

Acts 2:1–21; Psalm 104:24–34, 35b
1 Corinthians 12:3b–13; John 20:19–23

I've called this morning's sermon "Spirit Gifted." Today, of course, as you all know is Mother's Day. It's not easy being a Mom. Consider the case of this stay at home Mom. One evening she went to the PTA meeting and her husband and eldest daughter got together. They decided that they would clean up the kitchen and really impress Mom when she came home. They put away all the food. They wiped down the counters, washed all the pots and pans and put them where they belonged, put the dishes in the washer, ran it and put them away. Then they sweep, mopped and polished the floor and sat down overcome by their own nobility, they awaited Mom's return.

Two hours later she came home from the meeting, took off her coat, hung it up, walked through the kitchen into the den, grabbed the remote control, plunged into the lazy boy and began watching television. Her husband and eldest daughter followed her to her chair and stood slightly behind her waiting in expectation. Finally, she felt them looking over her shoulder and looked up at them and said what. Her husband said the kitchen. The kitchen what. The kitchen her husband exclaimed. The kitchen, we cleaned up the kitchen, didn't you notice. It's sparkling clean, everything from suppers cleaned and put away. We even did the floor for you. It's just as though we've done spring cleaning. She said momentarily and looked at them with a somewhat bewildered expression on her face and said "oh, yes I noticed, thankless task isn't it."

That's how it is sometimes isn't it. Being a Mom is a thankless job. Don't we all too often take Mom's for granted, but we do have this special day. A day when we can show Mother's just how much we appreciate them. It's our special opportunity to say thank you, thank you, thank you. Let's hear it for Moms.

But there is more to this day. A lot more. Today, 50 days after Easter, the Church celebrates its version, the Christian version of Pentecost. And the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Disciples and beloved, believe it or not, the gift of the Holy Spirit to each and every one of you. Not that is something to celebrate, but I think we are rather cautious when it comes to expressing or putting to use the gift. Heaven knows we don't want to draw attention to ourselves, do we? And we don't want to be accused of that touchy, feeling stuff and the last thing we want is people to misunderstand what we are saying or talk about us behind our back or ridicule us because we are one of those spirit nuts. Of course, things haven't changed much have they? In the time that is past since the Disciples first received that gift, listen to how the initial event is described. Why it's the stuff of Hollywood's special effects. You know, you would think they would get to it after Charlton Heston and the crossing of the Dead Sea. A house filled with the sound like rushing wind. Something like tons of fire appearing and burning on the individual heads of the Disciples and then they speak. A plethora of languages. It might have gone unnoticed to all but the Disciples if weren't for the fact that Jerusalem was filled, crowded with pilgrims from a host of countries that come to the capital to celebrate Pentecost, the second most important religious feast for the Jewish people. Celebrated exactly 50 days after Passover where they celebrated the harvest and made gifts of bread. So, Jews from far and wide and every nation where Jews had

been spread, they came and gathered at Jerusalem and saw what was happening in this household where the Spirit was gifted to the Disciples.

It wasn't the wind like sounds or the tongues of flame that caught the attention of those gathered for the feast. It was the languages that assailed their ears in a great _____ of sound as well as the growing shock when these Jews from all over the known world and amongst all of this clan suddenly realized that they could understand in their own tongue what was being said. What is still worse, much worse, was that the people who were doing this were Galileans. Give me a break, uneducated peasants, fisher folk, what on earth could it mean. What is God up to in this event? While somewhat perplexed and ready to walk away and give the whole thing up, others stopped to listen and their listening to think and to wonder what was God up to. What was he doing? But there were those who quickly dismissed the whole thing as the after affects of too much preparatory Pentecost celebrating.

Our receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is no where near as dramatic as the account presented to us in the reading from Acts. We received the gift of the Holy Spirit in our baptism when it was marked outwardly with anointing oil as the sign of the cross was made on our foreheads with the Pastor announcing our baptized names and saying, "child of God you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." Later, when the baptized take for themselves the promises made for them by their parents at the time of their baptism, the Pastor prays that God will stir up that gift in them. The baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit. That gift beloved is the self same gift given to the Disciples on Pentecost when the Christian Church was birth. Just so, God's presence makes the Disciples and us not just a group of believers, but mark this, it makes each and everyone of us the real presence of Christ in the world. We are the body of Christ called to continue his ministry and his mission whenever and wherever we are able. How can this be? How can we possibly do something like this you ask? Because what God gives us when he gives us his Spirit is enormous. It is more than just strength and support and teaching and comfort although those things are wonderful to have. And he gives us more too than joy and peace, patience and kindness, those things which we have called the fruits of the Spirit and which each of us bear. He gives us the gift of faith and hope and love which Paul reminds us are the greatest spiritual gifts of all. And then he gives us our own personal abilities and gifts which we've worked at our educations and our jobs to discover. These gifts are designed for the building up of the Church and equipping and empowering us in mission and ministry to which we here in Trinity are called. That ministry can be performed as faithfully as scrubbing and polishing the kitchen floor. As going into the most disaster ridden area and offering help in the name of Christ. There is a downside however. Do you know what it is? It's our tumidity. Our tumidity of putting those gifts to work. The sad reality is that if we never put our gifts to work for Christ's sake, we trap the power of God in our inaction. You see, as I see it, the gift of the Holy Spirit is something like the ability we have to float. Now, don't smile. Granted, some of us may float a little under the surface rather than on top if we don't move our arms and our legs around. But, there isn't one of us who will sink to the bottom. It is hard work, very hard work, to swim to the bottom and stay swimming there, but we will never know how well we float if we never get into the water and allow our ability and the water to do what they are meant to do.

Unsure of your own spiritual gifts given you. No problem. Hey Judy how about standing up for us. I did it to her at 8:15 a.m. and she scolded me and I am going to get her again. There we are. Judy Collins, our Coordinator of Spiritual Gifts, give her a hand. She is here to help precisely because identifying our gifts is so vital to our living faithfully. We here at Trinity have taken it so seriously that we have called Judy onto our staff to help us.

You know, there was a man called Yates who during the depression owned a sheep ranch in Texas. I checked with Fred Bolds. I thought they only ran cattle in Texas, but no they have sheep ranches. Now he didn't have enough money to continue paying the mortgage. Now what does that sound like? In fact, he was forced to live like many others and live on government subsidies. Each day as he tended his sheep he worried about how he was going to pay his bills. Sometime later a seismic crew arrived on his land because they thought there was a possibility there was oil there and they sought his permission to test drill. After a lease was signed they went ahead. At 1,115 feet a huge oil reserve was struck. Subsequent wells provided even more oil than the first well had revealed and Mr. Yates owned it all. And wouldn't you know, miracle of miracles, his lease to the land included the mineral rights. He had been living on relief and yet he was a billionaire. Think of it. Just think of it, he owned all that oil with its tremendous potential, yet for many years he didn't realize he had it. Are we like Mr. Yates with the gift of the Spirit, do you think? Do we consider ourselves weak and helpless, all the time unaware of the extraordinary power that we have available to us which is laying just below the surface in our minds, in our hearts and in our souls. We here today are a Pentecost people. The Spirit has been and is being poured upon us and being stirred up in us. Let us take the bull by the horns and pour ourselves into the ministry and mission before us, unlike the thankless task of the PTA Mom with whom we began. Let our living out of the gift of the Spirit filled with thankfulness reveal our heart felt gratitude to God for this amazing and outstanding gift. Amen.