

One Spirit, many gifts

Notes on the Bible readings

- Paul founded a Christian community in Corinth about AD 50. He stayed in the city for 18 months, but left for Ephesus after a complaint from the synagogue (see Acts 18). Despite a difficult relationship, Paul maintained a correspondence with the Corinthians. In this letter, he expresses concern about divisions in the church. Rifts had been caused by race, class and wealth. Paul encourages unity through baptism, and points out that everyone who confesses belief in Jesus has received the Holy Spirit (v.3).

- God is the enabler – the Spirit that makes things happen! Paul says that the Holy Spirit reveals itself in practical ways, giving gifts that are to be used in public worship. The list makes unusual reading today: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, speaking in tongues and interpreting them.

- Some of these spiritual gifts may not be very common today, but the important point is that they are not just for individuals, they are for the benefit of the whole community (v.7). There are different gifts, but it is 'the same God who activates all of them in everyone' (v.6).

- Jesus' first miracle at a wedding in Cana is an act of generosity that serves as a sign of Jesus' glory. The gifts that the Christians in Corinth possess come from the Holy Spirit, and may be regarded as glorious too.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ Is there a spiritual dimension to this photo for you?
- ▶ How might this photo be a metaphor for God's gifts?
- ▶ Are we open to the possibility of God activating new gifts in us, and in our community?



A prayer of thanksgiving

Humbly, O Lord, we thank you for all the many blessings in our lives. We are grateful for home and family; and for this, our church family and our place in your house. Thank you for your many gifts to us, material and otherwise. Especially today, we thank you for the gifts of the Spirit. We marvel that we have been chosen to bear these. Come among us, Lord, touch us, that our gifts may be stirred into action for the beautifying of your worship, and the building up of us all. Amen.

A prayer for others

In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we look to you, Father, Son and Spirit, for guidance, inspiration, and the enabling of our gifts. By the example of your perfect unity, may we be encouraged in our faltering and erratic unity. By the gracious giving of the Holy Spirit, may we recognise your gifts in us and pool our gifts for the edification of one another and of your Church. We pray for our church family here and worldwide, that we may be one in worship and witness. Amen.

A personal prayer

I do not ask for the spiritual gift I would have, Lord, for I am not a magician seeking powers. I am a follower of Christ seeking to know what you would have me do. Therefore, I know that through the Holy Spirit, the gift will choose me, and I will be grateful. Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Live your faith

Make a point of thanking (and/or encouraging) someone in your church for something that they do, or have done recently, that has helped to build the community.