

ongoing relationship with the holy spirit

JOURNEYING WITH THE SPIRIT

Everyone's story will be different. Despite the differences, each of our stories have one thing in common: the work of the Holy Spirit is powerful and tangible if we allow Him to move in and through us. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He was promised to us by Jesus and longs to walk alongside each of us in our journey with the Lord. In our baptism, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit; in Confirmation, we are sealed in the Spirit and sent forth on a mission. In the end, our ability to become the men and women we are called to be is only possible through the Holy Spirit.

THE PROMISE

We can trust that the Holy Spirit will be with us in our day-to-day lives because Jesus promised Him to us. At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke to the apostles specifically about an advocate, one who would come after Him and remain with them. In fact, before His death, Jesus said that it would be better for the apostles that He leave in order to allow the Spirit to come.

JOHN 16:7

Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

The apostles must have wondered how this could be. How could it possibly be good for them for Jesus

to leave? What could this new promise be that would be better than Jesus Himself being with them?

Now, especially in light of your preparation, we know what this promise is: the Spirit of God who lives within each one of us. This is the Spirit that inspired the Word of God, the Spirit that allows each of us to hear God's voice, and the Spirit that gives us the grace to follow God and pray to God each day.

discussion questions

The Holy Spirit has been promised to us. Where would you like to notice the workings of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, in your life?

**AND I WILL PRAY TO THE FATHER, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COUNSELOR, TO BE WITH YOU FOR EVER.
(JOHN 14: 16)**

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit is present to us in a myriad of ways. First and foremost, it is the Spirit who allows us, as St. Paul says, to call Jesus Lord, and it is this same Spirit who allows us to worship God in spirit and truth. As we live in the Spirit — first learning to see Jesus as Lord and worship Him — we are able to become the people we are called to be. We are given the gifts and fruits of the Spirit; these gifts are things you have heard of throughout Confirmation preparation and throughout your life, but it is good to remember them and to ask the Lord to concretely bestow those gifts on us.

The gifts that the Spirit bestows upon us are quite simply that — gifts. They are given to us freely by God the Father through the Holy Spirit to build up the Church and make God more known in the world. These gifts allow us to know how close God is to us in our daily lives and then to be strengthened and sent forth.

There are two sets of gifts - the first set is the traditional Gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. The second set comes from various points in the Bible where the Holy Spirit gives extraordinary or "motivational" gifts - these gifts are prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, contributor, administration, and mercy.

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WISDOM: The ability to see God's plan and have faith in Him in all things.

UNDERSTANDING: The ability to comprehend the truths of God.

COUNSEL: The ability to discern good and evil and make good choices.

FORTITUDE: Having the courage and strength to suffer for the faith and face persecution.

KNOWLEDGE: Having a deeper ability to see things as God sees them.

PIETY: The ability to understand who we are in relation to God; it leads us to humble prayer.

FEAR OF THE LORD: Having a fear of separating ourselves from Him and being in awe of God and who He is.

discussion questions

Which gifts of the Holy Spirit do you experience the most in your life? Which do you experience the least?

Are there any gifts of the Holy Spirit you would like to grow in? How can you grow in these gifts?

MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (GIFTS GIVEN TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH)

PROPHECY: Allows one to perceive what God is doing in the world.

MINISTRY: Allows one to serve, be hospitable, and bring God's love to others.

TEACHING: Allows a person to share truth well.

EXHORTATION: Allows one to encourage others to live a good and virtuous life.

CONTRIBUTOR: A gift given to one who has the calling to give of their gifts — financial gifts, gifts of time, or gifts of talent — to help build up the Church.

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ADMINISTRATION: A gift to one who is called to be in leadership of others.

MERCY: A gift specifically given to those called to serve and bring God's mercy to those who are most in need.

discussion questions

Which motivational gifts of the Holy Spirit do you experience the most in your life? Which do you experience the least?

Are there any motivational gifts of the Holy Spirit you would like to grow in? How can you grow in these motivational gifts?

CHILDREN OF GOD

Even more important than the gifts and graces the Spirit offers is the relationship of love He invites us into with God the Father. Through the Spirit, each of us is adopted as a beloved son or daughter of God the Father. In the Spirit, we are able to come to truly know God as our Father and share in the life of the Trinity.

NEW LIFE

Soon you will be sealed with the Holy Spirit and sent forth to live as disciples and bring Christ to the world. In this role, you will have the chance to share the joy, hope, peace, and love that God has bestowed upon you. You will also, unfortunately, have the opportunity to meet those who want to resist God's plan for the world, those who may dislike or persecute you because of your faith. However, in all of these situations we have support, an advocate, one who is with us in each moment: the Holy Spirit.

We all remember the story of Pentecost; the apostles – who listened to Jesus' command to wait and were fearful of what might happen to them if they left the room – were waiting in the upper room, praying. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit entered with a powerful wind and tongues of fire. The apostles then went out and lived as bold witnesses to Christ for the rest of their lives.

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READ ACTS 2:1-11

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AT PENTECOST

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

This same experience is meant for each of us: we encounter the Lord,

are empowered by the Spirit, and then go forward with joy and boldness to bring Christ and His Spirit to each person we meet.

As you prepare for Confirmation, reflect on the following: Where would you like to ask the Holy Spirit to enter your life? How can you use the strength, gifts, fruits, and guidance of the Holy Spirit? Ask Him to come and be with you. The Father will not leave you waiting, but will send His Spirit upon you in great abundance.

discussion questions

Where would you like to ask the Holy Spirit to enter your life?

CLOSING PRAYER

empowerment prayer

As we complete our Confirmation preparation, we are going to pray intentionally for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to walk with each of us in each moment of our lives. As we listen to the praise and worship song, pray that the Holy Spirit would be with you always.

HOLY SPIRIT LYRICS: Jesus Culture

*There's nothing worth more
That could ever come close
No thing can compare
You're our living hope
Your presence, Lord
I've tasted and seen
Of the sweetest of loves
Where my heart becomes free
And my shame is undone
Your presence, Lord*

*Holy Spirit, You are welcome here
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere
Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for
To be overcome by Your presence, Lord
Your presence, Lord*

*Let us become more aware of Your presence
Let us experience the glory of Your goodness*

Close in prayer: Lord God, we are so grateful for all that you have done throughout this Confirmation program. As these teens go forward to receive your grace in a special way in the Sacrament of Confirmation, we pray that you fill them with the Holy Spirit. Help them trust that they are never alone, that you are always with them and will never abandon them. Give them the gifts and graces they need to be the disciples you are calling them to be. Mother Mary, we pray for your intercession over each one of us, as we pray together, Hail Mary...