

Water: Water signifies the Holy Spirit's action in Baptism. "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). And in John 7:37-39, Jesus directly associates the Spirit with the living water that satisfies spiritual thirst.

Fire: Fire signifies the vibrant and transforming energy of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire upon the Apostles at Pentecost, and they were transformed into courageous witnesses for Christ.

A cloud and light: In the Old Testament, God often appeared as a fire or light within a dense cloud (see Exodus 40:38, Ezekiel 1:4). These two images together symbolize that the Holy Spirit reveals, yet also keeps hidden, the glory of God. In the New Testament, clouds play a role in Jesus' Baptism, Transfiguration, and Ascension.

A dove: In all four Gospels, at Jesus' Baptism the Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove. This is why in Christian art, a dove often symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

Anointing: As part of our sacramental rites, being anointed with oil symbolizes that the power of the Holy Spirit is being poured out on the person. The word Christ means "the one anointed by God's Spirit." Now Jesus Christ pours his Spirit out on all those who are baptized and confirmed.

Laying on hands: Jesus healed the sick and blessed children by laying his hands on them (see Mark 10:16). People received the Holy Spirit when the Apostles laid hands on them (see Acts of the Apostles 8:17).