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St. Catherine of Siena



Catherine was born on March 25, 1347 in Siena, Italy, the 23rd child of Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa. As a young child, she received spiritual visions and offered herself completely to Christ. She entered the Dominican Third Order as a teenager and spent three years in seclusion, prayer, and austerity. Later, she would become very active in the political and religious affairs of Italy, working for peace and the reform of the Church. She gained a wide reputation for her holiness of life and a group of followers gathered around her. She recorded her visions of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory in her "Dialogue." In 1378, the Great Schism began, splitting the Church's allegiance between two, then three, rival popes. Catherine spent the last two years of her life in Rome in prayer and pleading on behalf of the cause of Pope Urban VI and the unity of the Church. She offered herself as a victim for the Church in its agony. She died at age 33. She was canonized in 1461.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Confirmation Prep, Session 6

Opening Discussion...

- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- What do I do with the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Topic of the Day...

- Wisdom: put spiritual things above worldly things.
- Understanding: understand the truths of the faith more easily.
- Counsel (Right Judgement): use judgement to live a life for Christ and to lead others to Christ.
- Fortitude (Courage): helps us follow the will of God, even in difficult circumstances.
- Knowledge: an awareness of God's plan for our life and a knowledge of temptations and sinfulness.
- Piety: our obedience to God and our willingness to serve him out of love.
- Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe): gives us great respect and awe of God and a dread of hurting the Lord with our sins.

Silent Prayer/Big Questions...

- What does it mean to me to have the Holy Spirit come upon me?
- Do I feel that I have a relationship with the Holy Spirit? Lord, lead me to this.
- Do I want to fully receive the gifts of the Spirit or is something holding me back? Lord, help me to un-wrap these gifts from you.

Scripture Reflection

John 20:19-22 & John 14:25-27

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

"These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

The Catechism teaches about the Holy Spirit:

686 The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation. But in these "end times," ushered in by the Son's redeeming Incarnation, the Spirit is revealed and given, recognized and welcomed as a person. Now can this divine plan, accomplished in Christ, the firstborn and head of the new creation, be embodied in mankind by the outpouring of the Spirit: as the Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

688 The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:

- in the Scriptures he inspired;
- in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;
- in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists;
- in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;
- in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
- in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;
- in the signs of apostolic and missionary life;
- in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.

1831 The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

1832 The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."