

May 15, 2016

Pentecost

“The Jews from every nation heard the disciples speaking in their own language”

God is a gypsy who plays her violin at the gate of my heart. She plays her rhapsody until the tears come . . . longing, longing to be invited in.

The Disciples

A point we need to make here is that the scriptures do not say the disciples spoke in many different languages; it says they were heard in many different languages. God can be heard in every language, in every culture, in every religion, in every tradition. It is God’s language. And what language does God speak? Love. What is God’s message? Beauty, mercy and compassion. Where does God speak? Everywhere, often in the most unexpected places. Where do we hear God? In our hearts.

A Modern Story of Pentecost

Many of you remember Fr. Jack Morris, my predecessor here at St. Mary. This is a Pentecost story taken from Fr. Jack Morris’s biography, “*Ruined for Life*,” which has just been published. It is a story of God speaking to Jack’s heart in a most unexpected place about beauty, love and freedom. The following is Fr. Jack’ testimony.

“Through the challenging process of teaching as a Jesuit scholastic at Copper Valley boarding school for nativist near Anchorage, a full load of subjects I had never taught before, and performing parenting duties for the boys, I was, by God’s grace is, lead out of the straight jacket of the Jesuit law and order program of the previous seven years. During those formation years, my zeal for holiness, was total. I viewed holiness, not in terms of love or community, but as the center of my own sanctification, my individualistic quest to bond with God by keeping the rules perfectly. I bought the literal whole of what I believe we were taught. This literalism was imbedded in me, I believe, from a certain rigid Puritan strain of my mother. I was a fundamentalist, or in novitiate terms, ‘a hair shirt.’

“When I went to Alaska, I went to my superior wanted to know when I could see him for spiritual direction. He looked at me and said, ‘I don’t have time for that. Just do your work and things will work out.’ He got up and walked out, leaving me and my confusion.

“An earthshaking moment occurred during my second and final spring at Copper Valley. I was out at the furnace house by myself, working on a motor. The tips of purple and white crocuses pushed up through the melting snow as the temperature hovered just above freezing. The snowbirds had returned.

“One has to live through a long, hard Alaskan winter to know how one's soul longs for the relief of warmth and light. I felt alive as I silently worked. All at once, to my own consternation, I started weeping profusely. I looked around, dumbfounded, hoping no one had caught be like this with my guard down. It was a penetrating warming, unclenching of a fist, a loosening of a stronghold on me.

“What had triggered by spontaneous subbing was the warmth of the returning spring, the sun gradually fighting back the cold, the icicles beginning to thaw and drip. My own tears flowed from the melody and invitation of spring, God’s renewing invitation to life.

“Years later, I discovered the poem ‘*Gypsy Music*’ by Sister Lou Ella Hickman, and I realized it perfectly captured the feeling I experience that day in Alaska as spring thawed my frigid heart: ‘*God is a gypsy who plays her violin at the gate of my heart. Hidden in the high thin notes of her wild music is her longing for love. She plays her rhapsody until the tears come . . . longing, longing to be invited in.*’”

This is the Feast of Pentecost

This is the Feast of God speaking to us, in our own language, to each heart, in the most unexpected places. When we hear God speak, we are moved beyond our own agenda, our own anger, own ego, our own fears. When we hear God speak, we are moved beyond just getting God to do what we want God to do. When we hear God speak, we are moved beyond just *me and God* - to *all-of-us-and God*. When we hear God speak, we are moved to a radical transformation at the deepest level of consciousness itself - utter self-giving love.

We’ve all had Pentecost encounters with God which changed our lives. Can you recall a time in which this happened to you, when you were taken to a new level of consciousness, a new hope, a new awareness, a new spirit of compassion that you hadn’t felt before? You’ve all had these experiences, and undoubtedly more than once. Can you recall one which you would like to share with the rest of us - an experience of God speaking to you, a new Pentecost?

Community Sharing

From every nation, we hear God speaking to us in our own language

Gypsy God, play your violin at the gate of our hearts. Hidden in the high thin notes of your wild music is your longing for love. Play, play your rhapsody until your tears come and we invite you in.

Happy Feast of Pentecost Everyone!