

# Many gifts from the one Spirit



## From 1 Corinthians 13

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose... Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ... God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one... If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.



## Reflection (from “Community and Growth” by Jean Vanier)

Don't just look at the obvious gifts, the talent. There are hidden and latent gifts, much deeper ones, which are linked to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to love. They too must flower.

In Christian Community, everything depends upon whether each individual is an indispensable link in a chain. Only when even the smallest link is securely interlocked is the chain unbreakable.

It will be well, therefore, if every member receives a definite task to perform for the community, that they may know, in hours of doubt, that they too are not useless and unusable.

Every Christian community must realise that not only do the weak need the strong, but also that the strong cannot exist without the weak.

Using our gift means building community. If we are not faithful the building will be weakened. St Paul emphasises the charismatic gifts in this building but there are many others which are more directly linked to a quality of love. Bonhoeffer speaks of the different ministries a community needs: holding one's tongue, humility, tenderness, silence in the face of criticism, listening, constant readiness to render small services, support of brothers and sisters, proclamation of the Word, speaking the truth in love. There are people who have the gift of being able to sense immediately, and even to live, the sufferings of others – that is the gift of compassion. There are others who know when something is going wrong and they can pinpoint the cause – that is the gift of discernment. There are others who have the gift of light – they see clearly what is of fundamental concern to the community. Others have the gift of creating an atmosphere which brings joy, relaxation and individual growth. Others again have the gift of welcome. Each person has a gift to use for the good and growth of all.



## Concluding prayer

Take a moment to thank God for the many gifts of the Holy Spirit you have experienced at work in your parish community.

