

## **Pentecost & Laudato Si Sunday**

**19.05.24**

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Today, we celebrate the feast of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that renews the face of the earth. We are also celebrating with the universal Church, Laudato Si Week, remembering Pope Francis urging in his encyclical Laudato Si' to *"Hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor"*.

Pentecost brings the Easter season to a close, celebrating the fullness of the Spirit and the great gathering of nations. The plan of salvation has been brought to its conclusion. The Risen Lord is exalted in his rightful place next to God and has sent his own Spirit to fill the earth with God's power. The world is charged with divine energy; it needs but a spark to ignite it with life and excitement.

But, if this has already happened on that first Pentecost, why does our world look the same? Why is there still so much religious and ethnic rivalry? Why do we continue to make distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, woman and man, distinctions that favour one at the expense of the other?

Why is there so little peace between nations, between peoples, between humanity and our environment, between us and creation itself? Why do we refuse to forgive or to be reconciled? Is Pentecost merely a feast that we celebrate in red vestments and a few extra alleluias? Has the face of the earth really been renewed?

The answer is yes! Resoundingly, yes! The Holy Spirit has been poured forth and works wonders wherever human hearts are open to its prompting. The earth is renewed each time rivalries are resolved, distinctions are recognised as merely expressions of diversity, peace is restored, comfort and solace are offered, forgiveness is granted, and the earth and all it contains is cared for.

Each time we plant a seed of hope we are immersed in the power of the Spirit of God; all we must do is open ourselves to it and the reign of God will be born in our midst and the seeds of hope we have sown will blossom and bear fruit in abundance.

On this feast of Pentecost, when we commemorate Pope Francis' letter Laudato Si, the Holy Spirit calls us to an ecological conversion, a term coined by Pope St. John Paul II to point out that our care for creation is not something incidental but rather intrinsic to being a follower of Jesus Christ.

The Garden of Eden is marked by harmonious relationships with God, one's own self, with neighbour, and creation. Our sin, however, alienates us from God, self, the other,

and creation. Jesus has come to restore those broken relationships by pouring out upon us the gift of his Spirit. The Holy Spirit heals and elevates our vision to see truly with the eyes of love.

The promise of the Holy Spirit who empowers us, enables us to develop a culture of tenderness; to love as Christ loved; to make God's reign present by loving the hungry, the homeless and the powerless; to resist those who dominate, exploit, people or the earth, unjustly; to persevere in the face of difficulty and opposition; and do things we never thought possible such as courageously raising our voices in response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

The prophetic dimension of Easter and Pentecost does not end with Jesus, it starts with us. The Spirit that anointed Jesus anoints each of us with power but it is not the power of domination or manipulation but 'power with' - it is sharing, collaborating, and relational where all things are brought into relationship with God, with each other, and with creation itself, of making all things one – consciously filled with the Presence of God.

Our spirituality is not one that looks to get out of the world and its challenges. It is a spirituality connected to the world around us - the world of people and nature. Pentecost challenges us to plant seeds of hope, seeds that will bloom into a renewal of the face of the earth.