

North American Martyrs
The Holy Spirit & The Church

Who is the Holy Spirit?

He can (seemingly) be hard to find, grasp, understand for most. But it can be made clear as a starting point. How can we find Him?

“The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:

- in the Scriptures he inspired;
- in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;
- in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists;
- in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;
- in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
- in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;
- in the signs of apostolic and missionary life;
- in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church (p. 688)

He is the Third Person of the Trinity

- Father, Son, & Holy Spirit are family. The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father & the Son. We are not made to over-spiritualize this.
- In the Beginning, God created man in his Image and likeness. We are body and soul composites and it is through real life that we encounter the Holy Spirit. He comes to live in you and in me, and desires it ardently (Christ- “it is better that I go so that the Advocate may come.”)
- God comes to live in us in more than an ‘intangible way’. (“In him we live and move and have our being.”) He lives in us so that our love would be fruitful like His.
- The family is the premier icon of this, and we can look to the family often, and the “tangible” life as the route in which God desires to work through us.

What His “Role” is: (Offices): Gift, Guest, Artisan, Director

- As **Artisan**: the worker in skilled trade. He is the One who forms your heart- molding it, shaping it, stretching it through love.
 - ‘Artisan’ is rooted in the Latin word rooted in “art”.
 - Eph 2:10 “You are His handiwork...” otherwise known as artwork. Masterpiece. Let him do the molding!
- As **Gift**: the spiritual gifts are not the real gift, but a way to the Gift.
 - Do not forget the spousal imagery here.
 - To be a “sincere gift of self” is the goal of the Christian life. With the gift, comes life.

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How He is known (Titles): Paraclete, **Advocate**, Consoler, Counselor, **Spirit of Truth**, Ruah (“breath”), **Wild Goose**

- “...when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:16-18)
- He is the Spirit of **freedom**
 - Self reliance versus self gift
 - Childlike faith.
- My favorite: The Wild Goose (background)

How He is “Seen” (Symbols): Living Water, Fire, Anointing, Cloud, Seal, The Hand of God, The Finger of God, The Dove

The Holy Spirit is on “Joint Mission” (CCC 689-690)

689 *The One whom the Father has sent into our hearts, the Spirit of his Son, is truly God.¹⁰ Consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is inseparable from them, in both the inner life of the Trinity and his gift of love for the world. In adoring the Holy Trinity, life-giving, consubstantial, and indivisible, the Church's faith also professes the distinction of persons. When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable. To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him.*

690 *Jesus is Christ, "anointed," because the Spirit is his anointing, and everything that occurs from the Incarnation on derives from this fullness.¹¹ When Christ is finally glorified,¹² he can in turn send the Spirit from his place with the Father to those who believe in him: he communicates to them his glory,¹³ that is, the Holy Spirit who glorifies him.¹⁴ From that time on, this joint mission will be manifested in the children adopted by the Father in the Body of his Son: the mission of the Spirit of adoption is to unite them to Christ and make them live in him:*

“The notion of anointing suggests . . . that there is no distance between the Son and the Spirit. Indeed, just as between the surface of the body and the anointing with oil neither reason nor sensation recognizes any intermediary, so the contact of the Son with the Spirit is immediate, so that anyone who would make contact with the Son by faith must first encounter the oil by contact. In fact there is no part that is not covered by the Holy Spirit. That is why the confession of the Son's Lordship is made in the Holy Spirit by those who receive him, the Spirit coming from all sides to those who approach the Son in faith.”¹⁵

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How do we share in this? By “Bearing the Divine Form”:

704 "God fashioned man with his own hands [that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit] and impressed his own form on the flesh he had fashioned, in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form."⁶⁵

Pentecost: “The Church’s Birthday” (: Acts 2:1-14)

Beforehand: “While **staying** with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to **wait** there for the **promise of the Father**. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5)

“God’s Gift”

When the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, he makes us into the Image of Christ. In doing so, we begin to regain the heritage of what was bestowed on us in the Beginning. He does this by bestowing gifts on his children. And he takes us by the hand to build us up into what we were made for:

733 "God is Love"¹²⁴ and love is his first gift, containing all others. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."¹²⁵

734 Because we are dead or at least wounded through sin, the first effect of the gift of love is the forgiveness of our sins. The communion of the Holy Spirit¹²⁶ in the Church restores to the baptized the divine likeness lost through sin.

735 He, then, gives us the "pledge" or "first fruits" of our inheritance: the very life of the Holy Trinity, which is to love as "God [has] loved us."¹²⁷ This love (the "charity" of 1 Cor 13) is the source of the new life in Christ, made possible because we have received "power" from the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸

736 By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit: . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."¹²⁹ "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit."¹³⁰

“Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory.”

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What is 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."¹³²

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.¹³³

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.

751 The word "Church" (Latin *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ek-ka-lein*, to "call out of") means a convocation or an assembly. It designates the assemblies of the people, usually for a religious purpose.¹³⁹ Ekklesia is used frequently in the Greek Old Testament for the assembly of the Chosen People before God, above all for their assembly on Mount Sinai where Israel received the Law and was established by God as his holy people.¹⁴⁰ By calling itself "Church," the first community of Christian believers recognized itself as heir to that assembly. In the Church, God is "calling together" his people from all the ends of the earth. The equivalent Greek term *Kyriake*, from which the English word *Church* and the German *Kirche* are derived, means "**what belongs to the Lord.**"

Yet in a deeper sense, the **Church is the body of Christ**. The Church is Christ, in truth. (See Acts 9:1-9 and Acts 22:6-21)

778 The **Church is both the means and the goal of God's plan**: prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf. Rev 14:4).

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The Church is:

the **People of God**,
the **Body of Christ**, and
the **Temple of the Holy Spirit** (CCC 781-810)

The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic (CCC 811-870)

866 The Church is **one**: she acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one Baptism, forms only one Body, is given life by the one Spirit, for the sake of one hope (cf. *Eph* 4:3-5), at whose fulfillment all divisions will be overcome.

867 The Church is **holy**: the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her holy; the Spirit of holiness gives her life. Since she still includes sinners, she is "the sinless one made up of sinners." Her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy.

868 The Church is **catholic**: she proclaims the fullness of the faith. She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation. She is sent out to all peoples. She speaks to all men. She encompasses all times. She is "missionary of her very nature" (AG 2)

869 The Church is **apostolic**. She is built on a lasting foundation: "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (*Rev* 21:14). She is indestructible (cf. *Mt* 16:18). She is upheld infallibly in the truth: Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops.

Discussion questions:

1. What is my experience praying to/with the Holy Spirit? What are some misconceptions I have had?
2. How do I see the Church? What have I thought before that is different from what I know now?
3. What are some things that surprised me? What do I want to think about and consider more?