

## Pentecost

Today we celebrate the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God was active in creation (*as in the Christian Aid devotional readings*), and has been at work throughout the history of the world, but **Pentecost** marked a **new chapter** in the Spirit's work, as each of those early disciples was filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised. Let's consider some of the ways we might see the Spirit's work today:

**1. In Creation.** In the creation story in Genesis, we see the Spirit's involvement in creating and sustaining the universe. This means we can see something of the Spirit's work revealing the character of God in creation, however creation came about, through a Big Bang, evolution etc:

**i) beauty** – eg. a starry night, birds and animals, sunset, trees, mountain grandeur...

God enjoys beauty, and delights in the wonder of his creation. So, we can see something of the majesty of God in creation.

**ii)** in our understanding of how the world works, we see the amazing balance of different elements that **sustain life**, as we grow in our knowledge of the solar system. eg There are 200-400 billion stars in our galaxy! We breathe the same atoms of air as the disciples on the Day of Pentecost! God has taken infinite care in his creation, and continues to do so in sustaining it all.

All this means that we have a great responsibility to care for and protect the goodness of all of God's good creation, as highlighted recently by the Christian Aid devotional.

**2. In Creativity** We are created in the image of God, and like our creator we also create.

The past year's lock-downs have closed down more formal creativity. We haven't been able to go and see plays or films or to hear concerts, but has revealed all sorts of new creativity, from painted rainbows to photography to inventive uses of technology to learn new skills. We can roughly say that there are **two types of gifts and abilities**:

**i) Gifts inherent in us**, in our genes, which we can develop, eg music, arts, crafts, design, invention, sports...

**ii) Gifts 'given'** more directly by the Spirit. The unlearned languages spoken by the disciples at Pentecost. The Spiritual gifts, which Paul lists: eg. Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, teaching, administration, leadership, exhortation, generosity, compassion... (*see 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12*) All these are given by the Spirit, inspired by God, and give glory to God when they are dedicated to him and used in love. Most of these can also be enhanced and developed as we use them and gain experience in exercising them. Paul's lists are not exhaustive, there are very many gifts given by the Spirit. All of us have gifts, and the greatest and most creative gift of all is **love**.

**3. In creating Community.** Pentecost was the birth of the **Church**, the people of God, from all nations and languages. Very quickly those first Christians began to share their lives together, and their faith with others, which became infectious, drawing others to join them in worship of God and in service of their communities.

The Spirit seeks to recreate us, transform us, give us life, and works in us to form the character of Jesus, the **fruit of the Spirit** (*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*) The Spirit brings us into the fellowship of the **Church**, a community of people who are dependent on one another (different gifts in one body), united by the Spirit. Paul speaks of the Church (as well as individuals) as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, where we encounter God, as the Spirit lives in us and reveals God through our lives. The Spirit works through the structures of the Church (eg Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion..), the order of the church (leaders, both lay and ordained..); and in inspiring new creativity in music, song, liturgy, and in sharing God's love in mission and evangelism.

Finally, we remember the Spirit is the **Spirit of Jesus**, who indwelt Jesus, and is now given to us. The Spirit always points us to Jesus, and draws us to be more like Jesus in every way. May it always be so in our lives, to the glory of God.