

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jun 4th 2017

Pentecost Sunday

Have you had the experience of talking and listening to someone and feeling as if that person might as well be speaking a different language? It's a conversation with little understanding and no communication. Or a conversation that seems to go in circles with each person trying to make his or her point and the other person not listening, not getting it, not understanding.

I thought of meetings like that and conversations like that when I read the first reading today where the gathered Jews were amazed that after the Holy Spirit rested on each of them as tongues of fire, they could understand the multitude of languages around them. How wonderful to be able to understand, to hear what people are saying even if they seem to be speaking another language. The Holy Spirit can help in that understanding, in helping me find God in all people. If I am finding God in all people – even the ones who annoy me – I can find some way to listen and to understand and to communicate.

We can ask the Holy Spirit to breathe that gift of understanding into us, to refresh us like a great strong wind that blows away the dust and cobwebs. We have to be still, to listen to that Holy Spirit, to the best part of each of us, encouraging us and giving us the strength to do more than we thought we could.

The Sequence that is part of today's readings offers a wonderful prayer for today and everyday. The prayer asks the Holy Spirit to

Bend the stubborn heart and will;

Melt the frozen, warm the chill;

Guide the steps that go astray.

I need that prayer to guide my steps and to guide my understanding. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me to listen, to really hear what people are saying to me. I ask the Holy Spirit to help bend my often stubborn heart and will and to keep me on a good path.

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