



Fire

Friday 17th January



Photo by Ricardo Gomez Angel on Unsplash

Scripture: Mark 2.1-12

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, 'Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and take your mat and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic— 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

To reflect

Today's Daily Eucharist Gospel reading is Jesus healing a paralysed man – showing the power he has as fully human and fully divine – God made man manifest.

Fire in the bible is used figuratively to show the presence of God and is an instrument of God's power. Fire is used for sacred purposes, sacrifices consumed by fire and at the dedication of Solomon's temple. The Holy Spirit is likened to fire (e.g. Matthew 3.11) and the Holy Spirit's descent on the early church at Pentecost in Acts 2.3 is shown by the appearance of tongues of fire.

Fire purifies, shows the presence of the Holy Spirit, as we settle into Epiphanytide and the new calendar year you're invited to reflect and consider whether there are parts of your life that need purifying, refining. You are invited to pray to the Holy Spirit to help you in this task as you seek to pattern your life on that of Jesus.

Penitential Prayer of St Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

O Lord,
The house of my soul is narrow;
enlarge it that you may enter in.
It is ruinous, O repair it!
It displeases Your sight.
I confess it, I know.
But who shall cleanse it,
to whom shall I cry but to you?
Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord,
and spare Your servant from strange sins.

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'O God of Earth and Altar', words by G.K. Chesterton and music by R.V. Vaughan Williams. This is penitential hymn.
- 'I Belong' by Kathryn Scott. This is based on Romans 8.38-39, it includes the lyrics 'Nothing can take me, from your great love, Forever this truth remains, I belong, I belong to you...'
- 'Kyrie: Kyrie Eleison' by Hildegard Von Bingen, one version is by Oxford Camerata.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.