

Veni Creator Spiritus

Pentecost Sunday (Year B)

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In one of the Old Testament books, there is a proverb which says, 'there is nothing new under the sun.' (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Many people would agree with this. 'History repeats itself.' 'Nothing happens that hasn't happened before.' Whether this is said out of frustration due to a lack of progress or validation of why things shouldn't change, many people live by this advice. In my opinion, that is unfortunate.

Whenever we live according to the idea that there is nothing new under the sun, we begin to lose our motivation. The excitement for life that we once had as children gradually declines and life becomes a dull routine. 'Why waste any more energy trying to make a better life for myself, undergo a career change, start a new hobby, met someone new, or fight an addiction.' Some people, sadly, lose the will to live.

This weekend, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. We recall the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the face of the earth. One of the most traditional chants to the Holy Spirit associated with today's feast is called 'Veni, Creator Spiritus,' which translates to 'Come, Creator Spirit.' Also, in the creed, the Holy Spirit is called 'Dominus et vivificantem,' which translates to 'the Lord and Giver of Life.' In both of these traditional teachings, we have a solution to our lack of motivation. The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who comes to create something new in our lives. The Spirit is the creator and giver of life.

In our Gospel today, Jesus himself recognizes that the Holy Spirit will take his followers into new territory. As he said to his disciples, “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.” That very Spirit of truth has been guiding the Church for centuries and still has more to teach us.

Even though she is now in her later years of life, the theologian Sr. Elizabeth Johnson is a great example of someone who always wants the Holy Spirit to lead her into more and new truth. In her book *Quest for the Living God*, she explains why. She writes, “in former times, the basic conception of the world was that it was created in the beginning and remained a static entity; God’s activity consisted primarily in maintaining what had already been established. Now that we realize that the world is becoming, that genuinely new things come into being by evolution and other processes, fresh ideas of divine presence and agency are needed.” (187) Throughout the whole book and in her other writings, Sr. Elizabeth has tried to fill that need.

Pentecost is a feast that reminds us that there are some new things under the sun. Do I find life boring? Am I feeling unmotivated? Do I believe God wants to do something new for me? For this community? For this world?

On this feast of Pentecost, may the Holy Spirit shed a ray of light on you, give you sweet refreshment, cool you from the heat, pour dew on your dryness, heal your wounds, wash away your guilt, bend your stubbornness, guide your steps, melt the frozen, and warm the chill.