

Midday Prayer - 100

✓ 19.5.75 26.5.69 (Whit Mon.)
192 18.5.70 " "
8.1
✓ 22.5.72 " "
✓ 3.6.74 " "

Spiritus Domini [DSC.0.22]
Veni Sancte Sp. (Dunstall RHC)

Factus est R25 "Suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty wind blowing." It was the morning of the 50th day from the Passover of Christ, and His disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit He sent to them, and they began to speak to the crowd in the streets about the marvellous things God had done for men, events of which they'd been privileged witnesses and in which at that very moment they were taking part. They were changed men that morning as, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, they grasped the truth and reality of what Jesus had told them and done for them. And they moved out into a wider world than any of them had ever known before, bringing the news of God's love and care and concern for all men, forming around them a community of people who accepted and devoted themselves to Christ as their Lord and Master. That was the first Pentecost day, when the church of Christ, the new People of God made its entry on the stage of world history. The events of that day were themselves part of the wonders of God's interventions in human history — the world, and man's relations with God were changed then, and since then have been on a different footing. Yesterday we celebrated the feast of Pentecost, recalling those stirring events long ago. But we were not, or shouldn't have been just looking backwards, or inwards in celebrating the beginning of the Church: for the feast of Pentecost is a celebration of a mystery of salvation. It's not a "feast of the Holy Ghost", nor simply an anniversary, but the celebration by the Christian community of the completion of Christ's saving passover — something which was, is and will be, which has happened, is happening now and will continue to happen. In our prayer and reflection this week, the present-day aspect of Pentecost, its reality now for the world, the church and ourselves individually, should

not be forgotten. It may be difficult to visualize or think about the Holy Spirit (even the name our human languages have to use isn't very helpful); but the really important thing is His reality, as a Person who is present, active, in us and with us, even if we don't and can't see Him with our eyes or any other sense perception, for there are not the bounds of experience or of reality. The Holy Spirit has a mission in us and in our world which is intimately linked with the work of Christ Our Lord and His church. In the N.T. writings they are inseparable. What the Spirit's mission is, who He is, has to be discovered in understanding the scripture and the community which both wrote those scriptures and had them written for it. And the way this community celebrated the Spirit's mission and work is relevant too. It's interesting to know how the feast of Pentecost developed to its present form. [as the point behind the significant (if slight) change being made next year in the new calendar.] The meaning of the Church's celebration of Pentecost is very full and rich — there's plenty to think and pray about; today there's time for just one point — and unfortunately the time immediately after Pentecost has other significant feasts, which demand reflection too. But for now, listen first to the beautiful, quiet melody of the plainchant sequence-hymn of Pentecost, Veni Sancte Spiritus — Come Holy Spirit. MUSIC — The 'Veni Sancte Spiritus', dating from about the yr. 1200, attributed (among others, but more probably) to Stephen Langton who became Archbishop of Canterbury: @. PRAYERS

Veni Sancte (Solenne)

The idea of Pentecost as the outblowing of Babel, expressed in those last two prayers, was once a popular notion found in a number

of very old Pentecost prayers are in the writings of some of the fathers. As the spirit of rivalry, jealousy, hate divides mankind so that ~~the~~ ^{men} can't even speak to each other, the ~~work~~ ^{mission} of the Holy Spirit of God's love is to bring all mankind back into unity and harmony, to introduce them into the life of God won for them by Christ in His redeeming work, to form a new People of God which will embrace the whole world. This is not a different objective from what Christ did in instituting the Church - the Holy Spirit is the 'soul' of the Church, its guide, inspirer and comforter: but the Spirit also works outside the formal structure of the Church of which He is the life. It's He who brings men's minds and hearts together, inspiring them with what good-will they have to make our world a more human place and therefore a place in which men can find God's love and concern for them. Clearly, many of the men who sit down to discuss the solutions to the world's problems, at the United Nations, (at the Paris peace talks) ^{in the Middle East} or anywhere else, don't ^{perhaps} know that there is such a person as the Holy Spirit, or refuse to accept that He has anything to do with their purposes. But the fact that they consent to talk to each other, however reluctantly, with whatever reservations, is already evidence of the Spirit's influence. But without His inspiration, without following His guidance into the truth of Christ, the unity and co-operation of all men will remain a day-dream, partially and temporarily made real from ^{time} to time, but without any solid basis because there's no real love & self-sacrifice involved in it. So this week, let us pray for all who guide our ^{little} earth, that they may be open to the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that we can become the one family of God on this earth wh. the astronauts see as one undivided globe