A Message from Godfrey

When the Holy Spirit came to the Upper Room where the disciples were praying on Pentecost, ten days after our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, it was with great power. We are told that the Spirit came in the form of a driving wind and "tongues as of fire" (Acts 2:3) descended on each of them.

We are told that immediately the spirit transformed the timid disciples and enabled them to proclaim Christ's Word with apostolic zeal!

They now fully understood the significance of our Lord's Passion: Namely, that His death and resurrection made it possible for them, and indeed for *all of us*, to join Him in His *Heavenly* kingdom in Eternal Life, not in some *Earthly* kingdom for Israel.

The disciples started speaking boldly about God in languages that they didn't even know, much to the amazement of those who heard them. Most of those early listeners were devout Jews staying in Jerusalem "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). They were in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish festival of Shavout, which commemorates the harvest.

In addition, about 3000 people were baptized that day after hearing St. Peter's passionate message calling for repentance and conversion (Acts 2:14-41). This was coming from the man who had denied Christ three times less than two months earlier!

We may not be transformed quite as suddenly by the Holy Spirit as the disciples were. The story of Pentecost can help each of us listen to Christ's guidance through His Spirit!

Amongst many fine Pentecost hymns is one of my favourites, sung particularly at Pentecost and ordinations or whenever the church prays for the intervention of the Holy Spirit for whatever reason.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire;
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sev'nfold gifts impart.

Thy blessèd unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love;
Enable with perpetual light
The dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soilèd face
With the abundance of Thy grace;
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;
Where Thou art Guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of both, to be but One;
That through the ages all along
This, this may be our endless song.

The first verse of the Veni Creator talks about the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit. Paul reminds us what they are in his letter to the Galatians
"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness". Immediately we see the tension that the Holy Spirit brings to us. How do we marry these gentle virtues to the rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire?

When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism or Confirmation are we touched by invisible flames or blown by an invisible wind? The answer is not clear but there are moments in each of our lives when we may have experienced things that we cannot explain in a rational way.

Pentecost is often referred to as the birth day of the Church. The day when the church came to terms that Jesus, God the Son, had gone and that he was returning as God, Holy Spirit.

One of the striking characteristics of the early church in the day of Pentecost was that they were together "***with one accord***". The word "***accord***" means "***to have one mind.***" These early disciples, all 120, **1:15**, were united in their desire to seek the face of the Lord, **1:14**! Unity was the calling card of the early church, and it should mark us as well. If we want the Lord's presence and power in these days, then God's people are going to have walk together in unity. ***We Need Another Pentecost***! We need a move of God in these days like the early church enjoyed in those days. But, if that is to happen, there must be unity and purpose among God's people.

That is why we are going to think about how the church here in Stoke D'Abernon would re-act to a Pentecost experience that brought change and challenge-that brought transformation and trust. Today we celebrate that power, the coming of the Holy Spirit to restore the image and power of God in our lives and in and through our Church. The comings and goings of Easter, the Ascension and Pentecost are finished. God is in his earth, in our lives if we will allow Him.

Amen.