

Today we celebrate Pentecost—the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter...the commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. Our readings from this morning aren't from Acts, but both of our readings allude to the Holy Spirit. And in Corinthians, Paul describes this "hidden wisdom of God" ---this Spirit---that is in each of us. Is it? Paul says "we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God. We have? What does that feel like? What does that look like? Tongues of fire? What does that look like? People speaking in tongues? This dress I'm wearing? Or that red shirt or tie or dress you pulled out especially for today? What is the Holy Spirit and how do we access it? How do we respect the manner in which others access—or don't access—it? I do not mean to sound cynical. I like to think I'm expressing some of all of our questions or doubts or wonderments about this important part of our trinity. I'll come back to this.

In 2013, I gave my brother a short book by Leah Hager Cohen, entitled, *I Don't Know; In Praise of Admitting Ignorance and Doubt*. I thought he needed to consider the possibility that he did not know everything. I don't think he ever read it. I still love him. I read it, and it has stayed with me, and comforted me in my prevalent ignorance about, well, everything, from my job to how to raise a family, to how to worship, how to be my "best self." In the book, Cohen points out all the dangers of failing to admit ignorance---being afraid to say "I don't know," or not having an answer, or understanding the problem to start with. All this leads to something she calls "fakery" . When we "fake it" —lie, pretend we know what we're talking about, or what we're doing—we not only shirk our responsibility to be truthful, but we avoid vulnerability. Shirking responsibility and avoiding vulnerability, she writes, "ultimately distances us from the very prizes we crave: true connection with others and integrity within ourselves." True connection with others and integrity within ourselves requires honesty and vulnerability. Easier said, than done, for sure. When we know our limitations and recognize the boundaries of our own comprehension, she writes, "this is a kind of knowing that approaches wisdom." Notice Cohen writes *approaches* wisdom.

Paul tells the people of Corinth that the wisdom of God is not a wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age....that there is a "secret and hidden wisdom of God" . This is something we can *approach*, but we can't *know* it, any more than we can *know* God's will for us. We may pray to understand that will or accept that will. And we pray to receive that spirit. And we may believe we receive that spirit here, in this community of faith, when we sing or pray or receive communion. We may feel the Spirit when we look into the eyes of a child we know and love—or a stranger who needs love. To quote Paul, one more time: "What person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?"

So, to return to my questions: What is the Holy Spirit? What does it feel like? Look like? I don't know. What I do know is that when I worship in community—this community—I get close. When I sing---and, oh how I miss singing and hearing others sing---I sense it. When I witness a beautiful sunrise or spot spring's first jasmine high in the treetops, I believe in the Holy Spirit, and I give thanks to God for bestowing these gifts on us. But I lack the words---and the wisdom—to put it into words good enough for what it is. But I think that's part of the deal—our words aren't good enough for that which is God's. How could they be? My hope for each of you is that you'll find peace and joy in *approaching* God's wisdom, in *seeking* the Holy Spirit and that that is enough. Remember Christ's words in John: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."