



THE HOLY SPIRIT
Who within the Church
is always active in the Sacred Liturgy
Texts from the
Catechism of the Catholic Church

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH IN THE LITURGY

The sacred liturgy is the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church

In the liturgy the Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of "God's masterpieces," the sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine co-operation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church. (1091)

The Holy Spirit prepares and unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ

In this sacramental dispensation of Christ's mystery the Holy Spirit acts in the same way as at other times in the economy of salvation: he prepares the Church to encounter her Lord; he recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly. By his transforming power, he makes the mystery of Christ present here and now. Finally the Spirit of communion unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ. (1092)

THE HOLY SPIRIT PREPARES FOR THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST

The Holy Spirit fulfils what was prefigured in the Old Covenant

In the sacramental economy the Holy Spirit fulfils what was prefigured in the Old Covenant. Since Christ's Church was "prepared in marvellous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and in *the Old Covenant*," the Church's liturgy has retained certain elements of the worship of the Old Covenant as integral and irreplaceable, adopting them as her own:

- notably, reading the Old Testament;
- praying the Psalms;
- above all, recalling the saving events and significant realities which have found their fulfilment in the mystery of Christ (promise and covenant, Exodus and Passover, kingdom and temple, exile and return). (1093)

The Spirit unveils the mystery of Christ hidden in the events of salvation history

It is on *this harmony of the two Testaments* that the Paschal catechesis of the Lord is built, and then that of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. This catechesis unveils what lay hidden under the letter of the Old Testament: the mystery of Christ. It is called "*typological*" because it reveals the newness of Christ on the basis of the "figures" (types) which announce him in the deeds, words and symbols of the first covenant. By this re-reading in the Spirit of Truth, starting from Christ, the figures are unveiled. Thus:

- the flood and Noah's ark prefigured salvation by Baptism,
- as did the cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea.
- Water from the rock was the figure of the spiritual gifts of Christ,
- and manna in the desert prefigured the Eucharist, "the true bread from heaven." (1094)

For this reason the Church, especially during Advent and Lent and above all at the Easter Vigil, re-reads and re-lives the great events of salvation history in the "today" of her liturgy. But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church's liturgy reveals it and enables us to live it. (1095)

The Holy Spirit gathers the children of God into the one Body of Christ

In the *liturgy of the New Covenant* every liturgical action, especially the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments, is an encounter between Christ and the Church. The liturgical assembly derives its unity from the "communion of the Holy Spirit" who gathers the children of God into the one Body of Christ. This assembly transcends racial, cultural, social - indeed, all human affinities. (1097)

The assembly should *prepare* itself to encounter its Lord and to become "a people well disposed." The preparation of hearts is the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the assembly, especially of its ministers. The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart and adherence to the Father's will. These dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterward. (1098)

THE HOLY SPIRIT RECALLS THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

The Holy Spirit is the Church's living memory in the Word of God

The Spirit and the Church co-operate to manifest Christ and his work of salvation in the liturgy. Primarily in the Eucharist, and by analogy in the other sacraments, the liturgy is the memorial of the mystery of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the Church's living memory. (1099)

The Word of God. The Holy Spirit first recalls the meaning of the salvation event to the liturgical assembly by giving life to the Word of God, which is proclaimed so that it may be received and lived:

"In the celebration of the liturgy, sacred Scripture is extremely important. From it come the lessons that are read and explained in the homily, and the psalms that are sung. It is from the Scriptures that the prayers, collects and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning." (Second Vatican Council) (1100)

The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual understanding of the Word of God to those who read or hear it, according to the dispositions of their hearts. By means of the words, actions and symbols that form the structure of a celebration, the Spirit puts both the faithful and the ministers into a living relationship with Christ, the Word and Image of the Father, so that they can live out the meaning of what they hear, contemplate and do in the celebration. (1101)

The Holy Spirit gives the grace of faith to respond

"By the saving word of God, faith... is nourished in the hearts of believers. By this faith then the congregation of the faithful begins and grows." The proclamation does not stop with a teaching; it elicits *the response of faith* as consent and commitment, directed at the covenant between God and his people. Once again it is the Holy Spirit who gives the grace of faith, strengthens it and makes it grow in the community. The liturgical assembly is first of all a communion in faith. (1102)

The Spirit recalls the marvellous works of God

Anamnesis. The liturgical celebration always refers to God's saving interventions in history. "The economy of Revelation is realised by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other... The words for their part proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain." In the Liturgy of the Word the Holy Spirit "recalls" to the assembly all that Christ has done for us. In keeping with the nature of liturgical actions and the ritual traditions of the churches, the celebration "makes a remembrance" of the marvellous works of God in an anamnesis which may be more or less developed. The Holy Spirit who thus awakens the memory of the Church then inspires thanksgiving and praise (doxology). (1103)

THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES PRESENT THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

The outpouring of the Spirit makes the unique mystery of Christ present

Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us but actualises them, makes them present. The Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. It is the celebrations that are repeated, and in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present. (1104)

The Holy Spirit is invoked upon the offerings to become the Body of Christ

The *Epiciclesis* ("invocation upon") is the intercession in which the priest begs the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, so that the offerings may become the body and blood of Christ and that the faithful, by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God. (1105)

Together with the anamnesis, the epiciclesis is at the heart of each sacramental celebration, most especially of the Eucharist:

"You ask how the bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the wine... the Blood of Christ. I shall tell you: the Holy Spirit comes upon them and accomplishes what surpasses every word and thought... Let it be enough for you to understand that it is by the Holy Spirit, just as it was of the Holy Virgin and by the Holy Spirit that the Lord, through and in himself, took flesh." (St John Damascene) (1106)

The Holy Spirit's transforming power in the liturgy hastens the coming of the kingdom and the consummation of the mystery of salvation. While we wait in hope he causes us really to anticipate the fullness of communion with the Holy Trinity. Sent by the Father who hears the epiciclesis of the Church, the Spirit gives life to those who accept him and is, even now, the "guarantee" of their inheritance. (1107)

THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The intimate co-operation of the Holy Spirit and the Church in the liturgy

In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his Body. The Holy Spirit is like the sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches. The most intimate co-operation of the Holy Spirit and the Church is achieved in the liturgy. The Spirit, who is the Spirit of communion, abides indefectibly in the Church. For this reason the Church is the great sacrament of divine communion which gathers God's scattered children together. Communion with the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy. (1108)

The epiciclesis is also a prayer for the full effect of the assembly's communion with the mystery of Christ. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" have to remain with us always and bear fruit beyond the Eucharistic celebration. The Church therefore asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity. (1109)

IN BRIEF

- **The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by his transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church. (1112)**