

## THE WORKINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT<sup>1</sup>

To quote someone who wrote a book on the Holy Spirit, “The Spirit remains a presence and a force that seems mysterious and little understood. Even Christians who speak easily of the Jesus and the Father become strangely reticent when asked to speak about the Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

Theologians use big words to describe the Holy Spirit, He is the third person of the Holy Trinity, Who is Co-eternal and consubstantial with the un-originate father and the Only-begotten Son.

The Liturgy tells us that He is single (or uncompounded) in His nature but manifold in His workings. Perhaps the workings or energies of the Holy Spirit are the aspect we can relate to most, because here the Holy Spirit comes in touch with our lives. So, let us use the few moments allowed us to meditate on some of the manifold workings of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel according to St. John, calls the Holy Spirit, “the Comforter”. When our Lord told His disciples, “I will not leave you comfortless” (John 14:18) He was no doubt referring to the comforting Spirit that will be given to them when the Bridegroom is taken from them.

And how needful we are today for this Comforting Spirit in a world filled with bereavement and tragedy. So, it behoves us to implore the Holy Spirit by saying, O Spirit of comfort come and be with us today. Come to comfort the women of Lebanon in their untold sufferings. Come to comfort the women of Palestine and those of Israel, who day in and day out loose husband and child and parent and sibling in an unending merry go round of violence that leads to nowhere. Come to comfort the women of Iraq who for 12 years watched as their children perished for lack of nourishment or lack of medicine because of some arbitrary and vindictive sanctions imposed on them. Come to comfort the women of America and Britain and Iraq, who are about to loose husbands and sons and daughters in a war that is unjust and most immoral. A war that is forced on the world by a handful of men and women that had been made drunk by the sour wine of shear power and blinded by unbridled greed.

Isaiah 11:2 tells us that the Holy Spirit is a “Spirit of wisdom and understanding”. And how much needful we are today for wisdom and understanding. So, let us entreat the Holy Spirit by saying, “O Spirit of wisdom and understanding come and be with us. Settle on our leaders and guide them, lest they should plunge this trembling and terrified world into chaos and unspeakable miseries.”

The Gospel according to St. John again calls the Holy Spirit, “The Spirit of Truth”. And how needful we are for this Spirit of Truth to dispel the spirit of falsehood that fills our world today. So, let us supplicate the Holy Spirit by saying, “O Spirit of Truth come and be with us and deliver us from all falsehood.” “Deliver us from the falsehood of politicians who would convince us that they have to colonize Iraq in order to liberate it. Deliver us from the falsehood of Generals who would convince us that they can win a war without hurting

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<sup>1</sup>An address by Father Athanasius Iskander to the world day of prayer meeting, March 7, 2003, Guelph, ON. The day was hosted by the women of Lebanon.

<sup>2</sup>Burns and Fagin: The Holy Spirit

civilians. Deliver us from the falsehood of self proclaimed prophets who preach death, destruction and terror in the name of God.

It is also meet to call the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of Liberty", for St. Paul tells us in II Cor 3:17, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." How needful we are today for this liberating Spirit, so let us beseech the Holy Spirit saying, "O Spirit of Liberty, come and be with us. Come and liberate all who are oppressed". "Come and liberate the oppressed of Lebanon. Come and liberate the oppressed of Palestine". "Come and liberate the oppressed of Iraq, whether they be Shiite, Sunnis, Christians, Kurds or Assyrians". "Come and liberate the millions that are oppressed by hunger, by disease, by lack of shelter and those that are oppressed by ignorance and fanaticism". "Come and liberate us from the bondage of our own sins, from bigotry and prejudice, from anger and hatred and malice, from the lust to take revenge and retaliate". "Come O Spirit of Liberty and liberate us from covetousness which is idolatry, from avarice and from the love of money, the root of all evils".

But the workings of the Holy Spirit are also apparent in the fruit of the Spirit and foremost among these are love, joy and peace. And how needful we are today for these. So, let us implore the Holy spirit by saying, "O Spirit of Love come and be with us and fill us with love, not only for our neighbours as the Old dispensation commands us, but also towards our enemies as the new dispensation teaches us". "O Spirit of Joy come and be with us and fill us with heavenly joy". "Disperse away the clouds of doom and gloom and the anxieties and the distress of nations with perplexity spoken of by St. Luke the Evangelist". "O Spirit of Peace come and be with us and fill us with peace divine and dispel away the Spirit of war that the adversary is sowing in our world". For unto Thee is due honour and glory and worship together with the Father un-originate and the only begotten Son, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.