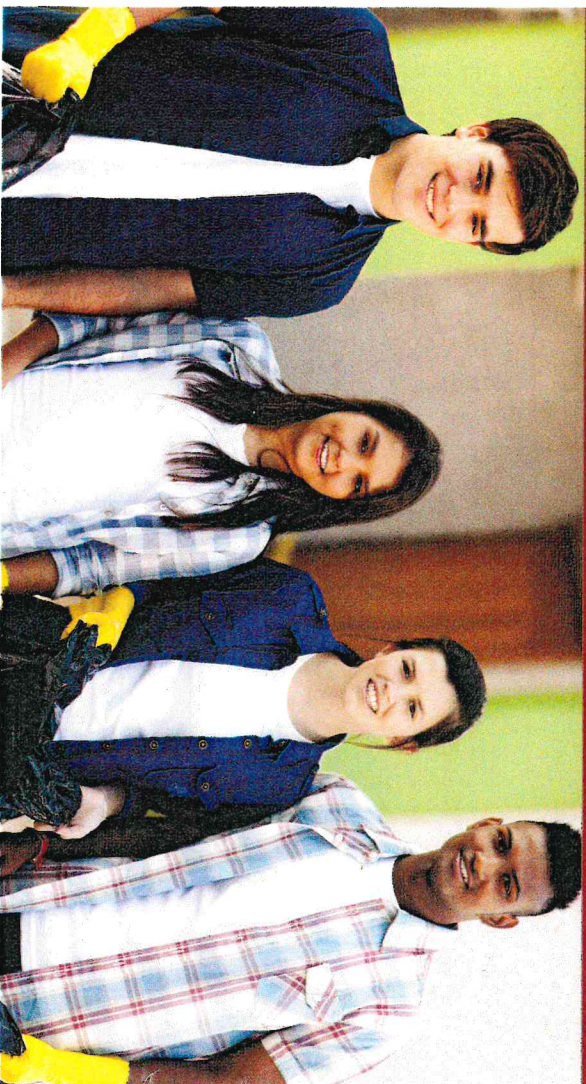


# Fruits of the Holy Spirit



*When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive special graces. The Church has traditionally called these the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. We read in Matthew's Gospel about trees that bear good fruit and trees that bear bad fruit. In this parable, Jesus tells us that "By their fruits shall you know them." (7:20) This helps us understand the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are observable behaviors of people who have allowed the grace of the Holy Spirit to be effective in them.*

**CHARITY:** The *agape*, or self-giving love, always seeks the best for the other. *Agape* denotes a love that gives freely without expectation of return. It does not condemn or consider how deserving or undeserving its object may be. This charity is an act of will, rather than of emotion. It is love by choice, not chance.

**JOY:** More than worldly happiness, this joy is rooted in God and comes from the sure knowledge that God is one's strength. This does not mean that a person may not experience sadness on occasion from tragedies and disappointments, but underlying the sadness is the conviction that one is always loved by God.

**PEACE:** Peace is more than an absence of conflict. It is the tranquil state of a soul in balance, confident that everything is in God's hands. The root word for peace (Greek *eirene*, Hebrew *shalom*) means wholeness, completeness or tranquility that is unaffected by outward circumstances or pressures.

**PATIENCE:** Patience includes the concepts of lenience, forbearance, endurance, long-suffering, and the willingness to bear wrongs patiently. It also includes the ability to endure persecution and ill-treatment, and still exercise restraint.

**KINDNESS:** Kindness is goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness, benevolence, compassion, sympathy and affability. The root word (Greek *chrēstotes*) describes the ability to act for the welfare of those who tax your patience. Through the fruit of kindness, the Holy Spirit removes one's abrasiveness and increases one's ability to be considerate of others.

**GOODNESS:** Goodness is the state or quality of being morally excellent and virtuous. It means valuing good and doing what is right because it is right. With goodness comes uprightness of heart and conduct, and finding joy in truth and righteousness. In goodness, we are transformed and strengthened to live as "children of the light" through "all that is good and right and true." (Ephesians 5:8,9)

**GENEROSITY:** Generosity means not being overly concerned about one's possessions, and using those possessions selflessly for the good of others. Generosity can be manifest by spending time, talent or labor for others. It includes looking out for society's common good, and giving from the heart without expecting any reward in return.

**GENTLENESS:** Gentleness is the virtue that restrains the passion of anger. Where anger flares up, gentleness calms down. Where anger wants to crush its target, gentleness soothes and quiets, tenderly embracing that which has caused anger to rise. It is important not to confuse gentleness with weakness.

**FAITHFULNESS:** Faithfulness is committing oneself to something or someone, for instance, to one's spouse, to a cause or to a religion. Being faithful requires personal resolve, based on trust, not to wander away from commitments or promises. Christian faith requires trust in God, completely submitting one's intellect and will to God.

**MODESTY:** Modesty means seeking the humility to behave with propriety in speech, thought, dress, manners and behavior. Through modesty, one forgoes any self-aggrandizement or self-seeking. It guides how one looks and behaves toward others, in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.

**SELF-CONTROL:** Self-control is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that enables one to have mastery over the self and control one's thoughts, speech and actions. It involves moderation, constraint and the ability to say "no" to our baser desires.

**CHASTITY:** Chastity means maintaining the gift of human sexuality with integrity. In chastity, we learn to make choices that honor our unique human creation and which are in obedience to God's commandments. We make those choices freely, recognizing that the integrity we choose benefits not only ourselves, but our families, friends and neighbors.