



THE YEAR OF ST. PAUL

THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS

Second in a Series

May 10, 2009

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. (I Corinthians 12: 4-11)

The Christians at Corinth were good people, full of faith; but they were becoming dangerously divided. Even when they gathered for the breaking of the bread, there were “insiders” and “outsiders”—some became drunk while others went without. And there were debates and arguments about the Spirit’s gifts as well. Who has received the Spirit’s gifts? And which gifts are most important?

Paul begins to address that concern in the passage quoted above. He reminds the Corinthians that the Spirit is poured out not only on a select few, but on every member of the community, without exception. The gifts themselves—and they are many and various—are not given for the satisfaction of the individual, but for the good of the whole community. A gift that is not allowed to do its work is no gift at all.

—Corinna Laughlin

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The risen Christ said to his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The mission he gives them is the mission he began. How do you see the various gifts described by Paul—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues - reflected in the life of Jesus? Talk about specific examples from the Gospels that come to

mind. Now, think about our parish. Where do you see those gifts alive in the Church today—in the parish—in the people you live and work with?

2. Respond to the following passage. What do you make of the image St. Thérèse’s older sister used to help her understand how God gives gifts to each person? How does this relate to Paul’s vision of spiritual gifts?

Pauline told me to fetch Papa’s large tumbler and set it alongside my thimble and filled both to the brim with water. She asked me which one was fuller. I told her each was as full as the other and that it was impossible to put in more water than they could contain. My dear Mother helped me understand that in heaven God will grant His Elect as much glory as they can take, the last having nothing to envy in the first. (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, The Story of a Soul)

Prayer for the Year of St. Paul

*Glorious Saint Paul,
Apostle to the Gentiles,
when the Lord called, you answered,
and you spread the good news of the Gospel
to the very ends of the earth.
Pray for us,
that we may serve Christ as you did:
proclaiming the name of Jesus
in good times and bad,
when convenient and when inconvenient.
Pray for us,
that we may welcome all the people we meet
with compassionate hearts and open minds.
Pray for us,
that Christ may live in us
as he lived in you.
We pray in the name of the One
who is your Lord and ours,
Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

This is the second in a series of bulletin inserts about Saint Paul in celebration of the Year of St. Paul. The Jubilee Year will conclude June 29, 2009.