

No one becomes fully human overnight or even in a year or two. It takes time. And while we are growing towards full humanity we need help. As we have seen, during his life on earth, Jesus recognized this and constantly offered healing and reconciliation to the people he met.

Peace and reconciliation

Following his Resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, his followers, and offered them first of all his peace. As they were gathered together, full of shame about the way they had deserted him, full of fear about their future and full of questions about who he really was, Christ came to them. And his first word was "Peace." The overwhelming love of God washed over them all. Everything else could wait, the words of regret, sorrow, and shame. The most important point Jesus wanted to make was that he loved them, he understood them and he wanted to restore any damage to their relationship with him. Jesus then continued: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." After saying this he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained."

He asked his followers to continue his work. To enable them to do this he promised the gift of his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would be with them to guide them, heal them, and infuse them with Christ's spirit of reconciliation.

Parents and reconciliation

God's forgiving, healing love is not to be kept as a personal "keep clean" kit, but it is to grow, spread and develop amongst all his followers. In loving, forgiving, and healing one another, we build the body of Christ, the Church, in the world in every time and in every place. Christians make Christ present in their

lives by their words and actions of love and reconciliation and peacemaking.

As a Christian parent, you are laying the foundations of your child's life. You are called to place, at the heart of your parenting, Christ's Spirit of unconditional love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As your child experiences this in your care, he or she will begin to glimpse the true nature of the love of God and the promise of lasting peace and happiness, which is God's promise to us.

