

Source of energy

27 5 12

God, who at this time
taught the hearts of your faithful people
by sending them the light of your Holy Spirit;
grant us by the same Spirit,
to have a right judgement in all things
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort.

This morning, our text is from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter two, verse four:
'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit'.

What gives you energy ? Where do you find your energy from ?

As a teacher, I found the act of teaching energising. It was the administration, the meetings, the constant changes that I found draining. In the classroom, the process of learning, the exchange of ideas, being with youngsters who wanted to learn, was what made my time as a teacher richly worthwhile.

But as a Christian, what gives you energy ? Is it coming to church ? Is it being in a place steeped in prayer and speaking and listening to God in prayer ? Is it hearing the Bible read or the sermon preached ? Is it coming up to the altar rail to receive communion ? Is it meeting other Christians and being with them and talking to them, not least over coffee after the service ends ? What connects you

to God ? By what means are you plugged in and switched on so that you can feel the energy flow ?

Today is the Day of Pentecost, the day traditionally considered to be the birth of the Church. It is the day that the Holy Spirit came and anointed the apostles in a most dramatic way: with the sound of a rushing wind and in the form of tongues of fire. Energised and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostles rushed out into a crowded Jerusalem street to share their excitement. In the native languages spoken by the foreign Jews who come up to Jerusalem for the festival of Shavuot, these few men communicated the good news to the crowd that God, Emmanuel, in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, was their long-expected Messiah. It was an electrifying moment and after Peter's first public sermon, some 3,000 people made the step of faith to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

It was the presence of the Holy Spirit which made what the apostles did possible. It was the Holy Spirit that gave them the energy to do what they were being called to do: to witness to the truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our Saviour. It is interesting to note that here in Luke's account of the coming of the Holy Spirit, there are two images which suggest energy: wind and fire. Gathered in the Upper Room in prayer, the apostles hear the sound of a rushing wind and they see tongues of fire alight on each of their heads. Whatever they heard and saw, the fact is they had the energy to do what they needed to do: to speak to others about what they knew: that Jesus is God with us.

One of names of the Holy Spirit is 'Comforter'. Like many words in English comfort can mean more than one thing. We can say we live in comfort because our home is comfortable: our chairs are comfortable to sit in and our home is the place where we have those comforts that make our lives truly comfortable. On the other hand, comfort as a verb can mean to comfort someone in their distress; to comfort someone means to listen to what worries them and to help them get what's wrong into perspective. To comfort someone, then, is to help get them through a difficult patch. But the root of the word in Latin is essentially the word for strength - 'fortis' - so the Holy Spirit is not so much the person of God who gives a big hug and in cherishing us sets us back on our feet but He is the source of energy who sets our feet in motion, who gives us the energy and motivation to fulfil our vocation to be mirrors of God's love to other people.

So today on the Day of Pentecost let me end by restating today's text '**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit**'. Then let me ask you again the questions with which I began: What gives you energy? Where do you find your energy from? As Christians, what connects you to God?

I have spoken in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist
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