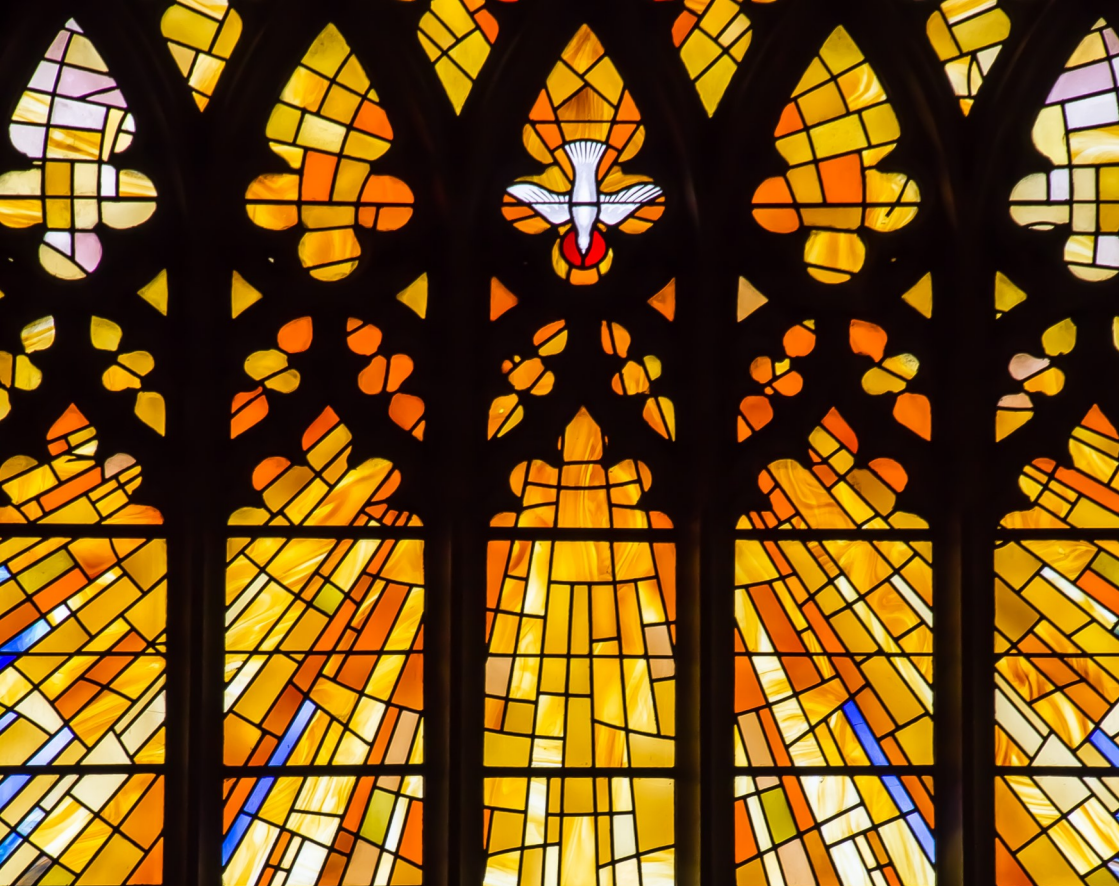


Reflecting
on Pentecost Sunday



Archdiocese of
Liverpool

Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks in this story.*



- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a plant, leaves or a flower from the garden next to the light.

Begin by praying this prayer requested by Archbishop Malcolm:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Now, breathe deeply and allow yourself to become still.

Let the music, *Spirit of the Living God*, help you to relax. Ask for God's grace and light to fill your heart and your mind as you open to the Word.



Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.



Spend some time just looking at the three images.

- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



As today is the Feast of Pentecost, we have a Sequence. Pray this now using the music provided.



Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

Come, Holy Spirit, come! And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine! Come Father of the poor!
Come, source of all our store!
Come, within our bosoms shine.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

You, of comforters the best; You, the soul's most
welcome guest;
Sweet refreshment here below; In our labour, rest
most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

O most blessed light divine, shine within these hearts
of yours,
And our inmost being fill! Where you are not, we have
naught,
Nothing good in deed or thought,
Nothing free from taint of ill.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour your dew; wash the stains of guilt
away:
Bend the stubborn heart and will; Melt the frozen,
Warm the chill; guide the steps that go astray.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Veni Sancte Spiritus.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Veni Sancte Spiritus.

On the faithful, who adore and confess you, evermore
In your sevenfold gift descend; give them virtue's sure
reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end.

Allelu, Alleluia. Allelu, Alleluia.
Alleluia. Allelu, Alleluia.

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of the faithful
And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Allelu, Alleluia. Allelu, Alleluia.
Alleluia. Allelu, Alleluia.

Now, either read slowly to yourself the passage from the Gospel according to John or better still, read it aloud, again slowly.

From the Gospel according to John 20:19-23



When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

The Gospel of the Lord.



Now revisit the part of the story that seems to be most important for you.

Read this part a second time, aloud if possible, and allow it to nourish you before reading Fr Chris Thomas' reflection...



When I was eleven, we went on holiday. We were going to stay in a hotel in Ostend. I guess it was more like a boarding house really. I don't know how Mum and Dad managed to get the money together and I don't know how Mum managed to persuade Dad to go but one chilly July morning we arrived in Ostend. We found the 'hotel' and went in. It was dark and gloomy. I remember there was a long thin hallway with a flight of stairs leading up to the bedrooms. There were stuffed animals everywhere and the whole effect on an eleven-year-old was quite macabre. As I got used to the gloom, I made out a flimsy reception desk and behind it a man with a small moustache and a monocle. He clicked his heels together and welcomed us in formal stilted English.

My Dad, who was a casualty from the Second World War, took one look at this poor man and decided that he had been a Nazi officer during that conflict. We went up to our bedroom. The four of us were sharing a family room and Dad refused to move. He was so afraid. He wouldn't unpack his bags or come down for any meals. He sat up all night just in case this man came up to do dastardly things to his English guests. Mum, my brother and I went out every day to see the sights, but my poor Dad sat in this room with only his whisky bottle for company until the day we left Ostend. It is amazing what fear can do to us. We're seeing it all around us in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opening reading this weekend was the story of the first Pentecost. Then in John's Gospel we had the story of the disciples in an upper room frightened out of

their lives, worried about what the Jews would do to them. In both those stories the Spirit came. In the Pentecost story the Spirit came spontaneously, and the disciples were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' In both accounts they changed, were moved from a place of fear because of the action of the Spirit.

Pentecost is all about change and transformation. It's about the Spirit who moves us from our fear into a place of empowerment. Sadly, many of us have a problem with the Spirit. If we're going to be really honest, we don't like this part of God which we can't control or explain, this part of God which is fire and water and wind and which our theologies can't predict or inhibit. We are afraid of where the Spirit might lead us. Pope Francis recently wrote this: "The Holy Spirit bothers us because he moves us, he makes us walk, he pushes the church to go forward. We want the Holy Spirit to doze off. We want to domesticate the Holy Spirit and that is no good, because he is God. He is that wind which comes and goes, and you do not know where. He is the power of God; he is the one who gives us consolation and strength to move forward. But to move forward, and this bothers us. It is so much nicer to be comfortable."

Yet, if we are open to that changing transforming spirit then we can experience freedom from our fears and our anxieties and find new life. We can find the power to forgive and not judge and condemn. We can be moved from our lethargy and go out and proclaim the risen Jesus. The Spirit of God is about deep inner change and as we are changed deeply within, our lives and the lives of those around us are changed. The invitation today that we're given is to open our hearts

and say, 'Come Holy Spirit' and go on that journey which will lead us to life. A journey that is scary and challenging because it forces us to constantly let go and reassess what makes sense of life and what values are important in life. Don't celebrate Pentecost if you don't want inner change. Celebrate Pentecost today if you want to find life. Celebrate Pentecost and know the power of the Holy Spirit within you.

Read through *A Sonnet for Pentecost* by Malcolm Guite.



Today we feel the wind beneath our wings
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays
Today the church draws breath at last and sings
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.
This is the feast of fire, air, and water
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.
The earth herself awakens to her maker
And is translated out of death to birth.
The right words come today in their right order
And every word spells freedom and release
Today the gospel crosses every border
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace
Today the lost are found in His translation.
Whose mother-tongue is Love, in every nation.



As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need. You may like to include one or more of the following:



We pray for Pope Francis ... our inspiring leader through these challenging days ... and for our Archbishop, Malcolm, all our bishops, priests and deacons and the many lay people ministering within our communities at this time ... that they be renewed and refreshed by the breath of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for all who care for the sick and dying, the elderly and the vulnerable ... may they be filled with compassion and be channels of your healing love.

We remember especially Bishop Vincent Malone who died on 18 May. We give thanks for his faithful service to our diocese and the Church in England and Wales and pray that he will now enter into the deepest love of God.

We pray for those who are grieving at this time ... that they may be comforted and find support in the prayer of the community.

We pray for those who have lost jobs as a result of the pandemic ... may they quickly find new opportunities to use their gifts and provide for themselves and their families.

We pray for the work of our diocesan Synod ... that our community will wisely discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us during the coming months.

We pray now in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

To end your time of reflection, listen to *I Send You Out*.



I baptise you in the name of the Father
I baptise you in the name of the Son
I baptise you with the Holy Spirit
Go out and spread good news

*I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
and know that I am with you always
Until the end of the world*

Well, it's time for us
To become people of spirit
It's time for us
To become people of love
It's time for us
To know that Jesus Christ is risen
Forgives our sins and brings us new life

*I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
and know that I am with you always
Until the end of the world*

Love one another
Peace to your brother
Feed every hunger
Glory to the Father

*I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
I send you out on a mission of love
and know that I am with you always
Until the end of the world*

Acknowledgements

Cover image: stock photo - detail of stained glass depicting the Holy Spirit.

Spirit of the Living God (this version performed a cappella by Voices of Praise).

Images on page 3 (clockwise from left): Wikimedia Commons - flame from a burning candle; mosaic, originally produced for The Church of the Holy Ghost in Ford, Liverpool, was 'saved' by a group from the Metropolitan Cathedral when the church was being demolished. It was installed in the Cathedral in 1989 and is the work of George Mayer-Marton (1897-1960). Photograph by Sean Murphy; *The Great Commission* by Nalini Jayasuriya, 2002.

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