

10<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
All Saints, Clifton

So, 2,000 year ago, approximately, Christ's Ascension occurred. What must it have been like for the Apostles? Forty-one days earlier they were desolate, their Lord had been taken from them and then suddenly He was back, forty days ago to be exact. The joy they must have felt. The days following were amazing, joyous, exciting, powerful.... And now, He is gone again. Just as they were getting used to having Jesus around again and all their hopes and dreams seemed a reality, He was gone - and just like that! One minute here, the next.... His comfort to them was a strange message that seemed meaningless to them:

Power from on high, baptized by the Holy Spirit

How could they possibly understand what they were waiting for, how to prepare themselves, what signs to look out for...

They were probably experiencing darkness again...

And that is what the next 9 days were, darkness, but with a glimmer of hope, they trusted in Jesus and knew that if He said that something was coming, it would come...

And it did! The rest is history!

But we too experience times in our lives when we don't feel Jesus' presence, when we wonder if we have ever really received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory  
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place,  
As earth became a part of heaven's story  
And heaven opened to his human face.  
We saw him go and yet we were not parted,  
He took us with him to the heart of things,  
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted

Is whole and heaven-centered now, and sings;  
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,  
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,  
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness  
And sing the waning darkness into light;  
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,  
Which all creation waits to see revealed.

(Malcolm Guite, *Sound of the Seasons*)

We have an opportunity to relive those 9 days now, now in that we know what happened and what can happen.

The time between Ascension and Pentecost is traditionally known as a Novena, 9 days of special prayers to bring the Holy Spirit to those who don't know God.

This year the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, invites us to join in with others around the world to pray. We are invited to pray for an individual who does not know God, who has not met Jesus, who has not experienced the Holy Spirit.

And it is that simple! We simply pray, Come, Holy Spirit... Come into our lives, come into the life of... Come, Holy Spirit, come...