

The Spirit of the Lord God is like the wind, it blows where it will and comes to rest upon those chosen. As we heard in the first reading, seventy righteous elders, chosen to help Moses care for the people, were gathered to receive the Holy Spirit, the grace and blessing of the Lord. Even though two of those chosen were not present to receive the spirit, he came upon them anyway, and they too began to prophesy, speaking wondrously of God in their midst.

Confronted by Joshua, son of Nun, about these two elders who had not made it to the meeting tent and yet were prophesizing, Moses responded, "Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!", meaning on the whole of the 600,000 in the camp.

That SAME spirit of God rests on each and every one of us here today, right here, right now, given to us, and enriched in us, by God through the very VISIBLE outward signs and SPOKEN words of the Sacraments, starting at our baptism. By the pouring of water, the anointing with oils, the signing of the cross, and the words of prayer, we receive grace and blessings, and are welcomed into the Body of Christ, His Church, to be priest, prophet, and king.

Then at First Holy Communion we receive the Body of Christ into us that we might be one in Him as he is one in us. Then again in Confirmation through the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil, sealing us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How LOUDLY the words of Moses should be in our ears today, "Would that the Lord might bestow His Spirit on them all!", for truly He has done just that to all of us here, and to so many more around the world.

For too much of my life I think I may have reacted similarly as Joshua, the son of Nun, and also like John in today's gospel, who tried to stop someone from driving out demons in the name of Jesus, simply because he was not a follower of Jesus. I think – no, I KNOW - Jesus would rebuke ME even today for what I think about many of the world religions, especially about the 40,000 plus separated Christian sects.

That “Catholic-holier-than-thou” attitude, imprinted on me throughout my youth, may keep me strong in my faith, but it can be a quick turnoff when trying to discuss faith issues with non-Catholics. Who am I to decide upon whom the Holy Spirit has descended, or whose heart Jesus has come to take up residence. Who of any of us can see into the heart of a person and say that Jesus, at one time or another, hasn’t touched that heart? “For whoever is not against us is for us.”

As Catholics, we are fortunate to have the Sacraments, those outward signs that allow us to SEE that we received the Spirit of God, and we understand that the grace and blessings we receive thru the sacraments is with us always, FOREVER, that we may draw strength from that grace in times of need. We are called to be like a pool, feed by an underground spring, God. The more we share of its water with others, the more it continues to flow, never to go dry. Grace and blessings, FREELY given to us by God, is a gift to be shared by us to everyone.

The gifts of the spirit are not like gold and silver bling or fancy clothes that scream out to others, “Look at ME!”, that over time corrode and rot away. St James in the second reading is pretty plain in his letter that if building up earthly wealth is all that we are about, then we will become like our treasures in the last time, corroded and rotted.

A humble heart sees how Jesus was treated by those of earthly means and knows that treatment was neither right nor just. We are all called to be Jesus, to offer ourselves to the Father in living simple, not extravagant, lives, so that at our end time we avoid “Gehenna, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

May our hearts be open to SENSE the spirit within, to be bold to speak the words of God, and to live lives that praise His name in all we say and do.