**31 May 2020 Pentecost Red**

**Readings Acts 2.1-21** 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13 **John 20.19-23**

God is spirit. **Let us worship him in spirit and truth.**

The Lord is with us. **Let us praise his name together.**

**Collect of 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.

**First Reading Acts 2.1-21**

1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

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

14But 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. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16No, 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. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

**Gospel John 20.19-23**

19It was evening on the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

**Reflection by Henri Nouwen – and Vanda!**

“The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to his followers, is the great gift of God. Without the Spirit of Jesus, we can do nothing, but in and through his Spirit we can live free, joyful, and courageous lives. We cannot pray, but the Spirit of Christ can pray in us. We cannot create peace and joy, but the Spirit of Christ can fill us with a peace and joy that is not of this world. We cannot break through the many barriers that divide races, sexes, and nations, but the Spirit of Christ unites all people in the all-embracing love of God. The Spirit of Christ burns away our many fears and anxieties and sets us free to move wherever we are sent. That is the great liberation of Pentecost.”

When I have been praying about the Acts reading this Pentecost, the thing that keeps coming to mind is that everyone gathered because of the sound of the wind. The noise of the Spirit, and I presume the noise of the apostles speaking in many tongues was what drew the crowds. Some thought they were drunk, others were confused. But I would imagine none were as shocked as the apostles were to find themselves speaking languages unknown to them! God promised to pour out his Spirit, and he did!

Often it seems that God fulfils his promise, and we are left not understanding, being shocked and unbelieving. At Baptism (and Confirmation) we are made children of God and his love is written in our hearts, his forgiveness for our sins gives us a new start, his badge signed on our heads, his commission given through the light. Sorted! But we stumble through life forgetting we are children of God, imaging that we are the ones who cannot be utterly loved by God. That we cannot be forgiven, and that we cannot possibly have anything to offer God. Perhaps we are too shocked finding out how deeply loved we are that it is easier to live without that knowledge – so we forget. Sometimes we must work hard to forget too!

May this season of Pentecost remind you of your calling as a precious child of God. Love, forgiven, redeemed, and commissioned to share this with all those who have forgotten how to love, or how to be loved. With those who cannot forgive or allow themselves to be forgiven. With those who feel useless or unworthy. Send your Spirit on each of us Lord and give us hearts of fire set with love for you. And give us the courage to remember always that we are heirs of your kingdom, children of God, redeemed by the Son, filled with the Spirit and loved for eternity!

**Prayers from ROOTS**

God of wind and dove and fire, speak freedom, peace and change
over lands divided by war and by creed.
Speak refreshment, assurance and warmth over lives afflicted by exhaustion and illness.
Speak integrity, humility and challenge over churches crippled by fear and finances. Speak calm, gentleness and comfort over lives broken by grief and loss.
Speak power, anointing and healing over each one of us,
that there may be new beginnings, and a catalyst for change. Amen.

Spirit of fire, warm us with your everlasting love.

Spirit of wind, blow away hurtful words that damage relationships.

Spirit of earthquake, carry away our fears.

Spirit of breeze, restore our peace with your calming breath.

Spirit of the living God, speak to us in words we can understand.

**Lord Jesus, all around the world your followers are facing difficult times. Please protect them from harm and help them build their faith in you. Amen.**

**Final Prayer**

The Spirit of God fills us to live and love outrageously.

**Spirit of God, brooding over the waters of our chaos, inspire us to generous living. Wind of God, dancing over the desert of our hopes, lead us to the oasis of new life. Breath of God, inspiring communication amongst strangers, make us channels of your peace. Amen.**  *Kate McIlhagga, amended*

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you. Amen.

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