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!

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation means explaining the meaning of something. In a Biblical context the thing being interpreted will be a message from God, which someone has delivered in tongues.

There is a foreshadowing of the gift of interpretation in the Old Testament when the prophet Daniel interprets the writing on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast. (Daniel 5 25-28)

“Mene, mene, tekel, parsin” – You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

According to Paul an interpretation of tongues will involve a revelation, prophecy, word of instruction or word of knowledge. (1 Corinthians 14 v 6)

If someone speaks in tongues in a Christian gathering, then the message must be interpreted, normally by someone else, to be edifying for all. The intellect is not involved. The interpreter simply opens his mouth and says whatever comes from God, in the language of those present. As in the case of prophecy there might be an element of the human in the interpretation, but some will be from God!

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