

MINISTER'S LETTER

AN IMPORTANT BIRTHDAY

This month heralds a very important birthday!

No, not mine, my important birthday comes later in the year!
(self-promotion will get you nowhere, Ron!)

No, not the Pope's

No, not Donald Trump's

Yes, Mardie has a birthday this month, but it was not hers I was thinking of either!

The birthday I was thinking of relates to the birth of the church!

But "hang on", I hear you say, "Isn't the birthday of the church on the 22nd June (1977)?"

No! That's the birthday or starting date of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Day of Pentecost (May 24th this year) is the birthday of the church catholic, or better and clearer, the church universal (just so we don't confuse it with the Roman Catholic Church – which, of course, is also a part of the church universal.)

Pentecost marks the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-21).

It signifies the birth of the Christian Church and the empowerment of believers to spread the gospel. It is understood as the birthday of the church because it marks the moment when the early disciples were transformed from fearful followers into bold witnesses of Christ's resurrection.

The Holy Spirit's advent signifies unity, empowerment and divine guidance, enabling believers to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers and live in accordance with God's Kingdom values of love, forgiveness and peace. It also emphasises the trinitarian nature of God with the Spirit as the third person of the

Trinity, fully God, trustworthy and ever present in the life of the church and the lives of all.

The church observes Pentecost as a season of the Christian Year beginning with the Day of Pentecost (the first Sunday of the season of Pentecost is, fittingly, Trinity Sunday where the church recalls its faith in the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God). It concludes with the feast of Christ the King. Thus, the church, empowered and resourced by the Spirit seeks to relate its faith as a people of God to Christ's mission in and for the world.

We at Ormond Uniting are a community faith which exists ONLY because we have the gift of the Spirit. Our challenge is to listen and discern that gift in our individual lives and in the life of the church. That is all! That is authentic Christian Mission.

Happy birthday Ormond Uniting Church (and all the other branches of Christ's Church, too!) for May 24!

Ron Townsend.

Our thanks to Ron for providing this inspiring letter while Ji is on leave.