

INTRODUCTION

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the disciples like a mighty wind with flames of fire and the ability to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ in other languages.

The Spirit comes upon us at the time of our baptism, when God claims us as his own and adopts us into his family. If we come to faith later in our lives, the Spirit comes upon us when we receive the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection and begin to live by faith in its reality.

The Spirit is among us; he is part of our lives. In the gospel lesson today, Jesus tells his disciples how the Spirit will reveal himself to them in their daily lives. Jesus' words both comfort us and challenge us.

INVOLVED

Today is Trinity Sunday. The lesson is one that shows the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus says to his disciples that he will send the Holy Spirit to them. When the Holy Spirit comes upon them, the Spirit will guide them and reveal to them the truth—the truth that Jesus tells the Spirit to share. There is a unity of purpose that we see in this relationship, and an interaction between the persons of the Trinity that demonstrates a close, intimate relationship.

This passage also tells us that the Spirit has come. The Spirit has come and he has stayed. God is with us and God is involved in our lives. It is true that God broke into the world and our history in the person of Jesus Christ. At Jesus' ascension, however, God did not separate himself from us. He continues to be involved in our lives in the person of the Holy Spirit.

God is present with us. This is not a benign presence. God is interested in our lives and what happens to us. The Spirit is actively a part of us.

The focus of the Spirit's presence in our lives is that of relationship. We do not perform a series of empty rituals that communicate some historical event. Our daily lives are not built around tradition. We walk with God in a dynamic, intimate relationship with our creator. We sing songs of love to him in our Sunday worship. We gather at his table and eat his food being refreshed and renewed by what he offers us.

EDUCATING

I love what Jesus says to his disciples, "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now." I have those same thoughts when I am teaching confirmation. I am enjoying teaching. I am looking forward to confirmation camp in a couple of weeks. I look even further to the end of a

two-year program and when we celebrate the Affirmation of Baptism of these young people. I'm glad to be able to teach them more.

The life of faith is a life of learning. The Spirit moves in our lives and enlightens us. The Spirit teaches us through the events of our lives and our relationships. As we walk with God, we learn more about ourselves, our world and others. We grow in knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

There are times we forget how important it is to avail ourselves of the learning opportunities that are ours. At times, we decide we have learned enough—we don't have to study, question, and search any longer. We can put our minds and spirits in neutral and simply coast.

The Spirit is in our lives and always offers to teach us and to help us grow. He doesn't force himself upon us, but he is always available to us.

GUIDING

An unspoken element of being a follower of Jesus Christ is that Jesus leads us. One of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to guide us.

We may be tempted to enter into an abstract theological discussion on how detailed the leading of the Holy Spirit is. Does the Spirit lead us to specific parking spaces, and determine whether we order Mexican or Chinese? Or, does the Spirit limit his leading to point out the general direction that he wants us to walk? While this may be an interesting discussion, a more important question is, "Do we ever ask the Spirit for guidance?"

If it is true that we live in order to do God's will, then it is important for us to ask what God wants us to do. Asking opens us up to the possibility of being guided. Vocational decisions shouldn't be limited to what we can do to make the most money. We should also ask the question, "What does God want us to do?" When we see a need, a simple prayer of, "How can I help?" may lead to a ministry beyond our imagination.

CONCLUSION

We are often satisfied with a distant, impartial God. Perhaps we feel it is safer that way. If we keep God at arms length, God won't ask us to do something we don't want to do. Still, Jesus offers us so much more. He sends the Spirit to be a part of our lives, to teach us and guide us and empower us to be instruments of God's love and grace.

Amen