

THE HOLY SPIRIT –THE EASTER GIFT  
Teaching for the Life in the Spirit Session # 2 , May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006

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### **Introduction**

It is a sad fact that even though our faith in One God is Trinitarian in nature, in practice we do not give the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, as much importance as we give to God the Father or to God the Son. We really fail to give the Holy Spirit His proper place! We do have a good communication with the First Person of the Holy Trinity as our Creator, Sustainer, and Father. We express this relationship by being thankful to Him for all that we have and we call Him “Abba” with much love. Also, we do have a pretty good relationship with the Second Person as our Redeemer, Savior and the Lord. We are very much aware of Jesus’ atoning death for the remission of our sins and we are so grateful to Him for His humbling himself by becoming a man, to suffer unto death etc. But regarding our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we are far behind except that we remember Him in the official prayers of the Church. Even though He is equally a Divine Person in the most Holy Trinity and equally responsible for our redemption we don’t relate to Him much. Even though we do read and study a lot about the life and mission of Lord Jesus Christ, we don’t care at all to study about the Holy Spirit and His functions or manifestations.

A typical example is that we seriously spend 40 days of Lent in meditating over and re-living the Passion and death of Christ, but we don’t give much importance to the preparation for a re-anointing with the Holy Spirit, the focus of the entire Easter Season. We even discard the need of a re-anointing of the Holy Spirit, even when we are very well aware of the need of receiving Jesus over and over again. In short, the Holy Spirit has almost become a forgotten God. Consequently, our practice of faith remains substantially incomplete. As a matter of fact, due to this incomplete practice of faith, the believers do not grow in Christian perfection as they should.

The picture of the early Church is very different from that of today. The life of the early Christians was so amazing even to the enemies of the Church that they commented of the first disciples as those “who turned the world upside down” ( cfr. 17:6). Their zeal for prayer, the Eucharist, fellowship and the Teaching of the Apostles was really wonderful: *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers...Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes”* ( Acts. 2:41-42, 46). Their love for the neighbor was unimaginably great: *“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need”* ( acts. 2:44-45). They were looked upon with great respect: *“They praised God and were looked up to by everyone”* ( Acts. 2:47). *“The people esteemed them “* ( Acts. 5:13).

The reason is quite obvious. Our Lord's words came true in them literally: *“When the Holy has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection”* ( Acts. I: 8). Yes, all the members of the early Church were persons who had the “Pentecost” experience. They were persons filled with the Holy Spirit. They were so filled with the Spirit that they could use the various gifts of the Holy Spirit to give testimony to the gospel. And indeed *“Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the*

*apostles*” ( Acts. 5:12). And, their only prayer when they were banned to preach the gospel was for miracles, signs, wonders and healing: “*And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and help your servants to proclaim your message with all fearlessness, stretching out your hand to heal and to work miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus*” ( NJB). The Scripture continues: “*As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness*” ( Acts. 4:29-31).

The use of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in their preaching was so decisive that it helped very much for the fast and efficacious spread of the gospel, even among the Gentiles. In fact it was those signs that opened many doors for the first Church for evangelization. Even the enemies were compelled to shut their mouth at those miracles. Take for an example, the response of the Sanhedrin at the Apostolic Preaching of the Gospel for the simple reason of Peter’s healing of a lame man.: “So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, and conferred with one another, saying, “What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. But so that it may not be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name” ( acts. 4:47).

It is this consciousness of the same necessity for the Church in the modern world that prompted Blessed Pope John XXIII to pray thus as a means to rejuvenate the modern Church : “ O Holy Spirit, renew your wonders in this our day as by a new Pentecost”. And the gift of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vat. Council and the consequent renewal of the universal Church that followed by the council was the result of this prayer! Pope Paul VI’s historical statement: “ The first need of the Church is always to live Pentecost”. What a remarkable statement!

Let us take a look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council Document called Lumen Gentium ( On Church in the modern world”): “It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, “allotting his gifts to everyone according as He wills,(114) He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit”.(115) These **charisms**, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church. Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Pope Paul VI during the First International leaders Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal said: “ We rejoice with you , dear friends, at the renewal of the spiritual life manifested in the church today, in different forms and various environments. Certain common notes that appear in this renewal are: the taste for deep prayer, personal and in groups, a return to contemplation, and an emphasis on praise of God, the desire to devote oneself completely to Christ, a great availability for the calls of the Holy Spirit, more assiduous reading of the Scriptures, generous brotherly devotion, the will to make a contribution to the service of the Church. In all that, we can recognize the mysteries and discreet work of the Spirit, who is the soul of the Church”.

Speaking to the international leaders of the Charismatic Renewal in 1979, Pope John Paul II stated: “I am convinced that this movement is a sign of the Spirit’s action... a very important component in the total renewal of the church . The situation in the world is dangerous, very dangerous. Materialism is opposed to the true dimension of human power, and there are many different kinds of materialism. Materialism is the negation of the Holy Spirit. Now I see this movement, this activity everywhere... Consequently, I am convinced in the total renewal of the Church, in this spiritual renewal of the Church”.

### **The Holy Spirit - the Easter Gift**

In order to understand well the prominence of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives as well as in the Church and the world, we need to consider the context of Jesus’ breathing of the Holy Spirit on Apostles on Easter day and later a mighty anointing of the Spirit on every believer present in the Upper Room on the Pentecost day. Jesus’ previous reference to the Holy Spirit right before His death gives us the impression that the Passion and Death of the Messiah was intended to grant the Holy Spirit: “But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” ( Jn. 16:7). On this Scripture Pope John Paul II makes a comment in His Encyclical on the Holy Spirit DOMINUM ET VIVIFICANTEM: “*If I go, I will send him to you,*” Thus, the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the power of his Fatherhood, as he has sent the Son ; but at the same time he sends him in the power of the Redemption accomplished by Christ-and in this sense the Holy Spirit is sent also by the Son: “I will send him to you.”... The Holy Spirit will come as Christ will depart through the Cross: he will come not only afterwards, but because of the Redemption accomplished by Christ, through the will and action of the Father” ( paragraph # 8). So it is very clear that the granting of the gift of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of Jesus’ death.

### **Descending of the Holy Spirit marks the completion of Redemption**

.Through the prophecy of Ezekiel( 36:24-27) God tells us that the redemptive work of Jesus reaches its fulfillment only in pouring out his Spirit upon us. It is all the more clear from the fact that Jesus identifies the promise of salvation with the sending of the Holy Spirit( cfr. Lk. 24:49 and Gen.3:15). From Ezek. 36:24-27 it is very clear that the ultimate purpose of cleansing our souls and purifying our hearts of the deep rooted sinful inclinations and inner wounds (that leads to sin) by the blood and wounds of Christ, is precisely to instill His Spirit into us. It is only then that we shall be strengthened enough to obey God’s commandments, which is the only way to enter into the Kingdom of God( cfr. Mt. 19:17—if you wish to enter into Life, keep the Commandments). If we look into the order of the Paschal Mysteries, it is easy to understand that the descending of the Holy Spirit is the completion of the Redemptive work. Jesus became man (took flesh) to die on the cross; he died on the cross to rise from the dead; he rose from the dead to give the Holy Spirit. This is the scheme of redemption in four stages. This explains why Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon the disciples the very first time he met them after his resurrection. “*He breathed on them and said to them, ‘ Receive the Holy Spirit’*” ( Jn., 20:23). That was the culmination of the elaborate process of a complete Redemption.

### Redemption really means infilling with the Holy Spirit.

The word Redemption means Re-creation( of man). That is to say, to give back to human nature what was lost by the original sin. The Bible says clearly that it was the presence of the Spirit of God within man that made him the image and likeness of God. “ *Then God said: ‘ Let us make a man in our image, after our likeness. ... The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being’*” ( Gen. 1:26; 2:7). Therefore, what was in the mind of God when He gave the promise of sending the Messiah to save mankind was precisely to give back the same Spirit of God to man. God has revealed this plan several times to humanity through the prophets. For example He spoke thus through Joel: “ *It will come to pass in the last days, God says, ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...’*” ( quoted in Acts. 2:17-18).

We can see a very close similarity between the way God created man in the beginning and the way He re-created man through Jesus Christ after Resurrection. Genesis 2:7 says: “*The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being* ( Gen. 2:7) ; and the Gospel of John says what the Risen Lord did when he met the apostles first after the Resurrection: “he breathed on them and said to them, “*Receive the holy Spirit*”( Jn. 20:22). It is interesting to note what “The Jerome Biblical Commentary” comments states on Jn 20: 22 “ John uses the same verb as in the Greek text of Genesis 2:7 to describe this new creation”. It is a matter of fact that it is the death and the resurrection of Our Lord that made possible this breathing of the Holy Spirit. This is what St. Paul tells us in Titus 3:6—“*When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared,... he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior*”( Titus3:4-6).

Hence it becomes clear that being filled with the Holy Spirit is the way to get redeemed. This is the reason why Jesus told the zealous Pharisee Nicodemus who believed in Jesus at the risk of losing all his position in the Jewish religion that even a person like him will not enter into the Kingdom of God if he is not born again from water and Spirit, meaning that he should get completely filled with the Holy Spirit to such an extent that he can no more have any trace of the old sinful nature.

### **Jesus revealed this redemptive plan at the very beginning**

Even long before his death, seeing ahead the after-effect of his death and resurrection, Jesus gave the promise of the Holy Spirit. John reports it thus: “ *On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, ‘Let any one who thirst come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: “Rivers of living water will flow from within”. He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not been glorified’*” ( Jn. 7: 37-39). Besides this promise in his early discourse, Jesus spoke even more about the Holy Spirit in his last Discourse: “ *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world can not accept, because it neither sees it nor knows it*” ( Jn. 14:16-17); “ *The Advocate, the holy Spirit, the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you*”( 14: 26); “ *But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and*

*condemnation*” ( 16:12). These repeated references to the Holy Spirit right before his death , of course, is a clue to a better understanding of Jn. 7:39, namely, Jesus’ glorification through his death on the cross was precisely to give the Holy Spirit to all mankind.

### **Accomplished in the apostles**

This is illustrated in the apostle’s case very clearly. As we know, the Apostles were the first samples of the redeemed mankind. Look at the long process of redemption Jesus accomplished in them! Having selected them to the apostolic college he trained them in the new values of the Kingdom of God. And he was always sensitive to their minute mistakes and very particular to correct them then and there. As he promised at the last Supper he shed his blood for the forgiveness of their sins by his death on the cross. But the process of redemption was completed only with the granting of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the first thing Jesus did when he met his Apostles after his death was to give them the Holy Spirit: “ *On the evening of the first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’... And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ ( Jn. 20:19-23).*

Some people are of the opinion that, since we have received the Holy Spirit once in Baptism, there is no need of a “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. If we search the scriptures we will be convinced of fanning up the Spirit again and again. Look at what Jesus did! He didn’t stop with the first anointing, which he gave on the Easter Sunday. Rather it was perfected step by step by further anointing. The Scripture says, “*during the 40 days after his crucifixion he appeared to the apostles from time to time ... And on these occasions he talked to them about the Kingdom of God*”(Acts. 1:3 ). The following verses clarifies that what he meant by the ‘Kingdom of God’, was a reference to the Holy Spirit. : “ *In one of these meetings he told them not to leave Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them in fulfillment of the Father’s promise, a matter he had previously discussed with them: ‘ John baptized you with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days’ . Another time when he appeared to them, they asked him, ‘Lord, are you going to free Israel from Rome now and restore us an independent nation’ he replied thus: ‘ The Father sets those dates, and they are not for you to know. But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth about my death and resurrection*” (Act. 1:4-8).

Again, right before his Ascension he urged them to wait in intense prayer to receive a mighty outpour of the Holy Spirit: “ *And now I will send the Holy Spirit up on you, just as my Father promised (cfr. Joel 2: 28). Don’t begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven*”(Lk. 24:40 ). And they did literally as he commanded: “ *And they returned to Jerusalem filled with mighty joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising God*” ( Lk. 24:53); “ *They were at the Mount of Olives when this happened , so now they walked the half mile back to Jerusalem and held a prayer meeting in an upstairs room of the house where they were staying. This prayer meeting went on for several days... Seven weeks had gone by since Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the Day of Pentecost had now arrived. As the believers met together that day suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on their heads. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in languages they did not know, for the Holy Spirit gave them this ability*”(Acts 1:12,13,15; 2:1-4).

## **The Holy Spirit, Life Principle of the Early Church**

A glance at the Acts of the Apostles provides an eloquent witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the early Church. From the very first page we see the Holy Spirit at work in ways that are surprising, even disconcerting. It is he who directs the course of events and moves the apostles and the community of the faithful.

Peter in his first sermon, as he stood outside the Upper Room on that First Pentecost Morning, recalled to his listeners the prophecy of Joel which spoke of this mysterious outpouring of the Spirit “.....” (Acts 2:16-20; Joel. 3:1-5).

The Spirit of Jesus inspires the words to be used before the Sanhedrin or the Roman Proconsuls and governors ( Mt. 10:20; Luk. 21:15). Paul testifies: “my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God” ( I Cor. 2:4-5).

The Spirit infuses courage and boldness in the apostles: “The Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join up with that chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet ....and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing. Philip came to Azotus, and went about proclaiming the good news to all the towns until he reached Caesarea” ( Acts 8:29, 39).

The Spirit gives strength to the martyrs: “Stephen, filled with the holy Spirit, looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ” ( Acts. 7:55).

The Spirit brings Peter to the household of Cornelius: “As Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said (to him), "There are three men here looking for you. So get up, go downstairs, and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for” ( Acts. 10: 19-21).

The Spirit chooses those who are to be sent: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” ( Acts. 13:2).

The Spirit is the joy and assurance of those who are persecuted: ‘The Jews, however, incited the women of prominence who were worshipers and the leading men of the city, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory. So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. The disciples were filled with joy and the holy Spirit” ( Acts. 13: 50-52).

The Spirit presides over the decisions made in the new-born church—directives that will determine its long future—and the apostles transmit these directives saying: “It is the decision of the holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage” ( Acts 15:28-29).

The Spirit traces out the route to be taken by the apostles on their journeys, guides them and holds them back: They traveled through the Phrygian and Galatian territory because they had been prevented by the holy Spirit from preaching the message in the province of Asia. When they

came to Mysia, they tried to go on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them, so they crossed through Mysia and came down to Troas”( Acts. 16: 6-7).

The Holy Spirit directs Paul’s missionary life in a special way: “But now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem. What will happen to me there I do not know, except that in one city after another the holy Spirit has been warning me that imprisonment and hardships await me. Yet I consider life of no importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace” ( Acts 20: 22-24).

Thus we see beyond any shadow of doubt how the early Church lived by, and expressed its faith in the Holy Spirit.

### **The Early Christians were Spirit-filled persons**

If we study closely the Acts of the Apostles, we will be convinced that only those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were considered “Believers” or Christians( cfr. Acts. 2: 1—41). The norm for any service in the Church, even for social work was the Spirit-filled life: “ *At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, ‘ It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve the table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task’*” ( Acts. 6:1—3). For the early Christians, Christianity meant a religion replete with the Holy Spirit. That was why St. Paul wrote extensively about the special gifts of the Holy Spirit to the early Christians. The use of those gifts were very common in the early Church. That is why he deals with it in detail in I Corinthians Chapter 14. It says that the mind of the Church was to allow full freedom to the Holy Spirit to guide each baptized person and Christian communities. St. Paul even went so far as to say: “ *Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him*” ( Rom. 8:9b).

Sad to say, today many practicing Catholics think that this kind of Spirit-led Christian life is not very much necessary. (Some even brand it a feature of Protestantism! ). They do not even like to associate with Spiritual movements which give due importance to the use of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit such as gift of tongues, gift of prophecy, gift of wisdom, gift of knowledge, gift of healing, etc. All this is because of ignorance or misunderstanding of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If we stick on to that we may even be guilty of quenching the Holy Spirit: “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good” ( I Thessalonians 5: 18-- 20).

### **The necessity of “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”**

Protestant Pentecostals did not invent the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Rather it belongs to the integrity of Christian initiation as witnessed by the New Testament and the early post –biblical teachers of the Church. Peter describes the essential elements of Christian initiation in these words: ““Repent and be baptized.... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy”” ( Acts. 2: 38). Christian life begins with a conversion to the person of Jesus, but it also involves essentially the gift of the Holy Spirit. All four gospels present Jesus as the one who “baptizes with the Holy Spirit” ( Mk. 1:8; Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33). Jesus’ own baptism in the Jordan is marked by the perceptible descent of the Holy Spirit ( Lk. 3:22 par), and his baptism becomes the prototype of all Christian initiation: “For in one Spirit

we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit” ( I Cor. 12:13).

### **The effects of this reception of the Spirit are manifold:**

- Sanctification ( I Cor. 6: 11-19);
- A new and experiential relationship to God by which we cry “Abba, Father” ( Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15),
- A new and experiential relationship to Jesus whom we proclaim as Lord ( I Cor. 12:3);
- A union with others in the bond of love, walking in the Spirit by the power of the Spirit ( Gal. 5: 25);
- Love, joy, peace and other fruits of the Spirit( Gal. 5: 22);
- A new insight into the mysteries of God ( I Cor. 2: 9-15);
- A taste for the word of God ( Hebr. 6:4-5);
- The courageous boldness to witness even unto death ( Acts 1:8) ;
- The discernment of true doctrine ( I Jn 2: 24-27);
- Gifts of praise, knowledge, prophecy, healing, and other charisms of service for the up building of the body of Christ, each according to the measure of Christ’s determination ( I Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:7-16)

As these gifts are sought ( I Cor. 14:1) and discerned ( I Thess. 5:19-21), they empower members to create that communion which the Church is meant to be and to proclaim the Church’s message of love, justice and peace to the world. This life in the Holy Spirit is not, therefore, one spirituality among others in the church. It is the spirituality of the Church.

### **Baptism in the Holy Spirit is Normative**

How did the early post-biblical church appropriate the biblical teaching? Baptism in the Holy Spirit was a synonym for Christian initiation in Justin Martyr, Origen, Didymus the Blind, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Tertullian, Hilary of Poitiers, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, John of Apamea, Philoxenus of Mabbug, Severus of Antioch, and Joseph Hazzaya clearly regarded the reception of charisms as integral to Christian initiation. Hilary, Cyril and Chrysostom have all been named Doctors of the Church, recognized as authoritative witness of identifying the faith of the Church.

Take for example, how Hilary of Poitiers describes the experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: “ *We who have been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy ( maximum gaudium) when we feel within us the first stirring of the Holy Spirit*”. “ *Among us there is no one who, from time to time, does not feel the gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit... We begin to have insight into the mysteries of faith, we are able to prophesy and to speak with wisdom. We become steadfast in hope and receive the gift of healing....*”

### **The meaning of Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

Praying for the full release of the Holy Spirit is known as the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. By no means it signifies a second baptism, but it refers to a later awakening of the original sacramental grace of Baptism. It is a prayer for the full release of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to become “baptized in the Holy Spirit” means to be so filled with the Holy Spirit to the extent of

having the special gifts of the Holy Spirit that we become an efficacious and very powerful instrument to spread the gospel, to build the Kingdom of God on earth. It also means to be filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit in such a way that our life becomes a model of all heroic virtues in such a way that we become an inspiration to all for turning back to God.

### **Is “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” necessary for baptized persons?**

The gift of the Spirit which is God’s love ( Rom. 5:5) can never be totally appropriated, and for that reason it must besought repeatedly through prayer ( Acts 4: 23-31); indeed, at times it needs to be stirred up or rekindled ( 2 Tim. 1: 6-7). Thus, especially for those who were baptized in infancy, prayer for the full release of the Holy Spirit is a common way of appropriating the grace of Christian initiation. Such is the New Testament pattern and mandate for the life and growth of the Church.

It is interesting to know why did Jesus insist “baptism in the Holy Spirit” for the Apostles on Pentecost day since they had already received the Holy Spirit on Easter Sunday? Because, it was through the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, that took place on Pentecost Sunday, that the “gifts of the Holy Spirit “ were given to them. It was these “gifts” which really enabled them to be efficacious witnesses to the gospel, to the death and resurrection of the Lord (cfr LK. 24:49;. Acts. 1:8—CLB)

Are we not in the same condition as the apostles before the were baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost? Of course, we have received the Holy Spirit in baptism and a “sealing” of the Spirit in Confirmation. Yet, neither the fruits of the Holy Spirit such as love ( Christ like-love), joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faith fullness, gentleness, self control so on and so forth ( Gal. 5:22-23) nor the gifts of the Spirit such as knowledge, wisdom, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues ( cfr. I Cor. 12:7-10) are seen in our lives as they were in the first disciples.

So it is our fundamental obligation to spread the gospel, to evangelize the world, to give testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ with “power” to the ends of the world that necessitates all the more the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”. It comes then that it is due to our lack of zeal for evangelization that makes us indifferent to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This necessitates the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” in our lives today. In fact, by observing the 50 “holy days” after Easter in preparation for the feast of Pentecost every year the Holy Catholic Church summons all her children to be “baptized in the Spirit” again and again.

### **To become worthy of the “Gift” of God !**

Therefore, to be open to the Holy Spirit, to thirst for being filled with Him, to pray incessantly for an infilling of the Holy Spirit , to ask the Holy Spirit earnestly to come into your life and become the true Lord of your life, to desire fervently to receive all the gifts He wants to give you—these are very fundamental to genuine Christian life. On the contrary, indifference to the work of the Holy Spirit in us as well as in the Church and the world will be a grave mistake that militates against the Redemption accomplished by Christ’s death.

Dear friends, it is therefore, our duty to re-ignite the power of the Holy Spirit by receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Hence, lets us therefore, start a serious preparation from today onwards for an ever deeper in-filling of the Holy Spirit after the example of the Bl. Mother and

the Apostles in the remaining days of Easter Season, as the early Church did. The following Sessions are immediate preparation for it.

“Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."  
( Jn. 4:10)

Please prepare yourselves for (May 31) the Consecration to the Bl. Mother as a means for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on you, and all Christians, especially the participants of the Life in the Spirit Sessions on June 3<sup>rd</sup> when we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and make the “Laying of Hands” Prayer. Please make sure that you will not miss any of the following sessions.

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