

June 2 – Seventh Monday in Eastertide Monica Stuhlreyer, IHM

As we wind down this wonderful Easter Liturgical season, we are constantly reminded by the scriptures that Jesus will not leave us alone, orphaned, as he returns to his Father! He tells the apostles and us,

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and then you will be my witnesses even to the ends of the Earth. I will send you an Advocate to remind you of all the things I have told you. I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, she will guide you to all truth.

The Holy Spirit is the gift of the Risen Christ. Jesus says, “Do not be afraid, do not let your hearts be troubled ... (he speaks of his passion) Even though you will be scattered, and you will leave me alone, “I am not alone because the Father is with me. I tell you this ahead of time so you may have PEACE in me.”

I love the line from Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem, *God's Grandeur*:

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod, but they cannot wreck his rod ... for there lives the **dearest freshness deep down things**, for the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit), over the bent world broods, with warm breast and ah, bright wings.

Jesus also warns, “In the world you will have troubles, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”

Our commentary says that life experiences show that as we try to live out our relationship as a disciple of Christ, we do have troubles—John Lewis calls some of them good troubles! There are those troubles that disturb us from within, as well as those that occur outwardly, conflicts in relationships, failures in efforts that are part of our ministries, events in our world that contradict the Gospel way of life we have chosen.

All these troubles we are familiar with! Jesus warned us. Why are we surprised when troubles come upon us? I recall that psalm response we often sing, “Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble, be with me, Lord, I pray.”

Only in You, Oh God, can we find our peace, be present to us when our hearts are in turmoil!

All these events can be moments that “scatter” us and we may get distracted from our relationship with God. But Jesus invites us to trust that there is always community in God. “I will be with you” is said so many times in the scriptures.

We are held in community by the Holy Spirit. This is a reassurance—as the Church gathers, we find communion.

Another commentator reminds us that it is the Spirit who binds us believers in every generation...all the while, inviting us to open the door to new experiences of God at work among us.

Several weeks ago, I found myself going through a period of depression or desolation according to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, so I prayed and was grateful to have found some time in quiet prayer. I asked God what he was trying to teach me, perhaps purify me ... I couldn't connect these feelings with any one event.

I believe the Holy Spirit is not finished with me/us yet, or with deepening our appreciation of God's ever-expanding love. Be confident, God is at work in us. So, I prayed, "Spirit of the Living God, refresh me. Help me to trust that you are always at work in me/us, inviting me to be open to your invitation to grow, continue to grow, to become a more mature follower/companion of Jesus."

I say, "Come, Holy Spirit." I do believe the Holy Spirit is the gift of the Risen Christ.

I believe you will respond to my prayer, I've experienced it, for as Hopkins says, "for the Holy Ghost (Spirit) over the bent world broods with warm breast and ah bright wings."

In the gift of the Spirit, you give us freedom, help us to claim that freedom, to free ourselves from all that pulls us toward darkness whenever we are threatened by it. Yes, Come, Holy Spirit!