

Readings Reflections

...In the Name of God

I Believe in God the Holy Spirit

June 17, 2007

The center of God's divine activity is the incarnate Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Yet, just as the Son performed the work of the Father who sent him, so the Spirit performs the work of the Son. In carrying on Jesus' earthly ministry, the Spirit's ongoing work is to reveal truth, give life and strengthen faith

John 14: 22-27 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Acts 2: 1-4 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

John 16:5-11 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Reflections

The first time I recall truly connecting with God was during a time of great change in my life. So much was happening that I felt a fire within, and I understood why the church uses the color red in reference to the Holy Spirit! This was the first time that I'd ever really taken the time to listen to what God was saying to me...usually my prayer time was full of me and my needs, wants, wishes, and plans. Because I listened and because my heart was open to His words, I experienced the Spirit's direction so clearly that it was audible in my head. I clung to His words like a lifeline, and as I started to live out the guidance He'd given me, opportunities presented themselves and doors opened. As time went on, the truth of the Spirit's guidance was borne out over and over again, and I was humbled and grateful.

That experience was a new beginning for me in living a life of faith and relying on the Spirit. The key for me is remaining connected to the Source of life

through daily prayer and contemplation, Bible study, and journaling. When I lose the connection, my spirit feels dry and lifeless. The glass is always half empty, I feel like I can't get anything done, and it seems that I'm alone, climbing a mountain carrying a 100 pound pack. On the other hand, when I let the Spirit fill me every day, I am more positive and energetic, and I have a sense of peace and joy, regardless of the day's circumstances. Just as my body requires daily food and exercise, so my soul demands daily feeding and care.

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Relying on the Spirit is not always a simple matter of listening and doing what I'm told. Sometimes I don't like the guid-

ance He offers, and we struggle over it together, sometimes for a long time. God uses my struggling to instruct me further, though, so it is time well spent. I don't always know immediately whether my understanding is from the Spirit, so I have to spend some time discerning. This is often a time that I'll reach out to a close, wise friend — probably someone in my small group — to talk it over.

As I learn more about the character of Christ through my personal study, I am better able to discern when the Spirit is at work, and my connection to Him deepens. That deeper connection draws me toward Him even more, and so you can see how it flows. The key is my decision to be open to His leading by maintaining the daily discipline of study and learning; an hour on Sunday morning just isn't enough. As I connect to Him, He connects further to me. How do *you* connect to the Spirit?

— Colleen Palmateer

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary,

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Readings

Don't have a Bible? Access the readings at biblegateway.com.

Sunday, June 17

John 14: 22-27; John 16: 5-11; Acts 2: 1-4

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as your counselor? How has the Spirit given you peace during a difficult time?

Monday, June 18

2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Those who wrote scripture understood that they were receiving wisdom and understanding from God, and they boldly shared their knowledge. How do you know when a thought or "nudge" is from God?

Tuesday, June 19

Romans 8:26 -31

Do you truly believe that the Spirit lives within you? Is there a circumstance in your life right now that you could entrust to the Spirit to intercede on your behalf?

Wednesday, June 20

John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2: 9-16

The Spirit helps us understand God's truth, and faith is critical. Think of someone you know whose mind is closed to the Spirit. What can you do this week to make a difference in that person's life?

Thursday, June 21

Romans 8:9-17

Paul says in this passage that we must die to sin. From what sins do you need to walk away to allow the Spirit lift you?

Friday, June 22

Acts 2: 38-47; Acts 4: 31-35

The Acts church was fully committed to living a Spirit-filled life. What did they do specifically? What was the result? What has been your experience of Christian community?

Saturday, June 23

Psalm 139

Meditate upon this psalm and make it your prayer today.