

**Commissioning Mass of Youth Leaders for Youth Spectacular
March 2, 2019**

How many times have we heard this powerful statement from our Lord in the Scriptures: “Whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” The message of that statement is clear. Trust in God. Do not forget that we are his children who rely on him. Turn away from any pride that tries to convince us that we are in control of this world. Never forget the power of God is strong enough to support us in all circumstances. All these important lessons are summarized in this action of Jesus, showing a child as our example of faithfully following the Lord. But time and again we lose this lesson. The distractions of the world wear us down and we take our eyes off the Lord. We forget to be like a child, and we try to hold the world up all by ourselves.

We certainly have important work to do in this world, cooperating in the mission of God himself. As Sirach reminds us, God made us “in his own image” and sent us out into the world, with “inventive heart” and “power over all things else on earth.” It is a big responsibility, and it is easy to become overwhelmed by the huge work that lies before us. But Sirach does not stop there. No, Sirach sings his hymn of the great Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety, and Fear of the Lord. These are great gifts of God, and he has sent us out into the world with these gifts because he loves us. God does not send his children without help or preparation. We must, however, remember to use these gifts of God in our lives so that we can truly live as the children of God which we are. Our mission depends on it.

God has sent us in his image to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, but always by the grace of the Holy Spirit who dwells as the soul of the Church. Pope Francis has recalled to us the importance of always relying on the Holy Spirit. He said: “The Spirit is in our heart, is in our soul. And the Spirit guides us in life so that we become the right amount of salt and the right amount of light for humanity” (23 May 2018, General Audience). We are not the authors of wisdom and understanding. We are not the masters of piety and fortitude. We do not mold ourselves as people who practice holy fear and awe of our God. These are gifts of God, freely and lavishly given. These are gifts sent in the Spirit, from the heart of our loving Father to those saved in a free and devoted act of his Son.

We are children who must draw from the gifts we have been given. The only other option is to try and live out on our own. We can become indignant like the disciples in the gospel passage, rebuking the child-like trust in God. But following the Lord’s will is the only way to truly live as children of God. As Pope Francis also said: “Docility to the Spirit is a source of joy” (14 April 2016, Mass, Casa Santa Marta). So, it can also be said, that not being docile and relying on the Holy Spirit brings us the opposite: frustration, despair, doubt, and anger. This is no way to live as those made in the image of God. Take the time today to ask the Holy Spirit to renew you. Ask the Spirit for his great gifts! Ask the Spirit to help you be docile to his guidance and care. Be renewed and walk as children who trust in the Father.

May Mary, who showed us true openness to the Spirit intercede for us all, “That [we] might glory in the wonder of his deeds and praise his holy name” (Sirach).