



Pentecost Sunday is always the most fun for the lectors, for those who get to read the appointed Scripture to us in the pews. For it is today they get to carefully navigate through ancient not-so-easy geography: “Parthians, Medes, Elamites,” and more; just to give us a glimpse of the far-reaching language of the Holy Spirit for all of God’s children. But long ago, the people from these far-off places are not simply on the lookout for a solid translation from leaders in the new church movement. No, these precious children of God from all over the world are desperately searching for hope, for peace, for a love that withstands all the trials and tribulation of their homeland. And, so with that in mind, we’re going to try something new for this year’s rendition of Pentecost Sunday.

Now, not too long ago, we also started a new thing for every first Sunday in October, because that was the day when the wider church celebrated World Communion Sunday. We began a new tradition of singing, “For the Healing of the Nations,” as we prayed “Peace be yours” for numerous places from around the globe. It seems only fitting that we do so on Pentecost Sunday as well, as a reminder that Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and more, are not just about names of countries that lectors get to bravely go reading through off a piece of paper. No, they were thoroughly precious children of God desperately searching for hope, for peace, for a love that withstands all the trials and tribulation of their homeland.

Unfortunately, such desperation did not stop when the apostles miraculously became foreign language experts on-the-spot. It continues today in many of the very places that those Parthians, Medes, and Elamites called home, in Iran and Iraq, not to mention beyond in Syria, Ethiopia, and Yemen, but also where much attention is paid now in Ukraine: precious children of God wondering if there is any more hope left for them, any more peace to experience at all, any more love leftover that can withstand unspeakable trials and tribulations in the places they still call home.

At some point, for far too many of them, their living and surrounding conditions become so brutal and horrifying, that they have no choice but to search for any sign of goodness elsewhere. They must make the most mind-boggling choice that I cannot even begin to imagine: whether to leave everything they know about their entire life behind, not just in terms of stable jobs and local hang-out convenience stores or even their living and dining rooms filled with memories galore; but for some, to even leave family and decades-long friends behind, with the distinct possibility of never seeing them again. Far too many children of God of Mariupol, Ukraine, had no choice but to leave everything behind, as Russian forces invaded, and unleashed a terror escapade on their treasured homeland. And many of them made the thousand-mile trek to Poland. And it is there, where the desperate prayers of numerous Ukrainians were answered in the form of a complete stranger, not from neighboring Poland, but from even further away in Ireland.

Barry Haughian has been fortunate enough in his life to have purchased a second home a little over five years ago, on the western end of the Emerald Isle. In fact, it is a castle, originally built over half a millennia ago. Barry envisioned the place would be a comfortable getaway for he and his wife and their teenage daughter, but after watching the news of helpless human beings, he couldn't resist making the trip to Poland to do whatever he could to help, to fulfill his part of "Peace be yours," to those who knew no peace at home anymore. Four extended Ukrainian families now call that castle home, including several children who started attending the local schools and use the garden area outside to play games. One of the mothers spoke of those young people's immense struggle with it all: "Children cry: they didn't know where we can sleep, where we can [get] food. Children are very tired."

On a much lesser scale, it can even be tiring for us at a far-off distance. We grow tired of the never-ending dismal news in Ukraine and beyond. We grow tired of being asked for help. We grow tired of praying, "Peace be yours," and yet the violence and hate rage on. Children of God of all ages are tired of it all, to say the least. And so, we desperately need this Pentecost Sunday, yet again. We need reminded that this is not a giving-up and tired-out kind of Holy Spirit: this is a rush-of-a-most-ferocious-wind kind of Holy Spirit that has been a part of our life, of the whole world, from the very beginning. This is the Holy Spirit that will never cease from unleashing life-altering hope and soothing peace and boundless love within us, so that we may have just enough to keep doing our part as disciples of Christ in whatever way we can.

No, not all of us have a castle to house desperate children of God fleeing a war, but we most certainly have a fortress of God's grace within us, a fortress that no matter how tiring the world may get, will never be broken of its ferocious yearning to bring the most powerful love to life. The Holy Spirit, on this Pentecost Sunday, and always, is not giving up on them, on us, on this world that God still loves beyond our wildest imagination. For that Greatest News of all, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!

[The Ukrainian Refugees Living in an Irish Castle - BBC News](#)