

Life in the Spirit – Session 8: The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Prayer

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. Let us pray. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Scripture

- The primary Scriptural source for the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" is found in the writings of the Prophet Isaiah:

A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. (Isaiah 11:1-5) Amen

Baptism

- In Scripture the Spirit is symbolized by "the breath of God" which transmits the life of God in the creation of Adam and the authority of Jesus to the Apostles.
- We receive the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of Baptism. At baptism, the Spirit, the life-giving love of God imparts the life of God Himself to us, making us His children. Baptism frees us from the power of original sin and restoring us to a right relationship with God and with one another. I remember when my three daughters were baptized. I was in awe because I realized that at that moment in time, they were perfect sinless human beings, as close to God as they would ever be in their life on earth.
- Every baptized person receives the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are the sanctifying gifts of; Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Wonder and Awe in God's Presence. These are gifts we need in everyday life to enable us to take an active role in sharing our responsibility for the work of the church.
- St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that wisdom, understanding, knowledge and counsel influence and direct our intellect. These 4 gifts help us understand and recognize the kingdom of God in our midst. The other three gifts, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord, touch our will enabling us to repent, turning away from all sin to God.
- EVERY BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN THEM! What an awesome thought!

Confirmation

- The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are enhanced in Confirmation so as to have a greater effect as we mature in our lives as Christians.
- These gifts given through the Holy Spirit to give us the power to live as Christ taught us and the power to bring others with us.
- At the Last Supper, as Jesus was preparing his Apostles for his Passion and Death, they were overcome with grief. He said: *“I tell you the truth: It is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go I will send him to you.” (John 16:7)*
- Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit, one who speaks in favor of another, recommends, acts as an intercessor.
- Confirmation is the sacrament of integrity. It helps us to live a moral life pleasing to God.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom: The ability to look at everything with the eyes, ears, voice, touch of Christ. To view the world in the realm of the BIG PICTURE- HEAVEN. We ask ourselves the question, “How will this action affect me and others in the light of eternity? This gift helps us to see life as Jesus sees it. It is the result of our friendship and intimate contact with God in prayer.

- A person is able to express a truth in such a way that it bears effective results in those who listen.

Knowledge: To know who we are as Christians and to know our “code of honor” and to live by it. It is the gift that enables us to judge correctly in matters of faith.

- The gift of knowledge helps us value things correctly. We see the things of this world e.g., possessions, pleasure, power and the very purpose of our lives as gifts from God. We see all created things in relationship to God.

Understanding: To gain insight into our faith. The message of Jesus is the Good News. The Understanding of the truths in scripture come alive and the world can be understood in that light.

- Since our intellect is limited, the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of understanding to help us comprehend the truths of our faith. This gift enables us to go beyond the boundaries of human reason and attain knowledge that we could not reach on our own. For instance, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the Eucharist, to see beyond the surface meaning of the Scriptures, recognize the hand of God in all situations.

Counsel or Right Judgement: We are able to judge situations as God would and direct ourselves and others in the way of salvation. It is more of listening in the silence of our soul so that God’s indwelling Spirit can guide our responses every day and in every situation.

- With the gift of counsel, God shows us what is best for our eternal happiness.

Fortitude or Courage: To boldly speak out about Jesus and the Good News of the Gospel. The strength to stand firm in faith throughout the trials of life in the face of temptation and persecution.

- Fortitude helps us to face threats to our wellbeing or obstacles to block good deeds. We are able to overcome fear and act. It is not the absence of fear but the ability to overcome it. Fortitude enables us to be faithful and courageous enough to stand against evil.

Reverence or Piety: To give God and our Lord Jesus Christ first priority in our lives. If we use this gift, all areas of our lives will reflect God's holiness. We become enlightened and moved to worship God as the Source of all Being.

- Piety is a disposition that helps us follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. It nourishes confidence in God and His will for us. It moves us to works of mercy and compassion toward others. Our lives become a continual conversation with God.
- Piety helps us pray without ceasing.

Fear of the Lord or Wonder and Awe: We become aware of God's presence at every moment of our life and we are filled with a desire to be close to God always. It is a childlike response to God's majesty.

- When we truly fear the Lord we stand in awe of His mystery and realize that things are not only what they are but also stand for something supreme. What we cannot comprehend by analysis, we become aware of in awe.

In Conclusion: Jesus, the Son of David, was anointed by the Holy Spirit to accomplish His Messianic mission as Savior of the world. The Holy Spirit poured out on His humanity the seven gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord in their fullness. As crucified and risen from the dead, the Lord Jesus shares these very same gifts with all believers. First given to us in Baptism and then more fully in Confirmation, these gifts help us to respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to make good choices, to serve God and others, and to walk the path that leads to eternal happiness.

What does the Holy Spirit do for the Church?

- He remains with the Church to sanctify her.
- He dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple.
- He prays in the faithful making them realize they are indeed beloved adopted children of God.
- He guides the Church in the way of all truth, hence the frequent invocation of the Holy Spirit.
- He imparts charismatic gifts.
- He constantly works for the spiritual renewal of the Church, leading her to perfect union with her Spouse. "The Spirit and the Bride (the Church) say 'Come'" (Rev 22:17)
- He is the heart of the Missionary Church
- Recall His relationship with Mary, Mother of the Church, and with Christ the Head of the Church

What are some of the things attributed to the Holy Spirit with respect to individual Christians?

- We were born again of water and the Spirit

- We received a sort of personal Pentecost in Confirmation
- He helps us to make a good confession (know, detest our sins, renounce them out of love for God above all and resolve to change our lives)
- He will make us appreciate the Word of God (Holy Scripture) inspired by Him, and it is in the Spirit that we must read it.
- He will make us appreciate the unique value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the reception of Christ in Holy Communion.
- He enlightens our minds, strengthens our wills, guides us in making important decisions regarding vocation, overcoming habitual faults, living a life of faith, hope and charity, charity towards God and our neighbor.

The Fruit of the Spirit

- The fruit of the Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

This will be the topic for the next session!

Questions and Scripture

1. **In what way do you see the Gifts of the Spirit evident in your life?**
2. **Are you more aware of the Holy Spirit working in your life since being prayed with for the release of the Holy Spirit?**
3. **What gift would you like to see more active in your life?**
4. **When do I invoke the Holy Spirit?**

Lk 24:13-35

1Kgs 3:12

Is 11:2

Mt 6:31-33

Jer 23:18

Jn 14:16-18

Jn 16:13

1Thess 5:17

2 Tim 1:7

Gn 22:12

“ For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened... Your heavenly Father [will] give good things to those who ask him” (Mt 7:8,11)

The reference for this session was taken from, *The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, by Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli S.T.D.,S.S.L., D.D.