

**“Anyone who belongs  
to Christ has become  
a new person”**

**~ 2 Corinthians 5:17 ~**



## **A Fresh Start**

**Read:** Luke 4:21-30

Years ago I attended the Labour Day classic football game with my dad. During the third quarter a man interrupted the game by running across the field. The fans weren't amused by this disruption and started to heckle the trespasser. I still remember the guy beside me vehemently saying, "who does this guy think he is?" I imagine that this is exactly what the people who heard Jesus read from the scroll thought, "who does this guy think he is?" And, like the Rider faithful, they turned on the intruder.

This wouldn't be the only time Jesus upset people. As John Leonetti, in his book "Your God is too Boring", points out, Jesus was not arrested and killed for being a "crank". These things occurred because Jesus upset the established order and claimed to be God. When Jesus revealed the nature of God, he changed the world's perception and some people didn't like that.

One of the first things Jesus revealed about God is that he is a Trinity of divine persons. In other words, God is a community of love that is exchanged between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Because God is a "loving community", he invites us to live in community with one another. The community Jesus invites us to be a part of is the Church. The Church is a family of believers who grow in fellowship with one another. The Church is a place of love.

At Pentecost, Jesus sent the Church the power of the Holy Spirit. From that point on everything changed. The fire of the Holy Spirit removed fear and doubt from the minds of the early believers. Their community of faith began to transform the world through love. Leonetti reminds us that the fire didn't go out after the first generation, but remains active in the Church and her members.

When we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, God turns us into saints. We are offered a fresh start and a new direction when it comes to our lives. Just like Jesus, saints are people who live out God's love fearlessly. But be warned, following Jesus and proclaiming his name can put you in the same predicament Jesus found himself in. People may not like the way you are called to live and to love. But that's what we are called to do. Love like Jesus. Why would we do this? Because Jesus is God and following him changes everything.

**Grow:** How can I love more like Jesus?