

God of all nations,
on this day of Pentecost we praise you for the power of your Holy Spirit,
equipping each of us for our life's work.

We celebrate especially the wonderful work of our Queen,
who has put loyalty before her royalty through all the ages of her reign.

And who, day by day, has served you her God and Christ her King
with humility, resilience and grace.

Thank you for all she is and all she has done to your glory.

Amen.

A prayer of commitment

In the name of Christ,
and following the example of our Queen,
let us pledge ourselves to live out our faith
responsibly, dutifully and courageously.

Will you offer your hands in friendship and welcome
to those who are afraid,
to those who are a long way from home,
to those of all nations who are in need?

We will.

Will you use your feet
to go where there is loneliness,
to visit those who are hurting,
to stand up for those who have been brought low?

We will.

Will you use your voice
to speak out for the voiceless,
to speak words of peace,
to speak blessing over those who have never known love?

We will.

Will you give your life,
whether you are young or whether you are old,
in service of your family, your friends,

your church and your community?

We will.

Will you open your heart
to the peoples and all the creatures of the world
and pray and work for peace and compassion?

We will.

Will you honour the Queen before God,
in and through all the seasons of your life,
by living as she has done:
responsibly, dutifully and courageously?

We will.

In the name of Christ, we will. Amen.

Teach us your ways O Lord and we will walk in your truth

If you go back and read the Old Testament, you will discover that **Pentecost** was one of the Jewish feast days. Only they didn't call it Pentecost. That's the Greek name. The Jews called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. It is mentioned five places in the first five books — in **Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16.**

Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of the month of May or sometimes in early June.

There were several festivals, celebrations, or observances that took place before Pentecost. There was **Passover**, there was Unleavened Bread, and there was the Feast of Firstfruits. The Feast of Firstfruits was the celebration of the beginning of the barley harvest.

To work it out according to the Old Testament, you would go to the day of the celebration of Firstfruits, and beginning with that day, you would count off 50 days. The fiftieth day would be the Day of Pentecost. So Firstfruits is the beginning of the barley harvest and Pentecost the celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest.

Since it was always 50 days after Firstfruits, and since 50 days equals seven weeks, it always came a "week of weeks" later. Therefore, they either called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks.

In our reading from Acts the disciples are doing as they were instructed waiting in Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together.

By Jesus' time, Pentecost was also a celebration of God's descending in the thunder and lightning that shook Mount Sinai (Exodus 19.16-19) to give the Law to Israel. So, at the time we are looking at in our gospel today there is fulfilment here too, as again God comes to his

people who are once more 'all together in one place'. God comes with a power such as that of wind and fire, but now not with tablets of stone but with the Holy Spirit as prophesied by Ezekiel.

We can only imagine what that rush of wind was like?

Some year ago, in Italy we watched a storm on the hills across the valley raging with lightning lighting up the hills opposite our villa. It swirled around and we realise it was getting closer to our side of the valley and very quickly it was upon us. The trees bent over, and the wind rushed through the veranda and took with it tables and chairs and lanterns so quickly we just ran for shelter. It was very frightening, and it caused quite a lot of damage.

Is it any wonder the disciples were confused as to what had happened, when their rushing wind went through the house?

They were all filled with the Spirit – the Spirit that allowed them to gain confidence to speak out, to find a voice. They were witness to what had happened to Jesus and were gifted with the ability to go forward as witnesses.

Our Queen's message this Platinum Jubilee was

"I continue to be inspired by the goodwill shown to me, and hope that the coming days will provide an opportunity to reflect on all that has been achieved during the last 70 years, as we look to the future with confidence and enthusiasm."

Later in John's gospel it tells us : 'The Spirit of truth' will teach us everything, above all how Jesus' words and works speak to the present. A world without God offers peace only by silencing the oppressed by fear. Jesus gives us the untroubled peace of those on whom he breathes the Holy Spirit and sends into that world.

It is this peace that is gifted to us all by the Spirit that we can go forward. Amen