



Sunday May 20, 2018

Thank you all for being here. And special thanks to those of you who are wearing red. I wore my Christmas Sox, a gift from St. Bede's. The red represents the tongues of flame mentioned in the lessons today, the gift of the Spirit to communicate the presence of God in Christ and all the good things that come with that gift.

Although the gift of communication may be a little hard to understand in the other way that today's Scripture puts it. I admire our Lector today who has to assure us that a very diverse group of people heard the good news in their own languages. I can understand a little Italian for the Romans in the crowd; but Phrygian and Pamphylans I can't even begin with, and how about the Parthians and Cretans. When I was a little kid, I thought the part about Cretans was pretty funny because, of course, of the pun in the name. Little kids have a perverse sense of humor.

This is the one part of the story of the gift of the Spirit that I find, at first, actually I don't think its very funny anymore. I think it's a little difficult and confusing, and in some ways annoying. I have been studying French off and on for more than sixty years, and I'm still not certain that I am courament, that is, fluent in the language, and here the disciples don't have to study at all and they speak Cappadician and Mesopotamian! It's not fair.

The other gifts of the Spirit are pretty amazing also, and assessable. The Spirit is the power of creation, which is still going on. I don't

know how many chiclets we have at the front door at this point, lots though, and they make all of us rejoice in their new life, except, possibly, mama feels a little harried at various points. There's at least a dozen.

The Spirit makes us church through baptism and in other ways, empowering community. There are gifts of healing and guidance and faith and leadership, and I don't know what all. We are a gifted crew.

Michael Curry's sermon at the wedding yesterday talked all about what I think is the greatest of gifts, namely the gift of love. That is in fact what makes the world go round.

But how are you going to make the point? Bishop Curry used a little bit of black style, which surely helped the theme of one message for all this very diverse world of ours. And of course, he is American and Episcopalian which helped make clear the power of love across cultures.

Speaking other languages in fiery tongues was not on the agenda, but always communicating the love of God is on the agenda. That's my agenda. It's been God's agenda all along. And God doesn't make us all study French forever to get the point across. Instead, he goes to everyone in ways that they can understand. Did you know that the majority of the world's written languages were translations from the Bible?

Yes, missionaries all know that you've got to talk to people in ways they can understand. That's the point of this lesson.

All the teaching and learning that we have done about evangelism this past year has this truth at its heart. What you really have to do is communicate the love of God in ways that people can understand.

Could be food for the poor, dance, give people a ride. Could be listen really well instead of talking all the time. Taking care of ducks.

So I'm going to sit down. But I want you all to give thanks to God for the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, and let his love be known any and every way you can.

Amen

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