

## Holy Spirit ... Giver of Life

NICENE CREED

### BREATH OF GOD

This year World Environment Day coincides with the feast of Pentecost, the theme is *Only One Earth*. The feast of Pentecost invites us to reflect on the Spirit of God in all of creation:

*The Spirit of God, present in every aspect of the emergence of our universe, with every atom, and every distant galaxy, with every living creature from bacteria to dinosaurs, is present by grace to all human beings. This grace-bearing Breath of God leads the people of Israel throughout their sacred history. In the Christ-event, this same Spirit brings about the incarnation, sanctifying and transforming the humanity of Jesus, so that he can be the Word of God, the human face of God in our midst.*

Denis Edwards *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*

There is only one Spirit who is the source of all good initiatives to form a just and sustainable world today. We are all one in the Spirit.

Cardinal Walter Kasper writing in *God of Jesus Christ* says that the Holy Spirit is at work 'whenever something new arises, whenever life is awakened and reality reaches beyond itself, in all seeking and striving, in every ferment and birth.'

### LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

St Paul describes life in the Holy Spirit:

- ◆ One who leads *Romans 8:14*
- ◆ Reveals the depths of God *1 Corinthians 2;10*
- ◆ Activator of gifts *1 Corinthians 12:4-11*
- ◆ Bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God *Romans 8:16*
- ◆ The one through whom God's love has been poured into our hearts *Romans 5:5*
- ◆ Helps us in our weakness and intercedes with sighs too deep for words *Romans 8:26*
- ◆ Whose fruits are real and tangible, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control *Galatians 5:22-23*

Jesus spoke of the Spirit as a spring of living water welling up from within (*John 4:14; 7:39*) and proclaimed: it is the Spirit that gives life (*John 6:63*)

### MIDWIFE OF A NEW CREATION

Colleen Griffith reflects on Fr Denis Edward's metaphor for the Holy Spirit as the midwife of a new creation.



The metaphor is evocative, as midwives enliven those they accompany through their knowledgeable presence in times of vulnerability, moving in areas that are deep and intimate. Midwives are present in natural ways, seeing ahead of the birth giver.

Engaged and involved, a midwife is also lovingly "other". She is not the one in labour

or the one fatigued by the process of birthing, She is the one present to, for, and with the one in labour,

The involvement of the birth giver in delivering new life is never bypassed; it is focal and cherished. In these ways the Spirit is like a midwife.

Midwives bring birth givers to new levels of self-awareness and to clearer understanding of transitional moments.

Midwives intercede for birth givers as well. As a midwife, the Spirit both teaches and reminds (*John 14:26*). And the Spirit "groans for us, interceding on our behalf, with prayerful groaning that God's work in us might be brought to completion.

We are invited to participate in the birthing of God's mercy and justice in the world ...

*The Holy Spirit Setting the World on Fire*  
Eds Richard Lennan & Nancy Pineda-Madrid

### CALLED TO SERVE & PROTECT CREATION

Fr Denis Edwards wrote in *Partaking of God*:

*Commitment to the good of the Earth community can involve joy and solidarity, but it can also involve something like the dark night of St John of the Cross.*

*In a Christian vision, prayer and lifelong ecological commitment belong together. Edward Schillebeeckx has said: "Without prayer or mysticism politics soon becomes cruel and barbaric. Without political love, prayer or mysticism soon becomes sentimental or uncommitted interiority."*

*One of the insights offered by liberation theologians ... is that Christian political action needs to be grounded in prayer, in the mystical. What is true of commitment to justice for the poor of the Earth is also true of ecological commitment.*

### THE LORD THE GIVER OF LIFE

In the words of the Nicene Creed, the Spirit is the giver of life. This not only refers to the Breath of God at the beginning of creation, but continuously. The Spirit is the unceasing flow of the Breath of God that sustains all of creation, bringing forth life.

The devastation of Earth's ecological systems is the tragedy of our time and the most pressing issue we face as we look to the future and consider what our children and grandchildren will inherit.

We are called to ecological conversion as part of our Christian vocation. This is a grace that involves transformation of the way we think, see, feel, act and live. Our damaged Earth cries out for the renewal and rejuvenating energy of the Spirit of God as the Pentecost sequence sings:

To wash away what is unclean;

To pour water over what is drought stricken;

To heal what is hurt;

To loosen what is rigid;

To warm what is frozen;

To straighten what is crooked and bent.

**Holy Spirit,**

**making life alive,**

**moving in all things,**

**You are the source of all creation and beings.**

**Holy Spirit,**

**cleansing the world of every impurity,**

**forgiving guilt,**

**anointing wounds,**

**glistening,**

**You are commendable**

**You are Life.**

**You awaken and reawaken everything that is.**

*Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of the Church*  
12th century