

Our Inheritance The Ascension of the Lord/C Sunday, June 2, 2019 Acts 1:1-11;
Eph 1:17-23; **Lk 24:46-53** (Mental, emotional, spiritual maturation requires conscious participation, and it requires a lot of listening to the Spirit.)

“And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay... until you are clothed with power from on high.”

As most of you know, recently my father passed away and so my siblings and I are now dealing with our inheritance, small as it is. It requires a lot of paperwork, signing, counter signing, etc. Now it's actually quite a nuisance, but **you can bet that not one of us will forsake our inheritance because of the trouble involved.** Sadly however, **many Christians are always passing up their own inheritance because of the trouble involved in claiming it. This is “the promise of my Father,” our inheritance, also called the Holy Spirit.**

Last week I described the role of the Holy Spirit in elevating, illuminating, and sweetening our emotional life. If we stay trapped in the personal self that in fact we have created ourselves in childhood, then our emotional lives tend to be dominated by fear, anxiety, anger, and the other dark feelings that stem from a sense of separation, isolation, and smallness. However **when we permit the Holy Spirit to raise us up to a much wider, richer, and deeper sense of who we are in God, then our emotional lives blossom with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.** The primary fruit of course is divine charity, which is like bright light, and the other fruits are like the colors of the rainbow all contained within the brightness of love.

Today we turn to **the gifts of the Holy Spirit.** The fruits of the Holy Spirit relate to our feeling nature, which is very important because our feeling nature is the center of gravity for our wills, so changing our feeling nature, our hearts, is absolutely essential if we are ever to do the will of God. But in contrast to that, the gifts **aim at the mind. Wisdom, understanding, right judgment, knowledge, even encourage our actually mental gifts.** They correspond to faith in the same way that adult experience corresponds to the life of children. So the gifts of the Spirit are the adult version of childlike faith.

Now a child may be in awe of her mother and trust her completely, but **when she in turn is a mother herself she understands her mother in a deeper and much more personal way.** Grandparents and great grandparents have a certain wisdom gained over the years. They can put things in perspective very easily. That's what **wisdom is about, perspective.** If we want knowledge, if we want to learn how to play the piano or practice yoga or anything else, we need a teacher who knows the subject. **Only with a good mentor can we gain mastery, knowledge, and competence.** Those are three examples that can relate to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Why? Because **we are put on earth for one single purpose: to get to know and to experience God.** It begins here and continues into eternity. **Understanding, knowing, and appreciating God requires the mentoring, teaching, and experiencing that can only come from the Holy Spirit.** The Spirit may use others for his work, but really no one knows God but God. That's something you have to think about: **no one knows God, but God.** God can use other people to teach you, but they don't know. It's only if they are actually being used by the

Spirit that they can serve any purpose for you in expanding your knowledge or understanding or appreciation of God.

Jesus told his disciples it was better for them that he go because if he did not, the Paraclete or Holy Spirit could not come. Now I am sure they didn't understand that; I'm not sure we do. But we do know that **the ascension of our Lord was a time of transition for the disciples**. No longer could they be his timid, little followers waiting to be told what to do. **They had to find in themselves the power from on high and go forth unto the ends of the earth**. As disciples we now have to face the challenges, not only of our own personal lives, but of the wider mission of Christ; and in fact the two are intertwined. One of the gravest and most widespread mistakes made in Christian tradition is believing somehow that we can separate our personal lives, problems and challenges from the mission of Christ—impossible. **Our personal issues, our personal challenges, our personal problems will only be resolved within the grander, wider, mission of Christ himself**; there can be no before and after.

You notice we put the flames up for Confirmation, and we have kept them up until next week to emphasize this gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, but also in life in general. Confirmation is a sign of the Spirit, but we know that just receiving sacraments does not automatically produce their effects. We know that only physical maturation is automatic, no other kind is. **Mental, emotional, spiritual maturation requires conscious participation. The maturation of our faith requires a lot of listening to the Spirit**, which can easily get drowned out in the ambient noise of our world. So if we really want to mature in our Christian faith and gain the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as the fruits of the Holy Spirit so that we can live truly a newer life, a richer life, a fresher life, a holier and a happier life, we have to listen very carefully to the guidance and to the direction and to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. And probably we really ought to think about that statement Jesus made when he said, "It is better for you that I go."