The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
The Day of Pentecost

... At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is, But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity, Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards, Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point, There would be no dance, and there is only the dance...

T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

Peace on each one who comes in need;
**Peace on each one who comes in joy.**
Peace on each one who offers prayers;
**Peace on each one who offers song.**
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,
**Peace of the Spirit, the Triune One.**

‘A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you,’ says the Lord; ‘I will put my spirit within you and you shall live.’

*Ezekiel 3:26; 37:14*

**Opening Prayer**

Living God,
eternal Holy Spirit,
let your bright intoxicating energy
which fired those first disciples
fall on us
to turn the world again.
Hear this prayer for your love’s sake.

*Amen.*

**The Gospel**

*John 7:37-39*

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
Poem

Mechtild of Magdeburg

English version by Jane Hirshfield

Effortlessly,
Love flows from God into man,
Like a bird
Who rivers the air
Without moving her wings.
Thus we move in His world
One in body and soul,
Though outwardly separate in form.
As the Source strikes the note,
Humanity sings —
The Holy Spirit is our harpist,
And all strings
Which are touched in Love
Must sound.

Meditation

Water is, from the very beginning of scripture, one of the most compelling signs of the presence of the Holy in the midst of life, from the stirring of the water at the moment of creation, to the water gushing from a cleft in the rock in the desert, to the river flowing from the throne of God at the foretold culmination of sacred story. In the brief gospel passage, Jesus offers himself as the source of that divine “living water,” which will be conveyed to those who are in relationship with him by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The poem uses images of birds and music, rather than water, to evoke the relationship between the Holy Spirit and those who long for relationship with God. But the sense of “flowing” present in all the images conveys the same sense of ease and power, of indwelling and outpouring, perhaps of danger and transformation, that we may see in the passages where water is the outward and physical sign of the Spirit.
Reflection

Which image of the Holy Spirit, and our life in the Spirit, is most compelling to you? Does this image connect with a memory, or a hope for the future?

The images in poem and gospel can seem very personal, and yet scripture and tradition assure us that the Holy Spirit binds us together in community, so that we are one, as Jesus and the God he calls Father are one. Do you see something in these readings that might inspire or guide you to seek community in a new way, in this time of distance, isolation, and social disorder?

Prayers

We bring before God someone whom we have met or remembered today

We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer

We bring to God a troubled situation in our world

We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit, clarity of mind, and warmth of affection

We offer our thanks to God for the blessings in our lives

We name before God those who have died.

Gracious God, you hear all our prayers: those we speak aloud, those we hold in our hearts, and those prayers for which we have no words. Hear the prayers of your people, and grant them as may be best for us, for the sake of your holy name. Amen.

Accept our thanks for all you have done, O God. Our hands were empty, and you filled them.

May Christ’s holy, healing, enabling Spirit be with us every step of the way, and be our guide as our road changes and turns, and the blessing of God our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life be among us now and remain with us forever. Amen.