THE DAILY BREAD

The Acts of the Apostles



The Holy Spirit

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

INTRODUCTION

The Forgotten Person

Try a small experiment. Ask the next devout Catholic man you know to give you a two-minute talk on God the Father. He will probably manage it. He will talk about the Creator, about being a child of God, about Jesus's relationship with His Father, maybe about the parable of the Prodigal Son. He will be in familiar territory.

Then ask him for a two-minute talk on Jesus. This will be easier. He has more material. He knows the stories.

Now ask him for a two-minute talk on the Holy Spirit.

Watch what happens.

The pause. The drifting eye. The reach for vague language. *He is… the love between the Father and the Son. He is… like the breath of God. He came down at Pentecost. He helps us, somehow.* Then a polite change of subject.

This is not a defect peculiar to your friend. It is the situation of most Catholics, including most Catholics who pray daily, attend Mass weekly, and have been confirmed for decades. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, is, in the lived imagination of the average Catholic, somewhere between a metaphor and a feeling. A dove. A flame. A sentence at the end of prayers. Something present at Confirmation that was supposed to do something but never quite seemed to.

This is a serious problem.

The Holy Spirit is not a force, an energy, or a vague divine influence. He is a Person, equal to the Father and the Son, and you are in an actual relationship with Him.

The reason it is a serious problem is that the Christian life, as the New Testament describes it, is not possible without Him. He is the One who makes us holy. He is the One who prays in us when we do not know how to pray. He is the One whose presence in your baptized soul means you are not alone in your own skin. Every grace you have ever received, every moment of faith, every act of love, every successful resistance to temptation, came through Him. He is not optional equipment. He is the engine.

If you do not know Him, you are like a man driving a car who has never opened the hood. The car keeps running. The engine keeps doing its work. But you have no idea what is actually happening, and when something goes wrong, you have no idea how to ask for help.

This book is going to open the hood.

We will spend ten chapters with the Holy Spirit: who He is, what He does, how He showed up in the Old Testament, what happened at Pentecost, what it means that He lives inside you, the seven gifts He brings, the twelve fruits He grows, the charisms He distributes, how to recognize when He is moving, and how to cooperate with His action.

By the end, the two-minute talk should be no problem.

More importantly, by the end, you should have begun a real relationship with the third Person of the Trinity, the One who has been there the whole time, doing most of the actual work, waiting to be recognized.

C H A P T E R O N E

Who He Is

Not a Force. A Person.

Begin with the single most important sentence in this book.

The Holy Spirit is a Person.

He is not a force. He is not energy. He is not the impersonal power of God. He is not a feeling that comes over you in moments of devotion. He is not the warm sensation in the back of your neck during a particularly good hymn. He is a Person, in the same sense, the *exact* same sense, that the Father is a Person and the Son is a Person.

This is the first place most Catholics go wrong about the Spirit. The language of "Spirit," combined with the imagery of dove and flame and wind, makes Him sound like a thing. He is not a thing. He is a Someone. He has a will. He has love. He can be grieved. He can be invoked. He can be spoken to and He responds.

The Doctrine

The Church teaches, and has taught from the earliest centuries, that God is one in three Persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct Persons sharing one divine nature, one will, one being.

Father, Son, and Spirit are not three different masks God wears for different occasions. They are not three different ways of describing one God. They are three eternally distinct Persons who are, mysteriously, one God. This is the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is the deepest mystery of the Christian faith.

The relations between the Persons matter. The Son is eternally *begotten* of the Father. The Spirit eternally *proceeds* from the Father and the Son. (The Eastern Orthodox object to that last phrase, the famous Filioque controversy, but the Latin Catholic Church has held it since the early centuries.) These technical terms are not games. They describe real relationships within the eternal life of God.

What this means, practically, is that the Holy Spirit has a particular identity. He is not the Father. He is not the Son. He is *the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son and who, with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified.* That is the language the Church uses every Sunday in the Creed.

Why This Matters

If the Spirit is a Person and not a force, the entire shape of your relationship with Him changes.

You can talk to a Person. You can ask a Person for things. You can listen for a Person's voice. You can love a Person, and be loved by a Person.

A force does none of these. You can use a force. You can be powered by a force. But you cannot have a friendship with electricity.

Most Catholics, in their interior life, treat the Spirit like electricity. They want to feel something. They want power for prayer, courage in temptation, energy for ministry. They are looking for the *output* of the Spirit's action. They are not looking for *Him*.

The reversal is everything. He is the One who matters. The gifts He brings are wonderful, but they are gifts because of who gives them. Wanting His effects without wanting Him is like marrying a woman for her cooking. You are missing the actual point of the marriage.

I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth. — John 14:16-17

The Name He Uses

In John's Gospel, in the long farewell discourse on the night before His death, Jesus refers to the Spirit four times by a specific word: *Paraclete*. The Greek term is hard to translate cleanly. It means, literally, *one called alongside*. It is rendered variously as Counselor, Comforter, Helper, Advocate.

The image is of a friend who comes to stand beside you. A defender, in a legal sense. A witness, in a courtroom sense. An advocate, in the sense of one who pleads your case. A consoler, in the sense of one who holds you up when you cannot stand alone.

This is the Person Jesus promised would come when He went away. Not a force to power you up. A Friend to stand beside you. To be with you, He says, forever.

How to Begin

Today, sometime before you sleep, say out loud: *Holy Spirit, I want to know You.* That is the beginning. He is a Person. He has been waiting to be addressed. He will answer, in His own way, in His own time. The address itself is the door.

C H A P T E R T W O

What He Does

The Work Underneath Everything

The Spirit's work is enormous, ongoing, and largely hidden. He is, at any given moment, doing more in your soul than you are conscious of. Here are the main things.

He Makes You Holy

This is His proper work, the work the Church specifically attributes to the Spirit. The technical word is *sanctification*. To sanctify means to make holy. Whatever holiness has ever been produced in any human being is His direct action.

This is worth pausing over. Every saint who ever lived was sanctified by Him. Every moment of charity, of patience, of forgiveness in your own life was His action, working in you, before it was yours. You did not generate it; you cooperated with it. You did not produce holiness; you let Him produce it through you.

This is also why you cannot become holy by willpower alone. We saw this in *Breaking a Sinful Habit*. The reason willpower alone fails is that holiness is not a human achievement; it is a divine action that you participate in. Without the Spirit's prior, continuing, hidden work, no one would be holy, ever. With it, even the most damaged man in the world can become a saint.

He Convicts of Sin

Jesus said this explicitly in John 16. The Spirit, when He comes, *will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.* The conviction is not the angry voice of the prosecutor we talked about in *Knowing the Father*. It is the quieter, deeper, more painful work of showing you the truth about yourself.

When you find yourself, suddenly, unable to keep doing what you were doing, when a sin you have committed for years starts to grate against your conscience in a new way, when something in you opens that had been closed, that is His action. He is the One who makes sin recognizable as sin. Without Him, sin looks normal, looks acceptable, looks like just how things are. With Him, sin starts to feel like the wrong shape, and you begin to want out.

He Brings Christ to Your Remembrance

Jesus told the disciples, on the same night, that the Spirit would *teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.* This is, among other things, why

the New Testament exists. The Gospels are not just the disciples' fading memories of things Jesus said decades earlier. They are the result of the Spirit reminding them, with precision and depth, of the words and works of Jesus and helping them understand what those words and works actually meant.

The same work continues in you. When a verse of Scripture rises in your mind exactly when you need it, that is His action. When the right words come to comfort a friend in grief, that is His action. When you suddenly see, in a passage you have read fifty times, something you never saw before, that is His action. He is the interior teacher. He is constantly making Christ present in your interior life.

He Prays in You

Paul writes, in one of the most striking sentences in the New Testament: *We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words* (Romans 8:26).

This means that, when you sit down to pray and feel that you have no idea what to say, when the words run out, when you cannot summon the proper religious sentiments, the Spirit is already praying inside you, beneath your words, beyond your words, in a depth your conscious mind cannot reach. The prayer is happening. You are participating in it more than originating it.

This is enormously consoling. Bad prayer days are not catastrophic. The Spirit is praying anyway. Your job is to show up. He does the rest.

The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. — Romans 8:26

He Gives Witness That You Are God's Son

Romans 8 again, a few verses later: *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

When you have moments, sometimes brief, sometimes longer, when you simply *know*, with a depth that has nothing to do with argument, that you are loved, that you are the Father's son, that you belong to Him, that is not autosuggestion. That is the Spirit, directly testifying to your spirit. It is one of the most important works He does, because the knowledge that you are loved by God is the foundation of everything else in the Christian life, and you would not be able to hold onto it on your own.

The Sum

The Spirit makes you holy, shows you your sin, reminds you of Christ, prays in you, and tells you that you are God's child. He does this whether you notice or not. He does it every day. He has been doing it your whole baptized life.

The chapters that follow are going to make this work easier to see. But it has been happening all along.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

The Spirit in the Old Testament

Breath, Wind, and the Promised Pouring Out

The Holy Spirit did not begin His work at Pentecost. He has been at work since the first verse of Genesis. The Old Testament is full of Him, if you know what to look for.

Ruach

The Hebrew word for the Spirit is *ruach*. It is a rich word. It means breath, or wind, or spirit, depending on context. The same word covers the breath in your lungs, the wind in the trees, and the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. The ancient Hebrews did not have separate categories for these. They were variations of the same animating reality.

The first appearance of the *ruach* is in the second verse of the Bible: *And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* He is there at the very beginning, the One who broods over the formless deep before God speaks creation into being.

A few chapters later, in Genesis 2, God forms the man out of the dust of the ground and *breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.* The breath of God animates the first human being. This is not, in Hebrew, a different concept from the Spirit hovering over the waters. It is the same *ruach*, the same animating divine breath, now placed inside a particular creature.

Already in the first two chapters of the Bible, the Spirit is doing two of His most characteristic things: making order out of chaos, and giving life.

The Spirit on the Prophets, Judges, and Kings

Throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit comes upon particular people for particular tasks. He comes upon the prophets, who suddenly speak in His name. He comes upon the judges, who suddenly find the courage to lead. He comes upon kings, who are anointed and changed.

Samson, the strongman, has the Spirit "rush upon him" in moments of crisis. Saul, the first king of Israel, is changed into "another man" when the Spirit comes upon him. David, after his anointing, has the Spirit come upon him *from that day forward*. Elijah hands his prophetic mantle to Elisha, and Elisha receives "a double portion" of his spirit. The prophets, again and again, write that *the word of the LORD came to me* and *the Spirit of the LORD was upon me.*

But notice the limitation. The Spirit comes upon individuals, temporarily, for specific tasks. He is not given to the whole people. He is not given permanently. He empowers from outside; He does not yet indwell from inside. The Old Testament prophet who has the Spirit is the exception, not the rule.

The Promise

Several of the prophets, looking forward, anticipate a day when this will change. When the Spirit will no longer be the exclusive property of the few but will be poured out on all flesh.

Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones, and God says, *I will put My Spirit within you, and you shall live.* He sees a new covenant in which God will give a new heart and a new spirit to His people. *I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My ordinances.* The new heart is, specifically, a heart with the Spirit inside it.

Jeremiah sees the same vision. A new covenant, a law written on the heart rather than on stone tablets, the people knowing the Lord from the least to the greatest. The Spirit, internalized.

Joel sees the most striking vision of all:

Afterward I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Even on the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out My Spirit. — Joel 2:28-29

This is the promise. A day will come when the Spirit will not be the privilege of a few prophets. He will be poured out on everyone. Old men, young men, slaves, women, sons, daughters. The whole people of God will have what only Moses and David and Isaiah used to have.

Why This Matters

It matters because it sets up what happens at Pentecost, and at every baptism since. When you were baptized, you received what the prophets longed to see. You received what David received from his anointing, what Elijah handed to Elisha, what Isaiah and Jeremiah carried in their bones, except permanently, internally, as part of your own life.

You are walking around with what the Old Testament saints would have given anything to have. Most modern Catholics have no idea.

The next chapter is about the moment this changed.

C H A P T E R F O U R

Pentecost

The Birth of the Church

The book of Acts opens with the eleven apostles, plus Mary and a small group of disciples, in an upper room in Jerusalem. Jesus has ascended ten days earlier. He has told them to wait in the city for "the promise of the Father." They do not know exactly what they are waiting for. They are waiting anyway.

It is the Jewish feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Passover, originally a harvest festival, originally also a commemoration of the giving of the Law at Sinai. The city is full of pilgrims from across the Mediterranean world: Jews from Egypt, from Asia Minor, from Rome, from Mesopotamia, all of them in town for the feast.

And then this:

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent 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

This is the moment. The promise of Joel, the new covenant of Jeremiah, the new heart of Ezekiel, all of it lands in that upper room in a particular ten minutes of a particular morning in approximately the year 33 AD.

What Actually Happened

Three signs accompany the descent.

A sound like a violent wind, *ruach* in physical form, filling the house. The same wind that hovered over the waters at creation, that breathed life into Adam, that drove the prophets, now in the room.

Tongues of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. Not one large flame for the group, but a flame for each individual. Each person personally indwelt. The Spirit is given collectively to the Church but received personally by each member.

And the gift of tongues, the disciples speaking in languages they had not learned, languages spoken by the pilgrims from the various nations gathered in Jerusalem for the feast. Each visiting Jew, hearing the disciples, heard the gospel in his own native language.

This last sign is theologically significant. It is the reversal of the Tower of Babel. At Babel, in Genesis 11, the prideful humans had built a tower to reach the heavens, and God had confused their languages so they could not understand each other. The unity of the human race was broken on that day. At Pentecost, the Spirit gives back what was lost. Different languages are still spoken, but now the message of God reaches across them. The Church, born in this moment, is from the beginning a community of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

The Effect on Peter

The most stunning evidence of what happened is the change in Peter.

Six weeks earlier, Peter, the leader of the apostles, was in the courtyard of the high priest while Jesus was being tried inside. A servant girl asked Peter if he was one of Jesus's disciples. Peter denied it, three times, with curses, in front of a small crowd. He fled. He wept bitterly.

Six weeks later, after the descent of the Spirit, Peter stands up in front of the entire Pentecost crowd in Jerusalem, including some of the same people who had condemned Jesus to death, and preaches a long sermon explicitly accusing them of having crucified the Messiah. *This Jesus, whom you crucified, God has raised up.* He calls them to repentance.

Three thousand of them are baptized that day.

This is not the same Peter. The Peter who could not face a servant girl is now publicly preaching to the people who killed his Master. Something has happened. The Spirit has happened. He has done in Peter, in ten minutes, what Peter could not have done for himself in a hundred years.

What This Means for You

Pentecost is not just a historical event. It is the moment the New Covenant publicly began. The same Spirit who descended on the apostles in that upper room descended on you at your baptism. The same fire. The same indwelling. The same equipping.

This is not poetic exaggeration. This is what the Church teaches. Every baptized Catholic has received the Holy Spirit. Every confirmed Catholic has had that gift strengthened and matured. The Pentecost in the upper room was the public, foundational event; your own Pentecost happened on the day you were baptized, in whatever small church, before whatever family was gathered to watch. The reality was the same.

The next chapter is about what that ongoing presence actually means.

C H A P T E R F I V E

The Indwelling

Your Body Is a Temple

Read this sentence slowly: *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.*

That is Paul, writing to the Corinthians, around the year 56. He is making, almost in passing, one of the most astonishing claims in the entire New Testament.

Your body, this body, the one you are sitting in right now, is a temple. Not metaphorically. Not in the sense that you should treat your body with respect, the way you would treat a sacred building. Literally. The Holy Spirit lives inside it. He has been living inside it since your baptism.

What "Indwelling" Means

The technical word is *inhabitation*. The Catholic theological tradition has held, from the earliest centuries, that the Holy Spirit dwells, personally and really, in the soul of every baptized person in a state of grace. Not as an influence. Not as a presence that occasionally drops by. Permanently, until you push Him out by mortal sin.

This is sometimes called the *indwelling of the Trinity*, because the Three Persons are inseparable. Where the Spirit dwells, the Father and the Son dwell too. Jesus said this explicitly: *If anyone 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* (John 14:23).

The Greek word for "make our home" is *monēn poiēsometha*. It means, literally, *we will make a dwelling*. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Most Holy Trinity, take up residence inside a baptized soul.

This is the deepest fact about you. It is more important than your job, your family, your accomplishments, your sins, your story. The Triune God lives inside you. Right now.

Why Most Catholics Do Not Live as If This Is True

If you really, fully internalized this fact, the practical consequences would reshape your life.

You would not be able to look at a stranger the same way, because a stranger might be a baptized soul, and a baptized soul is a temple of the Holy Spirit. You would not be able to use your own body for sin the same way, because the body in which you are about to commit the sin is a temple. You would not be able to drift through prayer the same way,

because the One you are trying to speak to is already inside you, closer to you than your own thoughts.

Most Catholics live as if God is somewhere else. Up in heaven. In the tabernacle at church. Out in the universe. When they want to pray, they reach out, mentally, toward a distant location.

This is exactly backwards. He is not out there. He is in. The deepest place in your own soul is not yours. It belongs to Him. He has been waiting there the whole time.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own. — 1 Corinthians 6:19

The Three Witnesses

This is so important that the Church gives us three witnesses to it.

First, Scripture. The passages in John 14, in 1 Corinthians 3 and 6, in Romans 8, in Ephesians, all teach the same doctrine. The Spirit dwells in the baptized. *The Spirit who dwells in you* is one of Paul's favorite phrases.

Second, the saints. Read the writings of Teresa of Avila in the *Interior Castle*. Read John of the Cross. Read Elizabeth of the Trinity, whose entire spirituality was built around this single doctrine. These are people who lived as if this were really true, and the result was the kind of spiritual depth that, frankly, most modern Catholics do not approach.

Third, your own life. You have probably had moments, sometimes only briefly, when you felt that God was inside you. Not next to you. Inside you. A welling up, a peace, a sense of being held from within. That was not your imagination. That was Him. He has been there the whole time. The moments of awareness are the moments when the curtain lifts a little.

How to Begin Living As If This Is True

A few minutes each day, sit quietly and say, interiorly: *Holy Spirit, You are in me. I worship You. I love You. I want to be aware of You today.*

You do not need to feel anything in response. He is there whether you feel Him or not. The practice is not to *generate* His presence; it is to *acknowledge* it. Over months and years, this simple acknowledgment slowly reshapes the interior life. You stop reaching out for a distant God. You start meeting the God already inside.

This is the deepest part of the Christian life. The saints have always known it. The next chapter is about what He brings with Him when He moves in.

C H A P T E R S I X

The Seven Gifts

The Standard Equipment

When you were confirmed, the bishop laid his hands on your head, anointed you with chrism, and prayed that the Holy Spirit, with His seven gifts, would come upon you.

You may not remember this. You may have been twelve. You were probably more concerned with whether you had picked a saint name that would embarrass you later.

The prayer mattered anyway. The gifts were given. You have them. They are part of the standard equipment of every confirmed Catholic. Most Catholics do not know what they are, do not invoke them, and do not particularly use them. This is, again, the engine running unobserved.

Where They Come From

The seven gifts are listed in Isaiah 11, in a prophecy about the coming Messiah:

> *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 the fear of the LORD. — Isaiah 11:2-3*

Six gifts in the Hebrew; the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate translate one of them twice, giving us seven, the number of fullness in Hebrew thought. The Church has used these seven for nearly two thousand years.

The gifts were given to Christ in their fullness. Through Him, they are given to every baptized soul. At Confirmation, they are deepened and matured for the work of adult Christian life. Here is what each one actually does.

Wisdom

The gift of seeing things from God's point of view. Not cleverness. Not intelligence. The supernatural capacity to recognize what matters, what is good, what is true, in the largest possible frame. The wise man knows what to value, in what order, for what reasons. When you find yourself, in the middle of an ordinary day, suddenly stepping back from a frantic project and seeing it the way it will look on your deathbed, that is wisdom moving in you. The Spirit is lifting your gaze.

Understanding

The gift of grasping, from the inside, what the truths of the faith actually mean. Not memorization. Not theological vocabulary. The deep penetration of meaning. When you read a passage of Scripture you have read a hundred times and suddenly see what it is actually saying, that is understanding. The Spirit is opening the text from inside.

Counsel

The gift of right judgment in particular situations. What should I do tomorrow? What should I say to my son tonight? How should I respond to this difficult email? Counsel is the practical, on-the-ground knowing of the next right step. When the answer comes to you in prayer, quietly, with a sense of rightness, that is counsel. The Spirit is your inner adviser.

Fortitude

The gift of courage to do the right thing when it is hard. Not raw bravado. The supernatural strength to act on what you know to be true, even when the cost is high. Fortitude is what got the martyrs to the lions. It is also what gets the ordinary husband through the hard year when leaving would be easier. The Spirit is in your spine when you stand up.

Knowledge

The gift of seeing created things in their right relationship to God. Knowing that the world, beautiful as it is, is not the final good. Knowing that career, status, possessions are real but not ultimate. Knowledge is the gift that lets you enjoy a sunset without confusing it for God, that lets you love your family without making them an idol. The Spirit gives you the proper order of loves.

Piety

The gift of filial affection toward God. Not religiosity. Not duty. The warm, real, son-to-Father love. When you find yourself, sometimes unexpectedly, just glad to be in His presence, just wanting to be near Him, just feeling tenderness toward Him without anything in particular happening, that is piety. The Spirit is teaching you to love your Father.

Fear of the Lord

The most misunderstood gift. It is not being afraid of God in the sense of being scared He will punish you. It is the reverent awe a son feels at the magnitude and holiness of his Father. The combination of love and reverence that makes you not want to disappoint Him, not because He will lash out, but because you love Him too much to grieve Him. The Spirit gives you the proper interior posture before Holiness Himself.

How to Use Them

These gifts are not theoretical equipment. They are operational. They are working in you, mostly under the surface, every day of your life. The way to use them better is to ask.

Each morning, briefly, invoke the gift you need that day. *Spirit of Wisdom, give me wisdom in the conversation with my boss today. Spirit of Fortitude, give me courage in the hard part of this afternoon. Spirit of Counsel, show me what to say to my wife about the thing we have been fighting about.*

You will not always feel an immediate answer. The gifts often work invisibly, shaping you below the level of awareness. But the asking matters. The Spirit honors the request. Over time, you will notice things going better than they should have. That is Him. He has been there.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

The Twelve Fruits

What He Grows in You

The gifts are what He brings. The fruits are what He grows.

Paul gives the list in Galatians 5. The Catholic tradition has expanded it slightly to twelve, but the foundation is Paul:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. — Galatians 5:22-23

The Vulgate and the Catholic tradition add generosity, modesty, and chastity, giving twelve. The number is not the point. The point is the pattern.

Fruits Are Not Gifts

The distinction matters. The seven gifts are infused; they are given directly, at baptism and confirmation. The twelve fruits are *grown*. They are what the Spirit produces in a soul that cooperates with His action over time.

A fruit tree does not produce fruit instantly. It is planted. It grows. It is watered. It is pruned. After several years, fruit appears. The fruit is real, but it took the slow, hidden work of the tree to produce.

This is how the fruits of the Spirit work. They are evidence. They are the recognizable signs that the Spirit's work in a particular soul is taking. A man who has been walking with the Holy Spirit faithfully for ten years looks, to those who know him, different from the man he was ten years before. Not always dramatically. But the fruits are appearing.

The Twelve

Love. Not feeling-love. Willed love. The persistent choosing of the other's good. The man who, over years, has stopped exploding at his wife, stopped resenting his teenagers, started actively wanting the good of the colleague he used to envy, is growing in love. The Spirit is producing it.

Joy. Not pleasure. Not cheerfulness. A deep, settled gladness that does not depend on circumstances. Joy survives bad news. Joy can coexist with grief. Joy is the felt awareness that, beneath everything, God is good and the story has a good ending. The man who has joy is not faking; he just has internal access to something most men do not have.

Peace. The quietness of the soul that knows itself held. Not absence of conflict. Not the absence of stress. Peace persists in stress. The man with peace can handle a crisis without coming apart, because something deeper than the crisis is settled.

Patience. The capacity to suffer without complaint. Not gritted teeth; the genuine ability to wait, to bear, to keep going, without bitterness. The man growing in patience does not stop having hard things; he stops being demolished by them.

Kindness. The instinct to give. To be helpful, to be warm, to be on someone's side without having calculated whether it benefits you. The man growing in kindness does small good things without keeping score.

Goodness. Moral solidity. The reliable rightness of behavior that does not require constant supervision. The man growing in goodness is, increasingly, just trustworthy. You can leave him with a task, a confidence, a temptation, and the outcome will not depend on whether anyone is watching.

Generosity. Open-handedness. The willingness to give time, money, attention, energy, without the small voice in the back of the mind calculating the cost. Generosity is one of the great signs of the Spirit's growth; misers do not bear it as a fruit.

Gentleness. Strength under control. Not weakness. The man with gentleness has not lost his strength; he has learned to wield it without bruising people. The husband who can disagree with his wife without crushing her, the father who can correct his son without shaming him, has grown in gentleness.

Faithfulness. The capacity to keep showing up. To keep one's word, over years, in small things and large. Faithfulness is what makes a marriage of forty years possible. It is also what makes the daily prayer life of an old saint possible. The Spirit grows it slowly.

Modesty. Right self-presentation. Not false self-deprecation; the absence of the need to inflate. The modest man does not have to be the loudest in the room. He does not need to win the conversation. He has stopped competing for attention.

Self-control. Mastery of the appetites by the will under grace. The capacity to say no to the second drink, the third helping, the late-night impulse. Self-control is famously hard to grow because the appetites are loud, but it does grow, over years, in souls cooperating with the Spirit.

Chastity. Sexual integrity. The proper ordering of desire toward love rather than toward consumption. The married chaste man loves his wife with his body; the single chaste man

loves God and his neighbors without using anyone. Chastity is one of the most misunderstood of the fruits and one of the most beautiful when fully grown.

How to Watch for Them

You will not necessarily feel the fruits growing. They appear, the way the new growth on a tree appears in spring. One day you notice that you did not react with anger the way you would have last year. Another day you notice that the thing that used to enrage you now mildly amuses you. Another day you notice that the woman you used to find threatening you now genuinely like.

These are not random improvements. They are the Spirit's work, becoming visible. Notice them. Thank Him for them. The acknowledgment is itself part of the cooperation that lets more fruit grow.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

The Charisms

The Gifts for Service

The gifts of the Spirit, the seven we just walked through, are given to every baptized Christian for personal sanctification. They are the standard equipment. The fruits are what grows when they are exercised.

There is a third category that is often confused with both, but is distinct. The Church calls these the *charisms*, from the Greek *charisma*, meaning *gift of grace*. These are supernatural gifts given to particular people, in particular times, for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The List in 1 Corinthians 12

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. — 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

The list is not exhaustive. Paul gives different versions in different letters. Romans 12 lists ministry, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leading, mercy. Other lists add hospitality, evangelism, helps, administration.

The principle is the same. The Spirit distributes particular gifts to particular people for the good of the Church. Not everyone gets every gift. No one gets all the gifts. Each Christian gets some, suited to that person's place in the Body and that person's vocation.

The Distinction From the Gifts and Fruits

The seven gifts are *for sanctification*. They make you holy.

The twelve fruits are *evidence of sanctification*. They are the visible result of the gifts being used.

The charisms are *for service*. They are not primarily about your own holiness, although exercising them well does make you holier. They are primarily about what the Spirit wants to do through you for someone else.

This is why a man can have a strong charism and still be a fairly mediocre Christian. Paul deals with this directly in Corinth. The Corinthians had spectacular charisms, tongues, prophecy, healing, and were also, by Paul's account, immature, divided, and proud. He spends most of his first letter to them trying to get them to grow up. The charisms were real. The personal sanctity was uneven.

This is also why a man can have very subtle, even unrecognized charisms and be a great saint. Most of the saints have not been famous for spectacular gifts. They have been famous for love, which is the fruit Paul places above all of them in the next chapter.

The Catholic Position

A few things to clarify, because this is an area where confusion is common.

First, the charisms did not die out with the apostles. The Church has never taught this. Healings, prophecies, supernatural knowledge, deliverance, tongues, all of these have continued through Church history. They were prominent in the early Church, less prominent in the medieval period (though still present in the lives of many saints), and have been recovered in widespread fashion in the modern era through what is called the Charismatic Renewal, which began in the Catholic Church in 1967 and has been affirmed by every pope since.

Second, the charisms are not the same as personal holiness. A man with the gift of healing is not necessarily holier than a man without it. He has been given a tool for the service of others. What matters is whether he uses it humbly, in obedience to the Church, and in love.

Third, all charisms must be discerned. The same letter where Paul lists the gifts also tells the Corinthians to *test the spirits*, because not every supernatural experience is from the Holy Spirit. Some are from the human imagination. Some are from elsewhere. The Church provides discernment through pastors, spiritual directors, and the magisterium. Charisms exercised outside of this discernment quickly become problems.

What Charisms You Might Have

You almost certainly have some. Whether you know what they are is another question.

Sit with the question this week. What have other people consistently told you that you are good at, in matters of faith and service? Are you the man people come to in crisis because you know what to say? That may be the charism of counsel or consolation. Are you the man whose prayers seem to be answered with unusual frequency? That may be the gift of

intercessory prayer. Are you the man whose words about the faith have moved someone to come back? That may be the charism of evangelism.

The Catholic tradition has, in recent decades, developed tools for discerning charisms, especially through Sherry Weddell's work at the Catherine of Siena Institute. If you are serious about discovering what gifts the Spirit has given you for the service of others, that work is worth seeking out.

The deeper point is this: the Spirit gave you something. Specific gifts. For the building up of His Body. The Church needs you to use them. You will be far less restless once you know what they are and have begun to exercise them.

C H A P T E R N I N E

How to Recognize Him Moving

Discernment of His Action

Most Catholic men do not realize how much of their interior life is the Spirit's action. They attribute their good impulses to themselves and their bad impulses to themselves, and they treat both as essentially their own.

This is wrong. Most of the good in you is not from you. It is from the Spirit, working in you, sometimes invisibly. Learning to recognize His movement is one of the most important skills in the spiritual life.

The Signs of the Spirit's Action

How do you know it is Him? Several reliable signs.

Peace. Even when what He is calling you to is hard, the call itself comes with peace. Not happiness. Not absence of difficulty. A deep, settled sense that this is right. When you find yourself, after wrestling with a decision, arriving at a place of quiet certainty, even though the path is costly, that is His confirmation.

Movement Toward God. The Spirit always moves you toward God, never away. Toward prayer, not away. Toward the sacraments, not away. Toward humility, not pride. Toward generosity, not grasping. If you find yourself drawn to confession after avoiding it for months, that is Him. If you find yourself opening Scripture you have not touched in a year, that is Him.

Love for Christ. When you find yourself, sometimes for no reason, warmer toward Jesus than you were a month ago, that is the Spirit. He is, in Catholic theology, the love between the Father and the Son, given to us. When you feel an increased affection for the Lord, you are participating in that eternal love.

Self-Forgetfulness. The Spirit moves you outside yourself. Toward the needs of others, toward causes larger than your career, toward the kind of work where the question of your own benefit recedes. The man who suddenly notices the poor for the first time, after years of not seeing them, is being moved by the Spirit.

Concrete Action. The Spirit, when He moves, produces fruit. Not just feeling. Not just inspiration. Actual action in the world. He moves you to do something. To make the phone call. To go to confession. To pick up the rosary. To stop the bad habit. To start the good one.

If a supposed movement of the Spirit leaves you only with a warm feeling and no action, it is probably not Him.

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. — John 3:8

The Signs That It Is Not Him

By contrast, there are reliable signs that a movement is *not* from the Holy Spirit, even when it is dressed in religious language.

Anxiety. The Spirit does not produce panic. He produces sober urgency, sometimes; never anxiety. If a religious impulse comes with a frantic, churning quality, with the sense that you must do this immediately or everything will collapse, that is not Him. The enemy uses urgency. The Spirit uses peace, even in serious matters.

Self-Importance. The Spirit does not move you to think more of yourself. He moves you to think less of yourself, in the sense that you take up less of your own attention. An "inspiration" that ends with you cast as the hero of a religious drama is suspect.

Division. The Spirit unifies. He builds up the Body. He brings people together around Christ. An impulse that ends with you despising your fellow Catholics, dividing from your parish, or holding yourself above the magisterium, is not from Him. The fruit of the Spirit is love. Where you find the opposite, you find a different source.

Disobedience to the Church. The Spirit does not contradict the teaching of the Catholic Church. He is the One who guarantees that teaching. The supposed "inspiration" that tells you to disregard a confessor's advice, a clear teaching of the magisterium, or the counsel of a sane spiritual director, is not Him. It is, in nearly every case, your own ego in religious vestments.

The Slow Skill

Recognizing the Spirit's action is a skill, like recognizing a particular friend's voice in a crowd. You learn it by exposure. By spending time with Him. By making mistakes and being corrected. By comparing notes with other Christians whose discernment is more developed than yours.

If you have a spiritual director, this is one of the central things spiritual direction is for. If you do not, find a wise priest, a holy older man, or a faithful spouse, and bring your interior movements to them. Ask what they hear. The discernment of the Spirit is, in part, a communal work. He speaks to His Church, not just to individuals in isolation.

Over years, you will get better at this. You will start to recognize the particular texture of His voice. You will know, with increasing reliability, when He is moving and when something else is. This is one of the greatest gifts a mature Catholic life develops. Pursue it.

C H A P T E R T E N

How to Cooperate

Being Filled With the Spirit

Paul writes to the Ephesians: *Be filled with the Spirit.*

The Greek grammar is striking. The verb is in the present passive imperative. *Be being filled.* It is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing reality. You do not get filled once at confirmation and coast for the rest of your life. You get filled, daily, continually, by repeated submission and openness.

The question is how.

Daily Invocation

The simplest practice: ask Him.

The Church has, for centuries, used the prayer *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. Come, Holy Spirit. The full Latin prayer is sung at Pentecost and is one of the great hymns of Christian worship. But the short form, the three words, is the daily prayer.

Begin each day with it. Before you get out of bed. *Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me today. Lead me.* You do not need a long formula. The invitation is the point. He is in you already; you are asking Him to take more of the wheel.

The traditional longer form is worth memorizing:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

This is the prayer the saints have prayed for over a thousand years. It still works.

The Sacraments

The sacraments are how the Spirit ordinarily comes. Confession infuses sanctifying grace; Confirmation strengthens the gifts; the Eucharist increases the union with Christ through which the Spirit's life flows.

If you want to be filled with the Spirit, the first practical answer is to use the sacraments fully. Mass on Sundays at minimum, more if you can. Confession monthly, more if your

conscience needs it. Eucharistic Adoration when available. Each of these is the Spirit's own ordained pipeline. He fills the soul that shows up at His designed places of meeting.

Scripture

The Spirit inspired the Scriptures. He speaks through them, still, today. Reading Scripture slowly, in the presence of the Spirit, is one of the most reliable ways to be filled.

A simple practice: pick a passage. Ask the Spirit, *Open this to me.* Read it slowly. Notice what stops you. Sit with what stops you. Ask Him what He is showing you. This is the heart of what the Church calls *lectio divina*. Done daily, even for ten minutes, it changes the soul.

Surrender

The deeper truth is that being filled with the Spirit requires emptying yourself of the things that crowd Him out.

He cannot fill a soul that is already full of itself. The proud man has no room for Him. The man whose mind is constantly noisy has no room for Him. The man whose schedule is so packed that prayer never makes the list has no room for Him.

Daily surrender means letting go, in some small way each day, of the grip you have on your own life. The prayer of Charles de Foucauld is one of the great surrender prayers:

Father, I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You; I am ready for all, I accept all.

This prayer, prayed in the morning, slowly empties out the resistance. The Spirit can then fill the space. He is gentle. He does not push in. He waits to be invited.

Other People

You will not be filled with the Spirit alone. The Spirit moves through the Body of Christ; you receive Him, in part, through your participation in the Church.

This means a real parish life. A small group of men who pray together. A spiritual director if you can find one. Holy friendships. Service of the poor. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The Spirit is found where He is being poured out for others, and you are filled, in part, by being part of that pouring.

The Cumulative Effect

None of this happens overnight. Most of it does not feel like much, day by day. You will not, on the average morning after saying *Come, Holy Spirit*, feel a rush of fire descending on your head.

What you will get, over years, is something deeper. The slow filling. The gradual transformation of the man you were into the man He is making you. The fruits start appearing. The gifts start operating more freely. The voice gets clearer. The peace gets deeper. The desires get reordered. You start to recognize, looking back, that the man you were ten years ago was not the man you are now, and the difference is Him.

This is what "filled with the Spirit" actually means, for most Christians, most of the time. Not the dramatic experiences. The slow filling that has been happening since your baptism and that increases every day you cooperate with Him.

CONCLUSION

Come, Holy Spirit

For more than a thousand years, the Catholic Church has prayed, at Pentecost, a sequence called the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. The Golden Sequence. It is one of the great prayers of the Christian tradition. It is also a fitting end to this book.

Here is part of it, in English:

Come, Holy Spirit, send down from heaven the radiance of Your light. Come, Father of the poor, come, giver of gifts, come, light of hearts. Greatest Consoler, sweet guest of the soul, sweet refreshment. Rest in toil, coolness in heat, comfort in tears. O most blessed Light, fill the inmost heart of Your faithful. Without Your divine power, nothing is in man, nothing is innocent. Wash what is unclean, water what is dry, heal what is wounded. Bend what is rigid, warm what is cold, straighten what is crooked. Give to Your faithful, who trust in You, Your seven sacred gifts. Give reward to virtue, give salvation in the end, give eternal joy.

Pray it. Slowly. Aloud if you can. Notice what each line is asking for.

Rest in toil. If your work has been crushing you, that is Him you are asking for.

Coolness in heat. If you have been burning with anger, with lust, with anxiety, that is Him you are asking for.

Comfort in tears. If you have been grieving, that is Him you are asking for.

Wash what is unclean. If there is sin you cannot get out of yourself, that is Him you are asking for.

Water what is dry. If your prayer life has been arid for months or years, that is Him you are asking for.

Heal what is wounded. If you carry a wound, in your family of origin, in your marriage, in your faith, that is Him you are asking for.

Bend what is rigid. If you have become hard, defensive, unable to receive, that is Him you are asking for.

Warm what is cold. If your heart has gone cold toward God, toward your wife, toward your children, toward your own life, that is Him you are asking for.

Straighten what is crooked. If you know there are bent places in you that have been bent for a long time, that is Him you are asking for.

He is the answer to every one of those lines. He has been there the whole time. He is the engine of the spiritual life. He is the One who has been doing most of the actual work, while you were giving credit to yourself or to your stained-glass picture of God.

He is a Person. He is in you. He has gifts to give, fruits to grow, charisms to distribute, peace to bestow. He is patient. He is not in a hurry. He will be with you, Jesus said, *forever*.

The two-minute talk, if you ever have to give it, is something like this: *The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. He proceeds from the Father and the Son and is worshiped and glorified with Them. He was promised by the prophets, came in fullness at Pentecost, and was poured out on me at my baptism. He lives in me as in a temple. He is making me holy. He brings seven gifts and grows twelve fruits and distributes charisms for the service of the Body. He prays in me when I cannot. He testifies to me that I am the Father's son. He is the love between the Father and the Son, eternally given. And He is, right now, available, attentive, and waiting to be invited more deeply in.*

That talk is the right answer. But more important than the talk is the prayer. Pray it tonight. Pray it tomorrow morning. Pray it every day for the rest of your life.

Come, Holy Spirit.

He will come. He is already here.

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