

God really is as close as our own hearts – Pentecost confirms this.

The feast of Pentecost, the feast of the sending of the Holy Spirit, is in a sense the only feast of the liturgical year that is really ours. Today we celebrate a mystery that happened to us, to Jesus' followers. At least that is the intention of this feast. We can still act as if it is all only about others. The strange events in the Acts of the Apostles, the mysterious appearance of Jesus in St. John's Gospel – all can seem so remote while in reality it's all written in an effort to show how close God is – right where we feel and think and move and dream. The Spirit was given in different ways: it blew over them, fire descended on them, and they got the Spirit in noise, light, and smoke.

The Spirit was given in different gifts: in the gifts of peacemaking, forgiving, speaking in tongues, healing, administering, dancing, singing, playing, and praising the Lord. The bottom line is: the Spirit is as available

and as diverse as there are people. And this weekend, we are privileged to have a number of people who were received into the Church at Easter – each unique, each a special embodiment of God's Spirit. (Witness talks at each Mass.)

A young doctor is assigned the care of a patient. The poor woman is suffering from a disease that nobody on the staff has ever seen before. The doctor spends hours pouring over medical data, searching through texts, studying the woman's tests. After many long hours, the moment of discovery comes – he is able to identify the virus, break down its chemical composition, and discover the right medicine and treatment for the woman.

A secretary's husband becomes seriously ill. He faces many long hours of convalescence and therapy. She'd like to be with him, but she has already used up all of her leave time. Her co-workers want to help, but how? The moment of brilliance dawns: they devise a plan to pool some of their own sick days into a bank for her. Because of their generosity, the secretary is able to be there when her husband most needs her, while keeping her job and benefits.

A student is having trouble in a given subject at school. The student is working as hard as he can, but it's just not coming. The student's conscientious teacher

tries every possible way she knows to make the student grasp the concepts. Then, one day, the moment of light: the teacher's explanation finally makes sense to the youngster, the letters now mean something, the numbers make sense.

Such an inspiration is no less than the Spirit of God – the very love and life of God that dwells within each human heart and mind, the Spirit that enables us to translate our sense of compassion and humility into great expressions of love and life. The Polish poet and Nobel Laureate Wislawa Szymborska writes that “Inspiration is not the exclusive privilege of poets and artists generally. There is, has been and always will be a certain group of people whom inspiration visits. It's made up of all those who have consciously chosen their calling and do their job with love and imagination.” May we be open to the Spirit of God and its promptings of holy inspiration, finding ourselves able to accomplish good and great works of kindness, compassion and reconciliation in whatever medium we work, in whatever place we dwell, in whatever time we live.

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