

The Spirituality of God's Worship, the Father, in the Holy Spirit

by Fr. Carlo Colonna, S.J.

This year I would like to offer my readers some meditations on the Spirituality of God's Worship in Spirit and Truth, as Jesus tells us in John's Gospel, *"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:23-24).

Here is the highest peak that we have to climb to reach the top, and, once there, we will worship the Father in spirit and truth. This peak is called "the peak of the Spirit and of Truth". If we join these two terms we could also say: "the peak of the Spirit of truth", which is one of the names of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we are called to worship the Father through the Holy Spirit. We therefore find ourselves within this powerful worship. We are enveloped by it, and we are like an army of worshipers. We are filled by worship, by that same worship coming from the Holy Spirit.

This peak is not far from us, because it can be found in the heart of each worshiper of God the Father. The Holy Spirit has been poured in our hearts of believers and we do not limit ourselves to loving God and his commandments with all our heart, our mind and our strength, but we also worship Him with all our heart, our mind and our strength. The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of God's love, but also the Spirit of God's worship. He who has the fullness of God's Spirit becomes a true worshiper of the Father in spirit and truth, a member of God's family, a host to the wedding banquet of the Lamb, where the table is the altar from which God is exalted and magnified and uplifted in a never ending song of praise and peace.

Let us try and enter this high place, which is the Holy Spirit, and let us try and seize some of its innermost life, which will become our own life as we become true worshipers of the Father in spirit and truth. This is a blessed place, where we can enjoy, every day, the light and the richness of God's splendor as it is written: *"Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and glory are in his sanctuary"* (Psalm 96,6). This is God's sanctuary in the Spirit, in which the worshippers are enveloped and empowered. They never cease worshipping and praising God, so mighty and powerful in his splendor, with all their forces and beyond. The prophet Isaiah says: *"Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away"* (Isa 35:10). This is a perfect description of such high and divine realities! God's worship on the highest peaks of the Holy Spirit is the place where all the worshippers of the Father are totally surrounded by and immersed in his majesty and beauty, in his spirit and his splendor, filled with joy and praise. All these things come from God and his entire sanctuary is filled by them. They are *"what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"* -- *the things God has prepared for those who love him*", as claimed by the apostle Paul (1 Cor 2:9).

Let us then draw strength from this reality and let us develop the spirituality of God's worship, the Father in the Holy Spirit, because this is our calling as believers in God through the revelation of his Son/Truth, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which has been poured in our hearts.

Jesus says that the Father is looking for such worshippers. God is jealous of his worshippers. He first showed his attachment in relation to Israel, God's chosen people, by separating her from all the other pagan nations, and thus making her a people of worshippers. But how many times did God suffer and cry because Israel did not respond to her highest calling and turned to idols and false divinities instead, just like the pagans did! God's plan, as He wanted to accomplish it, not only included Israel as his worshippers, but also all the other nations on earth. But here again, how much suffering and how many tears God the Father had to endure and to shed. How high was the price He had to pay in order of making the nations of the earth his worshippers!

God's suffering and tears are not to be considered mere pious realities, unworthy of God's highest spirituality, of One who can neither suffer nor cry. Although God cannot suffer or cry for insignificant and stupid things, because He is so far from them, he can feel hurt for vital and essential realities while they are incomplete until they will reach their accomplishment. He is like a woman who suffers and cries in the pangs of birth until her baby is finally born.

The coming of Messiah, blessed be his Name forever, was necessary, both for Israel and the nations. And it was even more necessary for this same Messiah to suffer and cry over unfaithful Jerusalem and to be crucified and shed his blood on the Cross. Why was it necessary? To free all men from idolatry, purifying and sanctifying them and preparing them to become true worshippers of the Father in spirit and truth. This is how

the Father has tried to shape his true worshippers in spirit and truth! These realities cannot be understood as part of our normal knowledge, but they are seized by a supernatural intellect, enlightened by the Spirit. Let us thank the Father for this gift!

Messiah has come, and He himself is now announcing that the time has come when Jews and Gentiles will mount together, where? To Zion? To other mounts of worshipping? No. They will ascend to the highest peak that does not belong to this world. It is the mount of the Holy Spirit. What will they do there? They will be standing in the Father's presence and they will adore Him in spirit and truth!

Paul the Apostle was one of the first men to ascend to these highest peaks of the spirit and truth. His experience changes the history of humanity forever and he describes this apocalyptic event in these terms: *"For through Him, (Messiah, the Truth, in whom the Father reveals Himself fully), we both (Jews and Gentile) have access to the Father by one Spirit"* (Eph 2:18). What does it mean that "we have access"? It means that we are standing before God's divine Presence. What for? To worship him in spirit and truth as it is written about God's divine throne : *"The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."* (Rev 22:3-4).

I cannot help rejoicing in the Spirit, noticing that, under the sweet guidance of the Spirit who dwells in our hearts and in our lives, a messianic Jew believer in Jesus, and an Italian gentile believer, coming from the nations, are now sharing this common project. Every two weeks, alternatively, we will publish a short comment on Worship of the Father through the Holy Spirit, according to the power and the wisdom that the Spirit is specifically giving each one of us. The Father has given his gift to both Jews and pagans, and they are now both renewed by the Spirit of Christ and enabled to become true worshippers of the same Father.

I welcome with sincere joy my brother in Christ and worshipper of the Father in the Holy Spirit, Rabbi and Messianic Jew Stuart Dauermann. I hope that other Jews and Gentiles, believers in Jesus, will follow us in this project and will even venture themselves further and beyond. I hope they will fulfill their calling and become true worshippers of the Father in the Holy Spirit. I also hope that they will not tread this path alone and that they will not in some manner be in competition with one another. On the contrary, I hope that that they will work together, urged by charity according to the Spirit, who makes us one with the Father and the Son.

This is the prophetic sign of the new times in the Spirit, and here we are, stepping all together into this new millennium.