

## Reflection for Pentecost Year B

Sunday, May 19th, 2024

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:25-35, 37b; Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Bethlehem was God with us.  
Calvary was God for us.  
Pentecost is God in us. (Bob Baer)

A kindergarten teacher was observing the children in her classroom while they were drawing pictures. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's artwork. As she came to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Taking a deep breath and concentrating on her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

(kayala.com, pg. 91)



Pentecost is God in us.

On this joyous feast day, we've come together to celebrate the Spirit of God within our own hearts and within our Church community: the breath of God giving us life.

As author Melissa Thompson writes, "that is God in you. The very breath we breathe keeps us alive. Divine oxygen straight from the Almighty."

The final verse of our gradual hymn - "Breathe on Me, Breath of Life" - tells us that we will never die but live for eternity.

Ms Thompson continues, "that Holy Spirit gives us power to do what [He] has called us to do. Without it, we [can't] do anything. Without God, our lives are meaningless. But with it, we have life, perfect life forever."

The reading from Acts is **the** story of Pentecost ~ the rush of wind and tongues of fire. It helps us understand how God sees human diversity and how He has made us all so wonderfully different.

Psalm 104 talks about the world and all its creatures depending on God for provision and breath.

The prophet Ezekiel is given a vision of dry bones in a desolate valley, and God commands him to speak and as he does, the bones come together, are clothed with flesh, and receive the breath of life.

In the gospel reading from John, Jesus says that he has still many things to say to his disciples, but that they are not ready to hear them. When he tells them that he must leave, he promises that they will be provided for, and that God will send them an advocate to help them.

John's gospel calls the Spirit the *paraclete*, a term for someone who is called to one's side as a source of help.

Two thousand years later Jesus's promise applies to us, his disciples.

The Spirit of God calls us to be the kind of people He intended us to be: loving Him and loving our neighbour as ourselves. God also calls us modern-day disciples to be *paracletes*, advocates for each other.

If I opened my Thesaurus to the noun *advocate* I would find a variety of synonyms: Comforter, Counsellor, Helper, Champion, Supporter, Strengtheners.

We can be advocates by supporting one another. We don't have to offer advice or offer clichéd answers, just sit alongside the one who is in need. (adapted from healthyspirituality.org)

Albert Dumas' famous quote comes to mind: "Don't walk in front of me... I may not follow. Don't walk behind me... I may not lead. Walk beside me... just be my friend."

Spiritual speaker Mary Wise describes an advocate as one who doesn't abandon you; the one who will not leave you alone.

The one who will be present as the presence.

And for Christians, that advocate is the Holy Spirit, the breath of God.

A wise author summarized the role of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives:

"God does not look at our ability or inability; all God wants is our availability, and if we prove our dependability, He will increase our capability." ("It's Service, Not Status, That Counts" by Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign* July 1975)

Jesus first entered our lives when we were baptized, and for most of us, when we were infants, when, as Rev. Terrance Klein notes, we were "too little to recognize him. But in baptism, what is even more important than our choosing Jesus, is his choosing us."

When we celebrate the Eucharist we are renewed in the Holy Spirit.

"Holy Communion is the Lord's way of saying that we need never be apart from him in our lives. He will always be there for us." (Rev. Terrance Klein)

One minister describes the Holy Spirit as a "quiet ember" in this closing story:

A pastor once heard that one of his parishioners was going about announcing to one and all that he would no longer attend church services. The rebellious parishioner was advancing the familiar argument that he could communicate with God just as easily out in the fields, with nature as his setting for worship.

One chilly evening the pastor called on this reluctant member of his flock for a friendly visit.

The man was alone and sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself at home but said nothing.

In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After a few minutes, he took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth, all by



itself. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone embers' flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

The pastor glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

The pastor's silent message was not lost on the parishioner. After a long pause, he turned to the pastor and said, "Thank you for your fiery sermon. I'll be back at services next Sunday."

(adapted from Pentecost stories, John Pichappily, kayala.com)

We read in the Scriptures that "When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together." And here we are, too, quiet embers infused with the Holy Spirit. May Pentecost burn brightly in our faith, the promise fulfilled that our advocate is standing with us.

Amen.



## *Holy Spirit Prayer*

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
That I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
To defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,  
That I always may be holy.

Amen.

*St. Augustine*