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!

5. MIRACLES

A miracle is an extraordinary and welcome event that cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws. We dealt with healing miracles yesterday, so today we will briefly think about miracles which did not involve healing.

One well-known example of a miracle in the Old Testament is when God parted the Red Sea so that Moses could lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses stretched out his staff and the waters parted. God wanted to perform this miracle so that the Egyptians would know that he was the Lord. (Exodus 14 v 10-22)

The first miracle Jesus performed was the changing of water to wine at a wedding. This miracle shows that Jesus is about transformation, whether from water to wine, or from people full of sin who deserve punishment to people who in the eyes of God are sinless. (John 2 v 1-11)

In our materialistic society we find it hard to accept the reality of miracles. Let’s remember that science has found ways to make things happen that our ancestors would definitely have considered impossible. And we are discovering more all the time. We absolutely do not understand everything yet!

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” (Hamlet to Horatio, Hamlet, Shakespeare)

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