

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF UNITY

“He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:14, 15)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His prayer that Saint John the Evangelist recorded in chapter 17 of his gospel, prayed for unity. For example, in verse 11 He says: “...that they may be one as We are.” This type of unity is not one of human understanding that relates to some people having a common goal or beliefs. It is a mystery that unifies each of us to our Lord Jesus Christ and thus with each other.

This concept relates directly to our salvation. For example, how can the Cross be salvation for me unless I become unified with Christ Who died for me on the Cross? Or how would I ever have resurrection unto life unless I become unified with Christ Who rose from the dead? I therefore must die with Him and rise with Him in order to be unified with Him for salvation to be fulfilled for me.

How is this mystery of union fulfilled? Through the Holy Spirit Who acts in all of the sacraments of the Church and takes of what is Christ’s and declares it to us. The Holy Spirit transfers all the saving effect of the Cross to the believers through the sacraments.

Baptism – I am buried with Christ and risen with Him (*Rom. 6:4-5*). I become a new creation and a new temple that has put on Christ (*2Cor. 5:17, Gal. 3:27*).

Confirmation – I become a sanctified temple (*1Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19*) sealed by and filled with the Holy Spirit in order to live a holy life that is full of good fruits that can be presented to Him in the last day (*2Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30*).

Eucharist – Christ abides in me and I in Him. I receive forgiveness of my sins and He grants me eternal life by becoming unified with Him Who is everlasting (*John 6:53-58*). We all become unified with each other through Him since we all partake of that one Body (*1Cor. 10:16-17*).

Repentance and Confession – The Holy Spirit cleanses me and continues to grant me life by turning me away from the sin which is death to repentance which is life (*John 20:22-23; James 6:14-16*).

Priesthood – Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the priesthood to the apostles by giving them the Holy Spirit in order to continue His priesthood in the Church and administer the sacraments to fulfill that union with Him (*John 20:22-23*).

Unction of the Sick – the Holy Spirit grants me forgiveness of sins and healing of body, soul, and spirit (*James 6:14-16*).

Holy Matrimony – a man and woman become one flesh through the Holy Spirit in order to sanctify their relationship and make their home an extension of the Church producing spiritual sacrifices. This is a mystery after the type of mystery of Christ’s union with the Church, the body of Christ (*Mat. 19:5, 6; Eph. 6:22-32*).

The Holy Spirit also grants unity and salvation through His work, gifts, and fruits:

+ The Holy Spirit leads people to believe in Christ (*1Cor. 12:3*).

+ The love, joy, peace, etc... (*Gal. 5:22*) that the Holy Spirit produces in us breaks the barriers amongst us and unifies us. And since God is love, joy, peace, etc... this unifies us with Him. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (*John 13:35*). However, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to work in me, I need to humble myself and submit to Him. Thus, our Lord said, “Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart” (*Mat. 11:29*).

+ It is this humility and obedience that the apostles practiced that led them to be unified in prayer and joy waiting for the Holy Spirit according to the command of Christ not to leave Jerusalem until they had received power from on high (*Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4*). It was the further act of the Holy Spirit to unify once He descended on them on the day of Pentecost by breaking the barrier of diverse languages for all to hear the disciples’ preaching and the sermon of Saint Peter that led 3000 people to believe, repent and be baptized. In contrast, the pride of those building the tower of Babel led them to be divided and dispersed by them speaking in different tongues (*Gen. 11:1-9*).

+ The disciples, by living according to the grace of the Holy Spirit, were granted the gifts of performing miracles according to the words of Christ: “He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do” (*John 14:12*) for the spreading of the kingdom and the salvation of souls.

This life of unity in the Church directed by the Holy Spirit is described in the book of *Acts*: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved” (*Acts 2:42-47*).