

23rd May 2021

Spirit

**“Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit within Spirit can meet –
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”**

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, The Higher Pantheism

On this Day of Pentecost, I'll leave theological explorations of the Holy Spirit to those who wish to define doctrine. But, instead, I'll tell you a story.

The Church of the Saviour, in the Adams Morgan area of Washington DC where I spent a short time in the late 1980s, had a network of different expressions of Church, a variety of “mission groups”, each with its defined task, committed members, an “inward journey” for study and support, and an “outward journey” of service. One of these was Christ House, a residential respite medical care facility for homeless men and women. The work which went on there, the healing and wholeness offered unconditionally, and the standing Christ House had, were remarkable.

Every evening, Christ House welcomed people to share a meal with residents and staff, and I joined them regularly. On one occasion, a Gospel Choir had been invited. The members of the choir sat at random tables to eat with us, and, at the end of the meal, still scattered about the refectory area, they stood up and they sang. And *boy*, did they sing! It was hairs-standing-up-on-the-back-of-your-neck time. For what we were being offered was passion, commitment, love, healing and faith ... The two sopranos at my table were in tears as they sang. And not surprisingly, so was I *and* the two members of staff and three residents who'd shared the meal together. It was a remarkable, inspiring and moving occasion.

If ever there was an example of Tennyson's belief that “Spirit within Spirit can meet”, it was in Christ House that evening. In our sharing and in the singing, we had spoken to God, *and* He had heard us all. “Closer than breathing”? The Spirit took my breath away. “Nearer than hands and feet”? I could reach out and touch the very presence of the Spirit God.

So on Pentecost, this Holy Spirit Day, I'm back in Christ House being nourished by that Spirit, weeping again when a Gospel Choirs sings and remembering that my Spirit and God's Spirit have become one.

For more about the work and history of Christ House, see <https://christhouse.org>.

A prayer for today

Meet me again, Spirit of God, that I might be one with you. Amen

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>