

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Holy 'Ghost Writer'

By Ken Woodley

Think back, for a moment, to the best meal you've ever had in your life. Whether at a fine restaurant or cooked at home, with family at Christmas or over a campfire in the woods by a lake.

A meal that lives long in memory, and may even be one that you've enjoyed while surrounded by the coronavirus.

Okay, hold that thought as we listen to what Jesus has to say about the Holy Spirit in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John:

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

Of the three figures of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the most difficult for many people to fully grasp. God we understand. Jesus we comprehend. But the Holy Spirit? The Holy Ghost? Ghosts aren't part of our everyday lives. Except this one.

One can think of the Holy Spirit as a "feeling" that comes upon us when we are deep in prayer or, as can happen, when our mind is on something else entirely. A feeling that reminds us of God and Jesus, gives us a feeling of their presence and what it means in our lives, a feeling of inspiration, a feeling of insight, a feeling of hearing, seeing and understanding the spiritual more clearly, suddenly and sometimes only for an instant. An instant, however, that lingers in memory—like the best meal you've ever had.

Think of God as the Master Chef. Master Chefs express themselves through their culinary masterpieces. God's back in a kitchen that is literally out of this world and God is cooking up the best meal we could ever possibly be served—an expression, or articulation, of God's life-transforming love and grace. That's what God, the Master Chef, prepared for us: love and grace that change our lives.

Now, think of Jesus as the meal, itself, as the way God's love and grace were expressed and articulated into the world. God served love and grace to

us through Jesus and the meaning and ministry of his life, death and resurrection.

But how does the Holy Spirit fit into all of this? Think of the Holy Spirit as the aroma of that meal that God prepared for us and then served to us through Jesus. Though the Master Chef, the meal and its aroma are three distinct and different things, they are also, somehow, part of the same thing.

Think about aromas. We can't see them. We can't touch them. But they sure are real. They are like spirits of what has been prepared for us and then served as a meal. They are culinary "ghosts" but we know for a fact they exist. We smell them every day.

The aroma of a meal is part of the meal, itself. The aroma comes directly from what has been prepared. The aroma of a steak is literally part of the steak. The Holy Spirit is no different—It just doesn't have anything to do with a rib-eyes.

And all aromas do something quite special.

Think back to that best-meal-ever in your life. If you could somehow smell the aroma again it would bring that meal back to life for you. The aroma would remind you of every nuance, nook and cranny of that meal: how it looked, the way it felt on your tongue and, especially, its flavors.

That is exactly what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit allows us to feel, to "taste" the expression of God's love and grace that was prepared and served to us through Jesus.

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit to ensure we'd never go spiritually hungry. God's love and grace are being served every day and COVID-19 cannot shut that down.

The Holy Spirit makes deliveries wherever you are, and there is always "take-out," as well, no matter where you find yourself.

Simply enjoying the meal, however, is not God's dream for us, nor why Jesus lived for us, died for us, and was resurrected for us. Being transformed by God's expression of love and grace—even just a little bit—is why God brought all the ingredients together and invites us to the feast.

No degree of transformation is insignificant. Consider how one single comma, rather than the tiny dot of a period, can change the meaning of a sentence that alters the plot of a chapter that transforms the end of a novel.

Our own life stories are being written every day and a Holy "ghost writer" is just waiting to be our co-author.

So keep typing.

And follow that scent.

