

## INSPIRED WORD May 13, 2015

### TEACHING – ISAIAHAN GIFTS

At Confirmation the bishop extends his hands over those to be confirmed, and he says these words, "My dear friends, in Baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to the chosen sons and daughters. Let us pray to our Father that He will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen His sons and daughters with His gifts, and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God." Then he says, "All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you have freed Your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send Your Holy Spirit upon them, give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in Your Presence, through Christ our Lord. Amen." That is the prayer that was prayed over all of us when I received Confirmation, and that is the prayer that will be prayed over the adults on Pentecost Sunday. What is offered us, my brothers and sisters, is a tremendous grace, the **Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord**. This list comes from the Old Testament, it comes from the prophet Isaiah and Isaiah is speaking about the anointing that is going to come upon the Messiah. Reading from **Isaiah** he says, "And 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." (**Reference: Isaiah 11: 2 – 3**) Jesus, our Lord, was anointed by the Holy Spirit in the waters of the Jordan River and Jesus as Messiah received in their fullness these seven gifts. He had them always from the time of His conception, but in the Jordan River they were given to Him in fullness. They were released in Him in power, partly because He is our Model for living life in the Holy Spirit. He received these gifts so that we might receive these gifts as well in our turn, because in Baptism we are called to share in Christ's mission, are we not? In Confirmation we are anointed by the Spirit, receiving an increase in these gifts so that we might become more Christ-like. So what are these gifts for? They are for our personal holiness; they are for us; and they are called **Sanctifying Gifts**. They make us holy. We receive them to bring to perfection within us those virtues that God bestows upon us – of faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. These gifts make us docile – that means willing to obey the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, so the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, and to live in the power and under the prompting of the Holy Spirit. So really it gives us ears to hear, to hear that Spirit of God Who wants to direct our lives because He wants us to be happy and fulfilled. Pope John Paul II, in a general audience on April 3, 1991, defines these gifts as "exquisitely divine energies which the Holy Spirit pours into the soul to perfect the virtues by giving the human spirit the capacity to act in a divine way." In other words, to think like Jesus Christ, to love like Jesus Christ, and to act like Jesus Christ. Then he continues with this, "These seven gifts correspond to a movement; the gifts of **Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding** illuminate the mind, to give us the mind of Christ. The gifts of **Counsel and Fortitude**

strengthen the decisions of the will so that we might have the will of Christ and the gifts of **Piety** and **Fear of the Lord** (reverence) enable us to grow in a personal relationship with God through prayer and an upright life, giving us the heart of Christ.” Do you see the importance of these? Pope Gregory the Great (now a Saint) tried to capture this dynamic relationship between these gifts of the Holy Spirit and this is what he said, “Through the Fear of the Lord we rise to Piety, from Piety to Knowledge, from Knowledge we draw strength (Fortitude), from strength to Counsel, from Counsel we move towards Understanding and with intelligence toward Wisdom, and thus by the sevenfold grace of the Spirit it opens up to us, at the end, the entrance to the right at death.” I am going to go through them in this order, the order that Pope Gregory the Great (now a Saint) told us and the order that I just mentioned to you - **Fear of the Lord, Piety, Knowledge, Fortitude, Counsel, Understanding** and finally to **Wisdom** which is the dynamic flow of those gifts. Let’s take a look at the first one, the **Fear of the Lord**; it is also called reverence. This kind of fear or reverence is not a servile fear where one cringes and runs away, but it fills us with respect for God. It’s a filial respect that you would have for a parent; it can fill you with a desire to never lose God. It also helps us to realize that we are creatures and He is God! He is God and we are not. It is also the launching pad for all of the other gifts; it says that the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord. Now we’ll go to **Piety**; it is a gift that directs our hearts. It directs our hearts with feelings and affections, thoughts and prayers to the Abba of Jesus, and our God – to the Father. The story that comes to mind is the story in Scripture of the prodigal son. The son squandered all of his money and then he finally came to his senses and decided to return to his father. I am going to say to my father, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.” He practiced this because he thought that is what his father would do. He was going to beg him to make him a servant. What happened when the son returned to the father? The father was standing there and watching for him, wasn’t he? When the father saw him, he ran to his son and threw his arms around his son. The son then began to tell his father the words that he had practiced about having sinned against heaven and against his father and that he was no longer worthy to be called his son. The father embraced the son and put a ring on the son’s finger and commanded that the fatted cow be killed. The father said, “My son was lost and now he is found.” (**Reference: Luke 11: 13 – 24**) That is piety! To relate to this God of ours, as the Father, and to relate to other people as children and brothers and sisters of the Father. The next is **Knowledge** - that is a capacity to discern the things of God in one’s knowledge of the world – what you see around us. It helps us to use the things of this world in the right way, the way that God intended us to do. It enables us to realize the emptiness of created things in themselves, especially if we make them into idols in our lives. Knowledge helps us to see the magnificence of the Creator in His beautiful creations – in the mountains, and in His stars. **Fortitude** is next – it helps us to remain faithful to what God wants us to do in spite of any difficulty that we might encounter. Maximilian Kolbe had that gift of Fortitude; he was martyred when he gave of himself and took the place of a man, who had a family, and who was going to be killed. Fortitude also helps people embrace the martyrdom of sickness. Remember Pope John Paul II in his final days on this earth – he was bent over, could hardly talk, could hardly stand nor walk. In this suffering he continued and he was a great model;

he kept going and going. Next is **Counsel** - it is an ability to live and regulate your life choices in accordance with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In other words, ask the Holy Spirit what it is that He wants you to do and then hopefully you do it, but sometimes we resist. He wants to hear from us and to guide us. **Understanding** is next - this gives us insight into the truths of our faith. To kneel before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and to open your heart to him, requires a real understanding of, yes, this is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. This is followed by **Wisdom** - this helps us to see things in God's eyes, to see circumstances in the world in God's eyes. Remember when Jesus told His apostles that He was going to suffer and die and Peter refused to accept that. Jesus told Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are thinking as man thinks, not as God thinks." (**Reference: Mark 8: 33**) So Jesus is going through His suffering and death through the eyes of God. Pope John Paul II had said that "with these gifts, these sevenfold gifts, we are equal to any task and capable of overcoming any difficulties."

Without interior growth of the Isaiahan Gifts, we may use the Charismatic Gifts in flesh and emotion, rather than the power of the Holy Spirit. All of the Charismatic Gifts will have more power and affect in our lives when we have asked God to strengthen and stir up the flames of the Isaiahan Gifts, which we receive at Confirmation. If we do not have a good foundation, then in the first trial or difficulty, we quit! Scripture tells us that we are to build our house on solid rock or ground, and the **solid rock of the Charismatic Gifts is the Isaiahan Gifts!**

#### **PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, praise be to Your Holy Name!! Lord Jesus, thank You for Your gift of salvation! Lord Jesus, thank You for being present here among us. We love You, Lord!

#### **SCRIPTURE**

**Revelation 5: 11 – 13:** Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the Throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To Him Who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!"

#### **SCRIPTURE**

**Matthew 18: 19 – 20:** Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them.

#### **SCRIPTURE**

**Isaiah 60: 1 – 5:** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples; but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you; all assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried

on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy because the abundance of the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.

### **CONFIRMATION / IMAGE**

I want to confirm that, because as we were singing and praying, I had an Image. It was of all of us, as children, looking up into a dark sky, full of stars but dark. Yet somehow, all of our faces were illuminated as if there was a source of light that the world could not see. Then all of a sudden, I looked up and saw the Holy Spirit's radiance across the sky, illuminating all of those who had chosen to follow Jesus Christ.

### **PROPHECY / EXHORTATION**

My beloved ones, I love you! Listen to these words carefully, My beloved ones! **I love you!!** But My love is a special love; it is a love that only I can give. It is a perfect love, it is an unconditional love, but it is also **a love which must be received**. I love you, My beloved ones, but **you must willingly accept My love**. Tonight I walk amongst you, you do not sense Me, you do not see Me, but you should believe, My beloved ones, I walk amongst you. I have told you that I love you, and that I desire to touch you. But, My beloved ones, **you must also be willing to accept My touch**. I do not force Myself upon you, but I ask you to reach out, not with your hands, but to reach out with your hearts and allow Me to touch you. Reach out with your hearts and **accept** the love that I give you. Things are difficult for you, My beloved ones, I recognize this; in the past I have referred to these difficulties as walls. And now I ask you, My beloved ones, do you desire to keep the difficulties or do you desire to accept My love and My touch? It is your choice!

### **CONFIRMATION / SCRIPTURE / EXHORTATION**

I confirm what Mel just said. Jesus does love us, and His love is the greatest gift of all to us. We have this gift of His love, but are we just going to let it sit, or are we just going to toss it aside? We heard the teaching about the Isaiah Gifts – are we going to let the world see the evidence in us of those Gifts? So do we open these gifts, or do we let them sit? The Lord directed me to this Scripture in **2 Peter 1: 3 – 8**: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So, really, we have to open up the gift, I have to open up the gift.

## **SUMMARY**

Tonight we heard all about these gifts, do we believe in these gifts? Then the next question is what are we willing to do with them? Do we believe the words that we heard from God that His love is unconditional? After hearing the words tonight, I believe what the Lord is saying to each one of us is: "You have heard about My gifts, you have heard about My unconditional love that I have for you, you heard that I want you to take them – they are free! Now what are you willing to do?" I believe that what the Lord is saying is that if you believe, what are you willing to do? If you accept these gifts that I give to you freely, what are you willing to do? If you accept My unconditional love, what are you willing to do? That question is hard to answer some times, because of the circumstances in our lives, because of the different things we go through each day, because we don't know how to ask for the gifts that God is giving us, nor, a lot of times, we don't even know how to receive them. But if we believe that Jesus Christ came down on this earth and died for our sins, then I just want to leave with you with these words tonight: **What are we willing to do about it?**