

PENTECOST

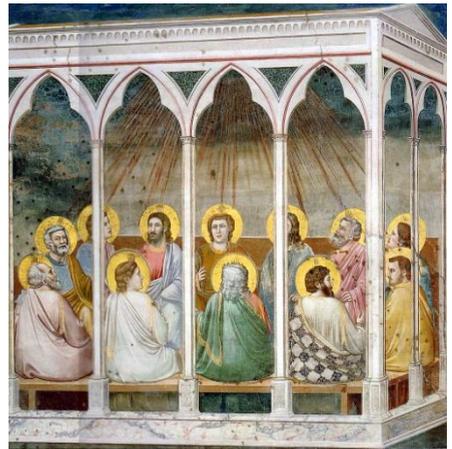


When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 2:1-4).

How can we depict such a scene? Icons use traditional, stylised imagery, as shown in the Maronite icon here. There is an assemblage company – not just the disciples, but Mary and some other as well - and the Holy Spirit descends, as a dove separating into tongues of fire.

The 13th Century fresco by Giotto, from the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, is somewhat similar, although his mastery of perspective is demonstrated by grouping the disciples the disciples around a table and placing them inside a building. Here, though, we have rays of light rather than literal tongues of fire.



Both of these pictures are, however, rather static and do not begin to capture the great excitement of the event. The disciples all seem quite calm in the face of this momentous happening. Much more dramatic is the water colour of the



twentieth century artist, Estella Canziani, painted in 1936. Canziani was born in London and was a Quaker. The fluid lines help give a sense of the wind, but it is the attitudes of the disciples, their awe and worship, that bring home to us that with real impact is going on.