

The Window



Pentecost. *Acts 2*

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This Sunday is **Pentecost**, also known as Whit Sunday from the white clothes traditionally worn by the newly-baptised, and is sometimes described as the birthday of the Church. Christ's ministry on Earth was rather like a pregnancy, where the mother and child are physically linked by the umbilicus as the foetus forms its organs and limbs. At last the pain of childbirth is made worthwhile by the baby's first breath, when it utters its first cry.

The symbolism of the *pneuma*, breath or Spirit of God, runs right through the Old and New Testaments. It is the Holy Spirit that comes down at Pentecost and breathes life into the newly-born Church, and comes to each new Christian as we are born again in baptism.

Like an infant we are still reliant on God for sustenance and teaching. It thus seems very natural to meditate at this time on what the great English female mystic Julian of Norwich describes as the Motherhood of Christ. In the Holy Eucharist the Body and Blood of Christ become that spiritual milk which feeds the growing Church, born at Pentecost.