

Spirit Filled Beginnings

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*A reflection by Sr Michelle, fc.J,
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September always feels like a special time in schools. As a junior high school teacher, I especially enjoy accompanying the Grade 7 students who are younger, smaller and almost baby-faced next to the older grades who are returning for another year. They get lost in the hallways, struggle to negotiate the complexities of combination locks for their lockers, and are bewildered by all of the many classrooms they have to rush to throughout the day. They forget teacher names and don't bring the books they need. In short, they view junior high school with new eyes, and I take real pleasure in seeing the building and routines that I'm returning to with their fresh perspective.

A palpable sense of excitement permeates the atmosphere for these first few weeks. The possibilities about how the year will unfold seem endless. Any goal seems reachable. Everyone is on their best behaviour, absolutely buying into the hope inherent in these early stages.

“ I often feel a sense of connection with the Holy Spirit in these school year beginnings and in many of the other beginnings of my life.

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Certainly our Scriptures celebrate the Spirit's role in various important beginnings: the conception of Jesus, the start of His ministry after His Baptism, and in the foundations of our Church at Pentecost. It may seem to some like the many beginnings that happen around us in our daily lives don't rise to the level of these auspicious events and so might not merit the presence of the Spirit, but our Catholic Catechism teaches us that the Spirit dwells among us and wants to be known by us.

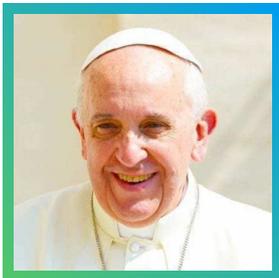
Now, I don't pretend that I have any more idea than the next person of what or who the Holy Spirit is. When we talk about God, we know that we are always talking about Mystery. Having said that, I like what [Richard Rohr, OFM](#) writes: *Mystery is not something you can't know. Mystery is endless knowability.* To me, this speaks to the possibility that we can recognize and even experience the Holy Spirit at some level and in some instances, without ever fully and completely knowing Her. In fact, having had conversations with

other Religious about the role of the Spirit in their Vocation stories and ministries, many can point to moments where the Spirit played a pivotal role in their lives. Those same Religious will often struggle, though, to put into words who exactly the Holy Spirit is for them.

I, too, may have difficulty finding the right words to say what exactly the Spirit means to me in my life, but I do believe that I can sense the gentle guidance of the Spirit walking with my Grade 7 students as they screw up their courage to enter unfamiliar classrooms and engage in conversation with the strangers that will become part of their everyday lives for the upcoming year. I believe that She is whispering words of encouragement to them as they tackle higher level academic topics and join extracurricular teams and groups. It is under Her care that new relationships are inspired, new knowledge is learned and new possibilities are dreamed. As students and staff settle into a new school year, let us pray that they will feel richly blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in all of their beginnings.

Michelle, fcJ

This blog article was first published in [Around the Well](#), a blog written by younger Canadian Religious



“ What is God’s love? It is not something vague, some generic feeling. God’s love has a name and a face: Jesus Christ, Jesus. Love for God is made manifest in Jesus. ”

Pope Francis

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