

## Catechism Class

**The Holy Spirit, the Church, Baptism, the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the Age to Come**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets...**

*O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, Most Gracious Lord.*

“We shall now examine what kinds of ideas about the Spirit we hold in common, as well as those which we have gathered from the Scriptures, or received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers. First of all, who can listen to the Spirit’s titles and not be lifted up in his soul? Whose thoughts would not be raised to contemplate the supreme nature? His called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds for the Father, right Spirit, willing Spirit. His first and most proper title is Holy Spirit...an intelligent being, boundless in power, of unlimited greatness, generous in goodness, whom time cannot measure. All things thirsting for holiness turn to Him; everything living in virtue never turns away from Him. He waters them with His life-giving breath and helps them reach their proper fulfillment. He perfects all other things, and Himself lacks nothing; He gives life to all things, and is never depleted...He is the source of sanctification, spiritual light, who gives illumination to everyone...and the illumination He gives is Himself...

Through Him hearts are lifted up, the infirm are held by the hand, and those who progress are brought to perfection. He shines upon those who are cleansed from every spot, and makes them spiritual men through fellowship with Himself. When a sunbeam falls on a transparent substance, the substance itself becomes brilliant, and radiates light from itself. So too Spirit-bearing souls, illumined by Him, finally become spiritual themselves...These are only a few of the many things we have been taught concerning the greatness, dignity, and working of the Holy Spirit, and we have learned them from the Spirit’s own words.”

*On the Holy Spirit, chapter 9  
St. Basil the Great*

“It is impossible to believe in the Father and the Son without the presence of the Spirit. He who rejects the Spirit rejects the Son, and he who rejects the Son rejects the Father...It is impossible to worship the Son except in the Holy Spirit; it is impossible to call upon the Father except in the Spirit of adoption.”

Chapter 11

“The Originator of all things is One: He creates through the Son and perfects through the Spirit...’By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the Spirit of His mouth.’ (Ps. 32:6, <LXX>)...the Word is He who was with God in the beginning, and was God and the Spirit of God’s mouth is the Spirit of truth who proceeds for the Father. (Jn. 15:26) Perceive these three: the Lord who commands, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who strengthens. What kind of strengthening is it? Perfection in holiness, which expresses itself in an unyielding, unchangeable commitment to goodness. Such holiness is impossible without the Spirit...it is impossible to maintain a life of holiness without the Spirit.”

Chapter 16

“The Spirit is said to dwell *in* created things in many and various ways, but as far as His relationship to the Father and the Son is concerned, it is more appropriate to say that He dwells *with* them, rather than *in* them. Those who are worthy receive His grace, and He works *within* them...Whenever the union between things is intimate, natural, and inseparable, it is more appropriate to use *with* since the word suggests an indivisible union. On the other hand, in situations where the grace of the Spirit comes and goes, it is more proper to say that the Spirit exists *in* someone...Therefore, when we consider the Spirit’s *rank*, we think of Him as present *with* the Father and the Son, but when we consider the working of His grace on its recipients, we say that the Spirit is *in* us. If we say, ‘Glory to the Father through the Son *in* the Holy Spirit,’ we are not describing the Spirit’s rank, but confessing our own weakness, since we show that we are not capable of glorifying God on our own, only *in* the Spirit is this made possible.”

Chapter 26

### **The Holy Trinity**

“As the Son’s incarnation and sacrifice on the Cross did not take place without the Father and the Holy Spirit, so also the salvation of each one of us is not worked out without the cooperation of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that is, of the entire Holy Trinity. The Incarnate Dispensation and the salvation of each soul are the work of the One Triune God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. One must plant this deep in his mind...

So, the faithful come to the Father through the Son. But how do they come to the Son? They come through the Father, as the Lord himself reveals: “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him*” (John 6:44). If without this attraction to the Son it is impossible for the work of our salvation to begin, and if this attraction is effected by the Father, then it is quite obvious that the first principle of the salvation of each soul is God the Father.

You should remember this scriptural truth and confess it. You were drawn to the Lord, who is eternally at the right hand of the Father, by the Father Himself.

But how does the Father draw us to the Son? He does so through the Holy Spirit. Everything necessary for salvation is effected by the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of those that are being saved. The Lord, who suffered, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, sent the Holy Spirit from the Father, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the true Church and works out the salvation of each one of her members.

The Holy Spirit came down to the Apostles. He directed them to the ends of the earth, He graced them with life-giving speech, He strengthened them in the faith. He sanctified and assisted the Christians in every good work. Without the Holy Spirit, no one is saved, or is it possible to be saved. This is why the Lord said: *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”* (John 16:7) It is as if saying: “If the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, does not come, I became man in vain, I died in vain, I was risen in vain. You will not find salvation, because without the Holy Spirit, you cannot be transformed, you cannot acquire the attributes of the saved”

When thinking of your salvation then, you should remember that you also owe it to the Holy Spirit, Who through the Divine Mysteries of the Orthodox Church is offered to you and guides and strengthens you on the path of salvation.

Do you see, now, how we are saved? We are saved in Christ Jesus by the good pleasure of the Father and the grace of the Holy Spirit. You should confess this and always keep it in your mind and heart...

The holy Apostles had understood this deeply, and this is how they expressed it in their benedictions for the salvation of the faithful: *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace be to you”* (1 Peter 1:2); and, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”* (2 Corinthians 13:14). The latter words of the Apostle Paul are repeated in the Divine Liturgy after the recitation of the Creed, and before the beginning of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist.

All of our holy Fathers, in their teaching on salvation, also referred to it as a work not of Christ alone, but of the entire Holy Trinity. They referred to it as a work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with the three persons of the Godhead constituting the one source of salvation.”

St. Theophan the Recluse