



Sunday, 9 June 2019 – Pentecost
Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Readings: Acts 2: 1-21 Gospel St John 14: 8-17
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Do you remember the days when Pentecost was called Whit Sunday? Good, that gives me all the excuse I need to be a bit retro this morning! I'm going to begin in a style of times past quoting a text, well two actually that interlink: From Acts God declares: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." And in the Gospel: Jesus said "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, in fact, will do greater works than these because I go to the Father."

If you're like me, you won't claim to perform miracles, so how will we do greater works than Jesus? Too often we measure success by the world's benchmarks. Instead it is better to consider how the Holy Spirit generates great works. But how do we visualise God's Holy Spirit in the first place when we can't see, hear, touch or smell him? Today's Pentecost prayer has the key. His divine light gives us right judgment to discern him at work in all things. The outcomes of his actions, therefore, are visible in the world through us and each successive generation of those who believe.

Let's prove this by going back to the beginning of time plunging straight into the first few words of Genesis where we are told that the Spirit of the Lord moved over the face of the waters and created forms from voids and ultimately, humankind.

There can be times throughout our lives when it seems that we too are floating in a void: the loss of a loved one, maybe unemployment or loss of health, whatever, our change of circumstances it is disorientating. When security is stripped away, the only fixed point is God's creative love flooding us with his Spirit filling our aching voids. Then, though seemingly broken, melted and moulded into a different person, when we know that God loves us, he gives us a vision of possibilities not previously discerned, as we shall sing in the post-communion hymn. God values us.

Let's leap forward to the angel Gabriel visiting Mary. He tells her that the Spirit of the Lord will come upon her and she will conceive and bear a Son beginning a sequence of creative life not previously imagined. Through the virgin birth came God, in man. By Christ's life and ministry, we received a pattern for living. Through death on the cross we gained a Redeemer. Christ's resurrection gives hope beyond the grave. Finally, by his ascension we have access to heaven. All because of Mary's collaborative faithfulness. God needs us.

Moving on again we come to the Day of Pentecost where Peter and the other disciples are in Jerusalem for the festival. They stand up and address the vast crowd of people. These previously dejected men who, after the crucifixion, had covered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews are now emboldened by the Holy Spirit to

speaking out about their faith in a creative way that all people, whatever their nationality understand. That day 3000 people turned to Christ. 3000! God enables us.

Today, in our post-Christian world, we might be thinking “3000 coming to church, if only!” How can we make a difference? I think it’s this, the Holy Spirit the bringer of peace and harmony also fires hearts and minds to work together for good. It only takes one match to set a fire going. If each one of us were matches, think what a blaze that could generate. We can perform great works if we allow the Spirit to move amongst us. God calls us.

To conclude, how are allowing ourselves to be aflame for God?

Amen.