

**God: The Holy Spirit**  
*(RCIA Handout Oct 27, 2015 – James Carrier)*

  
RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Jn 20:22)

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit.

  
**I believe in the Holy Spirit**, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

**How do we characterize our relationship with the Holy Spirit.**

  
On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus promised, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever” The Greek word that is translated as “Advocate” is *parakleto*. In the time of Christ the *paraklete* was like a family attorney who was on a permanent retainer. Any time a problem arose in the family, the *parakletos* was on call, and he would come immediately to assist in the struggle.

  
Because **we are part of the family of God**, we can say that our family attorney is the **Holy Spirit Himself**. Open your heart to the Holy Spirit and he will come immediately, albeit imperceptibly, to assist in the struggle regardless of how difficult.

Another way to characterize Him is to say: The Holy Spirit is the mystery of God’s love alive in the world.

**1. What does the CCC say about our faith regarding the Holy Spirit?**

In the Nicene Creed we say “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father (*from the substance of the Father*) and the Son: “with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.” (CCC, no. 685, citing the Nicene Creed)

“No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.”  “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ “ This knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit: *to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit.*

He comes to meet us and kindles faith in us. By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son.

The Church teaches that The Holy Spirit is a person, like Jesus, and like God the Father. The Holy Spirit is not some kind of generic force, like lightning or turbulent vortex shedding in a low Reynolds number boundary layer.

Because a number of heresies had developed, the early church called the **Council of Nicea in 325** and firmly established that Christ is the Son of God. 

In further characterizing the Trinity **The COUNCIL OF ROME, 382** produced the Tome of Pope St. Damasus. And just to show you how rock-solid our belief in the Holy Spirit is, one of the 24 of anathemas states:

If anyone denies that the Holy Spirit has all power and knows all things, and is everywhere, just as the Father and the Son: he is a heretic.

 **Catholicism** is a religion rich in symbolism, so it's worth looking for it, to understand it when you see it. Here are some Symbols that are used for the Holy Spirit in **Scripture**. Remember that scripture is an important part of our faith.

 696 **Fire** symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit's actions. The prayer of the prophet Elijah, who "arose like fire" and whose word "burned like a torch," brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel.

 697 **Cloud and light**. Are two images that frequently occur together in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In the **theophanies** of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory—with Moses on Mount Sinai, at the tent of meeting, and during the wandering in the desert. In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures. On the mountain of Transfiguration, the Spirit in the "cloud came and overshadowed" Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James and John, and "a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

**Theophany:** A direct communication or appearance by God to human beings. For example: God confronting Adam and Eve after their disobedience (Genesis 3:8); God appearing to Moses out of a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6);

 698 **The seal** is a symbol close to that of anointing. "The Father has set his seal" on Christ and also seals us in him. By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark," the seal of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object.

 699 **The hand**. Jesus heals the sick and blesses little children by laying hands on them.<sup>51</sup> In his name the apostles will do the same. Even more pointedly, it is by the Apostles' imposition of hands that the Holy Spirit is given.



700 **The finger.** “It is by the finger of God that [Jesus] cast out demons.” If God’s law was written on tablets of stone “by the finger of God,” then the “letter from Christ” entrusted to the care of the apostles, is written “with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.”



701 At the end of the flood, **whose symbolism(by the way) refers to Baptism**, a dove released by Noah returns with a fresh olive tree branch in its beak as a sign that the earth was again habitable. When Christ comes up from the water of his baptism, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, comes down upon him and remains with him. The Holy Spirit comes down and remains in the purified hearts of the baptized.



### 3. **Water and anointing are symbols of the Holy Spirit**

Water: signifies the Holy Spirit’s action in Baptism, since after the invocation of the Holy Spirit it becomes the efficacious sacramental sign of new birth. (CCC, no. 694)

I grew up around the waters of the Great Lakes in Michigan so water has a special place in my view of things. For me, one of the most powerful images of the Holy Spirit, in Scripture and Church Tradition, comes from St. John of Damascus. It is the image of the Holy Spirit as an ocean, fed by the river of Christ, originating from the spring of life...the Father. The ocean is water, the river is water, and the spring is water, the substance of the three is one. I also like the image conceived by St. Augustine that "The Holy Spirit is the soul of the church."



**Anointing.** The symbolism of anointing with oil also signifies the Holy Spirit. In Christian initiation, anointing is the sacramental sign of Confirmation. When you are confirmed, you will be anointed. Almost like a spiritual tattoo, when you join the Catholic church you get a tattoo you can show off to your friends and family.



### **THE SPIRIT IS THE IMMEDIACY OF GOD**

In a special way, the immediacy of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church is remembered on Pentecost Sunday as we hear of the Apostles and disciples gathered in the Upper Room and receiving the Holy Spirit.



### **GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit:** Wisdom, Understanding, *Counsel* [Right Judgment\*], *Fortitude* [Courage], Knowledge, *Piety* [Reverence], and *Fear of the Lord* [Wonder and Awe in God’s Presence]. (cf. Is 11:1-2) The connotation of words changes over time so we have alternate names for the gifts as used in the Confirmation Rite.

## **The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit by Rev. William G. Most**

They each perfect certain basic virtues. Four of them perfect the intellectual virtues.

[It's worth it to note that ours is not a blind faith, but a faith illuminated through intellectual virtues.] Understanding gives an intuitive penetration into truth. Wisdom perfects charity, in order to judge divine things. Knowledge perfects the virtue of hope. The gift of right judgement perfects prudence. (do we need to be prudent or can we just run amok?)

The other three gifts perfect virtues of the will and appetites. The gift of piety [Reverence] perfects justice in giving to others that which is their due. This is especially true of giving God what is His due. Fortitude [Courage] perfects the virtue of determination, in facing dangers. Fear of the Lord [Wonder and Awe in God's Presence] perfects temperance in controlling disordered appetites.

To illustrate the difference between things done with the Gifts and those done with the ordinary virtues, we'll talk about the gift of counsel. [Right Judgment\*]

There's commonly three kinds of guides a person will follow in making decisions:

1) **The whim of the moment.** Aristotle in his Ethics 1. 5 says that to act that way is a life fit for cattle, who do just what they happen to feel like doing.

2) **Reason**, which in practice is always aided by actual graces, which God gives so generously. For example suppose I see three options open to me, all of which are moral. Ideally I would make at least mentally a list of the good points and of the bad points of each. Then I would look over the whole board, and pick what gives the best effect for me. Another example: if I come to think I need penance for my sins, I would ask: How much have I sinned, so I can know how much penance? what kind of penance will fit with my health? with the obligations of my state in life? And after several steps, a decision is reached. This method is called discursive, since it moves from one step to another.

3) **Gifts**, In the third and highest way a soul, does not go from one step to another in a discursive process, but the answer is, as it were, dropped fully made and complete into his mind by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This was the case for Mary at the annunciation. If she had been operating in the ordinary mode, she might well have reasoned: Now my people have been waiting for centuries for the Messiah (as soon as Gabriel said He would reign over the house of Jacob forever she would have known that He was talking about the messiah). He is here now. I should share this news with others, especially the authorities in Jerusalem. And what about my husband Joseph? In a short time he will not be able to avoid dark thoughts. But the Gospel shows she did none of these things, she just accepted it. However, God needed to send a special angel to tell Joseph. So the Gifts can lead souls to points not contrary to reason, but far more lofty than what reason would suggest.



**The fruits of the Holy Spirit: joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, charity, goodness, modesty, chastity.**



Because I've been doing a lot of renovations on my house I'm going to make an analogy of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and a house.

Through a renovation project of our soul, the fruits of the Holy Spirit become the building blocks of our Christian character. These construction materials refurbish who we are. So much so that sometimes, those who knew us previously can hardly recognize who we have become. (You've changed!) Charity, kindness, generosity, and goodness form the foundation of virtue upon which our Christian character is built. The overarching building blocks of peace and joy are best described by Paul when he uses the phrase, in his letter to the Philippians, "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding." Keeping out the harsh weather of doubt is the roof of faithfulness. This Christian character is surrounded with the strong supporting walls, of patience, and gentleness. And within those walls we exercise modesty, chastity, and self-control.



**How do you know that the Holy Spirit is alive in you?**

The Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and [inspires] us to welcome him in faith.

If your friend gives you a CD, no matter how hard you press it up against your ear you won't hear any music. Likewise you have to let the Holy Spirit sing through the actions of your life to experience the music of His Love.



**What have we learned:**

\* The Holy Spirit is: the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

\*In Scripture, some of the images of the Holy Spirit are fire, cloud and light, seal, hand, finger of God and dove, water and anointing.

\*The Gifts of The Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel [Right Judgment], Fortitude [Courage], Knowledge, Piety [Reverence], and Fear of the Lord [Wonder and Awe in God's Presence].

\*The Fruits of The Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-control, Chastity.

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- \* Before his Ascension, Jesus said to the Apostles, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
- \* Whenever the Father sends his Son, he always sends his Spirit: Their mission is inseparable.
- \* The life of the Blessed Virgin Mary shows us the power of the Holy Spirit. She was made by the Holy Spirit into a witness of grace from the moment of her conception. It is also by the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary conceived Jesus, the Son of God.
- \* By the anointing of the Holy Spirit at his Incarnation, the Son of God was consecrated as Christ (Messiah).
- \* At Pentecost, Peter said of Jesus that “God has made him both Lord and Messiah” (Acts 2:36). From this fullness of his glory, Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the Church.
- \* The Holy Spirit builds up, animates, and sanctifies the Church. He prepares us to go out and bring others to Christ. He opens our minds to understand Christ’s death and Resurrection. He makes present for us the mystery of Christ, especially in the Eucharist, and brings us to communion with God that we may bear much fruit (cf. CCC, no. 737).

## THE CHURCH: REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

**What is a Church?** I'm reminded of a story about Pope Saint John Paul II's utter determination to worship God, and do so in spite of the violence that surrounded him. This story was told to me by a Polish friend when I lived in the Chicago area. In the 1950's the communists built the town of Nowa Huta as a "communist workers' paradise." Of course they expected everyone to be atheist, but the devout Catholic Poles would not let that stand. For twenty years the devout Catholics fought to build a church, but were denied building permits, and were prevented from building it by every bureaucratic trick in the book. In spite of threats of violence they would put up a cross and hold a mass out in a field, but by the next morning their cross would be bulldozed down, and all evidence of a worship service destroyed. The stalwart Bishop Karol Wojtla (later Pope St. John Paul II) would hold mass in the freezing rain, dust, snow, hot sun, and never gave up on this church. It was eventually built, and the gigantic crucifix over the altar was constructed from shrapnel taken from the wounds of Polish soldiers, collected and sent from all over the country. Clearly, you don't need a building to have a vibrant, energetic church. Therefore, the church is not a building, it is us.

**IMAGES AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH —CCC, NOS. 748-810 PETER IS A ROCK AND A LOVING PASTOR** The account in Chapter 16 of Matthew begins with Jesus and the Apostles' arrival at Caesarea Philippi, a city that was twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee. In this setting, Jesus asks the Apostles who people thought he was. They replied that some thought Jesus was John the Baptist, others that he was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. They wondered if Jesus was one of the great prophets come back from the dead. Jesus asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter alone replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Jesus praised Peter's reply, noting that he had not arrived at such an insight through his own human abilities.

**The Holy Spirit maintains the stability, durability, and continuity of the Church both in favorable and unfavorable historical circumstances.**

Peter had received a revelation from God and had spoken from his faith. "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father" (v. 17). Jesus then proceeded to make Peter the rock on which he would build the Church. Beneath the backdrop of a temple built on a rock and devoted to the idolatrous worship of an emperor, Peter, whose name means "rock," is chosen to lead God's Church. "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church" (v. 18). Jesus went further and promised to give Peter the "keys to the Kingdom of Heaven," that is, authority to shepherd the Church.

Jesus also promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. These words are a reminder that, while disorder and chaos might threaten the Church, they will never prevail over the Church because of Christ's protection. Like we see in the Middle East today for example!! It seems that with greater persecution the church has greater growth.

 John 21:15-17 recounts a Resurrection scene.

The risen Jesus spoke to a repentant Peter, who is filled with sorrow because three times he denied Christ, and Christ asks him “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” Peter replied, “Yes Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” Jesus repeated the question two more times, and Peter strongly professed his love. Each time Jesus commissioned him to feed his lambs and sheep, that is, the members of the Church. This scene complements the one in Matthew. There, Jesus called Peter to be the rock of the Church. Here, Christ summoned Peter to be a shepherd who loves Jesus and the Church’s people. From Jesus, the Twelve received the mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations. Peter ultimately made his way to Rome, where he died as a martyr. In establishing the Twelve Apostles with Peter at their head, Jesus gave the Church the basic structure of its leadership.

  
**THE CHURCH AS MYSTERY** The Church is essentially both human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation. —CCC, no. 771, citing Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium; SC), no. 2 The Church is a holy mystery because of her origin in the Holy Trinity and her mission to be the Sacrament of Salvation (the sign and instrument of God’s plan to unite all under Christ). The Holy Trinity brought the Church into being. The Father called the Church into existence. The Son established the Church. The Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and wisdom at Pentecost. The Holy Trinity abides with the Church always, creatively and providentially. The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings Christ’s salvation to the world. She is the instrument of God’s universal call to..... holiness. At the same time, the Church is made up of .....sinful people. Yet despite the personal sinfulness of her members, the Church remains holy by the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit who permeates her.

  
**MEANINGS OF THE WORD CHURCH**

The word Church is a translation of biblical words: the Hebrew word qahal, and the Greek word ekklesia, both of which mean “gathering of people or community” for worship. It was first applied to the people of Israel whom God called into existence. The Church is also called into existence by God. Responding to the proclamation of the Gospel begun by the Apostles, men and women embrace God’s gift of faith and through Baptism become members of the community of the Church. The word Church means the people gathered by God into one community, guided today by the bishops, who are the successors of the Apostles and whose head is the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. The term Church also applies to specific geographical communities called dioceses. It also applies to the buildings where the faithful gather for the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and to families, who are called domestic churches.



## **PLANNED BY THE FATHER**

How did the Church come to be? From the beginning, the Church was part of God's plan for sharing his divine life with all people. There was a gradual formation of God's family through a series of events described in the Old Testament: God's covenant with Abraham as the father of a great people, the liberation of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt and their establishment in the Promised Land, and their solidification as a nation through the kingship of David.

## **FOUNDED BY JESUS CHRIST**

Jesus brought about the fulfillment of the Father's plan for the Church first by his preaching and witnessing the Good News of the Kingdom, with its gifts of salvation from sin and participation in divine life. The seed and beginning of the Kingdom was the little flock whom Jesus shepherded as his family. Jesus established the beginnings of a visible structure of the Church that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved, through his choice of the Twelve Apostles, with Peter as the head. By his Cross, Jesus gave birth to the Church: The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. "The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus." "For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'" As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross. (CCC, no. 766, citing LG, no. 3, and SC, no. 5)

## **REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit revealed the Church at Pentecost, coming upon the Apostles and the disciples with a transforming fire, forming them into a visible community, and empowering them to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The early Church Fathers taught that there was an inseparable link between the Holy Spirit and the Church: "Where the Church is, there also is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church" (St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, 24.1). So forceful is the presence of the Spirit in the life of the early Church that the New Testament narrative of the Church's early growth, the Acts of the Apostles, is often called the "Gospel of the Holy Spirit."

The Acts of the Apostles and early Church history show how the Holy Spirit bestowed gifts on the community of believers for their roles and responsibilities in serving the Church. This was a dynamic process that illustrated the abiding presence and action of the Spirit along with the increased understanding of the Faith. From Pentecost onward, the Church began her earthly pilgrimage that will be fulfilled one day in glory. The Holy Spirit maintains the stability, durability, and continuity of the Church both in favorable and unfavorable historical circumstance



## CHURCH AS THE SACRAMENT OF SALVATION

To say that the Church is a sacrament is to say that she is a mystery, being both visible and spiritual.

The visible Church is a public institution, with a hierarchical government, laws, and customs. She is visible in her worldwide membership of millions of believers who gather in Christian homes, parishes, dioceses, monasteries, convents, and shrines to praise God and then to go forth to witness Christ and serve the world in love, justice, and mercy.

This Church is also a spiritual reality, with interior bonds of faith and love forged by the Holy Spirit. The Church as both visible and spiritual is traditionally described as the Mystical Body of Christ. It is a living body, sustained by the hidden work of the Holy Spirit.

The complexity that characterizes the Church as a visible institution and, at the same time, a spiritual reality causes some to miss the basic unity of the Church. The Holy Spirit is the source of unity of all the aspects of the Church. The Holy Spirit integrates the visible aspects of the Church with the invisible aspects in such a way that the Church is always a unity of both aspects.

In the unity of this Body [of which Christ is the head], there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted. (CCC, no. 806)

The Church is the sacrament of salvation. “The Church is like a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men” (CCC, no. 775). The Church is a sacrament of the union of all people with God, and a sacrament of the unity of all peoples—for the Church gathers people “from every nation, race, people, and tongue” (Rev 7:9).

The Spirit communicates to us the salvation gained for us by Jesus Christ through the Church and her seven Sacraments. “The Church ‘is the visible plan of God’s love for humanity,’ because God desires ‘that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit’” (CCC, no. 776, citing Pope Paul VI [June, 22, 1973]).



Ultimately this all points to the author of unmitigated mercy, the flawless advocate of the insignificant, who’s death on the cross brings eternal consequence to the word Savior, Jesus The Christ.

Amen



## **What have we learned:**

- \* The Church is us
- \* The gates of Hell won't prevail against the Church
- \* The Holy Trinity brought the Church into being. The Father called the Church into existence. The Son established the Church. The Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and wisdom at Pentecost.
- \* To say that the Church is a sacrament is to say that she is a mystery, being both visible and spiritual.

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

\*The word Church is based on both the Greek word *ekklesia* and the Hebrew word *qahal*, which mean the gathering of the community. It was first applied to the people of Israel, whom God called into existence. The Church was planned and formed by God, who called together into one those who accepted the Gospel.

\*The Father prepared for the Church through a series of covenant events described in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the divine plan for the Church through his saving death and Resurrection. The Holy Spirit manifested the Church as a mystery of salvation.

\*The Church is a visible society and a spiritual community; she is a hierarchical institution and the Body of Christ; she is an earthly Church and one filled with heavenly treasures. Hence the Church is a complex reality that has human and divine elements.

The reality of the mystery of the Church is expressed in a variety of ways as follows:

\*The Church is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of our communion with God (cf. CCC, nos. 774-776).

\*The Church is the People of God. “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.... Once you were ‘no people,’ / but now you are God’s people” (1 Pt 2:9-10). We become members of God’s People through faith and Baptism (cf. CCC, nos. 781-786).

\*The Church is the Body of Christ. Christ is the head, and we are the members. In the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and roles, yet everyone is linked together by Christ’s love and grace, especially the poor, the suffering, and the persecuted (cf. CCC, nos. 787-795).

\*The Church is the Bride of Christ. “Christ loved the Church and handed himself over [to death] for her that he might sanctify her” (Eph 5:25-26; cf. CCC, no. 796).

The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. “We are the temple of the living God” (2 Cor 6:16; cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17, Eph 2:21; cf. CCC, nos. 797-801).

\*The Church is a communion. The starting point of this communion is our union with Jesus Christ. This gives us a share in the communion of the Persons of the Trinity and also leads to a communion among men and women (cf. CCC, nos. 813, 948, 959).

\*These truths about unity and communion in the Church call us to become a source of unity for all peoples.