

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 1st 2016

Memorial of Saint Justin, Martyr

Coming to this week, with the memories of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost still vivid, I am as Paul begins in his letter today, grateful to God.

Pentecost is truly one of my favorite celebrations of the year. The images of the Holy Spirit are impossible to be confined- wind, fire, a dove, and breath. These images are a gift to me throughout the year as I try to enliven my faith and my actions each day.

The Easter Vigil flame as an altar server was awe inspiring. Rarely in our lives do we encounter such a large, wild flame.

While camping or cooking, starting the fire takes a tremendous amount of work, without the right help and the right tools, I would not be able to produce such a flame. When Paul tells Timothy to stir the gifts that God has given him into a flame- (to avoid cowardice, to embrace power, love, and self-control) what I read is that it takes work. There is nothing easy about creating fire, there is nothing easy about using our God given gifts for others so that they shine like a flame. We give glory to God by what we do with our gifts, but it takes work.

Mark's Gospel today ends with the great affirmation that God is the God of the living. How important this is to those of us working each day to bring greater dignity to our brothers and sisters. God is not one who waits for us to just survive this life, but rather God is actively prodding us to build God's kingdom each day. This daily grind also takes work in a world where caring for others is counter cultural.

One of my favorite prayers was written by an inspiring woman, Sr. Peggy O'Neill, S.C. As we continue to find ways to transform our world, may we continue to be inspired by the images of Pentecost.

Pentecost

Hurry Sacred Spirit!

Come with your raging fire

Shape our rage

So that our words burn and transform

Blow us with a mighty wind

So that we walk far enough

Birth in us questions that clash with systems that bind

Shatter stones that entomb: violence, hunger, illiteracy

Stones that keep people apart

Gift us with the Truth that defies lies that hang mist-like over our worlds.

Yes hurry, Oh Movement of God,- prod, push, convince, convert.

Seep into our souls

So that we are oned and

Need not fear.

4/19/89 Suchitoto, El Salvador, Sr. Peggy O'Neill, S.C.

Kelly Tadeo Obik-Creighton University's Schlegel Center for Service and Justice