

*Devotion to and love for the Holy Spirit. We reach Him through our Blessed Lady.*

(1 May 1986)

**168** In the spirit of Opus Dei, veneration for the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit, whom our Father loved so much from the time he was a young priest, occupies an important place. A loving relationship which we, his daughters and sons, should cultivate in our own lives, if we truly want to do Opus Dei being ourselves *Opus Dei*, a divine work.

In the supernatural life, as St Paul teaches us, *no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.*<sup>1</sup> We are incapable of carrying out even the smallest action, of eternal value, without the help of the Paraclete. He impels us to cry out, *Abba, Pater*, so that we savour the reality of our divine filiation. As our Advocate, he defends us in the battles of the interior life. He is the One sent to bring us the divine gifts, and the Consoler who pours into our souls the *gáudium cum pace*, the joy and peace which we have to sow throughout the world.

So let us try and deepen our intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Let us, with daily deeds and efforts, renew our resolution to get to know him very well. I ask the most Holy Trinity, as our Founder used to repeat every day, that, for God's daughters and sons in Opus Dei (for you!), the Divine Spirit may never be the *Great Stranger* – which is what our Father used to call him with immense sorrow when he realised that most Christians hardly know him, and do not thank him for the constant graces he sends us.

**169** I would go so far as to say that, in the Work, we have in addition a special obligation to know and love the Divine Paraclete. Countless times our Founder insisted that Opus Dei's only aim is for all its members to sanctify themselves and do apostolate, practising the Christian virtues in accordance with the specific way God has laid down for us. In other words, the specific task of the Work is to prepare us to receive fruitfully the action of the Holy Spirit and to help the people we know to be docile to that sanctifying action. Do you see why we have to develop a very close relationship with the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity?

My child, do you often consider in your prayer the very consoling truth that we are living temples of the Paraclete? Do you, with sincere interest, cultivate your desires to know better and to love the Triune God who dwells in your soul through grace? Do you try to look for and renew little human devices which help us so much to maintain a constant dialogue with the Lord, to go about things in his presence and say affectionate things to him? This is a good moment, as the solemnity of Pentecost draws near, for each of us to renew our resolutions to converse frequently with the Holy Spirit.

**170** As our Founder used to insist so often: *We talk to the Father who is in heaven, repeating the words which Jesus, our Lord, taught the Apostles: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name... We talk to the Son, because we love him on the Cross and we thank him for having redeemed us. But we hardly remember the Holy Spirit, and he is the One who acts in souls which are in a state of grace. He is the One who makes his abode in us, making us temples of the most Holy Trinity, although, as there is only one God, when the Holy Spirit is in a Christian's soul the Father and the Son are there too.*<sup>2</sup>

The activity of the Holy Spirit passes unnoticed, like dew watering the soil and making it fertile, like a breeze cooling one's face, like a fire spreading its warmth through the house, like the air we breathe almost without realising it. These are some examples which Holy Scripture uses, when talking about the action of the Paraclete, this Sanctifier who showed himself to the apostles as an impetuous wind and in the form of tongues of fire,<sup>3</sup> and whom our Lord himself compared to a fountain from which would flow, in the bosom of those who believed in him, rivers of living water.<sup>4</sup>

One of the reasons why our Father had such devotion to the Holy Spirit was precisely this: he admired and was constantly grateful for the effective and silent work of the Paraclete in souls in a state of grace. And to such an extent did he allow himself to be moulded by the Sanctifier, that he

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 12:3

<sup>2</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, Notes taken at a get-together, 28 October 1972 (AGP, P04, 1972, vol II, p. 697)

<sup>3</sup> Cf Acts 2:1-4

<sup>4</sup> Cf Jn 7:38

became identified with Christ when he was still very young, and made his own this characteristic that is so proper to our Consoler. *My way is to hide and disappear, so that only Jesus may be in the limelight,*<sup>5</sup> was always his guiding motto.

**171** In order to become more familiar with the Paraclete, I advise you to assimilate in depth, and consider frequently, in your personal meditation, that prayer composed by our Founder as a young man, and which is a magnificent act of availability to the Lord: *Come, Holy Spirit! Enlighten my mind, to know your commandments, strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy, set my will aflame... I have heard your voice and I don't want to become hardened and resist, saying, "later... , tomorrow". Nunc coepi! Now! – lest there be no tomorrow for me.*

*Oh, Spirit of truth and wisdom, Spirit of understanding and counsel, Spirit of joy and peace! I want what you want, I want because you want it, I want in the way you want it, I want when you want it...*<sup>6</sup>

I would really like you to ask yourself: What effort do I make to respond to the divine grace which the Paraclete is offering me? I often heard our Father expressing this thought: *A deep, ardent devotion to the Holy Spirit has been a tradition in the Work from the beginnings: don't let it be lost.* Consider whether you are in tune with this reality, and you will discover that perhaps it is there that you will find the way for your life as an apostle to have all the effectiveness our Lord desires. In any case, listen attentively again to our Founder who wrote this for us: *A resolution: to "keep up", without interruption as far as you can, a loving and docile friendship and conversation with the Holy Spirit. Veni, Sancte Spíritus...! – Come Holy Spirit, and dwell in my soul!*<sup>7</sup>

**172** The month of May, which we have just begun, offers us a privileged opportunity for drawing closer to the Holy Spirit. How? By approaching our Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary with the piety of children. You must have often reflected on the fact that in the economy of salvation God has wanted to associate Mary in an intimate way with the action of the Paraclete. When the Son is sent into the world by the Father, he becomes incarnate *de Spíritu Sancto, ex María Vírgine*:<sup>8</sup> of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we say in the Creed. When the Church is revealed publicly through the coming of the Paraclete at Pentecost, we find the Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church there in the midst of the Apostles, a magnet which attracted the divine Spirit to the earth at that time.

If we want to draw ever closer to the Holy Spirit and let him act in our souls without putting any obstacle in the way, we should let ourselves be guided by the hand of the one who is in a very special way, by virtue of her divine motherhood and her fullness of grace, a living Temple of the most Holy Trinity and Spouse of the Paraclete. Our Lady leads us to the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit moves us to have recourse to our Lady, to make it easier for us to honour the Blessed Trinity.

So let us unite our devotion, affection and petitions to the Mother of God and our Mother, with a love full of self-giving and sincere piety towards the Third Person of the most Holy Trinity. That way we will fulfil the mission which God has entrusted to us more faithfully and effectively: to sanctify ourselves in our ordinary duties and sanctifying the people around us in our family, professional, social activities, etc. And the desires which fired our Father's heart as he prayed before Our Lady of Guadalupe one day in May 1970 will become a reality *sooner, more and better.* This was his personal prayer: *This month of May, which we are living now, will shine forever. I offer you a future of love, with many souls. I – who am nothing, who alone can do nothing – dare to offer you many souls, an infinity of souls, vast waves of souls, all over the world and throughout the ages, souls determined to give themselves to your Son, and to the service of others, in order to lead them to him.*<sup>9</sup>

**173** This very month of May, on the Sunday dedicated to the most Holy Trinity, the Holy Father, John Paul II, will ordain a group of your brothers as priests. What a good occasion to thank God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one sole God – for the graces and gifts which he is constantly pouring down on the Work and on ourselves, unworthy as we are. What a splendid opportunity to pray for the unity of the Work, with more ardour and gratitude!, because this prayer for our Opus Dei ought to be stronger every day; otherwise, what sort of gratitude would it be? Thank him for everything, my daughters and sons, including those things that perhaps at first sight

<sup>5</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, *Letter*, 28 January 1975

<sup>6</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, *Manuscript prayer*, April 1934

<sup>7</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, *The Forge*, 514

<sup>8</sup> Roman Missal, Ordinary of the Mass, *Creed*

<sup>9</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, *Notes of his personal prayer in the Villa of Guadalupe*, 20 May 1970 (AGP, P01, 1977, p. 792)

could seem hard or difficult to accept, with your thoughts on the Church and on the Work. *Thank him for everything*, our Founder used to repeat, *because everything is good*,<sup>10</sup> if it can be directed to God.

**174** My daughters and sons: once again I ask you to be united to my prayer. And, in order to obtain from our Lord what we are asking for, go with immense confidence to the Mary most Holy and continue along this way of getting to know the Holy Spirit, a way bequeathed to us by our Father: a wide and open path for souls who desire to live a strong, well-rooted piety, as is demanded of all of us in the Work. Invoke Him so that all of us who are God's children in Opus Dei may travel along this path to the end, and so that he may help us to overcome the obstacles which may arise along our way.

In this way, as I have reminded you so often, we will succeed in having the Holy Spirit cleanse us, satisfy our thirst for God and communicate his fire to us to extend the kingdom of Christ to the whole world. Allow him – I am saying this to you, my daughter, my son! – to penetrate always into your heart and your life: may he never find, in any of us, the obstacle of pride, sensuality, laziness, vanity... When we perceive his motions in our soul, may we prove as malleable as wax, so that the Paraclete can mould us as he wants, without meeting resistance or reluctance, and so imprint on us the firm characteristics of Jesus, our divine Redeemer.

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<sup>10</sup> St Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way*, 268