

April - Month of the Holy Spirit

“When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness.” (Jn 15: 26)

The month of April is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Spirit. In the Most Blessed Trinity the Holy Spirit is the Third Person and proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son and the Spirit are distinct divine persons but inseparable. Both are sent by God the Father.

The person of the Holy Spirit is referred to in various ways in Sacred Scripture. Jesus calls Him the “Paraclete” (Comforter or Advocate) and also the “Spirit of Truth”. The New Testament also refers to the Spirit of Christ, of the Lord and of God. Many symbols are invoked to represent the Holy Spirit. Among them are water; fire and the anointing with oil. Drawing on the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan the Holy Spirit is frequently depicted as a dove.

The Holy Spirit has been present throughout salvation history. He inspired the prophets who preached the Messiah and He brought the prophecies to fulfilment in Christ. The Virgin Mary was filled with grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus revealed the Holy Spirit in His teaching and bestowed Him upon the Church when he breathed on the apostles after the resurrection and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (Jn 20: 22-23) At Pentecost Christ poured out the Spirit in abundance in conferring His Church with its mission and thereby revealed the Spirit as a divine person.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and He is communicated by Christ through the sacraments. In particular, at Baptism He restores divine life and in Confirmation the Holy Spirit strengthens the faithful to bear witness to the Truth of Christ. It is particularly apt in April to pray for all those who have received or are preparing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation. We can all call upon the Holy Spirit to guide us as He is the master of prayer.

Prayers

Come, Holy Spirit / Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Litany of the Holy Spirit

Church Documents

Divinum Illud Munus

Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Holy Spirit, promulgated on 9 May 1897

Dominum Et Vivificantem

Encyclical of Pope John Paul II of 5 May 1986 on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the World