

The Holy Spirit

DOGMA & THEOLOGY

Who is the Holy Spirit: A power or a person?

At the heart of Christian belief about God is the question of who the Holy Spirit truly is. Is the Holy Spirit merely a divine power or influence, or is He truly a Person? Can a mere power help or intercede? Can a power possess a mind or act with intention? Holy Scripture itself answers these questions with clarity.

The Apostle Paul writes:

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Romans 8:26–27, NKJV)

In this passage, St. Paul attributes to the Holy Spirit actions that presuppose personal agency. The Spirit helps, intercedes, possesses a mind, and acts according to the will of God. These are not the actions of an impersonal force. Intercession requires awareness, intention, and relationship. Scripture therefore presents the Holy Spirit as a living Person who actively participates in the life of believers.

This biblical witness is fully consistent with the faith of the Church. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, we confess:

*We believe, “in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, ... who, **with the Father and the Son.**” (The Creed)*

This confession, in the creed, places the Holy Spirit not among created forces, but within the very life of God Himself. Scripture describes the Holy Spirit in personal terms, not as power, when it says that He teaches, guides, comforts, and intercedes (John 14:26; Romans 8:14). He possesses emotions, intellect, and will (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 2:10–14; 1 Corinthians 12:11). The Holy Spirit spoke to Philip and gave counsel to the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 8:29; Acts 15:28). He was sinned against and lied to (Acts 5:3–4).

Each of these testimonies leads to the same theological conclusion. The Holy Spirit does not act as an impersonal force, but as a Person. He is the Third Person (Hypostasis) of the Holy Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Son.

For the servant of the Church, this truth is not merely theoretical. To believe in the Holy Spirit as a Person is to recognize that the Christian life is lived in real communion with Him. He teaches, guides,

sanctifies, and intercedes, and He calls believers to holiness, obedience, and deeper participation in the life of God.

Can a mere power be a witness?

This question follows naturally from the previous observations. Can the Holy Spirit, often described as the power of God, truly function as a witness? This question follows naturally from the scriptural testimony concerning the personal nature of the Holy Spirit.

Witnessing is not a mechanical act. Witnessing typically involves perception, understanding, and the ability to communicate. Can a force or power possess these qualities? These are qualities that belong to a personal subject, not to an impersonal force.

Holy Scripture explicitly identifies the Holy Spirit as a witness. The apostles declare:

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

(Acts 5:32, NKJV)

In this passage, the Holy Spirit is presented alongside the apostles as a witness to the saving work of God. The Holy Spirit is not described as a passive power operating through them, but as one who actively bears witness together with them.

The Holy Spirit’s role as a witness is closely connected to His mission to reveal Christ. Our Lord Himself teaches that the Spirit bears witness to Him:

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

(John 15:26, NKJV)

Here, Christ attributes testimony directly to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit “testifies” of Christ, revealing the truth of who Christ is and what He has accomplished. This witnessing role is not limited to the apostolic age but continues in the life of the Church, as the Spirit enables believers to confess Christ faithfully before the world.

It is therefore theologically inaccurate to describe the Holy Spirit merely as a power of God. Scripture reveals Him as the divine Person who knows, testifies, and participates in God’s saving work. He is not a separate being alongside God, but a distinct divine Person (Hypostasis) within the one Holy Trinity, who shares fully in the divine knowledge and will.

For the servant of the Church, this reminds us that Christian witness is never merely a human effort. When the Church proclaims Christ, she does so in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, who bears witness from within her. True testimony to Christ depends not on human persuasion alone, but on fidelity to the Spirit who reveals the truth and confirms it in the hearts of those who hear.

Can a mere power experience grief?

If witnessing presupposes awareness, grief presupposes something even deeper.

Can the Holy Spirit, as the power of God, experience emotions such as grief? Grief is a complex emotion requiring substantial self-awareness and relational capacity.

Holy Scripture speaks with clarity on this point. St. Paul exhorts believers:

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

(Ephesians 4:30, NKJV)

This command would be unintelligible if the Holy Spirit were merely an impersonal force. Scripture attributes to the Holy Spirit the capacity to be grieved, which reveals His personal and relational presence within the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit seals believers for redemption and remains actively involved in their journey toward salvation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ further explains the guiding role of the Holy Spirit:

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

(John 16:13, NKJV)

The Spirit’s guidance is not coercive, but faithful and patient. He leads believers into truth and remains at work even when they stumble. The reality of human weakness does not negate God’s love. Rather, God continues to call His people to repentance and restoration.

Christ also teaches that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin:

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

(John 16:8, NKJV)

This conviction must be understood correctly. The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is not intended to condemn, but to awaken the conscience, reveal the truth of our condition, and lead us back to God through repentance. When believers respond humbly to this conviction, the Spirit restores communion and strengthens them in righteousness.

It's crucial that we, as believers, remain sensitive to this inner voice and yield to His guidance. Resisting the Holy Spirit's promptings only leads to spiritual stagnation and a deeper entrenchment in sin.

Can a mere power guide or speak?

The Bible provides numerous examples of the Holy Spirit's active role in guiding and directing God's people. The book of Acts provides clear examples of the Holy Spirit’s active guidance in the life of the Church. While the early Christians ministered and prayed, Scripture records:

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”
(Acts 13:2, NKJV)

Here, the Holy Spirit **speaks, calls, and appoints**. The Holy Spirit specifically calls out Barnabas and Saul for the missionary work God had prepared for them.

Similarly, in Acts 20:22-23, the Holy Spirit compels Paul to go to Jerusalem, despite the dangers and hardships that awaited him.

“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”
(Acts 20:22–23, NKJV)

The Holy Spirit does not promise Paul ease or safety, but truth and preparation. **His guidance is not meant to remove all suffering, but to strengthen believers to walk faithfully in God’s will**, even through hardship. In Acts 21:11, the prophet Agabus, through the Holy Spirit, foretells St. Paul's impending arrest in Jerusalem. This prophecy wasn't meant to discourage St. Paul but to prepare him for the trials ahead. It's a reminder that the Holy Spirit doesn't shield us from all difficulties but equips us to face them with faith and courage.

Similarly, in Acts 28:25, we witness the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet Isaiah to a hardened and unbelieving audience. This illustrates that **the Holy Spirit's work** isn't limited to believers but **extends to those who are still far from God**. The Spirit's convicting power can penetrate even the hardest hearts, drawing them towards repentance and salvation.

The Apostle Paul further warns that discernment is necessary within the Church:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”
(1 Timothy 4:1, NKJV)

This warning underscores the **importance of remaining attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit**, especially in times of confusion and false teaching. The Spirit is the source of truth and discernment for the Church.

The Inspiration of Scripture and the Work of the Holy Spirit

When the Church speaks about the inspiration of Holy Scripture, she confesses a profound theological truth. The Bible is not merely a collection of human writings about God, nor is it the product of a blind or mechanical process. Rather, Holy Scripture is the Word of God given through the active and living work of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul writes:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

(2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV)

The affirmation that **Scripture is "God-breathed"** encapsulates this truth. The original Greek term "θεοπνευστος" portrays the Holy Spirit's active role in the formation of Scripture. It underscores that **the Bible's words are** not merely human thoughts about God but are, in a mysterious and profound way, **the very words of God Himself**.

At the same time, the Church rejects the idea that inspiration is a form of mechanical dictation. **The Holy Spirit did not erase the personalities, styles, or historical circumstances of the human authors**. Instead, He worked through their intellect, language, culture, and free will, guiding them so that what they wrote is truly God's word and faithfully communicates His saving truth.

St. Peter the Apostle confirms this understanding:

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

(2 Peter 1:21, NKJV)

This verse highlights the cooperation between divine action and human response. The prophets and apostles truly spoke and wrote, yet they did so under the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Scripture is therefore both divine in origin and human in expression.

Because the Holy Spirit is the primary author of Scripture, the Bible carries divine authority and reliability in matters of faith and salvation. At the same time, Scripture must be read within the life of the Church, where the same Holy Spirit who inspired the texts continues to guide their faithful interpretation.

Is the Holy Spirit equal to the Father and the Son in Divinity?

Yes, the Holy Spirit is unequivocally equal to the Father and the Son in Divinity, according to a multitude of scriptural references and theological interpretations. This is a cornerstone of Christian belief, affirming the Holy Trinity—one God in three co-equal, co-eternal persons.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself reveals this equality when He commands His disciples:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

(Matthew 28:19, NKJV)

Notice here it is said, “in the name” and not the names (also 1 Jn. 5:7). His Divinity is proven also, that He is the Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2; Ezek. 37:9, 10), capable of resurrecting the dead. Who can raise the dead except God alone?

The Creed confesses this same truth when it calls the Holy Spirit “the Giver of Life” and “the Speaker to the prophets.” This confession is grounded in Scripture, as the Apostle Peter writes:

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

(2 Peter 1:21, NKJV, see also 2 Tim. 3:16; Acts 28:25)

The divinity of the Holy Spirit is also revealed with particular clarity in the account of Ananias and Sapphira. St. Peter confronts Ananias, saying:

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’”

(Acts 5:3-4, NKJV)

In this passage, lying to the Holy Spirit is explicitly identified as lying to God. Scripture does not permit the interpretation that the Holy Spirit is merely a power or instrument of God. He is addressed as God Himself, worthy of reverence and fear.

The Holy Spirit exhibits attributes that are unique to God.

Creator:

- “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Eternal:

- “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14).
- Eternal existence belongs to God alone. Indeed, every other being has been created at some point in time. The fact that the Holy Spirit is eternal is further evidence of His deity. Origen asserts the divinity of the Holy Spirit, “*The Spirit Himself is in the Law and in the Gospel; He is ever with the Father and the Son; like the Father and the Son He always is and was and will be.*”

Unbounded:

- “For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:10) (What bounded being could search the depths of God?).
- Since God’s ways are unfathomable to us, but known to the Holy Spirit, this is another indication that the Holy Spirit is God Himself.

Omnipresent:

- “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:7) and “Because the spirit of the Lord has filled the world,” (Wisdom 1:7)
- The Spirit of the Lord is the same as the presence of the Lord. He is everywhere. We find that Jesus said the Holy Spirit would indwell all believers. We read the following in the gospel of

John, “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:17). The fact that He can indwell each of us at the same time shows that He is everywhere present.

Omniscient:

- “Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11) (To know the things of God is to know the unknowable).
- Someone must be a human being to know things about humans. Likewise only God can know the intimate things pertaining to God. Since the Holy Spirit knows the things of God, He therefore must be God.

What is the role of the Holy Spirit and how does He interact with us?

The Holy Spirit actively works within the life of every believer and within the life of the Church. His work is not limited to a single function, but encompasses a unified and life-giving ministry that leads humanity into communion with God. Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit as Intercessor, Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Convictor, Sanctifier, and the One who leads people to Christ. These roles are distinct in expression, yet inseparable in purpose.

<i>Role of the Holy Spirit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Biblical Reference</i>
Intercessor	the Holy Spirit functions as our Intercessor. Recognizing our human limitations and the inherent struggle to articulate our deepest needs and desires in prayer, the Spirit intervenes. He bridges the gap between our fallibility and God's omniscience, interceding on our behalf with "groanings which cannot be uttered."	<i>“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession.”</i> - Romans 8:26
Helper/Comforter/Advocate (παρακλητος)	The Holy Spirit is seen as a source of comfort and assistance to believers. In times of trouble or need, the Holy Spirit is believed to come alongside believers to provide guidance, strength, and support. The Holy Spirit's role as Comforter is particularly significant. In a world filled with trials and tribulations, the Spirit provides a wellspring of peace and consolation. He empowers believers to navigate life's challenges with resilience and hope, reminding them of God's unwavering love and faithfulness.	<i>“But the [παρακλητος], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”</i> - John 14:26 (N.B. The Greek word παρακλητος is alternatively translated as intercessor, helper, comforter, or advocate.)

Convicts	The Spirit's conviction centers on sin, righteousness, and judgment. He exposes the reality of sin, leading individuals to repentance and a recognition of their need for a Savior. Furthermore, the Spirit illuminates the standard of righteousness established by God, revealing the disparity between human efforts and divine perfection. The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is not intended to condemn but to lead individuals to repentance and transformation. It is a vital aspect of the role of the Spirit, prompting a change of heart and a turning towards God.	<i>"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"</i> - John 16:7-8
Strengthens against the Flesh	In our flesh (our human nature) there are forces that are much stronger than ourselves. The Holy Spirit will strengthen us, so that every time we are tempted, we do not yield to the lusts of the flesh.	<i>"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh ... those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."</i> - Galatians 5:16-25
Leads to Christ	One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to lead unbelievers to the faith. This happened to Cornelius the Gentile when God's Spirit worked in him and even gave him gifts and led him to faith. So, unless the Holy Spirit works in an unbeliever, he cannot attain faith. It is up to the individual to accept or to quench the Holy Spirit and His work.	<i>"no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit"</i> - 1 Corinthians 12:3

Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father only or from the Father and the Son?

The question of the procession of the Holy Spirit touches the inner life of the Holy Trinity and must therefore be addressed with precision, reverence, and fidelity to Scripture and the faith of the Church. The Church distinguishes carefully between the **eternal procession** of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity and the **temporal mission** of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches explicitly concerning the Spirit's eternal origin:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."
(John 15:26, NKJV)

In this verse, Christ reveals two distinct truths. First, the Holy Spirit **proceeds from the Father**. This refers to the Spirit's eternal origin within the Holy Trinity. The Father alone is the source and origin (arche) within the Godhead. Second, Christ says that He will **send** the Spirit to the disciples. This refers

not to the Spirit's eternal origin, but to His mission in time for the salvation and sanctification of the Church.

The Church therefore confesses that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father alone, while being sent into the world by the Son from the Father. This distinction safeguards the unique personal property of the Father as the source within the Trinity, while also affirming the Son's active role in the revelation and sending of the Spirit in history.

This understanding is reflected in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which confesses the Holy Spirit as the one "who proceeds from the Father." The Creed does not speak of procession from the Son, but consistently maintains the Father as the source of the Spirit's eternal being

At the same time, Scripture affirms the intimate relationship between the Son and the Spirit. The Spirit is sent in the name of the Son (John 14:26), testifies of the Son (John 15:26), and glorifies the Son by revealing His truth to the Church (John 16:14). These statements describe the Spirit's work in the economy of salvation, not His eternal origin within the Trinity..

Patristic Teaching on the Holy Spirit

The teaching of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit is not a later theological development, but is deeply rooted in Scripture and faithfully articulated by the Fathers of the Church. Among the most important patristic witnesses to the divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit are St. Basil the Great and St. Athanasius the Apostolic. Their writings provide clarity and guidance, especially in response to early misunderstandings that attempted to reduce the Holy Spirit to a created power.

St. Basil the Great: The Holy Spirit in Doxology and Worship

In his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* (c. 375 AD), St. Basil addresses objections raised against the Church's liturgical language, particularly the use of doxologies that glorify the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son. His concern is not merely linguistic, but deeply theological. How the Church prays and glorifies God reflects what she believes about God.

St. Basil writes:

"But finally let us look, one by one, at the references to the Holy Spirit in the divine Scriptures, and, like good bankers, let us judge whether He has anything in common with the creatures, or whether He pertains to God... that we may call Him either a creature or else other than the creatures, pertaining to and one with the Godhead which is in the unoriginated Triad."

St. Basil's argument is clear. If the Holy Spirit shares the works, attributes, and worship proper to God, then He cannot be a creature. Basil insists that Scripture itself provides the standard by which the Spirit must be confessed as divine.

He further explains his concern regarding liturgical expressions:

"Lately when praying with the people, and using the full doxology to God the Father in both forms, at one time with the Son together with the Holy Spirit, and at another

through the Son in the Holy Spirit, I was attacked by some of those present on the ground that I was introducing novel and contradictory terms.”

St. Basil clarifies that these doxological forms do not contradict one another. Rather, they express the same Trinitarian faith from different perspectives. To glorify the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit is to confess the equality of the three divine Persons. To glorify the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit is to confess the order revealed in salvation without diminishing divinity.

St. Basil reminds us that Orthodox worship is not accidental or poetic excess. It is theology expressed in prayer. To worship the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son is to confess that He is true God and worthy of glory.

St. Athanasius the Apostolic: The Holy Spirit Is Not a Creature

St. Athanasius, in his *First Letter to Serapion* (late 330s AD), addresses those who accepted the divinity of the Son but denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He responds by returning consistently to Scripture and to the Church’s rule of faith.

St. Athanasius writes:

“The creatures came from nothing, having a beginning from which they came into being. For, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth’ and all that is in them. **The Holy Spirit is said to be from God.** For no one, it says, ‘knoweth the things of man save the spirit of the man which is in him. Even so, the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God.’ **What kinship could there be, judging by the above, between the Spirit and the creatures? For the creatures were not; but God has being, and the Spirit is from Him.** That which is from God could not be from that which is not, nor could it be a creature; lest, by their judgment, he also from whom the Spirit is should be considered a creature.”

Athanasius draws a sharp distinction between creation and the Holy Spirit. All created things come into existence from nothing. The Holy Spirit, however, is said to be “from God.” That which is from God cannot be counted among created things, for otherwise God Himself would be reduced to the level of a creature.

St. Athanasius further emphasizes the Spirit’s unique capacity to know and reveal God:

“Even so, the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God... That which is from God could not be from that which is not, nor could it be a creature.”

By appealing to 1 Corinthians 2, Athanasius shows that the Spirit’s knowledge of God is not external or partial. The Spirit knows God as God knows Himself. Such knowledge belongs only to God and therefore confirms the Spirit’s full divinity.

The Holy Spirit in the Liturgical Life of the Church

The Church does not merely speak about the Holy Spirit in theological terms; she lives by the Holy Spirit and confesses Him continuously in worship. The Holy Spirit gives life to the Church, and through the Church He grants the holy Mysteries. As St. Augustine teaches, "What the soul is to man's body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in the members of the one body."

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit are evident in every sacrament of the Church. Nothing in the sacramental life is accomplished apart from Him. Through His descent, invocation, and indwelling, the Holy Spirit makes the saving work of Christ effective in the lives of the faithful.

The Holy Spirit in the Eucharist

In the Divine Liturgy, the Church explicitly calls upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish the mystery of the Eucharist. During the epiclesis, the priest asks for two inseparable works: the sanctification of the gifts and the sanctification of the people.

The priest prays:

"We ask You, O Lord our God, we Your sinful and unworthy servants, that Your Holy Spirit may descend **upon us and upon these gifts** set forth, and purify them, change them, and manifest them as a sanctification of Your saints."

Following the Fraction, the Church proclaims:

"The Holies for the holy. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; the sanctification is by the Holy Spirit. Amen."

These prayers reveal the Church's faith that the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, as well as the sanctification of those who partake, is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The Eucharist is therefore both a revelation of Christ's real presence and a work of the Spirit who unites the faithful to Him.

The Holy Spirit in Baptism

Holy Baptism is the sacrament of new birth, regeneration, and incorporation into the Body of Christ. This new life is granted through the Holy Spirit. St. Paul the Apostle writes:

"But according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."
(Titus 3:5, NKJV)

In the baptismal prayers, the Church repeatedly invokes the Holy Spirit upon the water and upon those who are to be baptized. The priest asks that the water may become living water, water of purification, water of renewal, and water of sonship through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The Church prays over the water:

“And upon the descent of Your Holy Spirit on it, **grant it the blessing of the Jordan.** Amen. Give it power that it may become **water of life.** Amen. **Holy water.** Amen. **Water that purifies from sins.** Amen. **Water for the washing of the new birth.** Amen. And **water of sonship.** Amen....And that the light of the truth may shine within them [who are baptized] through the Holy Spirit, and that they may gain the eternal life and the blessed hope.”

Through the Holy Spirit, ordinary water becomes a means of divine life. The baptized are cleansed from sin, illumined, and reborn as children of God.

Similarly, the prayer over those approaching to be baptized, that they may receive the Holy Spirit, become temples of the Holy Spirit, be guarded through the grace of the Holy Spirit, be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the “gift of Your Holy and co-essential Spirit...” “...through [the waters] and Your Holy Spirit, You may renew the birth of Your servants, who have presented themselves...”

The Holy Spirit in Chrismation (Myron)

Immediately following Baptism, the newly baptized receive the sacrament of Holy Chrismation. In this mystery, the believer is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and becomes a dwelling place of God. The Apostle Paul teaches:

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God?”

(1 Corinthians 6:19, NKJV)

Through the anointing with the holy Myron, the Church confesses that the faithful receive the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the apostles at Pentecost. This is not a repetition of Pentecost as a historical event, but a personal participation in the same divine gift.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem explains:

“Christ bathed in the river Jordan, imparting to its waters the fragrance of His divinity, and when He came up from them the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, like resting upon like. **So we also, after coming up from the sacred waters of baptism, were anointed with chrism, which signifies the Holy Spirit, by Whom Christ was anointed** and of Whom blessed Isaiah prophesied in the name of the Lord: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor.”

Chrismation is therefore the believer’s personal Pentecost, empowering him or her to live a life of holiness, witness, and obedience to God.

“O Lord who alone are mighty, who performs every wonder and nothing is impossible for You, rather by Your will, Your power works in all things. Grant the Holy Spirit in the pouring out of the holy Myron. Let it be a life-giving seal and a confirmation to Your servants, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

During the anointing, the priest proclaims:

- **While anointing the head and face:** “An unction of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”
- **While anointing right leg:** “The perfection of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the breastplate of the faith and the truth. Amen.”
- **After anointing the priest breathes in the face of the newly baptized saying:** “Receive the Holy Spirit and be a purified vessel; through Jesus Christ our Lord, To whom is the glory...”
- **While clothing the child:** “...send down upon them the grace of Your Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.”
- **While tying the zunnar:** “Grant Your servants that they may be filled with the grace of Your Holy Spirit.”
- **After the “ΑΧΙΟC...” chant:** “Receive the Holy Spirit, O you who have received the holy Baptism....Receive the Spirit of Comfort. Receive the Spirit of joy through the powerful King. Receive the Spirit of rejoicing through Immanuel our God...Receive the Spirit that is full of glory...You have become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.”

The Church further prays consistently that the newly baptized may be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, strengthened in faith, and preserved in purity.

The Holy Spirit in Confession and Repentance

The sacrament of Confession is an encounter with the forgiving and healing work of the Holy Spirit. The authority to forgive sins was given by Christ through the outpouring of the Spirit. Scripture records:

“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

(John 20:22–23, NKJV)

Through the Holy Spirit, sins are forgiven, consciences are cleansed, and communion with God is restored. The Spirit works both in the penitent, who is moved to repentance, and in the priest, who pronounces absolution in the name of Christ.

The Holy Spirit in Matrimony

In the sacrament of Holy Matrimony, the Holy Spirit sanctifies the union of a man and a woman and establishes their communion in love. The couple, already temples of the Holy Spirit, are united not only in one flesh but also in one spiritual bond sealed by the Spirit.

During the crowning prayers, the Church asks:

“Sanctify them, O Holy Spirit. Amen.”

And during the command to the Bridegroom:

“My blessed son, who is supported by the grace of the Holy Spirit, you are required to

receive your wife...”

Marriage thus becomes a path of holiness, where love, fidelity, and sacrifice are sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling within both spouses.

The Holy Spirit in the Priesthood

The priesthood is the vehicle that God, through His Son, chose to maintain the regular flow of His grace and blessings through the sacraments. The Divine power and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, was first given to the Apostles.

“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit...’
(John 20:22, NKJV)

The sacrament of the Priesthood is accomplished through the descent and working of the Holy Spirit. Through ordination, the Spirit grants authority, grace, and responsibility to serve the Church and minister the holy Mysteries.

During ordination, the Church prays:

“**Fill him with the Holy Spirit** and grace and counsel, fearing You, so that he may shepherd Your people...just as you looked over Your people whom You chose and commanded Your servant Moses to choose for himself presbyters whom You ordained by an uncreated Holy Spirit which proceeds from You.”

“...may this ordination to the presbyterate be pleasing to You which has been performed on this your servant **through the coming of Your most-holy Spirit.**”

The laying on of hands is accompanied by prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who consecrates the ordained and enables him to serve faithfully in the apostolic ministry. In the final exposition, the church confesses:

“Truly great is the gift which you have received from Jesus Christ through laying the hand of priesthood, which was laid upon you and the blowing of the Holy Spirit.”

“**The Holy Spirit the paraclete descended upon you** and now you are worthy to carry the awesome and holy and blessed mysteries of Immanuel our Lord in your hands.”

The Holy Spirit in the Unction of the Sick

The sacrament of the Unction of the Sick is a ministry of healing and consolation through the Holy Spirit. The Church prays for both spiritual and, if God wills, physical healing.

The prayer proclaims:

“That the grace of Your Holy Spirit may dwell on him; cleanse him from all his sins; forgive

all his transgressions; and deliver him from every affliction.”

Through this sacrament, the Holy Spirit strengthens the sick, forgives sins, and grants peace, enabling the faithful to unite their suffering with the saving Passion of Christ.

Concluding Liturgical Perspective

Through the Church’s worship and sacraments, the Holy Spirit is continually confessed as the Giver of Life and the Sanctifier of the faithful. What the Church believes, she prays. What she prays, she lives. The Holy Spirit is not an abstract doctrine, but the living God who acts within the Church, transforms the faithful, and leads them into communion with the Father through the Son.

For servants of the Church, this liturgical confession is foundational. To serve faithfully is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, to minister with reverence, and to live in obedience to the divine life given through the Mysteries.



Review Questions

1. **Why is it theologically incorrect to describe the Holy Spirit as merely a power or force?**
[Because Scripture attributes to the Holy Spirit personal actions such as interceding, speaking, guiding, willing, and being grieved, which require personhood, not impersonal force.]
2. **Which biblical passage explicitly speaks of the Holy Spirit having a “mind,” and why is this significant?**
[Romans 8:26–27; it shows that the Holy Spirit possesses intellect and personal agency, confirming His personhood.]
3. **How does the Creed affirm the divinity of the Holy Spirit?**
[By calling Him “the Lord, the Giver of Life,” and confessing that He is worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son.]
4. **What does Acts 5:3–4 teach us about the Holy Spirit’s divine nature?**
[That lying to the Holy Spirit is identified as lying to God, which affirms the Spirit’s full divinity.]
5. **Why is the Holy Spirit’s ability to be grieved important for understanding our spiritual life?**
[Because it shows that the Holy Spirit is personally and relationally present within believers, and that sin damages communion with Him.]
6. **How does the Holy Spirit act as a witness to Christ according to Scripture?**
[He testifies to Christ (John 15:26) and bears witness together with the apostles (Acts 5:32).]
7. **What is meant by the Holy Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment?**
[The Spirit reveals the truth about sin and calls people to repentance, not condemnation, leading them back to God.]
8. **Why must inspiration of Scripture not be understood as mechanical dictation?**
[Because the Holy Spirit worked through the free will, language, and personality of the human authors while preserving divine truth.]
9. **What is the difference between the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit and His temporal sending?**

[The Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father within the Trinity, but is sent by the Son from the Father in time for salvation.]

10. **How do St. Basil and St. Athanasius defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit?**
[By showing that the Spirit is not a creature, is worshiped with the Father and the Son, and possesses divine knowledge and attributes.]
11. **How does the Holy Spirit work in the sacrament of the Eucharist?**
[Through the epiclesis, He sanctifies the gifts and the faithful, making communion with Christ possible.]
12. **What role does the Holy Spirit play in Baptism and Chrismation?**
[In Baptism, He grants regeneration and new birth; in Chrismation, He seals the believer with the fullness of His gifts.]
13. **How does the Holy Spirit act in Confession and Repentance?**
[He grants forgiveness, healing, and restoration through the authority given by Christ to the Church.]
14. **How does the Holy Spirit operate in the Priesthood?**
[Through ordination, He grants grace, authority, and responsibility to minister the Mysteries and shepherd the Church.]
15. **What does the Unction of the Sick reveal about the Holy Spirit's work?**
[That the Spirit brings healing, forgiveness, strength, and peace, according to God's will.]



[Patristics](#)
[Origen and the Holy Spirit](#)