

**"The Gift of the Spirit" (Homily)**

Deacon John Fulton, St. Kevin Roman Catholic Church, Warwick, Rhode Island  
July 28, 2019 -- Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Luke 11:1-13

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**"How much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"**

On April 11, 1967, two very wicked people conspired to take from me the most precious gift God had given me in my first 17 years of life. And they succeeded. Evil won, that day.

Although I prayed and prayed -- for escape, for restoration of the gift, for rescue -- God did not grant me these things. He did not restore the gift that had been taken from me. But he gave me another in its place: a gift that *has never* been taken from me, a gift that *can never* be taken from me.

For when, in my shock and confusion, I asked God for guidance, He gave me His Holy Spirit. And the Spirit shepherded me: Leading me through -- and beyond -- my problems, comforting me in my pain, and holding me up, so that evil, although it had wounded me, would not defeat me.

You have heard it said, "God always answers prayers, but sometimes His answer is 'No.'" True enough! But to this, our Lord adds, **"God gives the holy Spirit to those who ask Him."**

Thus, ask of God anything you need, **but above all else**, ask for His Spirit! Remember the Lord's promise!

God may not solve our problems as we ask, but the Spirit will guide us through them, and past them. God may not take away our pain, but the Spirit will help us bear the pain. God may not prevent evil, but the Spirit will sustain us, despite evil.

"Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit,  
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.  
In the same Spirit,  
help us to relish what is right  
and always to rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord."

Amen.

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### **Luke 11:1-13**

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished,  
one of his disciples said to him,  
"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."  
He said to them, "When you pray, say:  
Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread  
and forgive us our sins  
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,  
and do not subject us to the final test."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend  
to whom he goes at midnight and says,  
'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,  
for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey  
and I have nothing to offer him,'  
and he says in reply from within,  
'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked  
and my children and I are already in bed.  
I cannot get up to give you anything.'  
I tell you,  
if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves  
because of their friendship,  
he will get up to give him whatever he needs  
because of his persistence.

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive;  
seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you.  
For everyone who asks, receives;  
and the one who seeks, finds;  
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.  
What father among you would hand his son a snake  
when he asks for a fish?  
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?  
If you then, who are wicked,  
know how to give good gifts to your children,  
how much more will the Father in heaven  
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"