

Pentecost Reflection by Pope Francis for Thy Kingdom Come Service

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With joy, I join Archbishop Justin Welby and all of you to share some thoughts from the heart. This is Pentecost: we celebrate the day on which the Spirit of God came down with power. Since that day, God's life dwells among us, bringing us new and previously unknown hope, peace and joy. At Pentecost God 'infected' the world with life. How different this is from the contagion of death that has ravaged the earth for months now! Today, more than ever, it is necessary to implore the Holy Spirit to pour forth into our hearts the life of God, who is love. Indeed, if there is to be a better future, our hearts must change for the better.

On the day of Pentecost, people who spoke different languages assembled and encountered one another. In these months, however, we have been required to observe appropriate and necessary measures to keep our distance from one another. Yet we have also come to understand, perhaps better, what others are experiencing: we have been brought together by fear and uncertainty. How many troubled and broken hearts are in need of comfort! I think of how, when Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit, he used a particular word: *Paraclete*, that is, *Comforter*. Many of you have experienced the consolation brought by the Spirit, that inner peace which makes us feel loved, that gentle strength that always inspires courage, even amid suffering. The Spirit assures us that we are not alone, that God sustains us. Dear friends, we must give in turn the gift that we have received: we are called to share the comfort of the Spirit, the *closeness of God*. How can we do this? Let us think about all those things that we long for: comfort, encouragement, someone to care for us, someone to pray for us, someone to weep with us and help us face our difficulties. Everything we would like others to do for us, let us do for them instead (cf. *Mt 7:12*). Do we want to be heard? Let us first listen. Do we need encouragement? Let us give encouragement. Do we want someone to care for us? Let us care for those who are alone and abandoned. Do we need hope for tomorrow? Let us give hope today. Today our world is experiencing a tragic *famine of hope*. How much pain is all around us, how much emptiness, how much inconsolable grief! Let us, then, become messengers of the comfort bestowed by the Spirit. Let us radiate hope, and the Lord will open new paths as we journey towards the future. I would like to share with you something about this journey that we are making together. How greatly I desire that, as Christians, we can be more deeply united as *witnesses of mercy* for the human family so severely tested in these days. Let us ask the Spirit for the gift of unity, for only if we live as brothers and sisters can we spread the

spirit of fraternity. We cannot ask others to be united if we ourselves take different paths. So let us pray for one another; let us each feel responsible for the other. The Holy Spirit bestows wisdom and good counsel. In these days let us invoke his aid upon those charged with making complex and pressing decisions, that they may *defend human life and the dignity of work*. For this is what must be invested in: health, employment, and the elimination of inequalities and poverty. Now as never before we need a vision rich in humanity: we cannot start up again by going back to our selfish pursuit of success without caring about those who are left behind. And even if many are doing precisely that, the Lord is asking us to change course. On the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke with a bold courage (*parrhesia*) prompted by the Spirit. 'Repent' (*Acts 2:38*), he urged, be converted, change the direction of your lives. That is what we need to do: go back, turn back to God and our neighbour: no longer isolated and anaesthetized before the cry of the poor and the devastation of our planet. We need to be united in facing all those pandemics that are spreading, that of the virus, but also those of hunger, war, contempt for life, and indifference to others. Only by walking together will we be able to go far.

Dear brothers and sisters, you are proclaiming the Gospel message of life and you are a sign of hope. I thank you from my heart. I ask God to bless you and I ask you to pray that he bless me. Thank you.

To see the entire service with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, UK Church leaders and others google ***Thy Kingdom Come 2020 Pentecost Service***