

The Feast of PENTECOST, 2020
Virtual Grace

Organ Prelude - *Choral varié sur le theme 'Veni Creator'* M. Duruflé

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello and welcome again to “Virtual Grace”
from Grace Episcopal Church in Honesdale, PA,
on this holy feast day -
as we celebrate Christ’s gift of the Holy Spirit
on Pentecost - “Pente” = 50, 50 days after Easter.
Christ offers us - each one of us - the power of the Holy Spirit -
to work God’s wonder in our own lives,
as we are able wherever broken-ness, fear and pain makes itself manifest
to spread God’s love, peace and joy -
with that miraculous, mysterious, wondrous power
of the Holy Spirit.

For any who are just joining us, let me introduce myself:
I’m Fr. Ed, the rector of our parish.

We are grateful to all who have been walking “Virtual Grace” these past
months,
and are offering thanksgiving that we can open our doors for worship -
sadly, still with limitations and regulations for safety for all.
For that reason, we are glad to continue offering these video services.

Remember, if you are in any pastoral need at all, call me, 24/7.

I am more than ready to come to your spiritual aid and visit -
sadly, still with a mask!

We are grateful for those who have been able to make your sacrifices
in offerings and contributions.

If you are able, help us to continue the various ministries of Grace Church
through your contributions.

Come now, and let us bless the Lord together.

In the name of God the Creator, ✚ God the Sustainer, God who Sanctifies. Amen.

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith,
strengthen us in all goodness, ✝ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us
in eternal life. Amen.

Join with me, as you are able, in offering God praise in The Gloria.

CANTICLE -

Glory to God

BCP p.356

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, p. 227

Let us pray:

O God, who on this day taught the hearts of your faithful people by
sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same

Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOLY SCRIPTURE

FIRST READING

1 Corinthians 12: 4-13

A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Church at Corinth.
Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. ⁵ There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. ⁶ There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to all for their particular service. ⁷ The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. ⁸ The Spirit gives one person a message full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge. ⁹ One and the same Spirit gives faith to one person, while to another person he gives the power to heal. ¹⁰ The Spirit gives one person the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one person he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said. ¹¹ But it is one and the same Spirit who does all this; as he wishes, he gives a different gift to each person. ¹² Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. ¹³ In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.

Here ends the Reading.

CANTICLE

Benedictus es, Domine

Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers; *
you are worthy of praise; glory to you.

Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you forever.

Glory to you in the splendor of your temple; *
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.

Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you forever.

Glory to you, beholding the depths; *
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.

Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

SECOND READING

John 20: 19-23

A reading from the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. John.
Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

¹⁹ It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ²⁰ After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Here ends the reading.

MEDITATION

Around the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at General Seminary in New York,
is inscribed words that we who are preparing for the priesthood
seen every day during services.

For three years these words encircled us each and every day:

*Accipe Spiritum Sanctum + Quorum remiseras peccata remittuntur eis:
et quorum retinueris retenta sunt.*

Heavy words given us

as we struggled personally with God's call to each of us for ordained ministry,
taken from today's Gospel commission from Jesus:

Accept the Holy Spirit: whoever's sins you remit, they are remitted;
whoever's sins you retain, they are retained.

For some reason, the Church's set of readings brings us back to Easter night.

We, like the Disciples, are locked in fear,

and yet Jesus tells us to accept the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That's the Latin form.

I'm reminded that in the original Greek, the word is a command: "Take."

No questions allowed.

The problem with a gift, is that it has to be taken, accepted, and used.

Another shoe drops, as in the old ordination rite, these words are added:

"For the office and work in the Church of God."

On Easter night, there are no priests, no deacons,

but there are fear-filled faithful workers in the kingdom who are gathered.

Years ago, I wrote Introductions which are read by the Lector.

Here is what I wrote for the reading from Corinthians for today:

There are many ministries and gifts in the Church -
from consecrated and ordained to the variety of lay ministries.
How do you use your gifts to minister to others,
and participate in the life of the Church?

Do *you* forgive the sins of others through the power of the Holy Spirit?

Do you retain them, hold fast on to those sins done by others?

The hidden sub-text in Christ's command is that *we* retain the sins of others.

We hold the sins of others in our minds, our hearts, our souls.

Grudges, resentments, anger, hatred, even violence.

Yet, what we do with the sins of others can be made holy in God's Spirit.

That is one of the difficult things of being a Christian.

It is a high calling, higher even than going to seminary and being ordained.

Each Christian is called to perform "the Office and Work in the Church of God"

to remit - that is to offer forgiveness - for the sins of others.

Whether we take it upon ourselves is a test of how we accept - *if* we accept -

God's Holy Spirit to change *our* lives,

in order to be the agent of change the lives of others

for love, peace, justice, and joy.

It is a matter of the continuing Redemption which Jesus gives

which he gave that Easter night 2000 years ago,

and the gift Jesus continues to give us - his new Disciples -

as we walk in the Way of Love.

May God empower us to do as he commands and stretches out his hand in offering.

And may we accept,

take and cherish,

that most Holy Gift

of God's power working in and through each of us.

AMEN!

The CREED

Let us now profess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection \oplus of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS

BCP Form II, adapted

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop and Kevin our Bishop; for the Diocesan staff; and for all ministers and people. I ask your prayers for this parish family, and for all who are isolated from their community of faith.

I ask your prayers for those who govern and hold authority in the nations; that they may be led to govern with equity and justice to benefit the entire human family. Inspire them to discover new ways of overcoming divisions and mistrust. We pray for Donald, the President of the United States, the Congress, Thomas our Governor, and Sarah, mayor of our Borough.

I ask your prayers for those who rejoice this week; for Ellen and Mike Cory, celebrating their marriage; for those who celebrate birthdays and anniversaries: especially Billy; for those like Dylan who experience new awareness of Christ's presence in their lives.

I ask your prayers for the poor, for those who are on furlough or have lost their jobs; for the sick, especially Libby and Russ; the hungry; the oppressed, and anxious; and those in prison, especially Justin and Mitchell. I ask your prayers for those anticipating death.

I ask your prayers for the departed; those who have died by violent acts, and those who have succumbed to the complications of COVID-19.

I ask your thanksgiving for families with whom we live and love; thanksgivings for first responders, health-care workers and all who offer of themselves for the betterment of others.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, “Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you:” Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

Let us now pray together in the words which Christ himself taught us, saying:

Our Father...

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Organ Postlude -

“Come down, O Love Divine”

Hymnal 1982 #516

31 May 2020
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The feast of
PENTECOST

31 March 2020