

Introduction

1. The other day I walked into my office and out the window, I noticed a bird flying toward the evergreens
2. For some reason, it struck me that this was not just another “winter” bird flying around – this was larger, it seemed out of place
3. I went to my window and looked, and I saw... 8 robins sitting in the bare, open, leafless tree in the center aisle, as the wind was ruffling their feathers, and they looked cold
4. I wondered what they were thinking being here in the cold of winter, I wondered if they could survive
5. Once in a while, one of them would fly into the evergreens, and then back to the cold open tree once again
6. It made me think of the passage in Matthew where Jesus says, “Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”
7. Our message today takes us to another bird, so to speak – actually... GOD, who takes on the form of a bird, a dove, in our Gospel Reading today

I. But the Holy Spirit appears way before the Baptism of Jesus – but is present from all eternity, and most certainly at the time of the creation of this world

- A. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**”
- B. There He is – just hovering... The Holy Spirit “just keeps hovering” over water
 - i. But this Holy Spirit is important and instrumental in what will soon take place in Genesis 1
 - ii. For the “office of the Holy Spirit” – that is – His main work is to “make alive”
 - iii. The Holy Spirit is about to bring that which is void and empty and dark to be filled with LIFE and LIGHT
 - iv. As a matter of fact, the very next words in Genesis after we hear how the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters are these words, “And God said, “Let there be Light”
- C. The Holy Spirit is hovering over the soon-to-be-created world, in order to give it LIFE to a lighted world

- i. The Holy Spirit, being God, with the Father and the Son – creates a marvelous, majestic, glorious, pure, breath-taking, and beautiful world
- ii. He created those robins, and the trees, the waterfalls and the mountains, the fields and the grain that grows in them, the water and all that swims in it, the air and all that flies in it
- iii. And the Holy Spirit, hovering over creation, as the Father speaks the words “Let there be” – also hovers over the Heavenly Father as He breaths life into Adam and Eve
- iv. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have created a perfect human race, beginning with Adam and Eve; sinless, pure, with no sin, no worry, no disease, no trouble, no sadness, no pain, no death
- v. The Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters – and from nothing – This incomprehensible Creator brought all things into perfect being!

II. But that first creation was ruined

- A. Adam and Eve turned away from their perfect state with God, and they turned away from their obedience to Him
 - i. They chased the Holy Spirit away, and now all that hovers over Eden is guilt, and sadness, and worry, and blame, and a hard life, and being driven out of Paradise... eternal death
 - ii. No longer do the animals live in peace, the once peaceful waters no longer bring floods, the once majestic mountains now explode with fire, the once lush vegetation is now overtaken with thistles and drought
- B. Now – only sin and death hover all around us
 - i. Now we build up hate in our hearts
 - ii. Now we no longer trust God, but worry in our minds
 - iii. Now we no longer worship God, we worship things made by man
 - iv. Now we no longer sleep in peace, but we toss back and forth with anxiety
 - v. Now we no longer enjoy full health, but our bodies wear out and break down
 - vi. Now we no longer enjoy our neighbor in love, but we fight with our spouse, yell at our parents, and talk about our children
- C. Where is the Holy Spirit now?
 - i. Where does He now hover?
 - ii. Where does He now bring forth life?
 - iii. Where does He now bring everything into motion that is now void and dead from the Fall?

III. Though God has never left His people, even after the Fall – He shows Himself to the world in a magnificent and wonderful way

A. God comes into our broken world in the silence of the night – in a small manger in the town of Bethlehem

- i. He comes to a dead people and is made alive through Mary's womb
- ii. He comes to a weary people as Hope in the night of our lives
- iii. He comes to our tired bodies and our guilty souls with the news that He is peace and goodwill to all who live on the earth

B. And then, at about the age 30 – this once Infant Christ steps down into the waters of the Jordan River

- i. These waters are stirred by God stepping into them
- ii. These waters were created by the One who is now baptized in them
- iii. Jesus comes as the guiltless Adam, He is the second Adam, He is the perfect Adam, He is the Holy Adam, as Jesus is pure God who comes to take on Adam's flesh
- iv. And this Holy Jesus steps into the water in order to be covered, and drenched, and soaked with our SIN and our DEATH
- v. He comes out of the waters of His Baptism cursed with our sin, broken in our fall, with the full weight of our death upon His shoulders – as He now sets His eyes on Calvary
- vi. Here Jesus becomes sin who knew no sin – so that we could become the righteousness of God, holy and pure, forgiven and restored

C. And there – with those waters – is that same Holy Spirit who once hovered over the waters at creation

- i. Now – this Same Holy Spirit hovers over the waters of RE-creation
- ii. Through this baptism – the Holy Spirit will now make us alive
- iii. Through this baptism of Jesus – the Holy Spirit will now generate the waters of baptism and bring into motion our forgiveness and eternal life
- iv. In the form of a dove, the symbol of peace, resting on Jesus, God is announcing to all the world that He comes to restore peace between God and man through the Baptism of Jesus Christ
- v. And the Holy Spirit – He just keeps hovering

IV. Do you see this font? It is not a font of just plain water at the time of a baptism, but when a soul is brought near to be baptized into Christ – the Holy Spirit is hovering over these waters

- A. The Holy Spirit is hovering over these waters and stirs them to be a water full of the power of God to take away and to wash away all our sins, and to reverse what the fall had destroyed – even in us!
 - i. As the Holy Spirit hovers over these waters – He makes alive what was once dead (us)
 - ii. We are conceived and born dead in sin, but in these waters, the Holy Spirit pours over us the death of Christ to crucify our sins, and brings us to life in His resurrection
 - iii. Here the Holy Spirit, with the pouring of the Holy Water over the head of the person being baptized – awakens and arouses the dead soul and brings that soul to life!
 - iv. That’s what St. Paul was talking about in our second reading today, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

- B. Remember those robins in the tree?
 - i. We are so much like those robins
 - ii. If those robins flew back north too early, that was a poor choice – just like we make poor and wrong and sinful choices every day!
 - iii. Just as those birds were flying back and forth from shelter to the open tree – we seem too often to be fluttering back and forth looking for happiness and fulfillment in life
 - iv. And just as those birds were shivering from the harsh winter wind amongst the bare branches – we too suffer from this harsh world of sin, and its effects – everyday
 - v. But remember that passage from St. Matthew, “If the Lord takes care of the birds of air, will He not take care of you?”

- C. In **our** Baptism – the Holy Spirit just keeps hovering – over our lives every day!
 - i. When we make bad choices of sin – the Holy Spirit is there to forgive and soothe the penitent soul in your baptism
 - ii. When we go fluttering around this life looking for happiness and fulfillment – the Holy Spirit is there to lead you to the joy and gladness of knowing we are saved, and that our lives are defined in Christ – all gifts of our baptism
 - iii. And when we are being rustled and ruffled by the winds of this fallen world, by the storms in our lives – the Holy Spirit warms us with the love of God – a gift of our baptism
 - iv. Your Baptism is an every-day Sacrament, it is an every-day gift, it is the Holy Spirit hovering over our lives to forgive, protect, love, and keep us in Christ Jesus EVERYDAY!

- v. Now while it is true that God feeds and shelters the birds of the field in this life – there is a day when they will die and be no more
- vi. But not us – we are MORE THAN birds – we are the sons and daughters of God, and with the Hovering of the Holy Spirit in our every-day baptism → this same Holy Spirit leads us to heaven to live forever

Conclusion

1. Think about your life, what's going on in it right now, the trials, the joys, the sadness, the gladness, the anxiety and the hope, the stress and the peace...
2. Wherever you are on your journey of faith and life – one this is for certain...
 - a. You are a baptized child of God – you are in the Lord's hands in every situation, and you have an endless supply of God's love and forgiveness
 - b. Because – God never leaves us or forsakes us...
 - c. He just keeps hovering! Amen.