

Pastor Roy's Sermon from May 21, 2017 (Easter 6)

Jesus is reminding us that the Spirit is our advocate, to encourage, to care, and walk alongside us. We are not alone. No one is alone. Ever. The Spirit moves among the living in grace, by faith, in mercy, for peace. The Spirit is our best friend. The Spirit cheers us on, invites us to have the courage to be, to rest, to love ourselves. The Spirit supports us in every way. Do you know that the Spirit of Life loves you more than you could ever love yourself? We are beloved children of God. And all of creation is beloved. Whether it be microscopic life or great trees, or birds, or elephants as well as human beings. The Spirit gives us all life and hope and many, many gifts.

How does the Spirit speak to you? How do you sense the Spirit guiding you? Strengthening and supporting you?

Sometimes we think and feel we are alone. It's easy to forget that we are surrounded by friends, known and unknown. The Spirit reminds us that the simple gift of life is our communion with God and all of God's creation, so that we may see, hear and sense the wonderful connections and relationships all around us.

We are invited to listen to the Spirit who is advocating for us right now. How do you listen? I'm not asking, how should you listen, but how *do* you listen. Everyone does. Not everyone realizes they do, but everybody listens and responds in unique ways. Some would do well to listen more carefully. That is probably the challenge from Jesus for us today. Listen carefully. Even, listen *more* carefully.

Do you listen by being still? By reading a good book? By working really hard on something? By meeting and listening to a friend? By growing plants or tending animals?

Listening is about making space for another. Love creates space. Love stirs up generosity.

We all think of the Holy Spirit in different ways. There is no one way to picture God at work in the world today. But Jesus' reminder that the Spirit is advocating for us is helpful for us today. God is for us, not against us. But God is also for all of creation, and the very least among us. We dare not forget that if we wish to be well.

Let us together listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, calling us in love and mercy and strength. Amen.