

Lectionary readings: Acts 2: 1-21; Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13; John 20: 19-23 (Pentecost)

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 2:** The coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples was a deeply spiritual experience, very difficult to put into words. The best they could do was describe it in symbolic language - mysterious and uncontrollable like the wind, life-changing as fire, igniting everything in its path. The Spirit of God swept them out into the streets, ignited their hearts, setting them aflame, to communicate in miraculous ways the Gospel message of love and transformation. We will never know the exact nature of the 'tongues' and it doesn't matter. The one language we all need to speak, and which the Holy Spirit gives to each one of us, is the language of love. So let's ask God, through His Spirit, to set our hearts on fire, and to sweep away all that hinders us from being all we can be, so that we reach out, like Jesus, to all, excluding no one, and sharing the excitement of Peter, as we bear witness through our daily living to the presence of God within us, powerful and life-changing. Let's look, too, for the presence of God in others.
- **Psalm 104:** *'When you send your Spirit, new life is bornI will abandon myself into your hands as long as I live; I will sing praise to You while I have breath May all who feel separated from you open their hearts to new Life.'* A few verses from 'Psalms for Praying' for us to reflect on.
- **1 Corinthians 12:** Paul says that God works in different ways in every human being. We each have gifts given to us by God. Let's spend time this week aware of

God's presence, listening to Him, letting Him reveal to us what unique gifts He has given us. And let's help one another to identify our gifts. And let's open ourselves to the Spirit of God within us to empower us to give ourselves to Him more fully, and offer our gifts in His service and in the service of one another, not competing with one another, but co-operating together, each one making a different, but unique and valuable contribution, each one necessary in the life of the church.

- **John 20:** Jesus appears to the disciples, weak, fearful, vulnerable, locked away in a room. He comes to them with no words of condemnation, offering them inner peace, and breathing His Spirit into them. We, too, like to barricade ourselves behind our doctrines and rules and rituals, but God's Spirit wants to move us out from behind our 'securities', setting us free to go out, forgiven, loved, strengthened, to forgive as we have been forgiven, to love as we are loved, to empower people as we are empowered. He wants to transform us into a community of love, called to become like Him, to show people a God who is loving, forgiving, merciful. Let's allow God's Spirit to blow freely in us and through us, upsetting our prejudices and preconceptions, transforming us, turning us upside down and inside out.

A prayer

God of wind and fire, fill the house of our own life, the house of the church. Where there is division or hurt, heal and harmonise us. Where there is disintegration, re-connect and reconcile us. Where there is rigidity or an over-respectability, lighten, loosen us and make us respond to your free and unpredictable Spirit. Amen. (Donald Hilton)