

SERMON FOR MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
At a Church Convention¹

Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the sixtieth Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.³

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah [**EE-fuh**]; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew [**SHOW**] forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar [**KEY-durr**] shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth [**neh-BYE-awth**] shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish [**TARR-shish**] first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall

be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou has been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the twelfth Chapter of the First Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.⁴

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of

This cleansing of the Temple precincts points to the fact that this Church, as a whole, along with each of its members, should be kept free from earthly pursuits so as not to impede our use of our God-given gifts.

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August 8, 2010

¹ This sermon was originally written on the Epistle for Mass on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, 2010.

² *Psalms and Lessons for Special Occasions*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xliii (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

³ Isaiah 60:1-end (KJV).

⁴ I Corinthians 12:1-26 (KJV).

⁵ 329 aD to 379 aD.

⁶ St. Luke 19:41-44 (KJV).

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God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the

members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily:

Today we are given some idea of the gifts received of the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Trinity. Also, what must happen in order for us to prepare to use those gifts.

When Paul was writing to the Christians in Corinth, he advised them that they had been given to worship of “dumb idols.” The word “dumb” is not used the way we use it today; instead, it refers to the fact that these graven images and idols did not speak to them, except through their ministers and priests.

The Corinthians were not ignorant about the gifts that they were given, but they did not know how these gifts were to be used in service to God.

It is quite possible not only to get carried away with gifts, but even to be led into error. We need to be mindful that not all gifts are gifts from the Holy Spirit. Evil hides behind everything. In as much as we know about good, Evil knows more. It knows how to use these good things to our destruction. Some Christians are carried away with ecstasies and enthusiasm. Ecstasies and Enthusiasm alone are not proof of Spirituality.

Every time that we, as Catholic or better said, Universal, Christians truly proclaim that Jesus is Lord; this is a gift of the Holy Trinity. We, as Catholic Christians do this at least once a week on the first day of the week, Sunday. We say it in the proclamation of the Nicene Creed in our Communion Service. We truly are using a gift of God.

The reason for these gifts is for the growth of the Universal Church as a whole. As St. Basil the Great,⁵ Bishop of Caesarea and Doctor of the Church, said, “a Charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of others, but no one person possesses all of the gifts.” Nor is this particular list of nine gifts by any means a complete list.

Each and every gift of ministry or activity has the Trinity in it. There are many diverse activities and ministries. Also, keep in mind that every Christian is equal in God’s eyes, but remember that no two Christians are alike. Each is diverse.

First Corinthians states that each person is a “Temple of God”, that is, our hearts and minds must be kept clear and cleansed of earthly matters. Today’s Second Lesson is a clear directive that in order for the many gifts of the Spirit to work in us and in our Church, we need to keep a clean heart and mind. If we keep focused on the things that really matter, the things that are “not of this world”, God will take care of the rest.

It is not only our bodies, our personal temples, that must be kept clean. In St. Luke’s Gospel, we read that “he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him....”⁶

This particular version of the cleansing of the Temple is abbreviated; a more thorough description is found in St. Matthew 21. The money changers whom Christ cast out were the people that set up for Temple visitors to trade in their Roman coins for Jewish ones, with which they made their offerings and paid their Temple taxes. The Roman coins could not be used for these purposes because they bore the image of the Caesar, who was officially a pagan god and so this image would have defiled the Temple.