

Communio

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Holy Spirit Window. Bernini. St. Peter's Basilica.

*“May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the **Communion** of the Holy Spirit be with you.”*

- I. This simple greeting summarizes Jesus' goal, His mission, His desire for each one of us.
 - a. In the Gospel of John we hear, “whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our dwelling with him.” (John 14:23)
 - b. To help us, Jesus promises an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to help us discern the Father's will, and guide us into **Communion** with Him and the Father.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is so essential to our spiritual life; Jesus warns that blaspheming against the Spirit is an everlasting sin.
 - d. Cooperating with the Holy Spirit, however, brings strong bonds of **Communion**,
 - e. We are welcomed into the warm bonds of Love of Family, as brothers and sisters to Christ, and to one another.

- II. Our first reading in Genesis takes us to a family that is in crisis and struggling to repair its harmony and **Communion**.
 - a. We are plopped down in the Garden of Eden, right in the middle of a family squabble
 - b. God is upset, asking Adam, “What have you done?”
 - c. Adam is pointing his finger of blame toward Eve
 - d. Eve is pointing at the snake
 - e. And the snake gets dire consequences for his actions – Adam and Eve are next.
 - f. What’s going on here?

- III. A few hours earlier, and there was great harmony, **Communion**, in the Garden
 - a. God strolled leisurely through a flourishing Garden with Adam and Eve,
 - b. Adam and Eve, created in the image of the Trinity, were as one with one another: one flesh, one Spirit.
 - c. The great **Communion of the Trinity**, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was mirrored in the **Communion of Adam and Eve**,
 - d. And The **Holy Spirit** united God to Adam and Eve as one family, binding all into one Body, one Spirit.

- IV. What happened?
 - a. Both Adam and Eve have eaten the from the forbidden tree

- b. First Eve, then Adam
 - c. Each thinking selfishly, desiring to be gods themselves, and breaking Communion with the one true God.
 - d. Don't be too quick to judge, we all are guilty of the same sin
 - e. All of us too easily desire to be our own God, make our own rules, be in command of our own lives
 - f. And, like Adam and Eve, it leads to dire consequences
 - g. As a result of rupturing the harmony with the Trinity, we lose the gifts of the **Communion of the Holy Spirit.**
- V. Our Gospel reading places us right in the middle of another family squabble.
- a. Jesus' comes home to Capernaum to find a crowd so large He and his disciples can't even eat
 - b. Jesus' relatives are there, thinking He has lost His mind
 - c. We can imagine they have come to drag Jesus back to Nazareth, saying, "Stop this nonsense, and grow up! Time to come home, settle down, get a job, and take care of your mother!"
- VI. They don't recognize what those who have eyes to see and ears to hear are beginning to understand
- a. In the very person of Jesus, God is again strolling through the Garden with His people

- b. And the Garden – is beginning to flourish
- c. Storms are calmed, fish fill fishermen's nets, people have an abundance of bread to eat
- d. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Good News proclaimed to them.
(Luke 7:22)
- e. Jesus is at work in the Garden, restoring lost harmony, and preparing the way for the return of the **Communion of the Holy Spirit**.
- f. Recall that John the Baptist promised the Messiah would baptize not with water, but with the Holy Spirit
- g. And that when John baptized Jesus, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit was seen returning to the earth in the form of a dove.

VII. The restoration of the **Communion of the Holy Spirit** would only be fully accomplished with Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension,

- a. Raising lost humanity back to the very heart of the living Trinity
- b. Restoring harmony, **restoring Communion**, between God and the human family, and **Communion with one another**.

VIII. The **Holy Spirit** is not forced upon us

- a. Jesus affirms God grants us the same freedom as Adam and Eve

- b. We may blaspheme, that is to say refuse to revere, the Holy Spirit,
 - c. And forever remain outside of Communion with the Trinity
- IX. But for us, who, each time we profess the Creed, profess our belief in the Trinity, and in the Holy Spirit,
- a. Jesus tells us:
 - b. The **Holy Spirit of Communion** unites us as Children of God
 - c. and brothers and sisters to Christ and one another.
 - d. **We praise God! – and this is the point—For in the Holy Spirit, we have been restored in every good gift, every heavenly blessing, from above!**
 - e. **We are welcomed home to our Father’s house as daughters and sons, and sisters and brothers to Christ.**
- X. We walk with God and His risen Christ in our Garden, and participate with them in its restoration
- a. We gather as Family at our Eucharistic Table, renewing and nurturing our Communion.
 - b. We evangelize, preach the Good news in word and action
 - c. We care for the needs of the poor, and work to heal and comfort the sick
 - d. We work for peace and justice, and the dignity of every life, from conception to natural death.

To be sure, much work remains, and temptations remain.

- e. But God provides a remedy
- f. In the center of Adam and Eve's garden, God planted the Tree of Life
- g. That Tree of Life is Christ and His Church
- h. Through the Church and Sacraments, we are forgiven, renewed, restored, and nurtured.
- i. For example, the trials and sufferings of illness may tempt us to lose hope, to despair
- j. But the Sacrament of Anointing, which we celebrate today, restores our faith in Christ's unity with us in our suffering, an awareness of His presence, and brings healing and strength.
- k. Likewise, in the trials and sufferings of childbirth, adoption, or fostering, Christ blesses us and assures us of His love and presence, which we will also celebrate today with our expectant parents.

XI. May we always walk in our Garden with the Grace of our Lord, the Love of God, and, most especially, the Communion of the Holy Spirit.