

## **The Spirit, in Rush and Quiet**

Pentecost (C)

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On this Day of Pentecost, when we celebrate the Holy Spirit, it's appropriate that our readings show us two very different aspects of the Spirit.

Our first reading — the familiar story from Acts — is noisy, with crowds of people shouting amid tongues of fire. The Gospel reading, on the other hand, is part of Jesus' quiet conversation with his disciples before the Passion. Noisy in a crowd, quietly and intimately. The Spirit works in both ways.

In the Book of Acts, the Spirit descends suddenly, in a rush of wind and fire. As Episcopalians, this story might be a little outside our comfort zone. We might prefer a tea-and-crumpets approach to our faith. But this ecstatic story tells us something important: We cannot control the Spirit — just as we cannot control the wind. God cannot be contained.

Maybe you have had something similar to this Day of Pentecost experience in your own life — a time when you felt or saw or heard something that transported you to another place. A time of transcendence. If you have, then you know: This thing is real. It's dramatic. We can't control it.

John's Gospel gives us an intimate conversation among friends. In this conversation Philip asks Jesus to show the disciples the Father — to let them see God. Jesus gently chides Philip. Jesus says, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." The Father is Jesus, and Jesus is the Father. In other words, God has been right in front of Philip and the rest of the disciples all along. They just didn't recognize Him. Jesus then promises to send the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, which will abide with the disciples forever.

To me, this passage is about recognizing the Holy Spirit — the Spirit of Truth, the Light of God — in all people and in all of creation. That indwelling of Spirit that unites us to God and to one another is everywhere. We can see it when we are mindful.

Here's a spiritual practice that can help us recognize the Spirit. When you wake up, before your feet hit the bedroom floor, ask God to help you see Him that day. Then at bedtime, think about when you were graced with that sight of God during your day. It works.

Sometimes, we experience the Spirit descending in a rush of wind and fire. Sometimes, we experience the Holy Spirit in the normal moments of our day. You know that Spirit, because the Spirit abides with you, and will be with you forever. Amen.

*--Barbara Toman*