

Pentecost Sunday 2021

Today is Sunday the 23 May, Pentecost Sunday, the feast of the Holy Spirit.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing: This is the time, most Holy Spirit, when you, One with the Father and the Son, come to shed your light in the hearts of your faithful. As we celebrate the feast of Pentecost today, – the feast of the Holy Spirit, the feast of God active in the world – pause for a moment to recognise God’s activity all around you, to welcome the Holy Spirit into your life, to accept the light and the life that it brings.

Today's reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 2:1-11

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.'

The Pentecost scene described here is a vivid and colourful one – tongues of fire, a powerful wind... Have you ever had the experience of being in a foreign country, or a place where people speak differently, and unexpectedly hearing someone speak your mother tongue, or your local dialect? Can you remember what that felt like? The surprise? The strangely familiar words and cadences? That moment of feeling a little bit “at home”?

Is that, perhaps, one way that God speaks to you? When you feel you are being told something that somehow, and perhaps a little strangely, is not alien, not foreign, but from deep within you, “at home” in you, already in your mouth and in your heart?



As the passage is read again, how does the scene play out in your mind's eye? What did it all look like, and sound like?

Our day-to-day lives, on the whole, are probably a little less spectacular than that dramatic scene, but the Holy Spirit is no less present to us now than it was to them, then. There may not be tongues of flame and the sound of a powerful wind, but God's Spirit is present here now, present in this place, present within you, because you are a temple of the Holy Spirit. Knowing that God's Spirit is with you right now, what do you want to say to him?

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created and you will renew the face of the earth.