

There is hardly time to *breathe*! Our lives can get so hectic. There is so much to do, so many errands to run, so many responsibilities to meet. We live in a breathless culture. New technologies promise to save us time, but we end up having less time than ever. New technologies promise to save us energy, but too often we use the energy saved only to do two other things at the same time, leaving us more frazzled than ever. The demands of life these days is enough to take one=s breath away.

The Holy Spirit has been imagined from time immemorial as the breath of God. That breath by which God spoke the word of creation in the beginning. That breath which God breathed into the wet clay to bring to life the first human being. That breath which breathed new life into the valley of dead bones over which Ezekiel. prophesied in the depths of Israel=s despair. That breath which the Risen Jesus breathes over the disciples in today=s Gospel.

In a culture which can take our breath away we need the Spirit of God to breathe new life into our souls. In a culture whose pace can leave us breathless, we need the Spirit of God to breathe new energy into our exhausted spirits. In a culture that can knock the breath out of us, we need the Spirit of God to blow over the embers of our hearts, to rekindle the flame of our love.

How do we get in touch with God=s Spirit? How do we open ourselves up to the breath of God? Those who teach meditation techniques, East or West, usually begin by teaching students literally how to breathe. For by getting in touch with our breathing we can slow down our thinking, and quiet our racing hearts. And to get in touch with God=s spirit we have to still our thoughts and focus our attention, we have to open our hearts, let go and breathe. For in the hustle and bustle of our daily life, our breathing becomes too shallow. In the struggles and strains of our everyday existence we can find ourselves holding our breath for fear of what=s to come next. God invites us to take some time apart with him to catch our breath. God invites us to breathe in his Spirit and renew ours. Hildegard of Bingen speaks of her soul as a feather on the breath of God. There is an image to play with.

As we continue our prayer may we take time to breathe. May we be conscious of God=s power upholding us, sustaining us, surrounding us, inspiring us. May we breathe in the breath of God, feel the divine empower us, renew us, transform us into his image and likeness. May we create a space in our lives to let the Spirit of God do its work in us, with Him who is our Lord and Savior and through whom we arise to our better self.