

The rush of a violent wind

Patsy McGregor *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21

Upstairs in our tiny apartment, we heard the sound of a freight train. Of course that was totally unrealistic. There were no trains in the town of Toliara in Madagascar. Curious, I went to the door to check out what was happening. "Don't open that door!" my husband exclaimed as the sound increased. Seconds later I was crouched in the hallway, as a sound like the blowing of a violent wind passed by – a rare tornado whirling through the city.

Today's reading describes the events which took place on the festival of Pentecost – God pouring out the Holy Spirit on both 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 salvation and spiritual gifts which 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 unique character, and we are urged to receive the Holy Spirit and live joyous, abundant lives promised by Christ to those who love God.

Are you curious enough to listen to the sound of a violent wind and be filled with the Holy Spirit? God is faithful, breathing the Holy Spirit on us as we worship. 🕊



Lord Jesus, thank you for continually pouring out your Holy Spirit and blessing us with spiritual gifts to use for your honour, glory and the benefit of one another. May you be glorified as we receive your Spirit. Amen.

Books of the Old Testament

Job

by Trevor Dennis

The disasters that befall him come unbelievably thick and fast and Job, a genuinely good man, is impossibly good. His suffering is real, undeserved, and he can't make any sense of it. He presumes it comes from God, but why? His plight would suggest he's been extremely wicked, but that isn't true. So what is God playing at? He demands an answer. None comes. He beats his fist on God's door. Silence. The prayer of lament and complaint is central to the prayer

of the Old Testament, and Job stretches it to its limit.

Job's three companions leap to God's defence, but in doing so lose sight of Job and his pain. So Job brings a case against God. Finally God appears and shows Job how the world really is. Then God takes Job to its dark side, to the lairs of the chaos monsters, the source of all suffering. The vision transforms Job: "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear," he tells God, "but now my eye sees you." He ends by interceding for his friends. 🕊

“ I sought to hear the voice of God and climbed the topmost steeple, but God declared ‘Go down again – I dwell among the people.’”

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), Roman Catholic cardinal, theologian and poet

Your spiritual journal

A place of self-discovery

by Katharine Smith

People keep spiritual journals for all sorts of reasons and there's no right way of doing it. All you need is some paper or a notebook, a pen and some time set aside for writing. There are no rules to follow or exams to pass. Your journal is simply a safe and private place where you can write down thoughts that are going round in your mind, ideas and plans for different areas of your life, the pros and cons of some decision you need to make

or notes to remind you of each day's events. It's like writing a letter to yourself which, if you want to, you can share with God as a form of prayer.

Writing like this can take us on an exciting journey of spiritual growth and into a deeper relationship with God, who loves us and walks with us every step of the way.

Katharine Smith is a writer, preacher and lay minister. She has kept her own spiritual journal for over thirty years. 🕊