

BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT

‘To set the mind on what is unspiritual is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.’

(Rom 8:6)

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit or release of the Spirit is an internal religious experience (or prayer experience) in which Christ is experienced in a deeper more personal way. It involves a humble openness to the power of the Holy Spirit whom we have received in Baptism and Confirmation, and this empowerment usually leads to a deeper devotional life and an attraction to prayer, Sacred Scripture, and the Sacraments of the Church. With continued nurturing, this event will be the beginning of a lifelong process of growing closer to God.

The experience will often be very different for people and in your spiritual life, keep in mind that what happens to others may or may not be the same thing that happens to you. When you were prayed with, I prayed that the Holy Spirit will be more a part of your life... your decision making... your work... your all.... Pray to be completely surrendered and open to the love that God wants to express personally to you during this week and in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. This is only the beginning of a life long journey with Jesus. Think of it as the first time your meeting Jesus... Put aside every reservation, prejudice, pre-conceived ideas... etc....

Here is a lovely thought from St Irenaeus who lived about a hundred years after the time of Jesus.

He wrote a beautiful meditation on the return of the Prodigal Son and how his father hugged him back home in welcome. In his imagination, Irenaeus pictured the two hands of the Father. One hand is visible taking the hand of the son in warm welcome. The other hand is not visible as it is behind the son, drawing him closer in a loving hug.

The visible hand represents Jesus who sat with sinners and ate with them.

The unseen hand represents the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not seen directly but the warm embrace of the Holy Spirit transforms life.

The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, the Friend at our side and within us.

Simply be open to receiving all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that the Lord wants to give you (see 1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

When you were prayed for, a word may seem to come “out of nowhere” or a Scripture passage may come strongly to mind.

This is the Lord speaking. As you pray, you may “run out of words” and sense a desire to verbalize your love for God; the Lord may be giving you the gift of tongues (a heavenly prayer language) to praise Him... There are so many wonderful gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to his Church. Trust! God is still moving within you even if you don't feel anything.

Remember, we don't rely on our feelings. If we start to always expect a warm good feeling when we pray, then we start to only think God is with us when we feel good. In other words, when we experience the cross we start to believe as we feel. God's abandoned me. Jesus felt abandoned on Calvary, but he did not allow these feelings to dictate his decision to keep on going!

During the coming week, you may experience feelings of unworthiness, or you may feel reluctant or apprehensive because it seems that what you are doing is strange or unnecessary. These are fairly common, but recall God's call to you and focus on that. Review your journal and see how he has been preparing you for this event. Finally, be assured of the prayer support, which is being offered to our Father for you this week. If you are concerned about anything or if you have any questions, email me to kellyseamus@mac.com or if you like to share your own storey. I will not email you back directly but will answer the question or relate your experience at next weeks meeting. I will not reveal your identity just saying a person emailed me etc.

Do not let doubt or Satan keep you from receiving answers to questions and the assurance that Jesus wants you to have. Remember if you have a question many others will have the same question but did not want to follow it through. Sometimes we can rationalize away what God wants us to do.

Daily Reading Assignments

Matthew 18:1-4

Acts 2:33-36

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Luke 6:27-36 Matthew 11:25-30

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

CCC 576 CCC 731

CCC 273 CCC 2842 CCC 2603

CCC 1179 CCC 298

Day One

Last night you were prayed with. Today is a new day. You may feel a new joy, a new peace, a praise of God welling up within you. You may feel doubt, and maybe a bit confused about it all. You may also feel disappointed. You may even feel all of those things at once. But the life of the Spirit is not based on feelings.

Today is the day to begin a new life in faith. If you committed your life to Christ and asked him to baptise you in the Holy Spirit, then you were baptised in the Spirit. You may feel any number of things, but you made a new beginning last night. Now you must live that new beginning in faith.

Consider the facts. When you are baptised in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is in you in a new way. You should want to try to yield to all the promptings of the Holy Spirit and grow in a new way.

Satan is also concerned with you in a new way. Since you now have more spiritual power you are more dangerous to him, and he would like to stop you. After Jesus was baptised he entered into spiritual battle in a new way (Luke 4: 1-13). In the same way, now that you have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, you enter into spiritual battle in a new way.

Suppose a friend of yours wanted to get into a certain room, and he came to you and you gave him a key. Now suppose that someone wants to keep your friend from getting into that room. He has the key, and nothing should stop him from entering. But if he can be convinced that he does not really have the key, then he may never use it, and he would not get into the room. Now that you have been baptised in the Spirit,

Satan will try to make you think it was not real or that it did not happen to you. That's his number one tactic.

His number two tactic is just the opposite. His number two tactic is to convince you that now that you have the Holy Spirit you are all set. Your problems are gone, you don't need anything or anyone else. He will try to make you think you do not need to pray, you do not need to learn how to live in the Spirit, you do not need the help of other Christians. If you see a train of thought like that starting to go through your mind, beware. You are being built up for a fall.

Have no fear. Simply put your faith in God. Resist all doubts and anxieties. Let the joy and peace and praise of God fill you. In humility begin to learn from God and from your brothers and sisters how to live in the life of the Spirit. Remember that you are only a beginner.

Do not let the gift of tongues worry you. If you did not pray in tongues last night, just look for it to happen. It could happen almost anytime. If you said something last night but are not sure whether it was tongues or not, keep on saying it. If it was tongues, it will grow and develop. If it was not tongues, it can turn into tongues. If you did pray in tongues but it sounds like stuttering, keep on doing it. It will grow and develop.

Pray in tongues every day. It will grow in value for you.

You need the Life in the Spirit Seminars now more than you did before. The lessons of the next two weeks are very important. Now that you have been baptised in the Spirit, you need to grow in the life of Spirit. If you are having any difficulties or are unsure what has happened, Satan will try

hard to keep you away from other Christians. Do not let him talk you out of attending online the next two seminars.

God loves you. He wants you to live in union with him. Living the life of the Spirit is very simple; listen to God's word, put your faith in it and obey it. He will lead you.

Words of Life

Day 1:

When you were prayed with yesterday, a change was made in your life. You can count on Satan to try to confuse you. You can count on God to be with you and to want to lead you to a new life. God's word says:

'Unload all your worries on to God, since he is looking after you. Be calm but vigilant, because your enemy the devil is prowling round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand up to him, strong in faith.'

(I Pet 5: 7-9)

"Blessed be God forever" *(From the Offertory at Mass)*

Day 2:

The Lord has given you a new power in the Spirit. Make use of it. It may not seem like much at the moment. Or it may seem like a lot, but make use of what he has given you, and it will increase. The Lord commends those who are faithful when he says:

'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things. I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.'

(Matt 25:23)

"Blessed be God forever"

Day 3:

When you live in the Spirit, the Spirit prays in you. Let him pray in you often during the day, sometimes in English, sometimes in the new tongue he has given you. Even if you have only a few syllables in a new tongue or if you are not sure of it, pray in that tongue every day and it will grow. God's word encourages you:

'Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion.'

(Eph 6: 18)

"Blessed be God forever"

Day 4:

Learn to set your thoughts on the Lord and on the things of the Spirit. Think about the Lord. Meditate on the words of life he speaks. Understand how to live his life. If God's truth forms your mind, you will find life and peace. God's word promises you:

'To set the mind on what is unspiritual is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.'

(Rom 8: 6)

"Blessed be God forever"

Day 5:

The Lord wants you to have spiritual gifts, because he wants to give you power to serve him in an effective way. But he wants you to know that the aim of the Christian life is to love God and to love one another. That must be the centre of your concern. God's word says:

‘Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts.’

(I Cor 14: 1)

“Blessed be God forever”

Day 6:

How can you tell if you are a spiritual person? Frequently people have the idea that we are spiritual if we have many spiritual gifts. But spiritual gifts are not a good measure of how spiritual we are. You can tell if you are a spiritual person by how much the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) characterises your life. Paul warns us as he speaks to the Corinthians:

‘Brothers, I myself was unable to speak to you as spiritual men: I treated you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. What I fed you was with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and indeed, you are still not ready for it since you are still unspiritual. Isn't that obvious from all the jealousy and wrangling that there is among you?’

(I Cor 3: 1-3)

“Blessed be God forever”

Day 7:

God wants us to live with him in heaven. The difficulties we face on earth are small compared with the glory of heaven. The gift of the Spirit is simply a first instalment, a pledge of what is to come. God promises you:

‘Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens. This is the purpose for which God made us, and he has given us the pledge of the Spirit.’

(II Cor 4: 16, 5: 1,5)

“Blessed be God forever”

Study

This week the two chapters we will read are about growing in our union with Christ and in our life in the Spirit.

John 15, Galatians 5