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Fullness of Christian Life Life in the Spirit Seminar Saturday, May 19, 2001
St. Joseph, Downers Grove Church Hall 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer

So we pray and continue to pray in the Spirit. We pray the Lord may enlighten our minds that we may be free from obstacles of misunderstanding that have grown up within us because of the influence of the evil one, the father of lies, because of our own personal ignorance, because of the ignorance of our teachers. Whatever the reason for darkness, we pray for light. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Need for a Fullness of Christian Life

The title of today's talk is "A Full Christian Life." A full Christian life is something that very few of us really pursue. For some reason, and I think I know why, and I think you do too, we have been willing to live on the margins of the life of the Church, and we prefer to be in the midst of the life of the world. And in a sense I think there's a certain logic in this. It's a logic that's reflected in the people who practice voodoo. People who practice voodoo say, "Why should we worry about God? He's good. We ought to worry about the devil." So they spend all their time trying to placate the devil. Is this right? No. Is it logical? Weeeell, it has a certain sense of logic. Likewise, many Christian people think, listen, we don't have to worry about God. God is good, and if we die and we're repentant, we will go to heaven; so forget about God, forget about living the life of Christ. We're going to get really involved in the world because that's where the competition is. So we spend our time, our effort, on worldly success and achievements and attainments, having a good family. Many of these are actually legitimate goals: having a good family, a good job, and so on. But we spend all of ourselves on that, and we allow ourselves to be pushed aside of the rich life that the Spirit gives to the Church.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The Spirit is the soul of the Church. Now if we go back in the Old Testament, the Spirit isn't mentioned too often. It is mentioned, but not too often. The Spirit in the Old Testament is usually responsible for rather unusual, extraordinary events or circumstances. Sometimes the word "Spirit" is used for the power behind prophecy when talking about the spirit of prophecy, for example. But, again, it does not have a real common usage in the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

When we get to the New Testament, we see that right away, however, the Spirit is involved from the very beginning in the life of Jesus: the Holy Spirit overshadows the Blessed Mother. Without the Holy Spirit Jesus could not have been conceived. So from the very beginning we see the Spirit is at work in a way that we never really saw in the Old Testament. Talk of the Spirit is not really there. So the Holy Spirit from the very beginning overshadows the Blessed Mother, guides and directs the whole series of events. And the evangelists aren't exactly sure of all the events, but they know that they took place. Jesus was born, he was preserved, he grew up in Nazareth.

The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple

Now at a very early age Jesus is seen having done something that actually is rather naughty in a normal point of view. He more or less rejected his parents and went on his own. Now, of course, going on his own was going to the temple. But he really caused a lot of consternation among his two guardians, who are actually in that story called his “parents.” Although we know that Mary was truly his mother; Joseph was really not his true father, but his guardian. Nonetheless, he acted as his father in the human sense and was upset, and so was Mary. And Mary sorrowed after Jesus. When they found him in the temple, Mary said to him, “Why have you done this to us? Can’t you see your father and I have been seeking you sorrowing?” And he says, “Why?” Now you who have children, at one time or another I know you have been tempted to smack them! And you can rest assured at this moment the Blessed Mother probably wanted to. We don’t know—it doesn’t say.

God as Father

But the point is that Jesus was saying something actually profound. He wasn’t just being a rebellious teenager. He said, “Didn’t you know that I should be about my Father’s business?” And I personally believe that in this story the evangelist used the word “father” for Joseph up until this story, but I think from then on, no, because Jesus now has said something about who his Father really is. Now how did he know this? Well, the Spirit was already teaching his human nature. He was already connected to God in some very unique way; we call this connection in the “Beatific Vision.” Now the Beatific Vision of Jesus when he was twelve years old, was suitable for a twelve-year-old. So you have to understand that Jesus always grew in a way that was suitable for his human nature—that he had a human nature. We can also be assured that the human nature of Jesus and the vision that Jesus had will be given to us in heaven. That’s what the Church teaches. We will have Jesus’ vision of the Father. But the point is that Jesus is already aware of something.

Roles

Later on when Jesus starts confronting the people of his day, the believers of his day, he is quite aware of the fact that they are missing something. And he accuses them of being hypocrites. And the word “Hypocrite” is a very important word. It means “actor.” Now in modern English there is another word, “persona.” Persona means “mask”; now we think it means “person.” “Hypocrite” we think means someone who knowingly says one thing and does another. That’s not what it meant at that time. It meant an actor on a stage. So it means a person living a role—living in a role. We all have roles to play. I’m pastor of this parish, another I am an ordained priest. You all have roles. You’re a mother or father. You have secretary jobs or some other job. We all have roles. The point is that isn’t who we are. We’re not our role. We’re someone else.

Jesus’ Baptism

And we have to discover that true self. And the way we discover that is through the Spirit. So this whole idea of seeking the inner truth, this is absolutely essential if we’re going to be talking about living in the Spirit. In fact, if you remember, Jesus himself only began his ministry when he was baptized. And when he was baptized, the Holy Spirit

descended upon him. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' human body. And although Mark and Matthew don't agree about who heard what was said—one says, "Jesus heard"; one says, "the crowd heard"—the message was the same: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Those are two different versions. But they are both affirmations. And so it's very important that we have this sense that as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, the Holy Spirit then descends upon us as well in our own Baptism. And we are also affirmed that we are children of God. And that's what Steve was talking about in his witness talk: that he finally discovered through the Holy Spirit that he was a child of God. Now that phrase, I remember it in catechism class. You do too. But did you ever really experience what it meant? There the Spirit helps us experience what it means to be a child of God, not just a word in our mind, not just a thought, but an experience in our being that we are God's, we belong to God. And that comes in the Spirit.

The Early Church

Now the Church itself, the early Church, the Church after the time of Christ, you know, it was really a very pathetic thing. If you think about the apostles after Jesus was raised from the dead, they went and hid. When Jesus came and appeared before them, Jesus was appearing through locked doors. That's because they didn't have the fullness of life. They had known Jesus. They had received Eucharist. They had been baptized. But something was still missing. Presumably they had undergone John's baptism, but actually not baptism into Jesus. They had not been baptized into Jesus, strangely enough, until for all intents and purposes, Pentecost! You know, Jesus came to the Upper Room and said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven." He empowered them, and yet they were still powerless, in a certain sense. So the Spirit doesn't come all at once, once and for all—that is! The Spirit comes to us in stages, you might say. And from the standpoint anyway of the Acts of the Apostles, the moment of real empowerment for the Church as a whole came on Pentecost, when finally the apostles were freed from their fear and they were enabled to go out and to live the gospel, which means to endure hardship and danger. For faith as a virtue, in the Acts of the Apostles, is a virtue that is a form of courage. Faith is courage.

The Courage of Faith

The Holy Spirit gives this virtue of courage to our faith. So it's not merely a matter of saying, "I believe," or having a mental conviction. It's a matter of being able and willing to suffer imprisonment, persecution, rejection, hardship, physical distress, and death, for God. Now that we have to understand is a power—that's a power. When we use the word virtue, virtue is a power. We're talking about the power of the Holy Spirit. We are talking about God in us. This is what we mean when we talk about the Holy Spirit.

Challenge to a New Way of Perceiving and Living

Now the Holy Spirit acted as the Holy Spirit chose to act. We find a few cases in the Acts of the Apostles where people who had never even been baptized with water were receiving the Spirit. As I say, I'm not too terribly surprised, but they were! The apostles were quite surprised. And they said, "Well, that must mean the Holy Spirit wants us to do this and include these people, who were of course the Gentiles, outsiders, people who

didn't practice the correct way, which was for them, of course, the Jewish way. So the Holy Spirit is challenging the body of the Church from the very beginning to a new way of living.

The Outer and the Inner

If we, again, revert back to Jesus' teachings and think about how often he warned people about a dissonance between the outer and the inner, I think of the story about the cups. He was talking about the way that the Jewish ceremonial sprinkling took place over food and dishware. He said, "You know, you wash the outside of the cup, but the inside is dirty." So part of what Jesus was always focusing on was looking inside of us, not how we act out there, but how we act inside. And then to realize that really we actually, sometimes, can kill people inside our own souls. That's why he said such things as, "Anybody who looks with anger on his brother is a murderer." Of course he didn't mean you will be arrested and tried for murder, but it does mean that you can kill someone in our own heart, in your own soul. Likewise, you also can, on the other hand, you also can die for others in your own soul. And ultimately what we do in the outside world is an extension of what happens within us.

Baptism—New Life in Christ

St. Paul, when reflecting on the power of Baptism says, "Do you not know that we who have been baptized with Christ have died and have risen with him to live a new life. Now that new life is life in the Spirit. And it's not a new life, personal life. "You" is plural. "Life" is singular. This is something we miss in our English translation. You, plural, live a new singular life. The life we live is the life of the risen Lord in the Spirit, which means we can no longer be centered on ourselves. I can't be centered on myself; you can't be centered on yourself, because the new center is God. That's a radical change in perception, in consciousness, that the Spirit effects in our lives.

Sin--Missing the Mark

But again, this does not happen by magic; we have to yield to this work of grace. And often we do not yield to this, and therefore we miss the mark; and that's hamartia in Greek—it means "sin." "Sin" in Greek, translated in the New Testament, with the word meaning "missing the mark," comes from archery. It's very interesting that in the Old Testament the word for sin, there are three of them, but they all come from legal terminology. In other words, it's another word for "crime." But not in the New Testament. It's rather a word meaning "missing the mark, missing the target." So there is the whole idea of aim involved. Sin has to do with bad aim, so sin is tied into our intentionality in the New Testament. It's not simply a matter of bad will; it's a matter of bad aim too. The Spirit gives us right aim, helps us to hit the mark. That's why the unforgivable sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit because if we blaspheme, if we deny, the Holy Spirit, we will have then no source of right aim. If we have no source of right aim, we can't possibly ever hit the target.

New Birth in Baptism

In the story we find in John's gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, the power of the Spirit is once again emphasized in terms of creating a new birth. Jesus says,

“Unless someone is begotten from above,” a term which could also be translated “born again,” the same three words, “begotten from above by water and the Spirit,” which clearly means the sacrament of Baptism, “he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Now this is another very essential Christian teaching that through the Spirit we receive a new birth. It parallels St. Paul’s idea that we have a new life. It’s one life that we all live together.

The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments

Throughout the history of the Church, of course, the Spirit is essentially the agent in all of our sacraments: Baptism, Holy Eucharist—when the priest holds his hands out over the gifts he is evoking the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there is no Eucharist. When we come to the sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest empowered through the apostolic tradition, through the apostolic ministry of the Church, says, “I absolve you from your sins.” Where does that power come from? It comes from the Holy Spirit. When Jesus came to the disciples, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven.” Without the Holy Spirit there is no forgiveness. In Confirmation we have the seal of the Spirit given. “Be sealed with the Holy Spirit.” Now what’s the idea of the seal? Well, the idea is that it is like the story of the old skins and the new skins. In the old skins all the new wine runs out. And that’s very often our experience. We’re filled with the Spirit and it all runs away. Well, the seal is to keep the Spirit in us! Now every sacrament requires our participation and our preparation. Matrimony is another one. We are brought together through the power of the Spirit. Two bodies, two souls, two spirits, two minds, become one; but of course, they have to cooperate with the work of the Spirit. It doesn’t always work. None of this is magic. There is no magic. It’s all gift! Sometimes people may try to come together and they can’t because they aren’t perhaps meant for each other, or whatever. It’s not important for us to judge this, but it’s important to realize our responsibility to be open to the Spirit’s leading guidance. And sometimes we are a little late in life in responding to the Spirit; we waste a great deal of our lives. The anointing of the sick, again, is also, of course, preparation for healing and forgiveness and ultimately meeting God.

Need for Something More

But even all of these seven sacraments do not actually exhaust the Spirit’s work. And in the early Church it was very clear that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist were not the fullness of the spiritual life. They still looked for something more! And sometimes they called this the “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Recall that the word Baptism means—“baptizo” means “I dunk.” So it means to be dunked in the Holy Spirit, to be shrouded in the Holy Spirit. And it seems there has never been a point in which a person can’t be more filled. There has never been a point where we cannot be more filled. And the power of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is really a point where we are brought into a deeper intimacy with God and empowered to exercise ministry.

Call to be a Missionary

Now you hear our pope, John Paul, encouraging every single believer to take seriously the call to be a missionary. This is one of the most exciting and important developments in the theology of the Church. Fifty years ago the pope would have never said that. The

pope would have never said that every single Christian person “You must all come forward to be empowered to go out and to preach, to witness to Christ.” No, fifty years ago that was reserved for certain people. Not anymore. The spirit is alive, again immersing the Church in this power.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

So what are the gifts that are mentioned, the gifts of the Spirit? Well, there are many, but I want to talk of just a couple: adoration, praise—prayer. These are gifts of the Spirit. How is **adoration** a gift of the Spirit? When we adore God, we’re not helping God. God is helping us out. When we praise God, we’re not giving God something God doesn’t already have. God doesn’t need our praise. **Praise** is a gift to us. It lifts up our hearts. We say that “prayer is lifting our hearts and minds up to God.” But really lifting our hearts and minds up to God is a work of the Spirit. The Spirit prays when we cannot. It isn’t that we lift ourselves up; the Spirit lifts us up. And that power of praise is a power to lift up our lives which ennobles and excites our souls. Our souls basically, born as we are into this world, even though we are baptized, are often heavy and dull. And the power of the Spirit is really to lift us out of our heaviness and our dullness. And one of the ways it does that is giving us the gifts of adoration and praise. And when we are given the gifts of adoration and praise, we’re actually formed as contemplatives because if we really allow the Spirit to fill us, then we live in a contemplative sense.

A New Way of Being

And that’s what Augustine was getting at, I mentioned earlier today. Praise doesn’t just mean opening our mouths, but it involves that too—but it’s not just that. It’s a whole way of being; it’s a mode of being. It’s a mode by which what we do, what we say, is all filled with the contemplative presence of God. That’s really praising God. Augustine says, “The oxen praise God when they low.” Why? Well, that’s their nature. We praise God when we live out the human nature as Jesus God. And we know that exactly through a study of who Jesus is. The Spirit leads us to live the same life—same in the sense of also praising God. Of course this requires that we surrender our self-will to God, because that’s what Paul was getting at when he said, “You live a new life.” Well, then if we live a new life, we let go of the old one. The old life centered on yourself is not included in this new joy and new peace.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Now the fruits of the Spirit. When the Spirit begins to become operative in our lives, we bear fruit. Jesus says, “You must bear fruit, and your fruit must endure.” What are the fruits of the Spirit?

The first is **charity**. Charity or “agape,” in Greek, means unconditional love. Okay? Everyone loves somebody, so I hear. But normally people love those who love them or they love those who are attracted to them, or they love those who they think can help them, or they love those they identify with as a family or tribe. There is a certain sort of natural attractiveness, but it’s very divided because we do not know the Father, and we do not have the heart of the Father. Love for us becomes very anemic; and worse than anemic, we start to play favorites. We say, “This person I will love; that one I won’t.

That person is worthy to love; that one isn't." Or "I am loveable at least sometimes but not at other times." That's part of my baggage. Charity is a gift that means I love because I choose to love, and I am empowered to love as God does. I do not love you because you love me; I love you because God has empowered me to, because I'm empowered to act as God acts and to be as God is. That's a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Joy—the second gift. Joy is a gift in which our souls are really released from the heaviness that's always pulling us down into the various events of life, which can be either good or bad. But you know, even when you are tied to the good events in life, that's not good either because they're going to end. So if your life is like a rubber ball or like a roller coaster that's up and down, up and down, up and down, you're tied, you're actually enslaved, to the events around you, to the people around you. With joy there is no tie. Joy is a gift to be at peace even when things are bad. Joy does not mean that you are constantly giddy, laughing, and everything is a joke. That's not joy. People can have joy in the midst of death. It's an inner lightness of being. It's a gift of the Spirit. It's not the product of what we do. It's a gift.

Peace. Again, Jesus says, "I give peace, but not as the world gives peace." It's not the absence of anxiety. It's not the absence of conflict. It's not the absence of concern. Right in the midst of the world the Spirit gives peace, which lives simultaneously with our concerns; but it alters the nature of our relationship to them. For while we will continue to have concerns, and need to because we're sent into the world, we do not have them as burdens. "Come to me you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you," Jesus says. "My yoke is easy, my burden light." That is the peace that comes from the Spirit.

Patience. Patience. I will tell you I do not have natural patience at all. My dad used to tell me this all the time. He would say, "Well, you just have to be patient. You just have to have patience," he used to say. And I would say, "Yeah, but I don't have any!" You know, patience is a gift—real patience. And it's a gift that is given with a certain sort of vision. We have to understand that everybody is at a different stage. So we never take someone as finished. The gift of patience is the gift of taking people as they are today with the hope that tomorrow they will see God even better. And it doesn't come from anything you do. Patience is another gift. Patience.

Benignity, kindness. There is a kindness that comes from the Spirit; it's not from ourselves. So people are kind in the sort of way they never want to offend anybody. That's not the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is a kindness that is completely from God, and when you start to experience that gift you will be quite amazed at how you can treat people who are completely undeserving. It's a gift.

Chastity and self-control is also a gift of the Spirit. When we look in the world and we see people who have no self-control, they have no chastity, they have no sense of anything, really what they're lacking is God. It's quite silly to be attacking their behavior per se. It's simply a symptom of their lack of the Spirit. Anyone full of the Spirit starts

to have deeper and richer desires, and even Christian people sometimes are not very wise in this. They attack too much the symptom and not enough the cause.

Generosity, another fruit of the Spirit. You know, generosity is the ability to constantly give of oneself. That does not come from nature! Your human nature cannot be generous, even though some people say, “Oh, I’m generous by nature.” Well, if by nature people are generous, they have some strategy there. It may be unconscious—but. The generosity that comes from the Spirit, the strategy is there all right, but it’s the Spirit’s strategy. It’s helping us empty ourselves. It’s helping us empty ourselves because we need to. That’s all tied into the new life. And the more we empty ourselves, the freer we are. This is the fruit of generosity.

And then **fear of the Lord**, which has many different meanings, three of them I’ll mention to you. One is **reverence**. Reverence is a gift too, a fruit, to be able to have reverence for God. And true reverence for God is not like I’ll be reverent now because I’m in church. No, reverence, which is a fruit of the Spirit, is pervasive where we revere God and sense God’s presence everywhere and in everyone. Sometimes people say, “Well, I go to the woods rather than go to church, in fact, I find God better.” Well, too bad. God is everywhere, and God is in the woods all right! God is also in community, and we better learn how to live with God in the community and help communities develop more in the Spirit of Christ or our world is terminal. Really this is all God’s plan for the renewal of the earth too. So whenever you hear environmentalists and ecologists talking, if they don’t talk about the Spirit, they don’t know what they are talking about. Ultimately, the human family needs the renewal of which we are speaking so that we can care for our home. So that’s one meaning of fear of the Lord.

The second meaning of fear of the Lord is a **sense of mystery**, awe, reverence—awe and reverence, reverence and awe—a sense of mystery. And you know, when we have the spirit of awe and mystery we are actually again being elevated; we’re being intrigued; we’re being opened. That’s the second meaning of fear of the Lord.

The third meaning is a deep **sense that I don’t know anything**. That’s also part of fear of the Lord. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom begins when I now realize and really know deep inside of me that I don’t know anything, because then we really are open to the Spirit. So these are just some of the basic fruits of the Spirit. [How am I doing time-wise?]

Gifts for Service

Now the Spirit is inexhaustible, but we often let go of the Spirit or ignore the Spirit. So it’s important that we become aware of the power of the Spirit to renew us and renew our Church. Beyond the fruits of the Spirit there are gifts for service. There are many of those. **Witnessing** itself, **courageous boldness**, **prophecy**, means the power to speak for God. **Healing**, the gift of healing. Sometimes St. Paul uses the gift of healing to refer to the gift that the person who is healed receives. Other times it means the gift that some people have to mediate healing. In other words, some people are like walking sacraments of healing. That’s a gift.

Gift of Tongues

The gift of tongues I would like to mention for a moment. People are often befuddled, I would say, with the gift of tongues. “What is that? It’s such a strange thing; it sounds awful.” Well, I think we have to be a little bit careful. You know, we love to be in control. But one of our problems is that we love to be in control. Part of the conversion I’m speaking of, this surrender I’m speaking of, is really the surrender of control, but not in a wild, chaotic way. Now I do agree that there have been sort of exaggerated and bizarre phenomena associated at different times with different Pentecostal or Holiness movements where people writhe on the floor—well, I don’t recommend that—or they begin to laugh in fits, and so on. I really don’t understand that, and I don’t want to say much about it, but I don’t recommend it. But the gift of tongues is something different.

Praising God

It goes way back to the early Church, and it has to do with surrendering your tongue, your voice box, your throat, to the service of praising God. Now think about it. In most people where does sin reside most clearly? In their tongue, in what they say. So the gift of tongues is a gift whereby we are enabled to give up our own speech, even our so-called theological speech and religious speech, and simply let the Spirit speak through us. Now it doesn’t mean anything to us, and that’s not important. The fact is we are being used by the Spirit to praise God; and this is a gift to us, not a gift to God. So God frees us from ourselves, frees us from our patterns of speech, frees us from our tongue-tied inability to ever say anything that means anything really deep, and takes us up into the Spirit in the gift of tongues. And I would say we don’t have to think of that as rare. In fact, it’s actually very common as you look at St. Paul. Now St. Paul himself didn’t have a great respect for this gift for various reasons, but we don’t want to go into the history of it or how it was used or overused. It can be overused. Anything can be abused or overused. But it’s important that we realize it’s a possible gift we receive today.

Need to Ask

Now in the teachings of the Church, in the early Fathers we saw that there was a lot about the gift of the Spirit and the expectations that the early Church had that people would be filled with something palpable after their Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. And according to the Fathers, it only required two things: our willingness to receive it and asking for it. Now you might say, “Well, I’ve always been willing to receive whatever God wanted to give me.” But did you ever ask? Strangely enough, God can be very odd in this area. I mean, I found it so. I’ve always thought, well, doesn’t God know I need this? Yes, but ask anyway. You’d be surprised what will come. And it doesn’t mean that whatever you ask for will be granted in terms of what you want. But for some reason God lets us ask for what we need. And of course, even knowing what that is, is a process. Well, what gifts do you need? What gifts can you bring to the Church? I don’t know. You have to find that out.

Lukewarm

Now St. John Chrysostom already recognized that this fullness of the Spirit was already dying out of the institutional Church in his day, and that was a long time ago. That was after 313. So for many centuries we can say that the fullness of the Spirit has

been more or less excluded partly by not being asked for or not being really well received. So that's something I want you to think about today.

Metanoia

Before we receive the Spirit though it's very important that we are in the right attitude of mind. And that has to do with what Christ called "metanoia" in the Greek New Testament meaning, often translated, "repentance." We need to recognize our need for a new way of living, a new way of behaving, a new way of believing, a new way of seeing, a new way of feeling. All of this is combined in metanoia, "repentance." So right now I'd like to have you all close your eyes for a moment. Pray along with me. You may either if you want to say this prayer out loud after me, you may, or simply pray it quietly.

Prayer of Preparation

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge you as light of the world. I acknowledge my own inner darkness. I acknowledge my own inner confusion. I acknowledge my own sinfulness. I come to you this morning with honesty and sincerity and humility, and I ask that you wash me clean of everything that darkens me, of everything that holds me down, of everything that holds me back. Enlighten my mind in regard to the things I need to confess, and open me to the fullness of your Spirit. And I ask this in Jesus' name.

Poem

In conclusion I have a poem written by a bishop of the Eastern Church.

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.¹

¹ Metropolitan Ignatios of Latakia, "Main Theme Address," *The Uppsala Report* 1968 (Geneva: WCC, 1969) 298

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