



This weekend much of the religious world will celebrate the feast of Pentecost. It is very, very, solemn. But I think at least one part of it should be understood as a joke.

Imagine the scene in Acts 2. The followers of the recently murdered Jesus are meeting in one room. The atmosphere would have been very dismal and hopeless— *“when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house!”* Is not the wind a divine jest overpowering the heaviness of the moment? Like a brass band in the middle of a funeral?

Where do I get such weird ideas? Well, this one came from trying to

spray a necessary organic spray on our olive trees a few days ago. It is not easy to grow olives organically but it is worth the trouble both for the taste and for the environment. Everything must be done at exactly the right time. When the budding first starts there is a short window during which time the special drops must be sprayed. We carefully waited for a day when there would be no wind. Sister Julie confidently started the tractor and the spraying began. Immediately, a strong Northwesterly wind was in the fields! The spray blew back in her face. She took the tractor to the opposite end of the fields and tried again with the wind supposedly blowing the spray in the right direction. Tension was developing! As soon as she entered the field the wind shifted to the Southeast and again blew the spray into her face! And so it continued all morning. Once when I was in the field the wind was actually blowing from two directions at once!

I respect the wind. It often brings more balance to my life. I had a sort of Pentecost experience once far from that room in Jerusalem. As winter comes to an end in the Western United States, Native Americans in many places are mindful of a wind that causes the snow pack to lessen or disappear in a few hours. In the Pacific Northwest and parts of Northern California it is known as the "Chinook Wind." I experienced it on the banks of the Columbia River where the Chinook culture once thrived. A light, warm wind came up the river from the Pacific coast. With it came the smell of the sea, and the earth, and growing things. The bite of winter disappeared. It might return, but anyone who smelled the Chinook knew winter's time was limited. I was a tie-wearing, briefcase-carrying, intense, worried, twenty-something trial-lawyer. But, the

world that had preoccupied me retreated before this sweet breeze.

A simple gift to be treasured! When the wind blows, go with it.

Brother Toby

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