

To Some the Gift of Teaching

A prayer service for young men considering the vocation of a Christian Brother

The Presence of God

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (pause)

All: Loving God, we are asking you to be among us, to show us the way, to help us recognize our direction, to have us wait on your will and not upon our own or other's expectations, to help us remain sensitive to each others' needs, so that when we are strong we may dare to give, and that when we are weak we may be able to share our need and not to fear to receive. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; 27-31

There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives faith; by the same Spirit another is given the gift of healing, and still another miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts distributing them to each as he wills.

You, then, are the body of Christ. Every one of us is a member of it. Furthermore, God has set up in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracle workers. Healers, assistants administrators, and those who speak in tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles or have the gift of healing? Do all speak in tongues, all have the gift of interpretation of tongues? Set your hearts on greater gifts.

Pause for reflection

Response

Left: One man has a gift of insight. As he uses it, it develops and grows. If he refuses to use it, he becomes as unable to see to the heart of a matter as if he were blind.

Right: Another man has a gift of listening. He can get alongside a person and give confidence and strength as he listens. His talent grows and his wisdom increases. Once he becomes talkative, the gift is gone.

Left: Yet another has a gift of speaking. He helps people understand the issues in a problem, and with use his gift matures. Let him speak, or he might as well be dumb.

All: Help me, Lord, to see what talents I have. Let me not think that I have what I have not, nor that I have not what I have. Support me as I use my talents.

Second Reading: Meditation for the Time of Retreat by St. John Baptist de La Salle

You must not doubt that it is a great gift of God, this grace He has given you to be entrusted with the instruction of children, to announce the gospel to them and to bring them up in the spirit of religion. But in calling you to this holy ministry, God demands that you fulfill it with an ardent zeal for their salvation. For this is the work of God and whoever does God's work carelessly is cursed.

Let it be clear, then, in all your relations with the children who are entrusted to you that you look upon yourselves as ministers of God, acting with love, with a sincere and true zeal, accepting with much patience the difficulties you have to suffer, willing to be dishonored by men and mistreated, even to give your life for Jesus in the fulfillment of your ministry.

The zeal that inspires you is meant to give you these dispositions, recognizing that it is God Who has called you, Who has chose you for this ministry, and Who has sent you to work in His vineyard. Fulfill your ministry, then, with all the affection of your heart, working entirely for Him.

Pause for Reflection

Response: Adaptation of St. John Chrysostom's Homily

All: What is a greater work then to direct the minds and for the character of the young?

Right: God has made us more loving that we may care and protect the little ones. You see what powerful ramparts he has created for the protection of the weak; what zeal and care he shows, lest they be lost.

All: What is a greater work then to direct the minds and for the character of the young?

Left: Let us then imitate our Lord, and neglect nothing for the sake of our brethren, not even those things that seem most lowly and abject.

All: What is a greater work then to direct the minds and for the character of the young?

Right: But if anyone should need our service, however humble and lowly the needy one may be, however difficult and painful the service may be, let all these seem more enduring and easy for the salvation of your brother or sister.

All: We hold with certainty, that no painter, nor sculptor, nor any other artist does such excellent work as he who shapes the minds of youth.

Spontaneous Prayers of Petition

Response: We pray to the Lord.

Lord's Prayer (All)

Closing Prayer

All: Loving God, the words of your son, John Baptist de La Salle are still true: "The need for this Institute is very great." The young, the poor, the world and the Church still need the ministry of the Brothers. Help young men to recognize your gift to be teachers, and move them to join the Brothers in this great work of directing the minds and form the character of youth throughout the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Leader: St. John Baptist de La Salle,

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Live, Jesus, in our hearts.

All: Forever

(Arranged by Brother Paul Fitzgerald)