

REFLECTIONS

The passage from Acts that we read today is memorable - and not just because it is the one most dreaded by those reading a lesson in Church, on account of the string of difficult names it contains! The events of that day were dramatic and changed both the disciples and many who heard them speak.

The most striking and immediate of the effects of the Holy Spirit was the ability that it gave the disciples of Jesus to speak in other languages. And this ability to **communicate**, when we so often feel unable to find the right words or - even worse - put our foot in it by saying the wrong thing, is one of the most important features of the Spirit dwelling in us. In one of my favourite books, John Taylor calls the Holy Spirit the 'go-between God'.

The wind and flames in today's reading are images that are urgent and constantly moving - about **energy** and **empowerment**. We believe that while Jesus shows us the Way, it is the Spirit that galvanises the early disciples and gives them both the energy and the ability to go forward. In his letter to the Corinthians (12: 3-13), Paul speaks of the different gifts and activities inspired by the Spirit, but emphasises that it is the same Spirit that finds outworking in acts such as healing, teaching and prophecy. The disciples needed wisdom, guidance and empowerment as they moved on to establish the Church, as well as the God-given ability to communicate their message with clarity and in terms that really spoke to those they encountered.

Going deeper ... Our gospel reading begins: 'on the last day of the festival'. Which festival was this? As Christians, we are aware of the importance of the Passover, when Jesus died, and also of Pentecost. These are the two major festivals of the Jewish year, separated by fifty days. Today's gospel reading records words spoken earlier by Jesus when he had been in the temple in Jerusalem during another great festival - the Festival of Booths, or Tabernacles, which falls in the autumn. Here Jesus refers to the Spirit as a river of living water. The ceremony in the Temple included water being poured on the altar by the priest, so the imagery of living water would have resonated with those to whom he was speaking in that setting. It is an image used too by Isaiah (12:3) but most memorably by John (4:10) in the encounter of Jesus with the woman of Samaria at the well.

I wonder ... how others might recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

OUR CHURCHES' DIARY

TODAY 31st May PENTECOST

**SERVICES ONLINE at www.camvillages.org.uk
This week on YouTube
11.30 am HOLY GROUNDS on Zoom**

THIS WEEK

Monday - Friday 5.00 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom
Tuesday 2nd June 5.30pm Zoom licensing of the Revd John Saxon
Wednesday 3rd June
9.30 am Holy Communion Alex Jeewan & Caroline Currer

NEXT SUNDAY 7th June PENTECOST

"Close Encounters with Jesus" John Risby via email
SERVICES ONLINE at www.camvillages.org.uk

CAM VILLAGES MINISTRY TEAM

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SAFFRON WALDEN & VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY

The Grapevine

**COVERING THE CHURCHES OF
GREAT & LITTLE CHESTERFORD, LITTLEBURY WITH
LITTLEBURY GREEN, & WENDENS AMBO**

**Welcome to our services today
PENTECOST**

Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Acts 2.1-21

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. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.' But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Gospel John 7.37-39

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Those who are unwell:

Margaret Reed (Gt Chesterford)

Those who need our support:

Betty Dowsett (Littlebury Green)

Lucy Maskell (Great Chesterford)

Kylie Moore-Gilbert (in prison in Iran)

Friends and families of those who have died:

Those whose anniversaries are this week

Other topics for your prayers:

- The children returning to school this week
- The Revd John Saxon as he is licensed as a Team Vicar in the SW & Villages Team Ministry
- Those with the responsibility for determining the level of lockdown in the coming weeks
- Those ill with Covid19 in hospitals and at home with thanksgiving for those treating them
- Our churches as we maintain worship in new ways
- The effect of Covid 19 on refugee camps, other crowded communities, and nations where the
- Those missing loved ones who have died

VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

This Sunday is Pentecost, which is also known as the birthday of the Church, so Happy Birthday to us! What makes it so special is that it is the day that the Holy Spirit came and gave the apostles certain gifts; such as speaking in tongues, visions, the ability to heal and prophecies. It reinvigorated the early Church to enable them to carry on the work of Christ.

In the 19th Century Blessed Elena Guerra, the founder of the Oblates of the Holy Spirit, felt it was important that the Church needed to receive the Holy Spirit in the same way the first Christians did at Pentecost and petitioned Pope Leo XIII. She said:

'Pentecost is not over. In fact, it is continuously going on in every time and in every place because the Holy Spirit desired to give Himself to all [people] and all who want Him can always receive Him, so we do not envy the apostles and the first believers; we only have to dispose ourselves like them to receive Him well, and He will come to us as He did to them'.

So let's ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to be the Christians Christ intended us to be. It will enable us to be a transforming presence in the world, to spread the Good News of Jesus and for the building up of God's kingdom here on earth. That is what the Church was born for.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

With love, Alex

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Sovereign God, energise us by the breath of your Spirit, giving power for living through your love and goodness. Open our hearts to the living water of your presence flowing within, blowing away whatever keeps us from you, so that we may live and work more faithfully for your kingdom, this and every day.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

WEDNESDAY 9.30 am ZOOM HOLY COMMUNION with Alex Jeewan and Caroline Currer
For an invitation to Zoom services please contact Alex or Gillian (website.camvillages@gmail.com)

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (with Jesus)

John Risby's Brief Bible Study outlines continue every Wednesday: Looking at some of the people who met with Jesus - Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the paralytic, the rich young ruler, the thief on the cross and Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

Outlines will be sent by email each Wednesday, open to all, please book in at john.risby179@btinternet.com

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

There is support available in all our 5 communities during the lockdown. Contact details have been circulated. Don't hesitate to get in touch with them or to encourage your neighbours to - whatever the need.

SUPPORTING THE CHURCH

During the current pandemic. We are still trying to support our communities by providing online services, pastoral care and linking with local support groups.

As the church buildings are not open we are not able to receive donations in the usual way. The church is NOT centrally funded but relies on the generosity of those who use the churches and/or live in the parishes. There are many bills to pay just to keep the church buildings running and, as there are no weekly collections, we need further help to pay the bills.

We know this is a difficult time for everyone but if you can spare something to support your local church then please contact your church treasurer or contact me (vicar.camvillages@gmail.com) if you would like further information or for your treasurer's email address.

If you support your church through a weekly envelope scheme please let your church treasurer have your filled envelopes each month. With love, Alex

KEEP IN TOUCH

With all that's going on via our churches' website **www.camvillages.org.uk** especially the variety of services available for us on Sundays; don't forget at 11.30 am on Sundays there's

Holy Grounds

the Cam Villages Churches virtual after service coffee and chat. If you can, watch the service online and then join us with your mug of coffee on Zoom at 11.30 am. For an invite or if you need help get onto Zoom please email Gillian on Website.camvillages@gmail.com and she will get back to you and talk you through.

NEWS

LICENSING via Zoom: On 2nd June the Revd John Saxon will be licensed as Team Vicar in the Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry with special responsibility for Debden and Wimbish.

PLANT SALE outside 32 Jacksons Lane Gt Chesterford on Bank Holiday Monday raised a total of £220 for All Saints. Many thanks to Ruth and Steve Bannington and Carol Hatfield.

PARISH OFFICE The Parish Office is now closed to visitors but we are contactable by telephone and email as usual.

WEEKEND AWAY

There are still places available on the rescheduled weekend away **16th-18th July 2021**. Go to <http://stmaryssaffronwalden.org/weekendaway2021> for details and how to book.