Spirituality
Soul Seeing



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I've been told that I must trust in the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit trusts in me. I say this not with pride but humility, and more than a touch of trembling. So far beyond me, yet so near. In all the Spirit's forms and manifestations, how it appears when most needed or when least expected. Keeping my eyes and ears, body, mind and soul open. I believe, yes, the Spirit does dwell within me. Yes, the Spirit does surround and envelop me.

As it does for everyone, for everything.

Yet in what form will we find it? So often when we think of the Holy Spirit, it's as a dove. A soft trilling coo, comfort and peace and harmony

But the Holy Spirit can be wild and tempestuous, coming where and when it will, shaking us out of our complacency, asking us to look with fresh eyes.

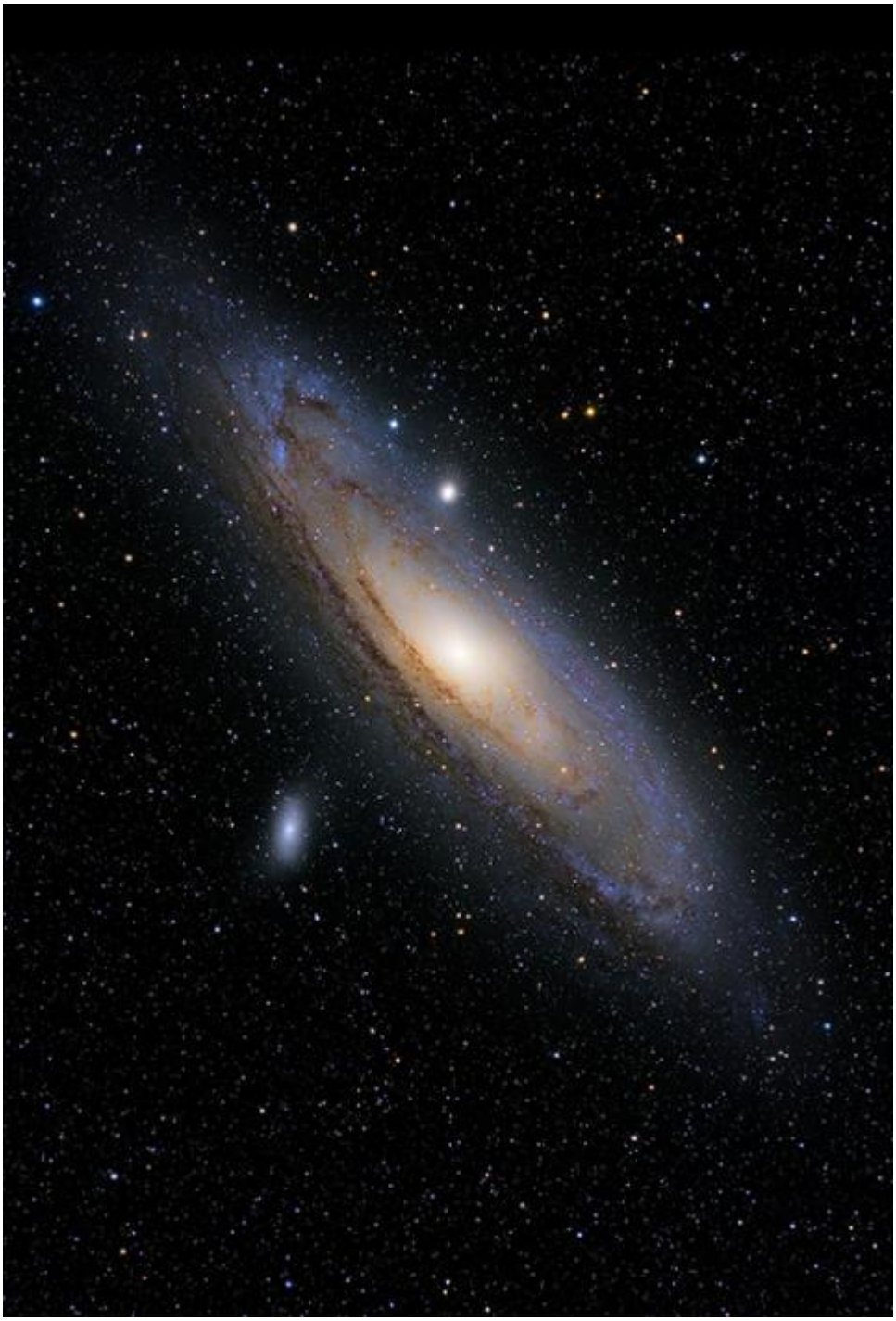
The Spirit can be fire. Peaceful. Raucous. Soothing. Piercing.

A dove flying serenely, olive branch in its beak. Or tongues of fire.

The wild Celtic goose, screeching, honking, disrupting.

The wind, blowing where it will.

A silent whisper.



(Unsplash/Chen Liu)

The Holy Spirit

Elusive, slippery, visions forming, changing, a Life of its own, a Life Divine, glimpsed in kaleidoscopic fragments, each in its own intricate pattern. And with a twist, a new whole, an aura, a persona, an aspect. The Spirit contained completely in each, yet

each combined to form a greater whole. An energy rippling around all and through all, from quarks and hadrons to galaxies and star clusters and nebulas. And everything all creation in between. Effortless energy abounding, tendrils shooting off Divinity's vine.

Manifestations manifold, appearing as it will to human hearts and minds, touching bodies, touching souls. Never static, even when at rest.

A verb

A man who wore three watches said, "I am not a thing — a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process — an integral function of the universe." This is us all, verbs of being, tiny and precious. In our being is the Spirit. Would that our eyes be open to our deeper selves, and to others, to see us all as verbs. Veils of illusion would flutter away.

The dove

Back with the patriarch in the morning of the day, a white dove glides from his hand, searching for dry land. And returning, exhausted, having found no place to perch. Seven days later, again released, away on the wind, the skies deep blue, white clouds puffy against the pink rays of dawn. In the evening, she reappears, olive leaf in beak, a sign of the land newly emergent, a sign of relief. And the next week, she is released, never to return to the ark. Bringing hope to the patriarch and his family, even as she is never seen again.



A mosaic of Noah's ark with the dove in Notre-Dame de la Garde in Marseille, France (Wikimedia Commons/Robert Valette)

Years later, above the muddy Jordan, shallow and murky, descending on a man being baptized by his cousin, who pushes him down bodily into the water. And as he emerges, he sees the heavens part in clear and lucid glory. As a dove descending, he hears a voice proclaiming, "Beloved Son, you are my delight." And then this dove, this Spirit drives or does it guide? the one into the desert, to pray, to fast, to be put to the test.

A light, silent sound

In a bleak and lonely cave, the prophet waits as he was commanded. He knows the Lord will come, the Lord will speak. But how? God's voice was not in the violent, buffeting wind, or the earthquake, or the raging fire.

No, God's voice was small and still, fine silence, gentle blowing, light stillness.

A light, silent sound speaks to the man in the cave, giving him succor, strength and hope. And the man in the cave, refreshed, emboldened, goes forth renewed to serve his Lord.

Pentecost

Many years later, 120 gathered. This day, first the noise, mighty rushing wind, startling turbulence descending from the heavens, enveloping them all in a divine embrace.

Then the tongues of fire, flames licking the air, parting to rest upon each one of them.

Were the tongues hot? Did they burn? And the tongues too, not only fire, but tongues of speech, languages they never knew, but suddenly now could speak. Could the bearers of the tongues comprehend their own new speech? Those that heard them speak understood.

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New wine, some scoffed. No, too early for that, though drunks might disagree. No, it's Spirit, holy and manifest, always approaching, always enveloping, always embracing.

And the Apostle proclaims God's presence and many who hear repent and are baptized. And the Spirit falls upon them too, a gift from the Divine, not as wind or tongues of fire, but invisible, mysterious, present, quivering with new life.

Wild geese

Wild geese, a Celtic vision. Watch as they fly in V-formation, with boisterous honks as they fly overhead. The exhausted leader gives way to another who soars to the front of the V. The rest of the flock follows, and they too shift positions as they tire. Raucous calls of encouragement, let's go, let's fly, let's make some noise. A collective spirit, a community flocking and flying together, compelling beauty in their harsh cries. Wake up. Fly with us.

Groups of geese have more than one name. On land, a gaggle. In the water, a plump. Flying in a V formation, a wedge. Flying not in a V, a skein. Casual flight, a team. Why all the names? Why all the fuss? Why not just a flock, generic, and be done with it.

This is how the Spirit presents itself, metaphors within metaphors, but each just a portion. In each portion is fullness, and beyond that a fuller fullness, a whole of a greater whole. Different descriptions, yet always wild geese. And why not? Isn't water a liquid? A solid? A gas? So too, the Spirit appears in different forms, but always the Holy Spirit.



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Ravished

Marilynne Robinson writes that John Keat's poem "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" is an expression of "that old humanist privilege of being 'ravished' by a book."

So why not be ravished by the Holy Spirit? Be overcome, overpowered, transported, delighted, entranced, enchanted, stunned, enraptured into a beguiling dance. To

give oneself up, body and soul, mind and heart, to the power of the Holy Spirit, God dancing with us, urging us along, come, come, play, rejoice and sing. As Wisdom herself did at the dawn of the cosmos, let us be God's delight. To play, to dance, like unfettered children in their delights, their shrieks of laughter, the feeling of sun and good sweat, the breathless breath that feels so fine, the world condensed to this moment, and this moment, this moment alone, is the only one that matters. The joy. The pure rapture.

Like children, let's run. Shriek and scream and sing. Shed the desire, the need for explanations, for understanding. The need, the desire, the understanding lives in the action, in the essence of the moment.

And after we run, we rest. And just be.

That's the Spirit!