

Pentecost 2011 St Michaels Studio City

The Wind of the Spirit
The Rev. Canon Mark Shier

The wind blew, as it always had, even in the beginning. The wind caressed the waters of chaos and all the startling wonder of the world came to be: a blinding flash, incandescent gases, inconceivable energies, sun, moon, and stars, this fragile earth, waters above and waters below, dry land, bacteria, trilobites, dinosaurs, roses, lilacs, cows, panthers, dogs, and human beings in all their infinite variety and longing. But the wind was more than the beginning; the wind accompanied the evolution of all that was, and is, and is to come. The wind blew through the halls of the palace on the hill and through the stink of the shanty by the river. The wind touched all that is, for the wind is the invisible yet tangible signal of the power of creation and re-creation, the love of Creator/Father/Mother poured out in the design of the Word/Son/Pattern. The wind is the going-between within the primal unity, the love-energy that makes divinity ever active, ever life-giving, always present. The wind is Spirit/Dove/Love and it restlessly touches all that is. Nothing can escape its power, not even the Word-Made-Flesh of Bethlehem. The Spirit/Wind always moves, forms, changes, creates, waits. For *this* wind is God.

The wind blew that night, the night of the feast, the night of the betrayal. The wind blew the fire and made the coals glow with light and warmth. The wind blew the ashes of the fire around the room and into the night. The wind blew in the face of the man who abruptly left, as if trying to hold him back from the darkness in his soul and in his future. The wind tousled the hair of those who remained, blowing through the lungs of the Man who touched and breathed and said, "Receive." The wind crackled with energy, as if God Himself were walking to the garden. The wind carried the wailing of angels who saw the agony to come and through their tears the glory that would follow. The wind touched the cheek of the sweating Man kneeling in the garden, who prayed alone, who prayed that comfort come, and who prayed to a silent denial.

The next afternoon the wind caressed the body of the Man on the cross, bloodied and quivering in the agony of death throes. The wind took his last breath and laid it reverently at the feet of the throne in heaven. "It is finished," was the form of the breath. All heaven stood still in awe, and even the wind, for once, was quiet. The mystery of the sacrifice, the giving of life for life, willingly, lovingly, courageously, obediently, humbly – the mystery of the sacrifice was complete. All heaven held its breath.

The wind tugged at the nails as the body was taken down from the cross. The wind blew ahead of the grieving procession and blew into the cave-like tomb just before the stone was rolled across the opening. And then, strange to say, the wind continued to move and touch everything throughout that cold room, curves and lines and corners, rough floor, damp roof, most of all it caressed the body wrapped in linen laid on the hard ledge. It was almost as if the wind were trying to give life back to the lifeless.

The wind persisted and finally on the second morning the rising sun beheld the stone blown away from the tomb's door and beams of light gently touched burial windings, empty and

collapsed and fluttering raggedly in the wind that seemed to dance triumphantly throughout the cave. The jubilation of the wind banished the keening of the defeated; death slunk down through the stone floor. That which had given up its breath in love and caring now lived again, with breath soughing through lungs restored to vital functioning.

The wind also danced around the Man in the garden and the woman to whom he talked. Her tear-moist eyes now glowed with wonder and disbelieving belief. She reached out a quivering hand and the wind settled in the cup of her palm, then danced around the scarred hands and feet of the Man who seemed so much larger than life. The wind whipped the robes of the scarred Man and he disappeared into the gathering light. The woman ran back to the city, to companions locked behind closed doors and closed hearts, and told her story. Disbelieving, they came to the wind-blown tomb and dropped to their knees, unheeding of the breeze that seemed to whisper joy into their ears. The men stumbled back to the others and told their story of empty tomb and forsaken burial clothing. Something new was blowing in the wind.

The wind was a constant companion to the resurrected Man throughout the next few days. He worked tirelessly, on the earthly plane and in realms still hidden, in undisclosed intention. The resurrected More-Than-Man seemed bent on re-creating, re-forming, re-limning all that existed. It was as if this moment in the life of the universe were a turning point, a change in direction, an enlargement of meaning and purpose.

The wind then carried the Resurrection Mystery away from the earthly limitations and stood him gently by the everlasting throne, the wind rushing in and out through the glory on the throne and the glory in the Man. All heaven let out its collective breath and kneeled before this Trinity in Unity, this Oneness in Community.

The wind remained at the celestial throne and yet at the same time once again returned to the sapphire world of the cross and empty tomb and beating hearts and laughing babies. The wind blew around an upper room, startling the men and women in it, changing them in ways yet to be revealed, turning them from old lives of desperation to new lives of holy liberation. These were the beginning of the new world, the world of wind-driven sanctification, healing, life, and love. The wind danced through their hearts, enlivened their minds, poured itself though them into all that was and all that would be.

The wind had blown once across the chaos, which then formed into meaning. Now the wind blew again through the old meaning to bring new life and direction, a new path and a new destination. More and more women and men began breathing with the breath of the wind and giving themselves to the work of the crucified and resurrected God-Man. God's plan was complete, and it had only just begun.

The tomb is riven!
Jesus Christ is risen!
God's Spirit is given.
We are bidden!
Alleluia, alleluia. Amen.