

*What is Baptism in the Holy Spirit?*

In the traditional sense, Baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to the spiritual plunging of a new Christian into the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of initiation, especially in Baptism. As used among Catholics today, especially in the Charismatic Renewal, it refers to an experience of deeper conversion. It is a stirring up of what is, too often, an inactive settling of the Spirit already received in the Sacraments. This stirring up of the Holy Spirit with His special gifts is meant as empowerment for the good of the whole Church.

In practical terms, what has been the effect of this stirring of the Spirit? Let's list a few starters: The following are what we might call, personal getting-ready gifts...

1. A power-added ability to turn our lives around; The ability to stretch beyond the legalism and minimalism of much of Catholic life today. Luke-warm Christians can come on fire for Jesus.
2. A better spiritual vision to see the follies and fallacies of modern society.
3. Scripture becomes meaningful and alive.
4. Prayer, Holy Mass, and Sacraments become more meaningful and exciting.
5. A desire to praise our magnificent God with enthusiasm.
6. A greater sense of belonging to God's people.
7. The desire and power to become all God designed us to be.
8. A one on one friendship with The Father, with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
9. A greater sense of hope for happiness both now and in eternity.
10. A new boldness; a desire to share, to witness, to defend our Church, and to evangelize.
11. An awareness of sin in our lives and a desire to be reconciled.
12. New power over bad habits.
13. Power to overcome self-centeredness.
14. Power to overcome fears, phobias and even nightmares.
15. A better appreciation of the good, the true, and the beautiful; etc. etc. etc.
16. An openness to welcome the extraordinary charisms the Holy Spirit brings.

These are some of the personal changes people have experienced. Because we are a wounded people, God often has to clean us up to make us ready to serve with the public gifts of the Spirit. This is different for everyone. Not everyone responds to this stirring up in the same way. God, with our approval, gives such personal and charismatic gifts according to His Wisdom. Of course, some of the ordinary gifts of Isaiah 11:2, and, extraordinary charisms of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, also appear. These powers, like healings, prophecy, tongues, discernment, etc. can make us better servants to the whole Church. This baptismal stirring of the Holy Spirit is normative for all Catholics. Try it. You'll like it.