

"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: June 4, 2015 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Wisdom



Last Sunday we celebrated the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Thus, in our Church Calendar, this week marks “Ordinary Time,” until the First Sunday of Advent on November 29th. Depending on which prayer book you follow, we also refer to this as the Season of Pentecost for those following the 79 BCP, or the Season of Trinity for those following the 28 BCP. During Ordinary time the emphasis throughout the lectionary is on Mission and Ministry. It seems appropriate to me then that my Bishop’s Notes for this season focus on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are poured out upon us for furthering mission and ministry.

Determining exactly what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are is not as simple as one might imagine. Scripture lists these gifts in several places – Isaiah, Acts, Romans, and Corinthians, just to name a few. However, this series in the Bishop’s Note will focus on what I consider the foundational gifts and simply say that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, like the Holy Spirit Himself, are limitless.

What might be referred to as “Foundational gifts” are those that the Prophet Isaiah speaks of: ***“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord”*** (Isaiah 11:1-3a ESV) The seven foundational gifts are: Wisdom, Understanding, Might (fortitude), Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.

These gifts are freely given by God the Holy Spirit and are provided to the believer so that we may fulfill the purpose of our lives, which is to Love and Serve the Lord.

The first of the gifts Isaiah speaks of is Wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to understand, in our inner being, God’s desire for the world. This often comes as a knowledge that

we are unable to articulate but is often described as, “I know that I know that I know...” that God is the creator and author of all life, or that Jesus died for my sins. It is this wisdom that allows us to step forward in Faith.

The gift of Wisdom empowers us for ministry in a world that too often considers itself “wise,” but whose wisdom is based on the self. The Wisdom that comes from God is wisdom based on God Himself, and it goes beyond our own feeble minds and is used for God’s glory, not our own.

“O God, you are the author and source everything that ever was or is now and ever will be. We pray you to pour down upon us, your servants, the gift of Wisdom. Open our hearts and minds to view the world through the lens of your heart and mind that we may honor and glorify you. We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen”

Your Servant and Bishop,

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 118 - 120

118. What is confirmation?

After making a mature commitment to my baptismal covenant with God, I receive the laying on of the bishop’s hands with prayer. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)

119. What grace does God give you in confirmation?

In confirmation, God strengthens the work of the Holy Spirit in me for his daily increase

in my Christian life and ministry. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)

120. What is absolution?

After repenting and confessing my sins to God in the presence of a priest, the priest declares God's forgiveness to me with authority given by God. (John 20:22-23; James 5:15-16)

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Bishop's Note: June 11, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Understanding



During this Season after Pentecost – often referred to as “Ordinary Time” – I am embarking on an examination of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are freely given to believers at baptism with the general graces of the Lord, and then boldly given at confirmation or the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

What might be referred to as “Foundational gifts,” are those that the Prophet Isaiah speaks of: ***“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord”*** (Isaiah 11:1-3a ESV) The seven foundational gifts are: Wisdom, Understanding, Might (fortitude), Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.

These gifts are freely given by God the Holy Spirit and are provided to the believer so that we may fulfill the purpose of our lives, which is to Love and Serve the Lord.

The second of these gifts is Understanding. This gift of the Holy Spirit opens our minds to the understanding of Divine Truth as revealed in the Word of the Lord and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Take, for example, the way you can be reading the Word of God and then, all of a sudden, that passage which you’ve read a hundred times leaps off the page with a whole new meaningfulness to you. This past Sunday while studying for my sermon, I read from the Gospel of Mark: “[21] And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” (Mark 3:21 ESV) In the past, while reading this scripture, I always understood the second “they” as Jesus’ family. But this week, I believe the Holy Spirit gave me understanding to recognize the second “they” was the detractors of Jesus. Thus, Jesus’ family went up to aid Jesus, to check on him and to protect him.

God gives us the gift of the Understanding so that God may be glorified! This is not understanding so that we may simply be enriched or somehow made better. This is not the understanding that God gives where we have a deeper understanding about a math problem or a problem at work. This is Understanding of, and a deeper perception of, God's divine love for us – His love for YOU!

I pray that God may grant us this Understanding, so that we may better serve Him and better love our neighbor!

“God the Holy Spirit, we give you thanks and praise for the gift of wisdom and understanding. Enlighten our hearts and minds to better love and know you for who you are as the almighty and glorious Lord and creator of all life and grace.” Amen!

I pray you all a blessed Lord's Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 121 - 123

121. What grace does God give to you in absolution?

In absolution, God conveys to me his pardon through the cross, thus declaring to me reconciliation and peace with him, and bestowing upon me the assurance of his grace and salvation.

122. What is ordination?

Through prayer and the laying on of the bishop's hands, ordination consecrates, authorizes, and empowers persons called to serve Christ and his Church in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. (1 Timothy 1:5; 5:22; Acts 6:6)

123. What grace does God give in ordination?

In ordination, God confirms the gifts and calling of the candidates, conveys the gift of the Holy Spirit for the office and work of bishop, priest or deacon, and sets them apart to act on behalf of the Church and in the name of Christ.

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Bishop's Note: June 18, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Godly Counsel



Have you ever had a situation where you might be speaking to a brother or sister who is going through a difficult time? Perhaps they were trying to figure out a difficult relationship, or seeking to reconcile, or seeking to make a difficult decision, and sought out your counsel?

Did you find yourself, in that moment, offering clear counsel that resonated with your friend? If so you probably experienced the gift of Godly Counsel that Isaiah spoke of when he wrote: ***"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord"*** (Isaiah 11:1-3a)

The gift of Godly Counsel is present both in the giving and receiving of good advice in practical situations. The fruit of this gift is more than just a sense of it being sound advice, but it is fruitful when applied to a situation that allows someone to mature in his or her walk with the Lord.

In my ministry, I seem to recognize this most in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I see it when my Confessor speaks into my life and I just know: "Yes, this is truth and this is what I must do." This isn't because my confessor is terrific, though he is; it is because I'm open in that moment to the Spirit of God speaking into my life and using Fr. Larry as His instrument.

In other times I am the confessor, and I just know in my heart that this is the counsel that I'm supposed to give, or this is the question I am supposed to ask that will allow the penitent to make the connection. When this occurs, it is not because of my great

counsel, but because the Holy Spirit leads us to discern right from wrong and good from evil.

Ultimately, the gift of Godly Counsel comes with humility – humbling ourselves to seek help from others and - most importantly - from the Lord when faced with difficult decisions, or aiding others in making the right decisions and taking right actions.

“Gracious and loving Lord we pray for the anointing of your Holy Spirit with the gift of Godly Counsel for the furtherance our ministry in your church, for the benefit of your children and for your honor and glory! Open our hearts and minds to humbly receive your gift and then to willingly share it with others. This we pray in the name of our one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 124 - 126

124. What are the three ordained ministries in the Anglican Church?

The three orders are bishops, priests, and deacons.

125. What is the work of bishops?

The work of bishops is to represent and serve Christ and the Church as chief pastors, to lead in preaching and teaching the faith and in shepherding the faithful, to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church, and to bless, confirm and ordain, thus following in the tradition of the Apostles. (Titus 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 20:28)

126. What is the work of priests?

The work of priests, serving Christ under their bishops, is to nurture congregations through the full ministry of the Word preached and Sacraments rightly administered, and to pronounce absolution and blessing in God's name. (Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1)

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Bishop's Note: June 25, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Godly Might



In over 28 years of ordained ministry - and the several years prior, as a layman - I have never ceased to be amazed at the fortitude that some of our brothers and sisters have: strength to fight and strength to die gracefully; strength to love, serve, and stand by the side of a loved one in the midst of great sorrow and fear.

This strength comes not from within ourselves, but as a gift of the Holy Spirit that is sometimes referred to as Godly Might or Godly Fortitude. Again, this is referenced as one of the foundational gifts by the Prophet Isaiah when he wrote: ***"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord"*** (Isaiah 11:1-3a)

In my ministry, throughout the years as a Hospice Chaplain, Hospice Board Member, and Fire Department Trauma Team founder and member, I've been both blessed and cursed to witness hundreds of people face traumatic injury or illness. When that happens, both the patient and their loved ones must come to a place of either resignation at their ill fate, or of recognizing that, even though we live in a fallen world that knows great pain and sorrow, we can, as Christians, face pain and suffering with the knowledge that even in suffering God can be glorified and others can be aided.

In my own family, I look to my brother as an example of one who has had Godly Might & Fortitude. Ken has juvenile diabetes and is now 58 years old. Ken's health has deteriorated over the years: he's had two heart attacks, several stints, his kidneys are not working well, he has no feeling in his feet, and his eyesight continues to weaken. In short, Ken has all of the problems that someone who has had diabetes for fifty years would have. In all that time, I've never heard him complain, nor ask for a break or to have things easier. Ken has gotten up every morning and gone to work to support his family, to be a productive citizen, and to help other people.

I'm not sure Ken would say that he's gifted with Godly Might, but he'd be quick to say that he could not have done all that he has without God's help. Ken and his family are faithful Catholic Christians - he serves with the Knights of Columbus and, throughout the years, has held about every position a layman can have at his church; never complaining about his illness, never asking for a break, and never giving in.

Two weeks ago Ken got to see something he secretly feared that he might not - his only child's marriage to a wonderful man. I was so proud of my brother as he walked my niece down the aisle. I stood at the altar and saw the beam in my brother's face that radiated the love of a father for his daughter, and the Love of our Heavenly Father for his adopted son.

Let us pray for all the Kens of this world, and for all of the men and women who love them and care for them in good times and in bad. Thank God for the gift of Godly Might and Fortitude - it is too frightening to think what this world would be like without it!

Let us pray: *"Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake."* Amen.

I pray you all a blessed week as you seek and serve the Lord!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 127 - 130

127. What is the work of deacons?

The work of deacons, serving Christ under their bishops, is to assist priests in public worship, instruct both young and old in the catechism, and care for those in need. (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

128. What is marriage?

Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, binding both to self-giving love and exclusive fidelity. In the rite of Christian marriage, the couple exchange vows to uphold this covenant. They do this before God and in the presence of witnesses, who pray that God will bless their life together. (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19; Mark 10:2-9; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39)

129. What is signified in marriage?

The covenantal union of man and woman in marriage signifies the communion between Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, and the Church, his holy bride. Not all are called to marriage, but all Christians are wedded to Christ and blessed by the grace God gives in marriage. (Ephesians 5:31-32)

130. What grace does God give in marriage?

In Christian marriage, God establishes and blesses the covenant between husband and wife, and joins them to live together in a communion of love, faithfulness and peace within the fellowship of Christ and his Church. God enables all married people to grow in love, wisdom and godliness through a common life patterned on the sacrificial love of Christ.

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Bishop's Note: July 02, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Knowledge



I never cease to be amazed at the way God the Holy Spirit works in my life, both as an individual and in my ministry as the Bishop of the Diocese of San Joaquin. One of the ways that God blesses me, and presumably blesses others, is in the Apostolic Laying on of Hands in the sacrament of Confirmation.

It is my practice to dedicate time in the night and early morning to praying for each candidate individually – asking the Lord to show me something about them and the ministry that He would have them be involved with in their congregation and in the future.

Generally, but not always, I'll have a dream or a Word of Knowledge regarding the person to share with them as I pray and lay hands upon them. For example, with one man I had the strongest sense in the core of my being that he was to step out in faith and start a business. Unknown to me this young man had been wrestling back and forth about just that question – whether to work for someone else or go out on his own. Weeks after the confirmation service his family reported that the Word of Knowledge that I shared with him resonated as deeply within him as it had within me. He stepped out in faith, and his business has gone from good to better and continues to grow even now, several years later.

Like all Gifts of the Spirit, the reality of the gift is made manifest in the bearing of fruit. This is exactly what Isaiah had prophesied when he wrote: ***"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord"***

The fruit of the Gift of Knowledge is seen in a deepening trust and certainty about the Lord. The gift of knowledge is imparted by the Holy Spirit and is deepened through the daily study of Holy Scripture and prayer. God is constantly seeking to communicate with us, and His two

most prevalent ways of communicating are through His Word and through our quietly listening to the Lord. God may speak audibly, or He may speak through a sermon; a teacher; a friend. When He speaks, there is a resonance in your soul and you just know that you know.

We step out in Faith when we act on what the Lord tells us. Whether it is a word for us personally or for another, the Lord wants us to risk a little – share the word with a trusted friend, member of the clergy, or mentor to get their opinion. Always make sure that the word is in accordance with Holy Scripture and the teachings of the church, and ultimately - once the Word of Knowledge is acted upon - take the time in the near and distant future to review the results of that action. In other words, ask: “What Godly fruit has this born?”

Pray that the Holy Spirit will shed His Spirit of Knowledge upon you, that He may bless you and others.

I pray that the Lord may bless and keep you this week and always!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 131 - 14

131. What is the anointing of the sick?

Through prayer and anointing with oil, the minister invokes God's blessing upon those suffering in body, mind, or spirit. (Matthew 10:8; James 5:14-16).

132. What grace does God give in the anointing of the sick?

As God wills, the healing given through anointing may bring bodily recovery from illness, peace of mind or spirit, and strength to persevere in adversity, especially in preparation for death.

133. What are sins?

A sin is any desire or disobedient act that arises out of the fallen condition of my human nature and falls short, either by commission or omission, of perfect conformity to God's revealed will. (1 John 3:4)

134. How does God respond to human sin?

All sin is opposed to the holiness of God, and is therefore subject to God's condemnation. But God in his mercy offers forgiveness and salvation from sin to all people through the reconciling life, death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:28; Romans 1:18-2:4; 6:6-11)

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Bishop's Note: July 09, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Piety



Let me ask you a question: When did you first realize you were in love with the Lord? The very realization that you are in love with the Lord is, in fact, a gift from the Holy Spirit! This is the gift of Piety – the desire to love and worship the Lord!

The Spiritual Gift of Piety is what St. Paul was referring to when he wrote about a “Spirit of adoption” in his letter to the Romans: *“[15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”* (Romans 8:15)

For me, I recognized this gift soon after accepting Jesus as my Lord and Savior. The Church I was attending was St. Paul’s in Tustin. I was hungry to learn, and hungry to spend time with the Lord. So, in order to do both, I began attending the mid-week Eucharist on Wednesday nights. I wanted to arrive at church early and leave late – because I wanted to spend time with my Heavenly Father.

Through the Gift of Piety we realize how loving and merciful our Father is, and how we are loved beyond our wildest imaginations. The Gift of Piety helps us to know deep down that the Father’s love is steadfast and everlasting. It begins by recognizing that we are the adopted sons and daughters of God. God the Father chose us to be His sons and daughters, God the Son died for us to make us His sons and daughters, and God the Holy Spirit dwells eternally with His sons and daughters. As we accept this love, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to respond with the devotion of our hearts, minds, and bodies.

If all of this sounds foreign to you – if you find going to church or other spiritual disciplines to be a chore and a waste of time – I bid you to pray. Pray that God the Holy Spirit will fill you with a Spirit of Adoption and love!

“Heavenly Father instill in me the knowledge of your Grace and Love; the very character of a father’s love for his child. Grant me, Lord, a desire to know you and to love you with my whole heart. Grant me the longing of a child to be with his father not only for a single moment in time but to enjoy for eternity. This I ask through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Amen”

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Catechism Questions 135 - 137

135. How does God forgive your sins?

By virtue of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, God sets aside my sins, accepts me, and adopts me as his child and heir in Jesus Christ. Loving me as his child, he forgives my sins whenever I turn to him in repentance and faith. (2 Corinthians 5:16-18)

136. How should you respond to God’s forgiveness?

As I live in the grace of God’s constant forgiveness, so I should live in constant thanks and praise to him; and as I have been loved and forgiven, so I should love and forgive without limit those who sin against me. (Matthew 6:12; 18:22)

137. What is grace?

Grace is the gift of the triune God's love, mercy, and help, which he freely gives to us who, because of our sin, deserve only condemnation. (Acts 20:32; Romans 3:24; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:6-7)

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Bishop's Note: July 16, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Holy Fear



I remember as a young man reading this phrase in the Psalms of David for the first time: ***"The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"*** (Psalm 111:10), and thinking, "How can that be? How can wisdom and fear be used in the same sentence?"

I suspect that I was not alone in thinking, "God is a loving God; He doesn't want to frighten us." As I matured, I came to realize that the Fear spoken of in the Psalms and Proverbs isn't emotional fear, the way a child might fear an abusive parent or a criminal might fear his impending incarceration - worrying about being attacked by friend and stranger alike.

No, the Fear that Kings David and Solomon speak of is a Gift of God in the self-knowledge of who we are in comparison to who God is. Again, this self-knowledge is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and is one of the foundational gifts spoke of by the prophet Isaiah: ***"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord"*** (Isaiah 11:1-3a)

How is this gift lived out? Well, primarily it is an attitude of awe and reverence in the presence of God. I think of our worship and the reverence that we both feel and offer to the Lord. The physical acts of kneeling, genuflecting, and raising our arms to heaven reflect and inspire reverence for our Lord. The humility of lifting our hands, cupped like a manger, to receive the body of Christ is an act of reverence and awe. When we receive Christ's body and blood we are so aware of both our separateness and our unity - a unity based on Christ's will and desire more than ours.

This gift of fear, reverence, and awe calls us to follow the Apostle Paul's words in his letter to the Philippians, chapter 2: ***“10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”***

Holy Fear, the understanding of who we are in comparison to God, is indeed the beginning of wisdom. This reverence and awe is what leads us to open the door of our hearts and minds to the knock of our Lord Jesus on our hearts. The gift of Holy Fear leads us to open ourselves up to our triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is worldly fear which keeps the doors of our heart and mind closed to God for fear that He will make demands upon our lives; fear that we will have to change; fear that we will have to ultimately admit that we are NOT God - that the world does not turn on the axis of *our* lives.

Worldly Fear is a sign of our immaturity. Too often, no matter our physical age, spiritually we are like two years olds in our development, demanding that we be considered as the center of the universe. Holy Fear is the gift that leads to maturity, recognizing that we are not the center of the universe but that Jesus Christ is! And to that I say...AMEN!

Blessings and peace to you all!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 138 - 141

138. Does God give his grace only to Christians?

No. God graciously provides for all people; “he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). However, he shows his saving grace by bringing to faith in Christ those who are far from him. (Romans 5:1-11).

139. For what purpose does God give you grace?

God gives me grace in Christ for the forgiveness of my sins, the healing of sin's effects, growth in holiness, preservation through death and judgment, and my ultimate transformation into the image of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:2-10)

140. Is God's grace only for your religious or spiritual life?

No. God cares about my whole life, and his grace in Christ is at work in every aspect of it. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:28)

141. Can you earn God's grace?

No. God gives his grace freely, and enables me to receive it. Everything I do should be in response to God's love and grace made known in Christ, for “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8), and “we love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

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Bishop's Note: July 23, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Prophecy

"[14] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)



Let me ask you: What comes to mind when I say “*prophecy*?” Do you think of Isaiah speaking of the coming of the Christ? Do you think of John the Baptist coming out of the wilderness, calling people to repentance and dressed roughly in a camel hair shirt and leather belt – long hair and straggly beard?

Actually, I think of Archbishop Foley Beach and Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali. To look at them, you’d not recognize them as having the gift of prophecy but, in fact, they do have that anointing and exercise it regularly. This past week I was blessed to witness them exercise this gift at the International Catholic Congress of Anglicans. Through sermons and teaching, they built up the Body of Christ, which is the Church, inspiring all those listening to serve the Lord and glorify His Name.

Throughout history, God the Holy Spirit has selected men and women to “*proclaim the Glory of God and edify man.*” In the broadest terms, that is the definition of the Gift of Prophecy. Sometimes that gift is very specific, as we saw with Isaiah and the prophecies of the birth of the Messiah. Sometimes the prophecies are for building up the Bride of Christ – the Church – as we see in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12.

From the time of Jesus to the present, men and women have been given the gift of prophecy to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Haven’t you been in church and listened to a sermon that you just knew in your soul was anointed? Perhaps it stirred your heart and mind to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ? Perhaps it stirred your soul to reach out and serve others? Perhaps it convicted you to examine your life

and repent. Perhaps it was a strange and warm affirmation that you are loved beyond your wildest imaginations. Why do these sermons stir us? Perhaps 2 Peter states it best: *“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Peter 1:21)

It is my sincere prayer that everyone of my clergy will pray that God the Holy Spirit will grant them the gift of prophecy, that their sermons will be inspired and inspiring – glorifying God, and blessing and equipping the people of the church to actively bring people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ!

I pray you all a truly blessed Lord’s Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 142 - 144

142. How should you think of the human body?

My body is the good and God-given means of my experience, expression, enjoyment, love and service within God’s good creation. But sin and death now infect this world, and my body will degenerate and die. (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:19)

143. Where do you go after you die?

When I die, my body will perish but, by the will of God, my soul will live on, awaiting resurrection and final judgment. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

144. What is the resurrection of the body?

When Jesus appears on judgment day, he will bring all the dead back to bodily life, the wicked to judgment and the righteous to eternal life in the glory of God. (John 5:25-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)

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Bishop's Note: Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Service

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:3-4)



Jesus shared these words with the crowds during the Sermon on the Mount. Do you find yourself hungry to give to the needy? Do you find yourself hungry to care for others? And yet desire to do so without fanfare or acknowledgement? If so perhaps you have the Spiritual Gift of Service.

It was while I was in college that I first learned that I was blessed to have the gift of Service. A good friend of mine was a member of a sorority. I would visit Marsha and see these young women who seemed in need of care and attention that had no strings attached – no potential romance – no chance to be taken advantage of. And so, with Marsha's help and encouragement I formed a group of men together to be the "Big Brothers" for the sorority. We found ourselves helping where we could, having a listening ear and a non-judgmental presence. One Lent I was lead by the Lord to take on as my Lenten Discipline to anonymously write to each of the women sharing something that I'd seen them do, to complement them or otherwise give a "That a Girl" to each. These notes were sent daily throughout the forty days of Lent. What a joy to see the girls receive these notes and speculate who was writing them. To my knowledge no one every guessed correctly.

Closely associated with the gift of Service is the service of hospitality. I was blessed this past week to be the recipient of just such a gift. I was making my pastoral visit to St. John's, Petaluma and found myself the guest of parishioners. I didn't arrive until 10:00 pm but they were awake and ready to greet me; immediately made me feel comfortable and engaged me in stimulating conversation - nothing showy, nothing flashy just an open door and a warm smile. This was indeed a gift given in love without expectation of anything in return.

Without the Gift of Service the church of the first century could not have existed. It was because of courageous and giving people like, Nympha (Col. 4:15), Gaius (Rom 16:23) and Prisca & Aquila (1 Cor. 16:19) who hosted house churches. Opening their homes and their lives to new Christians knowing that their service was a gift to be received by the Holy Spirit and shared with the Body of Christ and was given freely and without expectation.

Giving without expectation is the hallmark of the Spiritual Gift of Service. Does this describe your calling and joy? If so rejoice because God the Holy Spirit has given you a very special gift to be shared with others... the love of service!

I pray you all a truly blessed week!

Bishop Menees

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"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: September 3, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Exhortation



As we continue our examination of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we come to the one that has come most naturally to me - Exhortation. The word exhortation comes from the Greek word *parakaleo* (παρακαλέω), which St. Paul also includes as a gift in his letter to the Romans in chapter 12, verse 8. *Parakaleo* means to: “appeal to, urge, exhort, or to encourage” someone to take a certain action. If we try to motivate someone to be kind to another person, we are exhorting him or her to action.

A clear example of this comes from St. Paul's second letter to his apprentice Timothy, when he exhorts him to: ***“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”*** (2 Timothy 2:15)

The one gifted with exhortation encourages people to live godly, loving lives that will be pleasing to the Lord. Equally important though, is that the one gifted with Exhortation also provides ways for people to live into the exhortation.

When I was a high school student, Fr. David Heaney exhorted me to pursue a calling to the priesthood. In doing so, he invited me to meet with him regularly, study the scriptures together, and to make pastoral visits with him. The summer of my Senior year of High School he encouraged me to volunteer at the local hospital as a lay pastoral visitor. There I discovered that I had a gift for being with people in difficult times and encouraging them to trust in the Lord and to work hard on their recovery. I would regularly meet with Fr. David after those visits to debrief and discover what God the Holy Spirit was doing in those visits, both with the patient and with me.

Ultimately, I pray that all of us in the Diocese of San Joaquin will ask the Holy Spirit to give us the gift of Exhortation, so that we may all live into the Mission of the Diocese:

"To equip, train, support and encourage clergy and lay leaders to bring people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ." And to that I say AMEN!

I pray you all a blessed week!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 149-152

149. What is prayer?

Prayer is turning my heart toward God, to converse with him in worship. (Psalm 122, 123)-

150. What should you seek in prayer?

In prayer I should seek the joy of fellowship with God, who made me for fellowship with him. (1 Chronicles 16:28-30; Psalm 96; John 17; Revelation 22:17)

151. What is fellowship with God?

Fellowship with God in prayer is relating to him as his children, as we approach the light and glory of his throne. (Revelation 7:9-17)

152. How can you have fellowship with God?

Through the death of Jesus as both High Priest and sacrifice, and in his Holy Spirit, I have fellowship with God in Word, Sacrament, and prayer. (Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 1:1-4)

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Bishop's Note: September 10, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Giving



As we continue our examination of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we look this week at the gift of Giving. St. Paul refers to this gift in his letter to the Romans:

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:6-8)

“...the one who contributes, in generosity....” The Spiritual Gift of Giving is an essential gift to the life of the community. We are, all of us, called to follow the biblical standard of giving 10% of all that we have - our time, treasure, and talent - to the Lord through His Church. However, in every generation and in every community, the Lord moves the hearts and minds of individuals to give above and beyond the tithe. These men and women have contributed to building great cathedrals, hospitals, schools, and orphanages, and have made possible the defense of this diocese from the lawsuits levied against us.

The one with the Spiritual Gift of Giving loves to give of their time, treasure, and talent as a way of blessing others and promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He or she is a person of faith who recognizes that God provides for every need and is willing to offer themselves and their material possessions as instruments for the Lord's work!

The person anointed with the gift of giving also gives without expectation of

receiving anything in return - no fanfare, no attention, no special favors. St. Paul said it perfectly in his Second Epistle to the Church in Corinth:

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send givers into the harvest to aid our church plants, missions, parishes, and the diocese in our mission: *"To equip, train, support, and encourage the clergy and lay leaders of the diocese to bring people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ."*

I pray you all to truly blessed and joyful week!

Bishop Menees

Click **HERE** for info on the Bishop's School for Lay Chaplains (**Note**: *required RSVP date is Friday, September 25th, 2015, so that we may determine if a sufficient number of participants has been achieved in order to proceed.*)

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Catechism Questions 153 - 155

153. Why should you pray?

I should pray, first, because God calls me so to do; second, because I desire to know God

and be known by him; third, because I need the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit; and fourth, because God responds to the prayers of his people. (Luke 11:13)

154. What should you pray?

In addition to my own prayers, I should pray the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, and the collected prayers of the Church.

155. When should you pray?

I should pray morning, noon, and night, and whenever I am aware of my need for God's special grace. And I should learn "to pray without ceasing" as I grow in knowledge of God's nearness. (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10-13; Matthew 15:21-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Hebrews 4:16)

"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: September 17, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Administration



As we continue our examination of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we come to the gift of Administration. In my opinion, this is one of the most needed and least valued of the Spiritual Gifts. Yes, St. Paul was clear to speak to this gift as he lists the spiritual gifts: ***"And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administering, and various kinds of tongues."*** (1 Corinthians 12:28)

The gift of administration is given to certain Christians in order to organize and implement plans for leading others in ministry. The gift of administration is closely associated with leadership. St. Paul tasks his apprentice Titus with organizing the church in Crete: ***"To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...."*** (Titus 1:4-5) Without the gift of administration, the church in Crete might not have raised up new priests and bishops, nor flourished as she did.

The gift of Administration is the gift of the Holy Spirit that binds the other gifts in the church together for their effective employment in Kingdom ministry. Those with the gift of administration love to see people in the church raised up and trained for ministry. They organize training schedules to equip people for ministry and then schedule them to serve. Without the gift of administration, we see people squander their gifts, and churches flounder with the small handful of people who are best at asserting their gifts leading everything.

In my ministry, I have been blessed to have people with the gift of Administration who have helped me immeasurably. When planting a new

congregation, I would argue that having someone with the gift of administration is most vital. I think of Miss Lou in San Diego. She is a woman who loves order and putting things in order. She would make sure that the bulletins were done; the ministers trained and scheduled; the fellowship food prepared and displayed in an appealing manner. However, it wasn't until Miss Lou began to share this gift with others, rather than do it herself, that things began to blossom. It is difficult for people with this gift to give over to others, but when they can things really begin to hum. When Miss Lou trained others to do the bulletin, take over schedules, and organize the coffee hour, then the Spirit moved to empower others, and that is where the gift of administration really becomes useful in a church. This was Titus' secret – he put the Church in Crete in order and then released others for ministry to do the same.

Pray that God the Holy Spirit grant the gift of administration to many in our congregations, that they may grow and flourish.

I pray you all a blessed week!

Bishop Menees

Click [**HERE**](#) for info on the Bishop's School for Lay Chaplains (**Note:** *required RSVP date is Friday, September 25th, 2015, so that we may determine if a sufficient number of participants has been achieved in order to proceed.*)

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Catechism Questions 156 - 158

156. What is the prayer our Lord taught his disciples to pray?

The traditional version of the Lord's Prayer is:

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be

done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

157. Why should you pray the Lord's Prayer?

I should pray the Lord's Prayer because Christ in the gospels teaches it to his disciples, as both a practice and a pattern for fellowship with God the Father. (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4)

158. How is the Lord's Prayer a practice for all prayer?

When I pray the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is training me to pray according to his Father's will; so I should employ the prayer constantly. (1 John 5:14-15; Luke 11:2)

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Bishop's Note: September 24, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Compassion



“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36)

The Spiritual Gift of Compassion is a gift that truly characterizes Christians and distinguishes us from the world. We are, all of us, called to follow Jesus' example of being compassionate, but there are those of us who are endued by the Holy Spirit with an extra dose of compassion and a zeal to love and serve those who suffer; who are outcasts; who are alone.

Mr. Webster tells us that the origin of the modern word “Compassion” comes to us through Middle English, by way of Old French and ecclesiastical Latin *compassio(n-)*, from Late Latin *compati*, meaning to ‘suffer with.’

The one with the gift of Compassion sees the suffering in the world around them and is given the desire and ability to speak hope and grace into that suffering.

When I think of the Spiritual Gift of Compassion, I think of the death of a former parishioner – Stasia Sterret. Stacia was a widow of about five years before I came to the church. When Stasia took ill, there was no one left in the family who could assist her, and for a week parishioners held a vigil with Stasia in the hospital - 24 hours a day - singing hymns, praying the psalms, and holding her hand. These people demonstrated the Spiritual Gift of Compassion. The thought of her dying alone was too much, and so they gave of their time, their hearts and their souls. Stasia died peacefully with two sisters in Christ by her side. The impact of their compassion on the church and on the hospital staff

was evident for years to come – not to mention the grace given to a dying sister in Christ.

Those who have the Gift of Compassion recognize those who are hurting and are moved to be with them – to assist in any way possible. Those with this gift cannot take the suffering away, but they are willing to suffer with them. These are the men and women who go into the trenches to lift the head and heart of a broken soul.

Thanks be to God for those who have this gift; for those who by vocation and profession are there day in and day out, loving and caring. The unofficial prayer for this ministry is captured in the service of Evening Prayer:

“Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love’s sake. Amen.”

May the Lord bless and keep you all!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 159 - 161

159. How does the Lord’s Prayer give you a pattern for prayer?

The Lord’s Prayer models the primary elements of fellowship with God: praise of God,

acceptance of his rule and will, petition for his provision, confession of my sins (here called trespasses), forgiveness of others, avoidance of sin, and God's protection from evil and Satan. I should pray regularly about these things in my own words. (Matthew 6:9)

160. What are the parts of the Lord's Prayer?

The Lord's Prayer begins with an address, makes seven petitions, adds a doxology, and concludes with "Amen."

161. Describe the order of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

As in the Ten Commandments, God's Glory, Name, and Kingdom precede any petitions for our personal well-being.

"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Our apologies for the re-send: the link for the San Joaquin Anglican was incorrect in the previous version of the Bishop's Note. This has been corrected.



Bishop's Note: October 01, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Utterance of Wisdom

In this series of the *Bishop's Note*, we have been focusing on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. So far, we've looked at the "Traditional" gifts as listed in Isaiah, and we've looked at the "Motivational" gifts as listed in Romans. Today we turn to the "Charismatic" gifts as found in St. Paul's first epistle to the Church in Corinth. In Chapter 12, verse seven of that letter, St. Paul writes: ***"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*** (1 Corinthians 12:7) God freely gives these gifts to His people for the good of His people. These gifts are supernatural abilities given to individuals by the Holy Spirit. They are not the natural abilities of the individual, and they are given for the common good of the people and not to promote the importance of the person in whom the gift is manifested. This is a very important fact to remember – the Charismatic gifts are given to people who are open to being instruments of God's Grace and Love to others. Therefore, they are to be used in all humility and love; to the Glory of God and the building up of His Church!

St. Paul lists these gifts in verses 8-11 of chapter twelve: ***"For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."*** (1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

The first gift listed is the "Utterance of Wisdom." The Greek word for wisdom is *Sophia* and refers to an intimate knowledge and application of God's Will through the

understanding of God's Word and an intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Jesus demonstrated this gift when he met with the Samaritan woman at the well (John chapter 4). Jesus spoke into her life when he said to her; ***"Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."*** (John 4:16-18) Jesus spoke this truth into her life not to shame her, but to let her know that he had an intimate knowledge of her life and so his expressed desire to give her "Living Water" was true.

When I think of someone who has demonstrated the gift of the Utterance of Wisdom in my life I think of Fr. Larry Bausch, my spiritual director. Over the years when we've met and I've shared my heart's desires, hurts, joys, and sins, he's spoken life and wisdom into me and my particular situation. Fr. Larry would be the first to tell you that any wisdom he's shared with me has come from God the Holy Spirit and not from himself.

I pray that, when you sense that a brother or sister is given the Spiritual Gift of the Utterance of Wisdom, you will take the time to be open and vulnerable sharing your heart's desires, hurts, joys, and sins, in order that God the Holy Spirit may speak through that individual and into your heart and soul. And I pray that you will be open to the Holy Spirit to give you this gift in order to speak life and love into the heart and soul of a brother or sister!

I pray you all a truly blessed week!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 162 - 164

162. How do you address God in this prayer?

As Jesus taught his disciples to call upon God, I pray, “Our Father, Who art in heaven.”

163. Who may call God Father?

All who are adopted as God’s children through faith and baptism in Christ may call him Father. (John 1:12-13)

164. If prayer is personal, why do you not say “my” Father?

The Lord Jesus teaches God’s children always to think of themselves as living members of his Body, God’s family of believers, and to pray accordingly.

"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: October 08, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit
– Utterance of Knowledge



One of Gifts of the Holy Spirit that works hand in hand with the gift of the Utterance of Wisdom is the gift of the Utterance Knowledge. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: ***"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,"*** (1 Corinthians 12:4-8)

The Utterance of Knowledge is the supernatural revelation of facts from the past, in the present, or in the future. It comes when the Holy Spirit speaks to a person's heart, addressing something in a brother's or sister's life with the purpose of building up that person in the Lord. This could be everything from speaking to the need for reconciliation, the need to act in a given situation, or the need to prepare for something that is coming in the future.

From time to time the Holy Spirit will speak to my heart, giving me a word of Knowledge to share with someone. When I prepare for a confirmation or ordination service I spend the night prior to the service praying for the candidate and asking the Lord if He has something to give to me to share with the individual. When in prayer during the service, I will generally speak in tongues over the candidate and then share with them what the Lord has put on my heart. I am always thrilled when the individual can confirm what I shared. Of course, the true test of all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is shown to be true by the fruit they produce.

Have you ever felt that nudge from the Holy Spirit that gives you special insight into a person's life, but then remained silent for fear of being wrong and making a fool of yourself? I would encourage you to risk looking the fool, because the Lord may be asking you to speak life into the heart of that individual. If it is of the Lord, the person will soon know it, and if it is not – well then, nothing ventured, nothing gained. As I generally say to someone: “Let me know if this is of the Lord, or if this is indigestion.” That little bit of humility acknowledges that we may be wrong. If we are seeking the Lord and seeking to love our neighbor, then I trust that the Lord will use us for His honor and glory!

I pray you all a truly blessed week ahead.

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 165 - 168

165. How is God like earthly fathers?

Like all loving and sincere earthly fathers, God loves, teaches, and disciplines us, observing our needs and frailties, and planning for our maturity, security, and well-being. (Psalm 103:12-14)

166. How is God unlike earthly fathers?

Unlike our natural fathers, our heavenly Father is perfect in his love, almighty in his care, makes no errors in judgment, and disciplines us only for our good. (Hebrews 12:4-11)

167. What is heaven?

Heaven is the realm of God's glory, presence, and power, which exists alongside this earthly realm, and from which he hears the prayers of his children. (1 Kings 8; Isaiah 61-6; Revelation 21:1-5a)

168. If your Father is in heaven, can he help you on earth?

Yes. God is everywhere, and as my almighty Father in heaven, he is able and willing to answer my prayers. (Psalm 99; Isaiah 6; Ephesians 3:20, 4:6)

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**Bishop's Note: October 15, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit
– Discerning of Spirits**



This week, as we continue our series in the Bishop's Note on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we look to another of the Revelatory Gifts – the Discerning of Spirits. St. Paul mentions this gift in his list of Gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 10: ***"For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."*** (1 Corinthians 12:8-11 ESV)

The Discernment of Spirits is the revelation of the Holy Spirit to a person to recognize whether the Holy Spirit, a human spirit, or an evil spirit is motivating a person or situation. This is more than the hairs standing up on the back of your neck – this is a revelation via vision, specific knowledge, wisdom, or a sense in the center of your being where God reveals what type of spirit - if any - is present in the person or situation.

St. Paul's experience in Macedonia, where he confronted a fortune telling slave girl, is an example of this gift at work: ***"As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour."*** (Acts 16:16-18 ESV)

This gift is essential when working with people who have been involved in witchcraft, Wicca, the occult, satanic worship, grave sin, drug use, etc. and who desires to change their lives.

The person receiving this gift must be careful to seek the Lord's wisdom and discernment when engaging in Spiritual Warfare. He or she should have teams of intercessors, be very well versed in the Holy Scriptures, and be under spiritual authority themselves as a way of putting on the full armor of God and protecting themselves and the person who may be suffering under oppression or possession.

May the Lord bless and keep you all!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 169 - 171

169. What is the First Petition?

The First Petition is: "Hallowed be Thy Name."

170. What is God's Name?

God's Name refers to his personal being – his nature, his character, his power, and his purposes. The Name God reveals to Moses is "I AM WHO I AM" or simply "I AM" (Exodus 3:6, 14). This Name means that he alone is truly God, he is the source of his own being, he is holy and just, and he cannot be measured or defined by his creatures.

171. Does God have other names?

Yes. Through the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, God's Name is also revealed to be "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

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Bishop's Note: October 29, 2015 Gifts of the Spirit – Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues



When I was sixteen year old, a friend of mine invited me to go with him to his Pentecostal church. It was a very different experience than anything I had known - no real liturgy; very loud music - and during the extended time of prayer people were speaking in an ecstatic language that I couldn't understand. On the positive side, it was not frightening –it was electric. I knew something powerful was happening, but I didn't know what it was. On the negative side, it was clear to me that, from their perspective, the “spiritual” people had the gift of tongues and the “un-spiritual” people did not. What I heard was the gift of tongues but without the gift of interpretation.

Sometimes the gift of tongues comes as a prayer language that is used simply to praise God in an unknown language, or when the Holy Spirit prays through us - in intercession for us.

Sometimes the gift of tongues will sound like a strange, almost made up language, and sometimes it is a known language of the world that the recipient of the gift did not learn – it comes supernaturally.

The gift of tongues is most powerful when combined with the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues. This is exactly what happened on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples: ***“And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of***

God.” (Acts 2:6-11)

In Jerusalem the visitors for the Jewish Feast of Pentecost heard, for the first time, the Good News of Jesus Christ in their own language! The Gift of Tongues is most powerful when God the Holy Spirit communicates something powerfully to someone in their own language when the recipient of the gift has no clue what is being said.

The most powerful example of this that I have witnessed was in 1979 – I was a Senior in High School and attending our youth group bible study. We normally closed the bible study with prayer, and this night one young woman began to pray in what sounded like French. Soon, Dennis, the adult leader, had tears streaming down his face. It turned out that the French was actually **Québécois**, the French dialect associated with the province of Quebec, Canada, where Dennis was from. It turned out that the young woman was praying that Dennis would reconcile with his father, with whom he had not spoken in years. As a result Dennis contacted his father and *was* reconciled. Less than a year later, Dennis died suddenly of a heart attack.

We should all be praying that the Lord will use us to His honor and glory. The Gift of Tongues, and the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues, are two gifts that do just that!

I pray you all a truly blessed week and Lord’s Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 172 - 175

172. What does “hallowed” mean?

Hallowed means to be treated as holy, set apart, and sacred. To hallow God’s name is to honor him as holy.

173. How can you hallow God’s name?

God is King of all the earth, and I pray that all people everywhere may revere and worship him, according to his revelation in Christ and the Holy Scriptures. (Psalms 2; 24; 47; 96; 99; Isaiah 40:12-20; John 14:8-9; Acts 4:8-12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 1, 21:9ff.)

174. How does God answer this petition?

God gives grace that I may honor his holy Name and Word in private and public worship, and he enables me to walk humbly with him, my God. (Micah 6:8; Matthew 28:18-20)

175. How else can you hallow God’s Name?

I can hallow God’s Name in word and deed by living an obedient and ordered life as his child, as a citizen of his Kingdom, and as one who seeks his glory. (Hebrews 13:15-16)

"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: November 5, 2015 Gifts of the Spirit – Faith



As we continue our discussion on the Spiritual Gifts we come to the Gift of Faith mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9: ***"....to another faith by the same Spirit...."***

We are so dependent upon God, that even our faith comes as a gift. When we think about the Spiritual Gift of Faith, it goes beyond our desire simply to believe in God and involves our willingly giving over to God. The gift of faith is described in Hebrews like this: ***"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."*** (Hebrews 11:1-3)

This does not mean that faith is contrary to reason - faith takes into account and goes beyond reason. Think of Moses and the people of Israel as they finally left Egypt and were on the banks of the Red Sea. God commanded them to move forward, telling them that He would part the waters. Because they had seen God's faithfulness in delivering the plagues against the Egyptians, but sparing the Israelites; and because Moses had seen God in the burning bush and experienced the faithfulness of God; when the Lord commanded them to move forward, they could do so with assurance of the hoped for promise of God. They moved forward, and the seas were parted!

The Spiritual Gift of Faith comes as a result of our submission to God. Not to say that we earn this gift through submission, but rather that we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit's gifting when we submit.

Ultimately the Spiritual Gift of Faith is the supernatural belief that God is God, and that He will continue to act according to His magnificent character. When given the gift of faith, we are able to quite literally trust our whole selves to God's grace and

mercy; so that when we ask the Lord to heal a brother or sister, we are not surprised when He fulfills that request. When we call upon the Lord to cast out a demon, we are not surprised when that demon is cast away. And when we ask God to use us as His instruments, we are not surprised to be His hands, His eyes, and His heart in a broken world.

I would bid each of you to ask God the Holy Spirit for the Gift of Faith, and to trust that He will fulfill that request!

I pray you all a truly blessed Lord's Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 176 - 180

176. What is the Second Petition?

The Second Petition is: "Thy Kingdom come."

177. What is the Kingdom?

The Kingdom of God is his reign over all the world and in the hearts of his people through the powerful and effective operation of his Holy Spirit. (Matthew 12:28; Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 4:6-7)

178. When you pray for God's Kingdom to come, what do you desire?

I pray that the whole creation may enjoy full restoration to its rightful Lord. (Romans 8:22-25; Philippians 2:9-11)

179. How does God's Kingdom come?

God's Kingdom, which was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, was founded in Christ's incarnation, established with his ascension, advances with the fulfilling of the Great Commission, and will be completed when Christ delivers it to God the Father at the end of time. (2 Chronicles 7:1-4; Matthew 10:5-8; 28:18-20; Luke 24:1-12; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:19-28)

180. How do you live in God's Kingdom?

My Kingdom life as a Christian consists of living with joy, hope, and peace as a child of God, a citizen of heaven, and a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 1:13-14; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:11)

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Bishop's Note: November 12, 2015 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Healing



“But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.” (Acts 3:6-7 ESV)

The Gift of Healing is when God chooses to pour out His supernatural power, which results in the healing of sickness and disease without the use of medical treatment. This healing *can* be purely physical, but generally God desires to heal us mind, body, and spirit.

All too often, when we think of healing we limit our sights to physical healing, but our God desires wholeness. He heals traumatic memories from actual traumatic events; He heals addictions to all sorts of things; He heals grief that cuts to the bone – HE HEALS!

Healing came to my family with the birth of my daughter Milagro. Milagro was born with double pneumonia and a collapsed lung. No one had a clue until she was placed on Florence's tummy - grayish blue and gasping like a fish. The nurse made a call and a doctor rushed in – grabbed her up like a football and ran down the hall. After a moment's hesitation – caught between my first-born and my wife – Florence said, “GO!” and I ran down the hall! I caught up to them in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and the doctor was placing her onto a bassinet thing and said something like: “Your daughter's lungs are not inflated we need to put a tube in through her side; can I have your permission?” I said yes, but that I wanted to pray over her. He said, “Make it quick,” and I started praying. Seconds later, Milagro took a huge gasp of air, started screaming, and before our eyes expanded to twice her size, turning from gray/blue, to bright

red, to very pink. I had to ask the doctor, “What’s happening?” He listened to her lungs and said, “Well I guess we won’t need these,” and pointed to the surgical instruments next to her bassinet.

Milagro was miraculously healed in front of the hospital staff and me, but the scars on her parents were deep. We almost lost our first-born – did we do something wrong? Anger, frustration, fear, and relief were front and center in our lives. After a couple of years of “dealing” with these emotions, I was doing Sunday supply at St. Luke’s in San Diego and they had a healing team present from the Order of St. Luke. The three of us went over for prayer after the service, and afterwards it was like a huge weight had been lifted off of our shoulders. The emotions were gone, not just pushed down. Our little family was now fully healed.

How could a healing be traumatic? Well, the fear of what could have been had weighed heavily upon us from the day of Milagro’s birth until that Sunday at St. Luke’s. The full healing for us came when God, in His mercy, transformed that weight into a triumphant heralding of God’s Grace and Glory!

Why is it that God allows some to be healed and some not? Truthfully, I don’t know. I am very aware that, as I write this Bishop’s Note, my mother-in-law is in surgery receiving a transplanted kidney from a person who lost his or her life, but who gave the gift of life to another. God chose not to heal that person, and to heal my mother-in-law instead.

Perhaps the question isn’t why, but rather what should we do when God heals? I do know the answer to that: Sing God’s praises, proclaim His glories, and fall at His feet in gratitude!

I pray you all a blessed Lord’s Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 181 - 185

181. What is the Third Petition?

The Third Petition is: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

182. How is God’s will accomplished in heaven?

The heavenly company of angels and perfected believers responds to God in perfect, willing obedience, and perfect worship. (Psalms 103:20; 104:4; 148:2)

183. Where can you find God’s will?

I find the will of God outlined in the Ten Commandments, learn its fullness from the whole of Scripture, and see it culminate in the Law of Christ, which calls for my complete love of God and my neighbor. (Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalms 119:1-16, 104-105; Proverbs 4; John 13:34; Acts 7:51-53; Galatians 6:2)

184. How is God’s will accomplished on earth?

God’s Kingdom comes whenever and wherever God’s will is done. As the Church aims to hallow God’s Name and seek first his Kingdom, it should lead the way in wholehearted obedience to God in Christ, and I should join and support the Church in this. (Psalm 119:176; Matthew 5-7; Ephesians 1:11; Daily Office Prayer of St. John Chrysostom)

185. What more do you seek in the third petition?

In the third petition I also pray for God to counter the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the Devil in my own soul; to thwart the plans of wicked people; and to extend the Kingdom of his grace to others through me. (Baptismal Service; Acts 1:8; 1 John 2:15-17, Galatians 5:16-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:4)

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Our apologies for the delay!

Bishop's Note: November 19, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Miraculous Power



As we've been working through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit - as listed in First Corinthians chapter 12 - verse 10 specifically mentions ***"Miracles."*** Let me ask you: "What comes to mind when you think of a "miracle?" For many it is the last minute "hail Mary pass" to win the Super Bowl; or the Cubs making it to the playoffs. Often it is described as being miraculous when a person is ill and finally begins to respond to medical treatments.

The Menees definition of a miracle is as follows: *"The suspension of natural law for the benefit of man and the glory of God."* Scripture is full of examples of miracles. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus heals the man with Leprosy: ***"And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, 'If you will, you can make me clean.' Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean."*** (Mark 1:40-42)

Clearly this is an example of a Miracle of Jesus, who suspends natural law to heal Leprosy - an incurable disease at that time, which still leaves many people around the world permanently disfigured. Clearly the healed man benefited from this miracle, and God was and is glorified! Not able to contain himself, the healed man spread the word that Jesus had healed him and restored him to wholeness – mind, body, and spirit!

Now you might say: "Well yes, but that was Jesus – these things don't happen now." Ah, but they do – daily! God grants the gift of miracles to different individuals so that man may be benefited and God may be glorified. These

miraculous events seem to happen regularly in the mission field, but they happen here in our present context too. I've witnessed several such miracles.

As a young man, I participated with a group of faithful Christians who walked from Santa Barbara to Tijuana to raise funds for a ministry known as Los Niños. Once in Tijuana, a group of us spent the morning making sacks of food – peanut butter and honey sandwiches and a piece of fruit – to give out to people who lived in the garbage dump, picking through trash looking for food and recyclables. That morning we made two hundred bags of food, confident that we had plenty. When we arrived there were hundreds and hundreds of people there. I turned to one of the nuns who worked with us and said, “We do not have enough food.” Her response: “Sure we do – we’ve never run out before, and we won’t today.” After about an hour of handing out food to well over five hundred people, we still had dozens of bags left – those were brought back to the orphanage that we worked with. This was clearly a miracle of multiplication. Were the laws of nature suspended? YES! Two hundred bags of food were miraculously multiplied. Was man benefited? YES! These people had a nutritious meal. Was God glorified? You bet your sweet bippy God was Glorified! And in telling this story again, God is glorified again.

Keep your eyes, mind, and heart open to the miraculous and I promise you that you will see God's hand at work. Ask God to use you as His instrument for the miraculous and act accordingly and you will both be blessed, and be a blessing to others!

I pray you all a truly blessed Lord's Day!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 186 - 190

186. For what personal blessings does the second half of the Lord's Prayer teach you to ask?

As a loyal child of God I pray first for God's honor, Kingdom, and will; then I pray for my own needs of daily bread, pardon for sins, and protection from evil.

187. What is the Fourth Petition?

The Fourth Petition is: "Give us this day our daily bread."

188. What does "our daily bread" mean?

Daily bread includes all that is needed for personal well-being, such as food and clothing, homes and families, work and health, friends and neighbors, and peace and godly governance. (Matthew 6:8; Luke 11:12; 1 Timothy 2:1-2)

189. Why should you pray for bread daily?

God wishes me to trust him every day to supply my needs for that day. (Proverbs 30:7-9; Matthew 6:24-34; Philippians 4:6)

190. Why does God give you daily bread?

God gives me daily bread because he is a good and loving Father, and I should thank him for it morning, noon, and night. (Psalms 81:10, 16; 103; Daniel 6:10)

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Bishop's Note: December 03, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Apostles_



As we approach the end of the year we also approach the end of this series of Bishop's Notes on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the early church God the Holy Spirit equipped individuals for ministry in building up the Body of Christ – The Church – through the advancement of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He is still doing so today!

St. Paul in his letter to the Church in Ephesus speaks of certain groups of people whom God has gifted through the Holy Spirit: ***“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*”** (Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV)

The first on this list were the Apostles. The Apostles were those men specifically called by Jesus who lived, worked, prayed, and suffered with our Lord. Most importantly, these are the men to whom Jesus chose to reveal himself, and who he chose to empower through the Holy Spirit in order to establish and govern the whole church. These men had the authority to speak the words of the Son of God, which were and are - in every way - equal to the power and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures.

“The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and

Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” (Matthew 10:2-4 ESV) Judas, the betrayer, was replaced by **Matthias** in Acts 1:26. Soon afterwards, **Saul** met the risen Lord on the road to Damascus and became the 13th and last Apostle.

Thank God for the Apostles, whom He used to govern the church in her infancy. They were the ones who were entrusted with the Gospel, and who were given the right and charged with the responsibility to share, protect, and defend the faith. This meant that the Apostles were required to raise up, train, and ordain new ministers, and to exercise discipline in the church.

As a bishop, I am humbled, honored, and blessed to have been raised up and equipped by God to be a successor to the Apostles in the Diocese of San Joaquin.

I pray you a blessed Second Sunday of Advent!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 191 - 195

191. What is the Fifth Petition?

The Fifth Petition is: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

192. What are trespasses?

A trespass is a thought, word, or deed contrary to God’s holy character and Law, missing

the mark of his will and expectations. (Romans 3:23)

193. Have you trespassed against God's Law?

Yes. Together with all mankind, I sin daily against God's Law in thought, word, and deed, and love neither him nor my neighbor as I should. (Jeremiah 2:12-14; Romans 1:18-24; 3:23)

194. What is God's forgiveness?

God's forgiveness is his merciful removal of the guilt of sin that results from our disobedience. (Isaiah 1:18; 52:13-53:12; Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 2:13-14)

195. On what basis do you ask forgiveness?

I ask God to forgive all my sins through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which was completed for me on the cross and is given to me through faith and Baptism. (Acts 2:38; Romans 5:17; Colossians 2:9-12; 1 John 1:9-10)

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Bishop's Note: December 10, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Prophets



And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

(Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV)

God the Holy Spirit has gifted Christians from the first Pentecost to this present day. He gifts us to be His instruments of Grace and Love until the Lord returns. However, the Lord also sets aside particular people for specific ministries that are described from the passage above from the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Last week in my Bishop's Note we spoke of the Apostles – those specific men chosen by Christ, who were witnesses to the resurrection, and were sent into the world as Christ's emissaries. This week we look at the The Prophets.

From Moses to this present day, God has called specific people to be His spokesmen. Who do you think of when I say the word "prophet"? In this season of Advent, it's hard not to think of John the Baptist, who fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah and calls the people of Israel to repent as we'll hear in this week's lessons: ***"He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.***
(Luke 3:7)

But the role of Prophet did not end in the first century. God has raised up men and women today - both ordained and lay - who are called to share the word of God with individuals, small groups of people, and all people everywhere. The gospel of the Lord is not for one person or one group of people, but for all people for all time.

Let us pray that God will raise up and equip more and more people with this gift, so that more and more people will be able to hear God's Word and thus have the opportunity to respond to God's call on their lives. What is God's call? Repent and believe, bearing fruits in keeping with repentance!

I pray you all a truly blessed 3rd Sunday in Advent!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 196 - 200

196. Does God forgive your sins?

Yes. God freely forgives the sins of all who ask him in true repentance and faith, and that includes me. (Leviticus 6:6-8; Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37, 40, 51; 7:37; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Hebrews 7:25)

197. Do you forgive others as fully as God forgives you?

Following the example of my Lord Jesus, I seek constantly to forgive those who sin against me. (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

198. Why should you forgive others?

I should forgive others because while I was still a sinner God forgave me. (Matthew 18:21-35)

199. How will you forgive others?

I will forgive others by extending to them the love of Christ, and by choosing not to hold against them the hurts they have inflicted, whether they ask forgiveness or not. (Romans 13:8)

200. Will your forgiveness of others bring reconciliation with them?

Not always. Forgiveness is an attitude of my heart desiring the blessing of my neighbor, but my forgiveness may not result in my neighbor's repentance and the restoration of our relationship. (Romans 12:18)

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Bishop's Note: December 17, 2015 Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Evangelists



"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."

(Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV)

As we close out this series on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we look at the positions in the church that require the gifting of God the Holy Spirit. St. Paul lays out these ministries in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Church in Ephesus. Beginning with Apostles, and then Prophets, today we look at the ministry of Evangelists.

By definition, evangelists are those who share the Good News of Jesus Christ. While all baptized Christians are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, there are those Christians - lay and ordained - who by God's Grace naturally share the Good News of Jesus with any and all that they meet.

When I think of evangelists, I think of two young women: one named Rebecca and the other Christina. They are two women who couldn't be more different in personality, or more similar in their love of Jesus. Rebecca, her husband, and their children were members of the congregation I served in San Diego. Rebecca is reserved and quiet, never seeking attention or being out front.

However, she has the ability to speak naturally about Jesus and would invite family, friends, and co-workers to church so that they could get to know Him too. Rebecca has a passion for supporting unwed mothers. She was and is excited to help these women and see their children be born, grow, and thrive!

Christina and I met when I came to the Diocese. She is single and gregarious, fearless in social situations, and equally has a love for Jesus and a desire to share that with others. Three years ago, the Lord put it on my heart to ask Christina to consider being a lay evangelist at Fresno State University. Without batting an eye, Christina said yes and set out on a two-year adventure that brought the Good News of Jesus to the Campus of Fresno State. While God did not bless that ministry by drawing hundreds of people to an on going ministry, He did draw several non-Christians or lapsed Christians to Christina, who led them to Jesus!

Neither Christina nor Rebecca are “ordained” or hold special titles in the church, but both are gifted evangelists and lovers of Jesus.

How is God providing opportunities and the desire in your life to quietly or boldly share the Good News of Jesus Christ? I bid you to pray for opportunities and the desire to share the love of Jesus; if you ask, I am sure He will give you the desire, opportunity, and ability to glorify the name of Christ!

I pray you all a blessed fourth Sunday in Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and prepare for His Second Coming!

Bishop Menees

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Catechism Questions 201 - 206

201. What is the Sixth Petition?

The Sixth Petition is: “And lead us not into temptation.”

202. What is temptation?

Temptation is an enticement to abandon total trust in God or to violate his commandments. (Proverbs 1:8-19; James 1:14-15)

203. What are the sources of temptation?

My heart is tempted by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, all of which are enemies of God and of my spiritual well-being. (1 John 2:15-17, Galatians 5:16-21, 1 John 3:8)

204. What kind of protection from temptation do you ask for?

Knowing Satan’s hatred and my weakness, I ask God to keep me from sin and danger. (Luke 22:31; James 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8)

205. Does God lead you into temptation?

No. God never tempts anyone to sin, nor is he the cause of any sin, but, so that I may grow in obedience, he does allow me to be tested on occasion, as he allowed Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-14; Hebrews 5:7-8; Genesis 22; Judges 2; James 1:1-8)

206. What are ways to guard against temptation?

I can guard against temptation by praying the Lord’s Prayer, asking for strength, confessing my sins, recalling God’s Word, and living accountably with others. (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 14:38; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 6:13-17; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)