Introduction

This little book is intended to bring you good news and to make you one of the beneficiaries of the abundant fruit which this news brings. Precisely, I wish to introduce you to the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit, which is a special devotion to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. I would have loved to meet you and talk to you personally about this Movement but I am afraid I may not get the opportunity to do so. This is why I decided to use this means to tell you a bit of the most important things which you need to know about it. I decided to present these bits of information in a question and answer format because I know from experience that people always have questions to ask whenever they are confronted with something new. I will not take so much of your time; be patient to read on.

1

What is the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit?

The Confraternity is a fellowship of the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and the children of God the Father, who consecrate themselves in a special way to the Holy Spirit for the purpose of spreading his love, his fire, his power, his gifts and his fruits in the world. It is a Movement as well as a special Devotion to the Holy Spirit whom Scripture and Tradition call by various names, symbols and imageries. He is the Breath of God, Divine Wisdom, the Cloud of God, the Advocate, the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Helper, the Power from on High, the Promise of the Father, the Heavenly Dove, the Spirit of truth, the Fire from Above, the Lord and Giver of Life, the Mother of God's Children, the Father of the Poor and the Third Divine Person. Every Christian believes in the Holy Spirit and is baptized in his name together with the Father and
the Son. In other words, I am sure that if you are a Christian, then you believe in him. We also mention him in our prayers and religious discussions such as when we say, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit". However, it is possible that, like a good number of Christians, you have never had an intimate relationship with this Heavenly Dove. Yet, this relationship is necessary that you should have it and that is exactly what the Confraternity intends to help you to do. Let us begin:

2

Can you explain what you mean when you say that the Confraternity is a Movement?

The Random House Webster's Dictionary defines Movement as "a series of actions directed towards a particular end" or "a group of people or organizations working toward or favouring a common goal". The Confraternity possesses these characteristics of a Movement and as such qualifies as one. It is an organization which coordinates a series of actions towards a common goal; namely, to make the Holy Spirit better known, loved and worshiped and to work in fellowship with him to bring about the renewal of the face of the earth through the Church. The Confraternity believes that the hope of Christians, the Church and the world today is to be found in the effective realization of this goal. Political, social, and economic expertise and networking coupled with scientific and technological breakthroughs have done a lot for the progress of the world and yet we lack real peace, life, unity and security. Since God the Father and the Son accomplish all their plans through the Holy Spirit, we the children of the Father and the disciples of the Son should learn to do the same. We will not be able to do much except by the same person

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and power, the Spirit. This is the Movement which the Confraternity represents.

3

What does it mean to say that the Confraternity is Devotion?

From a common sense perspective, devotion refers to an earnest attachment to a thing, a cause or a person which entails a deep dedication or even consecration to the object of one's devotion. A devotee is like a fan or enthusiast of a thing or person. Loyalty, affection, consecration, dedication, love and attachment all form part of the content of devotion. Whether we like it or not, human beings are often devoted to one thing or another, to one person or another. Today, we live in a world where soccer has become like a religion. As a result, we find many fans of different soccer clubs. The kind of dedication and emotional attachment which fans have for their clubs or idols offer us insight into what devotion is all about. The Confraternity is devotion to the Holy Spirit.

4

Does Scripture Encourage Devotion?

For most early Christians, following Jesus (discipleship) was largely a matter of devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and his ways. Their act of abandoning everything to follow Jesus appeared foolish in the eyes of men and women of their time but they were undeterred in their dedication. Commitment to Jesus and his Gospel call for both emotional and affective responses. This is why one theologian, Carl Dehine, defines devotion as "the feeling side of Christian faith." Devotion entails feeling and affection provoked and nourished by faith,

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3 Carl Dehine, "Devotion and Devotions" in J.A. Komonchak, M. Collins and D. A. Lane, eds., The New Dictionary of Theology, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, p. 283.
which promotes authentic Christian living. Authentic devotion expresses itself ultimately in services of obedience to God and integral development of creation.

In Acts of the Apostles Chapter 6, Scripture tells us that as the number of disciples continued to grow, the early Christian community encountered a serious problem. The Jews born outside their land and who had imbibed foreign cultures (the Hellenists) complained that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of the basics of life. When this came to the knowledge of the Apostles, they came up with a decision about what should be done. They said: “It is not right for us to neglect the Word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6: 2-4). In this passage, we can see that when faced with many options in life and ministry, Peter and his colleagues made a fundamental decision to devote themselves to two things: prayer and ministry of the Word. This is not a blind devotion; it is rather a devotion born out of decision. It is also a decision made among options that are good in themselves but where priorities needed to be rightly set.

5

What is the place of Devotions in the Church?

The Church of Jesus Christ is a praying and worshiping community. We are a people constituted to sing praises to the Lord who called us out of darkness into his own wonderful light (1 Peter 2: 9-10). The common worship or prayer of the People of God, the Church, is called Liturgy. These include the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments and the daily official prayers said by mostly the clergy and
members of the institute of consecrated life (the religious). Most of the other prayers and forms of adoration in the Church come under devotions. Popular devotions include habitual prayers in the Church, which are not part of the Liturgy, but are widespread such as the Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary. Christians, down the ages, have had the custom of gathering in prayer out of devotion to Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints. This gave rise to what we call Pious Societies. So in the Church, devotion is a recognized way through which the faithful express their faith, get educated on matters of faith and become empowered for ministry. There are many of them in the Catholic Church such as devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Divine Mercy, Precious Blood; to Virgin Mary (Legion of Mary, Block Rosary, Mother of Perpetual Succour) and the Saints (St Anthony, St Jude, St Rita and so on). Devotion to the Holy Spirit is rare.

Devotion to the Holy Spirit is not very common in the Church. Stop for a moment and think of your parish and other parishes you know and tell me how many societies you can find there that are of devotion to the Holy Spirit. I will be surprised if you have any one at all. The closest that you might find is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. Surely, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement has helped a lot in creating some awareness about the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers but it is not precisely a devotion to the Holy Spirit. The absence of Pious/Spiritual Societies devoted to the Holy Spirit in our parishes and dioceses is one of the indicators that there is serious neglect or forgetfulness of the Holy Spirit particularly in our devotional life as Catholics.
7

Is Devotion to the Holy Spirit just to make up for the Neglect?

Perhaps with more devotions to the Holy Spirit, the problem of neglect, ignorance and forgetfulness of the Holy Spirit will gradually be eliminated but that is not the positive reason for the Movement. Our interest is not simply to give the Holy Spirit a share of devotion and make him happy. Not at all! True devotion to the Holy Spirit is about having a personal dedication, unreserved commitment, total consecration and lasting loyalty to the Third Person of the Trinity. The Confraternity means to introduce people to this devotion, which implies getting them connected to the Holy Spirit in a way that they have not experienced before. If you are one of the few believers that is already enjoying some personal relationship with the Paraclete, this devotion will help you to discover ways of deepening what you already have.

8

Why is Devotion to the Holy Spirit Needed?

The Prophets spoke about the time of the Holy Spirit that was to come (Cf. Joel 3:1-3). Jesus Christ promised that he will ask the Father to send us the Holy Spirit (Cf. John 14: 16-18) and he fulfilled this without delay on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Even though the three persons of the Trinity are essentially inseparable, we can say that in a sense, the Day of Pentecost started a special period of the Holy Spirit in history. Certainly, the Holy Spirit was in creation before Pentecost, but on that Day, the Spirit came to be and to work in the world as a permanent indweller. This event was the culmination of the whole creative activities of the Father and the redemptive work of the Son. Following the Ascension and then Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, working in and with the Church, became the principal witness of Christ on earth. That is why the time in
Intention that “devotion towards the Holy spirit may be increased and intensified” (no 5). In this regard, he said that “we should direct towards the Holy Spirit the highest homage of love and devotion” (no.17).

Over a century later, Pope Paul VI speaking about the Second Vatican Council said that “the Christology and particularly the ecclesiology of the Council must be succeeded by a new study of and devotion to the Holy Spirit precisely as the indispensable complement to the teaching of the Council.”

Forty years has passed since this appeal was made and yet little or no devotion to the Holy Spirit are found in the Church.

Our world is dying for lack of true love and we Christians, who are called to teach the world love by word and example, seem to lack the courage to carry

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out this mission. Hence, we all swim in the ocean of indiscipline, corruption, and fear. We are in need of help. The Holy Spirit is the Helper par excellence, the source of power, love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7). In other words, devotion to the Holy Spirit holds the key to the transformation of the world, our nations, the Church and individual Christians.

Many Christians yearn to be holy. This desire has led people into all kinds of wrong paths and places where they are destroyed or misled. The devotion to the Holy Spirit as promoted by the Confraternity provides us with an enabling environment or school of genuine holiness. For sanctity is one of those realities which Scripture clearly says are not obtained by human power or might but by the Spirit of God (cf. Zechariah 4:6). Holiness or being spiritual is first and foremost a gift and then secondarily a task. Dedication and commitment to the Holy Spirit is the easiest road to holiness.

If you ask me what the world needs most today, my reply will be: to have its face renewed. If you go further to ask me who would be able to do this seemingly impossible task; my answer will be: the Holy Spirit will do it for to him nothing is impossible. Then if you wish to know how the Holy Spirit will do this; I will respond: He will do it operating through men and women, structures, systems and institutions that are freely consecrated and committed to his person, presence and activities in the world, and whose strength and power come from the worship of him in unity with the Father and the Son for courageous witnessing.

9

How is the Confraternity Different from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?

As I mentioned above, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement is one of the societies in the Church that comes closest to the Confraternity as far
as association with the Holy Spirit is concerned. For example, through “Life in the Spirit Seminar” and “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, the Charismatic Movement fosters personal receptivity to the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is not precisely a devotion to the Holy Spirit; its major emphasis is on the gifts (charisms) of the Spirit. The Confraternity lays emphasis on consecration, commitment, loyalty and friendship with the Holy Spirit which is consummated in worship and service. As members of the Confraternity, we are interested in promoting the knowledge of, devotion to and love for the Holy Spirit as a person with hope that with him in us and working with him, we would be able to renew our personal lives, the body of Christ, the Church and the face of the earth in general.

10

What are the Major Areas of Emphasis of the Confraternity?

The spirituality of the Confraternity is built on Four-plus-One (Five) Pillars or Areas of Emphasis, which are:

(1) Consecration: By virtue of Baptism and Confirmation, every Christian is consecrated to God. However, the Confraternity stresses the idea of double consecration. Let me explain: In baptism, we are consecrated by the Holy Spirit to become sons and daughters of God the Father, and brothers and sisters of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Seen from the perspective of relationship, this consecration may at best be described as one-sided until the person so-consecrated freely consecrates himself or herself to the Holy Spirit to become his friend, co-witness, and companion. It is as if the Holy Spirit at baptism says to
us “I LOVE YOU”. Then, he begins to wait for us to respond “I LOVE YOU TOO”. When we do this, then his relationship with us qualifies as mutual friendship. One-sided love does not constitute friendship. Devotion to the Holy Spirit is a concrete way of giving this long-awaited response of love to the Eternal Divine Love. It is something of the heart that comes from a deep feeling of being touched by Divine love and giving love in return. Devotion does not come by force. It is an outflow of affective commitment from the heart to a person or thing that has made a difference in one’s life. Moreover, the logic of this consecration implies and promotes the spirituality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in individual persons, the Church, and the world (the market, on the streets, in offices, in schools, the cars we drive and farmlands). In other words, for the Confraternity, consecration means total dedication to the Holy Spirit and living it in spirit and truth.

(ii) Commitment: The Confraternity insists on total consecration to the Holy Spirit expressed in obedience, openness, sacrifice, and readiness to follow the promptings, interventions, direction and control of the Spirit in a way that respects nature and reason when necessary. Total commitment is a necessary consequence of the consecration of one’s life to the Holy Spirit. In practical terms, this means handing over the self to the Spirit of God; Living and acting under the direction of the Holy Spirit and having the Holy Spirit as the Director General of one’s life. This commitment is supposed to grow and last through life and faithfulness is its hallmark. Thus, the Confraternity aims at deepening the formation of Christians beginning from their earliest encounter with the faith all through their life. It recognizes the special need to take adult Catholic formation beyond what is done in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). The Confraternity intends to be a school of further Christian formation in the Church and under the Church.
(iii) Worship: The Confraternity lays serious emphasis on the worship of the Holy Spirit in the same way as it pertains to the Father and the Son. The recognition and appreciation of the person, presence and actions of the Holy Spirit in creation, the Church and the lives of individuals necessarily bring us to worship him. This worship is expressed in prayer of praises, invocation, supplication and contemplation. A Devotee in the Confraternity is formed or trained to encounter, listen and talk to, praise, discuss with and surrender to the Holy Spirit on a constant basis. In effect, the Confraternity invites us Christians who worship God in spirit and truth (cf. John 4: 23) to move a step further to recognize and worship the Spirit of Truth (cf. John 14: 17) and to collaborate with him in working for the renewal of the face of the earth and the salvation of the world. Such are the men and women that the Movement intends to present to God in and through the Church. Do not forget that one of the major evidences given by the First Ecumenical Council of Constantinople held in AD 381 to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit is that he is “worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son”. This is our faith and the Confraternity helps us to live it out fully.

(iv) Witnessing: Witnessing is the fruit of consecration, commitment and worship. This witnessing is concretely expressed in the proclamation of the Word of God, holiness of life and practical charity. The Confraternity aims at empowering its members to participate more actively in the mission of the Church through bold, courageous and prophetic evangelization. Communication is of great value for Devotees; everything possible is done to use effective skills, knowledge and instruments of social communication to make the Holy Spirit known, loved, worshipped and obeyed. In terms of practical charity and in keeping with the spirituality of the Movement, the Confraternity occupies itself with
Advocacy for the ignorant, the poor, the voiceless and the defenseless in society (the Spirit is the Advocate), Counseling (the Spirit is the Counsellor), and Teaching the truth of the Catholic faith (the Spirit is the Teacher). All these are done under the guidance of the competent authority of the Church.

**(v) Renewal:** The Confraternity as a Movement is largely tailored towards the renewal, re-creation, refreshment and restoration of the lives of Christians, and of systems and structures in the Church, society and the universe as a whole. For Devotees, this renewal implies taking a stand against all forms of corruption, indiscipline and self-destructive habits, values, systems and institutions in life. Put simply, renewal is the goal of the Confraternity.

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What does the Confraternity intend to accomplish in the Lives of Individuals, the Church and the World?

First and foremost, the Confraternity intends to help people know the need for an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit and teaches them how this could be achieved.

It intends to re-position Christians to take their rightful position in the world as Master in creation (Genesis 1: 28), children of God (Romans 8: 14), Conquerors (Romans 8: 37), friends of Jesus (John 15: 15), etc.

It intends to equip Christians with the knowledge and tools for winning victory in the battle of life through the power and wisdom from above.
Confraternity of the Holy Spirit - What is It?

It aims at driving out fear from the lives of Christians.

It aims at promoting the spirituality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians, the Church and world.

It intends to have the Holy Spirit enthroned in every family, parish and diocese.

It intends to make the world more loving and lovable, by teaching and encouraging genuine love.

It intends to help parishes in preparing people for Pentecost.

It intends to organize seminars and workshops on the Holy Spirit.

It intends to participate actively in preparing candidates for Baptism and Confirmation.

It intends to have Counselling units or opportunities for the needs of its members and non members.

It intends to train people to be generous and to share their gifts (spiritual and material) with others.