

THY KINGDOM COME

Prayer
Journal

Written by

THE ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY


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*Come, Holy Ghost,
our souls inspire,
and lighten with
celestial fire.
Thou the anointing
Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold
gifts impart.*

The aim of this small booklet is to enable and stimulate your personal prayers over these days of Thy Kingdom Come.

Beginning on Ascension Day until Pentecost Sunday, Christians around the globe, from all denominations, are invited to hold as a focus for their prayers a desire for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit – upon them, their friends and the church. The Holy Spirit is God's promised presence with us, enabling us to be witnesses ourselves of the heavenly Father's revolutionary love for us in Christ first-hand, and then be witnesses to Jesus to the world.

The prayer is simply,

"Come Holy Spirit"

And the promise is sure:

⁹ 'So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!' [Luke 11:9-13]

These are days set aside for asking, searching, and knocking for the gift of the Holy Spirit. This will be done by focussing each day's prayer on one of the images of the Holy Spirit from the Bible: Power, Breath, Fire... Each reflection will follow the same pattern: *Enter*, as we reflect on the image of the Holy Spirit; *Hear*, as we read God's word; *Respond*, as we consider what this means for us; and *pray* as we engage with God.

And we pray this, not merely for ourselves, but for five friends, neighbours, colleagues or family members for whom it is our greatest hope and desire that they themselves my hear the call of Jesus and join us along the Way.

1

2

3

4

5

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.

[St Augustine of Hippo]

Power



ENTER

Look around you – what can you see that only works because of the energy supplied to it? Where do you need God's energy today?

HEAR

'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.'

[Acts 1:8]


Jesus speaks His final earthly words on this Ascension Day. We hear a commissioning – disciples are to be witnesses. How can we fulfil such a calling? Every instruction of God is grounded in a guarantee. Every command is based on a promise. For Jesus knows there is no way we can be witnesses without the power of the Holy Spirit. After all, Jesus Himself, 'the true and faithful witness', was utterly reliant on the Holy Spirit. Why would we think it any different for us?

RESPOND

How do you respond to Jesus' charge to be His witness? In what areas are you in need of the empowerment of His Spirit? Name your five, the five people you have committed to pray for during these 11 days, before the Lord.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... renew me that I might be a fitting witness to Christ and open those I have named before you to your life, that they themselves come to be witnesses to Your love.'



O My God!
Source of all mercy!
I acknowledge Your
sovereign power.

While recalling the wasted
years that are past,
I believe that You, Lord, can
in an instant turn this loss to gain.

Miserable as I am,
yet I firmly believe that
You can do all things.

Please restore to me the time lost,
giving me Your grace,
both now and in the future,
that I may appear before You in glory.

Amen

[after Teresa of Avila]

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair and bangs, blowing a dandelion seed head. The background is dark and out of focus, with some dandelion seeds floating in the air. The word 'Breath' is written in a large, white, cursive font in the upper right corner.

Breath

ENTER

On an average day we take 20,000 breaths.

In this moment be aware of your breath. Thank God for it.

HEAR

²¹ Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

²² When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' [John 20:21-22]

In the story of the day of resurrection we notice how many echoes there are of our beginnings – or, literally, our Genesis. It's on the first day, in a garden, and now when Jesus meets His disciples, He performs a parallel action to that of the Lord God in Genesis 2 who 'formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.'

This is not a return to the past – but an anticipation of the future. The breath of the resurrected one is the Holy Spirit – the life of God's existence. It is air which can only be ours because Jesus breathes on us.

RESPOND

As you breathe in and out five times name your five before the Lord.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... breathe Your breath into me that I may be Your new creation, and breathe into life those I hold before You.'

Breathe on
me breath
of God

Fill me
with life
anew

That I may
love what
thou dost
love

And do
what thou
wouldst do.

A large rectangular area on the right side of the page, outlined in green, containing horizontal lines for writing.

Water

ENTER

Have you ever been uncomfortably thirsty?
What did your first gulp of water taste like?
What are you thirsty for now?

HEAR

*O God, You are my God, I seek You,
my soul thirsts for You;
my flesh faints for You,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
[Psalm 63:1]*

Of course, we would prefer not to admit it. It feels rather a failure of our spiritual life, but our lives are arid and bone-dry, parched and barren. We are desperately in need of God.


It is pride that stops us admitting this; but it is only when we concede how dry our lives are that we will turn, desperate, to the one who promises the living water of the Spirit. The Lord is waiting for us to express our need and desire for His presence.

RESPOND

Consider your spiritual dehydration. Consider what the lives of your five might be with His water of life.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... bring Your living water to my thirsty soul. Create in those I name before You a deep thirst for Your refreshment, then send Your Spirit to satisfy it.'



If you would make progress,
then, you must be thirsty,
because only those who
are thirsty are called:

'Let anyone who is thirsty
come to Me and drink.
Those who are not thirsty
will never persevere in
their journey.'

[St Catherine of Siena]

Fire

ENTER

Bring to mind a time you were comforted near fire.

Bring to mind a time you were scared by fire.

Bring to mind a time when you were in awe of the force of fire.

HEAR

'I baptise you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry His sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.' [Luke 3:16]

Why does John the Baptist emphasise that the one coming after him will baptise with fire? John's baptism of repentance was in water. Water cleans and washes – it takes the dirt and grime from the outside. But it doesn't change the inside. It doesn't alter what the thing is, in itself. But fire melts things down, it re-forms, re-shapes and re-constitutes.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven, we are told there appeared one each of them something like a tongue of fire.

The fire of the Spirit comes to us to re-create us. Only Jesus can bring us this baptism. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to remake us. Whilst we understandably are drawn to the warmth of the fire of his love, we often shrink back from being remade in his crucible.

RESPOND

In what ways may the fire of the Spirit remake you?

As you name your five before the Lord let the truth that the fire of the Spirit can bring about a change within them that is only possible by God kindle your hope.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... remake me and those I lift before You with the fire of Your love.'





IN YOUR NATURE,
ETERNAL GODHEAD

I SHALL COME
TO KNOW MY NATURE.

AND WHAT IS MY NATURE,
BOUNDLESS LOVE?

IT IS FIRE

BECAUSE YOU ARE NOTHING
BUT A FIRE OF LOVE.

AND YOU HAVE GIVEN
HUMANKIND A SHARE
IN THIS NATURE

FOR BY THE FIRE OF LOVE
YOU CREATED US.

[St Catherine of Siena]

Dove of Peace



ENTER

The peace that God brings to us is utterly different from any peace that is offered by the world about us. We often forget this and seem to settle for less than God has for us, or confuse it with ease or lack of difficulty.

In what particular areas of your life do these words of Jesus speak to this day? *'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.'* [John 14:27]

HEAR

²¹ Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased. [Luke 3:21-22]

Only in the account of Jesus baptism does the Holy Spirit appear in the form of a dove. But of course we bring in all the mentions of the peace that is ours in the Spirit. In our imaginations this dove of peace is usually a brilliant white spotless creature. However, Luke uses the word for a different type of dove; a rock dove. A rock dove is of nondescript colour and is so named because it lays its eggs in the inner recesses of caves and dark places. The picture we see is of the Holy Spirit as the one who brings life in the deepest and darkest recesses of our life.

This is the peace of God. Coming into our deepest and most hidden places, the inaccessible places, and there bringing, creating and generating peace.

RESPOND

In what places do you need the Spirit of peace to effect peace?

When you look at the lives of your five friends you might wonder at what point God might begin His work in them. The dove of the Spirit desires to bring life in their deepest places. Pray they would come to desire that.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... Cause Your Holy Spirit to be so deeply implanted within our lives, that we might know and be instruments of Your peace.'

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

[St Therese of Lisieux]

Lined writing area for notes or reflections.

Oil



ENTER

Oil has always been highly prized and precious. It's not just what it does, but what it signifies. The anointing of someone in scripture is an initiation ceremony which changes the status and vocation of the person being anointed. 'Messiah' literally means 'anointed one'. Jesus is called Christ because He is anointed, and we bear His name 'Christians' because we are anointed in Him by the Spirit.

HEAR

¹² He sent and brought David in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.'¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. [1 Samuel 16:12-13]

The gospel declares a truth over us which is irreversible and irrevocable. By the Holy Spirit we are 'in Christ' and so are now the beloved children of God, eternally bound to Christ. This is the truth of who we are. There are great riches for our lives as we take hold of this reality.

Regularly there are further areas of our lives to which we can apply this. The oil of the Spirit gets in between the joints and mechanism of our lives into these areas. On a daily basis we can invite the Spirit to enable us to realise the truth of who we are.

RESPOND

If you are brutally honest, in what areas of your life is the reality of Christ lacking? When you consider how the love of God might begin to get under the skin of your friends, how might the image of the oil of the Spirit permeate any barriers?

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ... may Your anointing Spirit seep into every area of our lives, that who we are might reveal Your love.'



O Lord, my God, light of the blind and strength of the weak; yea, also, light of those that see, and strength of the strong; hearken unto my soul, and hear it crying out of the depths.

O Lord, help us to turn and seek You; for You have not forsaken Your creatures as we have forsaken You, our Creator.

Let us turn and seek You, for we know You are here in our hearts, when we confess before You, when we cast ourselves upon You, and weep on Your shoulder, after all our rugged ways; and You gently wipe away our tears, and we weep the more for joy; because You, Lord, who made us comes to remake and comfort us.

Hear, Lord, my prayer, and grant that I may most entirely love You, and do rescue me, O Lord, from every temptation, even to the end. Amen.

[St Augustine of Hippo]



Comforter / Advocate

ENTER

What is it you really need?

How we answer this question is disturbingly revealing about us.

It indicates what we recognise as most necessary, as most essential.

Whilst our initial meeting points with God are our perceived needs, we also know that God, as our creator and redeemer, is the one who most truly diagnoses us. And what is given to us by Christ Jesus in his Spirit is that which is most basic and profound to us: *Himself*

HEAR

¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.

¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, because He abides with you, and He will be in you.

[John 14:16-17]

In some of the final words of Jesus' earthly life, we are let in on Jesus' desire that the Father give us what is most essential to us. These days we don't really talk about advocates – except maybe in legal circles. But other words are 'helper', 'defender', comforter', 'supporter'. This is one who stands by your side, argues your case in front of others and has your back. This is someone unreservedly for you.

Notice that Jesus says the Spirit is 'another' advocate – because Jesus Himself is the first. The Spirit, not bound by the physical limitations of Jesus of Nazareth, who could only be in one place and one time, is therefore one who is sent to us to continue the ministry of Jesus – God with us.

RESPOND

What we need most is God
personally present to us.

As you sit in the presence of
your advocate, name before
Him your five friends.

As He draws close to them
ask that the advocate would
awaken them to their greatest
and most essential need.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit ...

I acknowledge my greatest
need is Your presence
and my sure hope Your great
love to be with me.'

ALONE WITH NONE
BUT YOU, MY GOD,
I JOURNEY ON MY WAY.

WHAT NEED I FEAR,
WHEN YOU ART NEAR
O KING OF NIGHT AND DAY?

MORE SAFE AM I
WITHIN YOUR HAND
THAN IF A HOST
DID ROUND ME STAND.

[Columba, c.521 - 597]



Wind

ENTER

If you can, take a look outside and notice the pattern of the wind.

Think about all the things that are mysterious about the wind; where it comes from, the different force of it.

HEAR

'The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes? So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'

[John 3:8]

The picture of the Holy Spirit as wind can be disconcerting. For who can control the wind? Who can predict its pattern or pathway?


But I wonder if this is the gift of this metaphor for us – it emphasises how out of our hands the work of the Spirit is and underlines how God is the one who initiates the Spirit's movement. The best place to be is always in the pathway of the Holy Spirit. I remember reading an interview with a woman who had circumnavigated the globe single handed. She was asked about the most terrifying moments of storms and gales. Her answer was that those moments weren't the worst: the most frightening times by far were when there was no wind and there was no movement for days.

RESPOND

We need the wind of the Spirit to blow. Pray that God would choose to send His strong Spirit to us, and most particularly to the five you are praying for.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit, blow upon us and cause us to be moved by the strength of Your presence.'



*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To You, Lord, I return it.
Everything is Yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only Your love and Your grace,
that is enough for me.*

[St Ignatius of Loyola]



Guarantee

ENTER

What is your deepest hope?
What is your clearest certainty?

HEAR

⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. [2 Corinthians 5:4-5]

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a promise, an anticipation of what will be. The image is taken from everyday life in the first century where the commitment to pay for something in full was given by the putting down of a deposit. The down payment was tangible security of intention – the full amount is promised, this pledge will be made good on. It is guaranteed.

The Spirit is the first instalment of the future promise – one day we will know the full presence of God. But until then God's presence amongst us by His Spirit encourages and assures us of God's faithfulness.

RESPOND

Take some time to trace the presence of the Spirit in you and around you. Naming your five friends before God pray that the Spirit might begin a work in them which He will bring to completion.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit and create in us a longing, expectation, and hope for the fullness of your presence.'

LET NOTHING DISTURB YOU,

LET NOTHING FRIGHTEN YOU,

ALL THINGS ARE PASSING AWAY:

GOD NEVER CHANGES.

PATIENCE OBTAINS ALL THINGS

WHOEVER HAS GOD LACKS NOTHING;

GOD ALONE SUFFICES.

[St Teresa of Avila]

Words

ENTER

The Spirit is the speech-giving Spirit – sent to us to that we might hear and speak life-giving words.

It is only through the agency of the Holy Spirit we cry 'Abba Father' and 'Jesus is Lord'. It is only because of the Spirit that a way is opened up for us to hear and speak to God. It is only by being enabled by the Spirit that we can bear effective witness to Jesus.

HEAR

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. [Acts 2:4]

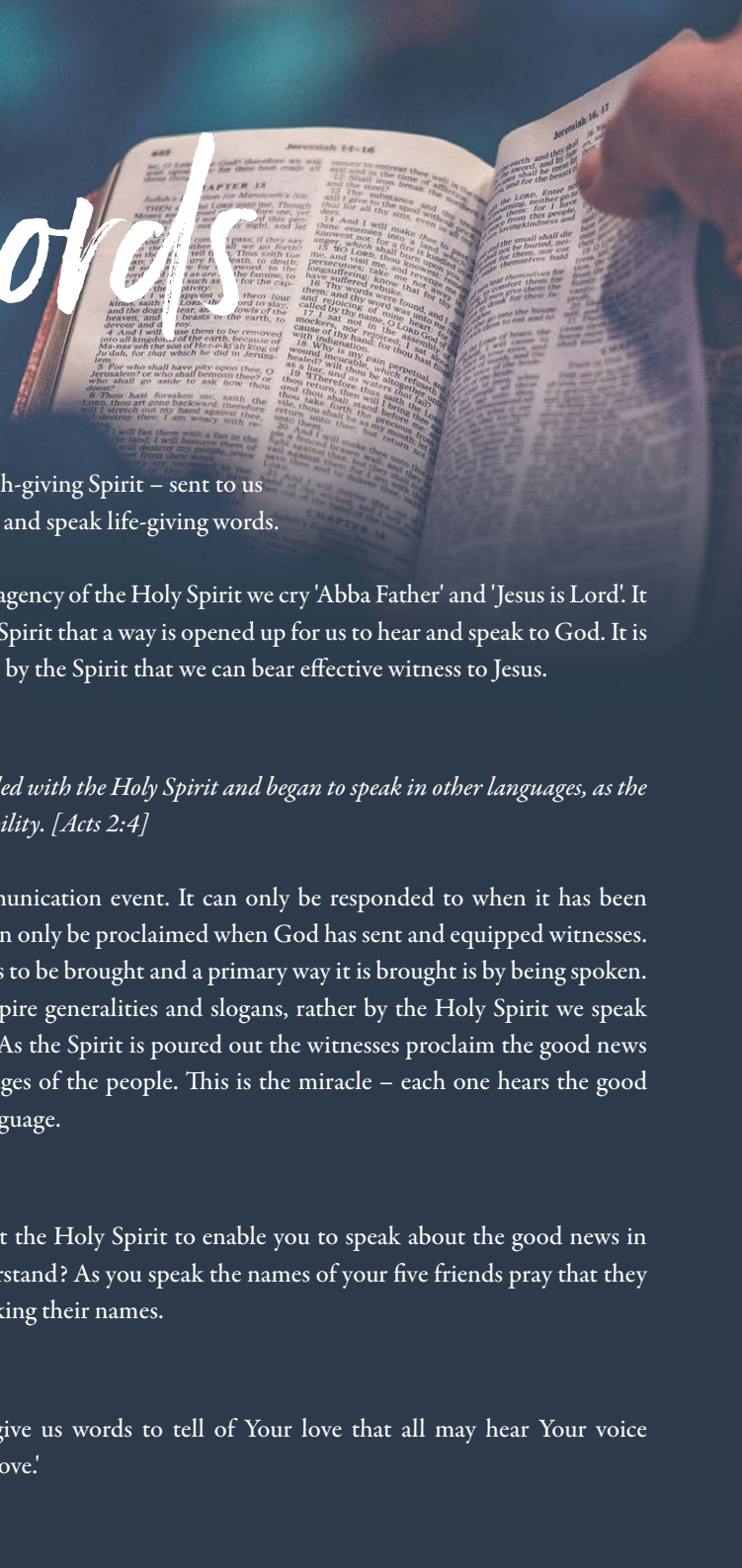
The gospel is a communication event. It can only be responded to when it has been proclaimed. And it can only be proclaimed when God has sent and equipped witnesses. It is news which needs to be brought and a primary way it is brought is by being spoken. The Spirit doesn't inspire generalities and slogans, rather by the Holy Spirit we speak a language, a dialect. As the Spirit is poured out the witnesses proclaim the good news literally in the languages of the people. This is the miracle – each one hears the good news in their own language.

RESPOND

Are you ready to trust the Holy Spirit to enable you to speak about the good news in ways others can understand? As you speak the names of your five friends pray that they might hear God speaking their names.

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit, give us words to tell of Your love that all may hear Your voice summoning them in love.'



*O God, our true Life, in whom
and by whom all things live, You
command us to seek You, and are
ready to be found; You bid us knock,
and open the door when we do so.
To know You is life, to serve You is
freedom, to enjoy You is a kingdom,
to praise You is the joy and happiness
of the soul. I praise, and bless, and
adore You, I worship You, I glorify
You, I give thanks to You for Your
great glory. I humbly beseech You
to abide with me, to reign in me,
to make this heart of mine a holy
temple, a fit habitation for Your
Divine majesty.*

*O You Maker and Preserver of all
things, visible and invisible! keep,
I beseech You, I who am the work
of Your own hands, who trusts in
Your mercy alone for safety and
protection. Guard me with the
power of Your grace, here and in
all places, now and at all times,
forevermore. Amen.*

[St Augustine of Hippo]

Personal

ENTER

The good news of God's love for all is personal. It might be you can recall specific times when someone spoke to you of God's love and it was as if you were being addressed personally. If so, thank God for such times. If not, do not be anxious; the Lord knows you and is for you. Pray that God would come afresh to you, personally.

HEAR

² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. [Acts 2:2-3]

In the telling of the story of Pentecost we notice the Holy Spirit is poured out on the community – all who are in the upper room – yet tongues of fire separate out on each person.


The Holy Spirit is a gift for all. But He is given personally, distinctly, to each one. And He is given to each one so that they may, in turn, be agents of the good news to others. What does it mean to you that your reception of the Spirit is unlike anyone else's? And that you will be enabled to speak in a specific way to particular individuals?

RESPOND

Sit with the weight of this responsibility – laid on you by the Lord – remembering that in the empowering presence of the gift of His Spirit you have all you need. How might your next contact with your five show a dependence on the God who speaks through you?

PRAY

'Come Holy Spirit give voice to our witness, that we might be able to speak the good news in words those around us can understand.'



*Come down O Love Divine
Seek thou this soul of mine
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing
O Comforter draw near
Within my heart appear
And kindle it Thy holy flame bestowing.*

[Bianco da Siena]

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