



## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Who from the beginning of time  
prepares for the One who is to come*  
**Texts from the  
Catechism of the Catholic Church**

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WORK OF CREATION**

#### ***The Spirit at the origins***

The Word of God and his Breath are at the origin of the being and life of every creature:

It belongs to the Holy Spirit to rule, sanctify and animate creation, for he is God, consubstantial with the Father and the Son... Power over life pertains to the Spirit, for being God he preserves creation in the Father through the Son.

(Byzantine Liturgy) (703)

The New Testament reveals that God created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son. (Jn 1:1-3) In him "all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Col 1:16-17)

The Church's faith likewise confesses the creative action of the Holy Spirit, the "giver of life," "the Creator Spirit" ("Veni, Creator Spiritus"), the "source of every good." (291)

#### ***In the creation of Man in the image of God***

"God fashioned man with his own hands [that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit] and impressed his own form on the flesh he had fashioned, in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form." (St. Irenaeus) (704)

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE PROPHETS**

#### ***In the Old Testament the Spirit speaks of the Messiah***

From the beginning until "the fullness of time," the joint mission of the Father's Word and Spirit remains hidden, but it is at work. God's Spirit prepares for the time of the Messiah. Neither is fully revealed but both are already promised, to be watched for and welcomed at their manifestation. So, for this reason, when the Church reads the Old Testament, she searches there for what the Spirit, "who has spoken through the prophets," wants to tell us about Christ.

By "prophets" the faith of the Church here understands all whom the Holy Spirit inspired in the living proclamation and in the composition of the sacred books, both of the Old and the New Testaments. Jewish tradition distinguishes first the Law (the five first books or Pentateuch), then the Prophets (our historical and prophetic books) and finally the Writings (especially the wisdom literature, in particular the Psalms). (702)

### **THE SPIRIT AND THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM**

#### ***After sin, the Son will restore the Father's likeness by giving the Spirit***

Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God," of his "likeness." The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image" and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life." (705)

#### ***To Abraham's descendants Christ will give the promised Spirit***

Against all human hope, God promises descendants to Abraham, as the fruit of faith and of the power of the Holy Spirit. In Abraham's progeny all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This progeny will be Christ himself, in whom the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." God commits himself by his own solemn oath to giving his beloved Son and "the promised Holy Spirit... [who is] the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it." (Eph 1:13-14) (706)

### **THE CLOUD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LAW**

#### ***In the manifestations of God***

Theophanies (manifestations of God) light up the way of the promise, from the patriarchs to Moses and from Joshua to the visions that inaugurated the missions of the great prophets. Christian tradition has always recognised that God's Word allowed himself to be seen and heard in these theophanies, in which the cloud of the Holy Spirit both revealed him and concealed him in its shadow. (707)

#### ***The gift of the Law, the awareness of sin, and the desire for the Holy Spirit***

This divine pedagogy appears especially in the gift of the Law. God gave the Law as a "pedagogue" to lead his people towards Christ. But the Law's powerlessness to save man deprived of the divine "likeness," along with the growing awareness of sin that it imparts, enkindles a desire for the Holy Spirit. The lamentations of the Psalms bear witness to this. (708)

### **IN THE KINGDOM AND THE EXILE**

#### ***The promised kingdom would be the work of the Holy Spirit***

The Law, the sign of God's promise and covenant, ought to have governed the hearts and institutions of that people to whom Abraham's faith gave birth. "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,... you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." But after David, Israel gave in to the temptation of becoming a kingdom like other nations. The Kingdom, however,

the object of the promise made to David, would be the work of the Holy Spirit; it would belong to the poor according to the Spirit. (709)

### ***The Exile and the promised restoration according to the Spirit***

The forgetting of the Law and the infidelity to the covenant end in death: it is the Exile, apparently the failure of the promises, which is in fact the mysterious fidelity of the Saviour God and the beginning of a promised restoration, but according to the Spirit. The People of God had to suffer this purification. In God's plan, the Exile already stands in the shadow of the Cross, and the Remnant of the poor that returns from the Exile is one of the most transparent prefigurations of the Church. (710)

## **THE EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH AND THE SPIRIT**

### ***Two prophetic lines leading to the announcement of the Messiah and the Spirit***

"Behold, I am doing a new thing (Is 43:19)". Two prophetic lines were to develop, one leading to the expectation of the Messiah, the other pointing to the announcement of a new Spirit. They converge in the small Remnant, the people of the poor, who await in hope the "consolation of Israel" and "the redemption of Jerusalem". (711)

### ***The expected characteristics of the Messiah***

The characteristics of the awaited Messiah begin to appear in the "Book of Emmanuel" ("Isaiah said this when he saw his glory," speaking of Christ), especially in the first two verses of Isaiah 11:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (712)

### ***The suffering servant who will give us his own Spirit of life***

The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the "Servant songs." These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus' Passion, and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many: not as an outsider, but by embracing our "form as slave." Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life. (713)

### ***Christ proclaims - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me"***

This is why Christ inaugurates the proclamation of the Good News by making his own the following passage from Isaiah:

The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good tidings to the afflicted;  
he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour. (714)

### ***The Holy Spirit will renew men's hearts, giving a new law and a new creation***

The prophetic texts that directly concern the sending of the Holy Spirit are oracles by which God speaks to his the heart of his people in the language of the promise, with the accents of "love and fidelity." St. Peter will proclaim their fulfilment on the morning of Pentecost. According to these promises, at the "end time" the Lord's Spirit will renew the hearts of men, engraving a new law in them. He will gather and reconcile the scattered and divided peoples; he will transform the first creation, and God will dwell there with men in peace. (715)

### ***The Spirit is making "a people prepared for the Lord"***

The People of the "poor" - those who, humble and meek, rely solely on their God's mysterious plans, who await the justice, not of men but of the Messiah - are in the end the great achievement of the Holy Spirit's hidden mission during the time of the promises that prepare for Christ's coming. It is this quality of heart, purified and enlightened by the Spirit, which is expressed in the Psalms. In these poor, the Spirit is making ready "a people prepared for the Lord." (Lk 1:17) (716)

## **IN BRIEF**

- **God created the universe and keeps it in existence by his Word, the Son "upholding the universe by his word of power" (Heb 1:3) and by his Creator Spirit, the giver of life. 320**
- **When the Church reads the Old Testament, she searches for what the Spirit, "who has spoken through the prophets", wants to tell us about Christ. (702)**
- **The Holy Spirit's hidden mission during the time of the promises is to make ready "a people prepared for the Lord", for Christ's coming. (716)**

