

The Living Message of Christ

The Truth of the Living Word, Jesus, Savior of the World

Pentecost, Sunday, June 8

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit”

(Acts 2:4)

Today's readings seem like a study in contrasts, don't they? In the first reading, St Luke gives a dramatic account of today's feast of Pentecost: a rushing wind, mysterious tongues of flame, prophetic declarations, and a vast crowd hanging on Peter's everyword. But in the Gospel, St John paints a quieter, more intimate picture. He tells how Jesus appeared to the apostles privately, breathed his Spirit into them and sent them out to forgive, just as his Father had sent him to forgive.

So does the Spirit inspire great excitement and grand gestures, or quiet acts of mercy? Both. It's not a matter of either/or. When Jesus breathed the Spirit into the apostles, he showed them the reason for his death and resurrection: to win forgiveness for their sins and for the sins of all the world. Then when the Spirit came rushing into them on Pentecost, he filled them with the power to proclaim their mercy far and wide.

This is the key to our celebration today: we need to experience both the mercy and the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to know, intimately and personally, just how forgiving God is. We need to know, that nothing, not even the greatest of sins, can overcome the love that he has for us. But we also need to experience the powerful rush of his Spirit filling us with confidence in God's love. That confidence can propel us into the world to share the good news to everyone we meet.

Today, more than any other day, is a great day to ask for a fresh new outpouring of the Spirit. Ask the Spirit to flood you with a personal encounter with God's mercy. Then ask the same Spirit to give you the courage to proclaim that mercy far and wide.

“Come, Holy Spirit! Fill me and Empower me!”