

23. 5. 69

14. 5. 70 (in part)

TAPE. Ps 150. Dear (LHM) Ps 150, a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God, in a modern French setting. I've been using this to introduce Midday Prayer during the whole of pascheltime this year, because this whole Easter season is a celebration of the Day of the Lord in which, in joy, we thank God for all the graces and blessings He has given us in Christ. And now, this weekend we reach the end, and the second high-point, of Easter in celebrating Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. To stress that Pentecost is the 50th day of Easter and its completion, in future there will be no special octave to follow Pentecost, because Pentecost Day itself is an 'octave' day, so to speak, the octave of octaves, rounding off Easter Day and so it's a bit misleading (as we've been doing) to treat Pentecost as a feast-day on its own and to prolong it to the following Saturday. Originally in fact the name 'Pentecost', 50 days, was given to the whole period we now call pascheltime, and which the Fathers of the Church called the Day of days, regarding it as one continuous celebration of all that Christ accomplished for us, and which is the great gift of God's goodness we most of all thank Him for in song and prayer and praise, especially in the Eucharist, at Mass. // On Sunday, the first of the scripture readings, from the Acts of the Apostles, is of course the description of the happenings on the day of Pentecost when the descent of the Spirit on the Apostles produced such extraordinary effects, making them fearless spokesmen of God's revelation of His love in Christ and opening the ears and minds of men of all nations to hear, understand and accept the good news of the salvation brought to them by Christ. In St Luke's description, something can be seen of the power and activity of the Spirit - the rushing wind, blowing freshness and life and vigour, following paths which are not of man's making

or planning: tongues of flame, seizing and consuming in the heat of God's love the hearts and minds of men like ourselves, making them burn with an enthusiasm and zeal and self-forgetfulness in their being united with Christ their Lord and with one another in Him. The divisions among men, symbolised in our inability to communicate with one another because our languages are different, are overcome in the power of the Spirit - everyone that morning could understand the message the illiterate apostles were delivering. The unity of all mankind in God has been restored - all of us can communicate with Him, and through Him with each other in the language of His love poured into our hearts. Scripture, of course, has to use human language and imagery to present to us the mystery God reveals; the mystery here, of the action and power of the Holy Spirit in us, is not and never will be self-evident: we've got to pray and meditate in the presence of God on <sup>the meaning</sup> ~~what~~ of what we read and hear read, to understand what the Spirit does and how He works in our world. // What I was saying a moment ago about the unity of mankind may seem far-fetched and, in our present-day divided world, even absurd. But isn't this rather because the work of the Spirit is not finished yet: it's a process that's going on and, precisely because of His presence, can be brought to completion in the unity of the Body of Christ. Perceptive men, like Teilhard de Chardin, have glimpsed this process at work and given hope to men who haven't been able to <sup>see or</sup> understand the work of the Spirit. Mankind's best ideals of the unity of all men, ideas like the United Nations; or the growing interdependence of all men in what's been called the Communications revolution cannot really heal our divisions unless the Spirit of Christ's love, which is



what most fully unites us, is at work and allowed to be at work there too.

Not to anticipate Pentecost in our prayers today, let's listen now to a motet for Ascension - the antiplan, from Ps 46, for the offertory on Ascension Day, 'Ascendit Deus in

Philipps  
"Ascendit Deus"  
(R.H.K.)

substitutione' MUSIC PRAYERS.

The new, second reading for Pentecost Sunday is from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians where he speaks of the gifts of the Spirit. Each of us has received the Holy Spirit; but each of us has our own specific contribution to make to the building up of the body of Christ, to the transformation of the world through the spirit who is God's love, to the union of all men in the love and life of God. There is a variety of service, though it's the same Lord we serve, impelled by the same Spirit.

Each of us has our own gifts, and the Holy Spirit works in different ways in each of us. We're not the Apostles on Pentecost morning, and so we mustn't be waiting for the same kind of manifestation of the power and activity of the Spirit that they received.

We must look for the signs of His presence in us and around us, so that we can be guided by Him. But we won't be really seeing Him, but rather a fragment of our own imagination or self-importance, or even the power and activity of the spirit of darkness and evil (~~is~~ <sup>Satan</sup> is a fallen angel), unless we keep Christ's word and love Him, and in His peace, the peace He gives which the world cannot give.

|| "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him: and the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you." And this is the gospel message, from St John, we'll be hearing on Sunday.