



Reflections on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit *for Parents and Teens*

Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Apostolic Tradition of the Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1832 States “The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: charity, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.”

Saint Paul wrote in letter to the Galatians 5:22-26 In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ (Jesus) have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another.

The *Catechism* lists charity while Saint Paul wrote love. Charity and Love are one in the same.

Most of the following statements are derived from “A Brief Treatise on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit—Community in Mission,” by Msgr. Charles Pope, January 27, 2013. Msgr. Pope ends his treatise with the Sequence Hymn for Pentecost which says of the Holy Spirit:

Flecte quod est rigidum (Bend what is rigid);
fove quod est frigidum (Warm what is cold);
rege quod est devium (Rule what deviates).



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Charity—giving ourselves unconditionally for the good of another. This type of love is AGAPE which is a love above brotherly love, love of pleasure or even family love. It is the work of God—love of the Father—expressed to the fullest. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God” (#1822). Saint Paul gives a wonderful and incomparable depiction of Charity in 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Charity.



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Joy—this type of joy is happiness we get from God and not the world. It is not an emotional joy which may only last for a time. Some of the places in the Bible where the joy of God is expressed are:

Psalm 30:12—You changed my mourning into (joyful) dancing: you took off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness (joy).

Romans 15:13 —May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the greatest examples of joy is stated in 2 Samuel 6: 14, “Then David, girt with a linen apron, came dancing before the Lord with abandon, as he and all the Israelites were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and of sound of the horn.”

We should be so joyful in the presence of our Lord, especially in front of the Sacrament!

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Joy.



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Peace—used in the Greek Bible to translate the Hebrew word “Shalom.” This reference to peace is not to indicate that we are at peace with someone else or that the world is at peace and there are any wars or conflicts going on. This peace is a peace which exists in the human person and his relationships of everything within.

Having this kind of inner peace is like a scale. There exists an equilibrium of experience that everything is alright and trust in God—that everything is in the hands of God. Leaving everything to God allows for a more tranquil kind of life where a person does not seek to manipulate and/or control the outcomes of life. In essence, a person becomes more peaceful towards others.

In a Novena by Father Don Dolindo Ruotolo who was a Neapolitan priest (1882-1970), stigmatized miracle worker and “mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit,” he wrote, “We must let go of our problems, stop worrying and trying to resolve them ourselves. We must believe, trust and allow our Lord to rescue us from ourselves and supply our wants and needs as he can.” He surrendered himself to God and he says, “O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything.”

We, too, must do the same in order to acquire that inner peace for ourselves. What a quote! O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Peace.



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Patience—In the Greek world this word was applied to a man who could avenge himself but did not. It is often a reference to God and his attitude towards us in Scripture. God has a lot a patience up to a certain point as is noted in the Holy Bible time and time ago with his elected people the Israelites. God exercised a lot of patience with them and sometimes he withheld punishment until he was ready.

With this fruit of the Holy Spirit we allow ourselves a willingness to suffer the difficulties of life and of others. We are more able to accept the imperfections, wrongs and slights of people instead of taking revenge. By having the virtue of patience, we can withstand the crosses, miseries and difficulties of life in the world. Here, too, we can call on God to “take care of it.”

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Patience.



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Kindness—is something lacking in our society whether it is at home, in church, in the streets, in sports, etc. Kindness seems to be missing everywhere. Kindness can be expressed as something just and good for others. It can be in the form of a gesture, money, word, action, deed, etc. Jesus shows his kindness and gentleness in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened; and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” Jesus has made the yoke, not one size fits all, but custom made for each one of us to carry the burden and pull together for ourselves and others.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Kindness.



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Goodness—can be a euphemism for God. It is something that is right and best for others. In Luke 18:18-19 Jesus admonishes the rich official. Luke states, when the official asked him this question, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.” There are more references to goodness in the New Testament. Some of these are:

- Romans 15:14—I myself am convinced about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another.
- Ephesians 5:9—for light produces every kind of goodness, righteousness and truth.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:11—To this end, we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith.

Also in Micah 6: 8, the prophet points to the Jewish law--“You have been told, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you; Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Goodness.



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Generosity—is in reference to money (most of the time) whereas kindness is in reference to attitude, behavior and things. Generosity is, for example, giving more than just money. We, as people of God, are required to go beyond our needs for the needs of the Church and others. This generosity can be in the form of money, time and talent. Jesus points to the example demonstrated by the poor widow's contribution in Mark 12: 43-44. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury; for they have all contributed from their surplus wealth; but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood." We can demonstrate and practice our generosity by following the seven corporal works of mercy as indicated in Matthew 25:

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Shelter the homeless
5. Visit the sick
6. Visit the imprisoned
7. Bury the dead.

These can lead to the spiritual works of mercy:

1. Counsel the doubtful
2. Instruct the ignorant
3. Admonish sinners
4. Comfort the afflicted
5. Forgive offenses
6. Bear wrongs patiently
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

From the above we can see that generosity can be demonstrated, practiced and accomplished in many different ways.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Generosity.



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Gentleness—can be understood as kindness, meekness, treating people with a lovable attitude instead of in anger or frustration. In the New Testament, it means to be submissive to God and to be humble enough to be taught by God. It can also mean to be considerate to others and deal with people in a caring way with patience and love—gently.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Gentleness.



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Faithfulness—being trustworthy, reliable, faithful, and believing in God—these are some descriptions of faithfulness. Faithfulness can be the trust between a husband and wife as one example. It can be trust between friends, neighbors, family members, etc. Faith is the belief in God which makes a person more trustworthy and reliable because of the sense that God might be watching and holding us accountable. If we make commitments to others then the Holy Spirit’s fruit of faithfulness is prompting us to live up to those commitments.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Faithfulness.



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Modesty—when we refer to modesty we naturally assume the way we dress. In church, modesty is required and necessary to be in the presence of God and his people. Modesty is also referred to as behavior. Dressing inappropriately in church is dressing such as to not under dress and expose certain parts of the body which may cause disruptions or inappropriate thoughts, say, lust. We should give God the reverence that he deserves and desires. Of course, culture has a lot to do with the degree of modesty which a person exhibits. We should treat our bodies like the temple of God that we are.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Modesty.



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Self-Control—is a virtue (fruit of the Holy Spirit) by which one manages to control the love and desires of pleasure. Ever since the fall of man, pleasures and desires have existed but there is a time and a place for such things. Man could not exist without desires and pleasures but they need to be mastered through moderation and regulation. Self-control (temperance) can apply to almost anything, such as, excessive alcoholic drinking, gambling, drugs, etc... If these or other things hurt others or ourselves, then we need to change or abstain from them. Call on the Holy Spirit for help and support because we cannot do it ourselves; but God can.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Self-Control.



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Chastity—is defined as the abstinence of sex (celibacy). It is a virtue in which one exhibits proper sexual expression based on our state in life. For a single person, member of a religious order or a priest total abstinence is involved. When Jesus preached on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:11-12 the Apostles said to him that it was better not to marry and Jesus answered, “Not all can accept (this) word, but only those to whom that is granted. Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.” Jesus was referring here to chastity as well.

Share one way you have or will use the Gift of Chastity.