## A reading from the book of Genesis Chapter 11, beginning at the first verse

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. 2And as they migrated from the east,\* they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.’ And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’ 5The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. 6And the Lord said, ‘Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.’ 8So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused\* the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Hear the word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God**

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## A reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2 beginning at the first verse.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Hear the word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God**

 **PENTECOST SUNDAY John 14:8-17, 25-27**

Philip said to Jesus, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ 9Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If in my name you ask me\* for anything, I will do it.

15 ‘If you love me, you will keep\* my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,\* to be with you for ever. 17This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in\* you.

25 ‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26But the Advocate,\* the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

**In the name of the One God, Father and Mother of us all, Word made flesh and Holy Spirit**. (SLIDE 1) Today we celebrate one of the most significant feasts of the church along with Easter and Christmas; and that is the sending of the Holy Spirit amongst us. Pentecost is usually understood as the foundation or beginning of the Christian church or as we heard in the children’s story, the birthday of the church.

Although of course, the Spirit of God was already present at the very creation of all things. We heard in the Psalm this morning, “When you send forth your Spirit, you renew the face of the earth.”

In Luke’s gospel, (SLIDE 2) The young Jesus stands in the synagogue in Nazareth and reads a passage from the prophet Isaiah: “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind- to set free those who are oppressed”.

Jesus had a sense that the Spirit of God was indeed upon him – he closes the book and says to the gathered people, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” The same Spirit present in creation, the breath of God, has come upon the person of Jesus and as we hear in today’s gospel, this same Spirit will be sent upon those first followers of Jesus and indeed that same Spirit is sent upon us also:

Jesus says in today’s gospel: You will be given ‘another Advocate to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth.’ And God’s Spirit is empowering if we can truly believe it: Jesus tells his companions, (SLIDE 3) “In fact, you will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” Greater works than these: that is quite a statement.

The scholar Edward Schillebeeckx, says of the Spirit of God- it is the gift of the risen Christ. Later in John’s Gospel we hear from Jesus himself, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, The Counsellor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 17:7) Jesus and the Father are one and the gift of the one God is the power of the Holy Spirit. And that Spirit is present with us today.

Today’s gosepl readings would also do quite nicely for next week when we acknowledge the Trinitarian nature of the One God: “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” Jesus and the Father are bound together through the power of the Spirit and animate all that is through the power of the Spirit.

There is a danger of seeing Pentecost as an isolated event that took place in the first century, but in fact the Spirit of God has always been present in creation, both at the dawn of time but also in the ongoing creation here and now. (SLIDE 4)

The late Denis Edwards writes, “The story of the Spirit's work in our world embraces the universe itself. The Creator Spirit is the dynamic, energizing power of God enabling our observable universe to exist and to evolve from the first moment of its existence fourteen billion years ago."

And, alongside the person of Jesus, the Holy Spirit remains present, intimately close, and continues today to animate all aspects of creation — human and nonhuman alike. The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit is the driving power of ongoing creation that enables all creatures to exist, evolve, and flourish." (SLIDE 5) CREATION IS NOT A BACKDROP FOR HUMAN DRAMA – IT IS THE DISCLOSURE OF GOD’S IDENTITY. Creation reveals to us the very nature of God.

The spiritual implications of this claim are many. It affirms that God has a direct, unmediated relationship with all creatures! Jurgen Moltmann beautifully describes this as the "unspeakable closeness of God" to all creation.

The Franscican priest, Dan Horan says, “In our deeply anthropocentric tendency to view God's relationship as focused solely on the human family we can lose sight of the fact that God loved all creation into existence and continuously sustains all life in the Spirit.”

Pope Francis wrote quite recently in the encyclical Laudato Si, "The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge" . And something new is emerging. (SLIDE 6)

Today communities across the world and certainly here in Australia are demanding that governments stop to consider what damage has been done by humankind to our environment and to search for ways to repair this damage. The effects of climate change are no longer a matter for debate (if they ever were!) – we see before our eyes in Australia, extreme flooding, bushfires and we see our neighbours in the Pacific coping with rising sea levels. We are being called to change.

May we take time during this celebration of Pentecost not only to recall the Holy Spirit's enduring presence in human history, but to come to see more clearly the divine action of the Spirit throughout the broader community of God's creation.

May our celebration of the outpouring of the Creator Spirit at Pentecost inspire us to care deeply for this earth and all of its peoples.

May the Spirit of God bless each and every one of you.