


## Rev. Piotr Łabuda


 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9044-817X>  
[piotr.labuda@upjp2.edu.pl](mailto:piotr.labuda@upjp2.edu.pl)

---

The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

 <https://ror.org/0583g9182>

## The Holy Spirit as the gift in the ‘hour of Jesus’

 <https://doi.org/10.15633/ps.29403>

Rev. Piotr Łabuda – Associate Professor at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Head of the Department of Sacred Scripture and Patrology at the Faculty of Theology, Tarnów Branch, Lecturer in the New Testament at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow and at the Redemptorist Seminary in Tuchów. Editor-in-chief of several biblical series (e.g. *Krąg Biblijny*, *W Kręgu Słowa*, *Tolle, Lege!*, *Źródło Wody Żywej*).

---

**Article history** • Received: 20 Mar 2025 • Accepted: 8 Apr 2025 • Published: 31 Dec 2025

**ISSN** 1428-5673 (print) • **ISSN** 2391-6575 (online) • Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

## Abstract

### *The Holy Spirit as the gift in the 'hour of Jesus'*

According to Luke, the ascending Jesus instructs his disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they are 'clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:49). In the account of the Acts of the Apostles, the Master's promise is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). John, however, presents the gift of the Holy Spirit differently. In the Fourth Gospel, the Church receives the gift of the Spirit in the 'hour of Jesus.' John emphasizes that Jesus, 'bowed his head and gave up his spirit' (John 19:30), marking the inauguration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This gift is also symbolized by the water that flowed from Jesus' side (John 19:34). The Risen Christ imparted this Spirit to his disciples when he appeared to them and "breathed on them" (John 20:22). This paper explores the theological intent of John, who shapes the Passion narrative and the account of the Resurrection to demonstrate that the gift of the Spirit is continuously bestowed by Jesus upon the Church community. The study seeks to answer whether John's account presents a different perspective on the 'gift of the Spirit' compared to Luke's or whether it serves to complement it.

**Keywords:** hour of Jesus, Holy Spirit, Passion of Jesus, gift, Gospel of John

---

## Abstrakt

### *Dar Ducha Świętego w „godzinie Jezusa”*

Według św. Łukasza wstępujący do nieba Jezus, nakazuje uczniom, by ci pozostali w Jerozolimie, aż zostaną „przyobleczeni w moc z wysoka” (Łk 24, 29). W przekazie Dziejów Apostolskich obietnica Mistrza spełnia się w dzień Pięćdziesiątnicy (Dz 2, 1-4). Inaczej dar Ducha Świętego ujmują św. Jan. W Czwartej Ewangelii bowiem Kościół otrzymuje dar Ducha Świętego w „godzinie Jezusa”. Św. Jan podkreśli, iż Jezus „skłoniwszy głowę, oddał ducha” (J 19, 30). Była to inauguracja czasu wylania Ducha Świętego. Ten dar symbolizuje również woda, która wypłynęła z boku Jezusa (J 19, 34). Tego Ducha przekazuje uczniom Zmartwychwstały, który przyszedłszy do nich „tchnął na nich” (J 20, 22). Opracowanie pokazuje teologiczny zamysł św. Jana, który tak kreśli wydarzenia pasyjne oraz przekaz o zmartwychwstaniu, aby pokazać, iż dar Ducha jest nieustannie przekazywany przez Jezusa wspólnocie Kościoła. Studium stara się odpowiedzieć na pytanie, czy przekaz św. Jana jest różny czy uzupełniający się z dziełem św. Łukasza ujęciem „daru Ducha”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** godzina Jezusa, Duch Święty, Męka Jezusa, dar, Ewangelia św. Jana

---

In Johannine theology, the motif of the hour of Jesus – His passion, death, and glorification – is of central significance.<sup>1</sup> These events represent the climax of John's Christology.<sup>2</sup> In keeping with the apocalyptic tradition, this is an eschatological hour, which the evangelist closely associates with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. John underscores that the Spirit actualizes the event of Jesus in history and that Christ bestows the Spirit upon His disciples to empower them for their apostolic mission.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the Gospel of Luke, John shows that this bestowal takes place not on the day of Pentecost but in the 'hour of Jesus.'<sup>4</sup>

This article comprises four sections:

1. "Jesus desires that all be 'finished'" (John 19:28);
2. "He gave up his spirit" (John 19:30);
3. "Blood and water came out" (John 19:34);
4. "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).

The aim of this study is to examine the interrelation between the hour of Jesus and the mystery of the gift of the Holy Spirit – an examination of when and how, according to John's intent, the imparting of the Spirit took place. The Fourth Gospel, unlike Luke, indicates that the Holy Spirit was given to the community of believers not only on the day of Pentecost but also in the 'hour of Jesus.' It is therefore appropriate to reflect on whether these are two distinct perspectives on the 'gift of the Spirit' or complementary ones.

- 
- 1 See I. de La Potterie, *Męka Pańska według świętego Jana* (J 18, 1–19, 42), in: A. Vanhoye, C. Duquoc, I. de La Potterie, *Ė. Charpentier, Męka według czterech Ewangelii*, Kraków 2002, p. 71; H. Witczak, "Godzina Jezusa" – ofiara zbawczej męki, śmierci i zmartwychwstania, "Verbum Vitae" 8 (2003), p. 117.
  - 2 F. Porsch, *Johannes–Evangelium*, Stuttgart 1988, p. 205 (Stuttgarter Kleiner Kommentar, NT, 4); A. Marchadour, *L'Évangile de Jean. Commentaire pastoral*, Paris 1992, pp. 236–237 (Commentaires); K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium. 2. Teilband: Kapitel 11–21*, Stuttgart 2001, p. 260 (Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 4.2).
  - 3 See L. F. Ladaria, *Cristologia del Logos y cristologia del Espíritu*, "Gregorianum" 61 (1980) no. 2, pp. 353–360; I. de la Potterie, *Cristologia e pneumatologia in San Giovanni*, in: *Bibbia e cristologia*. Pontificia Commissione Biblica, Cinisello Balsamo 1987, p. 275 (Parola di Dio, 5).
  - 4 For discussions on the Holy Spirit in the work of Luke, see R. Głuchowski, "Gdy nadszedł w końcu dzień Pięćdziesiątnicy..." (Dz 2, 1), in: *Duch Święty*, ed. P. Łabuda, Tarnów 2017, pp. 291–300 (*Źródło Wody Żywej*, 4); M. Bednarz, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel of St. Luke*, in: *Duch Święty*, ed. P. Łabuda, pp. 229–236 (*Źródło Wody Żywej*, 4).

## 1. Jesus desires that all now be 'finished' (John 19:28)

John's account of Jesus' death (John 19:28–30) is framed by the verb τετέλεσται—'It is finished' (John 19:28, 30). The phrase τετέλεσται, ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή signifies the completion of Jesus' mission and the fulfilment of God's plan.<sup>5</sup> Jesus accomplishes everything foretold in Scripture and desires to complete the work entrusted to Him by the Father (John 17:4). While dying, Jesus is not alone (John 8:29), as His death marks His return to the Father. This is emphasised by His final words, 'It is finished' (τετέλεσται), which simultaneously constitute an act of salvation for humanity. The words τετέλεσται and τελειωθῇ (John 19:28, 30) are closely linked to the blood flowing from Christ's pierced side (John 19:34), which in the Bible symbolises life (cf. Lev. 17:11, 14; Deut. 12:23).

The term 'all' (πάντα; John 19:28) refers to the entirety of Jesus' Passion (cf. John 18:4). John emphasises that Jesus fully completes the work He undertook. In John 13:1, what Jesus knows pertains to the hour that has already arrived. Thus, the phrase 'in order to fulfil the Scripture' (John 19:28) refers not only to what preceded it but also to everything that follows.<sup>6</sup> This is the only instance in which the evangelist employs the term *teleio, w* ('to fulfil') in reference to Scripture. Elsewhere, he uses the verb πληρῶ ('to complete').<sup>7</sup> The verb τελειόω appears to originate from an earlier tradition.<sup>8</sup> John employs this term with full awareness, as demonstrated by several factors. Firstly, τελειόω shares the same root as *tele, w*, indicating that the fulfilment of Scripture constitutes the complete realisation of Jesus' mission. Moreover, the evangelist has already used the verb τελειόω in relation to the work entrusted to Jesus by

5 See H. van den Bussche, *Jean. Commentaire de l'Évangile spirituel*, Bruges 1967, p. 516; S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana, rozdziały 13–21. Wstęp—przekład z oryginału—komentarz*, Częstochowa 2010, pp. 246–247 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, vol. IV/2).

6 See X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4: *L'heure de la glorification* (chapitres 18–21), Paris 1996, p. 151 (Parole de Dieu); R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie. Encyclopédie de la Passion du Christ, de Gethsémani au tombeau. Un commentaire de récits de la Passion dans les quatre évangiles*, Paris 2005, p. 1178.

7 See John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24.

8 See M.-É. Boismard, A. Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, Paris 1977, p. 440 (Synopsis des quatre Évangiles, vol. 3); R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie*, Paris 2005, p. 1179.

the Father.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the meaning of τετέλεσται confirms this interpretation: the term signifies the culmination of the Son's journey, in which He consistently carries out the Father's will. The phrase 'he bowed his head and gave up his spirit' (John 19:30) indicates that Jesus accepted death of His own volition. The act of bowing His head symbolises His entrustment to the Father.<sup>10</sup>

The verb τετέλεσται serves as a literary bracket, both opening and closing the account of Jesus' dying. This structure is formed by John 19:28 and John 19:30, which parallel each other. In both passages, Jesus Himself is the agent of the actions described:

a) Jesus knew that all was now finished (τετέλεσται) — John 19:28

b) He said, 'I am thirsty.' — John 19:28

a') He said, 'It is finished.' (τετέλεσται) — John 19:30

b') Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. — John 19:30.

At the centre of this account is Christ's cry, διψῶ ('I thirst'), a natural plea from a dying man experiencing intense thirst. This also serves as evidence that Jesus truly had a human body.<sup>11</sup> However, because this occurs in the context of Scripture being fulfilled, we can discern a deeper meaning in His words, 'I thirst.' John emphasises that Jesus is aware that this is how 'the Scripture is fulfilled' and that He longs to be united with the Father. Christ identifies with the persecuted psalmist,<sup>12</sup> even though the evangelist does not quote the psalm, as its author appears to reproach God for his fate.

Jesus Himself directs His own path (cf. John 10:17–18).<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, the verb 'I thirst' means His determination to 'drink the cup' given to

<sup>9</sup> See John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4.

<sup>10</sup> It is also worth noting that the verb τετέλεσται corresponds to the conclusion of the creation account: 'God finished his work on the sixth day' (Gen. 2:2). See X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, p. 156.

<sup>11</sup> See H. Langkammer, *Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*. Nowy Testament o meście i śmierci Jezusa, Wrocław 1994, p. 112. Some exegetes indicate that this cry primarily expresses a thirst for love: 'He gave everything and received nothing in return—neither understanding nor a response, except from that small group of faithful ones. Therefore, His thirst is intense.' R. Laurentin, *Prawdziwe życie Jezusa Chrystusa*, Kraków 1999, p. 397.

<sup>12</sup> See Ps. 63:2; 69:22; 22:15. Zob. R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie*, p. 1181; S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, rozdziały 13–21, p. 247.

<sup>13</sup> See R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie*, p. 1181; S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, rozdziały 13–21, p. 247.

Him by the Father (John 18:11) in a spirit of obedience (John 13:1). However, the words 'I thirst' may also be analyzed on a symbolic and salvific level. One may discern here a reference to the Passover lamb—Jesus as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). His role parallels that of the Passover lamb in the theology of the chosen people. Thus, Jesus thirsts for our salvation. In the Gospel of John, the phrase 'I thirst' serves as a summary: He has completed the work of revelation and redemption ('It is finished').

The words 'I thirst' may also recall the Samaritan woman's request: 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water', as well as Jesus' assurance that He will give her 'living water', after which she will never thirst again (see John 4:7–15).<sup>14</sup> This passage clearly illustrates the twofold meaning of 'I thirst'. The first pertains to the physical need of a thirsty man. The second refers to the spiritual realm—it is the Holy Spirit who will satisfy the spiritual thirst of a believer. The spiritual dimension of thirst is explicitly expressed in John 7:37–38, which speaks about the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This idea is further developed in the following verse about 'living water': 'Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified' (John 7:39).<sup>15</sup>

Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman, as well as His proclamation in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, were fulfilled on the cross. The dying Jesus longed for the Holy Spirit to descend upon believers.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in John 19:30, the evangelist notes that Jesus παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα ('gave up, ' or perhaps more precisely, 'handed over' the Spirit). Thus, the event of Jesus reached its completion: 'It is finished' (John 19:28), though the history of salvation continues until the end of time. It is on the cross that the era of the Holy Spirit begins as the continuation of Christ's work.

<sup>14</sup> See B. Maggioni, *Ewangeliczne opowieści o Męce Pańskiej*, Kraków 2002, p. 326.

<sup>15</sup> Some manuscripts add 'Holy' in John 7:39. See S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, rozdziały 1–12. Wstęp—przekład z oryginału—komentarz, Częstochowa 2010, pp. 652–653 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, IV/1).

<sup>16</sup> See R. E. Brown, *La Passione nei Vangeli*, Brescia 1988, p. 105; S. Witkowski, *Męka Pańska według Ewangelii św. Jana*, Kraków 2001, p. 82.

## 2. He 'gave up his spirit' (John 19:30)

The author of the Fourth Gospel emphasizes that, having said, 'It is finished' (*tete, lestai*), Jesus 'bowed his head and gave up his spirit' (κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα) (John 19:30). While Mark (Mark 15:37) and Luke (Luke 23:46) use the term ἐξέπνευσεν ('breathed his last'), John employs a completely different expression: παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. Consciously and purposefully, he speaks about Jesus's death with entirely new words.

The expression παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμά carries a threefold meaning. Firstly, it signifies that Jesus died. The active voice of the verb suggests that His death was a conscious act: until the very end, Jesus remained in control of His fate. However, a deeper interpretation points to the completion of His earthly mission. The phrase 'gave up his spirit' reflects the defining characteristic of His entire work: Jesus' disposition of self-giving. Thirdly, John had already suggested a connection between Christ's departure—His glorification—and the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 7:39; 16:7). John's account of Christ's death reveals the fulfillment of this prediction: as Jesus left the world, He imparted to His disciples the Spirit He had promised them as the fruit of His return to the Father.<sup>17</sup>

The phrase 'he bowed his head' (John 19:30) may be understood as a depiction of Jesus' complete exhaustion. However, John uses these words to emphasize that Jesus retains control over His fate. As He journeys to Golgotha and dies upon the cross, He is truly Lord and King. He needs no assistance—He carries His cross Himself (John 19:17).

Bearing this in mind, we can see in this moment more than merely the gesture of a dying man.<sup>18</sup> Christ 'bowed his head' toward two persons: His Mother and the beloved disciple.<sup>19</sup> He inclined toward those

17 See S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, rozdziały 13–21, Częstochowa 2010, p. 248.

18 See R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie*, p. 1188. John does not emphasize the tragic and painful dimension of the Passion events but rather the kingship of the Master. See P. Łabuda, *Jezus jako król w czwartej Ewangelii*. "To Ty powiedzialesz, że jestem królem" (J 18, 37), "Seminare" 24 (2007), pp. 83–94; J. Królikowski, *Królewskość Jezusa Chrystusa w opisie męki w Ewangelii św. Jana*, "Symposium" 25 (2021) no. 2, pp. 12–146.

19 See X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, p. 159; A. Marchadour, *L'Évangile de Jean*, p. 237; S. Witkowski, *Męka Pańska według Ewangelii św. Jana*, p. 89.

who represented the nascent Church and entrusted them with the inheritance of the Holy Spirit. This event inaugurates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

Such an interpretation aligns with the dual or even triple-layered meaning that is characteristic of John's Gospel.<sup>21</sup>

While the Synoptic Gospels describe the dying Jesus as surrendering His spirit to the Father, St. John identifies this spirit with the Holy Spirit, who was in Christ and acted through Him. From this moment on, the Holy Spirit will be present and will act in believers. In His death, Christ opened the way for the Holy Spirit, whom those standing at the foot of the cross receive on behalf of the Church.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. 'Blood and water came out.' (John 19:34)

The final scene depicting Jesus' crucifixion provides a spiritual and theological explanation of His death. This is emphasized by its three-part structure:

Introduction (John 19:31–32)

A. The Events (John 19:33–34)

- Negative rendering: 'They did not break his legs' (John 19:33)
- Positive rendering: 'One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out' (John 19:34)

B. The Triple Testimony (John 19:35)

- 'He who saw this has testified'

---

<sup>20</sup> See I. de la Potterie, *Męka Pańska według św. Jana*, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup> See C. M. Martini, *Męka Jezusa Chrystusa według czterech Ewangelii*, Kraków 1999, p. 137; É. Charpentier, *Pomoc w uroczystej lekturze opisów Męki*, in: A. Vanhoye, C. Duquoc, I. de La Potterie, É. Charpentier, *Męka według czterech Ewangelii*, p. 127.

<sup>22</sup> According to Saint John, Jesus is exalted already on the cross, passing from this world to the Father (see John 13:1; 17:11), and rejoices in what, according to the other evangelists, He obtained only after the Resurrection. In the Fourth Gospel, the cross is the source of the gift of life—the Holy Spirit. Its bestowal occurs in various circumstances. Thus, Saint John presents his own concept of Pentecost, distinct from Luke's version (see Acts 2:1–42). Cf. I. de la Potterie, *La Passione secondo Giovanni* (18, 1–19, 42), in: A. Vanhoye, I. de la Potterie, C. Duquoc, É. Charpentier, *La Passione secondo i quattro Vangeli*, Brescia 1983, p. 70 (*Universale Teologica*, 5); F. Porsch, *Johannes–Evangelium*, Stuttgart 1988, p. 206; A. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według św. Jana*, Lublin 2000, p. 207 (*Biblia Lubelska*).



- 'His testimony is true'
- 'He knows that he tells the truth'

A'. The Significance of the Events (John 19:36–37)

- Negative rendering: 'None of his bones shall be broken' (John 19:36)
- Positive rendering: 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced' (John 19:37).

The evangelist presents circumstances essential for understanding the event that particularly interests him (John 19:31–32), situating it within the Paschal context. He is the only one to mention that 'it was the day of Preparation' (John 19:31) and that Jesus was sentenced to death 'about noon' (John 19:14), the time when priests were offering lambs in the Temple in preparation for the feast. Only John describes what happened immediately after Jesus' death: the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken to hasten their death before the Passover feast so that they could be taken down from their crosses (see Deuteronomy 21:22–23). Pilate agreed, even though Roman law stipulated that the bodies were to remain on the crosses. Through this presentation of events, John reveals a deeper significance of the events.<sup>23</sup>

According to John, Jesus' death is not a defeat but leads to life. Instead of breaking His legs, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, from which blood and water came out. The piercing (or opening) of Christ's side may have two meanings. Firstly, it was intended to hasten His death. The spear pierced His heart, causing His death, and from His heart flowed blood and water. In this way, the evangelist emphasizes both Jesus' death and His humanity. However, John's intent is more profound: he draws theological conclusions from this event.<sup>24</sup> This is evident in the way he underscores his testimony (John 19:35), which stands at the centre, thereby connecting the event itself with its interpretation rooted in Scripture. The particular emphasis on testimony suggests that John considers the recorded event to hold special significance for the life

<sup>23</sup> See H. van den Bussche, *Jean. Commentaire de l'Évangile spirituel*, p. 531.

<sup>24</sup> The event that occurred cannot be easily explained medically (see C. M. Martini, *Męka Jezusa Chrystusa według czterech Ewangelii*, p. 147). However, it is possible that in a crucified person, a certain amount of blood remains in the heart, and a serous fluid accumulates around it (see P. Benoit, *Passion et résurrection du Seigneur*, Paris 1969, p.250 (Lire la Bible, 6).

of the Church. He attributes great importance to this scene, especially to the outpouring of blood and water.<sup>25</sup>

The witness is the one who ‘saw.’ In the way the soldiers looked, there was no faith (John 19:33). In the eyewitness (John 19:35), on the contrary, there was an act of faith. He looked at a twofold event—one rendered both negatively and positively (John 19:33–34).<sup>26</sup> The eyewitness delved into the significance of the event and conveyed its dual dimension: as a fact and as a symbolic reality. The verb ‘to see,’ which refers to the testimony, is in the perfect tense (ὁ ἑώρακώς), thus expressing an ongoing effect. This stresses that seeing is transformed into testimony, acquiring a sense of continuity and permanence. The witness recounts the event that he understood through faith. This perspective sheds light on his statement: ‘His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth’ (John 19:35). The terms ‘true’ and ‘the truth’ refer not only to the event itself but also to the spiritual dimension of reality (truth). The verb μαρτυρέω (‘to testify’) is also in the perfect tense. The evangelist’s statement is open to the future—from Jesus to the time of the Church, from the eyewitness to believers of all times. The witness saw the event, understood it, and bore testimony. We, on the other hand, believe based on his seeing (as a historical event), his understanding (through faith), and his testimony. The seeing of this firsthand witness would become the way the Church, i.e. future believers, sees it (‘they will look’). Thus, we will be able to attain salvation as disciples of Jesus, contemplating the Crucified One with the eyes of faith. The Holy Spirit authenticates this testimony: ‘He knows that [Jesus] tells the truth, so that you also may believe, for He comes from the Father and the Son and continually makes present the word of Jesus’ (cf. John 15:26ff; 16:14f).<sup>27</sup>

The pericope John 19:31–37 is closely connected to the preceding one, which recounts the death of Jesus (John 19:28–30). The verses John 19:28, 30, and 34 develop the theme of the gift of the Holy Spirit, granted

<sup>25</sup> See I. de la Potterie, *Męka Pańska według świętego Jana*, p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> The significance of the events is emphasized by biblical quotations. The first: ‘You shall not break any of its bones’ (Ex 12:46) refers to the first event (the soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs—John 19:33); and the second: ‘When they look on the one whom they have pierced’ (Zech 12:10) refers to the second event (the flow of blood and water—John 19:34).

<sup>27</sup> S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, rozdział 13–21, p. 261.

by Jesus. While dying, He thirsts for His ministry to continue through the action of the Holy Spirit (John 19:28; cf. John 16:7), which is fulfilled when He 'gave up his spirit' (John 19:30). The water that flowed from Jesus' side (John 19:34) also symbolizes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The priests of the Old Covenant killed the lamb in such a way that its blood, identified with life, would flow out and not coagulate. Similarly, the author of the Fourth Gospel emphasizes that from Jesus' side 'at once blood and water came out' (καὶ ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ, John 19:34). Immediately after His death, Jesus bestowed the gifts of blood and water. Thus, He brought life.<sup>28</sup>

The outpouring of water signifies the enduring gift of the Holy Spirit from the moment Christ died.<sup>29</sup> This fulfills what Jesus had previously foretold: 'As the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."' (John 7:38, Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition). It was then that He applied to Himself the prophetic words of Ezekiel (cf. Ezek. 47:1). The verb ἐξέρχομαι ('flowed out') appears in Ezekiel's prophecy, which speaks of water issuing from below the threshold of the Temple and becoming a stream that waters the desert.

It is in this spirit that the Book of Zechariah prophesies: 'On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity' (Zech. 13:1; cf. Ezek. 36:25–27). These words relate to an earlier prophecy: 'And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him' (Zech. 12:10). The words from Zechariah refer not only to the piercing of Jesus' side but also to the water that flows from it.

According to John, all this was fulfilled when Jesus' side was pierced. He became the source of living water that symbolizes the Holy Spirit (cf. John 7:38–39). Lifted up on the cross, Jesus draws all people to Himself

---

<sup>28</sup> The verse John 19:34 was, in some manuscripts (e.g. B, C, L), added at the end of Matthew 27:49. In the Gospel of Matthew, it expresses the idea that Jesus was pierced with a spear before His death.

<sup>29</sup> See R. Laurentin, *Prawdziwe życie Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 397; I. de la Potterie, *Cristologia e pneumatologia in San Giovanni*, p. 284.

(John 12:32), and all who believe in Him receive the Holy Spirit (cf. John 7:39).<sup>30</sup>

Here, water signifies the Holy Spirit and is connected with blood, which symbolizes Christ's sacrifice. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' gift; He is the source of the Spirit. The order of words plays a role here. Some manuscripts reverse the sequence (water and blood), no doubt due to harmonization with 1 John 5:6. In this case, the scribes were already influenced by Christian experience.<sup>31</sup>

It is out of Jesus' death that sacramental life emerges: baptism (water) and the Eucharist (blood). The Church was given these gifts by the Crucified. The order of words—mentioning water after blood—Implies that the Holy Spirit is the fruit of Jesus' sacrifice.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22)

In his account of the encounter between the Risen Christ and His disciples, John emphasizes that Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit (John 20:19–23). This pericope consists of two closely interrelated parts: Jesus' appearance (John 20:19–21) and the conferral of the mission (John 20:22–23).<sup>33</sup> This takes place in the evening on the first day of the week.<sup>34</sup> John stresses the initiative of the risen Christ, who enables the disciples

<sup>30</sup> See. I. de la Potterie, *La Passione secondo Giovanni*, p. 70; X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, p. 163; A. M. Ramsey, *La résurrection du Christ. Essai de théologie biblique*, Tournai 1968, p. 97; B. Maggioni, *Ewangeliczne opowieści o Męce Pańskiej*, p. 331.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Kremer, *Die Osterevangelien—Geschichten um Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1977, p. 162, 186; R. E. Brown, *La Passione nei Vangeli*, p. 107; C. M. Martini, *Męka Jezusa Chrystusa według czterech Ewangelii*, pp. 148–149; B. Maggioni, *Ewangeliczne opowieści o Męce Pańskiej*, p. 331; R. E. Brown, *La mort du Messie*, p. 1301.

<sup>32</sup> See P. Benoit, *Passion et résurrection du Seigneur*, p. 253; I. de la Potterie, *Cristologia e pneumatologia in San Giovanni*, pp. 285–286.

<sup>33</sup> On the literary relationship between these two parts, see Ph. Seidensticker, *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelien. Ein traditionsgegeschichtlicher Versuch zum Problem der Sicherung der Osterbotschaft in der apostolischen Zeit*, Stuttgart 1967, pp. 130–131 (*Stuttgarter Bibelstudien*, 26).

<sup>34</sup> This is not only chronological information but also liturgical. It refers to the first day of the week, when the Eucharist was celebrated (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2). See X. Léon-Dufour, *Résurrection de Jésus et message pascal*, Paris 1971, p. 235 (*Parole de Dieu*).

to recognize Him and entrusts them with their mission. He breathes on them, thus imparting the Holy Spirit and the power to forgive sins.

While depicting the events related to the appearances of the risen Christ, the evangelists emphasize the role of the ecclesial community, particularly the mission of the apostles (these are the so-called missionary revelations).<sup>35</sup> The disciples are sent forth to continue the mission of their Master, which He was given by His Father (John 17:17–19).<sup>36</sup> While writing about the sending of the Son by the Father, John does not use the aorist tense but the perfect tense ('As the Father has sent me' – ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, John 20:21). In this way, he underscores the ongoing nature of the mission, which will be continued by the assembly of the apostles.<sup>37</sup> In the world, the apostles will reflect His presence and, thereby, the presence of the Father. Jesus bestows the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, indicating a Trinitarian truth: the entire Trinity is the source of sanctification. This marks both the culmination and the conclusion of Jesus' mission.<sup>38</sup>

When Jesus came, He 'showed them his hands and his side' (John 20:20), proving that He was the same Jesus who had been crucified. He did not show them His hands and feet but His hands and His side. Thus, He presented Himself as the one who had been crucified and from whose

<sup>35</sup> The missionary revelations of Jesus are referred to by others as official or apostolic Christophanies. See M.-É. Boismard, A. Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, p. 365; J. Daniélou, *La risurrezione*, Torino 1970, p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> M.-É. Boismard argues that the theme present here is that of Jesus as the new Moses, in accordance with Deuteronomy 18:18. Just as Moses, Jesus conveys to the people the words He received from God (cf. John 7:16b; 8:28; 12:49–50; 14:24b). See M.-É. Boismard, A. Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, p. 471.

<sup>37</sup> See P. Benoit, *Passion et résurrection du Seigneur*, 369. X. Léon-Dufour argues, however, that this does not refer to the Apostles and their successors, but to all the disciples. See X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, 235; F. Porsch, *Johannes-Evangelium*, p. 215. Prophets often appointed their successors. The one who sent a representative authorized him, granting him a portion of his authority so that he could properly represent him. Likewise, Jesus appeared to the Apostles and sent them into the world (self-revelation and mission). See G. Ghiberti, *I racconti pasquali del cap. 20 di Giovanni: confronti con le altre tradizioni neotestamentarie*, Brescia 1972, pp. 101–102 (Studi Biblici, 19).

<sup>38</sup> See G. Ghiberti, *I racconti pasquali del cap. 20 di Giovanni*, p. 28; Ph. Seidensticker, *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelien*, p. 134; X. Léon-Dufour, *Résurrection de Jésus*, p. 235.

side blood and water had flowed (John 19:34). From Jesus' side came forth the Holy Spirit, who enlivens the human soul just as water gives life to the earth.

Life, particularly life in union with Jesus, is a distinctive theme of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>39</sup> Through His words and deeds, Jesus reveals life in its various meanings. Its full revelation and outpouring could not take place before Christ's Passion and Resurrection. Only the blood and water that came from His side refer to the Holy Spirit, who is the life-giving power whose source is the dying Christ (John 19:34). By pointing to His pierced side, Jesus recalled the water of life that flowed from Him, symbolizing the Holy Spirit given to those who believe (John 19:34; cf. John 7:39). In doing so, He signified that the promises concerning the Paraclete were fulfilled in the hour of His glorification.<sup>40</sup>

Jesus 'breathed on them' the Holy Spirit. With the power of the Spirit, He awakened in the disciples Paschal faith and transformed them into a new creation that could continue His salvific mission in the world (John 20:23; cf. Acts 1:8–9).<sup>41</sup> Apart from John's Gospel, the verb 'breathed' (ἐμφυσάω) does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament. It is used in the account of the creation of man (Gen. 2:7 LXX), where it emphasizes that man exists by the breath of God. Thus, the risen Christ 'breathed' just as God did in the act of man's creation: 'He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life' (Gen. 2:7 LXX; cf. also Wis. 15:11). The one who experienced death made Himself known as the Lord of life.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Ph. Seidensticker, *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelien*, p. 132.

<sup>40</sup> Only Saint John calls the Holy Spirit the Paraclete (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). This is a noun formed from the passive voice of the verb *parakaleō* (I call, usually to aid). In Greek secular literature, it most often means 'to encourage, 'to give courage,' and refers to someone called for help. From these meanings, the terms 'advocate' and 'defender' emerged. In Saint John's thought, this verb carries a deep significance, consistent with the tradition of the early Church. It primarily means 'to give good counsel,' 'to admonish,' and 'to encourage.' It also expresses the idea of effective help, guardianship, intercession, defense, and even accusation (John 16:8–11). Considering the rich semantic range of the term *para, klhōj*, it is more appropriate not to translate it but to retain its Greek form. See M. Bednarz, *Zapowiedzi zstania Ducha Świętego w Ewangeliu św. Jana*, "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne" 16 (1998), pp. 76–77.

<sup>41</sup> See I. de la Potterie, *Cristologia e pneumatologia in San Giovanni*, pp. 286–287.

<sup>42</sup> See H. van den Bussche, *Jean. Commentaire de l'Évangile spirituel*, p. 551; C. F. Evans, *Resurrection and the New Testament*, London 1970, p. 125 (Studies in Biblical Theol-

While writing about the forgiveness of sins, John uses the passive voice of the verb (ἀφένται – 'they are forgiven'). This construction suggests John's intention to avoid directly pronouncing the name of God. Thus, the passage may be translated as: 'If you forgive the sins of any, God will forgive them; if you retain the sins of any, God will retain them' (John 20:23; cf. 1 John 1:7, 9). Jesus grants the apostles the authority to forgive sins, cleansing them through God's power. Their ministry involves restoring a living communion with Jesus through His merits.<sup>43</sup> In the Greek text, a perfect tense is used, which corresponds to a continuous present tense. Consequently, sins are being forgiven in the present and will also be forgiven in the eschatological world.<sup>44</sup>

Some scholars suggest that John 20:19–23 describes the 'Johannine Pentecost'.<sup>45</sup> St Luke, in narrating the final Christophany, speaks only of the promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 24:49), as if directing the reader to the second part of his work. St John, however, presents

---

ogy. Second Series, 12); K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*. vol. 1, Poznań-Warszawa-Tyńiec 1999, p. 391; F. Porsch, *Johannes-Evangelium*, p. 216; A. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według św. Jana*, p. 214; X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, p. 236; C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2000, p. 231 (PSB); K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium*. 2. Teilband: Kapitel 11–21, p. 292.

<sup>43</sup> The situation is similar to Peter being entrusted at Caesarea Philippi (see Matt. 16:19), although in the case of the first of the Apostles, it concerns authority in a broader sense, not only the forgiveness of sins. The statement in John 20:23 is closer to Jesus' words in Matt. 18:18, where He addresses all the Apostles, speaking about sins and fraternal correction. On the connection between John 20:23, Matt. 16:19, and Matt. 18:18, see G. Ghiberti, *I racconti pasquali del cap. 20 di Giovanni*, 143–167. He considers John's text to be a modification of an earlier tradition. See A. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza, rozdziały 14–28. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, Częstochowa 2008, pp. 128–130, 226–227 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, vol. 1/2).

<sup>44</sup> See M.-É. Boismard, A. Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, p. 472. It seems that some manuscripts modify the text to the present or future tense for the sake of simplification. See S. Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana, rozdziały 13–21*, p. 299. John 20:22–23 is considered a classic passage for the institution of the sacrament of penance. See X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4, pp. 239–243. Some scholars claim that it may refer to the giving of the Spirit to those who have come to believe as a result of the disciples' 'mission' and have joined the community. See Th. Perkins, *The Gospel According to John*, in *The Catholic Biblical Commentary*, eds. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, Warszawa 2001, p. 1174 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna).

<sup>45</sup> See X. Léon-Dufour, *Résurrection de Jésus*, p. 239.

an ‘anticipation’ of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While depicting the final Christophany, Luke writes solely about the promise to send the Holy Spirit (see Luke 24:49), thus referring the reader to the second part of his work. John, on the contrary, anticipates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. His intention was to encapsulate the entire Paschal mystery in a single scene. In this way, he emphasized that through Christ’s resurrection, a new world was born.<sup>46</sup>

The outpouring of the Spirit takes place gradually, both before and after Pentecost. The imparting of the Spirit at Pascha, at Pentecost, and later are signs of the same reality that has been transforming the world from the moment of Jesus’ glorification (John 7:37–39). All these outpourings are one. On Pascha, the disciples were given the Spirit for the sake of their mission. Its solemn outpouring took place when the new people of God were being established (Acts 2:1–4).<sup>47</sup> In the last instance, the giving of the Holy Spirit serves as the starting point and the birth of a new community, which will march victoriously through the world under the guidance and power of the same Spirit.

## Conclusions

The Gospel of John reveals a special, deeply internal relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus is presented by John the Baptist as the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Then Jesus passes on the words that He received from His Father. Having said, “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless,” He adds, “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John 6:63). He is referring to the life-giving Spirit. Jesus’ words are capable of convincing people to live in accordance with their message. They carry the sanctifying power of the Spirit (cf. 1 John 2:14; 3:9). In His farewell discourse, Jesus gives five promises of the Paraclete (John 14:16–17;

---

<sup>46</sup> See A. M. Ramsey, *La résurrection du Christ. Essai de theologie biblique*, p. 105.

<sup>47</sup> See H. van den Bussche, Jean. *Commentaire del'Évangile spirituel*, p. 552; P. Benoit, *Pas-sion et résurrection du Seigneur*, p. 367.



14:25–26; 15:26–27; 16:8–11; 16:13–15). All of them speak of the Spirit's perfecting work for the Church community.<sup>48</sup>

Further passages in the Fourth Gospel indicate that the Holy Spirit, as a gift, comes from Jesus. He is the source of the Spirit. This is evident primarily in Christ's solemn statement in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles and, most significantly, in the accounts of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

The ministry of the historical Jesus is complete: 'It is finished' (John 19:28). Nonetheless, the history of salvation unfolds until the end of time. On the cross, the time of the Holy Spirit began—the Spirit that Jesus poured out on believers. He gave up His spirit (John 19:28). While dying, He made way for the Holy Spirit, received by those standing at the cross on behalf of the Church. Jesus is the source of living water, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Lifted up on the cross, the Lord draws all people to Himself, and all who believe in Him receive the Holy Spirit. From His pierced side, blood and water flowed. The water signifies the Holy Spirit and is connected with the blood, which symbolizes Christ's sacrifice. This implies that the Holy Spirit comes from Jesus. He is its source, and its work continues Christ's ministry.

While appearing to His disciples, the Risen One shows them His hands and side, reminding them that He is the Crucified One from whose side blood and water flowed (John 19:34). It was from His side that the Holy Spirit flowed out, nourishing the earth as water does. When Jesus came to His disciples, He breathed the Holy Spirit upon them, thus imparting the power to forgive sins and bringing new life within them. The One who had experienced death revealed Himself as the Lord of life. By bestowing the Spirit upon His disciples, Jesus also awakened their faith, through which they would proclaim the Good News.

In John's account, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit brings the Paschal mystery to its fulfillment. Through Christ's resurrection, a new world was born. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Easter, at Pentecost, and thereafter is each time a sign of the same reality—one that, since the glorification of Jesus, was transforming the world. All these outpourings constitute a unified whole.

<sup>48</sup> See A. Jankowski, *Duch Dokonawca. Nowy Testament o posłannictwie eschatologicznym Ducha Świętego*, Katowice 1983, p. 104.

There is, therefore, no contradiction between Luke's account – In which, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit was solemnly given to the Church community on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1–4) – and John's account, for whom the giving of the Spirit took place in the 'hour of Jesus,' i.e. during his Passion and after his resurrection. The same Spirit is continually given to the community of believers.

## References

- Bednarz M., Zapowiedzi zesłania Ducha Świętego w Ewangelii św. Jana, "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne" 16 (1998), pp. 75–100.
- Benoit P., *Passion et résurrection du Seigneur*, Paris 1969 (Lire la Bible, 6).
- Boismard M.-É., Lamouille A., *L'Évangile de Jean*, Paris 1977 (Synopse des quatre Évangiles, 3).
- Brown R. E., *La mort du Messie. Encyclopédie de la Passion du Christ, de Gethsémani au tombeau. Un commentaire de récits de la Passion dans les quatre évangiles*, Paris 2005.
- Brown R. E., *La Passione nei Vangeli*, Brescia 1988.
- Bussche H. van den, *Jean. Commentaire de l'Évangile spirituel*, Bruges 1967.
- Daniélou J., *La risurrezione*, Torino 1970.
- de la Potterie I., *Cristologia e pneumatologia in San Giovanni*, in: *Bibbia e cristologia. Pontificia commissione biblica*, Cinisello Balsamo 1987, pp. 275–291 (Parola di Dio, 5).
- de la Potterie I., *La Passione secondo Giovanni* (18, 1–19, 42), in: A. Vanhoye, I. de la Potterie, C. Duquoc, É. Charpentier, *La Passione secondo i quattro Vangeli*, Brescia 1983, pp. 55–71 (Universale Teologica, 5).
- de la Potterie I., *Męka Pańska według świętego Jana* (J 18, 1–19, 42), in: A. Vanhoye, I. de la Potterie, C. Duquoc, É. Charpentier, *Męka według czterech Ewangelii*, Kraków 2002, pp. 69–88.
- Duch Święty, ed. P. Łabuda, Tarnów 2017 (Źródło Wody Żywej, 4).
- Evans C. F., *Resurrection and the New Testament*, London 1970 (Studies in Biblical Theology. Secound Series, 12).
- Ghiberti G., *I racconti pasquali del cap. 20 di Giovanni: confrontati con le altre tradizioni neotestamentarie*, Brescia 1972 (Studi Biblici, 19).
- Jankowski A., *Duch Dokonawca. Nowy Testament o posłannictwie eschatologicznym Ducha Świętego*, Katowice 1983.

- Kremer J., *Die Osterevangelien – Geschichten um Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1977.
- Królikowski J., Królewskość Jezusa Chrystusa w opisie męki w Ewangelii św. Jana, "Symposium" 25 (2021) no. 2, pp. 121–146, <https://doi.org/10.4467/25443283SYM.21.022.14702>.
- Ladaria L. F., *Cristología del Logos y cristología del Espíritu*, "Gregorianum" 61 (1980) no. 2, pp. 353–360.
- Langkammer H., *Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi*. Nowy Testament o męce i śmierci Jezusa, Wrocław 1994.
- Laurentin R., *Prawdziwe życie Jezusa Chrystusa*, Kraków 1999.
- Léon-Dufour X., *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*, vol. 4: *L'heure de la glorification* (chapitres 18–21), Paris 1996 (Parole de Dieu).
- Léon-Dufour X., *Résurrection de Jésus et message pascal*, Paris 1971 (Parole de Dieu).
- Łabuda P., Jezus jako król w czwartej Ewangelii. "To Ty powiedziałeś, że jestem królem" (J 18, 37), "Seminare" 24 (2007), pp. 83–94, <https://doi.org/10.21852/SEM.2007.24.9>.
- Maggioni B., *Ewangeliczne opowieści o Męce Pańskiej*, Kraków 2002.
- Marchadour A., *L'évangile de Jean. Commentaire pastoral*, Paris 1992 (Commentaires).
- Martini C. M., *Męka Jezusa Chrystusa według czterech Ewangelii*, Kraków 1999.
- Mędala S., *Ewangelia według świętego Jana, rozdziały 1–12*. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz, Częstochowa 2010 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, IV/1).
- Mędala S., *Ewangelia według świętego Jana, rozdziały 13–21*. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz, Częstochowa 2010 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, IV/2).
- Miglietta M., Uwagi o procesie Chrystusa, "Zeszyty Prawnicze" 5 (2005) no. 1, pp. 5–49.
- Paciorek A., *Ewangelia według św. Jana*, Lublin 2000 (Biblia Lubelska).
- Paciorek A., *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza, rozdziały 14–28*. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz, Częstochowa 2008 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, I/2).
- Perkins Th., *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*, in: *Katolicki komentarz biblijny*, eds. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, Warszawa 2001, s. 1108–1176 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna).

- Porsch F., *Johannes–Evangelium*, Stuttgart 1988 (Stuttgarter Kleiner Kommentar NT, 4).
- Ramsey A. M., *La résurrection du Christ. Essai de theologie biblique*, Tournai 1968.
- Romaniuk K., Jankowski A., Stachowiak L., *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, vol. 1, Poznań–Warszawa–Tyniec 1999.
- Seidensticker Ph., *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelien. Ein traditionsgegeschichtlicher Versuch zum Problem der Sicherung der Osterbotschaft in der apostolischen Zeit*, Stuttgart 1967 (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 26).
- Witczyk H., “Godzina Jezusa” — ofiara zbawczej męki, śmierci i zmartwychwstania, “*Verbum Vitae*” 8 (2003), pp. 117–136.
- Witkowski S., *Męka Pańska według Ewangelii św. Jana*, Kraków 2001.