

KSC 2019 FORMATION PROGRAMME THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR TIME

Session One: Theme: The Holy Spirit

Father John the Dwarf was one of the early hermit monks in the desert around Suez around 410 AD. Some other monks came one day to test him to see whether he would let his thoughts get dissipated and speak of the things of this world. They said to him, 'We give thanks to God that this year there has been much rain and the palm trees have been able to drink, and their shoots have grown, and the brethren have found manual work.' Father John said to them, 'So it is when the Holy Spirit descends into the hearts of men; they are renewed and they put forth leaves in the fear of God.' (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Cistercian Publications, Kentucky, 1985*)

Step 1: Opening prayer: from the Order's Prayers

Step 2: READINGS ON THE THEME

St. Alphonsus writes: "The novena to the Holy Spirit is the chief of all novenas, because it was the first that was ever celebrated, and ---- by the holy Mother of God with the Apostles in the Supper-room. It was rewarded by many wonders and Gifts, principally by the descent of the Holy Spirit, a Gift merited for us by the Passion of Jesus Christ Himself."



Mary was certainly no stranger to the presence of the Holy Spirit in her life. As the Gospel of Luke recounts the words of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the time of the Annunciation. In response to her question about how she could become the Mother of Jesus, he responds with: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God." (Lk 1: 35)

God loves us and seeks always to be close to us and encourages us to be close to Him. These are but two instances of that closeness. One is the Annunciation and the other is Pentecost and both involve personally Mary. There are almost two births here – the birth of Jesus and the birth of His Church. Both take place in extraordinary and very difficult social circumstances at the time – perhaps not unlike now.

Step 3: *Allow a few moments reflective silence.*

Step 4: SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus said: 'I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world can never accept since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you.' (Jn 14:16, 17)

Jesus said: 'I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.' (Jn 14:25,26)

Step 5: REFLECTION (5 Mins)

Step 6: SHARING (10 Mins)

Often while administering the Sacrament of Confirmation I ask those gathered to raise their hands if they have been Confirmed. Almost always there is a great forest of hands. I ask them to keep their hands raised and remind them that at their Confirmation they received the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and to keep their hands raised if they can remember them. The usual response is that very few hands remain raised. I usually then say these gifts are meant to help us to live our life fully as disciples of Jesus, but if we can't even remember the gifts do we even remember to ask for those graces in our prayers and refer to them in our lives.

1. Can you remember the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?
2. Can you remember the fruits of the Holy Spirit as they are listed in Scripture?
3. Can you give any examples where either a gift or a fruit has helped you to make the right choices or decision as a disciple of Jesus?
4. Which gifts do we need to call upon especially in our current stage in the life of the Church?

Step 7: CONCLUSION

We pray together;

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen

Step 8: *The meeting proceeds*

Step 9: CLOSING PRAYERS – FROM THE ORDER'S PRAYERS