



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

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Choosing Christ

By Maria Muratore

God chose us from the beginning of time but we have free will and must make a conscious choice to choose Him. Neither career, relationships or possessions can fill a void, complete us and provide happiness the way Jesus can. True happiness comes from being loved and an awareness that you *are* loved. There is a definite peace and happiness when we believe in God's LOVE. We must trust and have faith in it. Let us then **identify** with Him who loved us first before we were ever even born.

Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit or "born again" is taking our identity from God as sons and daughters not slaves or servants. Therefore God wants us as His children and we, His church, are also the Bride of Christ. Before Jesus left his followers and ascended into heaven, he said he must leave in order for the Holy Spirit to arrive. Life here on earth is difficult with sin, immorality, sickness, pain and traumas from everyday life. Jesus wants us to invite and wait for the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is known by many names and titles which denote some function or aspect of His ministry:

Author of Scripture: ([2 Peter 1:21](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#)) The Bible is inspired, literally "God-breathed," by the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. The Spirit moved the authors to record exactly what He breathed into their hearts and minds.

Comforter /Counselor/Advocate: ([Isaiah 11:2](#); [John 14:16](#); [15:26](#); [16:7](#)) All three words are translations of the Greek *parakletos*, from which we get "Paraclete," another name for the Spirit. When Jesus went away He promised to send the Spirit to comfort, console, and guide those who belong to Him. The Spirit "bears witness" with our spirits that we belong to Him and thereby assures us of salvation.

Conviction of Sin: ([John 16:7-11](#)) The Spirit applies the truths of God to men's own minds in order to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners.

Deposit /Seal: ([2 Corinthians 1:22](#); [5:5](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)) The Holy Spirit is God's seal on His people, His claim on us as His very own. The gift of the Spirit to believers is a **down payment** on our heavenly inheritance, which Christ has promised us and secured for us at the cross

Guide: ([John 16:13](#)) Just as the Spirit guided the writers of Scripture to record truth, so does He promise to guide believers to know and understand that truth.

Indweller of Believers: ([Romans 8:9-11](#); [Ephesians 2:21-22](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19](#)) The Holy Spirit resides in the hearts of God's people, and that **indwelling** is the distinguishing characteristic of the regenerated person. **From within believers, He directs, guides, comforts, and influences us, as well as producing in us the fruit of the Spirit** ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)). He provides the intimate connection between God and His children.

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Intercessor: ([Romans 8:26](#)) One of the most encouraging and comforting aspects of the Holy Spirit is His ministry of intercession on behalf of those He inhabits. Because we often don't know what or how to pray when we approach God, the Spirit intercedes and prays for us. He intercedes for us "with wordless groans," so that when we are oppressed and overwhelmed by trials and the cares of life, He comes alongside to lend assistance as He sustains us.

Revealer / Spirit of Truth: ([John 14:17](#); [16:13](#); [1 Corinthians 2:12-16](#)) Jesus promised that, after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit would come to "guide you into all truth."

Spirit of God / the Lord / Christ: ([Matthew 3:16](#); [2 Corinthians 3:17](#); [1 Peter 1:11](#)) These names remind us that the Spirit of God is indeed part of the triune Godhead and that He is just as much God as the Father and the Son. He is first revealed to us at the creation, when He was "hovering over the waters," denoting His part in creation, along with that of Jesus who "made all things" ([John 1:1-3](#)). We see this same Trinity of God again at Jesus' baptism, when the Spirit descends on Jesus and the voice of the Father is heard.

Spirit of Life: ([Romans 8:2](#)) The phrase "Spirit of life" means the Holy Spirit is the one who produces or gives life.

Teacher: ([John 14:26](#); [1 Corinthians 2:13](#)) Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach His disciples "all things" and bring to their remembrance the things He said while He was with them. The writers of the New Testament were moved by the Spirit to remember and understand the instructions Jesus gave for the building and organizing of the Church, the doctrines regarding Himself, the directives for holy living, and the revelation of things to come.

Witness: ([Romans 8:16](#); [Hebrews 2:4](#); [10:15](#)) The Spirit is called "witness" because He verifies and testifies to the fact that we are children of God, that Jesus and the disciples who performed miracles were sent

by God, and that the books of the Bible are divinely inspired. Further, by giving the gifts of the Spirit to believers, He witnesses to us and the world that we belong to God.

To Identify with Christ as Christians we must know Him in the Trinity. Seek him in the scriptures. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. During this Lenten Season let's reflect on Seeing, Hearing, Speaking, Thinking, Doing, Partnering, and ultimately Choosing God:

Seeing God in others. We are made in God's image. We find beauty in seeing God's creation. Seeing and perceiving God's presence.

Hearing God in our decision making, prophetic Gifts, discernment. Inspired music and teachings.

Speaking God and declaring His Word in the Bible. We speak God in our Gifts of Evangelization, Prophecy, Testimony, witnessing and using the Gift of Tongues to edify the church and each other. God used words to create the Universe and all living things in Genesis.

Thinking God: Desiring Purity in our Thoughts (resisting Envy, Lust, Judgements). Arrest negative thoughts. We must discipline our thoughts *and keep our focus on God.*

Partnering with and Befriending God: God allowed to Adam name all the animals and mankind was given dominion over the world and its creatures. We're NOT alone. With any ministry or project, remember that you have a friend and partner in Christ. *"I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Choosing Christ Continued...

God in our actions: Do our actions prove that we are Christians or do our actions condemn us? Will they know we are Christians by our LOVE? LOVE is an action verb. Love means helping our neighbors, loved ones and strangers too.

Choose God: We need to **make intentional decisions** to follow God and not the world. It takes **courage, fortitude and effort to choose God**. It also may mean sacrifice **and witnessing our faith to the world**.

Don't worry because once we choose God we are in His hands and He'll guide and direct our path.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

The Holy Spirit will provide what's needed. Let's remember that St. Peter was *only* able to walk on water as long as he kept his eyes and faith focused on Jesus. Let's follow this model and keep our eyes and faith focused on Jesus as well. I hope this article helps you reflect on choosing Jesus in all aspects of your life during this Lenten season and beyond.

Lenten Exercise

Preparation

As we begin this time of quiet prayer, I invite you to find a comfortable place to sit with your back straight and your legs planted on the ground. Allow yourself to notice your breathing as you continue to breathe normally. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Take a few moments and close your eyes, preparing yourself to listen to what God may be saying to you during this prayer. As you sit with your eyes closed, use these or similar words: "Here I am, Lord. Here I am." When you are ready, open your eyes and pray.

Going into the Wilderness

Imagine you are walking in the desert. The sun is so hot that it feels as if your skin is burning. There is little vegetation except for some scrub bushes and cactus that spring up between the brown, dusty sand and rocks. It's a harsh landscape. You think that no one would survive here more than a day or two without water and food. You are thankful you brought both with you for this journey. As you look ahead, you see something or perhaps someone, sitting on a group of rocks. As you get closer, you see that it's a man, and he is crouched over with his hands clasped tightly. His head is down. He seems to be deep in thought or prayer. As you get closer, you realize it is Jesus. He looks up at you. His face is sad and pained. What do you say to him? He invites you to sit down beside him. He asks you why you are walking in the desert. What do you tell him?

You offer him some of your water, but he shakes his head no. He seems preoccupied. He raises his head and speaks to you. What does Jesus say to you? How do you respond to him? The sun is beginning to get low, and there is now a cool breeze in the air. It's time for you to continue on your way. Jesus continues to sit there, looking down at the rocks and sand at his feet. He looks so sad and lonely. As you leave, what do you say to him? He looks up at you for a moment. As you turn to walk away, what does Jesus say to you?

Where are the "wildernesses" in your life that tempt you?

What do you want to ask Jesus so he can help you during the wilderness times?

Concluding Prayer

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Upcoming Events...

April 6th

Ignited by Truth Conference

NC State Reynolds Coliseum

Guest Speakers include Fr. Larry Richards and Peter Kreeft

<https://ignitedbytruth.org/>

April 24th

Healing Mass 7pm

St. Bernadette's Catholic Church

Fuquay-Varina, NC

May 1st

Bread of Life Prayer Group presenting Holy Spirit Seminar (Born in the Spirit)

5 Week Series beginning May 1

Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette Center Wednesday Evenings 7pm-9pm

For further information email or call Ann Franzel (919-790-0023)

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For more information about these events and registration please visit our website at

www.ccsraleigh.weebly.com