

Lectionary readings: Acts 17: 22-31; Psalm 66: 8-20; 1 Peter 3: 13-22; John 14: 15-21

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 17:** *'To the unknown god'* was one inscription in Athens. There is a sense in which we can never fully know God, for God is Mystery, but Jesus has given us a glimpse into the Mystery. God is not remote, Paul says; in fact, we live and move in Him. And He is calling each one of us to acknowledge His presence within us so that we can be radically changed through His indwelling presence.
- **Psalm 66:** v12: *'You have brought us to a place of great abundance.'* (NTL) *'You have led us out to breathe again.'* (Jerusalem Bible) *'You have brought us through our pain and into Your dwelling place.'* (Psalms for Praying) v20: *'Blessed be the holy Name of the Beloved, Loving Companion Presence, who has embraced me, and renewed my life.'* (Psalms for Praying) Much to reflect on here. Let's allow God to lead us into that spacious place this week where we experience the life of the risen Christ and are embraced by Him.
- **1 Peter 3:** Just as Jesus came through His suffering and death into resurrection and new life, so we, too, can depend on God who loves to be with us in our times of suffering and to lead us through them to newness of life. 'May God grant to us the kind of love and courage to enter into suffering, if such is necessary, in order to unscramble God's Word and declare in witness and deed

His love and salvation for disoriented people in a disjointed world.' (Epistles Now)

- **John 14:** If we call ourselves followers of Jesus, then our lives will be characterised by love - the kind of love that Jesus showed in His life on earth - sacrificial, selfless love. And Jesus says that He ensures that we'll be able to show that kind of love and live like Him, for He has given us His Spirit to live in us and transform us. It's the Spirit of God that brings us into this 'place of great abundance' that the Psalmist speaks of. We don't worship a remote God, but a God who has taken up residence in our hearts in order to fill us with all His fullness. May we open our hearts to His Spirit this week and allow that work of inner transformation to take place.

'The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now Each individual human being can claim the Spirit of Jesus as the guiding spirit of his or her life. In that Spirit we can speak and act freely and confidently with the knowledge that the same Spirit that inspired Jesus is inspiring us.' (Henri Nouwen)

O Holy dove of God descending, you are the love that knows no ending; all of our shattered dreams you're mending: Spirit, now live in me.

O holy wind of God now blowing, bearing the seed that God is sowing, you are the life that starts us growing: Spirit, now live in me.

O holy flame of God now burning, you are the power of Christ returning; you are the answer to our yearning: Spirit, now live in me.

(Bryan Jeffery Leech: Hymn 591 CH4)