

Dear all

A few reflections for Pentecost:

From our Archdeacon, the Ven Justine Allain Chapman

Pentecost. A diffuser.



My lockdown treat is a diffuser. Adding water and some essential oil, such as lavender, my room is filled with a smell which promotes a peacefulness. My diffuser changes colour on a cycle, so it is relaxing to watch, and I feel restored by the wafting aroma. I've enjoyed using my diffuser and in these last weeks it has made me think of the stories of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. Jesus had breathed peace on the disciples, and told them to wait in prayer for the promise of power.

So we find the disciples, locked in a room, still fearful of what they would meet outside, and praying for the Holy Spirit to help them. And then God's spirit came and a sense of being anointed with flames and hearing the rush of wind. They went outside knowing that change had come. It was time for them to connect with other people, speak their language, and witness to love overcoming the power of death, to God bringing resurrection out of crucifixion.

This pandemic has locked us inside for weeks and we wonder about when we can live freely again, connect with others. I've become much more attuned to nature and appreciate the Pentecost stories which describe experiencing God as fire, wind, earth and water. All those elements have forceful and gentle aspects. Pentecost begins with God soothing, easing and freeing the disciples from fear. They are freed from fear of arrest, free to connect with others after time locked inside. They gained confidence - which is a word which means, with faith - faith in God and in themselves as people now not just following as disciples, but being sent out as apostles.

My diffuser resonates with the gentle, cleansing and powerful properties of water, which at our baptism makes us Christ's and starts us off in faith. Its cycle of colours reminds me that the seasons come round and yet we mark particular times. We are not free today to go outside, connect, celebrate, meet. There will have been many Pentecosts in the past where it hasn't felt as if our lives - body and soul - have come together and been blessed by God with a new start and fresh purpose. Just as there have been other times when it has been like that and we've been grateful, celebrated, full to overflowing - and that is a different date we keep in the year. Today we mark that a full sense of God's blessing when everything comes together is real in our lives, whether it is for today or another time.

Jesus promised that 'out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water' (John 7:39). Rivers have direction and purpose. They carry goods, support life and in the natural systems of our world return to their source and out to the sea. Perhaps you might consider yourself as a river, with a landscape to pass through, a direction, a journey onward and out which the season of Pentecost can reveal. Where will you go from now?

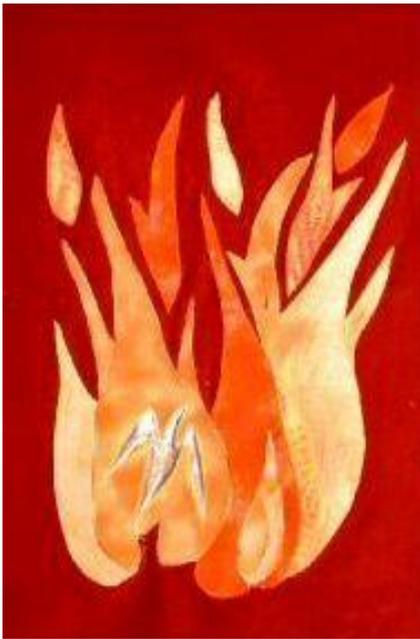
You may feel that it is inner freedom you long for. Jesus said: Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me, drink (John 7:37). Bring what you long for, what you fear, before Christ for his peace.

So I invite you to do something today for Pentecost - which won't be bursting from lockdown to celebrate with others - but could involve water. It could be watering plants, bathing, a consideration of the gentle moving of God amidst us. I'll enjoy my diffuser.

From Malcolm Guite, poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest, and currently a Bye-Fellow and chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge

Our Mother-tongue Is Love; A Sonnet for Pentecost

A Pentecost Banner at St. Michael 's Bartley Green



Here, once more is my sonnet for Pentecost.

Drawn from 'Sounding the Seasons', my cycle of sonnets for the Church Year, this is a sonnet reflecting on and celebrating the themes and readings of Pentecost. Throughout the cycle, and more widely, I have been reflecting on the traditional 'four elements' of earth, air, water and fire. I have been considering how each of them expresses and embodies different aspects of the Gospel and of God's goodness, as though the four elements were, in their own way, another four evangelists. In that context I was very struck by the way Scripture expresses the presence of the Holy Spirit through the three most dynamic of the four elements, the air, (a mighty rushing wind, but also the breath of the spirit) water, (the waters of baptism, the river of life, the fountain springing up to eternal life promised by Jesus) and of course fire, the tongues of flame at Pentecost. Three out of four ain't bad, but I was wondering, where is the fourth? Where is earth? And then I realised that we ourselves are earth, the 'Adam' made of the red clay, and we become living beings,

fully alive, when the Holy Spirit, clothed in the three other elements comes upon us and becomes a part of who we are. So something of that reflection is embodied in the sonnet.

Sounding the Seasons, is published by Canterbury Press.

Pentecost

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.

You can find Malcolm's blog here:

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/>

The Dean of Southwark Cathedral, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn, has taken up the idea of the Stations of the Cross, and Stations of the Resurrection, to devise a Stations of the Church.

It is rather long, so instead of giving you the full thing, I'll add just the *Second Station: The Fiery Church* here. Anyone interested can find all the stations at

<https://southwarklivinggod.wordpress.com/2020/05/31/stations-of-the-church/>

The Second Station : The fiery church

This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven.



When the day of Pentecost had come, they 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. (Acts 2.1-4)
Lord, may your church so speak that others may understand. **Amen.**

Other stations include *The Witnessing Church, the Suffering Church, the Serving Church, and the inclusive Church*. There are, as tradition dictates, 14 stations in all.

Finally, some links to Pentecost anthems;

If ye love me by Thomas Tallis has been described as the perfect anthem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M69bG10V2tg>

And here is another beautiful version by Bob Chilcott.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7pobZ-3dgU>

The Spirit of the Lord by Elgar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwV2eDyKZkw>

Listen Sweet Dove by Grayston Ives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymG4rQWrCLQ>



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark