

The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa

Pentecost Sunday

May 31, 2009

Acts 2:1-21

Romans 8:22-27

John 15:26-16:15

Some months ago, as we were beginning our Natural Church development process here at St. Andrew's, I was trying to gain some understanding about the meaning of Passionate Spirituality. As part of the effort, I began to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. My prayer was quite simple....I would just repeat the words, "Come Passionate Spirit Come" again and again....Come Passionate Spirit Come, Come Passionate Spirit Come. Come, Passionate Spirit. As I prayed this simple prayer, I noticed that these same sounds, with just a bit of a change in rhythm also produced a different prayer: Compassionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. This morning, as we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, would you please join me in this prayer? Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come...

16 times a minute. 960 times an hour. 23,040 times a day. Over 8 million times a year. In a lifetime of 80 years, over 670 million times. We breathe. Each time we breathe, we capture oxygen from the air. As we breathe, we bring energy to our cells. As we breathe out, carbon dioxide, waste gas is removed from our cells. We breathe to bring life's good energy into our bodies. We breathe to remove poison, bad air from our bodies. When we breathe we are alive. When we stop breathing we die.

The Spirit of God is described as the wind, the breath of God. In the beginning, God breathed her breath into the void, and creation was born. God breathed his spirit into Adam and Eve and they came to life. God breathed over the waters of the Sea, and the people of Israel were freed. God breathed through the prophets and the Israel heard God's word. God breathed over Mary and Jesus was conceived. God breathed over Jesus at his baptism, and Jesus began his ministry of healing the sick, feeding the hungry, freeing the captives, and raising the dead. At his death Jesus breathed his last, and handed over his breath to God. God breathed into the tomb and raised Jesus from the death on Easter. Easter night Jesus breathed his gift of Peace over the Apostles. On Pentecost, God breathed the spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus over the followers of Jesus and sent them out to the ends of the earth.

Every time you breathe, the spirit of God comes into your body. That's how close God is to you. Every breath you take, God's energy fills you. 16 times a minute, 23 thousand times a day. Hundreds of million times in your life, the breath of God, the spirit of God fills you. Every breath you take is filled with the energy of God. Every breath you take is filled with the power of God.

When we breathe, our cells are cleansed of poisonous carbon dioxide. To breathe is to be cleansed. God's Spirit is a cleansing Spirit. What are the poisons that you need to exhale? God's spirit sanctifies. She fills us with good air, as she removes the bad. What bad air needs to be removed?: The poison of jealousy, lust, hatred, division, greed, despair, fear. As you ask for God's life giving spirit to come. What poisons do you wish the spirit to cleanse?

What power from God do you need this day? Is it the power of courage? Is it the power of forgiveness? Is it the power of hope? Is it the power of truth? Is it the power of laughter? Is it the power of wisdom? Is it the power of humor?

Please pray with me. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come.

In the letter to the Romans, Paul says that creation is in agony. Creation is groaning.

Floods, fires, droughts, famine, disease, earthquakes, and storms, violence and war, poverty and racism, and hatred, terrorism, countries spending billions and trillions on the latest weapons of mass destruction while thousands die each day for lack of clean water. Creation is groaning in agony. Reports this week state that climate change will kill 300,000 people annually. This number will rise in the years and decades to come. Creation is in groaning in agony, as it waits for redemption. The Spirit of God has been poured upon us to bring creation to new birth. God has given us the Spirit of Jesus, the power of Jesus to bring redemption to the world. God wants to recreate the world through us, God wants to recreate the world through you. We are the midwives of the new creation. The word compassion means, to feel with. I know absolutely no Hebrew, but I am told that in Hebrew, the word for compassion comes from the words "to feel in the womb". To feel compassion is to feel another's pain, in our womb, in our gut. God feels the pain of the world in his womb. And, it is from the womb of God that a new world is born. God's compassionate spirit is bringing a new world to birth through you. Do you have the courage to bring that world to life? Do you have the courage to dream God's dream, to see God's vision of justice and peace? Do you have the courage to hope for what you cannot yet see? Do you have the courage to be God's instrument in redeeming the world? Do you have the courage let the Spirit work through you?

Please pray with me. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come.

Most pictures of Pentecost show the tongues of fire on the disciples. Many show the Holy Spirit as a dove also hovering in the room. The dove is one of the images most of us have of the Holy Spirit. One of the images recently discovered for the Holy Spirit is that of a wild goose. Some claim that the image of the Spirit as a goose goes back to the earliest centuries of the Church. Whether or not it is centuries old or not it is still an image that has power. Wild geese are not sweet and serene but raucous and loud. They do not fly away from the face of danger, but can be quite aggressive. They are annoying and uncontrollable. They make a mess.

How easily we try to tame and domesticate the power of God. We imagine God's spirit to be gentle and soothing, someone that we can easily control. A spirit that is as passive as a gentle murmuring coo. But the spirit of God is not always or only passive, or controllable, or quiet or gentle.

The Spirit of God can also loud, raucous and annoying. She bites at our heels to get us to move. There are times when she makes a mess of our well ordered lives and plans. As much as we would like to do so, we cannot control the Spirit of God. She blows where she wills. She howls when she wishes. There are times when she acts exactly as we wish she would not. The Spirit of God is not tame but wild.

In the midst of our worship each Sunday, we ask the spirit to be with us. We ask her to cleanse us and gather us together. We ask her to come upon our gifts to make them body of blood of Jesus. We ask her to come upon us to renew, sanctify and unite us. We ask her to send us out into the world. As we pray for the spirit this morning, let us imagine not the gentle dove, but the wild goose. Picture that wild spirit coming upon us. Ask that spirit to make us wild and raucous. Ask that spirit to make us annoying and uncontrollable. Ask that wild spirit to blow through us. Ask that spirit to fill us with the passionate power of God.

This morning, we celebrate the Baptism of Charlie and Christopher. We ask that the Spirit be with them and us. We ask that the Spirit give us energy, we ask that she sends us into the world that the world might be recreated through us. There is no Baptismal hymn this morning, instead, I ask you to pray that the Holy Spirit will come upon the waters of this font. Ask that spirit to be unleashed through all who are baptized in the spirit. Ask that spirit to be renewed in us. Ask that spirit to be with us today and forever.

Come Passionate Spirit. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit Come. Compassionate Spirit Come. Come Passionate Spirit.