

**The Still Point**  
**A Time of Meditation and Reflection**  
**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.**

**Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

**Opening Prayer**

O Lord, when your Son ascended into heaven, he sent down upon the Apostles the Holy Spirit, as he had promised, that they might comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom: Distribute among us also, we pray, the gifts of the selfsame Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**The Gospel**

*John 15:26-27;16:4b-15*

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but

will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

**Poem:** Caedom

*by Denise Levertov*

All others talked as if  
talk were a dance.  
Clodhopper I, with clumsy feet  
would break the gliding ring.  
Early I learned to  
hunch myself  
close by the door:  
then when the talk began  
I'd wipe my  
mouth and wend  
unnoticed back to the barn  
to be with the warm beasts,  
dumb among body sounds  
of the simple ones.  
I'd see by a twist  
of lit rush the motes  
of gold moving  
from shadow to shadow  
slow in the wake  
of deep untroubled sighs.  
The cows  
munched or stirred or were still. I  
was at home and lonely,  
both in good measure. Until  
the sudden angel affrighted me -- light effacing  
my feeble beam,  
a forest of torches, feathers of flame, sparks upflying:  
but the cows as before  
were calm, and nothing was burning,  
nothing but I, as that hand of fire  
touched my lips and scorched my tongue  
and pulled my voice  
into the ring of the dance.

**Meditation:**

Denise Levertov's poem works within two traditions: the season of Pentecost, which we mark today, and the tradition of Caedmon, known as the earliest identified English poet. According to the Venerable Bede, Caedmon was an illiterate lay brother who cared for the animals at Whitby Abbey. Caedmon's Pentecostal moment comes when, at an already advanced age, he departs in shame from a singing event just when the harp was about to be passed to his hands (or, "when the talk began").

Aware of his inferiority (and his lack of singing experience), Caedmon instead seeks refuge and comfort in the barn. That night, a divine being visits him in a dream, asking Caedmon to sing. At first reluctant, he finally produces what is now known as "Caedmon's Hymn". Levertov beautifully tells this story with vivid imagery evoking the Pentecostal flames and the liberation of the tongue as a vessel for the Holy Spirit.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- All of us feel woefully inadequate because of our humanity. And yet, we all are also endowed with gifts of the spirit. What are your gifts? When have they surprised you?
- Levertov's poem starts and ends with the image of "the dance" - a reminder that merry-making and celebration can be divinely blessed acts. When was the last time you felt like dancing? Did you dance? If not, what kept you from dancing?
- What hope does the story of the Pentecostal act give you?

### **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.**

***Poem and Reflection offered by: Matt Bentley***