

Come Holy Spirit, Come
The Feast of the Pentecost
The Rev. Deacon Lisa Kirby
May 20, 2018

Breathe on us breath of God, fill us with life anew

That we may love what thou dost love and do what thou wouldst do.

Paul talked about change last week.

We've got lots of changes and excitement going on around us Lots of new things going on. Our worship space is about to undergo renovations and we will see big changes in the landscape of worship during that time, and we will soon be on our summer worship schedule.

After today, the Alleluia's in the dismissal will be gone and the Confession of Sin will return to the liturgy.

In the life of the followers of Jesus, unbelievably big changes happened this day on what's called the Birthday of the Church.. It's the arrival of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire descending on God's people. The Holy Spirit who came to be the presence of Jesus here on earth after Jesus Ascension to the Father.

John tells us that the Holy Spirit comes to us as an advocate, someone who stands alongside each of us to inspire and to sustain us. There is a very personal aspect to this understanding of the Holy Spirit. For John It Is not just the spirit of the community which it emphasized in Acts. It's the spirit that is with each of us uniquely and specifically. I know you've felt that presence at difficult times. The Holy Spirit, often referred to as the she portion of the Trinity, is the spirit who guides me and sometimes gives me the words that come out of my mouth when on my own I don't have a clue what to say.

This may all be hard for some of us to understand and we may never have adequate words to describe the nature and function of the Holy Spirit but it has been suggested by writer Wade Griffith that rather than attempting to capture, predict, or define the Spirit, why not simply affirm that the Spirit IS and open your heart, inviting God's mysterious spirit to take up Residence in you.

Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove, with all thy quickening powers, kindle a flame of perfect love in these cold hearts of ours.

Looking again at our lessons, you know the Acts story-- Jews speaking in many different tongues and dialects but heard and understood by each in his own tongue. The descent of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire makes it possible for everyone to hear in his own tongue, actually hear what everyone else was saying in whatever language. There was ONE language being spoken on that day and on this day—one WORD—Love-- to be spread by this newborn Christian Community.

In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north, but one great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth

As community and as individuals we can spread that love by both word and deed if we will just listen and hear it and respond to its call.

Now I want to make a distinction between listening, which is what those ancient ones were doing before the intervention of the Holy Spirit, and hearing, which is what they were able to do by the power of the Holy Spirit, and then as this brand new Church respond by carrying the message to the ends of the earth.

How often do we listen, but do not hear? How often did we or do we tune out our teachers, parents, spouses, friends and all we hear is Charlie Brown's teacher "wah wah wah wah".

If we cannot listen and truly HEAR the important people in our lives how can we pretend to hear the voice of the homeless, the rejected, the suffering. We are going to affirm our Baptismal Covenant today. We are going to pledge to respect the dignity of every human person. If you respect someone you not only listen to them, you strive, as best you can to hear rather than just listening to reply as so many of us do.,

And I cannot really hear on my own, And I cannot hear the emotions behind the words, as much as I would like to. For me, it is only through the intervention of the Holy Spirit that I may occasionally have the ears to hear. , I am dependent on that Spirit, that Grace.

It is is the power of the Holy Spirit---to translate for us the confusing, sometimes halting speech of one who is in pain. Even more it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to respond.

Today when we pledge to respect the dignity of EVERY human being, let us Pray to the spirit to help us to be truly respectful, that we might listen, that we might hear, and then respond to the words and even what is behind the words.

Come Holy Spirit Come that we may love what He dost love and do what He wouldst do.