

RECEIVE A REVOLUTION!

HE WILL
BAPTIZE YOU
WITH THE HOLY
SPIRIT AND FIRE.

MATTHEW 3:11

Fr. Cedric Pisegna, C.P.

Receive a Revolution!

I grew up in Massachusetts. Our state was the birthplace of the Revolutionary War when the colonists rose up and overthrew the oppressive British government. Eventually a new nation was born. The United States of America was founded on the principles of freedom and liberty. The word “revolution” means complete or marked change. The Holy Spirit comes to revolutionize our lives. Because of his presence, a new birth occurs that brings us freedom and wholeness.

We are all familiar with the term “Holy Spirit.” All of us who grew up in any denomination have heard of God’s Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is so much more than a theological term or doctrine. God’s Spirit is alive and wants to transform our life. In fact the whole purpose Jesus came, died, and rose was to bring us “abundant life.” (Jn. 10:10) Jesus was tortured to death so we could come to know the wellspring of grace that is the Holy Spirit. Many have encountered this life-changing blessing. Many more still do not know the Spirit. Others need to be re-filled. My call as a Catholic priest and missionary is to help people come to know the treasure that is the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that you will be revolutionized by the presence of God’s Spirit.

Purpose:

The Holy Spirit comes for three main reasons.

1) Intimacy with God: The Holy Spirit is the presence of God himself. At the beginning of Mass, the priest used to greet the community with, “The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.” In the new Missal, fellowship has been changed to, “The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love

of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” “Communion” is a word that means oneness or unity. It implies intimacy. The primary purpose of God’s Spirit is so we could have restored union with God. Through the Holy Spirit, we can now have a personal relationship with God.

Through the Holy Spirit, my spiritual life was and is being revolutionized. I used to think God would always be distant and “out there somewhere.” Through the Holy Spirit, I’ve learned that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Ro. 5:5) God lives in the innermost depths of our hearts. He also lives in our conscious life. Once we awaken to and have a new consciousness of this glorious presence, we experience rebirth.

Jesus told his apostles, “Better for you that I go away. Unless I go, the advocate will not come, but if I go, I will send him to you.” (Jn. 16:7) When Jesus walked the earth, he was “with” us. But when he ascended to God, he sent the Holy Spirit to be “in” us. “In” is closer than and better than “with!” Through the presence of God within, we can have a powerful prayer life and come to know God. There will be times of refreshment from God’s presence. We will receive comfort and consolation. New manifestations of grace will come. Dreams and visions will be ours. Every day will be an exciting new adventure of grace.

This is the hallmark of the New Testament that was prophesied years ago: “they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest.” (Heb. 8:11) Your prayer life will change. The scriptures will come alive. You will want to worship and praise God. You will develop a habit of prayer and receive revelations from God. The primary purpose of the Holy Spirit is to revolutionize our relationship with the living God.

2) Transformation in Holiness: Besides giving us a new relationship with God, the Holy Spirit comes to change us. Remember, God's Spirit is the "Holy" Spirit. Holiness means to be separated from evil. In other words, holiness is virtue and qualities such as goodness, patience, mercy, generosity, and love. In order for us to change from vice to virtue, from bad habits to good, from sin to integrity, we need power; we need help.

Jesus taught, "Soon you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:5) We have all seen babies or adults baptized. Think of a person being plunged into the water. This is the notion of being immersed into the Holy Spirit. We become sopping wet and drip with the anointing of God. But baptism has another meaning. The Greek word *baptizo* comes from the notion of taking a garment and dipping it into a colored dye. Say you have a yellow garment and you dip it into purple dye. When you dip the garment into the dye, it changes color from yellow to purple. The dipping that brings about the change is *baptizo*. That is what it means to be a "dyed-in-the-wool Christian." It is someone who is very committed and being changed by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of yellow, I used to allow fear to dominate my life. Yellow is the color of cowardice. Now my favorite color is purple, the color of courage or valor. The Holy Spirit comes to encourage us to face our fears and gradually change into a person who is brave. The theological word for this is "sanctification." This is the process (and it is a day-by-day journey) of growth in holiness. Besides changing vice into virtue, the Spirit works on our attitude, which too is a facet of holiness. I used to be so negative. In my mind, I would hear things like, "I can't do it." "I'm not good enough." "I'll never accomplish much." Because of the Holy Spirit, my inner dialogue has drastically changed.

Now I hear things like, “I can do it.” “I am very able.” “I am going to change the world!” I’ve been dipped into the dye with a new color and so have you.

I didn’t have very much ambition while growing up. Before I was baptized in the Spirit, I had a nebulous goal of making a lot of money. I thought I could accomplish that by being a business major in college. While I was studying business, I really had little motivation or thrust toward it. When I was filled with the Spirit, I discovered my true passion. I was given dreams and vision. My motivations were revolutionized. I suddenly desired to help people. Selfishness was transformed into selflessness. I was given fire, determination, and ambition. I aspired to work and realize my potential. I became creative and energetic. I found myself being led by a force I had never known before. My bland color was being changed into a rainbow of passionate colors. That is why, on my television program, I always say: “Don’t just live, *live with Passion!*”

All of us have a past. There may be sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse. We all have failures, mistakes, bad habits, and sins. We may be involved in some sort of addiction. We all know too well the paralysis of shame, guilt, fear, anger, and negativity. The Spirit comes to bring us inner healing. We are given courage to face and own our issues. Then the Spirit cares for us and consoles us as we do the hard work of facing the past and moving through the pain. In time, we come out another person, better than we ever were.

The Holy Spirit can heal us from within everywhere we hurt. We are changed from Glory to Glory. (2 Cor. 3:18) This means that transformation in holiness is gradual and ongoing. Change is a process. Personal change may not happen immediately, but it will happen eventually if we don’t give up. Most want immediate “translation” instead

of “transformation” which simply takes time. There is no “microwave maturity.” The Spirit is very patient with us. He loves us and gives us the time we need to grow.

Holiness is the opposite of vice. Instead of being out of control with lust, gluttony, or anger, the Spirit brings a new self-control with moderation, temperance, patience, and balance. The Spirit comes to control us, lead us, guide us, and help us in every area of our life that is out of balance.

There is power within to change. I like to say, “The efficacy comes from the intimacy.” In other words, the movements, impressions, and intuitions of the Spirit to change come from the precious times of communion we experience. We fall in love with the Spirit, and we want to please God’s Spirit more than anything. As we walk, we hear an inner voice telling us, “This is the way, walk in it.” (Is. 30:21) Therefore we change and surrender our will to the will of the one who loves us and lives in us. God’s lifelong work in us is to make us holy. As we cooperate with grace, we will become the new creation we were redeemed to be.

3) *Change the World:* The Spirit was given to us to make a difference in our world. Primarily, we are disciples of Jesus Christ. The nature of the Church is missionary. We were given a mandate: proclaim the Gospel. Jesus didn’t just give us the great commission; he gave us *power* to achieve our mission. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witness unto the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Before I received the Holy Spirit, I had no interest in sharing the Gospel. You can’t give what you don’t have! Now being a witness and sharing the Good News about Jesus Christ is my obsession. I am a priest and a missionary and so is every believer. The Spirit comes

so we can “be” a witness. We have a new joy, patience, and way about us that is attractive to others. We become generous, encouraging, and inspirational, not pushy. We are gentle, kind, loving, and forgiving. People see this and want to seek God.

Pope Francis published an “apostolic exhortation” named *The Joy of the Gospel*. In this eye-opening document, he said Christians shouldn’t be people who look like they just attended a funeral. Some are Lenten Christians who need to know there is an Easter! He said churches aren’t mausoleums or museums, but places of prayer and celebration. Joy is attractive. It is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is joy. It is the joy of being loved and knowing that you are saved and on the way to heaven. When we show this joy, people will want what we have. Our Spirit-inspired attitude and virtue are the primary ways that we will “be” a witness.

In addition, we are to proclaim the Gospel with our words. In the new Missal, there was a shift at the end of Mass. We used to end with the words, “The Mass is ended, go in peace.” Now the word “Go” is rightly put first. Mass, after all, comes from the Latin word *missa* or mission. The whole purpose of Mass is to worship, be fed, and then go proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. “Go” is the great commission. Now we end Mass with, “Go, and announce the Gospel of the Lord.”

The power that Jesus gives us isn’t the power of this world. This world gives power to be in control, wealthy, domineering, or famous. Rather, the power Jesus gives is power to serve in order to influence the world. We are given power to inspire, encourage, help, forgive, and lift people up. This demands sacrifice and humility. Remember the Last Supper in John? Jesus washed the

disciples' feet and said, "If I your Lord and Master wash your feet, so you should do." (Jn. 13:14) Even though Jesus was a king, he showed us that true power lay in humble service.

God has given me a great platform to preach the Gospel through writing, preaching, radio, and television. In essence, this wide reaching platform is power. The power given isn't for me to usurp notoriety or fortune, but to influence people and change the world. Television demands great sacrifice, work, and creativity. But, this platform leads to a harvest of lives being touched and changed. God has given you this power also. Everyone is anointed by the Holy Spirit to "turn the world upside down" and right side up! You are anointed! (1 Jn. 2:27) Your platform may not TV, but I assure you God has put you in a place to make a difference.

Be Filled!

The prophet Joel (quoted at Pentecost) prophesied "I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh..." (Jl. 2:28) The Holy Spirit is for young and old, male and female, rich and poor. John the Baptist taught, "God *doesn't ration* his gift of the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 3:34) Jesus proclaimed, "*Whoever* believes in me, out of your heart will flow rivers of living water." (Jn. 7:38) The Holy Spirit isn't just for a certain few. The Holy Spirit is a gift given for *you* and all who thirst. Jesus died on a cross for you to know God's Spirit and experience abundance.

There are many words in the Scriptures regarding encountering the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit falls on people. The Spirit rushed on David. You can receive the Holy Spirit. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to baptize in the Holy Spirit. You are anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is symbolized by fire, breath,

wind, water, and a dove. I like to say receiving the Holy Spirit is a new consciousness of and new awareness of the presence and life of God within. This is what it means to be born again. (Jn. 3:3) Whatever term you want to use, this gift is too valuable to miss or deny. God wants you to receive the Holy Spirit!

Believing and Open

We learn in the Bible that power is made perfect in our weakness. The way an alcoholic comes into recovery is by admitting his or her powerlessness. Get in touch with your suffering, inner emptiness, inability to control your life, and inner hunger. In order to be filled, we must first be emptied of our controlling, domineering ways. We aren't always right, and we don't have it all together. Honest humility goes a long way with God. We must make room for the Spirit. Jesus emptied himself and became one of us. We must empty ourselves to become divinized.

Simply believe. Believe that the Spirit is for you. Believe that you are a spiritual person. Believe that God loves you and wants to fill you.

Are you ready to surrender control of your life and will to the Holy Spirit? This is the reason I became a priest, to introduce people to the person and force who is revolutionizing my life!

The Spirit is our comforter, intercessor, helper, standby, and advocate. He will lead you, guide you, and control your life. Get ready to be revolutionized and changed! Remember, transformation is a process and takes time. However, look also for the "suddenlies" of Pentecost. These are the graced moments, the wonderful manifestations of grace that come "out of the blue."

The Holy Spirit is all-powerful, ferocious, fierce, and indomitable. All things are possible through God's

Spirit. However, the Spirit is also very gentle, tender, and delicate.

He is innocent and pure and symbolized as a dove. Along with fiery feelings and glorious experiences, remember quiet. When nothing seems to be happening, don't be scandalized by the silence. Silence is the Spirit's language of love. Rather, trust in God's love for you. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the wealthiest, greatest, most precious gift you can ever receive. "This is eternal life that you know God". (Jn. 17:3)

Jesus taught, "If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask." (Lk. 11:13) I am praying the Holy Spirit will revolutionize your life! *Receive a revolution* in your relationship with God, your character, and your ability to be a witness as you pray now:

Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Holy Spirit, I want you with all of my heart.

I empty myself so I can be filled with you.

I am nothing without you and everything in you.

I need your intimacy, holiness, and power.

I give you permission to take control of my life.

I want to be led, guided, and influenced by you alone.

I want to know you in an intimate way.

Come Holy Spirit; fill me with all your fullness!

Revolutionize and transform my life.

Fill me with your Fire and Passion!

Come Holy Spirit! I receive you now! Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fr. Cedric Pisegna, C.P. is a Passionist priest who professed vows in September 1985. He was born in Springfield, Massachusetts and graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with B.S. in social work and a minor in Business. In addition, he has studied Philosophy at Southern Illinois University and has studied Speech and Drama at Northwestern University in Chicago. Fr. Cedric graduated from the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago in May 1990, receiving his Master of Divinity degree with Bible Specialization. He was ordained a priest on June 29, 1991.

Presently, Fr. Cedric preaches retreats and missions throughout the United States and Canada, ministering out of the Passionist retreat complex in Houston, Texas. He has preached over 500 missions for 30 years. Fr. Cedric produces a program for TV and Radio, *Live with Passion!*, which presently airs nationally and internationally on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), Daystar, EWTN, and other networks. He has numerous CDs and DVDs on Christian living and has authored twenty-five books.

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