

Session 5: Praying for Baptism in the Spirit



HEAD
Knowledge



HEART
Experience



HANDS
Christian Action

Session 5: Praying for Baptism in the Spirit

Introduction and Opening Prayer

You are all very welcome to this important night and I am sure that all of us have been looking forward to it and that hymn we have just heard was very appropriate and a good introduction. There is a prayer that you have often heard me say before, but I want to pray it again tonight.

Father in heaven, Your Spirit is a spirit of truth and love. Pour that same Holy Spirit into our bodies, our minds, and our souls. Preserve us tonight from all illusions and false inspirations. Reveal your presence, your word and your will to us in a way that we can understand. We thank you that you will do this, while giving us the ability to respond, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

In the last talk you heard about how to prepare to receive both the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. Shortly you will have an opportunity of asking for an infilling or baptism in the Holy Spirit (cf. Ephesians 5:18 *Be filled with the Spirit*). You can only be baptised in the Spirit once, but you certainly can receive many infillings of the Holy Spirit after that event. So for some, it is Baptism in the Spirit night, for others it is an infilling night.

When I finish this short input we will do a number of things:

1. Say a prayer of deliverance
2. Renew our baptismal promises
3. Prayer of commitment
4. Prayer for either baptism in the Holy Spirit, or a new outpouring for those who have already been baptised in the Spirit.

Jesus once said that the Spirit cannot be controlled:

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3 :8).

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Pope Francis has said:

"There is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills."

All you can do is to surrender to the Lord, as the saying would have it, *"let go and let God."*

- ◆ When you are prayed with, try to **speak in tongues** by making nonsense sounds. It is like a starting motor in a car helping the engine to begin ticking over by its own power. If you don't receive the gift of praying in tongues tonight, don't worry. It may come later.
- ◆ I think it is worth saying too that, on a night like tonight, **some people can be very emotional** when the Spirit comes to them. They may weep, laugh, feel they can hardly stand, etc. All of those phenomena are quite common. On the other hand, it has to be said that **others will feel nothing exceptional** and that too is normal – and it is certainly not a sign that you are not baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ One way or the other, we all **share a faith conviction** that we are being richly blessed.

At this point we can recall a text that we used earlier in the seminars. It is from St. John's gospel (1:33) and John the Baptist says,

"The One on whom you see the Spirit descend, it is he who will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

In the Jerusalem Bible, in a note at the bottom of the page, it says:

"This verse describes the main purpose of Christ's coming and Christ's resurrection, namely to pour out the Holy Spirit on those who believe in him."

In a way, you could argue that this qualifies as the **most important verse in the Bible**. Jesus was baptised in the Holy Spirit when he went down into the waters of the Jordan river. The Spirit came upon him with extraordinary power. Jesus wants to send the Spirit upon you in the same way that he received it. And where is Jesus now? He is **at the right side of his Father in heaven and he is there as the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit** and tonight he is looking at us and yearning to pour out his Spirit, which is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of love, on each and every one of us, in whatever way is appropriate.

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So, we can have a faith conviction that what we are asking for tonight is precisely what God wants us to ask for. **We are desiring something that is completely in accordance with God's will** and so we have that inner assurance – which we would not have about many other things – that tonight we will be richly blessed. Often, the effects of the infilling by the Spirit are only seen later, for example, in a strong desire to pray, new insight into the Scriptures, greater love for others, etc. I remember feeling much less anxiety than I felt before receiving the Baptism. So, the Holy Spirit is like a stone being dropped into a lake and little wave circles will start moving out. When the Holy Spirit is given to us, it will have knock-on effects in our conscious mind and in our unconscious and, as time passes, we will notice more and more effects of the Holy Spirit working within us.

So, I am just warning you not to be upset, disappointed or surprised by the differing responses that people will have tonight – that is all on the spectrum of what we would call 'the normal reaction'. Time will tell, and the whole purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit is to grow in holiness and to grow in the power to evangelise.

Steps of the prayer to receive Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Your time of waiting is nearly over! Now is the time when **God's great promise will be fulfilled**. Be relaxed, be expectant. Before we pray for each one of you to receive the Spirit we acknowledge that the evil Spirit may be trying to prevent us receiving this great gift. So we will pray a prayer of deliverance.

1. Deliverance Prayer

We will say this prayer together:

"In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of his Cross and his Blood, we bind up the power of any evil spirits and command them not to block our prayers. We break any curses, hexes or spells sent against us and declare them null and void. We break the assignments of any spirits sent against us and send them to Jesus to deal with them as he will. Lord, we ask you to bless our enemies by sending your Holy Spirit to lead them to repentance and conversion. Furthermore, we bind all interaction and communication in the world of evil spirits as it affects us and our ministry. We ask for the protection of the shed blood of Jesus Christ over each and every one of us. Thank you, Lord, for your protection and send your angels, especially St. Michael, the Archangel, to help us in the battle. We ask you to guide us in our prayers: share with us your Spirit's power and compassion. Amen."

I feel, as a Catholic, that I want to add a prayer to Mary:

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"O Mary, mother of God, pray for us this night that the Spirit that came on you with such power on Pentecost Sunday may come on us now as we wait on your Beloved Son and the fulfilment of his promise.

2. Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and empty promises?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today is given to you in a special way just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

I do.

Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The gathering of the faithful gives its assent by replying: ***Amen.*** (Amen in the bible means 'let it be so', 'let it be fulfilled'.)

3. Prayer of Commitment

We will say this prayer together:

Jesus I know that I am yours and that you are mine forever.

Thank you that you are about to fill me with your Spirit

so that I might have the power to live the Christian life in union with you.

Stir up your Spirit in me. Release your Spirit within me.

Fill me with the fullness of your Spirit:

- ◆ that I may experience your presence and power in my life as never before.

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- ◆ that I may find new understanding of your scriptures.
- ◆ that I may find new meaning in the sacraments.
- ◆ that I may find delight and comfort in prayer.
- ◆ that I may be able to love as you love and to forgive as you forgive.
- ◆ that I may discover and use the gifts you give me for the upbuilding of the Church.
- ◆ that I may experience the peace and joy that you have promised us.

Drench me with your Spirit, Lord Jesus.

I wish to receive all that you have to give to me. Amen.

4. Prayer for the Impartation

Brothers and sisters, as you are well aware, normally when we would be doing the 5th night of the seminars we would be with you in person and be able to place our hands upon you to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, because of the corona virus that is not possible, but I believe strongly that this is no barrier because Christ in heaven, the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, allowed this to happen and is nevertheless going to honour our prayer. He is present with each one of us and we are gathered in his name tonight.

And you see that picture on the right where Jesus in placing his hands on the man who has come forward for prayer. I want you to imagine that he is placing his hands on your head tonight. This is not 'pie in the sky'; this represents a **spiritual and supernatural reality**. Christ is present with you, Christ is present to you. He is ministering to you and it is all very real.

There is a wonderful verse in the Book of Habbakuk which says: *"His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden."* (Hab 3:4)

Now, of course, that awesome power is the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from cold death in the tomb to eternal and everlasting new life. So the Lord Jesus has his hands on your head and light is shining forth from the palms of his hands and it is shining into you. It is the light of his mercy which has already forgiven all your sins as a free gift, which you have neither merited nor deserved. And it is the light of his great love – it was that love which



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led him to die for you on the cross – and it is that love that he now wants to pour out upon you by his Holy Spirit into the depths of your heart.

I believe at this moment we can expect a sudden impartation of the Spirit. Some time back when I was praying about the Holy Spirit, I had an almost uncontrollable desire to start clapping my hands in the chapel and my colleagues would have thought I had taken leave of my senses if I started doing that. But I wanted to clap my hands as a symbol that **God is imparting his Holy Spirit right now**. It is not something for the past or for the future, it is right now the impartation of the Holy Spirit is being made, because it is something that Jesus came, died and rose to make possible. And it is happening now, because it is his will to fill you with his Holy Spirit. Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 *'Be filled with the Spirit.'* This is the time when this injunction will be fulfilled in your life and in mine.

I am going to pray a prayer now that the Holy Spirit will come upon all of us in whatever way God wants it to come upon us:

Lord Jesus, you are the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are full of joy in heaven because you see your brothers and sisters in this world, the valley of tears, looking to you, crying out for your Holy Spirit. We remember the time when you stood on the temple steps and you cried out to the crowd, *"If anyone is thirsty, let that person come to me and if he/she believes in me out of his/her heart will flow rivers of living water"*(John 7:37-38). And the waters he referred to were the waters of the Spirit. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that from your wounded heart in heaven, the Spirit of your mercy and love is pouring out. And as your hands rest on our heads, you are now imparting that Spirit to each and every one of us.

Lord, our response to your gift is, "Yes, Lord! ... yes, fill me with your Spirit! ... Amen, Lord to your blessing! ... Amen, Lord, to the fulfilment of your will! ... Amen to your mercy and your mighty love, may it fill me now! ... I believe it is filling me now, Lord!"

Strengthen each person tonight, Lord, in their innermost self by the outpouring of your Spirit of love. Lord, in the words of Paul we pray that we may have power, each and every one of us, to grasp with all your holy people what is the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of the love of Jesus Christ, which surpasses our little puny understanding, that we may be filled as never before with the very fullness of his love. Lord, we thank you now that this love is washing away all the obstacles, that it is pushing away all the hurts that would have stood as barriers in the past. Lord, we thank you that you have taken care of our enemy and cast him out into the outer darkness and there is no barrier now to the outpouring of your love. Drench us, soak us, inundate us, fill us, Lord, immerse us in your love. Squeeze out

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from the sponge of our heart anything that is incompatible with your love, Lord, and may all those empty spaces now be filled with the fullness of your love and your Spirit.

We thank you Lord that you are doing more than we are asking or thinking through your power working in us. We say, 'Yes, Lord' to any gifts of the Spirit you are giving to us. We say 'Yes Lord' if you want to give us the gift of praying in tongues. We say 'Yes Lord' to gifts of revelation, gifts of proclamation, gifts of demonstration that will enable us and empower us not only to grow holy in our personal lives but also to evangelise effectively in the future. "Yes, Lord" to everything you want to give us tonight! We are your body, Lord, all of us together. Pour out the full range of your gifts upon all of us so that together we may witness to your presence in the world today.

5. Praying in Tongues

Fr. Pat begins praying in tongues at this stage ... Oh, my people, I am so pleased with you that you have called upon me for my Holy Spirit. My Spirit, my children, is pushing away the clouds of darkness that were over your heart. See the light of my love is shining into the depths where it has never reached before. Yield all of your mind, your heart, your memory, your will, even your body to the power of my Spirit. Let it flow where it has never entered before. See, I am knocking at one door after another within you. Open those doors to me that I may enter and reveal my love to you in all those hidden areas of your life. Know that I am bringing healing to you this night. Know that I am imparting my gifts to you this night. Say 'yes' and I will fill you for I am truly with you, I am pleased with you, you are my beloved brothers and sisters. You are the beloved children of my Father, who delights in you this night. Thank you, Lord Jesus, thank you!

Responding to the prayer and surrendering to the gift of tongues

Now, brothers and sisters, one way of responding to the prayer is just to surrender to the gift of tongues if God is giving it to us. One way of doing that, I would suggest, is that I will begin to pray in tongues rather slowly and I am going to urge you to try and mimic what I am doing, to try and imitate the sounds that I am making. It does not matter whether they are accurate or not. The great thing is that nobody will hear you, so even though you may feel a bit foolish doing this and saying things that you do not understand, become a fool for Christ's sake tonight (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:10). Wouldn't it be wonderful, if like Mary and the apostles on Pentecost Sunday, you suddenly yielded to the gift of praying in tongues, a new prayer gift with which to glorify God.

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So I am going to start off very slowly and I invite you to mute your mike and to imitate me ... then I am going to go silent ... and I urge you then to try and keep going on your own. Don't think about it, just let something spontaneous well up from deep in your personality and all of a sudden you may find – as I found when I was 29 years of age – that you have the gift of tongues and it is flowing freely Let the new speech just come from your lips. It does not matter how fluent it is, let it come as best you can, let it flow from deep within you. Keep your eyes on the Lord Jesus, know that this is a way of praising him beyond words. As Paul said in Romans 8:26-27, when we do not know how to pray in our own native language, the Spirit prays in us in groans and sighs through tongues to the God beyond us. Glory to you, O Lord. We praise and bless your holy name.

6. Listening to God

Brothers and sisters, we have found in the New Springtime Community that God speaks to those who praise him. We have just been praising the Lord, albeit for a short time in tongues. I am going to invite you all to go silent for five minutes and we are going to tune into the Lord in the belief that the Lord wants to speak to us. When you receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it is very common to get inspirations and revelations from the Lord. It might be during the silence that

- ◆ a **Scripture text** will come to you,
- ◆ or you might have an **image** that comes before you that is meaningful,
- ◆ or you might have an **internal vision**, like a little video, which is meaningful
- ◆ or you might get **inner words** just welling up in your mind
- ◆ or you might get an intellectual **understanding of a mystery of faith**,
- ◆ or you might get a **prophetic word** coming to you as if God was giving you a message to give to our group tonight.

At this point we say with the prophet Samuel, "*Speak Lord your servant is listening*" (1 Sam 3:9) and we will go silent for five minutes.

Following the silence, we will move on to the concluding comments. At the very end of the meeting, we will give an opportunity to you all to share any words you received during this time of tuning into the Lord.

Concluding Comments

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Instead of being a once-off event, baptism in the Spirit **initiates an on-going process** that can be deepened and strengthened by new outpourings of the Spirit. You can cooperate with the infilling, guidance and empowerment of the Spirit by doing the following things:

1. **Prayer:** There is the need for daily prayer, where one not only talks to God, but also **listens to the Lord**. In order to do this the Church recommends the importance of regular reading of scripture in a reflective and prayerful way (e.g. *Lectio Divina*/Benedictine Scripture Prayer). During the coming week it is important that you continue to engage in daily reflection and prayer by using either *Finding New Life in the Spirit* or the printed notes that Sr Jane send out to each participant at the beginning of the seminars.
2. **Prayer Journal:** Some people find it useful, although it is not strictly necessary, to write down the inspirations they receive in a prayer journal.
3. **Eucharist:** The Eucharist is the source and summit of all graces in the Church. At the heart of the Eucharist is a beating heart of love. To attend it frequently is a wonderful way of opening oneself to the manifold graces of God.
4. **Prayer Meeting:** While Christianity favours individuality, it does not favour individualism. It is good therefore to join with other members of the Body of Christ on earth by attending a prayer meeting that is orthodox in its beliefs and practices, while being open to the Spirit and its gifts. Although, it may seem a bit strange at first, you will get used to it in time. Such meetings are good for providing such things as:
 - ◆ A sense of belonging
 - ◆ Support for one's faith and ethics in a culture that is very secular
 - ◆ Good Catholic teaching.
 - ◆ The example and help of fellow Christians.
 - ◆ A place to form friendships or even to meet one's future spouse.
 - ◆ All of you have a right and duty, which is rooted in your baptism in the Spirit, to share your faith in Jesus with other people.

Remember that today is merely the beginning of a new beginning in your Christian life. Next week we will begin to look at what one can do to cooperate with the activity of the Holy Spirit within us.

The days to come: The days to come are very important and I would encourage you not to feel disappointed if things didn't turn out the way you were expecting or hoping because I would be absolutely sure that everyone has been blessed in one way or another. It will take time to see how the blessing came and sometimes there are little obstacles in our hearts to the fullness of the blessing and we might have to come to recognise those in the days to come. I would encourage you when you are praying to have that image of Jesus with his hand on our head praying and light shining forth from his hands, for there his power lies hidden, to keep imagining it during the week and keep saying that 'the Spirit is flowing into me'.

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Tongues: Do little experiments with tongues. Start with the word 'Abba', any nonsense sounds, and try and concentrate on God and don't be thinking about what you are doing. Just let it happen spontaneously and I am sure that a number of you will start praying fluently in tongues.

Gifts of the Spirit: It remains to be seen what other gifts the Lord has poured out tonight. There may be precious gifts of healing and prophecy that were poured out tonight, but we won't be aware of them yet. They will manifest themselves in the weeks and months to come. So, stick to the little booklet or the meditation points during the week. Next week, when we come together, we can share what was really going on for us because we have to reflect on it and the implications of it – it will take time.