

Hi all!

How do you make chocolate milk? Well, first you've got to have a glass. Next, we need to fill that glass with milk. Then comes the good stuff. You add a generous helping of chocolate. Voila! Chocolate milk! Hold it though...what's that blob at the bottom of the glass? Why it's chocolate! It hasn't really become chocolate milk just yet. What do we have to do to make it chocolate milk? It must be stirred! Of course, we need a spoon. I just happen to have one here! Mmm, Mmm, good!!!

At Baptism, we receive seven special gifts from the Holy Spirit, the Advocate promised by Jesus. These gifts are freely given to us to help us live as followers of Him and to build up His Body, the Church. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are sealed and strengthened within us when we are Confirmed. These gifts help us to respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to make good choices, and to serve God and others. The seven gifts are; Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, and Fear of the Lord.

At baptism these gifts of the Holy Spirit are poured into us, kind of like the chocolate syrup was poured into the milk. As the milk does not become chocolate milk without stirring, we too, need to stir that spirit within us, so we become more Christ like. What is the "spoon" that we use to help stir these gifts, to make them so much a part of us that we grow as followers of Christ? That we become Christian not just in name but in deed.

Scripture, prayer and meditation, play an important part of stirring the spirit within us, not just in our minds but in the very core of our being. Coming together as community helps build up the spirit. However, in this time of isolation, we must look at "us" as community in different ways; more in a spiritual sense. Knowing that others are joining with us in prayer through the watching of Mass on Sunday or our continued private devotionals such as the Rosary and the Devine Mercy Chaplet helps keep that feeling of community alive and well. It keeps the spirit moving through us.

Intentional acts of mercy and justice. Another spoon made more difficult these days with social distancing and the stay at home order. But it is not impossible. We can still be generous with our time. Phone calls to family and neighbors. Donations of food and our resources to those in need. The more we stir this spirit in our lives the more we will begin to exhibit the fruits that are part and parcel of the gifts that we have received. The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit are signs that the Holy Spirit is alive within us and helping us live our faith in our daily lives. These fruits are: Love, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Joy, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-control, and Chastity.

At Baptism we are given these gifts of the Holy Spirit, not only for our own benefit but for the uplifting and growth of the those around us. The more we stir the spirit within us the stronger we become; the stronger the community becomes, and the stronger Christ's presence is made known in the world.

Peace, love and God's blessing!            Deacon Ed