

Acts 2:1-21
1 Corinthians 12:3-13

BEWILDERED, AMAZED AND ASTONISHED

On Pentecost day, when the Holy Spirit caused Jesus's followers
to praise God in many different languages—
which they themselves did not know—Luke tells us
that the crowd of devout Jews who gathered
were bewildered, amazed and astonished.

How could these ignorant hicks from Galilee
be speaking their language, they wondered.

Many wondered about the meaning of such a phenomenon,
while some dismissed the event as people being drunk.

As if a few glasses of wine could cause any of us
to start speaking Chinese!

Peter steps forward to wisely tell them that God is fulfilling a prophesy
from the book of Joel.

Think about it:

if God planned to have the people's sons and daughters,
young and old people and even slaves speak on God's behalf
when blessed by the Spirit, then maybe it's not quite so strange
that God's Spirit has brought about this miracle of language.

And the beautiful promise is that before the day of judgment arrives,
“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Salvation is freely available, requiring only a genuine profession
of faith.

Our reading this morning from 1 Corinthians is a very important teaching about the gifts of the Spirit.

It is quite clear that there are a variety of special gifts and each believer will receive one, with the responsibility to use it, not to show off but to show the glory and power of God.

During our time of separation, it seems particularly important to remind ourselves that “in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jew or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

We remember that the church is the body of Christ, and together we are all members.

We are a community and a family.

Henri Nouwen wrote, “By prayer, community is created as well as expressed.

Prayer is the first of all the realization of the community itself.

When we listen to the Word, we not only receive insight into God’s saving work, but we also experience a new mutual bond.”

The gift of God’s Holy Spirit that we celebrate today,

bewildered, amazed and astonished,

is our Advocate, our Protector, our Guide, our Comforter:

Christ’s presence within us.

We are holy, too.

Let us pray:

Wherever we are, Lord,

We know we are together, united in faithful prayer.

We thank you for your Holy Spirit,

we glorify you, we worship you,

and we count on you, especially during these devastating times,

to bless us with continuing faith and health.

You are our Rock and our Redeemer.

You sustain us with your never-ending love.

You encourage us to express with jubilant joy our love for you.

In your precious name we pray,

Amen.