

foreshadowing of the new life to come, when, on the Last Day, The Holy Spirit rebuilds us perfectly, and fills our new, immortal lungs with life that will never end.

That's a lot of work. That's why The Holy Spirit gets so much of the Church Year dedicated to her. Pentecost, the day when, St Luke tells us, the Spirit descended upon the disciples and made them into emissaries of the Gospel, is the bridge between the life and work of Jesus the Christ as a human, and the life and work of the Body of Christ, the Church. We're now on 'our side' of Pentecost, in the Time of the Church, six months of the color green, marking the growth of faith as the chief work of the Holy Spirit. Our every day life happens on this side of Pentecost, in the Time of the Church, and every bit of it is just as important as anything that came before it. The Holy Spirit gets half of the year, in part, to remind us that the Spirit's work is happening in our lives. God is present in our lives. The saving love and work of God throughout all of scripture and revealed most fully to us in Jesus the Christ is going on still, and it will not stop.

May The Holy Spirit, the life that is in Jesus the Christ, the breath with which the Father speaks his creative Word, fill each of us, this day and every day, and may we take some time in these six months of the Time of the Church, to appreciate what the Holy Spirit does for us. Amen

**Wednesday May 30, 2007 (The Wednesday after Pentecost)  
7am Holy Communion**

The Holy Spirit is the third-wheel to the Trinity. Just look at the hymn of praise in the bulletin this morning. This ancient *Gloria* sings the praises of God the Father, obsesses over exalted titles for Jesus, and then throws in the Holy Spirit at the last moment. That's kind of how a lot of us think of it. The Father is easy to believe in. He's all over the place in the Old Testament, or so we usually say. The Son, well, that's Jesus, the son of God. There's a lot written about him. The Spirit, well, that one's tougher to define. Many of us betray an anti-Trinitarian heresy by referring to the three persons as God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, as though *Jesus* isn't God (according to doctrine, he is). I always have to catch myself when describing the Spirit, because I am tempted to use the pronoun 'it'. I don't call people 'it', so why do I call this third person of the trinity 'it'? The Holy Spirit is a proper name for a person, kind of like how The Edge is the guitar player for U2. This person is *everywhere* in the bible.

Whenever God speaks to someone in the Old Testament, we say that's the Holy Spirit talking. We affirm that in the Creed. When we say, 'he has spoken through the prophets,' 'he' is The Holy Spirit. Not wanting to slap a

gender on the Holy Spirit, many of us call him 'her'. This approach has the added benefit of getting people's attention!

But what does The Holy Spirit do?

The early fathers of the Church suggested this metaphor, inadequate but better than nothing: The Father is like the mind of God; the Son is the Word of God, in the mind, so intimately a part of the mind that he is the mind, so intimately a part of God that he is God; the Spirit is the breath by which God speaks the Word, a breath so much a part of God that she is God. (The she is my addition!) The Holy Spirit is the breath of life, the wind that moved over the waters in creation, the air that carried the sound of God's first creative word, 'Let there be!'

That life was the same life that was in Christ. In Jesus' world, breath was the life force in any living thing. The Holy Spirit was the life that burned inside of Jesus the Christ. In John's Gospel, Christ bestowed that Spirit upon the disciples on the night of Easter. In Paul's letters, the Spirit is the carrier of all of God's gifts to us.

The Holy Spirit is who gives us faith and life. We are sinners and Christ died to take away our sins; we cannot believe that or find any comfort in it without the work of The Holy Spirit. Without The Holy Spirit, our faith is caught in an airtight chamber. It will asphyxiate. In Confirmation

Connection, we used candles to demonstrate this. We lit two candles in jars. Both burned brightly. Then, we stuck a lid on one of the jars. It did not take long before that flame used up the oxygen in the jar, replacing it with Carbon Dioxide waste, and died. Faith without the Holy Spirit is as impossible as that flame burning without its fuel. As the flame needs oxygen in order to burn our Faith needs the Holy Spirit in order to be alive.

The Holy Spirit makes us able to pray. With the kids we demonstrated this with 'prayer airplanes'. The kids are always making paper airplanes, so this time we made that their assignment. They each wrote a prayer on a half-sheet of paper and then folded it into their own airplanes and let them fly. The paper airplanes needed the air to carry them, just as our prayers need the Holy Spirit to carry them. Without the Holy Spirit, we couldn't even pray, much less have any hope of our prayers being heard. With the Holy Spirit, we can pray. The Holy Spirit gives us the faith to pray, and The Holy Spirit can carry and hear those prayers, since she herself is God.

As God, as the eternal life force of God, The Holy Spirit is who raises us from the dead. Every day she gives us faith, washes away our sins, lifting up the new Child-of-God out of the waters in which our old, sinful self is drowned. This new life which we experience in bits and pieces is a