

15th May 2005 Pentecost

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Readings:

- Acts 2:1-21
- Psalm 104:26-36 page 331
- Corinthians 12: 1-13
- John 20: 19-23

Pentecost marks the completion of Jesus' mission — his task fulfilled and sharing the Creator's glory, the Holy Spirit is poured forth and Jesus' mission becomes the mission of the faithful — beginning with the Apostles and Peter!

That which Peter and the apostles with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus had been waiting and praying for

— the fulfilment of Jesus' promise

— the giving of the Spirit

has happened

and the account in the Acts of the Apostles tells of those who locked themselves away being overcome by enthusiasm ☐ those who were fearful are filled with joy! Peter who had denied knowing Jesus is now unafraid to speak to the crowds in Jerusalem!

The experience of the apostles and the events that follow

what sounded like a rushing wind

AND

what looked like tongues of fire

these events are marked with

Enthusiasm

Joy

Empowerment

A sense of Purpose and Mission
and **Communication**

formerly languages which divided are now the means by which people are united in hearing about God's "deeds of power".

We see in the gospel similar elements — The eleven apostles gather in fear and the Risen Jesus bids them "Peace" breathes upon them the Holy Spirit and appoints them to the mission of forgiveness and judgement on the sins of those who do not grasp the forgiveness of God.

We discover that the apostles' enthusiasm and joy is so great that they are assumed to be drunk!

Peter needs to defend them!

"these are NOT drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning."

and Peter refers to the words of the prophet Joel... "In the last days it will be, God declared, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh."

Peter applies the words "last days" to this new era in which the Spirit will be poured out on "All Flesh"

- young and old.
- even slaves
- both men and women

to prepare them for "the Lord's great and glorious day"

BUT by the time Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians they had over emphasized the more spectacular enthusiasms of the Spiritual Life and had lost sight of their purpose.

Which was:

1. To know Jesus as Lord
2. That it is the One God who gives the spirit in a variety of ways for a united service as members of One Body.

Again the spirit is the source of unity even for people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. — "Jews or Greeks" and economic and social backgrounds — Slaves or Free one Spirit — One body!

Paul points to the Holy Spirit as enabling ministry by the giving of spiritual gifts.

//(PAUSE)

Many years ago there were thought to be the sole possession of the ordained people! I think we recognise ordination as defining role and function **NOT** the sign that the ordained person has **ALL** the gifts — **NO!**

We refer now to the Mission of the Church and the Ministry of the people!

The list of gifts here in 1 Corinthians.

- faith
- healing
- miracles
- prophecy
- discerning spirits
- tongues
- interpretation

We should not be fearful of these, but open to the possibility. Not far along in the letter however, Paul says that all these are of NO USE if there is no love...

Pentecost emphasizes the fact that we are the Body of Christ; we all drink of the One Spirit; that the gifts of the spirit are to enable the unity of the Church in its Mission.

Our own Parish Mission Statement which fits within the wider mission is:

to be a caring CHRISTIAN community which embraces and honours difference and offers a place to celebrate and grow spiritually within the Anglican tradition.

What part do we play in making that happen? What are my God given gifts to offer? Is it my or your gift to ask the difficult questions to keep us aware of our mission?

May we be filled with the joy and enthusiasm of God's Holy Spirit. May we be enabled to communicate in the language of our local community, and may we express our diversity of gifts in the unity of the Spirit.

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