

Ten After Ten Session 38: The Spirit of Christ in the Fullness of Time

717 “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” John was “filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb” by Christ himself, whom the Virgin Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary’s visitation to Elizabeth thus became a visit from God to his people.

718 John is “Elijah [who] must come.” The fire of the Spirit dwells in him and makes him the forerunner of the coming Lord. In John, the precursor, the Holy Spirit completes the work of “[making] ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

719 John the Baptist is “more than a prophet.” In him, the Holy Spirit concludes his speaking through the prophets. John completes the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah. He proclaims the imminence of the consolation of Israel; he is the “voice” of the Consoler who is coming.

720 Finally, with John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to man of “the divine likeness,” prefiguring what he would achieve with and in Christ. John’s baptism was for repentance; baptism in water and the Spirit will be a new birth.

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men.

722 The Holy Spirit prepared Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” should herself be “full of grace.” She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit fulfills the plan of the Father’s loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit’s power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit manifests the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh.

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God’s merciful love, into communion with Christ.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve (“mother of the living”), the mother of the “whole Christ.”

727 The entire mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the fullness of time, is contained in this: that the Son is the one anointed by the Father’s Spirit since his Incarnation—Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

728 Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. Nevertheless, little by little he alludes to him even in his teaching of the multitudes, as when he reveals that his own flesh will be food for the life of the world.

729 Only when the hour has arrived for his glorification does Jesus promise the coming of the Holy Spirit... The Holy Spirit will come and we shall know him; he will be with us forever; he will remain with us. The Spirit will teach us everything, remind us of all that Christ said to us and bear witness to him. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth and will glorify Christ.

730 At last Jesus' hour arrives: he commends his spirit into the Father's hands at the very moment when by his death he conquers death, so that, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," he might immediately give the Holy Spirit by "breathing" on his disciples. From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."