

The Holy Spirit

Written by Fr. Raul Reyes, OCD

The scriptures, in the Old and New testaments, are filled with the action of the Holy Spirit.

The spirit hovered over the waters in the chaos, the deep, or formless void (tohu wabohu) before God separated the waters from the earth. The Spirit of God gave life with his breath to the form of man which He had shaped from the clay of the earth. It was through the spirit, the cloud by day and the column of fire by night, the Shekinah, that guided the people from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of worshipping God in the desert. It was the spirit of God which anointed the Prophet Isaiah with righteousness to vindicate his people, to redeem them and to make them holy. (cf. Isaiah 61 and 62).

The ru ah overshadowed the Virgin Mary as she responded with her “fiat” to the message of the Archangel. And the Word was made flesh. (Luke 1:26-36)

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1-2).

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. ...he opened the scroll of Isaiah 61:1-2, where the prophet says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Luke 23:46 “then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.” As Jesus gives up his Spirit on the Cross, He gives life to the world.

On the evening of that day, the being shut where the disciples were. . .Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace to you!”

Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are my witnesses of these things, and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you;” (Luke 24:36 ff.) The

Promise of the Father being the Spirit who would descend on the disciples and the Church on Pentecost.

While the Gospel of John (20:19-24) varies from that of Luke, the message is the same. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; If you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

From the very beginning of creation, the spirit was the source of life for all created things and continues to give life to everything.

Whether the "ru ah" is a breath, life-giving air, principle of life or a charismatic spirit imparted to give strength, it is often a dynamic power that changes an individual within to go forth and proclaim the life-giving Word of salvific grace saving the world.

The Holy Spirit comes to the disciples and they become dynamic ministers, going unto the world proclaiming Jesus as Savior. As the Father had sent the Son, the Son now sends his disciples to go forth and bring salvation to the world through the Spirit that had been given them. The disciples today, the Church, continue to be sent forth. Known as the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Advocate, the Sanctifier, this Indwelling Spirit continues to send all disciples to evangelize and be a light to all nations, continues to make the Church holy,

The Lord Jesus directs us to "be holy as our heavenly Father is holy." How are we to be so enveloped in the Holy Spirit as to put the words of Jesus into practice? The words of the Lord must resonate in and through all our being so that the Spirit bring us to see the poor, the needy and in them see the very image of the Lord. Seeing the Lord in the least of our brothers and sisters and serving them, we serve the Lord. It is easy to see our brothers and sisters in need when we look for them and find them in street corners asking for handouts; it is easy to find the needy in those living in make-shift boards and covers which they call homes. Yet, we miss the poor and needy in our own homes and families. How is it we live with our families and not see the loneliness? The need for kindness? The need for understanding? The need for consolation? The need for compassion? If we just look at those around us, we find ourselves next to those who yearn for companionship and for love. The isolation is there; the loneliness is there; the ignored are there. Jesus assured us that He and the Father would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to remind us what Jesus wants us to do. We do not have far to go to find those wanting. We must tend to the poor and needy in our families

before we reach out to others outside our homes. We begin with our families to share with them what the Lord has shared with us, then we reach out to others and the rest of the world. At the very beginning of the Church, this is how the disciples began to spread the Good News to others. And this is how they the Christians were recognized: See how they love one another.

May our prayer be today that we be guided by the Spirit to reach out to our Lord God and to those around us in love; Unless we begin serving those with whom we live, we will serve neither neighbor nor God. How true it is: love begins at home. Let us serve first our families whom we love in order that we may reach out to others and to God. Every one of us can do this at home with our families. This is what Jesus asks; this is what the Spirit prompts us to do. This is what makes us holy in the Spirit.