

The Holy Spirit

Supplementing the talk

by Father Michael Harper

‘You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses ... to the end of the earth’.

Acts 1:8

The Work of the Holy Spirit

- A The Spirit is self-effacing
- B He is sent by Jesus to guide the Church
- C He is our Comforter/Advocate, to console but also to strengthen
- D He has been active from the beginning of creation; he inspired the Prophets.

The Holy Spirit is not a Force but a Person: One of the Trinity

- A For this reason, Orthodox reject an addition to the Creed that says He proceeds ‘from the Son’, as compromising the Spirit’s equality in the Trinity
- B The Spirit is active
 - in the Incarnation of Christ
 - at the Baptism of Christ
 - at the Transfiguration
 - at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit and Evangelism

- A The Spirit equips the disciples for evangelism
- B He empowers them to take the Gospel to the whole world
- C He inaugurates the Church and guides it ‘into all truth’
- D Pentecost reverses Babel: instead of confusion of tongues, the Spirit creates a unity of understanding. People of different languages hear and comprehend the good news.



Icon of the Transfiguration
*Museum of History and Architecture,
Novgorod, Russia*

The Holy Spirit acts in the Church

1 in the 'Mysteries' (Sacraments): for example

A in Holy Baptism

B at the Eucharist, where the Holy Spirit is invoked (by the epiklesis or 'calling down') over the gifts of bread and wine, to change them into Christ's Body and Blood

C in the power of Holy Unction.

The Holy Spirit acts in the Church

2 by his grace bestowed on every member

A His hidden power in us is kindled to a living flame so that we become Christ-like

B His action transforms our lives through the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

C He endows us with gifts for various types of service, and bestows his blessings in healings and miracles, and in the gift of tongues.



Pentecost

Icon (c. 1547) Cretan School, Monastery of Dionysiou, Mount Athos, Greece

Blessed are you, O Christ our God,
who showed the fishermen to be
most wise
by sending down on them the
Holy Spirit,
and so through them drawing the
world into your net.
O Lover of mankind, glory be
to You.

(Apolytikion for Pentecost)

When the Most High came down
and confused the tongues,
He divided the nations;
but when He distributed the
tongues of fire,
He called us all into unity;
Therefore with one voice
we glorify You, O most
Holy Spirit.

(Kontakion for Pentecost)

Recommended Reading

i. Chapter 5, 'God as Spirit' in Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, New York, 2002) ISBN 0-913836-58-3

ii. Archimandrite Sophrony, *The Writings of Staretz Silouan: Wisdom From Mount Athos*, trans. Rosemary Edmonds (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) ISBN 0-913836-17-6