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The Third Article—The Holy Spirit: A Still, Small Voice

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Let's start with who *you* are. What is your natural condition? (See catechism question 187.)

Not a pretty picture is it? We need help; and once again, it is God to the rescue. The Holy Spirit is true God, the third person of the Holy Trinity. He is holy, all-powerful, all-knowing. He is called by divine names, has divine attributes, does divine works, and receives divine honor and glory. (See Bible texts with catechism question 194.)

What is the special role of the Holy Spirit? While Jesus **SAVES US FROM** sin, death, and the devil, the Holy Spirit **BRINGS US TO** faith in our Savior and **BRINGS US TO** a godly life. It's not an easy job—this job called:

THE FOUR-PART PLAN

This work of the Holy Spirit is a big job—bringing us to faith and life as God's child. This is His four-part plan.

I. HE CALLS US

Think of a time when a grown-up or a friend called you to eat dinner or to get ready to do something together. How is their "calling" you different than the Holy Spirit calling you by the Gospel?

The Third Article

Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

what good works do you do that show others what it means to be a Christian?

IV. HE KEEPS US

What a comfort and relief it is to know that God works to keep us in faith and to keep us as His people.

James 4:7: The Holy Spirit even helps us to

Romans 8:26: The Holy Spirit even helps us to

THE TOOLS/THE RESULTS

We can't see the Holy Spirit; but we can see and hear and touch the tools He works with. These are powerful and very real tools. These tools bring the Gospel to our hearts and lives. These tools are the means of grace:

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We can't see the Holy Spirit; but we can see the results of His work in our lives. Just like a tree that is growing will have apples (or oranges or whatever), people that are growing in the Spirit will have the following in their lives (Galatians 5:22-23):



TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Ephesians 2:8-10: It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

The Third Article and its explanation.

The Third Article— Resurrection and Life

IT'S YOUR FUNERAL

Do you ever think about death? What are some of your questions and concerns about dying? See what the Bible says.

The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

Death came to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

Dust you are and to dust you will return. (Genesis 3:19)

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. (Revelation 14:13)

If we died with [Christ Jesus], we will also live with Him. (2 Timothy 2:11)

way since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

However, as Christians, we can talk about death and plan our funerals without being morbid, without feeling totally unsure of the future, because we have Jesus' sure promise that He is always with us and that He will raise us from the dead.

In small groups or with a partner talk about these questions:

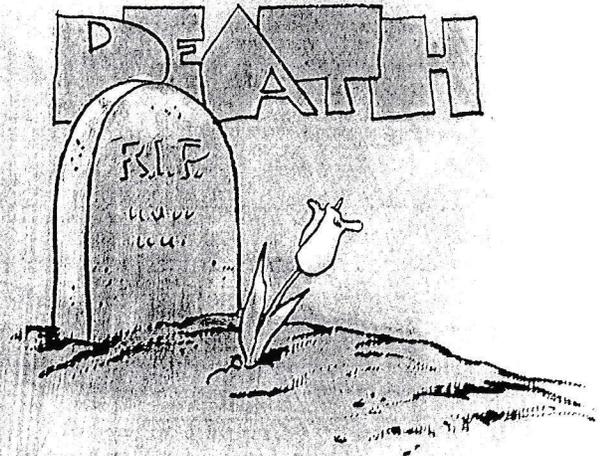
What would you like your funeral to be like? What songs and Scripture readings would share your faith with the people who attend?

What do you think happens to your earthly body when you die? Where might you like your body to be buried?

What message do you want engraved on your grave marker? How can the message be a witness of your faith to the people who see it?

Let's face it. Death is frightening to each of us. No one who has ever died can tell us what it's like to die and be buried. Death is a mysterious part of our future. Just thinking about death or being around someone who is dying might give us uncomfortable feelings. Visiting a funeral home perhaps sends shivers up the spine.

Doctors can't always agree on what death is or exactly when it takes place. Even without an accurate definition, people continue to die because death is how life on earth ends. It's the last act of every human life. God planned it that



IT'S YOUR RESURRECTION

One of the truths we confess in the Third Article is, "I believe in the ... resurrection of the body." Whatever sin and death do to our bodies, the Holy Spirit can undo! He is both able and willing. Remember, as you read and talk about these Bible verses, that the ending for our earthly bodies is a beginning for our life in heaven with Jesus.

Why can Christians trust that Jesus will keep His promises? (John 11:23-26)

When will the resurrection of the body take place? (1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 52)

What will Christ do to the bodies of all believers? (Philippians 3:21)

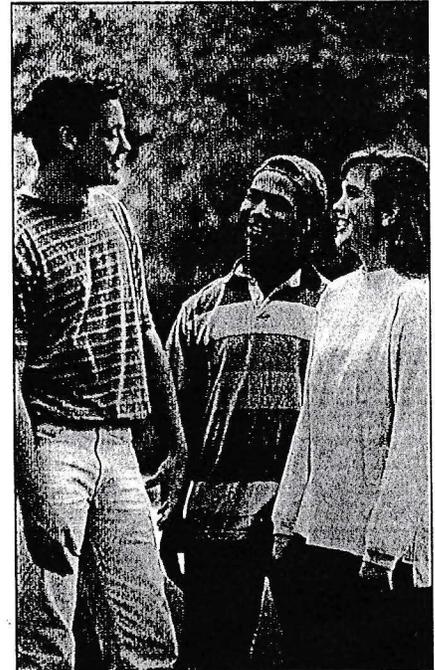
Read catechism questions 187-92 to discover more about resurrection and the Last Day. Based on Scripture, what do you think your resurrection will be like?

WAITING CONFIDENTLY, SHARING THE HOPE

"While we live our lives each day in the meantime, waiting for our death and resurrection, what do we do?" The apostle Paul seemed to be thinking about that question when he wrote: **Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).**

1. In the meantime, as you look confidently to your own resurrection, how can you work for the Lord while you live on the earth? Write your ideas here.

2. Imagine that your best friend just died from injuries he or she received in a car accident. Your parents take you to your friend's home to be with the grieving parents. They cry and ask, "I can't believe we'll never have Terry home again. Why did Terry have to die?"



Put your Christian faith into actions and words. You've known this family all your life, and you have shared with them a deep faith in Jesus. What would your actions be?

What words could you say to comfort your friend's parents?

How would your words and actions be different if this family had not known Jesus as their Savior?

3. Have you ever enjoyed a big family reunion where you met your grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and got to know many people while eating good food and having fun playing games? Christians have a big family reunion to look forward to—the Family of God being in heaven with Jesus someday.

Think of your relatives, neighbors, or friends who have already died. As Christians face death, there is real comfort in knowing that Jesus will give us new life with Him in heaven. What feelings do you have as you think about seeing in heaven all the people who accept God's free gifts of forgiveness and eternal life? That includes people like Abraham, David, Mary, Dorcas, Stephen, and Timothy. And then think about the blessing above all—we will see Jesus face to face!

Can you think of people in your family and community who don't know Jesus as their Savior, who don't have the hope of living with Jesus someday? God would have ALL people to be saved. That's why He sacrificed His only Son. With whom can you share the Good News of Jesus today? We would not want ANYONE to miss the eternal joy and peace of a heavenly home!

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

John 11:25–26: Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

Psalms 16:11: You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.

1 John 3:2: We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Continue to review the Third Article and its explanation.