

Grace, Mercy & peace from God our Father & our Lord Jesus Christ.

You may be surprised to discover that the pastor before you – who wears the same black outfit day after day – was as a young man quite enamored with fashion. I loved clothes, and loved shopping for clothes. In the dressing room I discovered all too often that not every piece of clothing was cut for me, nor did every piece of clothing or style look good on me. What looked great on another person often didn't suit me at all.

This morning is all about the Holy Spirit. In John's gospel we hear how Jesus on the day of resurrection breathes the Holy Spirit on His gathered disciples; in Acts we are made witness to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church on Pentecost; in first Corinthians Paul tells us about the variety of gifts the Holy Spirit delivers to the Church; and in a few minutes Emily, Noah, and Annie will affirm their baptisms and we will pray that the gifts of the Holy Spirit be poured out upon them in their lives as adults in the Church.

It may or may not occur to us as these very different expressions of the Holy Spirit are revealed in our presence this morning, that the images of ***the Holy Spirit before us appear to be vastly different.*** We are, of course, most familiar with the Holy Spirit in Acts – the unmistakable public expression of with wind and flame and confusion and speaking in foreign tongues, but the Holy Spirit revealed on that day shows only a single facet in ***a many sided***

jewel.

St John reveals *an alternate pouring out of the Holy Spirit* on the day of resurrection. This one isn't all wind and flame and confusion; it is *peace and forgiveness and new beginnings* for Jesus friends who have failed. The presence of the Holy Spirit manifests in both ways; I have certainly experienced it in both ways. But these early expressions of the Holy Spirit are just *the tip of the iceberg*. Paul's letter to the Corinthian congregation makes it clear that even in the first generation of the Church there was confusion, even controversy regarding the Holy Spirit.

People argued over whose experience was authentic. People being people – sinful, self-centered and always right, I mean – most argued that their experience or expression was the defining, legitimate evidence of true faith. *Two thousand years later the Church seems intent on debating a question Paul answered clearly at the start – there are variety of gifts and expression of the Holy Spirit, and no one has the whole picture – only the Church as a whole receives the fullest expression and benefit.* All expressions of the Holy Spirit that build up brother or sister or creation or the Church are legitimate.

The dressing room also revealed something else to me. What fit me when I was 25, doesn't suit so well at 55.

Annie. Noah, Emily: there will be different seasons to your young lives, and what seems to fit now will not suit so well at a different time. The gift God affirms today is that the same Spirit will accompany you and make available gifts for every time and season.

Ecstatic experience as on Pentecost or peace, forgiveness and new beginnings as on the day of resurrection – *I hope you will experience the Holy Spirit in both these ways and more.* I hope that the holy Spirit *fills your lives with the zeal to speak the good news* to your neighbor and a world desperately in need of belonging, solace, making sense of all the chaos. I hope you will *walk with the enduring sense of peace and the gift of forgiveness* that come from trusting through the same spirit.

Though the Acts reading seems more dramatic, more life-changing, more energizing, in my experience the gift of *the Holy Spirit for peace and forgiveness and new beginnings breathed on the Jesus' friends on the day of Resurrection has proven far more revolutionary and demanding in my life.*

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

The Holy Spirit poured out again upon you today offers you *the gift of receiving Jesus' peace, living in that peace, and sharing that shalom with others.* The Holy Spirit affirmed in you *today offers you the gift of receiving forgiveness, living in the certainty of that forgiveness, and power to grant the forgiveness you have received to those around you.*

You will need these gift because we your brothers and sisters in Christ and countless others will no doubt occasionally disappoint you, offend you, hurt you, even because they – we – are broken sinful creatures just like you.

My hope for you Noah, Emily, and Annaliese is *that you will be clothed from this day forward with the Holy Spirit*. That you will *cling to it as it clings to you*, and even though no one else may see it accompanying you through life, you know that the Spiritus Sancti – the Holy Spirit – opens your eyes to see Jesus' vision of God's Kingdom, where everything and everyone is sacred and holy in God's eyes, worth living for and dying for every day no matter what clothes you may wear.

AMEN !!!