

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Rev. Valentin Dedji. If you are well enough and able, why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time when you would normally be sharing with others in church - pray for them as they pray for you.

Call to worship

Welcome & Invocation:

Dear friends, on this Sunday after Pentecost, it is my great joy to connect with you at this moment on this on-line platform. According to the Christian liturgical calendar, this Sunday after Pentecost is called 'Trinity Sunday'. During this service, we'll explore the 'go-between' role that the Holy Spirit plays in revealing to God's people, the will of Jesus as commissioned by God 'The Father'. Thank you for welcoming me in your homes. We meet in the name of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen!

For those who may not know me, I am Rev. Valentin Dedji, a minister in the Enfield Methodist Circuit, in North London. Our first hymn is an invitation to celebrate the nature and mystery of God through the Holy Trinity.

Opening Hymn: StF 11 '*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*'

Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here

https://youtu.be/zzM9P_Gqw-s

1. Holy, holy, holy
Lord, God Almighty
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee

Holy, holy, holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons blessed Trinity!

2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns
around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert and art and evermore shall be.

3 Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name

in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons,
blessed Trinity!

Reginald Herber (1783-1826)

Prayers of Adoration:

O Loving God, as we gather to worship You,
we invoke the dynamic Spirit,
breathe upon our hearts today;
that we may your power inherit
hear us, Spirit, as we pray:
fill the vacuum that enslaves us -
emptiness of heart and soul;
and, through Jesus Christ who saves us,
give us life and make us whole.

Voice of God, prophetic Spirit,
speak to every heart today
to encourage or prohibit
urging action or delay:
clear the vagueness which impedes us-

come, enlighten mind and soul;
and, through Jesus Christ who leads us,
teach the truth that makes us whole. **Amen!**

1st Bible Reading: Romans 5: 1-5 (NRSV)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.**

2nd Bible Reading: John 16: 12-15 (NRSV)

¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.** ¹⁴ He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Sermon: Seeking the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit

Dear friends,

Just as we need the right key to open any door, there are some Biblical principles that act as keys to our ability to tap into what I call the cascade of God's Love and His guidance for His people today.

This leads us to the following extract that caught my attention from our Bible reading in Romans 5:5: ***'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.'***

1)- Getting Drenched in the cascade of God's Love

This reminds me of my first visit to Chatsworth House, in 2008 in the Derbyshire Dales. It is one of the finest grand houses in Britain. The house and its gardens are open to the public. In the garden is a huge cascading fountain which runs all the way down a hillside in a series of steps. The water flows from one step to another. The public are allowed to paddle in the fountain and walk up the steps.

This is a good image of God's love. The Father is the fountain of life and love, and His life and love fill the Son and overflows to us, through the Holy Spirit and then through us, it keeps on flowing to a needy world and broken world.

Where does all the water come from? From the top. It's not that we have to generate love. The main key factor here is that we need to keep 'connected' to the source of the cascade God's love. As Jesus Himself put it, this means to 'abide' in Him.

2)- Getting energized by God's Love

St Paul offers us a list of great 'spiritual tools' that can help us to keep 'connected' to the source of God's fountain of love: Faith, Hope, Grace, Endurance, Good Character, Righteousness... the list is expandable. In St Paul's own words, ***'since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame.'*** (Romans 5: 2-5). So when through our personal commitment or through a charitable organization, we are

doing our best ‘feeding the hungry’, ‘clothing the naked’, ‘visiting prisoners’, ‘offering hospitality’, as well as being there for the lonely and the elderly in our midst, we don’t bring love into existence through those gestures of compassion, screwing our faces up to get on with it. All we do is to re-activate the dynamic power that we receive from the cascading fountain of the Father’s unfailing love. As long as we remain connected to the source of God’s cascading love, we get drenched in love, until love flows out from us.

We live in a cold, graceless world. But when we step into the warmth of God’s love, our cold hearts are warmed up and our weary souls are energized. That was what happened to John Wesley one cold night, more precisely on the 24th May 1738, when experiencing confusing feelings upon his return from his missionary adventure to America, he felt that his heart became ‘strangely warmed’ again. He just needed to gather up his strength in order to go to Aldersgate Street where he exposed himself afresh to the sunshine of God’s love as he listened to the introduction to the Epistle of St Paul to Romans. The words of Charles Wesley through his famous hymn ‘And Can it be?’ (known as the Methodist Anthem), would be more suitable to describe what happens when one rediscovers the joy and the freedom to go sunbathing in the sunshine of God’s love:

.... *Thine eye diffused a quickening ray –
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went followed thee.*

Charles Wesley, 1707 – 1788), StF 345.

3)- Letting the Holy Spirit take Control

As we are today on Trinity Sunday, our gospel reading in John 16 helps us to understand the crucial role that the Holy Spirit plays in revealing to us the nature and mystery of our adoption in the divine family. In John 16:13 we read: **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.** The vocabulary that Jesus uses in that passage highlights the close connection between Jesus and the Spirit as well as the Spirit’s function of “further revealing” the same revelation that Jesus revealed during his earthly ministry. The fact that the Spirit speaks “whatever he hears” (v. 13) is in complete continuity with Jesus’s method of revealing only what hears from God. Even though Jesus is no longer physically present as the one who reveals God, we as believers can trust that Jesus and the Spirit share the same source of revelation which is God.

Since the Spirit takes what belongs to Jesus, and since what belongs to Jesus belongs to God, then even in Jesus's absence God's revelation to the world and to the church is still available — through the Spirit.

As we can see in John 16:12-15, we get the particular understanding according to which the Spirit recognizes two realities about how Christianity relates to its past and future. The first is that the revelation that took place in and through Jesus is fundamental for Christian identity. The second is that, as fundamental and eternal as Jesus' revelation is for Christians, the world will keep turning from the time that revelation first made itself known. The church in John's day, as well as today, and always finds itself trying to understand and live its faith in the midst of social, cultural, and global circumstances that change rapidly.

The question we are left with is whether we will listen to the Spirit and be open to newer and deeper understandings of our faith and to the implications of Jesus's revelation for us today. The internet, social media, and the 24-hour news cycle now give us a more immediate awareness of local, national, and global crises that challenge us for a Christian response, such as immigration and racial disparity in police treatment, to list just two examples. What is the Christian response to such realities?

What response is more true and faithful to Jesus' revelation? Can we, like John, trust the Spirit to guide us in discerning what it means to live out Christian faith today?

I pray that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may make the right decision for God's Glory. Amen!

Prayers of Intercession

Loving Jesus,

We come to you with no pretence
yet nourished by your grace.
We come as people needing love
within this time and place.

We pray for a world where every vulnerable person
finds welcome in a sheltered place,
where love is tender, undefiled,
and firmness intertwines with grace.

Lord Jesus, we pray for a nation just and fair
that seeks the welfare of all,
where leaders guide with prudent care
and nurture life for great and small.

We pray for our broken towns,
our neighbours hurt and bruised; We pray for persecuted
Christians across the world. We pray particularly for the
families of those Christians who were killed last Sunday in
Nigeria by gunmen at the end of the Pentecost service. You
alone Lord can heal the inner wounds of those families. May
you show them how old pains and wounds can be used
for new life.

We pray for families in our churches and local communities
that are bereaved and those who are struggling with all sorts
of diseases. We pray also for the lonely, those who are in
residential and nursing homes. May you give your divine
wisdom to medical doctors, paramedics, nurses and care
assistants.

Lord, may have mercy on us and show us your healing power.

We bring before the throne of Grace our broken selves,
confused and closed and tired;
then through your gift of healing grace,
may you awaken in us a new purpose.

We pray for a world where all have voice,
a place where humility and servanthood would reign
over a spirit of competition and selfishness.
Till then, may all have rightful choice

for compassion, solidarity and mutual care.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen!**

Final Hymn: 'StF 59 'Lord, the Light of Love is Shining'

Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/rce9UHYZwl4>

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us;
Set us free by the truth you now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.

Shine, Jesus, shine,

Fill this land with the Father's glory;

Blaze, Spirit, blaze,

Set our hearts on fire.

Flow, river, flow,

Flood the nations with grace and mercy;

Send forth your word,

Lord, and let there be light!

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,

Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.

***Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,
Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!***

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness.
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.

***Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,
Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,***

***Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!***

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Blessing:

May the LORD bless you and keep you;
May the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
May the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace. **Amen!**

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