

Holy Spirit 101

Other Books in the 101 Series

Mary 101

Tradition and Influence

Mary Ann Zimmer

Jesus 101

God and Man

John L. Gresham

Scripture 101

An Intro to Reading the Bible

William J. Parker, C.Ss.R.

Church History 101

A Concise Overview

Christopher M. Bellitto PhD

Liturgy 101

Sacraments and Sacramentals

Daniel G. Van Slyke, STL, PhD

To order visit your local bookstore
or call 800-325-9521 or visit us at www.liguori.org

Holy Spirit 101

Present Among Us

JOHN L. GRESHAM, PhD



Liguori

ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI MO 63057-9999

Imprimi Potest:
Harry Grile, CSsR, Provincial
Denver Province, The Redemptorists

Imprimatur: "In accordance with c. 827, permission to publish has been granted on July 5, 2011, by the Most Reverend Robert J. Hermann, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication; nor is any liability assumed by this permission."

Published by Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 63057
To order, call 800-325-9521, or visit liguori.org

Copyright © 2011 John L. Gresham

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gresham, John Leroy.
Holy Spirit 101 : present among us / John L. Gresham.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-7648-1985-8
1. Holy Spirit. 2. Catholic Church—Doctrines. I. Title. II. Title: Holy Spirit one hundred one.
BT121.3.G753 2011
231'.3—dc23

2011023399

Excerpts from English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana; English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Except as noted, Scripture quotations are from *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Compliant with *The Roman Missal*, third edition.

"Fresh Fire" from *My Journey to the Land of More* by Leona Choy. 2010, CHResources, Zanesville, OH.

Printed in the United States of America
15 14 13 12 11 / 5 4 3 2 1
First Edition

*To my children, each one a special gift from God:
Hannah, Sarah, Rebekah, Katie, and John Daniel*



I am also deeply grateful to Tim Dallas, Jane Guenther, and Mark Reasoner for reading this text and for their helpful suggestions. Thanks also to Leona Choy for permission to use her poem prayer “Fresh Fire.” Because prayer is so important to knowing the Holy Spirit, this book begins with prayer. Please make this your prayer each time you open this book.



Contents

About This Book 9

Introduction 11

Fresh Fire 13

CHAPTER 1: The Mystery of the Spirit in Names, Titles, and Symbols 15

CHAPTER 2: The History of the Spirit Through Sacred Scripture 51

CHAPTER 3: The Presence of the Spirit in the Church 85

CHAPTER 4: The Gifts, Fruits, and Charisms of the Spirit in Our Lives 111

Recommended Readings for Further Study 143

About This Book

The primary sources for this book on the Holy Spirit are sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the writings of Blessed John Paul II.

Scripture references are given in parentheses, and readers are encouraged to read this book alongside an open Bible.

The citations to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are also given. As an organic synthesis of our faith, the catechism is like a fountain of truth from which you can drink again and again.

References to papal encyclicals are cited by title and paragraph number. John Paul II's general audiences are cited by the date (month/day/year), except for his audiences on *Theology of the Body*, which are cited by paragraph number.

Introduction

When Saint Paul arrived in Ephesus, he encountered some disciples, but apparently noticed that there was something missing in their religious experience. He asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit...?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:1–2). Almost nineteen hundred years later, in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, Pope Leo XIII wondered if there were Catholics in his day who might reply to Saint Paul’s query in the same way. Of course, these Catholics could recite the Creed and say, “I believe in the Holy Spirit,” but the question is how well do they know the Holy Spirit? How intimate is their relationship to this divine person? It is still a valid question. Most Catholics know something of the Spirit but would like to know him better. This book is designed to help Catholics grow toward a fuller knowledge of the Spirit, a deeper intimacy in their relationship with him, and a greater receptivity to his gifts.

Knowledge of the Spirit must be experiential. You cannot study the wind by capturing it in a jar and bringing it into the lab for examination. Still less can we capture the Spirit. The wind of the Spirit does not sit still for a merely academic investigation. Those who understand wind the best are sailors, wind surfers, and hang gliders, those who learn to move with the wind, those who allow the wind to carry them over water and through the sky. Likewise, those who best understand the Spirit are those who surrender to the power of the Spirit and allow the Spirit to carry them forward in the spiritual journey of greater love for God and service to others. This book is

written as an invitation for readers to open themselves to the movement of the Spirit. I encourage readers to accompany their reading of this book with frequent prayers to the Holy Spirit, welcoming this “Holy Guest” into their hearts, their minds, and their lives.



Fresh Fire

BY LEONA CHOY

Veni Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit
descend on me with FRESH FIRE
flames of Pentecost, tongues of FIRE
fall upon and fill me
renew my stony heart to flesh
purify my soul
burn away the dross of self.

O Holy Spirit of God
Light Your Church AFIRE
transform us to burning bushes
yet not consumed, living sacrifices
touch our lips with glowing coals until
we are fully possessed by You
to speak holy words, think holy thoughts

We see reflected in Your holy FIRE
the brilliance of Your Manifest Presence
let the flames of Your searing love
blaze fiercely on the altars of our hearts
never quenched, never diminished
a perpetual sacrifice of praise
as fragrant incense rising to God's throne.

O Spirit, impart to me a burning heart
as I walk with Christ on my Emmaus road
fan the embers of my passion
back to "first love" intensity.

O Spirit, endue Your Church with holy power
to spread Your FIRE abroad
and ignite the Final Harvest Fields ablaze
to rescue rebellious mankind
from the kingdom of darkness
to Your brilliant kingdom of light
by Your uncommon FIRE!



CHAPTER 1

The Mystery of the Spirit in Names, Titles, and Symbols

The Mystery of the Holy Spirit

In the Nicene Creed, we confess our faith in the three persons of the Holy Trinity. We believe in one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Of these three divine persons, the Holy Spirit is the most mysterious to most of us. We have human fathers: biological fathers, adoptive fathers, or spiritual fathers, the best of whom point us to the mystery of our heavenly Father. We can get some concrete idea of what God the Father is like. While we know the reality of God transcends any such images, we can picture the first person of the Trinity as the white-bearded father in heaven, as he is often depicted in Christian art. Likewise, the second person of the Trinity, the Son, is accessible to us through many human images.

The eternal Son of the Father was incarnate as man, and we can know him as revealed in his human nature. We can read about his life in the Gospels, contemplate his face depicted in icons, venerate his image on the crucifix, and adore his sacred heart. Both Father and Son are accessible to our understanding and imagination in these concrete human images. The third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is another matter altogether. He appears as a dove, as fire, as wind. He is poured out like water or descends like rain. His presence is invisible, hidden, sometimes powerful, but often very quiet and imperceptible. When it comes to the Holy Spirit, we lack the concrete human images that help us to understand the Father and the Son.

However mysterious he may be to us, it is absolutely essential to our spiritual life that we come to know the Holy Spirit. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we come to have faith in Jesus Christ the Son, and it is by the Holy Spirit that we learn to call upon the Father in faith and love (CCC 152, 683). As “the master of prayer” who teaches and guides us into intimacy with God, the Holy Spirit is our indispensable teacher in the spiritual life (CCC 741, 2672). It is the Holy Spirit who heals the wounds of sin, renews us interiorly, enlightens us, and strengthens us for a life of goodness and charity (CCC 1695). We cannot live the Christian life without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Despite the difficulty in understanding this mysterious divine person, if we are to progress in Christian prayer and living, it is essential that we come to know him.

Last to be Revealed

The catechism provides a couple of reasons why the Holy Spirit is so mysterious. In explaining these reasons, the catechism also points the way toward a better understanding of this mysterious divine

person. The first reason is chronological. The Holy Spirit is the last of the three persons of the Trinity to be fully revealed and known as a person. As Saint Gregory of Nazianzus explains, “The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, but the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son and gave us a glimpse of the divinity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells among us and grants us a clearer vision of himself” (CCC 684).

In the Old Testament, God the Father is revealed. The Son and Spirit are not yet fully known. The Old Testament speaks of the Word and wisdom of God, by whom the Father creates and acts in the world, but the Word is not yet fully revealed as the beloved Son of the Father. Similarly, the Old Testament also attributes God’s presence or activity in the world to the movement of his breath or spirit, but the Holy Spirit as divine person is not yet known.

In the New Testament, the Son is fully revealed by his Incarnation as man. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father is made known. The Word made flesh is revealed as the only Son of the Father, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The New Testament begins to reveal the Holy Spirit. The Spirit appears descending upon Jesus. In Jesus’ final discourse, preparing his disciples for his impending death and resurrection, Jesus speaks of the Spirit of Truth, whom he will send to the disciples after his glorification. “Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his death and resurrection” (CCC 728).

The Spirit is poured out upon the Church at Pentecost, and it is within the life of the Church where the Spirit comes to be known in a personal way. “On the day of Pentecost...Christ’s Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as a divine person....On that day, the Holy Trinity is

fully revealed” (CCC 731–732). The Father was revealed in the Old Testament. The Son was revealed in the New Testament. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus says the Spirit is known “now” within the Church, where he dwells among us. With Father and Son, the Spirit is eternal and active in creation and history from the beginning. However, the Holy Spirit is not fully known by us until he “is revealed and given, recognized and welcomed as a person” (CCC 686). This chronology of the progressive revelation of the Holy Trinity suggests that we come to know the Holy Spirit as a person as we open ourselves to his presence and activity within the Church. It is as we “welcome” the Spirit into our lives that we come to know him in a personal way.

Divine Self-Effacement of the Holy Spirit

Understanding the progression of divine revelation, while helpful, does not remove all the difficulties that obscure our understanding of the Holy Spirit. The catechism provides a second reason for the mysterious obscurity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not reveal himself but is given to reveal the Father and the Son.

Now God’s Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who has spoken through the prophets makes us to know the Father’s Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself (CCC 687).

When he taught about the coming Holy Spirit, Jesus said,

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears....He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 16:13–14).

The Spirit makes the Son known to us and guides us into a fuller understanding of the teaching of Christ. The Son has received all things from the Father. "All that the Father has is mine" (John 16:15). The Spirit takes what belongs to the Son, which the Son has received from the Father, and declares that to us. He "declares" this truth to us, not just in words or concepts but by making us sharers in that truth, participants in the reality of new life in Christ. The Spirit enables us to share in the Son's knowledge of the Father and to enter into his prayer to the Father. "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:6). *Abba*, the Aramaic word a Jew would use to address his earthly father in Jesus' day, was spoken by Jesus in prayer to his heavenly Father (Mark 14:36). That word of intimate relationship with the Father is placed upon our lips by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites us to the Son in his prayer to the Father. The Spirit remains mysterious and hidden because he does not speak of himself but always of the Father and the Son. He does not glorify himself but glorifies the Son and, through our adoption as sons and daughters, leads us to the Father.

The Spirit is characterized by "divine self-effacement" (CCC 687). He does not draw our attention to himself but remains hidden and unseen as he directs us toward the Father and the Son. It is this divine self-effacement that contributes to his mystery. Because of this divine self-effacement, we cannot know the Spirit directly. We must come to know him indirectly, by the results of his activity. We come to know the Spirit, not by his own self-disclosure but by his activity through which he discloses the Father and the Son to us and makes us receptive to that disclosure through faith (CCC 687). We come to know the Holy Spirit by attention to the effects of his hidden presence in our midst and by welcoming him through the gifts he gives us.

The Holy Spirit and the Revelation and Realization of Personhood

A third obstacle to our recognizing the Spirit as a person is our misunderstanding of what it means to be a person. We misinterpret the divine self-effacement of the Holy Spirit by thinking of the Spirit as something less than personal. The problem lies in our misunderstanding of what it means to be a person. We must have our understanding of personhood illuminated by divine revelation in order to grasp how fully the Holy Spirit exemplifies what it means to be a person. The meaning of personhood is revealed by Jesus Christ. Christ, by his example and teaching, shows that the true meaning of human personhood is found in the sincere gift of oneself. It is through this sincere gift of self that one finds fulfillment in communion with others. In light of Christ, we can begin to see that the divine self-effacement of the Spirit is not the negation of personhood but its full realization. The Spirit is known through his gifts because the Spirit is fully and absolutely person, fully gift, known through his total giving. The Spirit is the divine person whose personhood is revealed in total self-giving. John Paul II describes the Holy Spirit as “person-gift” (*Dominum et vivificantem* [DEV], 10). The self-giving of God to humanity is expressed by the gift of the person of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, God gives himself to us in a personal way. In the light of this revelation of divine personhood as gift, we come to know and understand the meaning of human personhood.

The Spirit not only reveals genuine personhood to us, the gift of the Spirit enables us to realize ourselves as persons by giving ourselves to God and others. The Spirit is given to us to enable us to realize our own human personhood. John Paul II explains how the self-opening and self-giving of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit

makes possible the full realization of human personhood through self-giving. We learn from Christ the true meaning of human personhood, but we live this life of self-giving through the power of the Holy Spirit given to us by Christ. The triune God who exists as interpersonal gift in the eternal exchange of love between Father, Son, and Spirit gives himself to us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit enables us to discover our own human personhood through the gift of our self to others (DEV 59). Through all of his many gifts, the Spirit offers himself to us so that as we receive him as a gift, we might be transformed in giving our lives as a gift back to God and in self-giving love to others. We must allow the Holy Spirit to teach us the true meaning of personhood and to help us realize our own personhood through giving. Through the divine gift of the Spirit, we are empowered to make our own lives a gift to others.

To know this divine person better and to more readily receive him as a life-transforming gift in our lives, we may begin by considering the various names by which he is known. Scripture and Tradition make use of many different names, titles, and symbols to describe the mystery of the Holy Spirit. These diverse designations reflect the many ways in which the Holy Spirit makes himself known to us. Each name, title, and symbol conveys some dimension of the mystery of the Holy Spirit and his working in our lives. By reflecting on each of these, we can grow toward a more intimate knowledge of the Spirit and a more personal relationship to him. We will begin our reflection with the simple word, “Spirit.”

Name for the Spirit

The Hebrew word for Spirit in the Old Testament is *ruah*. This word has a variety of associated meanings in Hebrew. Depending on the context, the word can mean “spirit,” “wind,” or “breath.” Sometimes

these meanings overlap. For example, the Book of Exodus describes how God makes a wind (*ruah*) blow to part the sea so the Israelites can cross to freedom (Exodus 14:21). Later, when the Israelites celebrate their deliverance in a psalm, they sing of the divine breath (*ruah*) that moved the waters aside (Exodus 15:8). The ancient Hebrews use a term from their everyday experience of nature to describe the mysterious presence of God. God's presence is like wind that moves invisibly. Like the wind, God cannot be controlled. Sometimes God moves like a mighty wind, as when he led Israel out of Egypt. Other times, God's presence is experienced like the touch of a gentle breeze. Elijah heard the voice of God in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12). The Israelites also associated God's Spirit with breath, the source of life. The association between the Spirit and wind and breath continues in the New Testament. Jesus compares the Spirit to the unseen wind that blows invisibly and unpredictably (John 3:8). After his resurrection, Jesus breathes the Spirit upon the apostles, imparting the gift of new life through forgiveness of sins (John 20:22).

The New Testament uses the Greek word *pneuma* for Spirit. *Pneuma* had a general nonreligious meaning in the Greek language. It could simply mean wind, air, or gas. Our modern use of the term "pneumatic," as in pneumatic (air driven) tools, is derived from the ancient Greek usage. Some Greek philosophers used the word to describe a subtle substance suffusing and interpenetrating all things. In the Greek of the New Testament, *pneuma* begins to take on a new religious meaning. Early Christians built upon the precedence provided by the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which took this Greek term for wind and used it to translate the Hebrew word for God's Spirit. In the New Testament, the Greek word *pneuma* now designates the divine Spirit (and on occasion human or angelic spirits as well). With the adjectival form of the noun *pneumatikos*,

the New Testament takes a term that could mean merely “windy” or “gaseous” in secular Greek and uses it for the adjective “spiritual” to describe the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the soul. The Greek *pneuma* becomes *Spiritus* in Latin. Like Hebrew and Greek, *Spiritus* could simply mean “breath,” but when used in the Latin Vulgate Bible to translate *ruah* and *pneuma*, *Spiritus* comes to refer to the divine Spirit. The adjective “spiritual” originally refers to the presence of the Holy Spirit in human experience. From that biblical vocabulary derives our modern term “spirituality.” While often used today in a manner severed from these roots, the terms “spiritual” and “spirituality” originate in the New Testament experience of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Holy Spirit

“Holy Spirit” is the proper name of the Spirit (CCC 691). With the adjective “holy,” the Scriptures identify the Spirit as the divine source of holiness in our lives. Only God is holy by nature. Human beings become holy by participation in God’s holiness. We receive holiness as a gift from God. Mary is the model of a human being made holy by the gift of God. She teaches us how to become holy through receptivity to the Holy Spirit. We are sanctified or made holy by the Spirit. To be sanctified is to be set apart for God’s possession. When we consecrate a building to serve as a church, we are sanctifying it. That building now exists completely for the service of God. God sanctifies us as his temples by sending his Spirit to dwell within us. By the indwelling Holy Spirit, our lives are given over to the service of God. When a building is sanctified to be a church, we may have to throw out some of the old furnishings and renovate the building for its new purpose. The process of sanctification by the Spirit may be likened to gradually throwing out all of the old junk

in the building and filling it with those furnishings it needs to fulfill God's purpose. By the Spirit, we throw out sin and acquire new virtues. The Church Fathers speak of this sanctification as divinization. By grace we come to share in the divine life of God. The Spirit fills us with divine holiness. That holiness, which is God's by nature, becomes ours through grace (CCC 460, 1988, 2023–24).

The divinizing activity of the Spirit became a crucial argument for his full deity in the early Church. The Holy Spirit can only make us sharers in divine life if he himself is divine. The first Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 responded to the heresy of Arius (who denied the full deity of Christ) by affirming that the Son is one in being with the Father. The question of the deity of the Spirit was not addressed. The initial version of the Nicene Creed promulgated by that council simply said, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." The fuller description of the Holy Spirit as "Lord and Giver of Life, worshipped with the Father and Son" was not added until later, at the second Ecumenical Council, which met in Constantinople in 381. By that time, new heresies had risen in the Church around the question of the deity of the Holy Spirit. A group called the Macedonians denied that the Holy Spirit was fully divine. They were called Macedonians because they were followers of a bishop named Macedonius. Their opponents called them *pneumatomachians*, Greek for "Spirit fighters." When you fight against the Holy Spirit, that is not a fight you are going to win! Among the saints God raised up to oppose these "Spirit fighters" were Saint Basil the Great and his friend, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. At the heart of Saint Gregory's argument was that the Spirit could not divinize us in baptism if he himself was not divine by nature. It is because he is holy by nature that the Spirit can make us holy by his gift of himself to us in baptism and the other sacraments. Saint Basil contrasted the uncreated Spirit who sancti-

Also by John Gresham...

Jesus 101

God and Man

ISBN: 978-0-7648-1931-5

“Christology is an expression of a deep love for Jesus Christ. Not only does Dr. Gresham demonstrate this in *Jesus 101*, he models it so we can follow him.”

— Dr. Scott Hahn, professor of theology and Scripture
at Franciscan University of Steubenville

Other Related Liguori Publications Titles

The Living Church

Old Treasures, New Discoveries

Christopher M. Bellitto

ISBN: 978-0-7648-2039-7

Christopher M. Bellitto carefully explains how seven key elements developed through the centuries and became part of the Catholic tradition. *The Living Church* provides the historical context for the decisions, doctrine, and practice of the faith that were outlined in Bellitto’s companion title, *Church History 101*. Bellitto introduces you to a living Church and takes you on a lively journey of faith that is as exciting today as any time in history.

Church History 101

A Concise Overview

ISBN: 978-0-7648-1603-1

This easy-to-read volume answers the basic question, “what did the Church look like in this particular period?” for the four traditionally recognized eras of Church history: early, medieval, Reformation, and modern. Each chapter includes a map and timeline to locate the reader in time and place. All chapters conclude with discussion questions and a list for further reading.

**To order visit your local bookstore or call 800-325-9521
or visit us at www.liguori.org**