

St. Thomas' Cardiff & All Saints Boolaroo

PENTECOST

31st May 2020

Alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord fills the world.
Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God. Alleluia!
With tongues of fire, the Spirit kindles the apostle's zeal.
They declare in new tongues the wonderful works of God.
Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom now and forever.
Alleluia! Come, Holy Spirit!
Fill the hearts of your faithful people with your love. Alleluia!



‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me,’ says the Lord; ‘and let the one who believes in me drink. For out of your heart shall flow rivers of living water.’

CONFESSION

Heavenly Father, we confess to you our fears, our worries, and our anxieties. You have given us your perfect love which casts out all fear and your peace which transcends all understanding, but even still we feel dislodged, displaced, untethered, and uncertain during these times.
We believe, Lord; help our unbelief.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Almighty God, at the feast of Pentecost you sent your Holy Spirit to the disciples, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel: empower us with that same Spirit to witness to your redeeming love and draw all people to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

READINGS

First Reading

Acts 2:1-21

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’ 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. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Hear the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God



Psalm

Psalm 104.26–36

Lord, how various are your works: in wisdom you have made them all, and the earth is full of your creatures. There is the wide, immeasurable sea: there move living things without number, great and small; There go the ships, to and fro: and there is that Leviathan whom you formed to sport in the deep. These all look to you: to give them their food in due season.

When you give it to them, they gather it: when you open your hand they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are troubled: when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit they are created: and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure for ever: may the Lord rejoice in his works.

If he look upon the earth, it shall tremble: if he but touch the mountains, they shall smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live: I will praise my God while I have any being. May my meditation be pleasing to him: for my joy shall be in the Lord.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12.1–13

A Reading From Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 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. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. 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. 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.

For the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel

John 7:37-52

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John chapter seven beginning at the thirty seventh verse. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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, 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."' 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. When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, 'This is really the prophet.' Others said, 'This is the Messiah.' But some asked, 'Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?' So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on

him. Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, ‘Why did you not arrest him?’ The police answered, ‘Never has anyone spoken like this!’ Then the Pharisees replied, ‘Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.’ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, ‘Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?’ They replied, ‘Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.’

For the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Talk: [Pentecost](#) (Click)

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

For he has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” Hebrew 13:5-6

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray for the world and for the Church.

Holy Spirit, come as fire, and burn away the sins that cling to our church. Come as fire, and burn away the conflicts which divide and depress us. Come as fire, and burn away our pettiness, our insularity, our small gospel.

Come as fire, and in your mercy
hear our prayer

Holy Spirit, come as wind and blow away the bureaucracy that tries to put you into a box. Come as wind, and disturb our best-laid plans which left you out. Come as a storm, and rage through our hypocrisy and cowardice till all is clean.

Come as wind, and in your mercy
hear our prayer

Holy Spirit, come as floodtide, and water the dry ground that we call our spirituality. Come as floodtide, and sweep away our ramshackle defences against your love. Come as floodtide, and fill every nook and cranny of our lives.

Come as floodtide, and in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Holy Spirit, come as life-giver, and put again to us that basic choice - life or death, blessing or curse. Come as life-giver, and build our confidence that the last word in a resurrection faith is always “life”. Come as life-giver and touch our jaded faith with the miracle of Christ

Come as life-giver, and in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Gracious God, empower us to speak boldly and to act courageously on the journey of ministry that lies before us, affirming our heritage and proclaiming our hope.

Holy Spirit of God, Fill the world with Your peace, fill the Church with Your purpose, And fill us with Your power, for the sake of Your Kingdom. Amen.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;
in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you;
in these days of emptiness, take possession of us;
in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the
mystery of your cross. Amen

May the Lord Jesus Christ be with us to protect us.
May he go before us to guide us, and stand behind us to give us strength.
May he look upon us, to keep us, and bless us. Amen

REFLECTIONS ON READINGS

The Day of Pentecost is a celebration that is rich and challenging for followers of Christ, but it is easy to miss the transformative call that it offers. The readings for this year bring together a number of different themes, that all combine to beckon us into a deeper encounter with God and God's reign and into a life of Christ-like service. In Acts God's Spirit is given as the empowerment for God's people (sons and daughters) to become prophetic proclaimers of God's goodness – as Peter indicates through the connection with the Joel prophecy. The Pentecost narrative also contains echoes of the experience of Moses and the leaders he appoints to serve God's people, and Moses' longing that all of God's people should be filled with God's Spirit and proclaim God's message. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul teaches that God's Spirit is given to all and empowers all so that all of God's people may serve one another. In John's Gospel this calling is opened even further as Jesus, in his gift of the Spirit to the disciples, informs them that they are now sent as he was sent – and he was sent to bring living water to all who would come to him. Here, then, is the call of this Day – to open ourselves to God's Spirit, to be empowered and gifted, in order that we may be sent to bring God's life, God's grace and forgiveness and God's empowering Spirit to all others. Pentecost, then, is not a moment of personal bliss, or simply an experience that can be enjoyed in some sort of euphoria. Rather, it is a moment which changes everything, in which our lives are equipped and marked for God's reign, and in which our quest to follow Christ is made possible through the gift of the Spirit. The evidence of a Pentecost Church, then, is not so much particular gifts or experiences, but the life, grace and service that the Church brings to the world. We are filled with the Spirit not for our own sakes, but for the sake of the world that God loves so dearly.

FR GARY'S SERMON

(*flipping through a National Geographic magazine*) Oh hi . . . I was just flipping through this magazine and thinking how good Prince Charles is looking these days, but, then, looking at the front cover, I can see the magazine is 14 years old. It just goes to show how I need to clean my study one of these days. But I guess 14 years isn't too bad compared to the age of some of the magazines you used to find in doctor's waiting rooms.

And speaking of waiting, this was exactly what the disciples were doing in the opening verse of this morning's reading from the Book of Acts, because earlier on, in chapter 1, Jesus had sent his disciples back to Jerusalem to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

A period of ten days that they would have spent in prayer and the reading of the Old Testament, until the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. . . Pentecost was a celebration of harvest in the Jewish year, seven weeks after the Passover, at which the priests offered symbolically two loaves made from new flour.

And Pentecost was, indeed, a new beginning for the church, (*show the word*) and looking at the letters that make up the word can give us a few clues about its meaning.

I think the first letter in the word should stand for the word "people," because Pentecost is indeed the story about one of the most important events in the lives of God's people. And if any one experience can be said to have launched Christianity it is the experience of Jesus' disciples on the day of Pentecost following Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. And it was this experience that drew them together into the living community of God's people.

The next letter should stand for the word "empowerment," because just before Jesus ascended into heaven he said to his disciples, "... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." It was because of these words that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with a sense of excitement and expectation in their hearts. It was as if the power of the atom was about to be unleashed.

And there was going to be a lot of people around to see it, which brings us to our next letter that might stand for "nations." There were three great Jewish festivals to which every Male Jew living within 30 km of Jerusalem was legally bound to come — the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles and Pentecost. Pentecost means "The fiftieth," because it fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover. And just as many people came to the Feast of Pentecost as came to the Passover.

So, this explains the roll of nations mentioned in this morning's reading from the Book of Acts, because never was there a more international crowd in Jerusalem than at the time of Pentecost. The law laid it down that on that day no work should be done. So, it was a holiday and all the crowds on the streets would be greater than ever. But this empowerment of God's people that was witnessed by the citizens of so many different nations never would have happened if the disciples hadn't been drawn together by their common devotion to Jesus Christ.

So, the next letter stands for the word "together," because gathered together Jesus' disciples had little in common apart from loving Jesus. But they were all there, their differences overcome, for the simple reason that they adored him. Christians have been drawn together for the same reason ever since, because there is something about Jesus that draws people together.

And this brings us to the next letter that could stand for the word "exciting," because these Christians were gathered to be a part of one of the most exciting stories in all history. For the room they were staying in was suddenly filled with a sound like a violent windstorm, flames of fire and tongues come to each of them, they are able to speak new languages, and they are overwhelmingly aware of the presence and power of God's Spirit. They are filled with such delirious enthusiasm that those who saw and heard them thought that they must be drunk.

And this brings us to the next letter that could very easily stand for "Christ," because you might remember that after his resurrection Jesus Christ told his disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

And this brings us to our next letter, that might stand for the word “open,” because the disciples needed to be open to what the risen Christ had told them. And, indeed, they were, because they gathered in a room in Jerusalem waiting...even though they weren’t quite sure what for. They had already experienced the miraculous events of Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

And now they were ready to obey his find instructions not to return home, but to wait in Jerusalem and remain open to his promise. And as we can see they weren’t disappointed. So, you can probably guess what the next letter stands for. That’s right, “Spirit.” but we can appreciate the account of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost only if we are willing to suspend disbelief and open ourselves to the reality of God who is far too immense for our comprehension, a God who works in human history in ways that mystify and bewilder us.

The events of Pentecost are rooted in the prior event of Easter; indeed, the outpouring of the holy spirit is the fulfillment of the Easter promise. At Pentecost a very ordinary group of men and women were flooded with divine power, and thus transformed into the vanguard of a force that could change the world.

And this brings us to our final letter, which simply stands for the word “take,” because at Pentecost the Holy Spirit empowered the first Christians to take the message of Christ to all people throughout the world. And it was God’s Spirit that empowered Peter to stand up in front of a crowd and to speak out in such a way that the people would listen.

Likewise, the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit has come to change us and to empower us to speak out and to change the world.

When God sent the Holy Spirit to his people at Pentecost, he placed in our hands the task of spreading the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the world.

The disciples didn’t select certain kinds of people or place any restrictions on who might hear the Good News. They didn’t require those who heard the message to belong to a particular race or age or gender or nationality. They preached to all and received all in the same way. Men and women of all cultures and of all human conditions heard their words as good news for themselves.

Without Pentecost being a reality for us — as individuals, and within our parish committees and structures — we can only “play church”.

This Pentecost let us commit ourselves afresh to not just playing church, but to being church. A church filled with the power and wonder of God’s Spirit.

