

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Christians believe in a God who is *communion* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit: One God in three Persons, the Blessed Trinity.

The Holy Spirit is probably the least talked-about Person of the Trinity. By speaking about the Holy Spirit's *actions*, we can come to a clearer understanding of who the Holy Spirit *is*. There are key moments in our salvation history and sacramental life which show us the role of the Holy Spirit:

The Annunciation and Incarnation (taking flesh) of God the Son

The Angel Gabriel announces to be mother of Jesus. Mary says Father sends the Holy Spirit to Jesus in her womb.



Mary that God has a plan for her to “yes” to God’s plan. God the overshadow Mary and conceive

- The Holy Spirit is sent by God the Father to conceive Jesus in Mary’s own body, so that she can be his mother.

The Resurrection

God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to raise Jesus from the dead.



- The Holy Spirit is Love: the Love of the Father for the Son, and the Love of the Son for the Father. Nothing is stronger than God’s love (the Holy Spirit), not even death. When we are suffering or sad, we can call out to God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to raise us up with hope, peace and joy.

Pentecost

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended to his Father in heaven. Then the apostles prayed for nine days. On the tenth day, they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave them the words to speak about Jesus in different languages. The Holy Spirit gave them all the gifts they needed to be good followers of Jesus and to lead others by their example.

- The Holy Spirit gives us help to follow Jesus and be his witnesses in everything we do.



Baptism and Confirmation



Baptism unites us with the crucified and risen Jesus, victorious over sin and death. United to him, we are cleansed of original sin and reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit to a new life as members of Christ’ body, the Church.

Confirmation completes Baptism by giving us the gifts of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide us to live as Jesus’ followers.

- Baptism makes us part of the community joined to Jesus in his death and resurrection (the Church). It forgives all our sins and raises us to new life by the power of the Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus to new life.
- Confirmation completes the work of Baptism by sealing us with the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s gifts. They strengthen and help us live as followers of Jesus.

- We go forth from Mass, nurtured by Christ's body and blood, to place the gifts of the Spirit we have received at Baptism and Confirmation at the service of God and neighbour.

When we Pray

Jesus promised his disciples that whenever they prayed in his name, he would be there with them. We believe that when we pray together in Jesus' name, he is with us, and that the Holy Spirit makes him present.



- When we pray to God the Father in Jesus' name, the Father sends the Holy Spirit to make Jesus present with us. When we pray with a friend, with our family, in our school or in church, God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to make Jesus present with us.

The Holy Spirit Enables us to Pray

St. Paul wrote to the Christian community in Rome about how the Holy Spirit helps us to pray:

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” . . . the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes . . . for the holy ones according to God's will. (Romans 8, 14-15; 26-27)

- When we need to pray, but can't find the words, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts (Rom 5, 5) will help us to pray silently or with words, according to God's will.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

St. Paul tells us when the Holy Spirit is truly at work in our lives, we will bear much fruit:

“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ...If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.” (Gal 5, 22-23, 25)

The Paraclete: Advocate and Consoler

The Holy Spirit is the *Paraclete* Jesus promised to send. In the Gospel of John we read:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (Jn 14, 15-17, 25-26)

Jesus' promised gift of the Holy Spirit guides the Church in the truth, through the gifts given to its bishops, clergy, religious and lay faithful. The Holy Spirit consoles us in our trials and assists us as we strive to live out the demands of the Gospel. Each time we act in the name of all that is good and true, each time we reach out with the love of God -that dwells in our hearts- to others, the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives.