

Bishop's June Message 2011

Pentecost! The rush of a violent mighty wind! And as a result, the Galileans speak in the *muttersprache* (the mother tongues) of the devout Jews of the diaspora from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. They hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Messiah, Lord, and Savior, for the first time in their cradle-languages. Galilean peasants cannot do this! The diaspora Jews cannot believe this! But it happens --- at the will and whim of the Holy Spirit. Echoes of Emmaus ... “did not our hearts burn within us as he unfolded the Scriptures to us?” The Spirit speaks in the idiom of the one(s) being spoken to. Amazing! And more to the point, amazingly *effective!*

The arrival, the intrusion, the unexpected filling - of and by - the Holy Spirit. Heretofore unknown languages are spoken. Heretofore unknown truths are revealed. Why?... because the *kairos* – the fullness of time – has come. “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on *all* flesh...”

What does this mean? The Spirit empowers us and allows those who receive it to be healing presences. The Spirit that Jesus gives us *empowers us to speak*. The Spirit that Jesus gave us will speak in us and speak convincingly. The Spirit *empowers us to pray*. The Spirit comes to us to pray in our weakness, for when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words. The Spirit given us by Jesus *reveals our true spiritual identities*. The Spirit reveals we do not belong to a world of success, fame, or power but to God. Who are we? --- God's beloved daughters and sons! We are empowered to call God “Abba”. We are empowered to receive love. This love includes and infinitely transcends all the love that comes to us. It is the gift... of the Spirit! [See Bread for the Journey, Henri Nouwen – entries for June 8 to June 12 inclusive.]

The Spirit ebbs and flows in the Church – a tide that we cannot control, but for which we ardently pray. Come, Holy Spirit!

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada