
DEVOTIONS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit. Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment when he promised the gift of the Spirit of Truth. But the simplest and most direct prayer is also traditional, 'Come, Holy Spirit,' and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns."¹

TEN-DAY DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

The day before you begin the Ten-Day Devotion, which is the eve of the glorious Ascension of our divine Redeemer, you must prepare yourself by making a firm resolution to live an interior life and, once you have begun, never again abandon it. Do not ask yourself how much this is going to cost you; look at only how much it is worth. This has always been the case: What is worth a lot costs a lot. And what is the effort we put into knowing ourselves, when we compare it with the great benefits that we derive from it?²

FIRST DAY

Introductory Prayer³

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my

1. CCC, 2671; cf. Lk 11:13; Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.

2. F.J. del Valle, *About the Holy Spirit*, Dublin: Four Court Press, 1981.

3. Cf. Postulation for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva: *Historical Registry of the Founder [of Opus Dei]*, 20172, p. 145.

heart and resist, saying, "Later ... tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration⁴

*Pentecost: the day when the Holy Spirit
came down upon the Lord's disciples*

Having just read in the Acts of the Apostles about Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Lord's disciples, we are conscious of being present at the great display of God's power with which the Church's life began to spread among all nations. The victory Christ achieved through his obedience, his offering of himself on the cross, and his resurrection — his triumph over death and sin — is revealed here in all its divine splendor.

The disciples, witnesses of the glory of the risen Christ, were filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit. Their minds and hearts were opened to a new light. They had followed Christ and accepted his teachings with faith, but they were not always able to fathom the full meaning of his words. The Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things,⁵ had not yet come. They knew that Jesus alone could give them words of eternal life, and they were ready to follow him and to give their lives for him. But they

4. The homily "The Great Unknown," in *Christ Is Passing By*, by St. Josemaria Escriva, is reprinted here and divided into ten "Considerations."

5. Cf. Jn 16:12–13.

were weak, and, in the time of trial, they fled and left him alone.

On Pentecost, all that is a thing of the past. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of strength, has made them firm, strong, daring. The word of the apostles resounds forcefully through the streets of Jerusalem.

The men and women who have come to the city from all parts of the world listen with amazement. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, Jews as well as proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we have heard them speaking in our own languages of the wonderful works of God."⁶ These wonders, which take place before their own eyes, lead them to listen to the preaching of the apostles. The Holy Spirit himself, who is acting through our Lord's disciples, moves the hearts of their listeners and leads them to the faith.

St. Luke tells us that after St. Peter had spoken and proclaimed Christ's resurrection, many of those present came up to him and asked: "Brethren, what shall we do?" The apostle answered: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And, on that day, the sacred text tells us, about three thousand were added to the Church.⁷

The solemn coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was not an isolated event. There is hardly a page in

6. Acts 2:9–11.

7. Cf. Acts 2:37–41.

the Acts of the Apostles where we fail to read about him and the action by which he guides, directs and enlivens the life and work of the early Christian community. It is he who inspires St. Peter's preaching, who strengthens the faith of the disciples, who confirms with his presence the calling of the Gentiles, who sends Saul and Barnabas to the distant lands where they will open new paths for the teachings of Jesus.⁸ In a word, his presence and doctrine are everywhere.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECOND DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later... tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

8. Cf. Acts 4:8, 31; 10:44–47; 13:2–4.

Consideration

The Holy Spirit: present in the Church for all time

The profound reality which we see in the texts of holy Scripture is not a remembrance from the past, from some golden age of the Church which has since been buried in history. Despite the weaknesses and the sins of every one of us, it is the reality of today's Church and the Church of all time. "I will ask the Father," our Lord told his disciples, "and he will give you another Counselor to dwell with you for ever."⁹ Jesus has kept his promise. He has risen from the dead, and, in union with the eternal Father, he sends us the Holy Spirit to sanctify us and to give us life.

The strength and the power of God light up the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit is present in the Church of Christ for all time, so that it may be, always and in everything, a sign raised up before all nations, announcing to all people the goodness and the love of God. In spite of our great limitations, we can look up to heaven with confidence and joy: God loves us and frees us from our sins. The presence and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church are a foretaste of eternal happiness, of the joy and peace for which we are destined by God.

Like the men and women who came up to Peter on Pentecost, we too have been baptized. In Baptism, our Father God has taken possession of our lives, has made us share in the life of Christ, and has given us the Holy Spirit. Holy Scripture tells us that God has saved us "through the baptism of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit; whom he has abundantly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, in order that,

9. Cf. Is 11:12.

justified by his grace, we may be heirs in hope to life everlasting."¹⁰

The experience of our weakness and of our failings, the painful realization of the smallness and meanness of some who call themselves Christians, the apparent failure or aimlessness of some works of apostolate—all these things, which bring home to us the reality of sin and human limitation, can still be a trial of our faith. Temptation and doubt can lead us to ask: where are the strength and the power of God? When that happens, we have to react by practicing the virtue of hope with greater purity and forcefulness and striving to be more faithful.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRD DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want

10. Ti 3:5–7.

what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*The Church: the body of Christ,
enlivened by the Holy Spirit*

Let me tell you about an event of my own personal life, that happened many years ago. One day I was with a friend of mine, a man who had a good heart but who did not have faith. Pointing toward a globe, he said, "Look, from North to South, from East to West." "What do you want me to look at?" I asked. His answer was: "The failure of Christ. For twenty centuries people have been trying to bring his doctrine to men's lives, and look at the result." I was filled with sadness. It is painful to realize that many people still don't know our Lord, and that, among those who do know him, many live as though they did not. But that feeling lasted only a moment. It was shortly overcome by love and thankfulness, because Jesus has wanted every man to cooperate freely in the work of redemption. *He has not failed.* His doctrine and life have been effective in the world at all times. The redemption carried out by him is sufficient, and more than sufficient.

God does not want slaves, but children. *He respects our freedom.* The work of salvation is still going on, and each one of us has a part in it. It is Christ's will, St. Paul tells us in impressive words, that we should fulfill—in our flesh, in our life—that which is lacking in his Passion, "for the good of his body, which is the Church."¹¹

11. Cf. Col 1:24: *pro corpore eius, quod est Ecclesia.*

It is worthwhile to put our lives on the line, to give ourselves completely, so as to answer to the love and the confidence that God has placed in us. It is worthwhile, above all, to decide to take our Christian life seriously. When we recite the Creed, we state that we believe in God the Father Almighty, in his Son Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. We affirm that the Church—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—is the body of Christ, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and in the hope of our own resurrection. But do those words penetrate to the depths of our own heart? Or do they remain only on our lips? The divine message of victory, the joy and the peace of Pentecost, should be the unshakable foundation for every Christian's way of thinking and acting and living.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOURTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later... tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want

what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

Our faith in the Holy Spirit: necessarily complete

The arm of the Lord has not been shortened."¹² God is no less powerful today than he was in other times; his love for us is no less true. Our faith teaches us that all creation, the movement of the earth and the other heavenly bodies, the good actions of creatures and all the good that has been achieved in history—in short, everything—comes from God and is directed toward him.

The action of the Holy Spirit can pass unnoticed, because God does not reveal to us his plans, and because man's sin clouds over the divine gifts. But faith reminds us that God is always acting. He has created us and maintains us in existence, and he leads all creation by his grace toward the glorious freedom of the children of God.¹³

For this reason, Christian tradition has summarized the attitude that we should adopt toward the Holy Spirit in just one idea: docility. This means that we should be aware of the work of the Holy Spirit all around us and that in our own selves we should recognize the gifts he distributes, the movements and institutions he inspires, the affections and decisions he provokes in our hearts. The Holy Spirit carries out in the world the works of God. He is, as we read in a liturgical hymn, the giver of grace, the light of our hearts, the soul's guest, our rest in work, our consolation in sorrow. Without his help there is nothing innocent or valuable in man, because he is the one who cleanses the soiled, heals what is sick, sets

12. Is 59:1: *Non est abbreviata manus Domini.*

13. Cf. Rom 8:21.

on fire what is cold, straightens what is bent, and guides men toward the safe harbor of salvation and eternal joy.¹⁴

But our faith in the Holy Spirit must be complete—not a merely vague belief in his presence in the world, but a grateful acceptance of the signs and realities into which he has poured forth his power in a special way. When the Spirit of truth comes, our Lord tells us, “He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you.”¹⁵ The Holy Spirit is the Spirit sent by Christ to carry out in us the work of holiness that our Lord merited for us on earth.

And so there cannot be faith in the Holy Spirit if there is not faith in Christ, in his sacraments, in his Church. One cannot act in accordance with his Christian faith, cannot truly believe in the Holy Spirit, without loving the Church and trusting it. A man cannot be a coherent Christian if he limits himself to pointing out the deficiencies and limitations of some who represent the Church—if he judges her from the outside, as though he were not her son. Consider, moreover, the extraordinary importance and abundance of the Paraclete when the priest renews the sacrifice of Calvary by celebrating Mass on our altars.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

14. Sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, Mass of Pentecost Sunday.

15. Jn 16:14.

FIFTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later... tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

The Holy Spirit: present among us

We Christians carry the great treasures of grace in vessels of clay.¹⁶ God has entrusted his gifts to the weakness and fragility of human freedom. We can be certain of the help of God's power, but our lust, our love of comfort, and our pride sometimes cause us to reject his grace and to fall into sin. For more than twenty-five years, when I have recited the Creed and asserted my faith in the divine origin of the Church as "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic," I have frequently added, "in spite of everything." When I mention this custom of mine and someone asks me what I mean, I answer, "I mean your sins and mine."

All this is true, but it does not authorize us in any way to judge the Church in a human manner, without theological faith. We cannot consider only the greater or lesser merits of certain churchmen or other Christians. To do this would be to limit ourselves to the surface of things. *What is most important in the Church is not how we hu-*

16. Cf. 2 Cor 4:7.

mans react, but how God acts. This is what the Church is: Christ present in our midst, God coming toward us in order to save us, calling us with his revelation, sanctifying us with his grace, maintaining us with his constant help, in the great and small battles of our daily life.

We might come to mistrust other people, and we should each mistrust ourselves (and end each day with a *mea culpa*, an act of contrition that is profound and sincere). But we have no right to doubt God. And to doubt the Church, its divine origin and its effectiveness for our salvation through its doctrine and its sacraments, would be the same as doubting God himself, the same as not fully believing in the reality of the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Before Christ was crucified," writes St. John Chrysostom, "there was no reconciliation. And while there was no reconciliation, the Holy Spirit was not sent. . . . The absence of the Holy Spirit was a sign of the anger of God. Now that you see him sent in fullness, do not doubt the reconciliation. But what if people should ask, 'Where is the Holy Spirit now? We can talk of his presence when the miracles took place, when the dead were raised and the lepers were healed. But how are we to know that he is truly present now?' Do not be concerned. I will show you that the Holy Spirit is present among us now as well. "If the Holy Spirit were not present, we would not be able to say, 'Jesus is the Lord,' for no one can invoke Jesus as the Lord unless it is in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3). If the Holy Spirit were not present, we would not be able to pray with confidence. For when we pray, we say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven' (Mt 6:9). If the Holy Spirit were not present, we could not call God our Father. How do we know this? Because the apostle teaches us: 'And, because you are his

children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6).

"When you call on God the Father, remember that it is the Spirit who, with his motion in your soul, has given you this prayer. If the Holy Spirit were not present, there would be no word of wisdom or knowledge in the Church; for it is written, 'The word of wisdom is given through the Spirit' (1 Cor 12:8). . . . If the Holy Spirit were not present, the Church would not exist. But if the Church exists, there is no doubt of the presence of the Holy Spirit."¹⁷

Beyond all human deficiencies and limitations, the Church is the sign and, in a certain sense, though not in the strict sense in which the Church has defined the nature of the seven sacraments of the new law, the universal sacrament of the presence of God in the world. To be a Christian is to be reborn of God and sent to announce the news of salvation. If we had a strong faith, a living faith, if we were bold in making Christ known to others, we would see with our own eyes miracles such as those that took place in the time of the apostles.

Today, too, the blind who have lost the ability to look up to heaven and contemplate the wonderful works of God recover their sight. The lame and the crippled who have been bound by their passions, and whose hearts have forgotten love recover their freedom. The deaf who did not want to know God are given back their hearing. The dumb whose tongues were bound because they did not want to acknowledge their defeats begin to talk. And the dead in whom sin had destroyed life come to life again. We see once more that "the word

17. St. John Chrysostom, *Sermones panegyrici in solemnitates D.N. Iesu Christi*, Homily I, *De Sancta Pentecoste*, n. 3–4 in J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Græca* (=PG), 50, 457, Paris, 1857–1866.

of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword."¹⁸ And, just as the first Christians did, we rejoice when we contemplate the power of the Holy Spirit and see the results of his action on the minds and wills of his creatures.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIXTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*The action of the Holy Spirit:
teaching how to correspond to it*

I see all the circumstances of life — those of every individual person's existence, as well as, in some way, those of the great crossroads of history — as so many

18. Heb 4:12.

calls that God makes to men, to bring them face to face with truth, and as occasions that are offered to us Christians, so that we may announce, with our deeds and with our words strengthened by grace, the Spirit to whom we belong.¹⁹

Every generation of Christians needs to redeem, to sanctify its own time. In order to do this, we must understand and share the desires of other men — as equals — in order to make known to them, with a *gift of tongues*, how they are to correspond to the action of the Holy Spirit, to that permanent outflow of rich treasures that comes from our Lord's heart. We Christians are called upon to announce, in our own time, to this world to which we belong and in which we live, the message — old and at the same time new — of the Gospel.

It is not true that everyone today, in general, is closed or indifferent to what our Christian faith teaches about man's being and destiny. It is not true that men in our time are turned toward only the things of this earth and have forgotten to look up to heaven. There is no lack of narrow ideologies, it is true, or of persons who maintain them. But in our time we find both great desires and base attitudes, heroism and cowardice, zeal and disenchantment: those who dream of a new world, more just and more human, and others who — discouraged, perhaps, by the failure of their youthful idealism — hide themselves in the selfishness of seeking only their own security or remaining immersed in their errors.

To all these men and women, wherever they may be, in their more exalted moments or in their crises and defeats, we have to bring the solemn and unequivocal mes-

19. Cf. Lk 9:55.

sage of St. Peter in the days that followed Pentecost: Jesus is the cornerstone, the Redeemer, the hope of our lives. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."²⁰

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEVENTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*The gift of wisdom: making us know
God and rejoice in his presence*

I would say that, among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, there is one that we all need in a special way: the gift of wisdom. It makes us know God and rejoice in his presence,

20. Acts 4:12.

thereby placing us in a perspective from which we can judge accurately the situations and events of this life. Had we been consistent with our faith when we looked around us and contemplated the world and its history, we would have been unable to avoid feeling in our own hearts the same sentiments that filled the heart of our Lord: "Seeing the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were bewildered and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd."²¹

Not that the Christian should neglect to see all that is good in humanity, to appreciate its healthy joys, or to participate in its enthusiasm and ideals. On the contrary, a true Christian will vibrate in unison with all the good he finds in the world. And he will live in the midst of it with a special concern, because of knowing, better than anyone, the depth and the richness of the human spirit.

A Christian's faith does not diminish his spirit or limit the noble impulses of his soul — rather, it makes them grow with the realization of their true and authentic meaning. We do not exist in order to pursue just any happiness. We have been called to penetrate the intimacy of God's own life, to know and love God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and to love also — in that same love of the one God in three divine Persons — the angels and all men.

This is the great boldness of the Christian faith: to proclaim the value and dignity of human nature and to affirm that we have been created to achieve the dignity of children of God, through the grace that raises us up to a supernatural level. An incredible boldness it would be, were it not founded on the promise of salvation given us

21. Mt 9:36.

by God the Father, confirmed by the blood of Christ, and reaffirmed and made possible by the constant action of the Holy Spirit.

We must live by faith. We must grow in faith, up to the point where it will be possible to describe any one of us in the terms used by one of the great Doctors of the Eastern Church to describe Christians in general: "In the same way that a transparent body, upon receiving a ray of light, becomes resplendent and shines out, so the souls that are borne and illuminated by the Holy Spirit become themselves spiritual and carry to others the light of grace. From the Holy Spirit comes knowledge of future events, understanding of mysteries, comprehension of hidden truths, giving of gifts, heavenly citizenship, conversation with the angels. From him comes never-ending joy, perseverance in God, likeness to God, and the most sublime state that can be conceived, that of becoming God-like."²²

Together with humility, the realization of the greatness of man's dignity—and of the overwhelming fact that, by grace, we are made children of God—forms a single attitude. It is not our own forces that save us and give us life; it is the grace of God. This is a truth which can never be forgotten. If it were, the *divinization* of our life would be perverted and would become presumption, pride. And this would lead, sooner or later, to a breakdown of spiritual life, when the soul came face to face with its own weakness and wretchedness.

"And shall I dare to say, 'I am holy'?" asks St. Augustine. "If I mean by 'holy' that I bring holiness and that I need no one to make me holy, I would be a liar and full of pride. But if by 'holy' I understand that one is made holy as we read in Leviticus, 'You will be holy, because

22. St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 9, 23 (PG 32, 110).

I, God, am holy,' then the whole body of Christ, down to the last person living at the ends of the earth, may dare to say, together with its head and under him, 'I am holy.'"²³

Love the Third Person of the most Blessed Trinity. Listen in the intimacy of your being to the divine motions of encouragement or reproach you receive from him. Walk through the world in the light that is poured out in your soul. And the God of hope will fill you with all peace, so that this hope may grow in you more and more each day, by the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

EIGHTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later ... tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

23. St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, 85, 4 (PL 37, 1084).

24. Cf. Rom 15:13.

Consideration

The Holy Spirit: living according to him

To live according to the Holy Spirit means to live by faith and hope and charity—to allow God to take possession of our lives and to change our hearts, to make us resemble him more and more. A mature and profound Christian life cannot be improvised, because it is the result of the growth of God's grace in us. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the early Christian community described in a single sentence that is brief but full of meaning: "And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in prayers."²⁵

This is how the early Christians lived, and this is how we, too, should live: meditating upon the doctrine of our faith until it becomes a part of us; receiving our Lord in the Eucharist; meeting him in the personal dialogue of our prayer, not trying to hide behind an impersonal kind of conduct, but coming face to face with him. These means should become the very substance of our attitude. If they are lacking, we shall have, perhaps, the ability to think in an erudite manner, an activity that is more or less intense, some practices and devotions. But we shall not have an authentically Christian way of life, because we are all, equally, called to sanctity. There are no second-class Christians, obliged to practice only a "simplified version" of the Gospel. We have all received the same Baptism, and although there

25. Acts 2:42.

is a great variety of spiritual gifts and human situations, there is only one Spirit who distributes God's gifts — only one faith, only one hope, only one love.²⁶

And so we can apply to ourselves the question asked by the apostle: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"²⁷ And we can understand it as an invitation to deal with God in a more personal and direct manner. For some, unfortunately, the Paraclete is the Great Stranger, the Great Unknown. He is merely a name that is mentioned, but not Someone, not one of the three Persons (in the one God) with whom we can talk and with whose life we can live.

We have to deal with him simply and trustingly, as we are taught by the Church in its liturgy. Then we will come to know our Lord better, and at the same time we will realize more fully the great favor that has been granted us when we became Christians. We will see all the greatness and truth of the *divinization* to which I referred earlier, which is a sharing in God's own life.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

26. Cf. 1 Cor 12:4–6; 13:1–13.

27. 1 Cor 3:16.

NINTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*Docility, life of prayer, and union
with the cross: fundamental points*

"The Holy Spirit is not an artist who draws the divine substance in us, as though he were alien to it. It is not in this way that he leads us to a resemblance with God—but rather, being God and proceeding from God, he himself marks the hearts of those who receive him, as a seal upon wax. In this way, by the communication of his own life and resemblance, he restores nature according to the beauty of the divine model, and returns to us our resemblance to God."²⁸

Let us see how this truth applies to our daily lives. Let us describe, at least in general, the way of life that will bring us to deal in a familiar manner with the Holy Spirit, and, together with him, the Father and the Son.

28. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate*, 34 (PG 75, 609).

We can fix our attention on three fundamental points: docility, a life of prayer, and union with the cross.

First of all, docility, because it is the Holy Spirit who, with his inspirations, gives a supernatural tone to our thoughts, desires, and actions. It is he who leads us to receive Christ's teaching and to assimilate it in a profound way. It is he who gives us the light by which we perceive our personal calling and the strength to carry out all that God expects of us. If we are docile to the Holy Spirit, the image of Christ will be formed more and more fully in us, and we will be brought closer every day to God the Father. "For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God."²⁹

If we let ourselves be guided by this life-giving principle, the Holy Spirit in us, our spiritual vitality will grow. We will place ourselves in the hands of our Father God, with the same spontaneity and confidence with which children abandon themselves to their fathers' care. Our Lord has said: "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."³⁰ This is the old and well-known "way of childhood," which is not sentimentality or lack of human maturity. It is a supernatural maturity, which makes us realize more deeply the wonders of God's love, while leading us to acknowledge our own smallness and identify our will fully with the will of God.

In the second place, a life of prayer, because the giving of one's self, the obedience and meekness of a Christian, are born of love and lead to love. And love leads to a personal relationship, to conversation and friendship. Christian life requires a constant dialogue with God,

29. Rom 8:14.

30. Mt 18:3.

one in three Persons, and it is to this intimacy that the Holy Spirit leads us. "For who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things of God no one knows but the Spirit of God."³¹ If we have a constant relationship with the Holy Spirit, we ourselves will become spiritual, we will realize that we are Christ's brothers and children of God, and we will not hesitate to call upon our Father at any time.³²

Let us acquire the habit of conversation with the Holy Spirit, who is the one who will make us holy. Let us trust in him and ask his help and feel his closeness to us. In this way our poor hearts will grow; we will have a greater desire to love God and to love all creatures for God's sake. And our lives will reproduce that final vision of the Apocalypse: the Spirit and the Spouse, the Holy Spirit and the Church — and every Christian — calling on Jesus Christ to come and be with us for ever.³³

And, finally, union with the cross, because in the life of Christ, the Resurrection and Pentecost were preceded by Calvary. This is the order that must be followed in the life of any Christian. We are, as St. Paul tells us, "heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with him, that we may also

31. 1 Cor 2:11.

32. Cf. Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15.

33. Cf. Rev 22:17.

be glorified with him.”³⁴ The Holy Spirit comes to us as a result of the cross—as a result of our total abandonment to the will of God, of our seeking only his glory and renouncing ourselves completely.

Only when we are faithful to grace and determined to place the cross in the centers of our souls, denying ourselves for the love of God, detaching ourselves in a real way from all selfishness and false human security, only then—when we live by faith in a real way—will we receive the fullness of the great fire, the great light, the great comfort of the Holy Spirit.

It is then, too, that souls begin to experience the peace and freedom that Christ has won for us,³⁵ and that are given to us with the grace of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity;³⁶ and “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”³⁷

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

34. Rom 8:17.

35. Cf. Gal 4:31.

36. Cf. Gal 5:22–23.

37. 2 Cor 3:17.

TENTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

Beginning: and beginning again

In the midst of the limitations that accompany our present life, in which sin is still present in us to some extent at least, we Christians perceive with a particular clearness all the wealth of our divine filiation, when we realize that we are fully free because we are doing our Father's work, when our joy becomes constant because no one can take our hope away. It is then that we can admire at the same time all the great and beautiful things of this earth, can appreciate the richness and goodness of creation, and can love with all the strength and purity for which the human heart was made. It is then that sorrow for sin does not degenerate into a bitter gesture of despair or pride, because sorrow and knowledge of human weakness lead us to identify ourselves again with Christ's work of redemption and feel more deeply our solidarity with others.

It is then, finally, that we Christians experience in our own life the sure strength of the Holy Spirit, in such a

way that our own failures do not drag us down. Rather, they are an invitation to begin again and to continue being faithful witnesses of Christ in all the moments of our life—in spite of our own personal weaknesses, which, in such a case, are normally no more than small failings that hardly perturb the soul. And even if they are grave sins, the sacrament of Penance, received with true sorrow, enables us to recover our peace with God and to become again a good witness of his mercy.

Such is the brief summary, which can barely be expressed in human language, of the richness of our faith and of our Christian life, if we let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. That is why I can end these words in only one way: by voicing a prayer, contained in one of the liturgical hymns for the feast of Pentecost, which is like an echo of the unceasing petition of the whole Church: “Come, creating Spirit, to the minds of those who belong to you, and fill, with grace from above, the hearts that you have created.... Grant that through you we may know the Father and become acquainted with the Son; may we believe in you, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and Son, for ever. Amen.”³⁸

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

38. Hymn *Veni, Creator*, Divine Office of Pentecost Sunday, cf. pp. 384f.

VENI CREATOR

Veni, Creátor Spíritus,
mentes tuórum vísita,
imple supérna grátia,
quæ tu creásti, péctora.

Qui díceris Paráclitus,
donum Dei altíssimi,
fons vivus, ignis, cáritas
et spiritális únctio.

Tu septifórmis múnere,
dextræ Dei tu dígitus,
tu rite promíssum Patris
sermóne ditans gúttura.

Accénde lumen sénsibus,
infúnde amórem córdibus,
infírma nostri córporis
virtúte firmans pérpeti.

Hostem repéllas lóngius
pacémque dones prótinus;
ductóre sic te prævio
vitémus omne nóxium.

Per te sciámus da Patrem
noscámus atque Fílium,
te utriúsque Spíritum
credámus omni témpore.

Deo Patri sit glória,
Et Fílio, qui a mórtuis
surréxit, ac Paráclito
in sæculórum sæcula. Amen.

V. Emítte Spíritum tuum et creabúntur.

R. **Et renovábis fáciem terræ.**

Orémus.

Deus, qui corda fidélium Sancti Spíritus illustratióne docuísti; da nobis in eódem Spíritu recta sápere; et de eius semper consolatióne gaudére. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. **Amen.**

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator, come
From thy bright heavenly throne!
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all thine own!
Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction, and true love!
Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace,
Finger of God's right hand,
His promise, teaching little ones
To speak and understand!
O guide our minds with thy blest light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with thy strength which ne'er decays
Confirm our mortal frame.
Far from us drive our hellish foe,
True peace unto us bring,
And through all perils guide us safe
Beneath thy sacred wing.
Through thee may we the Father know,
Through thee, the eternal Son,
And thee, the Spirit of them both,
Thrice-blessed Three in one.
All glory to the Father be,
And to the risen Son;
The same to thee, O Paraclete,
While endless ages run. Amen.

V. Send forth thy Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. **And thou shalt renew the face of the earth.**

Let us pray.

O God, who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord.

R. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PURITY OF BODY AND MIND

Lord, set aflame my heart and my entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit, that I may serve you with chaste body and pure mind. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER IN OCTAVE OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

Every year from January 18 to 25 inclusive, special prayers are offered for the unity of Christendom.

Ut omnes unum sint,
sicut tu Pater in me
et ego in te; ut mun-
dus credat quia tu me
misísti.

V. Tu es Petrus.

R. **Et super hanc petram
aedificábo ecclésiám
meam.**

Orémus.

Dómine Iesu Christe, qui
dixísti Apóstolis tuis: pa-
cem relínquo vobis, pa-
cem meam do vobis: ne
respicias peccáta nostra,
sed fidem Ecclésiæ tuæ;
eamque secúndum volun-
tátem tuam pacificáre et
coadunáre dignéris. Qui
vivis et regnas in sæcula
sæculórum.

R. **Amen.**

May they all be one, as
you, Father, are in me,
and I in you; so that
the world may come
to believe that it is you
who has sent me.

V. You are Peter.

R. **And it is upon this
rock that I will build
my Church.**

Let us pray.

Lord, Jesus Christ, who
said to your apostles:
I leave peace with you;
it is my own peace that I
give you; look not upon
our sins but upon your
Church's faith, and gra-
ciously grant her peace
and unity in accordance
with your will. You who
live and reign for ever and
ever.

R. **Amen.**