A Theology of the Holy Spirit Based on the Writings of Francis Libermann

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Abstract

Fr. Francis Libermann is known for his devotion and high regard for the Holy Spirit in his life. His whole life is a manifestation of his reliance on the Holy Spirit and how he wished that members of the congregation of the Holy Spirit should never undermine the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives. All this is evident from the many letters that he used to write to many people and especially his confreres in various missions. Particularly, Libermann has a rich vocabulary of his conception of the person of the Holy Spirit and his role in people’s lives. This article unearths such a treasure of vocabulary and attempts to construct a theology of the Holy Spirit based on the writings of Libermann. The article shows that Fr Libermann’s conception of the Holy Spirit puts him among the great spiritual writers in the history of the Church whose thoughts on the Holy Spirit is built on conceptions similar to most of the vocabularies that Fr Libermann uses.

Introduction

Pneumatology or theology of the Holy Spirit as a distinct field is recently developed in Roman Catholic theology. This does not mean that the awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit is a recent discovery. Actually, as scriptural references will suggest, the presence of the Holy Spirit is traced far back to the time of creation up to the present time. It is just that until recently, all references to the Holy Spirit in the study of theology were mainly done in the context of discussions of, for instance, the Holy Trinity1 as was evident in the first Councils of the Church such as the Council of Constantinople of 381 and subsequent councils. And so, literature on the theology of the Holy Spirit is still rare. However, in the last two centuries an interest has developed for this field. Yves Congar is one of the contemporary scholars on the Holy Spirit and has extensive studies on the Holy Spirit.

Since the foundation of the Spiritan congregation, there has been a devotion and clear reference to the person of the Holy Spirit and his role in the life of the congregation and the church as a whole. Actually, the very name of the congregation that was first founded by Claude Poullart des Places in 1703 was meant to be an acknowledgement of the same fact. This tradition has been kept through generations and generations of the Spiritan family. In keeping up with that spirit, and in unearthing the treasures and the rich heritage that the Congregation has on the person of the Holy Spirit, this article presents the thoughts of Fr Libermann (1802-52) on the Holy Spirit. This does not mean to disregard other great forefathers of the Congregation. The aim is, however, to use the rich vocabulary of Fr Libermann on the Holy Spirit, which he often lays bare in his many letters, and explore the possibility of constructing a theology with the terminologies he uses. The article traces the theology of the Holy Spirit right from scriptural references, both in Old Testament and New

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Testament. It then looks at how the Holy Spirit has been viewed in the historical phases of the Church. Then it presents the official teaching of the Church on the Holy Spirit. Lastly, it presents some dominant thought of Fr Libermann on the Holy Spirit from which the article attempts to construct a theology. A history of the theology of the Holy Spirit or pneumatology indicates that one can only carefully move through the language, metaphors, and anthropomorphisms that give shape and substance to gain an accurate understanding of the Spirit of God and its role and function within humanity and the world.2

The Holy Spirit in Holy Scriptures

The first source of knowledge of the Holy Spirit is obviously Revelation as presented in the Sacred Scriptures.3 This is also in line with the assertion that “Scripture is the soul of theology” (#21). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament contain verses which talk about the Holy Spirit even though some of them do not directly use the term ‘Holy Spirit’ but only offer an insight into it. Such insights go a long way to help us in understanding what the Holy Spirit is and what his place is in the Triune God. The scripture passages on the Holy Spirit that are both in the Old and New Testaments lay a good foundation for a later systematic presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. As it will be indicated later, the Church reached a point in history whereby it had to grapple with whether the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in general, and the Holy Spirit in particular, has a basis in Scripture. This quest was very important for establishing the credibility of the Church’s stance and definition of the Holy Spirit to ensure that it was not just an invented doctrine. In both the Old and New Testaments, there are scripture passages in which the Holy Spirit is talked about independently as well as those passages in which the Holy Spirit is talked about in the wider context of the other persons of the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Beginning with the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is synonymous with the Hebrew word רוּחַ (ruah), which, in its primary sense, means breath, air, and wind. However, according to Schoemaker, across the broad spectrum of lexical meanings, of these three translations of rûaḥ, wind seems to be the “customary meaning of the Hebrew word when unaccompanied by any explanatory modifier.”4 He further notes that in the Old Testament, there are many instances where rûaḥ as wind seems to be interchangeable with rûaḥ as the Spirit of God, the idea of power and invincibility is intended.5 This explains why the systematic definition of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit used scripture passages that referred to the Holy Spirit as wind. For Frankel & Teutsch, however, many

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3 Yves Congar, I believe in the Holy Spirit, 3.
times *rûah* is used as a symbolism for “God’s agency in the natural world”\(^6\). So, which exact passages in the Old Testament give some reference to the Holy Spirit?

In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God is depicted as a “mighty wind sweeping over the waters.” The invisible, yet powerful hovering of the Spirit of God with the lifeless and unproductive condition of the earth lends toward the immediate potential of radical transformation. In this case, the Holy Spirit, or rather the mighty wind, becomes a prerequisite for transformation of the world or rather an agent of change. The connotations of the *rûah* ʿelōhîm (Spirit of God) and its role in creation is also captured vividly by Robert Hubbard in that, if human eyes and ears were watching and hearing the events of Genesis 1:2: “they might see the effects of its silent movement across the waters…the *rûah* soaring like an eagle, then in its wake flow gentle ripples or majestic waves rolling across the deep…they might hear its rustle or rumble, audible like the wind….in sum, visible signs and audible sounds from an invisible source attest the on-site presence of the mysterious *rûah* in Genesis 1:2.”\(^7\) In Gen 1:2, therefore, the Holy Spirit is presented as a precursor to change and transformation whose presence is felt in the world. In the same book of Genesis 1:26, the Holy Spirit is presented in the company of the other divine persons as the creator Spirit when the Triune God is depicted saying “Let us make man in our image and likeness…”. The Church fathers interpreted this as an allusion to the Holy Trinity of which the Holy Spirit is part. Furthermore, the identity of the creator Spirit is also affirmed in the second account of creation in which the biblical tradition shows the creation of a woman and puts the image of the Spirit as the Breath of God that breathes life into the dust of the Earth so that it becomes a living being.

Another notable reference to the Holy Spirit in the OT is Ezek. 1:4 when God manifests himself to Ezekiel, out of a whirlwind [*rûah*] coming out of the north. This too shows that the involvement and interaction of God with humanity, as captured by the idea of air in motion, continues to be a primary element throughout the OT. In the context of Mosaic leadership, the Spirit endowed men with the enhanced qualities of charismatic leadership and wisdom, further established by the subsequent activity of ecstatic prophesying (Ex. 11:25-26). This brings to light another unique function as it pertained to the Spirit of God and human agency in the OT; it served also to authenticate anointed leadership in Israel. The last reference for our consideration is Isaiah 6:6 which has the phrase “holy, holy, holy.” This phrase too is used as a basis for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In other words, the Holy Spirit is depicted in the context of the Triune Godhead. Scripture scholars hold that Isaiah was having an ecstatic view of God during which he received his call. Further references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament include Ezek. 37:1-7, Ex. 31:1-5, 1 Sam. 10:6, Hos. 9:7, Wis. 1:4, Joel 3:1-5.

Hubbard argues that what remains important to understand all these references is that, regardless of the theophanic element utilized throughout scriptures to identify God’s interaction with the cosmos, the presence motifs and various manifestations serve to symbolically assert the presence

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of Almighty God and that whether stirring humans or nature, the *rûah* always shows up decisively to intervene or effect change.” So far, based on the OT references, we can conclude that the Holy Spirit is identified, among many other titles, as God, holy, creator, agent of change and transformation.

**The Holy Spirit in the New Testament**

The same trend of manifestation is also noted in the New Testament where, unlike in OT, the Holy Spirit is not strictly mentioned symbolically but rather directly. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is referred to by the Greek term πνεύμα (*pneuma*) which is often translated as Spirit. While the New Testament presents a special phase of salvation of humankind whereby God enters the human realm by becoming one of us, the Holy Spirit is presented as a crucial element that is present in the whole process of God engaging with humanity in this special way. Thus, at the Baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3:16, the Spirit of God is depicted descending like a dove over Jesus accompanied by the voice of God. In Luke 1:35, Mary is overshadowed with the Holy Spirit right before the birth of Jesus. Similarly, in Luke 4:18-19, the Spirit of the Lord is upon Jesus right at the beginning of his ministry who also enables him to preach the Good News to the poor and freedom to captives.

The fifth encyclical of Pope John Paul II *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986) notes that in the Old Covenant, anointing had become an external symbol of the gift of the Spirit (#16) as we explored earlier on in our discussion of the Old Testament conception. Consequently, Jesus’ acknowledgement of being anointed points to the fact that he was endowed with the Holy Spirit. All this shows the significance of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of Jesus. It is from such a significance that Jesus, after the resurrection, commissions the apostles to carry out their mission and make disciples in the name of the Triune God. Commenting on the role of the Spirit in the life of Jesus, Michael Schmaus makes a good observation when he states that “the incarnate Son of God was conceived through the Holy Spirit; he was equipped with the Spirit at his baptism. He was driven into the desert by the same Spirit for his decisive struggle with Satan. The Spirit is the moving power behind every activity of Christ.”

Additionally, in the NT the Holy Spirit is predicted as being present right from the Church at Pentecost in Acts 2 where the early Christians receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which becomes the fountain of their mission to the ends of the world. The Pentecost event is considered the birth of the Church (*Dominum et Vivificantem* #25, *Ad Gentes* 4). And so, the Holy Spirit again takes on the role of creation of the Church community. It is worth remembering that before receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the early Christians were still in hiding and living in fear mostly remaining in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14). Jesus himself too instructed them to remain in Jerusalem until they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who would enable them to speak and preach (Acts 1:4). What one can immediately observe from these Pentecost events is that the Holy Spirit granted the apostles and early Christians the strength and boldness to carry out their mission in an

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environment that was not very friendly to their work having had Jesus killed for the same work they were tasked to carry out. The role of the Holy Spirit in mission is already established at an early stage in the development and growth of the Church.

The charismatic activity of Pentecost and every instance thereafter would also reiterate the idea of a new creation (2 Cor. 5:7), bringing to light the dynamic moving of the rûah ṣelôhîm over the lifeless and unproductive condition of the earth that was depicted in Gen. 1:2. As Stephenson (2012) writes, “Pentecost is truly a ‘kairos event’ in which God decisively enters the historical process and introduces something new into it” (62). In this case, the Holy Spirit becomes an agent of re-creation of the world. This again highlights the identity of the Holy Spirit as creator as was evident in the Old Testament.

The Pauline literature contains the most comprehensive and most impressive testimony to the Spirit. Schamus notes that because the word Spirit covers a wide field in the theology of Paul, it is very difficult to specify what the Spirit meant to Paul. In Rom. 8:26, Paul presents the Spirit as a force that moves people towards joy and thanksgiving and above all moves people to call God “Father” (Gal. 4:6). Paul also understands the Holy Spirit as a foundation of a totally new life as the baptized are called the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Again, in this instance, the Holy Spirit is presented as an agent of re-creation. Lastly, Paul understands the Spirit as the source of all sorts of gifts from God such as speaking in tongues and many other gifts (Rom. 8:10, Gal. 6:8, 2 Cor 3:6). In short, Paul’s discussion of the Holy Spirit, albeit being comprehensive, affirms the identity of the Holy Spirit as already pointed out in the Old Testament as well as the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles.

Theology of the Holy Spirit in the History of the Church

The doctrine of the person of the Holy Spirit has undergone many phases in the history of the Church to attain its current official definition. The quest to have a definite doctrine can be traced as far back as the first Council of Nicaea in 325 which, albeit being an essentially Christological response to the Arian controversy, established consubstantiality among all the three persons. Congar distinguishes the historical development of the doctrine into three phases: the period before the Arian crisis, the period of the crisis itself and the period of systematic constructions. He, however, also reiterates that the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was not dealt with thoroughly as the main preoccupation was the relationship between the Son and the Father prior to the Council, Tertullian and Origen had already asserted that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father through the Son. This would be a hot subject for later Councils.

Proper definition of the third person however can be said to have taken shape at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Some few years before the Council, the Cappadocian fathers had already

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made a distinction between *ousia* (substance) and the hypostases (persons). This was worth commending because it affirmed the distinctness of the persons albeit that they shared the same divine substance. This Council was convoked to respond to the *pneumatomaki* alongside all other heresies that denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. It was at Constantinople that the fathers reasserted that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life who proceeds from the Father and has spoken through the prophets. The last significant stage of definition was in 589 at the third Council of Toledo during which the filioque was inserted into the Creed that led to the separation between the Eastern and the Western Church in the 11th century.

**A Dogmatic Presentation of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

This section presents the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught by the Church. First of all, the Church teaches that the Holy Spirit is truly God, consubstantial with the other divine persons yet distinct from each one of them (CCC #689). This means that, the Holy Spirit is part of the Triune God, who is God in the Christian sense. Like the other divine persons, the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son and yet does not lose His distinctness in such a unity. Being God and sharing in divinity with the other persons, the Holy Spirit has the same attributes proper to God such as pre-existence and eternity. Furthermore, the Spirit helps us to comprehend the thoughts of God and reveals Christ to us (CCC #687). This entails that, without the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand the dealings of God. He is the one who helps us come to terms with such dealings of God. This can be seen in the instance of the visitation in which the Virgin Mary is overshadowed with the Holy Spirit to understand the will of God (Lk. 1:35). The Spirit also prepares people to receive Christ, manifests the risen Lord to them, makes present the mystery of Christ and brings them into communion with God (CCC #737). In many ways, the Holy Spirit shows us the marvels of the risen Lord as well as makes us aware of the Godliness of Christ. While carrying out all these, the Holy Spirit remains God and remains united with the Father and the Son.

The terms “Spirit” and “Holy” are divine attributes common to the three divine persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By joining the two terms, Scripture, liturgy, and theological language designate the inexpressible person of the Holy Spirit, without any possible equivocation with other uses of the terms “spirit” and “holy” (CCC #691). A list of titles of the Holy Spirit can be found also in the same document as the “Paraclete”, “the Spirit of adoption”, “the Spirit of Christ”, “the Spirit of the Lord”, “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of glory” (CCC #692-693). All these titles reveal the richness of the identity of the Holy Spirit.

Karl Rahner, in his *Theological Dictionary*, argued that the person of the Holy Spirit is confessed and defined in the Creeds and in all the Church’s doctrinal judgments concerning the divine Trinity against some heresy documented in Church history. Therefore, The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single principle and by

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a single “breathing”15; as it says in the Nicene Creed: “…I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets…” As the creed suggest, the Holy Spirit is giver of life and an object of adoration and glorification. These attributes are only proper to God. This proves that the Holy Spirit is God as the other divine persons (Father and Son) and as such should be worshipped, adored and glorified.

The Vatican II document, Dei Verbum, affirms that the Holy Spirit helps those who desire to believe in God who chose to reveal Himself and his will through Christ and speaks to human beings as friends for the purpose of friendship. Therefore, the obedience of faith is to be given to God in full submission of the intellect and will. This is done by the Grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit opening the eyes of the mind to turn to God. The Holy Spirit brings gifts to help attain a deeper understanding of the Revelation (#5). Thus, the Holy Spirit helps believers to have an understanding of God’s plan with faith and reason in order to submit themselves in God’s will for the salvation of their soul; by reading the Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Teaching authority of the Church as it is said in Dei Verbum: “It is clear therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accordance with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls” (#10).

**Libermann’s Thoughts on the Holy Spirit**

The thoughts of Libermann on the Holy Spirit and his conception of the Holy Spirit are found in the many letters he wrote and sent to his confreres and missionaries wherever they were. Such thoughts are also found in his commentary on some chapters of the Gospel of St. John and the instructions he gave to many other people. All these reveal the rich conception of Libermann on the Holy Spirit. In fact, Henry Koren observes that the whole of Libermann’s doctrines have a universality that is imbued with an emphasis of allowing the Holy Spirit to act freely in each one of us.16 Our first treatment will be his exegesis on John.

As Michael Cahill notes, Libermann has a two-fold approach to the texts of the Gospel: first he situates it in its historical setting of Jesus and the apostles as well as taking into account the mind of the evangelist. Secondly, he establishes what can be applied to the followers of Jesus today.17 This means that he is a very careful exegete who does not just offer an emotional interpretation of the text but considers all the factors involved in the composition of the text in order to interpret it better. Commenting on the text of Jesus’ visit to Martha and Mary at Bethany, he looks at the two as a perfect example of holy souls who look for help in their afflictions and needs and asks that all

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faithful souls must emulate such an example. He adds that such imitation must be characterized by praying with fervor, love, confidence, and respect, abandoning themselves to every moment of the divine Spirit. His commentary on the text reveals the child-like trust that he had on the Holy Spirit, the trust that one ought to show towards God. Thus, Libermann already shows that he clearly conceives of the Holy Spirit as God equal to the Father and the Son. He, therefore, affirms his divinity. Secondly, he conceives of Him as a person of the divinity who is the comforter of the afflicted and always ready to come to the aid of those who ask for his help.

Libermann was the first to live by what he taught. The idea of self-abandonment to God is evident in his own life. When he was suffering from epilepsy, a condition that almost prevented him from getting ordained a priest, he embraced the condition and called it his beloved sickness. He completely abandoned himself to God. He also instructed his spiritual directees to abandon themselves to God citing that “when the Holy Spirit is at work in us, our hearts are burning and united to God without any worries or self-love.” As Rogath Kimayo asserts, for Libermann, total trust meant submission to God. Libermann himself warned in one of his letters that “if you do not learn to submit your spirit fully and blindly to God, you will risk becoming the toy of the demon who doesn’t ask for anything better than to deceive you in order to estrange you from God; and he is more crafty than we are.” Alluding to Amadeu Martins, Rogath further states that Libermann gained the title “Apostle of Trust.” However, it is worth understanding what Libermann exactly meant by self-abandonment to God lest one risks misunderstanding him. According to Koren, Libermann’s total surrender to God meant “the submission of all our powers and activities to God’s will, no matter in what way this will manifests itself, whether it be through a personal illumination by the Holy Spirit, our superiors, the accepted rule of life…” He contrasts such self-abandonment with passivity. Thus, Koren further argues that “this doctrine (of self-abandonment) avoids two extremes—the one which tends to leave everything to God and remain purely passive…the other, which strives to take initiative in everything.” Thus, Libermann willed that one must act according to the directions of the Holy Spirit while at the same time acting under the influence of God’s grace.

Libermann also gave a lot of instructions on community life. He talked about many qualities that help confreres to live community life and deal with all challenges that come with it. Since his own experience taught him that living community life demanded a lot of work and sacrifice, he recommended that his confreres should be “men of prayer, faithfully observing the rule of life and

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21 Rogath F. Kimayo, *Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann’s “Project of the Blacks”: Challenges Facing the African Missionary* (Nairobi: One Stop Printers Ltd, 2005), 27.
22 Rogath F. Kimayo, *Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann’s “Project of the Blacks”*, 27.
23 Rogath F. Kimayo, *Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann’s “Project of the Blacks”*, 27.
the rule of the Spirit.” He saw the Holy Spirit as a source of harmony and animator of community life in general.

Our last discussion on Libermann’s conception of the Holy Spirit is how he views the place of the Holy Spirit in mission. First of all, Libermann considers the mission as God’s project and the activity of the Spirit of God. Thus, mission is first of all Missio Dei before it becomes Missio Ecclesiae or the mission of the Congregation. What is done is the mission should, therefore, not be meant for personal self-glorification and should be meant to glorify God. It is from this perspective that Libermann wished that his missionaries should be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who is the animator of the mission. In his own words, he referred to the Spirit as the “light to the missionary path.”

A Theology of the Holy Spirit Based on Libermann’s thoughts

As it has been repeatedly asserted, Libermann referred a lot to the Holy Spirit. His whole life was filled with reflections on the Holy Spirit. James Okoye rightly asserts that statistically, the terms “Spirit,” “Spirit of God,” and “Divine Spirit,” dominate the second volume of his letters and his commentary on the Gospel of St. John. It would be a heavy and almost impossible task to present all his reflections on the Holy Spirit in a small work like this. However, there is a discernible conception that characterizes his writings on the Holy Spirit. In other words, the language he uses in his conception of the Holy Spirit is the same throughout.

As noted earlier on, the first evident thing to note in Libermann’s conception of the Holy Spirit is that he conceived of Him as divine. In other words, he conceives of the Holy Spirit as God equal to the Father and the Son. Additionally, his reference to the Holy Spirit also clearly shows that he conceives him as being distinct from the other divine persons. It is such a conception that enabled him to have total trust in Him, totally surrendering himself to his care. By conceiving the Holy Spirit as God, Libermann affirms not only what the Holy Scripture says about the Holy Spirit but also what the Church has always taught on the person of the Holy Spirit. Above all, this conception of God is foundational as it determined his whole relationship with the Holy Spirit in his life.

Secondly, Libermann’s view of the Holy Spirit as the animator and light of the mission proves the divinity of the Holy Spirit since mission is Missio Dei. If he is considered the animator of the mission, it means He knows the mission that the Economic Trinity gave and what needs to be accomplished to the extent that he is able to offer guidance. The Holy Spirit is inseparable to the mission of the Trinity (CCC #689). This is also evident in the post-resurrection experiences of the Church whereby the Holy Spirit becomes an agent for accomplishing the mission of the Church by strengthening those who were preaching the word and the whole Christian community at large.

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26 Rogath F. Kimaryo, Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann’s “Project of the Blacks”, 31.
27 Rogath F. Kimaryo, Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann’s “Project of the Blacks”, 36.
28 Malinowski, Francis Xavier, Meeting the Holy Spirit in the Writings of Father Francis Libermann C.S.S.P (Pittsburg: Centre for Spiritan Studies, 2015), 2.
29 Quoted in Malinowski, Francis Xavier, Meeting the Holy Spirit, 2.
Furthermore, Libermann conceived the Holy Spirit as animator of community life among confreres. He encouraged confreres to make prayer a crucial tool of the community life in order to entrust themselves to the Holy Spirit who would help them overcome all selfishness and undesirable temptations that damage community life and consequently threaten its continual existence. In so doing, Libermann conceives of the Holy Spirit as creative, capable of creating a new reality out of a community of persons that belong to the fallen state of humanity. This was the same Spirit which was at work in the first Christian community of the early Church which, despite some members showing selfishness, God still did wonders among them by keeping them united through the Holy Spirit that was always among them (Acts 4:32).

Lastly, Libermann endured through his suffering brought by epilepsy because he entrusted himself to the Holy Spirit. It is because of this that he learnt to call his condition “my beloved sickness.” By abandoning himself to the Holy Spirit, Libermann believed in the Spirit who is capable of transforming suffering into salvific love. As Dominum et Vivificantem states, “the Holy Spirit will enter into human and cosmic suffering with a new outpouring of love, which will redeem the world” (#39). Such suffering was concretized in the person of Jesus and he transformed our understanding of it.

**Conclusion**

This essay on Libermann presents only a part of his understanding of the Holy Spirit at work in his life, and in the lives of those that he directed. All this theology of Libermann on the Holy Spirit shows that his conception of the Holy Spirit is so deep as it is based on the anthropomorphic terms and the language he uses. A question, then may arise: how unique is Libermann’s conception? What new thing does it have to offer in pneumatology? When Libermann was reflecting and contemplating on the Holy Spirit, he did not have an idea of coming up with a systematic theological presentation on the Holy Spirit. It is just that his reflections reveal a lot of richness about the person of the Holy Spirit. Libermann’s theology is worth embracing because first of all, it does not contradict the teaching of the Church and the Scriptures on the Holy Spirit. This should not be taken for granted because in the history of the Church, there have been prominent figures who in their reflection on the doctrines of the Church have only ended up in misleading others. Secondly, Libermann’s pneumatology should be commended because it is out of his own lived experience. New Testament pneumatology too was unique not because it was different from that of the Old Testament but because it was a fruit of the experience of the Holy Spirit working among the first Christians.

**Bibliography**


