

THE ASCENSION (based on Acts 1:6-11)

After Jesus had been raised to new life, he told his friends, “You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit. You will be my witnesses here in Jerusalem and all over the world.” As he said this, he disappeared from sight. They realised that he had gone back to his Father as he had said he would.

PENTECOST (based on Acts 2: 1-43)

When the harvest was being gathered in, on the feast of the first fruits, the friends of Jesus were not among the holiday crowds celebrating Pentecost in Jerusalem. Instead they were hidden away in a quiet room. Mary, the Mother of Jesus was with them.

Without the warmth of Jesus’ presence among them, they felt stranded and clueless. When Jesus had walked and talked with them, their hearts had burned within them; but now there was a death-like stillness and silence within them, which chilled their hearts and froze their power to act.

Then on that Pentecost morning, everything changed. The friends of Jesus knew all would be well.

They described the experience like this. They said it was as if a strong, powerful wind had filled the whole house and as if tongues of fire had spread out and touched each one of them. They felt alive as never before. The warmth of God’s love circulated through and among them, so that they felt compelled to rush out and share their joy with the whole world and to witness to the Good News of Jesus.

No longer tongue-tied, but with fiery conviction, the words tumbled out so fast and free, that in their excitement, they sounded crazy, as if they’d lost their senses. At first people thought they were drunk.

It was Peter who controlled the situation; no longer afraid, he told the crowds how God had generously poured out the Spirit upon all so that they could speak out. A great change took place amidst the listening crowds.

How do you think the friends of Jesus felt when he asked them to take his message out to all the world?

How would you have felt?

Who spreads this message today? Do you? How?