

Sermon Given at the Anglican Parish of Kingscliff -St James Kingscliff and St Mark's Pottsville.

Bible Readings: Acts 2: 1-21; Psalm 104: 24-35; 1 Corinthians 12:1-13; John 20:19-23

Title: The One Who Never Makes Us Lonesome

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Bob Dylan once wrote and sang: "You're gonna make me lonesome when you go." That's the fear behind every goodbye. And honestly, it's the fear a lot of people have about Jesus. He came, He loved, He healed, died and rose, and then He ascended into heaven. Left the disciples staring at the sky. Left us with a commission to go and make disciples, a command to love our enemies, forgive the unforgivable, carry a cross, deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him.

On our own? **Impossible.** And if Jesus had just given us a rulebook and a wave goodbye – He would have made us lonesome. He would have left us orphans. But Pentecost is God's unequivocal answer: You are not lonesome. I am coming to live inside you.

The Paraclete: Another of the Same Kind

Jesus' first gift to his apostles after his resurrection is the peace of the Holy Spirit. He said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' In John 16 verse 14 Jesus also promised: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate – *the Paraclete* – to be with you forever."

The word *Paraclete* means Comforter, Counselor, Helper – someone called alongside you. But the Greek word for "another" is *allos*: ***another of the exact same kind.***

Jesus was saying: "I am not leaving you a substitute. I am sending you Myself – in a new way. The Holy Spirit is My new presence in your life."

So when you try to forgive and you can't – the Forgiver Himself is in you. When you try to love your enemy – the One who died for His enemies breathes through you. You are never lonesome. You are indwelt.

The Ruach and the Dunamis: Not a Timid Spirit

The Acts of the Apostles gives us two powerful images. **First, the wind** – in Hebrew, *Ruach*. But not a gentle breeze. A strong, driving wind. St. Paul says: "You did not receive a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out 'Abba, Father!'" (2 Timothy 1:7).

That *Ruach* is God's own breath in your lungs. It is the Spirit that hovered over creation in Genesis 1, the same Spirit that brought to life dry bones in Ezekiel's prophecy (see Ezekiel 37:1-14) and the Spirit and Jesus' bride, the church, that said: 'Come' in Revelation (Revelation 22:17). The Holy Spirit turned frightened disciples hiding in the upper room into bold witnesses. And it turns your "I can't do this" into "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

Second, the fire – tongues of fire resting on each of them. This is not a fire that destroys but one that cleanses. The Holy Spirit's fire burns away everything that is not of God. It gives us passion for spiritual things.

And that fire is *dunamis* – 'dynamite' power, not the kind that kills, but the kind that 'enables'. Jesus said: "You will receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8).

The commission Jesus' gave us on Ascension Day can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are called to surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective disciples. Christianity is not behavior modification. It's transformation through grace.

Unity in a Divided World: The Opposite of Babel

Pentecost reverses the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 11). At Babel, God scattered the people with confused languages. At Pentecost, "everyone heard the apostles in his or her own language." The Holy Spirit brings unity – with God, with Creation and with each other.

And how we need that unity today in our fragmented and divided society and world. The unity of the Holy Spirit is not a uniformity where everyone is the same and acts the same, but a reconciled diversity. St Paul reminds us that we are one body but different parts (1 Cor 12:1-13).

Our Cenacle: This Church, These Temples

On the first Pentecost, the apostles received the Holy Spirit in the cenacle – the upper room. Here is our cenacle -St James and St Mark's church communities. Not just as a building, but as living temples of the Holy Spirit.

Every Sunday in this Church, we gather to receive the Spirit of Jesus – the Spirit who gives cohesion, unity, and purpose to our lives. This is the place where we encounter Jesus again and again. This is where we find His loving embrace.

The Final Promise: He Is Coming Back

The Holy Spirit is not a permanent goodbye but the guarantee of a coming hello. Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and take you to Myself" (see John 14:1-6).

The Spirit is the down payment, the engagement ring, the promise that Jesus hasn't forgotten you and me. Jesus is not making us lonesome. He is making us **long** – and that longing is itself the Spirit crying out within us: "Come, Lord Jesus."

Until that day, you have: The Paraclete – the Advocate beside you. The *Ruach* – God's breath in your lungs. The *Dunamis* – God's power to do the impossible. The fire – burning away sin and igniting passion. The unity – healing Babel's wound. You are never, ever lonesome.

Dear friends, this week, when you feel alone or face the impossible, don't try harder. Just whisper a quiet but powerful prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit", Amen. 🔥

The Reverend Constantine osuchukwu, AMDG, 24 May 2026