

PENTECOST 2018.

20-5-18

Impelled by the Spirit.

Our celebration today is asking us about how open we are to allowing God's Spirit to work in us in that way.

The Gospel we have today, Pentecost Sunday, finds us not at the Jewish feast of Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks, but at the Last Supper, where Jesus promises the Apostles that he will send them the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, sent by the Father.

There is significance in the fact that Jesus uses that word Advocate, rather than Holy Spirit, because an advocate, in our understanding, is usually a person who speaks for or pleads on behalf of someone else, often on behalf of a person of lesser status to someone of greater, as, for example, on behalf of a jobseeker to a prospective employer.

But here Jesus turns that around. It is to us human beings that the Advocate is speaking on behalf of God the Father and all He has done for us in Christ.

As Advocate the Holy Spirit speaks to us of all the Father has done in creating us and the universe in which we live, surrounding us with an abundance of good things to sustain and provide for us, and, when we failed to appreciate God's goodness and love, sending us his Only Son as his most explicit, and most insistent word of love and hope for the world, - the supposed victim against whom evil and death turned out to be impotent.

For the Apostles it set the seal on the Resurrection, the moment when, in spite of all the denial, betrayal, abandonment, and subsequent suffering endured by Jesus, they experienced his utterly forgiving and redeeming love. It blew their minds, and with that consciousness of God's love given them, they were able to move outside of their comfort zone, to share with the assembled crowd what had taken place.

Our challenge today is to let the Advocate speak to us as well, to be open to the revelation that God is indeed a God of all-encompassing love, whose love is already ours before we ask him, or do anything, and who wants nothing more than to have us as his co-workers in sharing that love with all and everyone He has made, reaching out in the likeness of Christ.