

+ Maria

**September 15, 2014 – Our Lady of Sorrows
Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit**

My dear Sisters in Christ and Our Lady of Mount Carmel - On this Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows we are offering the Votive Mass to the Holy Spirit in order to beseech the Holy Spirit to assist the capitulars as they fulfill their solemn and sacred duty to elect, before God, those Sisters whom they feel best in God's eyes, to serve as general superior and councilors for the Congregation. Let the minutes read that the Chapter of Affairs was begun in the summer with air conditioning and lasted so long that we are beginning the Chapter of Elections with sweaters on in the fall! Whatever the weather or season, we can rest assured that as God's beloved children, Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, will be with you, the capitulars, as well as the family of Carmel during these two special days.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son is always at work. Isaiah the prophet whom we heard read this morning, tells us that the Spirit of God will rest on God's servant, whom he will uphold – that is strengthen for his mission. However, there are many references to the Spirit in the Old Testament in the prophets and wisdom literature particularly. The spirit symbolized as wind, breath, water and fire, seems to have several duties. The Spirit is the creator spirit, present in Genesis, and whose traces can be seen in nature. The Spirit is a guiding spirit for Israel and a comforting spirit to those who are suffering for being faithful to God. The Spirit is a strengthening spirit that brings protection and gifts to those who will have a special role in Israel. The Spirit is in the prophets, and that Servant who will bring about at the right time, the Kingdom of God in its fullness. That Spirit is also a warring spirit that fills those whom God raises up to defend Israel from its enemies. The Holy Spirit is therefore, a creative spirit, a guiding spirit, a comforting spirit, a strengthening spirit, and a warring spirit. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God, the word of God at work in the world, providentially and lovingly bringing about the will of God for the welfare of His people.

The Spirit, St. Paul tells us today and moving to the New Testament, is contrary to the flesh. The Spirit is oriented to the good and the true, towards beauty and unity. The flesh indulges the passions and can be used by the evil one to turn men and women away from God and one another. The fruit of the flesh is death to the soul. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

That Spirit, finally, the gospel tells us, that creative spirit, strengthening, guiding and comforting spirit, that warring spirit, is all present in Jesus as we heard today from His own lips. The Spirit of Jesus brings healing and comfort. The Spirit of Jesus brings truth and freedom. The Spirit of Jesus defends us, and helps us to defend life and what is good and true without fear in our fight for God. The Spirit and the Father and the Son are one, always at work in our world. The Trinity lives in love and the outpouring of that love and life is the Holy Spirit for, as we say in the creed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life who proceeds from the Father and the Son." The Holy Spirit helps us to make the right judgment, good decisions in truth and love, a grace that the capitulars will need today and tomorrow, right judgment.

Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was creative in her who said yes to God in her soul and in her body. What she brought forth into our world was nothing less than the Lord Himself, so usable was she to God, and so docile to His Spirit. Our Mother in Carmel suffered because of her loving faithfulness to the will and word of God, yet the Spirit strengthened her in her suffering to remain steadfast at the foot of the cross – weeping in the flesh, believing in the spirit. At the foot of the Cross, could Mary remember those words of the Archangel Gabriel, "Fear not, for you have found favor with God?" We know that Mary, whom we invoke, will be praying with and in us today, that once again, God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. My sisters, fear not, for you to have found favor with God.

Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.
Avila-On-Hudson
September 15, 2014