



“Allowing the Holy Spirit to Come To Me and Through Me”

May I be a welcoming vessel through my words this morning so the Holy Spirit of my being might be wonderful, marvelous and glorious in this place. Amen.

When do we get – I mean really get – that the Spirit of the Living God descends upon us each day hoping to find a willing vessel for Its expression and that the God of the Most High says to every one of us each day, “You are my beloved child with whom I am well pleased!”?

What if we woke up every morning singing the song the choir just shared, “Welcome Holy Spirit. Welcome in my life. You are wonderful, marvelous, glorious, in this place!” Maybe we can get a recording of the choir and all set this as our alarm clocks. A little too happy and joyful for the early morning? I know some mornings it might feel that way for me! Maybe we could instead get a recording of the earlier song – “Come Holy Spirit” to call us awake with the invitation of the Holy Spirit – a call and response, a gentle nudging to begin anew each day.

In our reading today from John, Chapter 3, we heard the story of the mysterious encounter that Nicodemus had with Jesus. As always, John uses language which has many meanings on

many levels. Jesus speaks of the need to be born anew. The word John chooses to use is “anothen” – which can mean – “anew”, but also “from above” or “again.”

In Northern Aramaic “born again/anew” means “to change one’s thoughts and habits.” Nicodemus spoke Southern Aramaic and hence did not understand Jesus.

Some Buddhists have a ritual where they practice dying every day. Not as a morbid practice, but as a practice to allow for the release of the fear of dying, to bring a new quality to their lives, and to cultivate a peaceful mind for when the actual time of the death of the body comes.

What if we at Canadian Memorial chose to practice being born “anew” – “from above” each day as our morning spiritual practice? What would that mean for how we choose to live our lives, how we treat others? What if we could consciously open your minds and our hearts to new thoughts, new habits, infused by the Holy Spirit, the higher part of our Being?

Ernest Holmes, the founder of the church in which I am ordained wrote this:

“Everything is continuously being re-created, and it literally is true that the creative Spirit is forever making all things new. We must permit It to make all things new for us.”

In the Integral Life Practice Circles I have been hosting, some of us have made a commitment to do two practices each morning. The first is to take a glass of water and pour it back and forth with another glass speaking aloud the words: Spirit (or Mind) and Body, Spirit – Body – Spirit – Body, continuing to pour the water back and forth 10 times. This “vitalizes” the water with the Breath of Spirit and then we slowly drink one glass of water representing Spirit or Mind and affirm the qualities we choose that day for our Spirit or Mind. We then repeat the process, pouring water back and forth saying Spirit - Body, Spirit - Body 10 times and when complete, drink the glass of vitalized water representing our Physical Bodies and affirm that which we desire that day for our bodies.

We then activate our awareness of all 3 of our bodies: gross or physical, subtle or energy, and causal or I Am-ness in which all things arise, followed by performing the Integral Dedication Practice where we bow in the four directions and say these words:

“May my consciousness, and my behavior, be of service to all beings, in all worlds, liberating

all, into the Suchness, in this and every moment.

This is how we begin our days – “born anew” with the vitalizing water of Spirit in our Bodies, intending to allow ourselves to be a vessel for Spirit in a high-holy conscious way.

And as Jesus said to Nicodemus,

“Very truly I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.”

Each one of us has various ways that we can open to the Holy Spirit to come to us and through us. For some it includes ritual or spiritual readings. For others chanting or listening to music. For others, especially those of us in Cascadia, it’s being in nature and whoosh of Spirit descends upon us like the wind.

“Like the wind, it blows where it pleases, we hear the sound of it, we feel its breath, but we don’t know whence it comes and whither it goes.”

Our opportunity is to open up – to be the vessel for Spirit to descend and express as us, to breathe its breath into our lives. To allow the wisdom, the beauty, and the peace of the Most High to find a welcoming place to reveal more of Itself on Earth.

People have shared in the Tuesday Bible Study group their experiences of being “lifted up” – ascending in consciousness as they

were filled with this presence. This to me is the evolutionary experience of the Kin-dom of God on Earth – where consciousness is expanded, awareness is broadened, and God finds a ready vessel to reveal more of Its mystery.

On this Trinity Sunday, we ask the question: What is the evolutionary experience of the Trinity? How do we move beyond the personified patriarchal view of 3 Persons – One God? Are we able to experience the 3 aspects of the Divine with all of our senses – seeing, hearing, feeling, and even tasting and smelling, within our being, yet also within all creation, and within all our relationships?

For some here today, even the idea of using the words “Trinity” or the “Holy Spirit” can be offensive to one’s current beliefs and consciousness. These words invoke old paradigms or archaic ways of believing that were shed long ago. Yet in completely rebuking these terms, we also lose the essence of their meaning – that there is a Power that is Infinite – beyond all words, beyond all time or space. For some we call it God, Allah, Buddha, Dharma, Tao, the Holy Trinity or the Holy Spirit. Whatever we call it, it is the experience of this great and grand and glorious Power descending to us, and us ascending to It, opening ourselves to be a vessel for Its expression on Earth.

This descending and ascending is not to/from the “Heavens” or somewhere “out there.” Rather, it is an activity of consciousness, to the highest most and inner most part of

our being. To reject this expression of the Divine, shuts the valve that is ever-ready to flow into all creation – the flow of the Divine Breath ready to breathe life and express Its glory as our lives.

The other question we must ask ourselves is: What does it mean to truly allow the Holy Spirit of our Being to come to us and through us? Do we live our lives like Mother Theresa, and our prayer becomes, “May every action of mine, be something beautiful for God”? Or do we become like St. Francis, and become an Instrument for Peace with all beings, especially our animal kin? Each one of us has Spirit-Given Gifts that are ready to be expressed in our own unique and special way. I know this community helps people identify what those are in relationship to a ministry within the church. As we open up to these Gifts, our lives are transformed as we feel the energy of Spirit using us as Its vehicle for expression on Earth. What a glorious way to live life as Spirit-Expressing!

The other night I read through the hymns for today and the readings, and then opened up in my sleep to direct revelation of Spirit. The images that came to me in my dreams were that of building a full-sized labyrinth made of foam pieces. It was a beautiful puzzle that many of us here in this room were building together, piece by piece.

As we did, we acknowledged the turns of life: Birth, death, fear, courage, love, hate, sorrow, joy. As we

placed each puzzle piece of the labyrinth, we knew they represented the path of life, the path with many turns, the path where we think we are going “somewhere” but then we make another turn and find that we are farther away from “there” than when we started on the journey.

I have had many mystical experiences walking labyrinths, from walking barefoot on a gravel labyrinth in Arizona and having the ground feel like it disappeared, to walking the ancient labyrinth in Chartres, France, to chanting and walking at St. Paul’s here in Vancouver, to the most profound: experiencing my ordination ceremony in the center of a labyrinth at Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, CA.

So it make sense that my internal archetypal revelations of my dreams would bring this forth for me in contemplating a sermon on inviting the Holy Spirit to come to us, and through us. To be born anew on the labyrinth of life is to awaken to the ever-winding paths that take us ultimately to the center of our being – to God. We may not feel like we are getting anywhere or may find ourselves crossing paths with others walking on the labyrinth of life, and yet we always end up finding our centre-point, the ground of being, the Holy Spirit of Life itself which calls us home to the Truth of our Being.

Often we are invited to open to receive insights and awareness while we are in the centre of the labyrinth, insights that we then can wander with

along the path of the labyrinth to the entrance/exit point, and take back with us into our daily lives. This is the invitation we must cultivate in our daily spiritual practices: to seek the insights of new thoughts, new habits – to be born anew, and to take these revelations of the Holy Spirit into our everyday lives to live and express, celebrating the Divine as us.

It feels like one of the intentions of Canadian Memorial and its church services is the same as the walking of the labyrinth: to provide the space for all of us to be born anew - to seek and find the insights of new thoughts, new habits, new ways of being and to come home to the center of our being which is God. Through music, message and prayer, we reach up and our hand touches the hand of God that is outstretched, ready to pour forth Its Holy Spirit into our lives. If, for a brief moment while in church, we can have a glimpse of this, or feel it energetically through whatever consciousness filter fits for us, we open up to this expansive energy of God, and we provide ourselves as a willing vessel for the Cosmic Holy Trinity, to live Its life as our lives as we depart from our time together.

You will notice today that the songs chosen are various forms of invitations to - and celebrations of - the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Holy Spirit, come into our lives.
Give us a spirit of wisdom, an understanding heart
Give us a spirit of reverence, of wonder and of awe.

Spirit of trust and caring, melt
us, warm our chill.

Spirit of the Living God, fall
afresh on me.

Melt me, mould me, fill me, use
me.

Spirit of the Living God, fill our
lives with love.

And find delight in what is truly
precious.

And as pronounced in John
3:16: For God so loved the world, that
he sent his Son, the messenger of
Truth, that as we open our minds
consciously to his words, to his
invitation to be a vessel for Spirit, we
might not perish, but have eternal life
– a life of Spirit, in Spirit and as Spirit.

I'd like to close with a reading by
Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: Radiant is
the World Soul

Radiant is the world soul,
Full of splendor and beauty,
Full of life,
Of souls hidden,
Of treasures of the holy spirit,
Of fountains of strength,
Of greatness and beauty.
Proudly I ascend
Toward the heights of the
world soul
That gives life of the universe.
How majestic the vision -
Come enjoy,
Come find peace,
Embrace delight,
Taste and see that God is good.
Why spend you substance on
what does not nourish
And your labor on what cannot
satisfy?
Listen to me, and you will enjoy
what is good,