

## **A Service for Pentecost Sunday, 31 May 2020 – Dean Sarah**

*On Sunday mornings when the BBC1 Sunday Worship Service does not come from St Davids Cathedral (the next is on June 7), the clergy team, with support from other members of the parish and recorded music, will take turns to lead a service of reading, hymns, reflection and prayers, which will be posted on YouTube and social media. Here is an edited version of the latest service, led by Dean Sarah.*

### **Introduction:** Dean Sarah

Welcome to our Sunday Service, as we share in music, readings and prayers from our dispersed Cathedral Community. Today is the feast of Pentecost. 10 days after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit comes upon God's people. Instead of Jesus being in one place at one time, God's presence is always and everywhere, forever and for everyone.

We begin with a simple prayer of confession, asking for God's cleansing and forgiveness, so we may be ready to hear and receive all he desires to give us in this time together:

Most merciful God,

we confess to you, before the whole company of heaven and one another,  
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do.

Forgive us our sins, heal us by your Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.

We pray the Collect for today:

God, who at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people  
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:

grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things  
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;

through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

### **The Opening Hymn:** Come down O Love divine

**The Reading:** Roger Smith reads the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2, verses 1 to 21

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own

native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

**The Address:** Dean Sarah

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Old men shall dream dreams! I guess at the moment a lot of us are dreaming that the pandemic will soon pass, hoping for minimum deaths, and least possible lasting damage.

But what of the dreams God wants to dream in us – do we dare to hope, and work, for a future that is better than the past. It is possible, through God's Spirit.

Our God can always bring good out of every situation, no matter how bad. Resurrection follows crucifixion. Jesus departs, but the disciples aren't left bereft, because the Spirit comes in power.

So what do we dream? That we might learn good and lasting lessons, on which to build – on which God's Spirit will help us build.

And one of the most important lessons here and in so many communities seems to be our capacity to look after, and look out for, one another, and not just number one.

Instead of just looking at 'what is the risk to me, and what choices shall I make', we've done remarkably in shaping our lives as Jesus did: putting ourselves on the side of the weak and vulnerable, ensuring that we care for everyone, in what we do, and how we live.

It's about nobody being left alone; nobody acting alone.

This is at the heart of Pentecost. We're not abandoned by God – told to do what God says but left alone to succeed or fail, all by ourselves.

God comes to each of us, with the fire of his Spirit, full of energy, joy, so we can be forces for good in the world, to make differences that have lasting, eternal significance!

And it's not just about each of us: God's Spirit comes to help all of us together. St Paul writes that through the Spirit God gives many different gifts, 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each for the good of all' (1 Cor 12:7). Everybody gets something, so that all together we get everything we need and more besides – for ourselves, and for the good of the world!

There are many gifts – ones we think of as spiritual like preaching and holy wisdom, others very practical like administration and helping people. And there are many fruit – especially love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23a).

And we're going to need all of these together, if we are doing to make the right decisions, and do the right thing, to shape a better future: if we're going to let ourselves be guided by God's concern for, and commitment to, those who are most vulnerable.

This is the Jesus-shaped life, to take sides with the vulnerable rather than powerful. Because he did this, Jesus was rejected, and crucified in weakness and shame.

And yet this Jesus is the One through whom God redeemed the world – through whom he communicated the life-giving news that God's love is large enough to include everyone and powerful enough to defeat even death.

The Holy Spirit made the Apostles bold to join in sharing this message – that the power of God is made perfect in weakness.

The Holy Spirit wants to make us bold, to, so we can join together, and witness in word and deed to the Christ who came in weakness, identified regularly with the outcast, and shared God's love for all with a particular concern for the most vulnerable.

This is the sort of future the Holy Spirit will help us build. May God's kingdom come!

Amen

**The Prayers: Revd Sophie**

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

Breathe on our Church, O God, your holy and life-giving Spirit.

Refresh and revive it with your vibrancy.

Pour out your gifts that your glory may be proclaimed throughout the world.

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

Breathe on your creation, O God, your holy and life-giving Spirit.

Spread abroad from sea to sea and shore to shore your peace.

Your works will sing your praises.

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

Breathe on all flesh, O God, your holy and life-giving Spirit.

Unite into one family and fellowship the fragmented strands of humanity.

Bring all people to rejoice in the wonders of your love.

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

Breathe on all who are frail and weary, O God, your holy and life-giving Spirit -  
especially those who are infected, or affected, by the coronavirus.

*[We pause and call to mind in prayer all for whom we are particularly concerned]*

Refresh them with the living waters that flow from you.

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

Breathe on all who have died, O God, your holy and life-restoring Spirit.

*[We pause and call to mind in prayer all who have died recently, and all who mourn]*

May we all come to rejoice in your presence

Send forth your Holy Spirit, O God – **Renew the face of the earth**

**The Closing Hymn:** O thou who camest from above

**The Blessing:** Dean Sarah

God the Father stir up in you the gifts of his Holy Spirit,

So that you may witness to Jesus Christ the Lord

In all you are and all you do,

And so proclaim the joy of the eternal gospel good news!

And the blessing of God almighty: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be with you all, evermore, Amen