

## DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

*Verses & Notes January 2, 2008*

*Ephesians 4:7-14 (Continued)*

4: *There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call,  
5: one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
6: one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.*

**7: But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

8: *Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,  
and he gave gifts to men."*

9: *(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that  
he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

10: *He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens,  
that he might fill all things.)*

**11: And his gifts were that some should be apostles,  
some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,**

**12: to equip the saints for the work of ministry,**

*for building up the body of Christ,*

13: *until we all attain to the unity*

*of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
to mature manhood,*

*to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;*

14: *so that we may no longer be children,*

*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine,  
by the cunning of men,  
by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.*

15: *Rather, speaking the truth in love,*

*we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

16: *from whom the whole body,*

*joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied,  
when each part is working properly,  
makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.*

**Introduction:** Far too many Christians do not realize or do not believe that they have anything to give or do in the Body of Christ, the Church. They go to Church on Sundays and then too often little else, rather than recognize that every single baptized believer has received a unique gift of grace, given to them freely and apportioned according to the measure or will of Christ, for the good of the Body. And far too often lay Christians think that work in the Body of Christ means only work in the Church, rather than recognizing that all of life is the arena for serving the Body.

### Discussion:

- As we discussed previously, in chapters 1-3 St. Paul explains the three changes that happen in our lives by grace once we have heard, believed, and then been sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism.
  - Through baptism believers are changed by grace in three ways: "up, beside, and within"...
  - These changes have already happened, whether they are felt or not, BUT this is only the beginning! Though these changes are given freely by grace, the baptized must now live in them, also by grace.

- In Chapters 4-6, St. Paul gives instructions on how the newly baptized are now to live.
  - This second half of Ephesians begins with a call (4:1-3) *“to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*
  - Once St. Paul mentions their / our need to eagerly “maintain the unity of the Spirit,” he goes on to enumerate in detail the key aspects of this unity (4:4-6): *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.”*
- In verses 7-16, St. Paul discusses how this unity is to be maintained, not in cookie-cutter uniformity or conformity, but includes, and in fact depends upon, grace filled, gifted diversity; not in what Christians are to believe, but in how they are to serve within and for the Church.
  - Therefore, the Church consists of two aspects: unity (communion) and diversity (service) [cf. Cantalamessa, pg. 58f].
  - The Sacraments and their graces are a part of the unity aspect: these graces are shared by all;
  - The charisms or grace gifts, of which St. Paul discusses here and elsewhere, are part of this diversity: each person experiences this in a unique way.

### What is this unique calling to which each of us has been called?

- For each of us, this has three basic aspects:
  - Through **baptism** we all share a similar calling of imitating Christ;
  - **Our state of life**, whether clergy, religious, laity, celibate, or married;
  - **Our personal unique calling to service.**
- What is this baptismal calling?
  - “I made a vow to God, binding under [pain of] mortal sin, to give to God anything that He may ask, ‘Not to refuse Him anything.’” Mother Teresa, quoted in “Come be My Light,” pg. 28.*
    - This is the vow every baptized Christian is to make in obedience to God;
    - Our state of life is how we are to live this out;
    - Our personal Calling is even more specific as to how & where.
  - Most of what St. Paul explains in the second half of Ephesians concerns the calling we all share by baptism, but in 4:7-16, he’s referring to our individual callings.

### What does St. Paul state about this important diversity of callings within unity?

#### (1) Each baptised believer is given a grace gift: (vs. 7)

- “But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”*
  - He makes this same emphasis in other letters: (1 Cor 12: 4-7; Rom 12:4-6)
- **God has established two distinct channels through which He sanctifies the Church:**
  - From above through the channels of the Church, through the magisterium of the Church, the pope, bishops, and priests, through the sacraments, to the members of the Body.
  - Also, from below or within, the spirit “blows where it chooses” (john 3:8).
    - “All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Cor 12:11).
- **To be complete, truly unified and as Paul describes in today’s text (4:7-16), the Church needs both channels.** At times in history, there have been imbalances in how these channels were appreciated / utilized by the faithful...
  - The 2nd Vat Council reconized that importance of both these channels of grace: Lumen Gentium, 12:
    - It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, “allotting his gifts to everyone according as He wills, (1 Cor 12:11) He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank.*
    - By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of*

the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit". (cf 1 Thess 5:12,19-21)

*These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.*

*Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good. (cf. Jn. 11:52))*

## (2) This gift of grace is given freely from Christ according to His will: (vs 7-10)

- Not because we deserve it or have earned it or inherited it or according to our abilities;
  - But rather “...**according to the measure of Christ’s gift.**”
    - Rom 12:6, “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us...”
    - Jesus’ “Parable of the Talents” ...
- **Why did St. Paul add his “side reflection” in verses 8-10?**

“Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men.” (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

  - Possibly because there had been discussion / debate on the meaning of this quote from Psalm 68 in relationship to Christ’s decent, resurrection, & ascension.
    - How would they know this verse? (*From reading Bible at home? No!*)
    - St. Paul was not proof texting, but referencing the entire Psalm which describes the journey of Israel from Egypt to Jerusalem and the Temple by God’s mercy; this was a “type” of the new Israel, the Church, and their journey of faith.
    - Note: St. Paul’s quote in Ephesians is different than how it is stated in Psalm 68! Why? Because he was quoting from the Septuagint Greek Version of OT!

Ephesians 4:7-8

7. Ἐνὶ θεῷ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον  
τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 8. διὸ λέγει:  
**ἀναβὰς εἰς ὑψὸς ἠχμαλωτεύσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν,  
ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις**

Psalm 67:19

19. **ἀναβὰς εἰς ὑψὸς ἠχμαλωτεύσας αἰχμαλωσίαν,  
ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ,**  
καὶ γὰρ ἀπειθουντες τοῦ κατασκηνῶσαι  
κύριος ὁ θεὸς εὐλογητός

## (3) Some are given these gifts for the purpose of leadership (11):

*11: And his gifts were that some should be apostles,  
some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,*

- Lumen Gentium: (Second Vatican Council)

*32. By divine institution Holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity. "For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another"(Rom 12:4-5).*

*Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"(Eph 4:5); sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity. ...*

*If therefore in the Church everyone does not proceed by the same path, nevertheless all are called to sanctity and have received an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God.*

**(4) These leaders were called for a purpose (12a):**

12: *to equip the saints for the work of ministry,*

○ **Lumen Gentium: (Second Vatican Council)**

*And if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ. For the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God bears within it a certain union, since pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual need.*

*Pastors of the Church, following the example of the Lord, should minister to one another and to the other faithful. These in their turn should enthusiastically lend their joint assistance to their pastors and teachers. Thus in their diversity all bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ.*

*This very diversity of graces, ministries and works gathers the children of God into one, because "all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:11).*

○ **Two exaggerated misapplications of this that have led to imbalances throughout history and have led to the problems that St. Paul is trying to avoid:**

- **Clericalism:** *"And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ... for the work of ministry."*

Lumen Gentium, 30:

*For their pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church.*

*They also know that they were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world.*

*On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind.*

- **Anti-clericalism:** *"And his gifts were [for] the saints for the work of ministry."*

**(5) The goal of this diversity of gifts is growth, maturity, and unity (12b-13):**

12b: *for building up the body of Christ,*

13: *until we all attain to the unity of the faith*

*and of the knowledge of the Son of God,*

*to mature manhood,*

*to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;*

- What did he mean by the "building up the body of Christ"?
  - *Carrying out the "Great Commission" of Matthew 28:*  
*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.'"*
  - "all"
  - "the unity of the faith"
  - "the knowledge of the son of God"
  - "to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;"

**(6) This is necessary to avoid confusion and schism (vs. 14):**

14: *so that we may no longer be children,*

*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine,*

*by the cunning of men,*

*by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.*

- *Sola scriptura, clericalism, and anti-clericalism have all led to confusion and schism.*

**(7) And therefore attain true unity with Jesus Christ (15b-16):**

15b. *Rather, ...we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

16: *from whom the whole body,  
joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied,  
when each part is working properly,  
makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.*

- Essentially, another way of saying vs. 13, using imagery of the body.
- Important: "*when each part is working properly*"

**(8) This requires working together in charitable honesty (vs 15a):**

15a: *Rather, speaking the truth in love,...*