

Pope Francis Explains the Importance of the Holy Spirit

The following is a transcript of Pope Francis' speech, in which he explains the importance of the Holy Spirit. The speech was given last week, as Pentecost Sunday was approaching. Here is the translation of the Pope's weekly general audience address in St. Peter's Square, where he continued the cycle of catechesis dedicated to the Year of Faith.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Good morning! The Easter season that we are living with joy, guided by the Church's liturgy, is par excellence the time of the Holy Spirit, given "without measure" (cf. John 3:34) by Jesus, crucified and risen. This time of grace ends with the feast of Pentecost, in which the Church relives the outpouring of the Spirit upon Mary and the apostles gathered in prayer in the Cenacle.

But who is the Holy Spirit? In the Creed we profess with faith: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life." The first truth to which we adhere in the Creed is that the Holy Spirit is Kýrios, Lord. This means that He is truly God, as the Father and Son are, the object, for our part, of the same act of adoration and glorification that we address to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity; He is the great gift of the risen Christ that opens our minds and our hearts to faith in Jesus as the Son sent by the Father and that leads us to friendship, to communion with God.

But I would like to dwell in particular on the fact that the Holy Spirit is the inexhaustible source of the life of God in us. Men of all times and all places want a life that is full

and beautiful, just and good, a life that is not threatened by death but that can mature and grow to its fullness. Man is like a wanderer who, crossing the deserts of life, thirsts for a living water, gushing and fresh, able to quench deeply his profound desire for light, love, beauty and peace. We all feel this desire! And Jesus gives us this living water: It is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and that Jesus pours out into our hearts. "I came that they might have life and have it in abundance," Jesus tells us (John 10:10).

Jesus promises the Samaritan woman that He will give a "living water," super abundantly and forever, to all those who recognize Him as the Son sent by the Father to save us (cf. John 4:5-26; 3:17). Jesus came to give us this "living water" that is the Holy Spirit, so that our life may be guided by God, animated by God and nourished by God. When we say that the Christian is a spiritual man, we mean just that: A Christian is a person who thinks and acts according to God, according to the Holy Spirit. But I ask: And we—do we think according to God? Do we act according to God? Or do we let ourselves be guided by so many other things that are not exactly God? Each one must answer this in the depths of his heart.

At this point we can ask ourselves: Why is it that this water can slake the very depths of our thirst? We know that water is essential for life; without water, you die; it quenches thirst, washes, makes the land fertile. In the letter to the Romans we find this expression: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (5:5). The "living water," the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Lord who makes its home in us purifies us, enlightens us, renews us, transforms us because it makes us partakers of the very life of God, who is love.

For this reason, the apostle Paul says that the Christian life is animated by the Spirit and its fruits, which are "love, joy, peace, generosity, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit inserts us into the divine life as "sons in the only-begotten Son." In another passage of the epistle to the Romans, which we have mentioned several times, St. Paul summarizes it with these words: "All those who are led by the spirit of God, are sons of God. And you ... have received the Spirit that makes us adoptive children, whereby we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit itself, together with our spirit, attests that we are children of God. And if we are children, we are also heirs: heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order to participate in his glory (8:14-17).

This is the precious gift that the Holy Spirit places in our hearts: the very life of God, life as true sons, a relationship of confidence, freedom and trust in the love and mercy of God, which has as an effect, also a new gaze toward others, near and far, always seen as brothers and sisters in Jesus to be respected and loved. The Holy Spirit teaches us to look with the eyes of Christ, to live life as Christ lived it, to understand life as Christ understood it. That's why the living water that is the Holy Spirit quenches the thirst of our lives, because it tells us that we are loved by God as children, that we can love God as His children, and by His grace we can live as children of God, like Jesus.

And we, we listen to the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit tell us? God loves you. It tells us this. God loves you. He desires your good. Do we really love God and others, like Jesus does? Let us allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us allow Him to speak to our hearts and tell us this: that God is love, that He is waiting for us, that God is the Father, He loves us as a true Father [Papà], He truly loves us, and only the Holy Spirit alone says this to our hearts. Let us hear the Holy Spirit, let us listen to the Holy Spirit and let us go forward on this road of love, of mercy and of forgiveness. Thank you.

[Translation by Peter Waymel]