REFLECTIONS ON THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

In the run up to Pentecost, or Whitsun, I am going to write a few words about each of the gifts of the Spirit which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12. These are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues and interpretation.

I will give Bible references, so you might like to have a Bible to hand.

In the Old Testament these gifts were bestowed upon some chosen individuals, but since the death and resurrection of Jesus, and as prophesied by Joel, (Joel 2 v 28) they have become available to all his followers. Every Spirit–filled believer may receive and use any gift, but some gifts seem to be more suited to some people than others. And there is a degree of overlap among the gifts. I will be as clear as I can.

The most important thing about the gifts of the Spirit is that they must be used with love.

May I suggest that on the Day of Pentecost, we each choose a gift that we would like God to give us, and ask him for it. The gifts are given for the benefit of the Christian community. It might be difficult to use some of them while we are socially distancing, but perhaps not impossible. And life won’t be like this for ever!

2. KNOWLEDGE

To have the gift of knowledge we do not have to be wise. It works by direct inspiration from God, in the form of a conviction, impression, mental picture, dream, vision or insight. We suddenly know something that normally we would not know.

An example of the gift of knowledge in the Old Testament is when Samuel and the Israelites chose Saul to be their king. Saul hid and no one could find him, so they asked God where he was and God gave them that knowledge. (1 Samuel 10 v 20-23)

Jesus used the gift of knowledge on several occasions, for example when he met the woman at the well and he knew, supernaturally, that she had had five husbands. (John 4 v 1-18)

And the apostle Peter used this gift when he knew supernaturally that Ananias and Sapphira were lying to the apostles about the amount of money they made when they sold some property. (Acts 5 v 1-11)

This gift is useful to Christian healers. The healer receives supernatural knowledge that there is someone in the room with a particular illness or condition and invites that person to come forward for prayer. And if this really is a word of knowledge from God, the person will receive healing.

PRAYER

Dear Lord

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

May we remember that all your gifts are freely available to us, if we truly want them and if we ask you for them.

May we not dismiss any of your gifts just because they may not be part of our church culture. Please may we be open to them.

May we never belittle the power of the Spirit and the extent to which that power is available to us.

Please forgive us when we do.

Holy Spirit, please fill me now. (*At this point ask the Holy Spirit for one of the gifts if you would like to.)*

Through Jesus Christ

Amen