



St. Paul's RC Church
28 Dewley, Cramlington,
Northumberland,
England, NE23 6EF.

Pentecost Sunday [5th June 2022]

1st Reading: Acts 2: 1 - 11

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 3 - 7, 12 - 13

Gospel: John 20: 19 – 23

*The love of God has been poured into our hearts by
His Spirit living in us, Alleluia!*

Pentecost marks the end and the goal of the Easter season.

For Christians, it is a memorial of the day the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and the Virgin Mary in the form of fiery tongues, an event that took place fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus.

The Paschal Mystery — the Passion, the Death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus — culminates in the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father (at the request of His Son), on Jesus' disciples. The feast also commemorates the official inauguration of the Christian Church through the apostolic preaching of St. Peter, which resulted in the conversion of 3000 Jews to the Christian Faith. Pentecost is, thus, the official birthday of the Church. Today's Scripture readings remind us that Pentecost is an event of both the past and the present. The main theme of today's readings is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is something to be shared with others. In other words, the readings remind us that the gift of the Holy Spirit moves its recipients to action and inspires them to share this gift with others. As an indwelling God, the Holy Spirit makes us His Living Temples (1 Cor 3:16). As a strengthening God, He strengthens us in our fight against temptations and in our mission of bearing witness to Christ by our transparent Christian lives. As a sanctifying God, He makes us holy through the Sacraments: Through Baptism He makes us children of God and heirs of Heaven. Through Confirmation, He makes us temples of God, warriors, and defenders of the Faith. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, He enables us to be reconciled with God by pardoning our sins. Through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, He gives us spiritual nourishment by changing bread and wine into Jesus' Body, Blood Soul, and Divinity, through Epiclesis. Through the Sacraments of the priesthood (Ordination) and matrimony (Marriage), He makes the Church community holy. As a teaching and guiding God, He clarifies and constantly reminds us of Christ's teachings and guides the Magisterium of the Church in presenting Christ's teachings correctly. As a listening and speaking God, He listens to our prayers, enables us to pray, and speaks to us, mainly through the Bible. As a Giver of gifts, He gives us His gifts, fruits, and charisms, thus enriching the Church. We need to permit the Holy Spirit to direct our lives:

- a) by constantly remembering and appreciating His Holy Presence within us, especially in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation;
- b) by fortifying ourselves with the help of the Holy Spirit against all types of temptations;
- c) by seeking the assistance of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and in the breaking of our evil habits, substituting for them habits of Goodness and Love;
- d) by listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the Bible and through the good counsel of others;
- e) by fervently praying for the gifts, fruits, and charisms of the Holy Spirit;
- f) by renewing our lives through the anointing of the Holy Spirit; and
- g) by living our lives in the Holy Spirit as lives of commitment, of sacrifice, and of joy.

We are called to love as Jesus loved, not counting the cost. As Saint Paul exhorts us, "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16, 25).

We need to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. The feast of Pentecost offers us the chance to look at the role which forgiveness should play in our dealings with others. Thus, we are challenged to examine our sense of compassion, patience, tolerance, and magnanimity. Learning to forgive is a lifelong task, but the Holy Spirit is with us to make us agents of forgiveness. If we are prepared on this day of Pentecost

to receive the Holy Spirit into our lives, we can have confidence that our lives will be marked by the Spirit of forgiveness. We need to be Spirit-filled Christians: Spirit-filled people acknowledge their weaknesses, ask for the strengthening, anointing and guidance of the Holy Spirit every morning, ask for His forgiveness every evening, and pass on that forgiveness to those who sin against them. Spirit-filled people are praying people. Paul encourages us, "Pray on every occasion as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray for all God's people" (Eph 6:18).

Spirit-filled people are praying and worshipping God in their families and parishes. They try to grow continually in their Faith, and they seek out every opportunity to discover Christ and what it means to be children of God. Spirit-filled people are people who allow the Spirit to change their lives through their daily reading of the Bible and their frequenting of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.

Spirit-filled people speak words that heal, restore, make people happy and build people up, instead of tearing them down. Spirit-filled people pass on the love of God to the people living around them by their acts of kindness, mercy and charity.

Hence, let us ask the Holy Spirit for a spirit of love instead of hate, a spirit of helpfulness instead of non-cooperation, a spirit of generosity instead of greed, and a spirit of gentleness in place of our spirit of ruthlessness "Lower your bucket– taste and see": More than a century ago, a great sailing ship was stranded off the coast of South America. Day after day the ship lay there in the still waters with not a hint of a breeze. The captain was desperate; the crew was dying of thirst. And then, on the far horizon, a steamship appeared, headed directly toward them. As it drew near, the captain called out, "We need water! Give us water!" The steamship replied, "Lower your buckets where you are." The captain was furious at this cavalier response but called out again, "Please, give us water." But the steamer gave the same reply, "Lower your buckets where you are!" And with that they steamed away! The captain was beside himself with anger and despair, and he went below. But a little later, when no one was looking, a yeoman lowered a bucket into the sea and then tasted what he brought up: It was perfectly sweet, fresh water! For you see, the ship was just out of sight of the mouth of the Amazon. And for all those days they had been sitting right on top of all the fresh water they needed!

What we are really seeking is already inside us, waiting to be discovered, waiting to be embraced: the Holy Spirit of God Who has been living within us from the moment of our Baptism. The Holy Spirit is saying to us at this very moment from deep in our heart, "Lower your buckets where you are. Taste and see!" Come, Holy Spirit! Fill our hearts and set us on fire! Amen.