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Reflection

May 8, 2024

Today's scriptures are full of assurances needed in living and discerning the next step in our complicated world. Jesus' gentle encouragement restores our hope: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But in coming, "the Spirit of truth. . . will guide you to all truth." Paul proclaims, "you can be sure that God is not far from any one of us."

What is so timely about these assurances is that tomorrow is Ascension Thursday. Even though we celebrate the feast on Sunday, it means that this week begins the novena, the *focused* preparation time for the Feast of Pentecost.

Maybe it's because we were so intent on appealing for the Spirit to work profoundly during Chapter, that I am eager to enter these special days. Let's keep this energy going.

I know that many of us use the daily readings for our meditation. I would like to suggest some other possible paths of reflection for these days from the Ascension till Pentecost.

To begin with, the scriptures for the Feast itself, including the Sequence, taken one at a time could fill the days. They are exquisitely rich. Notice the commentaries offered in your missalettes, or in other resources.

For example, I have underlining in Carroll Stuhlmueller's Biblical Meditations so I know I have used it before. Yet I was surprised to see that the emphasis in Paul to the Corinthians on the *unity* of the one body, was to deal with the factions that had built up in that community. How human, that the abundance of gifts given there, brought divisions, jealousy and defensiveness. So, when Jesus breathed on the disciples to receive the Spirit, he also wisely, granted the power to forgive sins. . . Stuhlmueller remarks that" The gifts of the Spirit, through a common bond of forgiveness, patience, and long suffering, will begin to balance off. Each gift will be seen in relation to the gifts of other people. . .each one necessary that the

others turn out to be balanced and well put together.”
And that’s about just one of the readings.

Dig out your file labeled “Holy Spirit” or Pentecost.

What’s in there that so touched you once, that you kept it? Is it still true for you?

Recall the antiphons or mantras that lead into prayer or fill the spaces in times of prayerful reflection, like “Holy Sacred Spirit, breathe your breath on us…” or a Taizé chant, or hymns, like our opening song Gather 557 Send Down the Fire.

What about “Visio Divina,” using art for meditation? Of course, icons hold a special place, yet other art forms or poetry may also open us beyond our narrow world, into a spaciousness that vibrates with the Spirit.

For so many the natural world is the threshold for the sense of the presence of Sacred Mystery. At the first Pentecost, The spirit revealed Itself in wind and fire. Where do you experience the invitation to converse with the Source of All?

Well, enough of this, you get the idea.

Don’t let the well-known or too familiar become rote.

My hope is that you will choose as the Spirit leads you,
what will bring fruitful and amazing interior days.

We have walked with Jesus and the early church through the whole Paschal Mystery to this point of the fulfillment of Jesus’ own prayer and promise.

“I will send the Advocate to you, the Spirit of truth will guide you to all truth, that you may be one. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy complete. This is my commandment: love one another.”

So, we pray with hope:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in us the *fire* of your love. Amen.