

Reflection Monday 7th Week Easter 2022

Sr. Terry Rickard O.P. writes:

There are a variety of images in Scripture and tradition that help us better understand the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament we encounter the Holy Spirit as *“ruach”* — the very breath of God. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and she was filled with God’s life. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended upon him as a dove and empowered him for mission. On the day of Pentecost, a rush of wind shook the house and the hearts of the disciples, and flames of fire rested on their heads, transforming their fear and uncertainty into faith and conviction.

In the Celtic tradition the Holy Spirit is represented not as a peaceful dove but as a *“wild goose.”* The wild goose reveals a Spirit which is passionate, noisy, and courageous. This symbol reminds us that God’s Spirit cannot be tamed or contained.

There is an ancient tale that, through their loud cackling, a flock of geese forewarned the lookouts in a Roman city-state of an invading army. Throughout Christian history the prophetic cries of saints, movements, and religious communities — like the calls of those geese — have alerted the Church to the need for renewal and reform. The work of renewing and reforming is never done in isolation but as part of the community of the faithful which is very human and often fearful and uncertain.

The Holy Spirit works through ordinary people like you and me to bring God’s healing and purifying presence to all of creation. Ask the Spirit of the living God, the *“wild goose,”* to send upon you, the Church, and the world an outpouring of God’s spirit, transforming fear and uncertainty into faith and conviction.