

Pentecost - 31st May 2020

If you've seen the Disney film 'Finding Nemo', you will know about the **East Australian Current** which functions as a high-speed motorway in the ocean. Clown-fish, Nemo had become separated from his Father and that was not okay! He was struggling but shared his troubles with others, including Crush, a Turtle who said, 'Hey dude...jump in'. 'Jump in' was an invitation to plunge into the EAC...exhilarating and terrifying at the same time but also clear, refreshing and life-giving because Nemo was shaken up and stirred into accepting the challenges he had to face so he could see his Father again.

Wasn't it a relief to hear the message last week, 'It's okay not feel okay'? Our hair needs cutting; our hearts are wrecked by hearing the news each day; people face hunger, thirst, loss of income, loneliness, panic, shielding, illness and death. There are days when we don't 'feel okay', despite the sunshine. And it seems to be about timing. Good comedy depends on timing; plentiful harvests depend on timing, and weather, shopping without queuing depends on timing. And, in a timely way, during Mental Health week front-line/key workers and our leaders were voicing the collective message, 'It's okay not feel okay'. A relief for most of us. This may have been how the disciples felt in the 10 days after Jesus' Ascension. Put bluntly, Jesus was with them, lost to them by death on the cross, with them after the resurrection and then he ascended, telling the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. Maybe that felt not okay...

And, according to John, life carried on as normal. The people of Galilee were celebrating, 50 days after Passover, the first wheat harvest called the Feast of Weeks/First Fruits; in Hebrew, Shavuot. Shavuot coincided with remembering when the Torah, the Law, was given to Moses. So, Pentecost combined joy and gratefulness for both. But, let's be clear here, celebrating involved eating/drinking. Surely no-one would be thirsty after a feast, yet John tells us Jesus stood up and invited those who **were** still thirsty to go to him to drink what he called Living water.

So, Jesus knew things were not okay, he knew what the thirst was. It was thirsty work trying to follow a list of laws in order to receive God's blessing, trying to live up to images or expectations of others and especially trying to manage Life without a relationship with His Father.

Maybe you have thirsts? A thirst for knowledge, a thirst for getting out and about again, a thirst for righting the wrongs of the world. Even if we could slake

these thirsts, Jesus told the woman at the well, earlier in the Gospel, we would still be thirsty again. So, what it is we are thirsty for?

Our Pentecost celebration is a timely reminder; we need God's Holy Spirit to free us from ourselves, to release us from fears and addictions deep within and to know 'it's okay not to feel okay' about what is happening.

Listen to John in different translations: The NRSV says 'Out of the believer's **heart flow rivers of living water**'. The Message states, 'Rivers of living water will **brim and spill out of the depths**. The King James version declares, out of a person's '**belly shall flow** rivers of living water'. The heart, the depths, the belly'.

Jesus was pointing to the Holy Spirit of God as something potent bubbling up within these places. Acts 2 vividly described the planting of this Pentecost seed. The fruits of that seed in 2020 years later are our experiences of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Everything in between the planting in Acts and the fruiting today are Jesus' history, 'his story' in our lives, individually and collectively.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is like giving birth to a vision, like the prophet Joel's. Hearts of stone become hearts of flesh in which it is okay to feel chaos, pain and fear as well as compassion, hope and Love. On that day the disciples' hearts changed; they had visions of a new future, fulfilling the past. They felt it in the depths of their hearts and bellies and saw it like flames burning above them. They spoke in different languages so, wherever people had come from to celebrate Pentecost, they heard the **new** Good News.

Celebrating Pentecost this morning is our shaking up, stirring us to accept the challenges we face. And the Good News is...we don't do this on our own. We have Living Water, a life-giving river of fast-flowing, refreshment, flowing out through Jesus and falling on us like tongues of fire, whom we call the Holy Spirit of God.



Holy Spirit
Sent by the Father,
Ignite in us your holy fire;
Strengthen your children
With the gift of faith,
Revive your church
With the breath of love,
And renew the face of the earth,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen