

# holy spirit in the life of discipleship

## WHEN DOES IT BEGIN?

Baptism. Your first day as a Christian is usually when you are a baby. Many of us do not remember receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, but our baptism is the starting point of our Christian life and we need to remember the significance of it, even if we do not remember the actual experience.

Our baptism is the beginning of our lives in Christ. It is the starting point of our faith, gifts, graces, and incorporation into the Body of Christ. In that moment, we are forgiven of original sin and any personal sins. We become adopted children of the Father; He makes us part of His family.

It is also the starting point of our relationship with the Holy Spirit. At our baptism, we are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit to sustain and help us as we walk through life. The gifts of the Holy Spirit grow as we grow. When you receive Confirmation, these gifts are sealed in you.

## THE IDENTITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Who is the Holy Spirit? The question itself holds insight into the answer. The Holy Spirit is a “who” not a “what.” He is not an “energy” or “force” coming from God, but a person who is God Himself and part of the Holy Trinity. We know that God is not three separate gods, but rather,

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one indivisible God of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as professed in the Nicene Creed. The Council of Toledo XI convened and made clear that “the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also the same nature.”

The Bible also shows us the interactions of the Holy Trinity, notably at the baptism of Jesus, Jesus’ foretelling of the Holy Spirit, and St. Paul’s greeting to the people of Corinth.

### **2 CORINTHIANS 13:14**

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

What is the role of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit has many titles and the symbols attributed to Him are a glimpse of who He is and how He interacts with us and the Church. Some of His titles are: The Lord, the giver of life; Paraclete; and Spirit of Truth.

### **THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE**

*The Holy Spirit gives us life. In Genesis, God breathed His Spirit into Adam and he became a living being. In Ezekiel, the prophet called to the Spirit, or “breath,” to breathe life into the dry bones and brought back to life. The birth of the Catholic Church is celebrated*

*on Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus.*

### **THE PARACLETE**

*The word “paraclete” translates from Greek to “he who is called to one’s side.” Jesus promised that He would “pray the Father, and He will give you another counselor, to be with you forever.” When Jesus ascended into heaven, we were not left to go through life aimlessly. We have relied, and should rely on, the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us and for us as our helper and consoler.*

### **SPIRIT OF TRUTH**

*The bath of Baptism is both material (water) and spiritual (Spirit) and enlightens us to know God, understand our faith, and live our faith in an intentional way. What we know of God the Father and God the Son has been revealed to us by God the Holy Spirit because knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit... who comes to meet us and kindles faith in us.”*

### *discussion questions*

*Do you remember anything about your baptism? Why did your parents have you baptized (or why do you think they had you baptized)?*

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*What symbol of the Holy Spirit (Giver of Life, Paraclete, or Spirit of Truth) do you relate to the most? Why?*

*What is your relationship like with the Holy Spirit? How does it compare to your relationships with God the Father and God the Son?*

### THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

The roles of the Holy Spirit help us to better know our roles as members of the faithful. The great commission – to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – is our mission and

can only be possible through the life-giving advocacy of the Holy Spirit, who speaks truth through us. Just like the prophets and apostles were emboldened by the Holy Spirit and courageously proclaimed a Savior and redeemer, our baptism into the Christian family requires us to bring more people to and through the waters so they too can know God and His bride, the Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit and the Church are uniquely united. The Church cannot be separated from the workings of the Holy Spirit. The movement of the Spirit is found in the Church through Scripture, tradition, the Magisterium, sacramental liturgy, prayer, charisms and ministries, apostolic and missionary life, and the witness of the saints.

We need the sacraments to strengthen us in our daily walk with God, which is a relationship that is manifested through prayer. Prayer is our relationship with God, but for many of us, it is a daunting or boring chore. We often times impatiently and half-heartedly pray, asking for immediate answers and failing to recognize that prayer is not solely our response to God; rather, it comes from the Holy Spirit. Thankfully for us, the Holy Spirit is the “master of prayer” and in our weakness, advocates on our behalf and brings us to the source of life-giving water: Jesus.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit might be more than we can ever fathom or fully know, but that which is revealed should spring up in us gratitude and

and a desire to know, love, and serve God. We can do this in union with the Church by partaking in the sacraments, cultivating a strong prayer life, and sharing our faith, the Good News, with others.

### discussion questions

*What are ways in which you can grow in your prayer life, specifically in regard to the Holy Spirit?*

*How can you more fully participate in the sacraments?  
How can you more fully participate in the life of the Church?*

## THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When you receive Confirmation, the gifts from your baptism are sealed in you. This means that, by your confirmation, you share more completely in the mission of Jesus and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' mission is to lead everyone to heaven. When we are confirmed, that mission becomes ours. Getting everyone to heaven is no easy task, so we are given the power of the Spirit. The Spirit comes upon us in Confirmation to seal in us the gifts of wisdom, understanding, fortitude, counsel, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. All of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not given for our benefit, but rather, are given to us to build up the Church, to proclaim Christ, and to more fully walk as His disciples. Confirmation is meant to send you forth to live a life for Christ with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

We need the gifts of the Holy Spirit as individuals and as a Church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used in our daily lives. For example, wisdom could be used to help a friend with a tough situation or to navigate right and wrong. Courage is needed when our friends do something wrong and we need to stand up for what is right. When we see something beautiful, instead of passing over it, we can thank God for the beauty of the Earth. We can always use some more understanding of our faith. Knowledge is needed for our school work and counsel can be helpful when we encounter a friend or loved one in crisis. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are at work in our lives every single day.

In Confirmation, the gifts are sealed in us and if we are open, we receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a renewal of grace.

## discussion questions

*Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which ones do you see clearly working in your life (wisdom, understanding, fortitude, counsel, knowledge, piety, & fear of the Lord)?*

*Which gifts come easily for you? Which gifts are more difficult to foster?*

## GETTING TO KNOW THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is already present to us through our knowledge of God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit helps us know God, love Him, and live in His grace. We can also know the Holy Spirit through prayer, Scripture, the Church, and the sacraments. The foundation for knowing the Holy Spirit is prayer. In prayer, we can easily begin invoking the Holy Spirit, inviting Him into our lives.

“Come, Holy Spirit.” The Church instructs us to call upon the Holy Spirit before we do anything important. The Holy Spirit acts in all forms of prayer and is the “master and source” of prayer. If you find yourself feeling frustrated or you do not know where to start in prayer, simply ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide.

We can also come to know the Holy Spirit through Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the principal author of Scripture and enlightens us, so we can better understand the richness that God has given us in Scripture. We can ask for the help of the Spirit to read Scripture more often, more ardently, and with greater understanding.

As our relationship with the Spirit grows, so does our appreciation and love for the Church. The Holy Spirit works in all aspects of the even the ones we do not agree with. It is OK to wrestle with or struggle with Church teaching as long as we are open to the wisdom, knowledge,

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and understanding the Holy Spirit is imparting to us regarding those teachings. Ultimately, we need to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in helping us understand, love, and affirm these teachings.

The Holy Spirit is alive in the sacraments, specifically in the Mass, during which the Holy Spirit brings us into communion with Christ. In Reconciliation, after we have been cleansed from sin, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and helps us become more like Christ.

For us to grow in relationship with the Holy Spirit we must be more consistent in our prayer, listen for His promptings in silence, allow Him to move, have an openness to God's will, and regularly return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to prepare our hearts as His dwelling place. As we grow in understanding, we are more easily able to recognize the work, movement, and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

### discussion questions

*Who is someone you know who lives their life with abundance of the Holy Spirit? What sets this person apart?*

*How can you strengthen your relationship with the Holy Spirit?*

*How do you plan on using the gifts and graces received at Confirmation to live out your discipleship?*

## THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are concrete manifestations of the Spirit that we can see in ourselves and others. Someone who has great self-control or is very generous is experiencing the workings of the Spirit. But we can

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also see the fruits of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. Are you exceedingly gentle? Do you experience peace, even in stressful situations? Is it easy for you to find joy in difficulty? Praise the Holy Spirit for these fruits. The Holy Spirit is not trying to hide from you – He wants to transform and renew you, especially as you prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

*Which fruits come easily for you?  
Which fruits do you struggle with?  
How can you grow in the more difficult fruits?*

### discussion questions

*Which fruits of the Holy Spirit do you see at work in your life (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)?*

## CLOSING PRAYER

### holy spirit prayer

Pray together the Holy Spirit Prayer:

*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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Continue to pray this prayer throughout your Confirmation preparation. Pray it once a day, specifically asking for the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit to be more apparent in your daily life.