

The Role and Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Life

Tomy Kattampally

Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bengaluru

Abstract

The Holy Spirit, given to us in baptism, is the indelible mark of a Christian. This article explores how the “life-giver” Holy Spirit enables and empowers the individual to overcome the challenges of the present world. In the context of formation, spiritual discernment is a significant aspect of their vocation. The Holy Spirit is the paraclete, comforter, and the counsellor whom Jesus promised to be with us throughout our life. In conclusion, an individual bestowed with the power and freedom of the Holy Spirit would be recognized by the fruits of the Holy Spirit like love, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, and not by extraordinary gifts.

Keywords: Holy Spirit, Formation, Christian Life, Discernment

Introduction

The role and activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life is professed and taught by the Church since its very beginning. The Church in its attempt to preserve the patrimony of professing her faith in the Holy Spirit as “the Lord, the life-giver of life” followed the words of Christ. In the Encyclical letter *Dominum et Vivificantem* we read: “The Church, therefore, instructed by the words of Christ, and drawing on the

experience of Pentecost and her own apostolic history, has proclaimed since the earliest centuries her faith in the Holy Spirit, as the giver of life, the one in whom the inscrutable Triune God communicates himself to human beings, constituting in them the source of eternal life” (*Dominum et vivificantem*, 1986).

In the history of the Church, we notice that the Magisterium of the Church was always concerned about the need of teaching about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian, was publishing different documents such as the Encyclical Epistle *Divinum Illud Munus* by *Leo XIII* in 1897 entirely devoted to the Holy Spirit; the Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis* by *Pius XII* in 1943, speaks about the Holy Spirit as the vital principle of the Church, in which he works in union with the Head of the Mystical Body, Christ. The Second Vatican Council also emphasized the need for a new study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Pope *John Paul II* published the Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem* on 18th May 1986 as a remote preparation for the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000. Again the year 1998 was dedicated to the Holy Spirit and the purpose was to reflect upon the teachings of the Church on Holy Spirit, who was the agent in the birth of Jesus Christ.

Though we may be consoled by the concern of the teaching authority of the Church to teach and instruct its faithful the essential doctrines, in daily life we are confronted with a lot of confusion and misunderstanding. We have seen that the Church professes Holy Spirit as the “Lord, the life-giver of life,” however we see that the Church in the modern world is increasingly concerned about the material wellbeing such as; converting the traditional parish Churches to huge and modern structures, starting institutions, which can really earn money, celebrating parish feast and sacraments in an exaggerated manner, etc. Many faithful are really confused because they see the gift of the Spirit is working in people outside the official Church. There are also many people with the gift of tongue and vision, whose life may not be appealing to the general public. People are made to believe that Holy Spirit is at work only where there take place healing miracles. All these scandals arise because we lack the real faith that is expected from us by the Church.

Here I am not proposing new theories but it is an investigation into Paul’s letters to Galatians and Romans in which he speaks about the

role of the Spirit in the life of the faithful. By a close reading of certain passages from the aforementioned letters we can once again be reminded of the dynamism involved in the Christian life from its very beginning (baptism) to its fruition in the resurrection of the body (eternal life). Let the Holy Spirit come upon us and all who go through these lines, in order that sufficient light is shed on all to understand the dynamism involved in the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian.

Holy Spirit the Life-Giver

The Hebrew word for spirit is *rûah*, which is almost always translated in Greek as *pneuma* means breath, air wind or soul (TDNT, 1990). This word occurs 378 times in the Old Testament and they have got different meanings in various contexts. However we would like to take it as the life of God himself, the force by which he acts and causes action, both at the physical and at the ‘spiritual’ level (Congar, 1997). The Spirit is holy because it comes from God and its reality belongs to the sphere of God’s existence.

The expression in Gen 1:2 “the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters,” is to be seen as an allusion to the Spirit active in the creation. Just as it was at the origin of the old creation, so it is at the beginning of the new creation (Comblin, 1989). The same Spirit came upon the heroes or judges of Israel and strengthened them to fight for Israel and saved them from their enemies during the 150 years from the occupation of Canaan by Joshua until the institution of the monarchy (Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25). When Samuel anointed the youngest of Jesse’s sons, ‘the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward’ (I Sam 16:13). In the wisdom literature, the wisdom is brought so close to the Spirit that the two realities are almost identified, at least if they are viewed in their action. Wisdom also provides us with a very interesting reflection on the person of Spirit. The Spirit is characterized by its subtlety and purity to enter everything and everyone as the principle of life. Through the Spirit, God led his people and raised up for the heroes and strong warriors, kings, leaders, prophets and finally wise men (Congar, 1997). The culmination of God’s activity in the life of his chosen ones is seen on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles, who raised Jesus from the dead.

Holy Spirit the Initiator of Christian life

The Scripture as well as the Christian Tradition present Christian life as a new creation or a new beginning. The regeneration promised by Ezekiel 36-37 is being fulfilled in the life of a Christian through baptism when he attains the membership to the divine family. Irenaeus says “Baptism gives us the grace of new birth in God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit” (Turner, 1996). We attain the sonship of God by the work of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Christian is both born and adopted into the family of God (Gal 4:6). Holy Spirit was not only involved in the creation of the material universe, and in the virgin birth of Christ, but also in the regeneration of the believer (Williams, 1980). The Acts of the apostles which testify to the beginning of the Church is proof that the era of the Church began with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem, together with Mary, the Lord’s mother (Acts 1:14). The apostles who were left orphans after the departure of the Lord, felt capable of fulfilling the mission entrusted to them because the Holy Spirit worked in them (*Dominum et vivificantem*, 1986).

The Christian life which is threatened by a number of modern challenges needs to define its roots and establish its boundaries. For the revival of the religious life, Vatican Council II advocated a going back to its roots in order that they would revitalize their existence in the world (*Perfectae Caritatis*, 1965). The members of the Church, called to live the faith do have a number of challenges from within and from outside. It is a sad reality that they are not really aware of Church’s power points that they struggle hard to solve the problems that they encounter in daily life.

St. Paul was so sad about what happened in the Church of Galatia asked them a question “Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (Gal 3:3). The Church was facing trouble in which the Gentile Christians were asked to follow Jewish customs like circumcision and other demands of the law. The Jewish Christians who were fanatics (Judaizers) for the observance of the law preached a Gospel different from that Paul preached. For them Paul was not an authentic Apostle. For them every Gentile Christian had to be circumcised in order to become full partners in Israel. Paul’s letter responds in the sharpest manner to those who find this “other gospel” attractive, arguing that

Gentile Christians must not take on the observance of the law. Paul's strategy in dealing with this problem is by guiding them and convincing them about the origins of their Christian life. For Paul the Christian life starts with Baptism which is administered in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Paul seems to be so discouraged because of his converts' lack of spiritual discernment in not perceiving the contradiction and imminent disaster of their own situation. Two antitheses are set out in Paul's exhortation: that of beginning and completing and that of the spirit versus the flesh. The adverbial participle *enarxamenoι* (becoming) being both aorist and temporal must refer only to the moment of becoming Christian (Longenecker, 1990). The main point of Paul's rhetorical question here, however, has to do with the incongruity of beginning one's Christian life on one basis (with the spirit) and then shifting somewhere in progress to another basis (human effort). What Paul wants to communicate is that the Christian life is one that starts, is maintained, and comes to culmination only through the dependence on the activity of God's Spirit. If the Church starts its life with the indwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful it must be foolish to try to attain perfection through mere observance of the law which is concerned only about the externalities.

Many people enter religious orders with noble intentions however once they become the part of the established systems, seek after power and security. It is because they are distanced from the very purpose of their vocation. The parish priest who is too much concerned about the construction work and material wellbeing of the parish is automatically put to disappointment and dissatisfaction because he forgets the original purpose of his ministry. There is a general feeling in the Church that it is to be renewed and it must go to its original spirit. It is consoling that a lot of people are becoming aware of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life, especially through Charismatic renewal. However there are a number of deviations in such movements due to some of the materialistic influence in such movements, namely; self-projection, craving for monetary benefits, ignorance about the teachings of the Church, etc. Like the Galatian Church the Church in the present world also has a number of problems like different sects teaching a Gospel different from the teaching of the official Church. There is currently a mass exodus from

the mainline Churches to the New Religious Movements and Pentecostal Churches, whose stock in trade is to preach the Gospel of prosperity and emphasize miracles, especially healing (Udoette, 2007). For addressing any such problems the members of Church must acknowledge the role of the Holy Spirit in the constitution of the Church and must be docile to the aspirations of the Spirit without any fail in solving the problems that are part of its existence in the world.

Holy Spirit- The Real Guide in the Christian life

The beginning of Christian life which is marked by the descent of the Holy Spirit is to be continued with the guidance of the Spirit. Paul in his letter to the Galatians and Romans speaks about the struggle each person is undergoing “What the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want” (Gal 5:17; Rom 7:14-24). Man/woman is being made up of body and spirit, has a certain tension, a certain struggle of tendencies between the “spirit” and the “flesh.” This is part of everyday experience. That is why the apostle writes “Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness... drunkenness, carousing and the like.” He contrasts with these works of the flesh “the fruit of the Spirit,” such as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:19-23) (*Dominum et vivificantem*, 1986).

The flesh in Paul represents man’s lower nature, the weak aspect of his being and the seat of passion that sometimes frustrates the effort to live a life pleasing to God. Sin is attributed to the flesh, which sedates man’s moral faculty and causes him to miss the integrity in his life. The force of the flesh is the force of evil and sin and is so strong that it lays hold on man and subjects him to his own desires. It is the bearer of sinful desires and sinful feelings that contradict God and his Spirit. The flesh is so powerful that it deprives man of good reason and the moral capacity to do good even when he has the goodwill to do it. Paul sees it as a kind of personal force that distracts man from his good intentions and renders him incapable of doing the good things he would have loved to do. Therefore the force of the flesh is such that it makes a man frail and liable to temptation leading him to sin (Udoette, 2007).

Paul makes use of the word “spirit” in two senses. On the one hand, it refers to the human spirit (I Thess 5:23). Spirit in this sense refers to the willing and knowing self, that aspect of the human personality that is open to receive the Spirit of God. On the other hand, it refers to Spirit of God, given to him at baptism (I Cor 12:13; I Cor 3:16; Rome 8:14). Paul uses different terms for expressing the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person. 1) Deposit: The Greek word for deposit is *arrabon*. Paul has borrowed this from trade and commerce which signifies an advanced payment for goods and services with the guarantee that whatever remained would be paid. The Spirit of God which God has deposited in man is a guarantee that man will one day share fully in the life of God. 2) Seal: The Greek verb to seal is *sphragizein*. The sealing is done on things or on animals with a sign, figure, letter or words, or combination of these. This is the identifying mark that would convey the message to whom it belongs (Levison, 2009). The implication is that the Christian is sealed or stamped with the Holy Spirit of God (Eph 1:13-14) (Okwuegbu, 2008).

The postpositive conjunction “for” is used in a confirmatory and an explanatory fashion, confirming the opposition of flesh and Spirit stated in the preceding verse (Gal 5:16) and explains why that opposition exists. The present tense of the verb *antikeitai* which means ‘they are in opposition’ shows an ongoing opposition of the flesh and the spirit. The final clause of the statement which is expressed as a purpose clause doesn’t express the divine purpose but the purpose of both the flesh and the Spirit (Longenecker, 1990). The thesis of Paul is that when the flesh seeks to please itself, the spirit seeks to please God. As Galatians were caught up in warfare each individual is torn between the force of the flesh and the Spirit. The result is that one must align either with the flesh or with the Spirit. If one aligns with the flesh then he/she will be opting for the world and if he/she aligns with the spirit then he will be opting for God.

The resistance to the Spirit in the modern world is accelerated because of a number of external influences like media, distortion of values, financial wellbeing as well as financial crisis, etc. The encyclical letter *Dominum et vivificantem* calls the whole body of such influences as materialism, both in its theoretical form as a system of thought, and in

its practical form: as a method of interpreting and evaluating facts, and likewise as a program of corresponding conduct. In principle and in fact, materialism radically excludes the presence and action of God, who is Spirit, in the world and above all in man. The order of values and the aims of action which it describes are strictly bound to a reading of the whole of reality as “matter.” Therefore materialism is the systematic and logical development of that “resistance” and opposition condemned by Paul with the words: “The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit” (*Dominum et vivificantem*, 1986).

Challenges for a Life in the Spirit Today

The challenges can be identified as the desires of the flesh according to Saint Paul. They are put under four headings such as 1) Sexual Deviations, 2) Religious Deviations, 3) Vices against Unity and 4) Vices of Self-Indulgence. The thrust of this section is to have a look at some of the vices of the present generation.

Sexual Deviations. A reflection on all the vices described by Paul reveals that the modern world has all of them with higher intensity. The use of Greek adjective, *phanera* (manifest) to qualify the vices indicates that such works are open, self-evident, clear and well known to everyone (Zerwick & Grosvenor, 1988). It is again striking to note that the sexual sins appear first in the list which expresses a primacy over all other vices. The sexual sins listed in the catalog are three. They are adultery, impurity, and licentiousness. Anybody who is an addict to sexual deviations does suffer a lot in the process of their integral growth. The tension he/she undergoes is very acute that he/she is made mentally sick. Very easy access to pornographic channels, pictures, etc. adds a lot to such kind of tendencies in the modern world. Inquiry of the telecommunication department brings out shocking news for the parents and teachers where they are told that the students aged less than 10 years are caught for watching obscene pictures. The members of the Legislative assembly are even charged with such immoral activities during the business hours in the assembly. If somebody is addicted to such sexual deviations then an integrated life becomes impossible. Sexual deviations in family life ultimately lead to crucial family problems leading to divorces, sometimes even to murder and committing suicide. As it is the natural inclination of the flesh to go after its desires a serious effort from the part of the

individual is needed for solving such problems. There is no doubt that mere physical discipline cannot help one to overcome such deviations.

The solution St. Paul suggests for any such deviation is “Live by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). The Greek verb used for expressing the idea of living by the spirit is *peripateo* which literally means “go about” or “walk-around”. Paul uses this frequently and it has got a figurative meaning namely, “live” or “conduct” (Rom 6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 14:15). The verb takes such meaning from the Hebrew verb *halak*. In the letter to Galatians the exact verb is used only in 5:16 we do see the synonymous expressions in v 18 as “be led by the Spirit” and in v 25 as “keep in step with the Spirit”. The present tense of the verb denotes an expectation to action which is to be continued always, that is, experiencing the presence of the Spirit’s working in the day to day activities.

Religious Deviations. They are two religious deviations namely, idolatry and sorcery. They are sins that either contradict or challenge the existence of God either through worshipping idols or engaging in the practice of sorcery. We have already seen that present generation is easily tempted to adhere to materialistic tendencies. People have a normal bend of mind to substitute things of this world in the place of God. As profit-making or money-making turns to be the goal of any activity he is not concerned about the means through which the goal is achieved. The faith seems to be very shaky as he/she is confronted with the bare realities of life. As a person is provided with all the comforts of life, he/she is in an unrealistic world enjoying all the pleasures of life. However such persons are collapsed when he/she encounters certain tragedies which would affect the very existence like, sickness or loss of relatives or beloved ones due to accidents or natural calamities. In the Indian context there a number of people who resort to black magic practices, visiting temples of other religions or getting assistance from the priest of non-Christian religions to perform certain rituals for pleasing God.

One of the main temptations in religious life is to crave for power and security. God-seekers become self-seekers. The irony is that they are never satisfied by holding any of such offices. Human beings declaring independence from the power of God are simply putting themselves under the power of sin. The consequences of such refusal are indicated

in Rom 1:18-32. The first among them can be articulated as religious deviation. The first outcome of the refusal to worship God leads to worship of humans and animals (Rom 1:23, 25). Dunn (1998) says that “the basic instinct of the creature to invest ultimate significance in God’s creative power cannot be wholly suppressed, but only perverted” (Dunn, 1998). God can always be replaced by gods of human making. Instead of attributing ultimate significance to God, human beings can readily give that significance to what they are more inclined.

The Holy Spirit which is given to a believer in baptism helps a person to proclaim God as the creator and preserver of life. Paul uses the imagery of Judah and Tamar for explaining the concept of pledge and seal. Judah and Tamar occupy a pivotal point in a long lineage of promise. Judah was descended from Abraham, David from Judah and Tamar, and Jesus from David. The promise of God is forwarded in this most remarkable and unexpected story (Levison, 2009). The Holy Spirit, whose reception effected sonship to God (Rom 8:14–17), is only the beginning (“first fruits”) of a harvest of salvation which remains incomplete until the resurrection of the body (Rom 8:11, 23) (Dunn, 1998). God who keeps the promises in a very unfavorable condition will also fulfill his promise in the life of all the believers as he has promised through his son (Dunn, 1998). The hope in God’s providence must inspire a person to trust completely in the providence of God instead of placing his trust in the things of this world.

Vices against Unity. The next set of vices is enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, and envy. All of them allude to some kind of sin against the unity that is expected from the Christian community. Due to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit all the believers are joined to Christ as one body, accepting God as the Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all (Eph 4:3-6; I Cor 12:12,14). The desires of the flesh can entice the members of the community which will, in turn, can disintegrate Christian unity. Paul identifies a similar situation in the Galatian Church. The Judaizers were proposing a solution for the problem by relying on mere observance of the law which would only be externally leaving the internal attitudes without any change. “If you let yourselves be circumcised Christ will be of no benefit to you” (Gal 5:2). Ukwuegbu (2008) observes that “Although Paul’s catalog of

vices includes attitudes that could lead to a loss of the kingdom (Gal 5:21), their role in defining a reverse image of Christian identity is plain.”

Of the fifteen negative characteristics, eight relate to interpersonal relationships. Such attitudes or dispositions stand in complete contrast to the self-giving love of Christ and those united with him. All of them are the opposite of the type of freedom that involves mutual enslavement in love, which is expected from the faithful. A Christian should not be like a Jew or a Gentile who puts his trust in “the works of the law” and “the works of the flesh.” The attainment of Christian identity is possible as St. Paul says: “those who belong to Christ Jesus must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). In Paul’s view Christian life demands an intimate association with Christ’s crucifixion that demands a dying of self to the flesh and to the world.

Vices of Self-Indulgence. They are drunkenness and carousing. Man/woman can be said to be at his/her best when he can preserve the original dignity with which he/she is created. “God created humankind in his image” (Gen 1:27). By becoming a Christian, through the gift of grace, which comes from the Holy Spirit, a man enters a “new life,” is brought into the supernatural reality of the divine life itself and becomes a “dwelling place of the Holy Spirit,” a living temple of God (Rom 8:9). In the modern world vices of self-indulgence have succeeded in penetrating into man’s inmost being, into the sanctuary of the conscience where the Holy Spirit dwells. The original integrity the human being had, in the beginning, is lost when he is driven by the vices of self-indulgence. St. Irenaeus says “Glory of God is the living man, yet man’s life is the vision of God.” The man, living a divine life, is the glory of God, and the Holy Spirit is the hidden dispenser of this life and this glory.

Life in the Spirit: A Means for Liberation. In the letter, Paul repeatedly reminds the readers that the call to Christian life is an invitation to Freedom (Gal 5:1, 13). However Paul warns the Galatian Church that such freedom must not give opportunity for flesh. Judaizers thought that the reason for sin in the Church was due to non-observance of the law. As a solution to the then existing problem what they suggested was the strict observance of the law of Jews by all the Gentile Christians. Paul was not referring to freedom without responsibility; rather they had to submit themselves to one another through love instead of being

simply slaves to certain laws. Christians are free, but they must enslave themselves to one another by bonds of love. Therefore there is slavery for Christians that is determined not by the law but by love. In describing the vices Paul uses the plural form *erga* (works) in order to underline the endless multiplicity of sin, and by calling them ‘works’ Paul is stressing the fact that these manifestations are the things human beings do themselves because they are the works of flesh. When the virtues of the Spirit are listed Paul uses singular to give a cohesive and unified character to what the Spirit produces. The fruit is attributed to the Spirit because the Spirit is the foundation of the Galatians’ faith experience (Longenecker, 1990). As the virtues are fruit of the Spirit man/woman alone cannot produce them but must surrender completely him/her to the working of the Holy Spirit in his/her life.

The result of the indwelling of the Spirit in a believer is that he is “free” from all bondages that can enslave one’s existence in this world. It is on this ground of freedom that all the virtues of the Spirit would spring and flourish. It is not accidental that love is put in the first place in the list of virtues expressing the primacy in all other Christian elements. Paul might have intended that the rest of the list should be seen as expressions of the one all-embracing Christian grace of love (Dunn, 1993). Paul goes on to claim that love which is practiced out of freedom fulfills whole law by citing Lev 19:18 “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Paul was in a way reducing the Torah to the moral law. Therefore Paul was only rejecting the ritual laws and traditions but upheld the moral standards of the law which are to be practiced in daily life (Ukwuegbu, 2008). In Rabbinic circles, there was a propensity to identify Lev 19:18 as the single command that summarized the entire law. The command to love the neighbor was inclusive of those outside the boundaries of Israel after the example of the heavenly Father who is impartial to all. For Jews it was unacceptable, however Paul clearly states that the true fulfillment, the absolute realization of the law, is through love, and this love is provided by the Spirit (Ukwuegbu, 2008).

Holy Spirit as the Agent of Completion in the Life of a Christian.

We started the discussion with Paul’s rhetorical question “Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with

the flesh?” What Paul was implying that the Galatians’ progress to ‘completion’ should be consistent with the beginning (Dunn, 1998). This is made clear in Gal 5:5 “we by the Spirit, from the faith, are awaiting eagerly the hope of righteousness” (rectification). The two nouns, “hope” and “rectification,” are here used as synonyms, the second being an exegetical genitive: “we eagerly await what we confidently hope for, rectification at God’s hands” (Martyn, 1997). After presenting a long list of vices Paul warns the Galatians thus: “Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” The works of the flesh will call down God’s eschatological judgment and they will be excluded from the kingdom of God (Matera, 1992). It is through the active role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a faithful that he is able to bear fruits and thus equip himself for the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

The reference to two kinds of sowing and reaping in Gal 6:7-8 must be an allusion to eschatological reality. The first kind of sowing is to one’s own flesh means relying on the body namely, a materialistic attitude towards life. The second kind of sowing is sowing to the Spirit means relying upon the power of the Spirit rather than on the external forces. By sowing to the flesh one will harvest “corruption” and by sowing to the Spirit one will reap “eternal life.” The harvest of corruption then is eternal death and harvest of eternal life is a resurrection from the dead attained through life in the Spirit (Matera, 1992). Our inheritance is eschatological. The Holy Spirit is given to us in the present time as a ‘guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it (Eph 1:14). All this talk of hope, in the end, can be reduced to one conviction, to the certainty which the love of God engenders for people of faith. Those who grasp God’s love recognize that this love compels God, in the end, to keep the divine word, to lead those whom God loves to their destiny (Rom 8:28-30). This, of course, is the gist of Rom 5:5 “...And hope does not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Levison, 2009).

The work of the Spirit would be finished when the glory lost and the image disfigured by human disobedience were wholly renewed (2 Cor 3:18; 4:4, 6). The realization of hope lies beyond the confines of present existence (I Cor 15:19). The tension that exists between the flesh and the Spirit can be resolved only through the victory over death by the

resurrection of the body. In 2 Cor 5:1-5 Paul expresses his confidence that the present process of wasting away (outer nature) and renewal will climax in the transformation into the resurrection of the body, of which the Spirit is already the first installment and guarantee (Dunn, 1998). For in Christ's resurrection the Holy Spirit-Paraclete revealed himself especially as he who gives life: "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

Conclusion

From the above investigation, we have identified that any attempt for renewal in the life of a Christian can be affected only by becoming aware of the real beginning and end of it. The Holy Spirit which is given in baptism should be the differentiating mark of a Christian, living in a world of chaos. Holy Spirit the "life-giver" must enliven each and every aspect of a faithful so that he/she may not succumb to the whims and fancies of a consumerist society. This renewal can be made possible only through a constant relationship with the Triune God, which is again made possible through the help of the Holy Spirit.

In his discourses on the desires of the "flesh" and the "Spirit" Paul clearly distinguishes between a person led by the flesh and a person led by the Spirit. I feel that the features of a person led by the Spirit, which is described as fruit of the Spirit are still relevant today. They are love, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The best criteria for discerning whether a person is led by the Spirit or not is to make sure that he has got the above-mentioned qualities in his life. As members of the Church we should not be looking for extraordinary gifts in a person to prove the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which has been promised by Christ before his departure from the world came upon the Church in a solemn manner on the day of Pentecost and is still present in the world to guide and empower the Church.

The "helper" whom Jesus promised to the disciples before his departure must be the guide for a person torn between the desires of the "flesh" and the desires of the "Spirit." This is the context in which one feels discouraged and depressed because it is the struggle one must undergo each and every moment in his/her life. In order to overcome any such

temptations he must be completely free from all the bondages of this world, enjoying the freedom of the Spirit which is given to him in baptism. One is made free in order that he may love everybody, fulfilling the whole law by practicing the single commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” A person can please God only when he is led by the Spirit. The motive force behind overcoming this struggle is the “eternal life” which is guaranteed to all who produce the fruits of the Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit through the ever-renewing presence enkindle in all an urge to live according to the desires of the Spirit so that they may all reach the Father Almighty, the ultimate goal of their life.

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