

Reflection 1

We may know about the Holy Spirit, but do we know Him in a personal way, do we believe He is present with us?

'I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified' The Creed

The Holy Spirit is essential if we want to live full and effective Christian lives. Jesus to His disciples: 'It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you' John 16:7.

Reflection 2

We may have been baptised and Confirmed but still not be aware of the need to personally and deliberately invite the Holy Spirit to be at work in our lives. We have to ask Him to come. In the words of Cardinal Suenens: 'Has the Spirit got YOU?'

'If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!' Luke 11:9-13.

The Holy Spirit is the water of life, a gift freely offered to all who will accept Him:

'Come! Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes let him take the free gift of the water of life' Revelation 22:17

Reflection 3

When we open up our lives and ask for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, He offers us His supernatural gifts/charisms, given to help us reach out to others for their transformation, thus building up the Body of Christ, the Church. On the eve of Pentecost 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II prayed: 'Open yourselves with docility to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charisms which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us!'

We need these charisms to equip the Church to present the truth of the Gospel to our modern world more powerfully.

'Try to excel in gifts that build up the church' 1 Cor. 14:12

Reflection 4

At the Second Vatican Council in 1963, the Cardinals and Bishops taught us in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, section 12:-

'The Holy Spirit also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks for the renewal and building up of the Church. These charisms are to be received with thanksgiving since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church.'

This is repeated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church sections 800 and 2003, and is an echo of the teaching in 1 Corinthians 12.

Reflection 5

The most discussed list of charisms is found in 1 Cor.12:7-10:-

'To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge, to another faith, to another gifts of healing, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.'

God wants us to have the gifts of His Holy Spirit, but we must ask for them. Without them we are much more limited in our ability to meet the needs of those around us. We need to ask for them in faith and then to use them in a loving way.

'Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts' 1 Corinthians 14:1

'I pray for you constantly asking God the glorious Father to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light.' Ephesians 1:17