

*Based on Acts 2:1-2 and Psalm 104:24-20 (Nan Merrill Version). The Spirit Renews Creation.*

*The earth, though not without turmoil, is renewed.*

This is our Pentecost Promise.

To be sure, there is turmoil. In fact, *turmoil*, may be too light of a word, meaning no disrespect to Nan Merrill in her translation.

If the story of Jesus is any indication, there is *trauma*. There is *rupture*. There is *a communal psychic wound* that overwhelms the human spirit, shattering our capacity to cope.

The apostles do not come to Pentecost having rationalized the cross of Jesus with theological precision, as we like to do these two thousand years later. For the apostles at Pentecost, the cross is collective trauma: a reverberation of time and space, a walking woundedness from a shattering event, even as they continue to awaken from the event itself. In the trauma of the cross, the apostles have not merely lost Jesus. They have lost the sense of meaning, hope, and belonging they had cultivated in The Way and Spirit of Jesus. In the cross, the apostles have become *undone*.

It turns out the disorientation and dislocation of traumatic experience do not simply evaporate in a moment of resurrection. Easter is a season, after all, and not just a Sunday. Eastertide is full fifty metaphorical days of a long, slow, nonlinear process of healing trauma. In Eastertide, the apostles grieve, they hide, they gather, they doubt, they remember, they walk, they talk, they eat, they touch. Eastertide is healing modalities — relational, sensory, slow. Eastertide is intention and care, over time, as disorientation becomes tentative reengagement. Eastertide is intention and care, over time, as reengagement brings glimpses of new meaning.

As we come to Pentecost today, Eastertide has not erased the trauma. Resurrection is not a magic trick. Wounds remain in Christ's body. Eastertide trauma healing has not been about returning to normal. It has been a reconfiguration of what it means to be alive. It has been about Looking for the Living in the midst of the trauma, as we did on Easter Sunday. It has been noticing those places where The Living Looks for *US*, as we have been doing ever since: in our Star Wars Sunday of The Force remaining *with* us, in our Party for Pride and the Parade that followed, in our vision of a time when there is no longer a cross lingering in this life but only a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God, with leaves springing from trees *for the healing of the nations*.

The resurrection celebration of Eastertide has been the soul's way of insisting, *we are not done yet*.

With this soul insistence fully intact, the apostles arrive at Pentecost. Transformed by trauma, even healed by and largely from it, but not yet fully renewed.

Until the Spirit does Her thing.

And because the apostles have done the work of Eastertide, they are ready!

By the time we come to Pentecost, the seven Sundays of Easter have come and gone. Seven, as I have said before, is a biblical number of completion. The seventh day is the Sabbath. Creation is complete; God rests and celebrates and the people do, too. The seventh year is a sabbatical. An agricultural cycle is complete; the land rests and celebrates, and the people do, too. The seventh Sunday is the same. Resurrection has done all it is designed to do. The apostles rest and celebrate the healing from it all, and we do, too.

Until we come to Pentecost. The eighth Sunday in the Season of Easter. And eight is an even more exciting biblical number than seven. Eight is the *Day After* all has been made well. Eight is The *New* creation on the other side of the trauma. Eight is leveling up in the game of life. Eight is integration and embodied thriving. Eight is Infinity.

On the eighth Sunday, on Pentecost, the promise rings true: *The earth, though not without turmoil, is renewed!*

The Spirit, like a rush of a violent wind, fills the apostles. The trauma-forged, resurrection-stretched community begins to inhabit its purpose again. Only this time, through the power of the Spirit, the purpose has broadened. It is wider and wilder and multilingual and multicultural.

On Pentecost, through the trauma, through the healing of the trauma, through the power of the Spirit, we are broken wide open to co-conspire with the Spirit in the renewal of the *entire* earth, and not merely our small yet sacred part within it.

But here's the thing. The Spirit does not rebuild what once was. The Spirit does not even lead the apostles into a Reformation of what once was. The Spirit does not lead the apostles to reclaim the Temple. Instead, they *become* one!

Tongues of fire rest on each person, not only the leaders. The Body of Christ becomes plural, interdependent, portable. Not as a one-time moment to recall once a year from the dust bin of history into our liturgical calendar because our Pastor really likes to wear RED. But as a living, breathing, collective reality for us today.

We, too, find ourselves in a moment of collapse, reverberating throughout time and space — a collective trauma of climate grief, political violence, racialized immigration injustice, economic precarity. We are not strangers to the cross.

We have been looking for the living in the Season of Easter and the living has found us, and we are finding connection and meaning and hope and belonging in new and vital ways, but we are not finished yet. We are only just beginning.

Because Pentecost is not the end of the trauma. It is the beginning of renewal *through* the trauma. On Pentecost,

the Spirit meets us not at the top of our game, but in the ash of what we have lost. On Pentecost, the Spirit breathes us through it, cultivating within us the capacity to speak new languages from old — and recent — wounds, in order that we might bear the light of love to the ends of the earth.

On Pentecost, the winds rise, not to scatter us but to stir us. On Pentecost, we need not be fearless to be faithful. On Pentecost, we need only let the Spirit breathe through our scars. On Pentecost, we see visions of renewal, young and old alike. On Pentecost, we dream.

On Pentecost, we insist: *the earth, though not without turmoil, can be renewed!*

And we get to be part of that renewal.