

# Life in the Spirit of Christ

## Models of Sanctification as Sacramental Pneumatology

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**T**HIS ESSAY ARGUES THAT the Lutheran tradition offers a sacramental approach to the theology of the Holy Spirit that shapes its view of the sanctified life. The term *sacramental* is used in the broad sense to speak of the Spirit's work in salvation history through means in creation—fundamentally, through the Son's own *human* life and history. Because such a pneumatology is grounded in the identity of the incarnate Christ as the privileged locus of the Holy Spirit, as the bearer and giver of the Spirit of God, we may refer to this sacramental view of the Spirit as an incarnational pneumatology. The term *sacramental* is also used in the narrow sense in this essay to refer to God's work through his instituted means of grace, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit works through ordinary means or signs in creation (that is, water, bread, and wine) not only to deliver God's word of forgiveness, life, and salvation to us now but also to shape our lives after Christ's own life in the Spirit. If the forgiveness that God delivers through his means of grace points us to the benefit of the sacrament, the life in the Spirit of Christ that flows from receiving such gifts of salvation refers us to the daily use of the sacrament.

Our argument proceeds in three stages. First, we show that a Nicene approach to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, while interested in drawing the Third Person's ontological distinction from us, ultimately points to his sanctifying works on our behalf as the basis for acknowledging and confessing his divine equality with the Father and the Son. In a creedal hermeneutic, an important shift is made from the immateriality to the materiality of the Spirit, from ontology to soteriology, which sets the stage for conceiving the Spirit's work through means in creation to bring about God's saving purposes.

Second, we argue that a material or incarnational view of the Holy Spirit finds its basis in the affirmation of the Spirit's inseparable connection to Christ's own flesh, the incarnate Word's life and mission. Pneumatology does not only look for the Spirit who comes *after* Christ, but sees the Spirit already *in* Christ. In a prominent patristic reading of the Jordan event, Christ's receiving of the Spirit for us in baptism paves the way in the Father's plan of salvation for Christ's giving of the Spirit to us in

our baptism.<sup>2</sup> There is a chain of salvation, a pneumatological link, between Christology and ecclesiology. We see that a sacramental pneumatology is finally grounded in a pneumatological Christology. In Lutheran theology, Luther's affirmation of the Holy Spirit's work through the external word is not merely a polemic move against enthusiasts but is an approach to pneumatology that assumes the Spirit's inseparable connection to Christ and his words of life.

Third, the essay presents three models of life in the Spirit—namely, baptismal, dramatic, and eucharistic models of sanctification—and highlights how these ways of conceiving the Christian life are grounded both in biblical narratives and corresponding sources in the Lutheran tradition. By showing the link between Christology and ecclesiology in these narratives and sources, we demonstrate how Christ's own cruciform life in the Spirit shapes the Christian's life in the Spirit. Finally, we suggest how these models, though they complement each other, may function practically in addressing particular issues faced in the life of the Christian, while directing him in some way towards the use or appropriation of the sacraments in everyday life. In short, this brief study yields three models of sanctification grounded in an incarnational and sacramental pneumatology.

### NICENE PNEUMATOLOGY

In his classic treatise on the Holy Spirit, Basil the Great (ca. 330–379) speaks of the Third Person of the Trinity according to both his divine nature and his grace towards us. Against the Arianizing pneumatomachians (“Spirit-fighters” or “Spirit-deniers”) who subordinated the Holy Spirit ontologically to the Father and the Son, reducing his nature to that of a “ministering spir-

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1. “The word ‘sacramental’ . . . may be understood in the narrow sense and simply mean the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. And it may be understood in the broader sense as a designation of a fundamental religious view, which seeks to find God, not in pure spiritual ideas, but in the small outward things of the world which are used by God as a means of manifesting himself in the visible and physical world” (Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, trans. John M. Jensen [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1953; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001], 152).

2. For a survey of various patristic reflections on the Jordan event, see Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegetown, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996).

it,”<sup>3</sup> Basil shows that the Holy Spirit shares the same dignity with the Father and the Son because he shares with them the divine name into which catechumens are baptized according to the Lord’s command and teaching in Matthew 28.<sup>4</sup> The pneumatomachians made a big deal of a particular doxology in use at the time — “Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit” — which they interpreted in Arian fashion, claiming that a difference in the prepositions (*to*, *through*, and *in*) meant a dissimilarity of natures among the three persons.<sup>5</sup> To buttress their argument, the pneumatomachians argued that another doxology also used at the time in the churches under Basil’s pastoral care — “Glory to the Father, with the Son, together with the Holy Spirit” — was an innovative liturgical rubric that should not be allowed in worship. Basil noted that the doxology in question was not innovative at all. It was grounded in the Lord’s instruction on and the church’s practice of Trinitarian baptism, which assumed and confessed “the union and fellowship” of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son.<sup>6</sup>

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### *Basil shows that the Holy Spirit shares the same dignity with the Father and the Son.*

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Basil’s influence is felt in our churches to this day, each time we speak or sing the common doxology, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> Yet Basil does not deny the proper use of the other doxology, where God’s people say “Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit,” as long as the same is not understood in a subordinationist manner. Both doxologies are ultimately Trinitarian, even if each one highlights something distinct about the Holy Spirit. The first doxology speaks of the Holy Spirit according to his divine nature — who he is in communion with the Father and

the Son. As Basil explains, the preposition “*with* proclaims the communion of the Spirit with God.”<sup>8</sup> Those who share in the same divine nature deserve the worship due to God alone. In the Council of Constantinople’s (A.D. 381) expanded version of the third article of the Nicene Creed, the confession of the divinity and lordship of the Holy Spirit, “who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,” bears the marks of Basil’s teaching against the pneumatomachians. The conglorification of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son confessed at Constantinople amounts to an extension of the argument for the *homoousios* of the Son with the Father confessed earlier at Nicea (A.D. 325).

In spite of its potential abuse by Arian sympathizers, Basil still accepts the second doxology, which, properly understood, speaks of the Holy Spirit in accordance with what he does for us and for our salvation in history, according to “the grace we have been given.”<sup>9</sup> As Basil puts it, in response to the pneumatomachian linguistic argument, “the preposition *in* expresses the relationship between ourselves and the Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> If the first doxology points to the divine person of the Spirit in himself (*theologia* or immanent Trinity), the second one points to the works of the Spirit for our benefit (*oikonomia* or economic Trinity).<sup>11</sup> Vestiges of this economic type of doxology are still present in our churches each time we ask God the Father to hear our prayers “*through* Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Since such prayers occur “*in*” or “*by*” the Holy Spirit anyway, we do not typically articulate in the rubric itself what the Spirit is doing. In this case, we do not talk about the Spirit. We simply pray in the Spirit. The Spirit is the one in whom we worship the Son and by whom we cry out to the Father through the Son.<sup>12</sup> We pray in the Spirit of sonship, of Christ.

When Basil teaches about the Spirit in the immanent Trinity, he distinguishes the Spirit from God’s creatures. As “holy” Spirit, the Third Person is not a ministering spirit, like an angel, but rather the source of their holiness.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the Spirit is the source of the sanctification or holiness of the saints.<sup>14</sup> When speaking of the Holy Spirit according to his divine attributes, Basil can also refer to his immateriality, for “God is Spirit” and cannot be reduced to time or space.<sup>15</sup> As “spirit,” the Holy Spirit is utterly distinct from creation and cannot be

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3. “Our opponents . . . divide and tear away the Spirit from the Father, transforming his nature to that of a ministering spirit” (St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997], 10.25).

4. *Ibid.*, 10.24.

5. *Ibid.*, 1.3, 2.4.

6. *Ibid.*, 10.24; Basil insists that “we follow the teaching of the Lord as our rule. . . . He [the Spirit] is numbered *with* them in the baptismal formula, and we consider it necessary to combine their names in the same way when we profess our faith, and we treat the profession of faith as the origin and mother of the doxology” (*ibid.*, 27.68).

7. “We have already said that as far as our understanding is concerned, to say ‘Glory to the Father *and* to the Son *and* to the Holy Spirit’ means the same as ‘Glory to the Father *and* to the Son *with* the Holy Spirit.’ We have received the word *and* from the very words of the Lord” (*ibid.*, 27.68).

8. *Ibid.*, 27.68.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. “Therefore, when we consider the Spirit’s *rank*, we think of Him as present *with* the Father and the Son, but when we consider the working of His grace on its recipients, we say that the Spirit is *in* us” (*ibid.*, 26.63).

12. “He who rejects the Spirit rejects the Son, and he who rejects the Son rejects the Father. . . . It is impossible to worship the Son except in the Holy Spirit; it is impossible to call upon the Father except in the Spirit of adoption” (*ibid.*, 11.27).

13. *Ibid.*, 16.38 (cf. 19.49).

14. *Ibid.*, 9.22–23, 19.49.

15. “His first and most proper title is Holy Spirit, a name most especially appropriate to everything which is incorporeal, purely immaterial, and indivisible” (*ibid.*, 9.22).

bound to any place. At this level of *theologia*, discourse on the Holy Spirit aims at safeguarding his divine nature, an important move against the Arians. In the larger scheme of things, however, this necessary move is really a penultimate one, for Basil is more interested in discussing the works of the Holy Spirit in our midst in order to lead us to the confession of his lordship. There is a Nicene hermeneutic at work in these efforts, grounded in St. Athanasius's (ca. 296–373) earlier claim against the Arians that the Word was not a human creature who was later anointed and exalted to become deified on the basis of his virtues or obedience. Rather, the Word, who is God with the Father, was anointed and exalted for our sake according to the flesh so that we might be exalted through him. In Athanasius's own words: "Therefore He was not man, and then became God, but He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us."<sup>16</sup>

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***Basil's greater interest lies in the works of the Holy Spirit for our sake (soteriology).***

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Athanasius and Basil share a theology from below, which moves from the works of the Son and the Spirit in the economy of God's salvation to a recognition of the divine nature they have in common with the Father. For Athanasius, we come to know, confess, and worship the Son as God, *homoousios* with the Father, on the basis of his works for us. In the same way, Basil shows that we come to know who the Holy Spirit *is* on the basis of what he *does* on our behalf. In Basil's pastoral application of the Nicene hermeneutic to the Third Person, the soteriological move to the story of the Spirit in our sanctification — the desire to speak of what the Spirit does freely in time and space

for us and for our salvation — drives the show. While the ontological distinction between God and his creatures is important, the soteriological claims of the creeds and the fathers concerning the joint mission of the Son and the Spirit in the Father's salvation of the world were determinative for the church's Trinitarian confession. At the level of *oikonomia*, what matters most is the Spirit's work in the life of Christ and his saints.

**PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHRISTOLOGY**

In his major work on pneumatology, after discussing the work of the Spirit in the Scriptures as the breath of God who carries out his will in history, Yves Congar concludes that the Holy Spirit's identity may be described not so much in terms of immateriality as much as "subtle corporeality."<sup>17</sup> While Basil can speak of the immateriality of the Holy Spirit in order to distinguish the Third Person from creation (ontology), we have argued that Basil's greater interest lies in the works of the Holy Spirit for our sake (soteriology). The overriding reason for safeguarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit lies in the church's confession of the saving work of the Spirit in baptism. Through the regenerating grace of baptism, humans become Spirit-bearing souls, and many blessings follow.<sup>18</sup> In view of the saving works of the Spirit from the beginning of our adoption in baptism to our final sanctification at the resurrection, we confess the Spirit to be God. Basil moves from the works of the Spirit to the worship of the Spirit: "Remission of sins is given through the gift of the Spirit. . . . Through the Spirit we become intimate with God. . . . Resurrection from the dead is accomplished by the operation of the Spirit. . . . Understanding all this, how can we be afraid of giving the Spirit too much honor?"<sup>19</sup> By locating the Holy Spirit's action in baptism and its benefits, Basil moves towards a material and thus sacramental view of his work. Such an approach assumes an incarnational view of the Spirit that highlights his inseparability from the Son, the Word made flesh, who bears and gives the Spirit.

The christological ground for a sacramental pneumatology requires that one look for the Holy Spirit not simply *after* Christ, but already *in* Christ, in his life and mission.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, Basil locates the Holy Spirit not only in the saving bap-

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16. *First Discourse Against the Arians*, 1.39, in *NPNE*<sup>2</sup>, 4:329. By deification, Athanasius does not mean that man becomes God by nature but rather that man becomes deified by grace through the Holy Spirit. For Athanasius, such deification is an all-encompassing Spirit-driven saving work that begins with the Christian's anointing in baptism and thus includes his participation in Christ's own resurrection, immortality, incorruptibility, and being in the Father's presence (cf. 1.41).

17. "Rûah-breath is not in any sense opposed to 'body' or 'corporeal.' . . . It is a subtle corporeality rather than an incorporeal substance. The *rûah*-breath of the Old Testament is not disincarnate. It is rather what animates the body. . . . The Greeks thought in categories of substance, but the Jews were concerned with force, energy, and the principle of action. The spirit-breath was for them what acts and causes to act and, in the case of the Breath of God, what animates and causes to act in order to realize God's plan" (Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith [New York: Crossroad, 1997], 1:3).

18. "Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to the kingdom of heaven, our adoption as God's sons, our freedom to call God our Father, our becoming partakers of the grace of Christ, being called children of light, sharing in eternal glory, and in a word, our inheritance of the fullness of blessing, both in this world and the world to come" (*On the Holy Spirit*, 15:36 [cf. 9.23]).

19. *Ibid.*, 19.49.

20. For a brief description of a Lutheran pneumatological Christology, see Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "Pneumatology: Key to Understanding the Trinity," in *Who Is God?: In the Light of the Lutheran Confessions: Papers Presented at the Congress on the Lutheran Confessions, Bloomington, Minnesota, April 22–24, 2009*, ed. John A. Maxfield (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2012), 137–39; for a fuller development of these ideas, see Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "The Holy Spirit in Christ: Pneumatological Christology as a Ground for a Christ-Centered Pneumatology," in *Propter Christum: Christ at the Center* (St. Louis: Luther Academy, forthcoming).

tism that Christ commanded for our sake *after* completion of his mission on earth, but *in* Christ's own incarnation. Referring to texts on the baptism of Jesus (John 1:33; Matt 3:17; and Acts 10:38), Basil asks: "But when we speak of the plan of salvation for men, accomplished in God's goodness by our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who would deny that it was all made possible through the grace of the Spirit? . . . Everything that happened since the Lord's coming in the flesh, it all comes to pass through the Spirit. In the first place, the Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit, who would henceforth be inseparably united to his very flesh."<sup>21</sup> Basil shows the defining action of the Spirit in the incarnation, being "present in every action he [Christ] performed," "there when the Lord was tempted by the devil," "united with Jesus when He performed miracles," and also never leaving him "after His resurrection from the dead."<sup>22</sup>

Before Basil, in the aftermath of the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), Athanasius shows a bit more clearly this pneumatological link between the baptism of Jesus and Christian baptism. The Word of God made flesh was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism so that we might receive the Spirit through him [that is, through the Word] in Christian baptism. Athanasius argues that "no otherwise should we have partaken the Spirit and been sanctified, but that the Giver of the Spirit, the Word Himself, had spoken of Himself as anointed with the Spirit for us."<sup>23</sup> The Word receives the Spirit in the flesh in order to give the Spirit to humanity. The Spirit's presence in Christ has a sacramental trajectory.

Luther's pneumatology acknowledges that the Holy Spirit cannot be bound to the spoken/sacramental or written word. The Holy Spirit cannot be manipulated *ex opere operato*, as our personal possession, as if he were an instrument of the word. At the level of *theologia*, "the Spirit is not bound *in* the word" because he "has his own existence in God's eternal glory, away from the word and from our world."<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the Holy Spirit, "as the revealing Spirit," comes to us freely and out of love only through the spoken and sacramental word, and in a sense binds himself to the word not for his own sake but for our benefit.<sup>25</sup> The Holy Spirit is intimately linked to the written word that is heard and spoken in proclamation, as well as the word that is seen, felt, and tasted in the sacraments. In his own way, Luther is applying the Nicene creedal hermeneutic to the question of the relationship between the Spirit and the word, privileging soteriology (the economy of salvation) over ontology in the formulation of pneumatology. For this reason, a

proper spirituality or view of life in the Spirit will not seek God outside of his word, which points us to Jesus Christ in the flesh. The inseparability of the Spirit and the word does not take away from the hiddenness of the Spirit, but gives priority to the materiality of his works in our midst. In paradoxical fashion, the Holy Spirit is both free from the word (*theologia*) and yet freely bound to the word (*oikonomia*). Similarly, the Lutheran confessors note that the Holy Spirit works faith "where and when he wills," and then immediately add that the Spirit does so only "in those who hear the gospel" (AC v, 3 [Kolb-Wengert, 40]).

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### *The Spirit's presence in Christ has a sacramental trajectory.*

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The ultimate move towards the material or sacramental view of the Holy Spirit depends entirely on Luther's christological understanding of the word. Scripture, oral proclamation (including absolution), and the sacraments point to and deliver Christ to sinners. Since "all Scripture tends toward him," Christ is the object or aim of the word (AE 35:122). Moreover, Christ is the one who speaks his promises today when the Scriptures are delivered to us in the proclamation. Christ is the subject or agent of the word.<sup>26</sup> The inseparability of the Holy Spirit and the word of God that is heard and spoken in the proclamation, as well as felt and tasted in, with, and under the water and the bread and wine, is entirely dependent upon the inseparable fellowship of the Spirit and the Word made flesh. There is no greater sacrament and sign of salvation than the incarnate Christ in whom the Spirit dwells and through whom the Spirit is given. In Luther's view, the Spirit is united to Christ's promise (*promissio*) under the sign (*signum*) in the sacraments, thereby revealing "his own manifestation in the humanity of Christ" today and making these sacraments the "concrete means for the work of the risen Christ" on our behalf.<sup>27</sup>

The Lutheran confessors, almost in passing, point to this word-centered character of the Holy Spirit's work in the particular framework of a pneumatological Christology, highlighting the pneumatological continuity of the proclamation of the word (law and gospel) from Christ to the church: "There-

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21. *On the Holy Spirit*, 16:39.

22. *Ibid.*, 16:39.

23. *First Discourse Against the Arians*, 1:50, in *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>.

24. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 122.

25. "But as the revealing Spirit, as the Spirit which is come to us, he cannot be without the Word. For it is the Spirit's work to make the risen Christ real and present among us. And the risen Christ can only be present among us in his humanity. But the risen Christ's humanity in our midst now is the word, a contemporary and sacramental word, which gives Christ as gift, and in which he is the acting subject" (*ibid.*, 122-23).

26. "For the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him" (AE 35:121).

27. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 166. Luther's views assume that a sacrament is only a visible sign (*signum*) of God's promise (*promissio*) because Christ in his humanity is God's sacrament, God's own visible sign and promise given to us in the proclamation of the word. Luther also notes that only the Holy Spirit is able to bring together in a salvific way the promise and the sign offered in the sacrament by creating the faith that holds on to Christ in the sacrament. For a deeper study of these connections, see p. 101-72.

fore, the *Spirit of Christ* must not only comfort but through the function of the law must also ‘convict the world of sin’ [John 16:8]. Thus, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit must perform . . . an alien work—which is to convict—until he comes to his proper work—which is to comfort and to proclaim grace. *For this reason Christ obtained the Spirit for us and sent him to us*” (FC SD v, 11 [Kolb-Wengert, 583]; emphasis added). Because the Holy Spirit is inseparably united to the Word made flesh and his words, and therefore to his Scripture, his absolution, his baptism, and his supper, we can posit the materiality and incarnational character of the Spirit and thus a sacramental view of life in the Spirit of Christ. If Christ is the privileged locus of the Spirit, the definitive bearer and giver of the Spirit, then Christians must look to Christ to know what life in the Spirit looks like.

### THREE MODELS OF SANCTIFICATION

Basil’s statement that the Holy Spirit is “inseparably united to his [Christ’s] very flesh” succinctly highlights an incarnational view of the Spirit’s work and guides us as we look more specifically at three dimensions of our incarnate Lord’s life in the Spirit that in turn shape the Christian’s life in the same Spirit. These christological narratives yield three approaches to the Christian life, namely the baptismal, dramatic, and eucharistic models of sanctification.<sup>28</sup> An operating assumption of these approaches is that, while Christ’s life in the Spirit is unique from that of the saints, there are still aspects or configurations of such life that are in continuity with the Spirit’s work in Christ’s saints. The Spirit whom Christ receives and bears in the flesh for our sake is the same Spirit whom Christ gives to his saints in order to shape or conform their lives after his own.

This section sketches three models of sanctification, grounding them in a pneumatological Christology, and shows how these forms of life in the Spirit of Christ correspond to various ways in which Lutherans have spoken of the Christian life. Each of the models presented flows from a sacramental view of the Spirit’s work in the church, one that highlights the continuous use or appropriation of the sacraments in the life of the saints during their pilgrimage in the world. All three models anchor the Christian life in a cruciform or cross-shaped reading of the Father’s anointing of the Son with the Spirit at the Jordan. In the waters of the Jordan, the obedient Son receives the Spirit in the flesh to begin his ministry as our Suffering Servant (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21).<sup>29</sup> Christ’s reception and bearing of the Spirit gives his life a cruciform trajectory, sets him on a path to the cross.

28. For a fuller description of these three models of sanctification, see Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., *Teología de la santificación: La espiritualidad del cristiano* (St. Louis, Missouri: Editorial Concordia, forthcoming).

29. The Synoptic Gospels quote Isaiah 42:1, “with you I am well pleased,” the beginning of the first Servant Song (for the other songs, see Isaiah 49:1–7, 50:4–11, 52:13–53:12). As far as John’s Gospel goes, there are some manuscripts that make an allusion to Isaiah 42:1 through the use of the title “God’s chosen one” (1:34). More

At the Jordan, Christ was anointed to suffer unto death on our behalf. From this cruciform reading of Christ’s baptism, we gather some implications for the Christian life. The Father’s anointing of the Son at the Jordan for his mission as the Servant becomes paradigmatic for conceiving the sanctified life as a daily (1) return to baptism, where we die with Christ in the waters and are raised with him from the waters to new life (baptismal model); (2) struggle in the deserts of life against the attacks of the devil, a battle the Christian must vigilantly stand firm and fight in with the word and prayer (dramatic model); and (3) act of worship or thanksgiving to God, a life where one becomes the servant of many, a living sacrifice unto the Lord (eucharistic model).<sup>30</sup>

### The Baptismal Model

We have already seen how Athanasius links the church’s reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism to the anointing of Christ at his baptism. The Word received the Spirit in the flesh in order to save humanity. Before Athanasius, Irenaeus (ca. 130–ca. 200) had placed both the incarnation of the Word and his reception of the Spirit in baptism at the center of salvation history, as events through which the incarnate Word recapitulated for the human race the history of sinful Adam on his way to death and resurrection. As a result of the fall, the Spirit had departed from Adam. In order to restore the Spirit to the race of Adam, the Word not only took upon himself the nature of Adam (human nature) at the incarnation but also received the anointing of the Spirit at his baptism.

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## *Christ is the privileged locus of the Spirit, the definitive bearer and giver of the Spirit.*

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Irenaeus writes: “Wherefore he [the Spirit] did also descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them

important, however, is that for John the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29) is none other than the one on whom the Spirit remains and who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (1:33).

30. For a reflection on the Christian life as the church’s participation in Christ’s threefold office, see Raniero Cantalamessa, *The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus: The Mystery of Christ’s Baptism*, trans. Alan Neame (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994). He uses a methodology that is similar to mine, one that seeks to ground the church’s life in the Spirit in a pneumatological Christology.

from their old habits into the newness of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Drawing from Isaiah 11 and 61, Irenaeus notes that the Spirit descends upon Jesus to anoint him for his messianic mission to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and forgive sins.<sup>32</sup> Upon completion of his mission, the Lord Jesus then gives the Spirit whom he received at the Jordan to the church through baptism.<sup>33</sup> Having received the Holy Spirit “as a gift from his Father,” the Lord Jesus then “confer[s] it upon those who are partakers of himself, sending the Holy Spirit upon all the earth.”<sup>34</sup>

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### *The faithful Son descends to the waters of the Jordan on behalf of sinners.*

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A prominent theme in Luther’s catechesis is his instruction on baptism as a daily death and resurrection with Christ, a daily drowning of the Old Adam and raising of the new creature in Christ (SC IV, 11–14 [Kolb-Wengert, 360]). These images assume the church’s participation in Christ’s life, his death and resurrection, but also his baptism, which is the entry point in his ministry towards his way of obedience unto death, as well as his exaltation and giving of the Holy Spirit to others. The faithful Son descends to the waters of the Jordan on behalf of sinners, anticipating his role as the Servant who will take upon himself our sins. In Scripture, the waters signify both judgment and new life. Jesus goes down to the waters of God’s judgment on behalf of sinners, drowning our sins with him in our place, and then rises from the waters so that through him we might have forgiveness and new life.

Luther shows that, through the baptism of his Son at the Jordan, God “hallowed and set apart the Jordan and all water to be a blessed flood and a rich washing of sins” in order that the one being baptized may be blessed “with true faith in the Holy Spirit so that through this same saving flood all that has been born in him from Adam and whatever he has added thereto may be drowned in him and sink.”<sup>35</sup> One may add to these cat-

echetical uses of Romans 6 and the narrative of Jesus’ baptism the image of the righteousness of Christ as a robe with which he clothes his saints daily (for example, Eph 4:22–24; Rom 13:14). As Christ comes out of the waters of the new creation, he leaves his robe of righteousness in the waters for sinners to pick up so that they might be clothed with his righteousness in the waters of baptism and receive his Holy Spirit.<sup>36</sup> Implications for the use of baptism follow: “Therefore let all Christians regard their baptism as the daily garment that they are to wear all the time. Every day they should be found in faith and with its fruits, suppressing the old creature and growing up in the new” (LC IV, 84–85 [Kolb-Wengert, 466]).

In the baptismal model, the Christian life is cyclical, a daily dying to sin in order to be raised to new life through the forgiveness of sins. Sanctification becomes a daily return to one’s baptism to receive the blessings of justification promised therein. The model corresponds to the life of daily repentance, of contrition and faith, where the gospel alone provides the power and motivation to fight sin and do God’s holy will in accordance with his word and for the neighbor’s sake. The baptismal model avoids a fatalistic view of the Christian life in which the reality of the sinful nature paralyzes the believer and prevents him from fighting against the power of sin in his life. This view of life in the Spirit also avoids a perfectionist or utopian view of sanctification in which the believer thinks progress in sanctification is inevitable and thus lives under the illusion that he has nothing or little to repent of. The model encourages us to go back each day to the waters, where we see a reflection of our guilt and shame, but finally where we are cleansed of our sins and our filthy rags are replaced with Christ’s holiness.

### *The Dramatic Model*

Immediately after his baptism, the Son is led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where he is tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). The Son’s faithfulness to the Father and his mission to be our servant is put to the test. In the garden of Gethsemane, as the hour of the passion approaches, the Son suffers God’s will in a tragic world where the devil tempts (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46). The desert and the garden are places of spiritual attack. The Son knows what it is like to be tempted, and sympathizes with our struggles, even as he defeated the devil for us on the cross (Heb 2:14–18, 4:15). In the first desert, Israel became an unfaithful son of his Father. In the second desert, Jesus, the new Israel, triumphed where old Israel failed (Matt 4:1–11). In the first garden, Adam too became a disobedient son, transgressing the command and word of God. But in the second garden, Jesus, the second Adam, said yes to the Father’s will and was obedient unto death for our sake.

Christians live in the desert and the garden. Their lives are a spiritual battle or struggle against the evil one, a dramatic conflict between God and devil, where the need for vigilance

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31. *Against Heresies*, 3.17.1, in *ANF*, 1:444; “The Word of God . . . dwelt in man, and became Son of man, that he might accustom man to receive God, and God to dwell in man, according to the good pleasure of the Father” (ibid., 3.20.2, in *ANF*, 1:450; “God recapitulated in himself the ancient formation of man, that he might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man” (ibid., 3.18.7, in *ANF*, 1:448; cf. 3.18.1, in *ANF*, 1:446).

32. Ibid., 3.9.3, in *ANF*, 1:423.

33. Irenaeus cites Matthew 28:19 and makes an allusion to Acts 2:17 (cf. Joel 2:28) (ibid., 3.17.1, in *ANF*, 1:444).

34. Ibid., 3.17.2, in *ANF*, 1:445.

35. Martin Luther, “The Baptismal Booklet: Translated into German and Newly Revised,” 14, in Kolb-Wengert, 374.

36. For a discussion of patristic reflection on the taking of Christ’s robe of glory from the Jordan, see McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 128–44 (cf. 145–55).

through prayer and the word becomes the weapon of choice. The biblical images that correspond to this vision of the Christian life are those of the gladiator who stands firm against the attacks of the devil with the sword of the Spirit (the word of God) in hand to defend himself (Eph 6:10–20), or the disciplined athlete who prepares to run the good race of the faith through the deserts of life with his eyes on the prize of eternal life at the end of the finish line (1 Cor 9:24–10:13; cf. Phil 3). In his catechesis, Luther envisions the baptism of the child as a little exorcism, the moment when a child of wrath becomes a child of God, when the Spirit enters the child and drives away the evil spirit.<sup>37</sup> Baptism also brings one into a struggle with the devil, who, hanging “around the child’s neck [is] a mighty, lifelong enemy,” and provides the baptized with spiritual strength “so that the child might resist him valiantly in life and death.”<sup>38</sup>

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### *In the dramatic model, the Christian life is seen as a battle between God and the devil.*

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In his sermons on the temptation of Christ, Luther explicitly links the experience of the Son to the temptations his saints undergo.<sup>39</sup> Just as Christ suffered physical, spiritual, and crass forms of temptation, so also Christians suffer attacks that aim at leading them to doubt God’s care for their bodily needs, to tempt God by trying to be spiritual or holy apart from his word, or to turn away altogether from God in unbelief.<sup>40</sup> Reflecting on Luther’s teaching, Bonhoeffer speaks of the temptations of the flesh (of the body), spiritual temptations (of spiritual aspirations above God’s word), and the last temptation.<sup>41</sup> While the temptations of the flesh incite many kinds of sinful desires or lead to doubting God’s power and love in the midst of suffering, spiritual temptations amount to tempting God by demanding that he manifest himself outside of his commands and promises to us. This attempt to be spiritual apart from God’s word

leads to carnal security (*securitas*) or despair (*desperatio*). In the end, Bonhoeffer places all our temptations in the “two stories of temptation,” in the context of the Adam-Christ story: “Either we are tempted in Adam or we are tempted in Christ. Either the Adam in me is tempted — in which case we fall, or the Christ in us is tempted — in which case Satan is bound to fall.”<sup>42</sup>

In the dramatic model, the Christian life is seen as a battle between God and the devil, between the Holy Spirit and the whole person in opposition to God (flesh). Luther speaks of life in the Spirit as a cycle in which God forms his children through the attacks of the devil (*tentatio*, *Anfechtung*), leading them to put their lives in God’s hands through prayer (*oratio*) and find strength in his word (*meditatio*) in the midst of the attacks.<sup>43</sup> We have another cyclical view of life in the Spirit of Christ, in which the Holy Spirit drives Christians into the desert, the place where the evil spirit attacks (*tentatio*), but also — like the garden, or the mountain and the temple, for that matter — the place of prayer (*oratio*) and the word (*meditatio*) where one receives the strength to stand firm. This model of the sanctified life acknowledges that we all have deserts or gardens — our Achilles’ heels, as it were — where we especially struggle with sin and thus are more easily tempted to fall. We think of those thoughts, words, attitudes, behaviors, and even places that incite us to transgress God’s word most often, where we are most vulnerable. The dramatic model encourages vigilance in the face of recurring, habitual sins, through forms of external or corporal discipline and even accountability (for example, fasting, rest, less Internet time, support groups), but ultimately through daily prayer and meditation on the word. The athlete runs the race and the warrior stands firm. Both learn to be alert, disciplined, and well prepared, mindful of dangers and challenges along the way, as they look forward to the end of all struggles and the joy of triumph in the life of the world to come.

### *The Eucharistic Model*

At the Jordan, Jesus is anointed to be our Suffering Servant, a datum of the faith that has both soteriological and ethical significance. Jesus teaches his disciples what a disciple looks like, one that, like his Lord, does not come to be served but to serve and give his life for others (Mark 10:45). The apostle Paul also places his christological hymn in the context of a moral exhortation to members of the church to serve one another as the Lord served us by becoming our Suffering Servant (Phil 2). Just as Christ’s entire cruciform life in the Spirit may be seen as a living sacrifice and pleasing worship to the Lord for the sake of the world, so also Christians are shaped by the Spirit to be living sacrifices unto the Lord for the sake of the neighbor (Rom 12). Through their faithful witness and good works, Christians spread the aroma of Christ throughout the world.

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37. “The baptizer shall say: ‘Depart, you unclean spirit, and make room for the Holy Spirit’ (Luther, “Baptismal Booklet,” 11, in Kolb-Wengert, 373); “I adjure you, you unclean spirit, in the name of the Father (+) and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit (+), that you come out of and depart from this servant of Jesus Christ, N. Amen” (ibid., 15, in Kolb-Wengert, 374).

38. Ibid., 3–4, in Kolb-Wengert, 372.

39. For two sermons on Matthew 4 for the first Sunday in Lent (Invocavit), see Martin Luther, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. John Nicolas Lenker (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000), 1.2:133–47; and 5:312–20.

40. Ibid., 1.2:137–47.

41. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall, Temptation: Two Biblical Studies* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 130–42.

42. Ibid., 115.

43. For a succinct account of Luther on *tentatio*, see John W. Kleinig, “*Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*: What Makes a Theologian?” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66 (2002): 255–67

The Lutheran tradition speaks of the Christian life as a “eucharistic sacrifice” that is rendered to God by those who have been justified “to give thanks or express gratitude for having received forgiveness of sins and other benefits” (Ap xxiv, 19 [Kolb-Wengert, 261]). Through “the work of the Holy Spirit within us,” Christians become living sacrifices unto the Lord and therefore practice the true worship of the New Testament, that “spiritual worship” which includes “the righteousness of faith and the fruits of faith.” Life in the Spirit is an act of worship, the living out of justifying faith through good works. It is a daily thanksgiving to God in service to others. Such “sacrifices of praise” encompass “the preaching of the gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, and indeed, all the good works of the saints” (Ap xxiv, 26–27 [Kolb-Wengert, 262–63]). These statements teach us about the benefit and use of the sacrament, or the “twofold effect” of the Lord’s Supper, which consoles consciences by delivering the benefits of Christ’s atoning sacrifice but also empowers them with the gospel to love their neighbors in church and world (Ap xxiv, 74–75 [Kolb-Wengert, 271]).

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*The Lutheran approach to pneumatology is rooted in the Nicene creedal tradition.*

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Similarly, Luther teaches about the spiritual fellowship between Christ and his saints that the sacrament brings about, a communion where two happy exchanges take place. Christ takes our sins and gives us his righteousness, and the saints in turn take each other’s joys and burdens. Holy Communion signifies “a fellowship and a gracious blending of our sin and suffering with the righteousness of Christ and his saints” (AE 35:60). Christ comes to the needy in and through his saints with gifts of love, or the saints bring the face, hands, and feet of Christ to the needy through their acts of love. When one partakes of the sacrament, “do not doubt that you have what the sacrament signifies, that is, be certain that Christ and all his saints are coming to you with all their virtues, sufferings, and mercies, to live, work, suffer, and die with you, and that they desire to be wholly yours, having all things in common with you” (AE 35:61). The Lutheran sources described above support a view of the Christian life in which the Spirit forms Christ the servant in his saints through the daily reception and use of his sacrament.

The eucharistic model of sanctification focuses on faith and its fruits, including the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit in ac-

cordance with the fruit of the Spirit, the works of missions/evangelization and mercy/justice in the world, and everything that concerns our vocations in this life. Because the eucharistic model assumes the Christian’s personal dying to self and being raised to new life (baptismal model), and his dealing with the devil’s personal attacks in his life (dramatic model), it will tend to focus on the outward, centrifugal, social, or neighbor-oriented dimensions of the sanctified life. By doing so, the model moves away from a potentially individualistic conception of holiness towards a more vocational approach that encourages Christians to find joy and give thanks to God by serving the neighbor through ordinary tasks. Being spiritual (of the Spirit) amounts to fulfilling God’s commands through the exercise of one’s gifts and vocation in the world.

### CONCLUSION

We can now gather some lessons. First, the Lutheran approach to pneumatology is rooted in the Nicene creedal tradition, which highlights the materiality or corporeal dimension of the Spirit in his works for us as the basis for confessing his divine majesty. This approach to pneumatology may be called sacramental because it teaches us that, in God’s plan of salvation, the privileged locus of the Holy Spirit is the incarnate Word who receives the Spirit in the flesh in order to give the same Spirit to humanity through his word in, with, and under visible signs or means of grace.

Second, a Lutheran approach to sanctification flows from an incarnational view of the Spirit that links the baptismal, dramatic, and eucharistic models to Christ’s own life in the Spirit. In other words, Christ’s life in the Spirit determines and shapes what life in the Spirit looks like for the Christian. Moreover, the Lutheran sources for a biblical doctrine of sanctification bear witness to the sacramental framework of the Christian life, since all three models are inextricably linked to some appropriation or use of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper for daily life. This is most evident in the baptismal and eucharistic models, but also in the dramatic model. The latter describes Christian baptism as an exorcism where the Holy Spirit drives away the evil spirit, the entry point for the Christian’s lifelong battle against Satan, and the go-to place where the Christian holds on to God’s promises to help him stand firm against Satan’s attacks.

Finally, this brief study should cast suspicion upon, and put to rest, the claim that the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith prevents Lutheran churches from taking sanctification seriously. What emerges from the Lutheran sources is a robust theology of sanctification, closely linked to the Holy Spirit’s justification of the sinners through word and sacrament, and thus to the daily use or living out of one’s baptismal and eucharistic identity in the world where the devil attacks and the saints pray to God, die to sin, hear God’s promises, give thanks for his blessings, and serve their neighbors. **LOGIA**