

GO!

[Acts 2:1-21](#)

[John 14:8-17, \(25-27\)](#)

It's always a little tricky doing a sermon series as we have been during Eastertide, because you never know whether the readings for the day will help or hinder your theme. Today they mesh perfectly because we have reached Go on the sevenfold Way of Love. In addition to each of the seven movements being inter-related, Turn and Learn form a pair as do Prayer and Worship, and now Bless and Go. Last week Barry talked about original blessing, the knowledge that each and every one of us and indeed, each and everything in creation is blessed. You remember how in the great Creation story, each time God created something, God saw that it was good.

God is continuing to create and God sees that it is good, and all that God creates is blessed.

And Barry went on to suggest that the gift of the Spirit of God is like an awakening to the original blessing that is the inheritance of everyone and everything. So the Spirit of God appearing at Pentecost was not a brand new person of God suddenly showing up, but the *awareness* of God's Spirit suddenly filling the disciples. And they were so filled and empowered and bursting with this new and amazing energy that they couldn't stay in the room any more. They had come together in fear and suddenly they were out on the streets with no fear or hesitation.

Almost as if the Spirit had bellowed "Go!" in their ears and they couldn't sit still any longer.

In one of our Eucharistic prayers we pray "Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love." That's what happened that day; the disciples started "burning with the Spirit's power, and becoming a people of hope, justice and love."

The blessing that we receive is not meant to be hoarded, or kept secret but to be shared, which is why at the end of every Eucharist the deacon sends us out with the word "Go" – "let us go forth" or "Go in peace." It is the task of the deacon to keep us on our toes, to remind us that this blessing is not just for us, in fact this blessing of the reign of God is to be shared and passed on. It has been said that "the Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members." (William Temple).

When we keep the blessing to ourselves, selfishly hanging on to what we have in case somehow we lose it, we are like the Hebrew people who collected more manna than they needed – the next day it was moldy and full of maggots. Our blessing is to be celebrated and shared. Our blessing is to recognize the presence of God's Spirit and hear the direction, "Go!" Go and share my love, Go and be a blessing to others, Go and care for creation...

Today we are saying goodbye and Godspeed to Jim who has been with us for the past two years as part of his training to be a deacon. In a few weeks he will be ordained as a deacon in the church of God and it will be his task to stand at the door and remind the people of God that there is an out-breath as well as an in-breath. We come together to worship God and to reconnect with one another in the Body of Christ and then we go out to share that with the world.

Who we share with and how we do it will be different for each of us as we all have different life situations. Each one of us has a variety of relationships and each relationship is an opportunity to share God's love. Even if you live alone and keep pretty much to yourself, you still have relationships the neighbors you see or the checkers in the market. In fact, we all have relationships with people we have never met in person – politicians, pundits and news anchors for example. Even these remote digital relationships offer us a place to express God's love as we pray for these people, and also to be transformed as we practice loving them and seeing them as God's beloved.

Most of us have a rich and varied group of family, friends, acquaintances and neighbors. This is our own mission field. This is where God has sent us and is sending us. The disciples on that Pentecost morning didn't go far, they were just sent into the streets outside their safe room. They became apostles – those who are sent with the message of God's love to show through their words and actions. We too are called to be apostles. We are the ones who God is sending into our particular sphere of influence, we are apostles among our own friends and neighbors. Gathered here together we are disciples, but when we go out through those doors carrying with us the blessing of God, we are apostles to the world.

We don't need to try to convince anyone of anything. Our job is to share God's love through our prayer and our actions and to share our own experience of God's love so that others may recognize the power of God and may come to experience God's love for themselves.

There are many practical ways that we, the people of St Benedict's share God's love with the world around us. Through the Abundance Shop, Laundry Love, 40 Prado, Community Dinners, the Warming shelter and other projects of Los Osos Cares and through EarthCare, we are having an impact on our community. Sometimes it is easy to let busyness take over.

But the theme of Go! must always be held in balance with the other six movements of the Way of Life. Our work in the world needs to be balanced by our inner work. This is one of the blessings we receive in the heritage of St Benedict – an understanding of balance. This is an individual thing as well as a community awareness. Some of us are more inclined to go and do things, whereas others are more inclined to prayer and meditation. And each of us needs to balance self-care with service.

How is God calling you to be a blessing and to share a blessing this week? Are you being called to be more active? Are you being called to be more prayerful? Who are the neighbors God is sending you to love?

Being a blessing, following the Spirit's push to Go! into the world may not mean **doing** anything different but doing it with a conscious awareness that you are sent by God into this very situation. You are sent by God into this particular conversation, into this particular mess, into this particular celebration. As an apostle of Christ, you get to embody Christ in the place where you find yourself and in the relationships that you have.

And you are not alone. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us, and the Holy Spirit always is with us. But sometimes we need a change of perception. We need to see the presence of the Spirit and open ourselves to the love and grace of God flowing through us.

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

"You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you." The Spirit of God abides with us and in us. The Spirit of God sends us out into the streets. The Spirit of God sends us to be Christ and to seek Christ in every person, every creature and every situation. God "grant that we, burning with her Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love."