

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Last week, I spoke about how God gives each and every baptized believer spiritual gifts – or charisms – that are given, not for me, myself, and I, but for the spiritual good and the building up of others. Well, as we continue in our second reading this week with 1st Corinthians, we hear St. Paul discuss these spiritual gifts further. In fact, he speaks about more of them, listing being an apostle, prophet, or teacher, and working mighty deeds, and healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues.

Now, I said last week that the only way for us to even know that we have these spiritual gifts, let alone for them to come alive in our lives, is to seek to partner with God. In other words, when we truly seek God's will in our daily lives through an ongoing, personal, daily, lived, real relationship with God through prayer, amazing things start to happen!

The thing about these spiritual gifts, which St. Paul also teaches to us today, is that the Holy Spirit doesn't give everyone the same gifts. In fact, different charisms are given to different people. And St. Paul, in his inspired genius, explains this reality with the image of a body. He writes, "As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ...[but] if they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body."

The thing about our place in the body, is that it can be easy for us to compare ourselves to others. And St. Paul addresses this too. He write, “If a foot should say, “Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.” So, we cannot say, “Well, I’m not Mother Theresa, so I can’t do mighty deeds like she did”, or “I’m just content with the way things are – I don’t want to get too involved with this who spiritual gifts thing.” But the thing is we need each other. If we don’t have all hands (or arms or feet or parts) on deck, what kind of body is our Church going to be?

What this means is that we all have our unique place in the Body of Christ. Beginning with our baptism, when we were made members of Christ’s Body, each one of us was given our place and purpose. We each have a unique role for the functioning of the Body, which no one else can play. I serve Jesus as His priest, bringing God’s love and salvation to His people, and God’s people to Him in prayer – and yet, I do this in my own unique way, with my own strengths and talents, and flaws and weaknesses. What about you – what is your place in the Body of Christ? Have you ever even asked that question? What does God want of you in your life? What is your vocation? Are you living your life for Him? God bless you.