

People who are open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Today I want to continue a series of homilies I am developing for our Mission Beyond Initiative—

Mission Beyond is a year-long process to look at the Parish Mission Statement and the seven points of our parish vision statement.

Two months ago I preached on the parish mission statement—
and more specifically about the mission of Church

Last month I looked at the first point of our vision statement:

We want people who have a personal relationship with Jesus
and are comfortable sharing their faith with others.

You might remember that I gave three indicators
for how you might be able to gauge how true that is in your life:

I said people who have a personal relationship with Jesus...

- 1) Can take the stories of the Bible and make apply them to their lives.
- 2) People who are committed to prayer because Jesus was committed to prayer. And
- 3) People who get excited about opportunities to grow in their discipleship walk.

Today I want to look at Vision Statement 2:

People who are open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Mark Twain once said that the two most important days in a person's life is
1) the day they were born, and 2) the day they figure out why.

And I believe it is the Holy Spirit that helps us to understand the number 2.

If you want to know about the holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
We need to look to St. Paul's writing....

Because it is within St. Paul's writing that we not only hear
of the 20 spiritual gifts that are in the Bible,
but it is also in St. Paul's writings that we hear
about the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit.

So I want to delve a little deeper into what Spiritual Gifts are...
And what the fruits of the Spirit tell us...

And we can be sure of this: God wants us to know this.
We know that because in 1 Corinthians 12:1 St. Paul writes these words:
“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters,
I do not want you to be unaware.”

St. Paul says...look I want you to know about these things...
God wants you to know about these things...
It's crucial that you know about these things...why

Because in verse 7 he tells us:
“To each is given a manifestation of the spirit for the common good.”

In other words, I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit...
Because knowing them...knowing how they impact our lives
All of that will help make the world a better place.

You see, because God does not give us these gifts for ourselves
but for others....God gives them to us for the common good...
If you have the gift of teaching...it is not given for your benefit...
but for the benefit of your students...

If you have the gift of Service...it is not given for you to feel all high
and mighty about what you do...
it is given for the benefit of those you serve, at the soup kitchen,
in your parish, in your own family...

There is a parishioner or two or three or ten in our parish
that have the gift of Helping...yes, Helping is a spiritual gift...
and I know if I call one of them and say:
hey, can you do this for us?

If there is any way they can, They'll do it...
Their spiritual gift, however, is not given for them...
It's given to them for those they help.

So we know that God wants us to know our spiritual gifts
and he wants us to know that they are given to us not for ourselves,
but for others.

So what are the 20 spiritual gifts?
I'm going to go through them very quickly here.
And these are in no particular order...

Proclamation/Prophecy—I like to call that truth telling.

People with this gift can tell others how God is acting in their lives.

Servanthood/Service—Just have a desire to do whatever they can to help.

Exemplified by Jesus: I have come not to be served but to serve...

Teaching (especially the Faith)

Encouragement-these people have the ability to build people up (coaches)

Generosity-this involves more than just money and material things...

Love to be outrageous in their generosity

Nurturing Leadership-guiding, molding, modeling—much like a good parent.

Mercy-also called compassion

Wisdom- *Sophia* in the Greek...good judgement mixed with diplomacy...

Knowing-Not head knowledge but heart knowledge.

Faith-Not just a belief in God but an ability to have exceptional trust in God.

Discernment-An ability to see all sides of a situation quickly, accurately,
and often able to point out what needs to be done.

Helping-These are the people who are there to set up...there to tear down...
often they are behind the scenes people...let me know what needs to be done.

Evangelism-excited to share the good news of Jesus
and how Jesus is active in their lives

Shepherding-leads groups of different sizes to a common goal.

Ties in closely with...

Visionary Leadership which is a spiritual gift. Seeing the possibility in a group

Apostleship-Gift of Church leadership...the gift you want your bishops to have.

And then there are 4 gifts a little less common to us as Catholic,

but St. Paul writes about them...I call them kind of the supernatural gifts:

Speaking in Tongues...Interpretation of tongues

Healing Power and Miracles

So those are the spiritual gifts...and I'll add them to my bulletin letter next week
in case you'd like to look at them more closely...

But the more important question is this:

So how do you know what your spiritual gifts are:

Spiritual Gifts Course...take it the next time you get a chance...

A second way is to ask this question:

What do you like to do? This is a clue to your spiritual gifts..., you're gonna
like it...and you're gonna be good at it...

Think about it if God gives you a gifts

So what do you like to do? What gives you energy.

I love to teach...I like planning a lesson...teaching the lesson...
I can be really tired until I get into a classroom....I'm energized.

A third way is to ask the question—

What do you admire about others?

Often that is a sign of something that might be a gift of yours.

Another way...**What do others admire about you?**

What others see as your strengths are often signs of your spiritual gift.

So we can learn to know our spiritual gifts by:

- 1) Taking the Spiritual Gifts Course the next time we offer it
- 2) Look at what we like to do... what gives us energy, what are we good at...
- 3) What do you admire in others?
- 4) What do others admire about you?

How do you know if you are utilizing your gifts...

You know this in part by what St. Paul calls the Fruits of the Holy Spirit...

Galatians 5:22-23...As you become more connected to the Spirit in your life things start happening in a special way...

You become more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, more patient...

You become more generous, more faithful, gentler and kinder...

And you exhibit more self-control

If all that is true and I think it is...

you can see why we have this as part of our vision for our parishioner

Imagine a parish of loving, joyful, peaceful patient people...

Imagine parishioners who are faith-filled and generous, Gentle Kind and exhibiting self-control.

I want to be a part of that...and you know what? I am...

We have all those gifts in this community...

I see them time and time again in the lives of the very people sitting in front of me today.

We just want you to believe it.

We want you to be open to the Spirit's action in your life.