

Easter 6 B RCL

Trinity, Bend

Acts 16:9-15

Revelation 21:10,22-22-5

John 14:23-29

All of today's lessons have the same theme, the action of the Holy Spirit. Let's take them in chronological order. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus says, The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything....."

*vision*  
In Acts we hear Paul had a dream. It is the **Spirit of God** that speaks to us through dreams. His dream was so clear that he immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia.

Then in Revelation, we hear John of Patmos say, 'In the **Spirit**, the angel carried me away to a great high Mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.'

As a Spiritual Director I took this as a hint that today was the day to give you just a glimpse of the action of the Holy Spirit. Yes, we'll be celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit in just two weeks on Pentecost, but I believe the Holy Spirit does not get the attention she deserves.

After 3 years of Study becoming a Spiritual Director, I've learned how the Holy Spirit has influenced the history of the world. Not just the Christian world but the whole world.

Some of our best leaders, such as Thomas Merton, were studying Eastern Religions to see how they could blend with Western Christianity. They do that beautifully.

So let's explore the work of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus said, he would send the Advocate, the Third person of the Trinity.

In Acts, Paul meets Lydia, a worshiper of God. She had gone down to the river to pray. This rich woman was smart and had good business sense. She knew who to sell to she could size up people quickly. She was a dealer in purple cloth, the most expensive cloth you could buy at the time. She needed to know her cliental.

She listened to Paul and realized what he was saying was true. She was baptized with her whole household, servants and all then she begs Paul to come stay with her. She probably had really good accommodations. For him with excellent food and all.

Later we will learn that she financially supported his missionary work. The letter to the Philippians was probably sent to her house. In it Paul thanks them (her) for the financial support he has received.

Isn't it interesting that The Holy Spirit the feminine face of God has Paul meet up with this powerful, rich woman. *That wasn't just a coincidence*

In Revelation, "In the Spirit John is carried away <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ another vision, where the angel shows him the river of the water of life and the tree of life and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. That's the same peace we heard about in John, "my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives." The world was not full of peace. But John in Revelations ~~see~~ <sup>sees</sup> Peace.

Now the question is where is the action of the Holy Spirit today. Well we need to look for it. We can't do that without prayer and consciousness of the presence of God in our world.

I begin my day with a wake-up shower. As I end that shower, I stand in the water for a few seconds and say the baptismal prayer, "I baptize you, In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. You are my beloved child with whom I am well pleased."

This simple prayer helps me to start my day with a positive attitude. Not difficult but I reminder of my baptismal promise. The idea to treat each person as, Christ. *himself*  
We never know who we will meet throughout the day.

This being Memorial Day Weekend, I'll share a different kind of War Story.

There is a wonderful, true story about Bob Fletcher, a white farmer who took care of multiple Japanese Americans' farms in Florin, California, during World War 2, paying down mortgages and taxes until he could return the properties to his neighbors.

Fletcher's actions were unique in an era of rampant anti-Japanese racism. His story and those of others like him stood out because of general attitude against the Japanese during WW II. These farmers were imprisoned in camps, while their sons fought in the war for America.

According to Ken Mochizuki, "One common denominator of all these so-called helpers was they had personal contact with the Japanese Americans. Although they placed their own careers and reputations on the line, it was the personal contact that led them to do what they did. They knew them as people, real living people."

I don't know if these people realized they were empowered by the Holy Spirit but I believe they were. They were treating their neighbors with love and peace.

We just need to look <sup>to</sup> for notice the action of God in Bend. I believe the Bend Joy Project is powered by the Holy Spirit. Those who thought this up might not say that, but I can look for the loving action in our town.

Teachers who teach anti-bullying are another example. It is hard to live in the love of Jesus Christ when you are bullying someone. Love is the action of the Holy Spirit.

I urge you to spend some time in contemplation each day. If you don't know how to prayerfully do that, I'll be happy to teach you. I took a 16-week course in that a long, long time ago. Centering Prayer is one way to Contemplate and have a real conversation with God. Where we are listening as much as we talk. Not easy for most of us, but it can be learned if you want to.

One of the most energetic, talkative, powerful women I ever knew was Betty. This woman dealt with a husband with very early on set Alzheimer disease, he had to retire in his 50's because of it. She cooked, cleaned and sang in the church choir. The type of woman who liked to run the whole show.

One day I asked her, "How do you do all that you do?" "Well I'm Contemplative," was her response. I was very surprised, this was not what I saw during the day out in public. "I sit over there in my chair and pray and listen to God for an hour each morning."

Listening to God is what John is talking about. The Spirit is in the wind, as we will read on Pentecost. The rushing wind of tornadoes, the still small voice of God, while we hide in our caves. We just need to pay attention. Take a moment to breathe and notice the breath of God throughout the day. The breath of God that empowers us to live in love.