

BEING BRAVE!
Thursday 19th May 2016
Hampden Gurney School
Baptism and Confirmation
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I always love coming to your school here. I suppose there are lots of reasons for that. One is because three members of our family are now here. But the second is because I've known this part of London since I was the same age as you are now. My Dad used to work in a building in Oxford Street, just opposite the big Marks and Spencers. In the school holidays, sometimes I'd come up to work with him because London was *so exciting*.

If I went out for a walk, I'd often come up to Marble Arch, just round the corner from here, and drop in through the gates of Hyde Park. There, on almost any day, you'd see four or five people up on a box or set of steps, making a speech. They would all be speaking on different subjects. Some were politicians, some were protesting – *Ban the Bomb* was a favourite cause, some were religious. It was quite good fun to listen. Often they were very lively speakers! Sometimes rather unpleasant people would throw things at them – eggs, or rotten tomatoes! It sounds funny, but I wouldn't have wanted to be the target!

I suppose now, looking back, I think how brave those speakers were. They didn't mind looking silly because they believed in the cause. Now that's just where we are this morning. In our first reading Peter gives a powerful sermon about Jesus 'Repent and receive the Holy Spirit', he says. Later on he'd suffer for it – he'd go to prison and eventually die for his belief. In our second reading, our gospel, Jesus comes to his followers after his resurrection. He'd already *been* brave and God had raised him up. Now he brings the Spirit to them all: 'Receive the Holy Spirit!' he says. It is the Spirit who will give his followers courage. They, too will be brave. They'll do their bit at the Speakers' Corners in Palestine.

Now today, Persia, Marie and Lela are being brave. They are asking God to give his Spirit to them in Confirmation. That same Spirit will give them the confidence they need to tell others of God's love. It will give them the gifts they need to lead a good life, after the pattern of Jesus. Persia is being doubly brave. She is going to be baptised as well. She will get quite wet! Just as Jesus died and God raised him, so Persia will be 'sort of' drowned and then raised up. So today's a great day – all three will be ready from now on for Speakers' Corner, just across the road. They will be brave in the Spirit of Jesus.

Amen.

Readings

Acts. 2. 38-39.

John. 21. 19-23.