Read: Psalm 32 (33):12-22

"They are happy, whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen as his own."

While for some the time of lockdown has created immense personal and family difficulties, for many there has been a certain sense of security in the hatches all being battened down whilst knowing that our neighbours were in the same boat; there has been a sense of collective effort in which we were all playing by the same rules for the common good, and there was a certain reassurance in that, even though we knew that we were in the middle of a crisis. But we now seem to be moving into what threatens to be a much more turbulent time, which may be more alarming than before, so perhaps it is a moment for us to take stock and re-ground ourselves.

We have just celebrated Pentecost, recalling that amazing time when there was a particular gifting of the Holy Spirit which transformed and empowered Peter and the others, changing them from fearful and uncertain people into bold proclaimers of the Good News who knew exactly what they were about. But whilst that was a particular (and undoubtedly dramatic!) gifting at a particular time for particular people, it is good to remind ourselves that we too have been gifted in a particular personal way with the Holy Spirit, ever since the day of our Baptism.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you', and after saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20: 21,22). He has said, and continues to say, all of that to each of us: peace, be sent, receive the grace you need.

That does not mean we are all called to be Peters and Pauls. We are not. What it does mean is that we too are gifted with the Holy Spirit to live lives of faith with courage and hope, whatever happens. We are sent, each in our own way, to the world around us, a world which needs, as it always does, people of solidly grounded good cheer who can help the Lord in fulfilling Isaiah's vision: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives." (Isaiah 61:1).

So whatever the troubling news from around the world, we should ensure that we are ones who can be relied upon, through what is heard in our words and seen in our deeds, to soothe and encourage, based on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sure hope we have.

"May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you."