

Pentecost St Michael's Sunday 31st May 2020
Zoom 10am Acts 2. 1-21 John 20. 19-23

‘Creative Spirit’ - an Icon of Pentecost

Contains elements of Biblical pictures of God's spirit:

Dove – reminding us of when the Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism. Notice that the dove is not earthed, perching on a branch, but rather is a free spirit pervading all that is.

Fire - sparks from a fire reminding us of the tongues of fire that the disciples experienced. Echoes here of the two who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus; and as he opened the scriptures to them they said, 'did not our hearts burn within us'; or, as MP, 'As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you, now and for ever'.

Movement – there is a restlessness in this picture reminding us of a blustery, 'rushing mighty' wind in the house where they were. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus he said, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again." The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3. 6-8)



But there is something else about this picture. It is the only image I have ever taken with my camera where I have not seen the object of my photography beforehand. This picture was created simply by me holding the shutter open and moving my camera gently around in front of a firework display. I was truly amazed at the outcome. So this picture came to remind me of the Spirit being active at the beginning of the Old Testament when God's Spirit 'was hovering over the waters' (Genesis 1. 2) And in due time this same creative spirit became part of what it means to be human, to be made in God's image. Could it be that when I opened the shutter of my camera at that particular moment, God's creative Spirit so moved in me as to produce this amazing image; or do you dismiss this as a complete fluke?

Today we celebrate the moment when God's spirit was poured out on all flesh, as Peter explains. "Poured out on all flesh" – not just on the Christians, not just on the church created to bear the responsibility of reminding the world of this event in history. When we pray this day, 'Come Holy Spirit', we are not asking for God to do something he has already done. Rather we are asking him to open our eyes to the activity of God's Spirit in our own hearts, in our families, in the people we meet, in any circumstance where we can see the fruits of God's abundant Spirit in expressions of love, joy, peace to name but three. Come Creative Spirit, come!