

Readings Acts 2: 1-11; Romans 8: 8-17; John 14: 15-16, 23-26



Fr Michael says:

The Launching of the Church: Thanksgiving and Mission

The richness of today's celebration is seen in its origins: which recognises the first fruits of the year and the Giving of the Law of God to the People on Mount Sinai: the foundational Covenant between God and us! In the Jewish Tradition, we have the description of the how a mighty wind turned to fire and a voice came to proclaim the Law to the assembled People. The Fire then split into 70, corresponding to the 70 known nations of the world, as well as the 70 leaders who were set aside to help Moses with leading and building up the People. The Covenant is for ALL nations. Luke in the Acts adapts this Tradition and replaces the Law with the Good News of the coming of the Messiah as Saviour and Redeemer for all: thus repairing damage done by the Tower of Babel, denoting the fraction of humanity and creation of many languages – and restoring unity to the peoples of the world: all understand the Apostles in their own language!

Paul, in his letter to the Church of God in Corinth, creates the image of the Body of Christ and the role of the Spirit, through different Gifts, which are offered to bring about the full development of this Body, to allow us all to play a full and active part in forming and building up our world: it is our calling!

With John we see how Jesus launches the Mission of the Church, through the Breath of the Spirit and the Gift of Reconciliation and Peace! Fear is banished and the doors are thrown open to go out and proclaim the Good News. What has happened? The fears and the awareness of inadequacy are banished: the enthusiasm and commitment are present and shared! The warmth of the Spirit opens our hearts, as it did the Apostles. This celebration gives rich and powerful meaning to the events which take place this weekend with Bishop Paul: our basic Mission is seen in the Initiation of Luis into Adult membership of our Church. We fulfil this task as we rejoice together over what we have achieved in the past 16 years together, with my serving as your Parish Priest. We launch a new phase of life with Fr Tom, to serve you into the future, as Parish Priest, to build on what has been achieved to extend the Kingdom in new ways and into new areas, in our lovely town of Hitchin and beyond.

So we pray: "Come Holy Spirit, with strength for the weak; courage for the fearful; light for those in darkness; comfort for the sorrowful; healing for the sick and injured; guidance for those who are lost; faith for those who are in doubt; hope for those who are in doubt; hope for those who have none; love for those who have none. Come Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love and we shall renew the face of the earth." These are some of the ways for us to build on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy – they will increasingly be realised, with the leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, working with and through us all in different ways, enhanced by Fr Tom's service to you all! May the Lord walk with you all, and may His Holy Mother, be your model of listening and responding to His call to "launch into the deep" again!