

Notes from the Liturgist...

Receive the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)

Pentecost comes from a root word which means “fifty”. In liturgical language, it refers to the 50th day after the Resurrection. In the story of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, on that day the disciples were in one place together and suddenly there was a noise like a strong wind around them which filled the entire house. That was followed by the appearance of tongues of fire that came to rest on each of them. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit; to their amazement, they were able to speak in different tongues because the Holy Spirit inspired them.

The Spirit of God is no longer in human form, such as Christ was. In the previous Gospel readings, Christ himself said once that it would be good for him to go so that the Spirit might be able to come to us. Why would it be good for Christ to leave us? Would it not have been best if he had stayed with us? If Jesus continued to stay with us here on earth, he would have all the human limitations. If Jesus did not leave us, he would not be a Man for all of us.

It is the Spirit which blows where it wills, which inspires all with tongues of fire, which makes every nation under heaven proclaim the gospel in their own languages. Thus, it is the Spirit which makes the mission of Jesus also the mission of the Father – a universal mission. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of all Creation, leading us all eventually to the new heaven and new earth.

The Holy Spirit will strengthen and inspire us to continue the mission of Jesus here on earth. We are all God’s dialogue partners, co-workers of spreading the Good News to all creatures and giving witness to the Love which God the Father has for us, His Children.

The Feast of the Pentecost is also known as the birthday of the Church, which the Body of Christ is filled and strengthened by the Holy Spirit to continue the mission of Christ, the mission of God, our human mission.

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem ...



and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8, NRSV