

In the same breath.....

An inspirational talk, at Mass, on Pentecost Sunday



Right at the end of the Book of Psalms is a song which goes:
: **Let everyone/ everything who has breath, praise God**, which sets things in a particular perspective, and that's why I've brought along my friends whom you're getting to know today... each of them with a gift and a character of their own.

I was at a conference in Assisi a few weeks ago where I was very clearly reminded of how our praise and our devotion to God as human beings is lacking unless we acknowledge those other voices and indeed **personalities** in the choir of Creation. **With** us, alongside us. Not just a means to an end, but rejoicing **in their own right**.

In the ecosystems and the shared habitats we're part of whether we choose to notice it or not.

Which will cherish and sustain **us** as we cherish **them**, or not.

In the **Creed**, we'll hear of how God is the maker and therefore sustainer of Heaven and Earth, sky and soil, one **unified interactive** Creation, God for all the life we see **and** all the life we don't see. All the life **with** us, in the rainbow Covenant. Each part of **that** body, with a part to play, **whether we see them or not**.

Heaven and Earth are not science fiction 'detached dimensions'. As fossil fuels mess up the **sky, what we do here affects what happens there**. There's so much in the Bible which recognises that. When we pray the 'Our Father,' [*the Jesus Prayer, the Lord's Prayer,*] we ask God's will be done **throughout every part of Creation**.

I hope, when, together, we read those words of the Creed, we realise they refer to realities. All this churchy spiritual language is **not** abstract, **not** imaginary. Seen and not-yet seen.

In the 'retreat' I was leading on the holy island of Iona this month, I set up a moth trap, and each morning we found we had been visited by many species of fellow creatures who are there around us, unseen, yet praising God **according to their kind**.

But human beings have been trying to pretend we're a choir on our own; the only voice that matters, without acknowledging and negotiating with those other voices. This messes everything up for every creature on God's living Earth, the common home of all. The shared habitat.

The Earth **remains** the Lord's. The gift is that we **call Earth home**. It works the very same way with rich and poor humans. Folk with money imagine they're exclusively entitled to what God gives to be shared. And that won't work forever. If life **enjoyed** is not life **passed on**.

And breath, of course, which in Bible languages is the **same** as Spirit, as that wild wind from the sky; breathing is always a giving and a receiving. It's both in and out: **because** the trees and the phytoplankton breathe out, we can breathe in, and vice-versa.

The Church does not hold their breath. The community of the Church both receives, and in Baptism **passes on** the Spirit. The Spirit' **who** is not a rubber stamp. Not an **"it"**, but very much a **who**, as we heard in the Gospel reading from John; the **Advocate advocating** we wake up to realities of climate justice. So that we do read the signs of the times, and attend to those prophetic voices, of the poor and of nature, *with* whom, not just **through** whom, we can rejoice as Jesus rejoiced in God as Father, as loving parent.

We might also observe how in the same **breath** the prophet Isaiah mentions the powerful Word of God and the **water-cycle**. Dynamic, life-giving. Meaningful. But that's what poetry does - saves a lot of time by connecting realities which belong together because, by God, they really are related!

Pentecost Sunday, brings together all those different nuances of spirit and wind and breath and power, visibly

and conspicuously in the cause of justice and diversity and community and the glory of God. Not just to the obvious leaders: everyone in the church-together receives the opportunity.

On Pentecost Sunday a few years ago, I took a congregation to Whitelee Wind farm. I'd **love** to do that again. It did all the work for me.

It's an inspiring and interesting place, of many gifts, which powers our cities without messing up the heavens with greenhouse gases- and when there's leftover power, they either store it in batteries or make hydrogen which powers the buses and bin-lorries in Glasgow. Whitelee is a place where you will see sheep **wandering** around, and people on mountain-bikes **whizzing** around many miles of tracks on Eaglesham moor, a peatland full of wonderful carbon-capturing bog. Wildlife loves it. The stuff they used to call waste land and pay people to destroy. Now we're looking after it. We **can** learn to respect and value what we tried to throw away.

Whitelee is a place of negotiation with that wild personality - the Spirit - of the wind: with **what** you can't control, but **who** is there offering benefits for our good, the good of the planet and the glory of God, who loves these multilayered landscapes of wonder.

In Christ's name, receive, breathe in, breathe out! AMEN!