

Gifts

Divine grace has different faces that we call gifts. One of them is the gift of prophecy (that continues in the New Testament). It is when the New Testament prophet speaks to the Church and says what God wants from it.

The gift of serving is also found in the Church whether the gifted was a clergy or not. As for the teacher, he is the one that simplifies the dogma in a coherent way that combines all doctrines. The preacher is the person that explains the faith based on the reading from the Epistle, the Gospel, or both of them. The giver gives in a simple way and mainly to the indigent. As for the leader of the economic affairs, he shall be diligent. The merciful, is the one that forgives everyone that needs a physical or a spiritual mercy.

All of this is fulfilled in love which doesn't have any hypocrisy, any love of appearing, and without differentiation between people. After that, Paul, the writer of the epistle to the Romans, says that we should hate what is evil because he who loves evil doesn't love. In the same sense he says that we should cling to what is good and "love one another with brotherly affection" as the Lord has said: "Love one another, as I have loved you", and he has loved us to death. Then, he asks us to honor each other and pay attention to be the initiators in this honoring and not wait until the other initiates and loves us. Then he says "Do not be slothful in zeal", this is the zeal of piety and service. We shouldn't postpone this zeal but be "fervent in spirit" and this fervency descends on us from the Holy Spirit that appeared as fire on the disciples in the upper room that they were in being afraid from the Jews. Those who are fervent in faith and love worship the Lord. "Rejoice in Hope", this happiness comes from the Holy Spirit as the apostle says in another occasion. "Patient in tribulation": this refers to the personal tribulation caused by non-Christians or even Christian brothers. It is also the tribulation that the church lives through persecutions. "Be consistent in prayer", as the Book tells us, we should not stop praying day and night. Maybe, he refers here to the "prayer of the mind" or "the prayer of the heart" which could be in words or without any words. Prayer is the permanent bond with God who uses this prayer to nurture us and make us his companions.

Then, the apostle asks us to contribute to the needs of the saints, and by saints he means all the faithful. We give them brotherly kindness and console them in their grief. This contribution is also our hospitality towards strangers as Jesus said: "I was a stranger and you invited me in". None of us should feel like a stranger. "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them". This is what Lord Jesus said, and Paul's words here are an echo of the Lords' words.

"Bless and do no curse" is one of Jesus' words. Our blessing towards those who loved or hated us is to ask for God's blessing to descend on all people. God's

blessing is when he gives us life, grace and “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous”. This is perfection according to the words of the Savior: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”. Perfection is the quest for perfection, and this way, God’s image in us shall revive us.

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