

## ***A Manuel of Marianist Spirituality***



**Quentin Hakenewerth, SM**

(continue) **PART ONE: Sprit as Life**

### **HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God. Wherever it dwells or acts, it communicates life and power. When God comes to dwell in us, we are joined to God in the Holy Spirit. Because we are made in God's image, the coming of the Spirit is not a presence that opposes our person. It is not an intrusion; rather, the Spirit is a congenial presence which can perfect us with new qualities beyond our own possibilities.

The Holy Spirit brings the life of God into our human life and makes the two one. We do not renounce our own personality, nor do we become another person. But to the extent that we become "children of God," we experience a profound transformation in our life. The gifts and the fruits of the Holy spirit are seen in our thinking, our feeling, our attitudes, and our work. If we allow it and collaborate, the Spirit of God becomes one with us and transforms us. The Lord does not possess us in order to dominate us; rather, God brings us to greater fullness through a new and richer life.

God becomes so closely one with us that we can easily believe it is merely our own self. Even when there are extraordinary manifestations which “renew the face of the ground” we can fail to recognize the source in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God acts in us not as an outside agent, but as our very own spirit. The Spirit’s action proceeds from the interior; therefore, it is only from our own interior spirit that we can recognize God within. “You know God, because he abides with you” John 14:17.

This very intimacy of the Holy Spirit with us can be a problem. We can discover and experience the Holy Spirit only by seeing our own actions and our own attitudes in the light of faith. In faith, we can experience a real presence. We never see the Spirit as such, but in faith we can recognize the manifestations of the Spirit’s presence through our own life.

Perhaps we recognize most clearly the nature of the presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus himself. The very beginning of Jesus’ existence as a human being was due to the action of the Holy Spirit in Mary. The conception of Jesus was not a human act blessed by God: it was an act of the Spirit of God in a human being – Mary. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you,” Luke 1:35. When Jesus encounters John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth, the extraordinary blessing of this encounter was the action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus began his ministry “with the power of the Spirit” in him, Luke 4:14.

In all his dealings, Jesus manifests the action of the Spirit in his human nature. After he was empowered to ministry by the Spirit, the manifestations of the Spirit were permanent in him. The work of God is now his word: when he speaks, he “speaks the words of God,” John 3:34. The power of miracles is an abiding power in his human nature. He lives in constant openness with God. No one ever has possessed the Spirit as he does. “God gives the Spirit without measure,” John 3:34.

This description of the Spirit in Jesus gives us a hint of how God wishes to dwell in us to transform us, and to give us his own power in much the same way as Jesus lived it.

---

*Exercise: Relate an experience in your life that you believe to be a manifestation of acting in the Holy Spirit who abides in you.*

---

**RECAPITULATION:**

In the first part of this section, “Spirit as Life,” was mentioned that our experience of *spirit* apart from our body doesn’t exist. “Our experience of ourselves is that we are one being, one living body.” The consequence of that is we tend to live for our bodies rather than our spirit! What this means is that many live under the motto, “Let us eat, drink, (and party), for tomorrow we die!” This saying is as ancient as the Greeks.

“We are meant to live all three levels of life in a harmonious unit,” body, psyche, and soul! But abundant and eternal life is centered in the *spirit*. I printed purposely in italics the following important passage in the Part: When the body serves the spirit, the body is drawn into fuller life with the qualities of the spirit. If the spirit is subject to the body, the spirit is limited by the impulses of the body.

Be honest with yourself now: what influences you more at this moment in your life, **Body** or **Spirit**?