



Today we celebrate the events of Pentecost. Pentecost for me is one of the major festivals of the churches calendar that does not get the recognition it deserves. Christmas and Easter are great celebrations in both the secular and non secular world, everyone knows what we are celebrating but Jesus' birth, and death and resurrection are not the full story, Pentecost is the beginning of the next chapter in the story.

It is now 10 days since Jesus ascended; with a promise to his disciples he would return. On the day of Pentecost they were all together in one place, whether they were expecting what would happen next we do not know but one thing's for sure, the sudden rush of a violent wind was not only felt by them but by everyone around them. I don't think anybody really knows exactly what happened on that first Pentecost. Where did those tongues as of fire come from? Did everyone really become bilingual or was it just that the arrival of the Holy Spirit was so powerful every visitor and traveller was talking about it in their own language. Whatever it was, it always conjures up in my mind what must have seemed like the greatest party of all time. You can picture the chaos, the excitement, the atmosphere, the noise, which must have been so deafening, so much so that those who were not 'feeling it' mistook them for being drunk.

It was Peter, the ever discerning Peter, (a bit like he has been for us over these past few weeks), who took it upon himself to set the book straight and give a clear explanation of the situation. He reminds the bystanders of the prophetic poetic words of the prophet Joel, who foretells that, following the sun being turned to darkness, (as it did as Jesus hung on the cross on Good Friday), and moon to blood (was this Jesus' blood?) that God would send his Holy Spirit, a gift to every man and women, to rich and poor, to slave and master.

And so the full story does not end. When the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost it came to stay and the story becomes endless, it is around us always. Like the wind it came with, we cannot see it but we can still feel the power of it today in our everyday lives.

Collect for the day

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your holy Spirit; grant us by the same spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6** And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. **7** Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? **9** Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." **12** All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" **13** But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

A reading from the 1st letter of Paul to the Corinthians

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

A reading from the Gospel according to John

³⁷ On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸ and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.



Words from Fr Rodney

We celebrate today the Feast of Pentecost, so called because it is fifty days after Easter. It more usually used to be called "Whit Sunday" because it was one of the days when in early days new Christians were baptised and were clothed in white robes which they wore for the rest of the week when they gathered for worship with other Christians. Pentecost saw the fulfilling of the promise that Jesus made to his disciples at his ascension that he would send them the Holy Spirit to provide them with all they would need to be the witnesses He had called them to be. We read the story at the end of St. Luke's Gospel, and at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles.

The power of the Holy Spirit filled the first disciples with the faith and confidence they needed to begin the work of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus to the world. But the story only begins there, for every generation of Christians receives the same power at Baptism and Confirmation, a power that needs to be constantly renewed in all disciples through worship & sacrament, study of the scriptures and prayer, and fellowship with one another. If our discipleship isn't what Jesus says it should be, then we should look to those things, and make sure that we are giving them the attention that they need.....

Intercessions

Let us pray

God of power, as we gather together on this special day we ask for your blessings on the members and leaders of our own congregations and on our brothers and sisters in faith throughout the world. We pray that the boldness of the Spirit transforms us, the gentleness of your Spirit leads us and that the gifts of your spirit become our goal and our strength, now and always. Amen

God of love and strength, we ask that your Holy Spirit direct the rulers of the world. Fill our leaders with the wisdom and discernment to seek the common good, especially at this time when the world needs to be united in its battle against disease, division, poverty and injustice. We pray especially for your guidance for our own government and its advisors as it faces the challenges of the pandemic, and ask that they move us forward safely. Amen

God of love and hope, we pray for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for the work of your Spirit amongst us, inspiring so many acts of kindness and compassion for others. We pray for all those who are vulnerable, those who are afraid, those struggling to cope and those who are lonely. We ask that they may access the support they need and come to know the comfort of your power and assurance. We also remember all those key workers in our communities and pray for their safety. Amen

God of compassion and healing we bring before you all those who are suffering in body mind or spirit, in particular we pray for Lizzie's mum Anne, and any known to us today.. We also remember all those suffering in the pandemic, their loved ones and those who care for them. We ask that through your Holy Spirit they and all those who are suffering at this time may find the peace, courage and strength to face the challenges before them. Amen

God of light who sent your Spirit to comfort your disciples during their time of despair, we pray today for all those who have died and those whose lives are darkened by sorrow and mourning, we pray particularly for anyone known to us and whose anniversaries fall around this time... May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

In a moment of silence bring your own prayers to God

The Lords prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.



