

***THE FIERY
SPIRIT***

***Fr. Tadros Malaty
1997***

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Fr. Tadros Malaty

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St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church
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**Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and
Lord of lords**

Icon designed by Dr. Yousef Nassief and Dr. Bedour Latif



THE BEHOLDER OF GOD
MARK THE EVANGELIST
SAINT AND MARTYR



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

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Dear Youth,

On this sacred occasion, the feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church, on the Day of Pentecost, we present you with a translation of Fr. Malaty's book, "***The Fiery Spirit.***"

May the Holy Spirit inflame your heart with His great love.

Implore the Holy Spirit to be your Counselor, Advocate and Intercessor.

Implore Him to be your Guide through the path of righteousness!

Implore Him to mould you into Jesus' image.

Implore Him to fill your heart with peace and love.

Implore Him to shed His light on you, and illuminate your innermost depths.

Accept His gifts gratefully, and be completely dependent on Him!

May the Holy Spirit answer all your petitions!

St. Mark's Church, Arncliffe, Sydney

1

A New Year And A New Heart

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE

YOU ARE GOD'S BEAUTIFUL WORLD!

From time to time a person feels that his life is empty and meaningless, similar to the rugged land “**without form,**” void of splendor and beauty, a useless life, surrounded by “**darkness**” (Gen. 1:2). Or like a debased life which deserves to fall under God’s wrath, such as in the time of the flood, from which no one was saved, except Noah and his family in the ark, and when the dove found no resting place (Gen. 8:9).

This is exactly the feeling of many youth today, especially when they find themselves enslaved to their lustful desires, their bodies captivated by sensual pleasure, and their hearts become tombs full of filth!

Will God leave us in such a state? Certainly not! God’s Holy Spirit, who “*hovered over the face of the waters*” to create a beautiful world out of desolation (Gen. 1:2), is still working in the waters of Baptism to create out of those baptized a glorious spiritual world!

My dear youth, the Spirit of God is still hovering in your heart and mine, through the tears of repentance (the second baptism) in order to renew within us a heavenly world. He is always occupied thinking of you, as you are His beautiful world!

THE SPIRIT OF STRENGTH AND THE STRENGTH OF THE SPIRIT!

Our Lord Jesus Christ came on earth not to present us with mere commandments, but to renew our nature by His Holy Spirit, and to establish His kingdom in us. He came in order to convert our inner beings, which are void of beauty, into a unique, glorious spiritual world. In other words, He crucified our old man, who was in the image of the earthly Adam, and bestowed on us a new man, in the image of the new heavenly Adam. For this, Jesus advised His Apostles not to quit Jerusalem until they received a **Power** from above (Acts 1:8).

In the Greek language the word “**power**” is derived from the word “**dynamite**” or “**dynamic**.” So our Lord advised His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, to start their evangelistic work, without the **power** of the Holy Spirit. He asked them to rely on the Holy Spirit within them, as He shatters the solid sin with dynamic divine power, and creates a new celestial heart suitable for His abode. This dynamic power should be the motivating force of their work, as the Holy Spirit knows no laziness or rest, as He is an influence of love who works unceasingly.

Thus, my dear youth, do not fear the lust of the flesh or sin with all its temptations, or the whole world with all its burdens, as you have attained the Holy Spirit in the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation (Mayroun), who works in you with all **power**! If you accept the work of the Holy Spirit in you, and ask His assistance at any time, trust that He will support you.

CONVICTION, RECONCILIATION, AND GLORY

If your heart has become like the world after the flood, full of dirt and filth, and is rotten and corrupt, this saddens God’s Spirit as He does not find a resting place in your heart.

My dear youth, do not fear, the dove (which symbolizes

the Holy Spirit) was let loose from the ark (which symbolizes Jesus Christ) three times: First time it did not find a resting place in the world; second time, it came back carrying in its beak an olive leaf; lastly it rested and found its comfort. This is how the Holy Spirit works, He converts your heart from a corrupt world, conforming it to be the temple of God.

The Spirit of God is hovering over the corrupt world trying to find rest, but cannot as “*they have together become corrupt*” (Ps. 14:3). People in the Old Testament felt that God was far away from them, so the Psalmist with a loud voice sang, “*How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?*” “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Ps.13:1; 22:1)

The main function of the Holy Spirit is to illuminate your vision, so that you may discover your weaknesses and sins. You then feel the need for your Savior’s love, who forgives all your transgressions, purifies your nature, and grants you His reconciliation... and you will “**not want!**” (Ps. 23:1).

Jesus’ last words to His disciples were, “*If I depart I will send the Helper, and when He has come, He will convict the world of sin*” (John 16:7.8). Always bear in mind that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, in the Church, not to cover your sins, but to open your eyes to your own sins, convict your heart with tears of repentance, after which your sins are forgiven.

My beloved youth, take advantage of God’s gracious and endless love which is extended to all sinners. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict you, and uncover all your faults and bestow on you the tears of repentance. Through the holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of both body and soul, you will find that God the Father has His arms outstretched with His tender love embracing you through the Cross.

The Holy Spirit who hovers around to create in your heart a holy dwelling for Himself, will expose you to realize your grievous sins to humble oneself before God, after which He uplifts you to the highest heavens.

The Spirit of God will not “*leave you as orphans*” (John 14:18), but He will come forth to us with the “*olive leaf*,” the spirit of peace, and reconciliation to declare within us the power of the precious Blood of Jesus, through which we reconcile with God. Thus we are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. This is the work of the Spirit which carries the “*olive leaf*,” who takes of “*what is Mine (Jesus) and declares it to you*” (John 16:14).

The work of the Holy Spirit does not stop at reconciliation, furthermore, He gives one a newly fellowship with Christ. Then, when the Holy Spirit finds comfort in your heart, and rejoices in working through you, you will experience the pledge of eternal glory: interior happiness, unspeakable hearty Joyce and being after the image of God carrying Christ’s features of love, humility and sanctity.

That is how the Holy Spirit works in you. First He starts by self conviction, where He uncovers all your inner corruption and leads you to reconciliation through the Blood of the Savior. This is followed by a taste of the everlasting glory, where the Spirit finds comfort in your heart.

YOU HAVE DOVE’S EYES

The work of the Holy Spirit is to imprint His spiritual vision in you. Thus, the Bridegroom will say to you, “*You have dove’s eyes*” (Song 1:15).

If you stand close to a friend and look into his eyes, you will discover your image imprinted in his eyes, as you are standing close to him. That is how the Lord Jesus sees the image of the Holy Spirit (the dove) imprinted in your eyes. As long as your heart is in continuous contact with Him, realizing His capabilities and is cooperating with Him, He will always be active in you.

Do not be afraid of your weaknesses, as your eyes are “*dove’s eyes*,” a sign that the Holy Spirit dwells within you. He

is the One who is working in you, who transforms your weaknesses to **power** or to **dynamite**, and destroys the power of evil. He does not destroy your heart or your efforts, but destroys the evil in order to establish God's Kingdom in you.

My dear youth, you have “**dove's eyes**” as the Holy Spirit, who is in the shape of a dove, is manifested deep inside you.

TENDER MATTERS

It is not surprising that the Holy Spirit, who is active in you, is referred to as a dove. In the beginning the Holy Spirit hovered over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2), similar to a mother-dove who stretches out her wings to gather to her bosom the eggs in order to hatch them, or stretches her wings in order to protect her little chicks.

We see in God a Father purposefully bringing about our salvation. In the Incarnate Son we see the Bridegroom, embracing His bride, the Church, who is adorned with abundant spiritual beauty. As for the Holy Spirit, it can be said that He somehow holds the qualities of Motherhood. He holds the affection and unique tenderness of Motherhood, from which spring all gifts and virtues. At the beginning He hovered with great love over the face of the waters, in order to create the world for us. In the New Testament, He hovered over the waters of baptism to embrace the one baptized, bestowing upon him the image of his Creator and bequeathing the Church love and affection that she may care for the baptized with the same Spirit of God giving birth to new members unceasingly.

My dear youth, the role of the Holy Spirit is not only to nourish you with divine love, but to fill you with a kind of maternal affection. *You will be full of tremendous love to the extent that you would want to embrace the whole world, and you will be filled with this internal urge and desire to extend this fiery love to the whole universe.*

This kind of love-giving does not know any selfishness, unlike the suffocating and domineering love of some parents, where the children despise this imprisoning and stifling-love which is full of selfishness, and long to get rid of it! But the Holy Spirit lavishes on you sincere, charitable, generous and spiritual love, where the believer asks for nothing from those who are dear to him, but to see them crowned with glory just as he himself long to be. Moreover, he rejoices and feels glad that everyone surpasses him, even concerning eternal reward. This Spiritual affection cannot be attained unless your life is holy and blessed. Both love and holiness are the essence to a spiritual life, a new life with Jesus Christ who is holy and full of true love! That is why our Lord sees your eyes as those of doves. One eye represents Spiritual love, the other symbolizes holiness. Thus the eyes carry the same image of **holy love or loving sanctity**.

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

✠ God fills Man's nature with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

He then crowns this nature with true glory.

Because of His love for righteousness He restores to us the pure nature we once had before sin.

St. Macarius the Great

✠ There is no way a person can attain any of God's gracious gifts unless he attains the Holy Spirit Who has all God's gifts.

St. Didymus the Blind

✠ The Holy Spirit makes all God's work sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, whether they come in the form of fatigue, fasting, vigil, solitude, or charitable deeds.

✠ With the Spirit we were sanctified in the Lord.

St. Anthony the Great

Hover Over Me, O Spirit of God

At the beginning You hovered over the face of the waters!

And created a beautiful world for me,
You sufficed me with all things created,
and You made me in need of nothing!

Now You hover over the waters of Baptism,
to create out of my corruptible life, a new spiritual world!

God's joyous Kingdom!

A lively icon of heaven itself!

You are the perpetual accomplisher,
the essence of love!

If I have ruined what You gave me,
still You can sanctify me once more.

Work within me, O Spirit of God.

As Noah's dove which declared reconciliation and peace through an olive leaf.

Rest in my heart, deep down,

For You can wholesomely sanctify me!

Be manifested in my eyes so that they become dove's eyes.

Work in them, that they may be full of sanctified love or loving sanctity!

Spirit of God, You descended on the Incarnate Word,
in the shape of a Dove!

You who are One with Him, Inseparable!

I beg You to abide in me,

granting me unity with my Redeeming Savior!

Spirit of God, create from me a holy and blessed sanctuary, fit to be Your sacred abode.

2

The Spirit of God, the Friend and Companion

LOVE AND PROTECTION

THE NEED FOR A COMPANION

Dear youth, how many times have you suffered from an agonizing experience of loneliness and isolation? This tortured loneliness where no one shares your inner feelings and understands your thoughts! Even if you are surrounded with family and friends this inner anguish still exists!

How many times have you secretly and bitterly cried out:

- I suffer from loneliness, who can save me from such a feeling?
- Who can enter my life with sincere friendship free of selfishness?
- Who can accept me for what I am, with all my weaknesses and goodness?
- Who can love me without asking for anything in return?
- I am depressed and feel as lonely as an orphan, I am in desperate need of assistance!

Jesus Christ answers the plea:

“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you” (John 16:7).

He is the only One who can enter your heart and accompany you throughout your way.

How can this take place?

The Spirit of God in the shape of a dove “*was hovering over the face of the waters*” (Gen. 1:2), in order to create from your heart (the rugged and desolate earth) a new beautiful world where the touch of God’s love, His work and beauty are

manifested. The Holy Spirit embraces you with His godly love and transforms your inner corruption into God's joyous Kingdom. Where you felt loneliness in your heart, the Holy Spirit will now build God's Kingdom within you, that you may enjoy fellowship with God and the fulfilling state of being in the presence of angels. He will carry you as on His wings to find comfort in your heavenly Father's tender bosom.

The Spirit of God is not merely a divine energy working in your life, but He is rather a Friend who accompanies you wherever you go, and removes the dreadful feelings of loneliness. That's what we got in touch with even in the Old Testament, where the Spirit of God appeared as a cloud that sheltered the children of Israel by day, and in a pillar of fire that gave them light by night and accompanied them permanently. Sometimes He led their way as a commander would lead an army. Other times He walked behind them to protect them from backward hits. On other occasions, He walked with them to bless them along the way. What a wonderful companion and friend!

THE COMMANDING SPIRIT

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light” (Exod. 13:21). He does not want to leave you, but asks for your friendship and inseparable companionship.

The Spirit of God appears in the shape of a cloud in order to protect you from the heat of the sun, as is said, “*The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night*” (Psalm 121:6). He shelters you as a cloud causing no darkness, for the Spirit of God enlightens your way being a pillar of fire. He removes the world's bitterness and bestows on you the coolness of the Spirit and heartily peace amidst the heat of the day. Thus transforming daytime into a cool comfortable environment, and its light into perpetual light.

God's loving Spirit shelters you to make of you a kind of "*an ark of Covenant,*" as was said, "*The Cherubim spread out their wings above, and covered the mercy seat with their wings*" (Exod. 37:9). From there God spoke to His people, thus you become a witness to God who sends His messages to others through your sanctified heart. In other words, He shelters you, and creates of you a sanctuary that witnesses to Him.

In the ancient days during war a commander used to lead the way, to encourage the soldiers to fight courageously. That is the case with the Holy Spirit; He walks as a cloud in front of you as a true Leader, who gives Himself to you as a victorious spiritual Armor. The companionship of the Spirit is not an emotional or imaginary friendship, He is rather an intimate companion to assist you in your spiritual struggle through your actual life, to grant you the spirit of victory.

The children of Israel were previously saved from slavery under Pharaoh, to walk in the wilderness, as in a battle, until they crossed to the promised land. All that time the cloud was leading the way.

My beloved friend, you are invited to free yourself from the slavery of sin to be free of the captivity of the enemy, and pass through the wilderness of this world, and experience the pledge of the glory of the children of God. In your struggle you need the Spirit of God who renews your new nature in the water of baptism. And through repentance He gives you a daily renewal, thus freeing you from the slavery of your old man, the earthly Adam, in order to accord you with the new man. Thus, you will bear the image of the new Adam, Who is our heavenly Lord. (1 Cor. 15:46).

It is amazing how the Holy Spirit guides you! He changes the distressing worldly battle into a joyous and cheerful feast, making the spiritual struggle gratifying and delightful. Concerning this, St. Anthony states, "The Holy Spirit makes any

of God's work sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, whether it is strife, fasting, watchfulness, silence, deeds of mercy."

THE DEFENDING SPIRIT

It is written, "*And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.*"

Thus, when the Spirit observes the enemy approaching behind you, He will immediately surround you. He will also stay behind you to protect you from the dreadful menace, and from the fiery snares of the enemy.

THE SPIRIT WITHIN YOU

"Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exod. 40:34).

This is exactly how the Holy Spirit works within you. He shields you and changes your heart into a sacred dwelling, full of joy and glory, an abode fit for the Lord. He diverts your gaze from the luxuries of the world, with all its carnal desires and lusts, into an exquisite and splendid vision stronger and greater than any worldly temptations.

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

✠ The Holy Spirit enters the heart, and uplifts it to the highest heavens, and attaches it to the Lord.

St. Anthony the Great

✠ God fills Man's nature with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and crowns him with genuine glory.

St. Macarius

✠ Blessed is the one whose treasure is in his heart.

Blessed is he who breathes the aroma of the Holy Spirit, and his whole being is mingled with this aroma. Blessed is he whose life is filled with the sweetness of our Lord.

St. John Saba

THE SPIRIT OF GOD ACCOMPANIES YOU

In the Book of Numbers, when the children of Israel traveled in the wilderness, the cloud accompanied them wherever they went. If they stopped, then the cloud stopped, and if they walked, it followed.

Thus the Spirit of God wishes to accompany you in every step you take. The Holy Spirit wishes to bless your actions and your deeds. He wishes to sanctify your body, thoughts and feelings. He also wishes to consecrate your clothes, as He did with the Apostles, Peter and Paul, whose shadows were used to heal the sick, and their handkerchiefs and other personal articles were used to drive out devils.

The Spirit of God wants to guide you to assure you of a bright future. He stands close by you to deliver you from your past, and dwells in you, so that you may always rejoice and be happy with the present time. He accompanies you in all your steps to sanctify and fulfill you.



Spirit Of God, My wonderful Companion!

Spirit of God, be my sole Companion!
Guide my steps, and lead me to a victorious battle!
Shelter my heart as a cloud,
that protects me from the heat of temptation,
and cool me with Your rich oil of grace.

Spirit of God, grant me a new and rejuvenated outlet,
so that I may be saved daily,
from the slavery of the devil,
and pass through the cruel wilderness of this world,
and enjoy the heavenly Canaan.

Spirit of God, I beg of You to stay behind me,
to protect me from the unknown!

Defend me, O Spirit of God,
as I do not depend on the strength of man,
prestige, power or any materialistic matters.

Enter my heart, O Spirit of God,
so that I may rejoice in Your glory!
The world then will find no room in my heart,
neither will sin be able to overpower me,
nor the enemy to lure me away from You,
as I will rejoice in Your grace!

Spirit of God, escort my footsteps, wherever I go.
Bless my heart, thoughts and senses.
Bless my inner and outer deeds.
Bless me, O Holy One!

Spirit of God, be with me and within me!
Guide me and I will follow You.
Defend me from the unknown.
Abide in my heart and escort my movements.
For You are my wonderful and sweet Companion!

3

THE FLAMING HEART

How many times have you admitted that you love God but:

- When you stand up for prayers, you do not feel His presence?
- When you open the Bible to read, you feel it is puzzling?
- When you enter the church, you feel no spiritual awe?
- That you find no comfort in any kind of worship?
- Neither do you find it easy to keep the commandments.

What is the solution to such a common problem?

A certain prominent family in Los Angeles, contacted and invited me to visit them. I was greatly pleased and went to visit them. They then admitted that they had been very impressed with a Coptic family they visited in Toronto. They confessed that this particular family has changed their outlook on God as they felt that their hearts were illuminated with the **fiery Spirit!** The wife professed that from then on their greatest desire and wish was to be like this Coptic family.

WHAT IS A FLAMING HEART ?

A **flaming heart** is one which burns with the Spirit of Christ! Wherever this heart is found it kindles all hearts associated with it. This kind of heart is attached to the Lord, and is capable of altering people's callous hearts into warm hearts, fit for a sacrifice of love that pleases God's gracious heart.

A **flaming heart** confronts sin with power. Such a heart is capable of transforming those sins from abrasive thorns to nothingness. A person with such a heart transforms the love of the world with all its pleasures, into a life of thanksgiving to the Lord for creating such a beautiful world for his sake. He transforms the lusts of the flesh into spiritual sensational feelings

full of love for the Lord!

A **flaming heart** can never be quenched “*nor can the floods drown it*” (Eccl. 8:7). It is God’s loving image - The consuming fire!

You may ask, my beloved youth, how can you attain a flaming heart?

Such a heart cannot be attained by knowledge or by personal striving. It is the seed that God Himself plants in the believer’s heart. A **flaming heart** is one that holds the true living image of God’s Spirit the consuming fire (Heb.12:29), who lives with the devouring fire (Is.33:14). Who came to send fire on the earth (Luke12:49). Thus God then makes of the believer a creation similar to the fiery Cherub, and from the Church He makes a fiery vessel carrying God’s throne!

Meet God’s inflamed Spirit and you will become a blessed flame!

BLOOD AND FLAME

Jesus Christ came on earth to establish in us a burning spirit with His divine love. For this reason, St. John the Baptist looked upon Jesus from two integral perspectives:

(a) Propitiation by His blood:

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Our Lord came to embrace man with His love. He took man’s position, and agreed to pay his debts of sin through the cross. And granted him to be the son of God as a divine gift. He took what is ours, and gave us what is His!

(b) Divine Flame:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; He who is coming after me is mightier than I,... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11). The correlation between the sacrifice and fire starts from the history of redemption. The sacrifice suggests blood which purges all sins,

and “*without shedding of blood there is no remission*” (Heb. 9:22). Fire represents the fiery work of the Holy Spirit, who transforms us into a burning flame of fire so that we can be worthy to be redeemed by this Blood.

A FIERY AGREEMENT

God was eager to constitute an agreement with man and make a covenant. So He asked Abraham to offer a sacrifice divided into two, after which, “*there was a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces*” (Gen. 15:17).

Do you want to enjoy a covenant of love with the Lord? Then first you have to enjoy real reconciliation with God! Through His sacrifice on the cross where you will meet the Lord, the consuming fire! He will then transform you to a burning torch with His Holy Spirit, extricating all coldness from your heart, creating out of you a spiritually inflamed person!

A FLAME FROM HEAVEN

Elijah was in great distress, when he thought that the priests were killed and the people turned their backs on God, the Living Fire! They became like icebergs who do not know the meaning of spiritual warmth. Elijah offered the sacrifice and poured many waters on it (12 jars). “*Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench*” (1 kings 18:38).

If you lose hope and think that everyone around you has lost their living practical faith, do not despair! Have faith in the fiery Spirit of God, who is capable of licking up the water from our hearts, consuming our earthly nature to make out of us a fiery chariot fit for the dwelling of the fiery God therein.

A FIERY GUIDE

The first encounter between God and Moses, the prophet and first leader of God’s people, was in a flame of fire

from the midst of a bush! Moses was attracted by the beauty of the burning bush, and was fascinated as the bush was not consumed! Afterwards God anointed Moses with the spirit of leadership.

Moses perceived the incarnate God in this burning bush, which represented the blessed Virgin Mary, who carried the Word of God, without being consumed of God's Divinity. For this, the Holy Spirit prepared the Virgin Mary for the unique task.

Moses also saw the Church of Christ in the burning bush! The Church which, through Jesus Christ, is empowered with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, thus grew to be an inflamed fire.

If you really want to be a true leader, accept the work of the Holy Spirit in you. Jesus Christ advised His disciples, not to depart from Jerusalem until "*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit will always be active in you unless you deviate from His work. Any spiritual leadership outside the circle of the **fiery Spirit** is apt to be fruitless!

My beloved youth, roam with Moses in the wilderness to the bush which is burning with Spiritual fire! Try to perceive the leadership of the Spirit Himself who appeared as a pillar of light leading the people, transforming their darkness into light, and the desolate night into the radiance of day!

Elevate yourself with Moses to Mount Sinai, the mount which was vibrating with God's holy words, and inflamed as if with fire. Enjoy God's work through the exaltation of the Holy Bible which can shake the mountains within you, transforming your heart into a holy dwelling!

My dear youth, accept with Moses the holy commandments of God, not as stony tablets, but rather tablets engraved in your heart with the Holy Spirit of God, and hear the Lord saying, "*My words in your mouth fire*" (Jer. 5:14).

A WALL OF FIRE

The people of Israel lost hope that they would ever be free from bondage, but the Lord assured Zechariah, “*I will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst*” (Zec. 2:5).

Bear in mind that the devil has his fiery arrow always aimed directly at you, so that you would be under his bondage, as in Babylon, “*the great city of harlots and abomination*” (Rev. 17:5). No one can protect you from these arrows but the Holy Spirit of God, who creates a wall of fire to protect you. Furthermore, He is the secret of glory within you!

VOICE OF GOD AS FIRE!

David experienced a period of great depression, and fervently called on the Lord; and “*He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering*” (1 Chr. 21:26).

When your surroundings seem morose and you are faced with melancholy and the whole world seems gloomy and desolate, call on the Lord through the sacrifice of His holy Cross. You will immediately hear His fiery voice answering you in your inside altar!

THE FIRE OF WONDERFUL GLORY

Solomon had made an altar for the Lord as an icon of heaven. God gave him a confirmation that his sacrifice was acceptable. Thus to declare His glory in His house as soon as Solomon had finished praying, *fire came down from heaven and “the glory of the Lord filled the temple”* (2 Chr. 7:1).

My beloved youth, are you ready to make an altar for the Lord in your heart? If your answer is “**yes,**” pray with Solomon to perceive with the eyes of faith how the fire of the Holy Spirit works daily in your heart, to make therein His Temple your altar, and grant you glorious alliance with the Lord!

Briefly ask the Spirit of God dwelling inside you to work therein granting you:

A fiery heart inflamed with love to God and people, to make of it an icon of heaven.

Make of my heart a fiery Cherub or a heavenly chariot.

Grant you in the merits of the cross forgiveness of sins through repentance, renew His covenant with you, extract from your heart all worldly desires.

Make out of it a permanently illuminated lamp.

Bestow on you a spirit of leadership whose aim is salvation to all.

Transform the words of the Holy Bible to illuminated words, to be engraved in your heart!

Ask the Spirit of God to encompass you with His fiery wall, to protect you from the fiery arrows of the enemy!

Grant you His internal glory!

Bless your heart, and make of it a temple fit for His dwelling. and your soul a heavenly abode.



Welcome, O Fiery Spirit Of God!

Come, O fiery Spirit of God,
in flame my heart with Your fiery divine love!

Convert my coldness to a spiritual warmth.
Thus I will become as a fiery Cherub carrying You with joy!

O consuming fire, renew within me Your covenant,
so that I may carry Your fiery image within me,
and be considered as one of Your fiery inflamed servants.

Drop fire from above as You did with Elijah,
to lick up water that destruct my inside, also the inside
corrupting dust.

Transform my life to an acceptable sacrifice!

Create in my speech Your fiery words,
to shake the mountains of hard heartedness,
so that I may witness for the truth and serve You,
O Pillar of Fire!

Be a wall of fire around me,
to protect me from the fatal fiery arrows of the enemy.
Be glory within me (Zech. 2:5).

O unique Fiery Spirit,
Dwell within me!
So that I may be truly holy fit for Your abode,
O devouring Spirit of God!

4

The Fountains Of The Living Waters

AN INVITATION TO BE FILLED! AN INVITATION TO BE HOLY! AN INVITATION TO CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE!

WHAT DO I LACK?

A few years ago I met a lady in America who complained of inner dreariness and felt distressed, although she admitted that God gave her beauty, prestigious position, a loving husband, a gorgeous child, and everything that would make a person happy and satisfied. She asked me for the reason of this inner dryness, tedium and thirst for the unknown! She needed to be filled! She confessed that she lacked nothing, but still her heart was like a wilderness. She asked what she could do in order to be filled?

I instantly recalled what the Jews used to do in the festival of booths in the days of Lord Jesus on earth, when a priest would hold a golden urn and pour water in front of all the congregation, asking them to approach and be quenched. On this same great feast Jesus Christ stood in public and cried out, saying,

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39).

This is the gift of the glorious crucified Lord... His Holy Spirit bursts within us rivers of living waters, and changes the

wilderness of our hearts into cultivated paradise! A heart capable of producing the fruit of the Spirit which is “*love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...*” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Isaiah foresaw Jesus’ wondrous deeds and love for His creation, when he repeated and emphasized that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us transforms our inner wilderness into a joyous and cheerful paradise. Thus he says, “*The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God*” (Isa. 35:1-2).

My dear youth, Isaiah has not mentioned anything that does not concern you personally. He has actually presented you with the good and happy news which pertains to your thirsty and dehydrated inner being. If you feel so, cry with David, “*I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land*” (Ps. 143:6).

Jesus will immediately present you with the water of the Spirit which will not only fill you with happiness but will quench and overflow you with love, joy and glory! He will change you into a beautiful, fertile garden, “*When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongues fail for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them*” (Isa. 41:17).

Previously God looked His thirsty people and made the water gush from the stricken rock and quenched their thirst at Horeb (Exod. 17:1-7). But now as you are starting a new exodus, He will do greater things for you. Jesus Christ the Crucified Lord presents you with the **Living water** which will change the whole feature of the universe, conforming your corrupt heart to a holy and spiritual paradise, and your inner wilderness into a celestial habitation suitable to produce spiritual trees bearing delicious fruits.

“I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isa. 41:18-20).

Do not complain, my dear friend with the people of Israel, but rather meditate on the stricken rock, or on the Crucified Lord and enjoy the gift of the Holy Spirit for you through His people or His church. The first sermon Peter delivered after Jesus’ ascension was, *“Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”*(Acts 2:38).

My dear friend why do you thirst?

Examine your heart, and you will discover the sealed spring within you!

Enjoy the gift of the Spirit who dwells in you!

The Spirit is yearning to work in you!

To convict you of your sins, and bestow on you repentance and forgiveness.

He will fill you with joy and peace.

Come to Him! Come closer to Him and be quenched!

Come along for repentance and confession!

Ask Him to work in you!

AN INVITATION FOR HOLINESS!

At the beginning of the journey of the children of Israel, through the wilderness, God gave them water out of the rock in ***Horeb***. (Exod. 17) On their approach to the **Promised Land** God presented them with water from ***Kadesh*** (Exod. 20).

Why is this?

At the beginning you need the gifts of the Spirit, so that your thirst may be quenched and your wilderness is changed to divine paradise. When you cross the path you are quenched from the spring to experience the blessed and holy life. For the word “*kadesh*” means “**holiness.**” The story concluded with, “**He was hallowed among them**” (Num. 2:13).

This is an invitation for everyone to taste an enjoyable life with the Holy Spirit of God, Who is called “the sanctifying Spirit.” He grants us fellowship with God the Father, through His gracious Son, thus we are counted amongst the holy and blessed!

Do not be perturbed my dear youth, if you feel, as I do, that you are weak and if you are tried with thoughts and desires. For the Spirit of God, who abides in us, is capable of extricating our mundane nature, and bestowing on us a permanent renewal and a holy and blessed life in Him. Shout with David, “*Create a pure heart in me, O Lord. And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*” Get hold of the divine promise: “*I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. I will deliver you from all your uncleanness*” (Ezek. 36:27,29).

How wonderful is God’s love! He faced the peoples’ malevolence and contentious nature towards Him and His servant Moses (Num. 20:3). And through His gifts He “*was hallowed among them*” (Num. 20:13). At *Horeb* God transformed thirst to living water, and in *Kadesh* he changed their contention into a holiness and a blessed life. This is the extent of God’s love and His graciousness to His people!

It is clear that the Holy Spirit is the source and power of holiness by which we partake in the holiness and blessedness of His grace.

The experience of a close relationship with the Son of God allows us to participate in the sonship and attain the rank of

children of God. Thus, the sharing in the Holy Spirit makes us spiritually holy.

✠ He is called the Sanctifying Spirit, for He offers holiness to all.

Origen

✠ It is impossible for one to attain any of God's graces unless he acquires the Holy Spirit in Whom are all God's gifts.

St. Didymus the Blind

AN INVITATION TO CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE

God is inviting you today, not merely to a satisfying and sanctified life, but rather to a heavenly life full of bliss, exhilaration and praise, as a special gift from the Holy Spirit. God desires to transform you while you are here in the “*valley of tears,*” to the pledge of eternal glory and participation in a celestial life through the spiritual congregational praise.

The Lord said to Moses, “*Gather the people together, and I will give them water.*” “***Spring up, O well!*** *all of you sing to it, the well the leaders sank, dug by the nation's nobles, by the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah*” (Num. 21:16-18).

Here God calls on Moses to gather the people, so that He can bestow on them His Holy Spirit, who descends on the assembled congregation in Church, thus filling them with hymns and praises.

Praises contains significant meanings:

(a) “**Spring up, O well!**” As if the hidden spring will rise up for everyone to enjoy its waters! What does this spring symbolize but baptism, in which the believer is emerged and born again as a child of God, professing the work of the Holy Spirit in him?

The Church's tradition is to place the baptistery at the entrance of the church so that a believer would always

remember on entering or exiting the church, the baptism he has obtained.

It is expedient to remember the grace we have obtained in baptism, and participate with the Holy Spirit of God appreciating our adoption to God. And as said by *St. Didymus the Blind*, “The Holy Spirit frees us from both death and sin. He makes us partakers of the divine glory and children of God the Father and His heirs. He changes us into the image of the Son of God, and makes us His brethren and heirs with Jesus, to the extent that we become glorified and inherit with Him. He grants us heaven instead of the world, and in His generosity, He awards us with Paradise, and makes us glorified more than the angels. Above all, the Holy Spirit extinguishes the flames of perdition in the waters of the divine baptism.”

(b) “**A well dug by the leaders**”: How strange that God, the Creator and Redeemer, asked Moses to gather the elders, leaders and the children of God, in order to dig a well! Does digging a well require all this celebration, where everyone is involved in singing! It is merely the rejoicing of all the Church with the work of the Holy Spirit, who introduces her to a life of heavenly exultation! Perhaps the meeting of the elders and the people symbolizes the meeting of the believers and the heavenly hosts, rejoicing at Man’s salvation and his exhilaration in the glory of God.

Dear friend, do not worry when you experience a spiritual remoteness in your life. God’s Spirit is capable of appeasing your spirit, transforming you from the dreadful literality to spiritual edification.

Do not be disturbed when you fall into sin, as the Spirit of God is always eager to purify you, both spiritually and physically. He is ready to sanctify your mind and heart, your daily worship and work, your time and talents! Don’t be frightened of bitterness. He is ready to help you attain eternal happiness!

**Quench My Thirst, Sanctify Me,
Submit My Heart To Joy**

Quench me O Spirit of God with Your holy waters,
as You are the true Fountain of life!

My heart is completely depleted,
I am in great need of You!

Transform my heart from all mundane desires,
to Jesus' heavenly kingdom!

Rejuvenate it from dreariness and raggedness,
to God's splendid world!

O Holy Spirit of God, be my Helper!

Who is capable of transforming my darkness to light, but You!

Who is capable of changing my lust to holiness, but You!

Who can renew my nature, O Spirit of God but You!

Quench my thirst, sanctify me, and submit my heart to joy!

Carry me, O Spirit of God, on wings,
and I will fly up with You,

to witness the heavenly hosts and join in their praises!

Carry me, O Spirit of God to my Beloved,

so that I may delight in the throne of the gracious God,
where my spirit will rejoice with His glory!

There I will discover God's plans for me, and for all mankind,
and praise Him unceasingly!

Work in me, and sanctify me, O Spirit of God!

5

CAN WE FIND SUCH A ONE AS THIS, A MAN IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD? (Gen. 41:38)

During the Pharaohs' period, the Egyptians were well known for their great wisdom. St. Stephen witnessed to this saying, "*And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds*" (Acts 7:22). Pharaoh was considered by the Egyptians as a descendant of a line of gods, the wisest man in the world! What did the wise man say concerning Joseph the estranged young who was imprisoned? (Gen. 41:38) "*Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?*" (Gen. 41:38)

Pharaoh knew that Joseph's wisdom was incomparable and exceptional. He couldn't have attained such wisdom from man, but was a gift from the Spirit of God.

THE WISDOM OF THE SPIRIT AND THE SCHOOL OF SUFFERING

Joseph was deprived from enjoying the spiritual communal (church) worship, or family worship. He lived away from his parents, without a spiritual guide, Holy Bible, a priest or even a spiritual friend! He lived as a slave to be sold as an instrument which has no right of movement or a say in what is going around him! During this depressing external atmosphere, Joseph knew how to train himself in the school of suffering, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, with unique wisdom and prudence! For this reason he did not suffer from any sort of depression or psychological state of any kind. On the contrary, he possessed great wisdom which was able to raise him to glory!

Joseph lived both his childhood and youthhood, amidst the envy and jealousy of his brothers. By human wisdom he ought to have been more wary and careful and be able to escape from serving his brothers outside his father's house, just in case they harmed him. But under the guidance of the Spirit, with divine wisdom, he looked for them, in order to present them with food. With great love he offered them food, but they sold him as a slave, as a second thought, after changing their mind from killing him!

How did wisdom support him? Joseph says. "*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good*" (Exod. 50:20).

Joseph was faced with various problems: First he lived as a slave in the house of Potiphar. When he won Potiphar's confidence, and was given charge over all his possessions, Joseph was then exposed to imprisonment because of the lust of his master's wife. All outlets were shut, Joseph the lonely, young man in a strange land, away from his beloved father, who has no hope for a happy marital relationship, is deprived of all family affection, now attacked by the lust of this woman! According to human wisdom Joseph should have given in to her lust, as an escape from her wickedness, at the same time released his own deprived physical state! All these are worldly conceptions. But Joseph, the pure and holy, thought otherwise. He chose the divine wisdom and as a result he was sent to prison. What happened then? He later attained the glory that is obtained by the Spirit of God!

Human wisdom can free you from suffering, but temporary. It can even present you with wealth and prestige which never suffices and is never lasting! As for the divine wisdom, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, *it transforms you from suffering to glory, not merely the future everlasting glory, but inner glory which you enjoy here on earth as a deposit for everlasting glory with God Almighty!*

Remember my dear friend, all those young saints who abided by divine rather than human wisdom. Youth like St. George, St. Menas and Prince Tadros (Theodore), had they adhered to human wisdom, fearing to lose their lives here on earth, and if they had practiced deceit then their lives would have ended fruitlessly. While through divine wisdom, they became united with the eternally living Christ and still work in Church with their prayers up till now, as if they were able to overcome bodily death and enjoyed everlasting heavenly glory!

THE SPIRIT AND THE WISDOM OF LEADERSHIP

God created man to make of him a living leader, with the knowledge of how to administer all affairs with wisdom and how to help others.

God called on Moses for leadership, but Moses tried to retreat by responding, *“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since... but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue”* (Exod. 4:10). According to human wisdom, Moses was not suitable to take a role of leadership, but according to the Spirit of God, he enjoyed the wisdom of leadership, as he heard the promise, *“I will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do”* (Exod. 4:15).

Note St. Paul’s call for the Spirit of God to provide him with wisdom of leadership and evangelism, *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit... and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel”* (Eph. 6: 18,19).

My dear friend, you are capable of learning the techniques of leadership, administration, and eloquence. In order to attain this power you need the wisdom of the Spirit, who is full of power... Lift your hands, and the gates of heaven will open, God will not only hear your prayers, but the people also will listen to you. The Spirit of leadership will help you assist

those who are under your leadership, at the same time help you in your own private life!

Are you earnest to live a pure life? Do you consider purity as wisdom and impurity as imprudent and ignorance?

You can flee from the place of sin and impurity. You can always avoid debased company so that you would not be contaminated. Ask yourself, who has control over your tongue? Who protects your vision? Who sanctifies your thoughts? Who uplifts your emotions and senses above all carnal desires? Truly you need the Spirit of wisdom, the Holy Spirit of God who leads you to chastity and holiness, freeing you from the slavery of sin!

The Holy Spirit of God led Joseph with great wisdom along his path of suffering, from slavery to near kingship. He also led Moses with wisdom to free the people from Pharaoh's slavery, to help them across the wilderness. This same Spirit led Joshua son of Nun to enter with the people the promised land, and apportion the land, after which God gave him ceaseless victories over the enemies.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WISDOM OF MINISTRY

A successful person is he who is capable, with the help of the Spirit of God, to minister others, through practical behavior as well as discourse and instruction. Moses ministered to Joshua, who was his successor, and who said about him, "*A man full of the Spirit.*" And the seventy elders who ministered with him, "*God descended on a cloud and spoke to him. He took from the Spirit which is upon him and gave to the seventy elders.*"

May the Spirit of God bestow on you with an open heart and a broad mind to instill in others the spirit of ministry and love. May God employ you not only to minister unto others but above all to encourage others to serve.

THE SPIRIT AND WISDOM IN OUR DAILY LIFE

The Spirit of God accords man with wisdom even in materialistic matters. It was said of Bazalel son of Uri, who was responsible of building the Tabernacle. He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, “to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze” (Exod. 35: 30-35).

Bazalel used to work with stones. All his experience dealt with collecting straw and making stoneware. He had no idea of how to deal with refined matters. Who taught him the workmanship of cutting jewels, designing artistic craft, and chose him to work on all articles needed for the foundation of the Tabernacle?

God yearns to bequeath on you His wisdom, not only for your worship, but for your daily life. So that you may be considered with Joseph, as a, “*a successful man*” and what was referred to in Psalm one, “*And whatever he does shall prosper.*”



**Lead Me By Your Wisdom
O Spirit Of God!**

Spirit of God, I beg of You to take my life in Your hands.
Bestow on me Your wisdom to help me.
In my life and in my relationship with others!

Lead me through Christ in the midst of suffering,
along the royal path!
Reward me with celestial glory,
then I'll fear nothing!

Bequeath me the Spirit of Wisdom.
Then I'll be free from Satan's slavery,
and enter the heavenly Canaan!

Bequeath me with the Spirit of Wisdom,
with a heart full of love for everyone,
that I may learn to encourage others to be enlarged and enclose
a loving heart.

O Spirit of God, sanctify my hands,
so that I may work with the Spirit of wisdom.

Sanctify my thoughts,
to know how to act as a child of God in my daily life!

Sanctify my heart,
so that I may love everybody with divine wisdom.



6

A SPIRIT OF AUTHORITY, NOT OF RULING, AND A SPIRIT OF POWER, NOT OF COWARDICE

Jesus Christ did not descend in order to create a weak person out of you, but created you to restore your honor and authority. He came in order to make you worthy to be called a child of God. He came to make you a holy member in His Body. He came to make of you a holy temple suitable for the Holy Spirit. God desires that you would feel deep down through your daily experience what David had realized after going through a very harsh time. God lifted him up from the ash heap to make him sit with the honorable of his people. He wishes that you would be uplifted in order to sit with Him in heaven, as is written, “*And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:6). Thus, share the joy of the heavenly hosts and their constant praises.

In order to attain such grace, God has given you His Holy Spirit so that you can enjoy sincere humility. Through this humbleness you will discover your weaknesses, and discern the great ability of the divine grace, and the work of the precious blood in your life. You will then be able in Christ our crucified Lord to face life with all its temptations, but rather the world with all its lusts, as well as fight the evil one with all his intrigues.

What can ever happen to you while being carried on the wings of the Spirit? By the Holy Spirit you will enjoy unity with God the Father through His Son. So you will enjoy the Spirit of power, and not of cowardice, without pride or arrogance (2 Tim

1:7). Be well aware that all the success in your life is a gift from Him.

Jesus Christ has given authority to His disciples, “*to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you*” (Luke 10:19). He also stated, “*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (Acts 1:8). The early Church then discerned the spiritual authority, and the divine power in their lives and their ministry and started singing, saying,

*“To Him who loved us
washed us from our sins in His own blood,
and has made us kings and priests to His God and
Father,
to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen”*
(Rev. 1:5,6).

Thus, you will discover that you are made a spiritual king and priest, with authority, and your prayers will be acceptable to the Lord. God will see your work accompanied by the sacrifice of your love, which reaches Him as an aroma of joy. He will then bless you and bestow glory and authority on you from His richness!

Divine authority was defined by St. *Isaac the Syrian* as, “power of a king, with full authority, to order one thought in and the other out!”

Thus authority to a Christian, is not to rule over others, but rather to experience a new life and a supreme interior work. The Spirit of God gives us full control over oneself, by purifying one’s thoughts, senses, faculties, perception and judgment. In other words, power from above to defeat the devil with all his intrigues and power to enjoy the heavenly life within us. God is eager to accord you the spirit of authority, so that you may enjoy the power of the Spirit with love, and not pride.

A person who has spiritual power, knows how to love and deal with others with love, by the help of the Spirit of God. He will even love his adversaries without asking for a reward.

WHERE IS THE SPIRIT OF AUTHORITY?

Many times we feel a sigh deep inside. Sometimes a person feels the presence and power of the Holy Spirit working in him. He prays fervently with love, finds pleasure to obey the Commandments, and a strong desire to sit all day at the feet of the Crucified Lord. But as soon as a cold wind advances his way, he feels very weak, devastated and desolate, unable to enjoy the new life! Has the power of the Spirit left him? Has he lost the rights God gave him through the blood of Jesus?

If you feel so, do not be discouraged, as *St. Anthony* went through these phases. He presented us with practical experiences to overcome such feelings. He commented that these moments were the most precious moments in his life. During that time when he felt isolated from God's grace, he confessed that God had never been closer to him! For thus he declared his faith in God's work within him. He added that he felt that *those moments were moments of testing his honesty and faithfulness to the One who loved him*. He strived unceasingly, and cried to God to help him, and bestow His grace on him. He prayed and felt that his prayers would never reach the Lord. He did not give up, but read the word of God with determination, with the hope that he would be filled. He presented God with praises so that God might open to him the gates of heaven... and with this struggle and persistence he defeated the enemy! Then it would be said of him, as it was said of Jacob, you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed.

One of the many examples which illustrates God's constant watch over us, is found in the Old Testament: The era of Joshua was considered as one of the greatest, when

continuous victories were attained, and the promised land was divided up among the tribes of Israel. This was followed by a very gloomy period, “the era of Judges” of which was said, “*In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 21:25). The people turned to the worship of idols, and did evil in God’s sight. In spite of that, among those people were those who knew how to attain the fiery Spirit of God, who gave them power and authority during the hardest times.

Some of these examples were:

1- Othniel, the youngest son of Kenaz. He was chosen by God to deliver the people of Israel so “*the Spirit of God came upon him.*” He went to war and God delivered Cushan the king of Mesopotamia into his hand, and peace prevailed on the land for forty years (Judges. 3:1).

When everyone around you feels discouraged, and lose hope in salvation and victory, do not consider yourself a loser. But look up at the Spirit of God, the Giver of victory and authority, as “*God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are*” (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

The Jews searched Peter and John, and perceived that they were “*uneducated and untrained men.*” They saw the work of the Holy Spirit in them, as they “*realized that they had been with Jesus*”(Act.4:13).

Do not be perturbed by any circumstances surrounding you, or by your weaknesses; for the Holy Spirit takes what is Jesus’ and gives it to you, “*All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you*” (John 16:15). Thus, Jesus Christ Himself becomes your

righteousness, sanctification and salvation. *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”* (1 Cor. 1:30).

2- A time has come when not one man was found capable of leading the people. Thus Deborah took over leadership of the battle, through her faith in the work of the Spirit of God within her (Jud. 4:5).

God works with the priest and congregation, man and woman, aged person and child, rich and poor, talented people and ones who think themselves less talented. The Spirit of God uses every soul that interacts with Him and leans on Him.

Do not seek high ranks even in Church. For it is not the place that grants you spiritual success, but rather your exhilaration by the Spirit of God dwelling within you and reacting with you.

3- Jephthah was the son of a harlot, thus his brethren thrust him out, that he may not inherit in his father’s house. He fled away and vain men were gathered to him, and they went out with him (Jud.11). Then the Spirit of God came upon Jephthah (Judges11:29), thus he grew to be a living ruler serving all people. How wonderful is the Spirit of God, who aims to work with everyone even with those who are driven outside the camp!

Probably when one reads the story of Jephthah he feels low hearted! For although he was deserved to be cast out, still the Spirit of God used him, to make out of him a special successful leader of the people, through God’s work within him.

When St. Paul the Apostle felt that he was cast outside the camp, he was glad, for he saw his Christ crucified outside Jerusalem, thus he said: *“Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach”* (Heb.13:13).



Spirit Of Power, Strengthen Me !

How marvelous is Your love and work, dear God!
You grant me Your Spirit, the Spirit of Power,
in order to restore my dignity, and my authority!

Bestow on me Your Spirit and I will fear nothing,
even if a whole army is encompassed against me!
And even if the whole world turns against me,
I will fear no evil!

Neither will I be perturbed if Satan aims his arrows at me!
As You are my Strength, my Protector, and my Victory!

By Your Spirit You destroy my weakness,
to grant me Your strength.

You look at my orphanhood,
and grant me Your Fatherhood.

You remove all my sins, in order to give me Yourself,
the Spirit of Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption!

When the world is gloomy in my sight,
when I feel downcast, and depressed, because of my
weaknesses,

when I am attacked with hopelessness,
because of my diminished capabilities,
You enlighten my life with Your Spirit,
and carry me as on dove's wings to heavens itself.

And kindle the innermost depths of my being with Your grace,
so that by Jesus Christ I can do anything!

I confess to You that I am weak and sinful,
and I thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit,
the Spirit of holiness and authority!
To You is the glory, O Holy One!



*STIRRING UP THE GIFTS. . .***ENJOY CONSTANT RENEWAL**

DO NOT NEGLECT THE GIFT THAT IS IN YOU!

St. Paul's advice to his beloved disciple Timothy is, "*Do not neglect the gift that is in you*" (1 Tim. 4:14). This is also an advice for us. God has sent His Holy Spirit to distribute various gifts to His people. St. Paul says, "*for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills*" (1 Cor. 12:8,11).

Two factors have to be considered:

1. It is definite that the Holy Spirit has granted you with one or more gifts for your spiritual growth, and for the sake of helping others. He is ready to disclose those gifts to you, stir them up and nourish them within you.

2. God does not reward you according to what kind of gifts you have, or how important they are, but He rather rewards you according to your honesty in stirring up these gifts! God considers your cooperation with the Holy Spirit and how you apply your gifts to good use.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS?

Ask God to reveal His gifts to you. He who has given you, will generously reveal them to you.

Start with fervent **prayers!** Offer God your love, and remember He has loved you first! Show this love in your deeds and treatment of others, even to those who annoy you. God will then open your eyes and you will perceive the capabilities which He has given you, and your true role in witnessing to Him.

By your quiet meditation on the word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to enter the innermost depths of your being. He will then illuminate your vision, and you will discover God's precious gifts, and feel glad of possessing them. Thus all your life will be led according to His will!

Start with simple and easy deeds in your church life and your treatment of others. For the Lord said to the faithful servant; "*you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things*" (Matt. 25:23). Try to come closer to God by walking in the path of His commandments. He will then come closer to you, but rather dwell within you, hold your hands, and lead your way to the path of righteousness.

FEW PRACTICAL HINTS

- ✠ Pray for others, each by his name if possible. Practice prostration for the sake of their salvation, especially those who annoy you, or those who are sinful and are living a debased life.
- ✠ Look after your friends and colleagues, and try to invite them to a new life with Jesus and to partake with you the church life, which is inflamed by the Spirit.
- ✠ Substitute your personal presents and visits to spiritual work. Send spiritual books or pamphlets to assist them in their spiritual struggle.
- ✠ Be happy in the Lord, especially in the confinement of your own home!

DO NOT ENVY OTHERS

When you stir up the gifts of the Holy Spirit in you, be careful as St. John Chrysostom warns us against envy. Sometimes a person is attacked by a feeling of despondency and low self-esteem, feeling that he is not granted important gifts, as others. He then envies others and destroys himself.

God, Who has created you, knows what is good for your spiritual enrichment. He offers you gifts and skills which will help you in your salvation and for helping others. He, alone, knows what is suitable and beneficial for you. He is aware of what is relevant and adequate to your life. Never envy others for their numerous gifts, and do not feel superior if you are more gifted, as the gifts they, or you have attained is not due to your merits.

WASTED GIFTS!

Many attain spiritual gifts and because of their lack of honesty in preserving them, or their pride in possessing these gifts, they lose their alliance with the Lord. This occurs when they care for vainglory, without administering to their inner spiritual growth nor carrying to gain a new experience with God. They are occupied with what is external, and leave their inner being degenerated and corrupt!

Samuel anointed Saul as king of Israel. The Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied (1Sam.10). Moreover, he turned to be a new man... The prophet Samuel put his hand upon Saul and kissed him... But again he mourned over him and the Lord rejected him. He was preoccupied with literal formalities, and apparent service, without listening to the Lord's voice and inwardly meeting with Him. Therefore, he was told: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?!" for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel" (1Sam. 15).

How amazing was the apostle Paul, for though his service was successfully wide spread, besides that he was gifted with making miracles, also he enjoyed foreseeing an abundance of revelations and visions, still he was afraid lest he loses his secret fellowship with God. Consequently he said: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1Cor. 9:27). What is more is the fear, St. John Saba used to declare least he comes out only with his black clothes (i.e. his priesthood or monasticism).

CONSTANT RENEWAL

As I once spoke in my book, *“The Holy Spirit In Between The New Birth And Constant Renewal,”* about the gift of the Holy Spirit who renews our corrupt nature, through the new birth in the water of baptism... still this beginning of the new man has to grow continuously day after day, to depict constantly the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, we may come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

How can the daily renewal be unceasing? By being keen to edify our inside person through the Spirit of God, who overflows to work apparently. That’s what David the King and Prophet had done.

David was not preoccupied by ascending on the throne, even after getting the divine promise, and being anointed as King. Thus, even then he cried out: “Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps. 51).

Through this concern for renewal, the prophet realized the work of Spirit within his life. As an example, we remember what he once said: "He teaches my hands to war"...

Another example of Elihu the youth, Job’s fourth friend. Job’s three elderly friends were truly destructive sympathizers, as they discouraged Job, instead of uplifting him spiritually. They looked to the outside rather than the inside. Elihu, on the other hand, spoke to Job through the Spirit saying, *“the spirit within me compels me. Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent; it is ready to burst like new wineskins”* (Job 32:18-19).

Elihu responded to the Spirit of God, who was within him, and was able to console Job in his anguish. But joy (wine)

filled his heart, and he became like a wineskin about to burst, thus thrusting joy on all around him! By the Holy Spirit he spoke with great humility until he comforted Job. With sincerity and affection he said, *“But please, Job, hear my speech, and listen to all my words”* (Job 33:1). He also spoke with the spirit of praise, with joyous words saying, *“Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him?”* (Job 36:22)

As soon as Elihu finished, God appeared to Job, and there was obvious change in Job’s heart. Thus, he no more defended himself, declaring his righteousness, but rather he spoke with humility. As a result he was rewarded by luxuriating in God’s presence and gifts.

My friend, penetrate your inner being to discover the Spirit of God active within you. Pray that He bestows humility on you, so that you can work and stir up the gifts with full spiritual strength. Thus, you could come closer to people’s hearts and help their edification, as Elihu touched Job’s heart!



Dear Lord, open the eyes of my heart,
to discover that You are the Source of all good gifts.
Disclose all your gifts to me,
so that I may work by You, and glorify Your name!

O Spirit of God be a fiery fortress encompassing me.
Help me not to ignore Your gifts, but rather stir them up
in me.

Do not allow me to be conceited by Your gifts,
but allow them to be for Your glorification.

Receive into Your hands my heart and life.
That I may have tender feelings towards others through
You.

Not to do for the sake of any worldly glory,

but rather for the benefit of Your everlasting Kingdom!

Bestow on me a working spirit,
a Spirit of humbleness and love,
To You is the Glory, O my Lord Jesus Christ, and God
the Father.

8

CONTINUOUS RENEWAL

In all aspects of life, a person feels in need of what is new; whether it be food, drink, clothes, his relationship with others, his thoughts and ideas etc. There came a promise from Him who sat on the throne saying to us, “*Behold, I make all things new*” (Rev. 21:5) .

What does the Orthodox Church mean by **renewal** through her Bible and tradition?

Many Western missionaries consider themselves as the preachers of the *Renewal Movement*. In a questionnaire was presented in the consultative council between the EMEU (Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding) and the MECC (Middle East Council of Churches), under the title “The Spiritual Renewal,” they asked:

[6. Do the Middle East Christians feel a need to learn from Western spirituality?]

They didn’t give the Coptic Church a chance to explain her concept of *Renewal* in an orthodox way, considering what the other Orthodox churches say in that area is enough. I insisted to record our concept of Church Renewal.

RENEWAL IS A CONSTANT MOVEMENT

According to the Orthodox view renewal is a Constant Movement. Renewal in the understanding of our Church, is a constant growth and a joy in this new life.

Renewal is associated with a life of repentance,
with a life of personal worship,
with a life of communal worship, which is inflamed with the Spirit.

It is our behavior and our relationships with others.

It is an alliance with the celestial hosts and the saints.

It is witnessing to the Lord Jesus, and preoccupation with our salvation.

It is a new life constantly growing in Jesus.

Renewal is a life of experience with the Holy Trinity!

1. RENEWAL AND INDIVIDUALISM

Some Western Churches have gone through a very rigid religious phase, suffered of the harsh church authority, and literalism, especially in the Middle Ages. Thus some westerners searched for a spiritual renewal movement calling upon individualism. Some based their researches on the idea of attaining individual enjoyment in God's word, and an individual experience with Jesus, as if renewal is an individual movement!

On studying the *Book of Psalms*, a religious commentator remarked that it is a very religious and profound Book, in spite that its contents consist of praises intended for a congregational worship. In his tone of writing there was a certain doubt that fiery spirituality could be attained in-group worship!

In our **Orthodox understanding, renewal** touches the entire aspects of life. A worshipper does not separate his personal relationship from his communal Church life. Even in the confinement of his private room, a believer should always pray in a congregational spirit. In his repentance he should support others, in his downfall he should know that he saddens and influences many!

A congregation which is illuminated by the Spirit is like a furnace in which coal could be immediately inflamed, as soon as it touches the burning coal which in turn supports the censer as a whole. In the confinement of our room we carry the church with the fiery Spirit, which is in us. And in our congregational worship, we consider our salvation and spiritual maturity, saying with the apostle, "*I discipline my body and bring it into*

subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27).

In his love for the congregational worship, a Christian person, considers his personal salvation, thus grows in it and in his concern for his everlasting life, he supports others with him!

A person who complains, or feels boredom in the congregational service, has to search his inner being and find out whether he practices, on daily bases, in the enclosure of his own room, his personal worship rightfully and spiritually, to practice it as well among the group.

Both congregational and personal worship, compliment and support each other. In all his spiritual activities he would regard his spirituality as his first priority.

2. RENEWAL IS A DAILY EXHILARATION AND A NEW EXPERINCE WITH THE HOLY TRINITY.

Some of the Western Christians often mention renewal as an inner individual elation with Jesus. After some tens of years a new movement arose, focusing on the illumination of the Spirit (*Charismatic Movement*). Before, they used to concentrate on Jesus Christ, but now on the work of the Holy Spirit.

I ask, where is the role of the Father? It saddens my heart when the role of the Father is completely disregarded. His tender and infinite love, through which “*He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16) is neglected!

The Word was incarnated so that we could enter with the Holy Trinity in a personal relationship of love. He came to reveal to us the nature of the Father, to be acquainted with Him, love Him, enjoy an alliance with Him, and stay eternally with Him.

When He taught us how to pray, He directed us to address Him as our Father, as we say: “Our Father who art in

heaven.” Our belief in Jesus Christ is a belief in the Son of God. Our belief in the Father is that He is the Father of the Son. Through the Son we became children of God, who is our honor, hope, inheritance and glory!

Our belief in the fiery Spirit of God, is inseparable from our belief in the Father and the Son, as through Him we attain the spirit of adoption, for He presents us with unity in Jesus as children of the Father. I am not intended here to discuss a theological theme.

One of the Catholic Bishops frankly declared, “As a bishop I admit that my relationship with Jesus is much deeper than that of the Father.” And he declared that this was a result of a failing in his childhood Christian teaching, as the focus was based on the Person of Jesus Christ.

A Western evangelist once said to me, “It is a pity that we disregard the role of God the Father.”

3. RENEWAL AND THE WORD OF GOD.

David says, *“I have seen the consummation of all perfection, But Your commandment is exceedingly broad”* (Psalm 119:96). **Renewal** is the rejoicing in the word of God; it is not based on the renewal on the method of teaching, in as much as the approach to the spiritual intensity, under the guidance of the fiery Spirit. He is the One who reveals to us the Person of Jesus Christ, who is hidden behind the words, so that we may meet Him and experience His goodness. He then carries us to His Father’s bosom, so that we may rejoice in the warm of His unique Fatherhood.

Renewal in the teaching of the word of God is a constant growth in our daily experience with God. Unlike the Philosophers who look at Him as an absolute being, asking man to worship Him and submit to Him. But God who created the world for our sake, declared His Fatherly love, by sending His Son to render us with salvation, and the Holy Spirit to carry us

to the glory to partake of His kingdom. Thus we sing with David saying, “*With Your light we see Light.*”

Through the Word the Holy Spirit reveals to us the God of all creation, who presents Himself to uplift us to Him so that we may be exhilarated in Him, and He in us. Thus we say, “*My beloved is mine, and I am His. He feeds His flock among the lilies*” (Songs 2:16).

4. RENEWAL AND THE LITURGICAL LIFE

Many think that liturgical renewal concerns the service only, and how to make it more appealing to today’s society, who suffer from lack of time, and lack of concentration on prayers for long hours. We do not deny that time today is very different to the past, as man is racing with time! What previous ages used to accomplish in a month is now accomplished in an hour. The Church can be of assistance by considering the following:

(a) It is expedient that the Church considers the time of her children not by reducing the time of service, but by being punctual and not to tarry in trivial matters. On the other hand, the Church has to bear in mind that today man suffers from pressure and tension in trying to race with time. Thus, he needs to spend time in spiritual tranquillity. He needs longer spiritual periods with God, in order to enjoy inner peace, and to build his spiritual, intellectual as well as his physical state.

(b) Maybe what causes boredom in our worship are not the long hours, but rather the practice of these worship in its literal and routine method, void of spiritual depth and inner exhilaration. I would like to draw a few examples on this:

In Los Angeles I met an American woman whose husband was Indian, who was baptized in the Catholic Church. After attending a Liturgy one Sunday and a child’s baptism as well, she asked me, “How can my husband be ordained as a

Coptic priest?" I answered, "First he has to be a church member." Then I asked her why does she want him to be a Coptic priest, she responded, "We felt that we were in heaven!" She did not complain of the duration and length of the Liturgy, but she felt that the congregation prayed, with one accord, and a kindled spirit, which made her feel as if she was in heaven.

In the city of Queens in New York, the Copts hired a church for prayers. On Good Friday they asked the pastor of the church if they could hire the Church from seven in the morning to seven o'clock in the evening. He did not believe that anyone could persevere in prayers all that time. So he personally attended the prayers and commented to the late, Father Antonius Baky, "Now I know why all these people, including children, attend such prolonged prayers, as I personally have felt the strength of the Spirit!

When Father Bishop Kamel started his service in Los Angeles, some asked him to shorten the prayers on Good Friday so that people would attend. But he insisted on keeping it as it was and people used to participate in the worship, and listen to the word of God, with joy and elation of heart.

In St. George's Church, at Sporting, an American attended the holy Liturgy, at the same time he had an appointment with an eminent member at ten o'clock. His attendant reminded him of the meeting, but he refused to go. At the end of the Liturgy he commented, "I was greatly fascinated and strangely captivated. There was no way that I could have left the service!"

On meeting an Anglican Bishop at St. Mary's Church in Cleopatra, Alexandria, during the summer holidays, when the weather was extremely hot, he asked me what was the secret of the success of the Church in Egypt in attracting the youth. He added, "May I take a photograph of the church, as it is the most

attractive I have ever witnessed. You should call her, the *Church of the Transfiguration*, as it was transformed from a garage to an image of heaven!" This was the feeling of an Anglican Bishop though the church was suffering a difficult situation, from the small vicinity of the church, the heat and the crowd. He witnessed in her the **transfiguration of the heavenly Jesus Christ**.

The above are only a few of unlimited examples. Thus the need is for the congregation to practice worship with the fiery Spirit of God!

(c) Liturgy is a congregational worship, it is not meant for the priest and deacons only. Any Liturgy where the whole congregation does not participate, but merely the turn of listeners, is a deviation from the true function of the Liturgy.

Participation of the whole congregation, young and old, emphasizes the belief of the church as one holy Body of Christ, which comprises the spirit of congregational and mutual worship.

(d) Renewal in the Liturgy is administered on Scripture bases, founded on St. Paul's words, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." (1 Cor.14:15) When we pray with a certain tune let it be an assistance to comprehend the meaning. Let us employ both the spirit and the intellect, without separation, in our worship!

5. RENEWAL AND MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

When I attended the consultative council between the EMEU and the MECC, I got acquainted with many missionary's thoughts, also concepts of other native denominations in the middle east.

We have been hearing and still hear that the Orthodox Church is fanatic and enclosed. Some who accuse her of this think that renewal means to accept others, no matter what

teaching or strange concept they introduce. Neglecting that they extort church members and cause them to deviate from the true faith.

Many of our brethren's of Protestant leaders spoke of missionary movements, asking to give them a chance to work side by side, and through the local churches where they came to preach. They disapprove that such missionaries are considered "*parachurch*" though at the apostolic era this was not the case. But rather any missionary who came to serve at a certain area, was automatically allowed to join the local church and work through it.

I commented on this before the council, that some years ago you complained that the Orthodox churches refuse to participate in councils with missionaries, and here you have the same feelings as you ask them to work through the local churches.

I am sorry to say that missionaries think that they came to the Middle East to renew and reactivate the Church. In some other council I presented them some questions such as:

- Why do you bother to come to the Middle East for preaching there, while Jehovah witnesses, as I have seen, had spread there teachings all over Canada, and you have done nothing about it?!

- What about the numerous people who have been converted from Christianity and followed the Indian religion and others!

Some answered: The Holy Spirit instructed us to go to the Middle East!!

Where Christianity collapses in the United States of America and in Europe, we find the missionaries coming to work in the Middle East, pretending that they are doing a good job to renew the Church there, according to individuals.

It's not the place here to speak about missionaries. For we really long to see the one Church in the whole world. But let not the West think they are coming to teach the East spirituality. Actually through love and true faith we interchange experience with one another. For we can't fail that the East is rich with Christian tradition, not merely concerning books and volumes, but also in its worship and behavior!

Some missionaries think that the East needs the "*liberal theology*" to rescue them from daily troubles. Unrealizing the richness of the glorious Crucified Lord risen from death, who lifts man above sufferings. He doesn't extract pain from our lives but carries us as if on the Spirit's wings, declaring His glory to us, while we are still on earth.

I felt deep sorrow when one of the Egyptian brethren - non-Orthodox - stood in the midst of the consultative council, and spoke to the missionaries (about 100 persons from the united states and Europe) saying: In Egypt we are in need of the West to teach us how to serve the poor, and how to study the Holy Bible. He gave an example of what he beheld, about a camping of 15 of orthodox Copts who gathered to study the Holy Bible. He commented that they were thirst and disparately in need of any help, no matter what! How amazing is that bitter picture, this brother presents. I was obliged to comment on those words. I present it briefly here:

a. As an example, in Alexandria, each church but rather every pastor offers weekly huge amounts of money to the poor. Besides there is a committee at each church responsible to achieve the same purpose. Also another board of all churches in Alexandria.

I gave examples of Sunday school children and their teachers who have an active role in serving the poor. But rather I know some of the poor who give out of their needs to fulfill the needs of their brethren. We don't need to learn loving the

poor from the West, but actually to learn this from the simple persons of our people, children and poor!

b. Concerning the meetings to study the Holy Bible, I gave an example of such meetings that are held at St. George's Church at Sporting. Hundreds of church members meet at vespers, youth meetings, either for young men or ladies, to study the Holy Bible. Moreover during summer, youth go to camping for a few days to study the holy Bible. I was asked as well to give a hint on Pope Shenouda III's meetings, and meetings for Bible study at different Parishes.

6. RENEWAL AND CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

In our Orthodox Christian understanding, **life with Jesus** is a unified life. We do not separate our life into a life of private or group worship, witnessing to Christ's Gospel or dealing with others at work, either with friends, beloved people or ones who annoy us. It is one life which is daily renewed from all aspects, and each growth should be for the general good, not in one side at the expense of the other, but all complementary to each other. Thus **church renewal** affects directly or indirectly our practical attitude under any circumstances.

The most important aspect in the phase of **renewal**, is for the believer to share **a life of joy** by feeling the kingdom of God within him. A true Christian would run to Jesus in time of suffering Who will change his anguish to experiences of glory. St. Paul lived a life of joy amidst all his suffering. In his imprisonment, together with Silas, they used to glorify God at midnight *"At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them"* (Acts 16:25).

Thus preaching to the prisoners with great joy, and converting many (Acts 16:34).

Dear Reader, You need to test the joy of the Spirit as a predominate divine gift, while suffering, as He is the food of the

spirit! In Him you will enjoy permanent spiritual growth.

We cannot separate the **spirit** from **love**, as you cannot test the joy of the Spirit without true love. Unlimited Love is that which is not only focused on those who love you, but rather is extended to those who are against you.

Another issue which concerns **living behavior**, is your esteem of others, whatever their status, they should always be considered as children of God, in whom you see God's image. The love of Jesus is offered to all, without exception. We can't miss, how Jesus treated children with honor and deep love, teaching us how to treat everybody.

Here we need a **renewal movement** in our relationship with all members in church, from two aspects: Firstly, the understanding of the fatherhood of the priest and the motherhood of the Church. The priest in his fatherhood role represents a living picture of God's Fatherhood. Any deviation or carelessness in his role is a distortion to God's image. As a father the priest is to be attached and dedicated, to his congregation unto death, even further for he prays on their behalf. As a father, he should feel his need of his offspring, not to satisfy his materialistic and psychological needs but rather to experience celestial life, where love is abundant. As I said to one of the Anglican Fathers that the Orthodox priest's correlation with the church is comparable to a bridegroom attached to his bride. His fidelity to his one and only love, that he never thinks to divorce her or desert her, to unite with another church, together with his devotion to his people, will open the heart of the youth to see in him the love of God!

Second aspects, which compliments the first, is that it is not expedient for a priest to be authoritarian, but he should bow down, in order to carry every member on his shoulders with love to Christ. He has to be aware that he is responsible to present the spirit of creative love that never destroys his

children's personalities. But rather make it grow, so that they many enjoy the spirit of leadership and skill, if possible since childhood. A fatherly priest is he who places his children as his first priority, longing to see them even more successful than himself. And being keen that everyone knows his positive role at Church. Actually that's the real concept of spiritual discipleship, meaning to develop a living leadership, begetting spiritual children who carry different talents, probably different from the priest's, but following the same spirit, without putting them in one or the same form.

RENEWAL AND THE CONCEPT OF ECUMENISM

The concept of *ecumenism* was not originated from the **renewal movement**, but it is as old as the establishment of the Apostolic Era! Since then the church has tried to preserve the nature of ecumenical church as the one Body of Christ.

St. Athanasius felt that the division between churches was caused because of the difference in certain terms, he stressed that if the term held the same meaning in our intellect, we should not allow the expressions and terms to divide us!

After the separation that took place at the Council of Chalcedon, many efforts were done to achieve unity, and was about to be fulfilled except that in the seventh century, as a result of political difference, the East was separated from the West. Thus the East was completely isolated from the Western society, not only socially and politically but also religiously.

The **concept of ecumenism** is the acceptance of the one Christian faith with earnestness and zeal. Ecumenism not at the expense of the true one faith, is not the getting together of few churches, but rather their unity in one faith, through a **living spiritual renewal of every local church..**

I felt sorry when once I went to buy a church in the district called "Oakliegh" in Melbourne in the year 1987 from one of the three big churches that had united at that time. I asked the

pastor, what's the idea of unity? What's its purpose? He answered: "The number of members had lastly diminished so much, that church buildings exceeded our needs... Thus, there was a necessity to unite, so that we may increase in number in the one united church." As if unity was done to make a mass of humans or cover the weakness.

We hope to see a kind of unity based on a living concept of faith, as what we behold now between the two families, the Orthodox Chalcedon and non-Chalcedon. I lived the bitter struggling and serious dialogue, but it was faithful with honest intentions to acquire the one faith. They had successfully overcome the differences in terms used, as long as the concept of faith is one.

It is our greatest desire to see the church in the whole world inflamed with the Spirit, to practice her living Bible with one heart, one spirit and one faith, enjoying the work of the Trinity in all aspects of her life.



**O Holy Trinity
You are my joy!**

O Spirit of God grant me a heart inflamed with love.
Teach and support me so that I may not grieve You.

Carry me to the Father's bosom!
As I am no longer a slave,
but free to call with the spirit of adoption,
My Father Who art in Heaven!

Carry me to the Father's bosom,
Where I can meet my brothers and sisters.
Then I will see Him as Father of all,
loving all and bestowing on us His grace to love all!

Help me, O Spirit of God, to accept God as my Father.

Ask Him to change me to the image of Jesus.
And entreat Him to open everyone's heart,
so that they would enjoy His Fatherhood.

O Spirit of God,
take from Jesus what is His and give me,
hoping to come unto the measure of the stature of fullness of
Christ,

In Him I will find my nourishment,
my salvation and glory!

I will realize that the whole world is nothing
compared to Him!

I will then come in touch with Jesus' power,
that can't be defeated against the corrupt world,
world's troubles and Satan's sharp fiery arrow.

Carry me, O Spirit of God to the Cross,
so that I can see it as a glorious and divine throne,
to approach Him with joy to be crucified with Him,
so that I may be glorified with Him.

O Spirit of God, enclose to me the Church of Christ.
As it is the image of Heaven.

To enter the altar and enjoy the Body and Blood of Christ,
which was shed for me!

I am in great need for You, O Spirit of God,
To be in me and nourish my inner being,

O Holy Trinity,
You are my joy, my sustenance, and my glory!