

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost Sunday –The Spirit Illuminating Culture and History

The narrative of the Pentecost account in Acts is set in culture and history and the pilgrimage of a people.

It engages the Graeco-Roman language and culture where it is imposed upon the ancient Jewish culture. Luke is the only discernible Gentile writer in the New Testament. He writes in elegant Greek and yet he has some knowledge of the Semitic background in Israel that is also stamped upon the Pentecost account.

The Intention of Luke is to bridge gaps not only between God and humanity but between the Roman Empire and the Jewish State. Luke also addresses issues that tested the developing Christian mission in its conscious engagement with both cultures.

Luke addresses Acts as well as the Third Gospel to a figure of nobility called Theophilus within the Roman power structure. He wants to assure the people in power that this new movement is not only a new vision of God but also a non-threat politically to the existing rulers.

Unlike Matthew who takes the cultures on Luke engages the cultures. The powerful military stance of Rome aligned to the residual spiritual power of the Jewish State was a formidable combination to penetrate and engage. Therefore the words in Acts and elsewhere in New Testament do not exist in a vacuum. They can be read in their own right, but this misses the engagement with the people of the day in the text and some of its most convincing elements for us now. That is, we may miss the hints and clues that Luke and the other writers give us about addressing the historical, political, social, and spiritual issues of our time.

Speech: The transitory tongues of fire at Pentecost mark an interior surge of spiritual power. It drives speech that praises God with utter freedom.

Languages: The capacity to link dispersed Jews in Jerusalem for Passover in discernible languages links nations and addresses one of the curses of humanity, the divisiveness of the Babel Tower of our languages.

Spiritual Fire: The fire at Pentecost does not radiate from a bush as of old on Mount Horeb, but from humans praising God. God speaks through humans in angelic language and discernible languages so that they can praise God together.

Social: Pentecost consolidates community and it consolidates the Jesus movement and its mission on earth. It empowers them for their work and their mission and brings Christ alive in their preaching and in their teaching and in their worship. It is a great moment in the history of the Church because it transcends history and yet drives history and gives fresh directions with renewed hope in a New Era. The Jesus movement was given fresh configurations and content in a dynamic enacted story that had no end because its end is in God.

Pentecost engages us at many levels. The red balloons signify its warmth.

What warmth does it bring to you today?

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

June 11, Wednesday.

- Bible Study, 10:00am
- Discussion Group, 7:30pm, Parish Office.

June 12, Thursday. INDEPENDENCE DAY. NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

NEXT WEEK:

Trinity Sunday. **one (1) service only** at 9:00 a.m.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Genesis 1:1-2:3; Psalm 150; 2 Corinthians 13:11-14; Matthew 28:16-20
