

CATHOLIC FAITH CHALLENGED 3

THE HELPER



Dr. MICHAEL KARIMATTAM



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During the Last Supper Jesus promised the disciples to send a helper to be with them forever. "The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (Jn 14, 26). Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity is here presented as the counsellor and helper. There is a gradual development in the revelation about the Holy Spirit in the Bible. This book tries to trace that development. It is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the nature and working of the Holy Spirit as presented in the Bible, both Old and New Testament, while the second part explains the gifts, charisms and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God who remains with us all the time, walking with us holding our hands, as the light to our path, strength to defeat temptations, power to overcome obstacles, inspiration to live and proclaim the Word of God faithfully and as hope that will not let us succumb to despair. He is a loving presence that will fill us with unending joy, undying hope, and an invincible inner power. The Holy Spirit is with us as a constant companion, giving us inner tranquility, inspiring in us true love and everlasting peace.

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ISBN: 978-93-90790-68-5



₹ 160

Available at: [amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in) & [atmabooks.com](https://www.atmabooks.com)

Scripture

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English

The Helper

(Scripture)

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Translated from Malayalam by Sr. Glorista SABS

Copyright: Author

Layout: Sheeja M

Cover Design: Sreejith George

First Published: January 2022

ISBN: 978-93-90790-68-5

Printed, Published and Distributed by:



Pavanatma Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Parayanchery, Kuthiravattam (P.O.)

Kozhikode - 673 016

Ph: +91 9746077500, +91 9746440800

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Introduction

It was the Last Supper. Jesus knew that within a few hours he will be taken away from the disciples. He will be arrested, brutally tortured and finally crucified as a criminal. The disciples whom he had gathered around him from Galilee will be left alone. They will also face the enmity and hatred of both religious and political leadership. He knew well that they have not really understood what he tried to teach them through word and deed. He also knew that they were sad and really frightened by what he told them about his impending departure. This is the context when Jesus told them: *“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me”* (Jn 14,1). *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another helper, to be with you for ever”* (Jn 14, 15-16).

Who is this helper? Some Muslims claim that Jesus was talking about Muhammad, the founder of the Islamic religion. The Greek word that is translated as “Helper” is *“Paracletos”*. The Muslims argue that in the original it was *“Periclytos”* but the Christians changed it to *“Paracletos”*. The Greek word *Periclytos* means the one who is honored or praised. They argue that it is the meaning of the word, Ahammad or Muhammad. According to the Muslims Jesus had foretold about Muhammad and both Jesus and Muhammad were sent by the same God, Allah. Is this claim valid? Was it really Muhammad that Jesus was speaking about as a helper?

One cannot help but be surprised about this claim! To say that Jesus was talking about someone who would come after 600 years to comfort and strengthen the frightened disciples who feel as orphans with the violent departure of the master, needs extra ordinary imagination. Before deciding who the “Helper” Jesus promised was, let us look into the name Muhammad.

Those who argue that the word Muhammad means praised or honored, and it is the translation of the Greek word “*Pericyltos*” must seek if such a word is found anywhere else in the Bible. They would not find it. They will not find a single ancient manuscript of John’s Gospel with the word peryclitos. But, the word “*Paracletos*” appears again four times in John’s writings (Jn 14, 26; 15, 26; 16, 7; 1 Jn 2, 1). This word does not mean praised but “*one who is called to be near – Helper*”. Hence, one is forced to conclude that the argument that the name of Muhammad is in the Bible is either out of ignorance or an intentional lie.

If we look into the kind of things, Jesus said the “helper” would do, we can see that these have no relationship to Muhammad. Jesus promised to send a helper to the disciples in distress to console and strengthen them. The Holy Spirit would guide them to understand the truths they are yet unable to grasp. Could we say that these were promises about a business man who came after 600 years?

Therefore, to say that the helper Jesus Promised was Muhammad or to say that Muhammad is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit is either an expression of ignorance or purposely distorting the truth, which does not need any refutation with arguments and evidence form the bible. What is important is to find out what the Bible says about this “Helper”.

In the gospel according to John the “Helper” and the “Holy Spirit” is the same person. “*But the helper, the Holy*

Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your memory all that I have said to you” (Jn 14, 26). The Greek original is “*Paracletos, to pneuma to hagion*”. The word *paracletos* means the one who is called to be near. It points to a context of trial in a court, where the one accused gets the help of the advocate. In fact the advocate is the literal translation of the Latin word *advocatus*, which again is the translation of the Greek word *paracletos*. This Greek word is sometimes translated also as counsellor.

The subject of discussion here is the picture of the Holy Spirit present in the bible, both the OT and the NT. The official teaching of the Catholic Church about the Holy Spirit can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 683-747; the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII “*Divinum Illud Munus*” published in 1894 and Pope John Paul II “*Dominum et vivificantum*” published in 1986.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the general picture of the Holy Spirit found both in the OT and in the NT, while the second part studies the various activities of the Holy Spirit, such as Gifts, Charisms and Fruits.

PART I

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE

God revealed Himself and His plan of salvation through the Bible, the written Word of God. From the first book, Genesis, to the last book, Revelation, we can find many indications and descriptions about the Holy Spirit. We see the indications about the nature and activities of the Holy Spirit given in the Old Testament gaining clarity in the New Testament. The picture of the Holy Spirit that appears from Genesis to Revelations will be studied in this first part.

1

OLD TESTAMENT

The knowledge about the Holy Spirit gained clarity only slowly. In the beginning there are only vague indications and references to the Holy Spirit. The fundamental teaching of the Old Testament is Monotheism, that is, there is only One God. However, in this One God we can see hints about some kind of a plurality. This is evident at the very beginning of the Bible. *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters”* (Gen 1, 1-2).

a. Symbols – Breath, wind:

The Bible tells about the Holy Spirit through Symbols. Here in the second verse of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis we have the first of such references. The original word in Hebrew that is translated as spirit is *Ruah* and its Greek translation is *“Pneuma”*. This word can have several nuances in English, such as spirit, wind, power. It indicates rather the action of wind that manifests itself in various ways. It moves, breaths life, removes obstacles, destroys; many such actions could be seen as the work of the wind.

The Spirit of God that moved over the formless, dark void created forms and shapes. From the beginning of

creation, the Holy Spirit was active. In connection with creation the Holy Spirit appears in the Old Testament again many times. *“When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground”* (Ps 104, 30). The word translated here as Spirit is *Ruah* in the original Hebrew. As in the first creation so also in the re-creation of the world Holy Spirit is active and operative.

The same idea is presented in greater detail by Eze-kiel in the language of a vision. When the Prophet prophesied to the dry bones, they took on human form and then the Lord said to him, *“He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, thou knowest”. Again he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live”* (Ez 37, 3-5). As the Lord said, it happened. They all came alive and stood like a huge army. It is the Hebrew word *“Ruah”* that is translated as breath.

b. Water – Spring:

Another symbol for the Holy Spirit is water. Now the water has two qualities: 1.It gives life; 2. It washes clean. At the same time water has the capacity to overcome all the obstacles and go forward that could be for saving or punishing. The flood that would kill all the living is a punishment God sends; at the same time it could be also a purifying act.

In a prophecy by Prophet Ezekiel presents the purifying and life-giving act of the Spirit: *“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh”* (Ez 36, 25-26). What is translated

as “spirit” is the Hebrew word “*Ruah*”. By presenting water and wind in a parallel form, attention is directed to the two different activities, “purification and giving life” of the Holy Spirit.

In a vision about the new Temple, a stream that sprang up from the Temple, sailed through the desert and reached the Dead Sea calls our attention to the life-giving activities of the Holy Spirit. *“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east ... the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. ... Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.... As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other...And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”* (Ez 47,1-12).

A spring becomes a small stream, river, and finally turns into a vast sea. All the way through it provides life in abundance as the work of the Holy Spirit. This symbol, with slight variations is present in the book of Revelation: *“Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month”* (Rev.22,1-2); The stream that in the vision of Ezekiel starts from the threshold of the temple and in John’s vision starts from the throne of God and of the Lamb symbolizes the Holy Spirit who proceeds from God the Father and the Son.

c. Fire:

Another symbol of the Holy Spirit that appears in the Old Testament is “fire” that is used as an instrument of punishment as well as a symbol of the presence of God. When God made the Covenant with Abraham, fire appeared making His presence known. *“When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces”* (Gen 15,17). On Mount Sinai, for the first time God appeared to Moses in a burning bush (Ex 3, 2-6). During the journey through the desert, God guided the people at night, in a Pillar of fire (Ex 13, 21; Num 9, 15). God appeared to the people on Mount Sinai in the symbol of fire (Ex 19, 16-19). When fire came down from heaven and consumed the victim Elijah had placed on the altar on Mount Carmel, people recognized the presence of God: *“Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.”* (1Kgs 18, 38).

The Prophets have presented “fire” as a symbol that announces the presence of God, *“The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day”* (Is 10,17). Proclaiming that God resides in the middle of fire, prophet Isaiah teaches about His holiness and the holiness demanded from all those who approach Him. *“Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”* (Is 33, 14).

Just as water and wind, fire also has two functions: 1. Destroy all that is evil. 2. Purify all that is good. Fire is a symbol of the presence of God (Ps 18, 8; 50, 3; 97, 3). In the New Testament also the Holy Spirit appears in the

form of fire. *“There appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2, 3-4).

2. Activities

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit appears as a power rather than a person, the Divine power or grace that operates in the individuals. Holy Spirit anoints persons and purifies them, strengthens and leads them in the way of the Lord. He would give the sense of justice to the Judges, wisdom of God to the Prophets, strength and prudence to the kings and holiness to the priests.

a. Prudence and Intelligence:

The brothers of Joseph, filled with jealousy, sold him as a slave but God protected him constantly, freed him from the prison and raised him to the highest office in Egypt. When Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh and advised him to appoint a suitable person to deal with the impending crisis of seven years' famine, Pharaoh said to his servants: *“Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God? So, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; you shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you”* (Gen 41, 38-40). Intelligence and prudence are to be used to discern the God given signs, take decisions and adjust life accordingly. The Holy Spirit inspired Joseph to have intelligence and prudence that saved a population from starvation and death.

b. In the Judges:

The strong leaders who led Israel after Joshua to the beginning of kingship are called “Judges”. The Holy Spirit

would choose certain persons and strengthen them to protect the people from enemies. All the Judges, from the first one Othniel to the last one, Samson, were strengthened by the Holy Spirit. The book of Judges tells about Othniel, *“The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand”* (Judg 3, 10). Then came Gideon (Judg 6, 34), Jephthah (Judg 11, 29), and Samson (Judg 13, 25; 14, 6) who were all strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of the Lord would come upon certain people in critical situations and make them strong leaders in order to save the people from the enemies. These leaders must know that the power is from the Holy Spirit, not their own natural quality. They must remember and acknowledge it. Of the 12 Judges, the strongest one, Samson did not do that; filled with pride, he thought his power was his own. Finally, the Spirit of the Lord left him (Judg 16, 20) but Samson was not aware of it. The consequence was drastic; he lost his freedom, his sight and finally his very life (Jgs 16,18-31). Samson is a negative model from whom we have much to learn.

c. In the Kings:

Saul was the first king of Israel. According to the command of God, Samuel anointed him as king. The Spirit of the Lord worked in him with great force and he became a new person (1 Sam 10, 9-10). The Lord strengthened him to save His people from the enemy, *“The spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, “Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!”* (1 Sam 11, 6-7). But, eventually when

he became proud and disobeyed the Lord, *“The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him”* (1 Sam 16, 14). In obedience to the order of God, Samuel anointed David in the place of Saul. *“The LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward”* (1 Sam 16, 12-13).

The Sacred author tells that an evil spirit tormented Saul when the Holy Spirit left him. A king must remain open to the Spirit, constantly listening to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and live accordingly; if he fails to do so, he will be rejected by God. That is the lesson we get from the experience of Saul.

d. In the Prophets:

In the Old Testament, the work of the Holy Spirit was most obvious among the Prophets. The very call to be a Prophet is depicted in the Bible as the anointing by the Holy Spirit who places the word of God on the tongue of the prophet. The Holy Spirit inspires him and teaches him to speak; what, to whom and how to say it, will be instructed by the Holy Spirit (Jer 1, 9; Is 6, 1-13; Ez 3, 14). The true prophet in the Old Testament is one who is called by God, anointed by the Holy Spirit equipped with the Word of God and sent to speak to the people. In this the work of the Holy Spirit is decisive.

However, all those who claim to be prophets may not be prophets. False prophets were like a curse to the people then as well as now. How to discern a true prophet from false prophets? How to discern and distinguish the Word of God from human words? This is a problem encountered by all the prophets and the people. In such situations, the words of Prophet Micah provide a guideline. After stating

what would happen to the false prophets, the Prophet stated emphatically about his mission: “*As for me, I am filled with power; with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin*” (Micah 3,8).

The true Prophet will be filled with the Holy Spirit. This message was presented forcefully by Isaiah (Is 56-66). “*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; and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn*” (Is 61, 1-2). Listed here are the activities of the Holy Spirit: Anointing, sending, proclaiming the Word of God, giving freedom, liberation to the captives – all these happen by the power of the Word of God. That Word is given by the Holy Spirit. According to Evangelist Luke, Jesus started His public ministry reading this passage from Isaiah and proclaiming that the prophecy was fulfilled while the people were listening to Him in the Synagogue at Nazareth (Lk 4, 18-21).

e. In the Servant of the Lord:

While the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon, Isaiah II was sent to them with the message of consolation and hope (Is 40-55). In these chapters many times there is mention of a person called the “*the Servant of the Lord*” (***Ebed Yahweh***). There is no agreement among bible scholars about the identity of this Servant. Some consider this as a title referring to the corporate personality of all the Israelites who were living in exile in Babylon, a claim that is supported by passages such as, “*But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!*” (Is 44, 1). Such usages are repeated many times and so there are some who

consider that all the 16 chapters of Isaiah II (40-55) present the servant of Yahweh as the people of Israel.

However, there are many who think that not all the passages that speak about “Servant of Yahweh” refer to the people of Israel as such but there are a few, especially four passages (Is 42,1-9; 49,1-6; 50,4-11; 52,13 -53,12) that point to a particular person. Again there is a difference of opinion about the identity of this individual servant. Some consider that it refers to Prophet Jeremiah who suffered a lot on account of the Word of God; while others argue that it refers to the Messiah who was to come in the future. The New Testament interprets these Servant Songs as prophecies about Jesus the Messiah, the suffering Servant (Acts 8, 32-35). The Servant who appears in these songs is the Saviour who is to come, who will be a Prophet and King and at the same time through His Passion and death will redeem the people from their sins. In the promises given to the people of Israel, through the Prophets, these prophecies have great importance. The working of the Holy Spirit in the “Servant of Yahweh” deserves special attention.

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations” (Is 42, 1). From the very beginning clear hints are given regarding the origin of His power and mission. This servant is subject to the special love of God. The Hebrew word that is translated as servant is “*Ebed*” which could mean not only Servant but also “Son”. At the time of the Baptism of Jesus, the voice that came from heaven reflects this prophecy: *“and a voice came from heaven, “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.”* (Mk1,11). It is the Holy Spirit who anoints the “Servant” as the “Prophet”. The Spirit of God is the source and origin of the strength of the “Servant”.

The Spirit of God strengthens the “Servant” to estab-

lish justice among the people, to liberate the captives and to be the source of light and salvation. Here the mission of the Prophet and the King come together in one person. The Servant is the prophet, the king and the Saviour, not only for the people of Israel, but for the whole world. The redemption of humanity will be achieved not only by word, but also by His suffering, death and resurrection. In all these activities the strength and power of the Holy Spirit will be at work. When all these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the revelation about the Holy Spirit also becomes more clear and explicit as the power of God that works in the Son is the Holy Spirit.

f. The working of the Spirit among the people

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit” (Joel 2, 28-29).

This is a promise that was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2, 1-4). Not only on certain chosen individuals but on all the people God will pour out His Spirit. Here the Spirit that will be poured out on the people is something different from, but at the same time equal to God. It is the power that would enter into people and strengthen them and guide them; a pouring out of power - that is the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. When the Holy Spirit comes the old people will have dreams that would become visions that would guide the youth leading to a renewal of the earth.

Moses had wished and prayed for this outpouring of the Spirit on all the people of God. Fed up with the disobedience, grumbling and rebellion of the people in the desert, Moses complained to God about his inability to guide and

lead them alone, God asked him to choose seventy people to help him. *“Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied”* (Num 11, 25). The Hebrew word translated as Spirit is *“Ruah”*. The Lord who strengthened Moses to lead the people guided also the seventy people who were chosen.

The Spirit came upon two men, Eldad and Medad who, though they were chosen with the others, had not gone to the tent of meeting where the 70 had gathered, and they too prophesied. Joshua complained and asked Moses to forbid them to speak but Moses responded, *“Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!”* (Num 11, 29). The Spirit fills the people and inspires them to know and proclaim the Word of God. That is the work attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

The people who returned from the Babylonian Exile were in despair; the promise given to them makes this clearer. *“As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children’s children, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore”* (Is 59, 21). The hope is in the Holy Spirit who would come upon the people and guide them constantly.

Summary

The revelation about the Holy Spirit found in the OT could be summarized as follows. The Old Testament emphasizes the unity of God. However, from the very beginning we can notice a hint to plurality in that unity. In the

beginning of the creation account we see such a hint when the sacred author tells about God who creates, the Spirit that was moving over the face of waters and the word by which God creates (Gen 1, 1-2). God creates by the Word through the Spirit. This has been explained through various symbols.

Even when we say that the Holy Spirit is presented as a power rather than a person, it has to be admitted that the Spirit is not seen as a natural quality nor capability of God but rather as a person having his own intellect and will. It is the Holy Spirit that inspires, strengthens and guides the Judges, Prophets and the Kings. God giving His Spirit to a person is presented as “*Anointing by the Holy Spirit*”. Such an anointing is done in order to fulfil the plan of God.

All the promises and indications concerning the anointing by the Holy Spirit are pointing to the Saviour who was to come. Jesus Christ is at the same time King, Judge, Priest and Prophet. He was filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit would fill all the people of God and guide each individual. The New Testament narrates how these hopes are fulfilled.

2

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The teaching about the Holy Spirit, that is often vague and only given as hints in the OT, becomes clear in the NT. The gospels speak about the Holy Spirit mostly in relation with Jesus Christ. The Acts of the Apostles extensively narrates the working of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples, filling their hearts, strengthening and guiding them to proclaim the gospel. The epistles, especially the letters of St. Paul tell us much about the Holy Spirit. In the book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit appears under many symbols.

1. A New Beginning

It was generally believed that the Divine Revelations came to an end towards the middle of the fifth century BC, with the death of the last Prophet, Malachi. After him there were no more prophets anointed by the Holy Spirit. Basing on prophecies like Joel 2, 28-29, people believed that the Spirit of God will come upon people only at the end of ages. The first two chapters of the Gospel according to Luke narrate the presence and actions of the Holy Spirit as the fulfilment of these hopes.

Luke starts the Gospel presenting the picture of a number of people filled with the Holy Spirit, becoming active in carrying out the plan of God. The reference to the actions of the Holy Spirit starts with the apparition of the Angel to Zachariah while offering incense in the Temple.

The action of the Holy Spirit will become evident in the son born to the elderly couple. *“He will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God”* (Lk 1, 15-16). The one who comes to prepare the way of the Saviour will be filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit. In this we can see John the Baptist as the last of the OT prophets whom the Holy Spirit empowers to prepare the people to receive the Messiah.

The baby leaped with joy in the womb of Elisabeth at the sound of the greetings of Mary who was carrying the Saviour in her womb. *“When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”* (Lk 1, 41). The work of the Holy Spirit made Elizabeth a prophetess and she recognized the one standing in front of her as the mother of the Saviour; with great joy, she proclaimed that truth while praising God for the blessing she received. The baby in her womb jumped with joy as he was filled with the Holy Spirit. With the naming of the baby, the sign the Angel gave to Zachariah was fulfilled as he regained his ability to speak. Filled with the Holy Spirit he praised God describing the characteristics of the Saviour who was to come and the mission of the child who was going to prepare the way for Him.

Mary who received the call to be the mother of the Saviour has more importance than these two persons because the work of the Holy Spirit first appeared in her. Hearing about the Saviour who was to be born and her part in that process, she asked the Angel how it would happen as she had no relationship with a man. In this context we hear for the first time about the role of the Holy Spirit in connection to the Birth of God Incarnate, *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will*

overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Lk 1, 35).

In the words of the Angel we can see a “Synonymous Parallelism”. The Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High point to the same reality but at the same time they explain each other. The same parallelism can be seen also in the expressions “*will come*” and “*overshadow you*”, both of which point to the same action and explain each other.

In the beginning of creation, the Holy Spirit hovered over the formless void and created forms and shapes. In a similar manner, in the incarnation of the Son of God, the Holy Spirit is giving shape to the human form. Without a human father, the Son of God was born of a virgin. There is nothing impossible for God Who created everything from nothing. Mary was satisfied by the explanation of the Angel and surrendered herself to the plan of God. With that Mary got a hint about the working of the Holy Trinity, especially that of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation of God as man. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and so He is God, He is holy. Holiness is one of the attributes of God we find in the Bible. Humans are called to participate in the holiness of God by dedicating themselves to God and living according to His will.

The gospel according to Mathew (1, 18-20) tells that the Incarnation of the Son of God happened through the work of the Holy Spirit, as it is revealed to Joseph by an Angel in a dream. “*But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, **for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit;** she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* (Mt 1, 20-211). Mathew continues to explain that this event was the fulfilment of the promises God had given through the Prophets

(Mt 1, 22-23), showing thereby that it is the Holy Spirit who initiated the fulfilment of the History of Salvation.

The last mention of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Infancy narratives we see in the context of the presentation of Child Jesus in the temple. On the 40th day, as the days of purification were over, the parents took child Jesus to the Temple. No one except two people saw anything special in that poor couple who came to the temple to present their child to God and had brought two doves, as ransom for the child. The first one to come out to greet them was an elderly man, Simeon, who recognized the Saviour in the baby and proclaimed it aloud. Luke states it emphatically that it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he recognized the child, praised God and prophesied what was awaiting the child and the mother. In two sentences the Holy Spirit is mentioned three times.

“It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word” (Lk 2, 26 – 29). The Holy Spirit reveals the Divine Truths and constantly guides the devotee. Simeon was a devotee who constantly listened to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit and obeyed faithfully. Simeon and Hanna who came behind him are symbols of the holy remnant of Israel who were waiting for the coming of the Saviour

The working of the Holy Spirit in persons such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon and Hanna marks the beginning of a new era in the history of salvation. Here we see the working of the Holy Spirit that was not felt for over four centuries. Of all these people, John the Baptist

experienced the working of the Spirit most forcefully.

The Holy Spirit worked in John the Baptist who was sent to prepare the way for the Saviour and to introduce him to the people. *“The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”* (Lk 3, 2-3). The expression “the word of God came to” presents John as one similar to the Old Testament prophets. It is the Holy Spirit that inspires John the Baptist, but what makes John different from the Old Testament prophets is his mission which is to introduce the Saviour to the people.

John introduced the Saviour saying, *“I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire”* (Lk 3, 16). Fire is presented here as an attribute and at the same time working of the Holy Spirit. Fire has the function of purifying, but also of destroying. It would purify the stained metal while burning to ashes the trees that do not bear fruit. This message is emphasized in the preaching of John the Baptist who announced that the Holy Spirit would make it possible for the Saviour to perform these two functions. *“He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God”* (Jn 1, 33-34).

2. The Holy Spirit and Jesus

The gospels have reported the working of the Holy Spirit in all the events related to Jesus, from his birth to his death and exaltation, as well as Jesus’ teachings about the Holy Spirit.

Birth – Anointing

We have already seen the testimonies of the gospels about the Incarnation of the Word of God as the work of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1, 35; Mt 1, 18. 20). Jesus started the public ministry after being anointed by the Holy Spirit. All the three synoptic gospels report that the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan is the context in which the Holy Spirit came upon him. However, we have to note the specification that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus after he was baptised. The evangelists are emphasising thereby that the baptism administered by John is only the context, not the effective cause of the anointing by the Holy Spirit. It is not John the Baptist but God the Father who anointed Jesus by sending the Holy Spirit upon him; the baptism only prepared the atmosphere for it.

The Synoptic Gospels have reported three things that happened in connection with the Baptism of Jesus: 1. The heavens opened; 2. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove; 3. From heaven the voice of the Father revealed Jesus as His beloved Son (Mt 3, 16-17; Mk 1, 10-11; Lk 3, 21-22). Luke presents this event as the anointing by the Holy Spirit that prepared Jesus for his prophetic ministry (Lk 4, 18-19. 21; Acts 10, 38). The Holy Spirit, who anointed Jesus, remained always with him. All the words and deeds of Jesus were always according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus the people saw him as a great prophet, mighty in word and deed (Lk 24,19).

Victory over Satan

The synoptic gospels report the 40 days of fasting and confronting the devil in the desert as the first activities of Jesus after the baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit. Desert was considered to be the abode and fortress of Satan, the power of evil. It was in the desert where the people of Israel had wandered for forty years, constantly

succumbing to temptations. Jesus is now correcting that history by presenting Himself as the stronger one who defeats the strong man, symbol of Satan, and liberates his captives (Lk 11, 21-22).

It was the Holy Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness and enabled Him to defeat Satan in the confrontations, presented in the gospels as temptations (Mt 4, 1; Mk 1, 12). After defeating the tempter Jesus went to Galilee to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Luke emphasises the fact that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit: *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country”* (Lk 4, 14).

In the Actions of Jesus

All the activities of Jesus were performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. During his first proclamation in the synagogue at Nazareth, which is often characterised as the ***Nazareth Manifesto***, where Jesus announced his mission (Lk 4, 16 -30), he calls attention to the Holy Spirit as the source and force behind all his actions: *“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”* (Lk 4, 18-19). Jesus proclaimed that the prophecy regarding the eschatological Prophet has been fulfilled in him: *“And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”* (Lk 4, 21). While preaching the Good News at the house of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius, Peter gives special emphasis to this truth.

Among the activities of Jesus, the people were most surprised and impressed by the exorcism of evil spirits because they believed that the world is under the dominion

of Satan and the cause of all the miseries of the people are the result of this demonic possession. The miracles Jesus performed, especially the exorcism of the evil spirits, was an evident sign of God's power working in Jesus. The Jewish leadership however, instead of accepting this Divine presence in Jesus, accused Him of being an instrument of Satan: "*He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons*" (Lk 11, 15).

While exposing the foolishness of this accusation Jesus brought two things to their attention: 1. The fact that he is exorcising the evil spirit by the power of God stands as a proof of the presence of the Kingdom of God. 2. Purposely denying a truth one knows and depicting the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Satan is a grave sin that will not be forgiven because it is a sin against the Holy Spirit (Lk 11, 19-23; Mt 12, 24-32).

In the Prayer life of Jesus

Prayer through which Jesus constantly kept contact with the Father had the most important part in His life; it was an essential part of His lifestyle. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus who was absorbed in prayer after receiving Baptism at the beginning of His public ministry (Lk 3, 21). According to the Gospels, Jesus prayed in the desert, on the mountains and in lonely places. Luke has stated it several times that Jesus was filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit in his prayer life.

Jesus shared in the joy of the Apostles who returned after having completed their first mission with great success. "*In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will... Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to*

see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Lk 10, 21-24). Paul pointed out that “joy” is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5, 22). Jesus was filled with joy when His disciples took part in the mission entrusted to Him and they succeeded in their first attempt. The Evangelist emphasizes that this overflowing joy was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Not only in joy but also in deep sorrow, Jesus turned to the Father with ardent prayer: *“Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk 22, 42). The cup was not removed but Jesus was given the strength and courage to drink it to the last drop; that also was the work of the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is mentioned also in Jesus fulfilling the mission on earth, in the most painful way on the cross. “Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last” (Lk 23, 46). The fourth gospel tells the same thing in different words: “When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (Jn 19, 30). The New Testament, especially the epistles of Paul, teaches that the Resurrection of Jesus was accomplished by the Father through the Holy Spirit: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you”. (Rom 8, 11).*

The Promise of Jesus

The Bible, the New Testament in particular, sees the history of the world, more than that the Salvation History, as divided into three stages: The first stage is the time from creation to the Incarnation of the Son of God. During that long period emphasis is given to the works of God the Father who revealed Himself as Yahweh, the Creator and

liberator. The second stage is from the Incarnation of the Son of God till His glorification, presented as the centre of time, where the work of redemption is narrated. From the Ascension of Jesus till His second coming is the third stage where work of the Holy Spirit is the centre of attention. Even when it is said that in each of these three stages one person of the Holy Trinity is presented as the main actor, one should not forget that in all the cases the Almighty God is at work.

While trying to study the teachings of Jesus about the Holy Spirit, what is said above regarding the three stages of salvation history should be kept in mind. The infancy narratives (Mt 1-2; Lk 1-2) describe the activities of several people filled with the Holy Spirit. But as Jesus started the public ministry, the work of the Holy Spirit was centred only on him alone. Not only that, Jesus himself has said that the Holy Spirit as the power and gift will be granted only through his glorification. *“Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”* (Jn 7, 39). Even when Jesus sent out the disciples to proclaim the Gospel and gave them power to perform miracles, the Holy Spirit is not depicted as a permanent presence. Hence, the working of the Holy Spirit during the public ministry of Jesus and after his resurrection should be seen separately. This difference is evident in the promises Jesus gave.

During the public ministry Jesus sent first the 12 Apostles (Mt 10, 1-42; Lk 10, 1-12) and then 70 disciples (Lk 10,1-2) as his forerunners. When they returned after completing their ministry successfully, Jesus, moved by the Holy Spirit, praised God the Father (Lk 10, 21). The persecutions foretold as the second part of the missionary discourse of Jesus (Mt 10,1-42) point to the suffering the

disciples would face after the glorification of Jesus. Jesus promised that at that time, the Holy Spirit will be with them as their helper, *“for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you”* (Mt 10, 20; Lk 12,12).

Jesus assured the disciples that if one prays with faith and perseverance, the Father would give the Holy Spirit. *“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (Lk 11, 13). Before His Ascension Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles to strengthen them for Evangelization. *“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high”* (Lk 24, 49). That is the last promise given by the earthly Jesus

3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit and explained the working of the Holy Spirit through many examples and parables. These promises and explanations are presented more clearly in the Gospel of John.

Symbols

We see Jesus teaching about the working of the Holy Spirit using several symbols in a conversation with the Jewish leader Nicodemus who came to visit him at night. A person is born again as the child of God and a citizen of the Kingdom of God through the Holy Spirit: *“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3,3-5).* Here water is used as the symbol for the Holy Spirit. Immediately after this Jesus uses the symbol of wind to speak about the working of the Holy Spirit. *“The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (Jn 3,8).* The working of the Holy Spirit will be like that of the wind

which blows where it will. No man made barriers and walls will be able to restrict and control the movements of the Holy Spirit.

In the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well Jesus used the symbol of a spring of water that flows into eternal life in order to explain the working of the Holy Spirit. *“Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”* (Jn 4,13-14). It is the same Holy Spirit that enables the believers to offer prayers and true worship to God. *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him”* (Jn 4,23).

When Jesus said, *“if you do not eat the body of the Son of man and drink His blood, you will not have eternal life”*, many of his followers left him saying that they were not cannibals. The explanation Jesus gave in this context sheds new insight into the works of the Holy Spirit. *“It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”* (Jn 6, 63). Here we can see an indication that those words of Jesus are not to be taken in the literal sense. Jesus himself states this explicitly: *“It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”* (Jn 6,63).

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, before the large crowd Jesus proclaimed: *“If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink... Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water”* (Jn 7, 37- 38). A spring that would gush forth from the heart and flow as a big stream - that is the Holy Spirit. This is a promise Jesus has given to all those who believe in him. The same evangelist John who has

recorded this promise has also narrated its fulfilment on the cross: “*One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water*” (Jn 19, 34).

Promises

John tells us that during the farewell discourse at the Last Supper Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help the disciples. Jesus was in deep sorrow because the disciples who left all that they had and followed Him will in a few hours become orphans as he will be taken away from them through a cruel death. They have not understood all that He taught them by word and deed. Now who will guide them? After his departure the power of evil would hunt them down as sheep by wolves. They will face severe persecution and cruel death because they are his disciples. It is in this context that Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit.

After assuring them that God the Father would give them anything they ask in his name, Jesus tried to give them strength and hope. “*I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever*” (Jn 14, 16). The Greek word translated as *counsellor* is “*Paracletos*”. In Latin it is called “*Advocatus*”. The literal meaning of the word is “One who is called to be near” or “One who is near to help”. Originally this word pointed to the one who helps a person in the context of the trial in a law court; that is what the word *advocate*, the English form of the Latin *Advocatus*, means.

Even though Jesus is physically going away, they would not have to fear because the Holy Spirit will be with them, residing in them. Through death and resurrection, Jesus is going to the Father. It is his glorification; he is receiving back the glory he had emptied himself of at the incarnation (Phil 2, 6-11). The Holy Spirit will be given through this glorification, “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go*

away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (Jn 16, 7).

Even when Jesus promises that after his glorification he would send the Holy Spirit, we have to remember that the Holy Spirit is proceeding from the Father (Jn 15, 26) and it is the Father who sends the Spirit (Jn 14, 16), in the name of Jesus (Jn 14, 26). It is from this teaching that the article of the Creed *“We believe in the Holy Spirit who comes from the Father and the Son”* was formulated.

Jesus has given clear promises also regarding the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Will remain with the Apostles forever:

As we have seen, in the Old Testament the Spirit would come, strengthen the person for a mission and then leave. That will not happen now; the Holy Spirit will remain with them constantly.

2. Will Help:

The Holy Spirit will help them to fulfil the will of God. That could be in various ways.

3. Will teach and remind them everything (Jn 14, 26):

The Apostles were not capable of understanding much of what Jesus did and said. But the Holy Spirit would teach them everything and remind them of all that Jesus had told them and thus *“They will be led to the fullness of Truth”* (Jn 16, 13).

4. Give Clear Convictions:

“When he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (Jn 16, 8-9). This saying has a meaning that is much deeper than what is seen

on the periphery and so is difficult to understand. The word “will convince” is a clear example of it. The Greek word is “*Elexei*”. It is the future tense of the verb “*Elengo*” which can mean accuse, establish the crime or prove the wrong doing, to convict. Prove the guilt in a way that one cannot deny it or make the person convinced of the wrong done. This is a word used in the court of justice to prove the guilt of the accused, which is the duty of the advocate. This is presented as the activity of the Holy Spirit, the Helper.

It is also important to note who is accused and convicted. It is the world that is accused and judged. The “world” stands for all persons and powers that are rejecting God by rejecting Jesus. The whole world is seen as being under the dominion of evil. This becomes clear when Jesus calls Satan the ruler of the world: “*The ruler of this world is coming*” (Jn 14, 30). Salvation History is a conflict between good and evil, God and Satan. Here the Holy Spirit, the *Paracletos* is entrusted with the mission of accusing Satan and proving him guilty.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of three things, namely, sin justice and judgment

a. Sin: Sin basically is rejecting God. The world purposely rejected God who revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. Though there was more than enough proof to believe in him, the world closed its eyes against Him and thus sunk in darkness. The climax of this rejection was the trial, condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus. This will be the first conviction given by the Holy Spirit or the first crime proved against the world.

b. Justice: The Greek word is “*dikaiosune*” which could be translated also as holiness. Justice or holiness is the total union with God who Himself is Holiness. To the sinner Jesus gives justice through the forgiveness of sins and participation in the Divine life. The Holy Spirit will

make the world become convinced that it is through the death of Jesus that man receives participation in the Divine life.

c. Judgment: Through the death and glorification of Jesus God has won victory over sin and the root cause of it, Satan. That is the Last Judgment. The climax of God's love and the true nature of Satan become manifest in the crucifixion of Jesus: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (Jn 3,16). By rejecting Jesus Satan was convicting himself and sealing his own condemnation: *"Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out"* (Jn 12, 31).

The mission of the Holy Spirit, the Helper, is to continue fulfilling these three works. The Holy Spirit would put the world on the defence, speak for the disciples of Jesus Christ and protect them. The work of Jesus Christ will be continued by the Holy Spirit.

5. Bearing Witness

One of the works of the Holy Spirit will be bearing witness to Jesus Christ. *"When the Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning"* (Jn 15, 26-27). In the writings of John and in the life of the faithful, witnessing has great importance. Jesus who is the Word Incarnate gave witness to the Father through His words and deeds, and above all, by His death on the Cross revealed the love of God. His mission will be continued by the Holy Spirit who will reveal the true identity of Jesus, God's salvific plan and how that plan is being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus must continue this mission with the

help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

6. Total Self - Giving

The meaning of saying that the Holy Spirit will be given only with the glorification of Jesus Christ (Jn 7, 39) is further clarified and shown as being fulfilled with the death of Jesus on the cross. *“When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit”* (Jn 19, 30). This description of the death gives the impression that it is the death that gave the Holy Spirit. The Greek expression *“Paredoken to pneuma”* can have two meanings. The most obvious meaning is that He gave up his life or died. But there is more to it.

Hiding a meaning deeper than what is seen on the surface is part of John’s literary style. The third day (2, 1), time (2, 4), this house (2, 19), born again (3, 3) are some examples. What does the saying *“he gave up his spirit”* mean? What or who is this spirit? What does it mean he up? To whom is the spirit given? Such questions are relevant here. The Greek word *“Pneuma”* has deeper meaning than “life”. What is translated as “gave up” is the Greek word *“Paredoken”* which could also mean *“handed over”*. The death of Jesus was handing or giving over the Spirit.

Water and blood flowing out of the pierced heart of Jesus give such an indication. What Jesus had said about the Holy Spirit that would flow from heart (Jn 7, 39) is fulfilled here. The great importance the Evangelist gives to this incident is proof for this. *“He who saw it has borne witness ... his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth ... that you also may believe”* (Jn 19, 35).

What John tells regarding the sending of the Holy Spirit is different from what is written in the Synoptic Gospels. On the evening of the first day of the week, Jesus

appeared to the disciples, greeted them and proved his identity and the reality of the resurrection by showing them wounds in his hands and side: *“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. 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”* (Jn 20, 21-23). This event is known as the Johannine Pentecost that marks the fulfilment of the Promises Jesus had given about sending the Holy Spirit.

It reminds us of the second biblical account of the creation of man: *“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being”* (Gen 2, 7). Here the spirit that Jesus breathes on the disciples is the divine life that enters into them, who were mere human beings, giving them the power and authority to perform the duties entrusted to them. Bind – Loosen: the use of this antithetic parallelism invites attention to the authority given to the disciples to enable people to participate in the Divine life. The Church is given authority to lead the people into the Kingdom of God; the Holy Spirit would provide the necessary help and strength in this process.

4

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

With the glorification of Jesus, a New Age has begun. Jesus, who ascended into heaven after entrusting the mission of preaching the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Mk 16, 19) and sat on the right-hand side of the Father, sent the Holy Spirit to empower them. The book of the Acts of the Apostles explains how the Apostles carried out the mission entrusted to them. This book is often called the **Gospel of the Holy Spirit** because it narrates the works of the Holy Spirit who guides the Apostles in all their actions giving them strength and direction.

1. Promise of Jesus

Right before ascending into heaven Jesus told the disciples clearly regarding the working of the Holy Spirit. *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1, 8). The disciples were weak and afraid. Peter the rock melted like wax when challenged and renounced the Master not once but three times. Not only Peter, all the disciples were scared, fled and hid themselves from the public eye. Now Jesus tells them that from the Holy Spirit they would receive more knowledge, courage and power than what they received during the three years they were with Him.

Jesus instructed them to remain in the city in prayer until they receive the Holy Spirit. *“While staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 1, 4-5). The Holy Spirit is the promise of God the Father. The Apostles would continue the mission of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Their receiving the Holy Spirit is compared to a Baptism. The Baptism administered by John the Baptist prepared people to accept the Saviour. Now the Baptism by the Holy Spirit would make the disciples the co-workers of the Saviour. John the Baptist had told the people about this Baptism by the Holy Spirit: *“I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”* (Mk 1,8; see also Jn 1, 33).

The ten days that separated the Ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1,3; 2, 1) establishes the relationship as well as the difference between the two ages. Ascending to heaven and sitting at the right-hand side of the Father signifies that Jesus has taken back the glory He had set aside when he became a human being. At the same time it points out that Jesus has fulfilled the mission entrusted to Him by the Father and from now on it will be the Holy Spirit who will continue to guide the disciples. Baptism by the Holy Spirit is a symbol of purification as well as empowerment. It happened on the day of Pentecost.

2. Experience of Pentecost

As instructed by Jesus, the Apostles with Mary, mother of Jesus, waited in prayer. On the tenth day it happened. The people of Israel celebrate the Pentecost or 50th day festival, remembering the day God accepted them as His own people through the Sinai Covenant. Now the Pentecost assumes a new meaning, marking a new

beginning. *“Suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2, 2- 4).

The mighty wind is the symbol of rushing forward pushing away all obstacles. The same power that appeared in the beginning of creation (Gen 1, 2) now fills the upper room where the disciples are assembled. What is translated as *“mighty wind”* are two Greek words. The first one is *“Pnoe”* which could be translated as breath or wind. It should be noted that the word *pneuma* that is translated as spirit also derives from this root. The second word is *“Biaia”*. It is an adjective meaning strong, powerful, violent. The two words together indicate the power of the Holy Spirit, that is life giving and at the same time removing all obstacles.

No one can see the wind but can experience it and feel its power. But fire is different as it can be seen and one can experience its warmth. The disciples saw tongues of fire resting upon each one of them. The Greek original text says they saw the *“divided tongues of fire”*, which would imply that the same tongue was divided into many pieces and rested on each one. This experience has a meaning deeper than what would be seen on the outside. It is more than a factual description; it is a personal experience that they all were filled with the Holy Spirit. Each one had the experience of receiving the Holy Spirit.

It is evident that the tongue signifies the mission to speak. However, it was not many tongues, but the same tongue that divided itself into many and rested on each one. This would signify that the same Holy Spirit makes everyone capable of speaking, indicating thereby that all

those who speak by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit will be giving the same message. It points also to the unity of the community that is formed by work of the same Holy Spirit.

Special attention needs to be given to the symbol of fire as it has many functions, one of which is purifying, as the saying goes “purified in the fire”. When a metal is stained it could be purified by fire. In the Bible fire is also a symbol of punishment that burns all that is evil. We can see numerous examples of punishment by fire, starting with Sodom and Gomorrah. *“Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and **fire** from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground”* (Gen 19, 24-25; see also Amos 1, 4; 7.10; Mt 25, 41; Rev 19, 20; 20, 9-10). At the same time fire can indicate the presence of God as well. *“Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”* (Is 33, 14). By presenting God as devouring fire and everlasting burning, the prophet is telling that sinners cannot come near God.

Just as water washes clean, fire burns to purify. The Holy Spirit came on them in the form of tongues of fire indicating the mission they were entrusted with and the power they were being given to fulfil the mission. This purifying and empowering function of the Holy Spirit is foreshadowed in the initial vision Isaiah had in the temple where becoming aware of God’s holiness and his own sinfulness he cried out: *“And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips;*

your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.” (Is 6,5-7). Burn to purify, take away sins, make them new persons and strengthen them to proclaim the Gospel - that is the mission of the Holy Spirit who appeared to the disciples as tongues of fire.

This Spirit will be with them always, as strength, as consolation and as inspiration, even when they will have to undergo severe suffering. The Spirit will be with them just as it was with Prophet Jeremiah. Because of proclaiming the Word of God faithfully, Jeremiah had to suffer more than any other prophet in the Old Testament. Due to intense suffering he was often tempted to abandon his mission, but the Lord who called and purified him did not allow him to run away, but gave him the strength needed to carry the task entrusted to him with absolute fidelity. This painful experience came out from his own mouth as a bitter lament: *“Whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot”* (Jer 20, 8-9). The fire that is shut up in the bones! Jeremiah recognized that fire as the word of God. *“Because they have spoken this word, behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them”* (Jer 5, 14). The Word of God is not like the soothing lies of the false prophets; it is powerful, crushing, burning, melting: *“Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?”* (Jer 23, 29).

3. Empowering

The Apostles felt the Holy Spirit who came upon them as burning fire and inspiring strength. In a split second

they were all transformed into new persons. They were sitting behind closed doors, fearing the enemy. Now the Holy Spirit like a mighty storm broke open the doors and shattered the windows. Their tongues that were frozen with fear are suddenly loosened. Shouts of joy and hymns of praise sprang up from their hearts now filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. They knew that the enemies, who killed the Master, were standing around looking out for them, but they are not afraid any more.

They were suddenly ready to overcome any obstacle, to encounter any persecution. The joy they felt inside came out as spontaneous praises without their deliberation. They felt that the Salvific mission that was fulfilled in Jesus is being proclaimed by their mouths. They knew they were not speaking, but the Holy Spirit that was speaking through them. The people gathered around them heard the praises and proclamations by the disciples in their own languages and were surprised and wondered where they got this courage and knowledge from. When they spoke in Aramaic, how was it possible the people heard and understood the message in each one's language? That is the Holy Spirit Jesus had promised them. The words were placed on their tongue before they knew what to say. They became courageous and stood up before the enemy and boldly proclaimed that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. They felt being pushed from inside to proclaim the Gospel. This is the work of the Holy Spirit that the Acts of the Apostles narrates through many examples.

Peter, who was so scared that he denied knowing Jesus in front of a maid, has now become eloquent. To the people who gathered hearing the sound of the mighty wind, Peter proclaimed that Jesus whom they crucified has been raised from the dead and is now seated at the right hand side of God. He has sent the Holy Spirit; that is what they are seeing and hearing. This event had been already

foretold through Prophet Joel. It has become a reality now (Acts 2, 14-36). Peter ended his first sermon calling the people to conversion that would enable them to receive the Holy Spirit: *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2, 38). The witnessing was fruitful as 3000 people received Baptism that day, filled with the Holy Spirit they became new people and a new Community was formed (Acts 2, 41-42).

As days passed their strength was not diminishing; just the contrary, they were becoming more and more powerful and eloquent. There was strong opposition and the Jewish leadership took serious measures, threatening the Apostles and imprisoning them. They were forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus but the power of the Holy Spirit that filled them did not let them succumb to the threats, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4, 19-20). Even the Sanhedrin, the supreme authority of Judaism, was surprised by the courage and conviction that was reflected in the words of Peter. They sent them away after repeating the warning.

In the midst of obstacles, the disciples prayed more ardently, *“When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness”* (Acts 4, 31). From that first Pentecost to this day, the empowering by the Holy Spirit continues, enabling the disciples to bear witness to Jesus, risking their own lives without fear or regret.

4. Signs – Miracles

The power of the Holy Spirit that worked in the disciples was not limited to prayer and Evangelization. As Promised by Jesus, numerous miracles happened through them. It started with the healing of the crippled man begging at the temple gate, to whom Peter said: *“I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”*. *And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God”* (Acts 3, 6-8). The people were *“filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him”* (Acts 3,10). That became an undeniable evidence to the truth of what the Apostles were telling, proving that God is working in and through them.

This was only a beginning; miracles continued to happen. At the words of the Apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit, evil spirits were cast out; the sick were healed. When the shadow of Peter fell on the sick, they became well (Acts 5, 12-15). The kind of miracles Jesus performed began to happen through the Apostles as the Holy Spirit was active in them. The healing of the Paralytic at Lydda (Acts 9, 34-35) looks like a repetition of the healing performed by Jesus (Mk 2, 10-12). The words Peter said to the dead widow of Joppa, *“Tabitha, rise”* (Acts 9, 40), reminds the words Jesus said to the daughter of Jairus, *“Talitha cumi”* which means, *“Little girl, I say to you, arise”* (Mk 5, 41). The result was sudden, the dead person got up immediately. Such miracles added credibility to the proclamation of the Gospel, because they proved that it was the Holy Spirit that was working through them. This made the disciples more courageous.

5. Community Life – Witness of Christian life

The community life of the Christians was a great testimony that is emphasized in the Acts of the Apostles. Those who believed in the Gospel “*were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold*” (Acts 4, 31-34). “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers*” (Acts 2, 42).

This spirit of community life attracted many to the Gospel. The gifts they received to perform miracles were never used for personal benefits. In the Christian community there was no difference between rich and poor. The knowledge they received from the Apostles about Jesus, his life, teachings and commandments laid the foundation for their community life. The material goods they had were shared with the entire community and so no one was in need of anything. The centre of their power was the service of “*Breaking the bread*”, the memorial of the Last Supper of Jesus. Prayer in the community deepened their unity which they recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Acts of the Apostles presents this community life as the characteristic mark of the first Christian community. However, in the course of time this community life became less solid and the members began to experience discrimination between the rich and the poor. Against this

danger the apostles reacted very strongly, while the signs given by the Holy Spirit became warning to them. The tragic end of the couple, Ananias and Sapphira is an example (Acts 5, 1-11). After selling their property, they kept aside a part of the money pretending that they were giving the entire amount to the community. It was considered a crime against the Holy Spirit. Peter told them, “*You have not lied to men but to God*” (Acts 5, 4), which points to the seriousness of their action. This warning is relevant at all times.

6. Martyrdom

Jesus had warned many times that the life of the Apostles will not be easy (Lk 9, 23-24. 57-62; 12, 4-12; 14, 25-34). He taught them leaving no room for doubt that those who wish to follow Him must take up their cross and be ready to die on the cross, but they had never thought that the way of the cross would be so hard. That is why all of them ran away when Jesus was arrested.

However, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, they were totally transformed. No more they are afraid of being beaten or being shut up in prison. They considered being Jesus’ disciple and dying for him as gain and a great privilege. That is what the disciples of Jesus Christ, starting with the first martyr Stephen, to this day are proclaiming through their lives and experience. The proclamation of Paul is the best example for it: “*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (Phil 1, 21). These words came from one who was once a religious terrorist, Saul who denounced Stephen as a blasphemer and took the initiative in stoning him to death. This shows the change the Holy Spirit brings about in a person.

7. The Conversion of Saul

Saul of Tarsus was a young Jewish scholar who saw Jesus as a false prophet and Christianity as a heresy that should be wiped out from the face of the earth. He was resolved to imprison the Christians and kill them off and thus to crush this new heresy in the bud. To do so, Saul obtained the permission and authorisation of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish authority. He was going to Damascus to arrest the Jewish Christians, bring them to Jerusalem to put them on trial and murder them for blasphemy. This Saul is an example of the kind of change the Holy Spirit brings about in a person.

As he approached Damascus, he encountered a light like a lightning that made him fall to the ground. The bright light blinded him. He heard a voice asking him: *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”* And he said, *“Who are you, Lord?”* And he said, *“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”* (Acts 9, 4-5). He got up as a new person realizing that he had misunderstood Jesus, the Son of God, as a false prophet. He stoned Jesus to death in Stephen; it was Him that he was constantly persecuting. It took time for him to absorb the depth and magnitude of this truth. On the third day, a disciple of Jesus by name Ananias stood before Saul who was blind. The words of Ananias marked a turning point in the life of Saul. *“Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit”. And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized”* (Acts 9, 17-18).

The words of Ananias produced instant result. As something like scales, that symbolized all the prejudices

and misunderstanding about Jesus Christ and his followers, fell from his eyes Saul not only regained his physical sight but also gained a new insight. The rest of Saul's life was guided by the Holy Spirit - imprisonment, persecutions and finally beheading in Rome. Thus he became a martyr for Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit who instructed him where to go, where not to go, what he should say and to whom. More than half of the 28 chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are set aside for narrating the activities of Paul. The Book presents Paul as the most powerful and clear example of the working of the Holy Spirit. That life of witnessing still continues.

8. Guidance

The early Christian community confronted many serious problems and had to go through various obstacles. On the one side there was opposition and persecution from the part of the Jews as well as the Gentiles while on the other side they encountered many problems within the community itself. The dishonest behaviour of the couple Ananias and Sapphira was only the beginning. There arose conflicts between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, mainly on account of financial matters. In distributing the daily food, the Gentile Christians suffered discrimination from the Jewish Christians. In this situation, the Holy Spirit gave guidance through Peter.

“The twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6, 2-4). All approved of the suggestion that led to a new institution of service in the Church called Deacons, who would be responsible for the material

affairs while the Apostles would concentrate on prayer and proclamation of the Word.

It was a very beautiful and ideal decision, but over a period of time this decentralization of power was slowly forgotten. Today the roles seem to be totally reversed. While the successors of the Apostles seem to be concentrating more and more on financial management, the lay people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are showing greater interest in prayer life and proclamation of the Gospel. In the first decision of Peter we can see the call of the Holy Spirit to each member of the Church to have a deeper awareness of the mission entrusted to him and to concentrate only in those matters.

9. Jewish tradition and the Uniqueness of the Gospel

The role and importance of the Jewish traditions was another serious problem the early Christians faced in daily life as well as evangelization. This problem became more acute when through the Evangelization of Paul thousands of Gentiles believed in Jesus and received Baptism. The stance Paul took was, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household”* (Acts 16, 31). Even before receiving the Baptism all were filled with the Holy Spirit when Peter preached the Gospel in the house of Cornelius. All of them were Gentiles.

The leaders who saw Christianity as a continuation of Jewish religion paid no attention to such activities of the Holy Spirit. They insisted that in order to receive the blessings promised to Abraham, one has to follow the Sinai Covenant and obey all its commandments and prescriptions. Even Peter seems to have approved of their argument. The difference of opinion between Peter and Paul, the two main pillars of the Church, reported in the letter to the Galatians,

will show how serious and dangerous the situation was:

*“When Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified” Gal 2,11-16).*The conflict in the leadership brought the Church to the brink of division. It was then, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles called the first ecumenical Council at Jerusalem in which a decision was made that gave a new direction to the Church that is being followed to this day.

Peter guided the discussion that led to this decision. Basing on his own personal experience, for example the case of Cornelius (Acts 10, 44-48) he argued that it was God who guided the gentiles to faith and gave them the Holy Spirit while they were still gentiles. *“God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will”* (Acts

15, 8-11).

After a detailed discussion the decision was made. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired them to make a decision that would help the disciples to overcome the restrictions of the Jewish traditions and to proclaim the Gospel to all the people in the world regardless of their caste and creed. The Council Fathers declared: *“It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell”* (Acts 15, 28-29).

This decision was an important turning point in the history of Evangelization. It was the fulfilment of the promise Jesus gave that the Helper sent by Jesus would lead them to the fullness of Truth. The 21 Ecumenical Councils that followed, all 267 Popes from Peter to Francis, and the universal Church under their leadership, are constantly being guided and led by the Holy Spirit.

All through her history, in all the matters that deal with faith and morals, the Church is helped by the Holy Spirit to make the right decision according to the Will of God. The whole Church, setting aside all prejudices, selfish interests and vain glory, with humble hearts and open minds, must listen to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. This is the lesson the Holy Spirit teaches through the first ecumenical Council of Jerusalem.

THE LETTERS OF ST. PAUL

The teaching about the Holy Spirit is seen most vividly and in detail in the letters of Paul. In these letters he is sharing, with the churches he founded, his deep convictions that he gained through personal experiences. Among these, the working of the Holy Spirit is given a unique place. Since the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are dealt with in detail in the second part, they are not discussed here.

Holy Spirit in the Life of St. Paul

According to Paul, from the moment he encountered the Risen Lord at the gate of Damascus, he was led by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle explicitly states that the Holy Spirit was constantly guiding him through inspirations and signs to decide what to do, where to go or not to go, what to say and to whom to say.

“They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas” (Acts 16, 6-8). It was the Holy Spirit who guided him to end the missionary journeys and to go to Jerusalem. He was warned through inner inspiration and vocally through some disciples that he would encounter

imprisonment and persecution in Jerusalem. *“Behold, I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the Spirit, not knowing what shall befall me there; except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me”* (Acts 20, 22-23; 21, 11).

Paul saw the Holy Spirit coming on the faithful through the imposition of his hands. Speaking in tongues and making prophecies were the signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19, 6-7). Miraculous healings of the sick were undeniable signs that led many to become a disciple of Christ. Paul recognized through personal experience and taught the people that the leaders in the communities of the faithful are chosen by the Holy Spirit. He spoke about it in his farewell discourse to the leaders of the church in Ephesus, *“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son”* (Acts 20, 28).

Holy Spirit in the Teaching of St. Paul

What Paul came to know about the Holy Spirit through his experience he shared with his disciples, thereby giving them directions regarding personal as well as community life.

1. Holy Spirit – the source of Divine life

It is the Holy Spirit who adopts human beings as the children of God and gives them the right to call God, Father. *“Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir”* (Gal 4, 6-7). The position as children of God enables us to call God “Father”; to preserve this position we have to listen and to submit ourselves to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

“All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For, you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8, 14-17). “I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5, 16). Human nature corrupted and weakened by sin will lead to evil and ultimately to eternal damnation. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to overcome the evil inclinations and to lead a life befitting the children of God.

2. Dwells in us and transforms us

The Holy Spirit given through the glorification of Jesus Christ is not a temporary presence, as in the Old Testament times, but lives in the heart of the faithful constantly thereby making them the house of God. *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own” (1 Cor 6, 19; 3, 16; Eph 2, 22; Rom 8, 9). It is the Holy Spirit that transforms us into the Temple of God. When Jesus promised a helper, he had mentioned about the indwelling of the Spirit forever “I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever” (Jn 14, 16).*

3. Guarantee of Eternal Life, Seal

“In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1, 13-14).

The word “guarantee” is the translation of the Greek

word “*Arrabon*”, which is used in business transactions. It indicates an amount paid in advance with a promise that the entire amount will be later paid together or in instalments. Paul assures us that the Holy Spirit is the advance payment or guarantee God has given us. If we have received the Holy Spirit then we can be certain that God will give us the grace to be always with Him, seeing His glory and singing His praises.

The seal signifies ownership. In early days the owner would put his seal on the animals and slaves. By depicting the Holy Spirit as the seal on our soul, we are assured that God has accepted us as His own. The official seal on a document insures ownership which cannot be changed. God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. The Catholic Church reminds us of this truth by teaching that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Priesthood place God’s seal on our souls. We are not our own anymore; we are no more orphans, but God’s own children. As an assurance of it, the Holy Spirit is given to us. We must be aware of the glory we receive through this gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. Source of Hope

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15, 13). Death is not the end of human life, it marks the end of life in this world but at the same time opens the door to the eternal life of happiness with God, as His children. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us this hope and assurance, by deepening our faith. *“Through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness”* (Gal 5, 5).

5. Reveals the mysteries of God

Human intelligence is unable to fully comprehend who God is and what His will and plans are, but the Holy Spirit

reveals them to us. The world could not understand Jesus Christ as the Word Incarnate and the Saviour of the entire humanity. Thinking they were doing a good service to God, they condemned him as a false prophet and revolutionary and crucified him. But the Holy Spirit reveals to us that Jesus is the Son of God and it is through him that we become the children of God and attain eternal life.

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man’s thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God... The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2, 9-14).

6. Teaches and helps to Pray

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Rom 8, 26). This statement reminds us of the disciples asking Jesus to teach them to pray (Lk 11, 1). Jesus taught us to pray by calling God, **“Abba, Father”**. The Holy Spirit makes it a reality in each person who believes in Jesus. By saying that the Holy Spirit mediates for us according to the will of God Paul is giving emphasis to the indwelling and constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. This inspiration and prayer explain the attribute Jesus gave to the Holy Spirit, “Helper”.

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of

our bodies” (Rom 8, 22-23). The Holy Spirit, who knows the will and the hidden plans of God, inspires this groaning in the faithful (Rom 8,26). Words are inadequate to express the deep yearning of the soul for God. The deep love and the deep sorrow one feels cannot be expressed in words. Here the groan becomes relevant. The true prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit is the groan that comes from the bottom of the heart. It is like the conversation between a mother and a baby who has not become capable of speaking.

7. Sanctification

To sanctify means to make totally belonging to God. All that is dedicated to the Holy God becomes holy. It is the Holy Spirit who thus sanctifies people. While encouraging the faithful at Thessalonica to remain faithful to Christ Paul reminds of this truth. *“We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth”* (2 Thes 2, 13).

8. Response of the Faithful

Paul has clearly written in several letters how the faithful should respond to the works of the Holy Spirit. It must be remembered that one has received the Holy Spirit through faith (Gal 3, 2). One must remain open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit while deeply desiring for the coming of the Holy Spirit. *“Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord”* (Rom 12, 11). One must pay special attention to the warning, *“Do not quench the Spirit”* (1Thes 5, 19). It is quite possible that due to one’s disobedience and carelessness, the working of the Holy Spirit might not be effective in the person. This would eventually lead to eternal punishment.

If one lives against the will of God, rejecting the

inspirations of the Holy Spirit, it would bring eternal condemnation. Not only that, it would hurt God. The Book of Genesis has reported a reflection of God before sending the great flood: *“And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”* (Gen 6, 6-7. This grief of God is reflected in Paul’s advice to the faithful at Ephesus: *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”* (Eph 4, 30).

6

CATHOLIC EPISTLES

Of the 27 books of the New Testament, 21 are known as epistles or letters. Of these 21, 13 are written by Paul to various churches he established and to individuals in various circumstances. Seven epistles, namely James, 1-2 Peter, 1,2,3 John and Judah, are addressed to the universal Church and therefore they are called Catholic Epistles.

The letter to the Hebrews does not belong to any of these groups. At one time it was believed to have been written by Paul, but considering the literary style and themes of the letter, now it is commonly agreed among bible scholars that it is written by a disciple of Paul, mainly with the Jewish Christians in view. However, for convenience sake, we are discussing this letter also in this chapter under the title Catholic Epistles. We are trying to present a concise picture of the Holy Spirit as presented in these eight letters.

1. Letter to the Hebrews

In the Letter to the Hebrews, which focuses attention mainly on the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is mentioned seven times. We see here many indications concerning the working of the Holy Spirit in the Prophets, in Jesus Christ and in the Disciples of Christ.

a. Working of the Holy Spirit in the Prophets

The Letter explicitly states that it is the Spirit of God that inspired the Prophets of the Old Testament and spoke through them. The message of the Holy Spirit has been expressed in the Psalms also. The letter presents an advice from the Book of Psalms as essential for daily life, with the introduction *“the Holy Spirit says”*. *“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, when you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways. As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” (Heb 3,7-11 quoting Ps 95,7-11),*

The Holy Spirit gives the awareness that none of the sacrifices in the Old Testament was capable of purifying people from the stain of sin. Hence there was the need of a new and effective sacrifice (Heb 9, 8), that was offered by the Son of God, Jesus Christ through which humanity is reconciled to God and has received the forgiveness of sins. It was the sacrifice that established a New Covenant that was promised through Prophet Jeremiah. *“And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin” (Heb 10, 15-18; Jer 31,33-34).*

b. In Jesus Christ:

The Gospels have recorded that the Holy Spirit was actively involved throughout the life of Jesus, from his birth to glorification. The author of the letter to the Hebrews

concentrates on Jesus' Sacrifice, *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant"* (Heb 9, 14-15). The purification by the Old Testament sacrifices was only external but the sacrifice of Jesus purifies man fully through the work of the Holy Spirit. Here one can find an indication regarding the role of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit purifies, the Son is offering himself in sacrifice and the Father receives the sacrifice. In all these the Holy Spirit is the moving force.

c. The gratuitous Gift to the Faithful

It is the Holy Spirit that strengthens and guides the Apostles for the proclamation of the Gospel. All the miracles performed through them were signs of the Kingdom of God becoming a reality on earth. It was the Holy Spirit who gave them the power to proclaim the Gospel in a way people could understand, believe and accept it. God granted the Holy Spirit as a gift, *"God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will"* (Heb 2, 4). Here the letter bears witness to the fulfilment of the promise Jesus had made to send the Holy Spirit (Acts 1, 8).

Those who receive the Holy Spirit as a gift must live according to His inspiration. The sacred author reminds that disobedience would invite severe punishment. *"For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ... if*

they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt” (Heb 6, 4-6).

Denying the truth known and rejecting the inspiration of the Holy Spirit would have terrible consequences. *“If we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries”* (Heb 10, 26-27). Ingratitude and infidelity to God point to the rejection of Jesus Christ and insulting the Holy Spirit: *“How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?”* (Heb 10, 29). Special attention needs to be given to the expression *“Spirit of grace”* because the Holy Spirit is the source of all the grace and gifts, and at the same time the greatest gift we receive. Therefore, with a sense of gratitude and responsibility we must listen and submit to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

2. Letter of St. James

Only once does the letter of St. James mention about the Holy Spirit and that in a sentence that is very difficult to understand. *“Do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us?”* (Jas 4, 5). It is not clear which scriptural passage is intended here. Nowhere in the OT do we find such a sentence. There is also no agreement among bible scholars about the meaning of this sentence either. It could be the author is speaking in general about the Scripture rather than to a particular passage. In that case what is quoted above needs to be read as two sentences.

“Do you suppose it is in vain what the scripture

says?” *“He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us”*. The Scriptural passage quoted in the next verse gives support to this interpretation. *“But he gives more grace; therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble”* (Prv 3,34; Jas 4,6). There are differences of opinion also in deciding who or what is meant by *“the spirit which he has made to dwell in us”*. There are some who consider that it refers to the human soul that makes humans different from other creatures. However the interpretation that the spirit refers to the Holy Spirit, whom God sends as a gift into the heart of those who believe, seems more acceptable.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us; we must listen and live according to the inspirations of that Spirit. What is meant by *“He yearns jealousy”* is the earnest desire of God that we should not reject the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and thus end up in eternal damnation. “Jealousy of God” is a symbol we see many times in the Bible (e.g. Ex 20, 5). Sometimes it is translated as intolerance, but the meaning is the same. The “Jealousy” means the ardent desire of God that those who received the Holy Spirit and became children of God should not perish.

3. Letters of St. Peter

There are two letters in the name of St. Peter, the head of the Apostles. Of these, the first letter mentions the Holy Spirit eight times while the second letter only once. Bible Scholars are of the opinion that the spirit mentioned in 1 Peter 3, 4 refers not to the Holy Spirit but to the human soul. This is clear from the saying that the ornament of women is a meek personality, *“Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands”* (1 Pt 3, 4-5).

1Pt 1, 11 speaks about the Holy Spirit who worked in the Prophets of the Old Testament. *“The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the **Spirit of Christ** within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look”* (1Pt 1,10-12). Special attention should be paid to the phrase *“Spirit of Christ”* referring to the Holy Spirit. This calls our attention to the singularity and at the same time to the different activities of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. This is similar to what was seen in the Gospel of John: *“The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you”* (Jn 14, 26). *“The Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me”* (Jn 15, 26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father as well as of the Son, Jesus Christ. 2Pt 1, 21 also tells about the Holy Spirit who spoke through prophets: *“because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”*.

In 3, 18 Peter tells the faithful that Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit: *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison”* (1Pt 3, 18-19). In all the events in the life of Jesus, from His conception to glorification, the Holy Spirit was actively involved. This is the view of the New Testament that is visible in this passage also.

Peter was addressing a community that was undergoing severe persecution on account of their faith in Jesus Christ. He assures them that the Holy Spirit will give them consolation and hope, and above all the strength to endure the suffering with courage: *“If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”* (1 Pt 4, 14). This is a teaching relevant at all times, especially during these days.

The Holy Spirit is referred to as the “spirit of glory”. The work of the Holy Spirit manifests the glory of God. The climax of this manifestation is in the paschal mystery that involved the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, because that event expressed the zenith of God’s love. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”* (Jn 3, 16). Those who suffer and die for Christ express a similar response to that love. Hence the phrase, *“Spirit of glory”* points to the greatness of the love of God and the human response to the love.

4. Letters of St. John

There are three letters known in the name of St. John. In the first letter the works of the Holy Spirit are mentioned seven times, but in the second and third letters the Holy Spirit is mentioned not even once. The discussion about the Holy Spirit in the first letter deals mainly with three things.

a. Makes us aware of the presence of God in us:
“All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us” (1 Jn 3, 24). The Holy Spirit is the precious gift God has given us. Residing in us, the Holy Spirit makes us aware of the presence of God in us. In order to have the presence of God in us, we have to live

according to God's commandment. The Holy Spirit would help us to become aware of the truth that God lives in us (Jn 14, 23). John again reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who helps us to know that God abides in us. *"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit"* (1 Jn 4, 13). This awareness is the foundation of spiritual life.

b. Norms to discern the True Spirit: The letter warns about the danger that not only the Holy Spirit but also the power of evil could work as an inner force inspiring us to action. How to discern the True Spirit from evil spirit? This is a serious problem that is dealt with also in the OT, where various norms are given to discern the Spirit of God and recognize the true prophets from the false prophets (Dt 18, 22; 13,1-5; Jer 28,8-9), but here John gives just one criterion: *"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already"* (1 Jn 4, 2-3). By mentioning about the Holy Spirit twice in the same sentence, John clarifies the norm of discerning the true Spirit from the false one. It is the Holy Spirit that helps us recognize and confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Denying the divinity or humanity of Jesus would be the sign of the work of the evil spirit.

This criterion was quite relevant from the first century. We can see here a warning against a heresy called Docetism which taught that the humanity of Jesus was only an illusion. At the same time there are many who deny the Divinity of Jesus and they have been active since the first century. John teaches that both groups belong to the assembly of the false prophets. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals the true identity of Jesus. *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have*

beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (Jn 1,14). The Holy Spirit helps us to know and accept this truth, but it will be the evil spirit, the spirit of Antichrist that denies this truth.

c. Gives Witness to Jesus: Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, fully God and fully human. John repeats three times that it is the Holy Spirit who gives witness to Jesus: *“This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree”* (1 Jn 5, 6-8).

This is a statement that is difficult to understand and so various interpretations are being given. The main question is who or what is intended by water, blood and Spirit. Rather than going into the details, the generally accepted explanation is given here. The identity of Jesus is the main subject. How should we understand the Incarnation of the Son of God as man? Some claim that the humanity of Jesus was only an illusion; in reality the Son of God has not been born or died. The heresy called Docetism argued that the very humanity of Jesus was an illusion. The Word of God was neither born nor died.

Another heresy called “Adoptionism” also is relevant here. The protagonists of this heresy taught that Jesus of Nazareth was just an ordinary human being, the son of the carpenter Joseph. At the time of Baptism by John in Jordan, God adopted him as his son by infusing His word into him by the Holy Spirit and worked throughout the public ministry, but right before the Passion the Word of God left Jesus. Thus the one who suffered and died on the Cross was not the Son of God, but just the man, Jesus from Nazareth.

These heresies received much acceptance in the first

centuries. The Muslims, who claim that Jesus did not die but just disappeared, seem to be depending on these heretical teachings of the first centuries. John, in the letter, refutes the theory through three witnesses. Water refers to the Baptism of Jesus; blood points to his death through which his humanity is fully revealed. The Divine Sonship of Jesus did not start at Baptism and end right before his death. It is the Son of God who became man, lived and finally died on the Cross. The Baptism by water and the voice of God that resounded from the open heaven (Mk 1, 11) bear witness to this truth. The blood testifies that it is the Son of God who died. The Holy Spirit confirms these two testimonies.

At the same time, in the reference to water and blood we can see a hint that the Holy Spirit is given through the glorification of Jesus that happened through his death on the cross. *“If any one thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’”. Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”* (Jn 7, 37-39). John, while narrating the crucifixion, has also reported the fulfilment of the promise that the Spirit will be given through the exaltation of Jesus on the cross.

“One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness ... his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth ... that you also may believe” (Jn 19, 34-35). This water and blood should be seen as a sign of the Holy Spirit being given by the glorified Jesus. It was the proof that the one who was crucified died; the water and blood should be seen as a sign of giving the Holy Spirit. There are some who explain that the water is the sign of Baptism and the blood is the sign of the Holy Eucharist. There is no

doubt that it is the Holy Spirit who proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God who became man. That is the main activity of the Holy Spirit as narrated in the Gospel written by John and in his first epistle.

5. The Letter of Jude

The letter of Jude that has only 25 verses mentions the Holy Spirit twice. The message presented here is similar to what we have already seen in the other letters. Here the message is given as a warning against those who propagate erroneous ideas, thereby causing divisions among the Christians. *“It is these who set up divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”* (Jude 19-21).

Dwelling in the hearts and the community of the faithful, the Holy Spirit will lead them to the fullness of faith; will help them to remain united, firm in their faith and will teach them to pray. This is the teaching of the letter of Jude. The warning that the absence of the Holy Spirit in life, as well as disobedience to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, will lead to false convictions and apostasy is relevant at all times. Examples of this can be seen all through the history of the Church. Therefore, one should always take extreme care to discern and submit to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will strengthen our faith and help us to pray. This is a teaching similar to what Paul wrote to the Romans. *“Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words”* (Roma 8, 26). Listening with the heart to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit also is prayer. When the inspirations of the Holy Spirit become prayer, faith will be deepened and the unity of the community will be strengthened.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The book of Revelation, the 73rd and the last book of the bible, narrates the dramatic development of the History of salvation leading to its beautiful end. Since the book is written in the apocalyptic literary genre that presents ideas and events mainly through symbols, it is often difficult to understand what the author intends to convey. Hence people usually avoid reading this book. Only some pictures such as New Heaven and New Earth evoke some interest among the general public.

At the same time, some of symbols such as certain numbers, “the great prostitute”, “the beast” etc. are often misinterpreted. Some people use the indications of days and years in the book to determine the date of the end of the world. Therefore, this book should be studied with great care. The Apocalyptic literature as a whole uses numbers, various parts of the body, animals, birds, persons, etc. as symbols. If they are taken in the literal sense, the meaning the author intended will not be understood.

While talking about the Holy Spirit also the book of Revelation uses the language of symbols. At the same time, there are also expressions that are not so complicated and difficult to understand. Without going into a detailed study of the Book of Revelation, only the matters dealing with the Holy Spirit will be discussed here under two titles, symbols and works.

1. Symbols

The first symbol used to depict the Holy Spirit is the number “*seven*”. The symbol of seven spirits appears four times in the book - 1, 10; 3, 1; 4, 5; 5, 6. Number “seven” stands for fullness or perfection. Hence the usage of “Seven sprits” would signify the fullness of the spirit that is the Holy Spirit.

In the introduction to the book, where the author greets the readers with grace and peace, there is a hint about the Holy Trinity. *“Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”* (Rev 1, 4-6). In this, God the Father is presented as the One without beginning and end. The expression “seven spirits” is used for the Holy Spirit. The author continues to introduce Jesus Christ as the faithful witness and as the King of kings who rose from the dead. Through these three symbols, the author is speaking about God, whom we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; at the same time he underlines the Divinity of the Holy Spirit and His equality with the Father and the Son.

In the letter to the Church in Sardis Jesus is presented as, *“The word of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars”* (Rev 3, 1). Here emphasis is given to the constant presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus. “Seven stars” are the symbols of the seven churches presented in the Book of Revelation 1, 16-20. The Risen Jesus has not gone away from the Church but resides in the middle of the Church. This truth is presented through the symbol of the seven lamp stands among which he stands and the seven

stars that he holds in his right hand; at the same time these symbols indicate that Jesus is present in and guides the Church through the Holy Spirit.

The second part of the Book of Revelation (chapters 4-22) starts with a heavenly vision (4,1-5,1. Here the Holy Spirit appears as fire: *“From the throne issue flashes of lightning, and voices and peals of thunder, and before the throne burn seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God”* (Rev 4, 5). We have already seen that fire appears in the Bible many times. The torches of fire show the way for those who travel at night; torches are also used to light other fires. Fire is a symbol of purification as well as a sign of Judgment.

The picture of the Holy Spirit painted as tongues of fire that came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2, 3) is relevant here. In front of God who sits enthroned as Judge of the world, there stands the Holy Spirit as burning torches of fire, implying thereby that the Holy Spirit would reveal everything, and at the same time would also judge and purify. In the following chapters the history of salvation is presented as three septets of judgment (6, 1-12; 8, 1-9, 19; 16, 1-21). The symbol of torches calls attention also to the divinity as well as to the role of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation.

The salvific plan of God is fulfilled through Jesus Christ who offered Himself as sacrifice and then rose from the dead and entered into the Glory of God. The picture of the lamb that looks as if slaughtered but standing represents the death and resurrection of Jesus in the same image. *“Between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth”* (Rev 5, 6). The horns represent the strength and Kingship while

the eyes indicate knowledge. Through these symbols Jesus is presented as one who is omnipotent and omniscient. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent and so sees everything and knows everything. This symbol shows that it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus works.

The last chapter of the book of Revelation presents the New World as “New Jerusalem” and as the Paradise of God. In the description of this city, the Holy Spirit is presented through another symbol. *“Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb”* (Rev 22, 1). The origin of the attributes the Church gives for the Holy Spirit such as the one who proceeds from the Father and the Son could be seen here. This is the river Prophet Ezekiel saw in his vision (47, 1-2). This is the spring that flows from the heart of all those who believe (Jn 7, 38).

Water provides life and at the same time it washes clean. In the first description of the Paradise, in the Book of Genesis, the river is presented as the source of life and prosperity (Gen 2, 10-15). The living river that proceeds from the Father and the Son purifies everything while giving eternal life, is the Holy Spirit. While inviting us to receive that water freely, the Book of Revelation is depicting the Holy Spirit through the symbol of water: *“The Spirit and the Bride say “Come.” And let him who hears say, “Come.” And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price”* (Rev 22, 17).

2. Works of the Holy Spirit

a. Spiritual Experience

The Book of Revelation repeats several times that the Holy Spirit reveals the Divine mysteries that are invisible to the eye and beyond the comprehension of human intellect.

The statement of the situation” *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet... (Rev 1, 10),* indicates the work of the Holy Spirit in the human soul. Being lost in the spirit was a preparation for the revelation he was going to receive. It indicates that what was going to be said was revealed by God.

It is with this statement that the first part of the Book of Revelation begins and is immediately followed by the message of the Risen Lord to the Churches. In the beginning of the second part also a similar vision is recorded. *“At once I was in the Spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne!” (Rev 4, 2).* The object of the first vision is the glorified Son of God on earth while that of the second vision is heaven and heavenly realities. The Divine plan for the history of salvation is presented in the second part as gradually unfolding. The descriptions in both parts are based on the mystical experience of John. Here we can see one of the works of the Holy Spirit, namely, leading a person to a spiritual experience through the illumination of the inner being.

The same idea is again repeated twice, both times dealing with the works of the Holy Spirit. *“He carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness” (Rev 17, 3).* The woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs represents the evil forces that try to destroy the Church, the bride of Jesus Christ. From the ascension to the second coming of Jesus, the Church is in the desert, suffering severe persecution. But there will be an end to this persecution and the persecutor, Satan, will be defeated and wiped out of the face of the earth. The destruction of the city described in chapter 18 is the beginning of this process. The picture of the Spirit leading the visionary into the wilderness emphasizes the fact that this knowledge is given through the Holy Spirit: *“And in the Spirit he carried me away*

to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev 21, 10). At the beginning of the public ministry, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to defeat Satan (Mt 4,1). The desert is considered as the fortress of Satan which Jesus has demolished by the power of the Holy Spirit. The result of that victory of Jesus over Satan is reflected here. The Church participates in that victory. It is the Holy Spirit that works in both cases, making the victory possible.

The Holy Spirit helps to see the New Heaven and the New Earth, representing the completion of the History of Salvation, as New Jerusalem coming down: *“In the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God”* (Rev 21, 10). This work of the Spirit is similar to the one depicted in 17, 3. In the plan of God it is already fulfilled, but in history it has yet to become a reality. Here we are given a picture of the New Creation which is also presented as the work of the Holy Spirit.

In all the four instances seen above, the working of the Holy Spirit is the same, that is lifting the human soul to the Divine milieu. Through a mystical experience the person is made capable of seeing each incident through the eyes of God. This vision and knowledge strengthen the hope and faith of the individual. Even in the midst of severe persecution the person would remain happy; that is the effect of the mystical experience.

b. Prophecy

Prophecy is the communication of God’s message to people. It is the Holy Spirit that enlightens one to know the plan of God and enables to proclaim it. This truth presented all through the Bible, is repeated many times in the Book of Revelation.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev 2, 7). This is an invitation to pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. Though the Son of Man is speaking (2, 1) the message comes from the Holy Spirit. This shows that the Divine message is given to the individuals and to the Church in general by the Holy Spirit. All the seven letters to the churches end with such an invitation. It is the Holy Spirit who speaks through the Word of God that is proclaimed to the churches. One has to remember this all the time, accept and obey the message faithfully.

“That they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!” (Rev 14, 13). This statement was made after presenting a symbolic vision of heaven and hell (Rev 14, 1-12). The Holy Spirit reminds us that with our minds set on eternal life in heaven, we should remain firm in our faith in the face of persecution, and overcome all the temptations with courage. We have to take very seriously the reminder that what we do today would determine whether our lives are going to be in heaven or hell.

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19, 10). The mission Jesus gave to the disciples was that they were to bear witness to Christ through words and deeds and above all by their very lives. *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1, 8). This promise and mission are repeated and confirmed here. The Holy Spirit is the source of hope and strength for the disciples of Christ.

“These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place” (Rev

22, 6). The expression “*spirits of the prophets*” refers to the Holy Spirit who guides them by giving the Word of God that is proclaimed through them. The word “spirits” must be understood against the background of the symbol “seven spirits”. This final statement about the origin of the message in the Book of Revelation insists once again that all that is seen and heard in the Book are revealed by the Holy Spirit.

One of the main works of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the Will of God and to encourage and empower people to obey that Will. The Holy Spirit might be communicating the Divine Will through inner experiences, visions or auditions. One must listen to, discern the inspirations of the Spirit and obey them.

c. New Life

“After the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up hither!” And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud. (Rev 11, 11-12). Another work of the Holy Spirit is presented here as giving new life to those who died for Jesus and the Gospel. This scene is the conclusion of the description about two witnesses (11, 4-13). No need to fear if one is killed on account of the faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will give new life and take them to heaven. This picture contains a promise that would give great courage and hope to the faithful.

The picture of the Holy Spirit entering the dead is similar to the vision Prophet Ezekiel had about the breath of life entering the dry bones and giving them life: *“Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that*

*they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host” (Ez 37, 9-10). It is the Hebrew word *Ruah* that is here translated as breath. The people of Israel in Exile would return to Jerusalem and that would be like the breath of life entering the dry bones. What was said through prophet Ezekiel becomes a reality here. The Holy Spirit is the life giving spirit, the spirit that gives new life to all.*

d. Prayer, Invitation

“The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come”. And let him who hears say, “Come”. And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev 22, 17).

This is the last reference to the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Remaining in the Church constantly, the Holy Spirit invites her to live according to the Will of God. The Bride is the Church while the spirit refers to the Holy Spirit. But it is not clear whom they are inviting or to whom are they asking to come. There are two possible answers for this question.

One of the possibilities is that Jesus is invited to come and lead the history to its end by inaugurating the New Heaven and New Earth. What is being said before and after supports this assumption. Root of Jesse, descendant, and Morning Star, all these symbols refer to Jesus Christ. The morning star announces the imminent rising of the sun. In a similar way, all these symbols proclaim that the renewal of everything is imminent. The declaration of Jesus, *“Surely I am coming soon”* and the prayer of the Church *“amen, come, Lord Jesus!”* (Rev 22, 20) also lend support to the conclusion that the Church is waiting and praying for the coming of Jesus Christ. The Church is waiting with great desire, anxiety, and with deep prayer for the return

of the Lord. The Holy Spirit teaches the members of the Church to pray and they pray with the Church. This is an eschatological view for which the Holy Spirit helps. However, there is more to this verse.

The Church is asked to receive the living water free of cost. It cannot be Jesus who is invited to receive the living water, because Jesus is not drinking but giving the living water (Jn 4,14; 7, 38-39). The invitation is to receive the Holy Spirit and so it is possible that the faithful are being invited. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church is calling the faithful to receive the Holy Spirit freely.

It is not necessary that we choose either one of these explanations. Both can be seen as complementary and so acceptable. The Salvation History reaches its completion with the second coming of Jesus for which all must wait with ardent prayer. Receiving the Holy Spirit, the living water, all the members of the Church should submit to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and wait in deep prayer for the second coming of Jesus

Hope will not disappoint us. The waiting will not be in vain because the prayer offered through the Holy Spirit will be answered.

“Surely I am coming soon”. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22, 20).

Part II

GIFTS, CHARISMS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed” (1 Cor 12, 1).

We have already seen in the first part that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that adopts Human beings as the children of God and helps them to grow by making them participate in the Divine life. The gifts and charisms the faithful receive and the fruits thereby produced in them belong to the most important works of the Holy Spirit. Though they are extremely important in the Christian life, many of the faithful know little about them and are therefore not aware of their importance.

The Catholic Charismatic movement that gained momentum in the light of Vatican II gives great importance to works of the Holy Spirit, especially gifts and charisms but at the same time many erroneous explanations are also spreading about them. The great importance given to the gifts and charisms are not often given to the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In this situation we need to gain clarity about the gifts, charisms and fruits of the Holy Spirit. In the letters of St. Paul and the official teachings of the Catholic Church we can see rather extensive teachings about them. Regarding the fruits of the Holy Spirit a detailed study could be found in Gal 5, 16-28, while Gal 5, 22-23 gives a list of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The gifts and charisms are dealt with in detail in Rom 12, 13-21; 1 Cor 12-14 and Eph 4, 7-16. In the teachings of Paul about the gifts of the Holy Spirit one could notice the influence of Is 11, 1-9 that speaks about the Messianic King.

The official teaching of the Catholic Church regarding these subjects can be found in a number of Documents of which the most important ones are: (1). Vatican II ***Lumen Gentium*** (The Light of the World) (2). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) §767-769; 798-801; 951; 1831; 2002-2005; 2702-2703; (3). Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus* (That holy mission) published on 9 May 1897; St. John Paul II ***Dominum et Vivificantem*** (The Lord and Giver of Life), published on 18 May 1986 (4). The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ***Juvenescit Ecclesia*** (The youth of the Church is being renewed) a document published on 15 May 2016 (5). The teachings of Pope Francis on Wednesdays from April 9 to June 11, 2014.

1

GIFTS – CHARISMS – FRUITS

What is generally known as gifts and charisms are the expressions of the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, in individuals as well as in communities. The main purpose of these gifts and charisms is to form the lives of individuals and communities according to the Will of God and to use them for the common good of the people of God. The effects of the work of the Holy Spirit that become evident in individuals and communities are called the “Fruits of the Holy Spirit”.

All through the Bible, there are descriptions about the gifts of God and the fruits expected from it. However, in many things there is a lack of clarity. Are gifts and charisms the same or are they different? Which are the gifts? Which are the charisms? Which are the fruits? How many gifts, charisms and fruits are there? It is not easy to get definite answers for such questions. Hence it is very common that each one defines the gifts, charisms and fruits according to one’s own personal experience. Nevertheless, there is a general understanding that there are seven gifts (Is 11, 1-3), 9 charisms (1 Cor 12, 8-10) and 9 fruits (Gal 5, 22-23). But this list is not complete. There are many more gifts and charisms in the Bible and one cannot limit the teaching of the bible about gifts and charisms to these three passages alone.

1. Many Gifts and Charisms

“What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Cor 4, 7). This question by the Apostle calls our attention to a wider area of gifts. We must have the awareness that life, the goal of life and all the talents needed to achieve the goal are given as gratuitous gifts by God. When we speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we must not forget that the Holy Spirit Himself is the greatest gift. The Holy Spirit works in different ways in each person and community, and there will be differences in the gifts; but everything is given to build up the mystical body of Christ.

When St. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth where the people were confused and disturbed on account of various gifts and charisms, he reminded them of this variety of gifts. *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”* (1 Cori 12, 7). The Greek word that is translated as *“common good”* is **“*Sumpheron*”** which also could mean *“greater good”*. The gifts and charisms received by each member must be used for the common good of the Church. The main purpose of these gifts and charisms is not material gain but to enable people to live in the world in such a way as to be witnesses to Jesus and to proclaim the Gospel.

There are many gifts and charisms that manifest the work of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom, prudence, counsel, might, knowledge, piety and fear of God - these seven are considered as gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are often called ***Isaianic*** gifts because they are found for the first time in the Book of Isaiah : *“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”*(Is 11,2). The addition of piety to the Isaianic list of 6 gifts comes from the Latin translation called

Vulgata. The book of Proverbs has a list of seven gifts that are similar to this: *Knowledge, prudence, piety, humility, ability to give directions, self-reliance with strength, grace that comes from wealth and respect* (Prv 8, 12-21). However these gifts are not often taken into consideration. All these are presented as the gifts of wisdom. As in Isaiah, so also here in the Book of Proverbs these gifts are presented as given to help the rulers to build up a just society

Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership and cheerfulness in acts of mercy are known as Roman gifts (Rom 12, 6-8). *Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working miracles, prophecy, ability to distinguish between spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues*, the nine gifts mentioned in 1Cor 12,8-10 are often called Corinthian gifts. In the same letter Paul mentions eight other gifts, *apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, rulers, and those speaking in tongue* (1 Cor 12, 27-30), which are known as Corinthian gifts and also charisms for service. *Apostles, prophets, evangelizers, pastors and teachers* are known as Ephesian gifts (Eph 4, 11). However, Paul teaches that “Love” is more important than all these gifts (1 Cor 12, 31-13, 13).

Jesus had promised about the gifts the Apostles would receive. Once the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they will be strengthened, empowered and inspired to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1, 8). The Gospel according to Mark speaks about five special gifts that the Risen Jesus gave to the apostles while sending them out to proclaim the Good News: “*And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.*” (Mk 16, 17-18). Jesus has taught the disciples that virginity (celibacy) that is a consecration of the person for the

Kingdom of God is a special gift (Mt 19, 11). St. Paul reminds that both celibacy and family life, as the call of God, are gifts of God (1 Cor 7).

In the light of these several lists, one finds it difficult to accept the general conclusion that there are 7 gifts and 9 charisms. When one counts, more than forty gifts and charisms could be seen in the Bible. Not only that; when one examines closely, a strict division between gifts and charisms becomes impossible.

There is no such doubts regarding the fruits of the Holy Spirit. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Gal 5, 22-23). The 9 fruits are basically agreed by all. However, there is no general agreement about the question if “Love” is a gift, a charism or fruit. Hence, it is impossible to count and separate them into definite groups as it is difficult to determine the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual, Church communities and the entire universe. Nevertheless, basing on the experience of the persons, communities and the official teachings of the Catholic Church certain definitions and divisions would be helpful to understand the working of the Holy Spirit. Hence in this study, the generally accepted divisions and explanations are used while dealing with the gifts and charisms.

2. Certain Terms

Gifts and charisms are the main subject of discussion here. These terms refer to the working of the Holy Spirit, inspiring persons and communities and to their subsequent activities. The terms Gifts and charisms are often used with the same meaning. Looking at it from the side of the giver it could be seen as a gift while from the view point of the receiver it as a charism. In the original language, Greek,

also one encounters the same problem. There are also a few other words that point to the same reality.

Charisma – Charismatic: The word “Gift” that is often used to indicate the working of the Holy Spirit is the translation of the Greek word, “*charisma*”; “*charismata*” is the plural. The adjective *charismatic* is also related to the word Charisma which derives from the word *Charis* that is translated as Grace. Hence it could be called “**Gifts of Grace**”.

Pneumatika: The Greek word “*Pneumatika*”, deriving from the word “*Pneuma*” which means Spirit, indicates that which is related to the Spirit. Therefore this word would point to what is spiritual as opposed to what is material or worldly (1 Cor 2, 10-14). Hence we have the expression **spiritual gifts** or the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rom 1, 11; 1 Cor 12, 1. 14, 1).

Dorea: The Greek word “*Dorea*” indicates that which is given freely, gift. When Jesus said to the Samaritan woman that to those who ask he would give the living water, the Holy Spirit, as a gratuitous gift, he used the word “*Dorea*”. “*If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water*” (Jn 4, 10). Paul often uses this word in connection with the word “Charis” which could be translated as the “**gift of grace**”. “*For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the **free gift** in the grace of that one-man Jesus Christ abounded for many*” (Rom 5, 15).

Energema: This word comes from the verb form “*Energeo*” which means “work” or “act”. The English word “energy” derives from this root. The word “*Energema*” means an unusual expression of power which indicates the miracles worked by the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12, 6-10).

Even though various words are used, there is not much difference in the meaning because all these terms refer to the working of the Holy Spirit that helps to build up the Church in faith, hope and love. All of them basically refer to the gifts and charisms through which come the fruits.

3. Importance of Gifts and Charisms

The teaching given in *Lumen Gentium (LG)* about the way the Holy Spirit fills the people of God with gifts and charisms and leads them is a decisive guide for the faithful.

“The holy people of God also shares in Christ’s prophetic office; it spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give praise to His name (Heb 13,15). The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One (1Jn2,20), cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole peoples’ supernatural discernment in matters of faith when “from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful” they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth. It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God (cf.1Thess 2,13)). Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life.

“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, He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts (cf. 1Cor 12, 11), 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” (1Cor 12, 7). 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 labour 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” (1 Thes 5, 12. 19-21) (L G 12).

2

THE SEVEN GIFTS

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) presents the general teaching of Vatican II about the work of the Holy Spirit, dividing it into two parts as gifts and fruits. The Document explains the gifts as follows

“The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

“The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

“Let your good spirit lead me on a level path. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God . . . If children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” (CCC § 1830-31)

The teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the seven gifts is based on the prophecy of Isaiah about the coming King (Is 11, 1-9). The Prophet presents them more as the characteristics of the Spirit rather than the gifts of the Holy Spirit. *“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. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear” (Is 11, 2-3).

The Hebrew word **“Yir’ath Yahweh”** is translated as the “Fear of the Lord”. In Is 11, 2-3 the same word appears twice. If we take only this text into account, there would be only six, not seven gifts. Then why do we speak about seven gifts? This comes from the Greek translation known as the Septuagint, where the same Hebrew word is translated as **“Eusebia”** (piety) in 11,2 and **“phobos Theu”** (fear of God) in 11,3. It was this text that St. Jerome used in the translation into Latin, known as **“Vulgata”**, where in the first occurrence it is translated as **“pietas”** (piety) and the second one as **“Timor Domini”** (The fear of the Lord). Pope Francis has given a simple and clear teaching about each of the seven gifts. In the light of that teaching a short description about each of the seven gifts is given below.

1. Wisdom: Pope Francis explains what is wisdom very succinctly: *“Wisdom is precisely this: it is the grace of being able to see everything with the eyes of God; it is to see the world, to see situations, circumstances, problems, everything through God’s eyes” (Papal audience, April 9, 2014).* Wisdom is the gift we receive from the Holy Spirit that enables us to see everything as God sees. It comes from a deep God experience that makes one capable of discerning God and His plans that would enable one to evaluate everything in the light of that experience and make decisions. Wisdom would enable one to surrender oneself totally into the hands of God. It is a gift that operates on an experiential level.

2. Intelligence or Understanding: *“This gift enables us to understand things as God understands them, with the mind of God. For, one can understand a situation with*

human understanding, with prudence, and this is good. But to understand a situation in depth, as God understands it, is the effect of this gift". (Pope Francis, papal audience, April 30, 2014). The material world and situations are understood by seeing them with the eyes of God. It is a gift that helps us to understand everything as God does. Instead of seeing the situation in a human way, the person discerns what God desires and makes the decision accordingly.

This helps to understand the inner meaning of the dogmas of faith; define the relationship between God and the creation; opens up the inner meaning of the Word of God; receives Divine revelation regarding contemporary realities and incidents. Those who are innocent like children receive this capacity to understand (Lk 10, 21. 12, 54-56).

3. Counsel: *"Counsel, then, is the gift through which the Holy Spirit enables our conscience to make a concrete choice in communion with God, according to the logic of Jesus and his Gospel" (Pope Francis, Papal audience, May 7, 2014).* It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that helps one to make decisions according to the Gospel; not only in one's personal life but also in the lives of those who are in contact with him, to make the decision, in their concrete circumstances, according to the will of God. This gift is also called Counselling that is rather popular today.

This spiritual gift of counselling is a little different from the scientific counselling done by psychologists because here it is claimed that everything is guided only by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These two forms of counselling need not be contradictory; the two could be used mutually complimenting. At the same time, it has to be kept in mind that all that one feels need not be inspired by the Holy Spirit; these could be one's imagination or coming from some other influence. Hence this is an area where much prudence and discernment is needed.

4. Fortitude: *“Through the gift of fortitude, the Holy Spirit liberates the soil of our heart; He frees it from sluggishness, from uncertainty and from all the fears that can hinder it, so that the Lord’s Word may be put into practice authentically and with joy. The gift of fortitude is a true help, it gives us strength, and it also frees us from so many obstacles”.* (Pope Francis, Papal audience, May 14, 2014). This gift is also called courage. It enables a person to take a firm step for Truth and Justice, confront and overcome oppositions (Acts 21, 13). This gift is always evident in the area of evangelization, helping a person, whatever be his state of life and the field of action, to bear witness to Jesus, even among great opposition and risks for personal safety.

5. Knowledge: *“The knowledge that comes from the Holy Spirit, however, is not limited to human knowledge; it is a special gift, which leads us to grasp, through creation, the greatness and love of God and His profound relationship with every creature”* (Pope Francis, papal Audience, May 21, 2014). Knowledge is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to know the glory of God and God’s relationship to each and every creature. This would help one to know the plan of God for oneself and to live according to it. It would help to discern the presence of God in each individual. By this a person becomes capable of recognizing the will of God in all that happens to him. He will get deep insights regarding the revelation of God.

This knowledge would help one to believe in the Word of God and live according to His will. By studying daily the written word of God and the official teachings of the Catholic Church one would get deeper in knowledge. The greatest knowledge one can achieve is the knowledge about Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of humanity. *“Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For*

his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3, 8). God desires to give this knowledge to all. “This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2, 3-4).

6. Piety: *“Piety indicates our belonging to God and our profound relationship with Him, a bond that gives meaning to our lives and keeps us sound, in communion with Him, even during the most difficult and tormenting moments”. (Pope Francis, papal audience, June 4, 2014).* Piety is the deep and firm relationship with God. In times of joy and sadness, and while confronting difficult problems, piety helps us to find meaning for life, to have hope and awareness of our goal in life. It gives the assurance that God will never abandon us. Piety generates in us a childlike love for and trust in God.

Piety gives the conviction of being the children of God (Rom 8, 14) and the assurance that no power or situation can ever distance one from Him (Rom 8, 35-39). It was through Piety that Paul was able to say, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1, 21) and “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2, 20).*

7. Fear of God: *“Fear of the Lord, instead, is the gift of the Holy Spirit through whom we are reminded of how small we are before God and of His love and that our good lies in humble, respectful and trusting self-abandonment into His hands. This is fear of the Lord: abandonment in the goodness of our Father who loves us so much”. (Pope Francis, papal audience, June 11, 2014).* The awareness of being extremely small or rather nothing before God and His greatness, enables one to fully trust in God and submit

oneself to His plan. Fear of God is a gift that convinces us that only by surrendering ourselves unconditionally to Him will we be able to live. Prophet Isaiah's experience is a typical example of the fear of God. *"And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!'"* (Is 6, 1-7). Fear of God would help us to become conscious of our sinfulness, even when we are aware of the love and mercy of God and His motherly affection. However, this is a state of mind different from what one would have when facing a mortal danger.

In front of God who is invisible and Almighty, I am just a piece of dust; that awareness should help me not to stay away from God but to live in His presence with a humble attitude and immense respect, and awe. Fear of God would help us from the danger of living an immoral life thinking that no matter what I do, God will forgive me.

The advice of Paul forcefully reminds us about the significance of the gift of the "Fear of God": *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Phil 2, 12). The warning *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb 10, 31) also expresses the importance of the gift "Fear of God". *"To fear the Lord is wisdom's full measure"* (Sir 1, 14). "Fear of God" would help us to take life seriously and arrange all the matters according to the will of God.

Gifts and Virtues

The graces we receive from the Holy Spirit in order to grow and strengthen in Divine life are what we call the gifts. The virtues have similar qualities and both are

intrinsically related. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, before dealing with the gifts, gives a detailed teaching about the virtues (CCC 1803 -1829). While the term gifts emphasizes the aspect of grace being given by God freely, the term virtue points to the ability developed using the inspirations, intelligence, and understanding coupled with all our efforts, trying to grow in doing good.

The advice of Paul sheds light into the various aspects of virtues, “*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things* (Phil 4, 8). According to CCC 1803, “*a virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends towards the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions*”.

Virtues are usually divided into two: human virtues and theological virtues.

Human Virtues

The firm convictions and habits that organize and guide life according to reason enlightened by faith are called ***human virtues***. They are also known as ***moral virtues***. Of these, “self-control, prudence, justice and courage” (Wis 8, 7) are called “**Cardinal virtues**”, because they are, as it were, the hinges on which all other moral virtues turn. The word *Cardinal* is the adjective derived from the Latin word *Cardo* that means hinge

Prudence helps one in every situation to discern the real good and stand for it choosing the right means. ***Justice*** is the virtue one acquires by constant effort, while training oneself to give each one his due- to God, to others and to

oneself. **Courage** is the virtue that helps one not to lose heart in the face of difficulties and to stand for justice. **Self-control** is the virtue that helps one not to get lost in luxury, but practice simplicity in desiring, and organizing the use of, material goods in one's life. These are the gifts of God, naturally developed through one's own abilities, but they will be purified and strengthened by God's help.

Theological Virtues

Faith, hope and love are usually known as the "Theological virtues". These virtues help one to live in relationship with the Holy Trinity. **Faith** is a divine virtue that helps one to accept the revealed truths while placing oneself totally in God's hands. "*He who through faith is righteous shall live*" (Rom 1, 17).

Hope and love are closely related to faith. The virtue of **Hope** helps one to trust that believing in the promises of Jesus and relying on the help of the Holy Spirit firmly, rather than on one's own ability, one will attain eternal life that is the life of unending happiness with God.

Love is the Divine virtue that helps one to love God and in His name all humans as brothers and sisters. This is the climax and the sum total of the Commandments of Jesus. Paul, the apostle teaches in a very strong language that among the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, the most important one is love. After dealing with various gifts and charisms he goes on to present love as the "*more excellent way*" (1Cor 12,31). He dedicates a whole chapter to narrate the greatness of love (1 Cor 13,1-13). Love is presented also as the first of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5, 22).

Capital Sins

What is traditionally taught as capital sins and their opposite virtues also are relevant here. Human nature is made weak by the original sin, creating a tendency

towards evil. The various manifestations of this tendency are usually called the capital sins. In fact they are not sins as such but only attraction and inclination to commit sins. Hence the term vice might be more suitable here. Their opposite virtues indicate the attitudes and habits one must achieve through the help of the Holy Spirit and constant personal efforts. Some of these virtues are related to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Capital Sins (Vices) - Their contrary Virtues

1. Pride	Humility
2. Lust	Chastity
3. Greed	Charity
4. Gluttony	Temperance
5. Sloth (laziness)	Diligence
6. Wrath	Patience
7. Envy	Kindness

The Holy Spirit gives us gifts to attain these virtues and to grow in them while at the same time we are warned to keep constant vigil against the fundamental vices. The words of St. Paul *“I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified”* (1 Cor 9, 27) are relevant here and need to be given special attention.

3

CHARISMS

Charisms are gifts given by the Holy Spirit, for the greater glory of God and for the building up of the Church through serving the society. While the spiritual gifts give importance to spiritual growth of the person, the charisms give emphasis to the betterment of the society. The teaching of St. Paul “*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*” (1 Cor 12, 7) sheds light on the purpose of giving gifts to individuals. As the expression of the special grace from God, they are called “Charisms”; whereas as the work of the Holy Spirit they are called “Spiritual Gifts”.

Number of Charisms

There is no definite answer to the question concerning the number of charisms. In the Pauline letters charisms are presented in various ways. Hence there is a difference of opinion among Bible Scholars regarding the number of charisms. There are also various opinions concerning the personal as well as the social dimensions of Charisms. It was in this situation, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith published the official document ***Juveniscit Ecclesia*** (***JE*** - The renewal of the youth of the Church) on 15 May 2016, giving certain decisive teachings regarding the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit.

This document divided the gifts of the Holy Spirit into two: *Hierarchical gifts* and *Charismatic gifts*. Those who

are occupying the various offices in the Church receive the grace to carry out their official duties. These gifts are called *Hierarchical gifts*. The gifts or graces that are given to individuals, in order to give witness to Christ in the particular situations each one is living and to build up the Church, are called *charismatic gifts* (J E §14-15).

The Document of Vatican II (Lumen Gentium- LG) had already mentioned such division. “*The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple (1 Cor 3, 16; 6, 19). In them he prays and bears witness to their adoptive sonship (Gal 4,6; Rom 8, 15-16.26). Guiding the Church in the way of all truth (Jn 16, 3) and unifying her in communion and in the works of ministry, he bestows upon her varied hierarchical and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs her; and he adorns her with his fruits (Eph 4, 11-12; 1 Cor 12, 4; Gal 5, 22)*” (LG § 4).

The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (J E§16-17) instructed that there should be no conflict between these two gifts but they must cooperate with each other to build up the Church. The Document continues to exhort that personal gifts and charisms should not be used for selfish interests but for the common good and in obedience to the authorities in the Church. The Hierarchical Gifts should be seen under this perspective.

Hierarchical Gifts: The word **Hierarchy** points to the various levels of authority in the Church. In the Bible, especially in the letters of Paul, we see three levels of authority namely, Bishops, Elders and Deacons. The Bishops are the successors of the Apostles; the elders are considered as Priests. The Deacons were appointed to take care of the material needs of the Church (Acts 6, 1-7). The Document further instructs that in administering the Sacraments and in an orderly management of the Church,

the ones who have received the hierarchical gifts should provide the leadership. This will help to maintain unity in the Church and promote growth (J E §14).

Charismatic Gifts

Charismatic gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to strengthen the People of God to organize their lives according to the plan of God and to bear witness to Jesus Christ in various ways by proclaiming the Gospel. These are also called Charisms. The hierarchical gifts are related to the institutional structure of authority and the administration of the Sacraments and therefore only a limited number of people receive these gifts. On the other hand, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (J E §15-16) teaches that the Holy Spirit freely gives the charismatic gifts to all the faithful.

Division of Gifts

Though the document JE teaches about the nature and use of the Charismatic gifts, it does not specify which the gifts are; hence there is still no clarity about the number of gifts. The charismatic gifts are divided in various ways by various people. Some propose a division of the gifts into two categories, namely ***word gifts and action gifts***. Five gifts, namely “gift of tongues, interpretation, prophecy, knowledge, wisdom are called Word Gifts whereas” the other four gifts, namely, faith, healing, ability to perform miracles and discernment of the spirits are called **Action gifts**. There are others who propose a threefold division namely, gifts of **Grace**, gifts of **Service** and gifts of **work** and each one of these with three subdivisions. **Gifts of Grace:** prophecy, speaking in tongue, and interpretation of tongues. **Gifts of Service:** wisdom, understanding and discernment; **Gifts of Work:** faith, healing and miracles.

There is yet another threefold division with each

category having three further subdivisions: **Word Gifts:** Speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy; **Intellectual or Revelation Gifts:** wisdom, understanding, discernment; **Sign Gifts:** faith, healing and miracles. Even though there are many different opinions about divisions and sub divisions, there is a general consensus that there are nine charisms. At the same time wisdom and understanding are usually considered as the gifts of the Holy Spirit and so they are included in the list of seven gifts.

Studies and views about the gifts and charisms were developed mainly basing on the letters of Paul. Hence the lack of clarity regarding the various divisions and categories in the letters would reflect also in the opinions about the gifts and charisms. Just as the body has many members and different duties are assigned to each of them, so also the Mystical Body of Christ has many members that have different duties. In order to perform these duties the Holy Spirit gives them the necessary charisms. This awareness should be the guide in determining the gifts and charisms. Accordingly, we will deal briefly with the nine charismatic gifts found in 1 Cor 12,8-11: *“To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills”*. After this, we will discuss also the gifts and charisms mentioned in the other letters of Paul and other parts of the New Testament.

1. Word of Wisdom: Of the nine charismatic gifts mentioned in this passage the first one is **“Wisdom”**, though

in some editions of the NT it is considered as the second gift. We have already seen Wisdom as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The *Word of Wisdom* is similar to that gift, but there are also some differences between the two. While the gifts are given mainly for the growth in personal life, Charisms are given for the formation and growth of the community of the faithful. Therefore Charisms give greater importance to the social dimension; this is the main difference between the two.

The Word of Wisdom would help one to make the proper decisions in different situations of life, especially in times of crisis. This would help one to understand the deep meaning of the Word of God, and organize one's life in the light of the Word. Word of Wisdom is of great importance in Evangelization, counselling, teaching and pastoral care as it would protect one from giving erroneous explanations for the Word of God and giving wrong directions for making decisions.

2. Word of Knowledge: This is the second in the list of the seven gifts. In the original Greek it is given as "*Logos Gnoseos*". Logos means "Word". *Gnoseos* is the genitive form of *Gnosis* which means knowledge. This charism is very similar to the gift of the Holy Spirit, *knowledge or understanding*. As in the case of "wisdom" here also the difference is in the emphasis given to the social dimension. The Word of Knowledge is the gift the Holy Spirit gives to know and proclaim the Word of God and the Doctrines of faith, without error. The inspirations given by the Holy Spirit, in the context of counselling, regarding certain individuals and the problems they encounter also belong to the Word of Knowledge.

With the help of this gift, one might know the desires and thoughts of another (Mt 22, 18; Jn 2, 25). One might know the secret sins of others (Jn 4, 18; Acts 5, 3-4). Past

events they have not seen (Jn 1, 47-48) and events that are yet to take place (Acts 20, 23-29. 27, 10) might be revealed. This gift would help to profess Jesus as the Saviour (Jn 4, 25-29. 39-42) and to lead one to conversion (Mt 26, 31-35. 69-75). This charism is very helpful in giving spiritual leadership and in Counselling.

3. Faith: Faith is the charism that gives one the conviction about what God is going to do. This has close similarity to and relations with the divine virtue of faith but, there are also certain differences. The divine virtue Faith helps one to believe the revealed truths by intellect and accept them in one's heart. The charism of faith, on the other hand, giving firm conviction that God would act, helps one to surrender totally to the Will of God.

What Jesus said about the faith that would move the mountain (Mt 21, 21-22; Mk 11, 23) and Paul repeated (1 Cori 13, 2) are relevant here. The charism of faith enables a person to perform healings and miracles. After explaining that it was the lack of faith that made the disciples incapable of exorcising the evil spirit, Jesus taught them that if one has faith to the size of a mustard seed, one will be able to move the mountain (Mt 17,19-21). This teaching calls our attention to the nature and need of faith. This faith is a strong conviction the Holy Spirit sends to one's heart that God would enter into the life of a person and would bring an end to one's misery. From the time of the Apostles to this day, this gift is actively operating in proclaiming the Gospel (Acts 3, 6-7)

4. Healing: It is the gift of the Holy Spirit that gives miraculous healing to a person from illness or other weakness on the physical, mental or spiritual level. Healing is always a well-known gift and leads persons and communities to faith. A healing could happen suddenly or slowly. The healing received in cases for which the medical

sciences have no satisfactory explanation is usually considered as a miraculous healing.

Healing the sick was a main activity of Jesus during his public ministry; it was the expression of God's mercy and the sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had promised this gift to the Apostles and they experienced it in their first missionary (Mt 10, 8; Lk 9, 1-2. 10, 17-20). The Risen Lord before his Ascension repeated this promise (Mk 16, 18). Healing of the sick is a visible sign of God's mercy being poured into the broken person fully restoring his health. The main purpose of the healing is to lead the person to true conversion and to strengthen his faith. Therefore, undue importance should not be given to physical healing. One should also beware of focusing only on physical healing. If not, it might lead to attitudes and motivation not befitting Christian faith and unhealthy competitions. Jesus had warned against such a danger (Mt 7, 21-23).

Together with healing the exorcism of the evil spirits also is considered as part of this gift. People might have become the slaves of Satan through sin which is considered as the root cause of all the illness. It does not mean that all the illnesses are caused by the possession of evil spirits. At the same time, the Church believes and teaches that the power of evil would enter a person and make him sick with various illnesses and disorders. Hence, the Church gives the authority to exorcise evil spirits and the necessary directions for the same.

Among the activities of Jesus and of the Apostles, exorcism had great importance (Mk 1, 21-28; Acts 16, 16-18). Jesus presented the exorcism of evil spirits as an action that would announce the presence of the Kingdom of God (Lk 11, 20). This gift is helpful for the growth of the Kingdom of God, but here also wrong motivations and

misuses could creep in. Because of this danger, the Church has prescribed clear norms and regulations for exorcisms, which all the faithful are bound to follow.

5. Working Miracles: Miracles are God's supernatural interventions into the natural realm to demonstrate divine power. They are signs that would confirm and strengthen the faith or bring about faith. All through the Old Testament we can see such miracles. The ten plagues in the context of the Exodus (Ex 7-11), the parting of the sea for the people to pass over (Ex 14), Manna and quails in the desert (Ex 16), water from the rock (Ex 17) are some examples. The Gospels report that Jesus performed many miracles such as the water turned wine (Jn 2, 1-11), multiplication of loaves (Mk 6, 30-44), walking over the sea (Mk 4, 37-41), raising the dead (Jn 11, 38-44) and many more.

All these miracles were signs of God's love and compassion as well as of His power, manifested through Jesus Christ, or in other words, the signs of the Kingdom of God. Jesus promised help to the Apostles to perform such miracles. This promise continues to be fulfilled to this day by the working of the Holy Spirit through various types of miracles. The deaf hear, the blind receive sight; tumours disappear without surgery, healthy organs such as kidney, appear in the body- many such miracles are still happening. These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit that prove the presence and strength of God, for the greater glory of God and for the growth in faith. The miracles that happen suddenly are more powerful signs than slow healings. Such miracles are helpful in the area of the proclamation of the Gospel.

At the same time, these miracles could pave the way for temptations as some might consider the miracle that took place through their word or action as being performed by their own power. In this case the ultimate goal of the miracle will not be the benefit of the people by increasing

their faith and the glory of God, but one's own popularity and material gain. The negative stance Jesus took when the enemies demanded a sign should be our guide here (Mk 8, 11-13). The response Jesus gave to the tempter in the wilderness also should be taken into consideration (Mt 4, 1-11).

6. Gift of Prophecy: Prophecy is the gift of the Holy Spirit given to communicate God's message to an individual or the community. The explanation of St. Paul gives clarity to the gift of Prophecy: *"For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation"* (1 Cor 14, 2-3). Prophecy does not necessarily mean predicting the future. The Greek word "*Propheteia*" came from two words "*Pro - Phemi*" which means speak for (another). That is translated as prophecy. It means to speak the Word of God, or communicate the message God desires the people to know. In comparison to the other gifts Paul gives more importance to the gift of prophecy. *"Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy"* (1 Cor 14, 1).

A prophecy could be foretelling about something that would happen in the future, reminding of something that happened in the past, or revealing and interpreting something that is happening now; it could also be asking to do something. In any case, prophecies are intended to deepen the faith of individuals and through them to confirm and strengthen the faith of the community. Prophecy could be giving consolation and hope to people or calling them to repentance and conversion. God knows what the person needs and so the Spirit inspires the individual to give the prophecy as and when a person needs.

There are prophecies recorded both in the Old Testament and New Testament that give clear instructions to individuals and communities. In the Acts of the Apostles we see that at every stage of the evangelization, the Holy Spirit gave directions through such prophecies. *“While they were worshipping 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). This message given in the Church in Antioch is an example. A disciple called Agabus put on the belt of Paul and said: *“Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”* (Acts 21, 10-11). This is a very clear example of the gift of prophecy.

Gift of prophecy is not to satisfy the curiosity of people to know the future. Hence, one has to be vigilant in the use of this charism. There were many false prophets in the Old Testament time who presented their own ideas as the word of God (Jer 23, 25-29; 1 Kgs 22, 13-28). The danger of the presence of false prophets is great even today and so it is essential that we discern the charisms.

7. *Discernment of the Spirits:* It is the supernatural ability to recognize whether a person or situation is being motivated by the Holy Spirit, their human spirit, an evil spirit or by a combination of both human and evil spirits. The inner feelings or inspirations might come from three different sources: 1. It could be the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; 2. It could be the temptation of the devil; 3. It could be a person’s desires and feelings. To distinguish these will not be always easy; hence the Holy Spirit gives the power of discernment.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 Jn 4, 1). John continues to teach how to distinguish the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

from the temptation of Satan. *“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already”* (1 Jn 4, 2-3). It is the Holy Spirit that helps for such discernment. The gift of discernment would help to recognize temptations and to remain vigilant about it. It helps individuals and communities to make the right decision in every situation.

The warning that the spirit that does not profess Jesus Christ as God is the spirit of Satan is very important in everyday life. The charism of discernment would keep the faithful away from making decisions against the teachings of Jesus Christ and from following such a life-style. All that we hear with the introduction, “God said” need not be accepted as the Word of God. We have to check and see if what is being said is in agreement with the teaching of Jesus. The charism of discernment will be a great help in this context. All that looks attractive need not be the working of the Holy Spirit. Hence, one must pray for this gift with great desire. In proclaiming the Gospel and conducting Counselling this charism is essential.

8. *Speaking in Tongues:* This is a gift well known and widely used among the charismatic prayer groups. The Bible tells about three kinds of speaking in tongues.

1. *Gift of tongues for evangelization.* The gift of tongue is mentioned for the first time in connection with the proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus had given an indication about it before His Ascension into heaven. *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues”* (Mk 16, 15-

17). It is a gift of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel in a language not known to the one who speaks. On the day of Pentecost, it became a reality as the Apostles and the people who listened to them were surprised.

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2, 4). The Apostles spoke in their native tongue, Aramaic, but those who had come from different countries as pilgrims to Jerusalem heard what they spoke in their own languages. This is the first meaning of the gift of tongues we see in the Bible that is the ability to speaking in such a way that those listening can understand them. The speaker is not speaking in a strange language, but the listeners are enlightened to understand the message in their own languages. But this is not what is usually understood as “speaking in tongue”.

2. Gift of tongues in prayer: The Holy Spirit kindles the heart of the persons, taking over the control of their lips and they praise God through unclear voices and that is called “speaking in tongue”. In the letter to the Romans Paul writes: *“The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words”* (Rom 8, 26). It is an inner force that moves the lips and produces sounds. People will be making different sounds as they receive the inner inspiration. Even those who make the sounds will not know the meaning. The joy and peace that fill their hearts are being expressed through the lips like the smile and cry of the babies. God who sees the heart knows the meaning of those sounds. The individuals can decide when to speak in tongues and when to stop it though they do not understand the meaning of the sound that comes out of them. It would take them to a deep prayer experience, giving them great peace and joy. In the church communities this would help in many ways.

3. **Messages in tongues:** There is a third kind of gift of tongue. Here people are inspired to give a message in a language that is known neither to the speaker nor to the listener. Paul discusses this gift in detail in 1Cor 14, pointing out the various aspects of this gift and giving necessary directions. This is a gift that needs interpretation, which again is also presented as a gift of the Holy Spirit. *“If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God”* (1Cor 14, 27-28). The Holy Spirit gives to some the gift of speaking in tongues and to some others the gift of interpreting what is said in tongues. This is something that still happens and is very relevant. There are some who receive the gift of writing in a language they do not know. If there is no one to interpret them, such gifts would become useless. Hence, the Apostle Paul teaches that the gift of interpretation is more important than the gift of *“speaking in tongues”*.

9. **Gift of Interpretation:** The gift of “speaking in tongues” is usually known as *“Glossolalia”*. The gift of interpretation is a gift the Holy Spirit gives to explain the meaning of what is being said through the strange sounds of glossolalia. The aim of this gift is to clarify the plan of God regarding individuals and communities and help them to make decisions accordingly.

Bible Scholars are of the opinion that in the Church of Corinth, the gift of “Speaking in tongues” was widely used and often misused. In many of the ancient religions such a phenomenon existed. Even today we could see examples of this in some strange phenomena such as soothsayers and oracles. There are bible interpreters who think that there were in the Church of Corinth people who even after coming to know Jesus and became Christians, continued certain pagan forms of prayer that caused misunderstanding

and became counter witness and that is the reason why Paul gave such importance to this subject.

No matter what the circumstances were, the gift of “speaking in tongues” is listed as the last in the list of Gifts. Paul agrees that praying in tongues is good but insists that one has to be vigilant and cautious when praying with that gift and giving messages. Just as in the matter of spirits, here also there is a need for the gift of discernment. It will be often difficult to determine if one is really speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and if the interpretation given is correct. By this very fact, there is the danger of people misusing the gift for selfish interests and being cheated by tricks of Satan. Hence one has to be vigilant and take the needed precautions.

So far we have been discussing the charismatic gifts that are generally known and approved. But there are some other gifts mentioned in the New Testament that are similar to these but not very popularly known. Some of such gifts are presented below.

10. Proclamation of the Gospel: Jesus came into the world with the Good News of God (Mk 1, 14). It was to proclaim the Gospel that Jesus called the Apostles (Mk 3, 14) and sent them out to the ends of the earth (Mk 16, 15). The Holy Spirit would strengthen the Apostles to proclaim the Good News (Lk 24, 47-49; Acts 1, 8). According to the teaching of Paul proclaiming the Gospel is a gift of God: *“His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some **evangelists**, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”* (Eph 4, 11-12).

The Gospel is the Good News of salvation that humanity is being offered through Jesus Christ. All the people in the world must come to know that God is the loving Father who desires to save the entire humanity

from the domain of sin and Satan through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and to adopt them as His own children. Accepting this invitation all must accept God as the Father and the others as brothers and sisters and live in love and peace. This is the essence of the Gospel. It is the ultimate goal for which the gift of Evangelization would prepare the Apostles.

11. Teachers – Instructors: Those who guide the faithful to the depth of faith are called teachers (Rom 12, 7; 1 Cor 12, 28). The original Greek word is “*didascalos*” that points to one who teaches. The word “*Didache*” which means religious instruction also comes from this root. Instructors are those who teach what to believe. Those who become believers through evangelization will be helped by the Holy Spirit through teachers to grow in faith.

12. Leadership – Pastoring: It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that is given to lead individuals and communities according to faith. It is the Holy Spirit who helps to lead with love and enthusiasm, “*He who gives aid, with zeal*” (Rom 12, 8). The Greek word is “*Kubernesis*” from which come the words such as govern, rule, lead, etc. The words Government and Governor are related to this word. This is the gift that helps one to lead the people according to the will of God. This is closely related and similar to Hierarchical gifts. Not only in the Hierarchy but on all levels of Christian life, this type of leadership is essential. This gift helps to lead the families, prayer groups, big organizations; all the institutions of the Church need this type of leadership.

Ephesians 4, 11 defines the nature of this leadership and the gift of being good shepherds. “*His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ*” (Eh 4, 11-12). This is a theme we see all through the Bible. God is

seen as the Good Shepherd, and those who lead the people of God should be likewise good shepherds. The qualities of a good shepherd described in Ezekiel 34, 15-16 are relevant here. *“I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice”* (Ez 34, 15-16). Leading the people in justice is the main duty of Pastors. The best example for this is the exhortation Jesus gave while presenting Himself as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10,1-18).

13. Service - Charity – Mercy:

Three gifts that have similar meaning are placed side by side in the advice Paul gave to the Romans: *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **if service, in our serving**; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; **he who contributes, in liberality**; he who gives aid, with zeal; **he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness”*** (Rom 12, 6-8). This list is presented with the introduction that all of them are the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Of the three, the first one is the gift of service. The Greek word is *“Diakonia”* from which the word Deacon is derived. This gift is used mainly to take care of the temporal needs of the community while meeting the needs of all. This gift is often seen as related to the hierarchical gifts. Not only those who are in the position of Deacons, but in one way or another everyone in the society needs this gift as all the Christians are called to offer service to those in need. The other two gifts explain with what attitude one must perform this service.

Those who give for charity should do so with a

generous heart. This is the approach one must take towards those who are suffering from poverty. This attitude comes from the belief that the earth and all its products belong to all and all must have the means to live with human dignity; it is part of the plan of God. Behind Paul's advice to generosity one could notice the picture of the first Christian communities where nobody considered the properties as one's own but shared with everybody according to the need: *"Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common...There was not a needy person among them"* (Acts 4, 32-34; 2,44-47). This gift enables one to help those in need. Generosity is an attitude that would help one not to accumulate wealth and become rich but to share according to the needs of others. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires one to give generously.

Not only generosity but kindness or compassion also should be considered as part of this gift: *"He who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness"* (Rom 12, 8). Mercy is a gift that forces one to help those in need. The Hebrew word is *"Rahamim"* that denotes the feeling a mother has towards the baby in her womb. The Greek word for the same is *"eleo"*, that points to the compassion one feels towards the suffering of another and the inspiration to help. The Greek word *"Elemosune"*, as well as the English word *"Alms"* comes from this verb. It is the Holy Spirit that helps one to give with a cheerful heart and compassion so that the one who receives would not feel inferior or humiliated.

Though there are many gifts, the source of all the gifts is the same Holy Spirit and all the gifts are aimed at the greater good of the society. The Holy Spirit would help that all the gifts and charisms become fruitful. Next we turn to the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

4

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law” (Gal 5, 22-23).

The special qualities seen in the persons and communities that live according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are called the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit must lead to producing the fruits. Just as in the nature, in spiritual life also the fruits are important. At the Last Supper during the farewell discourse, Jesus emphasized the need of producing fruits, meaning the life of the disciples must not become fruitless.

Through the parable of the vine and the branches (Jn 15, 1-10) Jesus taught this clearly. Jesus is the vine and the disciples are the branches while God the Father is the farmer. The disciples would produce fruit only if they remain close to Jesus as the branches remain close to the trunk. Jesus said: *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15, 5).*

John explains in the words of Jesus what the fruits are: *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love” (Jn 15, 8-9).* Loving and remaining in love is the fruit Jesus expects of and promises them. Just as Jesus loved, the disciples must

love each other with a love that is willing even to sacrifice one's life for his friends: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (Jn 15, 12-13). Such a love will be the characteristic mark of the followers of Jesus: *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (Jn13, 35). This is the fruit the disciples should produce. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to help them to produce such fruits (Jn 14, 16).

Producing good fruits is a theme we see all through the Bible. The persons and communities that live according to the precepts of the Covenant will produce good fruits, but unfortunately often the opposite happens. This tragedy is highlighted by prophet Isaiah through the parable of the vine that produced sour grapes (Is 5, 1-7). John the Baptist had warned about the Messiah who will cut and throw into the fire all the trees that do not produce good fruits (Mt 3, 10). Jesus has given such a warning through the parable of the fig tree that was given a year to produce fruit (Lk 13, 6-9). The fig tree that withered at the words of Jesus indicates that this allotted time was over (Mt 21, 19).

It is the Holy Spirit who helps the disciples to produce fruits. The fruits of the Holy Spirit that Jesus presented in a single word "Love", are described by St. Paul through many attributes as can be seen from the list given in the beginning of this chapter.

The official teaching of the Catholic Church can be seen in CCC § 736 and 1832. *"By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"*. (CCC §736). *"The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the*

first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: “charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity” (CCC §1832). The expression **“the first fruits of eternal glory”** presents these fruits as a foretaste of heavenly life. A life that is guided by the Holy Spirit will be a sign of heaven on earth. This life will reach its completion when we enter into eternal life through death.

How many Fruits of the Holy Spirit? The most authentic teaching about the fruits of the Holy Spirit can be seen in Gal 5, 22-23: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”*. Here the Apostle has listed nine fruits. But, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) has listed 12 fruits. Naturally one would ask, why this difference? Should we take the Bible or CCC as the norm here?

In order to answer this question, first of all we have to consider the difference in the list. It was St. Jerome who translated the Bible, OT from Hebrew and NT from Greek into Latin that the common people could understand. To indicate the language of the common people it was called *“Vulgata”*. This word comes from the root *“Vulgus”* which means people. Hence *vulgata* literally means *“popular”*. In this Latin version three more fruits were added to the list that was in the Greek original, namely, *generosity, modesty and purity*. That is the reason for the difference between the two lists. In the list of gifts also such a difference could be seen. In the Hebrew original text of Isaiah 11, 2-3 there is a list of six gifts whereas in the *Vulgata* there are seven gifts because to translate *“Fear of God”* of the original text St. Jerome used two words *“Piety”* and *“Fear of God”*.

While deciding which list to accept, we have to pay

attention also to another fact. In the letter to the Galatians, St. Paul used not the plural “Fruits” but the singular form “Fruit”, for which the Greek original is “*Carpos*” that could be translated as “fruit” and “result”. The word fruit can be used as a collective noun, pointing to more than one.

From this perspective the question concerning the number of gifts, nine or twelve, itself becomes irrelevant. By the *fruits* we mean the effect of the working of the Holy Spirit in the persons who surrender themselves willingly to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. The impact of the Holy Spirit in the inner self of the persons will become evident in their desires and decisions, attitudes and approaches, life style and priorities. What should be considered as the most important ones of these characteristics are presented here as a list of fruits, which cannot be considered as complete and exhaustive. The three fruits added in the Vulgata call attention to certain spheres of life.

These facts should be kept in mind when trying to study each fruit separately. Together with that, one has also to keep in mind that it is the Holy Spirit that produces the fruits. The working of the Holy Spirit becomes fruitful in the persons who surrender themselves willingly and completely to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Here the people have the role of the farmer. Each tree produces fruit not by the activity of the farmer alone. The farmer prepares the ground, plants the tree, removes the weeds, gives manure and thus helps the tree to grow. All these are needed but the tree produces fruit by its inner force.

Human life also operates in the same way and bears fruit. My approach, decisions and actions create an atmosphere that is favourable or unfavourable, but ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who produces the fruit. On the contrary, if a person lives according to his own desires, against the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he would produce

fruits of the flesh rather than spiritual fruits. St. Paul has called our attention to such a danger.

Before speaking about the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle has given a long list of the fruits of the flesh. *“Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal 5, 19-21). Here the list is not exhaustive, as the usage *“the like”* gives the impression that there are many more to add. The same thing could be said about the list of the fruits of the Holy Spirit also. What is important is the attitude as it is the attitude that leads one to action. Hence searching for the number of the fruits of the Holy Spirit would be in vain. It might be better to conclude that certain important examples are listed rather than a full list of gifts. The three fruits added in the *Vulgata* are presented as the opposite of the works of the flesh listed by the Apostle. Now we shall try to study each of the nine fruits and then the three fruits added in *Vulgata* will also be discussed.

1. Love:

Whether love is the gift or fruit of the Holy Spirit is a relevant question. There is a long discourse about the gifts and charisms in the first letter to the Corinthians chapters 12 and 14. The chapter in the middle, chapter 13 is a hymn about love. After talking about gifts and charisms, when the Apostle presents love with a preface, *“The greatest of these is love”* (1 Cor 13, 13), one could ask the question if “love” is a gift or charism. But “Love” is beyond such divisions and labelling.

“Love” should be considered as the sum total of all

the gifts, charisms and fruits that are produced by the Holy Spirit working in individuals. However, in order to get a clear understanding about this Love, one should study the Greek word which is translated as love. In fact there are four words in Greek to indicate “love” and all four have different nuances.

Storge: The first one is “*Storge*”. It indicates the natural feeling of parents towards children which can be translated as *affection*.

Eros: This word points to the attraction a man and woman feel towards each other that would lead to sexual union. The word *erotic* is the adjective derived from this noun. This love brings together the man and woman that would lead to having children and forming a family.

Philia: Another type of love is “*Philia*”. It is a natural feeling of attraction towards another person, irrespective of sex. It could be translated as *liking*. From this root come the words “*Philadelphia*” which means brotherly love; *Philosophia* which means “love of wisdom” etc. But none of these is the love that is considered as the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Agape: This is a totally different kind of love. While the other three types of love are based on feeling, here it is a wilful decision to love. It is to love as God loves. When John defines “*God is love*” he uses this word (1 Jn 4, 8-16). Here the one who loves does not take into account the merit of the one loved, or think about what one could gain from this love. The only desire of the one who loves is to give what is best for the one loved. It is imitating the love of God who “*so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life*” (Jn 3,16).

Jesus has taught that Love should be the characteristic

mark of his disciples, *“I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you... But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful”* (Lk 6, 27-36). A love that never takes vengeance on the other, desires only what is best for the ones who offend and hurt us, that is agape. This is the first of the fruits of the Holy Spirit or we could say that this is the only fruit of the Holy Spirit. All the rest are its explanations and practical applications

CCC § 1822-29 teaches in detail about the fruit, love, but there it is presented as a theological virtue: *“Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God”* (§1822). *“Fruit of Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ: Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love”* (§1824). Love is the fulfilment of the new commandment of Jesus: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another”* (Jn 13, 34).

This love encourages one to offer one’s own life for the other, *“Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends”* (Jn 15, 13). It is the Holy Spirit who makes one capable of such a love; it is in this love that the working of the Holy Spirit becomes evident. All the other fruits are different manifestations of this fundamental attitude. The source of all the virtues is the love that fills one’s heart. It is love that provides the strength to live according to the Commandments of God.

2. Joy:

The second fruit of the Holy Spirit is joy. We can see in detail the teaching of the Catholic Church about the fruit Joy in CCC §1716-172. CCC teaches about joy linking it with Beatitudes. *“The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfil it: We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated. How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you. God alone satisfies”* (CCC § 1718).

The Greek word is **“Chara”** which points to the joy that fills the heart of the human being. The happiness one feels could be mainly external and could end up being a temporary feeling. The one who is hungry would feel happy when he gets plenty of food. One might feel happy when one gets a job that pays well for which he had been waiting a long time. When one gets a lottery for ten million, he might feel happy, but all these last only for a short time. The depth of happiness here would depend on the external situations. The Joy the Holy Spirit gives is not such a short lived emotional experience.

Joy is an interior contentment that comes from being close to God and in the right relationship with others. The external situations will not affect this joy. In extreme poverty and in the middle of severe persecution, the joy that fills the heart will continue because it comes from God. Joy also comes from standing for justice and truth, honesty and integrity in relationships. Joy is also the result of the deep conviction that I am a child of God and am doing my best to do the work He has entrusted to me.

Joy is above and beyond the feeling level because it comes from love, the satisfaction created by the love of God and love of the brethren. This could be seen as a foretaste of heavenly life, as the blessings Jesus announced introducing the Sermon on the Mount. The exclamation “**Blessed**” is an expression of this joy. The Greek word “*Macharios*” is translated as Blessed. *Macharios* comes from the root *Chara* and so the exclamation “blessed” could be interpreted as “*How joyful your situation is!*” As a child of God, you are a citizen in the Kingdom of God; you will live with God for ever. This is the foretaste of eternal happiness.

The ninth and the last beatitude clarifies this meaning. “*Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you*” (Mt 5, 11-12). *Rejoice and be glad* in the original Greek is “*Chairete Kai Agalliaste*”, an expression that indicates an exuberant joy that fills the heart and overflows through external expressions of exultation. When the joy that fills the heart is expressed one would leap with joy (Lk 6, 23).

The Son of God became man to make this joy available for all. Jesus revealed this truth to the disciples during the Last Supper. “*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full*” (Jn 15, 11). They will not lose this joy even in the midst of severe persecution because it comes from God. It is the Holy Spirit that fills their hearts with joy.

It is this joy that enables the disciples of Jesus through the last 20 centuries to accept persecution, to love even when hated and tortured, and to help all those in need without discrimination of friend and foe, caste, creed and colour. It is this joy that enabled them to sing praises while

being thrown as prey to wild animals, to the furnace and led to the scaffold to be burnt alive. This Joy fills them with an inner satisfaction that no one can take away from them.

3. Peace

All the peoples on earth desire to have peace. It is the deepest longing of the human heart, often described as calmness, quiet, tranquillity etc. This thirst of the human heart comes out as prayer in almost all the religions. The prayer that comes from the inner soul of India is an example: “*Om santhi, santhi, santhi:*” Santhi is the state of mind that can be translated as peace, although the term peace does not have all the nuances of this word. This is a prayer, and at the same time a wish for peace. Another prayer: “*Loka samstha sukhino bhavanthu*” (may all the world enjoy wellbeing, peace and happiness) expresses this thirst of the human soul.

The very name of the Islamic religion is “Peace”. It is a desire, confession and resolution that the whole world should have and remain in peace, even though some radical groups take the way of violence to reach the haven of peace. Christianity gives great importance for “Peace”. When they meet they used to wish each other peace. At the prayer meetings, especially the Eucharistic celebrations, the greeting “*peace be with you*” is an essential part. In spite of all these, the real peace seems to remain as a mirage. Where can we find true peace? What is peace? How can we get it? The Bible gives a clear answer to these questions.

Peace is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of persons and communities. The Greek word is “*Eirene*” that is opposite of war. However it refers not only to the state of not having war. It gives emphasis to the equilibrium in the person and society. There is a Latin

saying, “*Si vis pacem prepara bellum*”, which means: *if you wish to have peace prepare for war*. From this we can see the explanation the Romans gave for peace and the means they proposed and used to establish peace. However, balance of power often creates terror. Even when the nations make treaties and sign agreements, they are busy accumulating and making ever new and more powerful weapons of mass destruction. This is not the “Peace” that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The Hebrew word for peace is “Shalom” that points to a state of equilibrium. It is a state in which the persons live in harmony with God, with fellow human beings, with the universe and with one’s own self. This is a gift of God and at the same time the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the human hearts and in the community.

This kind of peace existed in the Paradise; or rather this was the Paradise, where the first parents were settled, where God walked with them. They were not afraid or ashamed. However, when they broke the commandment of God, this harmony was broken; they lost this peace and distanced themselves from God, from each other and from the universe. In order to change this situation of alienation and bring peace God announced through the prophets that He will become man.

“To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (Is 9, 6-7). How this peace will be established was proclaimed through the same Prophet Isaiah. *“The effect of*

righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever” (Is 32, 17). Only through justice we can have peace. In fact peace is the consequence of justice and the sign of love put into action. It happens when resources are shared equitably, power is used for service, interdependence is fostered, information is shared openly and honestly, the dignity of person is respected, legitimate differences are tolerated, the disadvantaged receive help, hurts are forgiven and common good is upheld.

This however is almost impossible for man by his own strength. What is impossible for man is made possible by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who works in and through Jesus Christ that establishes true peace on earth: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”* (Lk 2, 14). This is the last gift Jesus gave to the disciples before his departure: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”* (Jn 14, 27). The greeting of the Risen Lord is always peace: *“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you”* (Jn 20, 19).

There are some special characteristics for the peace Jesus gives. It is *“not as the world gives do I give to you”* (Jn 14, 27). Even when the external situations are against them, the peace Jesus gave the disciples would remain with them because it is the Holy Spirit who would abide with them all the time. This peace would reflect on their faces and would be evident in their dealings. It is the source of joy and contentment.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (§ 2302-2327) teaches in detail about peace as part of the fifth

commandment “Do not kill”. The document teaches what the nature of Peace is and how it is being manifested: *“Respect for and development of human life require peace. Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is “the tranquillity of order”. Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity”* (CCC § 2304).

Jesus established this peace through his death on the Cross. The CCC continues to state in § 2305, that the Cross is the sign and source that connects heaven and earth, God and man. The salvific mission of Jesus was accomplished through the death on the cross. It was from the Cross that Jesus gave the Holy Spirit (Jn 7, 39; 19, 34). St. Paul teaches in his letter to the Ephesians that through the death on the cross Jesus united the entire humanity, both Jews and gentiles, into one mystical body.

“He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Eph 2, 14-17). This peace must grow in our hearts and should be expressed in mutual relationships; the Holy Spirit would give us strength for it.

All are called to this peace. The peace that fills the hearts should become evident in the actions and thus there will be true peace in the community. Jesus has promised that those who try to establish peace would receive special grace. *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be*

called sons of God” (Mt 5, 9).

In the contemporary world, often qualified as post-modern and post-truth world, there is a growing tendency to see the other as enemy and hell. “Peace”, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, would make substantial changes in this attitude. True peace would help us to see God as the loving Father, the others as brothers and sisters, the earth as mother and remain in peace and unity with all. When each one accepts himself as he is and tries to live the way God desires him to live, this peace will become visible in the person and in his surroundings.

4. Patience

Patience is an essential quality that we are losing in today’s world. We are living in a world that seeks immediate results for every endeavour and gratification for all the desires. With the advent of the electronic age, there is an impression that one can get anything immediately. Now no one seems to have time to wait for anything. Everything should happen immediately as I desire. Patience, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is totally the opposite of this attitude.

The Greek word is “*Makrothumia*” that is formed by adding two words: “*Makro*” which means *long* and “*Thumos*” that means “temper, *passion, anger, wrath*”; hence *Makrothumia* could be translated as “*keeping away the anger*” or “*avoiding war*”. In Greek culture this word was used to indicate the particular quality of a person who could avenge himself but does not. It could denote lenience, forbearance, patient endurance, long suffering.

In the Bible, this word *makrothumia* can have various nuances, such as patience, slow to anger, readiness to wait. This word could imply that quality of a person who, even when there are possibilities of taking revenge, does not do it but forgives and tries to get reconciled with the enemy. The Bible presents *patience* as a quality of God, as could be seen in the response to Moses who wished to see the

glory of God (Ex 33, 18): *“The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation”* (Ex 34, 6-7). In this, the Greek word, *Makrothumos* is translated as “slow to anger”. The literal meaning would be “controlling anger” but it is only a part of the quality of Patience.

Patience becomes most evident in personal relationships. Being able to encounter the enemy with a mental equilibrium, without any thought of revenge, and willing to accept any suffering is part of patience. It would help one to accept insults, hurts, and negative reactions from others with a calm and quiet mind. Controlling one’s emotions with thoughtfulness also comes under the title of patience.

There are three levels of patience: 1. The ability to accept hurts and offences from the part of others without a thought of revenge. 2. The ability to accept all the difficulties and sufferings in life, from whatever source they may originate, and to use them for spiritual growth. Here there will be no complaints, no bitterness, no despair and no question when all this will be over. 3. The third level is still higher. It indicates a thirst for suffering and praying to God for the same. We can see such patience in many saints who considered all the suffering they had to endure as a participation in the sufferings of Jesus.

The attitude St. Paul expressed in the letter to the Colossians is an example of patience. *“I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church”* (Col 1, 24). It was this attitude that helped him to consider suffering as a gain. *“It is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed,*

but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (Phil 1, 20-23. 29; 3, 7-10).

5. Kindness

Kindness is a quality often forgotten in the midst of greed without limits and attempts to grab even what belongs to others. As religious and political terrorism increases, there grows a tendency to see others as enemies and try to defeat and destroy them. Here one forgets the truth that the one standing next to me is my brother. Kindness, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, stands in opposition to this tendency.

The Greek word is “*Chrestos*”, which means goodness, uprightness, generosity. It indicates an attitude of being loving and helpful to others. It is similar to the Hebrew word “*Rahamim*”, which expresses a mother’s attitude to the baby in her womb. This could be translated as compassion or mercy.

Kindness is a warm and friendly disposition toward another. A kind person will be polite and well mannered, respectful and considerate, caring and helpful. It is the quality of understanding, sympathy and concern for those in trouble or in need. It will be manifested in the affability of speech, generosity of conduct and forgiveness of injuries sustained. Without any consideration of the person’s behaviour towards me, kindness would encourage me to be sensitive to the needs of the other. This is the kind of feeling that forced the Good Samaritan to get down from his donkey and help the one lying by the wayside, wounded by thieves and bleeding to death (Lk 10, 34). The feeling he had could be called kindness, compassion,

sympathy. Seeing the other's need as his own, he tried to help him without expecting anything in return because he was moved by compassion or kindness. All that he wanted was to help the wounded man bleeding to death. Here we see kindness in action. It can also be called sympathy. The Greek word translated as sympathy is a combination of two words, namely *syn* (=with) and *pathein* (=suffer). Sympathy is suffering with the one who suffers and trying to do all one can to remove or at least alleviate the suffering.

Where there is such kindness there will be mutual love and respect. Kindness will prevent a person from publicizing the help given for achieving personal glory, and also from making the one who receives the help feel humiliated. In a way it is kindness that sustains our lives. It is the kindness of God that gives me life and nurtures me by providing all that I need. I experience this kindness through nature and other people. We must keep the promise of Jesus in mind: "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*" (Mt 5, 7). Ultimately, kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Expressions of kindness could be seen in friendly talks, respectful approach, readiness to help, consoling presence and an attitude that gives joy and self-confidence to the other. The Holy Spirit would help us to understand that showing mercy is not a sign of weakness and receiving help should not make one feel inferior.

6. Goodness

All that God created was good. Evil came into the world through the disobedience of man who acted against God's commandment. Now through Jesus Christ man can receive freedom from the forces of evil and participate in God's goodness. The heart of man is filled with goodness by the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for goodness is "*Agathosune*". It derives from the adjective "*Agathos*" (=good), which is a

quality of God (Mt 19, 17). In the first creation account, it is repeated several times that God saw what He created was good (Gen 1,3. 12. 18. 21. 25). When the act of creation was completed with the creation of man, “*God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good*” (Gen 1, 31). Fill the heart with this goodness and try to see and evaluate everything through the eyes of God - that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, goodness.

This fruit is the capacity of seeing good in everything, in everybody and in all circumstances and events. The Goodness in the heart would help one to see the face of God in all the people and to see the hand of God in all the events. Goodness will help individuals to see, hear, think, speak and live in a way different from what is seen and heard through the various mass media. Those who have goodness in their hearts would approach everybody and everything with a sense of goodness that could be seen as partaking in the goodness of God.

God has placed goodness in everybody’s heart, but the influence of sin dims this goodness and often covers it. That is the basic cause of all the evil in the world. The evil spirit induces people to see only what is evil in the other. The Holy Spirit works against this temptation and those who surrender themselves to the Holy Spirit will be filled with goodness, enabling them to see everything as God sees. Such persons would see what is good in the other.

7. Faithfulness

This is intrinsically related to faith and it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word is “*pistis*”; it comes from the verb *peitho* which means to persuade or be persuaded. The noun *pistis* could be translated also as faith, fidelity. Faithfulness is a quality of God, “*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*” (1 Cor 1, 9). St. Paul has called our attention many times to the faithfulness of God (1 Cor 10, 13; 2 Cor

1, 18; 1 Thes 5, 24; 2 Thes 3, 3). Those who believe in God are convinced that God is faithful. Fidelity is a quality that helps one to remain faithful to God and also to have close relationships with others.

Faithfulness is an essential quality that is needed on all levels of life. It is demonstrated by loyalty to friends, duties performed, promises kept, vows observed and being true to one's word. One must remain faithful to God, to oneself and to others. All of these are part of being faithful and it should be expressed in religious life, social life and in family relations.

What is important is not that one succeeds or not, but that one is faithful and therefore reliable. Being true to one's word, even suffering loss, to fulfil the promise one made is fidelity. In the parable of the Talents the first two servants were faithful while the third one was unfaithful to the master (Mt. 25, 14-36). Implicit in faithfulness is strong affection based on firm conviction that the object of one's fidelity deserves allegiance.

Life would become impossible without faithfulness. When international treaties are violated, when those who come to power through popular votes forget their promises, when married couples forget or discard the promises of fidelity to each other made at the time of wedding, when one fails to fulfil the promises made to God and to people, in all these and innumerable similar situations, life becomes unbearable. Man, every man and woman who are created in the image and likeness of God, and are His representatives on earth, must remain faithful to promises. The Holy Spirit would help to be faithful, but one must listen to the promptings of the Spirit and obey.

8. Gentleness

This is a quality that is essential in personal relationships. The Greek word is "*Prautes*" which is derived from the root "Prau" that indicates a quality of

the individual. Gentleness is related and grounded in humility. It is concerned with another's welfare, safety and security. It helps one to have a positive attitude towards the peculiarities of others as well as their needs. It indicates the joy one feels when something good happens to others. It prevents one from being proud and showing off one's own greatness and belittling others. On the contrary, gentleness helps a person to consider others as greater than self and be polite. Jesus shows the importance of this fruit presenting it as part of his own nature: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Mt 11, 29).

Gentleness is a disposition that is even-tempered, balanced in spirit, unpretentious, and that has the passions under control. The person who has this quality pardons injuries, corrects faults, and rules his own spirit well. Here we see no pride or bitterness or the pretension of being great that would make one to see the other as inferior. If someone points out a mistake, he will try to correct it with a grateful heart. He will be forgiving others easily. The gentle person will not keep a grudge against anyone but will desire only what is good for the other. Such a person will be always available to anyone who needs his help.

9. Self-Control

In the list of the fruits of the Holy Spirit the last one is self-control. The Greek word is *"Enkrateia"* which means strong, having mastery, being able to control one's thoughts and actions. It indicates the capacity to resist the attraction to evil tendencies, especially in the area of sexuality. It is self-mastery regardless of the circumstances, to be in control of one's self rather than to be controlled by passions, events or other people, especially when under pressure or in times of crisis.

The person with a sense of self-control will have the capacity to control his thoughts, desires and emotions; at

the same time will have a clear awareness of who he is and what his mission and limitations are. This self-knowledge would provide the capacity to remain firm in the face of obstacles; not to become provoked, without wavering in temptations, choose only what is good and live doing one's duty. The person will not have too great ambitions, no thirst for what is forbidden; there will be no desire for authority, wealth, and forbidden pleasures.

The one with self-control will be vigilant at all times to recognize the temptations in order to avoid them. There will be no outbursts of emotions, but with a calm, balanced mind would do all that is need to be done while encountering obstacles, overcoming difficult situations. He will be neither proud nor fearful, but calm and firm in decisions and dealings. That is the self-control produced by the Holy Spirit.

10. Generosity

We have already pointed out that in the Latin version of the Bible called *Vulgata* there are three more fruits of the Holy Spirit besides the nine described above. Next we turn to these three fruits. Generosity is the first fruit that was added to the above list. It is a quality that would enable one to be sensitive to the needs of the other while trying to help him with a generous heart, expecting nothing in return. The person will not keep an account of what he has done for others nor will he consider giving to the needy as a loss; it is an external expression of love, kindness and goodness of the individual.

It is partaking in the nature of God who gives everything in abundance. Generosity encourages one to give to those in need, finding satisfaction in giving, rather than accumulating wealth and becoming rich. This is true not only in the matter of material wealth but in every sphere of human life, including knowledge, expertise, relations, influence and time. Generosity is the opposite of

selfishness. It was a characteristic mark of the first Christian community: *“Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common”* (Acts 4, 32). St. Paul exhorted the faithful in Corinth to bear witness to Christ by expressing their faith through generosity: *“You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel”* (2Cor 9,11-13) This quality helps to become aware that whatever one has, be it health, wealth, talents or knowledge, is not his own but given to him for the common good, to help others in need. Generosity would encourage one to share what one is and has.

11. Modesty

Controlling the external and internal movements and appearance of a person according to his endowments, possessions and state of life is called **modesty**. This quality stands as the opposite of the attitude and lifestyle, projected through the advertisement, *“Owner’s pride, neighbour’s jealousy”*.

Modesty is a quality that is often ignored and neglected by the contemporary world that gives great importance to exhibitionism. Four virtues are commonly included under modesty: humility, studiousness, and two kinds of external modesty, namely in dress and general behaviour. Humility is the ground of modesty that curbs inordinate desire for personal excellence and inclines one to recognize one’s own worth in this true light. Studiousness moderates the desire and pursuit of truth in accordance with faith and right reason, avoiding curiosity for the forbidden. Modesty in dress and bodily adornments inclines a person to avoid not only whatever is offensive to others but whatever is not

necessary. Modesty in bodily behaviour directs a person to observe proper decorum and decency in bodily movements.

Modesty is related also to the qualities of meekness, kindness, and goodness. It teaches one to be satisfied with what is necessary and prevents the desire to show off. This sense of modesty is relevant in all areas of life. Modesty helps one to be careful not to say or do anything that might cause another person to sin. Modesty should be part of a counter culture that would stand against the contemporary tendency to expose and exhibit everything as a sign of greatness.

12. Chastity

Chastity is the virtue by which a person who is capable of passion deliberately and resolutely controls his erotic desires for love and resists the temptation to find lewd images in the media or to use others as a means of achieving his own satisfaction. God created human beings as man and woman. Chastity helps to control the emotions and desires as well as the operation of the mind and body. This virtue enables one to avoid all that is forbidden by the commandment, “Do not commit adultery”. It is intrinsically related to fidelity and self-control.

Jesus has clearly taught about the importance of this virtue: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”* (Mt 5, 27-28). The fundamental aim of sexuality is that a man and a woman be united in marriage and live as companions for the rest of their lives, giving birth to and raising children. For this the Holy Spirit helps through the fruit of chastity.

According to St. Paul, all that is against this virtue is rejection of God and therefore severe sin. Naturally one knows God and moral laws, but if one goes against it purposely, and then what would happen can be seen from

the apostle's words: *"Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct."* (Rom 1, 24-28). All the sexual deviations depicted here are sins against chastity and would seem to present a direct picture of our postmodern attitudes.

The virtue of chastity prevents people from abuse of sexuality, protects the unity and indivisibility of marriage, encourages and enables to beget and care for children in families. Chastity is a virtue closely related to modesty

The virtue of Chastity should be understood from the perspective that considers the human body is a temple of God and part of the mystical body of Christ. *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? ... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body"* (1 Cor 6, 15-20). Hence one must stay away from all kinds of sexual deviations. *"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship"* (Rom 12, 1). St. Paul emphasizes the importance of chastity when he tells, *"You were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body"*

(1Cor 6, 20).

There is similarity as well as difference between chastity and sanctity or holiness. Holy means what is set apart and totally consecrated to God. Holiness or living a holy life is leading a life in perfect obedience to the commands of God, whereas the virtue of chastity focuses attention in the area of sexuality. Controlling the sexual life according to the will of God, according to the commandment of God, in thoughts, words and deeds is called chastity.

Chastity is equally important for married and unmarried people. Keeping chastity does not mean that one should stay away from sexual relationships but it demands that one should regulate it according to the Commandments of God. Therefore, we cannot limit it to virginity and celibacy, because all the people in all the ways and states of life need to observe chastity that helps one to offer oneself as a pleasing sacrifice to God, as Paul advises: *“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”* (Rom 12, 1).

Summary

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are virtues that become effective and visible in the lives of individuals and societies through the working of the Holy Spirit. The gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit lead to fruits. Basing on Gal 5, 22-23, it is generally understood that there are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. However, the Latin version of the Bible called *Vulgata*, has added three more fruits; hence there are two opinions regarding the number of fruits.

Even when the fruits are said to be nine or twelve, one should not forget that these point to the various aspects of the same reality. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are characteristics seen in the same person. All of them are closely related to and explain each other. The fruits we see in the Greek original text are: love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control. At the same time, we can see three more, namely, generosity, modesty and chastity in the Vulgata.

All these fruits become evident in the mutual relationships of people. Of these, only one, namely joy, is seen as an inner feeling and disposition of the individual; nevertheless this also will be visible in the person's relationships and dealings with others.

Jesus has repeatedly reminded that fruits are more important than gifts and charisms (Mt 7, 21-24). Even if one gets all the gifts and charisms, but does not produce fruits, it will be of no avail. The branches that do not produce fruits will be cut off (Jn 15, 1); the tree that does not bear fruit will be cut and thrown in the fire (Mt 7, 19); the house that is built on sand will fall. Such parables call attention to the importance of bearing fruits.

The Holy Spirit produces fruits in human lives as the sap created by the roots reach the branches through the stem to produce fruits. Jesus taught this through the parable of the vine and the branches. Even when we say the fruits of the Holy Spirit, we should not forget that it is the Holy Trinity, who resides in us, is producing the fruits. For life to be fruitful one has to remain close to God by obeying the Commandments.

Jesus summarized all the laws and commandments in a new Commandment. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another"* (Jn 13, 34). *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing"* (Jn 15, 5). Jesus has taught how a person can remain in Him. *"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love"* (Jn 15, 10). That is the condition in order to be filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. *"He who does not love does not know God;*

for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins” (1 Jn 4, 8-10).

CONCLUSION

“There appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2, 3-4).

During the Last Supper, while taking leave of the disciples, Jesus promised to send them a helper to be with them forever. *“And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever” (Jn 14, 16).* Who is this helper given in response to the prayer of Jesus? What are the characteristics of that helper? We have been searching for an answer to these questions. And have seen that this promise is not about any human person but about the Spirit of God who is one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit could be qualified as the ***Hidden God***. In the Bible as well as in the teachings of the Catholic Church, we can notice a gradual growth in the understanding about the Holy Spirit. The Creed is the most authentic confession of the faith of the Catholic Church. The Second Ecumenical council that met in Constantinople in AD 381 formulated the faith in the Holy Spirit in the following words: *“And (we believe) in the Holy spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who in unity with the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets”.*

This is the creed we profess during the Holy Mass. There is a small addition in the formulation of the Creed,

recited during the Latin mass. To the confession about the origin of the Holy Spirit as “*proceeds from the Father*” just one word was added in Latin, namely *filioque*, which means **and from the son**. This addition was made in the light of the teaching of the Bible and also of Church Fathers. However, this addition created a great controversy. Maybe that is the reason why in the rubrics of Syro-Malabar Church an option is given to add or omit “and from the Son”. If we read carefully what is said about the Holy Spirit in the Bible, we can see that there is no foundation for this controversy.

We have seen the teaching about the Holy Spirit gradually unfolding in the 73 books of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Now we are trying to present a summary of the findings following the historical order of the development.

The Bible uses three symbols to indicate the Holy Spirit, namely, wind, water and fire. All the three are closely related to life and living; at the same time they are also used as symbols of empowerment and purification. It does not mean that the Holy Spirit is wind, water and fire but these symbols help us to understand the nature and working of the Holy Spirit. Special attention needs to be paid to these symbols as they are capable of generating and nurturing as well as destroying life. The Holy Spirit helps to generate Divine life in human persons and at the same time to destroy all that would stand against life.

With this we have to consider also the symbol of a dove in which the Holy Spirit appeared when Jesus received the Baptism. The dove symbolizes the people of God (Hos 7, 11) and at the same time it is a symbol of peace (Gen 8, 11). This symbol would indicate that the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus in order to reconcile God and humanity and thus establish peace on earth. The word “Trinity” never appears

in the Bible but we can see many incidents that indicate the reality that is expressed through the word Trinity. God the Father is the Creator; God the Son is the Redeemer who liberates humanity from the slavery of sin; God the Holy Spirit provides the Divine life and generates people as the children of God.

The Holy Spirit was active from the very beginning of creation. The spirit of God moved over the formless waters and created forms. The Holy Spirit was active in the Patriarchs (Joseph- Gen 41, 38), in the leaders, kings, and Prophets and empowered them for their missions. Moses wished that all the people were filled with the Holy Spirit: *“But Moses said to him (Joshua), “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!”* (Num 11, 29). Prophet Joel prophesied that the Holy Spirit will come on all the people: *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit”* (Joel 2, 28-29). These hopes and prophecies are fulfilled with the glorification of Jesus.

In the beginning of the New Testament we can see many people guided by the Holy Spirit such as the Blessed Mother, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Simeon, Hanna, the Apostles and early Christian community. However, the work of the Holy Spirit was most vivid in Jesus.

Jesus was born in Mary through the working of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1, 35); he was anointed for fulfilling His mission by the same Spirit (Mk 1, 10). The Holy Spirit was always with Jesus leading, guiding and empowering Him in all His activities (Lk 4, 18; Mt 12,28; Acts 10, 38). With the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus proclaimed the Gospel,

exorcised evil spirits, healed the sick, raised the dead, forgave the sinners and thus inaugurated the Kingdom of God on earth.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit who worked in Him would continue to guide the Apostles and taught them what the Holy Spirit would do. The Holy Spirit would abide with them forever, inspire them constantly, empower them to overcome all the obstacles, would lead them to the depths of the mystery of God, would help them to live and proclaim the Word of God, would help them to be re-born as the children of God, and teach them to pray, nay the Holy Spirit would pray through them.

The Risen Lord Jesus Christ gave the Apostles the Holy Spirit by breathing on them. The Holy Spirit who came upon them on the day of Pentecost with the sound of a storm and rested on them in the form of parted tongues of fire, brought about a total change in them. They were strengthened to bear witness to Jesus, to proclaim the Good News in public with courage. The Holy Spirit enabled them to perform signs that added credibility to their words. The tongues of fire purified them and filled them with Divine power that would push them forward, overcoming all the obstacles.

The Holy Spirit remained with the Apostles, guided them, formed Christian communities and worked through them to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The working of the Holy Spirit was revealed as gifts and charisms in them that gave credibility to the Gospel they proclaimed. The gifts and signs became fruitful in persons and communities that were rooted in love. They were filled with joy. They bore witness to Jesus through their meekness, generosity and self-control. This is what is happening since the first Pentecost and will continue until the end of the world. The helper Jesus promised is not

someone who lived and died centuries ago, but it is God who, though invisible, continues to be in our midst making His presence palpable through powerful experiences.

In the Bible we can notice that the history of salvation is divided into three stages, namely preparation, fulfilment and proclamation. 1. The first part covers the period from creation to the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is usually called the Old Testament time. 2. The time from the birth of Jesus to His death, resurrection and Ascension is called the time of fulfilment. 3. The third stage covers the time from the ascension and glorification of Jesus to His Second coming, usually called “the end of the world”. This is the time of the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth. While in the first stage attention is focused on the work of the Father, the second stage concentrates on the Redemptive work of the Son and the third gives importance to the working of the Holy Spirit. However, it should not be forgotten that throughout the entire history, from the Creation to the New Creation, the Holy Trinity, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is at work.

The Holy Spirit is God who remains always with us as light on our path, as strength in our struggles, as inspiration to proclaim the Gospel in a convincing manner, as hope guarding us from being overpowered by despair, and as a constant companion filling our hearts with joy. God who reveals Himself through the Bible is Father and Mother; brother and sister and an ever-present companion and friend.

The Holy Spirit is God who remains with us as a loving presence that gives us unending joy, undying hope, and everlasting peace that nothing can eliminate. *“If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with*

him” (Jn 14, 23). *“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper, to be with you for ever”* (Jn 14, 16). In order to receive this helper we need to do only one thing, listen to the words of Jesus, obey his commandment of love, and thus abide in His Word. Then the Kingdom of God Jesus inaugurated will become a reality, in our hearts, in the whole world; for that we pray with the Holy Spirit.

“Come Lord Jesus”

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ഗ്രന്ഥകർത്താവിന്റെ ആത്മ ബുക്സ്
പുറത്തിറക്കിയ മലയാളം ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ

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