

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Whitsunday, 23 May

We begin with an article by Tom Ravetz: From the Son to the Spirit

Over the past 6 weeks we have navigated the passage from Lent to Passiontide, and on to Easter and Ascension. On Sunday, we celebrate Whitsun, which ushers in a new period of the year –the festivals of the Spirit. During the four weeks of Passiontide, we experienced the altar and all the vestments in black. This experience of everything being stripped back to its essentials –a reminder of death, when only the essential endures – fitted the prayers that we heard, which confronted us with our being forsaken and thrown back on ourselves. From Easter Sunday, the altar has been dressed in red. This is complemented –literally –by its counterpart colour, green. We intuitively feel how these colours, symbols of life and love –reflect the mood of resurrection. Now for the ten days of Ascension, the bright red received a new counterpart. The details on the priests' garments have changed from green to gold. New riches have been bestowed upon the earth through Christ becoming universal, spread out in the cloudy hydrosphere that supports all life on earth. This journey through the festivals allows us to live every year anew through the stages of Christ's life: he unites with the earth in all its darkness; he resurrects from the depths and draws the life of the earth into the heights, not to escape the earth but to imbue it with the new life that he gives us. On Whitsunday, we enter a new world. The altar is dressed in white. The priests' garments are trimmed in yellow. The prayers speak of our relationship with the spirit, who heals and connects us. Our gaze is turned to our own present once more. What a change has taken place since Passiontide! There too, the rainbow of possibilities had been reduced to utter simplicity –not white, but black. Then, we needed to be aware of the desperate limitations of our situation. We cried out to the Spirit to help us in our isolation. Now, we notice that we have something to give. The flames that stream towards us recall the event of Pentecost, when the Apostles experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit as the tongues of flame settled above each one's head. Now, answering flames spring up within us which can join the joyous outpouring of life-giving, healing power.

Tom Ravetz

Dear friends, this Sunday's Confirmation in Hollywood was a very special occasion. Long awaited, it had to be postponed for a whole year first due to lockdown and then because we were not allowed to share out communion.

It was of course a great pity that so few of us were allowed to be present.

But the service we celebrated on Ascension Sunday was very festive and Kai and Ghin have now made the step from childhood to youth and have received their first communion in The Act of Consecration of Man.

Ben van Lieshout

Holywood

For Sunday services, please ring to book a place as we can only seat 12-14 people.

Ascension

Wednesday 19th May The Act of Consecration of Man 10.00

Whitsun

Sunday 23rd May The Act of Consecration of Man 10.00
Followed by talk and conversation:
"The flames of the Spirit"

(Trinity)

Wednesday 26th May The Act of Consecration of Man 10.00

Glencraig

Ascension

Thursday 20th May The Act of Consecration of Man 9.15

(Trinity)

Thursday 27th May The Act of Consecration of Man 9.15

Mourne Grange

Ascension

Tuesday 18th May Funeral Service for Ann Collins 15.00

Saturday 22nd May The Act of Consecration of Man
(Memorial service for Ann Collins) 10.15

Support Group 11.30

Friday 28 May Talk : The flames of the Spirit 16.00

Clanabogan

(Trinity)

Saturday 29th May The Act of Consecration of Man 10.30

The gospel for Whitsun is John 14: 23-31

Jesus replied, "He who truly loves me reveals my Spirit, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and prepare with him an everlasting dwelling. He who does not love me cannot reveal my Spirit. And the spirit power of the word that you hear is not from me; it is the speaking of the Father who sent me.

I have said this to you while I am still with you. But he who is called down, the health-bringing Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you everything and will awaken within you all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

You have heard how I said to you, 'I am going away, and yet I am coming to you'. If you loved me you would rejoice because I am going to the Father, for the Father is mightier than I am. I have told you now, before it happens, so that when it happens you may find trust. I no longer have much to say to you, for soon the prince of this world is coming. Yet over me he has no power. But the world shall see in this how I love the Father and how I act in accordance with the Father's purpose, as it was entrusted to me. Arise, let us be on our way.



A homily on John 14: 23-31

We are all surrounded by an invisible element. It is an element that is vital to our life. It weaves among all things. It is the air. Filled with life-giving oxygen, exhaled by the plants, the air sustains our life. Yet most of the time we remain unconscious of it.

There is another invisible element that weaves among all things, that surrounds and sustains the very nature of the universe. This invisible, omnipresent element is God's love. God's love for all of His creation surrounds everything, sustains everything, gives everything existence and life.

After their apparent loss of Christ at His Ascension, His disciples were encapsulated by grief. After ten days Christ sends His and His Father's healing Spirit of Love. This Spirit of Love, of understanding and comfort now not only surrounds them, but in fact enters into them. Christ and His Father make it possible for their radiant, life-giving and sustaining love to begin to enter and operate from within human souls.

This is what He means when He says: He who truly loves me reveals my Spirit, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and prepare with him an everlasting dwelling. (John14:23) But we need to make space for Him in our hearts.



A prayer for Whitsun by Adam Bittleston

Thou Holy fire, making thy home in us,
When we at peace can see and serve the truth,
Make strong in us the memory of Christ;
Bring to our tongues His World-renewing Word.

Thou gracious Light, uniting distant men
In certainty on paths of active thought,
Make clear to us the charge of destiny;
Bring to our heads Thy World-renewing Hope.

Thou healing Breath, who in the body's depths,
Restorest harmony with heaven's Will,
Let live in us the order of the stars;
Bring to our hearts their World-renewing Joy.