

Discerning the Holy Spirit



One of the most critical spiritual exercises for Christians is how to discern the Holy Spirit; i.e., discerning whether a thought or inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit or the devil. Oftentimes, it comes down to the nature of the message. In the latter part of the first century, John the Apostle sends this warning to the Johannine community: “Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus

Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God.” (1John 4:1-3)

One of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was: “By their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16). Discerning between the Holy Spirit and the devil can be grouped into 4 main areas:

1. Conviction vs. Condemnation – The Holy Spirit convicts: When some people hear the word “convict,” they right away take it to mean “proving guilt.” However, the “conviction” that the Holy Spirit brings is the awareness of sin that leads to repentance, healing and a desire to draw closer to God. We need to remember this the next time we come across John 16:8, where Jesus said to His disciples regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit: “When He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin.” With the Holy Spirit, what a person feels is “I have sinned, but I can be forgiven,” according to 1John 1:9: “If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.”

On the other hand, the devil condemns: The devil instills doubt, hopeless guilt and shame. The devil attacks our self-worth and identity; what a person feels is “I am a failure, I am not worthy to be forgiven, I am not worthy to be loved.”

2. Gentleness vs. Panic – The Holy Spirit guides with gentleness: We know that an inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit when it brings us a sense of clarity, assurance, peace and gentleness. The key word here is “gentleness” – along with love, joy, peace and kindness, gentleness is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Letter to the Galatians (cf. Galatians 5:22-23).

On the other hand, a thought or influence comes from the devil when it brings fear, panic and chaos into our minds and hearts – the devil pushes and pressures us, produces anxiety and confusion.

3. Love vs. Bitterness – An inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit if it inspires us to love God and our neighbor. It inspires us to be humble, self-giving and genuinely concerned for others. On the other hand, the devil promotes pride, selfishness, bitterness, anger and resentment. Generally speaking, the Holy Spirit builds and heals relationships, while the devil destroys and tears apart relationships. One caveat to this is that at some point in time in a person’s life, the Holy Spirit inspires us to avoid toxic relationships which consistently drains our joy, drives us to sin, and damages our spiritual and emotional well-being.
4. Truth vs. Lies – An inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit if it aligns with divine truths; if it aligns with the Deposit of Faith – Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Sacred Tradition is the living transmission of

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the Christian faith from Christ to the Apostles and down to the Church today. It encompasses the entirety of the Church's life, including the Bible, doctrines, liturgy, sacraments and teachings of the Church Fathers.

An inspiration also comes from the Holy Spirit if it inspires us to be open to edification – to assent to instruction in the divine truths. On the other hand, the devil distorts the truth and influences us to oppose the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition. The enemy twists words, uses deceit and half-truths to make his lies believable; the devil instills stubbornness and opposition in us to accept divine truths.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our church is planning to host a summer camp this summer at Unicoi State Park and Lodge in Helen, Georgia, from July 31st to August 2nd. The theme is "God Calls Us in the Breeze." Let's listen to God's voice together amidst the beautiful scenery, live together, and enjoy activities together. For more information, please contact Anhsing Shen or Huiyen Chang. Please register with Daisy.

We would like to thank the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia (CFNGA) for the \$1,000 parish enrichment grant which was used to purchase our new Paschal candle holder.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has launched its "Rooted in Christ – Growing in Faith" campaign to raise funds for the programs and activities of the Archdiocese. Each parish and mission church in the Archdiocese is expected to participate with their individual goals. The Archdiocese has designated our parish goal of \$60,000, and has scheduled our parish to begin with a preparation period from January to March 2027 and actual campaign period from April to September 30, 2027.

Holy Land Carvings will come to our church on May 31, 2026. They will bring to us wood carvings for sale which were hand-made in Bethlehem to support Christian families in the Holy Land.

Prayer List: Dawn Leach, Agnes Hu, Jasmine Ho, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 7:00 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		