

## Solemnity of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

† Sunday, 23 May 2021



In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: New members of the Church

Keynote: In one spirit – born to give witness

### Acts of the Apostles 2: 1-11

Inaugurated by the Holy Spirit, Pentecost marks a new era of salvation history. Recalling the events of the first Pentecost, and the sudden overwhelming manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, Luke sees the Pentecostal Spirit as overcoming the ancient division of human language and tongues, which began at the Tower of Babel. The disciples are now so empowered by the Spirit that they are transformed, they set out to proclaim the word of salvation beginning at Jerusalem. Now reaching out to all peoples with a message of truth – a message that transcends the boundaries of nations, culture and language. This day in Jerusalem is the starting point of the mission, which will bring the gospel to all peoples, *'They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.'*

**Responsorial Psalm 103 (104)** – A song in praise of the boundless love of God!

### First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 12: 3-7, 12-13 (Optional Galatians 5: 16-25)

Paul sets out in this section of his letter, how we might discern the manifestations of the Spirit. One of the chief signs, Paul says, is, *'No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.'* Then the apostle reminds us that, *'There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit. There are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord, working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them.'* Using the example of the human body which although it has many parts is but one body, Paul says, *'so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.'*

Maybe this too is one of the signs of the presence of the Spirit, for the baptised may almost be intoxicated – energised with the Spirit. It will be for each of us to discern the presence of the Spirit in our own lives, for as Paul says, *'The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.'*

### Gospel according to John 20: 19-23 (Optional John 15: 26-27; 16: 12-15)

For John, the evangelist, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the climax of this *'mystagogia'* – this period of discernment and reflection. A time for deepening our Christian experience, a time for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the Christian community which follows the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

But note, that when the risen Lord appears among his disciples in this locked room, there is a clear identification made between the Jesus – the man crucified, and the Jesus – of the resurrection. Seeing this for themselves, and recognising Jesus, *'the disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you"'*. In the breathing on them we have an echo of that first creation when God breathes a living spirit into humankind.

Here there is a new creation, a new coming to life, with Jesus breathing his own eternal Spirit upon his disciples, sending them forth from this locked room to liberate the world from slavery, and in their turn to set people free from sin, death and every kind of evil. For Jesus says, *'For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven.'* It is a breath taking message, and Good News indeed! Alleluia!

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#### Note

This is the end of the Season of Eastertide. Tomorrow the cycle one of weekday Readings Year B resume with Week 8 in Ordinary Time.