



Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

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The Fruits of the Holy Spirit sum up the nine attributes of a person or community living in accord with the Holy Spirit, according to chapter five of the Epistle to the Galatians: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control..."

The Divine Fruits

Part Twelve

Chastity

Chastity, of which there are two types:

conjugal chastity, proper to persons living in lawful wedlock; and continence, proper to the unmarried, is the crown of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, for it is chastity that makes man regard his body and that of others as temples of God. “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (Cor. 6:19)

There are three general states of life; in each of these chastity is divinely intended to be a means of sanctification. There is the state of marriage, the single state in the world and the state of consecrated celibacy. My intention is to deal with each of these.

First, chastity as it should be lived in the state of marriage. Since the origins of Christianity, the Church has uniformly held that Christian marriage is holy. It is not only sacred in its origins; it is also holy in its purpose. This purpose is to sanctify husband and wife and through them the children they may bring into the world. The greatest single need in the world today, and I measure my words, is for the unbelieving world to see Christians and Catholics loving selflessly and not practicing contraception. To such couples the Lord has entrusted the task of making viable to men the holiness and sweetness of the mutual and tempered fidelity which joins the love of husband and wife to their cooperation with the love of God. Who is the author of human life? Nothing so well secures this mutual fidelity as the practice of true devotion, particularly of prayer in common and the frequent reception of the Sacraments.

For the unmarried, the nature of chastity means total abstention according to the command of God. We may call this level of sacrifice in the practice of chastity as the love of God and the greater love of

one’s fellowman, and its essence is sacrifice. Not to understand what we are getting into now is not to appreciate the high calling that some people receive for a lifetime consecrated to chastity. This form of life elevates chastity to a divine plan, for the love of God.

In every state of life, chastity is a frail and delicate virtue that cannot be preserved unless it be protected by other virtues. It is, as it were, a citadel that requires for its defense the raising of outward ramparts. These are four in number: humility, which prompts flight from dangerous occasions; mortification, which by waging war against the love of pleasure, reaches the evil at its roots; devotion to the duties of state, which protects one from the perils created by idleness; love for God, which by filling the heart, prevents it from giving itself over to dangerous affections.

No believer in Christ can become holy unless he lives a chaste life according to his vocation, for chastity in every state of life is the norm of a person’s charity. Chaste people, whether married, single, or consecrated are selfless people: they love God more than themselves and are therefore ready to prove their love always by self-control. If we shall all finally be judged by our practice of charity, it is not too much to say we shall also be judged by our practice of chastity. Why? Because “the pure of heart shall see God” (Mt. 5:8). The pure of heart, the chaste of heart shall see God.

Chastity means giving ourselves to Christ completely whether as a priest, religious or layman. All vocations are called to have chaste in their way of living.

Chastity also means indulging our physical desires within the right context such as being sexually pure before marriage and by remaining faithful to one’s spouse.

As a member of the Catholic Faith we are expected to manifest these twelve fruits in our day to day actions. It can be a struggle to remain steadfast and live a Christian way of life especially with all the mixed messages and negative influences that we receive from our culture. However this should only challenge us even more to cultivate our character.

Chastity is the last of the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit. These Fruits of the Holy Spirit can be found

in Scripture. Some bible texts quote nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit while other texts quote twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The *Priestly People* newsletter has provided short meditations on the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Father Gerald sP and Fr. John Hardon SJ writings have provided most of the meditations for the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian lives his vocation to love either in the married or celibate state: “Each one has his own gift from God one of one kind and one of another”. In response to a call from God, we choose the life of consecrated celibacy “for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven”, to live chastely in this manner. This way of life facilitates our attention to the “interests of the Lord” in prayer, in friendship, in community and in apostolic collaboration with others.

Our chastity should speak for itself, giving evidence of the transforming character of Christian love. Hence, the Servant of the Paraclete in living out his vocation will be an understandable sign of Divine Love in so far as he loves as Christ loves, with a deep, unique, personal love. Such friendships have as their goal a spiritual and emotional growth. And it is in such spiritual and emotional maturity that God becomes all in all to those who are seeking Him. Fidelity to this gift of grace requires continual personal growth - and at times this growth may be painful - and a steady affirmation of the whole person in Christ. Union with Christ, apostolic work and Christian friendship are supports we continually need in persevering and growing in this self-transcending way of life in Christ for the sake of His people.

Servants of the Paraclete Constitution

How Do the Fruits of the Holy Spirit Differ From the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

If the gifts of the Holy Spirit are like virtues, the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the actions that those virtues produce. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit we bear fruit in the form of moral action. In other words, the fruits of the Holy Spirit are works that we can perform only with the aid of the Holy Spirit. The presence of these fruits is an indication that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian believer.



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