

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, May 24th 2015

As a body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,
so also Christ. (1 Corinthians 12: 12)

In fear, the followers of Jesus hid behind locked doors. The air did not stir and the walls closed in like a tomb. The trauma of recent days silenced them. They had lost their way. In dread they awaited cries for more bloodshed. In guilt they felt they had failed him. But it was a playful breeze that slipped under the door and swept over them. How could a wind trick its way through these thick walls? The crushing weight lifted and breath returned. Like dry branches, their spirits ignited. They laughed and embraced. Amazing words poured forth. Fear fell away like the shells of locusts. Once again new life came forth.

In desolation we drop like bones into a ditch. Rigid and alone. By reaching out to another, the spirit can find us. One person finds the words and the other listens. In one simple gift of compassion, the breath of life returns. Jesus' companions did not scatter, each seeking safety on his own. In misery, they clung to each other. God's spirit made them one body and they roared back to life together.

Intent on being self-sufficient, I can distance myself from the sources of life. Without deeper connections to others, God's spirit does not find me. Our world separates us in many ways: each absorbed with her own career, schooling, house, car, disappointments, plans... This ardent individualism can chip away. In friendship, prayer, conversation, struggles for justice, and service, the odd notion that we are all one body begins to ring true. As we come to stand together, the spirit of unity surprises us.

Veni Sancte Spiritus. The lush gifts of the Holy Spirit sound like paradise: "rest most sweet; grateful coolness in the heat." Jesus greets his exhausted companions with "peace be with you." We are not alone. No walls are too thick for God's spirit.

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