

In The School of Mary

(Papal documents condensed by Deacon William Wagner)

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Pope John Paul II

Dominum et Vivificantem, The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, May 18, 1986.

INTRODUCTION

In the Nicene Creed (derived from the Councils of Nicaea, A.D. 325 and Constantinople, A.D. 381) the Church professes her faith in the *Holy Spirit* as “*the Lord, the giver of life.*” In the Gospel of John we find our Lord saying, “If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’”. And the evangelist explains: “*This he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive.*” Jesus used the image of *water* with both the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus. The Church, instructed by the words of Christ, from the earliest centuries proclaimed her faith in the Holy Spirit, as *the giver of life*, the one *in whom the inscrutable Triune God communicates himself to human beings.*

This faith needs to be constantly reawakened and deepened in the consciousness of the People of God. The Second Vatican Council noted the need for a new study of the doctrine on the Holy Spirit. Pope Paul VI emphasized that the Christology and the ecclesiology of the Council needed to be succeeded by a new study of and devotion to the Holy Spirit as the indispensable complement to the teaching of the Council. John Paul II said that in our own age we were called anew by *the ever ancient and ever new faith* of the Church to draw near to the Holy Spirit as *the giver of life.* We share with the *Oriental Churches* the extraordinary riches of the teachings of the Fathers on the Holy Spirit. On the occasion of the 16th Centenary of the 1st Council of Constantinople, celebrated on the occasion of Pentecost (1981), the Holy Spirit was seen as the one who points out the ways leading to the union of Christians, especially as the supreme source of this unity.

From the exhortation uttered by Paul and used in the Eucharistic liturgy: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” now comes this Encyclical on the Holy Spirit. A divine Person, he is at the center of Christian faith and is the source and dynamic power of the Church’s renewal. The Second Vatican Council’s study of *the Church in herself* and *the Church in the World* moves us to penetrate more deeply into the Trinitarian mystery of God himself through the Gospels, the Fathers and the Liturgy.

The Pope sees an expectant desire within the Church for a fresh discovery of God in his transcendent reality as the infinite Spirit, the hope of finding in him the secret of love and the power of a “new creation”. John Paul II says that the main purpose of this study is to develop in the Church the awareness that “she is compelled by the Holy spirit to do her part towards the full realization of the will of God, who has established Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world”. (*cf. Lumen Gentium, 17*)

Part I THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON GIVEN TO THE CHURCH

Jesus' Promise and Revelation at the Last Supper

At the Last Supper Jesus promised *another Counselor*: "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth." (cf Jn 14:14:13, 16f.) This Spirit, called Paraclete (*Parakletos*: counselor, intercessor, or advocate) by Jesus, is the second since he himself is the first Counselor. John Paul II says that the Holy Spirit comes after Jesus and because of him, in order to continue in the world, through the Church, the work of the *Good News of Salvation*. In his final discourse, found in the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks several times concerning the continuation of his own work by the Holy Spirit. In a way, he is preparing the apostles for his imminent departure in his Passion and Death on the Cross.

The Holy Spirit will be the Counselor of the Apostles and the Church. Although invisible, he will always be present in their midst as the teacher of same Good News proclaimed by Christ. The words used by Christ in that last discourse, "*he will teach*" and "*bring to remembrance*," mean that he will continue to inspire the spreading of the Gospel. They also mean that he will help people understand the correct meaning of Christ's message in the midst of changing conditions and circumstances. The Holy Spirit, then, will ensure that in the Church there will always continue *the same truth* that the Apostles heard from their Master.

The Apostles will continue a special relationship with Jesus because he says that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth will bear witness to him. More, they also will be witnesses because they have been with him *from the beginning*. The Apostles were the direct eyewitnesses. They *heard, saw with their own eyes, looked upon and even touched with their hands*, the Christ. The Pope says that in the witness of the Spirit of Truth, the human testimony (*first-hand and historical*) of the Apostles will find its strongest support. Therein, also, it will find the hidden foundation of its continuation among the generations of Christ's disciples down through the ages.

The Holy Father here points out that the supreme and most complete revelation of God to humanity is Jesus Christ himself. The work of the Holy Spirit is to inspire, guarantee and convalidate the faithful transmission of this revelation in the preaching and writing of the Apostles. The *witness of the Apostles* ensures its human expression in the Church and in history.

In John (*Jn 16:12f*) we find Jesus now saying: "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth." Jesus had previously spoken of the Spirit as *the Counselor, the Spirit of truth*, the one who "*will teach*" and "*bring to remembrance*," as the one who "*will bear witness*" to him. Now he says that "*he will guide you into all the truth*." John Paul connects this reference to that which Jesus made concerning his "*self emptying*," his Passion and Death on the Cross, that "*which you cannot bear now*." Later it clearly would take on a broader meaning.

The *mystery of Christ* demands faith. The "guiding into all the truth," is achieved in faith and through faith. This is the work of the Spirit of truth and the result of his action in man. This holds true not only for the apostolic eyewitnesses but also for all the generations of disciples and confessors of the Master, who accepted with faith and confessed with candor the mystery of God at work in human history.

The Holy Father explains how, between the Holy Spirit and Christ, there subsists in the economy of salvation an intimate bond. It is within this bond that the Spirit works as another Counselor ensuring the transmission of the Good News revealed by Jesus of Nazareth. Thus in the mystery and action of the Church, the Holy Spirit-Paraclete unceasingly continues the historical presence on earth of the redeemer and his saving work. The glory of Christ shines in the words, "He (the Spirit of Truth) will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

John Paul II notes how the complete self-revelation of God, accomplished in Christ and witnessed by the preaching of the Apostles, continues to be manifested in the Church through the mission of the invisible *Counselor*, the Spirit of Truth. The word "take" ("He *will take what is mine* and declare it to you.") expresses how intimately this mission is linked with the mission of Christ, how fully it draws from this mission of Christ. This incident clearly manifests the divine and Trinitarian unity of the source. "All that

the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (Jn 16:15) By the very fact of taking what is “mine”, he will draw from “what is the Father’s.”

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

It is a characteristic of the text of John that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are clearly called Persons, the first distinct from the second and the third, and each of them from one another. Jesus speaks of the Spirit-Counselor, using several times the personal pronoun, “he”. Throughout the farewell discourse in John’s Gospel, he reveals the bonds that unite the Father, the Son and the Paraclete to one another. The Father sends the Holy Spirit in the power of his Fatherhood as he has sent the Son. At the same time he sends the Spirit in the power of the Redemption accomplished by Christ. In this sense the Son also sends the Holy Spirit: “I will send him to you.” The Holy Spirit will come insofar as Christ will depart through the Cross. He will come not only afterwards, but because of the Redemption accomplished by Christ, through the will and action of the Father.

The Pope points to something that is important for us to note. It is that in the farewell discourse at the Last Supper, we have reached the highest point of the revelation of the Holy Trinity.

The farewell discourse at the Last Supper can be read as a preparation for the life-giving formula of Baptism as it is expressed in the mandate given the Apostles just before the Ascension: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” Through the grace of this Sacrament, man is called and made *capable* of sharing in the inscrutable life of God himself.

In his intimate life, God “is love.” This personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. In the Holy Spirit it can be said that the Triune God becomes totally gift. Through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is *the personal expression* of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift. We have here an inexpressible deepening of the concept of *person* in God that only divine Revelation makes known to us.

The Saving Self-giving of God in the Holy Spirit

John Paul notes that in a sense in John’s gospel we have the revelation of the most profound “logic” of the saving mystery contained in God’s eternal plan. The Redemption accomplished by the Son in earthly history -accomplished by his “departure”- through the cross and Resurrection, is transmitted to the Holy Spirit: the one who “will take what is mine.” The text of John’s Gospel indicates that Christ’s “departure” is an indispensable condition for the “sending” and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Importantly, these words also say that what begins now is *the new saving self-giving of God, in the Holy Spirit.*

It is a new beginning in relation to the first, original beginning of God’s saving self-giving identified with the mystery of creation itself. The biblical concept of creation in which the Spirit of God (*ruah Elohim*) moves over the face of the waters includes not only the call to existence but also the presence of the Spirit of God in creation, his saving self-communication to the things that he creates. This is true, first of all, in regard to man created in the image and likeness of God. In the language of the Creator can we already find suggestions of the Trinitarian mystery as God uses the plural: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness?” The Holy Father says that, at any rate, the Book of Genesis enables us to see in the creation of man the first beginning of God’s saving self-giving in accord with the “image and likeness” of himself that he has granted to man.

John Paul thinks that Jesus’ farewell discourse should be read again in the light of that “beginning” of so long ago that we know from Genesis. Describing his “departure” as a condition for the “coming” of the Counselor, Christ links the new beginning of God’s saving self-communication in the Holy Spirit with the mystery of the Redemption. It is, indeed, a new beginning.

John Paul II says that the coming of the Counselor represents truly a new beginning because, since the *first* beginning to now, sin has intervened. Paul writes to the Romans that because of this sin “creation ...was subjected to futility ...and waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God”.

In the upper room, Christ speaks of his “departure”. This “departure” of Christ through the Cross has the power of the Redemption. It also means a new presence of the Spirit of God in creation: the new beginning of God’s self-communication to man in the Holy Spirit. And as Paul writes in Galatians that “you are children is proven by the fact that God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son who cries: ‘Abba, Father’.” The Holy Spirit is at one and the same time the *Spirit of the Father* and *the Spirit of the Son*.

The Holy Spirit comes *at the price* of Christ’s “departure”. In the context of the Master’s “departure”, we have an “advantageous” departure. For thanks to it, another “Counselor” will come. At the price of the Cross, which brings about the Redemption, the Holy Spirit comes to remain from the day of Pentecost onwards, with the Apostles, the Church, and through the Church in the world. The Holy Father concludes that in this way there is brought about that *new beginning* of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit through the work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

The Messiah anointed with the Holy Spirit

There now is also accomplished in its entirety the mission of the Messiah. “Messiah” literally means “Christ”, the “Anointed One”. In the history of salvation it means “the one anointed with the Holy Spirit”. Speaking in the house of Cornelius, St. Peter relates “*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.*” The Pope says that from these words and similar ones, one must go back to the prophecy of Isaiah, sometimes called “the Fifth Gospel” or the “Gospel of the Old Testament”. In this prophecy there is an allusion to a mysterious person “*upon whom the Spirit of the Lord shall rest*”. The New Testament will identify him as Jesus.

This text (Is 11:1-3) is important for the whole pneumatology of the Old Testament because it acts as a kind of bridge between the ancient biblical concept of “spirit”, understood primarily as “charismatic breath of wind”, and the “*Spirit as a person and as a gift, a gift for the person*”. The Messiah, from the “stump of Jesse”, is precisely that person upon whom the spirit of the Lord “shall rest”. At this point, one cannot yet speak of a revelation of the Paraclete. However, with this veiled reference to the figure of the future Messiah, the Pope says that there begins the path towards the full revelation of the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Trinitarian mystery, a mystery that will finally be manifested in the New Covenant.

Last week we concluded with the Holy Father speaking of the beginning of a path toward the full recognition of the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Trinitarian mystery. This week we begin with his telling us that the Messiah himself is this path. The Messiah in the Old Covenant is the single great personage anointed by God himself. He is the Anointed One (Is 61:1f). He will also be the mediator in granting this Spirit to the whole People (Is 48:16). He is the chosen *Servant of the Lord* upon whom the Spirit of God comes down.

This *Servant of the Lord* is revealed in the Book of Isaiah as the Man of Sorrows, the *Messiah* who suffers for the sins of the world. He will bring forth justice to the nations (Is 42:1). He will become “a covenant to the people, a light to the nations (Is 42:6); that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth (Is 49:6)”. These texts and others are to be read *in the light of the Gospel*. John Paul II notes how the Prophet presents the Messiah as the one who *comes in the Holy Spirit*. He is the one who possesses *the fullness of this Spirit in himself* and at the same time *for others*: Israel, for all the nations, for all humanity.

The aged Simeon, the “righteous and devout man” upon whom “rested the Holy Spirit”, sensed this at the presentation of Jesus in the Temple when he perceived in him the “salvation ...prepared in the presence of all peoples”. The Virgin Mary, who “had conceived by the Holy Spirit” (Lk 1:35) sensed this also as she pondered in her heart the “mysteries” of the Messiah.

The Pope had previously reminded us that in the Old Testament there was no suggestion of a distinction of subjects or of the Divine Persons as they subsist in the Trinity, later to be revealed in the New Testament. Both in Isaiah and in the whole of the Old Testament, the personality of the Holy Spirit is completely hidden.

Jesus Christ will make reference to the prediction contained in the words of Isaiah. He will do this in Nazareth in the Synagogue. He will open the Book of Isaiah and read the passage: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me,” and having read this passage he said to those present:

"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing". In this way he proclaims that he is the Messiah, the one who possesses the fullness of the Spirit, the one who marks the "new beginning" of the gift that God makes to humanity in the Spirit.

Even though in his hometown of Nazareth Jesus is not accepted as the Messiah, nevertheless his messianic mission in the Holy Spirit is revealed to the people by John the Baptist. John the Baptist foretells the Messiah-Christ not only as the one who "is coming" in the Holy Spirit but also as the one who "brings" the Holy Spirit, as Jesus will reveal more clearly in the Upper Room. John is not only a prophet, echoing the words of Isaiah, but also a messenger. He is the precursor of Christ.

Jesus now comes to John the Baptist at the Jordan River. It is on this occasion that John proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." On the lips of Baptist, "Lamb of God" is an expression of truth about the Redeemer no less significant than the one used by Isaiah: "Servant of the Lord." John professes what others have rejected, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the One Anointed by the Holy Spirit. After having been baptized, as were the others present, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and at the same time a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

John Paul II points out that this occurrence not only confirms the testimony of John but also reveals another dimension about the truth of Jesus of Nazareth. It is this: *the Messiah is the beloved Son of the Father*. The theophany at the Jordan touches the mystery of the very person of the Messiah. The voice from on high says: "my Son".

This theophany would be gradually revealed and confirmed by Jesus himself, by all that he "did and taught." Before he came to the farewell discourse in the Upper Room, the Holy Father tells us that there were important stages of that gradual revelation. The evangelist, Luke, tells us that, after the return of the seventy-two disciples from their mission, they recounted with joy the fruits of their labors. Jesus, in his turn, rejoices that it has been given to him to reveal the fatherhood of God. "Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit," Jesus reveals this outpouring of the divine fatherhood as upon the "little ones". (cf Lk 10:21) His "rejoicing" further prompts Jesus to speak of the intimate and mutual self-knowledge of the Father and the Son and its revelation to whom the Son chooses. (cf Lk 10:22)

The Pope notes that what comes "from outside", from on high, now comes also "from within" by way of Jesus' "rejoicing". He speaks only of the fatherhood of God and his own sonship without speaking directly of the Holy Spirit. Yet the "rejoicing" flows from what the Holy Father calls the *fullness of the Spirit* that fills his heart and pervades his own "I". The union of Christ with the Holy Spirit, a union of which he is perfectly aware, renders this "rejoicing" perceptible in its hidden source.

In the magnificent confession of the fatherhood of God, Jesus of Nazareth also manifests himself, his divine "I". He is the Son "of the same substance who alone knows the Father and the Father, him only. That Son is he who "for us and for our salvation" became man by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin whose name was Mary.

The Risen Christ says: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

In the discourse in the Upper Room, Jesus presents himself as the one who "brings" the Spirit and "gives" him to the Apostles and the Church. To "bring" means first of all to "reveal". In the Old Testament from the *Book of Genesis* onward the Spirit of God was made known to us; first as a "breath" of God giving life. Then in *Isaiah* as a gift for the person of the Messiah, as the one who comes, the "Anointed One".

The Holy Father now points out that in the New Testament at the Jordan, Isaiah's proclamation is given concrete form: Jesus of Nazareth. He is the one *who comes in the Holy Spirit*, bringing the Spirit as the gift proper to his own *Person*, to distribute that gift. "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Lk 3:16) In the farewell discourse in the Upper Room, the Holy Spirit is revealed in a new and fuller way. He is a *Person-gift*. He is coming as "another Counselor" who will lead the Apostles and the Church "into all the truth." Expressing a special communion, having as its original source the Father, Jesus says of the Holy Spirit: "He will take what is mine and declare it to you."

The Holy Spirit is first sent as a *gift for the Son* to fulfill the messianic prophecies. After the "departure" of Christ, the Holy Spirit "will come" directly to complete the work of the Son in the new era of the history of salvation.

John Paul II says that on the threshold of the Paschal events, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, the new and definitive revelation of the Holy Spirit as a Person is accomplished. This is the time of the “new beginning” of the self-communication of the Triune God to humanity in the Holy Spirit through the work of the Redeemer. Already the “giving” of the Son, *the gift of the Son*, expresses the most profound essence of God who is Love. (Jn 3:16)

The gift *made by the Son* completes the revelation and giving of eternal love: *the Holy Spirit*. He, in the inscrutable depths of the divinity, is a Person-gift through the work of the Son. He is given to the Apostles and to the Church in a new way and through them is given to humanity and the whole world.

The definitive expression of this mystery happens on the day of the Resurrection. He is so “designated Son of God in power ...by his Resurrection from the dead.” (Rom 1:3f) The Pope says that the messianic “raising up” of Christ in the Holy Spirit reaches its zenith in the Resurrection, revealing himself also as the *Son of God* “full of power”.

The Risen Christ does two things. First, he fulfills God’s promise through the prophet: “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, ...my spirit.” (Ez 36:26f) Second, he fulfills his own promise to the Apostles: “If I go, I will send him to you.” (Jn 16:7) It is he, the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete sent by the Risen Christ, who will transform us into his own risen image.

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, ...Jesus ...stood among them. He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (cf Jn 20: 19ff) The Risen Christ, as though beginning a new creation, “brings” to the Apostles the Holy Spirit, at the price of his own “departure”. John Paul says that he gives them the Spirit, as it were, through the wounds of his crucifixion. Upon giving them the Spirit, “he showed them his hands and his side.”

The mission of the Son finds its “fulfillment” in the Redemption. The mission of the Holy Spirit “draws from” the Redemption: “He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” The Redemption is totally carried out by the Son as the Anointed One. At the same time, this Redemption is constantly carried out in human hearts and minds – in the history of the world – by the Holy Spirit, who is the “other Counselor”.

The Holy Spirit and the era of the Church

The Holy Father tells us that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent to sanctify the Church forever, so that believers might have access to the Father through Christ in one Spirit. (cf Eph 2:18) This event constitutes the definitive manifestation of what had already been accomplished in the same Upper Room on Easter Sunday evening. The Risen Christ came and “brought” to the Apostles the Holy Spirit. He gave him to them, the doors being shut, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit”. Later, on the day of Pentecost, the doors of the Upper Room are opened and the Apostles emerged bearing witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Second Vatican Council had said: “Doubtless, the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified. Yet on the day of Pentecost ...the Church was publicly revealed to the multitude. The era of the Church began with the “coming” of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, together with Mary, the Lord’s Mother. (Acts 1:14) The time of the Church began the moment when the promises and predictions began to be fulfilled in complete power and clarity upon the Apostles, thus determining the birth of the Church. The *Acts of the Apostles* speak of this at length and in many passages.

With the coming of the Spirit the Apostles felt capable of fulfilling the mission entrusted to them. The grace of the Holy Spirit that the Apostles conferred on their collaborators by the imposition of hands continues to be transmitted in Episcopal Ordination. In the Sacrament of Orders the bishops, in turn, render sacred ministers sharers in this spiritual gift. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, they ensure that all who are reborn of water and the Holy Spirit are strengthened. Thus, the grace of Pentecost is perpetuated in the Church.

As the Second Vatican Council writes: “*the Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple.* (cf I Cor 3:16; 6:19) In them he prays and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted

sons (cf Gal 4:6, Rom 8:15ff). ...By the power of the Gospel he makes the Church grow, perpetually renews her, and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse.”

The Conciliar document, *Lumen Gentium*, tells us that the era of the Church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit and continues down the centuries. We know that the Second Vatican Council was in a special way an “ecclesiological” Council: a Council on the theme of the Church. The teaching of the Council, at the same time, is essentially “pneumatological”: that it is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church. John Paul notes that it contains precisely all that “the Spirit says to the Churches” concerning the present phase of the history of salvation.

The Pope says that the Council has made the Spirit newly “present” in our difficult age. Following this same line of the thought, we must also carefully study the subsequent Synods of Bishops, aiming as they do to ensure that the fruits of truth and love become a lasting treasure for the People of God. For this purpose one must learn how to “discern” the salvific fruits of the Spirit carefully from everything that may instead come originally from the “prince of this world.” The Church realizes that she is truly linked with mankind and its history. She truly knows that only God, whom she serves, meets the deepest longings of the human heart; that they are never fully satisfied by what the world has to offer.

Part II THE SPIRIT WHO CONVINCES THE WORLD CONCERNING SIN

1. Sin, righteousness and judgment

The same Counselor and Spirit of truth who has been promised as the one who “will teach” and “bring to remembrance” is foretold as the one who “will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” Jesus links foretelling of the Holy Spirit to the words indicating his “departure” through the Cross, emphasizing the need for his departure: “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you.”

What is more important is the explanation that Jesus himself adds to the three words: *sin, righteousness, and judgment*. For he says that concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

In the mind of Jesus, sin, righteousness and judgment have a very precise meaning; different from the meaning that one might be inclined to attribute to these words. This explanation also helps us to understand the “convincing the world” that is the proper action of the Holy Spirit.

“Sin” means the incredulity that Jesus encountered among “his own.” Sin means the rejection of his mission, causing people to condemn him to death. Speaking of “righteousness” Jesus seems to mean that definitive justice that the Father will restore when he grants him the glory of the Resurrection. In this context “judgment” means that the Spirit of truth will show the guilt of the “world” in condemning Jesus to death on the Cross. The convincing about “sin” and “righteousness” has to do with the salvation of the world while “judgment” concerns only the “prince of this world”, Satan, who is “already judged” from the start.

The Pope here wishes us to focus our attention principally on the mission of the Holy Spirit, which is “to convince the world concerning sin”. In the context of the Upper Room the Holy Spirit takes from the Son the Redemption of the world and thus the essential task of salvation, the “convincing of sin”. This convincing is a permanent reference to “righteousness”, and definitive salvation in God. God’s economy of salvation in a sense removes man from “judgment”, that is from the damnation that has been inflicted on the sin of Satan. The Holy Spirit, by showing sin against the background of Christ’s Cross in the economy of salvation, enables us to understand how his mission is also “to convince” of the sin that has already been definitively judged.

All the words uttered by the Redeemer in the Upper Room on the eve of his Passion become part of the era of the Church, especially the words about the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete and Spirit of Truth. The Second Vatican Council sees itself to be the authentic depository of the predictions that the Holy Spirit would “convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

The Council explains how it understands the “world”. It focuses its attention on the whole human family and the sum total of its experiences along the path of its history. It is the world that the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker’s love, fallen into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated by Christ. He was crucified and rose again to break the stranglehold of personified Evil, that the world might be refashioned according to God’s design.

On the eve of Passover, when Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as the one who “will convince the world concerning sin”, on the one hand sin must be given the widest possible meaning, insofar as it includes all the sin in the history of humanity. But on the other hand when Jesus explains that this sin consists in the fact that “they do not believe in him.” It seems to imply that it applies only to those who rejected the messianic mission of Jesus. However, this limited historical meaning expands until it assumes a universal dimension *by reason of the universality of the Redemption* through the Cross. This understanding encompasses every sin wherever and whenever committed because of its reference to the Cross of Christ.

2. The Testimony of the day of Pentecost

Christ’s prophecies in his farewell discourse found their most precise confirmation on the day of Pentecost. In this event we perceive the first and fundamental fulfillment of the promise of the Paraclete. Sent by the Father, he comes after the “departure” of Christ, first through the Cross, and then forty days later after the Resurrection, through his Ascension into heaven. At the moment of the Ascension, Jesus tells the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, “*But before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, ...and you shall be my witnesses ...to the end of the earth.*”

Pope John Paul tells us that on the day of Pentecost this prediction is fulfilled with total accuracy. Acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Peter comes forward and proclaims what he certainly would not have had the courage to say before, “Men of Israel, ...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up.”

Jesus had foretold and promised, “He will bear witness to me, ...and you also are my witness”. In Peter’s discourse, the witness to Christ crucified and risen finds its clear beginning. In the content of that first witness, the Spirit of truth, through the lips of Peter, “*convinces the world concerning sin*” that is in the first place the rejection of Christ even to his condemnation to the death of the Cross on Golgotha.

From this initial witness at Pentecost, the Holy Father explains how this action of the Spirit of truth who “convinces the world concerning the sin” of the rejection of Christ is linked inseparably to the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of the Crucified and Risen One. It is a “convincing” that has as its purpose not merely the *accusation* of the world and still less its *condemnation*. Jesus did not come into the world to judge it and condemn it but *to save it*. (cf Jn 3:17; 12:47)

When those present asked Peter and the Apostles what they must do, he answered, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*” In this way “convincing concerning sin” becomes at the same time a *convincing concerning the remission of sins* in the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter in his discourse in Jerusalem calls people to conversion. Conversion requires convincing of sin. It includes the interior judgment of conscience. In this “convincing concerning sin” we discover a double gift: the gift of the truth of conscience and gift of the certainty of redemption. The Spirit of truth is the Counselor.

Through the ministry of the Apostolic Kerygma the convincing concerning sin is placed under the redemptive power of Christ crucified and risen. During the Pentecost event, when Peter speaks of the sin of those who “have not believed” and have handed Jesus over to death, he bears witness to the victory over sin. This is a victory achieved, in a certain sense, through the greatest sin that man could commit: the killing of Jesus, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father.

John Paul notes how the greatest sin on man’s part is matched, in the heart of the Redeemer, by the oblation of supreme love that conquers the evil of all the sins of man. “O happy fault!” the deacon sings in the *Exsultet*, the proclamation of the Resurrection, at the Easter Vigil.

No one but the Spirit of Truth can "*convince the world*", man, or the human conscience of this ineffable truth. Faced with the mystery of sin, we have to search "the depths of God": to penetrate the inner mystery of God for an understanding. It is precisely the Holy Spirit who "searches" the "depths of God" and from them draws God's response to man's sin.

By convincing the "world" concerning the sin of Golgotha, the death of the Innocent Lamb, as happened on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit also convinces of every sin, for he demonstrates its relationship with the Cross of Christ. The "convincing" is the demonstration of the evil of sin, of every sin, in relation to the Cross of Christ. The "mystery of iniquity" is hidden in this dimension of evil. Man does not know this dimension. He is absolutely ignorant of it apart from the Cross of Christ. The Holy Father concludes that as a result man cannot be "convinced" of it except by the Holy Spirit.

For sin, shown in relation to the Cross of Christ, is at the same time identified in the full dimension of the "mystery of piety". Man is absolutely ignorant of this dimension of sin as well apart from the Cross of Christ. Again, he is "convinced" of this dimension by the Holy Spirit.

3. The Witness concerning the beginning: the original reality of sin

This is the dimension of sin that we find in the witness concerning the beginning, commented on in the Book of Genesis. It is the sin that according to the revealed Word of God constitutes the principle and root of all the others. The Pope says that in this sin the "*mystery of iniquity*" has its beginning. This is also the sin concerning which the redemptive power of the "*mystery of piety*" becomes particularly clear and efficacious. St. Paul clarifies this by contrasting the "*disobedience*" of the first Adam with the "*obedience*" of Christ, the second Adam.

The witness from the beginning is that sin in its original reality takes place in man's will first of all as "disobedience", an opposition of the will of man to the will of God. This original disobedience presupposes a rejection of the truth contained in the Word of God who creates the world. This Word is the same Word who was "in the beginning with God", who was God. He is the Word who is also the eternal law, the source of every law that regulates the world and especially human acts.

The Holy Father sees that on the eve of Christ's Passion, as he speaks of the sin of those who "*do not believe in him*," there is a distant echo of that sin that in its original form is obscurely inscribed in the mystery of creation. For the one who is speaking is not only the Son Man but he is also the one who is "the first born of all creation." In the light of this truth, the "disobedience" in the mystery of the beginning presupposes the same "non-faith," that same "*they have not believed*" repeated in the Paschal Mystery.

As the Pope had said earlier, it was a matter of a turning away from the truth contained in the Word of the Father. This rejection expresses itself in practice as "disobedience", an effect of the temptation that came from the "father of lies". At the root of human sin is the lie that is a radical rejection of the truth contained in the Word of the Father.

"*The Spirit of God*" that "moved over the face of the water" is the same "Spirit who searches the depths of God: *the depths of the Father and of the Word-Son* in the mystery of creation. He himself, as love, is the eternal uncreated gift. In him is *the source and the beginning of every giving of gifts to creatures*. To create means to call into existence from nothing, *to give* existence. Man in his own humanity receives as a gift a special "*image and likeness*" to God. This means not only rationality and freedom but also, from the beginning, the capacity of having a *personal relationship* with God, as "I" and "you", and therefore the capacity of having a covenant.

"The gift of the Spirit" ultimately means *a call to friendship*. It means that the transcendent "depths of God" become in some way opened to participation on the part of man. The Second Vatican Council teaches that the invisible God speaks to men as friends and lives among them, inviting them into fellowship with himself.

The Spirit knows from the beginning "the secrets of man." The Spirit of truth knows the original reality of the sin caused in the will of man by the "father of lies", he who already "has been judged". The Holy Spirit therefore convinces the world of sin in connection with this "judgment", but also guides toward

the “righteousness” that has been revealed to man together with the Cross of Christ, through “obedience unto death.”

According to the witness concerning the beginning found in the Scriptures and in Tradition, in the first instance in the *Book of Genesis*, sin in its original form is understood as “disobedience”. It means simply a transgression of a prohibition laid down by God.

The human being, man and woman, called into existence, is a creature. Because of rationality and freedom there is a greatness and dignity in the human subject, who is a person. This personal subject, however, is still always a creature. “The tree of the knowledge of good and evil” expresses and constantly reminds man of the “limit” impassable for a created being.

In the beginning, the Creator issued a prohibition. The ensuing temptation, seen in the sacred text, was an inducement to transgress it – that is to say to go beyond that “limit”. The Pope tells us that disobedience means precisely “going beyond the limit” that remains impassable to the will and freedom of the created being. God alone is the definitive source of the moral order in his created world. Man cannot decide by himself, cannot “*know good and evil like God*”. God remains the first and sovereign source for deciding about good and evil, through the intimate truth of being that is the reflection of the Word, the eternal Son, consubstantial with the Father.

To man, created in the image and likeness of God, the Holy Spirit gives the gift of conscience. In his conscience the image may faithfully reflect its model, *the source of the moral order in man and in the world*. Disobedience means the rejection of *this source*.

God in creation has revealed himself as omnipotence, that is love. Man is called as an image of the Creator *to participate in truth and love*. Man’s disobedience, nevertheless, always means a turning away from God, a closing up of human freedom and an opening to the “father of lies”. This conscious choice is not only disobedience but it also involves a certain consent to the same motivation that is contained in the *first temptation to sin*. This act is unceasingly renewed during the whole of human history on earth.

The Holy Father notes that here we find ourselves at the very center of what can be called the “anti-Word,” or the anti-truth”. The truth about man becomes falsified. This “anti-truth” is possible because there is a complete falsification of the truth about who God is. God the Creator is placed in a state of suspicion. Man seeks to “falsify” God himself, the absolute Good that in the work of creation manifested itself as the Good, *as creative love*.

Despite all the witness of creation, the *spirit of darkness* is capable of showing God as an enemy of his own creature, as a source of danger and threat to man. In this way Satan sows in man’s soul the seed of opposition. Man is challenged to become the adversary of God. An analysis of sin in its original dimension indicates that, through the influence of the “father of lies”, throughout the history of humanity there is a constant pressure on man to reject God to the point of hating him: “Love of self to the point of contempt for God”, as St. Augustine put it. Man will be inclined to see God primarily as a limitation upon himself and not as the source of his own freedom and the fullness of good.

The Second Vatican Council analyzes the threat to man that lies in the “independence of earthly affairs” from God. The Council says that without the Creator the creature would disappear. When God is forgotten, the creature itself grows unintelligible. The ideology of the “death of God” demonstrates in its effects that on the “theoretical and practical” levels, it is really an ideology of the “death of man”.

The Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son, and as such is the Trinitarian gift, the source of every gift to creatures. In man, mercy includes sorrow and compassion for the misfortunes of one’s neighbor. In God, the Spirit-love expresses the consideration of human sin in a fresh outpouring of salvific love. Sin, by rejecting love, has caused the “suffering” of man that in some way has affected the whole of creation. The Holy Spirit will enter into this human suffering with a new outpouring of love that will redeem it. On the lips of Jesus the Redeemer, in whose humanity the “suffering” of God is concretized, there will be heard a word that manifests eternal love full of mercy: *Misereor (I will have mercy)*.

Sin is conquered through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who has become even “unto death” the obedient servant by making up for man’s disobedience, accomplishing the redemption of the world. In this way the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete, “convince concerning sin.”

In the letter to the Hebrews, Paul first of all recalls the Old Testaments sacrifices of the blood of goats and bulls. He compares that to the sacrifice of Christ and says: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" It is a sacrifice offered "through the eternal Spirit" that gives the power to "convince concerning sin." It is the same Holy Spirit, promised in the upper room, whom Jesus Christ "will bring" to the Apostles on the day of his Resurrection, whom "he will give" them "for the remission of sins."

The Holy Father notes that in the sacrifice of the Son of Man, the Holy Spirit is present and active just as he acted in Jesus' conception, in his hidden life, and in his public ministry. According to the *Letter to the Hebrews*, the same Jesus Christ in his own humanity opened himself totally to this action of the Spirit-Paraclete, who from suffering enables eternal salvific love to spring forth. "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered." In this way this letter shows how humanity, subjected to sin in the descendants of the Adam, in Jesus Christ become perfectly subjected to God and at the same time full of compassion for men.

There is now a *new humanity* that in Jesus Christ through the suffering of the Cross has returned to the love that was betrayed by Adam through sin. This *new humanity* is discovered in the divine source of the original outpouring of gifts: in the Spirit, who "searches... the depths of God" and is himself love and gift. Jesus Christ, as man, made this offering by himself. As the one priest, "he offered himself without blemish to God". In his humanity he was worthy to become this sacrifice, for he alone was "without blemish". But he made this offering "through the eternal Spirit." The Holy Spirit acted in a special way in this absolute self-gift of the Son of Man, in order to transform this suffering into redemptive love.

By analogy, one can say that the Holy Spirit is the "fire from heaven" that works in the depth of the mystery of the Cross. If sin caused suffering, now the pain of God in Christ crucified acquires, through the Holy Spirit, its full human expression. John Paul II points out a paradoxical mystery of love: in Christ there suffers a God who has been rejected by his own creatures, "They do not believe in me!"

In the depth of the mystery of the Cross, love is at work. The Holy Spirit as Love and Gift comes down into the heart of the sacrifice that is offered on the Cross. The Holy Father says that biblically speaking, *he consumes this sacrifice with the fire of the love* that unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion. While the sacrifice of the Cross is an act proper to Christ, he "receives" the Holy Spirit in a way that afterwards he alone with the Father can "give him" to the Apostles, the Church and humanity.

He alone "sends" the Spirit from the Father. He alone breathes upon the Apostles in the Upper Room and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven." John the Baptist foretold, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The Holy Spirit is revealed and at the same time made present as the Love that works in the depths of the Paschal Mystery, as the source of the salvific power of the Cross of Christ, and as the gift of new and eternal life.

The truth about the Holy Spirit finds daily expression in the Roman liturgy. Before Communion the priest says, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and *the work of the Holy Spirit* your death brought life to the world."

5. The Blood that purifies the conscience

At the climax of the Paschal Mystery, the Holy Spirit is definitively revealed and made present in a new way. Christ says to the Apostles, "Receive the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is thus revealed. The words of Christ confirm what he had promised and foretold during his discourse in the Upper Room.

The Paraclete is also made present in a new way. At the climax of Jesus' messianic mission, the Holy Spirit becomes present in the Paschal Mystery in all his divine subjectivity as the one who is now to continue the work of salvation. Jesus entrusts this work to humanity: to the Apostles, to the Church. Yet, in these men the Holy Spirit remains the transcendent, principal agent.

4. The Spirit Who Transforms Suffering into Salvific Love

The Risen Christ on the “first day of the week” gave particular emphasis to the presence of the Paraclete-Counselor when he said to the Apostles: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” This power granted to men includes the saving action of the Holy Spirit, who “convinces of sin”, making man realize his own evil and at the same time directing him towards what is good.

In the Upper Room, Jesus Christ spoke of the Holy Spirit as the one who bears witness that sin continues to exist in human history. Yet, sin has been subjected to the saving power of the Redemption. In convincing the world concerning sin the Spirit of truth comes into contact with the voice of human conscience. Vatican Council II tells us that the truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance rooted in the heart of man. Pulled by manifold attractions, man is constantly forced to choose among them, renouncing some.

The “convincing concerning sin” that accompanies the human conscience in every careful reflection upon itself leads to the discovery of sin’s roots in man. The Holy Spirit “convinces concerning sin” in relation to the mystery of man’s origins, showing the fact that man is a created being, and therefore in complete ontological and ethical dependence upon the Creator. The Holy Spirit tells us, at the same time, of the hereditary sinfulness of human nature. John Paul II, nevertheless, reminds us that the Counselor “convinces concerning sin” always in relation to the Cross of Christ.

A monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole of human history. This battle was joined from the very origins of the world to continue until the last day. Vatican II thus sees sin as a factor of alienation that weighs heavily on man’s person and social life. But the Lord came to free and strengthen man and the Council never tires of reminding us of the possibility of victory.

We know that recognizing evil in ourselves sometimes demands a great effort. Conscience not only commands and forbids but also judges in the light of interior dictates and prohibitions. It is also the source of remorse. Is not this suffering as it were a distant echo of that “repentance at having created man” that in human language the Scriptures attribute to God? When the Spirit of truth permits the human conscience to share in that suffering, it becomes particularly a means to salvation. Then, by an act of perfect contrition, the authentic conversion of the heart is accomplished. This is the evangelical “metanoia”.

The hidden giver of this saving power is the Holy Spirit whom the Church calls “the light of consciences.” It is he who penetrates and fills “the depths of the human heart”. Through this conversion a person becomes open to forgiveness, to the remission of sin. The Holy Spirit comes in each concrete case of conversion-forgiveness, by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross. Spoken to everyone are Christ’s words spoken to the Apostles the night before he died, “You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (Jn 14:17)

6. The sin against the Holy Spirit

Against the background of our discussion we hope to have some basis for understanding those surprising words of Jesus, *those words of “un-forgiveness.”* They are given to us by the *Matthew, Mark, and Luke* in their Gospels concerning a particular sin, the “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.”

The Holy Father now asks everyone’s question. Why is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable? How is it to be understood? St. Thomas Aquinas says that it is “unforgivable by its very nature because it excludes the elements by which forgiveness of sin takes place”. This blasphemy does not consist of words against the Holy Spirit but rather *in the refusal to accept the salvation that God offers to man through the Holy Spirit*, working through the power of the Cross. Whoever, therefore, rejects the Holy Spirit and the power of Christ’s Blood remains in “dead works”, in sin.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit consists precisely in the radical refusal to accept this forgiveness. If Jesus says that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven either in this life or in the next, it is because this “*non-forgiveness*” is linked as a cause to “*non-repentance*,” to the radical refusal to be converted. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, then, is the sin committed by the person who claims to

have a “right” to persist in evil – in any sin at all. He rejects the Redemption. He closes himself up in sin, thereby making his conversion as well as the remission of his sins impossible. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not allow one to escape from one’s self-imposed imprisonment.

The action of the Spirit of Truth in his “convincing concerning sin”, encounters in a person in this condition an interior resistance, an impenetrability of conscience fixed by reason of a free choice. Sacred Scripture calls this a “hardness of heart”. The Pope says that in our own time this attitude of mind and heart is reflected in *the loss of the sense of sin*. Pope Pius XII had already declared that “the sin of the century is the loss of the sense of sin”. This loss goes hand in hand with the “loss of the sense of God”.

God is the origin and the supreme end of man and man carries within himself a *divine seed*. It is vain to hope that there will take root a sense of sin against man and against human values if there is no sense of offence against God, namely the true sense of sin. John Paul II points out that the Church for this reason constantly implores from God the grace that integrity of human consciences not be lost. The Church sees the need for a healthy sensitivity with regard to good and evil. This integrity and sensitivity are profoundly linked to the intimate action of the Spirit of truth.

And so it is that the church prays that the dangerous sin against the Spirit will give way to a holy readiness to accept the Counselor when he comes to “convince the world concerning sin, and righteousness and judgment.

The Holy Father continues. In his farewell discourse Jesus linked the three areas of “convincing”, sin, righteousness and judgment, as elements of the mission of the Paraclete. He says that they mark out the area that in human history is opposed to sin. Those who let themselves be “convinced concerning sin” by the Holy Spirit, also allow themselves to be convinced “concerning righteousness and judgment”. The Spirit of truth who helps human consciences to know the truth concerning sin, at the same time enables them to know the truth about righteousness in Jesus Christ.

Those who are “convinced concerning sin” and who are converted through the action of the Counselor are led out of the range of the “judgment” by which “the ruler of his world is judged”. Those who are converted, then, are led by the Holy Spirit out of the range of the “judgment” and introduced into that righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. It is the righteousness that the Father gives to the Son and to all those united with him in truth and in love.

Part III THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES LIFE

1. Reason for the Jubilee of the year 2000; Christ who was conceived of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Father would say that the Church’s mind and heart turned to the Holy Spirit as the twentieth century was drawing to a close and the third millennium since the coming of Jesus Christ into the world approached. He said that the measurement of time in common use defined years, centuries and millennia according to whether they came before or after the birth of Christ. It must also be remembered that for us Christians the coming of Christ indicates, as Saint Paul said, the “fullness of time.” “When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman... (Gal 4:4f) And this Incarnation of the Son-Word came about “by the power of the Holy Spirit”.

Two Evangelists recount this matter in an almost identical way. According to Luke, at the Annunciation Mary asks: “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” She receives the answer: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you: therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. (Lk 1:34f) Matthew narrates directly, “When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.”

(Mt 1:18) Joseph, meanwhile, receives the assurance that what had occurred to Mary, his wife, was the work of the Holy Spirit. (Mt 1:20f)

Thus from the beginning, the Church confesses the mystery of the Incarnation, the key mystery of the faith, by making reference to the Holy Spirit.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, there became man he whom the Church, in the words of the Nicene Creed, professes to be the Son, of the same substance as the Father. He was made man by becoming incarnate from the Virgin Mary when the fullness of time had come.

For John Paul II the great Jubilee at the close of the second Millennium had a directly *Christological* aspect for it celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ. It also had a *pneumatological (of the Spirit)* aspect since the incarnation was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit, in the absolute mystery of the Triune God, is the Person-love, the uncreated gift. He is, finally, the subject of God's self-communication in the order of grace.

The mystery of the Incarnation constitutes the climax of this giving, this divine self-communication. The conception and birth of Jesus Christ are in fact the greatest work accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the history of creation and salvation: the supreme grace, the grace of union, the source of every other grace according to the great St. Thomas Aquinas. The jubilee year of 2000 AD celebrated this great work and at the same time celebrated the author of this work, *the person of the Holy Spirit*.

The "fullness of time" is matched by a particular fullness of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the "*hypostatic union*" is brought about. The Holy Father here explains that this describes the union of *the divine nature* and *the human nature*, of the divinity and the humanity in the one Person of the Word-Son. At the Annunciation in the virginal womb of Mary, a man, the Son of Man, who is the Son of God, is conceived. By means of this "humanization" of the Word-Son, the self-communication of God reaches its definitive fullness in the history of creation and salvation.

The Incarnation of God the Son signifies the taking up into unity with God not only of human nature, but also in this human nature, in a sense, of everything that is "*flesh*", the whole of humanity, the entire visible and material world. At the same time, the Incarnation has a cosmic dimension. The first-born of all creation, becoming incarnate in the individual humanity of Christ, unites himself in some way with the entire reality of man, and in this reality with all "flesh", with the whole of creation.

All this is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, and so, it is part of the great Jubilee celebrated by the Church. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit "in the fullness of time" is now by his power made present in the new phase of man's history on earth, the year 2000 and beyond, from the birth of Christ.

The Holy Spirit overshadowed the virginal body of Mary, bringing about in her the beginning of her divine Motherhood. At the same time it made her heart perfectly obedient to God's self-communication. Mary entered the history of the salvation of the world through the obedience of faith. The Holy Father tells us that faith, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift of God's self-communication in the Holy Spirit. When the Triune God opens himself to man in the Holy Spirit, God reveals and also gives to the human creature the fullness of freedom. This fullness was manifested in a sublime way precisely through the faith of Mary, through her obedience of faith. Truly, as Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she who believed."

2. Reason for the Jubilee: grace has been made manifest

In the mystery of the Incarnation, the work of the Spirit "who gives life" reaches its highest point. At the same time with the mystery of the Incarnation there opens in a new way the source of this divine life in the history of mankind, the Holy Spirit. The Word, "the first born of all creation", becomes the first-born of many brethren. Thus he becomes the head of the Body, the Church that will be born on the Cross and revealed on the day of Pentecost. In the Church, he becomes the head of all of humanity. "The word became flesh in whom was life and the life was the light of men ... to all who received him he gave the power to become the children of God." (Jn 1:14; 4:12f) All this was accomplished and is unceasingly accomplished "by the power of the Holy Spirit".

Saint Paul teaches that "all who are led by the Spirit of God" are "children of God". The filiation (becoming sons and daughters) of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of the Incarnation. i.e. through Christ the eternal Son. This birth, or rebirth, happens when the Father "sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts." (Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 1:22) Then, according to Saint Paul, "we

receive a spirit of adopted sons by which we cry 'Abba, Father!' (Rom 8:15) This "divine filiation" planted in the human soul through sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit. John Paul II recalls for us that sanctifying grace is the principle and source of man's new life, divine and supernatural.

"When you send forth your Spirit, they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth," sings the Psalmist. (Ps 104/103: 30) Creation is completed by the Incarnation. Since that moment, it is permeated by the powers of the Redemption, powers that fill humanity and all creation. Saint Paul has the mind of the Psalmist when he says that creation "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; those whom God has "foreknown" and whom he "has predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom 8:19; 8:29)

There is a supernatural "adoption" whose source is the Holy Spirit, love and gift. By the power of this *uncreated* gift there begins in the heart of all human beings that *created* gift by which they "become partakers of the divine nature". (*cf 2 Pet 1:4*) In this gift of new life, as a sharer in the mystery of the Incarnation "man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit". Thus there is a close relationship between the *uncreated* Spirit and the *created* human spirit. Through the Christological content (pertaining to Christ) of the great jubilee we have reached the pneumatological dimension (pertaining to the Holy Spirit). We see with the eyes of faith the two thousand years of the action by the Spirit of truth.

The Holy Father says that we cannot just limit ourselves to the two thousand years that have passed since the birth of Christ. We need to go back further to embrace the whole of the action of the Holy Spirit even before Christ, -from the beginning. According to the eternal plan of salvation this action was already closely linked to the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption. It influenced those who believed in the future coming of Christ as attested to by the *Letter to the Ephesians*. "In him (in Christ) you... were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it." (*Eph 1:13f*)

Within the perspective of the great Jubilee, the Pope says that we must reach farther afield. The Second Vatican Council reminds us of the Holy Spirit's activity also "*outside the visible body of the Church*." The Council says that since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate vocation of man is one and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to every man the possibility of being associated with his paschal mystery. The great Jubilee ought to constitute a powerful call to all who "worship in spirit and truth". It should be a special occasion for everyone to meditate on the mystery of the Triune God.

God is wholly transcendent (other, beyond) to the world. He is absolute Spirit, "God is spirit." (*Jn 4:24*) At the same time God is not only close to this world but present in it. He is immanent, penetrating it and giving it life from within. God is present in the intimacy of man's being, in his mind, conscience and heart. St. Augustine said of God that he was "closer than my inmost being". Only the Spirit can be so immanent in man and in the world while remaining inviolable and immutable in his absolute transcendence.

In Jesus Christ the divine presence has been made manifest in a new way and in visible form. The love of the Father, as gift, infinite grace, and source of all life, has been made visible in Christ. This appearing of grace in human history in Jesus Christ has been accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. He, the hidden God, who as love and gift, fills the Universe.

3. The Holy Spirit in man's inner conflict:

"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh."

Unfortunately, the history of salvation shows that God's coming close and making himself present to man, that marvelous "condescension" of the Spirit, meets with resistance in our human reality. The prophetic words of Simeon, inspired by the Spirit, in the Temple in Jerusalem foretell in the presence of the new-born Babe of Bethlehem that he "*is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, as a sign of contradiction*." This opposition becomes conflict and rebellion on the ethical plane by reason of fact that sin takes possession of the human heart.

Saint Paul describes in a particularly eloquent way in his letter to the Galatians this tension and struggle within the human heart. We read, "But I say, walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh." (*cf Gal 5:16f*) These two are opposed to one another. This struggle in fact belongs to the heritage of sin. It is a consequence of sin and at the same time a confirmation of it. This is part of everyday experience. Saint Paul then enumerates a list of sins and he says that all these constitute the "works of the flesh".

Paul now contrasts them with "the fruit of the Spirit," love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Paul here is concerned with the morally good or bad works, or better, the permanent dispositions – virtues and vices – that are the fruit of submission to (in the first case) or of resistance to (in the second case) the saving action of the Holy Spirit. Consequently the Apostle writes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." The contrast that Saint Paul makes between the life "according to the Spirit" and life "according to the flesh" give rise to a further contrast: that between "*life*" and "*death*". To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." (*cf Rom 8:6. 13*)

This is an exhortation to live in the truth and at the same time it is a profession of faith in the Spirit of truth as the one who gives life. "For the body is dead because of sin, but your spirits are alive because of righteousness". We are debtors to Christ, who in the Paschal Mystery effected our justification.

The Holy Father notes that in the texts of Saint Paul there is a superimposing –and mutual compenetration- of the ontological (level of being) dimension (the flesh and the spirit), the ethical (moral good and evil), and the pneumatological (the action of the Holy Spirit in the order of grace). *Romans* and *Galatians* especially enable us to see vividly the tension and struggle between these elements. Who will win? The one who welcomes the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Father continues in his discussion, saying that the resistance to the Holy Spirit, characterized by St. Paul as a tension, struggle and rebellion taking place in the human heart finds, in every era, its external dimension. Today, it takes concrete form as a philosophical system, an ideology, a program of action, all for the purpose of the shaping of human behavior. It reaches its clearest expression in materialism, both in the theoretical form and in its practical application. The extreme form of this thought, ideology and praxis (in practice) is dialectical and historical materialism. It forms the essential core of Marxism.

Materialism radically excludes the presence and action of God who is spirit, in the world and in man. This is because fundamentally it does not accept God's existence. It is a system that is essentially and systematically atheistic. The Second Vatican Council devoted much of its attention to this striking phenomenon of atheism. It is not possible to speak of atheism in a one-dimensional way, or to limit it exclusively to the philosophy of materialism. Atheism takes many forms. Still, it is certain that in a true and proper sense materialism is characteristically atheistic because its order of values and aims of action are strictly bound to a reading of the whole of reality as "matter" (material or corporeal).

Though it may speak of the "spirit" in the fields of culture and morality, yet this "spirit" is derived from matter. Matter is the one and only form of being. According to this interpretation religion can only be understood as a kind of "idealistic illusion", to be fought and eliminated from society and from man's very heart.

The Pope explains that materialism is the systematic and logical development of that "resistance" and opposition condemned by Saint Paul: "The desires of *the flesh* are against the Spirit." Saint Paul notes however that this antagonism is mutual: "the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. Those who wish to live by the Spirit cannot but reject the "claims" of the "*flesh*", as well as its expression as an anti-religious "materialism". In this time of the great Jubilee, John Paul II says that we must emphasize the "desires of the spirit" as exhortations echoing a new time of advent, at the end of which "every man will see the salvation of God."

This is a hope that the Church entrusts to the men and women of today. This confrontation between the "desires against the spirit" and the "desires against the flesh", this collision may in many cases be of a tragic nature for humanity. However, the Church firmly believes that on God's part there is always a saving "convincing concerning sin" by the power of the Spirit.

The Holy Father tells us that the Pauline contrast between the “Spirit” and the “flesh” also includes the contrast between “life” and “death”. This presents a serious problem in that materialism in all its forms accepts death as the definitive end of human existence. If man is *essentially* only flesh, then death remains for him an impassable frontier and limit. Human life, as a result, is merely an “existence” in order to die.

The Pope calls our attention to the fact that on the horizon of contemporary civilization, the *signs and symptoms of death* have become particularly present and frequent. He enumerates several: self-destruction as a consequence of the nuclear arms race, the death-dealing poverty and famine in various areas of the world. Even more sinister are the threats that are becoming institutionalized such as the taking of life before birth and its taking before reaching its natural end, wars that destroy the lives or health of vast numbers of people, terrorist attacks organized even on an international scale. John Paul II notes how this is only a partial and incomplete sketch of, as he calls it, the *picture of death* being composed in our age. In spite of all, even though “*we groan inwardly as we wait for ...the redemption of our bodies*” (Rom 8:23) we are filled with unflagging hope because God, who is Spirit, has drawn near to us. This Spirit helps us in our weakness.

4. The Holy Spirit strengthens the “inner man”

The mystery of the Resurrection and of Pentecost is proclaimed and lived by the Church. She is the perennial witness to this victory over death that revealed the power of the Holy Spirit and determined his new coming, his new presence in people and in the world. For in Christ’s Resurrection the Holy Spirit-Paraclete revealed himself especially as he who gives life: “He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. (Rom 8:11) In the name of the Resurrection of Christ the Church proclaims life and at the same time proclaims him who gives this life, the Spirit, the Giver of Life.

Through this service man becomes in a new manner “the way of the Church”. United with the Spirit, the Pope says that the Church is supremely aware of the reality of the inner man, of what is deepest and most essential in man because it is spiritual and incorruptible. This is man’s life in God that as a fruit of God’s saving self-communication in the Holy Spirit can flourish only by the action of the Holy Spirit. St Paul prays that we be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man”. (Eph 3:14-16)

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit the inner, “spiritual” man matures. In this Spirit, the eternal gift, the Triune God opens himself to man, to the human spirit. Through the gift of grace that comes from the Holy Spirit, man enters a “new life” and becomes a “dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit”, a living temple of God. For through the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son come to him and take up their abode with him. (cf Jn 14:23) The Pope notes that in the communion of grace with the Trinity, man’s “living area” is broadened and raised up to the supernatural level of divine life. In effect, Man lives in God and by God. He lives “according to the Spirit” and “sets his mind on the things of the Spirit.”

As a consequence of this God-life in man, the Holy Father says that man’s intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself and his own humanity in a new way. Thus that image and likeness of God that man is from his very beginning is fully realized. This intimate truth of the human being has to be continually rediscovered in the light of Christ for he is the prototype of the relationship with God. The Second Vatican Council said that because of his divine likeness, which “shows that on earth man is the only creature that God wishes for himself”. In his dignity he is a being one open to integration and social communion. Full knowledge and implementation of this truth of his being come about only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Man learns this truth from Jesus Christ. It is put into practice in his own life by the power of the Spirit whom Jesus has given to us.

The Pope tells us here that the Triune God, gives himself in the Holy Spirit as a gift to man, transforming the human world from within, from inside hearts and minds. The Council teaches that along this path the world, made to share in the divine gift, becomes ever more profoundly human. Within this world, through people’s hearts and minds, the Kingdom develops in which God will be definitively “all in all”, (1 Cor 15:28) as gift and love.

At the point of the Great Jubilee Year, 2000, John Paul II expresses the desire that through the action of the Spirit-Paraclete there be accomplished a process of true growth in humanity, in both individual and community life. In this regard, Jesus himself “when he prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one ... as we are one’ (cf Jn 17:21-22) implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine persons and the union of the children of God in truth and charity”.

If man is the way of the Church, this way passes through the whole mystery of Christ, as man’s divine model. In the process, man discovers that in Christ he is raised to the status of a child of God. As a result he better understands his own dignity precisely because he is the subject of God’s approach and presence, the divine condescension containing the very root of definitive glorification. The Holy Spirit is the hidden dispenser of this life and this glory. The great St. Basil adds that the Holy Spirit is present in each person capable of receiving him as if he were the only one, and yet gives grace that is sufficient for all.

At this juncture, the Holy Father has us to understand that, when under the influence of the Paraclete people realize the divine dimension of their lives, they are then enabled to free themselves from being determined by a materialistic basis of thought. In this our age the Holy Spirit continues to succeed in penetrating our inmost being, radiating the light and strength of new life in the “freedom of the Children of God”. In so many cases social factors depress the development of the human spirit and ultimately deprive it of the genuine truth of its being and life in order to subject it to the “prince of the world.”

The Pope sees the importance of the Jubilee of the year 2000 in that it contains a liberating message. It is in fact the liberating force of the Holy Spirit guiding us through the “law of the Spirit that gives life in Christ Jesus”. (cf Rom 8:2) Saint Paul writes, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”. (cf 2 Cor 3:17) This is particularly an important message for Christians and the Church in a state of persecution both in ancient times and in the modern age. The witnesses to divine Truth often become a living proof of the action of the Spirit present in their hearts and minds by marking with their own death *by martyrdom* the supreme glorification of human dignity.

Even in the ordinary circumstances of life, Christians become witnesses to man’s authentic dignity by their obedience to the Holy Spirit thereby “renewing the face of the earth” in the many facets of society. According to Vatican Council II, they do this as disciples of Christ who, appointed Lord by the Resurrection, is now at work in the hearts of men through the power of his Spirit. They not only long for “the age to come” but they animate, purify and strengthen those most noble yearnings that will make the human family’s life ever more humane. They seek to affirm ever more strongly the greatness of man made in the image and likeness of God. This greatness is demonstrated by the Incarnation of the Son of God, entering into history and manifesting himself as true man.

5. The Church as the sacrament of intimate union with God

The second millennium should recall and make present for us anew the coming of the Word in the fullness of time. The Church, for its part, seeks to ponder the very essence of her divine-human constitution as well as that mission that enables her to share in the Messianic mission of Christ. This is much in accord with the plan of Second Vatican Council. We therefore find ourselves going back to the Upper Room and listening to Jesus as he speaks of his “departure”: “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you”. We saw this prediction come true on the evening of Easter day and then again in Jerusalem at Pentecost. We have seen that ever since then it is being fulfilled in human history through the Church.

5. The Church as the sacrament of intimate union with God

In the discourse at the Last Supper, Jesus speaks not only of sending the Counselor, but also of *his new “coming”*. Jesus says in his last discourse: “I will not leave you desolate; I *will come to you*”. At the moment of his final farewell before ascending to Heaven, he repeats the promise, “Lo, I *am with you*”, and “*always, to the close of the age*”. His “going away” and his “coming” forever in a new way, all this happens through the power of the Holy Spirit. This new coming of Christ is accomplished *in the reality of the sacraments*. In them Christ comes, is present, and acts in the Church in such an intimate way as to

make it his own Body, “even to the close of the age”. All this happens through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The most complete sacramental expression of the “departure” of Christ through the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection is the Eucharist. It is sacramentally realized in the Sacrifice and Communion. The Holy Spirit as part of his own mission accomplishes it. Through the Eucharist the Holy Spirit accomplishes the “*strengthening of the inner man*”. (cf Eph 3:16) Further through the Eucharist Jesus accomplishes a “full revelation of man to man himself”, suggesting the Holy Father says, a certain likeness between the union of the divine persons, and the union of God’s children in truth and charity. This union is made real especially through the Eucharist in which man shares in the sacrifice of Christ. In its celebration, man in a special giving of self learns to find himself, through communion with God and with others, his brothers and sisters.

Immediately upon the coming down of the Holy Spirit, the early Christians “devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and the prayers”, forming a community united by the teaching of the Apostles. The Pope points out that they recognized that the Risen and ascended Lord came *into* their midst *anew in that Eucharistic community of the Church and by means of it*. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church from the beginning *expressed* and *confirmed* her identity through the Eucharist. So it has been through the ages. Yet, we must admit that in this past Millennium, we find the great separation between Christians. All Christians, then, following the example of the Apostles must strive to be of one mind in the Holy Spirit, striving toward the principle of the Church’s unity. Baptized in one Spirit, they should be joined in the celebration of the same Eucharist, “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity”.

Christ’s Eucharistic presence enables the Church to discover ever more deeply her own mystery. In the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, the Church is understood as in Christ as sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race. As a sacrament, the Church flows forth from the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s “departure”, lives by his ever new “coming” by the power of the Holy Spirit within the same mission of the Paraclete-Spirit of truth. The Pope notes that this is the essential mystery of the Church as the Council professed.

John Paul explains that the power of the Redemption, whose source is the Eternal Father expresses itself in a sort of double rhythm. On the one hand there is the mission of the Son while on the other, the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is present both in the Son who “had gone away” in the Paschal Mystery and now is continuously present in the mystery of the Church. All this happens in the Church by the will of her Lord through the individual sacraments, thereby fulfilling her ministry of salvation to man. For the sacraments *signify* grace and *confer* grace: they *signify* life and *give* life. The Church is the visible dispenser of the sacred signs, while the Holy Spirit acts in them as the invisible dispenser of the life that they signify. Together with the Spirit, Christ Jesus is present and acting.

The Church becomes the sacrament of intimate union with God in Jesus Christ in whom this union is accomplished as a reality for salvation. Salvation is thereby extended in a sacramental way in the power of the Spirit-Paraclete. Through the gift of this “new Counselor” the good news takes shape in human minds and hearts and extends itself throughout history. In all of this it is the Holy Spirit who gives life.

The Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church, as being in the nature of a sacrament but is distinct from the sacramentality that is proper to the Sacraments themselves. The Council refers to the Church as being “in the nature of a sacrament”, a sign and instrument of communion with God. In this analogical sense of the word, sacrament, the Church is the sign and instrument of the presence and action of the life-giving Spirit.

Vatican II adds that the Church is “a sacrament ...of the unity of all mankind”. This is obviously a unity that the human race *has from God and in God*. This unity has its roots in the mystery of creation and acquires a new dimension in the mystery of the Redemption that is ordered to universal salvation. This is so since God “wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (cf 1 Tim 2:4) The Holy Father makes clear, “The Church, rooted through her own mystery in the Trinitarian plan of salvation, with good reason, regards herself as *the sacrament of the unity of the whole human race*.” The Church knows that she, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is a sign and instrument in the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation.

In this way the “condescension” (the coming down upon) of the infinite Trinitarian Love is brought about: God, who is infinite spirit, comes close to the visible world. The Triune God communicates himself to man in the Holy Spirit from the beginning through “his image and likeness”. Under the action of this same Spirit, man and the created world, redeemed by Christ, draw near to their ultimate destinies in God. The Church is “a sacrament, that is sign and instrument” of this coming together of the two poles of creation and redemption, God and man.

We ended last week with the Holy Father telling us that the Church is “a sacrament, that is sign and instrument” of the coming together of the two poles of creation and redemption, God and man. The Church strives to strengthen this unity at the very roots of the human race: in the communion that man has with God as his Creator, Lord and Redeemer. We have come to realize that in the work of the Church within the history of salvation, the Holy Spirit is present and at work.

6. The Spirit and the Bride say: “Come!”

The breath of the divine life, the Holy Spirit, in its simplest and most common manner, expresses itself and makes itself felt in prayer. Wherever the people of God are praying in the world, the Holy Spirit is the living breath of that prayer. It is a beautiful and salutary thought to recognize that fact. Widespread is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit who “breathes” prayer in the heart of man. Even in spite of prohibitions and persecutions, in spite of the atheistic character of public life, prayer always remains the voice of all those who apparently have no voice.

At the same time prayer is also the revelation of that *abyss* which is the heart of man: a depth that comes from God and that only God can fill, precisely with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the gift that comes into man’s heart together with prayer. In prayer he is that gift that “helps us in our weakness”. We read in the letter of Paul to the Romans, “For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words”. (Rm 8:26) He is present in our prayer and gives it a divine dimension. Prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit becomes the ever more mature expression of the new man, who by means of this prayer participates in the divine life.

The Pope feels strongly that our difficult age has a special need of prayer. He says that in the course of history, many men and women have borne witness to the importance of prayer by consecrating themselves to a life of prayer in monasteries and convents. So too in recent years have we been seeing a growth in the number of people who, in ever more widespread movements, are giving first place to prayer and seeking in prayer a renewal of the spiritual life. From this experience there is coming a real contribution to the revival of prayer among the faithful. In the process they are gaining a clearer idea of the Holy Spirit as the one who inspires in hearts a profound yearning for holiness.

At the same time there is a growing awareness that, even with all the progress in technology and science, man is threatened. In the face of this danger and amidst man’s spiritual decadence, individuals and whole communities, guided by an inner sense of faith, are seeking to raise man up again, to save him from himself. Thus they are discovering prayer. In this way, the times in which we are living are bringing the Holy Spirit closer to the many who are returning to prayer. Hopefully, this Encyclical will unite us with the Church and her Magisterium to a renewed commitment to prayer.

Despite the turmoil of our times, the Church remains faithful to the mystery of her birth. John Paul II acknowledges that while the Church went forth from the Cenacle on Pentecost, yet in a sense she never left it. The Church perseveres in prayer, like the Apostles, with Mary, the Mother of Christ. We see Mary present in the mystery of the Church, as she was present in the mystery of her Son. Vatican Council II notes that Mary cooperates in a unique way with a maternal love in the development of the many brethren of the first-born. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Vatican Council II says that the Church contemplates Mary’s mysterious sanctity, imitating her charity. She becomes herself a mother and a virgin, who keeps... the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse.

The Church, united with the Virgin Mother prays unceasingly as the Bride to her divine Spouse as attested in the Book of Revelation, “*The Spirit and the bride say to the Lord Jesus Christ: Come!*” The Pope notes that in a sense, the Spirit utters this invocation with the Church, and in the Church. For the Spirit is given to the Church in order that the People of God, however widely dispersed, may persevere in hope. It is the eschatological hope, the hope of definitive fulfillment in God; the hope of the eternal

Kingdom, that is brought about by participation in the life of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit, given to the Apostles as the Counselor, is the guardian and animator of this hope in the heart of the Church.

Recalling all of this, the Holy Father hoped to prepare the Church for the great Jubilee of the year 2000 in the Holy Spirit, just as the Virgin of Nazareth, in whom the Word was made flesh, was prepared by the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

John Paul II concludes his encyclical, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, saying that the way of the Church passes through the heart of man, because here is the hidden place of the salvation encounter with the Holy Spirit, the Hidden God. Here the Holy Spirit becomes “a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The Holy Spirit does not cease to be the guardian of hope in the human heart. He takes from Christ and transmits to all, entering ceaselessly into the history of the world through the heart of man.

The liturgical Sequence of the Solemnity of Pentecost proclaims that the Holy Spirit brings “rest and relief” in the midst of toil, the work of human hands and minds. He brings “rest” and “ease” in the midst of the anxieties, struggles and perils of every age. He brings “consolation” when the human heart grieves and is tempted to despair. Praying the Sequence, the Church unceasingly professes her faith that there exists in our created world a Spirit who is uncreated Gift for he is like to the Father and the Son.

The Church with her heart, embracing all human hearts, implores from the Holy Spirit that happiness that only in God finds its complete realization. Thus the Church fixes her eyes on him who is the love of the Father and the Son. In spite of the increasing dangers she does not cease to invoke and to serve the peace of man on earth. Her trust is based on him who, being the Spirit-love, is also the Spirit of peace.