

## Two Hymns to the Holy Spirit

**T**HE HOLY SPIRIT is sometimes referred to as the neglected Person of the Trinity, and it is true that his mode of presence highlights his dependence on the Father and the Son. To recognize this fact in the forms of our piety is not, however, to neglect the Holy Spirit, but rather to emphasize the unity within the Godhead and the unified activity of the three divine Persons in creation and redemption. There are two hymns in the Catholic Tradition that have kept us aware of the special role of the Spirit. The first is the sequence for Pentecost Sunday, *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* (Holy Spirit, Come), probably by Stephen Langton (d. 1228), who was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1207 by Innocent III—who, as Lotario de Conti di Segni, had been Langton’s colleague at the University of Paris. An older and much more famous hymn is the *Veni, Creator Spiritus* (Creator, Holy Spirit, Come!) ascribed to Rhabanus Maurus (d. 856), Abbot of Fulda and Archbishop of Mainz. It has become an essential element in the rituals of ordination and of the consecration of churches. Anna Rist, in translating these hymns, joins a distinguished roster of Catholic poets, from John Dryden to Frederick Faber.

### *Veni, Creator Spiritus*

*Veni, creator Spiritus  
mentes tuorum visita,  
imple superna gratia,  
quae tu creasti pectora.*

Creator, Holy Spirit, come!  
Minds of your own make yield you room.  
Fill with a beauty not of Earth  
this human breast you brought to birth.

*Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
donum Dei altissimi,  
fons vivus, ignis, caritas  
et spiritalis unctio.*

Guest of man’s spirit you are call’d,  
Hand giving good gifts sevenfold,  
Well of all life and Love’s first Fire,  
Unction to work our spirits’ cure.

*Tu septiformis munere  
□dextrae Dei tu digitus  
□tu rite promissum Patri  
□sermone ditans guttura.*

To weak frames give unfailing might,  
to passions love, to senses light.  
Enrich our throats with your outpoured  
utterance of the Father’s Word. □

*Accende lumen sensibus,  
infunde amorem cordibus,  
infirma nostri corporis,  
virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Hostem repellas longius  
pacemque dones protinus;  
ductore sic te praevio  
vitemus omne noxium.*

*Per te sciamus da Patrem  
noscamus atque Filium,  
te utriusque Spiritum  
credamus omni tempore.  
Amen. □*

***Veni, Sancte Spiritus***  
The Golden Sequence

*Veni, Sancte Spiritus,  
Et emitte caelitus  
Lucis tuae radium.  
Veni, pater pauperum,  
Veni, dator munerum,  
Veni, lumen cordium.  
Consolator optime,  
Dulcis hospes animae,  
Dulce refrigerium.  
In labore requies,  
In aestu temperies,  
In fletu solacium. □  
O lux beatissima,  
Reple cordis intima  
Tuorum fidelium.  
Sine tuo numine  
Nihil est in homine,  
Nihil est innoxium.  
Lava quod est sordidum,  
Riga quod est aridum,  
Sana quod est saucium.  
Flecte quod est rigidum,  
Fove quod est frigidum,  
Rege quod est devium.  
Da tuis fidelibus  
In te confidentibus  
Sacrum septenarium.  
Da virtutis meritum,  
Da salutis exitum,  
Da perenne gaudium.  
Amen.*

Keep us from harm, our foe afar;  
Your peace attend the spirit's war.  
No danger but we shall avoid  
With as counsellor and Guide

Through and with you by us be known  
The Father, recognized the Son:  
With and through you, in lasting faith  
The Holy Spirit of them both.

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Holy Spirit, come and bring  
us a ray in-spiriting,  
heaven-sent, of our liking:

Gentle Friend of man oppress'd,  
of the soul the gentle Guest:  
cool in heat, in labour rest.

All our gifts are from your store;  
come, then Father of the poor:  
dry all tears, soothe every sore.

Light, of every blessing Source,  
shine in every part of us;  
make your faithful wholly yours.

In each part that lacks your grace,  
darkness only has a place;  
all deform'd is and defac'd.

Sickness of the mind allay;  
water dust, breathe life in clay;  
wash our sleaze, our sin away.

Bend what is inflexible;  
heal the wounded, warm the chill;  
rule what goes athwart your will.

Give us—sevenfold surety—  
virtue's merit; when we die,  
joy us everlastingly.

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