

06/09/19

A READING ABOUT THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE INDWELLING OF THE BL. TRINITY, from a homily by St. Augustine.¹

A comforter, an advocate, (for both terms render the Greek Paraclete) was necessary for the disciples after Christ's departure. He had not spoken of the Paraclete from the beginning, because his own presence in the midst of them had consoled them, but now, when he was on the point of leaving them, it was fitting that he should speak of this: the Holy Spirit would come to them, and filling their hearts with ardent love, give them power to preach the word of God boldly; the Spirit would bear witness to Christ within their souls, so that they themselves would also bear witness, without being scandalized when their enemies would forbid them the synagogue, and put them to death. But charity "endures to the last" (1Cor 13,7), and it was to be poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

"I can say truly that it is better for you I should go away; he who is to befriend you will not come to you unless I do go, but if only I make my way there, I will send him to you." That is to say: It is to your interest to be deprived of my presence under this form of a servant which I have taken; for though it is true that I live among you, the Word made flesh, I do not want you to love me with a natural affection; nor do I want you to be satisfied with this milk alone and wish you could remain as babes. It is to your interest that I go: otherwise the Paraclete will not come to you; if I do not wean you from this childish food that I have given you so far, you will have no appetite for solid food; if you keep a natural affection for me you cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

But why does he say: "He who is to befriend you will not come unless I go?" Was it not then possible for Christ, being here, to send him? Who would dare to say it? The Son of God had not left the place where that Holy Spirit was: come from the Father, he still dwelt in the Father. And then, how could it have been impossible for him to send the Holy Spirit on earth when he was on earth himself? Do we not know that at his baptism the Holy Spirit descended on him and remained with him? Do we not know in fact that they were inseparable? What the gospel means is that the disciples could not receive the Spirit while they continued to know Jesus Christ only according to the flesh. And these words are an echo of those of St Paul, who himself had received the Holy Spirit: "Even if we used to think of Christ in a human fashion, we do so no longer"(2Cor 5,16). For we know even the flesh itself of Christ otherwise than in a human fashion, when we know spiritually the Word made flesh.

Christ had, then, to deprive his disciples of his human presence and then it would not be only the Holy Spirit, but the Father and the Son who would dwell in their souls. If Christ indeed withdrew from them in order to be replaced, and not accompanied, in them by the Holy Spirit, what becomes of his promise: "And behold I am with you all the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world" (Mt 28,20)? And again: "We

¹Treatise 94 on Jn's Gospel. Trans. Lectionary and Martyrology, ed. En Calcat Abbey, Dourgne-Tarn 1956, 245-246.

will both come to him and make our continual abode with him"(Jn 14,23)? Since the Saviour promised to send the Holy Spirit and also to remain always with his disciples, then when natural thoughts and feelings gave place to those of the Holy Spirit, a dwelling would be prepared at the same time for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Besides, where any one of the three Persons is, there is the Trinity, one God. It was good, however, that the dogma of the Trinity was given to us under this form: to one who rightly understands it there can never be any diversity of substance, any separation of nature, but the recognition of the diversity of Persons one by one.

MARY-81

06.10.19

Mary, the Mother of God, in the Mystery of the Church - Taken from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from Vatican II ¹

Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, “when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). In this Church, adhering to Christ the Head and having communion with all His saints, the faithful must also venerate the memory “above all of the glorious and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.”

At the message of the angel, the Virgin Mary received the Word of God in her heart and in her body, and gave Life to the world. Hence she is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. Redeemed in an especially sublime manner by reason of the merits of her Son, and united with Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the supreme office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God. As a result she is also the favorite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit, Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all other creatures, both in heaven and on earth.

At the same time, because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all human beings in their need for salvation. Indeed she is “clearly the mother of the members of Christ, since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful, who are members of Christ their Head.” Therefore she is also hailed as a pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church, and as the Church’s model and excellent exemplar in faith and charity. Taught by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother.

The Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined mother should precede the Incarnation, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. This contrast was verified in outstanding fashion by the Mother of Jesus. She gave to the world that very Life which renews all things, and she was enriched by God with gifts befitting such a role. Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is, on God’s command, greeted by an angel messenger as “full of grace”. To the heavenly messenger she replies: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word”.

By thus consenting to the divine utterance, Mary, a daughter of Adam, became the mother of Jesus. Embracing God’s saving will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son. In subordination to Him and along with Him, by the grace of almighty God she served the mystery of redemption.

We have but one Mediator, “Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all”. The maternal duty of Mary toward humanity in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin on

all peoples originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. By her maternal charity, Mary cares for the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties until they are led to their happy fatherland.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary. She experiences it continuously and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer.

[1](#)The Documents of Vatican II – Walter Abbott – Herder & Herder – Association Press – 1966 – pg 85f

06SN1102

06.11.2019

**HOW THE WEAKNESS OF ST BARNABAS MAY HELP US, from a Sermon by
Card. John H. Newman¹**

On two occasions the conduct [of St Barnabas] is scarcely becoming an Apostle, as instancing somewhat of that infirmity which uninspired persons of his peculiar character frequently exhibit. Both are cases of indulgence towards the faults of others, yet in a different way; the one, an over-easiness in a matter of doctrine, the other, in a matter of conduct. With all his tenderness for the Gentiles, yet on one occasion he could not resist indulging the prejudices of some Judaizing brethren, who came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Peter first was carried away; before they came, "he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch, that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."(Gal 2:12) The other instance was his indulgent treatment of Mark, his sister's son, which occasioned the quarrel between him and St Paul. "Barnabas determined to take with them," on their Apostolic journey, "John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work."(Acts 15:37)

Now it is very plain what description of character, and what kind of lesson, is brought before us in the history of this Holy Apostle. Holy he was, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; still the characteristics and the infirmities of man remained in him, and thus he is "unto us for an example," consistently with the reverence we feel towards him as one of the foundations of the Christian Church. He is an example and warning to us, not only as showing us what we ought to be, but as evidencing how the highest gifts and graces are corrupted in our sinful nature, if we are not diligent to walk step by step, according to the light of God's commandments. Be our mind as heavenly as it may be, most loving, most holy, most zealous, most energetic, most peaceful, yet if we look off from Him for a moment, and look towards ourselves, at once these excellent tempers fall into some extreme or mistake. Charity becomes over-easiness, holiness is tainted with spiritual pride, zeal degenerates into fierceness, activity eats up the spirit of prayer, hope is heightened into presumption. We cannot guide ourselves. God's revealed word is our sovereign rule of conduct; and therefore, among other reasons, is faith so principal a grace, for it is the directing power which receives the commands of Christ, and applies them to the heart.

¹PAROCHIAL & PLAIN SERMONS, John. H. Newman (Ignatius Press, CA 1987)
pp. 401-403.

TM-PEN18

06/12/19

The Love of God in the Sending of the Holy Spirit. From a Treatise by William of St. Thierry.²

You, O God, our souls' Creator, knew that the love for you cannot be forced in the souls of humans, but has to be evoked. And this for the obvious reason that there is no freedom where there is compulsion, and where freedom is lacking, so too is righteousness. So, Lord, as the Apostle of your love tells us, you "first loved us"; and you love all your lovers first.

But Your love is Your goodness, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the father and the Son! From the beginning of creation he has been borne upon the waters - on the tossing souls of humans, that is - offering Himself to all, drawing all to Himself. And by breathing into and upon them, by warding off things harmful and supplying things useful, He unites God to us and us to God. Your Holy Spirit, Who is called the Love, and the Unity, and the Will of the Father and the Son, dwells in us by His grace and implants in us the charity of God; and through that charity He reconciles God to us. And thus He unites us to God through the good will that He breathes into us. And with us this vehement good will goes by the name of love, by which we love what we ought to love, namely You.

So, then, love-worthy Lord, You love Yourself in Yourself when the Holy Spirit, Who is the Love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father, proceeds from the Father and the Son. And that love is so great that it is unity, and the unity is such that it is oneness of substance - that is the Father and the Son are of the same being. And You also love Yourself in us by sending the Spirit of Your Son into our hearts, crying: "Abba, Father!" through the sweetness of love and the vehemence of good intention that You have inspired. This is how You make us love You, or rather, this is how You love Yourself in us. We first hoped, because we knew Your Name, O Lord; But now, through the grace breathed into us by the Spirit of Your adoption, we have confidence that all that the Father has is ours also. So, through the grace of adoption, we invoke You now under the same Name as Your only Son invokes You by right of nature. We are made one with You just insofar as we are worthy to love You and become sharers in the fulfillment of Your Son's

² The Works of William of St. Thierry. vol. 1. Cistercian Fathers Series: No.3. Cistercian Publications. Spencer. 1971. p. 53.

prayer: "I will that, as You and I are One, so these also may be one in us." For we are Your people, Lord; we are God's offspring, we, all of us, are gids and children of the Most High through a kind of spiritual kinship. We claim for ourselves a closer relationship with You, because through the Spirit of adoption Your Son does not scorn to be known by the same nature as we, and because with him and by him, taught by saving precepts and schooled by God's ordinance, we are bold to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven."

You, therefore, love us insofar as You make us lovers of Yourself, and we love You insofar as we receive Your Spirit, Who is Your Love, and let him lay hold of and possess all our secret affections, transmuting them into the perfect purity of Your truth into full concord with Your love. And this union, this adherence, this enjoyment of your sweetness will be such that our Lord, Your Son, will call it unity, in saying: "That they may be one in us."

06SN1302

06.13.19

From a Sermon by St. Anthony of Padua 3

The one who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience. We speak in these languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore are cursed by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: "A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches." It is useless for a person to flaunt their knowledge of the law if they undermine its teaching by their actions.

But the apostles *spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech*. Happy the one whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! For some speak as their own character dictates, but steal the words of others and present them as their own and claim the credit for them. The Lord refers to such people and others like them in Jeremiah: *So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets that steal my words from each other. I have a quarrel with the prophets, says the Lord, who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles. I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, who recount them and lead my people astray with their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says the Lord.*

We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfillment, insofar as He infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments. Likewise we shall request that we may be filled with a keen sense of sorrow and with fiery tongues for confessing the faith, so that our deserved reward may be to stand in the blazing splendor of the saints and to look upon the triune God.

06SN1401

06/14/19

From St. Bernard's Lament for the Death of Gerard, his Brother.⁴

How much better for me, O Gerard, if I had lost my life rather than your company, since through your tireless inspiration, your unfailing help and under your provident scrutiny I persevered with my studies of things divine. Why, I ask, have we loved, why have we lost each other? O cruel circumstance! But pity pertains to my lot only, not to his.

And the reason, dear brother, is that though you have lost your loved ones, you have found others more lovable still. As for me, already so miserable, what consolation remains to me, and you, my only comfort, gone? Our bodily companionship was equally enjoyable to both, because our dispositions were so alike; but only I am wounded by the parting. All that was pleasant we rejoiced to share; now sadness and mourning are mine alone: anger has swept over me, rage is fastened on me. Both of us were so happy in each other's company, sharing the same experiences, talking together about them; now my share of these delights has ceased and you have passed on, you have traded them for an immense reward.

What harvest of joys, what a profusion of blessings is yours. In place of my insignificant person you have the abiding presence of Christ, and mingling with the angelic choirs you feel our absence no loss. You have no cause to complain that we have been cut off from you, favored as you are by the constant presence of the Lord of Majesty and of his heavenly friends. But what do I have in your stead? How I long to know what you now think about me, once so uniquely yours, as I sink beneath the weight of cares and afflictions, deprived of the support you lent to my feebleness! Perhaps you still give thought to our miseries, now that you have plunged into the abyss of light, become engulfed in that sea of endless happiness. It is possible that though you once knew us according to the flesh, you now no longer know us and because you have entered into the power of the Lord you will be mindful of his righteousness alone, forgetful of ours. Furthermore, "he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him," his whole being somehow changed into a movement of divine love. He no longer has the power to experience or relish anything but God, and what God himself experiences and relishes, because he is filled with God. But God is love, and the deeper one's union with God, the more full one is of love. And though God cannot endure pain, he is not without compassion for those who do; it is his nature to show mercy and pardon. Therefore you too must of necessity be merciful, clasped as you are to him who is Mercy; and though you no longer feel the need of mercy, though you no longer suffer, you can still be compassionate. Your love has not diminished but only changed; when you were clothed with God you did not divest yourself of concern for us, for God is certainly concerned about us. All that smacks of weakness you have cast away, but not what pertains to love. And since love never comes to an end, you will not forget me for ever.

⁴On The Song Of Songs II Sermon 26.III. tr. Kilian Walsh. Cistercian Publications 1976. p.62-4.

It seems to me that I can almost hear my brother saying: "Can a woman forget the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet I will not forget you." This is how it must be.

TM-PEN24
06.15.2019

**A reading about the monk as a man of the Spirit,
from a book by Fr. Louis Bouyer. ¹**

It is contemplation, the twilight vision of the light of Tabor, possible even in this life, that is, so to speak, the heart of monastic life. But it is the divine Spirit alone who can make this heart beat.

In fact, the monk is and must be the "Spiritual" [person] in the Church, the one who is "of the Spirit" *par excellence*. All Christians have received the Spirit through the mystery of the Holy Chrism, but he does not manifest himself equally in all. We may even wonder if the gravest ill from which our Christianity is suffering is not that of having more or less "quenched the Spirit," to use an expression of St. Paul.

By his resurrection Christ has been made second Adam because he has been made life-giving Spirit. And he becomes in fact the head of a new race in so far as he animates it with this Spirit, who is the very Spirit of God. A Christian life which does not expand into life in the Holy Spirit thus remains radically incomplete. If, on the other hand, monastic life is defined as integral Christian life, it must essentially be the accomplishment of life in the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit in the original biblical sense of the term is the breath of life, but [it is] of divine life. It is the breath which, as it passes over the dry bones of Ezekiel's vision, will restore life to them. It is the breath which in the beginning had been breathed into the nostrils of Adam, and had brought forth its fragile image, the soul. Nevertheless, compared with the man in whom the Spirit himself lives and breathes, the first man, the living soul, was still only flesh. The last Man, on the other hand, that is the ultimate, final man, the risen Christ, is made "life-giving Spirit." This means that he has no longer merely the simple life of a creature made in God's image, because endowed with intelligence and will. His life, in his human nature itself, is henceforward the life of God; his intelligence is henceforward filled with the very knowledge of God and his heart loves what God loves, with the very love with which he loves it.

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The first result of this is that he enters into a new world. It is not only that the tangible universe is no longer the true home of him who has received the Spirit, but that the new universe which is revealed to him, although it includes the created spiritual world, definitely penetrates beyond the sphere of created things. The world that [the-one-in-whom-the-Spirit-lives] knows, is a world that is no longer the world as a separate object, in some sort existing outside God. It is the world such as it was when God sent it forth in the act of creation: a world in which all beings and all things are in communion with each other through their communion with God. It is the world, immense yet one; of the divine Wisdom, in which the measureless

¹ *The Meaning of Monastic Life*, New York, 1955, pp. 75-76, 78.

fecundity of divine life is revealed in the [wondrous] multiplicity [and order] of creation, but without being broken up or separated. For all things are there found gathered up in the unbreakable unity of the life and thought of God. All things there become transparent to God. There God himself becomes all in all things.