

The Holy Ghost, Yours, Mine (and Theirs?)

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The (Holy) Spirit in the Roman Church



Roman Catholicism¹: The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer...

Original Sin afflicts us, but does not ruin us altogether. It leads to death, but does not consist in our death.

402 Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination toward evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul." Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin. (p. 102)

405 Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: It is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin – an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence." Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle. (p. 102)

407 The doctrine of original sin, clearly connected with that of redemption by Christ, provides lucid discernment of man's situation and activity in the world. By our first parent's sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free. Original sin entails "captivity under the power of him who thenceforth had the power of death, that is, the devil." Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action, and morals. (p. 103)

Thus the presence of sin is not spiritual death, nor does it rob the sinner of his "freedom". It is merely a wound or a deficit of something needed. Baptism turns one again to God but does not deliver him unto perfect salvation, but to an opportunity to start again to fight for his salvation. The Bible indeed talks about the fight for faith, but does not present it in such a way that we could win that battle apart from the victory given us in Baptism. In Catholicism penance is the 'second plank' of phase of salvation which man has a part in winning and securing, in Lutheranism penance is the return to baptism in our on-going death to sin (confession) and resurrection to life (absolution) in Christ.

¹Source: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994

The Holy Spirit turns sinners to God in conversion, to a path where sinner must help save himself.

1989 The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is *conversion*, effecting justification in accordance with Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of the Gospel: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, thus accepting forgiveness and righteousness from on high. "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man." (p. 482)

1455 The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible. (p. 365)

1459 Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, **the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin**: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance."

1466 The confessor is not the master of God's forgiveness, but its servant. The minister of this sacrament should unite himself to the intention and charity of Christ. He should have a proven knowledge of Christian behavior, experience of human affairs, respect and sensitivity toward the one who has fallen; he must love the penitent with patience toward healing and full maturity. **He must pray and do penance for his penitent**, entrusting him to the Lord's mercy. (p. 368)

1477 "This treasury (of grace) includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission of the Father entrusted to them. **In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical body.**

So instead of giving Christ and the Holy Spirit pure credit for sanctification, that is, the good works that follow conversion, these good works become confused with the saving work done solely by Christ and his cross, so that good works done after faith become salvific, as Christ's unique works become salvific. Christ gives satisfaction for sins, the priest must also do penance for the penitent, the penitent must also do penance for his own sins. Thus Christ's work is insufficient since God also expects satisfaction from the sinner.

That being said, since man and God cooperate in salvation, the papacy and the hierarchy claim the right to also add their human traditions and rules to God's Word as a part of salvation. Thus human beings and their doctrine are also to be accepted by penitents under the threat that they must follow the church's rules in addition to God's commands, lest they rebel against God by rebelling against the church (read Luther). In addition to the Bible, the Pope is also speaking for God when he speaks according to his office.

882 The *Pope*, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and the whole company of the faithful." "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered." (p. 234)