

Life in the Spirit Series – Week 3 – Outline for Homily – 110821

WEEK 3 – RECAP OF PREVIOUS 2 WEEKS – OUTLINE FOR HOMILY

We are in week 3 of 7 pondering Life in the Spirit. Do you notice how God’s Word is stirring within you?

- I. What kind of personal contact do we have with God? Who among us would not want to be in a personal relationship with God? God’s living Word wants to bring to light any misconceptions of Christianity that prevent us from having and growing in the new and abundant life Jesus promised.
- II. We receive the better life in God Jesus offers us by responding to Him with our whole self.
- III. What steps will I take today, this week, to allow Jesus to develop a relationship with me?
- IV. There is something seriously wrong with the world (with society as a whole and with individual lives) – something major is needed – we believe we need God but the world doesn’t accept this.
- V. The cause of what is wrong with society is more than human fault and bigger than any one person can handle on our own (Satan exists, sin is undeniable, the dominion of darkness is a terrible force in the world); whether people believe it or not, we need God to find the new life we want.
- VI. God sent his Son Jesus to break the hold of Satan and give us new life through his death and resurrection. The world no longer believes Satan exists, but he does. How can we recognize Satan having a hold on us, and how can I give my allegiance in a real way to Jesus as my Lord and Saviour?

The Sunday Readings – The Word of God from Scripture – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 22:19-23 God sent the prophet Isaiah to put on display for us the character Shebna; who was the master of the king’s palace, his right hand man. He lost his position because he got carried away. Either out of fear he would one day lose his position or obsessed with his own importance and profit, he was no longer doing his job. He forgot that the honour and authority entrusted to him by his master were so that he could look after the other servants and members of his master’s household. He took his focus away from his master and became content in himself. We need to keep our focus on Jesus and his Father. We can only do this by resisting all the impulses inside us and the influences around us to focus on ourselves.

- I. **The Father wants all men to have new life. He sent his son Jesus into the world so that we could be given the source of new life, the Holy Spirit.**
 - A. In every generation it can happen and has happened that Christianity has not been spiritually alive, but God is ever eager to renew his Church by a fresh outpouring of his Spirit.
 - B. The Father wants all men to have new life in him.
 - C. The Father sent his son into the world to bring us new life:
 1. Jesus is Lord; if we accept his lordship, we can experience a new freedom and a new life.
 2. Jesus came for sinners, for all humanity. We are unwilling or unable to love everyone as God loves them and loves us; so we are all sinners. In Jesus all our sins can be forgiven (no matter what we have done), and every barrier between us and the Father can be taken away.
 3. After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit to bring us new life (Acts 1:1-5).

Romans 11:33-36 Paul acknowledges and calls on us to acknowledge that in God are the depths of all knowledge and wisdom and that we are forever in his debt. We have no claims of superiority over God but He is above us in every way and deserves our undivided attention and obedience. It is humbling for us to accept to make room for God’s way of seeing reality and for his plan for our lives. The Holy Spirit helps us.

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II. When the Holy Spirit comes to someone, he becomes a changed man (Acts 2 or Acts 19:1-7).

- A. The Christian immersed in the Holy Spirit comes to know God by experience:
 - He comes to know God as his Father who loves him and cares for him;
 - She experiences God's love and presence in a new way;
 - She experiences God speaking in her heart, teaching her, guiding her;
 - He comes to know Jesus as his Lord;
 - The Lordship of Jesus begins to be the basic principle for their way of life.
- B. The Christian immersed in the Holy Spirit can pray in a new way:
 - His prayer becomes more centered on God, less on himself;
 - Her prayer is more often prayer of praise and thanksgiving;
 - He discovers that he can pray in tongues; the gift of tongues is:
 - ❖ A means of spiritual growth
 - ❖ Prayer the Spirit inspires within us to praise God
 - ❖ Prayer the Spirit inspires within us when we cannot pray adequately
- C. The Bible, the liturgy, the sacraments come to life – Mass is no longer “boring”.
- D. The fruit of the Spirit develops within her (love, joy, peace, etc. – Galatians 5).
- E. He can receive the gifts of the Spirit to serve God (prophecy, healing, discernment of spirits, inspirations to speak – 1 Corinthians 12).

Once we are immersed anew in the Holy Spirit, we don't become someone else, we remain who we are, but our connection with God becomes more natural, more immediate, more direct, more personal. We become more trusting to let God guide us, more willing to follow his guidance, and better able to notice God acting in the circumstances of life around us and in other people, even those we find unpleasant.

III. Full life in the Spirit begins when we are baptized or immersed in the Spirit. Being baptized or immersed in the Spirit allows us to experience fuller life in the Spirit. This is not an option but the standard way for every Christian to have the abundance of life Jesus promised and offers us still.

- A. When we are baptized or immersed in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes to us in such a way that we can experience his presence and see it change us; as in Acts of the Apostles and lives of the saints.
 - This is not our first reception of the Holy Spirit, but a release of his power that is already within us since Baptism and Confirmation.
- B. Different people see different changes happen to them as a result of being baptized or immersed in the Spirit.
 1. Many may consciously experience the Holy Spirit in them for the first time. Others who have already consciously experienced something of the Spirit's presence in their lives can receive a fuller experience, may become aware of new effects, new changes which the Spirit brings about in them. Everyone can experience a new presence and working of the Spirit.
 2. You who have deliberately lived as Christians will see that years of Christian living have provided us with many resources that will be brought to life by the new presence of the Spirit in us.
- C. No Christian should lack personal contact with God or be powerless as a Christian.
 - Everyone, even beginners in the Christian life, can be baptized or immersed in the Spirit.

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Matthew 16:13-20 In Matthew's Gospel we catch a glimpse of Jesus forming his apostles; we see how intensively He seeks to have their understanding and allegiance. He really wants to know who they believe He is. Jesus knows who He is in union with his Father, the Creator of all, but He wants to know whether his apostles see Him for who He really is. Only then can they be in a true and intimate relationship with Him.

Jesus offers them his friendship in addition to being their master, and He desires them to want a personal relationship with him. Only then can He entrust his authority to them, because only then can they use his authority in the way the Father intends. Jesus also wants us to have a personal relationship with each of us now; because only when we treat Him as who He really is can we enter into the abundant life He offers us in communion with Him and with his Father in the Holy Spirit.

IV. Baptism or immersion in the Spirit is the dynamic beginning of our new life in God, because it is the way we give the Holy Trinity our full, free, and deliberate consent that they feel free to pour the fullness of their divine life into us. In the Spirit, this life is free to grow and develop in us.

- A. With the help of committed Christians as our brothers and sisters, we can grow to spiritual maturity.
- B. We can develop a daily communion and friendship with Christ.
- C. We can experience a new peace and joy, see ourselves being healed, becoming loving people.
- D. With this new peace in the Holy Spirit we can develop better relationships.

Today: you can find the recording of this homily on my website and there are a few copies of the notes on the communion rail, where there are a few copies left from last week.

Next week: we will discuss how to turn to Christ so we can receive the fullness of the new life he is offering.

The week after: there will be an opportunity to receive prayer to be baptized or immersed in the Spirit. I invite you to chat about these things with me, Abouna Badeea, our Deacons Dunbar, Pedro, or Brian, or with our Prayer Group leaders or members of the Prayer Ministry during the week before Labour Day. I will be available and will repeat the invitation to gather together to chat about these questions during the week after every Mass from Monday to Friday.

If you are interested in learning more about spiritual gifts, or about abundant life in Christ and life in the Spirit, please see the resources and references posted on my website <http://fathergilles.net>

Taken with a few adaptations from The Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual. Catholic Edition. Developed by the Word of God, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 1979.