

So we continue our thoughts on the Holy Trinity, this week we turn the focus of our attention towards the Holy Spirit.

The appearance of Jesus in the world makes explicit the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of God. At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel Joseph hears the angel's words: "*Jospeh, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*"<sup>1</sup> That is an interesting phase. What is conceived in Mary is Jesus, and Jesus "*is from the Holy Spirit*". That word 'From' is interesting, with its connotations of being 'sent' or 'directed' or even 'commanded'. We might think of Jesus a Son of God as being sent by the Father, but here it is most clearly not the Father but the Holy Spirit.

Later in the same Gospel, John the Baptist prophesies that there is someone coming who will baptise with 'The Holy Spirit and with Fire.'<sup>2</sup> The connection in the text makes it clear that this is Jesus, who when he is baptised he sees the '*Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him: and behold, a voice from heaven said, ; this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well please.*'<sup>3</sup> Jesus is then led by the "Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."<sup>4</sup> Again the Holy Spirit seems to be the impetus of action.

Why is this? I ask the question because the rest of the Gospel is seems almost entirely silent about the Holy Spirit until the very end. The dialogue Jesus has with the God the Father continues to be recorded, but not the Spirit. Is it because the Holy Spirit has played his part and departed, or because His presence and participation in the life of Jesus is considered by Matthew to be axiomatic, that is to say so self-evident, that it does not need to be mentioned? I think that this is the case, and my reasoning is based on the two other Holy Spirit 'events' in the Gospel.

The first is when Jesus warns that all sins can be forgiven, but not blasphemies against the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Ever. '*Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*'<sup>6</sup> The second is the close of Matthew's gospel, which may or may not have been added later on '*Go therefore and make disciple of all the nations baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*'<sup>7</sup>

Up to this point, what have we learned about the Holy Spirit? That the Holy Spirit is not God the Father and not God the Son (Jesus). That the action of the Holy Spirit somehow precedes Jesus coming into the world and Jesus preaching about the Father. That the Holy Spirit rests on Jesus when he goes about God the Father's business, and that when the Son of God is present, the Father is always present, and the Holy Spirit is always present. There seems to be a continuous harmonious action between the three of them.

Of the Holy Spirit the Creed that we pray at every Sunday Mass says this:

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<sup>1</sup> Matt 1:20

<sup>2</sup> Matt 3:11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 3:16-17

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid Matt 12:31-32

<sup>6</sup> Matt 12:32

<sup>7</sup> Matt 28:19

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Week of Ordinary Time 2025

*'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.'*

Previously we spoke of God the Father being the creator of everything, who is a moral God, and who reveals his presence in History. We spoke of God the Son who became Jesus, and who receives the full out pouring of His Father's Love and glory, to return it in Love and obedience to that Love. In the Father and the Son we see that God is a relational God, whose nature is Love. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God who is witness to and proclaimer of Gods Love.

The Holy Spirit breathes out the life of God the Father and God the Son<sup>8</sup>. This is the reason that His symbols are fire, light, cloud and water, the seal the hand, the finger and the dove.<sup>9</sup> He brings illumination of God; points to Him; brings relief to hard pressed souls, and is the proclamation of peace for mankind. He invites us to share the life of God, Himself through baptism.

This is why it is the Holy Spirit who proclaims the sending of Jesus to Mary and Joseph. Jesus is God's loving response to our need that the Son obeys and the Spirit rejoices in and shares with the world. I think that this is why it appears that the Holy Spirit goes silent for a time in Matthew's Gospel, because rather than being absent he is overflowingly present and visible in the Jesus's life. This is why blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is so deadly, because it rejects entry into our hearts of the message and messenger of God Himself. This is why the Holy Spirit opens and closes the Matthews Gospel: He lets us see Jesus Christ, who is our salvation. The Holy Spirit will make us humble before God and understand today's gospel as well. Pray to Him.

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<sup>8</sup> Ruch – spirit, breath, wind. 'Holy Spirit' is a title.

<sup>9</sup> CCC 691