Through the written word and the spoken word, God help us to hear your Living Word, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS, Acts 2:1-21

SUDDENLY from heaven there came a sound like the RUSH OF VIOLENT WIND.

It filled the ENTIRE house.

Divided tongues, AS OF FIRE, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

ALL of them were filled WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, and began to speak in other languages, as THE SPIRIT gave them ability. AS THE SPIRIT gave them ability.

Wow. I want us to imagine the awe and wonder and fear the apostles must have felt in this moment.

First there is the sound of a rush of violent wind. Can we approximate that with our breath? It will be tiny by comparison but might bring the Spirit into the room. We will take in a huge breath and exhale it as fiercely as we can.

Inhale. EXHALE.

There was the sound of a violent wind.

Then, divided tongues, AS OF FIRE, appeared. I don’t imagine this as a birthday candle. This is a living breathing fire among them. The FIRE of the Spirit appeared among them. AND filled with this Spirit, they were empowered with many languages. The Spirit brought the languages of the world into that place.

COME HOLY SPIRIT.

Ven Santo Espiritu.

Viens Saint Esprit.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.

COME HOLY SPIRIT.

And this was possible only in as much as THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM ABILITY.

The Spirit comes and delivers unimaginable ability. The people were amazed and astonished.

It is this very Spirit that Jesus leaves as an advocate. It is this very Spirit that brings the Church into being. It is this very Spirit that brings us to where we are today.

For me, it seems impossible to overstate the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the breath of God and the air we breathe. The Spirit is the fire and passion burning in our hearts. She is our advocate, our guide, our constant companion.

We can at times dampen the power of the Spirit. Just as the apostles were accused of drunkenness, fully embracing and living in the Spirit might mean looking a fool. *Oh, but I would much prefer live in a holy foolishness that embraces the impossibility of God than live in an earthly foolishness that limits God.*

Embracing the Spirit can also be time consuming and take us off schedule. The Apostles did not account in their day for the Spirit to show up like wind and fire and a multitude of tongues. How could they?!

I recently had a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit.

Just a week and a half ago, I was in New Orleans for a conference my wife Angela was leading along with others in her organization and their movement partners. It was a multi-faith gathering of people committed to Reproductive Justice. One morning of the Gathering we began with what was supposed to be 20 minutes of prayer to ground our day and intercede for a team member who was admitted to the hospital. An HOUR and 20 minutes later, we had prayed, and sung, and danced, and cried together in the palpable presence of the Spirit.

As Rev. Iya Estee, a Baptist preacher and Ífa Priestess called out to God, others prayed in the languages of their hearts. We heard English and Spanish, Hebrew and Arabic, Yoruba and the sacred language of silence. Estee’s voice came through the speakers, and the murmurings and prayers of others were heard through the room. We swayed in the flow. Same stood, some sat, some laid on the floor, some with hands open to the sky, some with hands resting on their hearts. In the silence people called out their petitions. With tears and sorrow, with hope and longing. Some offered their prayer in song. We came together and held hands singing, *Loosen, Loosen Baby, you don’t have to carry the weight of the world in your muscles and bones. Let go, let go, let go.*

Y’all. The Spirit was there! She was in our midst and we in hers. And still, I had moments when my whiteness and my Episcopal Church upbringing came in. I looked at my watch a couple of times thinking, “well this wasn’t on the schedule.” I had moments of wondering if people were comfortable or not with this kind of prayer. When we held hands, I worried that my hands were sweaty and my arms became tired. I love extemporaneous prayer AND it was all so open ended and felt unwieldy. There was no rubric to look to, no identifiable end in sight.

The Spirit was present. The moment was beautiful and holy and everything I didn’t know my heart needed. And it was indeed not on the schedule. It was not the plan. But that is the Spirit for you, folks.

The Spirit is beautiful and messy, flowing and chaotic, unmooring and grounding, pushing and pulling, silent and loud, wind and fire, every language of people and of God. The Spirit cannot be scheduled *and* is right on time, is inconvenient and perfect. The Spirit wraps us in a blanket of warmth and we can still be a bit uncomfortable. The Holy Spirit is big and expansive even when we want small and defined. And that is *precisely* why we need Her!

Come Holy Spirit.

Ven Santo Espiritu.

Viens Saint Esprit.

Veni Sancte Spiritus.

COME HOLY SPIRIT.

Come Holy Spirit when we are celebrating the many beautiful years of the church. Come Holy Spirit when we need to repent and repair. Come Holy Spirit when we are both excited and scared for the future, when transition awaits and uncertainty arises. Come Holy Spirit in the moments of life’s great celebrations, for graduations, new jobs, birthdays, and time with family. Come Holy Spirit when we feel so tired of grief and need and pain. Come Holy Spirit when war wages in many places around the earth. Come Holy Spirit when children are dying and parents are afraid. Come Holy Spirit when we are uncertain, anxious, indecisive, and unwilling.

Come Holy Spirit when we are elated with good news. Come Holy Spirit when we have moments when all feels right in the world because a flower finds a way to spring up through the sidewalk. Come Holy Spirit in the laughter of loved ones, in new friendships and old. Come Holy Spirit and give us joy and courage, fortitude, steadiness, and assurance. Come Holy Spirit in the glow of fire and the rush of wind. Come our great advocate and guide. Come Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit. Veni Sancte Spiritus.

Ven Santo Espiritu. Veni Sancte Spiritus.

Viens Saint Esprit. Holy Spirit, Come to Us.

Veni Sancte Spiritus. Holy Spirit, Come to Us.

COME HOLY SPIRIT.

