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**Together in Christ, Diocesan Bulletin for Christian Unity,
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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers, before Una Ratcliff would surrender the editorship of TiC she made sure that it would continue. Desmond Miller started to help so she carried on a while longer. The late Bishop Charles Henderson asked for a volunteer to take on the role of editor – as nobody else would, I offered, she agreed. Desmond has prepared a memorial to Una and we end this edition with the first part of a paper Una prepared for the Catholic Evidence Guild, one of her many activities.

Canon Bill Clements is another of those early pioneers for Unity. In retirement now, he had time to write a history of his last parish, Birchington, which is reviewed here.

Sr Margaret Leadox reviews Mary Reath's book *Rome and Canterbury, the elusive search for Unity*. It reaches to the end of ARCIC II. (It is expected that once the membership is agreed the 'ARCIC III' dialogue will start.)

A short guide shows the present status of the Personal Ordinariate. Let's pray that this is the Holy Spirit at work again after the euphoria of the Papal visit and the developing relationship between the Churches. Overshadowed by the Pope's visit was Edinburgh 1910–2010, a gathering of the 'five churches' at Swanwick.

An account of a visit to the Southwark Anglican Cathedral to see photos of the Tur Abdin monastic community completes this edition.

Michael

Una Marie Ratcliff

13/2/1925 – 3/9/2010

Una was brought up in Leeds. She left school age fourteen at the outbreak of the War. Later she found work in the Tax Office in Leeds where she met Sidney her future husband. They married in 1950 moved to London and settled in Bexleyheath in the parish of St Thomas More in 1951. Una and Sydney were daily Mass goers and involved themselves in the life of the Parish. Una wrote the Bidding Prayers, ran the Repository, conducted Catechism classes and for twenty-five years published the Parish Magazine. It was in recognition of her parish work that she received the Papal Award *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici*.

Sydney, a convert to Catholicism, and Una were active in the Catholic Evidence Guild speaking at Woolwich, Tower Hill and Hyde Park Corner. Una became a member of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission and then Secretary to the National Ecumenical Commission. She edited seventy-three issues of the Southwark Diocesan Bulletin for Christian Unity *Together in Christ* from 1983 to 2006 when due to age and failing mental capacity she had to relinquish her position.

Una obtained a B.A. degree (First Class Honours) in English at Birkbeck College, London, in 1969 and went on to do research in the field of mediaeval spirituality with a special interest in *Mary in the Mediaeval Mind*. She also had a deep interest in St Thomas More and was very knowledgeable about his life.

Una's spirituality was profoundly Eucharistic, but found further expression through the Charismatic Prayer Group which she and Sydney led at St Catherine's, Bexleyheath from 1978 to the mid-1980s. Una was a gentle and unassuming woman whose deep faith, commitment to prayer and spiritual gifts were an inspiration to all.

Una's final years were spent in a care home at Ashford. She died on 3 September 2010 supported by her family and strengthened by the ministry of the Church. May she rest in peace.

Pray for me, as I will for thee, that we may merrily meet in heaven.

(St Thomas More)

Edinburgh 1910 to 2010 – Towards Unity in Mission A Meeting of Ecumenical Officers in Swanwick 11–13 October 2010

In 1910 an unprecedented event took place in Edinburgh. 1000 delegates took part in the first ecumenical conference of its kind. The theme was *Unity for Mission*. Early in 2010 another conference was held in Edinburgh to mark 100 years since 1910. The Swanwick Conference celebrated these two events and looked at the changing context and agenda of the ecumenical endeavour. Immediately following the conference was a meeting of the ecumenical officers of the five major churches in England, Wales and Scotland: Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed.

The Conference consisted of three talks, a Bible study, plenary session, group work and worship. The first two talks by the Rev Dr Jeremy Morris and Dr Kirsteen Kim looked at the changing contexts of the two Edinburgh conferences. There were some surprising similarities between the two events 100 years apart. At both there was anxiety about secularism and the rise of Islam in a globalised world. But there were also significant differences. In 1910 the world was divided between the Christian and the non-Christian world and unity was seen as a means to Christianise the whole world. Today the division is between the rich North and the poor South and Christianity is one of many religions. The flow of missionaries has reversed. In 1910 mission was about converting the world to Christ; today the focus is on the *Missio Dei* – being the presence of Christ in the world.

The third speaker, Fr James Hanvey SJ, looked at ecumenism from a deep theological perspective. He suggested

that we were at a new beginning in ecumenism. The great resource we had to start again was our faith in what God had done and was continuing to do through Jesus Christ and through Christ in us. Ecumenism took place within history which meant it was subject to movement and change – change in our ecclesial communities and cultural shifts. Such work demanded patience and generosity. We must remember that we are not in control. God is sovereign everywhere including in secular society and that means there are no God free zones anywhere.

Fr Hanvey's talk was so theologically rich that it is impossible to summarise it in a few sentences. There are plans to publish it so that it can reach a wider audience. I can only offer a few reflections on things that stood out for me.

1. Unity is not just a pragmatic working together; it is entering into the salvific incarnational dynamic of Christ. Christ must always be kept in the centre and if he is not glorified in what we are doing we have to stop and start again.
2. We must learn to be critical friends, our facing our divisions, reflecting and understanding them and then working with them together.
3. The work of ecumenism is the work of truth and understanding in which there must be a commitment to change so that we are better fitted to participate in the life of God who changes the world.
4. Christ's mission is his identity, his saving presence. His identity is doing the will of the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Mission is taking on Christ's identity.
5. The inner relationship of the Trinity is one of self-emptying. Unity in Mission involves the same sacrificial self-emptying, trusting the other with who we are, allowing the other to take that

responsibility. 'I receive who I am from you and can be who I am through you'. We cannot be complete without the other.

6. Our faith in God's promise gives us energy and hope and puts everything into perspective. Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and the fulfilment of the promise is already present. As Aquinas says, the resurrection is the repair of the life of the world that moves us to the good.

The plenary sessions offered more food for thought. Here are a few contributions from the floor:

1. Church Unity: we will see it when we believe it.
2. Unity is a gift: if you try to create it you lose it. Like happiness, unity comes when we respond to God.
3. Questions unite, answers divide.
4. Receptive ecumenism is not just about the good things we can learn from each other; it is also about holding the hurts of the other on their behalf.
5. The inner relationship of the Trinity is one of self-emptying. Unity in Mission involves the same sacrificial self-emptying, trusting the other with who we are, allowing the other to take that responsibility. 'I receive who I am from you and can be who I am through you'. We cannot be complete without the other.
6. Our faith in God's promise gives us energy and hope and puts everything into perspective. Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and the fulfilment of the promise is already present. As Aquinas says, the resurrection is the repair of the life of the world that moves us to the good.

Barbara Wood,
Chair of SW Area
Southwark Unity Commission

Exhibition of Photographs at Southwark Anglican Cathedral of Tur Abdin (SE Turkey)

Following a mention of this exhibition by John Richardson (Ecumenical Officer, Churches Together in South London) in one of his always informative Newsletters, we decided to visit on the morning of 27th September, not realising that this was the official opening with a reception attended by among others the Archbishop of Canterbury!

A helpful member of the Cathedral staff suggested we returned after two o'clock when the festivities would be over – which meant we had time not only for a walk along the river but the added bonus of a lunch time recital by the cathedral organist, David Wright, playing a selection of pieces with a French theme (he warned us in advance that one of these included exceptionally loud chords which in other circumstances would be regarded as the organist pressing the wrong pedal but here were the composers specific intention.

The exhibition, when we were able to see it, consisted of a series of wonderful colour photographs taken very recently showing daily life in this remote village. We were able to talk to Giuio Paletta, the young Italian photographer, who explained he has made a mission of recording Christian communities around the world who are facing extinction.

The history of this tiny community goes back to the early days of Christianity and was much influenced by St Ephraim. Christianity in this part of Northern Mesopotamia developed largely outside the Roman world. Under Persian, then Arab and eventually Turkish influence, theology and literature flourished.

The 19th century however, with its emphasis on nationalism, led to upheaval in Turkey and oppression for minorities, including the

Christians of Tur Abdin. In 1915 many of them fled to Syria to escape massacres. However, those who remained behind found some stability until the Kurdish rebellion in the early 1980s led to further persecution and by 1995 the population had reduced from 20,000 to 2,000.

In recent years people have begun to return but still face daily struggles. They are a tiny Syrian Orthodox community surrounded by a mainly Kurdish population – currently local politicians are trying to take over lands around one of the monasteries.

The photographs themselves record daily life in a harsh landscape – men and women herding cows and tilling rocky ground – as well as ancient stone churches incredibly carved and interior scenes of liturgies in the Orthodox tradition using an Aramaic language.

We were deeply impressed by Guilio Paletta's determination to record the existence of these simple people as they cling on to their ancient way of life and faith.

The Exhibition arose from the work of a group, chaired by the Rt Rev. Christopher Chessun (soon to be the new Anglican Bishop of Southwark) committed to strengthening links with Syrian Orthodox Christians. The group are to be congratulated on providing this insight into the faith of fellow Christians living a life so far removed from our own experience.

Anne and John Dodwell

ROME & CANTERBURY THE ELUSIVE SEARCH FOR UNITY

By Mary Reath

(Governor of the Anglican Centre in Rome)
Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc. 2007

Since first becoming a Parish Unity Contact (PUC) I had been wanting to find a readable and non-biased account of the events of the Reformation in England, subsequent divisions within Christianity in this country, and then the efforts that have been made over the years in order to regain the lost unity.

One day I unexpectedly came across such a book in one of the Wandsworth Libraries. I found it very interesting and certainly a means of getting a better understanding of those who desire Christian Unity, but who see this from a different viewpoint to that of an Roman Catholic. In the hope that other PUCs might like to track this book down and find it helpful too, I want to share something of its contents here.

Mary Reath's book, *Rome & Canterbury* begins by stating that if we are to begin to imagine a future world, i.e. of unity, we must go back and begin when Western Christianity divided, to that time when Martin Luther and King Henry VIII unintentionally "set huge transformations in motion. ... they had merely ignited a latent spark, and then found themselves swept along." ... The events of the breaking apart of Christianity throughout the 16th and 17th centuries are traced out in some detail in the book. What strikes me most forcibly is "the extraordinary lack of awareness of the impending storm," apparent in the Church during those times which were "peculiarly ripe for change." How sad that this seemingly inevitable outcome was not prevented!

Then follows a description of the gradual development of Anglicanism, of those with evangelical leanings and also those longing for renewal through the Oxford Movement – from which Blessed John Henry Newman departed in 1845 to join the Roman Catholic Church. He would have been one of the "lone voices calling for ecumenical

thinking” at that time. A little later, in 1867, the first conference of the worldwide Anglican Communion was held at Lambeth, but it wasn’t until 1888 that they actually began to address ideas of Christian Unity. It seems that there were no “direct and sustained ecumenical meetings” between Rome and Canterbury until those between the Catholic Abbé Fernand Portal and Anglican Lord Halifax, which began in 1889. They had met by chance and struck up a friendship. They believed that disunity was caused mainly by lack of understanding and information. Abbé Portal also had personal doubts about whether Anglican Orders were valid. Both of them felt that God was inspiring them to do something about the situation. Their determined and enthusiastic efforts resulted in a Papal commission being set up in 1896 to deliberate the validity of Anglican ordinations. The negative outcome was a disappointment for them, but it was influential in initiating a wider and more serious discussion about just how the barriers dividing Christianity could be broken down.

After the Lambeth Conference of 1920, the Anglicans issued a document. It was called, *An Appeal to all Christian People*. Some of the statements in the document are given in this book and I quote them here, because I am impressed by how sincere, and even surprisingly up-to-date they sound:

The times call us to a new outlook and new measures. The Faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided and is thus unable to grow up into the fullness of the life of Christ. The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church.

The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service for the world.

We place this idea first and foremost before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demand of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed.

Archbishop Randall Davidson sent the document to the Roman Catholic Cardinal Mercier of Belgium, who was then requested to host a meeting, bringing together Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Several meetings took place at Malines, raising fears of change among many people of both sides. The most memorable of the talks, given by Cardinal Mercier, was entitled, *An Anglican Church, United not Absorbed*. It made the suggestion that an arrangement could be made for the Anglican Church, similar to the position of Uniate Churches within the Catholic Church. Although ideas such as that sounded shocking to many, the Malines meetings eventually provided inspiration for Catholic ecumenists working at Vatican II ... and, I would add, also for those of today. When Archbishop Fisher met Pope John XXIII in 1960, it was the first visit of an Archbishop of Canterbury to Rome in over 550 years. Then six years later, Archbishop Ramsey went there to see Pope Paul VI, and together they created an international commission to seek unity – signing a common declaration. An Anglican Centre was then opened in Rome to carry this work forward. It is there that Mary Reath is now one of the governors. In 1970 the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission took form, and since then has met annually, in different venues for about a week, for the past forty years. During that time the following nine documents of agreement have been issued:

ARCIC I (1970-1981)

Eucharist; Ministry; Authority in the Church; Eucharist and Ministry.

ARCIC II (1982 – the present day)

Salvation in the Church; Church as Communion; Life in Christ, Morals, Communion, and the Church; the Gift of Authority; Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ.

Although many sections apparently needed to be “hammered out with sweat and blood,” great efforts were made to “get behind the language that had originally contributed to the divisions.

I’d like to finish this review with two little quotes from the words of Mary Reath herself, “We’ve come a long way since the spilling of blood in Christ’s name,” and, “At some future, unknown moment, when the time is right, we’ll look around us and be surprised to see a new Church, one that we cannot now predict.”

I do hope you’ll be able to read the book in its entirety! Maybe you have come across other books worth recommending to us in a future bulletin. Perhaps they could even be suggested to the staff in a public library. Libraries are often willing to add new books to their shelves if they are given the details of specific books, or if requests are made for information of a particular type, e.g. Christianity in Britain today, ecumenism, or biographies of personalities notable in that field etc. I know we are in the computer age, but the public library is still a place where The Word can very effectively be sown. A good book can have such a powerful influence ... another means for us to spread some Ecumenical seeds!

Sr Margaret Leadox
Sacred Heart Church
Battersea

Continuity: A History of the Catholic Church in Birchington
by Canon William Clements KHS

Capital Press, Canterbury, July 2010

ISBN: 978-0-9566057-0-2 £7.50p

www.capitalpress.co.uk

As a cradle Catholic born in 1944, I read this part of the book with particular interest as many of the places named I am familiar with, some of my extended family being residents of Margate and Broadstairs.

The first 101 pages; Parts one, two and three, deal with the history of Thanet leading up to the Catholic presence since the year 597, when St Augustine arrived on the shores only a few miles from Birchington, up to the present century. The story came alive for me as the lives of people through the ages were told with simple clarity.

Part four: What of the Future? (Pages 104-112)

These eight pages I consider to be essential reading for anyone seeking Christian Unity, dealing with issues that divide Christian denominations and the reasons why Unity is so hard to achieve. Catholics still follow the teachings that St Augustine brought to the land, and these are what give the Catholic Church continuity.

Christ wishes us to all be one and we have to strive for that, accepting that other denominations have sincerity and truly acknowledge and worship Christ as their Lord God and Saviour.

Canon Clements writes of eight lessons he has learnt in his ecumenical journey:

1. Unity from Strength;
2. Tension;
3. Honesty and Openness;
3. Recognising Goodness;
5. Patience;
6. Communication;
7. Study;
8. Prayer

Cecilia Skudder

Holy Innocents, Orpington

The book is available from:

Mrs Faye Stevens, Flat 3, No 4 Miles Way, Birchington, CT7 9ST

Canon Bill is resident at Coloma Court Care Home, West Wickham.

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

On Saturday 15th January 2011 the first Ordinariate was established following *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Benedict XVI. Now former Anglicans may be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. Known as the *Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham* its patron is Blessed John Henry Newman, a former Anglican priest who became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church.

This Ordinariate will have a jurisdiction across England and Wales, not confined by diocesan boundaries, much like the Ordinariate for the Armed Forces that encompasses British Forces wherever they are deployed.

On the same day three former Anglican Bishops, Fr John Broadhurst, Fr Andrew Burnham and Fr Keith Newton were ordained as priests to the Ordinariate at Westminster Abbey by Archbishop Vincent Nichols.

Pope Benedict has appointed one of these, Fr Keith Newton to be the first Ordinary. He will have a place in the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales and be part of the decision making process they undertake.

The new Ordinariate allows groups of former Anglicans, usually parishes, to be in full communion with the Catholic Church, while retaining approved elements of their Anglican tradition.

During the coming months these groups will undertake preparation to be received into the Church, probably at Easter, with continuing instruction till Pentecost. Any former priests wishing to be ordained will need to be ‘called’ and prepared for Ordination as Deacons and Priests to the Ordinariate. Those priests accepted will undergo a further two or more years in training.

It will take time to see how this event will affect the work towards Unity between the Anglican and Catholic Churches. Hopefully the Ordinariate will provide a bridge rather than a barrier to the dialogue. Through their willingness to trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit to enter a new phase of the Church’s history maybe we can all address a vision of the future where we are all recognised

as within the Body of Christ. One of the latest advances to this is the prospect of an ARCIC III being set up soon. This Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission third phase will be expected to examine the fundamental questions regarding the Church as Communion – Local and Universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.

We all need to pray for our brothers and sisters in Faith that the Holy Spirit will lead them into the Truth, that ‘they may be one as we are one’ in whatever way the Lord has planned.

Michael Baldry

“TO SEEK CHRIST”

Lent Small Group Material

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton in collaboration with the Anglican Dioceses of Chichester and Guildford have produced a suitable programme of prayer and reflection to use during Lent.

The weekly reflections are based on the first Reading and Gospel for each Sunday during Lent and will last about ninety minutes. Each session will end with an ecumenical story giving an example of Christians working together or from Archbishop Rowan Williams and Pope Benedict.

It is suitable for parishes or local churches to come together once a week and gives an opportunity for sharing and discussion as well as prayer, listening to the Word and being together as a community in the Lord’s presence.

The programme will be available soon from the

Arundel and Brighton website:

www.dabnet.org/PastoralTeam/missionunity

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE

The first part of a paper presented at the
Catholic Evidence Guild Inter-Guild Conference 1975

By Una Ratcliff

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness,
like the ooze of oil Crushed.*

That is the beginning of the marvellous sonnet, *The Grandeur of God* by the Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins. It conveys the tremendous vitality, energy, power and beauty in creation. The poet goes on to say that man has marred creation – it ‘wears man’s smudge’, but his last stanza gives the glorious vision of the eternal renewal of nature and of hope, as he says:

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh! morning at the brown brink eastward springs -
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

How beautifully, and I feel, how prayerfully, the poet leads us on to the source of this power and beauty and to the continuing comforting warm presence and action of the Holy Spirit over the world. So much in that sonnet seems to me to provide a perfect introduction to the action of the Holy Spirit. ‘The world is charged with the grandeur of God’: the power of the Spirit is a vitalising current. ‘It will flame-out’: how often is flame and fire associated with the Spirit! And the glorious line: ‘There lives the dearest freshness deep down things’ suggests the loving action of renewal which the Spirit effects. I would also stress the word ‘lives’ as life is one of the primary associations with the Spirit – as St. Paul says: ‘The Spirit gives life.’ This powerful Spirit over the world is a Person who cares, who loves with an infinite love, whose image is a motherly one of a bird with tenderness and warmth and who gives the brightness of hope and beauty.

It is this image of the Spirit as a bird which leads us right to the beginning of the Bible:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

The Spirit of God was moving over the waters! The Jerusalem Bible translates, this ‘hovered over the water’ and the note there says: ‘like a bird hanging over its young in the nest’ – perhaps there is the idea of encouraging them to fly. As God’s Spirit hovered over the primeval chaos, which was dark and empty and formless, He prepares it to receive and respond to the creative word: ‘And God said: “Let there be light”; and there was light’. There was creation.

As we have started with this Old Testament text, it must of course be said at the outset that the Hebrew understanding of the term ‘spirit of God’ was not the same as the Christian one. The Trinitarian significance was not appreciated; there was no clear realisation of the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person until the Christian revelation. Nevertheless, in the light of the Christian revelation, it is quite wonderful to trace the connotations there are with the Spirit as expressed in the Old Testament and to see how these are paralleled and continued in the New Testament. It is the same Spirit who inspired both Testaments.

We have seen the action of the Spirit and the word at creation; may we just briefly consider these two words – spirit and word? Our word ‘spirit’, coming from the Latin *spiritus*, meaning breath, is paralleled by the Greek *pneuma* and these are translations of the Hebrew *ruach*, meaning breath or wind – you may find some variation in translation in the use of these terms incidentally. With this word *ruach*, there is the accompanying sense of movement. Sometimes the movement is strong, as at Pentecost; sometimes it is gentle as Elijah heard the voice of God in the gentle breeze. There is a sense of power, a sense of a promise about to be fulfilled. There is a sense of freedom for the direction of the wind isn’t determined – as Our Lord said: ‘The Spirit blows where He wills’.

The Hebrew for ‘word’ is *dabar* – with a dynamic sense to it, and the idea of driving or pushing out behind it. Father Montague,

who's thought I am gratefully following here in this spirit and word material, explains:

When the Hebrew speaks a word he is not taking in the outside world and shaping it within himself. Rather he is thrusting something creative and powerful outward from himself into the external world and actually changing that world. The word assumes an almost independent existence.

It was because the priestly author of Genesis had been made aware of the power of the Spirit and the power of the word – he had seen the, prophetic promise of the return from exile fulfilled – that he was able to give expression in Genesis of his profound and penetrating insight into the creation of the world, by the action of the Spirit and the word.

It would be very fruitful to consider more deeply this spirit and word relationship as seen in the Bible, but my subject is 'The Spirit in the Bible' and I will try to speak mainly about that, but with the reminder that we cannot really separate the two; there is a mutual interaction which can never be forgotten.

The Spirit of God then, is creative and life-giving. Let us see one or two more examples of this. From the book of Judith: 'Let all thy creatures serve thee, for thou didst speak, and they were made.' We have here the idea of speaking in connection with creation – the voice. 'Thou didst send forth thy Spirit and it formed them; there is none that can resist thy voice.' A beautiful expression of the spirit and word action again! And from Psalm 104 on which our Guild prayer is based: 'When thou sendest forth thy Spirit they are created, and thou renewest the face of the ground.' Creation and renewal – the themes of Hopkins' sonnet!

From Job 33: 'The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.' Both in Job and the Psalms is the opposite position expressed – that if God withdrew His Spirit, everything would perish.

The Spirit then, is creative and life-giving, and with this we can associate the abiding presence of the Spirit throughout the whole world. The book of Wisdom, from which we began our Mass this morning: '... the Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said.'

And again from the book of Wisdom: 'For thy immortal Spirit is in all things.' From Psalm 139, the abiding presence of the Spirit:

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to heaven thou art there ...

From the action of the Spirit in the world in general, may we now turn to the action of the Spirit on individual persons? Throughout the whole of the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testaments, we find numerous examples of the Spirit coming on people, or it is said the Spirit fell on them. People receive the Spirit people are filled with the Spirit, and there is a very important notion – the Spirit is poured out. When the Spirit comes on people, something happens to them. They receive with the Spirit some special quality or power which they did not have before and by which the action of the Spirit is recognised. This is so consistent in the Bible that I am stressing it: when the Spirit comes on people something recognisable happens, and it is recognisable as the action of the Spirit. Let us look at a few examples.

We will start with the story of Joseph, from Genesis 41. When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and advised him to 'select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt', Pharaoh said to his servants: 'Can we find a man such as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?'. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: 'Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are', and he concluded: 'Behold I have set you over all the land of Egypt.' It was recognised that the Spirit of God was in Joseph, giving him wisdom and the gift of interpretation.

In the book of Numbers 31:1-3, we read: 'The Lord said to Moses: "See I have called by name Bezalel ... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship ..."'

In the book of Numbers 11:25 ff., there was the story of Moses and the seventy elders who were assembled in the tent, and it was said 'when the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied.' In Numbers 24:1-13, it was said of Balaam: 'And the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his discourse' and then he proclaimed his oracle.

In Numbers 27:18: ‘And the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit and lay your hands on him”.’ and in Deuteronomy 34:9: ‘And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands on him.’

In each case some special quality or gift – wisdom, prophecy, knowledge, interpretation, craftsmanship, leadership – was seen as the effect of the action of the Spirit of God. We should also note the laying on of hands, in the case of Moses and Joshua.

Then there were the Judges – not judges in our modern legal sense, of course, but they have been described by writers as ‘Champions’ or ‘Deliverers’ or ‘Charismatic leaders’. The Catholic Commentary says of them: ‘Men chosen by God, in fact seized by the Spirit of God, theirs was the task to save their tribe or clan.’

Of these, there was Othniel of whom it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel.’ There was Gideon: ‘the Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon.’ There was Jephthah: ‘Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,’

Of Samson we read: ‘And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan.’ As the Spirit came upon them, they were given the charism of leadership and empowered to take action to save the people.

As we come to the book of Samuel, we find it said of Saul: ‘The Spirit of God came mightily upon him and he prophesied.’ And this was precisely as it had been foretold by Samuel. We remember here the saying which became proverbial: ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’

When Samuel anointed David we read: ‘Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily on David from that day forward.’ And David’s last words include: ‘The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me, his word is upon my tongue.’

Just two more examples from the book of Chronicles: ‘The Spirit came on Amasai’ and he spoke affirming allegiance to David, and ‘The Spirit of God came on Azariah’ and he then prophesied. The prominent accompaniments of the Spirit here are power and prophecy.

This seems a good moment to say a word or two about prophecy. The word prophet comes from the Greek, from the two words *pro* – forth, before, or for, and *phetes* – speaker. Prophecy is often thought of as a foretelling of the future, which it may be and often has been, as in many biblical passages which foretell the coming of the Messiah. Prophecy is also thought of as a forth-telling, a proclamation of the message or the word of God, and this it may be and often has been, as for example, Jeremiah telling forth the wonderful truth of God: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love’. A wonderful proclamation of the message of God! But for the completion of the notion of prophecy we must not lose sight of what we might call the prophetic state, by which I mean the action of the Spirit on the prophet, this ‘Spirit-coming-upon-people’ action which we have seen has been mentioned so many times in the quotations I have given. The content of the prophetic word is important, of course, but the action of the Spirit is of vital and equal importance. In some biblical writings there seems to be a Spirit emphasis, in others a word emphasis, and in others a perfect union of the two. To exemplify this, you can find passages beginning: ‘The word of the Lord came upon (or to) me’ and as we saw, ‘the Spirit came upon me’. In the quotations I’ve given, you remember the union of the two in Genesis, in Job and the Psalms.

Just to bring out the Spirit emphasis, we might look again at the fascinating account of Moses and the elders in Numbers 11, where the Spirit rested on the seventy elders and they prophesied – but there is no mention of any word of prophecy, only of this prophetic state. And for some reason, two men, Eldad and Medad, were not in the tent with the elders but had remained in the camp, and it was said they prophesied in the camp – again, no mention of anything said. And it was the same with Samuel and his prophets – no record of a message, only that they prophesied.

Having mentioned the elders in the camp, I’d like to bring out another very important aspect of that story. It was reported to Joshua by a young man that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, not the tent, and Joshua asked Moses to forbid them. Well, the reply given by Moses is highly significant. He said: ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.’ This is an

astonishingly early expression of the universality of the action of the Spirit, surely a prophetic wish; it is a wonderful anticipation of the prophecy of Joel which we will be hearing about regarding the pouring out of the Spirit, and of its fulfilment at Pentecost. But here is Moses saying: 'Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit on them.' We can parallel this with St Paul's words to the Corinthians: 'Now I want you all to speak in tongues but even more to prophesy.' Both passages show there is to be no jealousy about the action of the Spirit; his gifts are to be wished for, for all the community.

We can see this prophetic state as parallel to the action of the Spirit at creation; he hovered over the chaos and prepared it; he hovers over the prophet who is helpless and formless, and prepares him to receive the word and encourages him to take flight as it were, to come out and proclaim the word. And when the word is received the Spirit is active again to help the prophet to respond with all his heart and soul, with faith, and with all the warmth of his love, to the word; to give not only intellectual assent to it but a loving attention as he is 'aglow with the Spirit', to use St Paul's vivid phrase.

Fr Montague likened this spirit-word relationship to pregnancy and birth; the Spirit prepares and shapes and forms during pregnancy, at birth the word is the completion of his action and brings it to fulfilment – both are essential. I might take this further and say the spirit gives the 'after-care' to the new life – the love and care and warmth. So you don't just look at a new baby and say: 'I know I have a baby' expressing the knowledge of the fact of its birth, but you clasp it close and kiss it and cuddle it and love it and cherish it. And that is what the Spirit helps a prophet – and us – to do to the Word of God; prepares us to receive it and inspires us to love it.

... We have considered the life-giving and creative Spirit, whose presence is immortal and abiding; the Spirit who comes upon people and fills them, who gives them special gifts, and especially, the gift of prophecy. Let me add that the idea of the guidance and leading and instruction by the Spirit, which comes out clearly in the New Testament is also in the Old. ... It all adds up to a wonderful preparation for the fuller revelation and more powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

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