

Cardinal SUENENS

By Way of Farewell

The Holy Spirit in the Holy Church

The Holy Spirit at the Heart of the new Evangelisation and of Ecumenism

The Fiat Rosary

This is the final part of Book III
+L.J. Cardinal SUENENS
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The Holy Spirit, Life-Breath of the Church ©

By Way of Farewell¹

The future of humanity is in the hands of those who will know how to give future generations reasons to live and reasons to hope.

Gaudium et Spes (n° 31)

As I look to the future, I cannot avoid stressing the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church of tomorrow. He is always ‘the life-giving Spirit’, in the fullest meaning of the words. This is the idea I would like to emphasise by way of farewell.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HOLY CHURCH

The Creed speaks of the Church as ‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic’. Of these four attributes, the most ancient is holiness; the Church is described as ‘holy’ in the earliest versions of the Creed. It is likely that the earliest wording was: “*I believe in the Holy Spirit, present in the Holy Church.*”² The holiness of the Church thus appears as the first gift of the Spirit. Our ancestors in the faith spoke of ‘Our Mother the Holy Church’ for a reason – these words are not mere pious literature. We believe in the spiritual motherhood of the Church, who brings us into life and into holiness.

The Church of our faith is not simply the gathering, the sum of those who, whether individually or in community, claim to be followers of Christ. The Church has an existence, a substance, which precedes and goes beyond the conscious adhesion of believers to Jesus Christ and to the particular community to which they belong. She is both the community which we build together – ‘the Church is us’ – and the matrix which carries us, the mothering community which brings us into the life of God, in Christ and through the Spirit.

¹ *The Hidden Hand of God*, p.329, Dublin, Veritas

² See *Je crois à l’Esprit-Saint dans la sainte Eglise pour la résurrection de la chair*, by Pierre NAUTIN, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1977.

The Church of our faith was born holy. Her holiness is not made up to the sum of the saints to whom she gives birth; it is her own holiness – the holiness of Christ and of his Spirit in her – which bears fruit in us. The saints are not admirable in themselves; it is God and God alone who is to be admired in the saints.

In this sense, the Church is a mediator of the holiness of God. She is a mother who gives birth to saints, who allow themselves to be fashioned and formed by her. Properly speaking, we do not need to ‘become’ saints; rather we need to remain saints, and to grow in the initial holiness which we receive at baptism.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE HEART OF THE NEW EVANGELISATION AND OF ECUMENISM

It is a recurrent temptation to think of the renewal of the Church in institutional terms – in terms of reorganisation, of readjustment of external forms, of a reform of structures – much as one would in dealing with human institutions. But although we are able to build canals and install pipelines, we are not able to make a spring gush forth.

Pope John XXIII did not deny the need for certain reforms; but he went to the very heart of the matter, to the source of living water, when he called on Christians to welcome God’s gift so that a new Pentecost might be fulfilled in the Church. The Church is always in need of being refounded, at the very spot where she was founded: in the Upper Room, in the foundational experience which was the first Pentecost.

The renewal that we can expect from an actualisation of Pentecost is not primarily an external renewal; rather it is a renewal at the very source – in the freedom we give to God to ‘Christianise’ us, in depth, through his Spirit. All our ecumenical hopes of a return to visible unity for all Christians lie in this kind of renewal.

THE FIAT ROSARY

The rosary³ presented here, called FIAT, is characterized by the invocation of the Holy Spirit so that he can introduce us, in union with Mary, into the heart of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of Jesus.

Its aim is to create again in us the experience enjoyed by the Apostles in the Cenacle in Jerusalem when, praying with Mary, they awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit which transformed them and gave them the courage and strength needed to bring the Gospel to the heart of the world. It recalls all of us to our obligation ‘to live our prayer’.

Cardinal Danneels warmly approved and recommended the FIAT Rosary, emphasizing, as he did so, the relevance of the Cenacle.

“May this little ‘FIAT’ Rosary find its way into many families, helping them to become so many Cenacles of apostles, united round the Virgin Mary, in order to receive the Spirit of Pentecost”

It can be said that this rosary, so traditional and yet so new, is eminently a family, ecclesial, ecumenical and evangelical instrument and lends itself easily to being used as an instrument of Christian instruction.

³ The FIAT Rosary is an instrument of grace for evangelisation. Cardinal SUENENS has written an explanatory booklet about it. The FIAT Rosary and the booklet are distributed by the FIAT Association.

Most Holy Spirit,

*Help us to relive,
In union with Mary, the joyful,
sorrowful and glorious mysteries
of Jesus. Amen.*

Grant that we may be:

- *inspired by the faith of our Baptism,*
- *nourished by the Eucharist,*
- *renewed in the grace of Pentecost.*

So as to live,

- *in word and deed, always and everywhere,*
- *as faithful witnesses of Christ and of*
- *the love of His Divine Heart. Amen.*

We pray for:

*The Church...the world...our intentions...
Our Father...*

- The FIAT Rosary consists in all of nine mysteries: three joyful ones, three sorrowful ones, three glorious ones. The prayers for each of these mysteries are composed of three Hail Marys, followed by a '*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen*'.

- Final Invocations:

*St. Joseph, Guardian of the Holy Family,
Protect us.
St. Michael the Archangel,
from the Powers of Evil,
Defend us.
All the Angels and Saints,
Pray for us.*

- The FIAT Rosary ends in a song:

*O Mary, teach us how to say
YES to the Lord,
O Mary, every moment of our life.*

*O Mary, teach us how to say
THANKS to the Lord,*

O Mary, every moment of our life.

You can order the books of Cardinal Suenens on charismatic renewal in English, French, Dutch and other languages at

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