



Praying Together

during the week beginning Sunday 31 May:

The Day of Pentecost

Whit Sunday

**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

During this time of great anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the Cathedral family.

This is particularly important to us at a time when, following the Church of England's instructions, public worship at the Cathedral has been suspended. The residential clergy are still saying the Daily Offices at home or from church, and they are being live-streamed via the cathedral website where there is a link that takes you to the Cathedral's Facebook page (you don't need a Facebook account).

We hope that this pamphlet will provide you with important worship and prayer resources for use at home as well as a reminder of how to keep in touch with us, especially if you have particularly needs. Please be assured that you are firmly in our thoughts and prayers, and please pray for us at this very difficult and worrying time.

Gospel

John 20. 19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Thought for the Day

by the Right Reverend Sarah Clark, Bishop of Jarrow

Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you'. When he had said this Jesus breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven if you retain the sins of any they are retained'

John 20. 21-22

Jesus breathed on them, breathed on his friends to 'Receive the Holy Spirit' - imagine that deep breath in and out; imagine his warm breath touching them, imagine the gentle presence of the Holy Spirit resting on them, imagine Jesus breathing on you now. 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.

It feels a gentle scene in the upper room this day, – breath rather than the mighty wind, tongues of fire, the babbling of the great out pouring of Pentecost, breath rather than the dynamic power that drives Peter out to proclaim Jesus as Lord. Mighty wind, gentle breath – both are signs of the Spirit, as Jesus sends his friends out in mission, 'as the Father has sent me, so I have sent you, receive - In mission power and gentleness are both required.

This feels a gentle scene, yet it is not gentle to feel the warm breath of a man you know gasped his last breath on a cross three days before, it must have been utterly overwhelming, a felt truth that this is no ghost, but the Risen Lord, fresh from the grave.

The Risen Jesus breathed on them, as the Lord God breathed on Adam in Genesis '*then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*', Jesus breathes on the disciples and gifts them renewed life. Corvid 19

is a disease, that literally steals that breath, the breath of the victims, robs them of life, and is the very opposite of our God who is the giver of breath, of life. The Spirit's gift at Pentecost is a sign of hope, that everyone/everything that steal breath will not have the final word.

Jesus breaths on the disciples the one promised in John's Gospel, who will come so they won't be alone, isolated, orphaned when Jesus returns to the Father; this is the One who will be alongside them, at home in them, and all who love Jesus, – 'the advocate, the comforter, the truth bearer, who enables us to hear the words of God, and go forth in mission. Pentecost declares that we are not alone, there is one at home with us, alongside us, in us.

Jesus breathed on them, his friends who abandoned him to die alone; he gifts them the Holy Spirit, gifts them the power of God to forgive sins, or withhold forgiveness. I am sure that as forgiven men and women knowing how much they had been forgiven they would long to forgive and not retain. The Holy Spirit always moves us towards amendment of life and freedom from that which chokes our lives - to forgive one another our sins is Pentecost.

This Pentecost day - throw off any doubt, any fear and cry out to the Father in Jesus name that you and the whole Church may be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, sent afresh, equipped afresh, for this Covid 19 shaped time. Remember that the Spirit will come as the Spirit pleases in power or strange gentleness, in the midst of a party or in the shadow of death. Whatever your circumstances Breathe anew this day!

Prayers at Pentecost

We pray for God to fill us with his Spirit.

Generous God,
we thank you for the *power* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask that we may be strengthened to serve you better.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *wisdom* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to make us wise to understand your will.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *peace* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to keep us confident of your love wherever you call us.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *healing* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to bring reconciliation and wholeness
where there is division, sickness and sorrow.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *gifts* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to equip us for the work which you have given us.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *fruit* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to reveal in our lives the love of Jesus.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *breath* of your Holy Spirit,
given us by the risen Lord.
We ask you to keep the whole Church, living and departed,
in the joy of eternal life.

Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

Generous God,
you sent your Holy Spirit upon your Messiah at the river Jordan,
and upon the disciples in the upper room:

in your mercy fill us with your Spirit,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Pentecost Hymn

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.

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.

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.

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.

*Italian, Bianco da Siena,
translated by R F Littledale*

Commission

For fifty days we have celebrated the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over the powers of sin and death. We have proclaimed God's mighty acts and we have prayed that the power that was at work when God raised Jesus from the dead might be at work in us.

As part of God's Church, let us live out what we proclaim.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, will you dare to walk into God's future, trusting him to be your guide?

By the Spirit's power, we will.

Will you dare to embrace each other and grow together in love?

We will.

Will you dare to share your riches in common and minister to each other in need?

We will.

Will you dare to pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?

We will.

Will you dare to carry the light of Christ into the world's dark places?

We will.

Contact details for The Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

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A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer of Jan Berry:

Exuberant Spirit of God,
bursting with the brightness of flame
into the coldness of our lives
to warm us with a passion for justice and beauty,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
sweeping us out of the dusty corners of our apathy
to breathe vitality into our struggles for change,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
speaking words that leap over barriers of mistrust
to convey messages of truth and new understanding,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
Flame,
Wind,
Speech,
burn, breathe, speak in us;
fill your world with justice and with joy. Amen.

The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 8 June