

# *Trust the Spirit Within*

*by Thomas H. Groome*

*The Spirit within is always our primary Teacher.*

The first Bible story of creation climaxes on the sixth day with God making humankind in God's own image and likeness. (See Genesis 1:26–27.) The

second creation story embellishes the first with delightful details of God crafting Adam from the dust of the earth. It culminates with God breathing God's own life into the earth-person.

(See Genesis 2:7.) These mythical stories teach the great foundational truths of our faith, affirming that we are like our God and we possess God's own Spirit within us.

God's Spirit within us makes us capable of all that is uniquely human, such as the ability to relate, to love, and to create. The Hebrew Bible highlights that God's Spirit makes us capable of knowledge and wisdom. We can have the wisdom to live as a person of faith because of God's Spirit within us. As Moses taught the people, God's word is already "in your heart" (Deuteronomy 30:14).

In Christian faith, God's Spirit is revealed as the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Jesus

promised that he would send God's Holy Spirit on the disciples to continue as their Teacher. "[T]he Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit came with the first Christian Pentecost and has remained with the Christian community ever since. Every Christian receives the Spirit at Baptism and the fullness of the Spirit's presence through Confirmation. As Paul wrote, "in the one Spirit we were all baptized . . . all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Catholic Christians believe that the Holy Spirit guides the entire Church, especially through its teaching office. We also believe that each individual Christian has the gift of God's Holy Spirit within them. The Spirit within is always our primary Teacher, especially in matters of faith. Surely this has great implications for the work of catechists.

We can take comfort that, important as our work may be, the outcome of our work of catechizing others does not depend solely on our efforts.