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Today we celebrate the great feast day of the Church, Pentecost, and we celebrate that part of the Creed which we recite every Sunday: *And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.* We confess what we believe every Sunday, but do we really grasp the meaning of the words? Do we really understand what the Church teaches about the Holy Spirit? I would wager that of the three persons of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit gets the least attention from the average person, and even less if the individual is not in a Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican tradition. One almost gets the impression that for most the Holy Spirit is some type of phantasmal abstract concept and that most forget that the Holy Spirit is indeed Very God, the third person of the Holy Trinity.

Perhaps when we recite the Creed, it almost feels wrong to say that the Holy Spirit is *the Lord and giver of life*. After all, we are so used to calling Jesus *the Lord*, and God the Father *the creator* which implies that He gives life. But these are three attributes of God the Father and God the Son which are shared with God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is *Lord* because He is God. The Holy Spirit is the *giver of life* because the Holy Spirit was present and active at the Creation of the World. He is the one who overshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation and proclaimed that the Divine Word, Jesus Christ, would be conceived in her. The Holy Spirit is the *giver of life* because He too was active in the earthly ministry of Jesus, in the countless healings and miracles and raising from the dead. He is the *giver of life* because on Pentecost the Holy Spirit descends in full force upon the disciples as the Church is born and the Sacraments of the Church become vehicles of God's grace and salvation.

The Holy Spirit is *the Lord and giver of life who proceedeth from the Father and the Son who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified*. As the *Lord and giver of life* the Holy Spirit is present with God the Father and God the Son at the creation of the world, the Holy Trinity, whose oneness and unity we cannot fully comprehend. And with this in mind, when we say He proceeds from the Father and the Son, we must not think that He at any time came into being separate from God the Father and God the Son. And when we say the Holy Spirit proceeds, we do not say that He is subjected to or lesser than God the Father or God the Son either. When we confess that the Holy Spirit proceeds, we believe He is sent by the Father through the Son into creation. He proceeds from the Father and the Son to descend in His fullness, upon all people who love and desire to

follow Christ. For this reason, and because He is God, the Holy Spirit *is worshipped and glorified*. He is worshipped and glorified as a very God, the third person of the Trinity, neither lesser than or weaker than God the Father or God the Son.

The last bit about the Holy Spirit that we say in the Creed is that he *spoke by the prophets*. The Holy Spirit is not just found in the New Testament, for we find the Spirit present and active at the very beginning of the Scriptures at the Creation. The Fathers of the Church attribute the *hovering over the waters* to the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit did not stop being active after the book of Genesis. The Holy Spirit was active in every one of the Prophets, from Moses to Elijah to Malachi, speaking and conveying the Word and Judgment of God to and through them, performing signs, miracles, and wonders, preparing the way for the coming of Jesus Christ.

We confess and believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, very God, without separation or inequality with God the Father and God the Son, neither lesser than nor greater than, but coequal and coeternal. We confess and believe this incredible mystery of faith, of the transcendence of the Holy Spirit. And we are humbled that the Holy Spirit which transcends our understanding has on this feast day become immanent and desires to descend to each one of us and to dwell within us. We believe that we receive the Holy Spirit through the waters of Baptism, that very same Holy Spirit which fell upon the disciples in the upper room with cloven tongues of fire. Today cloven tongues of fire do not appear above our heads, but instead we are washed in the font of Baptism and our heads are anointed with the oil of Chrism, and we are made members of the Church. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to confess that we believe in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in all her teaching and all her Sacraments. The Sacraments which are the gifts of the Church, ordained by Christ Himself, and endued with saving grace through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sacraments which bring us into deeper union with Jesus that He may dwell in us and we in Him.

Through the Holy Spirit, through the Church and Her Sacraments, Christ is made the ever-present reality. The Disciples watched with awe and sadness as Jesus ascended into Heaven, but He taught them that He ascended so that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth will be poured out on them. The Disciples saw Jesus more clearly after Pentecost, and so are we able to see Jesus clearly today. We see Jesus through the gift of the Scriptures, through the Church, through the Sacraments, through our sorrows, labors, difficulties, trials, and temptations. Jesus is closer to us now than any earthly friend through the Holy Spirit, because it is through the Holy Spirit that He dwells within us and we in Him. The Holy Spirit

comes to convict us of sin, and to transform our minds and our hearts to the pattern of Jesus Christ. As we allow the Holy Spirit to grow in us, or as we grown through His indwelling presence He becomes the spring and substance of our mind and heart.

Let us pray today for the renewal of our minds and hearts, for continued transformation by the Holy Spirit that we may better receive Jesus Christ through the Sacraments of His Church. *Come, Holy Ghost, cleanse our minds and consciences, sanctify our hearts, wills, and bodies, with thy heavenly visitation, that our Lord Jesus Christ when he cometh may find us a temple meet for his abiding; who with God the Father and thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.*