

PENTECOST SUNDAY MAY 19, 2024.

You may recognize some of what I am talking about in yourself. You see, as I get older, I get more and more set in my ways. I eat dinner at the same time each night and sit in the same seat at the table. I say the same prayers and turn off the light at the same time every day. I 'm afraid that I have become a creature of habit.

You may recognize some of that in yourself. And I'm sure you know people in your life who fit that description. There's a part of us that knows that, as the years add up, it is harder and harder to change.

Well, today, on this holy day we call **Pentecost**, we come together to celebrate the precise opposite of being "set in our ways." Today we raise our voices and hearts in praise to the one whose very essence is manifested in **change, transformation, risk-taking and new life**. The one who promises to be with us on our journey of faith.

The Holy Spirit – the Paraclete, the Consoler, the Spirit of Truth - God dwelling in and at work in the hearts, minds and souls of his people, individually and collectively. The Holy Spirit---**our inspiration, our guide, our fortitude**. It is really kind of amazing when you think about it. God is alive and well, not simply somewhere "out there," but in you and me.

I won't speak for any of you, but I can tell you that many times, I have a hard time recognizing the Holy Spirit at work in my life. I mess up. I take the easy way out. I sin, all of those things and more.

Well, the Holy Spirit never gives up, but also never forces himself on us. The Holy Spirit renews us, transforms us, strengthens us, makes us all that we can be. And we often just want to remain the same, in our comfort zone, acting the same way.

In many ways the Holy Spirit wants to turn our lives **upside-down**, just as he did for those early followers of Jesus. And because of that, we should not be afraid for what the Spirit wants to uncover in us might surprise us, in a good way.

But it is not going to happen by accident. And it is certainly not going to happen if we are spiritually set in our ways. I rarely see another's point of view, especially in matters of faith. I am convinced that other people are the problem, not me. I act as if God loves me a little more than others. I only pray one way. I could list more; you get the point.

God always wants us to be more than we are today. The Holy Spirit helps that become a reality. Could the disciples ever have imagined that their words and actions would still be shaping the world two thousand years later? In our spiritual lives, let us refuse to be set in our ways, except for one, the way of **love**.