



## ***The Armor of Faith***

### **Topic Summary: Prayer and the Holy Spirit Part VI** ***Engaging the Holy Spirit***



*Holy Spirit as Dove Public Domain*

#### **Introduction**

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study to become lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

#### **Discussion:**

Last week we discussed the prayers of the Rosary. While there are many critics of the way Catholics pray, especially in relation to the prayers of the Rosary, it might be shocking to discover that Catholics are not the only ones who pray the Rosary. As denominational Christians discover the Biblical foundation of the prayers within the Rosary and the opportunity to reflect upon the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior along with the mysteries of heaven, they too, are drawn to its peace. If the prayers were simply rote and meaningless repetitions, then, yes, the critics would be correct in their admonishments of anyone who says the prayers,

but when the prayers are lifted as one reflects upon the meaning of the prayers, the mysteries of our faith, and our relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; then, it is an opportunity for us to be brought closer to the Passion and Love of Christ.

Of course, the criticisms of the Rosary reveal a much deeper issue and that is the challenge we face towards understanding God's message to us and what He asks of us. If we do not seek to comprehend the full context of God's message, we leave ourselves vulnerable to those who would deceive or distract us away from our faith and the fullness of our relationship with Him.

Many of the criticisms of the Rosary are rooted in scriptural references taken out of context or promoted to support an agenda rather than to seek and share the fullness of faith. Indeed, rather than sharing the blessings of scripture, we are seduced to lob scriptural rocks at one another rather than looking for the full context and meaning of what Jesus seeks to teach us. We must ask ourselves, who would desire that we not lift up such prayers or to reflect and meditate on the blessings and mysteries of our faith? Knowing the evil one is stirring trouble, though, does not absolve us of the responsibility of learning that which God desires for us to learn.

**(Question: With that thought in mind, how are we to set about learning the correct context of God's Holy Word when there is so much for us to learn?)**

15 *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, 17 the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."* 22 Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, "Master, [then] what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. 25 "I have told you this while I am with you. 26 **The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.** (John 14:15-26)

**(Question: We are blessed for the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who is sent to us in the name of Jesus, but how are we to know this Advocate?)**

46 *And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day 47 and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And [behold] I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* (Luke 24:46-49)

19 *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with*

you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22 And when he had said this, **he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit.** 23 Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (John 20:19-23)

**(Question:** As Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, He also conferred authority upon them. **What is the nature of this authority and what is the meaning of this authority?)**

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught 2 until the day he was taken up, **after giving instructions through the holy Spirit** to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for **“the promise of the Father** about which you have heard me speak; 5 for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the **holy Spirit.**” (Acts 1:1-5)

**(Question:** Here it is said that Jesus gave instructions through the Holy Spirit. **In what ways are we able to receive instructions through the Holy Spirit?)**

6 When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. 8 **But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**” 9 When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. (Acts 1:6-9)

**(Question:** Here, we see where the Holy Spirit also conveys power upon those who receive Him. **What power might we expect that we might receive through the Holy Spirit?)**

“My brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled which **the holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David,** concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who arrested Jesus.” (Acts 1:16)

And they were all filled with the **holy Spirit** and began to speak in different tongues, as the **Spirit** enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:4)

**(Question:** In these two scriptural accounts, we see the Holy Spirit speaking through King David and the disciples at Pentecost. **How might we know if the Holy Spirit is speaking to us or through us?)**

32 God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. 33 Exalted at the right hand of God, **he received the promise of the holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth,** as you [both] see and hear. (Acts 2:32-33)

**(Question:** In this scripture, we observe that Jesus received and poured forth the **Holy Spirit.** **How might we expect to receive what Jesus pours forth?)**

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" 38 Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the **holy Spirit**. 39 For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." 40 He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. (Acts 2:37-41)

(**Question:** Peter tells the people that if they repent and are baptized, they will be forgiven their sins and they will receive the **Holy Spirit**. What sacrament will help to prepare us for receiving the **Holy Spirit**?)

(CCC: 2670) "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." Every time we begin to pray to Jesus it is the **Holy Spirit** who draws us on the way of prayer by his prevenient grace. Since he teaches us to pray by recalling Christ, how could we not pray to the **Spirit** too? That is why the Church invites us to call upon the **Holy Spirit** every day, especially at the beginning and the end of every important action.

(**Question:** In this article of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we see we are invited to call upon the Holy Spirit. In what ways might we expect the **Holy Spirit** to lead us and how might we know the **Holy Spirit** is guiding us?)

(CCC: 2672) The **Holy Spirit**, whose anointing permeates our whole being, is the interior Master of Christian prayer. He is the artisan of the living tradition of prayer. To be sure, there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray, but it is the same **Spirit** acting in all and with all. It is in the communion of the **Holy Spirit** that Christian prayer is prayer in the Church.

### Quotes:

O **Holy Spirit**, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams. – Saint Augustine

Virtues are formed by prayer. Prayer preserves temperance. Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer prevents emotions of pride and envy. Prayer draws into the soul the **Holy Spirit**, and raises man to Heaven. – St. Ephraem

Those whose hearts are pure are temples of the **Holy Spirit**. – St. Lucy

As the soul is the life of the body, so the **Holy Spirit** is the life of our souls. – St. Peter Damian

Come, **Holy Spirit**. **Spirit** of truth, you are the reward of the saints, the comforter of souls, light in the darkness, riches to the poor, treasure to lovers, food for the hungry, comfort to those who are wandering; to sum up, you are the one in whom all treasures are contained. Come! As you descended upon Mary that the Word might become flesh, work in us through grace as you

worked in her through nature and grace. Come! Food of every chaste thought, fountain of all mercy, sum of all purity. Come! **Consume in us whatever prevents us from being consumed in you.** – St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi

**Final Thoughts:** Jesus told His disciples He would not leave them orphans, but that He would send them an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to remind them all which He taught them (John 14:26), and to testify to the truth (John 14:17, 15:26, 1 John 5:6). As we discussed, to receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit, we must open our hearts to Him. We must also be careful that we do not seek to be wise by our own estimation (Romans 12:16) such that we believe we see we are being led by the Holy Spirit when in truth our hearts remain blind.

As I have engaged others in defense of the Catholic faith, my challenge is that I do not have the theological degrees or knowledge of the Hebrew or Greek by which to parse the meaning of words as some of the critics I engage. The only assistance I have in such moments is to ask the Holy Spirit to guide me to what I need to know. That does not mean the Holy Spirit will suddenly enable me to read and speak fluent Hebrew or Greek, rather, He will help me to find and discern what I need. It may not always be in the immediate moment, but the more I study, the more I open my heart for the Holy Spirit to guide me.

As we pray, as we prepare to plan or make important decisions, we have the opportunity, through prayer, to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us. Let us, then, seek His wisdom, not only for our understanding, but so we may encourage one another through the blessings of His truth. In our prayer lives, let us ask Him to guide us in our learning, our comprehension, and in our choices.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has again come to an end. We hope you enjoyed this series of discussions related to “Prayer and the Holy Spirit.” We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our conversation with “The Importance of Faith and Works.”

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

**Next Session:** The Importance of Faith and Works