

## **Kicked out - by the Holy Spirit**

No one seems to know exactly where in Jerusalem the Upper Room (where Jesus and his disciples shared The Last Supper) is located.

There are a wide variety of options.

I have visited Jerusalem and I have struggled to track it down. One version looks like a mosque; one I have never been able to find and yet another isn't 'Upper' at all!

In fact, for that one you need to go down a long, steep flight of steps to get into it (while negotiating your way past the chattiest nun in Christendom)!

To some people it may seem disappointing that one of the most important sites in Christian history, where Mary and the disciples received the promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, is today unidentifiable.

But maybe that's exactly the point.

We don't need to go to a specific place to receive this particular gift. The Spirit is wild and free and is available to anyone who prays the prayer 'Come Holy Spirit'.

In fact, what happened inside that Upper Room is almost incidental.

What matters most is what happened when the disciples left it; for they found that their fear had evaporated; dried up like the morning dew by the Spirit's fire.

They went out into the city and into the world to tell everyone that Jesus was alive again and that new life and salvation could be found in Him.

This May, Christians are being called to enter into the Upper Room of their hearts to pray afresh for the Spirit's gift.

On May 9 at 7.30pm we will gather as a Diocese from parishes across Lancashire at Blackburn Cathedral to launch the local activities for 'Thy Kingdom Come', the annual prayer event led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York which takes place from May 10 -20.

'Thy Kingdom Come' has been running for three years now and is now international – being supported by the Anglican church in this country and around the world.

This year, for the first time, it will also be ecumenical – with Christians from other denominations taking part.

During this time, we will pray with Christians throughout our nation and across the globe while crucially, we also hold up in prayer people we know who are yet to find new life in Jesus Christ.

But, as with the Upper Room, what matters is not so much 'Thy Kingdom Come' as what happens next.

Our time of focussed prayer for the Spirit should send us into the world with fresh energy and joy as we proclaim that Jesus is alive through our words, our lives, our love, our service and our generosity.

'Come Holy Spirit.' It is a dangerous prayer; for if you pray it with all your heart there is no saying what might happen next or where the Spirit will send you!

During May, why don't you dare to pray that prayer?

**Rt Rev. Philip North  
Bishop of Burnley**