

An awesome ally

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23 and John 7:37-39

Many people live with low-level anxiety about the state of the world. Indeed, there is so much need, so much injustice, that it is easy to be overwhelmed. In today's readings from John, Jesus promises us that he has not left us to manage on our own – we will be sent the advocate to work alongside us. In today's reading from Acts we see this promise fulfilled, as God pours out the Holy Spirit on men and women: "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind... Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them".

The Holy Spirit coming to the Church is a story of transformation, a watershed moment for the disciples. Before Pentecost they

were afraid, full of doubt, cowering and attacked. Afterwards, they rise up, defend Christ and preach with confidence. The salvation and spiritual gifts they were given on that day, for the common good, continue to be dispersed among God's people. God gives gifts to each of us according to our individual character, and we are urged to receive the Holy Spirit and live joyous, abundant lives promised by Christ. As we take action for others in any way we can – for someone disadvantaged, excluded or who is in material, spiritual or emotional need – the Spirit moves through us and into the world. This is far more powerful than anything we do on our own. The Spirit comes with such power that everyone understands one another. It is with this Spirit that we are able to act. 🙏

Holy Spirit, breathe through me, live and move in me, empower, encourage and transform me and all Christians to rise up today and do God's will in the world. Amen.



Inner Journey, Outer Journey

by James Roose-Evans

Continuing our serialisation of extracts from James Roose-Evans' enduring classic.

In 1980 I was given a slim volume of letters, entitled *84 Charing Cross Road*, by Helene Hanff. I acquired the stage rights, adapted it, and in 1981 directed it at the Salisbury Playhouse. It was so successful that it transferred to the West End, starring Rosemary Leach and David Swift. I went to New York to direct it on Broadway where, with Ellen Burstyn and Joseph Maher in the leading roles, it ran for three

months. It won various awards: Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Play and Best Director. In 1986 it was made into a film starring Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins.

While this outward journey was unfolding, another inner journey was nearing its completion, resulting in my being ordained deacon on St David's Day at Glasshampton Monastery, surrounded only by the brethren. Then, four months later, I was ordained priest in Hereford Cathedral. 🙏

James' blog can be found at: www.jamesrooseevans.co.uk.



His book is available from Redemptorist Publications: 01420 88222
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World Bicycle Day

by Christine Clark

June 3 has been designated World Bicycle Day by the UN, which sees prioritising the needs of walkers and cyclists as a critical part of improving air quality and road safety in cities. According to the World Health Organization, safe infrastructure for walking and cycling is key to achieving greater health equity: "improved active transport is not only healthy; it is also equitable and cost-effective." Intrepid cyclist Christine Clark shares her personal story.

As a student I cycled everywhere, often carrying – probably unsafely – books, files and bags of shopping slung over my handlebars. I once had a nasty

fall when I somersaulted over the handlebars, but I wasn't put off. Years later, cash-strapped in our early married life and without a car, I continued to cycle with my small son happily riding on the child seat behind me, taking him to midweek activities at church, playgroup and on outings into the country.

This was challenged, however, when my twin daughters arrived. We heard that in Holland children are carried in front rather than behind, so we bought such a seat. My bike was now ready – one seat fore, the other aft, with me amidsthips. The girls loved it and used to argue for their turn in the front, where the view was better. I loved it too as it gave me freedom and independence. And I thanked God for the loving generosity that enabled us to continue our activities. 🙏

“Faith expects from God what is beyond all expectation.

Andrew Murray (1828-1917), South African writer, teacher and pastor