

- In our Gospel, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as an Advocate or helper.
- With the Holy Spirit what can we expect and what is expected of us?
- We can expect that our problems may actually be opportunities.
- Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay is fond of saying, *"We are not here to do God's work, we are here do God's will."*
- True. Just think how many of our plans and goals have been flattened by the pandemic.
- Our problems, though, can turn into God's providence or His will, with help from the Holy Spirit.
- Prior to our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles a great persecution broke out in Jerusalem and one of the first deacons, Stephen, was killed.
- The persecution problem didn't end the early Church, rather it expanded it into a missionary opportunity.
- The Holy Spirit drove Deacon Philip's evangelization efforts outward to other regions.
- When the Holy Spirit comes into our life, what then is expected of us?
- The short answer is evangelization.
- Bishop Robert Barron pointed out: *"In the scriptural tradition, no ... experience of God is ever given for the edification of the [recipient]; rather, it is given for the sake of mission."*
- In other words, God touches our life so that we can touch another person's life.
- So what tools might the Holy Spirit be equipping us with to evangelize?
- Our readings describe five charisms to watch for.
- A charism is a spiritual grace given to us to help grow the Church for the sake of mission.
- The first charism of the Holy Spirit is the ability to speak boldly about God.
- After Deacon Philip was driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, he became the first to evangelize non-Jews.
- St. John Paul II said, *"The sacrament of Confirmation grows out of this strength which the Holy Spirit communicates to each baptized person to make him or her a perfect Christian and soldier of Christ, ready to witness boldly to his resurrection and its redemptive power."*
- The second charism of the Holy Spirit is amazing signs.
- The Samaritans were attracted to Phillip because of his miraculous healings.
- We can be a healing presence through prayer, wise counsel, and charitable outreach.
- Pope Francis said the Church needs to be a field hospital first, to heal the traumatic wounds in people's lives before they are ready to receive the truth of our teachings or practice the faith.
- We are all instruments of healing that can lead souls to Christ the Divine Physician.

- The third charism of the Holy Spirit is being filled with joy.
 - Philip's missionary activities led to great joy in the city.
 - In like manner, St. Philip Neri used humor, laughter, and enthusiasm to re-evangelize Rome in the 1500's.
 - And St. Mother Teresa said, *"One filled with joy preaches without preaching."*
 - Let's be honest, who is attracted to a gloomy, sour-faced Church?
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- The fourth charism of the Holy Spirit is defense of the faith.
 - In the second reading St. Peter wrote, *"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope."*
 - We must strive towards being comfortable when speaking about our faith.
 - When people ask a question about Catholicism do we shut down, withdraw, or doubt the faith?
 - If so, perhaps we need continued study.
 - Most professions constantly sharpen their skill set to serve others better, why don't Catholics since we are expected to evangelize?
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- The fifth charism of the Holy Spirit is love leading to conversion.
 - Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, which is the love shared between the Father and the Son.
 - Godly love never leaves us to stagnate, but desires growth.
 - Thus God's love, found in the Holy Spirit, leads to conversion.
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- Remember, God gave us the Holy Spirit as a helper in time of need.
 - Therefore, listen to the words Jesus spoke to an anonymous Benedictine monk when he mediated upon the beloved disciple John leaning on the chest of Jesus at the Last Supper; an evening filled with unrest.
 - *"A troubled heart is always an indication of one's lack of trust in Me. Trouble, interior disquiet, comes from wanting to control and manage the things that are better left to My Father's providence. [...] Whenever you come up against something that contradicts your plans or fails to meet your expectations, give that ... disappointment to Me. Entrust it to My Heart, and then relinquish all worry over it. I am not distant from you nor am I removed from your life ... If the things that you want for yourself are good, know, beyond any doubt, that the things I want for you are infinitely better. When you find something difficult, or beyond your strength, ask Me to do it in you ... There are things that you would want to do that are alien to My plans, and there are things that I would have you do that you ... would never think of doing. It is your attachment to doing what you want that impedes the rapid fulfilment of My perfect designs for you ... The doing must be Mine. Yours is to trust Me, to wait upon Me, to abide close to My Heart like the beloved disciple"* (In Sinu Jesu: When Heart Speaks to Heart: The Journal of a Priest at Prayer by A Benedictine Monk, 260-61).