

## 1998: The Year of the Holy Spirit

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Published in the January 15, 1998 edition of the Arlington Catholic Herald

The year 1998 is the second phase of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 as described in Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter, "Tertio Millennio Adveniente." This past year was dedicated to Jesus Christ and during these next twelve months Our Holy Father wants to focus our attention on the Holy Spirit with a renewed understanding of His sanctifying presence and activity within the Church.

There are several themes for this year, which will help focus our spiritual preparation for the up-coming event at the turn of the century. For example, the sacrament that the Holy Father wants us to concentrate on is Confirmation, the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His marvelous seven gifts. As for the virtues, the Holy Father wants us to prayerfully examine the virtue of Hope.

Another theme for the year 1998 is Church unity; the Holy Father says, "The reflection of the faithful in the second year of preparation ought to focus particularly on the value of unity within the Church, to which the various gifts and charisma bestowed upon her by the Spirit are directed." In this regard, he is pointing out the work and documents of the Second Vatican Council.

The Holy Father also wants us all to have a renewed interest in spreading the Catholic Faith. Just as the Holy Spirit animated the early Church on Pentecost and has continued to sustain the Church throughout history, the Holy Spirit is the inspiration for the New Evangelization.

During this year, the Pope desires that Mary be contemplated and imitated as a woman of hope, who always trusted in the promises of God, and who is the spouse of the Holy Spirit.

In light of the Holy Father's tremendous document, I would like to offer twelve practical suggestions to help make this year an even more meaningful spiritual experience for all of us:

1. Study the seven gifts (wisdom, understanding, knowledge, piety, counsel, fortitude and fear of the Lord) and the twelve fruits (joy, charity, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, humility, fidelity, modesty, continence and chastity) of the Holy Spirit.

2. Read the books *The Sanctifier*, written by Louis L. Martinet (Pauline Books and Media), John Paul II's catechism on the Creed, *The Spirit: Giver of Life and Love Vol. III* (Pauline Books and Media), and *The Holy Spirit Lord and Giver of Life*

(Crossroad Publishing Co.) put out by the Theological-Historical Commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The booklets, *The Holy Ghost our Greatest Friend* (TAN Publishers) and *Devotions to the Holy Spirit* (Pauline Books and Media) are an excellent way to learn more about the Holy Spirit.

3. Between the Feast days of Ascension and Pentecost make a Novena to the Holy Spirit, as outlined in a booklet that can be ordered from the Holy Ghost Fathers, Wheaton, Maryland, (301)933-6130.

4. Study the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the sacrament of Confirmation. Recall the date of your own Confirmation and read a biography of your patron saint.

5. Learn about the virtue of Hope, which is the joyful expectation of things not yet possessed. Pray the Act of Hope often: "O my God, relying on Your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

6. Another way to increase the virtue of Hope is to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy each day. The Divine Mercy chaplet was revealed by Our Lord to Blessed Sr. Faustina Kowalska in 1935 as a way to grow in hope and trust in His Mercy.

7. Since the object of the virtue of hope is eternal life with God in Heaven, we should read and learn more about our eternal home. There are two excellent books that I would recommend: *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Heaven and Heaven*, *The Heart's Deepest Longing*, both by Peter Kreeft (Ignatius Press.)

8. See Mary as your model of the virtue of hope. She was always docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit in her life. Our Lady pondered the mysteries of God in her heart and she can teach us to follow the will of God and trust in His plan for our lives.

9. Consider Mary's relation to the Holy Spirit. She is the temple of the Holy Spirit and His spouse. To really delve into this marvelous relationship, read the writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe and Frank Duff, the founder of the Legion of Mary, on this subject.

10. Become active in the work of the New Evangelization! This year the Holy Father wants the laity to work for the New Evangelization and to be open to the charisma the Holy Spirit wants to give us. Consider membership in the Legion of Mary as an excellent way to deepen devotion to the Holy Spirit. The official Opening Prayers of a Legion meeting and the Legion Promise made by its active members are directed to the Holy Spirit. Even the official color of the Legion of Mary is red, the color of the Holy Spirit, and not blue as some would expect of a Marian organization. You may also wish to attend prayer groups in our diocese that are dedicated to the Holy Spirit and intercessory prayer.

11. Since the Holy Father is trying to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council for the New Evangelization: I would suggest getting a copy and reading the documents from the Council, particularly "Lumen Gentium." Any Catholic bookstore would have these available.

12. I heartily encourage people to attend one of the wonderful conferences on the Holy Spirit that are being offered at the Franciscan University of Steubenville this coming summer. For more information, please call 1(800)437-TENT

In conclusion, I strongly recommend that all Catholics purchase a copy of John Paul II's great document, "Tertio Millennio Adveniente," to read, study, and apply to their daily lives, so as to fully appreciate the great Jubilee to come.