

A Prayer for Discerning the Spirit

by Grant Showalter-Swanson

Toward the end of Jesus' life,
He made a promise to his disciples,
And to all of us,
Of the coming of an Advocate –
The Holy Spirit –
Who would remind us
Of Jesus' life and ministry
And continue to teach and guide us.

As Christians, we tend to uplift
The divine sonship and human personhood of Christ –
Studying and affirming all that Christ did for us.
The fully human form of the divine
Who enabled us access to new life –
In all of God's intended fullness –
As beloved creations.

Oh God, forgive us, for we tend to stop there.
Placing Christ and his salvific actions
Squarely in the past
And perpetuating a state of waiting
For Christ's final return in full Glory.

But Christ himself taught us
That the work of salvation continues
Long after our new covenant in Christ –
Through the continuous teaching
And transforming power
Of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Spirit is universal –
Uniquely present within each
Specific culture and context –
So that we may listen
And be transformed/transforming.

The Holy Spirit's presence is
with us – with all –
Here – everywhere –
Today – always –

Eager for us to listen
For her constant whisper
To grow clearer as we learn
To tune into her presence.

The Spirit urges us to look around –
To take notice of the world
Desperately in need
Of God's liberatory love
And tangible justice –
In the here and now –
And to do something.

The Advocate tries to teach us
That our salvation is
Tightly intertwined with
The holistic well-being
And flourishing
Of all humans
And all creation.

Triune God –
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –
We repent that we all too often ignore
The presence of the third person
Among us –
Convicting us –
Challenging us –
Urging us –
Into love manifested as action
That produces life.

Spirit of Life,
we pray to you today,
as individuals,
And as community,
Beseeching you for courage
And for hearts attuned
To your clear and present voice,
So that we can discern together,
What it is you are calling us into
Today,
Tomorrow,
And all the days to come.

For Jesus promised us,
That we will always be called
Into new things –
Hard things –
Counter-cultural things –
Always learning from the one great source
Of life and love –
Our Advocate.

Our Triune God,
Who cares so deeply
For each and every human being and
Each and every atom of the cosmos,
That God sent both Son and Spirit
To lead us in life and love
Into the healing and wholeness
Of all creation.

God among us,
Fill us with your Spirit of power.
Give us the strength to listen
- the will to follow
- the humility to fail
- and the compassion to try again.
Amen.

