

Knowing who the Holy Spirit is and what the Spirit does is the key to experiencing the “payoff” of the Sacrament of Confirmation and to understanding Parts One and Two of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The Profession of Faith” and “The Celebration of the Christian Ministry.” Dr. Ford will share insights gained in a decade of teaching pneumatology, the theology of the Holy Spirit.

**CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
THE PROFESSION OF FAITH—SECTION TWO
CHAPTER THREE —I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (683-747)
IV. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME**

“Rejoice, you who are full of grace”

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the *dwelling place* where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the “Seat of Wisdom.”

In her, the “wonders of God” that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722 The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” should herself be “full of grace.” She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the “Daughter of Zion”: “Rejoice.” It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *fulfills* the plan of the Father's loving goodness. With and through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit's power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *manifests* the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love, *into communion* with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve (“mother of the

living”), the mother of the “whole Christ.” As such, she was present with the Twelve, who “with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,” at the dawn of the “end time” which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.

The Holy Spirit and the Church

737 The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission henceforth brings Christ's faithful to share in his communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit *prepares* men and goes out to them with his grace, in order to draw them to Christ. The Spirit *manifests* the risen Lord to them, recalls his word to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection. He *makes present* the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, to *bring them into communion with God*, that they may “bear much fruit.”

738 Thus the Church's mission is not an addition to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but is its sacrament: in her whole being and in all her members, the Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present, and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity (the topic of the next article):

All of us who have received one and the same Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, are in a sense blended together with one another and with God. For if Christ, together with the Father's and his own Spirit, comes to dwell in each of us, though we are many, still the Spirit is one and undivided. He binds together the spirits of each and every one of us, . . . and makes all appear as one in him. For just as the power of Christ's sacred flesh unites those in whom it dwells into one body, I think that in the same way the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in all, leads all into spiritual unity.

739 Because the Holy Spirit is the anointing of Christ, it is Christ who, as the head of the Body, pours out the Spirit among his members to nourish, heal, and organize them in their mutual functions, to give them life, send them to bear witness, and associate them to

his self-offering to the Father and to his intercession for the whole world. Through the Church's sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body. (This will be the topic of Part Two of the Catechism.)

740 These “mighty works of God,” offered to believers in the sacraments of the Church, bear their fruit in the new life in Christ, according to the Spirit. (This will be the topic of Part Three.)

741 “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” The Holy Spirit, the artisan of God’s works, is the master of prayer. (This will be the topic of Part Four.)

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

- 1 Holy Spirit, Lord of light,
From your clear celestial height,
Your pure beaming radiance give.
- 2 Come, O Father of the poor,
Come with treasures that endure;
Come, O Light of all that live.
- 3 You, of all consolers best,
You the soul’s delightful guest,
Sweet refreshing peace bestow.
- 4 You in work are comfort sweet,
Pleasant coolness in the heat,
Solace in the midst of woe.
- 5 Light immortal, Light divine,
Show your love to humankind,
And our inmost being fill.
- 6 If you take your grace away,
Nothing pure in us will stay;
All our good is turned to ill.
- 7 Heal our wounds, our strength renew,
On our dryness pour your dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away.
- 8 Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.
- 9 On the faithful who adore
And confess you evermore
In your sev’nfold gift descend.
- 10 Give us comfort when we die;
Give us life with you on high;

Give us joys that never end. Amen.

Author: Stephen Langton, ?–1228
Translator: Roger Nachtwey, 1930–

Veni, Creator Spiritus

- 1 Come, O Spirit creator, come to us.
Visit us with your transforming love.
Refashion all of those you made with so much care.
Fill and refresh us with grace that overflows.
- 2 Come, O you who are called the Paraclete.
Come, O most high Gift of God Most High,
O Font of living water, Fire, and Charity,
Oil which anoints us as prophets and royal priests.
- 3 Seven heavenly gifts are yours to give;
Yours, the touch of God’s caressing hand
You are the very gift the Father promised us:
Lend our lyrics the languages of your love.
- 4 Kindle discerning light in all our minds;
Pour the pow’r to love in all our hearts;
And strengthen all our bodies, lest disease and sin
Steal from your temples the signs that you dwell
within.
- 5 Keep our enemies far from hurting us
Never cease to bring peace near to us
With you as guide before us, lightening our way,
We shall be safe from all harms that might befall.
- 6 Spirit, give us to know our Father God
Spirit, help us recognize the Son.
And may you always show yourself in ways that
speak
To our faith that you are the Love of Both of Them.
Amen.

Author: Rabanus Maurus, 776–856
Translator: Paul Ford, 1947–