

Sermon on Pentecost and Queen's Platinum Jubilee
June 5th 2022

May I speak in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

There are moments in all our lives, when all that is precious rises up, and the common thread of humanity that is often forgotten shows itself in all its glory.

I think most of us would agree that this weekend, as we celebrate both Pentecost and the Platinum Jubilee, is one such moment.

Two special events. Both with a shared message for us today. That message feels like one of unity.

Unity is felt in the gift bestowed on us by Pentecost, the Festival of the Holy Spirit. The gift of Pentecost is nothing less than the beginnings of the Christian church. As the Holy Spirit descends on the apostles, filling them with the holy fire of God, they are empowered to spread the good news of Christ's gospel in a vast number of different languages. It is the start of a global and unified message for all of humanity.

The gift of unity has also been displayed by the many hundreds of thousands of people here and around the world giving thanks for 70 years of gracious and unwavering public service by Queen Elizabeth. It has been a time to acknowledge those unifying values that lift all of us up; values of kindness and endurance, of generosity and patience, of optimism and hope.

We will all have our own favourite moments from the Jubilee weekend. One of mine was watching Fr Simon boogying energetically with the Tropical Isles carnival troupe on Friday; his groovy sunglasses going surprisingly well with his priestly cassock.

Another moment was watching on Thursday night as beacons of fire were lit up and down the country, by all sorts of people, young and old, from a range of different parts of the country. The fiery torches seemed to shine out across the land, creating a magical moment of togetherness.

Of course, *we know* that living together isn't always easy. And it's often a challenge to look forward with hope and positivity.

In his new poem, 'Three Sonatas for a Queen', the poet Ben Okri stresses the importance as he puts it: "of rising each day to do the job you are called to do, with calmness and a quiet humour, of not giving up...when all around darkness prowls."

Giving thanks doesn't always need flaming torches, speaking in tongues, parades or fly-overs. Appreciation can also be found in the quiet acknowledgment of the goodness we feel around us. The heartfelt thank you we say silently to people we may never meet, but deeply value. The thanks we feel for those we love and cherish, and our gratitude to those no longer with us, but still close in our hearts.

Today is also 'National Thank You Day'. This is a new celebration, it started here in the UK last year, during the Pandemic. Thank You Day is only in its second year, but is already supported widely, including by among others the Archbishop of Canterbury. The idea is simply to say thank you a bit more intentionally with a bit more thought than we would ordinarily.

So as fellow worshippers at St Peter's, I invite each of us, after the service today. If you are happy to so, to seek out someone to say thank you to, perhaps someone you wouldn't normally thank, just to reach out and express appreciation. Thank you for being you, for being here, for doing what you do.

And as we offer our gratitude on this glorious Pentecost Jubilee Sunday, I pray that every one of us may feel the gift of unity.

Unity with each other, and unity with God. The God who loves us unconditionally, waits patiently for us to come to Him and reigns quietly and eternally in all our hearts.

AMEN