

Worship at Home

24th May 2026 - Pentecost

Rachel Mitchell (South Devon)



*Today we celebrate Pentecost,
a very special day for Christians everywhere,
as we mark the birthday of the Church.*

In Joel 2 we read:

And it shall come to pass that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit... and whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.

We believe this prophesy has now been fulfilled – first at Pentecost and since then throughout Jesus' Church, and we only have to call on his name....

STF 152: This is the day...

**This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.**

**We will rejoice, we will rejoice
And be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Lord has made
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made.**

This is the day...when he rose again...

This is the day...when the Spirit came...

Anonymous

Let us pray

Lord, on this day of Pentecost,
we come to you in awe and anticipation.
As we celebrate the story again of that first Pentecost, when you sent your Holy Spirit, we give thanks for this great blessing poured out on those faithful first disciples. We rejoice in the way your grace-filled gift transforms all it rests on, remaking them – so they, and we become Jesus' witnesses, who spread your good news across all the world.

We know this same Spirit is here with us now, in the places where we are, ready to meet us, comfort us, strengthen us and unite us in your love – so we too may be more fully your people.

So today we wait on you, ready to receive the gift of your Holy Spirit anew. Come Lord, pour out your Spirit on us, warm our hearts by your presence, embolden and empower us, so that we too may praise the name of Jesus in every place and time, and rejoice in this wonderful new day you have made for us.

Lord, we are truly grateful for the gift of your Spirit, who reminds us that you hear all the prayers of our hearts brought in the name of Jesus - who taught us to pray, and to say:

The Lord's Prayer...

This year, the lectionary does not direct us to the familiar story in Acts 2 but instead to John's gospel, where Jesus breathes his Spirit into the disciples when he appears to them in the upper room:

Read: John 20 verses 19-23 (see below)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side.

The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Read also: 1 Corinthians 12 vs 1 – 13

Reflection

A few days ago, I lost the cross I habitually wear. Somehow the chain had been broken and so the cross was gone. The sense of loss was palpable. It was totally out of proportion to its actual worth – but why did I feel this way?

This cross was something I treasured. This was not just because of who had given it to me, or even what it represents, although both made it valuable to me. It was because this cross had a close association with some of the most significant moments in my life, particularly in my spiritual journey – times when the Holy Spirit was prayed for, given and received. Without it I felt incomplete.

This feeling of incompleteness made me acutely aware of how incomplete I would feel without the presence of our God with me, or the assurance that Jesus rose from the dead – the presence and assurance we can all know through the Holy Spirit.

John tells us that the Holy Spirit was breathed into the disciples in the upper room, and later, Luke in Acts 2 (1-21) tells us of the day when the Holy Spirit came and rested, like tongues of fire on the apostles, on the day of Pentecost. At both times the Holy Spirit was given for a purpose far beyond just a personal blessing, and it was through this wonderful and amazing gift that the Church was born.

What do we notice from our readings today?

The Holy Spirit was Jesus' gift to his disciples.

They did not earn this gift, but because of their belief and devotion to Jesus and their willingness to become His hands and feet, to go where He (Jesus) sent them, She (we always refer to the Holy Spirit as a person – so He or She) was given.

She was given at the right time...

The right time being, when God decided it was. This was out of the control of the disciples themselves. For them, they just needed to be ready to receive.

She was given to them all.

They were ALL blessed by her presence and then equipped by her for what was ahead. Just as the Spirit was breathed into all of them, so she is breathed into ALL of us so we may each know and become more like the God who loves us and redeems us.

She was given to bless and grow the Church.

Paul in his writing reminds us that when the Holy Spirit bestows gifts on Jesus' people, they should be used for the 'common good'. He also reminds us that these gifts are not just given to one person, so we all need to share what we have been given.

With the Holy Spirit came responsibility...

"If you forgive sins (the things we do that separate us from God) they will be forgiven", says Jesus. In Jesus' ministry this ability to forgive sins had been a point of contention, as the Jews saw this as something only God could do. Now, with the Holy Spirit within them, the disciples would have this authority too – to withhold, or to offer forgiveness in Jesus' name, as he would have done.

But back to the missing cross...

My loss had made me think about what my life would be like without the presence of the Holy Spirit and I realised how much poorer I would feel. No longer would I know God with me in every situation. No longer would I sense my heart being warmed as words from the Bible came alive for me. No longer would She be there to encourage and equip me when I am unsure or need to be brave.

Maybe today, as we recall the Church's birthday, it is a good time for us to think what a difference the Holy Spirit has made, or could make, to our lives. Would you (as I did with my cross) feel incomplete without Her presence in you – or are you unsure what it means for the Holy Spirit to live within you?

Whichever response you feel best describes your situation, wouldn't today be a good day to ask Jesus to send his Holy Spirit upon you anew, to refresh you and confirm God's claim on you as his child?

The disciples and apostles would go on to do the most incredible things, not in their own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. I wonder what we might do when that power is refreshed in us?

STF 370: Breathe on me

Breathe on me, Breath of God; fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine, until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Let us pray:

Come, Holy Spirit, come...

Lord as we pray this today, we pray it first over your Church. Whether gathered with others or on our own, remind us that we are all part of your body here on earth, united by the presence of your Holy Spirit within each of us. Come to us today, O Holy Spirit, and bless us anew with your joy.

Come, Holy Spirit, come...

Lord, today we pray this over your world. Come and reveal the light and goodness that you have already planted here – enable it to flourish and grow, dispelling the darkness of violence and greed we so often see. We pray particularly that your Spirit would instill her kindness and mercy in the leaders and the influencers who shape so many of the events and people in our world today.

Come, Holy Spirit, come...

Lord, we also pray this over the people we care for, and those who care for us day by day. We pray for those we see regularly, those we have not seen for a while, those we miss, and those we know who need the power of your healing, your peace and your forgiveness in their situations today.

Come, Holy Spirit, come...

Finally, we give thanks for your Holy Spirit, breathed into your Church by Your Son, Jesus. What a privilege it is to have the Eternal One come and make Her home in us. Thank you Jesus. **Amen.**

STF 397: The Spirit lives to set us free

(here the Holy Spirit is referred to as He rather than She)

The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light; he binds us all in unity, walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light, walk in the light walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord.

Jesus promised life to all, walk, walk in the light; the dead were awakened by his call, walk, walk in the light. ***Walk in the light...***

He died in pain on Calvary, walk, walk in the light; to save the lost like you and me, walk, walk in the light. ***Walk in the light...***

We know his death was not the end, walk, walk in the light; He gave his Spirit to be our friend, walk, walk in the light. ***Walk in the light...***

By Jesus' love our wounds are healed, walk, walk in the light; the Father's kindness is revealed, walk, walk in the light. ***Walk in the light...***

The Spirit lives in you and me, walk, walk in the light; his light will shine for all to see, walk, walk in the light. ***Walk in the light...***

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Thank you for sharing in this act of worship today. To those of you who are concerned, my cross was found and returned to me – so I can wear it (with a different chain) and feel complete again, yet also newly refreshed in the Holy Spirit – something I hope you will know today too.

We go with God's blessing

May the Spirit, whose gift to us we celebrate today, lead you into all truth, give you grace so you can confess that Jesus Christ is Lord with certainty, and strengthen you to proclaim his salvation at all times, and in all places.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and fill you with his peace, today and always. **Amen.**

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