

Session One

Wednesday 10 May

The Acts of the Apostles 1: 1-5

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'.

So, when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Hildegard von Bingen

The word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greenening, all creativity. The word manifests itself in every creature.

Pope Francis, from Laudato Si 2015

Nature is filled with words of love.

The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways.

Prayer

Give us this day for bread the Word of God from Heaven.

(From a version of the Lord's Prayer found in the ancient Irish Gospels).

Session Two

Wednesday 14 June

The Acts of the Apostles 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'In the last days, God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

The Holy Spirit as Caritas by Hildegard von Bingen

"I am the Supreme and Fiery Force who kindles every living spark....as I circled the whirling sphere with my upper wings (that is, with Wisdom), rightly I ordained it. And I am the fiery life of the Divine essence: I flame above the beauty of the fields; I shine in the waters; I burn in the sun, the moon, and the stars. And, with the airy wind, I quicken all things vitally by an unseen, all-sustaining life. For the air is alive in the verdure and the flowers; the waters flow as if they lived; the sun too lives in its light; and when the moon wanes it is rekindled by the light of the sun, as if it lived anew. Even the stars glisten in their light as if alive."

Prayer

God of wind and fire.
May we recognise your Holy Spirit
In the wildness of nature
As much as in the still small voice within us.
Amen.

Session Three

Wednesday 12 July

Book of Wisdom Sirach

Sophia (the spirit of Wisdom) I loved
I sought her out in my youth, I fell in love with her beauty
and longed to make her my bride...
Once you have grasped her never let her go.
In the end she will transform herself into pure joy:

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem by David Scott

She is in love with someone, I can tell.
When she sits, she sits alone and still.
Her shrouded face, encompassing profound denials,
Surfaces in light, and says 'I Will'.

Her movement speaks of shadows, edges,
And who it is she loves is not found here,
Not there, but moving from the centre
of her longing, is with her everywhere.

Prayer

Dear God
Give me the grace to live a life full of joy and wisdom so that I am constantly aware of the beauty and
giftedness of the world to which I've been invited by you to share and replenish. Amen.

Session Four

Wednesday 9 August

Romans 1: 19-20

Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For
since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have
been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Thomas Berry

... the foundations of a new historical period, the Ecozoic era, have been established in every realm
of human affairs. The mythic vision has been set into place. The distorted dream of an industrial
paradise is being replaced by the more viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence
within an ever-renewing, organic-based Earth community. The dream... becomes the myth that both
guides and drives the action.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Our task is to take this earth so deeply and wholly into ourselves that it will resurrect within our
being.

Gary Snyder

It's only a temporary turbulence I'm setting myself against, I'm in line with the big flow.

Prayer

God, to whom all hearts are open, and to whom all desires speak, and from whom no secrets are hidden, I beseech you to cleanse my heart's purpose with the inexpressible gift of your grace, so that I may perfectly love you and worthily praise you, Amen.

(Collect of the Mass of the Holy Spirit)

Session Five**Wednesday 13 September****Romans 13: 8-10:**

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbour as yourself". Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Rainer Maria Rilke, from Letters to a Young Poet

I beg you, to have patience with everything
unresolved in your heart
and to try to love the questions themselves
as if they were locked rooms
or books written in a foreign language

Do not search for answers
which could not be given to you now
because you would not be able to live them
And the point is to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps, then, someday, far in the future,
you will gradually,
without even noticing it,
live your way into the answer.

Prayer

God help us to change.

To change ourselves and to change our world.

To know the need for it. To deal with the pain of it.

To feel the joy of it.

To undertake the journey without understanding the destination.

The art of gentle revolution.

Amen.

Michael Leunig - <https://www.leunig.com.au/8-works>

Session Six

Wednesday 11 October

Mathew 21: 42-46

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?. Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls". When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Unbroken by Rashani Réa

There is a brokenness

out of which comes the unbroken,

a shatteredness

out of which blooms the unshatterable.

There is a sorrow

beyond all grief which leads to joy

and a fragility

out of whose depths emerges strength.

There is a hollow space too vast for words

through which we pass with each loss,

out of whose darkness we are sanctioned into being.

There is a cry deeper than all sound

whose serrated edges cut the heart

as we break open
to the place inside which is unbreakable
and whole
while learning to sing.

Prayer

Lord, I cannot fathom or hold you;
I can only ask you to take hold of me.
I cannot grasp or contain you
in a formula or tradition;
I can only ask you to fill me with yourself,
and make me part
of the mystery of your presence in the world.
Amen.

Angela Ashwin - from 'The Book of a Thousand Prayers'

Session Seven

Wednesday 15 November

1 Corinthians 13: 8-13

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

A Reflection on the meaning of 'liminal'

"I think of liminal as the in-between space, where the veil between the worlds is thin. Thinnest of all on All Hallows Eve."

Patrick White

Real knowledge is only ever understood intermittently: strenuously, the result of a daily wrestling match and partially, by glimmer through a veil.

Prayer

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply in to the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.