



# Come and See!

June 9, 2019, Pentecost

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## The Word...

As a body is one though it has many parts,  
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,  
so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,  
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,  
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

*(from 1 Cor 12: 3-7; 12-13)*

## Pondering the Word...

There is a painting by Rembrandt called, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp." It depicts several formally dressed, scholarly looking men surrounding a corpse, awaiting instruction by the good doctor, Nicolaes Tulp, in the pursuit of knowledge about the human body. The corpse is that of an executed criminal.

The first time I saw this disconcerting painting, Paul's words immediately came to mind--"we are all baptized into one body" --and a new image came to me: representatives of different faiths and practices, all in their formal garb, all in pursuit of human knowledge, all ready to render their opinion, waiting to dissect the body laid out in front of them. But in this case, it is not a corpse.

It is the living, breathing body of Christ.

And we wonder why our world is in such pain.

## Living the Word...

The real spirit of Pentecost is inclusion. It is solidarity. It is ecumenism. It is reaching out beyond our own limits and biases to speak in a language that all can understand. The more rules and boundaries we place between ourselves and others, the more we negate the true message and purpose of Christ's Spirit bestowed upon us.

I see signs of hope in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, perhaps in response to the growing trend of nationalism worldwide, but what can individuals do to promote greater understanding between faiths? It might seem obvious, but make sure you really know Christ for yourself. Our religious institutions, as wonderful as they are, are steeped in tradition and in the past, so don't always speak in languages that all can understand. Jesus was a master at this and will speak to you in a way that will enlighten and inspire you.

Be welcoming to others, especially those whose religious practices are different from yours. Be open to learning. The doctors in Rembrandt's painting were pursuing knowledge in order to better understand the human body, and to learn how to better heal those who suffer. Let's make sure our intent in learning is for the greater good of bringing healing to the Body of Christ in Christ's name, whose sacrifice is for all humanity.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jun 10:** *“My home is within you.”* (Ps 87)

Jewish scholar Robert Alter’s recent opus translates this phrase, *“All my wellsprings are in you.”* He comments: *“In a semiarid climate, wellsprings—ma’ayanim—is an understandable idiom for sources of life.”* This translation adds an important dimension. We know God is not somewhere far off or bound to this nation or that religion, but resides in each of us. But this also reminds us God’s presence within us is to be a wellspring that calls forth his life in others, especially in a world thirsting for peace. How will you be a wellspring today?

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**Jun 11:** *...They sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith.* (Acts 11: 21-26; 12:1-3)

Today is the Feast of St. Barnabas whose life is celebrated in many Christian traditions. His ministry is overshadowed in Scripture by his relationship with Paul (in fact, after he and Paul have a falling out [Acts 15:36-41] he is not mentioned in Acts again.) I like what we hear about him today. My guess is, like all the early Christian communities, the people of Antioch have a lot to learn. I doubt if any of these communities (or us, for that matter) follow things to the letter as the Pharisee, Paul, would like. But Barnabas sees the grace of God at work, rejoices, and *encourages* the people. Yes, he probably instructs them while he is there, but he doesn’t dismiss that the Spirit is already at work, speaking to this community in a language they understand. Let’s model our own outreach on the example of inclusion and encouragement Barnabas sets for us.

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**Jun 12:** *“If the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, was glorious...how much more will be the ministry of the Spirit? If the ministry of condemnation was glorious, the ministry of righteousness will abound much more in glory.”* (2 Cor 3:4-11)

This passage calls for theological reflection. What is Paul saying here? It aligns perfectly with Jesus’ words, *“I did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.”* (Mt 5:17) When the Israelites accepted God’s commandments, they were ahead of their time (Dt 4:6-7). God, through Moses, spoke to them in language they could understand (*notice a common theme here?*) in that most of the commandments referred to things they “shalt not” do for the good of the community: murder, bear false witness, covet, etc. This is what Paul means by “the ministry of condemnation,” a less enlightened approach to life. Jesus did not say the “shalt nots” are to be cast aside, but that the wellspring of our lives should be, not fear of punishment, but the goodness inherent in our God image, redeemed for us through Christ’s sacrifice. Is your faith based on retribution and fear? If so, consider seeking the help of a spiritual guide to lead you to a path illuminated by the glory of redemption.

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**Jun 13:** *“For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ.”*(2 Cor 3:15-4:1, 3-6)

What a beautiful image! Earlier in this passage, Paul refers to the veil separating God from the people and how it is removed by Christ. The light of God is like the sun: to look directly at it can be dangerous. But the moon reflects the sun’s light in way that is open to us, peaceful and calming. Give thanks to God for the powerful sun that sustains us and for the gentle glow of the moon that lights our way through the darkness.

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**Jun 14:** *“We hold this treasure in earthen vessels.”*(2 Cor 4:7-15)

This is one of those Scripture verses I should print out and post in as many places as I can to remind myself when pride in accomplishment sets in; or conversely, when I fail and browbeat myself because I “should” have known or done better. I am an earthen vessel—not made of steel, not of fine jewels and gold like the throne of the Most High. I am chipped, cracked, faded, but still able to be made anew, beautiful and useful, by the Divine Potter’s loving and merciful hands. Alleluia!

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**Jun 15:** *“He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves...”* (2 Cor 5:14-21)

What does it mean to no longer live for yourself? Such a sentiment is not popular these days when what “I” want seems to take precedence over all else. I notice myself getting caught in the trap of doing good because it makes me feel good about myself. This can skew my outreach to be based on what I think is best rather than on the other’s need. Spend time praying about what it means to live for others. Are some of your efforts based on your own desires and not those of others? (Parents, take note—this is a common trap so prevalent today.)