

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, the bond of love between the Father and the Son. He has been present throughout salvation history from Genesis to Revelation, and still with us today

The Holy Spirit is God—equal in being with the Father and the Son, of the same divine nature as they are (consubstantial with them).

From the Nicene creed:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

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

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

Both the Hebrew word (ruah) and the Greek word (pneuma) for the Spirit originally meant a “breath,” or “air,” or “wind.” The Spirit is understood to be the source of inspiration, life, and movement within God’s people.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth."

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens."

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

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.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is hidden but is at work.

The Holy Spirit anointed prophets to speak God's Word, priests to intercede for the people, and kings to lead Israel against the enemies of God.

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon the Messiah and endow him with spiritual gifts
Christ begins the proclamation of the Good News by making his own the following passage from Isaiah (11:1-2)

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 favor.

A rich example of the Holy Spirit's transforming power can be seen in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus.

She is God's masterpiece, transformed by him into a luminous witness of grace from the moment of her conception. The angel Gabriel rightly addressed her as "full of grace."

And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" Luke 1:28

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary conceived Jesus, the Son of God.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

Even though the Holy Spirit is the last Person of the Trinity to be revealed, we must understand that, from the beginning, he is a part of the loving plan of our salvation from sin and of the offer of divine life.

He has the same mission as the Son in the cause of our salvation. When the Father sends the Son, he also sends the Holy Spirit.

When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable.
(CCC, no. 689)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And 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. (John 1:10-14)

The Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove over Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.

He leads Jesus into the desert before he starts his public mission.

In the Last Supper discourse in John's Gospel, Jesus speaks about the promised revelation and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13

But the Counselor, 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. – John 14:26

And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high. Luke 24:49

when the Counselor 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; John 15:26

Just before his Ascension, Jesus said these words to the Apostles:

“You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, [in all] Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is revealed at Pentecost:

The Acts of the Apostles shows how the Holy Spirit transformed the Apostles from being fearful disciples, huddling behind closed doors, into courageous witnesses.

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:1-4)

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to build, animate, and sanctify the Church.

At our Baptism, the Spirit works through the waters which take away Original Sin and actual sins and give us new life with the Triune God.

At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is conferred by the anointing with the Chrism, by which the bishop seals us so that the Holy Spirit can strengthen us to pursue the mission of Christ to transform the world.

At every Mass, the Holy Spirit changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ by the ministry of the priest.

The Holy Spirit is dynamic, transforming our bodies into temples of God and our souls into dwelling places for Christ.

Sometimes called the Paraclete, advocate or consoler, the Holy Spirit fills us with inspiration and encouragement.

The Holy Spirit comes to us as a **teacher** of the meaning and depth of Revelation. He also fills us with power, the grace to **understand** the Church's teachings and the **wisdom** to see how they apply to our lives. Finally, the Spirit puts **courage** into our hearts so that we can witness what we believe to believer and unbeliever alike. When we learn how to be open to the Holy Spirit, he shares with us the gift of **understanding** that contains the power to know Jesus and to give witness to him.

The traditional list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:1-3).

The Holy Spirit continues to give us knowledge of God, living and active in the Church.

The Catechism sets out eight ways in which the Holy Spirit provides us with an experience of God's presence (cf. CCC, no. 688):

1. When we pray and study the Scripture which the Holy Spirit inspired, we can sense his presence in the biblical words.
2. When we read the lives of the saints, their teachings and witness, we can be motivated to holiness by their example which was shaped by the Holy Spirit.
3. When we assent with obedience to the teachings of the Magisterium, we are guided by the Holy Spirit. His presence is uniquely experienced at Ecumenical Councils.
4. When we actively participate in the liturgies and Sacraments of the Church, we enter into a sacred moment when the Holy Spirit opens us to experience God, especially in the Eucharist.
5. When we give ourselves to prayer, whether that be the Rosary or the Liturgy of the Hours or meditation or other prayers, the Holy Spirit prays within us and intercedes for us.
6. When we offer ourselves to the various missionary or apostolic efforts of the Church or see signs of those efforts, we can sense the Holy Spirit at work in the world.
7. When we recognize the charisms and ministries which help build the Church, we also understand that it is the Holy Spirit providing us with the leadership we need.
8. When we dwell on the great Tradition of the Church, its marvelous history and its host of saintly witnesses, we sense the Holy Spirit's sustaining power through it all.

The Gift of Knowledge helps us to grow in our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Just as a child grows in knowledge of his parents, so will a Christian, through the Gift of Knowledge, grow to know the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit more deeply and intimately.

The Gift of Understanding helps us to comprehend the divine mysteries. This applies to doctrines, dogmas, and scriptural passages and events, but also those things that occur in a person's life.

The Gift of Wisdom is seeing the thoughts and ways of God. When a Christian sees God's ways, he or she can follow God's will, not his or her own. The best way to know the ways of God is to read Sacred Scripture, in particular the Gospels (in which Jesus Himself teaches us about the ways of God).

Gifts that guide our action, helping us to make the right choices:

The Gift of Fortitude gives us strength to stand up for our faith and for what is good in the face of danger. It makes us willing even to suffer for the truth.

The Gift of Counsel helps Christians know what they should or should not do in situations that demand a moral decision. Through the gift of Counsel, the Holy Spirit guides us in what is right and wrong. He helps us to live the commandments.

Gifts that move us to relate to God in prayer and love:

The Gift of Piety guides us to worship God through the Holy Spirit. It also rightly aligns our relationship with God as His sons and daughters. With Piety, we can worship God as He wants to be worshipped.

The Gift of Fear of the Lord gives us the capacity for awe. As the Lord expresses Himself through Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, this gift allows us to be profoundly moved by the Lord's presence and mystery. This gift also helps us to stay close to God as we fear both His just punishment for sin and offending His love.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are permanent (lasting) dispositions (inclination or even orientation) in the soul, making it more docile or submissive to God's promptings.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit are
love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control

Because of the Holy Spirit our whole being, mind, heart, soul, and body can be permeated with Love.

We may not have to do great things, but we are called to do everyday duties with great love.

“We cannot all do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” ~ Mother Teresa