

I'd like to begin the homily today with a question about marriage. For those who're not currently or not yet married, your imagination will be more than sufficient. Think back — or forward — to a time of courting someone and considering marrying them. What was happening inside you during that period? Most likely, you were very **curious** about the other person. You wanted to know them — their story, their interests, what mattered most to them. And you were also **open**. Open to your life changing. Open to giving yourself to another person entirely. Open to loving them completely and receiving their love in return. In other words, you were open to being **seized by love**.

That's the interesting word at the end of the first reading today — I wonder if you noticed it. After Samuel anointed David with oil, we're told: **"The Spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on."** Seized on him. That's powerful language which, in the original Hebrew, means the Spirit **rushed upon him** — or **came upon him mightily**. This reminds me of Pentecost where, in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2, it says: **"Suddenly there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting."** Something powerful happened in David and in that moment at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit filled David and the disciples — and their lives were transformed.

Today, my entire homily rests on one simple assumption: that we actually believe Jesus is alive, present, and active in the world today **through His Spirit**. Not just in the Bible. Not just in theory. But in people's lives here, right now. *(Of course, the greatest proof and witness of this is the saints, because their lives show us what happens when Holy Spirit comes mightily upon a person).*

In Catholic faith, when someone is baptised, they are anointed — like David — with oil: **Chrism oil**. This anointing symbolises the invisible gift of the Holy Spirit. And so, while **every baptised person** has the Holy Spirit **within** them, not every baptised person has experienced Holy Spirit moving **powerfully** in their life. Not everyone has experienced the Spirit “**seizing**” them — coming upon them in a way that awakens faith and transforms lives.

When people encounter Jesus in this deeper way, they often describe their **interior** experience using words such as: a deep joy... or being deeply moved... they begin to realise that God is calling them to something new... and they experience a desire to share their gifts with others... a hunger for prayer... a desire to serve... or a sense that their life is now part of a bigger journey. Here’s the thing though: You can’t **make** or **manufacture** an encounter with God. You can’t force Holy Spirit to act - because it’s all gift. What we **can** do is become curious **about** this gift — and then open **to** it.

At the end of the video homily last weekend, I invited everyone into a simple prayer experience: “**Lord, what are you asking of me?**” Interestingly, the second reading today invites something very similar wherein the writer says: “**Try to discover what the Lord wants of you.**” Notice the word **try**? There’s nothing static or passive about faith because it involves **trying** — by listening, paying attention, and responding. It’s actually better to try and then realise we’ve misunderstood God's voice than to never try at all and remain blind and deaf to Jesus’ living presence in our lives.

See, sometimes people say they believe in God but have no experiential knowledge of God outside of the Sacraments. The entire story of the Bible, though, is not about a distant or

unknowable God. It's about a **personal God** who reveals himself fully in Jesus. This is why you'll keep hearing me talk — perhaps like a broken record — about seeking a **personal relationship with Jesus**.

Where do we start, then, if we're **curious about** and **open to** this journey? Well, it starts with becoming conscious of what's going on inside us. Curiosity draws us outside of ourselves and asks: **Could Jesus actually be present in my life?** While openness says: **Lord, if you are there, open my eyes because I'm willing to see. Open my ears because I'm willing to hear.**

Sound scary? If it does, know that God is not going to barge into your mind, your heart, or life, **seizing** you **mightily** against your will. He respects our freedom too much for that. But we **can allow** God to do this because our freedom is the one thing God will never violate. Often, when people **begin** to encounter Jesus personally, they realise something surprising. God had been there all along. Already looking at them. Already speaking to them. Already loving them. Their eyes and ears simply hadn't been opened yet.

So, in the briefest of conclusions, perhaps the simplest prayer for anyone who feels **curious**, or experiences **openness**, is this:
Come, Holy Spirit.