

Holy Spirit and Evangelization

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How big is the power of the Holy Spirit?

The driving force of evangelization is the Holy Spirit which is the leading character, while we are the instrument, or the media. The process of evangelization has to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit for producing good results. Therefore, how big is the power of the Holy Spirit?

I always think that the human heart is the most difficult thing to change. Our appearance can change and so can our financial status and health. But to change the hardened human heart is so difficult! The change of a person, including myself, from no faith to believing deeply in the Lord is so hard to achieve! Therefore, how big is the power of the Holy Spirit?

St. Paul is an outstanding apostle in evangelization. He made three journeys to reach some far-away places for evangelization, establishing and strengthen the early churches there. In evangelization and proclaiming the Kingdom of God he always mentioned the power of the Holy Spirit:

“For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.” (1Thessalonians: 1:5)

“And my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

It is his deep experience of the power of the Holy Spirit encountered during the evangelization that enabled St. Paul to repeatedly mention the mighty capacity of the Holy Spirit.

How did the Holy Spirit help him in his evangelical work? St. Paul often discussed the grace of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22) The narrations of the early Church’s evangelization in the Acts of the Apostles revealed the Holy Spirit and Its amazing grace in almost every page. The grace of the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. I would ask if there is any other power that could be compared with the Holy Spirit who is able to change and touch the human heart?! As St. Paul wrote, “Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy.” (1 Corinthians 14:1) “But if everyone is prophesying, and an unbeliever or uninstructed person would come in, he will be convinced by everyone and judged by everyone, and the secrets of his heart will be disclosed, and so he will fall down and worship God, declaring, “God is really in your midst.” (1 Corinthians 14:24-25) The grace of the Holy Spirit is the real power of the conviction of faith in God.

The Capacity of the Holy Spirit as the Companion of Evangelization.

Recently my wife and I visited a young couple who are suffering from the sudden death of their 2-month-old infant. The husband hasn’t gone to the Church for more than 10 years while the wife didn’t

have faith yet. At this moment they are thinking about the life of death: the young mother asked if God is using the death of the infant to punish her husband who doesn't go to the Church. I told her directly that it's wrong to think in this way. I pointed to the Jesus on the cross hanging on the wall and talked about the God who has loved us till death: He let everything happen for the sake of love. I pinpointed the truth of life: eventually everyone will die, but the resurrected almighty God will take care of their child better than they could, because He is the origin of all lives He has created with love.

The deeply wounded heart can only be healed by the Lord who loves them deeply. "And my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power." (1 Cor 2:4) Before leaving my wife and I prayed for this couple over our extended hands onto them: we prayed with the Spirit and also prayed with the mind under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the healing of their wounded heart. (cf. 1 Cor 14:14-15)

About 10 minutes later we ended the prayer, but they didn't open their eyes for some time. After a while they asked us that why after the whole day's shock, fear, confusion and pain there would appear such an amazing peace. The young mother saw clearly in her mind a pair of hands presenting her with a cup of water. She said with a smile that it could be the Lord who knew she was thirsty. I explained to her, "Jesus is the living water. He invites you to drink the water that you will never be thirsty again." The amazing peace Jesus gave to her cannot be found in this world.

Very often we complain to God the failure and pain in our lives. But if we can invite the Holy Spirit to enter into our life especially when we are at the end of our rope, God will help save us in his way. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Mt 5:4) Lord's Good News and his grace are able to bring about the hope to this couple. They offered the mass for the infant, hoping to unit in the future as a family in heaven. The wife will be baptized this year and together the couple participates in the church activities. In this way the three lives have become one within the love of God.

