

THE GIFT OF THE RISEN CHRIST

We are taught that the Gift of Jesus' death and resurrection is the Holy Spirit, the personal love of the Father and the Son. His death and resurrection freed us from sin, and when we repent we are washed clean. But when we are empty of sin we could theoretically still be in a state of emptiness. There is a simultaneous action accomplished by passion/death/resurrection of Jesus. We are not only emptied, but at the same time filled with a new, supernatural presence. This action of God is accomplished when we were baptized. It is also repeated each time we repent of serious sin either sacramentally or by genuine sincere repentance, as well as deepened and increased each time we pray or connect with the reality of the hidden God. We become emptied of sin and at the same time filled with the very life of the Trinity. A question often asked is how do we know we are in the state of grace, filled with that new supernatural life?

It is a reality that we sometimes "feel" close to God, or that we "experience" His presence. Feelings are neither good nor bad. As we say in the ME, they tell us something about ourselves. But the bottom line reality is that we cannot really "feel" or "experience" God. The good feelings that sometime happen when we pray are not bad, but they are really the effect of God's presence, not really God Himself, who is superior to all our concepts and feelings. In fact as we grow in God's love, these nice feelings go away. God knows that we can enjoy His presence, but His concern is not our pleasant feelings but deep intimate faith relationship. He knows we can identify His presence with the way we feel. We may mistakenly conclude that we are holy when we feel good; and not so holy when we feel dry and distracted.

The reality of God's presence is experienced when we are in a contemplative state. That is why the gift of "lectio divina" is the end process when we open up to a presence of God, as an act of faith even if we don't "feel" His presence. We consent to His presence even if we can't "prove" it. The use of the mind, imagination and will should result in a sense of presence which transcends the preceding actions of the mind and will.

It is the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Jesus, who leads us into the very depths of God himself. Ask the Spirit to help you to mentally calm down, and enter into the quiet sense of God's love. ***"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people."***