

## Sermon for Pentecost 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – Year A – Acts 2:1 – 21 and John 20:19 – 23

It's amazing sometimes how the Bible readings speak so directly into ones situation. Just like our readings today, this great celebration of Pentecost.

The past 10 weeks we have been staying behind the closed doors. We've huddled up in our homes, experiencing wilderment, fear and anxiety of what lies of ahead of us. We've been stressed about so many aspects of our lives. A bit like those first disciples in our readings both in the Acts and John's Gospel.

In the Acts, the disciples are gathered together behind locked doors. Jesus, their friend and teacher, had left them 10 days earlier, after he ascended into heaven. The disciples don't quite know what to do. They are scared and confused. And wondering what lies ahead of them as something wonderful would happen, they were told. As they are behind lock doors, suddenly they hear a sound almost like a very powerful wind. Something is amongst them, something they cannot see or feel, only sense. This something releases their tongues and they speak languages they don't know. They feel delighted and all the fear and anxieties just fades away. They feel strong, renewed in courage and wisdom.

Something similar happens in the John's Gospel reading. The difference is that this coming of the Holy Spirit happens in the evening of Easter day. But just like in the Acts, the disciples have locked themselves behind the closed doors. They are stressed and fearful. They have unbearable emptiness in their lives, after Jesus, their friend and teacher left them three days earlier. They are wondering what lies ahead of them; something will happen that will change their lives for ever, they were promised.

As they think how the presence of the Lord would happen on that day, suddenly Jesus stands before them. There's something new in this presence. But as the disciples come in terms with this sight of Risen Jesus, they feel how all the fear is gone, especially after Jesus speaks to them. ***Peace be***

*with you*', he says and then breathing on them, gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Wow! What amazing changes takes place in these accounts! The disciples are transformed from fearful individuals, scared to leave their safety behind the locked doors, into people willing to step out in faith. The Spirit of God, the Breath of God breathed new life into the disciples of Jesus Christ, making them strong, bold and capable of carry on Jesus' ministry and mission.

The same Spirit of God, the Breath of God has been working from the creation throughout the history of human kind, in Adam, in Moses, in Elijah, in Peter the Rock, in St Paul, in Mother Teresa and in Martin Luther King! And that same Spirit of God, the Breath of God, the Holy Spirit is ours too.

Have you ever said or done something, only to wonder, 'Wow, where did that come from?' And as we say that, we have realised that it wasn't us who came up with it? That it wasn't us-us, who did it?

I have these moments from time to time. Sometimes they pass by without too much thought. Perhaps just briefly wondering 'where did that come from?' And then I have those clear moments when I do realise that it is the Holy Spirit that has worked through me. And same is true for each one of us.

Today as we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church and the end of the Easter season.

We are reminded of the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives as Christians both individually and as a church. The lockdown life is past us and we have entered into new world reality, wondering what lies ahead of us.

After a brief moment we thought this new reality would be better than the previous one, until we saw how so many things continue to be wrong. Yes, we've stepped into a world where the air is cleaner and easier to breath than before. But where the nature is still in agony and where there's still no equality in human life.

But it's not all doom and gloom, there is the Good News too.  
And it is this: the world is at the birth bangs of Change, where the God's LOVE,  
JUSTICE and GRACE is needed even more than ever.  
And you and I have a role to play in this change.

The same Spirit of God, the Breath of God is ours just like it was  
for those first disciples and all who came after them. We are the ones who now  
have to show more than ever before what the love of God looks like in the world  
of hate, anger and fight of survival.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, Happy birthday! Receive the Holy Spirit so  
that together we may have strength, and renewed courage and wisdom to show  
what God's LOVE, JUSTICE, and GRACE looks like through our service of others  
and loving one another despite of our differences in race, tribe, gender, sexuality,  
life experiences and so on.

This Pentecost story is a story for our time. The Holy Spirit broke down the  
barriers on the birthday of the Church long ago. And the Holy Spirit continues to  
do that through us, as we answer to God's calling to engage in His world just like  
our teacher and Saviour Jesus Christ did.

Come Holy Spirit, Come.

**Amen.**