Today’s propers almost make us want to say, “Stop! Enough! Save some of this for one of those other, boring, Sundays, when the readings seem to offer such a paltry spark of inspiration.”

Look at what we’ve got here:

* Tongues of fire, perfect understanding
* Varieties of gifts with one Spirit, one body
* Greater works than Jesus’ own, the Spirit of Truth within us

It’s just not seemly. Looks like the Church is a kind of spiritual spendthrift by lavishing all this good stuff on one single Sunday.

On the other hand, if there’s one day in the Church Calendar, what better day than today, the Feast of the Holy Spirit!

Day in, day out, isn’t this God’s promise to us? That right here, right now—this Advocate is with us. This is Jesus’ own promise of our never being alone.

And how God lavishes that divine gift on us. What flamboyance: Tongues of fire!

Absolute divine understanding—all of this is an elaborate way of telling us that God speaks our language –the language of our hearts.

Of course they all heard the message in their own language, because this language of love cannot be bound by limits of human language, cannot be dammed up by insistence upon any kind of bottom line, will never be thwarted or stifled by well-reasoned arguments or debates about morality.

On that fiftieth day after the Resurrection God’s Spirit of Truth
burst through all barriers, outran all prejudice, swept away all human categories and conditions.

* So we have an Advocate. With whom do we need an advocate?
* Are we afraid of God’s judgment?
* Do we need an advocate to argue our case before Satan?

Much has been thought, and said, and written about this.

And, finally, I don’t think any of that matters very much.

What if the Holy Spirit is our Advocate without an object?

What if God is simply in our corner always?

For most of us it would be more than enough to have this Divine Presence within us to be an advocate for us against those other voices inside us.

So this is God’s constant championing of our cause against those other voices declaring that we’re no good, not loving, not loved.

Maybe that’s the single most important arena in which this perfectly clear voice speaks that language which transcends language—that territory within us.

The Spirit of Truth proclaims the Truth within each of us—that we are God’s children, created by God’s love, in God’s image, and that God loves us unstintingly.

Yes, those other voices are there as well—“You’re not smart enough, financially secure enough, energetic enough—in short, not good enough.”

But God’s loving voice overwhelms all the rest. All the rest.

When we allow ourselves to hear that language of the heart in our hearts, we are transformed. However fleetingly. . . . when we allow the other voices to quiet themselves in order to hear God’s voice calling to us.

When our hearts respond to that loving language, we are set free to speak in the same idiom so that others may hear it, too.

That is eternal life. That is the Kingdom of God. That is our calling.

In those times of transformation, when we encounter others who seem so different from ourselves (by whatever criteria we employ), we discover that we are not in competition with them, we have nothing to win or lose, we needn’t compare ourselves to them.

Instead we know, having heard the message in our own inner language, that we and they are not we-and-they at all—only we.

And together we can act in harmony, as one body, living the life of grace and compassion that God intends for us all—together.

Well, of course we should have an embarrassment of spiritual riches in today’s readings!

And it is more important than ever to remember this when so many forces seem to be pulling us in so many directions.

We see all the peoples of the world experiencing one single challenge at the same time—a strange kind of solidarity, or at least a call to solidarity.

Loving responses abound—campaigns to raise funds for protective equipment, food, and medicine; music played from windows and porches; moments of silence shared in appreciation for those who continue to work through the pandemic for the common good; weekly hours of prayer for those who suffer and those who care for them.

And yes, in the midst of this, horrific examples of brutality and racism, of desperation and frustration. Demands to end our isolation and demands to take greatest care when we want to let down our guard.

What a maelstrom of competing forces. What seeming chaos—such as that scene on the original Day of Pentecost.

Whatever else this period of time is, this day is the Day of the Spirit—the day of overflowing grace and peace

* that defies all odds, ignores all obstacles,
* fills our hearts and our Church and God’s creation
* with the superabundance of love that knows no bounds.

Let us, against all odds, rejoice and give thanks and be glad in it.

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