

A story of transformation



Stained-glass window depicting Pentecost, Bayeux Cathedral, France

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23 and John 7:37-39

Many of us live with low-level anxiety about the state of the world. Indeed, there is so much need, so much injustice, that it's easy to feel overwhelmed. In today's choice of readings from John, Jesus promises us that he has not left us to manage on our own – we will be sent the advocate to work alongside us. In our reading from Acts we see this promise fulfilled, as God pours out the Holy Spirit on men and women: "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind... Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them".

The Holy Spirit coming to the Church is a story of transformation, a watershed moment for the disciples. Before Pentecost they were afraid, full of doubt, cowering and besieged. Afterwards, they rise up, defend Christ and preach with confidence.

The salvation and spiritual gifts they were given on that day, for the common good, continue to be dispersed among God's people. God gives gifts to each of us according to our individual character, and we are urged to receive the Holy Spirit and live joyous, abundant lives promised by Christ. As we take action for others in any way we can – for someone disadvantaged, excluded or who is in material, spiritual or emotional need – the Spirit moves through us and into the world. This is far more powerful than anything we do on our own. The Spirit comes with such power that everyone understands one another. It is with the Spirit that we are able to act. 🙏

Holy Spirit, breathe through me, live and move in me, empower, encourage and transform me and all Christians to rise up today and do the will of God. Amen.

Mental Health awareness

Part 3 – lessons learnt

by Katharine Smith

Katharine Smith continues her series about depression.

Think back again to when you were ill that first time. Can you remember what or who helped you most? It may have been medication you were prescribed, or a friend who was supportive and non-judgemental. Did you find a balance of time you spent alone and time you spent with other people? Too much time alone and we may feel isolated and lonely.

Too much time with other people and we may feel overwhelmed and anxious. Did you keep a journal during that last period, which you can read to remind yourself of the things you enjoyed and the friends who supported you? Perhaps you could think about keeping a journal of this episode. And hear God saying: "Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11) www.mentalhealth.org.uk 🙏

A meditation for Pentecost

by Caroline Hodgson

If you can you make time today for a Pentecost meditation it will, guaranteed, make the rest of your day easier and lighter. There are many ways to meditate, and this particular one involves breathing in the presence of the Holy Spirit, visualising and experiencing the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit, and inviting God to change you through the Spirit. It's a simple practice, as follows:

- Sit or lie in a peaceful place where you won't be disturbed.

(You can of course do this with someone else or even in a small group.)

- Open your hands to receive God's presence and as you do, be aware of the openness in your heart.
- Take slow, deep breaths, and focus on inhaling the Spirit. Feel the warming fire of the Spirit's presence as a physical experience.
- Prayerfully focus on God's empowering presence; accept the mission entrusted to you, and allow the Spirit to transform your inner being and send you out to share the experience with others. 🙏

“When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That's what came into the Church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost.”

David Wilkerson (1931-2011), *The Cross and the Switchblade*