

Homily for Pentecost 2022

Two weeks ago we had the privilege and pleasure of celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation here in the parish when 10 of our younger parishioners received the gift of the Holy Spirit in a very special way. Today we celebrate Pentecost, a word which means the 50th day. In the Jewish Calendar, a special festival took place 50 days after Passover when the Jews thanked God for the abundance of their crops and when they recalled the different covenants God had made with them.

For Christians, Pentecost takes place 50 days after Easter when we remember the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the transformation that this brought about as we heard in the first reading. Those who received the Holy Spirit were given the courage to leave the safety of the upper room and to speak in a way that people from different countries and cultures could understand. Perhaps we can go back to Vatican II, sometimes called a new Pentecost, and the responsibility to seek out the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the gospel, and, secondly, to speak in a language intelligible to every generation. Could it be that the language we need to use is less that of obligation, and more of invitation, the language of the Gospel, the language of acceptance and belonging, the language of justice, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, the language of encouragement, laughter and joy, the language of love, breathed into our lives by the Holy Spirit as Jesus breathed into the disciples themselves.

From the story of the early Christians we know that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit gifted people in different ways, a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit. The Church has listed seven of these gifts, wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord, better presented perhaps, because of the negative aspect of fear, as awe or reverence. During this Easter season, largely through the AA we have seen how the first followers of Jesus used those gifts to proclaim the Good News, and how they had a very real experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit, giving them the wisdom to make the right decisions, helping them to grow in their knowledge and understanding of who Jesus really was, giving them courage in the face of great opposition, helping them to develop their worship and being in awe at the enormity of God's love for them. It was using these Spirit given gifts that enabled them to bear fruit in so many other people's lives, fruit that didn't just last during their lifetimes but has been handed on down to our own day.

We live in very different times to the first century and it is good to remember the words of Pope Francis – 'the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit is an event that continues. The Holy Spirit transforms us and wants to transform the world.' And how both we and our world need transforming. The same gifts are present in the Church today, and perhaps one of the gifts we might ask for is the wisdom to discern where the Spirit is leading us. A phrase that has stayed with me is to 'find the traces of the Spirit and follow them'. How all of us need to do that as the Holy Spirit leads us into a future that we do not know.

Bidding Prayers for Pentecost

Celebrant:

The Apostles waited and prayed for the coming of the Spirit. Gathered together in their company we pray for the Spirit's outpouring, and joyfully proclaim the greatness of God.

Reader:

For Queen Elizabeth on her Platinum Jubilee – that we give thanks for 70 years of devoted service guided by the Holy Spirit, we ask God to continue to bless and protect her. Lord hear us

For the peoples of Ukraine and Russia – that guided by God's Spirit ways will be found to bring a resolution to the current conflict, so that all may live at peace.

Lord hear us

On this World Environment Day we pray that we will treat our planet with the respect it deserves – that future generations will be able to enjoy the its beauty and resources.

Lord hear us

For Carers – that as we celebrate Carers Week we will not only acknowledge their selfless dedication but also campaign for a Recovery and Respite plan for unpaid carers.

Lord hear us

For those who have died, all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the Covid 19 pandemic, and Paddy Cahill, Jack Mundy, Tommy Cresham, Ann Cassidy, Edith Cox, Jack Poulter and Pat Mullan whose anniversaries occur this week – that they and all who have died may rest in peace and rise in glory. Lord hear us

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intentions...pause...then

Lord hear us

We ask the prayers of Mary, as we say together the Regina Caeli which you will find at the back of the newsletter. **O Queen of Heaven rejoice, Alleluia! For he whom you did merit to bear, Alleluia! Has risen as he said, Alleluia! Pray for us to God, Alleluia! Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia! For the Lord has risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Celebrant:

Almighty, ever living God, you ordained that the paschal mystery be completed by the celebration of Pentecost. Gather together all the peoples of the earth to praise your name and bear witness to you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen