

Explanation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit Youth Conference July 25, 1998

It has been said that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten person of the Blessed Trinity. And in time I have come to realize that that is actually a very perceptive insight. What do we mean by the Holy Spirit.? Now when we talk about God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, if we talk--well, what do we mean by Father? Well, I think we have an idea of Father because we have fathers whether we like them or not--sometimes we have fathers that are not good images of fatherhood, but nonetheless we have an idea of what a father is. And we talk about Jesus; well, Jesus is one like us--he's human but without sin. So we have something to grasp. The very nature of the Holy Spirit is that we don't really grasp the Holy Spirit in such an image. Now don't think for one minute that you can image the Holy Spirit as a dove! If you read the text, what it says is "The Holy Spirit descended like a dove." What it means is that the descent is like the descent of a dove. The comparison is the descent--as a dove descends. Well, how do doves descend? Well, very gently--so it's an image of gentleness, but it has nothing to do with a dove.

And there are pictures in Christian art, unfortunately, where they have this old man. Now the Father is not an old man--the Father's not a man at all! So picturing the Father, God the Father, as an old man is really offensive to Christian theology--but it's been done in Christian art; in fact, you see old man, young man and dove being some artist's rendition of the Trinity. Well, this has nothing to do with the Trinity. Jesus is the only human form of God.

The Holy Spirit--what is meant by the Holy Spirit? Well, that's what we have to really look at. It's going to be the most unexplainable side, if you want to put it that way, of God. First of all we have to start off with the affirmation that there is only one God. There are not three gods. So when we talk about the three persons in God there aren't three different individuals in this sense of the word "person"--that would not be correct. There's one God, one divine will; there are not three divine wills. So in so far as we think of person as someone with a will of his or her own, a mind of his or her own, there is one will and one mind in God; there are not three minds in God. Okay? So what do we mean by this? It's very mysterious. It can't be explained in words, and yet we deal with it because it's the revelation of God. God has revealed himself to us as a God with an inner relationship to himself, a three-fold relationship.

Now again, we can't explain it, but one way of thinking about it is by reflecting on ourselves. If I think something, if I think about something, I have a thought. Okay? My thought will change and I can modify it; I can forget about it. But God, now let's think of God, God--is God like us? No! When God thinks a thought can he forget about it? No. Can he change his mind about his thought? No. So when God thinks about God that thought is itself an infinite thought and it's an eternal thought. Okay? And that's getting close to the idea of the Word of God. The Word of God is the eternal uncreated thought God has about God. And when God speaks about God, which we call revelation, he gives us Himself. He doesn't give us something else, but Himself. That's what we mean by revelation: God is giving us Himself. So the Word he speaks to us is Himself. "Now in varied forms God spoke about Himself in the past," so says the Letter to the Hebrews,

“but now in our time God has come with the complete message.” The complete message is Jesus: the Word of God, the divine, uncreated Word of God, now--two thousand years ago now--assuming a human nature, and through the human nature expressing the nature of God. The will of God, the life of God, the mind of God, everything about God Jesus expresses!

What’s the Spirit? God loves God. God is not only a lover, but God is also a beloved. So one might think of the Spirit as the beloved of God. And God loves us so much, made in his own image and likeness, that He enables us, He created us in such a way as we can become beloved as God loves Himself--God loving us with his very own love He has for Himself. This is the Holy Spirit.

Now of course we wouldn’t know a thing about God if it weren’t revealed to us. A human mind may be able to figure some stuff out, but you know I’m not so sure about that as I look around. But anyway, what we do know is that through revelation we know about God. Now when Jesus uses--well, even before Jesus in the Old Testament, when the word “spirit “ was used the word was in Hebrew “Ruah,” which is a word used also for wind and for breath. Why would those words be used? Well breath, for example, was believed to be the source of life. In other words when a person died it was said, “Well, they died because they stopped breathing.” We might say, “We stop breathing because we’re dead.” They didn’t say it that way. They thought the breath itself was the life. Okay? And they thought the breath itself came from God. It was God’s life. This is the idea in the Old Testament that all life belongs to God, is God’s--which is the basis for the respect for life, and not only human life! In the Old Testament it was all life is really divine in origin. By life I don’t mean the living being itself as much as I mean the life in the living being--what makes it live--that’s God’s, belongs to God, comes from God and it returns to God.

And that’s the very idea of the sacrificial system in the temple. Why did the Hebrew priests slit the throats of animals? Because by killing an animal they were giving the life back to God. See, the offering was not the corpse. See? The corpse is no offering; that wasn’t what was offered. See? The blood was used symbolically to purify people and was poured onto the horns of the altar--it was poured in various places: in front of the kipparet, the mercy seat, symbolizing the cleansing, which is again a funny image for us--blood cleaning, I mean you know--blood doesn’t clean anything in my house, but you know that’s the mentality--okay we’re dealing with the image system. But what was offered to God was the invisible life itself, and upon that life was placed the petition of the people. See? It’s almost as if well, if we really want to get close to God, we have to get inside God. You know like well, if we want to get close to someone else we have to get in touch with them. Hopefully they have a phone. Okay, what if they don’t have a phone? Well, we’ll use a carrier pigeon. We have to get to them. Well, this is the idea of getting to God. Sacrifice was getting to God because the life was his, so we want to get to him; well, put a petition on an animal and immolate the animal and the petition would get to God. And hopefully He’d listen, but there was never any assurance He would. The hope was He would. Okay? So that’s the idea of Ruah, of breath, life. Okay?

But also wind! Okay? Now Jesus captures that idea, the idea of a wind. Why? Well, he says, “You know, you don’t really know when the wind is going to all of a sudden pick up or fall off.” There’s this unpredictable, spontaneous element; and he said, “With God too.” Now that’s something again all organized religion is always in danger of losing, because when we organize religion what we’re really doing is organizing people, and I guess we have to organize people. But when we organize religion we run the risk of trying to get everything kind of set down. And of course there is need for creed; there is need for doctrine and so on, but there is a tendency to think, “Now we have God figured out. Now we have God in our little box.” But what Jesus was trying to say, “Well, God is also Spirit and you don’t know when the Spirit is going to, the wind is going to blow, when it’s not going to blow, when it’s going to disappear altogether or come in like a gale.” And so there is that element of God; we have to remember this and keep reminding ourselves of this.

Now Jesus was always stimulating his listeners, trying to get them to think in new ways about things through the parables; well, there were certain people in his time who hated that. They just hated it! You could say they were Spirit-blind! A person who never wants to hear anything new about God is Spirit-blind. That’s a part of them; they don’t want to know the unpredictable, the unexplainable part. You know? “If God says, ‘Do this,’ well then I’ll do it. If he reveals law, fine I’ll follow it. But don’t tell me that God is going to work in unpredictable ways. I don’t want that.” See? So it ends up as a great control issue in people’s lives. I think it always will be. I think control is one of the big issues in people’s lives. And Jesus was trying to tell people, as we’ve talked about already with the ideas of the kingdom, the issue of the kingdom, that to live the full life of the kingdom we have to yield control to God! Yield to the control of God is now opening ourselves to the Spirit. Now as it turns out the openness to spirit in general can be dangerous because there is not only the Holy Spirit, but there are also other spirits; therefore there’s need for discernment. But we don’t have to go into that right now. Nonetheless openness to the Holy Spirit is necessary.

Now if we look into the New Testament there are two different traditions about the Spirit. One is the synoptic tradition: Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts. In the synoptic tradition there’s a great continuity between the idea of the Spirit in the Old Testament and the idea of the Spirit in the New Testament. The emphasis remains on spontaneity, spontaneity of divine action and the unpredictable character of divine action. We see it, as I read to you, I don’t remember when, but I remember I said at one point we read from the Gospel of Mark about the baptism of Jesus. The baptism of Jesus is the beginning of his ministry. The Spirit is there. The Spirit is initiating Jesus into his ministry. And the ministry is the purpose of his life, so it’s initiating him into the purpose of his life. Then as I also mentioned it drives him into the desert where he will confront evil in it’s various forms.

Now in Matthew the Spirit is present even in the infancy of Jesus as the author writes, “For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.” Matthew 1:20. And then again also in the baptism of Jesus in Matthew Chapter 3: “The Spirit of

God descended on him like a dove.” Now John the Baptist says in Chapter 3, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Here’s another image--fire! Now fire was a very important image in John the Baptist’s time. It was believed to be one of the primary elements making up the creation: fire, water, earth, air. Okay? Now when it came to fire that was like God’s activity and God’s judgment too. So judgment is associated with fire: that God would come and consume with fire those who had opposed his work. And that same fire would consume the blessed, but they would have a totally different experience of the fire. For them it would be this ecstatic experience of joy and energy--same fire as I understand it. Now at the end of Matthew’s Gospel again the Holy Spirit is at work. Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

In Luke and Acts, which is written by the single author, there are fifty-seven references to the Spirit--more than in Matthew or Mark. So Luke becomes very much interested in the work of the Spirit. And Luke’s basic idea is this: Look here the Spirit has been working in Jesus. Now Jesus has been delivered unto death, which he accepted; he’s been murdered, but he did not oppose this. Now he’s been raised up in the Spirit, and now that very same Spirit is going to continue his work in the believers so that the Church will continue to do what Jesus did; and that is clearly the teaching of the Acts of the Apostles. What we see is that the Church does what Jesus did in every way! The apostles raised the dead; they healed the sick--they did everything! And that same idea is also found in the fourth gospel where it says, “Greater things than I have done you shall do also.” Now I do think there is a danger that we think of those as exaggerations. I don’t think those are exaggerations! There are exaggerations used for various affects, but those aren’t. Those are not parabolic! I believe those are meant quite literally that we shall be empowered with the same Spirit Jesus was empowered with and we will continue his work!

This has not been a belief well kept in the Church! Even going back to St. Augustine--I’m getting a little ahead of myself, but even going back to St. Augustine’s time--there was already the recognition that there is something that has been lost here--the ardor. Well even in the Book of Revelations, let’s face it, what is one of the points of the Book of Revelations? “Well, I know you are still good people, but you have lost your original fervor! And I hold that against you.” Does not the Book of Revelations say that to the Churches? “I hold that against you: you do not have your original ardor.” That’s fire! But by the time of St. Augustine it was kind of obvious. See? And Augustine unfortunately invented a way of thinking about this: he talked about different ages. “Well,” he said, “back in those times they needed all these miracles and so on, and now we don’t need them any more.” Augustine was not a pro-miracle person. He didn’t like the use of relics for healing which was popular at that time. And he spoke against it until one day when the people were processing with the relics of St. Stephen, in spite of the fact that he didn’t approve of this and he was the bishop--nonetheless they did it anyway. And right in front of his face he saw the bone of Stephen or the relic of Stephen touch someone and heal them--right in front of his face! And Augustine said, “From now on I shall not speak on this topic.”

So later on in this country a man named Darby developed a whole idea of dispensations, different dispensations roughly based on Augustine. This led to an idea found in Protestant thinking called “dispensationalism.” And that idea is we cannot in any way expect to live the same life as the Apostolic Church. This I think is false. I believe that the Apostolic Church as witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles is meant to be the image for us of normal Christian life--normal Christian life! Okay? So rather than thinking of miracles as exceptional--they’re only exceptional in the sense that they don’t happen through the mechanistic manipulations that we do everything else with. Okay? They’re exceptional in that way, but they should not be exceptional among the believers. They should be normal among the believers. We should expect them in this sense--okay?--in a proper sense. I’m claiming this is really what Luke wants us to believe: that’s how he wrote the Acts of the Apostles!

Now again in Luke, in the infancy narratives, he doesn’t actually use the word there “Holy Spirit.” He says, “Power of the Most High,” but it means the same thing. The Power of the Most High overshadows Mary; she conceives Jesus in her womb. Again in the baptism and in the temptation there’s the descent like a dove; and filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert. Again this is reflecting the Gospel of Matthew. Later on in the Acts of the Apostles we see something else very extraordinary about the Holy Spirit. It alights on gentiles who have not even been baptized! Again the unpredictable work of God. See?

Now today we have the RCIA, right? You all have RCIA? That’s wonderful; we like that, but think about it for a minute. You know, if someone is really ready to receive God do they have to go through the RCIA? See, but that’s a typical Church thing; churches do this. We set up standards. See? Well now, you have to do this first. Why? Well, because a lot of people are not really sincere and they really are not ready and they just want to go with the crowd, “Oh, I want to do that too.” You know it’s like well, do they know what they are doing? No. So therefore we set up processes to let them know what it’s about. Okay?

But in the early RCIA that the Church originally set up it had nothing to do with actually what we believe. The Creed was only presented shortly before the baptism! Nothing about baptism was stated at all. They walked into baptism completely blind. They didn’t have any idea what it’s going to be. The Creed had just been given to them in words, but not explained. It was only explained after they were baptized. The theory was if you don’t have the grace of baptism, how are you going to know anything? So it wasn’t a matter of people searching for little bits and pieces of what they can accept and understand. The idea was: No, you have to understand if you become a Christian, this is what’s required of you. So what they would do is they would go to the various places where martyrs had been killed, at least in Rome. These become stations as they were called in Rome. And usually they were houses; it wasn’t necessarily where they were killed, sometimes where they were buried. Christians would claim the dead bodies of the martyrs and bury them in their basements. Now this is not something we would necessarily go for, but they did. And then those became domestic churches. They became gathering places for the faithful, and they are to this day. Later on they became

the churches of the early Roman Church. And now they are excavating down to many levels and it's fascinating if you go there and look at it. The point is what they would do is they would take candidates for baptism and they would say, "Now this is where St. Cecilia is buried and here's her story." And they'd tell about the martyrdom of St. Cecilia. The idea is "Look, if you really want to be a Christian, you have to be ready to die! If you're not ready to die, you're not ready to be baptized!" That was when RCIA was really a good program! So it wasn't a matter of information. See? It was a matter of preparation. See?

Then after the baptism took place, then the bishop would teach them the meaning of the mysteries that they had celebrated: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist. They didn't know what they were getting into that way. And then the bishop would take--week after week they would come to Eucharist and he would teach them the meaning--and that was called the catechesis. And it came after the baptism and the mystagogia. The mystagogia is of course, I should say it's really called mystagogia, catechesis was something else--that was repeating things, learning things in a repetitious way. But the mystagogia was learning how the personal life of a believer relates directly to sacramental celebration.

Again, where is mystagogia for those who are baptized as infants? Where do people who are more or less brought up Catholic where do they ever learn how to connect the sacramental celebrations of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist to their own personal faith experience? Now the Sunday homily should help do that, but in some cases the Sunday homilist does not know how to do that; so there is a void in the life of many people in the Church! They have not really been connected! See? They've received the gifts, but they don't know what the gifts are! So in a sense it's almost like if you went to someone's house--and it would be rather strange if you saw this--okay, there in the corner the Christmas tree from last year and underneath all these nice packages unopened. That is in many ways the Christian life today: gifts given, but unopened!

So now the Holy Spirit is seen in the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 10 alighting on the gentiles, and the disciples said, "Hey wait a minute. This cannot be! How can this be!" But they said, "Well, wait a minute. Who are we to tell the Holy Spirit what to do?" And they said, "When you were baptized," and they said, "We weren't baptized. Oh yeah, we were in the Jordan with John, but you know we weren't baptized in the name of Christ. We don't know anything about Christ's baptism." But they were receiving the gift of the Spirit. See? Now this is a very important thing from the ecumenical viewpoint that we have to recognize. The Holy Spirit can alight on anyone at any time. And it's up to the Church to learn what the Spirit's doing, not tell the Spirit what to do! It's very hard for the institutional Church to do that--any church. See? All these controversies and actually they're worse outside of the Catholic Church--the controversies about how to worship or what to believe. You know, they're terrible! But what the parties who are, you know, fighting about, what they can't believe is that it really isn't up to them!

Now in the synoptic gospels and the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit leads, overshadows and establishes the action that effects God's will. So it has to do with

Jesus' conception, the inauguration of his ministry and in the inauguration of the Church. In John and Paul however there is a different point of view! In John and Paul the Spirit is even more pervasive! In other words not only do they see the Spirit at these very special events: conception of Jesus, inauguration of ministry, inauguration of Church, but in John and Paul the Spirit is all the time, everywhere! There is no explanation of anything without the Spirit. The Spirit imbues everything, fills everything; and it's because of the Spirit that this new life we get from Christ actually perdures.

So St. Paul says, "If we are baptized with Christ, we have died with him and we live a new life." What has died? Well, what has died is of course not the physical body, but what has died is a certain attitude toward the physical body that it must be preserved at all costs, that its comfort is a great value. Okay? So that's the death and now there's a new life. And the new life envelops the body, but is not centered in the body. It's centered actually in the risen Christ. And in this way every body who is a believer is part of a greater body which is the risen Christ. And this risen Christ, of course, then is the Church; it's the body of the Church so there is an identity between the body of the believers, the body of the Church and the body of Christ. These are all one now in the Spirit.

In John there is a very important idea that spirit begets spirit. "Flesh begets flesh; spirit begets spirit." Now we talked earlier about what it means flesh begets flesh: all the ways in which not only does one generation lead to the next generation, but all the stuff of our lives that are passed on from generation to generation. That's the flesh. Now sin has made the flesh displeasing to God. It wasn't originally, but it's displeasing to God in particular because of its violence. Refer to the story of the flood in the Book of Genesis: "God was displeased because of the violence of the flesh," not because of any other reason; and therefore decided to destroy it. But then decided to save a small portion. But even get this--the ark--you know, on one side Noah's ark is a peculiar image, you know, a bunch of animals living together--but think of the power of that symbol! Two by two they entered, but all of these animals had to live in harmony on this ark. Now that already is something very unnatural in our world. Animals do not live in harmony--species with other species--they don't--they prey on each other! So the ark is already a symbol of some transformation that God is wanting in the very nature of the earthly life including the life of the animal. And Isaiah picks up that theme later on when he says, "The lamb will lie down with the lion." See the depth of peace and harmony that is the work of the Spirit--transcends even human life. In a similar way it was the ancient belief that human sin also transcended human life and created disorders throughout all of creation.

So now John talks about being begotten from above. Now what does that mean? Well, first of all there is a pun here. When Jesus is talking to Nicodemus Jesus says, "Unless someone is begotten from above by water and the Spirit, this person can never enter the kingdom of God. And Nicodemus misunderstands because of a pun in Greek between "born" and "begotten" and the word from above is "another," and another also means again. So he misunderstands and says, "What do you mean 'born again'?" How can a man be born again?" Now some people have made a big issue about this term

“born again.” It’s peculiar because that’s not what it originally meant. It means begotten from above--that the life of God does not arise naturally from human generation, but is a gift that needs to be received willfully. And the sign of it is water and Spirit. Now that’s what baptism is all about--water and Spirit, literally air and water. See, the word for Spirit is air so it’s by the power of air and water, but of course he doesn’t mean normal air and normal water. He’s referring to this life of God, the breath that comes from God--all life comes from God--and the water--that goes back to the waters of the Book of Genesis, the water, the primeval waters from whence God draws forth life on earth.

Now this experience however of being born again, what people call being born again, it is something we should focus on for a moment. First of all what it is saying is “Someone has finally experienced God,” and that’s something good. Actually we should experience God. It should not just be an idea in our head or something someone told us about. It should be something we know through our own experience. And this experience should change our lives! It should empower us to live the life Christ lived. [Of course--are you getting cold?--I was just getting warm. Don’t you think it’s warm in here? No? Okay, must be the Holy Spirit! Okay.] So this new life comes from God, and it needs to be experienced. Okay? And some people--again it’s not experienced! Now this is not normal, not what we want to call normal Christian life! So we believe that the initiation, the full initiation, into Christian life involves this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this experience of God and the gifts! So that’s something we want to expect. We want to expect it for ourselves, and we want to expect it for others.

The life of the risen Christ is shared life. Okay? So there are not many lives of Christ; there’s one life of Christ--we all share in it, this one life. And it’s mediated by the Church. So we need each other. We need the body. We need the body of Christ. We need this dimension that goes beyond our own individuality. That’s the way God works. It’s not our choice. It’s God’s way. It is through the mediation of the body that the signs are imposed or celebrated: baptism, confirmation, Holy Eucharist, matrimony, reconciliation, holy orders, holy anointing of the sick. But there is no necessary connection between those signs and their celebration on the one hand, and the experience of the Spirit on another. So people can receive all the signs and never experience any of the experience! Now in my personal experience, it seems to me that very often Catholics experience God in the sacrament of reconciliation more than any other time.

Now in a few moments I’m going to talk about prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As we talk about it here it is the fullness of initiation. Now maybe you have never heard of the term quite in that sense “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” but the original term is “baptism by water and Spirit.” The Spirit being the experience, so if we have the sign only, we don’t have the fullness yet of what is meant. So by baptism of the Holy Spirit means the fullness of the event, the fullness of the experience. And it’s clear in the early Church that this was considered part and parcel of being initiated into the Church. If you hadn’t experienced this yet, there was still something lacking, something missing.

But anyway this woman was telling me, “Well, I received the baptism of the Holy spirit three times.” I said, “What do you mean three times?” I said, “Normally we don’t

talk that way.” I said, “A believer receives the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy spirit, once--not three times. You may have many experiences of God, but the baptism of the Holy spirit is the initiation into the experience of God.” She said, “Gee, I got it three times.” I said, “Well what do you mean? What do you mean by that?” “Well, I went to Life in the Spirit seminar three times, and I was prayed over three times.” And I said, “Well, tell me what happened.” “Nothing.” The first time nothing happened; the second time nothing happened; the third time nothing happened. Okay. And so then she was talking a little more and she said, “But, you know, long before I ever went to Life in the Spirit seminar, I really felt I needed to go and confess my sins. And I went to confession. And you know when I went to confession I was so filled with some power that came through me I felt warmed all over.” I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of the expression “heart-strangely warmed”? That’s Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church--heart-strangely warmed. He’s talking about this experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit; that’s what it is. She said, “I felt myself warm,” and she said, “I just felt so full of joy and I felt so forgiven!” I said, “Karen, that was your baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

And you may have received this some time. I’ve heard of people receiving this driving their car. Sometimes it comes spontaneously out of the blue. Well, why not if it’s the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit can do whatever the Holy Spirit wants to do! Other people pray fervently and wait and maybe wait a while, and they receive it. Now it comes in different ways--I do admit it. There is no one way to receive this gift of the Holy Spirit, this initiatory experience of God; but it should arrive at some point if we are being sacramentally initiated.

Now Pope Paul VI in his wonderful book called Evangelii Nuntiandi, he says one of the worst problems in the Catholic Church is that we have all kinds of people who have been, he used the word, “sacramentalized.” He meant they’ve been baptized, they’ve received Holy Communion, but he said, “They’ve never been evangelized! They’ve never heard the gospel!” Well, if they’ve never heard the gospel, how are they ever going to experience the fullness of Christian life? Even in the Acts of the Apostles when the Holy Spirit alighted on those who had not yet been baptized, they had still heard the gospel. So we might say that hearing the gospel is more important to experiencing God than the sacraments. The sacraments should be thought of as celebrating what has been heard and received, and in some cases we have the cart before the horse. And that’s what he is saying--Pope Paul--I really recommend this to everybody--everyone should get this little booklet On Evangelization in the Modern World, “Evangelii Nuntiandi.” I can say it. Okay.

Did I send this to you?

No, I sent you a smaller little book by Father Sala. Okay.

Now what are the effects of this Spirit? The outpouring of gifts is of course for the building up of the body.

- Number one, adoration. Do we think of adoration as a gift? Adoration is not something we do, but adoration is a gift we are given that elevates us. I mean when you go back even to the primitive people they experience reverence and awe and fear sometimes too--fear of the sacred, awe of the sacred. That’s a gift! Adoration is a

gift. Praise is a gift. Prayer! Prayer is a gift--to be able to pray. I don't know if you've ever been in a state where you can't pray? Prayer is a gift! Prayer is lifting up the mind and heart to God, but we can't lift our own mind and heart up to God; God has to lift our mind and heart up to God. It's a gift! And it increases the contemplative dimension of Christian life which means our capacity to be aware of God in daily things. Contemplation is the awareness of God in all things, in all events, in all people.

- Number two, gifts of service animates a life of holiness that is committed to justice. Gifts of service animate a life of holiness. So holiness is a life that has been given to us and in which we are being inspired or animated by the Spirit of God and it's committed to justice. And we need to find ways to effect this justice or to work toward this justice.
- Three, docility to the Spirit. Docility to the Spirit means a willingness and an openness to be taught and an expectant faith. We talked earlier about faith and different facets of it: obedience and trust, those are basic, but now comes an expectant faith in God's desire and willingness to intervene in his world to effect or bring about the kingdom.
- Four, zeal for the gospel and respect for others. Respect is a very important thing--for those over us and for those under us. A Spirit-filled person must be respectful of people who are socially, economically inferior. Anybody can respect a boss; but a truly anointed, Spirit-filled Christian must respect someone lower, someone more humble than himself or herself.

Now St. Paul says, "In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, and we were all given to drink of the one Spirit. So the idea is that it's Christ Himself who is baptized by the Spirit, so we are baptized by the Spirit.

- ⇒ Number one, this leads to sanctification. As St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians Chapter 6, "That is what you used to be." He's referring to life as we know it can be, and he says that's what you used to be, but now you're not anymore. You have been sanctified."
- ⇒ Number two, a new and experiential relation with God whom we call "Abba." Abba means "Daddy" literally. Jesus taught his disciples to call God "Daddy," not Father but "Daddy," because Daddy involves this intimate relationship of trust and of expectant help. That's Galatians [Chapter] 4.
- ⇒ Three, the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, fear of the Lord. This is not the result of our own personal life; it's not the result of anything we can do! You cannot become joyful because you want to be joyful. You cannot become peaceful because you want to be peaceful. You cannot become patient because you want to become patient. My father used to criticize me. He said, "You're so impatient; why don't you just be patient." I said, "Because I'm not patient!" You can't become patient. See? There's no mind over matter here; these are gifts--actually these are fruits of the Spirit. St. Paul lists several of them.
- ⇒ Now next one, courageous boldness to witness to the Spirit. That's again a necessary component to a disciple: that we are courageous and bold in witnessing to Christ and to the Spirit. And in the United States, as I mentioned before, a lot of

people think that's undemocratic to assail people with the truth, to speak strongly; but actually that's part of Christian ministry.

- ⇒ Then prayer, prophesy, healing and other gifts. Prophecy means being enabled to speak for God. Again we cannot make ourselves prophets. There are people who do this, of course. They want you to think they are prophets. Those are very dangerous! Self-appointed prophets--stay way away from them!
- ⇒ All right, word of knowledge. What's a word of knowledge? Well, it means that God lets you know something about someone else for their benefit, for the upbuilding of the body. I've worked with people with the word of knowledge; it's helped in healing prayers if you know what to pray for. Again, you can't appoint yourself to this, but God distributes these gifts according to what is good for everybody.
- ⇒ Healing and other gifts. All of this enables the Church to do its job of proclaiming God's message of love, justice, peace to the world.

And the Spirit must be constantly sought. It's inexhaustible, but needs to be sought constantly. So we search for the Spirit; we discern the Spirit. And even in the Acts of the Apostles it shows that the fire can be diminished. If you want to consult Acts, Chapter 4:23-31 and 2 Timothy, Chapter 1:6-7. This fire can tend to go out--in the Book of Revelation. So this is, you might say, we shouldn't be surprised that the fire, the ardor, that comes from the Spirit dies out or never gets lit in the first place.

Now the early Fathers all attested to baptism in the Holy Spirit as a normative pattern of initiation. And I could quote from Origen, Justin Martyr, Didymus the Blind, Cyril of Jerusalem, Tertullian, Hilary of Poitiers, John Chrysostom, John of Apamea. I would like to read from this, from Tertullian: "Therefore, you blessed ones, for whom the grace of God is waiting, when you come up from the most sacred bath of the new birth, when you spread out your hands for the first time in your mother's house [the Church] with your brethren, ask your Father, ask your Lord, for the special gift of his inheritance, the distribution of charisms, which form an additional, underlying feature [of baptism]. 'Ask,' he says, 'and you shall receive.' In fact, you have sought and it has been added to you."¹ So it's to be expected that all those who have received baptism of water will receive the experience of the Spirit. And yet in our own day I think we can say that some of us have not. That many of the people in our parish have not. In the second baptism one takes possession perfectly of the power of the Holy Spirit. Now what is the second baptism? It means the experience of what baptism is about. Again, even in the early Church there was a distance between the sign and the experience. So this is not abnormal. What's abnormal and unhealthy is that the experience never comes at all. Now St. John Chrysostom says that in his day the Church has become like an old lady bereft of her jewels! Now if you think of what he's talking about, I don't know if you've ever seen this, but sometimes you might have some beautiful woman, maybe she's rich and young and she falls onto hard times--you see her many years later just a faint shadow of what she was in terms of physical beauty. Well, that's what he's saying about the Church. What's he talking about? He's talking about the absence of the gifts, the fact that people aren't using the gifts! They are not laying hands on each other; they're not effecting healing; they're not prophesying. So he's complaining and this is like--what?--

fourth century--something like that! So it's a long time ago. So it's not a recent problem.

But we do have in our own day a recognition that we need a new Pentecost. In 1958 Pope John the XXIII said, "What the Catholic Church needs is a new Pentecost." What he meant was that people can experience the Spirit. He didn't mean a dove would come down from the sky. He meant that people would experience the Spirit, and that the gifts would once again be utilized in the Church, that people would once again really know themselves to be children of God, that they would have a sense of being in the presence of God, that they would be able to experience awe and reverence, that they would have the gifts of wisdom and understanding.

- ◇ Understanding means that they could actually talk about faith in their own words, and it would make sense because they'd lived it!
- ◇ Wisdom means an overall vision of how everything fits together. They wouldn't just be living in a confused mass of whatever, information all over the place; but they'd have a sense of how it all works--how everything is worked out by God, our creator, for his glory and really for the glory of his people.
- ◇ Counsel--it would mean that we would have the ability to actually share with other people sound advise. It would come from our own experience of God being present and directing us.

So these are the gifts of the Spirit; the fruit of the Spirit I already mentioned--these should be what we experience, yet we know that as we go into our daily life we're often bereft of these gifts or these fruits.

Now just more or less in closing there's a prayer here which I think is very beautiful.

Without the Holy Spirit, God is far away
Christ stays in the past,
the Gospel is a dead letter,
the church is simply an organization,
authority a matter of domination,
mission a matter of propaganda,
the liturgy no more than an evocation,
Christian living a slave morality.

But in the Holy Spirit:

the cosmos is resurrected and groans with
the birth-pangs of the kingdom,
the risen Christ is there,
the Gospel is the power of life,
the church shows forth life of the Trinity,
authority is a liberating service,
mission is a Pentecost,
the liturgy is both memorial and anticipation,

human action is deified.

Strong words! I think it was one of the Greek Fathers said this--well, not one of the Greek Fathers--Metropolitan Ignatios of Latakia²--that was recently--bishop of a see in Turkey.

Now this is the very essence of what we mean by Charismatic Renewal: that people experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that people become equipped with the gifts and they exercise them in the body for the upbuilding of the Church. Now I would like to invite any of those of you who feel you would like to be prayed with for either inner healing, forgiveness, or release of the Holy Spirit, because you've all--if you've received the sacraments you've received the Holy Spirit. The question is whether the power has been released. Okay? So if you want to pray, I'd ask those of you who don't want to stay, you're free to leave. Those of you who do want to stay we have a member of our prayer group from--where do you live? Is it Bourbonnais or Bradley? Rural Kankakee. Would you like to introduce yourself to the group? Okay. Darwin has been in the Charismatic Renewal for many years --he accepted my invitation to come today.

Endnotes

¹ On Baptism 20; Sources Chretiennes 35:96.

² Metropolitan Ignatios of Latakia, "Main Theme Address," *The Uppsala Report* 1968 (Geneva: WCC, 1969) 298

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