

Sermon 20.5.18 A - the Feast of Pentecost.

Today we celebrate the pouring out of the Holy Spirit into the world. The feast of Pentecost.

It has become a tradition here at All Saints, that at the beginning of the service, our children run through our congregation streaming red and orange strips of paper behind them - they wind through the congregation, and their little ceremony symbolises the flowing breath of God the Holy Spirit blowing through the people bringing gifts and new life.

It's a very good tradition to have our children bless us in this way, for I think to be visibly reminded, that God's Holy Spirit fills all spaces, and is with us now and until the end of time is a blessing to hold in our hearts.

In the reading from Acts this morning, we hear that the Spirit "filled the entire house", and then the apostles were "all filled with the Holy Spirit", and such was the thrust of the event, they spilled out into the streets of Jerusalem where they spoke in the languages of the known world.

Peter reminded the sceptics in the crowd, who thought the disciples were drunk, what the prophet Joel prophesied - *God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh – even upon the slaves, both men and women and they shall prophesy.*

The divine breath of the Holy Spirit therefore, fills places far and wide with God's blessings, to *renew the face of the earth*, as the psalter writes.

Now when we envisage the great Christian festivals of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost as the one single deed by God, performed in history and upon humanity through divine love for his creation, we are more likely to get a better sense of the wonder and rhythm of our Christian faith – the movement of birth, life, death and rebirth into eternal life and be better able to appreciate that the movement is composed in divine love that flows with us along the way in companionship and leading.

In every beat of this rhythm, God is with us – in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

And it is heart-warming to know that every interconnected beat takes place for us and the creation– so that we can have life to the full.

The heartbeat of the rhythm begins with the birth – the incarnation – God coming into the world to show us how to love God and each other; then we take on a faster pace in life itself, and Jesus leading us in the way to fullness of life; then the deep note of death, overcome by Jesus Christ's victory in the resurrection, and then the heavenly trumpets play with Jesus glorification and departure, so that the advocate, the Holy Spirit can come to be our personal companion, counsellor and guide into all truth.

The rhythm of life in our faith - through love - for love's sake – and for us, so that we are moved beyond the cycle of birth, life and death to the cycle of birth, fullness of life, death and rebirth in eternal life.

Well the question for us is, how do we respond to such love?

I'm sure we will all have our own thoughts about an answer to such a question –and I offer mine and say that we respond to divine love for us in gratitude – and we receive the gifts

that we have been given by the Holy Spirit and help each other to know and love God and each other in our all that we do.

We pray in such a way that our whole life is a prayer, and in our life's prayer humbly accept that it is the Holy Spirit who will intercede for us.

We contemplate the leading of the Holy Spirit, and show patience as we learn how to abide in Jesus as he abides in us.

Jesus says to his disciples in the gospel reading: *I won't say too much more to you because you can't bear it now.* Jesus understands the depth of the mystery of the power of divine love in the world – the movement – the rhythm that delivers us to rebirth into life eternal – Jesus also knows our ability and our inability to understand that depth.

He knows that it takes time to reach below the surface truths of this world – particularly when they are personal - it takes living a relational life with him, being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and trusting in the rhythm of life that he initiates.

The coming of the Holy Spirit in the world brings us into the fullness of life through gifts and truth. May we be inspired to receive both and respond to the love by which the Spirit comes - in love and acceptance.

Come Holy Spirit, Come.

The Lord be with you.