

Life in the Spirit Series – Week 7 – Conclusion Outline – 110918

I. The Holy Spirit is at work in us to change us and make us holier.

- A. He is working to draw us into a deeper union with God and one another, to give us a fuller experience of the new life.
- B. He is working to make us realize the need for us to turn away from wrongdoing, to reorder our priorities, to take away all those things that make us less loving.
 - We encourage one another and build one another up as Jesus taught each time we share with one another and with others how the Lord is changing us.

II. We can expect to experience trials and difficulties as we grow: they can be a means of growth.

- A. Problems, difficulties and trials are normal and to be expected.
- B. The Lord uses them for our growth.
 - 1. “God works for the good in everything with those who love him.” (Rom 8:28).
 - 2. We now have a new power through our connection in the Holy Spirit to deal with difficulties.
 - 3. The Lord will teach us things through overcoming difficulties.
 - 4. “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17.
- C. Help is available from the leaders of the community and from members of the community: the Lord has blessed us with people who mentor us, being more mature in the life of the Spirit.
 - We encourage one another and build one another up as Jesus taught each time we share with one another and with others how trials and difficulties can be overcome.

III. After the Life in the Spirit Series is concluded

- A. In order to grow, we need much more (the Life in the Spirit Series is only a beginning):
 - 1. We need to learn a great deal more about the Christian life
 - It is important to take advantage of the teaching which is available in the community.
 - 2. We need the strength and support of others, the sharing of experience, advice
 - A good way to put out a fire is to pull the logs apart; a good basis for starting a fire is to put them together in the right way.
 - 3. We need a situation in which we can learn how to serve the Lord.
 - We encourage one another and build one another up as Jesus taught each time we share with one another and with others our personal experience of the value of community and its importance for growth in the life of the Spirit.
- B. We encourage you to explore the length and breadth, the height and depth of the faith life of our St Luke Catholic Community with its prayer, Bible Study, service, ministry, and faith sharing groups. Set yourself to discover how to take your place in this vibrant network with joyful anticipation of all that the Lord wants to do for you, through others, and through you.

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.

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The Sunday Readings – The Word of God from Scripture – 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55:6-9 Through the prophet Isaiah God declares his desire that all the nations come to Him, that all people hear and take to heart his Word of life and have the abundant life that only God can give, life that begins here and extends into eternity. We all of us need to seek the Lord while he may be found. We all need to give up bad habits and narrow human thoughts in order to make room for the truth, justice, and goodness that are in God. God's thoughts and ways are bigger and higher than human plans and ways.

Philippians 1:20-24,27 Even as a prisoner of Rome in chains, Paul wanted only to preach Jesus Christ and was willing to endure anything that might make Jesus known by more people. Paul calls the Philippians and us to live in accord with the Gospel in order to also make Jesus better known and loved.

Matthew 20:1-16 In his teaching and parables Jesus consistently tells us that in his Kingdom the Father never gets tired of inviting people to work with his Son in the vineyard of the Church. We tend to have a stingy view of what each person deserves for their efforts in life and in the vineyard, but God is generous because He knows what it costs each person to search for meaning in their life and to finally find a way to participate in the work God is doing in the world to bring everyone into his abundant life who is willing to receive and to share. God's love for every human being is vastly more generous and life giving than all our attitudes of mind and heart, which are far too narrow in comparison to God's heart revealed in Jesus.

RESSOURCE – The Christian Life Wheel diagram – notes for the presenters

1) The Christian Life

The Christian life can be pictured as a wheel. The rim of the wheel represents the Christian's daily life. The hub of a wheel is the source of power and direction for the whole wheel. It holds the wheel together. The hub of the Christian life is Christ himself (on the throne, the center). In order to transmit the power and direction from the hub to the rim, spokes are needed. Some spokes in the Christian life are prayer, study, service and community. These are means to put our whole life in contact with Christ, so that he can transform it with his power and directions.

This wheel diagram is useful for us to put into our lives practices by which we can grow as Christians. We do not try to explain the mediation of Christ's presence to individuals, nor the presence of Christ in groups of committed Christians, the body of Christ, or the sacraments. Rather, we focus on basic means of growth. We seek to grow in our Christian life in the Spirit; we need to encourage one another to participate in the regular liturgical life of the Church, because the important thing is for us to put into our daily lives certain practical means by which we can grow as Christians.

2) The Christian's Prayer

Talking about prayer should be an encouragement to spend time in prayer. We can enter into prayer in simplicity and we can share about our prayer, describing the different ways that we pray and that other people pray; so that we can all get a feel for the range of different things that can happen in prayer.

It is important to remember that Scripture is read and understood within the Church, as it is given to us in Christian Tradition. We should not just rely our own way of understanding it with the personal light the Holy Spirit gives each of us individually. There is a very helpful book on prayer that would be worth our while reading – Ralph Martin's **Hungry for God**: Practical Help in Personal Prayer. The book explains in greater depth the role of prayer in a relationship with God. Its practical advice is excellent for all of us who are trying to build or maintain a regular prayer life. The important thing we need to realize is that we must all nourish and develop a prayerful life to have a personal and vital relationship with God.

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3) Christian Community, Life, and Service

The key to God's call to live our new life in community is to begin to commit ourselves to other Christians and to an ongoing effort to grow with them and to serve with them as a logical expression of our Christian life. We need to realize the fact that community is part of God's plan. Now as it always is in the regular life of the Parish, we need to help one another. We're all in this together.

Personal testimony can help us understand how community has been for others of personal value; then we can make the connections more easily and see the possibilities for ourselves.

While Christian congregations do not always make sharing and mutual support easy, here at St Luke people do share their lives with one another and help one another grow in the life of the Spirit. Our prayer and other groups are open to the presence, action, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is what we need.

We encourage you to be active church members and good parishioners. This is not necessarily an encouragement for you to get involved in many church activities. Many may, in fact, need to cut down on the activities in your lives. We encourage you to seek the right kind of involvement so that you are good church members and so that you are growing in the new life in God and serving the Lord better. Whether you should take on more Church activities is a matter for individual discernment.

Many who experience a release of the Spirit, especially if you have not been active enough church members before, may experience a disappointment in the Sunday Liturgy or even weekday Liturgy, unless you take care each time to prepare yourselves in advance. The Liturgy is meant by God to be an important part of our spiritual life, yet we readily admit that there are from time to time difficulties connected with it. Nevertheless, the Liturgy remains since the time of the Apostles the source and summit of our new life with God through Jesus and in the Spirit. As each of us is renewed, the Parish and the Liturgy can become all that they are meant to be. Rather than become critical, Jesus calls us to participate as servants, looking for the ways that the new life in us can be shared with others.

4) The Disciple of Christ is a learner

To sum up, it is important to remember two things:

- 1) We want to encourage you to tell others about Christ and about the new life you have found (explicit, verbal witness / evangelism);
- 2) You want to avoid coming on too strong or too hard or too fast. Evangelism with those who are close to us has to proceed carefully. But it should proceed and not be avoided.

If we love others, we will want to share with them the good things we have found. It will be a natural overflow of our new life. Those who are close to us can be threatened easily. If they see a sudden change in us or if they feel that we are trying to convert them or otherwise change them, they can become very fearful and closed. We have to make our first concern to make them know that we love them more, not to make our first concern to preach the Gospel to them. Once they experience something new in us they like, they will be more open to listen.

Different people react different ways to what we want to share with them about our new life in the Spirit. When our relationship with someone is bad or problematic in some way, it is usually good to go slow. We can be freer when we have a close, warm, trusting friendship with someone.

On the other hand, we should not be unwilling to speak to people about what we have discovered. They will rarely find the new life we have found if they are not told something about it.

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