

A lot of people these days claim to be spiritual without being religious. Indeed many people would claim that religion is positively bad for you; that religion is a kind of straitjacket that closes off real growth and personal development; that religion is a way of keeping us subservient and dependent.

But what is a spiritual person? Today's readings give us three clues as to what it is to be a spiritual person, what it is to be interested in spiritual things rather than unspiritual things.

Today's Gospel suggests it is something to do with keeping my word, which is not just the word of Jesus, but the word of the One who sent him – the word of God, the utterance of God, the revealing of God. Holy Scripture is a library of books written by many different men and women over many centuries. But in those writings – poetry and praise, history and myth, meditation and prophecy – the inner nature of God is made known to us, his dealings with humanity, his love and his mercy. “Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” is one of our great prayers puts it. This is how to become a spiritual person.

Today's gospel gives us another clue: “*Keep my commandments*”. Being spiritual does require a structure. We can't just be spiritual in the abstract. We have to have certain activities and ways of doing things. The magisterium of the Church may well seem like a rather imposing body, of teaching that covers just about every aspect of human behaviour, but at its heart is the commandment to love..

In his apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis is at pains to emphasise that the Christian Faith can never be reduced to rules and regulations. Christianity is about love. The commandment we must keep in order to be spiritual is the same, the commandment to love.

The third clue to being a spiritual person is to be found in the second reading. It may not be very fashionable in our multi-faith, multicultural context, but being spiritual must have something to do with Jesus.

Jesus is the only human being who, having grappled with evil and death, won through to the other side, the only human being to have loved to the end, and to have allowed those very wounds of love to raise him up to the newness of life. Sharing **his** sufferings and **his** glory is what it means to be a spiritual person.

Nearly two thousand years ago, the friends of Jesus, together with his mother, *all met in one room*. They read and meditated upon God's holy Word, they tried to keep his commandments, and they grappled with everything that their friend Jesus had said and done. The result was an explosion – The Day of Pentecost, the Birth of the Church, a powerful wind, tongues of fire and the ability to preach to gospel to all nations. That explosion is still happening here and now throughout the world.

Study Holy Scripture, engage with God's commandments, live your life in and with Jesus. Allow Pentecost to change you and renew you.

“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.”

