

## THE APOSTLES' CREED – THE THIRD ARTICLE

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.

I cannot connect this article (as I have said) to anything better than Sanctification. Through this article the Holy Spirit, with His office, is declared and shown: He makes people holy [1 Corinthians 6:11]. Therefore, we must take our stand upon the term Holy Spirit, because it is so precise and complete that we cannot find another. 36 For there are many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, such as the spirit of man [1 Corinthians 2:11], heavenly spirits [Hebrews 12:23], and evil spirits [Luke 7:21]. But God's Spirit alone is called the Holy Spirit, that is, He who has sanctified and still sanctifies us. For just as the Father is called "Creator" and the Son is called "Redeemer," so the Holy Spirit, from His work, must be called "Sanctifier," or "One who makes holy."

"But how is such sanctifying done?"

Answer, "The Son receives dominion, by which He wins us, through His birth, death, resurrection, and so on. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit causes our sanctification by the following: the communion of saints or the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. That means He leads us first into His holy congregation and places us in the bosom of the Church. Through the Church He preaches to us and brings us to Christ." ...

... See, here you have the entire divine essence, will, and work shown most completely in quite short and yet rich words. In these words all our wisdom stands, which surpasses and exceeds the wisdom, mind, and reason of all people [1 Corinthians 1:18–25]. The whole world with all diligence has struggled to figure out what God is, what He has in mind and does. Yet the world has never been able to grasp the knowledge and understanding of any of these things. But here we have everything in richest measure. For here in all three

articles God has revealed Himself and opened the deepest abyss of His fatherly heart and His pure, inexpressible love [Ephesians 3:18–19]. He has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us. In addition to giving and imparting to us everything in heaven and upon earth, He has even given to us His Son and the Holy Spirit, who brings us to Himself [Romans 8:14, 32]. For (as explained above) we could never grasp the knowledge of the Father's grace and favor except through the Lord Christ. Jesus is a mirror of the fatherly heart [John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3], outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But we couldn't know anything about Christ either, unless it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 2:12].

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