

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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ASSUMPTIONS. "These people aren't drunk, as you suspect; after all, it's only nine o'clock in the morning!" Acts 2:15. Luke, when he wrote this statement, certainly did not live in our time. Luke responded with sarcasm and defended the apostles because it was only *"nine o'clock in the morning."* Was it bad-mannered in his day that alcohol was only consumed later in the day or only during certain times? His response probably was aggravated by the tensions of religious legalism and governmental intolerance against Christians.

There are so many ways to cause us harm, not just by others, or by those elements ingested into our bodies, or by damning words, deceit/deception, unfaithfulness, betrayal. There are *ASSUMPTIONS* about others without knowing them. Alcohol, medicines, food and words, when abused, change us and can harm us in ways that can lead to death. I have close friends who have recovered/recognized their need to turn from the abyss of addiction. However, they also know that they are just one drink or one pill away from relapse.

In one of my parishes I was invited by an AA group to be their spiritual advisor. It seemed an unusual request because I had my *ASSUMPTION* of who they were and wondered how I would fit in. It turned out that they mentored me and loved me in ways of faith and living that I had never known before. My faith formation/spirituality was liberated and never the same. They wrestled all the time with doubt, fear and shame. It was their inner faith/spirituality that gave them identity as a child of God and that centering affirmed in them the Pentecostal power of the Spirit poured down upon them. So many in the community had *ASSUMPTIONS* about *"those"* people who struggled all the time to affirm a resurrection faith in themselves. God called them *"beloved children"*; God loved, forgave and embraced them over and over again. They knew they would fail and fall many times, but God was there again and again to pick them up as they tried again and again to be guided by God's Spirit and love.

This Sunday is Pentecost. It was God's Spirit and affirming action in those early Christians that *"Christ is risen...INDEED!"* Their *ASSUMPTIONS* that Jesus would be found in the tomb were turned upside down. Pentecost with its power of God's Holy Spirit came alive. The resurrection faith claimed and challenged them to be free from all the *"normal"* that captured them. No wine, just Spirit. They would be filled with the Holy Spirit not just at nine o'clock but every moment of the day. May you receive God's Spirit in you to have visions, and dream dreams of a life and world that is God's world entrusted to you as caretaker. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*