

the CATHOLIC NAVIGATOR

Charting a Course to Christ

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“Come, Holy Spirit” “Veni, Sancte Spiritus”



The Holy Spirit arrives in a very special way in just three more Sundays. The following passages remind us of yet more still, quiet ways that He tells us He is here:

Romans 8:26, “...the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings.”

John 16:13, “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth... and will declare to you the things that are coming.”

John 14:26, “...the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you... and remind you of all [I] told you.”

Revelation 2:7, “Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches...”

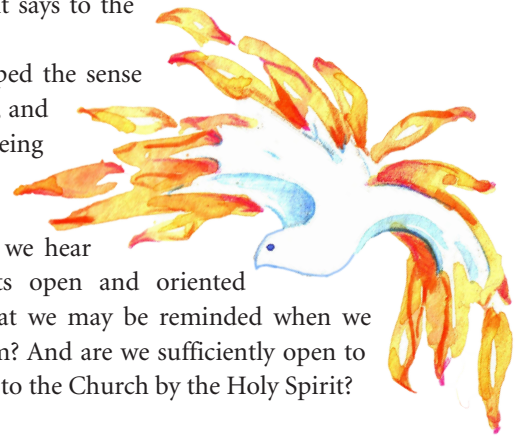
Have we developed the sense to notice when we, and our prayers, are being lifted up to God?

Do we recognize

God’s truth when we hear

it? Are our hearts open and oriented

toward God so that we may be reminded when we have forgotten Him? And are we sufficiently open to the truths brought to the Church by the Holy Spirit?



Saints Preserve Us!

The Holy Spirit protects the Church’s teachings from error. But Church members have no such assurance against sin. Historically, scandal has reached very high into leadership ranks. Fortunately, though, the Holy Spirit preserves the Church, frequently empowering exceptionally holy people at critical times. Pope St. Pius V (reigned 1566-1572), honored on May 5th, was one such person.

Pius V’s papacy began three years following the Council of Trent (1545-1563). This council dealt with many problems plaguing the Church. While Luther and others led the break with the Church, poorly trained clergy and corruption both tainted Church practices. The Muslim Turks were threatening invasion, and emerging nation-states constantly battled. Pius V’s challenge was implementing Council reforms amidst all of this, and to gather together all the people of God.

As Dominican friar, Michael Ghisleri, he unsuccessfully resisted becoming bishop,

then cardinal. However, he accepted papal election because so much needed to be done. Pius V immediately ordered the establishment of seminaries to train priests, and enforced laws against abuses. He published the Council Catechism and required Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (C.C.D.) classes for laity in parishes. His newly published breviary and missal were in use until Vatican II. And he saved Europe from Muslim domination by organizing the fleet victorious at the Battle of Lepanto.

He was hands-on with the poor, founding hospitals, nursing the sick, changing bandages, feeding invalids and attending to lepers. He diverted funds previously reserved for Papal banquets to feed and shelter the poor. He also spent several hours daily in prayer, fasted regularly, and avoided papal luxuries. That he retained his Dominican habit as pope is reflected today in the papal white cassock. He was truly the holy man needed by the Church and sent by the Holy Spirit.



Scriptural Secrets

The very physical descriptions in our readings today remind us again of our senses. In the First Reading, we envision Barnabas actually putting his arm around Saul/Paul when he “took charge... and brought him to the apostles.” (Acts 9:27)



And we feel the demands placed on us as Jesus described His followers as the ‘branches’ to His ‘vine,’ promising that even the branches already bearing fruit will be pruned so as to bring about still more fruit. The very tactile ancient world can still evoke powerful sensations.

Seeing lets me know you exist; hearing tells me I exist. But touch makes it clear there is a relationship between the two. Touch heals or hurts, builds or destroys. Whatever it does, it is never neutral. As with our four other senses, the use of touch shapes our souls and who we are.

Imagine how one grows who uses touch to fill the self, satisfying selfish appetites and longings and then applauding his success. Now imagine

Acts 9:26-31
Psalms 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

one who, on bent knee, uses touch in prayer to God, then standing and turning to reach out to his neighbors and address their needs. Which person gains eternal life – the one who feeds the physical body that perishes or the one who feeds the immortal spiritual body?

Paraphrasing a Native American fable, ‘the body that will live is the one that you feed.’ Any pruning, fire, or sacrifice of the material body that nourishes the immortal body is not only necessary but a gift from God.



Catechetical

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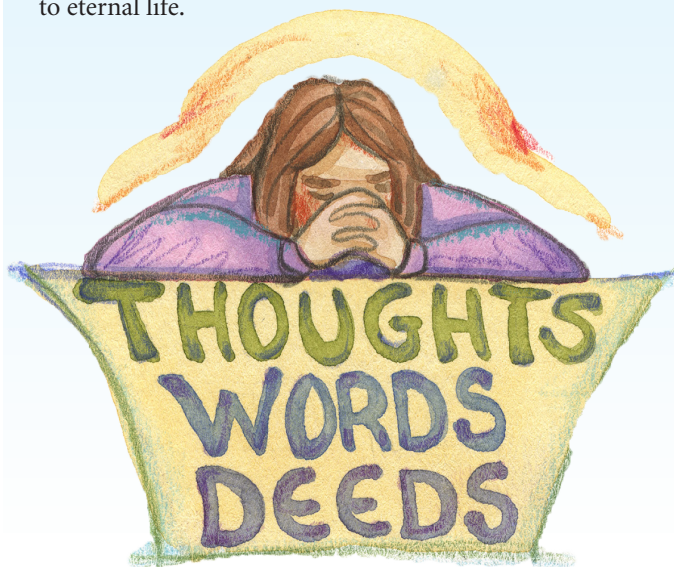
he unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.” (CCC 365)

Corner

This paragraph from the Catechism offers for our reflection a truth we seldom think of, *if* we know it at all: ‘It is only because of the soul that the body is alive,’ and not, ‘I am a body and should try to develop my spiritual soul.’

Too often we make decisions by thinking ‘from the outside,’ consulting only our mind and our feelings, “Am I hurting anyone else? Am I feeling good about myself?” Yet, if our spiritual soul animates and permeates every cell of our being, should we not instead be thinking ‘from the inside, out’: “Which decision empties me of selfish goals so that Jesus Christ can inhabit and animate me? Which choice nurtures my immortal soul?”

Because the body is so joined to the soul that they cannot be thought of as separate, what I do to and with my body, how I use my senses, necessarily affects my entire being, my soul. Common sense dictates that our decision-making should give due consideration to the effects our actions will have, not just on others, but on our journey to eternal life.



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