

16. January 2022

## One and the same Spirit works all this

1 Kor 12:4-11

*There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all. The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good. To one is given from the Spirit the gift of utterance expressing wisdom; to another the gift of utterance expressing knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit; to another, faith, from the same Spirit; and to another, the gifts of healing, through this one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the power of distinguishing spirits; to one, the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues. But at work in all these is one and the same Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual.*

In this text we can see the wonderful harmony with which God wants to lead His Church through the Holy Spirit: each member taking his place and using the gifts that God has given him to glorify Him and to serve in the Kingdom of God.

This counts also for the merely natural gifts, which God, in His Wisdom, entrusted to men for the same purpose.

If we internalise this passage and move it in our hearts, we can get an idea of the order that reigns in heaven. There, everyone occupies the place God has assigned to him. In the angelic hierarchy, the higher choirs of angels share their knowledge and gifts with the lower choirs. It must be a great joy for them to do so! We too experience this joy when others receive and benefit from the gifts entrusted to us, how much more so for the angels who have remained faithful to God! What more could they desire than to glorify the One who created them and in whose presence they have the joy of being? God is their joy!

Yet there is one more thing they ardently desire: that men - their brethren - may also glorify God and sing with them the "new song" in honour of the Lamb: "*Worthy is the Lamb that was sacrificed to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing.*" (Rev 5:12).

My daily meditations are enriched by the wonderful songs of Harpa Dei. This is a great gift. Here we see a gift of God unfolding, for His glory and for the good of souls. St. Hildegard of Bingen says that music is "the last remembrance of the lost paradise". The ministry of Harpa Dei is a good example of how God makes the gifts that He Himself gives bear fruit, for the good of people and for the building up of the Mystical Body of Christ. Numerous testimonies testify to how people are delighted and touched by sacred music. In this way, singing reaches its deepest purpose.

In this example one could also easily recognise the perversion of trying to abuse these wonderful gifts (and the same applies to the various charisms mentioned in today's reading) in order to nourish one's own vanity or to seek honour for one's own person. In this way, the gifts would lose their lustre and end up being like an out-of-tune instrument.

For the charisms to be at the service of the building up of the Church, it is important that the bearers of the charisms strive to walk the path of sanctification. This is similar to what happens in the case of the ministers of the Church. When God entrusts us with certain ministries, we are called to exercise them as purely and sincerely as possible. In fact, a charism in itself does not make us holy, nor does a ministry. They are not mystical gifts that transform a person in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, we can see them as a challenge to strive even more for holiness. As St. Paul makes us see in another passage of his letter to the Corinthians, all these gifts would be nothing without love (1 Cor 13). It is love that gives them their splendour, for it is love that unites us more deeply to the Lord and enables the Holy Spirit to communicate more easily to others through us.

Let us simply take our gifts as an undeserved gift entrusted to us, and let us make them bear fruit as we sincerely strive for holiness. Let us not flaunt them; let us not give too much importance to ourselves or to others, however brilliant their charisms may be. "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!*" -Cohélet would say to us (*Eccl 1:1*).

Let us remember: everything comes "from one and the same Spirit". We are his servants and we want to allow ourselves to be formed by this same Spirit, to take the place that the Lord has assigned to us in the Kingdom of God in the most fruitful way possible.