



PENTECOST SUNDAY

Pentecost Sunday

May 31, 2020

Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace
www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Pray

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



Our first passage from the book of Numbers is similar to a story told in the Gospel of Mark where the disciples of JESUS wanted Him to forbid others from driving out demons because they were not a part of the disciple's group. But this type of narrow attitude was condemned by both Moses – in our reading today and by JESUS in the gospels. We must always beware of putting limits on GOD because He can work through whomever He chooses.

Moses was looking forward to the day when all GOD's people would experience the pouring out of GOD's Spirit. The prophet Joel recorded GOD's promise to pour out His Spirit on all believers and this was fulfilled at Pentecost. As believers today we can be sure we have the Holy Spirit when we become Christians. We can also

pray to live by the Holy Spirit's power¹. The Holy Spirit lives within us – we just have to recognise it.

Our Psalm for today expresses GOD's sovereignty over all creation. GOD has supreme, unlimited power over the entire universe. He creates, He preserves, and He governs. As we understand GOD's power, we realise that He is more than sufficient to handle our lives.

Sadly today, many people are arrogant enough to think that they don't need GOD. But our every breath depends upon the Spirit He has breathed into us. Not only do we depend on GOD for life, but He wants the best for us. We should also desire to learn more of His plans for us each day.

When our passage from the Acts of the Apostles is read, we know we have arrived at the Feast of Pentecost – we all wear something red to help celebrate. I heard during the week that some of you now have liturgically-correct coloured pyjamas. But I digress!

¹ Galatians 6: 16-26

The part of the passage that spoke to me this year is that GOD speaks to us IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE. Just 2 weeks ago, we've talked about how the Apostle Paul discerned something about his audience which he could use in his introductory remarks as he began to share the Gospel message with them. In Acts 17:22, it says this: ²²Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. Two weeks ago, a 3-part documentary series began on ABCTV with Miriam Margoyles as the host. Miriam has played the role of Mother Superior in Call the Midwife and Professor Pomona Sprout in the Harry Potter movies. In the first episode of this documentary series, Miriam met up with an Aboriginal activist and Victorian MP called Lydia Thorpe. She describes herself as a Garnii and Goundijimara person rather than as an

Australian – as this was an imposed title resulting from what she describes as Invasion Day. I am not going to go into the politics of this. My point today is that colonisers and other would-be influencers try to impose their language and customs onto others.

[Pastor Isaac Villegas - who is from the governing board of the North Carolina Council of Churches](#) – suggests that the message of Pentecost we see is the opposite of (this): a world of many tongues. We see that God affirms the native languages of all the peoples. “The crowd...was bewildered,” says Acts, “because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.” For God, there is no imperial tongue. Instead, at Pentecost we see God affirm a diversity of tongues. The Holy Spirit speaks through all languages. Every language is holy. Pentecost invites us into a new way of engaging with difference—not just with different languages, but with all the ways we are marked as different from one another. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit speaks through the differences, without converting

them into sameness. People aren't invited to give up their languages, their cultures, and convert to the same way of speaking and thinking. The miracle of Pentecost is that God speaks through all the native languages—not that God speaks in a single language, or a universal language, that is then translated. Through the Spirit, difference is made holy. “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh”—not some, **BUT ALL**. Not in order to make everyone the same; but to affirm all flesh, to affirm where they came from, to bless who they are, to announce that what makes them different is good and holy. As a voice from heaven tells Peter later in the book of Acts (10:15), “what God has made clean, you must not call profane.”

Pentecost offers us a different way, where the Spirit affirms our differences, speaking in ways that each of us can understand—and yet drawing us together, around the same table, into communion. If we read to the end of Acts chapter 2, we see from the text how the day of Pentecost ends – with all these strangers eating

together. “So those who welcomed [the] message were baptized, [and] they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer” (2:41-42); “they broke bread from home to home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (2:46).

The miracle of communication that happened on Pentecost birthed a miracle of communion. To commune is to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit and hope for the miracle of knowing God in a meal, in each other. Communion is an invitation to come together around a table and to let Jesus stretch us into relationships with one another, with people who are the same and different, as we struggle to understand God, as we struggle to understand each other. And isn’t this the message of the gospel too?



We could say that the Resurrection is about us looking at the work of GOD. Pentecost is GOD looking at us through the gift of the Spirit. Pentecost means that we cannot stand looking up at the heavens, like the disciples

at the Ascension. Pentecost means that it is time to engage life and to shape the Kingdom of GOD – to put flesh and bones and hands and feet on the teachings of CHRIST. Pentecost means that each of us possesses gifts that come from the Holy Spirit; and together, those gifts enrich and build up the Body of CHRIST in the world



May we pray:

Gracious GOD, may Your gift of the Spirit continue to enflame our hearts, that we might bring your peace and justice to the whole world. Instill in people of every language and creed a commitment to live justly and a desire to be one with you and with your son, JESUS CHRIST, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen

Life Application Study Bible

Daily Prayer 2020

<https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/unconverted-difference-acts-21->

[21?utm_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm_campaign=40775698cb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_09_11_08_32_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b00cd618da-40775698cb-86182999](https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/unconverted-difference-acts-21-21?utm_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm_campaign=40775698cb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_09_11_08_32_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b00cd618da-40775698cb-86182999)

Date accessed – 30/5/2020