

Pentecost Letter.

Dear Friends and Faithful,

Warmest Whitsun greetings in the name of Christ Jesus and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Whitsun is the name used often in Anglican circles for the feast of Pentecost, a favourite time, not unnaturally, for baptisms, when candidates were traditionally clothed in white garments. Whitsun thus derives from the description of the custom, identifying it as Whit Sunday. The name, Pentecost, comes from the Greek word, pentekoste, meaning fiftieth, since it always follows fifty days after Easter.

Of significance is the fact that Pentecost and Easter parallel the Jewish Passover and the Feast of Weeks, with the fifty days between, and echoing the theological importance of the theme, firstly of deliverance from bondage, and secondly, followed by that of new spiritual and material generosity to be shared in life after liberation. We all know the Pentecost story of the sending forth of the Holy Spirit in power on the apostles and the embryo Church, and the message from the apostles generously delivered in speaking of justice, universally available for everyone.

The feast of Weeks is, too, about the same generosity for all. It recalls the giving of the ten commandments, the core of the Law (Torah), represented by thanksgiving for the wheat harvest (harvest festival), which clearly obliges generous kindness reflecting the absolute kindness shown by God to the Hebrew people. To emphasise this imperative, the people were yearly reminded why they were liberated in the first place, the priests making it clear that "when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your fields, or gather the remnants of your harvest; you must leave them for the poor and for the alien; I am the Lord your God".

Sadly, too often I believe, Christian Pentecost celebrations lack an essential sense of commitment, ownership, purpose, and liberation, and guilt about sin continues to plague us. The ultimate sacrifice has been made by Christ, and humanity is clearly reconciled with God's intention of distributive compassionate and generous justice. We do, really, have everything to celebrate, so let us transparently live as if we truly know it, and show it, inclusive of everyone, with determination, joy and infectious, loving energy.

So, dear sisters and brothers, I am thankful, happy and blessed, that we share our vision, reflected in this consideration of the Pentecost message that we are inspired to discern. Through the life of Christ Jesus and the experience of the apostles, we discover the power of God's self-giving love and forgiveness, and are given strength and inspiration to share the good news of Jesus through the words, actions and love, expressed in the steadily kind and magnanimous rhythm of our own lives.

Grace, peace and love, as ever,

+Brian.