

Parish Novena to the Holy Spirit **Day Seven: Friday 29th May 2020**



The Gift of Piety

***'No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'* (Mt 6:24)**

Jesus' words, quoted above from Matthew's Gospel, make a lot of practical sense. You cannot serve two masters because both will have different wants that require time and the fulfilment of specific demands. The slave is pulled in opposite directions and becomes exhausted dividing up time and action for their respective masters.

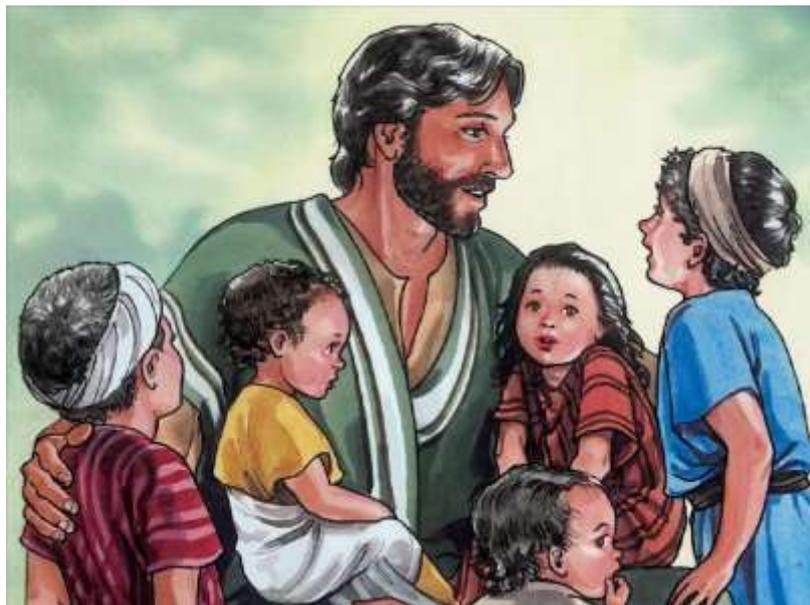
The Holy Spirit's gift of Piety saves us from being in this tug of war contest between two masters. It is through this gift that our hearts become inflamed with a genuine and devoted love for the One Master – God Almighty. In our modern parlance the words '*piety*', '*pious*' and '*devout*' have come to be linked with negative connotations. They are tainted with images of subservience, servility and demeaning obeisance. The generic fictional character of 'Igor', especially played by Marty Feldman the horror film '*Frankenstein*', seems to illustrate this negativity perfectly.



The above photo is not what the Spirit's gift of piety should like. A better image and example comes from the actions of small children found in the Gospel.

'People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.'

(Mk 10:13-16)



True piety and devotion manifests itself in the simple trust and love of a little child. I have watched the smaller members of my own family show this. When they first see Gran and Grandad they drop everything to race over for a hug, and in the case of Grandad a sweet! No matter what activity they are doing they stop and run over to their grandparents. No matter who is in their way or who finds themselves in their path, they are oblivious and push past, just to greet their Gran and Grandad. No matter if there has been tantrums in the day, a stint on the naughty step, a telling off from mum or dad, or a poorly tummy and new tooth, as soon as little one sees Gran and Grandad a joy comes over them. This is the look of true piety and devotion – genuine, sincere and joyful love.

To be pious, to be a devout Catholic, should not mean to feel enslaved, bitter and angry. To be a devout Catholic should mean to be a person of joy. Joy that they know they are loved by God and want to respond to that love with every fibre of their being. When we cooperate with the Holy Spirit's gift of Piety all prayer ceases to be a chore, a necessary task, and becomes an outpouring of intimate dialogue with the Lord. Attending Mass, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament at Exposition no longer feels like an outdated and unfulfilling practice, but instead becomes a grace filled time; Time spent in the company of the person you truly love. With the gift of Piety the Sacraments from Confession to Anointing of the Sick are no longer rituals but beautiful moments where Christ is able to touch and heal us. The reluctance to go to a Vigil Mass on a miserable wet and cold Saturday night in November evaporates into a desire to be in the very Presence of Love Himself. How many of us in lockdown, even with a multitude of various live streamed Masses available, are feeling that empty space within that only the concrete reality of actually being in Church before the Tabernacle can fill. This should be the face of piety – joyous love as these Sister's are showing below!



***'Whatever your work is, put your heart into it as if it were for the Lord and not for men, knowing that the Lord will repay you by making you his heirs. It is Christ the Lord that you are serving...'* (Col 3:23-24)**

Veni Creator Spiritus

***Come, Holy Spirit, Creator come,
From your bright heavenly throne!
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all your own.***

***You who are called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction, and true love!***

***You who are sevenfold in your grace,
Finger of God's right hand,
His promise, teaching little ones
To speak and understand!***

***O guide our minds with your blessed light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with your strength which never decays
Confirm our mortal frame.***

***Far from us drive our hellish foe
True peace unto us bring,
And through all perils guide us safe
Beneath your sacred wing.***

***Through you may we the Father know,
Through you the eternal Son
And you the Spirit of them both
Thrice-blessed three in one.***

***All glory to the Father be,
And to the risen Son;
The same to you, O Paraclete,
While endless ages run.***

Amen.

In this quiet time of the Novena today, let's reflect on how we express the Spirit's gift of Piety in our own lives. Has the practice of our faith become a laborious burden? Do we ever go the extra mile and spend time with the Blessed Sacrament? Does going to a further Mass in the week interfere with our own personal timetables? On holiday do we rest from God as well as from work? After booking our hotel, arranging our nights out and day activities do we research where we can go to Mass to give praise and thanks to God? To be in love with another means to nurture and foster a relationship – how are we doing that with the Lord? Have we ever explored various approved devotions and tried them? Do we understand the devotions we are praying now and are they edifying and helping us in our relationship with God?

We ask you Holy Spirit to pour the gift of Piety into our hearts like fuel, so that the flame of love within us may become a burning fire of devotion, for our merciful and loving God.
Amen.

***'I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord;
I repeat, what I want is your happiness.'* (Phil 4:4)**

Come, Holy Spirit

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God Bless and keep praying.

We continue our Novena pilgrimage tomorrow reflecting on the seventh gift of the Holy Spirit, '*Fear of the Lord*', and what it actually means.

Normally on a Friday I have been sharing any further updates from the diocese in regards to the opening of churches but nothing new has been emailed this week. Let's keep praying and asking the Holy Spirit to help us with the changes that inevitably will come.

Fr. O'Brien