



Chiara Lubich

The
Holy Spirit

Renewing the Face of the Earth

Edited by
Florence Gillet and Raul Silva

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Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Presentation of the book series..... | 7 |
| Introduction | 9 |

Chapter 1

| | |
|---|----|
| The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Movement | 19 |
| 1. The gifts and the fruits of the Spirit in the years 1943-1949 | 19 |
| 2. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the years 1949-1951 | 27 |
| A) Some special manifestations of the Holy Spirit... | 30 |
| B) The Holy Spirit, teacher of spiritual life..... | 37 |
| C) The manifestation of the Holy Spirit | 42 |
| D) Other ways of understanding the Holy Spirit ... | 44 |

Chapter 2

| | |
|---|----|
| The Holy Spirit: living water, fire, love | 51 |
| 1. Light for the mind and master of spiritual life .. | 52 |
| 2. A personal conversation with the Holy Spirit ... | 58 |

Chapter 3

| | |
|--|----|
| Knowing, welcoming and loving the Holy Spirit .. | 77 |
| 1. A burning flame in the heart of the new generations | 78 |
| A) To children and teenagers: “Be a generation of saints” | 78 |

| | |
|---|----|
| B) To young people: Guard within yourself the Spirit of love | 85 |
| 2. The invincible guide of the Spirit | 91 |

Chapter 4

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Holy Spirit makes all things new | 103 |
| 1. A charism for our time | 104 |
| 2. New insights on faith | 107 |
| 3. The Church is unity | 108 |
| 4. Social prophecy | 112 |
| 5. Apostles of dialogue | 118 |
| A) Dialogue between new and ancient charisms ... | 119 |
| B) Ecumenical dialogue | 122 |
| C) Interreligious dialogue | 126 |
| D) Dialoguing with people of non-religious persuasions | 133 |
| E) Dialoguing with culture | 137 |

Epilogue

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| I have a Dream | 143 |
| About Chiara Lubich | 146 |

Series Preface*

“To those who follow you, leave only the gospel.”

Chiara Lubich has articulated the gospel in many ways, which are outlined in twelve cornerstones: *God-love*, the *will of God*, the *Word of God*, *love of neighbor*, the *new commandment*, the *Eucharist*, the *gift of unity*, *Jesus crucified and forsaken*, *Mary*, the *Church-communion*, the *Holy Spirit*, *Jesus present among us*.

Since they emerged in the late 1940s, these points have been inscribed in the souls and in the lives of thousands of people from every corner of the earth. Nevertheless, since Chiara Lubich's death in 2008, what has been missing is a document that combined many texts, including those yet unpublished, that would illustrate them. This series of books seeks to deepen our understanding of these twelve cornerstones by presenting three sources from which they have emerged:

- the dimension of her personal testimony, especially as Chiara Lubich understood, deepened and lived these points;
- the theological dimension of reflecting on the mystery of God and of humankind;

* This volume contains Chiara Lubich's thought and experience on "the Holy Spirit." While it is the tenth in this series of titles originally published in Italian by Città Nuova, it is the fourth to be translated in its complete form and published by New City Press.

- the dimension of incarnating these points in human life via a communitarian experience, in line with Vatican II (see *Lumen Gentium* 9).

The series will include as many as twelve books, through which it is hoped that readers may discover:

- A great spiritual teacher who can accompany them in their spiritual life;
- A deeper appreciation of the communal aspect of Christian life, and the implications of a communitarian spirituality for the Church and humanity;
- A deeper and more personal understanding of Chiara Lubich's life and thought that they can apply in their everyday life.

Introduction

“Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth” (see Psalm 104:30). Today, this heartfelt prayer springs forth silently or aloud from the hearts of many believers and, in a way that only God knows, maybe of unbelievers, too. Behind us a dramatic century, before us the specter of a third world war, migrations of entire peoples escaping from hunger, unemployment, death. Who can we invoke if not the Spirit who alone can renew the face of the earth, stimulate a sense of brotherhood and teach us how to be united?

To invoke him, yes, but also, for those who believe, to thank him and to praise him for the innumerable gifts he has bestowed on us in the twentieth century. Gifts on all the churches, who are beginning an irreversible path toward communion, hopeful for full unity. Gifts on the Catholic Church in the great renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council. Gifts of numerous charisms in all the churches, gifts of evangelization, solidarity, prayer and communion. Gifts of mutual esteem among the faithful of various religions and the yearning for unity among many in every area of society.

Included in the panorama of these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit is the charism of light and love bestowed upon Chiara Lubich. It is a charism for unity, therefore in unison with the Spirit, who is the “bond of unity.” A gift which, in its ecclesial aspect, is capable of sanctifying, guiding and adorning the people of God

with virtue, so that the Church may increasingly fulfill its function as the “sign and instrument of the unity of the whole human race” (see. *Lumen Gentium*, 1). In its social aspect, it is a gift to renew society, which is searching for unity at all costs, and yet seems incapable of accomplishing it without contradicting it.

The present collection is written, first and foremost, to fill a gap. In fact, among the numerous publications of Chiara Lubich, no one volume is dedicated specifically to the Holy Spirit, despite his significant presence throughout Chiara’s life and that of the Movement.

One may wonder why, having received such great gifts which she abundantly communicated and which have brought about a much recognized and esteemed Work within the Church, Chiara had been reluctant, at least in some moments, to speak about the Holy Spirit. For each of the other cornerstones of the spirituality of unity she gave specific talks, highlighting their roots within the scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, the saints and the official teaching of the Catholic Church. But in speaking about the Holy Spirit, it seemed that she wanted to pull back, defining the subject as “too difficult, too demanding for me.”

Perhaps it was precisely because of the direct experience she had of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit that she found herself faced with an abyss, immense and indescribable. “It is the task of the Church to speak about the Holy Spirit,” she said.¹

1. Notwithstanding this statement, during 1989-1990, Chiara gave several talks on the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s relationship with the Focolare Movement. See talks given on 5 January 1990, and 20 November 1990, published in the *Gen’s* magazine (Italian).