

Sunday 23rd May 2021

The Day of Pentecost



Happy Birthday to the Church! 🎉

Today's Gospel reading is from John's Gospel (chapter 15, verses 26-27 and chapter 16, verses 4b-15). You can find this on our Order of Service (link from the website) but today we are going to concentrate on the Pentecost Reading, which comes from the Acts of the Apostles. It tells the story of the Day of Pentecost and the following is a version of the reading from Trevor Dennis's "The Book of Books":

Fifty days after Passover there was another Jewish festival: Pentecost. Once again Jerusalem was full of Jewish pilgrims from all over Palestine and from many countries beyond its borders. Jesus's friends were all together in one room. Mary, Jesus's mother, was among them. All of a sudden there came a sound like that of a rushing wind, and flickering tongues of fire appeared and touched each one of them. The sound was like the sound of the Spirit of God blowing like a wind over the dark heap of water at the creation of the world, and the tongues of fire were like the flames that danced for Moses at the burning bush.

The friends were caught up, cradled and sent whirling by the Spirit of God. Now they would have the courage, the wisdom and the energy to carry on the work of Jesus.

Filled with enthusiasm, they rushed out to meet the crowds of pilgrims thronging the city. The words came pouring out of them, almost as if they weren't speaking them themselves; almost as if angels had crept inside their heads. The Jews who heard them were amazed. They came from so many different places, with so many different

languages, yet they could all understand everything! It was as if each group of them heard the friends speaking in their own native language!

The people remembered the ancient story of the city of Babel, of how God made its proud builders speak different languages. Things in that story got so bad that fights broke out and they had to stop building. They became scattered over the face of the earth, and the city fell into ruins. But this was Babel upside down and back to front! They'd come to Jerusalem with a host of different languages, but now they could understand everything. Instead of fights, perhaps there could be peace and unity and well-being, in place of scattering and ruin.

Some people, however, thought that the friends of Jesus were drunk. "They've been drinking too much wine for the festival!" They said. Peter spoke up for the friends. "No we haven't", he replied. "After all, it's only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what some of our prophets were looking forward to. They said the days would come when God would pour out his Spirit on everyone, upon men and women, old and young, slaves and free. Then we would see visions and dream dreams, they said. Well, my people, those days have arrived! We have seen those visions! We are dreaming those dreams!"

Last week we thought about how, before his Ascension, Jesus had promised his disciples that they would receive power from on high to help them to spread the gospel and to be his body on earth. So the disciples waited in the upper room in Jerusalem, still fearful of the authorities and of what was going to happen next – and now we hear about the amazing things that did happen! Here was the Holy Spirit!

Peter was now filled with courage, as well as joy, and told the people all about Jesus. He spoke about about what Jesus had said and done, and about how the people had turned against him and the authorities had handed him over to the Romans, who had crucified him. "You thought that was the end of him", continued Peter, "but it wasn't the end at all. It was the beginning!" Peter explained how God had set Jesus free from death and that they had all seen him. A lot of people came to believe that day and, full of God's Holy Spirit, all the disciples went on talking about Jesus, sharing the amazing things he had done. After that day, they were no longer afraid, but came out of hiding and began meeting together regularly, sharing everything with each other and caring for one another – and so the Church was born!

This is why we celebrate the birthday of the Church at Pentecost. It was the start of the amazing way God allows us to love and serve each other. Once we are "on fire" and have received the light of Jesus, we can take that to other people and "light up" their lives as well. God wants us to share his story and his love with the whole world, just as the first disciples did.

🤔 Did you know that there are several symbols for the Holy Spirit?

Wind and fire are two of them, seen in the Pentecost story. We also sometimes use the symbols of water and of a dove, both seen in the story of Jesus's Baptism (see Matthew 3:13-17)

What do you think it is about each of these symbols that might lead to them being associated with the Holy Spirit?

A prayer for this week:

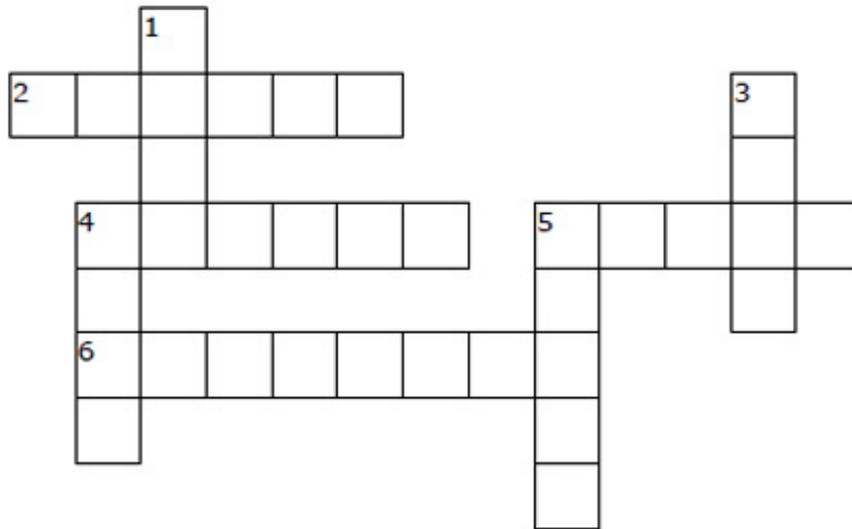
Father God, we thank you for sending your Holy Spirit upon us, just as you did on your disciples on the first Day of Pentecost. Thank you for your Church, to which we belong. We are glad to be part of your family. Help us to share your love and to tell others about Jesus. Amen.

If you scroll down, you will find some puzzles and colouring pages.

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All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Acts 2:4 (NIV)

Based on Acts 2:1-21



ACROSS

2. A being that cannot be seen, like a ghost
4. The place where God lives
5. Something that can be heard
6. Means of communication used by the people of a particular country

DOWN

1. A destructive burning
3. Blowing air, especially that which would move the leaves on a tree
4. Something that is pure and good, such as God's Word
5. To say words, to use the voice

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|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| LANGUAGE | FIRE | HOLY | WIND |
| SPIRIT | HEAVEN | SOUND | SPEAK |



You might like to be really creative with this one! You could simply colour the larger picture, or you could cut out the shapes that make up the picture and back it with coloured tissue paper to make a Pentecost stained glass window. You may have more ideas!

