

Catechism Class

The Holy Spirit, the Church, Baptism, the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the Age to Come

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets...

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

The Holy Spirit hath ever been, is and ever shall be; for He is wholly without beginning and without end. Yet He is in covenant with the Father and the Son, counted as Life and Life-giver, Light and Light-giver, good by nature and a Fountain of goodness, through whom the Father is known and the Son glorified. And by all it is understood that one power, one rank, one worship are of the Holy Trinity.

Light, Life, and a living noetic Fountain is the Holy Spirit, good, upright, noetic Spirit of understanding, and purifying offenses, God understanding, presiding, and purifying offenses, God and deifying, Fire projecting from Fire, speaking, active, Distributor of gifts, through whom all the Prophets, the Apostles of God, and the Martyrs are crowned, a strange Report, a strange sight, a Fire divided for the distribution of gifts.

from the verses of Lord, I Have Cried during Vespers for Pentecost

Look down from Thy holy heights, O Lord, upon Thy people here present Who await of Thee rich mercy. Visit us in Thy goodness. Deliver us from the power of the devil. Make firm our lives with Thy holy and sacred laws. Entrust Thy people to a faithful guardian angel. Gather us all into Thy kingdom. Grant pardon to those that hope in Thee. Forgive them and us our sins. Purify us by the operation of Thy Holy Spirit. Destroy the snares set for us by the enemy.

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who hast given Thy peace to men and, being present still in this life, dost ever grant the gift of the All-holy Spirit to the faithful, as an inheritance that cannot be taken away, Thou didst send down today in a manner most clear, this grace upon Thy holy disciples and apostles, and didst open their lips with tongues of fire. Through them every race of man hath received, through the hearing of the ear, the knowledge of God in our own languages. We have been enlightened by the light of the Spirit, and we have been freed from delusion as from darkness, and through the distribution of the perceptible tongues of fire and the wondrous operation of the same, we have been taught the faith that is in Thee, and we have been illumined

so as to praise Thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in one Godhead and Power and Authority.

For Thou art the Brightness of the Father, the express Image, inalterable and immovable, of His essence and nature, the Fountain of wisdom and of grace. Open Thou also the lips of me, the sinner, and teach me how I ought and for what I must pray. For Thou knowest the multitude of my sins, but Thy compassion shall overcome the enormity thereof. For lo, in fear I stand before Thee; into the sea of Thy mercy have I cast the desperation of my soul. Govern my life, Thou that governest all creation with Thy word and with the unutterable power of Thy wisdom, O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed, and make known to me the way wherein I should walk. Grant to my reasoning the Spirit of Thy wisdom, and give the Spirit of understanding to my foolishness. Overshadow my deeds with the Spirit of Thy fear, and renew a right Spirit within me. And with Thy governing Spirit, establish my faltering mind that, being guided every day by Thy good Spirit toward what is useful, I may be vouchsafed to keep Thy commandments and always to remember Thy glorious coming-again, which shall search out our deeds. Despise me not, lest I be deceived by the corrupting pleasures of the world, but enable me to yearn for the enjoyment of the treasures of that to come. For Thou hast said, O Master, that whatsoever may be asked in Thy Name shall be freely received from Thy co-eternal God and Father.

excerpts from the Kneeling Prayers at Vespers for Pentecost

Now, the comforting Spirit hath been poured on all flesh; for, starting with the rank of the Apostles, He extended grace through the communion of believers, certifying His effective presence by the distribution of tongues to the Disciples in fiery likeness for the praise and glory of God. Wherefore, being noetically illumined with them and confirmed in the steadfast Faith, we beseech the Holy Spirit to save our souls.

Now, the Apostles of Christ have put on might and power from above; for the Comforter hath renewed them, and in them renewed the knowledge of the new mysteries which they proclaimed to us in tones and resounding words, teaching us to worship the all-bountiful God of the eternal, simple Nature of three Persons. Wherefore, being illumined by their teachings, let us worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, beseeching them to save our souls.

from the THE APOSTICHA FOR HOLY SPIRIT at Vespers for Pentecost

DOXASTICON FOR PENTECOST IN TONE EIGHT

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Come ye nations, let us worship the three-personed Godhead, a Son in the Father, with a Holy Spirit; for the Father timelessly hath begotten the Son, equal to Him in eternity and the throne; and the Holy Spirit was in the Father, glorified with the Son, one Might, one Substance, one Godhead, which we all worship, saying, Holy God Who created everything through the Son with the help of the Holy Spirit; Holy Mighty, in Whom we knew the Father, and through Whom the Holy Spirit came to the world; Holy Immortal One, the comforting Spirit, proceeding from the Father and resting in the Son; O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee.

May He Who emptied Himself from the divine bosom of the Father, and came down from Heaven to earth, and took upon Himself all of our nature, and deified it; and afterwards ascended again into Heaven and sat at the right hand of God the Father, and sent down upon His Holy Disciples and Apostles the Divine and Holy Spirit, one in essence, equal in power, equal in glory, and co-everlasting with Him, and through Him enlightened them, and through them the whole world, Christ our true God: through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; of the holy, glorious, all-laudable, God-proclaiming and Spirit-bearing apostles, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

“We shall now examine what kinds of ideas about the Spirit we hold in common, as well as those which we have gathered from the Scriptures, or received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers. First of all, who can listen to the Spirit’s titles and not be lifted up in his soul? Whose thoughts would not be raised to contemplate the supreme nature? He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, right Spirit, willing Spirit. His first and most proper title is Holy Spirit...an intelligent being, boundless in power, of unlimited greatness, generous in goodness, whom time cannot measure. All things thirsting for holiness turn to Him; everything living in virtue never turns away from Him. He waters them with His life-giving breath and helps them reach their proper fulfillment. He perfects all other things, and Himself lacks nothing; He gives life to all things, and is never depleted...He is the source of sanctification, spiritual light, who gives illumination to everyone...and the illumination He gives is Himself...

Through Him hearts are lifted up, the infirm are held by the hand, and those who progress are brought to perfection. He shines upon those who are cleansed from every spot, and makes them spiritual men through fellowship with Himself. When a sunbeam falls on a transparent substance, the substance itself becomes brilliant, and radiates light from itself. So

too Spirit-bearing souls, illumined by Him, finally become spiritual themselves...These are only a few of the many things we have been taught concerning the greatness, dignity, and working of the Holy Spirit, and we have learned them from the Spirit's own words."

On the Holy Spirit, chapter 9
St. Basil the Great

"It is impossible to believe in the Father and the Son without the presence of the Spirit. He who rejects the Spirit rejects the Son, and he who rejects the Son rejects the Father...It is impossible to worship the Son except in the Holy Spirit; it is impossible to call upon the Father except in the Spirit of adoption."

Chapter 11

"The Originator of all things is One: He creates through the Son and perfects through the Spirit...'By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the Spirit of His mouth.' (Ps. 32:6, <LXX>)...the Word is He who was with God in the beginning, and was God and the Spirit of God's mouth is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father. (Jn. 15:26) Perceive these three: the Lord who commands, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who strengthens. What kind of strengthening is it? Perfection in holiness, which expresses itself in an unyielding, unchangeable commitment to goodness. Such holiness is impossible without the Spirit...it is impossible to maintain a life of holiness without the Spirit."

`Chapter 16

"The Spirit is said to dwell *in* created things in many and various ways, but as far as His relationship to the Father and the Son is concerned, it is more appropriate to say that He dwells *with* them, rather than *in* them. Those who are worthy receive His grace, and He works *within* them...Whenever the union between things is intimate, natural, and inseparable, it is more appropriate to use *with* since the word suggests an indivisible union. On the other hand, in situations where the grace of the Spirit comes and goes, it is more proper to say that the Spirit exists *in* someone...Therefore, when we consider the Spirit's *rank*, we think of Him as present *with* the Father and the Son, but when we consider the working of His grace on its recipients, we say that the Spirit is *in* us. If we say, 'Glory to the Father through the Son *in* the Holy Spirit,' we are not describing the Spirit's rank, but confessing our own weakness, since we show that we are not capable of glorifying God on our own, only *in* the Spirit is this made possible."

Chapter 26

The Holy Trinity

“As the Son’s incarnation and sacrifice on the Cross did not take place without the Father and the Holy Spirit, so also the salvation of each one of us is not worked out without the cooperation of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that is, of the entire Holy Trinity. The Incarnate Dispensation and the salvation of each soul are the work of the One Triune God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. One must plant this deep in his mind...

So, the faithful come to the Father through the Son. But how do they come to the Son? They come through the Father, as the Lord himself reveals: *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him”* (John 6:44). If without this attraction to the Son it is impossible for the work of our salvation to begin, and if this attraction is effected by the Father, then it is quite obvious that the first principle of the salvation of each soul is God the Father.

You should remember this scriptural truth and confess it. You were drawn to the Lord, who is eternally at the right hand of the Father, by the Father Himself.

But how does the Father draw us to the Son? He does so through the Holy Spirit. Everything necessary for salvation is effected by the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of those that are being saved. The Lord, who suffered, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, sent the Holy Spirit from the Father, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the true Church and works out the salvation of each one of her members.

The Holy Spirit came down to the Apostles. He directed them to the ends of the earth, He graced them with life-giving speech, He strengthened them in the faith. He sanctified and assisted the Christians in every good work. Without the Holy Spirit, no one is saved, or is it possible to be saved. This is why the Lord said: *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”* (John 16:7) It is as if saying: “If the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, does not come, I became man in vain, I died in vain, I was risen in vain. You will not find salvation, because without the Holy Spirit, you cannot be transformed, you cannot acquire the attributes of the saved”

When thinking of your salvation then, you should remember that you also owe it to the Holy Spirit, Who through the Divine Mysteries of the Orthodox Church is offered to you and guides and strengthens you on the path of salvation.

Do you see, now, how we are saved? We are saved in Christ Jesus by the good pleasure of the Father and the grace of the Holy Spirit. You should confess this and always keep it in your mind and heart...

The holy Apostles had understood this deeply, and this is how they expressed it in their benedictions for the salvation of the faithful: *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace be to you”* (1 Peter 1:2); and, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”* (2 Corinthians 13:14). The latter

words of the Apostle Paul are repeated in the Divine Liturgy after the recitation of the Creed, and before the beginning of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist.

All of our holy Fathers, in their teaching on salvation, also referred to it as a work not of Christ alone, but of the entire Holy Trinity. They referred to it as a work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with the three persons of the Godhead constituting the one source of salvation.”

St. Theophan the Recluse

I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...

“The Church is not an organization but a living organism, divine and human, as it is truly Christ’s glorified and resurrected Body. To be in true communion with the Church, then, is to have communion with Christ, and through Him with His Father and the Holy Spirit.”

Know the Faith, Fr. Micahel Shanbour

The Church is One and Holy because Christ is One and Holy.

The Church is Catholic because it expresses the wholeness of Christ wherever it is found.

The Church is Apostolic because Christ founded it upon the Apostles, and He Himself serves as the Church’s cornerstone.

“I will now tell you what is most important for everyone’s salvation. It can be briefly stated as follows: ‘Have faith and receive the Divine Grace who guides us in the Christian life through the Divine Mysteries. Live according to the commandments of God and the guidance of the God-sent shepherds. Be in a living relationship with the Church.’

So that you may better understand how very necessary this is, compare the journey of salvation to a regular road trip. In order for the traveler to walk easily and safely, he needs to have light, clear direction, and himself be healthy and strong. Furthermore, there must be a guide to help and point in the right direction in case of a difficulty, as for example before a fork in the road or at an intersection. In a similar manner, for the journey of salvation, there must be light, that is, correct faith; there must be clear directions, that is, the divine commandments; one must have spiritual health and vigor, that is the powers of the Divine Grace obtained through the Divine

Mysteries; there must also be those who know the way and can provide guidance, that is, the shepherds of the Church.

All this takes place within the bosom of our holy Church. Everyone who works well for his salvation is united with the Church. All those who have been saved followed this path, and all those who are being saved walk on this path. There is no other way to salvation...

God is one in [essence], but in three distinct [hypostases]. The Father, through the Son, made the world and provides for it. He created man in His image to live in Paradise. By the disobedience of the first-created man, we lost Paradise, and it became impossible for us to be saved. The Son of God took pity on us, undertook the work of redemption and restitution, came to earth, assumed flesh, suffered, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sat as God-Man at the right hand of the Father...

The Son Himself sent the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit came down to the Apostles, filling them with divine wisdom and power. Then they, full of the Holy Spirit, planted the Christian faith and established the Church from all the faithful and with Christ being the head. The same Apostles, according to the commandment of God, performed the Divine Mysteries, which provide Divine Grace to the faithful, and left the bishops and priests as their successors in the apostolic work and as caretakers of the heavenly, spiritual treasures that the Holy Spirit entrusted to the Church.

Through the special grace of ordination, the successors of the Apostles continued the work of salvation throughout the centuries, and so this work continues uninterrupted till our days. The faithful, who receive Divine Grace through the Divine Mysteries, are saved in the bosom of the Church, not alone, but all joined together in the true, living faith, and under the guidance of the shepherds. The salvation of each soul is worked out mystically, and every believer anticipates another life full of light, for the sake of which he endures voluntary and involuntary deprivations. He also believes that those who have fallen asleep do not cease to be in the body of the Church, but they communicate with us, not visibly, of course, but invisibly.

You must believe in all this wholeheartedly. We confess this faith by studying the Creed often. These are the truths of our faith and it cannot be otherwise.”

St. Theophan the Recluse