

A Note from St. James' Pastoral Care
May 2023, Ascension/Pentecost



Dear Friend,

A phrase in the prayer that was part of the Rev. Carol Hardie's Reflection for Monday, May 15th, rang like a bell in my thoughts: "Open our eyes to see those who are brightening our paths by their very presence." I suddenly wondered how often our paths are brightened by someone's small gesture and we don't even notice - we just take these things for granted! Sometimes it's the smile with which someone greets us - a friend, a greeter, a cashier, a server or a caregiver. Sometimes it's a little compliment; sometimes it's an encouraging word or phone call or message - even an old-fashioned card! Sometimes it's even a small gesture from a stranger: a brightly blossoming garden, an area cleared of garbage, a driver who gives us space. Sometimes it's the Dear God, brightening our path with sunshine, bird song, spring rain and so much, much more!

How often could we brighten someone else's path if we took an extra minute to think about it? Remember those Hymns for Children we learned so long ago that tried to instill these precepts in us? "Brighten the Corner Where You Are", "This Little Light of Mine" and "Jesus Bids Us Shine" are the ones that immediately come to mind.

In one verse from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7, He says, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Perhaps we think that those "good works" have to be big things, but I believe little things may have just as large an effect, especially if we ask God the Holy Spirit to inspire and strengthen us to do them as consistently as we possibly can. Even a match flares brightness into a dark room!

So, I'm giving us all a three-part challenge until the next Note comes out: 1. Pray that God will "open our eyes to see those who are brightening our paths by their very presence" and THANK them. 2. Pray that we can be open to seeing more opportunities to be that brightness ourselves. 3. Thank God for those others whom you see and for those opportunities given to you yourself. Let's see how we do, with God's help!



Next, here are the Gospel readings that take us from Ascension through the first weeks of the Season of Pentecost:

May 21 (Ascension Sunday)	Luke 24: 44-58
May 28 (Day of Pentecost)	John 20: 19-23 or John 7: 37 -39
June 4 (Trinity Sunday)	Matthew 28: 16-20
June 11 (Pentecost 2)	Matthew 9: 9-13



Here are two more sonnets from Malcolm Guite, one from Ascension, "the glorious finale of the Easter Season" (as Guite says); and the other to immerse us in the experience of Pentecost:

Ascension

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we our selves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed .



Pentecost

Today we feel the wind beneath our wings
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays
Today the church draws breath at last and sings
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.
This is the feast of fire, air, and water
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.
The earth herself awakens to her maker
And is translated out of death to birth.
The right words come today in their right order
And every word spells freedom and release
Today the gospel crosses every border
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace
Today the lost are found in His translation.
Whose mother tongue is Love in every nation.

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Lastly, here's a rousing prayer from the Tenth Sunday of the Pentecost Season in "A New Zealand Book of Prayer" (Anglican):

Come Holy Spirit, to all baptised in your name,
that we may turn to good whatever lies
ahead. Give us passion, give us fire; make us
transform the world from what it is, to what
you created it to be.

May God the Holy Spirit
kindle love in your
heart!
(M.C.)

With Love and Prayers
from your St. James'
Parish Family



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