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Pentecost and beyond

In mid-May, the Church celebrated the festival of “Pentecost”, commonly known in Britain as ‘Whitsun’. Generally associated with a Bank Holiday, in the Church it is the celebration of the moment, 50 days after Jesus was crucified, when the gift of God’s own Spirit was released on those who believed in Jesus. Frightened and in hiding, his followers were transformed, going out into Jerusalem to speak publicly of all that had happened. They not only spoke freely but, amazingly, were understood by the mass of pilgrims from all over the known world who were in the city at that time.



This dynamic transformation was understood in two ways. Firstly, God’s primary revelation of his life and his way had been to Jews. This was now expanded, as a revelation to the whole world. Jews had long identified one major characteristic of God’s way to be to gather, rather than to scatter people. The fulfilment of this desire was now to be the work of the Church as well as of the people of Israel. Secondly, we understand that God’s Spirit is offered indiscriminately, to all, regardless of gender, race or past history.

The Church has not always been the best example of these things and many in the Church regret and repent of this. The 20th century saw steps taken to bring the fractured body of the Church back into relationship, at first in formal negotiation, now, in the 21st century, in more relaxed, open and friendly co-operation. (The local [Food Bank](#) is an example of this.)

We believe that God continues to gather, to pull down barriers and to encourage people to live together in peace. This should impact on how we vote on June 23rd. More especially, it should bring some humility and caution as we consider how to engage with people, we find difficult or different from ourselves.