Holy Spirit
By: Father Louis Noplos

"The Holy Spirit is with us." How many times have we heard this statement exclaimed by clergy, or found in the Scriptures? How many times have we heard "It was the work of the Holy Spirit"? Although the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest Mysteries of our Orthodox Church, one which there is no tangible or scientific explanation and answer for, we can and have experienced its presence around us. There is a marveling and comforting power which we experience around us, and under its guidance, we remain constantly. This particular, unexplainable, perhaps incomprehensible feeling moves and directs our whole being to righteousness and to our destination nearer to God. No matter how limited in knowledge or willfulness we are, this magnificent power still remains with us.

At certain times, the Holy Spirit acts as our superior judge, resembling God with our finite existence, reminding us constantly of our ultimate purpose. At other times it is felt as an individual, separate voice calming our indecisive, trembling minds, and satisfying that powerful faith instilled deep in our hearts. There is within us a working, balancing, power which keeps us intact with the realities and truths of life. Our aspirations, our desires and the clear understanding of our capabilities are placed in proper logical order and a harmony exists which preserves us in this world.

At times when we are tired and pressured by outside elements we are forced to look at ourselves and we find that this power is with us. The Holy Spirit never works against us, but always works with us. It is not only part of the physical world, but the Divine as well. When we are angered with ourselves and our surroundings, when in pain or in gladness, when rejected or troubled – no matter what the conditions may be, this power is with us. This power is not of an earthly origin though it works and acts within the world. It is divine; it is beyond any human understanding, it is beyond life itself. This is the Holy Spirit, a part of God, working with us and among us.

To understand that the Holy Spirit is among us, we must understand what comes first. We must be moved by faith in Faith and by the clear understanding and realization of what we are. Our origin is from God and our actions must lead to God. What follows from the first day of the Creation, from the day of the fall and hence to the Incarnation of Christ, is not only part of the Great Plan, but is motivated by the Great Love of God for a specific purpose.

The work of Christ had to be fulfilled in order that the Holy Spirit could descend into the world unto the Church, and therefore, the two Persons become evident as to their individual purpose, the Person of Christ, and the Person of the Holy Spirit.

When Christ speaks of the coming of the comforter and the necessity of His departure, He certainly desired the continuation of His work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And in the days that followed His Resurrection everyone would have thought that thousands of angels would have descended down from heaven to assist His disciples in the continuation of Christ's work. This, however, could not be possible, for it would contradict God's own mission and

purpose. God only influenced man and opened new avenues of thought to Him, without at the same time damaging the freedom of man's will.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to liberate one from anxiety and together with the peace of God to bring great joy. The Holy Spirit continues the work of the son of God, and creates the new man by participating with man's life through Baptism.

St. Basil explains the Holy Spirit by saying: "It is the source of sanctification which never fails by reason of the multitudes of those who share in it".

A few days before His Ascension, the Lord spoke in a different tone of voice to His disciples. In the beginning of Christ's life on earth, He spoke as a resident of this earth. But in the days which followed His Resurrection, He is between Heaven and Earth. Finally, He leaves this earth gloriously, but He mentions "I go in order to return". Here we have in the Spirit, Christ among us.

In the Holy Spirit, through the true Church of Christ, we have Christ; we have Christ with us through faith.

The Holy Spirit is the direct bond with God Himself, and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit within us is already the beginning of eternal life in this earthly existence. Everything that emerges as new in life of the Faithful and the Christian Church is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

There are many obstacles in life whose reasons we cannot understand and appreciate fully as the Holy men and Saints did in order to live a better life within the Holy Spirit, which guides the Church. We must first train ourselves in the understanding of Christ's mission and of His Incarnation.

Why then do we find difficulties in our age and time to act according to the will of the Holy Spirit?

The work of the Holy Spirit, although it cannot be separated in a vacuum or placed within the limitations of time, must be allowed to work for us today. Everything does not always rest with God; part rests with His creation, man, for whom His begotten Son was sacrificed.

The Holy Spirit in order to accomplish its work must be allowed to enter within our lives because it creates unity which is embodied and directed by the love of God.

The Church is like a fortress, whose protecting walls are the Holy Spirit; walls which separate us from the Spirits of the world.

It is the same Holy Spirit which allows its faithful to wonder at times upon their own lives, which has kept our Holy Orthodox Church intact in doctrine and tradition in the spirit of Orthodoxy down through Christian antiquity.

Amen