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## **CONFIRMATION NEWSLETTER – No 2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to this the second Confirmation Newsletter. I hope that you found the first newsletter, interesting, helpful and useful. As I stated in the first newsletter, the purpose of these newsletters is to help parents carry out their part in the preparation of their child for Confirmation. In this newsletter I will focus on the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

### **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The first thing you do with a gift is open it.

In the confirmation rite, the celebrant extends his hands over the candidates and prays:

“All powerful God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life.  
Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide.  
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.”

(CCC 1299 & Isaiah 11.2)

These are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

#### **Wonder and awe in God's presence** (Fear of the Lord) –

helps us to honour the Lord and make Him the centre of our lives;  
helps us to see signs of God's presence in our lives and in the world around us;  
helps us to see God in the love and care of our parents and friends;  
helps us to see God in new life and growth in the people around us in the world.

#### **Reverence** (Piety) –

helps us to be grateful to God for His blessings and to respect all of God's creation;  
helps us to love God as Jesus did;  
helps us to be aware of God's love for us as enable us to bring this love to others.

#### **Knowledge** –

helps us to put trust in the Lord and to have confidence in His teaching;  
helps us to know the reasons why things are as they are;  
helps us to know God better;  
helps us to know always what it is that God wants us to do.

### **Courage** (Fortitude) –

helps us to boldly live by and proclaim the Gospel;  
helps us to continue to do what is right even if others oppose us;  
helps us to speak the truth even if it means we suffer as a consequence;  
gives us courage especially when life is most difficult, when we are alone or afraid.

### **Right judgment** (Counsel) –

helps us to make decisions guided by the Holy Spirit;  
helps us not to be too quick in judging others;  
helps us not to be prejudiced;  
helps us to be quick to admit when we are wrong.

### **Understanding** –

helps us to see the Lord and His ways more deeply;  
helps us to understand how people are feeling deep inside;  
helps us never to do anything to hurt others;  
helps us especially to understand those whose needs are greater than our own, the very young and the very old, those who are sick and those who are poor.

### **Wisdom** –

helps us to make judgments based on God's love;  
helps us to know always what the best thing to do is;  
helps us to know the needs of the people around us;  
helps us to find ways of working together as a team for God's kingdom.

## **Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

We are strengthened in these gifts in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

But what is the evidence? How do we know whether we have opened the gifts?

How do we know that we are responding to the Spirit in us?

“By their fruits, you will know them” (Matthew 7:16).

What are the fruits?

St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians lists them. (Gal.5:22).

They are **love; joy; peace; patience; kindness; goodness; generosity; gentleness; faithfulness; modesty and self-control.**

These are the qualities that will be evidenced in the person who is responding to the Spirit within – to the person who has opened the gifts.

Responding to the gifts means that there will be evidence that we are growing in the fruits, becoming more like Christ all the time.

When we think of fruits and flowers in the natural world, we know that they have their beginnings as tiny seeds. As long as the seeds remain in the packet nothing will happen.

The packet needs to be opened, the ground needs to be prepared,

the seeds need to be planted, the young plants need to be cared for and cultivated.

Such gifts of God in ordinary creation are not magic. They need the human effort.

But when the human response is added to the gift of God then all sorts of fruits and vegetables, and flowers, are the result.

## **Prayer for Guidance and Help**

Parents/Guardians, you have already received the gifts of the Holy Spirit at your own Confirmation. Here is a prayer that you might find useful at this point in your life:

Dear God,

Thank you for the great gift you have given me in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit into my life to offer me guidance and help.

I ask you for guidance now, Lord.

I need to know where to fit into this Church of yours.

What am I to do? What do I have to offer? Where am I to serve?

I have so many questions right now.

Be with me on my journey of faith, Lord.

Give me patience to wait for your answers.

Give me an open heart to hear you when you respond.

Give me your love and forgiveness, for I know I will make mistakes along the way.

Amen.

## **A Gift – Various responses**

There can be various responses to a gift.

- 1) It can be rejected.
- 2) It can be accepted but left unopened, unused, and perhaps forgotten about.
- 3) It can be accepted and opened,  
whilst at the same time opening ourselves to all the possibilities that gifts have to offer.

On Confirmation Day itself, I doubt if there is anyone who will be in the category of rejecting the Gift but there can at the same time be all sorts of mixed motives at play. Some young people, perhaps, may fit into the second category, in that this is not the something which touches their lives deeply at this time. Becoming aware of the Holy Spirit may not occur till much later in life. However, the hope would be that the young people have the third response as listed above, and indeed that you, their parents or guardians, are at or moving towards this same response.

The story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well can be a help. (John.4:1-42). Many believe that Jesus is referring to the Holy Spirit when he tells the woman, that if she only knew the gift that was being offered to her she would ask for it and it would be given to her. He is assuring her that the gift will be given to her. However, she herself has to do something. She has to ask for the gift. This itself will depend on her knowing something about the gift beforehand. I invite you to spend some time thinking and praying about the gifts, and their explanations, as highlighted above, and discussing them with your child.

## **PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Enkindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created,  
and you shall renew the face of the earth. **Amen**