

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*I like discovering peace filled spiritual articles which help to transform me, and which I can share for the edification of other Christians, rather than all the stress filled articles regarding the chaos in the church.*

*I already pray the Divine Office, read the bible, offer Holy Eucharist, have a holy hour, intercessory prayer*

*Thanks to Bridget McCartney Nohara for sharing her experience. It awakened in me a simple and neglected gift, a more personal relationship with the Holy Spirit in befriending Him in order to lead me to Jesus beyond the ways I usually meet our Lord.*

*Come, Holy Spirit!*



## **Befriending the Holy Spirit**

**BRIDGET MCCARTNEY NOHARA**

At the end of my tenure at a small, Catholic liberal arts college where many students and faculty shared my beliefs, my upcoming graduation seemed particularly ominous. I had cultivated a strong [community](#), and leaving this intimidated me at best, terrified me at worst. While I was hopeful that there would

be plenty of people to befriend in the workplace and new town I'd be moving to, I was apprehensive about how I might find them, and more importantly, how I might develop meaningful relationships in a new environment.

Following graduation and relocating, I longed for an authentic community. As the hunt for a friend commenced, I soon realized this would be a complex endeavor. Now since the months and years after graduation, I have learned to develop habits for relationship-building. These have since become bastions in my life—and have led to fruitful friendships. **One of these new habits has proved pivotal: befriending the Holy Spirit.**

A quick online search provides a host of self-help resources: articles, books, and videos on how to grow your social circle, but I truly believe that it is the Paraclete who will make the biggest difference.

*Befriending him first may naturally lead me to Christ-filled human friendships.*

By our faith, we know with certainty God's promise to pour out his Spirit upon us. Jesus himself was filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism (Matt. 3:16). But as was perfectly fitting, **Jesus wasn't filled with the Spirit just to display his own intimacy with this person of the Trinity. Rather, he was acting as the perfect model, revealing to us our own capacity for this receptivity. "This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to the whole messianic people" (CCC § 1287). We are that messianic people,** and this outpouring is ours for the taking. This would be my new goal: to become acquainted with the Spirit so that I might be less anxious about finding a friend or building community, and become more open to the divine encounters set before me.

**We learn through Scripture that the Spirit is alive and will always come to our aid (Rom. 8:26).** The *Catechism* explains, "When he proclaims and promises the

coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus calls him **‘the Paraclete’, literally, ‘he who is called to one’s side’, ‘ad-vocatus’**” (CCC § 692). He is the great communicator, the great unifier, and our personal advocate. It was these characteristics that drew me to the realization that befriending him *first* may naturally lead me to Christ-filled human friendships. By the grace of God, I was right.

The idea of **“befriending the Holy Spirit”** might sound abstract, but I have discovered that it’s something we **can quite naturally knit into the fabric of our day. It starts with the simplest utterance: “Come, Holy Spirit.”** As I endeavored to know the Paraclete more personally, I found myself whispering this prayer countless times a day. And as I prayed, I **became aware of his holy presence surrounding me. It became very evident that, “He comes to meet us and kindles faith in us,”** (CCC § 683).

Employing this practice of simply calling upon the Holy Spirit in the mundane moments of my day, I found that my activities became more interesting, and my days seemed more meaningful. Furthermore, I felt more capable of resting rather than rushing as I entered more deeply into the present moment.

**In my daily prayer, I began to invite the Holy Spirit to assist me specifically in making friends.** If I was meeting someone for coffee, attending a gathering, or just stepping out of my house for a few hours, I would ask the Holy Spirit to come with me and communicate through me. I would ask for his peace, and that he would allow me to be alert and open. **Ultimately, I asked that the whole encounter be for the glory of God, and that the person I met with would get a glimpse of Jesus in that time frame.**

Interestingly, this new devotion to the Holy Spirit transformed how I felt when spending time with people. **Jesus tells us in Scripture that he will not ration the Spirit (John 3:34).** As I invited the Holy Spirit to be my

**advocate in these moments of my life, I was relieved of the pressures I often put on myself—pressures to sound or act a certain way, to say the right thing, to express myself well. Instead, I could focus on encountering the person in front of me. It also relieved the pressure that if I found no one to talk to, or no one with whom I connected naturally, that this, too, was for his glory.**

This notion of befriending the Spirit is for *all* of us. It is for new moms, adjusting to a quieter social schedule and nights filled with feeding. It is for parents, re-learning how to fill their days in the wake of their children moving out of the house. It is for the elderly, relinquishing bodily strength and surrendering activities they once were fully capable of. **In every season of life, we are met with new blessings and new burdens, and in every season of life, the Spirit is waiting in the wings, ready to move with power if only we call upon him.**

Opening myself up to the Spirit hasn't meant that every conversation is smooth as silk, nor that every person I meet has become my best friend. It is nothing like a magic trick, and it has not instantly developed a rich community of friends around me. **Instead it has infused every meeting with meaning. It has given me the confidence to know, at very least, that I am accompanied by a person of the Trinity, and he most certainly will grant me the graces intended for the moment.** And it can for you, too.