

Reflections for Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21

Romans 8:14-17

John 14:8-17, (25-27)



Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

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Feeling a presence that disturbs

Gifts are often unexpected and surprising. On Pentecost day, the birthday of the church, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to the followers of Jesus gathered in the upper room. The Spirit comes as wind and fire: powerful elements that bring the curse of Babel to an end. Language is no longer a marker of identity, or a source of division. Instead it becomes a unifying force revealed to 'people living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven' (Acts 2:5).

The outpouring of the Spirit as 'tongues of fire' was the risen Christ's gift to his church. Given to those he had called to journey with him; preaching, healing, sharing meals with 'sinners', and speaking truth to power. These men and women knew the cost of discipleship, as they witnessed Jesus arrested, tortured and sentenced to the most violent of deaths. Yet just three days later they hear arguably the most significant words in history, 'He is Risen'.

This Pentecost as we hear Jesus say, 'As the Father sent me, so I am sending you' (John 20:21), and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, how do we feel? Joyful, anxious, excited, empowered, peaceful, ambivalent?

Anthony J. Gittins CSSp, in his book, *A Presence that Disturbs*, argues that the mark of authentic discipleship is to have 'felt a presence that disturbs...that both stabilizes and destabilizes, comforts and discomforts'. It is human nature to resist disturbance, especially if our own lives are comfortable and secure. To be open to the disturbance of the Spirit we must risk hearing the cries of the crucified of today, the groaning of our crucified earth.

Trusting the Pentecost promise can be made real through our prayers and actions for peace and justice, we acclaim: 'Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.' (Psalm 103)