

Pentecost • 5.19.24

Acts 2:1-11/1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13/
John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

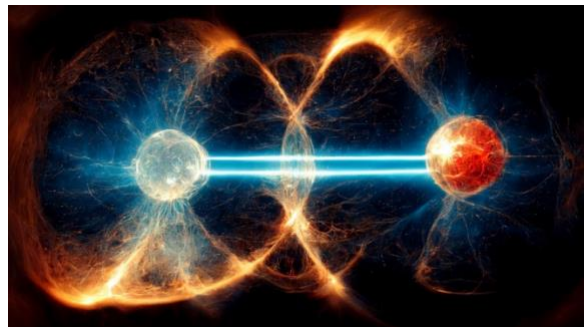
ENTANGLED BY THE SPIRIT... LURED INTO THE FUTURE



Did you, or rather, how many times this week did you say to someone, or write in an email: ***“I’ll pray for you”*** or, ***“You’re in my prayers”***? In our pastoral ministry and our Christian concern, it’s something we say often -- to a parishioner or a friend anxious about impending surgery, to a family member struggling with a problem, to a sister in community looking for insight, to newly-elected community leaders. I’ve often received the requested prayer, as I did from a Dad who wrote me once about all the kids, including his own, affected by a young high school student’s tragic death in the town where I worked. The last words in his email were: ***“Please keep those kids in your prayers.”*** Is that phrase just a polite way of ending an email or letter? Is it a token religious expression that we feel compelled to add to our conversation? Or is there a meaning behind the promise: ***“You’re in my prayers!”***

There is a theory in physics called **“quantum entanglement”** which, I believe, offers us insight into our faith and into the Holy Spirit. This “entanglement” is a strange feature of quantum physics, the science of the very small. It’s possible to link together

two quantum particles – photons of light or atoms, for example – in a special way that makes them effectively two parts of the same entity. You can then separate them as far as you like, and a change in one is instantly reflected in the other. In this **“entanglement,”** objects are linked together so that one object can no longer be adequately described without full mention of its counterpart. Even though miles apart – light years apart – they behave as if they were still connected because, in the quantum world, they are. Einstein cleverly called it **“spooky action at a distance.”** If you poke one particle the other particle flinches! This theory is hotly debated by physicists and scientists who wonder and search for an answer to the question: ***“If this is true on a sub-atomic level, can it be true on a larger level?”***



There is another theory in physics that offers us insight into our faith: ***Constant motion is the natural state of anything in the universe.*** This cosmic truth challenges our understanding of God as the “Unmoved Mover;” that is, to say that the divine moves others but is unmoved by another. If the Blessed Trinity is all about relationship and connection, then it might be better to think of God, the great “I AM,” in terms of **“I DO”** or **“I ACT.”** We can see the effects of God’s action in our world much more clearly than we can understand the ‘essence of God.’ It is the Holy Spirit who generates divine energy, moving people to work together for peace,

inspiring the musician and the painter, the dancer and the architect to make the world more beautiful. The Spirit of God is at work ***when enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, when understanding puts an end to strife, hatred is quenched by mercy and vengeance gives way to forgiveness.*** (Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation)

As people of faith on this Pentecost Sunday, you and I are given an insight into the workings of the Holy Spirit who is the “**connective tissue**” that joins together the Body of Christ and calls us to action. We have an assurance from Christ that we are indeed united to God and to one another on small and great levels. It was the Spirit of God who came upon the diverse group of people as the Acts of the Apostles narrates.



Suddenly, from different countries -- Parthians, Medes, and Elamites and other strange-sounding folk -- all speaking different languages, yet united as one; facile communication across boundaries of difference. Astounded, they suddenly experienced a common understanding and a shared destiny. God was working through each of them and they found a mutual homeland – life lived in the Spirit, opening their hearts to praise God and to love one another. They were ‘entangled’ in a way they never thought possible.

Pentecost can be for us a day of great hope that leads to a season of refreshment and renewal, and a recommitment to **be the change that we seek**. The mighty driving wind of the Spirit and tongues of burning flames that came to rest on the apostles propelled them into the future -- out of their hiding places and into the streets; from locked upper rooms to open-air atria and public marketplaces. The Holy Spirit desires to make a difference in our lives too.

Orthodox Bishop Ignatios wrote about the Spirit as the principle of life within the Church: ***“Without the Holy Spirit, God is distant, Christ is merely a historical figure, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is just an organization, authority is domination, mission is propaganda, liturgy is only nostalgia, and the work of Christians is slave labor. But with the Holy Spirit, Christ is risen and present, the Gospel is a living force, the Church is a communion in the life of the Trinity, authority is a service that sets the people free, mission is Pentecost, the liturgy is memory and anticipation, and the labor of Christians is divinized.”***

Jesus told his apostles at the Last Supper: *“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.* Often called the “birthday of the Church,” today’s feast sets our sight on the future in our pursuit of that Truth and the continued unfolding of the Reign of God in all its wonder and mystery. Maya Angelou’s poem, “On the Pulse of Morning,” may inspire us this Pentecost morning, to make the connections with and put into action the power and promise of the Holy Spirit:

Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
for this bright morning dawning for you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
cannot be unlived, but if faced
with courage, need not be lived again.
Lift up your eyes
upon this day breaking for you.
Give birth again to the dream.

Women, children, men...
Lift up your hearts.
Each new hour holds new chances
for a new beginning.
Do not be wedded forever to fear...
The horizon leans forward,
offering you space
to place new steps of change
here, on the pulse of this fine day,
you may have the courage...



May the Holy Spirit pour out that courage
on each of us and inflame our hearts with
Divine Love.

John Kasper, OSFS