

Mutuality with the holy gift: Perspectives on the charismatic renewal in the West African local church

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BOSTON COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

**Mutuality with the Holy Gift:
Perspectives on the Charismatic Renewal
in the West African Local Church**

**Thesis in Systematic Theology
Submitted in Partial fulfilment
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree
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General Introduction

Throughout history, different terms have been used by Christians to describe or name the Holy Spirit. Drawing upon biblical images, the Spirit is identified as the “breath of life” that comes from God and gives life. It is the *ruah* or *pneuma* of God that brings about God’s action. Often identified as intimately involved in the lives of prophets, the work of the Spirit was revealed through their words and actions. At the beginning of his public ministry, our Savior Jesus Christ invoked the Spirit of the Lord. At the Last Supper, he promised to send the Spirit, the Paraclete or Advocate (Jn 14:26). In the lives of his disciples, the actions of the Spirit at Pentecost were perceived as gifts. At the same time, the Spirit was understood as a gift given by both the Father and the Son. The early Christians began to speak about the Holy Spirit as gift and about the outpouring of different spiritual gifts as manifestations of the Spirit as reflected in the writings of Saint Paul (1 Cor 12:7-11). For Saint Paul, the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption who makes possible our affiliation with the Father (Rom 8:15b). As the theological understanding of Church developed over the course of the first four centuries, the Holy Spirit was identified in the Apostles’ Creed as “the Lord, the Giver of life.”

The Holy Spirit as a divine Person is a Gift.¹ Over time, experiencing how the Spirit is given and received has led Christians to designate the Spirit with the proper name of Gift, which is fundamentally the main characteristic of the Holy Spirit. For Karl Rahner, the Holy Spirit is a Gift “received and accepted in love.”² God the Holy Spirit is revealed as a Person of the Trinity. The

¹ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: He is the Lord and Giver of Life*, Vol. 2. (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 69.

² Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*. (New York: The Crossroad, 1997), 102. See also the French version: *Dieu Trinité: Fondement transcendant de l’histoire du salut*. (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 115. There is an explicit mention of the term *Don* that means Gift.

Spirit is “first and foremost what causes man to act so that God’s plan in history may be fulfilled.”³ As the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit leads the life of the Church and maintains it in a state of perpetual renewal.⁴ Experiences of the Holy Spirit help to bring about new transformations within the Church in general and Christian communities in particular. The Spirit is known in its relation to human beings as a powerful source for renewal among human beings.⁵ In recent years, this has been witnessed in the rapid growth of Pentecostalism and charismatic movements within the Catholic Church, such as the Charismatic Renewal. This phenomenon continues to shed light on the possibility and reality of experiencing life in the Holy Spirit. Among Catholic church leaders, Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens (1904-1996) contributed greatly to the recognition of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church after Vatican II and also to the lived experience of Pentecost for many charismatic Catholics and new communities as well.

Theologians like Yves Congar began to pay closer attention to the Holy Spirit, and emphasized a discrete use of the name of the Holy Spirit in history. Congar speaks in terms of “forgetting the Holy Spirit.”⁶ He also gives evidence that the Holy Spirit was sometimes forgotten in the writings of theologians. More recently, theologians such as Elizabeth A. Johnson have spoken of a kind of “forgotten” or “neglected” Spirit.⁷ These perspectives are insightful when thinking about the experiences of all Christians, and particularly the commitment of charismatics in the Church with regard to both the works of the Spirit manifested in the lives of charismatics and the forgetting of the Spirit in the lives of charismatics.

³ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Economy; Revelation and Experience of the Spirit*, Vol. 1. (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 4.

⁴ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 171.

⁵ Annie Jaubert, “L’Esprit dans le Nouveau Testament,” In Cazelle Henri, Annie Jaubert, and François Rouleau, eds, *Dieu révélé dans l’Esprit*. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 23.

⁶ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 159-60.

⁷ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. (New York: Crossroad, 2017), 128.

In West Africa, the Charismatic Renewal and new communities are the initiative of both the Holy Spirit and a number of charismatic founders and leaders who are renowned for their charisms, understood as gifts of the Holy Spirit. By their works, Charismatic Renewal groups and new communities are perceived as a breath of fresh air bringing renewal into the local Catholic Church. However, their particular interests in different gifts or charisms of the Spirit sometimes cause some leaders to lose their complete adherence to the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the experience of a charismatic person involves a relationship with the Holy Spirit that is not always reciprocal in terms of one's openness to sharing in the characteristics of the Spirit. Individuals receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but often they do not offer themselves in return. That is to say, the relationship is not one of true mutuality with the Spirit. This constitutes a forgetfulness and neglectfulness of the Spirit that arises from ignorance or lack of intimate knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is and how the Spirit acts. It seems that some charismatics, while believing in the person of the Holy Spirit, are more interested in the manifestation of gifts than they are in a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

In other words, when we talk about the Holy Spirit, people focus automatically on the different gifts, and lose interest in the divine Person of the Holy Spirit, the essential Gift. Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens emphasized this aspect of the behavior of charismatics who focus on the charism and “easily forget that the first gift of the Spirit is the Spirit himself.”⁸ This loss can be interpreted as a *forgetting of the Spirit*. Charismatic leaders or founders shape their lives not by reference to the divine mutual relationship but rather by reference to the powerful action of the Spirit, forgetting the slow and saving work of the Holy Spirit in them. This negatively affects the lives of

⁸ Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *A Controversial Phenomenon: Resting in the Spirit*. (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1987), 12.

charismatics, their communities, and the local Catholic Church, precisely the Church in Benin and Ivory Coast.

In this sense, the relationship with the personhood of the Holy Spirit is not always mutual even when the Spirit indwells powerfully in them and invites them into true communion. The dynamic of the reciprocal gift, in terms of giving and receiving as Christ receives and gives the Holy Gift, is not always understood in people's lives as a Gift that shapes life in order to be a gift given to others. Often, they have no consciousness of divine mutuality. Often, they do not understand that the three divine Persons are in mutual relationship, as Emmanuel Durand explains in his study on the divine mutuality between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁹ Moreover, they often do not realize that they have been called into relationships of mutuality with the Holy Spirit and one another.

How then can charismatics and Christians live out their the mutual relationship with the Holy Spirit and others in imitation of the Trinitarian mutuality?

This research points out the real experience of the forgotten or neglected Spirit in the lives of charismatics in Benin and Ivory Coast. In assessing the charismatic experience, another aspect would be to verify how mutual relationship, in which the Holy Spirit awakens and edifies the lives of human beings, participates in the process of the fulfillment of human relationships in the image and the likeness of Trinitarian mutuality. Indeed, mutual relationship with the Holy Spirit avoids any kind of forgotten Spirit; it edifies and inspires Christians, and charismatics in particular, to be people for others. In the process of becoming people for others, the Holy Gift impels charismatics toward their fulfillment in the image and the likeness of the Trinitarian mutuality.

⁹ Emmanuel Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes divines: Immanence mutuelle, Réciprocité et Communion*. (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 344.

This study sheds light on the importance of experiencing and sustaining a relationship of mutuality with the Person of the Holy Spirit, based on the promotion of an understanding of Trinitarian mutuality and how it serves as model for relationships of mutuality in the local Church and particularly in the charismatic renewal and new communities. The first chapter of the thesis points out the category concept of Gift as a naming category of the Holy Spirit and the mutual relationship in God. The second chapter examines the historical realities of the charismatic atmosphere in the West African Catholic Church and the *forgotten Spirit* in that context. The third chapter focuses on the promotion of an understanding of Trinitarian mutuality and how it serves as a model for human relationships of mutuality with God and with others. This particular aspect will be considered ecclesialogically with regard to the degree of mutuality present in the lives of the charismatic leaders and founders and also in the lives of charismatics, their communities and the people of God.

Chapter I: God the Holy Spirit and the Mutuality in God

Introduction

The Catholic faith considers the unicity of the three divine Persons as one God. The common language of faith expresses the uniqueness of God by saying: three Persons in one God. The Almighty God revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each divine Person is a true expression of God. The Son has been revealed in Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, as a promised gift, has been sent to dwell in the disciples of Jesus.

This promised gift of the Spirit is, day by day, actualized and realized in the lives of Christians. The Holy Spirit, in the experience of the early Christians was designated as gift in the life of those who received the Spirit of God. The term “Gift” in theological thought indicates the proper name of the Spirit. “Gift” does not mean a present or something that is given, but designates the Person of the Spirit in his characteristic of *being given*. How can the naming category “Gift” best express the Spirit, and the divine action of being given to Christians? How does the gift of the Spirit reveal the communion that exists among the divine Persons or their mutual relationship?

This chapter focuses first, on how the Holy Spirit has been revealed and experienced in the lives of believers as the third Person of the Trinity. Secondly, it distinguishes “Gift” as the proper name of the Spirit mindful of the different gifts of the Spirit. How does this distinctiveness contribute to an understanding of the relational mutuality that exists among the divine Persons? The third point of this chapter, examines Trinitarian mutuality in the sense that each Person shares in communion of love with one another.

I. 1 God the Holy Spirit

The process of reading and interpreting the Bible helps us to understand and explain how the Holy Spirit was experienced by figures in the Old and New Testaments. In the process of

theological developments and interpretations, arriving at an understanding of the revelation of the Spirit as a divine Person of the Trinity, was indeed slow and arduous.

I.1.1 Revelation and Experience of the Holy Spirit

According to Yves Congar, the revelation of the Holy Spirit indicates that God communicates through history to his chosen people.¹ Prophets and inspired writers interpreted God's message by actualizing it in the context of the people of Israel. Congar also points out that experiencing God the Holy Spirit signifies the knowledge of God's reality, who comes to us for an intimate relationship, for a communion between Him and his people.² In this sense, revelation and the experience of God the Holy Spirit go together, and shape the lives of those who are close to God. Through the prophet Ezekiel, God said to his people: "I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ez 36:26-27). God wants his people to be able to sense and feel as He senses and feels by giving them his Spirit. God will make a sensitive connection between his people and himself through his Spirit. It seems as though the Spirit of God will restore the image and the likeness of God in his people.

How did the Spirit of God become the Holy Spirit? What was the first experience of naming God's Spirit? The Bible uses the words *Ruah* (Hebrew), and *Pneuma* (Greek) to designate the Breath of God, the Spirit of God (*Spiritus* in Latin), that "animates and causes to act in order to realize God's plan."³ Israel's familiarity with the *Ruah* of Yahweh was both the sign of Israel's election and the action of God in the midst of his people.⁴ *Ruah* as a breath of life became the *Ruah*

¹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, xvii.

² Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, xvii.

³ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 3.

⁴ Henri Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," In Cazelle Henri, Annie Jaubert, and François Rouleau, eds, *Dieu révélé dans l'Esprit*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 16-17.

of Yahweh by differentiating it from the common breath that people need to survive.⁵ The *Ruah* of Yahweh is powerful. With the prophet Isaiah, *Ruah* means Spirit.⁶ The Spirit stayed with the shoot of Jesse as the *Ruah* had stayed with Elisha after the ascent of Elijah in the chariot of fire.⁷

Examining the Scriptures, Henri Cazelles gives evidence of the spirit that God bestows on his servants, his elect, to gather Israel. The Spirit of God leads the mission of gathering the people of Israel.⁸ The Spirit is characterized by the dynamic breath that gives life and freedom. This Spirit commands through Moses, and proclaims through the prophets. The Spirit of God is the great actor who awakes or inspires the spirit of the most important personality that played a role in history.⁹ He works through the people of God and helps to build the salvific plan of God. Yahweh is present through the Spirit in the scene of the burning bush that is rooted in holy ground (Ex 3:2-5). The Spirit of God is sacred, holy, and sanctifies the places where He dwells. During the sojourn of the people of Israel in the desert, there was a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day that showed the presence of the Spirit of Yahweh in the midst of Israel (Ex 13:21).

Humann, commenting on Congar, explains that the model which intensifies the action of the Spirit of Yahweh is the servant described by the Prophet Isaiah.¹⁰ The Spirit stays upon him (Is 42:1). The presence of the Spirit in the life of the prophet goes together with the announcement of the coming of the Messiah. The prophets are people of the Word of God who pay attention to the Spirit of God. The prophets indicated the chosen leaders of Israel, and they consecrated leaders so that the Holy Spirit would come and rest upon them (1Sm 9:22-10:1; 16:1-13; 1Kgs 1:32-34). Following the company of prophets, John the Baptist became the prophet who showed Jesus as the

⁵ Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," 10.

⁶ Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," 12,15.

⁷ Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," 15.

⁸ Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," 18.

⁹ Cazelles, "L'Esprit Saint dans l'Ancien Testament," 20.

¹⁰ François-Marie Humann, *La relation de l'Esprit-Saint au Christ. Une Relecture d'Yves Congar*. (Paris: Cerf, 2010), 203.

one whom he would baptize in the Spirit because the Spirit rested upon him (Jn 1:29-34). This is the evidence that Jesus Christ is in communion with the Spirit of God the Father.

The Spirit is manifestly present at the important moments in Jesus' life.¹¹ Those who encounter Jesus receive his word, as was the case of Nicodemus in the gospel of John. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit according to John the Baptist (Jn 1:33). At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit of God the Father comes upon him (Jn 1:32). Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism. Jesus was born and revealed as the Son of God through the work of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35). The gospel of Luke tells the story of the annunciation and the conception of Jesus. The conception was announced by the Angel who explained to Mary the participation of the Holy Spirit in the mystery of Incarnation. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most-High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God" (Lk 1:35). Jesus, in his birth, life, death, and resurrection experiences what he said to Nicodemus, living according to the Holy Spirit through his obedience to the Father. This experience starts with the openness of Jesus to the Holy Spirit. It is attested that the gift of the Spirit has been linked to the resurrection of Jesus.¹² His resurrection put the accent on the promise of God the Father. This promise is the gift of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. The death and the resurrection of Christ revealed the eternal existence that the Son shares with the Spirit.¹³

How did the revelation and the experience of the Holy Spirit contribute to the distinctiveness of the Spirit as a divine Persons?

¹¹ Humann, *La relation de l'Esprit-Saint au Christ*, 91.

¹² Jaubert, "L'Esprit dans le Nouveau Testament," 24.

¹³ Humann, *La relation de l'Esprit-Saint au Christ*, 92.

I.1.2 The Trinity and the Distinction of the Persons

On the mountain of Galilee, Jesus said to his disciples: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Mt 28:18-19). The baptism is done in the name of the divine Persons. One God in three Persons. According to Augustine in his treatise on *The Trinity*, the Trinity is the only one and true God. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the same and have one unique substance or essence.¹⁴

Catherine LaCugna, in her introduction to Rahner's book on the Trinity, emphasizes that God's self-communication is "necessarily triune and constitutes salvation history."¹⁵ The absolute and invisible God shows himself to humanity in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ The knowledge of the unicity of God considers the communal life of the unbegotten Father who begot the Son, the Son who shares the innermost life of his Father; and the Holy Spirit in its spiritual dimension is also the Spirit of both Father and Son. In history, God's self-revelation can be called "Trinitarian communication"¹⁷ that in faith is one true God in the distinct presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The saving action of God in history reached its plenitude of revelation in Jesus Christ the Son of God the Father with the saving action of the Holy Spirit. Early Christians were confronted with the issues of maintaining the oneness or the uniqueness of God, since it was firmly attested that Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is also God. These issues led to a wave of explanations and the use of philosophical concepts such as one *ousia* and three *hypostases*.¹⁸ In fact, the Cappadocian

¹⁴ Augustine of Hippo, *The Trinity*, Vol. 1, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), 67.

¹⁵ Catherine LaCugna, "Introduction", In Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997, x.

¹⁶ Catherine LaCugna, "Introduction", In Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, x.

¹⁷ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 35.

¹⁸ John O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 100.

Fathers maintained that there is one God (one *ousia* that signifies essence or substance, or nature) and three *hypostases* (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) that share the same nature as the one God. From that perspective, Rahner described the identity of God through the concept of essence; and each of the three the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct from each other.¹⁹ He also maintained that *hypostases* means Persons,²⁰ drawing on Saint Augustine who explained that the term "Person" is appropriate. As John O'Donnell observes, "the Person exists in and for himself."²¹ Furthermore, Rahner points out the "self-consciousness"²² that can be understood not as "three subjectivities" but as "only one real consciousness in God."²³ The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit share the same "self-consciousness" in their own proper way. This conception of the Person in God could represent a real confusion if the term person is understood in its modern sense.²⁴ Discussing the issue of a concept such as "Person" in God, Leonardo Boff also stressed the importance of what Saint Augustine said: "Person is a very generic term which can also be applied to a human being, despite the distance existing between God and man."²⁵ Boff also mentioned the meaning of person as "the subsistent relationship."²⁶ He proposes that in the Triune God, "everything possible is placed in common, enters into the play of relationships and completes the communion."²⁷ According to Boff, the Person in God is characterized by dialectical concepts of interiority (conscious) and openness (to others). This is what Boff understands to be the case when Jesus said: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." (Jn 14:11) Thus, "each divine Person is a

¹⁹ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 71-72.

²⁰ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 75.

²¹ O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 101.

²² Rahner, *The Trinity*, 75.

²³ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 107.

²⁴ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 107. See footnote.

²⁵ Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 87.

²⁶ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 88.

²⁷ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 88.

center of interiority and freedom, whose *raison d'être* (nature) consists in being always in relation to the other Persons."²⁸ There is a risk to attribute in God three consciousnesses.

For Rahner, "there exists in God only one power, one will, only one self-presence, a unique activity, a unique beatitude, and so forth. Hence self-awareness is not a moment which distinguishes the divine "Persons" one from the other, even though each divine "Person," as concrete, possesses a self-consciousness."²⁹ In the Trinity, the concept "Person" has nothing to do with three "subjectivities"³⁰ in God. Rahner does not speak about one consciousness in God but one self-presence.

For Boff, the concept of Person expresses better the mystery of the Trinity, while maintaining that any adequate appreciation of the Trinity cannot be reached. God is a Trinity of Persons marked by the "internal relationship".³¹ The Persons in God are characterized by the "eternal communion".³² In the same vein, LaCugna moves from the persons in the immanent Trinity as "essentially relational"³³ to the deep communion between God and human beings, saying: "The Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ brings about the true communion of God and creature."³⁴

One can think that the generic concept of Person is appropriate in the context of Trinitarian communion. As each of them is distinct from one another in their divine communion, the personhood of the Father, of the Holy Spirit and also of the Son, informs us that the living being of God as Persons in God moves beyond the physical reality of the concept of Person. The Trinity is one God in three Persons.

²⁸ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 89.

²⁹ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 75.

³⁰ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 75-76.

³¹ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 96.

³² Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 98.

³³ Catherine LaCugna, *God For Us*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1991), 289.

³⁴ LaCugna, *God For Us*, 296.

According to Congar, Augustine attributes to the Holy Spirit the personal name of Gift.³⁵ The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father, but also the Spirit of the Son. He is the common Spirit of both Father and Son.³⁶ The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the “extreme communication of God himself, God as grace, God in us.”³⁷ The Spirit given at Pentecost unites the disciples around Christ. Congar, in reference to the letter of saint Paul to the Galatians (4:4-6), shows that Christ is sent into the world, and the Spirit dwells in the hearts of human beings. It is a Spirit of communion. For Congar, the Holy Spirit is in direct communion with the human spirit. The Spirit is unique and omnipresent, transcendent and interior to all, subtle and sovereign, the respecter of freedom and the power for inspiring, and promoting God’s salvific plan.³⁸ Congar admits that the Holy Spirit is the full communication of God himself. The Holy Spirit is God as grace, God in us. The Spirit is the eschatological gift, the last gift and the supreme manifestation of the Grace-God.³⁹ For Albert Greiner, the Spirit, in maintaining the union of the Son at the cross to the Father, reveals himself as the (glory Spirit)⁴⁰ with the glorification of the Son by the Father. The Holy Spirit is life and glory. According to Congar, the Spirit seals in love the unity of the Father and of the Son from whom he proceeds.⁴¹

I. 2 Gift: Naming Category of the Holy Spirit

The reception of the Holy Spirit turns us easily to the reception of its proper gifts. The aim here is to explain that the Holy Spirit is not to be differentiated from its gifts, but to show that each gift is an expression of the Spirit, Gift *par excellence*.

³⁵ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 79.

³⁶ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 79-80.

³⁷ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2, 17.

³⁸ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2, 17.

³⁹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2, 18.

⁴⁰ Albert Greiner, “L’Esprit-Saint dans le Nouveau Testament”, In Henri Cazelles, Albert Greiner, eds. *Le mystère de l’Esprit Saint*. (Paris: Mame, 1968), 66.

⁴¹ Congar, *Je crois en l’Esprit Saint* Vol. 2, 18.

I.2.1 Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Gift of the Spirit

Congar explained that the development of new religious congregations in the history of the Church was seen as a sign of the Spirit by Anselm of Havelberg (1100-1158). In the scholastic period, the Church was marked by a diversity of religious communities, and diverse spiritualities emerged. Anselm of Havelberg gave an explanation that draws on Saint Paul's observation about the Holy Spirit and its diverse gifts.⁴² He explained that the Holy Spirit is united to the sole body of the Church. The diversity observed in the Church is due to the diversity of graces of the same Spirit. For Paul, there is a diversity of graces, but only one Spirit.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of the spirit; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. (1 Cor 12:7-11)

For the common good of the ecclesial body of Christ people are granted diverse gifts from the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit animates and governs the Church. There is not a real difference between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit itself if we understand the intimate presence of the Spirit in the lives of the persons who are granted with such gifts. They perform miracles through the work of the Spirit himself. In accordance with the Spirit or living in the Spirit, religious founders were able to contribute to the renewal of the Church. However, this does not mean that the religious leaders are in a privileged position in their relationship with the Holy Spirit, even though the same Spirit is acting powerfully on them. The Spirit himself and his gifts are not separated, but in the reception of the Holy Spirit, differences are made only between the diverse gifts. Persons receive the same Spirit but act differently for the common good of the Church, and

⁴² Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 115.

each person becomes a witness of Christ in the line of the Apostles. The experience of persons with the Holy Spirit himself needs to be explored by beginning with the event of Pentecost.

Congar emphasizes that in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit is essentially the dynamic principle of witness that assures the expansion of the Church.⁴³ At Pentecost a new era of relation begins between human beings and God. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit for the faith of Jesus' disciples and for the life of the Church.⁴⁴

Through the Holy Spirit, God brings Godself into the life and the heart of the disciples of Jesus. The gift of the Spirit was testified in the faith life of the Apostles. The radical transformation of the disciples reveals that God, through the Holy Spirit, indwells in each of them and in the whole Church. The reality of the gift of the Holy Spirit in human beings' lives sheds light on the dynamic Spirit who is always and already given. From the Apostles to the other followers of Christ, the Holy Gift testifies to his action through them and around them. The new followers of Christ are invited to the deep understanding of the reality of the Holy Gift in human lives.

The Holy Spirit reveals himself as a pure Gift that empowers those who receive this Gift in their lives to be shaped into the image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the radical transformation effected in the Apostles' lives, shows that they had integrated in their lives an important characteristic of the Holy Spirit by becoming self-giving for the world at any time. The Holy Spirit made their lives a living witness of self-giving after the perfect example of Jesus for the salvation of the whole world.

Furthermore, the Holy Gift shares with those who receive him His own divine life. Following the process of the action of giving, what is given also carries something of the person who acts in that way. However, with the understanding of Pentecost, it is always the Holy Spirit that is given

⁴³ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 44.

⁴⁴ Congar, *La Pentecôte: Chartres 1956*. (Paris: Cerf, 1956), 15-16.

by Christ and his Father through human actions. Human beings become true gifts in their personal lives in the image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit. It seems as though there is a double movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of discipleship. Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were shaped to be like Jesus by doing what Jesus did in his daily public life. Acting as Christ they were also positioned as Christ to give the Holy Spirit to others through Him.

The mission of the Apostles is in reality the action of God, the Holy Spirit. By the way of mutual Gift and in the process of receiving and giving, the Holy Gift operates in human beings' lives in an essential mode of relationship of the Triune God as union and communion. "In her intimate life, God is love."⁴⁵ Working in human life, the Holy Spirit transforms all hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. The love of the Triune God becomes a reality in human beings' lives. The radical transformation touches closely human affectivity with the "Love-Gift".⁴⁶ This exchange of the divine and mutual love affects positively human beings' feelings in their relationship with the whole of creation. Love opens the possibilities of a Free-Gift.⁴⁷ The Holy Spirit works for love and freedom in the lives of human being and opens the way for them to become free children of God. Both commandments of love of God and love of neighbor are sustained by the Holy Gift.

Moreover, following Christ and trusting in him requires the gift of faith in the life of the disciples who expected a new life in heaven. Trust in the new life to come is also the gift of hope by the same Spirit of God. Therefore, the Holy Gift is Hope-Gift, and also Faith-Gift that powerfully effect the union of human beings with God. With the action of the Holy Spirit in the world, since the holy day of Pentecost, Christians understand themselves as partners with God.

⁴⁵ Jarosław Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 114.

⁴⁶ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 114.

⁴⁷ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 116.

The Holy Gift of the Spirit is revealed to us as a transformative gift in order to fulfill God's salvific plan. The radical transformation of the disciples gives access to what we call the fulfillment of human nature in the image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit. It seems as though the transformative gift includes both the gifts of the Spirit and the Spirit himself. In the charismatic context, the diversity of gifts expresses the unity of the same Spirit. How can it be possible to focus on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and fail to be in good relationship with the Spirit? This question leads us to explore the proper name of the Spirit: Gift.

I.2.2 Gift: A Category of Naming for the Holy Spirit

There is a particular "Gift" distinct from other gifts that people receive from family and friends on special occasions. Although both the "Gift" of the Spirit and other material gifts share a common characteristic of being given in gratuity, there is an incomparable difference between them. First, "Gift" is, in the context of this study, the naming category of the Holy Spirit. For Congar, the Spirit reveals himself as "absolute Gift".⁴⁸ As the highest Gift, the Holy Spirit is a dynamic Gift, a living Gift. Saint Jerome considers the Holy Spirit as a tenet of life.⁴⁹ He is the Gift for life, empowering the existence of every living being. Second, the Gift is the other name of the third Person of the Trinity. Gift as a naming category of God the Holy Spirit expresses also the understanding of the event of Pentecost. In fact, Christ fulfilled his promise to his disciples by sending the Holy Spirit upon them. The disciples experienced in the spirit the life of the Risen Christ.

As a dynamic Gift, the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples of Jesus to become the followers of Christ with the particular identity of those who belong to Christ. Marked by the seal of the Holy

⁴⁸ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2, 69.

⁴⁹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 76.

Spirit, the disciples became other Christs. This aspect of the disciples of Jesus informs us that the Holy Spirit is a Gift of transformation for experiencing the life of Christ and his mission. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is a Gift, whose mission is described by Jesus using the metaphor of the wind which blows where it wills (Jn 3:8). This opens our whole being to the dynamic of the reciprocal Gift that is the giving and receiving beyond material gift but implies personal self-giving as a result of the reception of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Assuming the ordinary gift of human beings, the Holy Spirit as a Gift transcends all the characteristics related to the action of giving. Indeed, when someone receives a gift from another person, he also receives something of this person (one talks in terms of a valuable gift). It is the same with the action of giving. The giver of something also gives a part of himself to the other.⁵⁰ Looking closely at what is on the other side of the ordinary human gift, we understand that receiving the Holy Spirit is also to share the life and the mission of the Holy Spirit in us and through our humanity linked to others.

This particular attribution of Gift as a personal name of the Holy Spirit sheds light on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. According to Jacques Guillet, quoted by Kupczak in his review of Pope John Paul II's theology of the body, the union of the Father and of the Son through the Holy Spirit is ordered in the giving. This union producing giving is also giving.⁵¹ The Holy Trinity is essentially Gift whose essence is to "give itself to exist in the other and to give life to the other."⁵²

As God is triune, the gift of himself through creation makes it "a fundamental and radical gift". The gift of the Holy Spirit and its self-revelation as Gift reveals at the same time that "God exists in the mode of Gift." Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the seal of this original and fundamental

⁵⁰ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 94.

⁵¹ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 95-6. See also Jacques Guillet, "God," In Xavier Leon Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. (New York: Desclee, 1967), 185.

⁵² Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 96.

gift marks the whole of creation.⁵³ As Gift, the Holy Spirit invites us to a personal relationship with God and with others in the mode of giving, thereby shaping the real communion between created beings in the image and the likeness of God, the Holy Spirit. In God, the relation of the Persons is perfect and evidence is given to us in exploring the mutuality in God.

I.3 Mutual Relationship in God

What is the perception of God about his own relational being? Jesus can be our reference in leading us, through John's Gospel, to his relation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Through a social image of the holy Trinity in terms of "God in a process of community," this exploration sheds light on the intimate relationship between human beings and God, between charismatics and the Holy Spirit.

I.3.1 Relational Being in God

Jesus revealed his relation to his Father by saying that: "The Father and I are one." (Jn 10:30) According to Leonardo Boff, this passage of the New Testament gives witness to "Jesus' consciousness of his intimate union with the Father."⁵⁴ Moreover, Jesus asked his disciples to believe in him when he says: "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves" (Jn 14:11). One person is in the other as a relation of interpenetration.⁵⁵ Putting together the assertions of John and Paul about Jesus and his Father, we can say that the *Abba* experience is an existential experience of communion. This communal life has its full expression in the glorification of Jesus Christ. Both natures of Jesus Christ interpenetrate each other, "producing a true *perichoresis*"⁵⁶ making Jesus'

⁵³ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion*, 147.

⁵⁴ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 134.

⁵⁵ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 136.

⁵⁶ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 136.

life an open communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In terms of the works themselves, Jesus showed his disciples the promises of the Holy Spirit and their love of Jesus and his commandments (Jn 14:16-17). There is a unity of love between the Father, the Son and their Spirit of love. In God's relational being, the Father exercises his Fatherhood in relationship with the Son and his people on earth and in heaven. At the same time, the Son lives his Sonship in communion with his Father through their Spirit of Love who identifies himself in both Father and Son. This mutual love of the Father and of the Son is expressed by Jesus himself to his disciples when he says this: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love" (Jn 15:9). Mutuality in God seems to be what the disciples experience in living with Jesus from the beginning of their encounter to the glorification of Jesus. However, Jesus did not seem to speak of the Spirit as being within him as he revealed the Father because of his deep self-consciousness of his *Abba* experience. This does not mean that Jesus was ignorant of the Spirit in him, but he focuses more on his love for the Father. Surely, Jesus recognized the openness of his self-consciousness to their mutual mission. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (Jn 14:26) Jesus is aware of the link between himself and the Spirit, and how they are united to the Father. Jesus knows that he shares the Spirit of his Father, and he recognizes that the three divine Persons are distinct and in communion at the same time. For Rahner, "there is real difference in God as he is in himself between one and the same God insofar as he is at once and necessarily the unoriginated who mediates himself (Father), the one who is in truth uttered for himself (Son), and the one who is received and accepted in love for himself (Spirit)."⁵⁷ God's free self-communication makes this distinction between the divine Persons possible. Following that line of thought, Boff said: "God is

⁵⁷ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 101-2.

communion precisely because God is a Trinity of Persons.”⁵⁸ God expresses his oneness because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are “in the presence of one another, in total reciprocity, in immediacy of loving relationship,”⁵⁹ in being one with another and through another.

I.3.2 Trinitarian Mutuality

Trinitarian mutuality is a mutual relationship based on the love of the divine Persons. The mutual communion between the three divine Persons is based on love. For Yves Congar, the Holy Spirit is the link of love between the divine Persons.⁶⁰ Even though Jesus perceives that the Father is greater than himself, (John 14:28) Father and Son live in communion and the Spirit is the principle of that communion.⁶¹ According to Emmanuel Durand, the communion of the Father and of the Son, in its perfection, excludes any form of subordination. The Spirit is thus perceived in the communal relationship as the fulfillment of the Trinity.⁶² Durand clarifies Saint Augustine’s Trilogy: Loving – Loved – Love. Each aspect of this trilogy is linked to the distinctiveness of each divine Person. The Father and the Son are in relationship of Loving – Loved. The Holy Spirit in relationship of mutual love is the identity of Love proceeding from the Father who loves his Son and the Son who loves his Father.⁶³ There is in the relationship between the Father and the Son an identical operation of love. The Spirit in the reciprocity of mutual love is the Agent who realizes the mutual immanence of the Father and the Son.⁶⁴

For Durand, in the core of the Trinity, there is an interpersonal experience of mutual love and a communitarian experience.⁶⁵ The original order of the divine Persons is an order of mutual

⁵⁸ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 133.

⁵⁹ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 133.

⁶⁰ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 88.

⁶¹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 171.

⁶² Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines*, 334.

⁶³ Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines*, 339.

⁶⁴ Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines*, 340.

⁶⁵ Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines*, 344.

reciprocity, in which any subordination is excluded, privileging instead the eternal relation. In the Trinity, the Spirit has a real personal status. The Spirit and the Son are in an interpersonal relationship of reciprocity with the Father.⁶⁶ In addition to the Augustinian trilogy, quoted and clarified by Durand, Elizabeth Johnson helps us to understand that love characterizes the divine Persons in their relationship. The Spirit is designated as “love proceeding”⁶⁷ from the two other divine Persons. The Spirit is also the “living essence of love”⁶⁸ marked by reciprocal relation. Moreover, Love proceeding is also the love of the two other Persons who are in a mutual relationship with the Spirit without any dominant relationship. The Spirit has different naming categories such as love and gift, which give expression to its procession and its mutuality. “The Spirit is intelligible as the first gift, freely given and giving.”⁶⁹ For Johnson, the Spirit is love and gift. That indicates the deep nature of the divine mystery present in all created beings, empowering them.

The relationship of the divine Persons is characterized by a mutual love that is respectful of each of the Persons. The mutual love that proceeds from the divine Persons cannot be used to legitimate a kind of “domination” of the Father, but rather indicates the reciprocity in the community of the divine Persons. The Spirit is the dynamic creative principle of mutual love because the Spirit makes possible the reciprocal solidarity between God and creation.⁷⁰ Johnson does not see in the proceeding Spirit a subordination of relation to the two others, but rather a relation of coeternity and equality among the three divine Persons. Thus, the Spirit as “gift” is an expression of freedom. It is the mystery of the free self-gift of God, without any determination of

⁶⁶ Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines*, 344-6.

⁶⁷ Johnson, *She Who Is*, 150.

⁶⁸ Johnson, *She Who Is*, 150.

⁶⁹ Johnson, *She Who Is*, 151.

⁷⁰ Johnson, *She Who Is*, 151.

nature. In God, the relation is mutual, reciprocal and one of friendship.⁷¹ That relation is also free and creates freedom for others. This mutuality, as it is lived in the Trinitarian relationships, seems to play an important role in Jesus' self-awareness of his mission as Savior.

I.3.3 Community Process in God

According to John O'Donnell in his book entitled *The Mystery of the Triune God* there is a social image of the Trinity: God reveals Godself as three divine Persons in process of community. O'Donnell discusses with different authors on this aspect. He quotes Bracket who said: "The nature or essence of God is to be an interpersonal process, i.e. a community of three divine persons who are constantly growing in knowledge and love of one another and who are thus themselves in process even as they constitute the divine community as a specifically social process."⁷² The community of the Trinity seems to have priority in divine unity over God's essence. God's self-communication allows us to think about one essence in God and three divine Persons in unity of community. For Bracket, "the unity of God is not the unity of substance but the unity of community."⁷³

According to Jürgen Moltmann, the Trinity becomes the "divine community of Persons in relation."⁷⁴ The concept of relation takes the place of the philosophical concept of substance. In the mystery of the Trinity, the Persons live in intimacy with one another and "mutually indwell in one another."⁷⁵ In the Trinity, the need of clarification between essential and personal acts leads Kasper to assert that "God is one and his being is radically simple and indivisible. The uniqueness of God is one of being. "There are three Persons in God but each of the Persons is identical with

⁷¹ Johnson, *She Who Is*, 153.

⁷² O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 106.

⁷³ O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 107.

⁷⁴ O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 108.

⁷⁵ O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 108.

God himself. Each of the Persons is God. In God essence and Person are identical.”⁷⁶ In God, Person means relation. Thus, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given in order that human beings can be in relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.

In human experience, living in community is a task. If for human beings, person and community are not identical, in God, both Persons and community are identical.⁷⁷ The union of the three divine persons is defined as a communion of the persons who live in the community process. Thus, the comprehension of the community process seems to characterize the original nature of God that is also relational as it is revealed in the economic Trinity. The Triune God subsists eternally in the process of community of the three divine Persons.

God expresses himself by being present to every created being. God’s self-communication *ad intra* and *ad extra* is also the process of community of the three divine Persons present in created beings, in particular human beings. In this point of view, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit expresses in the inner lives of human beings the capacity of being in relationship with the Holy Gift. This openness is a characteristic of both human beings and God. The term “docility to the Spirit” seems to point out Christians’ relationship with the Holy Spirit. The use of the expression “docility to the Spirit” seems to reflect one intimate relationship with the Spirit. The particularity of the charismatics is the relationship with the Holy Spirit in terms of receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The next chapter sheds light on the Charismatic Renewal and the new communities in order to understand the strengths and limitations in the relation of the charismatics in terms of their relationships with the Holy Spirit, the relational Gift.

⁷⁶ O’Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 109.

⁷⁷ O’Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 110.

Conclusion

The experience of the Spirit expresses a real and an intimate connection between God and his people. God the Holy Spirit dwells in human beings and shapes their lives in his image and likeness. The Holy Spirit as a divine Person is a transformative Gift. The proper name of the Holy Spirit is Gift whose relational characteristic, that is defined in God, invites to a reciprocal relation with God's people. Gift implies self-giving as the principle of reciprocal relation. In God, Person means relation and mutuality in God is a source for inspiring and sustaining human relationships. The relational aspects of mutuality and community process in God are for us a call to be in reciprocal relationships with God and more precisely the Holy Gift.

The gift of the Spirit supposes its reception in human lives, and manifests its unicity through a diversity of its gifts. The same Spirit produces diverse gifts in order to promote God's salvific plan. These gifts are manifest realities of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians, particularly those of charismatics. *How is it possible to focus only on the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit and neglect the Spirit himself?* Answering this question is the task of the next chapter that discusses how the Holy Spirit is forgotten at the expense of his diverse gift.

Chapter II The Holy Spirit, the Charismatic Renewal and the New Communities

Introduction

This present chapter has as its goal to put particular stress on the importance of being in a true relationship with the Holy Gift. In the Catholic Church today, the context for experiencing the deeds of the Holy Spirit cannot be understood without looking closely at the history and commitment of members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. However, how does this

commitment of charismatic leaders shed light on their particular relationship with the Holy Spirit? What can be learned from observing the close attention they pay to the gifts of the Spirit but the limited attention given to a mutual relationship with the Spirit? How widely and profoundly has renewal through the Holy Spirit been received in the whole Catholic Church, and in particular in Benin and Ivory Coast? These are some of the key questions that need to be explored theologically and examined historically. To this end, this chapter assesses the historical background of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and New Communities as well as the valuable work of the Spirit mindful of the ways in which the Spirit is paradoxically forgotten or neglected by those who believe themselves to be gifted by the very same Spirit.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the historical phenomenon of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, beginning with its twentieth century leaders and the key concept of the “baptism in the Spirit.” The second part of the chapter focuses on three specific subjects of investigation: 1) the work of Jean Pliya on rediscovering the deeds of the Spirit, 2) assessing the origins and development of New Communities and charismatic associations in Benin and Ivory Coast, and 3) accounting for the ways in which New Communities and charismatic associations have been guilty of forgetting the Spirit and of failing to cultivate relationships of mutuality with the Holy Gift.

A Brief History of the Charismatic Renewal and the New Communities

What does this history teach us about the fire of the Holy Spirit and the process of renewal in the Church? How are the individuals and communities involved in this movement making connections between the experience of renewal and a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit?

II.3.1 A Brief History of the Charismatic Renewal

Initially, the phenomenon of Pentecostalism and its exponential growth were viewed as visible expressions of the spiritual experience of women and men on fire with the Spirit. Understood as one of the “most significant developments of the modern Christianity,”¹ this phenomenon reached many parts of the world simultaneously and independently. Within the Roman Catholic church, the Charismatic Renewal became the one of the first and most popular Catholic expressions of Pentecostalism. Before and after the 1960s, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) was constituted incrementally by diverse groups within the Church that were interested in the experience of renewal in the Spirit. In 1967, at Dusquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, members of prayer groups started to be “baptized in the Spirit.”²

For Edward O’Connor, most of the time the Pentecostal Spirit was “driven out of the established Churches.”³ There was no room for those with the gifts of tongues, glossolalia, prophecy, or visions. People with those gifts were identified as Pentecostal, which was later considered as “a third force”⁴ in the Western Church following Protestant and Catholic interpretations. In 1967, attempts the tendency to drive out of the Catholic Church people with such charisms failed since they refused to withdraw and join the Pentecostal communities.⁵ They held firm to the belief that Pentecostal/charismatic spirituality was really in harmony with Catholic Christian doctrine of faith and life.⁶ This new conception, sometimes referred to as Neo-Pentecostalism was differentiated

¹ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church: The definitive Study of a Dynamic Spiritual Rebirth from the Standpoint of Catholic Theology...its Significance in Catholic Life and Thought Today*. (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1971), 21.

² Patti Gallagher Mansfield, *As by a New Pentecost: The Dramatic Beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*. (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Press, 1992), 39-41.

³ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 23.

⁴ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 23.

⁵ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 24.

⁶ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 28.

from Protestant evangelical Pentecostal movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷ If it appears that this new form of charismatic fervor has a delayed reception in the Catholic Church, Cardinal Suenens in his book entitled *A Controversial Phenomenon: Resting in the Spirit*, explains, with the support of Father George Maloney, that it is an “ancient phenomenon”⁸ in continuity with charismatic prayer groups called “Enthusiasts” that were present in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. However, before showing how the institutionalization of those groups took place within the Catholic Church, it is necessary to provide some further background on the Pentecostal movement in the twentieth century.

According to Patti O’Connor, in the twentieth century, the emergence and growth of Pentecostal Churches are “factors of major importance in the Pentecostal movement.”⁹ Pentecostal inspiration originated in the 1890s under the influence of Charles Fox Parham, a Methodist of Kansas. He believed in baptism with the Holy Spirit, the fire of the Spirit that leads to conversion and sanctification.¹⁰ In the same line of thought with O’Connor, Susan Maurer also mentioned William J. Seymour, a member of the Holiness movement, who attended Parham’s Bible School in Texas, and also embraced his ideas. In the 1900s, Seymour claimed to have received the charism of the Spirit. The numeric growth of his followers led to gatherings at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles.¹¹ In addition, Maurer indicates that Pentecostalism was rooted in the Holiness revival movement of the Methodist Church with John Wesley (1703-1791) who advanced the belief in Christian salvation through conversion and sanctification.¹²

⁷ See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and The Reshaping of Religion in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2001).

⁸ Léon Joseph Suenens, *A Controversial Phenomenon: Resting in the Spirit*, (Dublin: Veritas, 1987), 25.

⁹ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 31.

¹⁰ Susan A. Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm: A History of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1967-2000*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 10.

¹¹ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 10.

¹² Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 9.

In 1907, Pentecostal missionaries brought the movement to West Africa. Its spiritual manifestations included fainting, weeping, and speaking in tongues.¹³ In the South of Ivory Coast, traditional elements were included such as the trance phenomenon with the Prophet William Harris (1860-1929), and other prophets after him.¹⁴

Viewed from a Roman Catholic perspective, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) played a great role in the establishment of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). From its very beginning, the Council focused on the “new Pentecost”¹⁵ that was taking place in the Church. In recognizing and advancing the role of lay persons in the life of the Church, the Second Vatican Council declared that “the holy people of God” can contribute to “Christ’s prophetic office.”¹⁶ For leaders of the CCR, *Lumen Gentium*, paragraph 12, became the *Magna Carta* for the movement. In 1973, Pope Paul VI met with the leaders of the CCR in Rome and appointed Cardinal Suenens as “special advisor in overseeing the reception of the CCR into the life of the Church.”¹⁷ Various dioceses started to be more open to CCR and were in favor of its first International Conference in Rome in May 1975. More than 10,000 charismatic Catholics attended the gathering.

The long process that led to the official recognition of the CCR seems to be rooted in the decision by the Second Vatican Council to welcome more lay movements into full participation in Christ’s evangelizing mission. In the aftermath of the Council, the CCR was seen as a breath of the Spirit for the ongoing renewal of the Church. This story of the CCR and its historical connections with earlier Pentecostal movements exemplifies how gradually and differently the reception of the Spirit occurs and the enthusiasm with which the Spirit’s gifts are received.

¹³ Susan A. Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 16.

¹⁴ André Mary, “Prophètes pasteurs: La politique de la délivrance en Côte d’Ivoire,” In *Politique Africaine*, no. 87, Octobre 2002, 69-71.

¹⁵ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 37.

¹⁶ *Lumen Gentium* 3, quoted by Susan A. Maurer in *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 38.

¹⁷ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 41,56.

However, it is important to observe that in non-Western parts of the world, where spiritual gifts (such as the trance phenomenon, vision) are part of traditional cultural experiences, such as in the West Africa context, so-called charismatic gifts of the Spirit, were sometimes viewed with suspicion and reserve. Nevertheless, Church leaders within the context of West Africa, for a variety of reasons, chose to invest in the formation of the CCR by offering support to its leaders and founders.

II.3.2 Charismatic Leaders and Founders

How can the unity of the Church be maintained with the incorporation of diverse charismatic groups in local Churches? Associations of the Faithful already existed in the Church. However, when praying, there was often an uneasiness among members of local parishes when the spiritual behaviors of members of charismatic groups were unusual and quite out of the ordinary prayer experiences of parishioners. Nevertheless, the Church recognized that members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal brought to the Church a visible impact in the life of diverse local Churches. For this reason, in the 1970s, organizing the CCR internationally became a priority for the Vatican and Cardinal Suenens. who already was familiar with a number of charismatic leaders, became a key figure in the process of collaboration and organization.

In the United States, Ralph Martin, Steve Clark, and Patti Gallagher Mansfield were positioned as charismatic leaders after their experience of baptism in the Spirit. They were committed to lead prayer groups such as the *Cursillo*, the Duquesne retreat or Weekend, and the Antioch Weekend.¹⁸ They focused on facilitating the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church through the reception of the gifts made possible by baptism in the Spirit. Their relationship with the Holy Spirit and the diverse manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit that they and others experienced contributed to greater openness and better collaboration with the Church. These leaders were among the first to encounter

¹⁸ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 26.

both the experiences of the Spirit and its works *and* the challenge of collaborating with Church authorities.

Patti Mansfield's experience of "baptism in the Spirit" started at a weekend retreat organized by *Chi Rho*¹⁹ (Greek initial letters for Christ). Biblical and spiritual preparation took place before the weekend retreat through which she was filled with awe in the Blessed Sacrament of the Body of Christ. As she was kneeling, she was filled with God's unconditional love flat on her face and with her hands burning. One of the leaders of the prayer group observed that she was baptized in the Spirit.²⁰ She was convinced that it was time for her to spread the works of the Spirit in the Catholic Church.

Ralph Martin and Steve Clark, two leaders of the *Cursillo* movement, shared with Patti Mansfield their experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Soon thereafter, other meetings were organized for evangelization in different states of the United States. Patti Mansfield found encouragement in *Lumen Gentium* 12 and the remarkable contribution made by Cardinal Suenens.²¹ Collaboration with Cardinal Suenens was understood as an effort to strengthen their relationship with the Church. In 1973, as mentioned earlier, Cardinal Suenens organized an international gathering of charismatic leaders in Rome. It was there that Ralph Martin (the representative of charismatic leaders in the United States) met Pope Paul VI who urged them to live their faith, and to take pastoral responsibility.²²

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement, with the committed of their leaders, breathed a new breath into the life of local churches. Charismatic leaders considered baptism in the Spirit as a revitalization of their sacrament of confirmation. Their relation with the Spirit turned into an

¹⁹ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 34.

²⁰ Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 29.

²¹ Mansfield, *As by a New Pentecost*, 48.

²² Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 40-1.

experience that included both the works of the Spirit and their relations with the authorities of the local Catholic churches. Later, Ralph Martin, in his commentary on the role of the Holy Spirit, pointed to the teaching of Christ on the promise of the Spirit upon his disciples (Jn 16:7-15). He also mentioned that the presence of the Spirit was essential to the lives of Christians. He concluded that “the charismatic dimension is not an optional dimension. It is something that is part of all of us by virtue of being Catholics and being baptized and confirmed.”²³ Martin showed that the experience of the Spirit is deeply rooted in Christian lives. There is no more important appropriation of the charisms than this deep experience with the Spirit. For Thomas Aquinas, as quoted by O’Connor, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit that are given to help others and to enable an individual to be united with God. Properly understood, a charism is a “spiritual gift”²⁴ and a charismatic is a person who is filled with the gifts of the Spirit. However, it is important to keep in mind the instruction of Cardinal Suenens that “charismatic” does not have an “exclusive meaning: [for] the whole Church is charismatic”²⁵ as are all Christians individually. Still, the term designating someone as “charismatic” remains linked to the experiences of the early leaders of charismatic prayer groups in 1967.

For many involved the CCR, a “charismatic person” designates a leader around whom people gather to pray. Since the first charismatic leaders emerged in the late 1960s, members of additional groups also received the gifts of the Spirit and as a result, the Charismatic Renewal spread throughout the world. In Africa, particularly in Ivory Coast, the group “Ephata” started its activities in 1974. Father Raymond Halter, a Marianist priest, was one of the initiators of this prayer group.

²³ Watch the video of Ralph Martin on the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life, June 8th, 2017. https://www1.cbn.com/video/SPC10_WebExtra_C/the-role-of-the-holy-spirit

²⁴ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 208.

²⁵ Léon Joseph Suenens, *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness*. (Michigan: Servant Books, 1983), 51.

Many other leaders followed, such as Father Norbert Eric Abekan, and Father Amann Cobbina.²⁶ The Charismatic Renewal in Ivory Coast was organized rapidly as a national movement with the election of the National Shepherd. Each parish of each diocese had a charismatic prayer group and one Shepherd who led the group. In Benin, in 1977, Jean Pliya was baptized in the Spirit and became the first Beninese charismatic in the country. He reported that his first charismatic prayer was at home with his family. His children and wife praised the Lord joyfully. Under the direction of the parish priest of *Bon Pasteur de Cotonou*, he started to gather together with other people as a prayer group.²⁷ The same movement of growth and multiplication of charismatic groups that was reported in United States also was observed in the following years in Benin as many parishes began to host charismatic prayer groups. Several coordinating committees followed, and later in February 1995, Jean Pliya was elected National Shepherd.²⁸

The presence of the Charismatic Renewal in Ivory Coast and in Benin strengthened the Christian faith and the social commitment of Catholics in both the Church and in society. However, it also opened the door to an increasing number of problems related to the formation of the Shepherds as well as other members of charismatic groups. This dynamic led to relational difficulties between the Shepherds and members of the clergy even though priests were appointed chaplains for the charismatic groups. A re-structuring was initiated in both countries in 1990s. In Benin, a bishop was designated as responsible for prayer groups by the bishops' conference and designated to work with members of the Office of Inter-diocesan Coordinators. In Ivory Coast, the structuring of that group would be insignificant around 1980s, but as an association and for their

²⁶ Lucie Sarr, *An African Experience of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, May, 21st 2018.

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/an-african-experience-of-the-catholic-charismatic-renewal/7628>

²⁷ Valerie Zinsou, *2^{eme} Congres du Renouveau Charismatique Catholique: Jean Pliya passe le témoin à Euloge Coovi Chékété*, 2 novembre 2013.

<https://www.facebook.com/558165527570277/posts/574177929302370/>

²⁸ Zinsou, *2^{eme} Congres du Renouveau Charismatique Catholique*.

formation, they referred to other New Communities and charismatics from other countries because of the distrust of some local clergy at that time. Later, in regard to the fruitful work of the prayer groups, Cardinal Yago appointed Father Abekan as chaplain of charismatic groups.²⁹

All the charismatic leaders were baptized in the Spirit, during a process of prayer that needs to be elucidated.

II.3.3 Baptism in the Spirit

“Baptism in the Spirit” is the foundational experience of charismatic who are inspired, led and impelled by the Holy Spirit. Charismatics and faith communities are accustomed to express this kind of experience as a “release of the Spirit” or a “new outpouring of the Spirit.”³⁰ It is an experience of transformation that intervenes in people’s lives similar to what happened with the first disciples of Jesus on Pentecost. According to Francis Sullivan, the significant number of persons devoted to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal can find its explanation in this spiritual experience and in the commitment that this experience requires. People who are renewed in the Spirit have an ardent desire to share with others their experience of being baptized in the Spirit.³¹

What can one say about the process of that experience?

As reported by Patti Mansfield, and commented on by Susan Maurer and Edward O’Connor, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit requires a preparation that increases one’s desire for conversion in order to be united to Christ. In the silence of prayer, there is also an act of offering one’s life as a great gift to God. Patti Mansfield followed this process as the “professors” gave instruction. Then

²⁹ Lucie Sarr, *Pourquoi le Renouveau Charismatic s’essouffle t’il en Côte d’Ivoire?* 2 Juin 2017.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/renouveau-charismatique%E2%80%89sessouffle-t-cote-divoire-%E2%80%89/>

³⁰ Francis Aloysius Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal: A Biblical and Theological Study*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1982), 59.

³¹ Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 59-60.

she asked for a miracle in her life. While she was praying, she was filled with love.³² She sensed the presence of the Spirit in her, and she wanted to tell others what happened to her. She also started to pray with a devoted heart for two other girls. In 1967, young people in the Catholic Church, experienced what they would understand later as being baptized in the Spirit. Mansfield has had evidence of being granted the gifts of piety, deliverance, and later, of the gift of tongues.³³

Looking closely at Patti Mansfield's experiences, the need to offer herself to God in preparation for that retreat becomes evident. After being filled with love, she committed herself to share her experience. In other words, she took seriously her commitment in the Church. What Patti Mansfield received, she was able with the power of the Spirit to give in return to others by putting herself at the disposal of the Spirit. She prayed for two other girls, asking the Lord Jesus to fill her friends with his love, and so it happened. One can see the movement of receiving and giving as a dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit through the relational prayer of Patti Mansfield with her friends during the retreat. The Holy Spirit revealed himself as Love manifested in her heart: a very close presence that opened her mind to the knowledge of God. The unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was firmly attested to in Patti Mansfield's journal.³⁴ The profound and warm relationship with the Holy Spirit was first manifested in her life. She was enthralled or seduced by the Holy Spirit and she started to reflect upon this connection when she first prayed for the two other girls with her heart on fire. Her charismatic life depended mostly on this attraction to the Holy Spirit just as Christ reminded his disciples: "As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you [disciples] unless you remain in me [Christ]" (Jn 15:4).

³² Mansfield, *As by a New Pentecost*, 34-39. See also Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 28.

³³ Mansfield, *As by a New Pentecost*, 40-42.

³⁴ Mansfield, *As by a New Pentecost*, 43.

After experiences of baptism in the Spirit, some believers brought numerous questions to the Church and to their pastoral leaders. Is baptism in the Spirit a real sacrament instead of baptism with water? Could one say that the sacrament of initiation in the Catholic Church is incomplete? How is baptism as a sacrament in the Church different from John the Baptist's baptism for conversion? When Christian baptism is performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, does the sacrament of baptism give charisms instead of the Holy Spirit? When people receive the sacrament of baptism are they born through water and the Spirit (John 3:5)? How are Christians as children of God reborn?³⁵

Beyond questions regarding baptism, Francis Sullivan, observes that often the sacrament of confirmation seems not to involve a deep Christian commitment in practice. He advances the idea that "Christian initiation still needs to be completed."³⁶ He also observes that being baptized in the Spirit can be understood as the completion of Christian initiation.³⁷ Nonetheless, Sullivan agrees with those Catholic theologians who address the question in what sense is a person "baptized in the Spirit"? Sullivan proposes that one's consciousness of that sort of experience is a growing process. "Being baptized in the Spirit" has two senses namely: "imparting of the gift of the Holy Spirit" (the theological sense), and "becoming aware of the power of the Spirit at work" in the lives of those who experience it (as the experiential sense).³⁸ Both meanings, the theological sense and the experiential sense, are what Sullivan calls the biblical sense of "Being baptized in the Spirit."³⁹

³⁵ Edward O'Connor, *Le Renouveau Charismatique: Origines et perspectives*. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975), 62-3.

³⁶ Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 61.

³⁷ Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 61.

³⁸ Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 68-9.

³⁹ Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 63.66.

In addition to Sullivan's position, O'Connor also points out different forms of the baptism in the Spirit. There are conscious experiences of the reception of the Holy Spirit marked with love, a burning heart, joy, tears and God's presence in oneself. There are also the hidden experiences. People would say that nothing happened to them after a charismatic prayer experience with others. Later, this hidden experience may be revealed through the transformative action of the Spirit in the lives of those who experience this type of baptism in the Spirit. Both forms of being baptized in the Spirit are important forms of the experience.⁴⁰

There is a continuity of meaning in the different manners of presenting the meaning of "being baptized in the Spirit." Baptism in the Spirit is "a new way" of experiencing a particular relationship with God the Holy Spirit, and a transformative experience within oneself with regard to one's commitment to the mission of the Catholic Church, since charismatics devote their lives to the growth of the Church.

II. 2 The Holy Spirit, the Charismatic Renewal and the New Communities

The previous historical overview of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church sheds light on the impact of the baptism in the Spirit in terms of the transformation of people's lives and the renewal of the Church. The Second Vatican Council attributes to the work of the Holy Spirit the perpetual renewal which the Church needs in order to remain faithful to its Lord.⁴¹ A close relationship of the Spirit with the Church works to the benefit of the faithful. However, it happens that the Church recognizes a sort of neglect or forgetfulness of the Spirit, a subject addressed by theologians over the centuries.

⁴⁰ O'Connor, *Le Renouveau Charismatique*, 63-4.

⁴¹ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 171.

II.2.1 The Forgotten Spirit in History

It was first in the context of the Protestant critique of the Roman Catholic Church, that theologians such as Yves Congar, and more recently Elizabeth Johnson and Clark Pinnock, recognized the *neglecting* the Spirit in theological thought.

According to Yves Congar, it is surprising that the works of some theologians pay very little attention to the Spirit in their discussions of the Trinity. This tendency has been interpreted as a forgetting of the Spirit. For instance, Yves Congar in scrutinizing Karl Adam's classic work, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, pointed out that the Church is substituted for the Spirit. "The certitude of the Catholic faith rests on the sacred triad: God, Christ, Church."⁴² Similarly, he found that Dominican theologian Raymond Léopold Bruckberger, when defining the Catholic faith, first spoke of God, then Christ, then the Church, and finally, the sacraments. There was a total omission of the Holy Spirit.⁴³ A similar kind of omission can be seen in the thought of Matthias Scheeben, who tried to explain the doctrine of infallibility of the Pope by declaring that "the Eucharist, Mary and the Holy See are the most important links by which the Church is established, maintained and shown to be true, total, firm and in living communion with Christ."⁴⁴ In defense of the Pope's infallibility, other authors mentioned that there are three infallibilities, that of God, Jesus Christ, and the Pope.⁴⁵ Yet another perspective can be found in the thought of Spiritan Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who declared: "The three white things are the three main gifts that God has given us: the Pope, the most holy Virgin and the eucharistic sacrifice."⁴⁶ Finally, even though the Magisterium of the Church was regarded for centuries as the principle of unity of the Church, thanks to Vatican II, the Holy

⁴² Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 159.

⁴³ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 160.

⁴⁴ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 161.

⁴⁵ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 161.

⁴⁶ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 161.

Spirit was recognized explicitly and restored to its rightful in the life of the Church,⁴⁷ as noted in the 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, I.2: “It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the Church as a whole, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful. He brings them into intimate union with Christ, so that He is the principle of the Church's unity.”⁴⁸

Mindful of the Protestant critique that attacked the attribution to Mary of all the merits of the Holy Spirit, it is important to recognize how within the devotional life of the Catholic Church Mary had, in practice, taken the place of the Holy Spirit. A report from Congar about the experience of spiritual people in the cenacle of Montmartre (1953) expressed that those people had attributed to Mary the permanent work of the Trinity through the action of the Holy Spirit. They said that Mary is “the soul of the Church.”⁴⁹ For Congar, it is unacceptable to say that Mary as “a certain jurisdiction or authority over the temporal procession of the Holy Spirit...”⁵⁰ Even though the relationship between Mary, Mother of God and the Holy Spirit is very deep, the role of Mary is inscribed in the work of the Holy Spirit. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that Mary was made Mother of the incarnate Word of God. In the Church, Mary is a model of life and intercession.⁵¹

In following Yves Congar, Elizabeth Johnson also relates this aspect of the forgetfulness of the Holy Spirit. Mary and the Church took the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. Another aspect of the forgetfulness of the Spirit was expressed in the relationship of subordination to the Father and the Son. Indeed, Elizabeth Johnson shows that the relation of procession of the Spirit led us to

⁴⁷ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 163.

⁴⁸ Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1964, I.2

⁴⁹ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 163.

⁵⁰ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 164.

⁵¹ Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 1, 164.

understand a certain form of subordination of the Holy Spirit in its relationship with the Father and the Son. In accordance with Vatican II, she underscores the communal relationship of mutuality among the divine Persons.⁵² Similarly, in his treatment of the forgetfulness of the Spirit, Clark Pinnock, in his article entitled “The Role of the Spirit in Creation,” pointed out that this forgetfulness of the Spirit has had a negative impact on the dynamic of the Church. He invited theologians to a deep experience of relationship with the Spirit because he estimated that the Spirit is neglected. He interpreted this neglectfulness of the Spirit as fear of the renewal of the Church.⁵³

In regard to this kind of historical forgetfulness of the Spirit, it is possible that having a relationship with the Person of the Spirit was difficult to imagine or think about. For example, the Church, as a palpable element, took the place of the Spirit. Even though Mary, who lived in the full presence of the Spirit, offers a model for being in relation with the Holy Spirit, it could be that her experience may be viewed as unique to her alone. In the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in communal life. This relational being cannot be separated, and neither created element nor favored persons (as Mary, the Pope) could take the place of the divine Person of the Holy Spirit. As a divine Person, the relational being is possible, and the Charismatic Renewal with its leaders bring insight to think about proper ways of living in relationship with the Holy Gift.

II.2.2 The Charismatic Renewal with Jean Pliya: Rediscovering the Value of the Spirit

a) An Autobiography Integrated into the Intelligence of his Faith

Jean Pliya (1931–2015) was a man of faith well-known in Africa, and with an exemplary popularity in the West Africa local Churches. With his wife Rose, he had seven children. His pious life began when he was fifteen years old. In his young life, he had a particular devotion to

⁵² Johnson, *She Who Is*, 128-31.

⁵³ Clark H. Pinnock, “The Role of the Spirit in Creation”, in *The Asbury Theological Journal*. Vol. 52, 1, (1997), 47.

the Virgin Mary and Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus. His human qualities brought him to be a leader of catholic students' association in France, then a professor, and then to occupy different responsibilities, such as administration and political functions, and pastoral commitments as well. In his ordinary life, he loved to tell stories; then he became a writer. Many of his novels are studied in secondary schools. During a period of his life when he was very sick, he discovered the real value of medicinal plants. He also was a consultant on natural therapy and dietetics. It is Jean Pliya himself who told his own story in an article published in the *Bulletin of ICCRS* (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) which is now CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service) in Rome.⁵⁴

In 1975, in Pliya's country, the Republic of Benin, the socio-political movement of the Marxist-Leninists started, which was a real offense and menace for Christianity. As a Christian, he was focused on the prayer of deliverance for his country. Prayer in the family was a habit for him as a certain report gave evidence of families meeting and sharing of the gospel since 1976.⁵⁵ In 1977, he was baptized in the Spirit during a Eucharistic celebration. This seems to show his particular relationship of faith in Christ who baptized him in the Spirit. He reported that his first charismatic prayer was made in the family and his children were praising God with joyful songs. Later, like other charismatic leaders, he was granted the gifts of tongues, prophecy, preaching, "words of knowledge", healing prayer, and also the process of growing in humility, with joyful service and compassion.⁵⁶ What Pliya said seems also to express that the Holy Spirit preserved him from vainglory. Spiritual gifts were added to his qualities as a human being who needed, in humility, to be at the school of Father Raymond Halter who was involved in the formation of charismatics in

⁵⁴ Jean Pliya, "Profil d'un joyeux enfant de Roi", In *Bulletin de l'ICCRS*, 2, (mars-avril 2001), 3.

⁵⁵ Valerie Zinsou, <https://www.facebook.com/558165527570277/posts/574177929302370/>

⁵⁶ Pliya, "Profil d'un joyeux enfant de Roi," 3.

Africa at that period, as noted earlier.⁵⁷ These different gifts of the Spirit were received in faith and they shaped him to increase his faith by becoming a man of faith, a witness of Christ in a particular relationship with the Spirit.

His commitment took a new direction. Pliya started with a prayer group at *Bon Pasteur*, a parish of Cotonou, the economical capital of Benin. The fast growth of members who participated in these meetings of prayer and those who received baptism in the Spirit facilitated the creation of new charismatic groups progressively in many parishes of the Cotonou and Porto-Novo dioceses, and also other dioceses in the country. His close collaboration with parish priests and other bishops was unanimously appreciated. His growing humility seems certainly the essential element of Pliya's life which convinced the clergy that God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, was clearly working in him and through him. That led the Church in Benin to focus on the formation of charismatic leaders whose commitments were fruitful for Christians and others believers. One can see the remarkable conversion, the unity of divided families, the rupturing with idols. Many others brought testimony of stopping consultation with *Vodoun* priests, or engaging in cultic devotions to various divinities of traditional religions. With other charismatic leaders and priests, prayers of deliverance were organized. In Benin society, there is a conception of evil spirits with some manifestations that one can see through the spirits of water naming *Mami Wata*, genies of the forest. These spirits can impact negatively the lives of people. Believers and those who suffer from the action of the evil spirits with other inexplicable diseases are always present to participate in these prayers of deliverance. The breath of the Spirit led Pliya, other charismatics, the clergy, and the whole Church in Benin to face the real challenge of the negative impact of evil spirits in people's lives. The manner in which Jean Pliya devoted his life to the transformation of Christian

⁵⁷ Pliya, "Profil d'un joyeux enfant de Roi," 3.

lives in Africa through his work of listening, intercession, healing ministry, has been an evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit over the traditional concept of spirits in Benin culture.

The deliverance of his country for which he prayed was manifested at the level of individuals. It seems that the Holy Spirit working in and through Jean Pliya gave him a clear understanding of what deliverance of his country meant in regard to the real liberation of believers to embrace Catholicism without fear of the Marxist-Leninist government.

Jean Pliya's full commitment to the service of the Lord began in 1990 when he was retired.⁵⁸ Sharing his experience in a great number of countries in Africa, he spread with other charismatics the importance of the renewal of the Church through the Holy Spirit as it was at the time of Pentecost. Gatherings, assemblies, and meetings of evangelization and prayer all contributed to increase the number of Catholics and also to the quality of their spiritual lives. Charismatic events and the vitality of the movement were also perceived as a matter of pride for Christian Catholics in comparison to the Evangelical, Protestant, and others Churches' commitment. Christians returned to their home Church, the Catholic Church, even if charismatics actions in the lives of some believers could not be a proof of the affiliation of believers with the Church. Maturing of the faith implied participation in prayer groups or other commitments in the Church whose help to experience a real relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit who led believers to see themselves as children of the same Father with Christ. One can observe that those who experience a true relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit in their own lives are always able to face difficulties in faith, and hope because they believe firmly in the love of God that the Spirit spreads in their hearts. Going back to their previous divinities' cults or consulting *Vodoun* priests is not part of their new lives or possible for them even to think about. It appears that Christians in general, and

⁵⁸ Pliya, "Profil d'un joyeux enfant de Roi," 3.

charismatics in particular, experience different levels of growth in faith, which can be compared to the parable of the seed sown on the path, the rocky ground, the thorns, and the good soil (Mark 4:3-9). How did Pliya integrate such understanding in his pastoral commitment? How can charismatics be impelled to improve the good soil in believers' lives? The Church in Benin recognized his true commitment as a follower of Christ whose life was totally devoted to transform people's lives through the deeds of the Holy Spirit. For that, the Vatican invited him in 1994 to participate in the first African Synod in order to share his pastoral experience, the fire that burnt in his heart and consumed the lives of believers. The value of the great work of the Spirit can also be found through Jean Pliya's books.

b) A Serie of Books Enriched by his Spiritual Experience as Charismatic

What do the publications of Jean Pliya teach us about his personal relationship with the Holy Spirit? First of all, he said that the Holy Spirit and his devotion to Mary led him to share his joyful experience through three books: *Priez comme un enfant de Roi* (1992), *Donnez comme un enfant de Roi* (1993), *Soyez toujours joyeux, c'est possible* (1997). His life of prayer started with a formula that became a true filial dialogue with the Father. Thus, following the example of Pliya, people renewed in the Spirit, people learned to develop their own manner of prayer that could be long, short, planned out or spontaneous. For Pliya only the breath of the Spirit can bring into the dry heart the hunger and thirst for sharing and loving.⁵⁹ To be faithful in prayer requires an act of will at the beginning of the process. Looking closely at Pliya's charismatic experience, one can see that prayer is the highest force of spiritual transformation that exists.⁶⁰ Transformation is the consequence of encountering the Lord through personal prayer. Working under the guidance of

⁵⁹ Jean Pliya, *Priez comme un enfant de Roi*, 5th ed. (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert, 2015), 49.

⁶⁰ Pliya, *Priez comme un enfant de Roi*, 134.

the Holy Spirit it is possible enter into a deep relationship with the Spirit. This demonstrates what it means to be a contemplative in action.

As an expression of Pliya's charismatic experience, his books give evidence of his testimony of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and granted gifts of intercession, deliverance, and liberation, that were explicitly expressed in the form of the prayers he composed. For instance, here are some titles of his prayers: "Ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit," "Prayer for Humility," and "Prayer of intercession, healing, liberation, deliverance, reconciliation and love." These forms of prayer illustrate Jean Pliya's filial relationship with the Father in obedience, love and joy, and also his prayer in relation to the Spirit.⁶¹ These prayers express Pliya's particular relationship to God through which he can pray, act and be a humble charismatic leader for his own salvation and the salvation of others. His filial life with God is clearly for his own freedom and the freedom of others. In his book, *Après la guérison et la délivrance: La marche vers la conversion* which expresses the process of conversion after healing and deliverance, Pliya emphasized the importance of one's knowledge of God and the experience of his love burning in one's heart as a goal for those who experience the gifts of the Spirit or who have been healed or delivered. The Parable of the Sower, found in his charismatic experience of prayer, reflects a deep docility to the Spirit that enables one to trust in Jesus as a means for "fertilizing the soil" of those who ask for deliverance and healing.⁶² As a man who lived in the Spirit, Pliya learned to live his life fully at the school of Jesus. For Jean Pliya, Jesus is the model healer. Looking to the healing narratives in the New Testament, such as the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years whom Jesus healed at the pool called *Bethesda* (Jn 5:1-15), it is evident that many who were healed underwent a

⁶¹ Pliya, *Priez comme un enfant de Roi*, 146. 210.

⁶² Jean Pliya, *Après la Guérison et la Délivrance: la Marche vers la Conversion*. (Paris: Édition des Béatitudes, 2009), 12-15. 79.

progressive conversion. After their healing, they were invited to live in a process of ongoing renewal. Pliya wanted people to express their freedom by learning to pray and by loving as Christ commanded. For Pliya, the process of conversion helps those who have been healed to experience freedom in Jesus Christ who is the Healer and the Savior united with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Through the Eucharist, Jean Pliya had a remarkable experience of healing that involved all those who have gone before him on his own genealogical tree.⁶³ He contends, drawing upon traditional beliefs, that families, from generation to generation, can be negatively affected by the mystery of evil personified described as the evil spirit. Pliya explained that some ancestors of those families made a kind of worship to the spirit of the river or forest, in implicating all members of families both living and dead. As a result of that, grand-children or other members of those families are bound by that spirit which can trouble their lives. He believes that it is Christ who overcomes the forces of evil that binds people and that it is Christ who restores the freedom and dignity of those whom the Holy Spirit brings into filiation to the Father. Mindful of the number of Christians whose lives are profoundly affected by the mystery of evil, Pliya is conscious of the spiritual forces that negatively impact so many lives.

Pliya's faith was based on his relationship with the Lord Jesus and firmly united to the power of the Spirit in his life and through the myriad deeds of the Spirit. He had a direct influence on the faith of other charismatic leaders and members of charismatic groups. Pliya's commitment showed how it was possible to live in true relation with God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In experiences of healing and deliverance, there always exists the risk is that the immediate action through which sick persons are gratified with the deeds of the Holy Spirit can strengthen them for a while until they face another test of faith in their lives but without an experience of healing or

⁶³ Pliya, *Des Ténèbres à la Lumière...Osez la Prière de Délivrance*. (Paris: Saint-Paul, 2006), 124-25. 139.

deliverance. The consequence of such experiences can lead to a return to traditional religious practices. Jean Pliya was aware of this reality and strongly recommended believers to trust in the saving action of Christ and the Holy Spirit. One can see in the work of Jean Pliya that conversion is a step-by-step process that leads from experiences of rocky earth to very fertile soil as Christ explains in the Parable of the Sower (Mk 4: 13-20).

Several books by Jean Pliya that are not mentioned here also serve as guides for spiritual combat, one of the most important realities impacting the lives of Christians in West African local churches. Because of his influence and witness, Pliya remains in people's memories as a pioneer of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Africa. Not only did he reveal the mighty action of the Spirit in the lives of believers, he also helped them to understand that the event of Pentecost is real and truly possible to experience today. As one bishop said, after the death of Pliya, that he finished the race with the Gospel in his hand, the name of Christ in his mouth, and the fire of the Spirit in his heart.⁶⁴

II. 3 Assessing the New Communities and the Value of the Work of the Spirit

Another aspect of the valuable work of the Holy Spirit can be found in the commitment of New Communities in both Ivory Coast and Benin. New Communities connected to the Charismatic Renewal have experienced remarkable growth and development in the local Church of Ivory Coast. The main explanation for this is linked to the history of the Charismatic Renewal in Abidjan. Charismatic leaders, in facing the reticence of the clergy in Ivory Coast, looked for guidance from the New Communities in France for the formation of different prayer groups that were growing rapidly. Over time, New Communities started in the local Church of Ivory Coast as an apostolate

⁶⁴ Marie-Valérie Zinsou, *Au Bénin, l'héritage de Jean Pliya*, 16 octobre 2017.
<https://africa.la-croix.com/benin-lheritage-de-jean-pliya/>

of lay people in order to edify the people of God. Today their numbers are around two hundred.⁶⁵ There was a real effort to integrate New Communities into the local Church with the creation of the Episcopal Commission for the Apostolate of Laity. The first New Community in Ivory Coast was *Communauté Mère du Divin Amour (CMDA)* with its two pillars: the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, through the Spirit. Other recent New Communities are *Sacerdoce Royal* directed by Abraham Marie; *Communauté Coeur Compassion de Jésus* moderated by deacon Honoré Akpovi; *Communauté des Enfants de Padre Pio*, moderated by deacon Atsé Brice (an international community like *Communauté de l'Emmanuel*, or *Communauté du Pain de Vie*). Even though these communities are devoted to the Holy Spirit and baptism in the Spirit for their members, devotion to the Virgin Mary also plays an important role in the lives of their communities. All of these communities are present in both Ivory Coast and the Republic of Benin, except *Communauté du Pain de Vie* which is not in Ivory Coast. However, the dynamism of Shepherds of these groups of prayer to become leaders of New Communities is more remarkable in Ivory Coast than in Benin. Paradoxically, charismatic commitments in Benin have been more easily welcomed than in Ivory Coast.

Pope Paul VI, in his message to the charismatic leaders in 1975, recognized the deep communion that charismatic groups have with the Holy Spirit and their intimate contact with God in fidelity to the commitments they made since their baptism in the Spirit.⁶⁶ This message of Pope Paul VI continues to resonate until today as these New Communities, particularly in Ivory Coast and Benin, continue to be well-received.

⁶⁵ Lucie Sarr, *L'Église Ivoirienne face aux Dérives de Certaines Communautés Nouvelles*, 3 février 2017. <https://africa.la-croix.com/leglise-ivoirienne-face-aux-derives-de-certaines-communautés-nouvelles/>

⁶⁶ O'Connor, *Le Renouveau Charismatique*, 25.

New Communities work for consolation among their members and the populations around them. They are a real help for the Ivorian Church because they bring their charisms to the People of God. The essence of these New Communities is rooted in the Spirit or renewal in the Spirit. The spiritual and pastoral activities of these charismatic communities are essential in the life of their members, and help them to be familiar with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the assemblies of prayer at spiritual retreats, some “revelations” of different spiritual gifts in the life of participants are important to maintain the charismatic status of those communities. Members who receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit become actively involved in the evangelization of their neighbors. In these communities, the expression of unity implies the union of their members with Christ and the Holy Gift. The union with Christ through the Holy Gift is important to build up communitarian life and the apostolic mission of these groups. Communities in prayer are in communion with the Spirit who unites them to Christ. Members are united by connections of overflowing love that the Holy Spirit brings to them.⁶⁷ During the assemblies of prayer, the invocation of the name of Jesus demonstrates that our Lord is the active Sovereign who exercises His saving work through the power of the Holy Gift. The Lord himself leads the growth of his Body, the Church.⁶⁸ New communities are united in love to Christ through the Holy Spirit. Prayer meetings are described as a “sea of liquid love.”⁶⁹ Each member of a group at a prayer meeting experiences a reciprocal esteem from the other members. There is evidence to suggest that charismatics experience the divine love of the Trinity. As Edward O’Connor observes:

“It is the love of man [sic] and the love of God compenetrating each other: the love of God elevating the love of man, and the love of man serving as the vehicle for the love of God. Human friendship is brought to fulfillment while serving as the vehicle of intimacy with God.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 111-13.

⁶⁸ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 114.

⁶⁹ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 120.

⁷⁰ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 120.

An assembly of prayer is mostly an act of faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the name of the divine Persons, laying hands upon people as a sign of prayer in the charismatic communities is also an act through which God grants his grace and, according to his will, the desired favors. The Lord intervenes in the community of faith so that people may be granted a manifest support of his presence and action. In their spiritual activities, freedom is freely given to prayer in tongues. Charismatics believe in the teaching of Saint Paul who said: “One who speaks in tongues speaks not to men but to God” (1 Cor 14:2). According to O’Connor, the Holy Spirit is the “principal author of the given prayer”⁷¹ because “we do not know how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Rom 8:26).

As the Spirit edifies, governs, and vivifies the Church, thus charismatic experience is also the living foundation of the New Communities. Members of charismatic associations are characterized by life in the Spirit. Indeed, prayer meetings or retreats are part of the dynamic through which participants rest in the Spirit. Being baptized in the Spirit is a special experience of New Communities and other charismatic associations or prayer groups. O’Connor describes baptism in the Spirit as an “interior experience of the power of the Holy Spirit filling and transforming”⁷² in the lives of people who have this experience. This deep experience of being baptized in the Spirit clearly expresses that all communities or associations involved in such transformative experiences, participate in the renewal of the lives of Christians and in the whole Church. However, a question posed to the Church as a result of the phenomenon of these New Communities remains: How has the local Catholic Church organized itself to integrate New Communities into the common pastoral activity of dioceses and archdioceses as well as local parishes?

⁷¹ O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 125.

⁷² O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 131.

The Church adjusts itself in organizing some structural aspects in which New Communities are officially recognized. In his function of regulating and accompanying Charismatic groups of leaders, Cardinal Suenens affirmed that believers who pray are the concrete existence of the Church whose very nature, is personal and communal. For Suenens, “Christianity is essentially communal,”⁷³ and for that reason, great efforts are made for the communitarian lives of parishes. He encouraged a real “integration of institution and charism at the parish level”⁷⁴ Cardinal Suenens helps us to understand that the vitality of the Church depends also on the integration of the New Communities through which love and faith are visible in parishes and dioceses.

In the same vein, the institutional Catholic Church created a service that can coordinate New Communities from every diocese in the world. At the international level, they are all united in the CHARIS association. Each leader or founder of a New Community is invited to register his/her community in the list of CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service) which is a unique service for all of the expressions of the Charismatic Renewal in encouraging cooperation among New Communities.⁷⁵

New Communities and their works contribute to the spiritual life of their members because they give to their members a profound sense of strength and assurance for spiritual combat. Even though living the charismatic grace is a permanent challenge,⁷⁶ New Communities focus on the intimate union with God through which this experience is daily renewed. With their members, charismatic associations work for the spreading of faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Most of the time, this saving work of charismatics is inscribed in the exercise of charisms. Growing interest in the renewal experience is also what brings consolation to the beneficiaries of these works. In the

⁷³ Léon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 137.142.

⁷⁴ Suenens, *A New Pentecost?*, 150.

⁷⁵ See CHARIS web site, <https://www.charis.international/fr/communautes/>

⁷⁶ O'Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 136.

Ivorian and Beninese local Church in particular, works of deliverance, healing, spiritual liberation, intercession, and evangelization point out that in the charismatic groups or associations, members are showered with the different gifts of the Spirit. Charismatics express a real commitment with and for the people of God. New communities are perceived as integrated in the life of the local Churches. Charismatics are involved in the pastoral life of the dioceses beside priests who recognize the great contribution of making the Church a sacred place where the Spirit is at work.

The local Churches of Benin and Ivory Coast recognize the great contribution of charismatic leaders with their New Communities and other charismatic prayer groups. Their credibility and enthusiasm attract Christians to return to the Catholic Church. The vibrancy of their commitment helps many Christians to be devoted singularly to Jesus through the Holy Spirit which supports the people in refraining from living in multiple religious systems simultaneously. Even if syncretism or multiple religious belonging remains a challenge for both Ivorian and Beninese local churches, many believers continue to experience the saving action of God, the Holy Spirit through their charismatic commitment.

II. 4 The New Communities and Charismatic Associations, and the Forgetfulness of the Spirit

In the New Communities or charismatic prayer groups, the appropriation of charisms and the works of the Holy Spirit occupy a great place. Faith in Jesus finds its expression in the charismatic experience. In this condition, it seems that the Person of the Holy Spirit is well-known through its different gifts. Familiarity with the deeds of the Holy Spirit in daily life is mostly dependent on the success of charismatics at work. In fact, charismatics are designated as those who “possess” the gifts of the Spirit. How can one talk about the forgetfulness or the neglectfulness of the Spirit in charismatics lives, if it is true that they “possess” the gifts of the Spirit?

It is paradoxical to say that the Spirit is neglected or forgotten by charismatics. That shows evidence that one does not know how charismatics experience the deeds of the Spirit in themselves and through their apostolic activities. However, it is important to look closely at the weaknesses of the New Communities and charismatic groups. Even though their spiritual experience sheds light on their affinity with the Spirit and his wondrous actions, charismatic groups of prayer and some associations are subjected to criticism. Those critics raise doubts about their familiarity with the Spirit. Often there is an element of personal promotion due to the fact that members “possess” charisms of the Spirit. For the purposes of this study, the relevance of these criticisms lies in the refusal to respond to the call for “mutual relationship”⁷⁷ in which the Spirit is at work and grants his people such gifts. This can be understood as a form of forgetfulness of the Spirit because mutual relationship is the true calling, not personal promotion.

Moreover, charismatics sometimes present themselves to others as if they were super-men or super-women. By doing so, they forget to conform themselves to the mutual relationship that the Spirit establishes with each of them. Mutual relationships for which the Spirit shows its wondrous deeds has as its goal the realization of human salvation through the promotion of life in all its forms. Ignorance of the salvific action of the Spirit and the positioning of oneself above others is a form of forgetfulness of the Spirit. In addition, the perception that one has of the Holy Gift, implies a life of donation for people who are baptized in the Spirit. There is also a neglectfulness of the Spirit when this life of donation is substituted by one’s personal promotion. The Holy Gift makes a charismatic “a strong person” in accordance with Christian life and practice.

In the Ivorian Catholic local Church, local clergy and Christian families have made complaints against New Communities and charismatic groups of prayer. The recent report of Father Abékan,

⁷⁷ Emmanuel Durand, *La périchorèse des Personnes divines: Immanence mutuelle, Réciprocité et communion*. (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 334. The author explains the mutual relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

the chaplain of the Charismatic Renewal in Ivory Coast, showed that his fellow priests complained of deviations in the New Communities. Father Abékan explained that, during meetings with priests, the activities of New Communities were called into question. One of the pioneers of the Charismatic Renewal in Ivory Coast asked him to switch off the fire that he lit. Many of the charismatic leaders are his spiritual sons, since this priest is close to the New Communities.⁷⁸ It seems as though there are many problems generated by New Communities. There is a loss of any positive point of view about works of consolation that charismatic associations and groups bring to the Church. The problem itself tends to undermine the power of the Charismatic Renewal in the Church. Before talking about the complaint itself, one can say that there is also a forgetfulness of the Spirit in this particular context of complaint because responsibility for the renewal in the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit who invites clergy and charismatic laypeople to collaboration. Can one really say “switch off the fire of the Spirit” because the resolution of such a problem is beyond any resolution? Too often, people focus more on human incapacity than divine capacity. This also suggests a form of neglectfulness of the power of the Spirit for whom everything is possible.

In addition, Msgr Boniface Ziri, bishop of Abengourou, a city in the Central-East region of Ivory Coast, in his message that marked the end of the pastoral year 2017-2018, and addressed to associations, movements, prayer groups, New Communities and their leaders, called for unity in the diversity of charisms. This message clearly expressed that the Church is aware of the challenges it faces. Part of his message said in substance that it is not because God chose you, provided you with his spiritual gifts, and made you a leader or founder of a community that you should see yourself as an extraterrestrial. He strongly recommended humility and docility in the New

⁷⁸ Lucie Sarr, *L'Église Ivoirienne face aux Dérives de Certaines Communautés Nouvelles*, 3 février 2017. <https://africa.la-croix.com/leglise-ivoirienne-face-aux-derives-de-certaines-communautés-nouvelles/>

Communities.⁷⁹ The bishop's exhortation highlights the fact that charismatics and founders are not in a reciprocal relationship with the Person of the Holy Spirit. It seems as though there are two opposite sides or poles: one for the charismatic granted with the gifts of the Spirit, and the other the Person of the Holy Spirit who is neglected in that relation.

Moreover, another priest said that campaigns of evangelization do not edify Christians in bringing them to adult faith. He pointed out the fact that people are in real dependence on one or another charismatic speaker. Some speakers are not always recommended by the Church even if they belong to the prayer groups or to the New Communities.⁸⁰ Even though the formation of lay charismatics is part of diocesan action plans, relationship by faith it is not always for freedom. Being dependent upon charismatic leaders does not have the same meaning as being under the impulse of the Spirit. What the Spirit does in the lives of charismatics is not similar to the relation between charismatic speakers and Christians. Being dependent on one or another speaker seems to be a condition that expresses a limit in the reciprocal self-giving with the Person of the Spirit and what the Spirit inspires as mutual relationships with others. A speaker's attitude can be interpreted as a form of control and of subordination of believers. This situation leads to the abuse of power that clergy must not tolerate or permit. When a charism does not serve the salvation of the people, it implies that such charismatics reveal their lack of real relationship with the Person of the Holy Spirit.

What the Spirit accomplishes with charismatic associations brings about unity and edification in the Church. Although New Communities are marked by valuable works and support of the Spirit who impels believers, members are limited in their relationship with the Holy Spirit. Mutuality

⁷⁹ Guy Aimé Eblotié, *En Côte d'Ivoire, les Communautés Nouvelles Appelées à l'Humilité*, 2 Juillet 2018. <https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-les-communautés-nouvelles-appelées-a-lhumilite/>

⁸⁰ Lucie Sarr, *Dans les Campagnes d'Évangélisation...* 19 Janvier 2017. <https://africa.la-croix.com/campagnes-devangelisation-orateurs-ne-toujours-recommandes-leglise/>

with the Person of the Spirit is lacking. Baptism in the Spirit does not necessarily mean a permanent relationship with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, forgetting the personal and communitarian relationship with the Holy Spirit brings insufficiency of pastoral action of the New Communities or charismatic prayer groups. Absence of mutuality with the Holy Spirit can lead one to focus on the gifts of the Spirit instead of living in accordance with presence of the Spirit. Which one is more valuable, the Spirit or its gifts? Focusing on the gifts of the Spirit points out the human interest of promoting oneself instead of promoting the living Spirit in us.

Furthermore, it is not surprising that one charismatic named Pacôme Marie Achija of the *Communauté Mère du Divin Amour (CMDA)* was suspended by Cardinal Jean-Pierre Kutwa, bishop of Abidjan, and later sacked by his community.⁸¹ He occupied the function of shepherd and led the ministry of evangelization and spiritual combat in the *Communauté Mère du Divin Amour (CMDA)*. He focused more on prophecy, promises of miraculous healing, of marriage and of prosperity. He participated in the Evangelical Assembly that took place in Johannesburg and asked that Pastor Alph Lukau to lay his hands on him. Shepherd Pacôme Achija fell down three times during the prayer.⁸² A Catholic priest reacted, as did other shepherds also. Reaction was essentially the impact of that scene on the lives of Christians, especially those who follow him. Others saw in shepherd Pacôme Achija's request a counter-productive act that discredited the whole Catholic Church because believers have more and more doubt about the power of pastors who refer to traditional practice for supernatural power. However, Pacôme Achija and his supporters saw only

⁸¹ Guy Aimé Ebloté, *En Côte d'Ivoire, le berger Pacôme Marie Achija exclu de la communauté mère du divin amour*, 23 mai 2019.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-le-berger-achija-pacome-marie-exclu-de-la-communaute-mere-du-divin-amour/>

⁸² Lucie Sarr, *En Côte d'Ivoire, polémique autour de l'imposition des mains d'un Pasteur Évangélique à un célèbre "berger" Catholique*, 24 janvier 2019.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-polemique-autour-de-limposition-des-mains-dun-pasteur-evangelique-a-un-celebre-berger-catholique/>

<https://youtu.be/ZASc2Nuq2DA?t=449>

a good example of ecumenism.⁸³ He also started to talk about his merits and his proximity with bishops who preach during meetings he organized before apologizing for himself. His community accused him of defiant behavior because he could not wait until his suspension would be removed.⁸⁴

This case was embarrassing for the Catholic clergy, believers, and other charismatic shepherds. The Evangelical pastor seems to be more controversial.⁸⁵ Days after, this pastor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was involved in a “fake resurrection.”⁸⁶ Ecumenism is welcome in the Catholic Church but cannot justify shepherd Pacôme’s action because it is more important for him as a member of a community to talk of his intention first with his bishop. If this impulse of doing such a thing came from the Spirit, he would not have been able to react without humility, and with impatience in showing his merits. Pacôme Achija decided to leave the Roman Catholic Church for the Orthodox Church because many others who work with him are starved with the long suspension of his apostolic activity.⁸⁷ The main question is why did he ask for the prayer in the Evangelical Assembly? Questions of rivalry and apostolic efficacy seem to have led his path to that Evangelical Assembly of prayer. A video on YouTube evokes these aspects in his exchange with pastor Alph Lukau.⁸⁸ Shepherd Pacôme’s action seems to show that the Spirit can be received powerfully through Alph Lukau’s prophecy and prayer. One can see here the

⁸³ Lucie Sarr, *En Côte d’Ivoire, polémique autour de l’imposition des mains d’un Pasteur Évangélique à un célèbre “berger” Catholique*, 24 janvier 2019.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-polemique-autour-de-limposition-des-mains-dun-pasteur-evangelique-a-un-celebre-berger-catholique/>

⁸⁴ Lucie Sarr, Guy Aimé Eblotié, *Le cardinal Jean-Pierre Kutwa suspend le “berger” Pacôme Marie Achija*, 04 février 2019. <https://africa.la-croix.com/le-cardinal-jean-pierre-kutwa-suspend-le-berger-pacome-marie-achija/>

⁸⁵ Guy Aimé Eblotié, *En Côte d’Ivoire, le berger Pacôme Marie Achija exclu de la communauté mère du divin amour*, <https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-le-berger-achija-pacome-marie-exclu-de-la-communaute-mere-du-divin-amour/>

⁸⁶ <https://ewn.co.za/Topic/Alph-Lukau>

⁸⁷ Guy Aimé Eblotié, *Côte d’Ivoire, le berger Achija Pacôme Marie quitte l’Église catholique romaine*, 3 septembre 2019. <https://africa.la-croix.com/en-cote-divoire-le-berger-achija-pacome-marie-quitte-leglise-catholique/>

⁸⁸ <https://youtu.be/ZASc2Nuq2DA?t=449>

supernatural conception that believers have about their shepherds. What is the part of his relationship with the Spirit himself? Without a doubt, shepherd Pacôme believes in the Holy Spirit and its gifts, but being granted with the gifts of the Holy Spirit also means for him to encounter a supernatural actor which Pastor Alph Lukau represents for him. How long has he been baptized in the Spirit and yet lived without the basic understanding of the role of the Spirit as expressed in the charismatic's spirituality?

Finally, discernment that is the personal gift of the Spirit was not part of Pacôme's decision to become a "follower" of a controverted pastor in defiance of his community and the local Church. For us, it is pertinent to take seriously Margaret Eletta Guider's questions about spiritual charisms in the life of charismatic leaders. She says: "What truly has been the action of the Spirit in their lives? And what of their commitments – ecclesiastical, social, and political – have been the products, not of the Spirit's action, but rather of their own desires, design, and self-interest?"⁸⁹ Falling down three times sheds doubt on shepherd Pacôme's experience of being baptized in the Spirit or even his whole experience with the Holy Gift. Who is in power here? The Holy Spirit or the "spirit" resting on the pastor involved in the "fake resurrection"? Pacôme Achija's relationship with the Holy Spirit is marked not only by the neglect of the Spirit, but by lack of knowledge of charismatic's spirituality, and the role of the Spirit. Pacôme Achija was not in a good spiritual condition to make a clear discernment. It is discernment that maintains believers in relationship with the Spirit for the reason that distinction can be made between his own desires, design, and self-interest and the will of God, the Holy Spirit. For André Brouillette, true discernment leads to

⁸⁹ Margaret Guider, "Spiritual Charisms in the World Church." *The Holy Spirit: Setting the World on Fire*. Edited by Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid. (New York: Paulist Press, 2017), 138.

peace and intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Discernment involves paying close attention of the work of the Spirit in us and through us.⁹⁰

These cases clearly illustrate the challenges and difficulties faced by charismatics as they endeavor to live in relationship with the Spirit, the supreme and supernatural Gift.

Conclusion

The Spirit of renewal in the Church is a personal and deep relationship of individuals with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit himself impels those who have been baptized in the Spirit to share their own experience of faith. The Holy Gift revealed himself as the first actor who brings into existence charismatic prayer groups and New Communities as well. Catholic charismatics in a close relationship with God show the valuable deeds of the Holy Spirit. Being granted many gifts of the Holy Spirit, as in the example of Jean Pliya, requires a profound humility in exercising the charisms of the Spirit. This humility helps one to grow in a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, and to see in faith how the Spirit shapes charismatic lives in order to be given over totally to the mission of the Church.

However, many shepherds of prayer groups or of New Communities face a range of difficulties that make a real and true relationship with the Spirit impossible. The Spirit is neglected or forgotten. The exercise of charisms of enthusiasm seems to be the actor of the work of the Spirit instead of the Spirit. Questions of faith remain for those who are not in a process of a true relationship with the Spirit. How then can charismatics live their mutual relationship with the Holy Gift without neglecting or forgetting the Spirit in the exercise of charisms?

⁹⁰ André Brouillette, "Discerning the Action of God." *The Holy Spirit: Setting the World on Fire*. Edited by Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid. (New York: Paulist Press, 2017), 113-114.116.

Chapter III: The Gift of the Holy Spirit and the Fulfillment of Human Beings

Introduction

In light of God's Trinitarian mission, mutuality in God is more desirable relational attitude that can inspired Christ's followers, and precisely charismatics in their close relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Gift impels charismatics to live in a relationship of mutuality with God and others. How can mutuality with God, through the Holy Spirit affect the lives of charismatics'? How can mutuality with both Christ and the Holy Spirit bring about a life of giving in the Charismatic experience? The paradox of the forgetfulness of the Spirit is a limitation in Christians experience. As a result, for believers, the process of experiencing fulfillment, understood as having abundant life in God (Jn 10:10), is affected. In response to the questions posed above, the first part of this third and final chapter explores the meaning and implications of living in the image and likeness of the Holy Spirit. The second part examines mutuality with the Holy Gift in terms of relationships of mutuality with others. Lastly, the concluding part of the chapter emphasizes the important need for charismatics to cultivate and sustain a relationship of mutuality with God through the Holy Spirit so as to experience fulfillment in the Spirit.

III. 1 Living in the Image and Likeness of the Holy Spirit

Understanding the significance of what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26) is key to living fully in a relationship of mutuality with God. Made in the image of God, as male and female, both women and men participate in the mission of being God's representatives on earth.¹ For Richard Clifford, a common explanation given to the term *imago*

¹ Pauline Viviano, "Genesis," in Dianne Bergant, and Robert Karris, eds. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Based on the New American Bible with Revised New Testament*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 40.

Dei focuses on “the task of ruling” all created elements on earth.² However, another and perhaps more important interpretation focuses on woman and man “resembling God substantially” through human intellectual functions.³ Human intellectual functions are made possible by the spiritual breath of God that gives life, thereby enabling human beings to think and act according to God’s will. To affirm that humankind is created in the image and likeness of God gives credence to the deep connection that exists between humanity and God through his Spirit.

How can living fully conscious of one’s creation in the image and likeness of God be the result of the transformative Gift? The dynamic Gift impels charismatics to become partners with God in this world. This partnership is inscribed in humanity’s substantial resemblance to God. Through the Spirit, it is possible for Christians and charismatics to move beyond any limitation that threatens their human dignity as *imago Dei*. Being created in the image and likeness of the Holy Gift determines not only how charismatics or Christians are endowed with the gift of the Spirit, but also the deep connection with the Holy Spirit that brings about the effective presence and action of God within us and in the midst of our world. Partnership with God, especially for charismatic women who are often undervalued and subordinated in society, provides a powerful sense of strength for commitment and perseverance, both within the Church and in the broader society. This particular aspect of women’s commitment will be explored in the context of the fulfillment of Christians in God.

Being in the image and likeness of God through the saving work of the Spirit can express the fulfillment of Christians in God by means of the grace of accepting of God’s will that leads to conversion. Vladimir Lossky captures the sense of this process known as *theosis* in a quotation he

² Richard Clifford, “Genesis,” in Enrique Aguillar Chui, Richard Clifford, Carol Dempsey, Eileen Schuller, Thomas Stegman, and Ronald Witherup, *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*. (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2018), 16.17.

³ Clifford, “Genesis,” 16.17.

attributes to Saint Maximus the Confessor: “Created beings will become by grace what God is by nature.”⁴ The fulfillment of human beings is to become, by the grace of the Holy Gift, the effective image and likeness of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The process of fulfillment in God is a process of real adhesion to Christ and the Holy Spirit which is a real elevation of human beings as partners of God. The lack of adherence to the will of God brings about, specifically in charismatic commitments, the forgetting of the Spirit.

The saving action of God in the context of the neglectfulness of the Spirit is affected through the commitments of charismatics. How is the neglected or forgotten Spirit at work in the lives of charismatics when the Holy Gift is misunderstood? The neglected Spirit reminds us of the same words that Jesus addressed to his disciples: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The services and self-giving lives of charismatics are made possible through the outpouring of the Spirit. One cannot say that baptism in the Spirit remains an indelible mark in the lives of charismatics unless it is accompanied by faithfulness to Christ and the Holy Spirit. How can charismatics understand the faithfulness to the Spirit in their lives when they spend a very long time in prayer without performing good works and miracles in people’s lives? The case study of Shepherd Pacôme Achija showed that he was not prepared to consider the intimate work of the Spirit in him. Focusing on the gifts of the Spirit leads to forgetting the saving work of the Spirit in the personal life of individuals.

Are the works of the Spirit invisible in the individual experience of forgetfulness of the Spirit?

People created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26) have historically proven their inability

⁴ Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*. (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 215. Actually the quotation has its origin in the writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who says theosis or deification is “becoming by grace what God is by nature” (*De Incarnatione*, I). However, Maximus the Confessor has several similar statements as found in the *Philokalia* of Maximus the Confessor, edited by G.E.H. Palmer. Vol. 2. London: Faber and Faber, 1981. See:

<https://archive.org/stream/Philokalia-TheCompleteText/Philokalia-Complete-Text#page/n423/mode/2up>

to live in accord with God's intentions. The Incarnation of the Word in Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit show to the whole of humanity that God shares the human condition, and makes his home in the lives of human beings through the indwelling Spirit (Jn 1:14). Living in us, God makes Godself near and embraces human nature. This supposes that human nature is always affected by its environment, and as result of that, the process of fulfillment is also affected. This makes the work of the Holy Spirit in us almost invisible even when the faithful Spirit remains intimately close in one's life.

Moreover, even if the Holy Gift lives in communion with charismatics, the lack of response to the mutual Gift is related to personal promotion of charismatics, their lack of docility to the Spirit, their lack of humility, and their misunderstanding of the saving work of the Spirit within them. The Holy Spirit remains Gift in spite of the hardness of a human heart that remains closed to God. Humans are not always aware of the refusal to be opened to God's grace. One can observe that persecutions or desires for other things, at the expense of the Word of God, render the growth and the fulfillment of human nature difficult or almost impossible.

Nevertheless, the Holy Gift is a "Life-Gift" that incorporates believers into the communal life of the Persons of the Trinity. As a Life-Gift, the Spirit reminds us that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity is the author of life. The power of the Holy Gift becomes the thing to be most desired since the experience of the first disciples and the early Christians at Pentecost when the promise of Jesus was fulfilled. People need to experience the presence of the Holy Gift in their daily lives in order to overcome forces of evil, and in order to balance their desires for other things and to grow in faith. In this way, the Holy Gift is a Life-Gift that produces faith in the Church and protects the life of the faithful by creating unity among Christians. The expression of "Life-Gift" in the lives of Christians opposes any inclination to death or to any option

that might constitute a closure to the reciprocal Gift of Life. Although death is a component in the lives of human beings on earth, it is not the end of our life in God. Rather, it is the means through which we enter into the mystery of sharing in the Resurrection with Christ (2Tm 2:11; Rom 6:8).

In addition, one of the implications of the process of being created in the image and in the likeness of the Holy Spirit is to become another Christ. It is not an exterior resemblance, but rather an interior likeness, made visible through believers' works. These works give testimony to the communal relationship with the First-Born, Jesus Christ.⁵ By faith in Jesus, the process of human fulfillment is an embodied process of Christian engagement. In fact, Christians conform their lives to the likeness of Jesus Christ the First-Born of many other brothers and sisters. Through faith in Christ, believers become children of God. This means that the brothers and sisters of Christ are incorporated into the communal life of the Triune God. The new life of Christians is also a gift of God whose mysterious presence in us has become a reality. Therefore, becoming another Christ understood as configuration to Christ involves the reception of the promise Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit and openness to the Spirit's work in us.

Another implication of being created in the image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit is related to self-gift as a result of the reception of the Holy Gift. The image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit takes as its focus the self-gift of the believers. "This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself."⁶ Living as a gift for God and for others, is the result of the openness to the Holy Gift. This openness to the Holy Spirit informs us and also enables us become like Him: a gift in His image and likeness. The implication of *being given* points to the radical action of the self-gift in the following of Christ. As Kupczak reminds us, by quoting John Paul II, the Holy Spirit is

⁵ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 141.

⁶ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 141.

a “complete” and “radical” Gift. The Christians’ gift of their lives integrates space and time as Christ did. The gift of their lives also continues to face the daily reality of pain, of temptation, of current events, with the radical option of being given in the image and the likeness of the Holy Gift.

Furthermore, the perfection of love is the direct implication of being given in the image and the likeness of the Holy Gift. According to Kupczak, being in the image of God points out “the living relationship and bond of love between God and [human beings].”⁷ Indeed, if, in Jesus, the love of God reaches in us its perfection, it is because of the work of the Holy Gift, the “Person-Love.”⁸ The Holy Gift leads Christians to become gift because, in reality, they experience the true love of God. Christians, whose lives are a gift in the image and the likeness of the Holy Spirit, follow the law of love that Christ taught to the disciples and which the Holy Gift reminds us of. The love of God and the love of neighbor fulfill in human beings the will of the Triune God.

As the logic of gift is to respond to a gift with a gift,⁹ Christians in living a life of communion are in the dynamic process of self-giving for the life of others, and the Church. The sign of unity between human beings is our faith in Jesus Christ. Christians learn from their relationship to the Holy Gift “the law of gift, which creates the communion of persons.”¹⁰ In communion with God, Christians learn to live as children of God and also as partners of God. Our status as children and partners of God is the concrete sign through which communion with God exalts us as real images and likenesses of the Holy Gift.

⁷ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 165.

⁸ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 147.

⁹ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 148.

¹⁰ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 149.

III. 2 Mutuality with the Holy Gift in Relationship with Others

Mutuality with the Holy Gift implies a deep communion with the author of baptism in the Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Risen Christ strengthened his disciples and prepared them to receive and act according to the Spirit. The Risen Christ is the Lord of the whole Church, and the Eucharistic celebration is his own gift to the Church. How does the Eucharist as gift make possible the gift of oneself through the mutual relation with the Spirit? In the sense of a life of giving, it is important to explore the link between the risen body of Christ and its giving in the Eucharist, and the impact of both Christ and the Holy Spirit on the lives of Christians.

III.2.1 Gift as Empowering the following of the Risen Christ through Discipleship

The resurrection is a gift through God's Spirit. The life of the Risen Jesus Christ is a gift of God. Rising from the dead, Jesus overcomes the powers of darkness. Put to death, Christ is still alive. The risen body of Christ is a transformed and incorruptible body.¹¹ Christ's body was restored and extended to perfection. The risen body of Christ is a restoration of the body.¹² Jesus also restores our daily lives from the fear of death, and all current events that steer us toward death. Jesus shows our new relationship in communion with God through his risen body.

The Risen Christ appeared to his disciples while the doors were locked (Jn 20:19.26). He asked them to feel his wounds in His hands (Jn 20:20.27). The risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ is both palpable and spiritual because of his two natures: human and divine. The Risen Jesus was able to appear anywhere and at any time to meet His disciples. The risen body of Christ can communicate with others. The Risen Christ spoke with some of his disciples and followers. He is able to move as the Spirit does. Jesus entered the house while the door and windows were closed. Jesus moves

¹¹ Caputo, "Bodies Still Unrisen, Events Still Unsaid": In Chris Boesel, and Catherine Keller, *Apophatic Bodies: Negative theology, Incarnation, Relationality*, (New York: Fordham UP, 2009), 103.

¹² Caputo, *Bodies Still Unrisen, Events Still Unsaid*, 46.

as the Spirit who blows where He will. The risen body of Christ is in communion of life with the Holy Gift.

For Caputo, the risen body rises above any kind of limitation. It is also a transformed body, freed from flesh and death.¹³ Paul referred to the risen body of Christ as the “Firstborn” in whom Christians put their faith (Col 1:18). The risen body of Christ opens the way of faith, and makes possible what is impossible, enlightens our bodies “to live as resurrected” on earth while awaiting full transformation in heaven. If we believe that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we also believe that the resurrected One lives in us in communion with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the absolute transformation of life is a reality in Christian faith precisely because we are transformed from the inside by the power of both Christ and the Spirit. Our bodies appear more connected to the risen body of Christ through the Holy Gift.

The risen body of Christ as Gift is a direct consequence of living His life as a gift in communion with His Father in their Spirit of love, and with other human beings. Talking about the risen body of Christ in his personal identity as God the Son, he reveals himself as Gift for his disciples in the action of breaking bread in His memory. For Congar, the “Spirit arouses faith” in Jesus who becomes Eucharist for his disciples.¹⁴ The Eucharist is the real presence of the risen body of Christ, through which His giving reaches perfection. Indeed, raised from the dead, Christ dies no more (Rom 6:9).

The risen body of Christ is connected to his public life with his disciples. Saying the blessing with five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus fed a great number of people (Matt 14:16-21). This is the episode of the multiplication of bread. This event in the life of Jesus, and his invitation to trust in him, help us to understand that He wanted to do more than just multiply bread and fish. In

¹³ Caputo, *Bodies Still Unrisen, Events Still Unsaid*, 97.

¹⁴ Yves Congar, *La Parole et le Souffle*, (Paris: Desclée, 1984), 80.

Mark's gospel, the desire of Christ appears clearly: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). In this way, the risen body of Christ accomplishes His life as a "ransom" for many through the Eucharist. The risen body of Christ is a Gift for human beings.

As the Holy Spirit and the Risen Christ share the same mission, the Holy Gift realizes the unity of the disciples around the resurrected Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit also accomplishes a radical transformation in the lives of the disciples by making them become the true witnesses of the salvific work of Christ. For Congar, The Holy Spirit reveals himself as a tenet of mission and of apostolic testimony.¹⁵ This conception was also mentioned by Annie Jaubert, who observes that the founder Spirit labored for the construction of the Church, and led the Church into its mission.¹⁶ With the Pentecostal Gift, the disciples were sent out on mission into the world. Thus, evangelization started with the power of the Holy Gift. The Holy Spirit inspires and supports the testimony of the disciples. The Spirit also makes firm these new lives of faith, and gives confidence to Christian communities where individuals were persecuted.¹⁷

Indeed, Peter was one of the first Apostles who was empowered by the work of the Holy Spirit. With his companion John at the portico of Solomon, he said to the lame man who asked for alms: "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Moreover, the Holy Spirit taught Peter to open the way of grace to those who were not members of Jewish families (Acts 10). The same Spirit gave him evidence of His works in the life of Cornelius and also the ways in which the Holy Gift fell upon all of those gathered around Peter (Acts 10:44-46). This experience helped the Apostles to decide that only

¹⁵ Congar, Vol. 2, 24. For better meaning, use French version on page 37.

¹⁶ Annie Jaubert, « L'esprit Saint dans l'Ancient Testament », in Henri Cazelles, Annie Jaubert, Francois Rouleau. *Dieu révélé dans l'Esprit*. (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 29.

¹⁷ Jaubert, *L'esprit Saint dans l'Ancient Testament*, 29.

baptism in the name of Jesus would enable Gentiles to be members of the Christian family (Acts 10:44-49).

In addition, the Holy Spirit led Barnabas and Paul during their mission (Acts 11:22-26). As the Holy Gift was active in their lives, they offered their lives as a gift to God and to their new communities. The testimony that they received from the Holy Gift empowered all the members of their community in Antioch. It is in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). The works of the Holy Gift spread throughout all of the members of the Christian communities.

When one is moved by the Spirit, all are affected by the work of the same Spirit. In reality, praying for the outpouring of the Spirit upon others presupposes a life lived in accordance with the Holy Gift. Indeed, sharing the life of the Holy Spirit helps us to become a gift for God and for others. Becoming configured to Christ, people are able to affect other lives through the works of the Holy Gift. The action of the reciprocal gift leads to empowering of the disciples of Christ to do what their Master does.

A life given, in following Christ, points out people's radical transformation through the works of the Holy Gift. The Spirit transforms and guides people for the service of God and neighbor. The Apostles became, by the works of the Spirit of God, true witnesses of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. Their lives were shaped in the image and the likeness of the Holy Gift who also brought about unity in the mission of salvation. This mission is intimately linked with the renewal of Christians through the Gift that empowers all people to be given through Christ in the Eucharist. What then are the teachings of Jesus Christ that can help charismatics to live in mutual relationship with the Holy Spirit?

III.2.2 The Mutuality of Charismatics with the Holy Spirit

The glorious deeds of charismatics are, at first, the work of the Spirit. Charismatics can be endowed with the gifts of the Spirit, and use them with efficacy, but they may forget that that this power to heal or to perform good works and miracles belongs to God. The better the work of charismatics, the better the mutual relationship with the Spirit who cleanses and sanctifies the lives of the members of New Communities so that their lives may positively impact their surroundings. Jesus Christ offers a constant reminder to charismatics: “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). A permanent and true relationship with the Holy Spirit brings about efficaciousness in the commitments of charismatics. The Holy Spirit’s proper characteristic is known as Gift and “Giver of life” and makes Christ the giver of the Spirit.¹⁸

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is a Gift that transforms us in order that we may experience the life of Christ and his mission. Working in the lives of human beings, the Holy Spirit transforms all hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (Ezek 36:26-27). Evidently, the process is slow and long, but in the context of the outpouring of the Holy Gift, those who receive it, also receive the promise of new life that the Spirit initiates in advance. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon people who are baptized reminds us that this descent of the Spirit makes room for an intimate encounter with the Person of the Holy Spirit. It is a progressive discovering of what the Holy Gift does and of the call for a relationship of mutuality. Interest in the outpouring of the Spirit, and the rhythm of charismatic prayer, contributes to that mutual relationship. A life of transformation occurs by living out a mutual relationship with the Holy Gift.

¹⁸ François-Xavier Durrwell, *L'Esprit Saint de Dieu*. (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 68.

Love is the central experience of baptism in the Spirit. The love that characterizes the Holy Trinity becomes, through the action of the Holy Spirit a reality in the service of relational mutuality. The outpouring of the Spirit is an important process in making manifest the relationship of the Spirit with the person who receives the Holy Gift. This relationship as presented in the context of the lives of charismatics is guided by the direction that the Spirit gives in regard to individual freedom. The one who leads is the Spirit, and those who are led provide proof of docility to the Holy Gift. The Spirit guides charismatics who are open, obedient, capable of listening and docile.¹⁹ The social relationships of charismatics are dependent upon the depth of relationship that they have with the Holy Gift. For instance, the Spirit brings freedom to those who live in close relationship with Him and invites them in return to show freedom in their own lives and in relationship with others and God. As we can observe in the Gospels, specifically in the Garden of Gethsemane, the experience of Christ and his disciples gives evidence of the lack of reciprocity in the lives of the disciples despite their close relationship with Jesus (Mt 26:36-46.69-75). Often, charismatics do not have any consciousness of the importance of relationship from subject to subject even when they are aware of the actions of the Spirit that are perceptible in their effects.²⁰ Therefore, the warning message of Christ is a call for the internal renewal of his followers, a credible basis on which charisms can unfold for a greater and stronger union with the Holy Spirit. It is important to remain attentive to the words of Jesus: “On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers’” (Mt 7:22-23). Those who will be rejected, said Jesus, were clearly lacking in charity,

¹⁹ O'Connor, *Le Renouveau Charismatique: Origines et perspectives*, 66.

²⁰ O'Connor, *Le Renouveau Charismatique: Origines et perspectives*, 66.

although they were charismatics enough working with the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit is the eschatological promise that sows love in human hearts and works for justice.

According to Karl Rahner, the Spirit is a Gift received and welcomed in love.²¹ The effects of the Spirit need to be understood through an internal conformity with the character of the Holy Spirit as well as a configuration to Christ in a union that revealed in the love of the divine Persons. In his intimate life, God is love.²² God's communication to human beings is marked by the gift of love. For Kupczak, the Spirit reveals himself through an intimate relationship with people striving for holiness, as both Gift and Love or "Love-Gift."²³ In this communication, the Spirit invites each charismatic into a mutual relationship and into a new identity that is transformative. Through love, and the gift of their very selves, charismatics identify themselves, as do all disciples of Jesus, with the Person of Jesus Christ. Love also opens up the possibility of an experience of "free-Gift."²⁴ With the Spirit, freedom is at first a personal experience. Each charismatic is to be a free subject in relationship with the Holy Gift. Saint Paul explains this process through our affiliation to the Father. The Spirit gives to us the consciousness of sons and daughters, and of persons freed through the action of Jesus (Rom 8:15-21). In the context of mutuality, this freedom liberates in order that Christians may experience the love of the divine Persons with and through others. But how, we might ask, can this experience of love through the Holy Spirit lead to mutual relationship with God and others in the context of West Africa?

²¹ Rahner, *Dieu Trinité: Fondement transcendant de l'histoire du salut*. (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 115. See also François-Marie Humann, *La relation de l'Esprit Saint au Christ*, 354.

²² Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 114.

²³ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 114.

²⁴ Kupczak, *Gift and Communion: John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 116.

III.2.3 Mutual Relationship with God and Others for the Life of the Local Church in West Africa

In the context of the New Communities in West Africa, fraternal love is nourished by personal intimacy with the Holy Spirit. However, mutual fraternity is not immediately granted with the outpouring of the Spirit. The charismatic experience of fraternal love points out, the deeds of the Spirit and a charismatic's deep mutuality with the Holy Gift. In fact, if the outpouring of the Spirit is not a guarantee of the possibility of mutual fraternity, such mutuality could not be promoted in a context where charismatics experience the neglect or the forgetfulness of the Spirit. The works of the Holy Gift are not the only sources of inspiration for charismatics. They must also look to the Person of the Spirit and His relationship with the Father and the Son. Giving and loving characterize the Spirit in the Trinity. If the Spirit makes Christ the Eucharist, the same Spirit makes his disciples people who give themselves for the life of the world, through the Eucharist they have received that the communion of humanity with God might be complete. Members of New Communities, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can find their full realization in the forms of fraternal life that these communities establish in their daily interactions. It is the Holy Gift that perfects in them their knowledge of the love of Christ. The interplay of fraternal action that is inspired by the mutuality of the divine Persons opens the way to understanding and living out communion with God and others.

The renewal of the local Churches of Benin and Ivory Coast that is understood as a part of the mission and activities of the New Communities, gives evidence of a new style and a new form of evangelization that considers the context and the problems and challenges that need to be faced, such as the movement of huge numbers of Catholics moving into Evangelical Churches, significant economic and political crises, and their social consequences.

However, viewed in the context of charismatics who forget the Spirit, what are the consequences of this forgetting for individuals, for New Communities to which they belong and for the local Church? Forgetting the Spirit is an existential paradox for both charismatics and the Church. What we know about the deeds of the Spirit is that they are done for the benefit of the whole Church. The Spirit understands everything, knows everything, gives life, inspires and sanctifies human beings, and graces them with freedoms.

However, despite the workings of the Spirit, local Churches in West Africa suffer a great deal from division, many of which are related to accusations that are brought forth by charismatics under the guise of “revelations.” How can people be endowed with the gift of vision, yet fail to remember and be attentive to the Spirit? If one of the most desirable acts that a charismatic can do is to help others transform their lives with the grace of the Spirit, such acts must take the form of showing others the love of God that leads to conversion, not humiliating public accusations of witchcraft. Forgetting the Spirit who is at work in the conversion of every sinner is a failure on the part of charismatics who also neglect to follow the example of Jesus in the Gospels (Mt 21:31; Lk 15:2; Jn 4:1-42; Jn 8:1-11). Remembering the love that the divine Persons inspire in us, how can this love of the Triune God help charismatics to fulfill their pastoral mission in ways that truly reflect their own relationship of mutuality with the Spirit that is manifested in loving others?

III. 3 The Gift of the Holy Spirit and the Fulfillment of Human Beings

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the verb *fulfil* is related to something expected, hoped or promised. Similarly, the notion of *fulfillment* for human beings is related to an experience of self-realization or achievement. In the context of this thesis, the fulfillment of human beings suggests finding one’s completion and fullness of life in God through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Gift, the process of fulfillment of believers follows the growth of faith, the transformation of

Christians that are rooted in Christ. The fulfillment of Christians is what Jesus describes as life in abundance when he says to the crowd: “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10b). Both Christ and the Holy Spirit actualize this promise of having life more abundantly. Indeed, this process of fulfillment grows with the intimate communion through the Eucharist and baptism in the Spirit. This is to say that the Eucharist and baptism in the Spirit provide charismatics with an experience of life in abundance.

First, fulfillment gives expression to the presence of God in the lives of human beings and to God’s action of establishing an intimate and living union with believers. With reference to the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, it is possible to think about the process of fulfillment of human nature as a divinely assumed nature, because of our communion with Christ and the Holy Spirit. The direct and immediate communion between God the Holy Spirit and believers implies their radical transformation. Believers move from hardened hearts to compassionate hearts (Ez 36:26-27), from the slavery of sin to the freedom of God’s children (Rom 8:2-17). This transformation involves the consciousness of a new life that cannot be attained through purely human means. The process of the fulfillment of human nature depends on the Spirit of God at work in the world. This aspect of the Faith-Gift implies a double movement of gift and its reception in believers’ lives. The gift of faith and its reception in the lives of believers starts the process of the fulfillment of human nature. Depending on the Holy Gift, this process follows the rhythm of humans’ faith to the extent that it is rooted in Christ.

Second, within Ivorian society, what are the elements that manifest the relationship of mutuality that charismatics must have with the Spirit in order to participate in the process of accomplishing God’s mission? The transformative Gift through the gift of faith which is shown plentifully, and particularly among charismatic women, is more visible in the Ivorian Church. This

new commitment of women in the West African Churches challenges existing patterns of behavior that do not provide opportunities for women to lead groups and associations, or the councils of parish. Indeed, there is a very limited number of women involved in the organization and development of West African society. There is also a massive number of women making up two-thirds of the membership of West African local Churches who are not invited take responsibility for leadership in the faith formation of other women as well as men. Though there are some charismatic women who are shepherds of different associations in parishes, and others who lead ministries of evangelization, or intercession and deliverance in the New Communities of women and men such as *Communauté Mère du Divin Amour*, *Sacerdoce Royal*, *Communauté Rosa Mystica*, *Service Catholique d'évangélisation*, their numbers are not equal to those of men. By reviving the gift of faith in the lives of both men and women, renewal spirituality is well-positioned to provide the Church with the presence of women shepherds who are full of strength and courage. The presence and leadership of women shepherds should not be underestimated in terms of their positive impact on clergy behavior as well as the support they give to the promotion of women in parish groups and charismatic associations.²⁵

Third, to what extent are these women leaders welcomed and received by other women and men in the Church or in society? Some issues are openly raised between women shepherds and other laypeople in Church, but most of these concerns are unspoken.²⁶ Is this because many parish priests give support to the idea of increasing women's commitment in the Church? There are some women leaders who are devoted to the Church, there are also charismatic women who make a real difference in reviving the faith of Christians and faith communities. Years ago, they created a

²⁵ Lucie Sarr, *Yvette Niamké, l'évangélisation au féminin*. 29 juin 2017.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/yvette-niamke-levangelisation-feminin/>

²⁶ Sarr, *Yvette Niamké, l'évangélisation au féminin*. 29 juin 2017.

<https://africa.la-croix.com/yvette-niamke-levangelisation-feminin/>

women's charismatic association to give strong and significant response to relational issues, and faith questions in the context of their formation, in order to impact positively the lives of believers.²⁷ The charismatic women's association called MICEF (*Ministère Catholique d'Évangélisation des Femmes*) is the first group dedicated to evangelization specially oriented toward women. Yvette Niamké is a National Shepherd who has led this group of charismatic women since 1991.²⁸

In addition, mutual relationships among men and women leaders and the promotion of women in positions of leadership have had a positive reception of in the Church of Ivory Coast. Charismatic women and men are invited to reflect the true image and likeness of God by becoming real partners with God. This promotion of humanity as partnership with God raises up, enriches and transforms human relationships, particularly the traditional partnerships between women and men. This experience of partnership with God carry over to other spheres to promote not only charismatic women, but all women in the church and in society, mindful of all they can contribute to the betterment and renewal of the Church and the society. As the edifying example of Shepherd Yvette Niamké teaches us, when partnership is promoted within families, it can become a living source of support for women and their commitment in both Church and society.²⁹

Moreover, as a dynamic and reciprocal Gift in the lives of human beings, the Holy Spirit constantly invites believers to become a gift in the image and the likeness of the Holy Gift. Receiving the Holy Spirit as the divine life in us increases our capacity to act in the same way with the Holy Spirit, in a communion of action with the Son and the Father. The capacity to act

²⁷ Sarr, *Yvette Niamké, l'évangélisation au féminin*.
<https://africa.la-croix.com/yvette-niamke-levangelisation-feminin/>

²⁸ Sarr, *Yvette Niamké, l'évangélisation au féminin*.
<https://africa.la-croix.com/yvette-niamke-levangelisation-feminin/>

²⁹ Lucie Sarr, *Yvette Niamké, l'évangélisation au féminin*.
<https://africa.la-croix.com/yvette-niamke-levangelisation-feminin/>

according to the Holy Gift presupposes that believers integrate the characteristic of a reciprocal gift as an exchange of life. Transforming Christian life as a gift to God and to others best expresses the process of the fulfillment of human nature. A life of giving implies a firm faith in the Triune God and a heightened consciousness of the importance human partnerships with God the Creator.

Furthermore, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and believers contributes to an understanding that “the receiving” makes “the giving” possible and vice versa. In daily life, Christians are able to give their lives to God and to others because they firmly believe that their entire lives are a gift. Any closure of the action of gift will lead to a concomitant closure to the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, refusing to act according to the reciprocal gift consists in opposing the action of God. Nonetheless, the process of human fulfillment involves responding to a gift with a gift. Responding to the Holy Gift does not only mean giving something else in return, but rather, it means giving one’s life in communion with God and others. This position resonates with Christ’s injunction “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Mt 16:24-26). The giving of one’s life increases our communion with God and with others. This communion has the power to support and sustain human life abundantly, and to bring it to the fulfillment of the Love-Gift for all eternity.

Conclusion

The term partnership with God has been revealed to us, in charismatic experience, as a respectful relationship, a communal experience with God, in which no one is neglected or forgotten, but rather encouraged. Partners act in consideration of others, and work together to accomplish the same goal. The call for charismatics to consider themselves as partners with God through the Holy Spirit is grounded in the life of Jesus and inspired by his words and actions during

his public ministry and after the resurrection. Hopefully, this chapter contributes in some way to an understanding of what it means to experience the grace of human fulfilment as we live our lives conscious of our creation in the image and likeness of the Triune God, especially the Gift.

General Conclusion

The Spirit of God has been revealed as a transformative Spirit since the promise of God to shape the lives of his people Israel. The people of Israel were waiting for the promise of a new life in God through the works of the Spirit as the prophet Ezekiel announced (36:26-27). This promise was fulfilled through Jesus, the Son of God and the sending of the Holy Spirit. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God, is an active God at work in the lives of human beings bringing about transformation, perfection, and salvation. As God, the Holy Spirit is the common Spirit of both the Father and the Son. From the beginning, the Spirit, understood as the breath of life was bestowed on humanity to be life giving and to perform God's will. Experiencing how the Spirit is given and received has led Christians to designate the Spirit with the proper name of Gift, that is fundamentally the main characteristic of the Holy Spirit, the transformative Gift.

The concept of *Gift* as a naming category of the Holy Spirit has been made theologically intelligible by considering both the sending and reception of the Spirit, and also by the fact that the Spirit is a gift of God the Father and the Son. The Spirit is given to humanity in order to accomplish God's mission. Gift as a theological naming category of the Holy Spirit allows us to think about the gift of the Spirit from which its many spiritual gifts derive. This approach helps to understand the behavior of charismatics that often is unrelated to their fundamental experience of being baptized in the Spirit.

In fact, being baptized in the Spirit is an experience of Christ's very love, which is intimately God's call for mutual love with Him and others. Some charismatics gave testimony to a closer commitment with the Spirit for the life of the Church. Others charismatics have shown interest in the different gifts of the Spirit, and as a result, they have been led to a certain forgetfulness of the Spirit. By pointing out the forgetting Spirit in the lives of charismatics, this study invites

charismatics and others Christians to a closer, intimate, and mutual relationship with the Holy Gift, since their first experience of the love of God through Jesus and the Spirit that gives testimony must flow from their baptism in the Spirit.

Living in mutual relationship with the Holy Spirit promotes life and love that contribute to our participation in the same mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Mutual life with the Holy Spirit is a Christian's response to the presence of the Spirit in one's life. That response implies attitudes of docility to the Spirit, humility in life, listening to the Spirit and others, freedom to serve and love, care for the Spirit Himself, and dialogue and discernment in a partnership with the Holy Spirit. This mutual relationship is intimate, spiritual, and also freely open to the love of others, in other words, to love as Jesus does. Living in the mutual relationship with the Holy Gift is similar to the life in the Spirit that shapes our living in the image and likeness of God, through the Holy Gift.

Being fulfilled in our creation in the image and likeness of God through the saving work of both Christ and the Spirit is both an existential and eschatological experience of salvation for Christians. The transformative Gift is a gift of fulfillment of oneself in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. Life in partnership with the Holy Gift and others is the result of that transformation. It is the impact of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers that makes possible such a transformation. This ongoing process of transformation also requires Christians to be in a relationship of mutuality with the Holy Spirit. Through such consciousness and the practice of such mutuality, we hopefully can avoid any kind of forgetfulness or neglectfulness of the Spirit.

This study, in light of charismatics commitment in the local Catholic Church of West Africa, gives support to the thesis of this research. Thus, mutual relationship with the Holy Spirit avoids any kind of forgotten spirit; it edifies and inspires Christians, and Charismatics in particular, to be people for others, and partners of God and others. In the process of becoming partners of God and

others, the Holy Gift impels Charismatics towards an experience of fulfillment in the image and the likeness of the Trinitarian mutuality, which is abundant life on earth and salvation in heaven. The relation of “communion and mutuality,”¹ and partnership in the Church as it is in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, becomes the way of promoting charismatic men and women in the West African local Catholic Church, and in the whole Roman Catholic Church as well.

¹ Elizabeth Groppe, "The Contribution of Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit." *Theological Studies* 62, no. 3 (2001), 475.

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