

Derry Diocese

Vocations Week 2020



Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Sunday 16th - Saturday 22nd February

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Diocese of Derry

Vocations Week 2020

Sunday 16th -Saturday 22nd February

“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear”.

Isaiah 11:1-3.

Christians understand these verses as describing the Messiah, and the gifts of the Spirit are perfectly present in him. These gifts are offered to every Christian by the action of the Spirit. The Spirit himself is “the gift of God” par excellence, he is a gift of God, and he in turn communicates various spiritual gifts to those who receive him. **POPE FRANCIS: General Audience, Wednesday, 9 April 2014.**

The seven gifts are designed to be used in the world for the purpose of transforming that world for Christ. Isaiah 11, vividly portrays what these gifts are to be used for: to do what one is called to do in one’s own time and place to advance the kingdom of God. The specific, personal details of that call do not come into focus until one has realized his very limited, ungodlike place in the scheme of things (fear of the Lord), accepted one’s role as a member of God’s family (piety), and acquired the habit of following the Father’s specific directions for living a godly life (knowledge). This familiarity with God breeds the strength and courage needed to confront the evil that one inevitably encounters in one’s life (fortitude) and the cunning to nimbly shift one’s strategies to match—even anticipate—the many machinations of the Enemy (counsel). The more one engages in such

“spiritual warfare,” the more one perceives how such skirmishes fit into the big picture that is God’s master plan for establishing his reign in this fallen world (understanding) and the more confident, skilful, and successful one becomes in the conduct of his particular vocation (wisdom).

Holy Spirit :Lord & Giver Of Life. Official Catechetical text in preparation for the Holy Year 2000- October 1, 1997

POPE FRANCIS: General Audience, Wednesday, 9 April 2014
Catechesis on The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: April 9,-June 11, 2014

TODAY we begin a series of catechesis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You know that the Holy Spirit constitutes the soul, the life blood of the Church and of every individual Christian: He is the Love of God who makes of our hearts his dwelling place and enters into communion with us. The Holy Spirit abides with us always, he is always within us, in our hearts.

The Church identifies seven, a number which symbolically speaks of fullness, completeness; they are those we learn about when we prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation and which we invoke in the ancient prayer called the “Sequence of the Holy Spirit”. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are:

- **Wisdom,**
- **Understanding,**
- **Counsel,**
- **Fortitude,**
- **Knowledge,**
- **Piety**
- **Fear of the Lord.**

Sunday 16th February 2020

WISDOM

*I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me,
I preferred her to sceptre and throne,...
Yet all good things together came to me with her,
and countless riches at her hands; (Wisdom 7:7;11).*

Wisdom is precisely this: it is the grace of being able to see everything with the eyes of God. It is simply this: it is to see the world, to see situations, circumstances, problems, everything through God's eyes. Wisdom is what the Holy Spirit works in us so as to enable us to see things with the eyes of God. This is the gift of wisdom. And obviously this comes from intimacy with God, from the intimate relationship we have with God, from the relationship children have with their Father. And when we have this relationship, the Holy Spirit endows us with the gift of wisdom.

If we listen to the Holy Spirit, he teaches us this way of wisdom, he endows us with wisdom, which is seeing with God's eyes, hearing with God's ears, loving with God's heart, directing things with God's judgement. This is the wisdom the Holy Spirit endows us with, and we can all have it. We only have to ask it of the Holy Spirit. And so, with this wisdom, let us go forward, let us build our family, let us build the Church, and we will all be sanctified. Today let us ask for this grace of wisdom. And let us ask Our Lady, who is the Seat of Wisdom, for this gift: may she give us this grace. Thank you!

Intercessions

That God, who is rich in mercy, will bless those called by Jesus to serve Him and His Church as priests, with faithfulness to their vocations, Lord hear us.

That in union with Mary, the Mother of God, we who have received Spirit of her Son into our hearts, will pray with zeal for holy vocations to the priesthood, Lord hear us.

Heavenly Father,
you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.
Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion, may find new expressions that
bring life and light to the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Monday 17th February 2020

UNDERSTANDING

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him,
God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1 Cor 2:9-10).*

Understanding is a grace which only the Holy Spirit can infuse and which awakens in a Christian the ability to go beyond the outward appearance of reality and to probe the depths of the thoughts of God and his plan of salvation. The Apostle Paul, addressing the community at Corinth, aptly describes the effects of this gift — that is, what the gift of understanding does in us — and Paul says this: But to understand a situation in depth, as God understands it, is the effect of this gift. And Jesus desired to send us the Holy Spirit so that we might have this gift, so that all of us might understand things as God understands them, with the mind of God. What a beautiful gift the Lord has given us. It is the gift with which the Holy Spirit introduces us into intimacy with God and makes us sharers in the plan of love which he has for us.

One can read the Gospel and understand something, but if we read the Gospel with this gift of the Holy Spirit, we can understand the depths of God’s words. And this is a great gift, a great gift for which we all must ask and ask together: Give us, Lord, the gift of understanding. Let us ask it of the Lord, that he may give us, that he may give us all this gift to understand the things that happen as he understands them, and to understand, above all, the Word of God in the Gospel.

Intercessions

That all those living out their vocations in Christ will take heart that Lord our God calls them by name to follow along the path of discipleship, Lord hear us.

For all called to be single men and women, that they will have confidence in Jesus Christ, who calls them each to reveal God’s love for the world through their words and actions, Lord hear us.

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Tuesday 18th February 2020

KNOWLEDGE

*'I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind.
Their sons and daughters shall prophesy,
your young men shall see visions,
your old men shall dream dreams.
Even on my slaves men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.'* (Acts 2,17-18).

The knowledge that comes from the Holy Spirit, is a special gift, which leads us to grasp, through creation, the greatness and love of God and his profound relationship with every creature. When our eyes are illumined by the Spirit, they open to contemplate God, in the beauty of nature and in the grandeur of the cosmos, and they lead us to discover how everything speaks to us about Him and His love. All of this arouses in us great wonder and a profound sense of gratitude! It is the sensation we experience when we admire a work of art or any marvel whatsoever that is borne of the genius and creativity of man: before all this, the Spirit leads us to praise the Lord from the depths of our heart and to recognize, in all that we have and all that we are, an invaluable gift of God and a sign of his infinite love for us.

In the first Chapter of Genesis, right at the beginning of the Bible, what is emphasized is that God is pleased with his creation, stressing repeatedly the beauty and goodness of every single thing. At the end of each day, it is written: "God saw that it was good" (1:12, 18, 21, 25): The gift of knowledge sets us in profound harmony with the Creator and allows us to participate in the clarity of his vision and his judgement. This should make us think and should make us ask the

Holy Spirit for the gift of knowledge in order to understand better that creation is a most beautiful gift of God.

Intercessions

For all those now discerning their vocations in Christ, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit and nourished by the bread of life, Lord hear us.

For all men and women now considering their vocation, that they will take heart in Jesus' call to serve Him Lord hear us.

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Pope Francis; October 2019.

Wednesday 19th February 2020

COUNSEL

“I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Psalm 16[15]. 7-8).

Now, through the gift of counsel, it is God himself, through his spirit, who enlightens our heart so as to make us understand the right way to speak and to behave and the way to follow. But how does this gift work in us? When we receive and welcome him into our heart, the Holy Spirit immediately begins to make us sensitive to his voice and to guide our thoughts, our feelings and our intentions according to the heart of God. In this way, the Spirit makes us grow interiorly, he makes us grow positively, he makes us grow in the community and he helps us not to fall prey to self-centredness and one’s own way of seeing things. Thus the Spirit helps us to grow and also to live in community.

In intimacy with God and in listening to his Word, little by little we put aside our own way of thinking, which is most often dictated by our closures, by our prejudice and by our ambitions, and we learn instead to ask the Lord: what is your desire? What is your will? What pleases you? As with all of the other gifts of the Spirit, then, counsel too constitutes a treasure for the whole Christian community. The Lord does not only speak to us in the intimacy of the heart; yes, he speaks to us, but not only there; he also speaks to us through the voice and witness of the brethren. It is truly a great gift to be able to meet men and women of faith who, especially in the most complicated and important stages of our lives, help us to bring light to our heart and to recognize the Lord’s will!

Intercessions

That like Samuel, all baptized Catholics will be faithful to their call to follow Christ, especially those chosen for the unique consecration of priesthood or consecrated life, Lord hear us.

For a deeper dedication among Catholic families to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life among their children, believing that Christ opens ears to hear His call and hearts to answer Him, life, will glory in the cross of Jesus Christ, Lord hear us.

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Pope Francis; October 2019.

Thursday 20th February 2020

FORTITUDE

“I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13).

Through the gift of fortitude, the Holy Spirit liberates the soil of our heart, he frees it from sluggishness, from uncertainty and from all the fears that can hinder it, so that Lord’s Word may be put into practice authentically and with joy. The gift of fortitude is a true help, it gives us strength, and it also frees us from so many obstacles. We too, all of us, know people who have experienced difficult situations and great suffering. Let us think of those men, of those women who have a difficult life, who fight to feed their family, to educate their children: they do all of this because the spirit of fortitude is helping them.

How many men and women there are — we do not know their names — who honour our people, who honour our Church, because they are strong: strong in carrying forward their lives, their family, their work, their faith. These brothers and sisters of ours are saints, everyday saints, hidden saints among us: the gift of fortitude is what enables them to carry on with their duties as individuals, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, citizens. We have many of them! Let us thank the Lord for these Christians who live in hidden holiness: the Holy Spirit is within them carrying them forward! And it will also do us good to ask the Lord to give us the gift of fortitude.

Intercessions

For those who work with youth, that they will encourage them to listen carefully for God’s call, Lord hear us.

That the knowledge of our unity, one body and one spirit in Christ, will heighten each person’s faithfulness to their vocation and encourage those He is calling to build up the people of God, Lord hear us.

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Friday 21st February 2020

PIETY

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship”, from which, “we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rm 8:14-15).

Piety indicates our belonging to God and our profound relationship with Him, a bond that gives meaning to our life and keeps us sound, in communion with Him, even during the most difficult and tormenting moments.

It is a relationship lived with the heart: it is our friendship with God, granted to us by Jesus, a friendship that changes our life and fills us with passion, with joy. Thus, the gift of piety stirs in us above all gratitude and praise. This is, in fact, the reason and the most authentic meaning of our worship and our adoration. When the Holy Spirit allows us to perceive the presence of the Lord and all his love for us, it warms the heart and moves us quite naturally to prayer and celebration.

The gift of piety means to be truly capable of rejoicing with those who rejoice, of weeping with those who weep, of being close to those who are lonely or in anguish, of correcting those in error, of consoling the afflicted, of welcoming and helping those in need. The gift of piety is closely tied to gentleness. The gift of piety which the Holy Spirit gives us makes us gentle, makes us calm, patient, at peace with God, at the service of others with gentleness.

Intercessions

That marriages be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and parents be renewed in their vocation in helping their children encounter the Lord Jesus Christ, Lord hear us.

That during our Diocesan Vocation Week, every parishioner will devote themselves and their families to praying for an openness to God’s call, Lord hear us.

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Saturday 22nd February 2020

FEAR of THE LORD

“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them” (Psalm 34: 6-7).

It does not mean being afraid of God: we know well that God is Father, that he loves us and wants our salvation, and he always forgives, always; thus, there is no reason to be scared of him! Fear of the Lord, instead, is the gift of the Holy Spirit through whom we are reminded of how small we are before God and of his love and that our good lies in humble, respectful and trusting self-abandonment into his hands. This is fear of the Lord: abandonment in the goodness of our Father who loves us so much.

This is what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts: he makes us feel like children in the arms of our father. It is precisely in experiencing our own limitations and our poverty, however, that the Holy Spirit comforts us and lets us perceive that the only important thing is to allow ourselves to be led by Jesus into the Father’s arms.

Fear of the Lord allows us to be aware that everything comes from grace and that our true strength lies solely in following the Lord Jesus and in allowing the Father to bestow upon us his goodness and his mercy. To open the heart, so that the goodness and mercy of God may come to us. This is what the Holy Spirit does through the gift of fear of the Lord: he opens hearts. The heart opens so that forgiveness, mercy, goodness and the caress of the Father may come to us, for as children we are infinitely loved.

Intercessions

For those who are having difficulty discerning their vocations, that the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and peace. Lord hear us.

For an increased awareness among our young people of the closeness of the Lord in their vocation discernment and their responsibility to recognize and follow Him, Lord hear us.

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Pope Francis, October 2019.

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Gifts of the Holy Spirit