

# Power to the people!

Heather Cooke *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21

What a powerful slogan in itself! No wonder it's been applied in so many contexts. It resonates with our sense of fairness and justice. We've all heard it somewhere – whether it's the civil rights movement in the United States or the catchphrase from the 1970s British TV comedy *Citizen Smith*, or the single by John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band, or even advertisements for energy provision.

Power to the people! Those two elements of the slogan dominate the Pentecost story. After all, this was the "power from on high" that Jesus had promised as he was taken up into heaven at the end of Luke's Gospel. And Matthew's Gospel records him

saying farewell with a commission to make disciples of all nations, all peoples. So the Pentecost story shows us the power of the Holy Spirit descending like fire and wind, two major sources of energy, empowering the disciples to communicate with all those foreigners in Jerusalem. It emphasises that the Gospel is for all people, whatever distinguishes them – not only race and language, but gender, age and class, as Joel had prophesied.

This is the power of God, promised by Jesus, with us today in the action of the Holy Spirit, giving us power as well. Not "power over", but "power to" – power to change the world for the better. God's people power. ☺



Generous God, you promised to pour out your Spirit on your sons and daughters, but so often we staunch its flow with our stubborn wills. Open our hearts wide to your transforming power and energise us with your love. Amen.

## World Bee Day

by Caroline Hodgson

Tomorrow is World Bee Day, designated by the United Nations to raise awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators, their contribution to sustainable development and the threats they face.

Pollination is vital for the survival of our ecosystems, for food security and biodiversity. Globally, nearly ninety per cent of wild flowering plant species depend, entirely or in part, on pollination, along with over seventy-five per cent of the world's food crops and thirty-five per cent of agricultural land.

Important pollinators, such as butterflies, bats and some species of bird are increasingly under threat from human activities, such as intensive farming, the use of pesticides and higher temperatures associated with climate change. Perhaps it's understandable that in the past people saw insects as a threat and a nuisance and developed chemicals and other means of controlling them. There's no point in regretting the damage that's been done, but humanity must act now, in a spirit of humility and cooperation, to rectify past mistakes and restore equilibrium to God's great creation. ☺

“I've read the last page of the Bible. It's going to turn out all right.”

Billy Graham (1918-2018), evangelist

## An Egyptian pilgrimage

by Sr Janet Fearn

*Sr Janet continues her reflection on some of the places she visited in Egypt.*

Aswan's granite quarry supplied the materials for many important ancient Egyptian monuments, but centuries of labour were almost forgotten as desert sand covered the site. The quarry was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979, along with other examples of Upper Egyptian architecture. Yet one of its most important discoveries was unearthed as recently as

2005, when someone wanted to build a house and, in laying the foundations, found previously unsuspected and immensely important archaeology.

Using stones and fire as their tools, ancient Egyptian workmen created a huge, 1,200-ton granite monument. But before it could be completed, the huge stone, bigger than Cleopatra's Needle in London, broke, and between seven and ten years of hard work had to be abandoned.

The Unfinished Obelisk is a beautiful, living witness to commitment, skill and perseverance in the face of hardship. Its very brokenness is also its healing. ☺