

Pentecost Sunday, 31st May 2020

Opening Prayer

Christ appears to His disciples, saying "peace be with you."

Holy Spirit, prepare my heart to know your peace afresh and to celebrate the Good News of God's Kingdom.

Hymn: Breathe On Me Breath Of God (StF 370)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9s8BFHThfc>

1. 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.

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

3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine;
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

4. 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

Gracious God, in all places and at all times you are loving, generous, kind and compassionate. From the beginning of time, your Spirit has hovered on the surface of the deep and in that Spirit you have formed us; cherished and valued us. Let this be my song of praise; I love because you first loved me.

Generous God, give me a heart of gratitude for all those things that speak of your love. For friends and family, for the gifts of your creation, and for all the places I have witnessed something of heaven. (*We call to mind those things for which we are grateful this week.*) Amen.

Living and loving God, have mercy on me. Pardon and deliver me from all my sins, strengthen and renew me for your service, that I might live and work to your praise and glory, and the coming of your Kingdom on earth. Amen.

Christ tells us that we are saved not condemned by God. God is love; we are forgiven, and forgiven to the full. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 2:1-21

Today's Gospel Reading: John 20:19-23

Time to Reflect

Both our Pentecost readings, from Acts and the Gospel, are stories from the life of the early Church.

The reading from John reminds us that this was a time of fear and uncertainty for the disciples, who had locked their doors in fright. In the midst of this, Christ appears to them and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit, offering them His peace. In our own time of being shut away, and of living in fear and uncertainty, we are invited to know that Christ appears in the midst of us as well, saying "peace be with you."

Our Acts reading is full of celebration and excitement and perhaps those are alien emotions for us at this time. Pentecost is considered to be the birth of the Church. It might feel like a cruel celebration when we can't be in our church buildings. But at its core, the reading reminds us that God's Kingdom is radically inclusive: those from all nations are able to hear the Good News, and all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Let us remind ourselves that the Church is alive and blossoming in our hearts, even when we can't meet; the message of Pentecost is still as true as it ever was. Our

lives may look different to their normal pattern but we are still part of God's people, welcomed into God's love.

God's peace and good News are still with us. Wherever we are, we are included. Take a time to sit quietly and receive God's gifts.

A time of prayer

On all those who are sick, in mind, body and spirit, O living God have mercy.

On those who are lonely or afraid, those who suffer from anxiety or whose souls are discomforted, O living God have mercy.

On all those whose lives are dedicated to service; our NHS staff, the hospitality industry, our farmers and many others, O living God have mercy.

On those who are never able to attend their place of worship, who suffer persecution and oppression and live in deprivation, O living God have mercy.

On those who fear they are unworthy and unwelcome in church, who do not feel included in your Kingdom, O living God have mercy.

On those who do not know your peace, for whatever reason, O living God have mercy.

Time to add our own prayers of the heart, either spoken or unspoken.

Everlasting God, whose very nature is love that has no end, hear our prayers. Help us to never make you in our own image but remain in awe of your mystery, the God who was, who is and who will always be. In the name of Christ, who shows us how to love. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Come Down O Love Divine (StF 372)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXO4rqBQOAU>

1. Come down, O Love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it
With thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it,
Thy holy flame bestowing.

2. O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes,
In its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round,
The while my path illuming.

3. Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness
Become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings
Weeps with loathing.

4. And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass
The power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit
Makes his dwelling.

Bianco da Siena (d.1434)

translated Richard Littledale (1833-1890)

A prayer of blessing

Holy God, guard me and guide me and hide me in your heart. Bless me, and all those made in your image, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Original Materials by Jessica Dalton