

The Gift of Love

Paul traveled extensively, preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ and starting Churches. One of the churches was in Corinth. It quickly became a Christian Community marked by many gifts of the Spirit. Unfortunately, it was also marked by chaos. Many members were saying that their gift was better than someone else's. Too many were saying "I'm more important to the church than you are. My gift is better than your gift." So Paul wrote the Corinthians "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. There are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Cor. 12:5-7) Paul then goes on to give a list of SOME of the varieties of Gifts, Service and Working, some of the manifestations of the Spirit. While Paul does tell the Corinthians that the greatest of the gifts is Love (1 Cor 13:13), there is no complete list of the gifts of the Spirit because God can and does give all of us all sorts of gifts to accomplish His will. For example, He may give someone the gift of being a mechanic so that the Church Van can reach out to others. Paul does make the point that "All these (gifts) are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." (1 Cor. 12:11) The good news is that we all have been given gifts and will be given more as we serve God more and more. The bad news is that we don't get to choose our gifts. I wish, for example, that I could sing.

This text seems particularly important right now. Paul's point was not made just to a small church in Corinth. It needs to be looked at by every Christian group, locally, nationally and internationally. It is too true too often with too many people. People abusing people. People feeling better

than others. People taking advantage of others. People using the gifts God gave them not to build up the body but to personal advantage. Just like the Church at Corinth, we ALL are one Body. We ALL have been given the gifts God wants us to have to build up that Body. We all are challenged to use those gifts for His glory. So we are all challenged to also remember what Paul said to the Church at Corinth "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The greatest of the gifts of the spirit is Love." (1 Cor. 13:13) If we are acting in love, regardless of what we are doing, we are moving in God's will.

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