



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

18 March 2019, 12:02 PM

Summary reflection 7: Inviting the Holy Spirit into your life

The following is a summary reflection of the seventh talk given by Father Raniero Cantalamessa to the US bishops during their 2019 retreat:

We begin by being with Jesus, being taught by him, and following his lead, which we can only do with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enables us to know, understand, embrace, and live what Jesus teaches as the way of life for his followers.

That way of life is not too hard or too... weird, like having to do without TV or alcohol (unless you belong to AA), or having to wear odd clothing (unless you are a bishop).

No, the Christian way of life is essentially to love God, and to love your neighbor, as you love yourself, or as Jesus loves you.

Love of God is shown by things like obeying God's commandments, worshipping God at Sunday Mass, and by sharing with the poor.

This last is perhaps the most important way to show love of God. How's that?

God loves us gratuitously, that is, unwarranted, and cost-free. For our part, though, love of God is our duty and salvation. So, we can't return gratuitous love to God...

Except by means of love of neighbor, which is gratuitous: forgive and give to anyone, no matter who, or if she/he deserves it, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful. And so, love of neighbor is the most important way to love God.

If you've tried to live that way, you know it's not easy. In fact, to be able to love your neighbor requires power from on high, from the Holy Spirit.

We received the life of the Spirit at Baptism, which was strengthened at Confirmation, and is nourished in the worthy reception of the Eucharist.

But in terms of the operation of the Spirit, that happens only to the extent that we allow, which is the extent to which we know our need and cry out to the Spirit for help.

There is no right or wrong way to invite the activity of the Spirit. We don't have to belong to the charismatic renewal, or have someone pray over and lay hands on us.

Why not try these steps as a way of inviting the Spirit to help you in your need:

- Express in writing, or give voice to your neediness for God's help
- Act on this conviction by confessing your sins to a priest, and by
- Making peace with others in asking pardon or pardoning, and by
- Getting rid of anything that is a source of temptation, or an occasion of sin, and by
- Daily prayer, Sunday Mass, obeying God, Bible reading, serving the poor, and by
- Supporting your parish through sharing your time, talents, and treasure
- Then, invite the Spirit to be active in your life, enabling you to love like Jesus

What is the evidence that these steps "worked"? If we are able to say, in the Spirit of Jesus love:
I live to give! I live to give to God! I live to give to my neighbor!

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque