

## MAY 2016

My dear friends,

May is often a month of beginnings and endings. Winter is (finally!) ending and spring brings warmth, longer days and blossoms. The graduations and weddings that are often celebrated this month are portals to leave an old way of life and greet the future. May also brings us the Ascension of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost. These are certainly days when we are reminded that we are called into the future with the love of Christ and the strength of the Holy Spirit. I can imagine that the Disciples would have been very glad if Jesus had just simply stayed with them—not just for those fifty days after the resurrection, but for the whole length of their lives. But Jesus did ascend and he is with all people everywhere across space and time, and not just with those few who were blessed to walk with him two thousand years ago.

Change—even hoped-for, positive change—can be frightening and upsetting. We've all experienced the flutter of spirits that goes along with leaving, moving, graduating or progressing. We leave behind an old way—perhaps a comfortable, beloved old way—to embrace the future. So before Jesus leaves the disciples he says "Don't let your hearts be troubled." Because he knows they will be. They, like us, are human and often fear change and loss. He tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will be with them, to guide and to strengthen them. Other names for the Holy Spirit are Paraclete, Advocate, Comforter, Indweller, Witness, Teacher and Helper. Pentecost reminds us that we are never left alone. God's Holy Spirit is among us and within us working wonders through us.

Your Sister in Christ,  
Mother Bonnie+

"Paraclete" is the Greek word in the New Testament that we translate into "Holy Spirit". It comes from *Paraklētos*, which literally means advocate or intercessor, from *parakalein* to invoke, from *para-* (along side) and *kalein* (to call).  
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