

Reflections

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180 – May 1st, 2016

Mary, Symbol of the Holy Spirit

Father Kentenich, Founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, considers that the Blessed Virgin is the most significant, the most personal and the most beautiful symbol of the Holy Spirit. Why does he reach this conclusion?

It is part of the being, of the nature of woman. According to his thinking, the woman is essentially **“receptive attentiveness.”** She receives, welcomes the male and the child, and at the same time, she generously gives herself to them. And what is true for all women, is in a more perfect way true for the Blessed among women, the Blessed Virgin.

She is the gift of herself and receptiveness personified. And as such She is the great Symbol of the Divine Spirit because the Holy Spirit is, between Father and Son, receptive attentiveness. She receives from the Father and the Son and likewise She gives herself to the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is, therefore, in the Trinity the breath of love, love made a person, the attachment of love between the Father and the Son. But also with men, works of love are especially attributed to Him. He is the one in us who awakens, motivates, cares, protects and welcomes all form and manifestation of love and life.

Therefore the woman, moreso than the man, is associated with the Holy Spirit. She also is an attachment of love between the father and the children. She is responsible for taking care of life and of cultivating the love of her own.

And the unattainable ideal of that feminine and maternal mission we admire in Mary. She is God’s masterpiece. Mother of beautiful love, Mother of life and of all the living. Therefore She is the image, the most perfect symbol of the Holy Spirit.

And then Father Kentenich concludes: just as Mary is the feminine principle in redemption, the Holy Spirit is the feminine principle in the Divinity.

The person who lives in the Holy Spirit. I believe we all desire to be closer to the Spirit of God, to enjoy His presence, to live in harmony with Him. St. Seraphim, a great saint and spiritual guide of the Russian Church would say: “The true sense of our Christian life consists in obtaining the Holy Spirit. To pray, to keep watch, to give alms and other good works are only means for obtaining the Holy Spirit.”

The wind. The wind is also a sign of the Spirit. It encloses a play on words: In Greek (pneuma) as in Hebrew (ruah), the same word means the wind and the spirit. And that coincidence allows us to speak of the Divine Spirit with the metaphor of the wind. Jesus did this with Nicodemus: “The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (JN 3, 8).

What element best represents freedom, power, immensity, nearness, the mystery and the reality of the Spirit in our lives? Along with the image of water, the wind is the one which best insinuates the presence and the action of the Divine Spirit in our world. Wind which is breath and strength, breeze and storm, freshness and ardor, oxygen and life. An impetuous wind preceded the experience of Pentecost. And while the wind “filled the house,” the Spirit filled the souls of the apostles gathered there (AC 2, 2-4).

One day Jesus himself breathed on his disciples and said to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit “ (JN 20,22). The breath of Jesus is the Holy Spirit: strength and life from his own breast, power to forgive sin, to redeem souls, to edify the body of the Church, Jesus leaves, but his strength remains, his Spirit. The Spirit as the legacy of Jesus, sent by the Father, attachment of the Trinity.

Question for reflection

1. What means do I use to obtain a greater closeness with the Holy Spirit?

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