

## A SPIRITUAL LOOP SYSTEM

*Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:5-11)*

When my children were young, I tried to teach them to be very careful about what they said and did. Often the person to whom you say or do it to or for, may remember it for years to come and it can influence in some small way their way of life. I can still remember things that were said to me years ago. We may never realise what effect our words or actions have on others.

Airwaves are not manmade. They were created by God who created all there is. Man discovered these airwaves and learned to manipulate them to send messages far and wide. Telephones, radio, television and social media are all wonderful inventions which man has learned to use for good purposes but also, there are those who abuse them for their own selfish designs. They have forgotten or ignored the fact that everything we have is given by God and everything we do we are able to do because God gave us the ability and the opportunity to do it. These gifts from God are abused not only by individuals but by businesses, politicians, governments and the media. We are all constantly being manipulated. As Bishop Mark put it in his pastoral letter, "We live in a world of noise and strident voices". We all need to find a time and place for silence, reflection and prayer.

I believe that God is speaking to us all the time. He speaks to us in all that is around us; through the sights and sounds of our natural world; through other people; in what we read and through the media. We cannot always hear above all those other voices and the manmade sounds we create to fill the silence. My hearing is not so good these days so I have hearing aids to help me. When I attend mass, I can connect to the loop system which cuts out the surrounding noise and lets me hear clearly the voice of the minister. It makes such a difference to how I am able to celebrate.

In our daily lives, I think we have to cut out all the surround sound and listen for and recognise the only voice that is true. We have to listen to the only voice that cannot lie, the voice of God the Holy Spirit; to connect to a spiritual loop system which cuts out all the fake news, the false prophets and all the conspiracy theories and lets us hear clearly what God wants us to know. I think that is what Pope Francis is inviting the whole church to do.

May the Holy Spirit guide us and help us to do so.

*Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;  
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;  
Thou my great father, a true child make me;  
Be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.*