

## **Pentecost Sunday, June 5: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104:25-32; I Corinthians 12:4-13; John 20:19-23**

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful: Grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*When the day of Pentecost had come...* Pentecost was a great feast in Judaism; however, the disciples likely were not in a festive mood. Fifty days earlier the crucified Jesus suddenly began appearing among them alive; just 10 days earlier Jesus ascended into heaven, telling them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. They had no clue what was in store.

We see the big picture: from such a hidden beginning came a worldwide movement. Nothing has been able to permanently halt the Holy Spirit: Christians have been and continue to be marginalized, persecuted, and martyred. Nothing can ultimately thwart the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecost story is certainly dramatic. We are not told how long the fiery tongues lasted. We do know the crowd outside was astonished; they said, *...in our own languages, we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.* On Pentecost the division of Babel is reversed. This is first truth: the Holy Spirit comes so we will powerfully communicate the mighty deeds of God to unify people in Jesus. The Holy Spirit wants to empower us to effectively share the Faith with people who are different from us.

The 2nd truth comes from today's Psalm. The Spirit is the presence of God bringing nourishment, life, and renewal. This is the Spirit's essential work in and through the Church. A Spirit-filled Church values, builds up, and nourishes people. Spirit-filled Christians offer the superabundance of God's nourishment which they have received to those who are hungering for friendship, restoration, and hope.

In I Corinthians we see a third truth, in Paul's words of the Holy Spirit's diverse gifts reveal our unity in Christ's Body. Paul writes of the unifying origin of gifts, *...it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.* Paul writes of the Holy Spirit's purpose in giving the gifts: *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.* Therefore, the test of spiritual gifts is our desire and ability to unite.

Lastly, we see in John's Gospel Jesus giving us the means through which the Holy Spirit brings unity. We are sent out by Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring the truthful word of reconciliation. Every parish and Christian are carriers of the truthful word of reconciliation. There is evil in the world; we cannot pretend it does not exist and is not powerful. Neither must we naively think we will contend against hatred, oppression, violence, and death with good intentions and platitudes. Jesus tells us to speak the truth in love; truly speaking the truth with right intention. As just one example, we cannot, must not speak the word of reconciliation to companies that make billions on the backs of domestic and foreign workers kept in economic slavery, until sin is acknowledged, repentance and amendment of life sought. And we cannot speak the truth in love if we are seeking retribution and vengeance; if we only spew outrage. I offer this as just the slightest example of being bearers of the truthful word of reconciliation; truth must first be heard and acted upon by us. We only can share what we ourselves know and practice. You and I must hear and respond to the truthful word of reconciliation in our own lives; we first repent and practice amendment of life before sharing it, in conjunction with sharing it. We are to become what God intends for all the world, a kind of first fruits of the kingdom. We will fail, but that too is an opportunity for share the Spirit's gifts: showing the world, showing other sinners, that repentance, forgiveness, amendment, and reconciliation are not just 'churchy words,' but God's power working in us and through us.

I end with a Collect in the Prayer Book, prayed on Good Friday and at all ordinations: O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.