

'Filled with His Holy Spirit'

OFS Monthly Formation

May 2023

Franciscan tradition:

In the life of Saint Francis, white doves would make an appearance, a seemingly heavenly sign. Certainly, at this time of year, as we are about to celebrate Pentecost, this is a good time to consider the Holy Spirit in the Franciscan tradition.

“St. Francis wished that his children should desire *above all* else the Spirit of the Lord and His Holy Operation”
(*The Franciscan Tertiary Manual and Prayer Book*, p. 195).

St. Francis statues,
(at the righthand and pictured below)
St. Francis by the Sea Church,
Hibiscus Coast



Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1274):



“The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord (*‘Dominicus character’*) ‘for the day of redemption.’ ‘Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life.’ The faithful Christian who has ‘kept the seal’ until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life ‘marked with the sign of faith,’ with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection”.

Ponder the words of our dear Seraphic Father, Saint Francis, from his Admonitions:

“Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit”.
(*Admonitions V, 1, FF153*).

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters”.

Genesis 1:27. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”.

Reflection:

Recently in the Easter Vigil readings you may have heard the reading from Genesis chapter 1. In the first few verses the work of the Holy Spirit is bringing order into chaos. This means that where the Spirit of God reigns, for example, in the family, workplace, Parish, fraternal communities, there will be good and right order, conversely, without the Spirit, there is chaos. Nearer the end of this chapter of Genesis (v.27) we understand that we are made in God's image, that this is what our spirit should reflect, the image of God. Have you ever noticed how much some children resemble their parents, that is, they are undeniably the children of those parents. How much more therefore are we called, as Franciscan children of God, to reflect our parents, our Seraphic Father St. Francis and of paramount importance, our heavenly Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is thanks to Christ's redemptive sacrifice, for, it is the "blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God", who purifies our "conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). To be the living image of God is indeed a significant challenge and requires a great deal of grace and subsequent conversion. It also has an evangelical dimension, namely to reflect this reality, "by the witness of holy lives and practical charity"(CCC 1273).

Church teaching: (*Rosarium Virgins Mariae*, Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, para. 23)

Pentecost "reveals the face of the Church as family gathered together with Mary , enlivened by the powerful outpouring of the Spirit and ready for the mission of evangelisation. The contemplation of this scene, like that of the other glorious mysteries, ought to lead the faithful to an ever greater appreciation of their new life in Christ, lived in the heart of the church, a life of which the scene of Pentecost itself is the great 'icon'".



Pondering the Pentecost scene - consider, could this also be an icon of Franciscan fraternity, i.e. fraternal communion in the Spirit? Notably during Mass, in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest prays that; 'filled with his Holy Spirit', we 'may become one body, one spirit in Christ'.

Image source:

<https://deaconmarty.com/pentecost-and-mary-mother-of-the-church-by-deacon-marty-mcindoe/>

Let us pray this 'Prayer of St Francis of Assisi for the Gift of the

Divine Spirit'; "O Almighty and Eternal God, most Just and Merciful, grant to us miserable creatures your grace, that we may always do what we know to be your will, and always will what you will, that, thus purified and enlightened interiorly, and so inflamed with the fire of your Holy Spirit, we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son Jesus Christ and thus arrive at the possession of you who lives and reigns, one God, world without end. Amen". (*The Franciscan Tertiary Manual and Prayer Book*, p. 202).