

VIGIL OF PENTECOST  
(Who is the Holy Spirit)

This afternoon we celebrate the Vigil of the Solemnity of Pentecost, the inauguration of the Church, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, descending upon our Blessed Mother, the Apostles, and disciples. But, who is the Holy Spirit? He is perhaps the least known of the persons of the Most Blessed Trinity and yet, He sustains, enlivens, and guides our Holy Church, as well as each one of us, to all truth.

In a few words, the Holy Spirit is the most powerful expression of God's supernatural love. ~~For it is God's love that serves as~~ the very foundation of His power, propelling and giving life to all creation. For example: From all eternity, the Father communicates his being, bestows all of his love to the Son. You see, love necessarily requires an object or person to love. And love must always be shared with another person. So while God is one, He is also separate and distinct as to persons, so that one might receive the bestowal of love by the other. Now upon receiving the Father's love, the Son immediately returns that love back to the Father. Back and forth for all eternity. While this mutual bestowal of divine love requires the persons of the Trinity to be separate and distinct from one another, at the same time, it unifies and makes them one, because love by its very nature, always seeks to unite all persons who love!

And this mutual bestowal of divine love is so intense, so powerful, it takes upon itself, a separate person, the person of the Holy Spirit! So who is the Holy Spirit? Simply put, He is the personification of the divine love, mutually exchanged between the Father and the Son. And their actions also assume the complexion of a Divine Family.

Now this magnificent and limitless source of supernatural love

by its very definition, cannot be contained, it must be shared. So like a fountain of living water, it gushes up, and then cascades down upon all creation. As God's love cannot be contained, the Holy Spirit is given to mankind in all its fullness! And yet we receive His gifts and grace in proportion to our readiness to receive it. To put it another way, we receive His love only to the extent that our level of responsiveness or disposition permits.

Jesus once said, "The water I shall give man will become in him, a fountain of living water, welling up to eternal life." As water is so necessary to perpetuate all physical life on earth, so too the Holy Spirit is essential for our spiritual life. And it is for this reason Jesus chooses to use the image of water to describe the actions of the Holy Spirit and His varied gifts. For example, water comes down to us from above as rain, which always remains the same in itself. And yet, rain produces wide and varied effects - different effects on all varieties of plant and animal life throughout all of creation. In fact, it adapts itself to the different needs of every plant or creature who receives it.

The same is true of all humanity. The nature of the Holy Spirit always remains the same, and yet His effects on humanity are extremely diverse and varied. He apportions gifts and grace to each person differently for the common good of all. For example, He may inspire one person to teach divine truth, another to speak prophesy, and still another to unselfishly serve the needs of the poor.

Finally, the Spirit comes to us as the almighty power of God's love, and yet He also comes to us as a true and docile friend and protector, to save, to heal, to teach, to strengthen, and to console. He is the true voice of our conscience, as He guides us to seek to imitate Jesus, so that we might think as Jesus thinks, act as Jesus acts, and love as Jesus loves.

God bless you all