

## Sentences of Celebration: Reformation Sunday

by John W. Howell

Leader: Throughout the human story  
the Spirit of God continues to speak,

**All: in visions and voices,  
in images and ideas,**

Leader: in all languages and all time,  
to all people in all places,

**All: inviting the people of God to discover new revelation.**

Reader: To Abram it came as a sign in the stars and the sand  
that he had been chosen by God.

Reader: To Moses it came in the sense that earth was ablaze with God's glory.

Reader: To Rahab it came as an unexplainable feeling  
that her enemies should be befriended.

Reader: To Esther it came as courage to speak, to act, to imagine, to risk.

Reader: To Mary it was dramatic, angelic, unbelievable—  
an overpowering realization that neither her life nor the world  
would ever be the same.

Reader: To the disciples, and to people in need of healing, and to thousands of others  
it was the personal touch, the eyewitness experience  
of the teacher-healer-storyteller-lover,  
the human being they called Jesus of Nazareth.

Reader: To three women at the empty tomb  
it was a gift in return for their faith,  
an ecstasy no one else remained to enjoy,  
a story no one else had faith, at first, to recount or believe.

Reader: And the words and the life and the power of this Jesus  
have tunneled through the tomb  
and have flown through time and culture  
and continue to live for us today.

Leader: The Spirit continues to speak

**All: in visions and voices,  
in images and ideas,**

Leader: in all languages and all times,  
to all people in all places,

**All: inviting the people of God to discover new revelation.**

Reader: The Spirit has spoken to people like Irenaeus, Paula, Aquinas, and Theresa,

Reader: through prophets and popes and priests and peasants,  
Reader: and through women whose names are forgotten but whose faith will endure  
etched in the hearts of those they have taught and nurtured,  
resounding in the songs they have sung and passed on,  
incarnate in ideas and questions they shared and inspired.

Reader: The Spirit has spoken through people of many faiths,  
from the Buddha to Gandhi,  
whose lives and teachings seem to echo those of Christ.

Reader: To Luther and Calvin and Wesley  
and Mary Dyer, Susan B. Anthony, and Rosa Parks,  
the Spirit came as a reformer's fire, blazing in the heart.

Leader: And still the Spirit comes to us today

**All: in new visions and new voices  
and in new understandings of the visions and voices  
passed on to us from yesterday.**

Leader: It may burn in our hearts like fire  
or whisper in the silence as a still, small voice.  
It may sing to us from the stars or sneak up on us from within,  
or embrace us in the touch of another child of God.

**All: But we are here today because the Spirit speaks to us  
and we respond!**

Adapted from *Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship*, Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, eds.  
(Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1990), 127-128.