

Pentecost - 31st May 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Jeff Britt.

Opening words for this Pentecost,

God says: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people." The Spirit has come. Alleluia! ¹

Call to worship: (Psalm 104:33 - 35b).

I will sing to the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.....

Praise the Lord my soul. Praise the Lord!

Hymn - Singing the Faith 395 ² [Join in here](#)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

Spirit of the living God,

Fall afresh on me.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Holy Spirit of God, I bring you my praise, and thank you that in these days of trial, you bring comfort and direction. Father God give me afresh your Spirit, and fill my heart with hope. And at this time of Pentecost I pray that you will pour out your Spirit and rekindle the flame within us, so that I and all your people may be beacons in the darkness and shine for you.

But sometimes Lord, in the strange times we are living in, during our dark moments, I lose sight of where I am and what I am doing. So forgive me for thinking I can get through in my own strength, and for not putting my trust in your Spirit's prompting. And so I pray for a fresh outpouring of your Spirit, today. Come, Holy Spirit, come. **Amen.**

Say the Lord's Prayer

Reading: Acts 2:1 - 21 ³ [Listen here. Play to 2:38](#)

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

Hymn - Singing the Faith 370 [Join in here](#)

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| 1. Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew;
That I may love what Thou dost love
And do what Thou wouldst do. | 3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine;
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine. |
| 2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure;
Until my will is one with Thine
To do and to endure. | 4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity. |

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Reflection: How have you been coping over the last two months? We have had many restrictions placed on us so that we have been unable to carry out our normal activities. We live in strange times where virtually everything in our lives has changed. Over the past few months we have been in “lockdown” and restricted in what we can do. Most shops, restaurants, businesses and churches have been forced to close their doors. We have had to change the ways in which we carry out our work and our worship! And it was the same for the early Christians in the time between Easter and Pentecost. Their lives had been turned upside down. Everything in their lives had been changed with the death of their Lord. And so they were worshipping behind closed doors; in people’s homes, keeping themselves to themselves, and keeping themselves safe. The disciples in a sense had had their freedom taken away and they were confused and afraid, not knowing what to do, just as a lot of people are today.

So Easter had come and gone, the disciples were still living in fear, afraid to go out into the streets for fear of the authorities. But then the risen Jesus appears to them and reassures them. Jesus had told them that when he returns to the Father, that he will ask for the disciples to be given another advocate to help them and be with them forever – the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16 - 17a).

And so, forty days after Easter, Jesus ascends into heaven. And having returned to the Father, he now asks for disciples to be given another advocate – the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16 - 17a).

Then ten days later as they were all together in one place comes the day of Pentecost, and in today's lectionary reading from Acts 2 we read these words: "then as they were all together in one place, suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." The promised Advocate. The dictionary tells us that an advocate is a champion, upholder, protector, reformer, supporter, helper or comforter.

And we, as Jesus' 21st century disciples also have an Advocate provided by the Lord. And sometimes, with everything that is going on we forget that. But be assured of this: the Holy Spirit resides in each and every one of us. When we feel lost and confused, he helps us find our way. When we are weak, he gives us strength. When we feel vulnerable he protects us. When we feel lonely and frightened he protects and comforts us. When we are despairing, he brings us hope. He is with us, walking along with us through these days of lockdown. During Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, who has been sent to re-ignite the flame within us, and to make us shine like beacons in the darkness of this world. The Holy Spirit is our champion and is giving us the hope of a better future. And a fresh start, which we look forward to.

And so, at this time of Pentecost, I pray that each one of us will receive a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all our lives.

Prayers of intercession:

Gracious God, whose Spirit helps us in our weakness and guides us in our prayers, in these days of uncertainty and social isolation, be with the lonely, the vulnerable, the aged and their carers Holy Spirit, encircle them in your loving arms.

Be with all who have lost loved ones, and those who are going through times of trial Comforter, encircle them with your strength.

Be with the jobless, the hungry and the homeless those who are forced to live on doorsteps and park benches Feed and shelter and encourage them. And we give thanks for food banks and other agencies who provide for them..... Holy Spirit, encircle them in your loving arms

Be with those who are sick in body or mind..... We pray for their healing.

Be with the doctors and nurses, risking their lives, and working so hard to bring healing to others..... encircle all of them with your protection and keep them safe.

And finally we pray for ourselves, that we may receive afresh your Spirit to comfort, protect and guide us. May the risen Lord be with us in these uncertain times encircling us all, protecting us in his loving arms. So Come, Holy Spirit, come and revive us again. **Amen.**

Hymn - Singing the Faith 372 [Join in here](#)

Come down, O Love divine
Seek Thou this soul of mine
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

Bianco da Siena (d 1434)

Blessing and dismissal

May the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you Always. **Amen.**

Go in peace in the power of the Spirit to live and work to God's praise and glory. **Amen.**

Acknowledgements

¹ From 'Fire and Bread - Resources from Easter to Trinity Sunday' by Ruth Burgess © Wild Goose Publications 2007.

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