

Pentecost Sunday – Janet Howie’s Contribution to Worship At Home in Lockdown_Sun 31/05.2020

What does Pentecost mean to me? Janet Howie

Pentecost seems such an impressive word, but it just means, fifty, the number of days after Easter Sunday before Pentecost Sunday, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit for all people. It’s a special day, often accompanied by wearing red for flame or lighting candles as symbols.

**candle flame –
even the faintest glow
lightens the darkness haiku J.H.**

Wind is a powerful symbol for the Spirit. Here is my poem, ‘Wind’

Wind

**Of no fixed address
you inhabit earth’s sphere.
Invisible, we see what you do.
We strive to control your power.
You blow where you will.**

**You dishevel, unbalance us,
burn skin, chill flesh to the bone,
hurl ships off course, strip forests bare,
fan a spark, snuff out a candle,
turn cyclonic or disappear.**

**First sign of newborn life,
closer than a lover,
you are in our speech by day,
at night, your breath
our rhythmic rise and fall.**

**Instinctive habit, yet tenuous,
do not abandon us.
Come wind, breathe
in our valley of dry bones,
Our *ruach* — breath of life.**

So what does the Holy Spirit mean to me?

For me, the Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ, able to abide in the thinking, doing and being of any one, who by faith, invites the Holy Spirit into their lives. This is more than having an active conscience, although that is important. It means being open to, co-operating with, and asking the Spirit daily, to be the enabler for daunting tasks, giver of wisdom, revealer of truth, counsellor and comforter. This mutual, ongoing ‘abiding’ in faith, is both simple and profound.

Most mornings I sit quietly, open to the Spirit’s presence, ready then, for whatever the day may bring. It has been my practice for many years. I experience, as well, in some measure, the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, kindness, goodness, and moderation. (Galatians 5: 22-26) There is also the discovery of spiritual gifts to be used in the service of others. (1 Corinthians:12) At times, being human, I may not be very receptive to the Spirit’s guidance. The Spirit does not leave me, but prays for me. (Romans 8:26-28).

Hymn **Tis 408** is a thoughtful one about the Holy Spirit. When my mother died, and I was grieving, her friend and neighbour, reminded me of the last verse.

**Be with me when no other friend
the mystery of my heart can share;
and be thou known when fears descend.
by thy best name of Comforter.**

(Janet Howie – Pentecost Sunday Year A – Sunday 31st May 2020)