

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

- discussed in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue 1998-2006 -

On this document

The Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue 1998-2006 paid much attention to Baptism in the Holy Spirit. See below.

In this dialogue 'On becoming a Christian', they have 'attempted to understand how an individual moves from his or her initial entry into the Christian life to being a fully active member of the church' (nr.5). Subjects were: Christian initiation and conversion, faith, formation, discipleship, experience in Christian life and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The final report in English (50.800 words, 100 pages) is a free download on www.stucom.nl nr. 0203uk and on www.vatican.va*

The section below on Baptism in the Holy Spirit is 6389 words.

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V. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation

A. Introduction

1. Why Reflect on Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

192. It is our intention to treat this section on Baptism in the Holy Spirit as we have the other sections of this report,

that is, within the context of Christian Initiation. We are fully aware that there are differences

among us regarding the meaning, significance, and timing of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is not our desire to prejudice the discussion in one direction or the other, but because the experience known as Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a cornerstone in Pentecostal life and spirituality and because the experience has been so significant in the spiritual life and formation also of Catholic Charismatics, we believe that it would be fruitful to look together at various biblical and patristic texts in order to discern what insights they might bring to our understanding of this experience and its place in Christian Initiation.

193. Catholics and Pentecostals both acknowledge the importance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. We share the conviction that the Holy Spirit has always been present in the church with grace, signs, and gifts. We affirm and embrace charisms as an important dimension in the life of the church.
194. Both of our traditions identify two principal moments for the reception of the Spirit. For Pentecostals these moments come in conversion and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. For Catholics they come in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.
195. Both Catholics and Pentecostals affirm the grace present in the Charismatic renewal. The warm reception given to it by the leaders in the Catholic Church is a sign of official recognition of this grace. In addition, many (though not all) Pentecostals would join Catholics in recognizing that grace in the commitment of Catholic Charismatics to remain loyal to their

Catholic faith. The Pentecostal doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit has led to internal discussions for Catholics through the Charismatic renewal's reception of that experience and through the diverse theological interpretations given to it. It is the conviction of the members of this Dialogue that the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit need not be a divisive issue among our communities. On the contrary, it may provide a meaningful bridge to greater understanding and mutual appreciation.

196. The Catholic renewal as well as the existence of this dialogue underscores the positive significance of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements for the whole church. These movements are one of the signs of the Spirit's enduring presence in the church and the world. It is for these reasons that we turn our attention to the subject of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

2. Earlier Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue On Baptism in the Holy Spirit

197. The subject of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit was first taken up in the initial round of this dialogue (1972-1976). At that time Pentecostals described Baptism in the Holy Spirit as follows: "In the Pentecostal movement 'being baptised in the Spirit', 'being filled with the Holy Spirit', and 'receiving the Holy Spirit' are understood as occurring in a decisive experience distinct from conversion whereby the Holy Spirit manifests himself, empowers, and transforms one's life, and enlightens one as to the whole reality of the Christian mystery (Acts 2:4; 8:17; 10:44; 19:6)" (*Final Report 1972-1976*, §12).

198. While the *Final Report 1972-1976* used the expression “receiving the Holy Spirit” as a description of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, it was clear to all participants that those Christians who have not had such an experience have received the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit dwells in all Christians (Rom 8:9), and not just in those ‘baptised in the Holy Spirit’. The difference between a committed Christian without such a Pentecostal experience and one with such an experience is generally not only a matter of theological focus, but also that of expanded openness and expectancy with regard to the Holy Spirit and his gifts. Because the Holy Spirit apportions as he wills in freedom and sovereignty, the religious experiences of persons can differ. ‘He blows where he wills’ (Jn 3:8). Though the Holy Spirit never ceased manifesting himself throughout the entire history of the church, the manner of the manifestations has differed according to the times and cultures. However, in the Pentecostal Movement, the manifestation of tongues has had, and continues to have, particular importance” (*Final Report 1972-1976*, §16).
199. In referring to the use of the expression Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the *Final Report 1972-1976* also stated that “in the New Testament the expression ‘to baptise in the Holy Spirit’ (Mk 1:8) is used to express, in contrast to the baptism of John (Jn 1:33), the baptism by Jesus who gives the Spirit to the new eschatological people of God, the church (Acts 1:5). All men are called to enter into this community through faith in Jesus Christ who makes them disciples through baptism and sharers of his Spirit (Acts 2:38:39)” (*Final Report 1972-1976*, §11).
200. That Report did not arrive at a joint statement on the understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit and its charismatic manifestations. Ambiguity remained in the Dialogue, for example, about the precise relationship between Baptism in the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the exercise of ministry in the other, as reflected in the following passage: “In some manner, all ministry is a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. It is not agreed whether there is a further imparting of the Spirit with a view to charismatic ministry, or whether Baptism in the Holy Spirit is, rather, a kind of release of a certain aspect of the Spirit already given” (*Final Report 1972-1976*, §18). In order to further the discussion on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, we offer the following observations.

B. Biblical Perspectives on Baptism in the Holy Spirit

201. All Christians believe that the sending of the Holy Spirit is essential to God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament the prophets announced a day when God’s people would receive the Spirit. Ezekiel proclaimed, “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you: and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes, and be careful to observe my ordinances” (Ezek 36:26-27; cf. 11:19). In addition, Joel prophesied a “pouring out” of the Spirit upon “all flesh” – old and young, sons and daughters, and even male and female slaves –

an announcement from which Peter draws to explain the observed prophetic phenomenon of Pentecost (Acts 2:7-8; cf. Joel 2:28-29).

202. In the New Testament, Jesus assures His followers that God wants to give the good gift of the Spirit to His children (cf. Lk 11:13). Prior to His ascension, Jesus promised His disciples that when the Spirit was sent, He would not only be with them but also in them (cf. Jn 14:17). A number of Apostolic letters mention the fact that believers receive the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9, 15; Gal 3:2; Titus 3:4-7). Through this reception, believers are born again (cf. Jn 3:5-6), assured of Divine love (cf. Rom 5:5), and baptized into one body (cf. 1 Cor 12:13), which introduces spiritual communion with God and one another (cf. 2 Cor 13:13; 1 Cor 1:9).

203. While one can find a foundation for understanding Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the beginning of all four Gospels, scripture nowhere mentions the phrase “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” in its nominal (noun) form. It uses the verbal form or it employs different verbs altogether. When he announced the coming of the One whose way he was preparing, John the Baptist declared to the multitudes, “I have baptised you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk 1:8; cf. Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33). Prior to his ascension, Jesus promised His disciples “...wait there [in Jerusalem] for the promise of the Father. ‘This’, he said, ‘is what you have heard from me; for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4-5 cf. 1:8). Catholics and Pentecostals both believe that Acts 2:4 is the

obvious fulfillment of this promise, “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them ability”. While Christians agree with the foregoing comments about the Holy Spirit, the interpretation of such biblical texts becomes more complex when Scripture is explored to account for the experience referred to as Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

204. On the Day of Pentecost, the questions that arose among those who witnessed the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:7-8, 12), led the Apostle Peter to address them. Peter appealed to the prophet Joel (2:28-32; cf. Acts 2:16-18) as providing precedent for what these people were seeing, a promise fulfilled before their eyes. “...This is what was spoken through the prophet, Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.’” Peter tied that promise to the coming of Jesus, His death, resurrection and ascension, and His promise of the outpouring of the Spirit. “When they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’” Peter’s response was to call them to repentance, followed by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. But he concluded by promising that if they did as instructed, they would “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” “The promise,” he pointed out, would apply not only to them and to their children, but to “all who are far

away ... everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (Acts 2:38-39).

205. Additional biblical evidence of this promise is found in Peter’s invitation to preach at the home of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, who had been identified as “a devout man who feared God” (Acts 10:2; 11:16). This phrase identified Gentiles who, while not converting to Judaism, nevertheless worshipped the God of Israel. Here again, the language used to describe the experience of the household of Cornelius differed from the words that Jesus used when He promised that His followers would be baptised in the Spirit. The text says simply that “the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word” while “the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on these Gentiles” (Acts 10:44-45). Indeed, Peter noted that the experience of these Gentiles paralleled his own experience on the Day of Pentecost, when he sought to justify Christian baptism of these Gentiles in water (cf. Acts 10:46-48) to the Jewish Christians who were present. Later, when Paul and Barnabas were summoned to the Jerusalem Council, Peter again appealed to the experience of Cornelius as being parallel to that of the apostles (cf. Acts 15:8).
206. Yet again, in Acts 19:6, Paul laid hands on those he found in Ephesus who had received the baptism of repentance preached by John the Baptist, and “the Holy Spirit came upon them.” In three cases when the Holy Spirit came upon the individuals there were charismatic manifestations, namely they “spoke in other tongues” (Acts 2:4), they

were heard “speaking in tongues and praising God” (Acts 10:45), or “they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). In Acts 9:17-18, Paul received the Spirit through the laying on of hands and was healed from his blindness. While there is no explicit mention that he spoke in tongues, Paul later wrote, “I speak in tongues more than all of you” (1 Cor 14:18). In Acts 8:9-19, while the text is not explicit about the presence of any charismatic phenomena when Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans and the Spirit comes upon them, it seems apparent that something dramatic happened that caused Simon, the magician, to desire the ability to bestow the Spirit through the laying on of hands. In the Acts of the Apostles there were charismatic manifestations at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

207. In summary, to be baptised with the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:5), to be filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:4) or to receive the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38) is seen as a gift of God rooted in Jesus’ own promise of Acts 1:8 and Peter’s claim in Acts 2:38-39. It is through the reception of this gift or grace from God that God reveals Himself in a personal and life-transforming way to the believer. The result is that the believer is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and becomes aware in a new and powerful way, of the presence of the risen and glorified Christ (cf. Jn 16:14). This encounter enables the believer to become a stronger witness for Christ (Acts 1:8) and to experience a deeper dimension of prayer and worship (1 Cor 12-14).

C. Patristic Perspectives on Baptism in the Holy Spirit

208. The following patristic statements underscore the strong pneumatological dimension to the early church's understanding and practice of Christian Initiation. At the outset, it should be asked, whether or not these patristic sources describe what today is known as "Baptism in the Holy Spirit". While some scholars interpret these texts in ways that suggest that they do, others are convinced that they do not. It is not our intention to attempt to resolve this debate. What we would like to point out, however, is that these texts demonstrate quite clearly the keen awareness that the Fathers of the church had regarding the decisive role of the Holy Spirit and his gifts in the transformation that took place when a person becomes a Christian. Those who expressed this view came from various parts of the Christian world, representing Latin, Greek, and Syriac traditions.¹

209. One of the earliest books written in Latin about baptism was by Tertullian (c.160-225), who included a passage indicating that prayer and charismatic gifts accompanied the "new birth" of one who became a Christian. He exhorts: "Therefore, blessed ones, whom the grace of God awaits, when you ascend from

that most sacred font of your new birth, and spread your hands for the first time in the house of your mother, together with your brethren, ask from the Father, ask from the Lord, that His own riches of grace and distributions of charisms (*peculia gratiae distributiones charismatum subiacerent*) may be supplied to you. 'Ask,' he says, 'and you shall receive'. Well, you have asked, and have received; you have knocked, and it has been opened to you" (Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 20 [c. 198-200]).² According to Tertullian, the receiving of the Holy Spirit is among the essential fruits of baptism, along with the remission of sins, deliverance from death, and regeneration (cf. *Against Marcion* 1, 28). Several other passages also suggest that one receives the Spirit in the sacrament of baptism (*On Modesty* IX, 9; and *On the Soul* I,4).

210. About the same time, another Western author, Hippolytus (c.170-235), preserves a prayer in his *Apostolic Tradition* to be pronounced over the newly baptised: "The bishop, imposing hands on them, shall make this invocation – 'Lord God, who has made them worthy to obtain the remission of sins by the bath of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, confer on them your grace so that they may serve you according to your will'" (*Apostolic Tradition* 22).³ Here the invocation indicates that the baptised have been regenerated in the Holy Spirit and

¹ For patristic passages that speak of the role of the Holy Spirit in a way that might possibly reflect Baptism in the Holy Spirit our dialogue team is especially indebted to the work of Kilian McDonnell OSB. He was responsible for the section devoted to the Fathers of the church in a book co-authored with George T. Montague and entitled *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, Second Revised Edition, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994. McDonnell summarized some of his findings during the first meeting of the present phase of our dialogue, held at Bolton, Ontario, on June 23-30, 1998, in his paper "The Experience of Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Early Church."

² Slight alterations to the English translation found in our usual source, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, have been made in light of McDonnell's discussion of the Latin words which appear in the above quotation.

³ Our English translation is based upon the critical edition found in Hippolyte de Rome, *La tradition apostolique*, "Sources Chrétiennes 11," B. Botte, editor, Paris: Cerf, 1946, p. 52.

that the gift of grace is aimed at serving the will of the Father.

211. For Origen (c.185-254), an Alexandrian who wrote in Greek, baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit are intimately related: baptism with water is “the principle and source of the divine charisms” (*Commentary on John* 6:17). To argue that the various charismatic gifts manifest themselves in powerful ways, Origen refers to the passage from the Acts of the Apostles about Simon the magician, who was so impressed by what occurred when the Spirit descended upon the newly baptised that he wanted to buy from Peter the power to bring about the same effect (cf. Acts 8:9-24). Origen goes on to explain the difference between the baptism of John the Baptist and that of Jesus and his disciples (cf. Acts 19:2-7), stating that the latter is a bath of new birth and of renewal in the Spirit. Gifts of the Spirit such as “the word of wisdom” or “the word of knowledge,” mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:8, are bestowed either through baptism or through the grace of the Spirit (cf. *On First Principles* 2, 10, 7 [c.220–230]).

212. In the Latin tradition, Hilary of Poitiers (c. 314-367) also points out some of the charismatic gifts that new Christians receive from the Holy Spirit: “We who have been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy when we feel within us the first stirrings of the Holy Spirit, [...] when we begin to have insight into the mysteries of faith, to prophesy and to speak with wisdom, become steadfast in hope and receive the gifts of healing and domination over demons” (*Tract on*

the Psalms 64:15).⁴ Hilary uses the imagery of water and intoxication to describe the Spirit’s powerful effect on believers: “We become inebriated when we receive the Holy Spirit, who is called a river. The prophet prays that the Lord will inebriate us, so that out of us various streams of grace might flow” (*Tract on the Psalms* 64:15).⁵ Hilary further states that, after they have been filled with the power of divine gifts, Christians may sow the seed of the Gospel on good soil, producing fruit of thirty, sixty and a hundredfold (cf. Mt 13:8 and 23). In another place, Hilary turns to the theme of experience and affirms: “Among us there is no one who, from time to time, does not feel the gift of the grace of the Spirit” (*Tract on the Psalms* 118 12,4). He insists that the charisms are “profitable gifts” (*On the Trinity* 8:30), exhorting his readers: “Let us, therefore, make use of this great benefit” (*On the Trinity* 2:35).

213. The instructions preserved from Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386), which he delivered to those preparing to enter the church during the rites celebrated at Easter, evoke what it was like to become a

⁴ Our English translations of this work are based upon the critical edition: S. Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis, *Tractatus super Psalmos*, “CSEL 22,” Pragae / Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, 1891, page 246.

⁵ Here Hilary is commenting on the following passages: Psalm 46:5 (“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High”); John 4:14 (“The water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”) and John 7:38-39 (“‘He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”). For a testimony to the powerful transformation worked in the believer by the Holy Spirit see: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fifth Theological Discourse*, 28 (380).

- Christian many centuries ago. Pronounced in the very church built over the places of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, Cyril recalls the charismatic gifts about which Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (cf. *Catechetical Lectures* 16:12) and relates the Holy Spirit to those gifts, which would soon be poured out upon the newly initiated: "Great indeed, and all-powerful in gifts, and wonderful, is the Holy Spirit" (*Catechetical Lectures* 16:22). According to Cyril, the grace given to the apostles "was not partial but [the Spirit's] power was in full perfection; for just as one who plunges into the waters and is baptised is encompassed on all sides by the waters, so were they also baptised completely by the Holy Spirit" (*Catechetical Lectures* 17:14).
214. Basil of Caesarea (c.330-379) affirms that the Holy Spirit is the unifying principle holding together the body of the church which is blessed with such a diversity of charisms: "Again, the Spirit is conceived of, in relation to the distribution of gifts, as a whole in parts. For we are all 'members one of another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given us'." This unity in the Holy Spirit is related to baptism: "And as parts in the whole so are we individually in the Spirit, because we all 'were baptized in one body into one spirit'" (*On the Holy Spirit*, 26:61). Basil adds that the power of the Spirit breaks into action according to the needs of particular situations: "For as art is potentially in the artist, but only in operation when he is working in accordance with it, so also the Spirit is ever present with those that are worthy, but works, as need requires, in prophecies, or in healings, or in some other actual carrying into effect of His potential action".
215. John Chrysostom (354-407), a famous preacher in the city of Antioch and later bishop of Constantinople, commented upon the verse in which John the Baptist says of the one coming after him that "He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit" (Mt 3:11), giving the following list of the graces received by those who became Christians: "remission of sins, removing of punishment, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, adoption, brotherhood, a partaking of the inheritance and an abundant supply of the Holy Spirit" (*On Matthew* 11). In contrast to Basil of Caesarea, however, who, as we just noted, affirmed that the charisms continue to be distributed and exercised in the Christian community, John Chrysostom finds the discussion of them in 1 Corinthians 12 "obscure" because of "our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place" (*On 1 Corinthians* 29). In another commentary concerning Romans 8:26 ("but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words"), he writes: "This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place" (*On Romans* 14). Chrysostom goes on to suggest that some of the gifts referred to in the Scripture were given because of the special needs of the early community, while others continue today in an institutionalized form.
216. One of the patristic testimonies, a prominent figure from the Syriac tradition, Philoxenus (c. 440-528)

gives us a somewhat contrasting position. He writes, “Now again, the Holy Spirit is given by baptism to those who are baptized and they really receive the Spirit, like the first believers. However in none of them, does it manifest its work visibly. Even though the Spirit is in them, it remains hidden there. Unless one leaves the world to enter into the way of the rules of the spiritual life, observing all the commandments Jesus has given, walking with wisdom and perseverance in the narrow way of the Gospel, the work of the Spirit received in baptism does not reveal itself” (*Letter to Patricius* 120).⁶ Obviously Philoxenus made a strong connection between baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit. Here the visible manifestation of the activity of the Holy Spirit is revealed in that spiritual path followed by those who “leave the world” to follow “the narrow way of the Gospel,” an apparent reference to the vocation of monks and nuns which is so highly prized in this early period, first developing in the East but later also appearing in the West. That being noted, still Philoxenus clearly holds to a hidden presence of the Spirit at work in all who have been baptized. This hidden presence can break out into visible manifestation long after the actual initiation of the believer into the Christian community.

217. Every one of the statements included in this brief sample of patristic texts unambiguously witnesses to the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the transformation by which a person

⁶ Our English translation is based upon “La lettre à Patricius,” Édition critique du texte syriaque et traduction française par René Lavenant, in *Patrologia orientalis*, vol. 30, fasc. 5, Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1963, pp. 861 and 863.

became a Christian, often in ways which suggest the bestowal of powerful graces and charismatic gifts. Such graces and gifts include: prayer with outstretched hands, receiving the inheritance and deliverance from death (Tertullian); regeneration by the Holy Spirit and receiving grace (Hippolytus); cleansing, power and gifts of wisdom and knowledge (Origen); joy, prophecy and spiritual inebriation (Hilary); spiritual power in its fullness (Cyril of Jerusalem); diversity of charisms and healing (Basil); sanctification (Gregory of Nazianzen); forgiveness, remission of sin, holiness, adoption as a child of God and abundant outpouring of the Spirit (John Chrysostom) and hidden effectiveness with subsequent manifestations (Philoxenus). Both of our communities rejoice that we can report this evidence about the power of the Holy Spirit at work in Christians from the early centuries of church history.

D. Contemporary Reflections on Baptism in the Holy Spirit

1. A Catholic Perspective

a. Some Doctrinal Observations

218. It must be recognized that there is no official Catholic doctrine on Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Its reception in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has sparked an intense theological investigation of the matter but this can only be understood in the light of Catholic teaching on the reception of the Holy Spirit. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes reference to the baptism that Christ will bring that distinguishes it from the baptism for repentance administered by John the Baptist. Referring to John 3:5—“Jesus

answered, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.’ ”—the Catechism describes the baptism that Christ institutes as a “baptism in water and the Spirit [that] will be a new birth.” (CCC 720). Certainly this does not directly implicate what Catholic Charismatics have meant by being ‘baptized in the Spirit.’ Within a Catholic context it means that the charismatic ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit’ cannot be considered as an additional sacrament, or that it communicates sacramental grace that those who have not received it would not possess. For example, Catholics cannot affirm that those who have been baptized and confirmed would be lacking in the grace of those two sacraments if they did not also receive the charismatic ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit.’

219. The Holy Spirit is invoked and imparted in the celebration of every sacrament. Although the work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the grace received in the sacraments—the sovereign distribution of graces, gifts, and charismata are affirmed in Catholic theology—the initial reception of the Holy Spirit is mediated through the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and eucharist). At the same time Catholics identify the action of the Holy Spirit in a way that parallels the Pentecostal understanding of conversion, where the Holy Spirit is given and regeneration takes place, and of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, where empowerment is given.
220. The Holy Spirit acts in baptism through regeneration, a “birth into the new life in Christ” (CCC 1277), “enabling [the baptized]...to believe in God, to hope in him...” (CCC

1266). They are incorporated into the church and in being anointed with sacred chrism (perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop and used within the baptismal rite) they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are “incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king” (CCC 1241).

221. It is in the sacrament of confirmation that the “special strength of the Holy Spirit” is imparted (CCC 1285). Indeed, “the effect of confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost” (CCC 1302). Through confirmation grace received in baptism is increased and deepened, resulting in a deeper sense of being a child of God (divine filiation by which we cry “Abba! Father!”), a more firm union with Christ, an increase of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a more perfect bond with the church, and special strength to witness to Christ including bearing the shame of the cross (cf. CCC 1303).
222. In confirmation, Jesus Christ marks “a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness” (CCC 1304). In the Catholic tradition, both baptism and confirmation imprint an “indelible spiritual mark” or “character” on the soul. Therefore it is through these two sacraments that Catholics are given new life, and the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, to grow in holiness and engage in mission with all the gifts and charisms that the Spirit imparts.

b. The Birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

223. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal came into being as one among several different manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Already, on the eve of the 20th century, Pope Leo XIII, taking up proposals made to him, wrote an Apostolic Exhortation (1895) and an Encyclical Letter (1897) in which he called for devotion to the Holy Spirit and recommended the nine days before Pentecost as a Novena of Prayer for the Holy Spirit: “for the renewal of the church, reunification of Christianity, renewal of society, and for a renewal of the face of the earth”. On 1 January 1901, Pope Leo XIII prayed the hymn to the Holy Spirit in the name of the whole church.

224. Over the course of the 20th century, the decisive influences in the growth of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church included liturgical renewal, a renewed emphasis on the biblical and patristic sources, new concern for Christian unity, shared responsibility of all the faithful for the church’s mission to the world, new theological and pastoral reflection on the working of the Holy Spirit, and a fresh appreciation of the church’s charismatic treasures (cf. *Charismatic Community Renewal in the Catholic Church in the Federal Republic of Germany: The Spirit Gives Life, A Theological Guide*, pp. 10-11).

225. In this context of the new awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit, the witness of classical Pentecostals and their teaching on Baptism in the Holy Spirit contributed to the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1967 in the United States. The early leaders of the renewal prayed for the experience of Baptism in the Holy

Spirit and received it with many also speaking in tongues. Subsequently they reflected theologically on both their own experience and the Pentecostal doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit and submitted their renewal movement to the guidance of the church’s pastors.

226. Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, along with many individual bishops and Episcopal conferences, acknowledged the signs of grace present in the Renewal, at times expressing caution about certain practices that required spiritual discernment, and teaching that might not be consistent with that of the Catholic Church. Consequently the classical Pentecostal doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit was not embraced as a whole without qualification. Since its beginning, the Charismatic Renewal has been warmly welcomed by the church’s leaders and more recently has received formal ecclesial recognition from Rome.⁷

c. Two Schools of Theological Interpretation

227. Two major schools of theological interpretation emerged among Catholic charismatics concerning Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some exchanged that term for others such as ‘release of the Spirit’ or “renewal in the Spirit’ in order to maintain a clear distinction between this aspect of the renewal and the sacrament of baptism.

⁷ With a Decree of 14 September 1993, the Pontifical Council for Laity gave formal recognition to the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS)*, as a body for the promotion of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and approved their Statutes.

228. The Malines Document (1974), an important Catholic statement on the Charismatic Movement, underlined the importance of experience: “When the Spirit given at initiation emerges into consciousness, there is frequently a perception of concrete presence” (III G 4). It established a fundamental relation between Christian Initiation and receiving the Holy Spirit: “The decisive coming of the Spirit by virtue of which one becomes a Christian is related to the celebration of Christian Initiation (baptism, confirmation, and eucharist). Christian Initiation is the effective sign of the Spirit’s bestowal” (III F I). It pointed to the insights of early Christian communities with respect to the reception of the Holy Spirit: “There is evidence that in many of the early Christian communities, persons not only asked for and received the Spirit during the celebration of initiation, but they expected that the Spirit would demonstrate his power by the transformation he would effect in their lives” (III F 1).
229. The document went on to indicate the view of early Christian communities in regard to charisms: “Further, the early Christian Churches expected that the power of the Spirit would come to visibility along the full spectrum of his charisms in the community, which included, but by no means was limited to, such charisms as helping, administration, prophecy, and tongues (1 Cor 12:28; cf. Rom 12:6-8)” (III F I).
230. For the Malines text, therefore, Baptism in the Holy Spirit is integral to Christian Initiation. It is to be understood as part of the fullness of Christian Initiation, as one expression of the total reality of initiation. Baptism in the Holy Spirit belongs to the church at a fundamental level.
231. This approach has two advantages: First, Baptism in the Holy Spirit is placed within a sacramental context; as part of Christian Initiation, it can be understood as a fundamental category of Christian life. Second, linking Baptism in the Holy Spirit with initiation relates the sacraments of initiation to the fullness of Christian life, which is based on spiritual experience and the openness to receive more gifts through the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Baptism in the Holy Spirit is “integral” and “normative”. But another question is raised as a result of taking this position. Is the specific character of Baptism in the Holy Spirit sufficiently recognised as a particular form of spiritual experience?
232. Another interpretation, one of those expounded in *The Spirit Gives Life*, a paper approved by the German Bishops’ Conference in 1987, indicated that: “A Christian does not possess God’s Spirit in a static manner. Rather, the person lives in the continuous ‘sending forth’ of the Spirit by the love of God. That is why we can always go on praying, ‘Send forth your Spirit’. A new kind of experience of the Spirit can therefore be understood as a new ‘outpouring’ of the Spirit by God.” In this sense, “alongside the continuous indwelling of the Spirit through baptism and confirmation – occasional renewals, or new sendings forth of the Spirit [occur] by which a Christian ‘is enabled to perform some action of grace or is placed in a new state of grace’” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.q 43 a.6). In this sense,

experiences of the Spirit can be explained as a new receiving of the Holy Spirit without denying reference to the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

233. The advantage of this approach is that it clearly emphasizes the particularity of God's guidance and his gifts. This approach has sacramental aspects, since all spiritual life has its roots in the sacraments. The individual sacraments give shape to the church, which Catholics consider to be "the universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48). In this context, the sacraments of initiation certainly are of fundamental significance. But God's bestowal of grace and of charismatic gifts need not be restricted only to the sacraments. As the New Testament points out, "the wind [Spirit] blows where it chooses" (Jn 3:7-8), distributing freely a variety of gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:4-13; Eph 4:11-17).
234. Both positions agree on the essentials of a dedicated Christian life and what here can be said to be "integral" and "normative", and on the fundamental meaning of the sacraments, especially those of Christian Initiation. Both agree on the importance of being open to the Holy Spirit and his gifts, "whether extraordinary or simple and humble". Both agree on the importance of openness to the charismatic dimension of the church, to the transformative and life changing power of the Holy Spirit and to the fullness of Christian life. Both agree on the importance of spiritual experience and, at the same time, that Christian life, as often had been said, is in no way "a progress from peak experience to peak

experience" or is "dominated by unusual experiences" but that, on the contrary, "life is lived mostly in the valleys. Often in the desert".⁸ In that sense both agree that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of ecclesial life. Thus, the two different approaches or positions do not appear to be irreconcilable. However, they clearly disagree on the understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, especially concerning whether this term should be used to specify a particular spiritual experience in the Pentecostal Movement and in the Charismatic Renewal, or whether this should be understood as normative for Christian initiation.

235. Both interpretations attempt to be faithful to Catholic tradition and both complement the charismatic experience with the church's theological and spiritual traditions. They both emphasize that the charismatic dimension is integral to the building up of the church and to the fullness of Christian life. Charisms, free gifts of the Holy Spirit, "whatever their character – sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues – ... are oriented toward sanctifying grace, and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church" (CCC 2003).
236. Catholics are grateful for the enrichment of their spiritual experience by their historic interaction with classical Pentecostals, their experience and doctrine. In the meantime, Catholics, while witnessing to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit throughout

⁸ Cf. Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, Collegeville, Minnesota 1994, p. 360.

the history of the church, continue to pray for a 'New Pentecost' following the lead of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council,. They also renew faith in the Holy Spirit as traditionally expressed in the beautiful Pentecost Sequence hymn *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come Holy Spirit) and the Litany of the Holy Spirit.

237. We believe that it is fitting in this dialogue to conclude this section on Catholic understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the prayers lifted up to God on the morning before Pentecost and the evening of Pentecost in the Liturgy of the Hours. Respectively they are: "We have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. With all who are baptized, let us give glory to the Lord, and ask him: Lord Jesus, give us your Spirit to make us holy." "You [God the Father] desire the unity of all Christians through one Baptism in the Holy Spirit, make all who believe one in heart and soul. Send your Holy Spirit into the Church."

The report follows with a Pentecostal Perspective. The whole report in English (50.800 words, 100 pages) is a free download on www.stucom.nl nr. 0203uk.

After the Pentecostal Perspective follows:

3. Convergences and Challenges

260. The most fundamental convergence concerning the theme treated in the present section, about which we can rejoice, is the common conviction within both our communities that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a powerful action of grace bestowed by God upon believers within the church. This dialogue, which began

in 1972, is the oldest and most continuous bilateral dialogue in which Pentecostals and Catholics engaged one another. It owes its origins in no small part to the climate of openness and trust created between us as a result of the beginnings of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the late 1960's. That this Renewal spread widely to a significant percentage of the Catholic population, now numbering in excess of 120,000,000, and was discerned by Catholic bishops and popes to be a welcome work of the Holy Spirit, allowed Pentecostals to see Catholics in a new and more positive light. Catholics too were opened to recognize the genuine and authentic work of God in their Pentecostal brothers and sisters. During the last century, the lifting up of Baptism in the Holy Spirit as part of the reality of Christ's community has been a gift to the church. The present section represents a sustained effort by Catholics and Pentecostals to explore Scripture and the patristic literature in a common search for greater illumination about Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is already a step that is of no little significance, especially considering the fact that our two communities together make up such a large portion of the worldwide Christian family. The fact that we conclude this report in the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Azusa Street Mission, one of the commonly acknowledged foundational events which led to the birth of various classical Pentecostal churches, is particularly felicitous.

261. At the same time, one striking conclusion to emerge from our common consideration of biblical and patristic material in the hope of

illuminating the phenomenon of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the uncovering of substantial diversity, not simply between our two communities but within each community. One example of this plurality of opinion concerns whether or not all of the patristic passages we have considered may be credibly identified as expressive of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. But this is also evident in our contemporary reflection on this issue. Here one finds that the substantial theological discussion of Baptism in the Holy Spirit which emerged after the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has not by any means arrived at a consensus regarding whether it should be considered fundamentally in relation to the celebration of the sacraments or whether it should be considered as an “extra-sacramental” outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For their part, the extensive number of denominational and independent Pentecostal churches and movements often are distinguished on the basis of differences related to their understanding of the nature and role of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Even from their very beginnings, differences among Pentecostals can be verified regarding the relation of Baptism in the Holy Spirit to conversion, salvation (Oneness Pentecostals) or sanctification, or

regarding the necessity of various kinds of evidence, such as speaking in tongues, to attest that one has truly received this baptism. Our common consideration of this material could not, nor did it aim at, trying to discern whether this diversity is compatible with a fundamental unity in faith concerning Baptism in the Holy Spirit, much less to identify whether such diversities may be incompatible divergences, either within our respective communities or between us. While the experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit seems to have a certain degree of similarity among its recipients, the understanding of it and its place within the series of events by which one becomes a Christian are matters of substantial difference of opinion.

262. Nevertheless, there is much that we can say together about the Holy Spirit’s role when one becomes a Christian. We have acknowledged together the importance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. We share the conviction that the Holy Spirit has always been present in the church with grace, signs and gifts. We affirm together and embrace the presence and exercise of charisms as an important dimension in the life of the church.

*The whole report *On becoming a Christian* is also published in print in 2009 by the Vatican, both in English and French, in *Information service* nr. 129 (2008/III). You can order it from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, vcaroli@christianunity.va. Price: 5 euro. USA: 5 dollar.

This English text and the French translation [plus commentary] are also on the website of the Vatican: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_pentecostals.htm

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