

Sunday 23 May 2021

Pentecost

St Stephen's Parish
Tinley Park, Illinois.



Sermon © Paul Monk.

Liturgy and Prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Come down O Love divine](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
or [Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire](#)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

Jesus Christ, whom we worship, is our crucified, risen and ascended Lord and we have been privileged to walk with him through his journey of love.

We have faced the agony of his suffering and death on a cross. We have rejoiced at his bursting free from the bonds of death. We have enjoyed his risen presence with us and his revelation of himself through the breaking of bread. We have seen his return to the throne before which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that this Jesus is Lord.

And now, with the followers of his own time, we wait the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, his gift to his people, through whom we make Christ known to the world.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

And the second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The Spirit of truth will convict the world of guilt about sin, righteousness and judgement. We have grieved the Holy Spirit. So we confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'.

All **Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.**

**Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Pentecost

Holy Spirit,
sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

First reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place.

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".'

Acts 2:1-21

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

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 baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. *1 Corinthians 12:3b-13*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Breathe on me, breath of God [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

John 14:15-21

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

It's a shame when we know a reading so well that we fail to notice what it says. We know it so well that we can list by heart the residents of Mesopotamia, the parts of Cyrene belonging to Libya, and so on. And that, for me, is precisely what happened

with the reading from Acts just now. And then it struck me, the very last verse of the reading, 'Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

The obvious question, in the context of Pentecost and receiving God the Holy Spirit, *what is the relationship between salvation and the Spirit?* To help us, we will look at several passages in Holy Scripture that describe lives lived in the Spirit.

Firstly, Romans 8 verse 26 tells us the Spirit helps us to pray. Most of us, if we are honest, will admit that praying is difficult. It can feel as though we are talking into thin air and when we pray. There is no power there, no oomph. We therefore feel as though we are operating in a vacuum when we pray. Surely, at the back of our mind will be the simple, honest question, *did I actually pray?* Was that a prayer or was it merely a human-based activity with no spiritual content to it? Romans 8 tells us that, when the Holy Spirit of God lives in our soul, the prayers we utter are prayers, are powerful, because the Spirit himself translates them in such a way that God the Father receives them, hears them, and responds to them. The Holy Spirit acts as the mobile phone that relays my conversation here to God himself in the throne-room of Heaven. We know that our request to be saved will have been heard.

But there is more to it than that. There is surely no point in asking the Holy Spirit to relay our prayers if we say nothing. If we say prayers that means nothing or, far worse, actively get in the way—selfish prayers, unconscious blasphemies and so on. So, **secondly**, the Holy Spirit helps us to know what to pray. I wonder if you know the children's game in which you hide something—a sweet, a small toy — and let them guess where it is. We then shout, 'You're getting warmer!' or 'You're getting colder'. Maybe next 'Ooooooh you are getting hot!' and so on. The idea originated with the Desert Fathers in the Syrian desert, in the third and fourth centuries. They were monks and nuns, hermits and oddballs who fled the sin of the city because they wanted to follow God more closely. And they noticed that, having received the Holy Spirit at some point in their growth toward sanctity, they could actually feel him. They felt a sensation of his love and joy and peace and the other so-called fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5. If their actions were in accord with the will of God, they could feel the Spirit quite strongly—'You're getting warmer!' but if they were in sin or merely going in the wrong direction, spiritually, 'You're getting colder' because the fire of the Spirit was no longer so strong. It means we can tentatively discern the will of God when we recognise the touch of the Holy Spirit in our soul: 'you're getting colder!' via 'you're warmer!' and 'you're hotter!' so that, at our lives' end, we are closer to salvation than when we started.

But the **third** way in which the Holy Spirit ensures our salvation is the more sensational. He intercedes for us. In other words, we are helpless when evil is on the prowl until the Holy Spirit himself intervenes. In the service of Compline that

we sometimes say during Holy Week, we remind ourselves of the devil prowling around, like a lion, seeking whom he may devour. Instead of fighting him ourselves—which most of us are sure to lose—He fights for us, prays for us, asks God for us, so that we can be saved. Read Ephesians chapter 6 for details. So when we ‘call on the name of the Lord,’ to use the words at the end of today’s reading from Acts, we can be sure the Spirit *will* respond. We can be sure that God will save us.

Today is the day of Pentecost, when we remember the way the Holy Spirit of God filled the first disciples. They called on the name of the Lord and they were saved. Will we be? If we sincerely do want to be saved, we must first ask God to fill us with his Holy Spirit. That way, we will be helped when we pray; we will find that when the Spirit prompts us we will be made aware of the road ahead and which way to go ‘Ooooh you’re getting warmer!’ And he will help us in the fight against those forces of evil that want us never to enjoy the delights of salvation.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Generous God,

we thank you for the *power* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask that we may be strengthened to serve you better.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *wisdom* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to make us wise to understand your will.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *peace* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to keep us confident of your love wherever you call us.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *healing* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to bring reconciliation and wholeness where there is division, sickness and sorrow.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *gifts* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to equip us for the work which you have given us.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *fruit* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to reveal in our lives the love of Jesus.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *breath* of your Holy Spirit, given us by the risen Lord.

We ask you to keep the whole Church, living and departed, in the joy of eternal life.

Lord, come to bless us

All and fill us with your Spirit.

Generous God,

you sent your Holy Spirit upon your Messiah at the river Jordan, and upon the disciples in the upper room:

in your mercy fill us with your Spirit,

All and fill us with your Spirit.

and make us one in heart and mind

to serve you with joy for ever.

Amen.

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The peace

God has made us one in Christ. He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come, has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you. Alleluia!

HYMN 3 Spirit of the living God (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

HYMN 4 You shall go out with joy (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Lord is here!

All His Spirit is with us.

Today we have remembered the coming of God's power on the disciples and we invite that same Spirit to drive us out into the wild places of the world.

For fifty days we have celebrated the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over the powers of sin and death. We have proclaimed God's mighty acts and we have prayed that the power that was at work when God raised Jesus from the dead might be at work in us.

Therefore, as part of God's Church here in Oldham, I call upon you to live out what you proclaim.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, will you dare to walk into God's future, trusting him to be your guide?

All We will.

Will you dare to embrace each other and grow together in love?

All We will.

Will you dare to share your riches in common and minister to each other in need?

All We will.

Will you dare to pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?

All We will.

Will you dare to carry the light of Christ into the world's dark places?

All We will.

The blessing

May the Spirit,
who hovered over the waters when the world was created,
breathe into you the life he gives.

All Amen

May the Spirit,
who overshadowed the Virgin when the eternal Son came among us,
make you joyful in the service of the Lord.

All Amen

May the Spirit,
who set the Church on fire upon the Day of Pentecost,
bring the world alive with the love of the risen Christ.

All Amen

And the blessing of God the Almighty
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he is our great high priest
who has entered once for all
into the heavenly sanctuary,
evermore to pour upon your Church
the grace and comfort of your Holy Spirit.

He is the one who has gone before us,
who calls us to be united in prayer
as were his disciples in the upper room
while they awaited his promised gift,
the life-giving Spirit of Pentecost.

Therefore all creation yearns with eager longing
as angels and archangels sing the endless hymn of praise:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the Spirit-filled saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God our Father,
you have raised our humanity in Christ
and have fed us with the bread of heaven:
mercifully grant that, nourished with such spiritual blessings,
we may set our hearts in the heavenly places;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

All **Almighty God,**
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.