

Pentecost Sunday
June 9, 2019

"To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."
(First Corinthians 12: 7).

What does this line taken from Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians mean to you? I would like to take some time and try to explain this line, as best as I can understand it applying to myself.

Let us begin by examining the word "manifestation". What does this word mean? A manifestation is a perceptible, outward, or visible expression of another reality. A painting can be a manifestation of the object which the painter paints. We are then able to say that each of us has become, through baptism, a living image of the Holy Spirit. This manifestation is a gift given to each of us from God. However, this gift is given to us "for some benefit". Now the real question arises. What is that "benefit" to which Saint Paul refers?

Allow me to present another example to you which may help in our answering this question. In the days before electricity, and even today in some parts of the world, when the darkness of night began to cover the land, people would light candles to help them see. The candle (fire) is a perceptible, outward, or visible expression of the reality of light. If a person lights a candle in a dark house, does that candle light help just that person to see or can it light the way for others in the same dark house? The answer is both. The candle manifests light to help the individual who lit it to see, and, at the same time, this one candle has the benefit to assist others, if there are others present in the same dark house. Let us carry this example a little further. What if we were to imagine the Holy Spirit as this candle a blaze in each one of us. This light would surely benefit us, and benefit others at the same time. I hope I have not lost any of you with this example.

I would propose, using the example above, that the light (Holy Spirit) of the candle (you and I) is a gift given to each of us by the one who lit the candle to begin with -- God. God sees that humanity lives in a dark house (the world). Darkness can be used to describe sin, ignorance, and error. He knows that if we are left stumbling around in this darkness, we may either injure ourselves or accidentally harm others. We need light. We need light to be able to move freely through the darkness. Therefore, God provides that light (Holy Spirit). We are the candles which God lights through the sacrament of Baptism. This light of the Holy Spirit dwelling in each one of us can now become a benefit, not only for us, but for all who struggle through the same darkness.

The gift of light (Holy Spirit) flows from one source (God). It is intended to assist, not only us, but everyone we meet, journey through the darkness of the world towards one object, a return to God. This is the benefit of the light of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us, and, if we allow, can also guide others. If you remember the words of the old children's song: "Let your light shine for all the world to see." My friends, today there are people in our world who need light to assist them. They need the light of the Holy Spirit. They need that light which is dwelling in each of you. Do not allow that light to be extinguished by sin or hid under the bushel basket of self-doubt. I beg each of you to allow this light to shine in all that you do and say. My prayer is that when you reach heaven you will be greeted by someone who managed to arrive there because you allowed the Holy Spirit to guide them through what you did, what you said, and how you lived.