Devotional Reflection, Friday, July 31, 2026
Proper 12, the week of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Hoisting Our Sails

Key phrases for reflection in today's reading:
2:1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
. . . . 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. . . . . in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'

You will find the full text of today's epistle reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 977)
AM Psalm 69:1-23(24-30)31-38; PM Psalm 73
Judges 5:1-18; Acts 2:1-21; Matt. 28:1-10

Today we celebrate the Feast of Ignatius of Loyola. (See below.)

David's Reflections

"'What is the wind?' a little lad asked his grandfather, a hardy sailor. 'I don't know, my boy,' answered the old man, 'but I can hoist a sail.'" * The disciples in today's Acts reading hoisted their sail. Luke gives its a vivid account of the wind of the Holy Spirit birthing the church as we know it, a community indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brought the presence of Christ into their ongoing post-resurrection experience. Note that the first expression of the Spirit's presence among them was to communicate the message of Jesus with those outside the community.

Why does anyone reside outside the Christian community? My most basic partial answer would be that they have not really seen and heard the story of Jesus, lived and shared by people committed to him. Why would anyone refuse forgiveness, transformation, eternal life, and love in community? Does it not grieve you that many people continue without faith because the wind of the Spirit has not managed to get our boats untied from the dock and out into the broad sea of God's mission?

Why would anyone refuse to respond in faith to the message of salvation in Christ? Another partial answer would be that the failings of the local expressions of church have created so much spiritual smoke that people are chocking on the fumes and are blinded by the smoke in their eyes. Again, does it not grieve you that the church can be her own worst enemy?

Why would anyone refuse? Paul's explanation in 2 Corinthians 3-4 has to do with the inability to see, what he calls blindness. Some people resist and refuse because they choose not to see or because they cannot see. The opponents of the earliest church in Acts offer prime examples of people so locked in to a perspective that they could not open to the message of faith in Christ. When Paul awakened to Jesus' presence, according to Acts 9, his short-term physical blindness ended with scales falling from his eyes. That blindness bespoke a deeper and more profound intellectual and spiritual blindness now ended.

Paul was a hard case, but even hard cases move from blindness to seeing and to faith. Some hard cases in Acts 2 did so. The hardest case among your friends and relations just might be a sleeping giant of a Christian.

If we hoist our sails, the wind will take us into that broad sea of God's mission. We do not have to understand the mysteries of the spiritual wind to hoist our sails? What keeps the canvass folded and unfurled? Stuck by the mystery of it all? Fear? Lack of faith? Feelings of shame and unworthiness? What is it costing us to remain lashed to the dock? What joys of seeing people brought home to God's love are we missing? Who suffers deprivation in our relationship circles? Why would anyone refuse to hoist a sail? Is it worth the cost to us and others to shield ourselves from risk and rejection?

We can only live into our best selves as we release ourselves to Spirit and dare the unknown adventure of relinquishing control. I commend to you Clark Pinnock's prayer to the Spirit and the book in which it is contained. "Welcome Holy Spirit, come and set us free! Let each one catch the living flame and be ravished by your love! Let our souls glow with your fire. Help us overcome our forgetfulness of Spirit." +

(Note: The late Ben Campbell Johnson, a Presbyterian seminary professor wrote a unique and creative book entitled *Speaking of God: Evangelism as Initial Spiritual Guidance*. Westminster/John Knox, 1993. The book, though out of print is easily available through Amazon. Johnson totally reframes witness as spiritual direction to those outside, which makes listening rather than speaking the priority.)

*Cited by Leonard Griffith, *God's Time and Ours* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), p. 147.

+Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Second edition. Forward and Commentary by Daniel Castelo. (Downers Grove:IL, IVP Academic, 2022), p. 1.

Collect of the Day, Proper 12, the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*. (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Ignatius of Loyola, mystic, educator, priest, and founder of the Jesuits (died 31 July 1556 CE).
http://satucket.com/lectionary/Ignatius_Loyola.htm
https://www.jesuits.org/stories/the-life-of-st-ignatius-of-loyola/

Collect of the Feast of Ignatius of Loyola
Almighty God, who called Ignatius of Loyola to the service of your Divine Majesty and to seek you in all things; Give us also the grace to labor without counting the cost and to seek no reward other than knowing that we do your will; through Jesus

Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Fridays
Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 97)

A Collect for the Presence of Christ
Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen*. (BCP, 124)

A Collect for Mission
O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 280, 515, 528, 540)

Daily Office Epistle, Acts 2:1-21
2:1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us,

in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' 13But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*