

Rocca di Papa, September 15, 1983

Honour the Holy Spirit

Dearest all,

In the last conference call we spoke about the Holy Spirit. And I'd like to take up the same subject again today; so that by getting to know this "Unknown God" better, we may love, honour, and obey him.

The Holy Spirit can do incredible things! Just look at the Apostles! The Church had been founded by Jesus on the cross, yet they were dumbfounded, hesitant, scared, hiding behind locked doors.

Then the Holy Spirit came down upon them, and they were filled with courage. They went out into the streets and squares, and spoke with such fire, that people thought they were drunk. Later, they bravely faced persecution and set out to bring the Good News to the whole world.

This is just one important example of what the Holy Spirit can do - not to mention all that he has done in the Church throughout her twenty centuries of life: miraculous outpourings of light, grace, transformation, and renewal. Think of the Councils, and of the various spiritual movements he raised up, always at just the right moment.

Look at the Focolare. Isn't something of this sort also happening with us, because of the fact that the Holy Spirit has bestowed one of his charisms on us?

Before this happened to change our lives, weren't we just like all those people who don't see beyond their own neighbourhood, whose thoughts and affections are limited almost exclusively to the small circle of their family; who are bent solely - as we were - on acquiring a profession, or on owning a car or a house; who try to brighten up their lives by going out to the movies or attending some sporting event on their days off?

Then the Holy Spirit intervened and gave us this wonderful new life. He helped us break out of our own self-centeredness, and start thinking about our neighbour. He gave us hope - and often proof - that, with his help, many of the problems that afflict the world could be resolved.

He gave us the courage to speak in front of crowds, which we would never have imagined possible. He also gave us the strength to spiritually - and often literally - leave behind, not only our own neighbourhood, but our own country and our own culture, to bring the fire of his love to the ends of the earth. He gave us the strength, day after day, to overcome difficulty and misfortune; and often with joyful hearts.

As a result, we have often experienced the Father's extraordinary providence; and we have seen the fruits of our labour: many people all over the world, united in one big family.

If, to a greater or lesser degree, things around us have changed for the better, this is the work of the Holy Spirit, who renews the face of the earth. Yes, for his task is to instil drive and motivation; to enable grace - the divine life Jesus has obtained for us - to operate in our lives; to give us strength and courage. Since we owe him so much, he should hold a much more prominent place in our spiritual lives.

Last time we focused on the fact that the Holy Spirit lives in our souls; that we are his temples; and that each of us must listen to his voice speaking within us.

Today we want to focus on the fact that he is also present in the soul of every neighbour we meet, who is also a temple of the Holy Spirit, or destined to be one.

If this is so, don't you think this is an added reason to love our neighbour even better?

Just as we show the proper respect before a tabernacle where Jesus is present in the Eucharist; similarly, we must have proper respect for all our sisters and brothers, because they are tabernacles of the Holy Spirit.

Here, then, is a thought to illuminate our path in the days ahead: *Let's honour the Holy Spirit*, by loving, respecting, and serving every neighbour.

(taken from *Journey, Spiritual Insights*, New City Press, New York 1984, pp.117-119.)