



“There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit.”

2Corinthians 12: 4

This extract quoted from *2 Corinthians* speaks a wonderful truth, there is only one God and therefore only one, and always, the same Spirit. It is a wonderful statement but I do believe it is a text which is often misunderstood and subsequently equally, and often grossly, misused.

I regularly hear sentences like *“we all believe in the one God”* or *“as long as we believe nothing else matters, the rest is just detail”*.

Such sentiments can appear to be supported, or prompted, by texts such as this one found in *2Corinthians*. This, however, shows a terrible lack of understanding about what it is St. Paul is trying to say.

This statement from the Apostle is expressing the eternal truth that there is only one Spirit. It is also reminding us of the fact that any prompting to love, to goodness or to faith comes from the one same Holy Spirit. The Apostle is letting us know the Spirit is the source of all goodness. This is because the Holy Spirit is, as the 3rd person of the Holy Trinity, the person of God who calls us to holiness. In reminding us of this St. Paul emphasises that there is only one God and that within this one being there can be found the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is an expression of the oneness of God.

It is true to say there is only one God. It is also true to state that all genuine, sincere and true faith is prompted by this same God but this does not mean all faith is the same. Nor does it suggest we all believe in the same God, even though we may use similar, or exactly the same, language about God. ***Mark 7: 6-9, Matthew 7: 15-21, 2Peter 2: 1-3, Rev. 13: 1-18*** I make this assertion because, although there is only one Spirit, it does not always follow we are open to the promptings or the working of this Spirit in the way we should be.

Matthew 26: 41, Galatians 5: 17

I think it can be rightly said we sometimes try to dictate how the Spirit should act in our lives. When that is the case might it be more that, in reality, we are not actually open to the Holy Spirit at all?

Can't it be suggested there are times when we might be, or are, trying to dictate how the Spirit should be in our lives?

When we behave like this towards the Spirit can we rightly claim to be open to the power of the Spirit at all, let alone say we are being led by this same Spirit?

2Timothy 4: 3, 1John 4: 1, Romans 16: 17-18, Mark 13: 22,

Although it can be said the Spirit prompts all sincere movement to faith this does not mean we all cooperate with these promptings of the Spirit in the way we should.

[Galatians 5: 16-18, Ephesians 4-30](#)

It is true, we can begin our journey of faith full of good intention but it is equally true that we it is easy for us to be distracted by our own desires, our own convictions or by the passing trends of this world while on the journey of faith. These we must be conscious of, and wary of, if we are to rightly say we are being led by the Spirit and open to the gifts the Spirit brings. [1Peter 5: 8, Luke 21: 34, Matthew 24: 11,](#)

Jesus tells us He is to return to the Father in order that He can send us the Holy Spirit.

[John 14: 16](#)

The Lord will ask the Father to send us the Advocate. But why?

What is the purpose in Jesus sending us the Holy Spirit?

Christ gives us the answer to this question when He tells us this Advocate, whom He will send, will lead us to all truth. [John 14: 26, 16: 13](#)

That being the case the Advocate will surely complete all Christ has called us to and will guide us, in perfect harmony with Christ's teachings, to the truth which comes from God, to The Truth who is God. [1Corinthians 14: 33](#)

Jesus, indeed, is the truth of God so if the Spirit is to lead us to all 'Truth' we can only conclude that the Advocate must draw us ever closer to Christ and cannot contradict anything Christ has taught us, or given us. [John 14: 6, Colossians 2: 8](#)

In effect this means that since Jesus says He is 'The Way' of God nobody else can be the way to God. It is not possible that anyone else can properly lead us to God except Jesus.

[Acts 4: 12](#)

Of course, there are those who can guide and assist us on our journey. But, like the Spirit, they must bring us ever closer to Christ the Lord in fidelity to His teachings and His gifts. We have been told many will come after Christ claiming to bring us the truth of God but we have also been warned that anyone coming after Jesus claiming to be a prophet or a messenger of God with a new revelation which in any way diminishes Christ cannot be speaking the truth of God. Ask yourself, can such a person truly be led by the Spirit?

[Matthew 7: 15, 24: 5, 11 & 24, 1John 4: 1-6, 2Peter 2: 1, 2Corinthians 11: 13-15](#)

Since Jesus tells us He is 'The Truth' of God, and proves this by His resurrection, anyone contradicting that claim or diminishing any of the teachings and gifts Christ has given us cannot be a true voice of God. [John 18: 37-38, John 20: 1, Luke 24: 1](#)

And since Jesus reminds us He is 'The Life' of God, can anyone who would deny us the means by which we can partake of that life even now truly be speaking to us from God.

[John 6: 35 & 51-57, John 10: 10, Matthew 26: 26-30, 1Corinthians 11: 24](#)

There are a variety of ways by which humanity over the centuries, has attempted to understand God but Jesus has shown us this is only fully possible if we accept Christ as Lord and receive His teachings. [John 10: 30 & 14: 6](#)

Many have struggled to understand Jesus but the only way we can properly come to know Him and receive the message of salvation has to be as Christ intended.

[John 10: 7-9 & 18: 37](#)

Even the Father said this. [Luke 3: 22 & 9: 35, Mark 9: 7, Matthew 3: 17](#)

To be sure we follow the path Jesus we must be able to see the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit working together in perfect harmony. We can only know we are receiving the Good News meant for us when we allow ourselves experience the fullness of God. To be sure this is happening we need to know the Sacred Scriptures and to be guided by the Magisterium of the Church which Christ, Himself, founded. [Matthew 16: 18-19, 18: 18](#)

Since They are One, what we say of Christ we can say, too, of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul reminds us, *“there are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit”*. [2Corinthians 12: 4](#)

We can only know the gifts, we believe we possess, come from this same Spirit if they lead us to Jesus and to the fullness of the teaching He gave and left us. All sincere faith may find its origin and first prompting in the Holy Spirit but that does not mean all religion as we experience it has come from God. Nor does it mean all religion is the same, or holds the same value and truth.

That the first prompting to faith comes from the Spirit does not necessarily mean we have followed the prompting correctly. In this we must be guided by Jesus who speaks to us through the Holy Bible, through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Sacraments and through the teachings proclaimed by Mother Church, in fidelity to Christ the bridegroom. If all religious belief is the same why would there have been any need for Christ to be born? [Luke 1: 31 & 2: 6-7, Matthew 1: 21](#)

If all belief is comparable, what kind of God would expect His only child to die at all, let alone die in so brutal a fashion as Christ did? [Luke 23: 17-25, John 19: 7, Acts 5: 30, 2Peter 3: 4](#)

If all religion is of equal value, how is it that Jesus did not merely claim to be God but also revealed Himself to be so? [Matthew 9: 5, John 10: 30 & 14: 8-10](#)

If Christ is God, and has shown Himself to be so, why would He, or the Father, or the Spirit then send someone after Him who would diminish, undermine, or outrightly contradict what Jesus said, and did, during His time on earth?

What would be the point of that?

It has to be said that not all belief is the same. Nor can we be certain we all believe in the same God just because we believe in some form of God.

Is it ever possible we can create or believe in a god of our own fashioning? [Exodus 32: 1](#)

It is our calling that we should grow into the life God calls us to in His son. But, is it possible we sometimes try to make God fit into our desires, our wishes, or form of Him, and even into our lives rather than allowing ourselves grow into God's will and into the life He has won for us in Christ? [Exodus 32:](#)

There is only one Spirit and therefore always the same Spirit, but it is our task that we discern we are following this same Spirit and not some image of Him we have created for ourselves or which we have convinced ourselves is truth when in reality it merely best suits our needs or desires. [1John 5: 21, 1Corinthians 10: 14, 2Corinthians 6: 16](#)

If, what we believe are gifts of the Spirit do not lead us to Christ Jesus, and to the fulness of the Truth He has given us, we have just reason to question if we are, in fact, following this Holy Spirit whose desire is to lead us to Jesus that we might come to the fulness of the life of the Father. [John 16: 13 & 14: 25-29](#)

There are many in the world who would happily lead us from God. Indeed, it is their wilful intent to do so. Some will even use the language of faith, including that of Christian faith, to convince us we should abandon the Church, or give up faith in Christ altogether. However, Jesus says, Himself, we must not go with them.

Luke 18:8, Matthew 7: 21-23 & 24: 5, 1John2: 4

We must stand firm in our faith even if we are rejected by all around us. We will not be the first to experience this. Nor will we be the last. *John 6: 60-71, Galatians 4: 16*

But the crown of righteousness will be ours.

Matthew 25: 21, James 1: 12, 1Peter 5: 4, 2Timothy 4: 7-8, Rev 2: 10

Let us keep our eyes on the eternal prize and not allowed ourselves be seduced away from it.

May you have a Blessed Week.

Fr. Martin