

# An Experience Based Definition of Spirit and Jesus and Mary of Nazareth

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## Abstract:

The loss of a loved pet or the desire of a new game are two of the various empirical examples of stretch, force, flow, love and knowledge that generate from changes between presence and absence or

concealment. The absent situation may well be beyond the material world and the concealed part may well be transcendental, thus both immaterial, beyond time and space. They are thus spiritual. Their interplay with the material presence results thus as spiritual force. The force provides a flow between the two situations that manifests empirically in the material world. The spirit as such provides life-giving force to matter in the world. The spiritual part that generates it remains however beyond direct empirical evidence. Material batteries, waterfalls and wind exemplify empirical material manifestations of flows between presence and absence. An experience based definition of holy Spirit stems from the discussion, in terms of presence and concealment. Mary mother of Jesus would be role model for receiving gifts from the holy Spirit and well of eternal life gifting graces of the holy Spirit.

O Mary Conceived without Sin, Pray for us who have Recourse to Thee

Spirit of Truth, Enlighten and Guide our Research

## INTRODUCTION

The essay presents the concept of the spirit based on the content explored in the introductory sessions of a catechism course. It relates everyday experience with the concept of the spirit and with the Christian (Catholic in particular) traditions. Additions to that training course have been in general placed in square brackets in order to show they have been added afterwards, as additional specifications. This includes the references, which have been placed after the course. Due to different presentation needs, some parts are ordered in a different way than the course, in order to help achieve a continuous development of argumentations. The opportunity of providing the course has been a received gift that allowed feedback and inspiration for further development of argumentations. The author expresses gratitude to the course organiser, the course participants and in general to all occasions of inspirations received.

During the course, only general reference to existing research was mentioned, without reference to previous research by the author. The course has endeavoured remaining within the path indicated by the Catholic Church, e.g. without investigating empirically based alternative paradigms to the Big Bang prospecting better reconciliation between science and religion. The course approach has been to follow the guidelines of the catechism official books with the official positions of the Church. This was the mandate.

The training approach endeavoured to actively involve the participants.

## **MODULE 1: THE OBSERVER: SPIRIT AS LIFE-GIVING FORCE BETWEEN PRESENCE AND ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT**

### **LOSS, DESIRE, PREOCCUPATION, CHANGE**

After the course introduction, a step by step presentation introduced the concept of spirit, through examples from experience.

Components of the empirical experiment: the observed events: situations occurring to the observer; the observation instrument: the observer acknowledging the types of situations and the macro categories of feelings; the recording of data: shared interviews. Number of repetitions of the experiment already performed in history: equivalent to the number of population acknowledging and sharing the different types of situations and macro categories of feelings multiplied by the number of times they share them during their lives. The following are thus considered outcomes of experience based empirical experiments.

#### **LOSS**

The girls and boys answered to the question: What/who would they miss. They mentioned a previous home, the loss of a younger sibling (it seemed respectful in that specific moment, given the boy's personal approach and the others, to avoid dramatising), of a pet, of an object. They thus also include dramatic events of life. Guiding questions to the participants allowed the group to build a definition of LOSSES as determined by the change between the PRESENCE [BEFORE] and the ABSENCE [CURRENTLY]. The facilitation of the group helped the girls/boys to reflect on the incredible motivations that such LOSSES bring to the person, such as deciding to review important aspects of their lives (Benazzo, 1999). They have a remarkable force, [in a way the ABSENCE manifests itself, becomes PRESENT in this force].

In the second session, objects brought hiddenly from home by a participant's parent have been given to a participant boy for distributing them following his own criterion. Some interesting reactions occurred and the girls/boys analysed them afterwards during the debriefing, with the facilitator's guidance. The owner said: "Hey!! But that is mine!!" showing the effect of the LOSS on her physiology, her sentiments and understanding given by the CHANGE from PRESENCE of the dynamo torch [BEFORE] and the discovery of the ABSENCE of its possession [CURRENTLY].

#### **DESIRE**

On the other hand, two boys have playfully scrambled to obtain a chain of cubes held together by an elastic band (a brain teaser to be twisted together into one only big aggregate cube). In this case the DESIRE was generated by the stretch between the hope of holding it PRESENT [AFTER] in the hands, in the near future, and the feeling of its [CURRENT] ABSENCE. [This absence may also be said CONCEALMENT of the yet undiscovered actual sensations]. There is a DESIRED CHANGE from ABSENCE/[CONCEALMENT] [CURRENTLY] TO PRESENCE [AFTER]. Such DESIRE, such stretch between these two has instilled a lively force. This was luckily somehow respectful and unruffled.

In the conscious gazing of the [CURRENTLY] MATERIALLY ABSENT object [and the CONCEALED sensations of holding it], the person could long for the sensations and discovery given by manipulating it PRESENT [AFTER] in the hands. This SEPARATION generates an INCREDIBLE FORCE in the observers involved.

#### SPIRITUALITY OF THE STRETCH BETWEEN PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

One girl went to the blackboard to interview what the others would DESIRE in terms of gifts to receive. Replies were such as a dog, a cat, electronic games, a certain smart phone, etc. [If past, present and future are considered as registering events in different times, then what is present in one moment was before absent/concealed and will become absent/concealed sometime in the future. All possible pasts and all possible futures may be considered (Benazzo, 1999).] [An ABSENT/CONCEALED occurrence is [CURRENTLY] IMMATERIAL. Ratzinger (1998) indicates that Augustine has first of all seen the spirit in an ontological sense as opposed to matter]. IMMATERIAL is considered here in the same way as SPIRITUAL. The ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT of the MATERIAL object, pet, etc. generates the PRESENCE OF A SPIRITUAL FORCE; the DESIRE in the case considered here. This DESIRE provides LIFE-GIVING FORCE moving the person's actions in certain directions.

#### PREOCCUPATION

When the desired object is obtained, WITH THE POSSESSION there are then other movements between presence and absence: For example the PREOCCUPATION of that PRESENCE [CURRENTLY] becoming ABSENCE [AFTER], because e.g. misplacement, breaking, or other. It would have changed the previous movement from DESIRE [CURRENTLY] into another movement, another life-giving power generated from different stretches between PRESENCE and ABSENCE. [The manifestation of the PRESENCE of the ABSENCE is in this case an exercise of consciousness that hypothesises a situation of ABSENCE. Without such an exercise, the stretch between presence and absence is lost].

#### CHANGE

We have humorously thought about the DESIRE of a cake, how many plates of cake one could think of eating one after the other. Noticeable quantities were playfully indicated, especially by the girls, confirming the understanding that normally females appear to like more than males sweet food. One girl jokingly talked about 5 slices of cake; another fancied about 10 slices of cake. Possibly they could perform one of those county fair eating contests, with good possibility of victory! (May be the boys could have been challenged on another type of food!) This playful humorous hypothesis led to think about the awaited morning snack: a homemade cake offered by one of the parents. The pursuit allowed considering two main aspects: On one hand when the successive slices of cake have been POSSESSED (IN THE STOMACH), the STRETCH between ABSENCE/[CONCEALMENT] and PRESENCE changes. The DESIRE OF THE MATERIAL, such SPIRITUAL [MANIFESTATION] that consists in the PRESENCE OF THE FEELING OF [MATERIAL] ABSENCE from the mouth and stomach, gradually disappears. The STRETCH between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/[CONCEALMENT] may change nature.

#### DESIRE TO DESIRE

Eventually what could remain could be a DESIRE OF HAVING AGAIN THE INITIAL DESIRE experienced before eating: the DESIRE TO DESIRE. This [ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT of the DESIRE] is yet again IMMATERIAL, THUS it generates a SPIRITUAL FORCE.

Before dealing with these, the LOSS, DESIRE, PREOCCUPATION, ABSENCE, [CONCEALMENT], PRESENCE, MATERIAL and SPIRITUAL, there had been an introductory part to the course as follows.

### **SOME MAIN BELIEFS ABOUT GOD**

A girl posed a fundamental relevant question about the veraciousness of the scriptures. “Do the scriptures tell lies?” This question could be replied in more than one way. The girl was probably referring to the modern difficulty of reconciling science and religion, i.e. the biological evolution and the Big Bang scientific paradigm with the Genesis of the Old Testament and other biblical descriptions in general. This recalled the first introductory question posed to the participants in the first minutes of the course: What or who has created all? The replies have polarised on God or the Big Bang. The trainer illustrated some current empirical data from some researchers that invite cautious scientifically based reservation about the Big Bang paradigm. In the past the Earth was considered flat for example, and this had been updated. Other updates could happen again, thus the debate may have to remain open. The discussion moved on as the theme was beyond the scope of the course. Another aspect of the question “Do the scriptures tell lies?” has converged, to remain on the central focus of the course about the spirit and holy Spirit for Christians, on how faithfully the New Testament reports the original wordings. Piero Ottaviano (2008) describes how at the time of Jesus of Nazareth the word of mouth was extremely well structured. History was presented within groups where each person had the opportunity to correct one another when particular information was reported incorrectly. Then the evangelists collected these stories. The New Testament has been kept in Greek language. Each copy of the bible was certified in the past by bishops (Ottaviano, 1996) contributing in that way to keeping it faithful to the testimonies of the early church, where church comprises all persons adhering to the belief, both secular and religious. [ALAND et al. (1979) present] a gigantic work that has collected practically all versions of the New Testament copied in the original Greek language. [Piero Ottaviano (1996) describes how] this review found some 500 versions. Many of the 500 versions or so had very little differences that were without relevant influence on the meaning of the text. These were therefore grouped and brought down to some 70 versions. This work and the other studies of the bible assure that the information has passed through the ages maintaining an accurate account of the historical events and actual words spoken. Piero Ottaviano translates literally from this Aland et al. (1979) work to Italian. In the passages where there are different possible literal translations, he keeps them all.

### **OTHER USES OF THE WORD “SPIRIT”**

Another argument of the first session had been to reflect about the use of the word SPIRIT in the daily ordinary language. This was intended to let consider concepts such as inspiration in art or other domains and try to figure out how this could relate to the spirit. The girls/boys were left reflecting on these until the next session. The discussion then highlighted how the artists would somehow manage drawing their artistic inspiration by feeling in particular ways the stretch between ABSENCE/[CONCEALMENT] and

PRESENCE. Inspiration is in such cases most often thought as the God's spiritual manifestation in the [MATERIAL] world.

## **MODULE 2: THE OBSERVER: SPIRIT AS FLOW, LOVE AND TRUTH; AND TEMPTATIONS**

### SESSION 2

#### **SPIRIT AS FLOW AND LOVE BETWEEN PRESENCE AND ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT**

Components of the empirical experiment: the observed events: situations occurring to the observer; the observation instrument: the observer acknowledging the types of situations and the macro categories of feelings; the recording of data: shared interviews. Number of repetitions of the experiment already performed in history: equivalent to the number of population acknowledging and sharing the different types of situations and macro categories of feelings multiplied by the number of times they share them during their lives. The following are thus considered outcomes of experience based empirical experiments.

After exploring PRESENCE and ABSENCE[/CONCEALMENT] mainly in the playful aspects of objects and pets, the discourse explores them in the INTERPERSONAL relations. The trainer evokes two lovers, for example their parents after they met each other. If the two were reciprocally strangers without interest in each other, would they feel the absence of the other when the other is far away? The agreed reply was that they would feel indifference. The girls and boys have replied to the question why the two persons would feel the stretch between presence and absence[/concealment]. Also in this case there was one of the girls and boys who interviewed the others from the blackboard. The answers indicated more than one reason and the most frequent was: LOVE. LOVE would be such LIFE-GIVING FORCE that MANIFESTS the stretch between PRESENCE and ABSENCE, between PRESENCE and CONCEALMENT. This stretch has a FORCE generating a FLOW, manifested in the actions of the two persons in LOVE. This is then compared with the other situations previously explored. There is a LOVE for what the desired OBJECT promises, such as game enjoyment, discovery. There is the LOVE FOR KNOWLEDGE; for what it provides. MEMORY manifests the LOVE for remembering the PAST in THE CURRENT TIME. MEMORY is thus both SPIRIT and LOVE for what is absent in the PAST. Such [LOVE of] MEMORY and the LOVE of KNOWLEDGE generate FURTHER CURIOSITIES, longing for additional and deeper KNOWLEDGE, LOVING further KNOWLEDGE. MEMORY and KNOWLEDGE thus longs for new MEMORIES and KNOWLEDGE. On one hand, DESIRE of DESIRE manifests a stretch, a FORCE due to an absent level of DESIRE. On the other hand, LOVE may generate desire of more LOVE, i.e. the LOVE of renewed or additional FLOW of LOVE: love of love.

#### **AN EMPIRICALLY BASED DEFINITION OF SPIRIT**

Based on these empirical observations, the spirit may be defined as stretch between presence and absence or concealment, which manifests as life-giving force providing a flow between these situations that manifests as love.

From these considerations, logical implications are drawn and related to the Christian concept of holy Spirit.

SESSION 3:

LOVE: INTENSITY AND OR DURATION of PRESENCE

The STRONGER, or deeper THE LOVE for a person, an object, a past experience and received information, then the STRONGER WOULD BE THE LIFE-GIVING FORCE between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT. The deeper the stretch between them, the stronger is [the DESIRE of] the flow of LOVE. [Two persons living together without appreciating the other, without discovering the other, would hardly feel the ABSENCE, as there was no occasion to feel the presence of the other]. The scrutiny also highlighted another determinant: The longer the KNOWLEDGE of a person or of a LOVED object, of a pet, in the sense described through the story of "The Little Prince" (written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943) where the wolf says to the little prince) "it is the time you have" devoted to "your rose that makes your rose so important", the DEEPER then is the FEELING of stretch from the ABSENCE or CONCEALMENT. This may thus be felt even when the person or object are distant some few steps. Thus a PROLONGED LOVED PRESENCE generates a STRONGER, deeper, LIFE-GIVING STRETCH between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT. Such spiritual stretch generates flows materialised into actions. In general thus LOVE is crucial in manifesting all the various stretches between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT. LOVE and SPIRIT are thus two companion concepts. [LOVE enacts a SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS and ENHANCES SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS]. [Ratzinger (1998) and Levering (2014) expound how Augustine draws on the first letter of John (1 John 4: 7-16) to call the holy Spirit as love. In addition, John's verses indicate two directions. "If we love one another, God abides in us" (1 John 4: 12), where the action is from the person. While (1 John 4: 13) "We recognise that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit", where the spirit of God acts, thus giving us the ability to abide to God thus to love]. Where there is LOVE there is SPIRIT, in particular holy Spirit. Where there is holy Spirit there is love. In addition as (1 John 4: 7) "Love is from God" and (1 John 4: 16) "Love is God", Ratzinger notes therefore that "love is 'God from God' ". Coffey (1984) maintains that "the Father's love, which is the holy Spirit, is actualised fully only in our response, which is a human love enabled, elicited, and sustained by the holy Spirit active within us"].

SESSION 3

### **CONTINUOUS PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT AND A FIRST EXPERIENCE BASED DEFINITION OF HOLY SPIRIT**

In the stretch between PRESENCE and ABSENCE[/CONCEALMENT], many absent situations may often be beyond the material world and many concealed parts may often be transcendental. In addition, the ABSENCES [and CONCEALMENTS] of material situations which occurred or will occur in different times and different places may aggregate together. These immaterial situations occur irrespective of the space distance or the time interval and are as such spirit. Their intensity is rather a result of the [stretch and] flow between the two, a function of the love for the presence that the interplay with the spiritual absence[/concealment] expresses. The stretch thus occurs beyond time and space. [The word for

beyond time and space is eternal. What is eternal is ever PRESENT. Thus even if the absence[/concealment] is immaterial and alternates with the MATERIAL PRESENCE; even if the MATERIAL is in time and space, the stretch between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT is eternally PRESENT, beyond time and space. The spirit transcends thus time and space localities.]

## SESSION 2

In another occasion, two trainers of a course from another room entered to take two chairs for their room (kindly asking). This has been the occasion to think how the chairs situation changed from PRESENT [BEFORE] to ABSENT [CURRENTLY] from the room. The two chairs remained though PRESENT IN THE MEMORY of the girls and boys, as PRESENT manifestation of ABSENCE. This has been an example for thinking how the PAST of each one of us is [concealed in the past], absent, however it remains [PRESENT immaterially, i.e. SPIRITUALLY] transformed as MATERIAL manifestation of the MEMORY. MEMORY provides the subjects of our thoughts that drive our actions thus it represents LIFE-GIVING SPIRITUAL FORCE generated by the stretch between PRESENCE in the PAST and CURRENT ABSENCE. This force generates actions that are flows].

[In a perspective of eternity, which translates to beyond time and space, the absence of the chair from the room and its presence both occur. What in the perspective of an observer who lives in time and space is the absence of one material situation, in a perspective of eternity beyond time (and space) it is actually concealment of the situation. Thus what is absent in an observer's time and space perspective is concealed in an eternity perspective]. The discourse has then provided a glimpse for further reflection. GOD is considered here in a first view and implicitly, as dogmatically omniscient and eternal. On the other hand, if God is considered comprising all occurrences [in all times, past, present, future and in all space coordinates, thus beyond time and space], then God has [some mode of] perfect memory of each and all occurrences, i.e. sees them all in omniscience. God sees [or comprises] a room both when a chair is in the room and when it is moved to another room. God sees [or comprises] when each one of us is in presence of a person, object and knowledge and as well when these are absent[/concealed]. God has perfect KNOWLEDGE, of all these LIFE-GIVING FLOWS involved in the stretch/change between PRESENCE and ABSENCE[/CONCEALMENT]. The HOLY SPIRIT may therefore be considered as comprising the PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, i.e. OMNISCIENCE, of all these FLOWS OF LIFE-GIVING FORCES between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT. [These need to include also the act of observation, with the stretch between presence and absence/concealment within the Kantian (Kant, 2003) a-priori categories of understanding that allow knowledge itself].

A boy has interviewed the others on the characteristics of God: strong, powerful, gentle, ..., "cool" (as for example Jesus operates miracles), person (referred here implicitly to Jesus), omnipotent, ... About twenty characteristics were mentioned. The trainer has added the CONCEALMENT in transcendence. John the Baptist gave testimony that: "No one has ever seen God" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002, John, 1: 18). Jesus said: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002, John 6: 46). For Christians then God has become present to us through the incarnation in Jesus. [Jesus is "informed by the spirit" and there is "presence of the Spirit in Jesus himself" (Davies, 2014)]. There is a movement between the



TRANSCENDENTAL CONCEALED ETERNAL GOD FATHER and the manifestation as presence in the MATERIAL GOD SON INCARNATION. [Davies (2014), rather than considering transcendence and immanence, considers presence, hiddenness and presence in hiddenness. In words used here, concealment (absence) manifests as presence through the flow (love) between presence and concealment (absence). In scripture, after Jesus of Nazareth ascension (Davies, 2014) there is a fuller mode of presence of God incarnated in Jesus, the sharing of our human history. In the words used here, the memory of Jesus of Nazareth in history is spiritual manifestation, for Christians this is manifestation of the holy Spirit. Coffey (1984) considers Jesus with "the Father's radical bestowal of love on him, which love is the holy Spirit, and if the response of Jesus is a love for the Father which ultimately is a return of this same Spirit, then ... the holy Spirit exists as the mutual love of the Father and the Son"].

[As this movement, flow that MANIFESTS as HOLY SPIRIT occurs between a condition of PRESENCE and one of CONCEALMENT of God, it occurs beyond time and space, in ETERNITY. It is thus always PRESENT, always flowing. It is LOVE (Ratzinger, 1998 and Levering 2014). Concerning GOD, it is perfect love WITHOUT SIN. Communication between the PRESENCE OF GOD in Jesus and the CONCEALMENT OF GOD FATHER in transcendence is always present for Christians and this is revealed from Jesus onwards. John the evangelist writes (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002, John, 14: 16-17) "16. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, - 17. the Spirit of truth..."].

## **SPIRIT AS TRUTH**

[Aquinas (Wippel, 1989) analyses truth within the Aristotelian legacy and identifies three levels of truth. The proper truth, which is the one of the intellect, then the things themselves because they produce truth in the intellect, then the truth assigned to God, the cause of all things and knowing all intellects. For Aquinas, truth is perfected in the adequation of the intellect and the thing. The assimilation of a knower to something known causes knowledge. There is thus the entity of a thing, then truth as adequation, then knowledge. Levering (2014) notes that in the Johannine literature "the holy Spirit is rather overwhelmingly associated with truth". In terms of spirit from the discussion above, desire, loss, preoccupation of loss, are defined as effects on the observer induced by the stretch between presence and absence/[concealment] of physical situations. These conscious feelings in the intellect define thus these spiritual conditions. These are also grasped by the intellect as stretches between presence and absence/concealment in the form of memory and knowledge and consciousness. These spiritual conditions are always in adequation with physical situations and movements between presence and absence/concealment. Each observer may live differently these stretches, assigning subjectivity to the material objective occurrence, however the adequacy persists]. Spirit is thus always considered truth. Rewording what mentioned in the previous session, the facilitator presented to the girls and boys a description of God holy Spirit as the aggregation of all these spiritual conditions, in all possible situations. [They include the Kantian (Kant, 2003) a-priori categories of understanding of the act of observation, and include as such transcendental with respect to these categories.] As they all are true spiritual manifestation, God as their aggregation constitutes as such truth, perfect truth. [Truth in this perspective is spirit, or in other words veraciousness, truthfulness. These spiritual forces allow taking consciousness of the ego and self, which is positive in the discovery of the world and God, however they

thrust into the temptation of satisfying the self and ego, who is scared of humiliation, of humility most of all and thus runs into the temptation of exalting the ego and self by communicating to other observers memory and knowledge different than true ones, those actually possessed by the person. This is a movement away from truth, of falsification. The knowledge of the observer is true, however the observer communicates something different to the exterior in such cases. The listener hears a story different than what actually occurred. The stretches between presence and absence for the listener are different than what would have occurred listening to the true story. Even with the false story though the stretch between presence and absence/concealment remains true. There is adequation of the stretch with the spiritual flow. The truth of the spirit remains in this case, even if the narrator falsifies the situation. The narrator deceiving by falsifying could also tend to run into self deceit by a subjective interpretation of the stretch, by using logical frames that would allow self deceit. This would still leave adequation of the flow with the stretch between presence and absence. What would occur then is that the listener would provide a feedback that is true, i.e. spirit, for the listener, however this feedback becomes inharmonic with the spiritual manifestation of the true story that is concealed by the narrator. There would as such be two spirits that clash with each other. Self deceit could complicate this. This clashing would tend to generate inharmonic flows that harm the narrator.] Considering the spirit as truth giving personalised hints and suggestions helping to approach God truth, the falsification would deteriorate the capacity of the person[, the observer,] to listen to these personalised suggestions of the spirit. It would deteriorate thus the possibilities of inspirations. [The deceiver would renounce to a coherent aggregate of spiritual manifestations, a coherent aggregate of truths. For an observer compromising veraciousness, the adequacy between the thing and the intellect may well be different compared to the adequacy for an observer that abides to veraciousness, i.e. two intellects may have two different understandings and views of the same common empirical thing. Veraciousness would allow remaining a listener of the spirit. Truth in this sense would constitute, rather than adequation between the thing and the intellect, adequation between spirit and matter. It thus embodies veraciousness which would allow the spirit to communicate in personalised signs understandable to the predisposed person and allow the person to listen to these hints, inspirations, given by the spirit. The spirit is in this view spirit of truth, and veraciousness of the observer, i.e. an observer who communicates transparently, who is truthful, allows maintaining and further learning to listen to the spirit. In this perspective of God considered as truth, this truth springs through veraciousness, God manifests through veraciousness. In John (John 4: 18, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002) Jesus said to the Samaritan woman “What you have said is true” and then says to her (John 4: 23) “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth ...” a true worshiper may also be understood as an veracious person. The literal translation of Ottaviano in Italian (2008) (John 4: 23) writes “..., when the veracious worshipers will ...”. In this light the action of remaining veracious is in itself worshipping of God, allowing receiving the spirit of truth defined as ever present beyond time, i.e. eternal. The spirit of truth as life-giving force and as eternal provides eternal flow of life, beyond time and space.]

## **ABIDING TO THE SPIRIT OR SATISFYING THE WORLD**

The search has progressed [proposing TEMPTATIONS, starting by considering a “sinful” object. A girl proposed a stolen object as sinful. The trainer has somehow stolen the two mobile phones/smart

phones from a boy (who has kindly turned the head away to allow that). These were put at the centre of the table. We noticed how ALL COULD HAVE RENOUNCED TO THE TEMPTATION of grabbing that “sinful” object. This allowed showing that for girls and boys this was an occasion allowing them ALL WINNING SPIRITUALLY with respect to that material sinful situation of the object. The proper owner eventually received the phones back.

The competition for obtaining a material object has also given the opportunity to talk about rewards in the MATERIAL world in comparison with rewards in the SPIRITUAL domain, in the following way:

As mentioned for the previous examples of the cake, ALL of the girls and boys COULD HAVE RENOUNCED EXAGGERATING in eating the cake, as a VICTORY IN THE SPIRITUAL domain. Exaggeration in eating is subjective especially in young who develop very fast at times. Conversely, ONLY FEW COULD HAVE EXAGGERATED in eating the cake in the MATERIAL domain, unless the parents of the girls and boys had been extremely bountiful in preparing cakes.

Under an additional perspective, a curiously interesting one person game may be grabbed by only one person in the material domain, while it may be looked at, desired and renounced by all. Even if ONLY ONE girl/boy of the group could capture that game materially, to withstand the DESIRE (or LOSS in other examples) of holding it and draw from them positive energy provides victories in the spiritual domain. All persons may thus win in the spiritual domain. Eventually, all could find an agreement by which each has an equal share of the time for holding and experimenting with the game, or another cooperative agreement. This is conducive to winning all in cooperation. Cooperation is in this view a result of participants winning in the spiritual domain. [In cooperation, the ego and self renounce and donate to others. This is a form of love. The victory of the ego and self occurs in the sphere of competition, while the latter is within a spiritual domain and is conducive to a victory of cooperation. There may be games in which all have equal access to chances of winning a competition. For example in a group competitive game that is repeated a large amount of times. Winners of previous sessions may though wish to stop being participants of the game and disrupt the activity. There would be the need of cooperation to keep the competitive game live. For others winning could be just having fun during the game. Further analysis on this is beyond the scope of these pages.]

Self and ego would impede perfect love without sin. [Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Petti,2014) indicates on 17 June 2013 that love tears down the walls of egoism. Love is normally related more to the feminine part in each one of us, male and female, as traditionally the mother has been donating her presence to the children]. The Church indicates Mary mother of Jesus has donated herself totally to God, renouncing to her self and ego. Catherine Labouré (a Vincentian, 1915) received visions from Mary of Nazareth giving her the inscription “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee”. Mary provides an inspirational example of love. She as such would have received the grace to abide to truth and love conceived without sin. For Christians and others, she received this in such a perfection to be conceived by her parents, as Jorge Mario Bergoglio recalls (Petti, 2014, Angelus of 8 December 2013), without original sin, and to remain without sin, in such a perfection to become mother of God. With the holy Spirit embodying such perfect love, following temptations of the ego and self would impede the full manifestation of the holy Spirit in the observer. [TEMPTATION would enthrall into pleasing the self and

ego or to falsify in order to please others that please our self and ego], rather than abiding to LOVE and truth. Invited, one of the girls/boys read the New Testament (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002) Luca evangelist 4, 1-14 named "The TEMPTATION of Jesus". This starts with "1 Filled with the holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted ...," and ends with "14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit ...", were temptations are indicated as the temptation of Jesus to satisfy himself, by creating bread for his hunger, by willing for himself the power and glory of all kingdoms of the world, by proving God's protection over him by throwing himself from the parapet of the temple. The girls and boys answered to the questioned whether there was a repetition in the paragraphs read. The repetition would be between the first and the last paragraph. What difference could the girls and boys find between these two? The group was guided to perceive that Jesus was before "Filled with the holy Spirit" and after he was "in the power of the Spirit". The question was then what was between these two different ways Jesus lived the holy Spirit: The TEMPTATIONS and how Jesus has tackled them. [The renunciation of temptation to satisfy the ego, the self,] would have ACTIVATED in Jesus the POWER of the holy Spirit. [In light of what discussed above, the power would consist in keeping the stretch between presence and absence for the ego and self, renouncing to the flow they would long for, while abiding to the flow and love for the healthy desires of others. For John the evangelist (John 4: 24), as Ratzinger (1998) puts it "the word spirit expresses the otherness of God in opposition to worldly matters". There would as such be the worldly love, the one for the self and ego, and the spiritual love, the one conceived without sin and renouncing to the supremacy of the self and ego].

The attention went on a temptation similar to Jesus' temptations in the desert: in the MATERIAL domain, for example one only may become the prime minister of a country [or CEO of a very large company, e.g. a multinational] in a certain year, just in case she/he would also desire it. There would be many ways of interpreting the role. One would be to accept compromises with the own consciousness to which the role could be invited. Another would be to withstand such compromises. Different persons have different views on which would be compromises in their own consciousness. There would thus be different ways, many of which noble ways, to interpret the role. These would in general view the role as service to others. Many though, even if they would desire the role, would have to accept compromises with their own consciousness. These compromises would for them be temptations, so for them it is a SPIRITUAL VICTORY to renounce the desire of such role and as such remain faithful to their personal subjective consciousness.

## **MODULE 3: OBSERVER AND NATURE: EMPIRICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SPIRIT AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AS BREATH OF GOD**

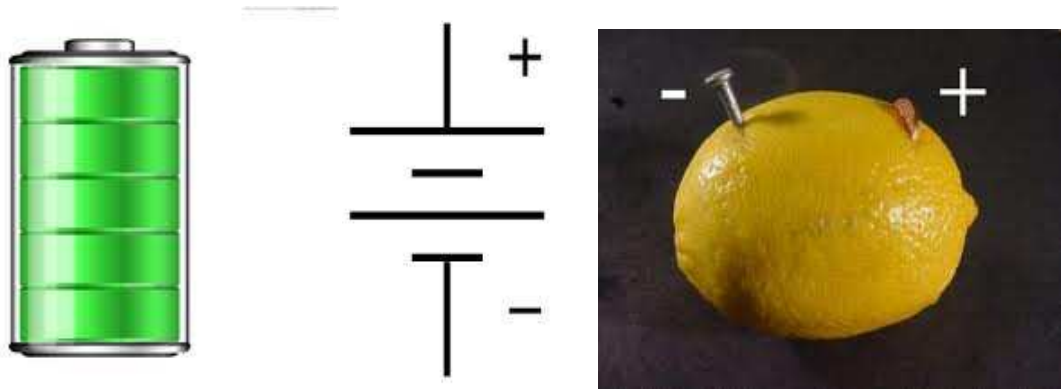
### **SESSION 3:**

The above EXPERIENCE BASED ANALYSIS of what would be the spirit and (what or rather) "who" would be the holy Spirit has observed the effects of stretches between presence and absence[/concealment] on the observer. These are now compared to the effect of stretches between presence and absence on the physical world observed, i.e. in nature.

## FLOWS BETWEEN PRESENCE AND ABSENCE IN NATURE

Components of the empirical experiment: the observed events: natural phenomena; the observation instrument: various instrumental means; the recording of data: instrumental registrations of data collected. Number of repetitions of the experiment already performed in history: extremely high number of repetitions of the experiment already performed. The following are thus considered descriptions of results of empirical experiments.

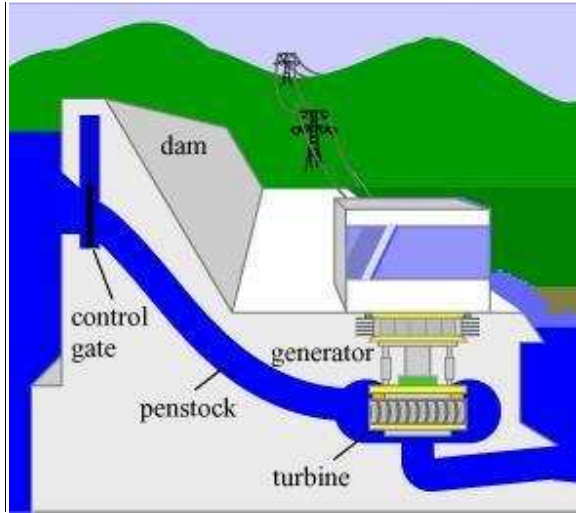
The girls and boys received figures with the invitation to portray them by gestures or body movement, to let the others understand and guess. Some of them were reluctant to do this mime. The important thing is that they tried to figure themselves representing them, favouring MEMORIZATION. The first group of figures represented a battery. Inside the battery, chemical reactions supply energy that thrusts the flow of current from the negative (-) to the positive (+) terminal (source: Wikipedia) generating a potential. When the battery is connected to a device, there is a flow that occurs between these two poles that gives energy, flowing from the higher voltage (+) to the lower voltage (-).



[http://hilaroad.com/camp/projects/lemon/lemon\\_battery.html](http://hilaroad.com/camp/projects/lemon/lemon_battery.html)

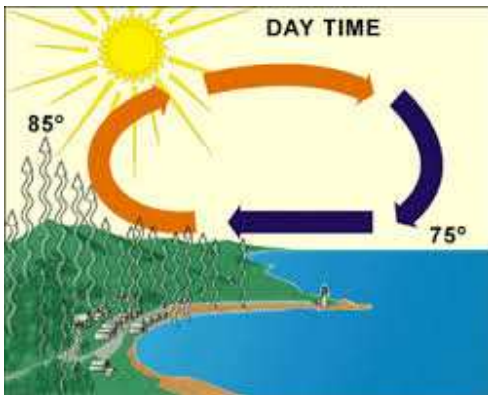
Voltage is one major determinant of the energy stored by the battery and ready to FLOW into power to move some kind of motor. This is determined by the electric POTENTIAL DIFFERENCE between two points, where one of the two points is the ground. The voltage is also called TENSION. The TENSION, as differential with respect to a ground, represents a tension (stretch) between a PRESENCE (+) and an ABSENCE (-).

A WATER DAM was another example of flow between presence and absence.



On one side there is presence of a higher level of water than on the other side of the dam, where most often there is just a river stream in the valley bottom. A FLOW, a stream of water between PRESENCE and ABSENCE provides force generating electricity.

The example of the BATTERY and the WATER DAM are found in some restricted places on Earth. What could be an example of a PHYSICAL FLOW that is present throughout the whole Earth? The WIND has been considered.



In a daytime sea breeze, land warmed by the sun warms by conduction the air above, faster than the sea does. WARMER AIR is less dense than colder air above thus receiving an upward thrust as for an air balloon. This DECREASES PRESSURE compared to the nearby area with colder air and generates a DIFFERENTIAL IN AIR PRESSURE (source: Wikipedia). An air flow generates from the colder area of relatively higher pressure (relative PRESENCE) to the warmer area of lower pressure (relative ABSENCE). This generates the sea breeze. In general, a differential in air pressure between two regions generates WIND. These FLOWS are LIFE-GIVING FORCE moving moisture, contributing to clouds formation and to rain that nurtures nature.

If these differences, tensions become too strong and control is lost, they may become destructive. Examples are, a battery that is charged too much heats too much leaking dangerous chemicals; if a dam

lets the difference dissipate in too much a short time, the valley below and its population are tragically devastated; dramatic weather conditions may bring about destructive cyclones with tragic casualties. The physical and normally life-giving forces become destructive. Quick discharge of such high potentials could be considered also in the observers' experience. Renouncing to temptations of the ego and self would generate high spiritual potentials. Careful release of such potential in other channels, i.e. channels of love for the others, would channel the stretches between presence and absence towards allowing various levels of manifestation of the holy Spirit in the observer. It would allow avoiding destructive flows.

## **A DEFINITION OF HOLY SPIRIT ASSOCIATED TO THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN**

The Old Testament, on which the New Testament draws, recalls, among others, the idea of the spirit of God with the concept of wind using the word "Ruach" that in Hebraic has three main meanings: SPIRIT; WIND (in the sense of movement of air); BREATH. Breath stands also for source of life (Bonting, 2006). Translations in other languages mostly lose this multiplicity of meanings in one only word.

BREATH allows LIFE in a human person. WIND as flow between presence and absence of high pressure allows WILDLIFE on earth and may be considered the BREATH OF EARTH. SPIRIT as LIFE-GIVING FLOW OF LOVE between situations of PRESENCE and situations of ABSENCES/CONCEALMENTS may be considered as the BREATH OF GOD. The word "Ruach" comprises this common thread. The TOTALITY OF SUCH BREATHS OF GOD would include ALL THE LIFE-GIVING LOVING FLOWS between ALL PRESENCES AND ABSENCES/CONCEALMENTS. [These would include the spiritual flows involving the observer's Kantian (Kant, 2003) a-priori transcendental categories of understanding used, i.e. those involved in observing, memorising and knowledge; those that, as spiritual flow, contribute in generating actions. Thus the spirit would be acting immanently on the visible empirical matter, while keeping hidden parts, i.e. remaining transcendental in its complete aggregate. Such totality of love would constitute the HOLY SPIRIT].

## **MODULE 4: IMPLICATIONS: SPIRIT AS GIFT AND A SPECIAL ROLE OF MARY MOTHER OF JESUS**

### **SESSION 2**

### **MARY MOTHER OF JESUS OF NAZARETH AS WATER SPRING OF ETERNAL LIFE GIFTING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

[For Christians, God as love conceived without sin, the holy Spirit, gifts the son Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus says (John 4: 10, 14) 10. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 14. "... whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life". Ratzinger (1998) recalls (John 7: 39) "39. He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive" indicates that this well is the well of the Spirit and that the movement of giving is specifically of the holy Spirit. Levering (2014) characterises the holy Spirit as eternal gift given by the Father (John 15: 26) "...the Spirit of truth that proceeds from

the Father”, and given by the Son. Love conceived without sin results as gift. As Catherine Labouré (a Vincentian, 1915) reports the inscription gifted to her in vision by Mary of Nazareth “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee”, Mary would have excelled in love conceived without sin and would have become a “water welling up to eternal life”. In addition, Mary of Nazareth appearing in vision to Catherine Labouré (a Vincentian, 1915) asks her to obtain a statue (also engraved in a medal) in which she appears bestowing all kind of graces to persons, and she invites to ask her for all graces. Mary of Nazareth would have abided in love in such an excellence and perfection that she would bestow graces of the holy Spirit, that is the gifts of the holy Spirit. As the holy Spirit is gifts, bestowing all its gifts means Mary of Nazareth would gift the holy Spirit itself. As she is female, she would gift it from the female side of God. An example of a grace from God could be gifts of renouncing to temptations. This would allow the observer to become or return more in power of the spirit. The first letter of John (1 John 4: 7-16) analysed in detail by Ratzinger (1998) and Levering (2014) indicates how abiding to love would allow the holy Spirit to abide in the observer. Love is in this view gifting oneself to God and the others, and God as love bestows gifts, graces]. The discourse about gifts was introduced by talking about charisms and a full analysis is beyond the scope of this paper as the fruits of the holy Spirit have been presented later in the course: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (self-control). What was noted in relation to the presentation of the spirit was that in them there are the categories of the “us” and of the “yes” (to the other), rather than the “I” and the “no” (to the other). These would correspond to the gifts of renunciation of the temptations of the self and the ego. The Spirit of God and love, as mentioned above, results in renouncing to the perspective of the self and ego and in abiding to the perspective of the others and all, loving the neighbour as oneself.

## CHARISMS

From the discourse, at the end of the second session, a boy asked about the market economy. This allowed relating the discourse with the division of labour that provides economic advantage in competition to whom is more productive than others in certain productions or phases of production. This allows decreasing costs of products for all thus giving possibilities for more free time or more income to more people. Then institutions interact with market forces to shape how additional free time or income is allocated to citizens. This recalled the need to introduce the discourse on charisms, even if shortly in this introductory presentation of the HOLY SPIRIT, as they would be described in the next phases of the course. Economic discourses allowed also mentioning cooperative economic aspects, such as redistributive taxes. Economics and its controversial aspects were only just mentioned, as beyond the scope of the course. What was mentioned was that the LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT would bring each one of us to have a gift for one or some specific fields of activity. To try to “LISTEN” to the HOLY SPIRIT would thus help discover the own true vocation entrusted from God and manifesting God. Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Petti, 2014, 6 November 2013) indicates authentic charisms as graces that are received when used for the benefit of all. One of the girls and boys has interviewed the others, as a session closure activity, to collect on the blackboard what each one of them would at that moment be most willing to do when grown up.

## BEING TAMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT



The little prince and the rose (De Saint-Exupery, 1995) as mentioned in reference of the previous session, recall the issue of love. The Little Prince loves his rose because he has devoted so much time to that rose. He misses that rose when he is far away, while he is indifferent to the other roses. He then meets a wolf and tames it, while he is tamed by the wolf. He devotes time to their relation, generating love. The wolf will miss the little prince, and will feel the love in the occasions that will recall the little prince such as his hair when watching the colour of wheat in the fields and their floating in the wind.



The attention went on the docility to the holy Spirit, to allow to be tamed on the example of the little prince. [Howell (2011) indicates that the beatitudes (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002, Mathew 5: 3-11) may primarily be considered as graces bestowed to persons. They would indicate behaviours that allow remaining abiding to the holy Spirit, to love conceived without sin and truth, thus allowing receiving gifts from the holy Spirit.] These behaviours would make the person more tamed by the holy Spirit. To follow Jesus and his words would allow loving in the right way and to be tamed by the holy Spirit. Mary of Nazareth mother of Jesus would in this light be a shining role model of attitudes for abiding to love conceived without sin. [Mary of Nazareth excelled in humility and veraciousness and she abided in love conceived without sin. Humility is renouncing to pride of the ego and self. It is as such an act of love.] Given the holy Spirit omnipotence, it would be illusory to tame the holy Spirit, and it is rather being tamed by the holy Spirit by abiding in love and truth and humility. This would allow abiding in God such that the holy Spirit exercises in a greater degree its life-giving force, its omnipotence. Mary would have received such graces from the holy Spirit to abide perfectly in love, and to become completely in the power of the omnipotent holy Spirit. In such a power that for Christians [as Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Petti, 2014) indicates on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 during homely at the mass on the solemnity of Mary, Mary has become mother of God].

## POPE FRANCIS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

At this point the girls and boys have been invited to watch some very short videos of Pope Francis, who describes GOD with respect to the HOLY SPIRIT. Here you find in English two that are similar to those.

Pope Francis – thanks to prayer, the Lord gives himself as grace, as HOLY SPIRIT.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5QXRPB1wh0>

Pope Francis - HOLY SPIRIT proceeds from the Father and Jesus pours this in our hearts. LIVING WATER is the HOLY SPIRIT.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bsUA1sPWns>

## VISUAL WRAP UP OF THE MAIN THEME OF THE WORKSHOP

With respect to the concept of LOVE, the discourse highlighted that the STRETCH between PRESENCE and CONCEALMENT/ABSENCE that generates the LIFE-GIVING FLOW is felt more the more LOVE is BESTOWED TO THE PRESENCE. The MORE THE LOVE the MORE THE LIFE-GIVING FORCE occurs.

Three figures shown have been sketched on the blackboard. One represents a present, to recall the PRESENCE that is LOVED (missed when lost or desired when absent). [However this is only present in a certain time and space, materially. It is a worldly presence.] On the other hand there is an image of a hiding cat that represents the CONCEALMENT or ABSENCE. In between an image that recalls the FLOW OF LOVE that ENACTS the LIFE-GIVING FORCE of THE STRETCH between PRESENCE and ABSENCE. [This love would consist in the actual present, the presence of the spirit, personal and less visible. It would flow more the more the observer renounces to the worldly present of the self and ego, by donating as much as possible love conceived without sin.] The MORE LOVE is present, the LESS the stretch or tension between PRESENCE and ABSENCE/CONCEALMENT is necessary TO ACTIVATE THIS LIFE-GIVING FORCE.





For Coffey (1984), Jesus of Nazareth is “the incarnation of divine love in human love”. For Christians, Mary of Nazareth has excelled in love, the divine love conceived without sin, to conceive Jesus as creator of the Universe, who would be present in all such flows.

#### A SCHEMATIC DEFINITION OF HOLY SPIRIT AND SPIRIT

A summary was done on the main characteristics that have defined the spirit:

Spirit = life-giving force = love = knowledge = veraciousness

When these categories apply to God, they would become the following:

holy Spirit = gives life (thus omnipotent) = love conceived without sin = truth

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

A definition of spirit stems from empirical observation of experience as a flow generated from the stretch between presence and absence or concealment. Examples of these stretches are taken from the observer’s own experience and from the observed physical events. Loss, desire, preoccupation of loss, memory and knowledge are those considered for the observer. Batteries, water dams and wind are those considered for the latter. The flow results as love. The holy Spirit is shortly defined as embracing all these, including those moving the observer and the observation act, resulting as love conceived without sin that gives life and truth. When this is enacted to satisfy the self and ego and at the expense of others, this would lead to satisfying the world and losing contact with the spirit and the gifts it bestows. When this is enacted renouncing to the self and ego, then it would abide to love conceived without sin and would allow receiving as much as possible of the gifts, graces, from the holy Spirit.

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