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2

Building God's kingdom together

When we say the Lord's Prayer, we pray: "Thy kingdom come...". All the time that Jesus was preaching and teaching he kept telling people that the kingdom of God was very near. And all of us who follow Jesus are called to work together to build that kingdom. To build God's kingdom we need the help of the Holy Spirit.

At your CONFIRMATION the Church prays that the Holy Spirit may always be your HELPER and GUIDE. We pray that you may receive all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help you live as a Christian and to help to build God's kingdom.

This is the prayer the bishop or priest says as he holds out his hands over you in blessing:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters
from sin
and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.



**Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Gifts for a king

In your Bible, find Isaiah chapter 11 verse 2.

Can you find the same gifts mentioned here as in the prayer? The translation may be a little different but try to match up the different names for the same gifts. Write them down in your notebook like this:

Confirmation Prayer Isaiah 11 in my Bible

Wisdom

Understanding

Right judgment

Courage

Knowledge

Reverence

Wonder & Awe

When the prophet ISAIAH wrote this verse the people of Israel had a bad king who did not honour God and did not look after the people. Isaiah PROPHESES that one day there will be a truly good king who will love God and will really care for his people. He will be fair to everyone and will care for:

rich people and poor people

sad people and happy people

good people and bad people

friends and strangers

men and women

grown-ups and children

clever people and simple people

short people and tall people

thin people and fat people

black people and white people.

This king will bring peace and happiness so that even the wild animals will live together in friendship and the whole world will be at peace.

Read Isaiah, chapter 11 verses 6–9, and in your notebook make a drawing or paste in pictures to show Isaiah's prophecy of a world of peace and friendship.

Quite soon the people of Israel did have a much better king who tried to honour God and to care for all the people. But Christians believe that Isaiah's prophecy only really came true when Jesus was born. Jesus Christ is the only King who really rules in the power of the Spirit with:

Wisdom
Understanding
Right judgment
Courage
Knowledge
Reverence
Wonder & Awe.

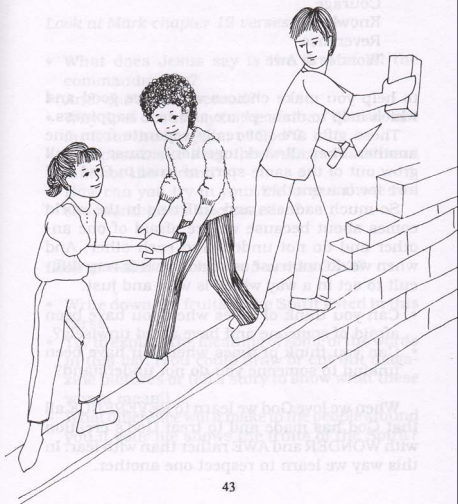
Jesus is the only King who can bring justice for all people and true peace.

Isaiah's prophecy came true in part with the birth of Jesus. And each one of us can know Jesus Christ as the wise and loving King of our lives who can bring us peace. But the prophecy is also still about the future. We still do not see the "wolf and the lamb lying down together". We still see plenty of fighting in the world. We still find people quarrelling with one another – even in our own families, even in the Church itself. We

still find that poor people are not treated with justice. We still have a long way to go until the earth is a place of true peace and justice.

The building bricks of love

When you are confirmed you are being asked to play your part in helping to build God's



kingdom of justice and love. This is why the Church prays for you on the day of your Confirmation, that you may receive the gifts that are needed by a good and just king.

It is not easy to know the right way to act at all times and this is why you need the kingly gifts of

Wisdom

Understanding

Right judgment

Courage

Knowledge

Reverence

Wonder & Awe

to help you make choices which are good and which help to make peace and true happiness.

These gifts are not really separate from one another. They all work together because they all grow out of the same spirit of trust in God and love for one another.

So much sadness and suffering in the world comes about because we are afraid of one another and do not understand each other. And when we do not trust one another it is very difficult to act in a way which is wise and just.

- Can you think of times when you have been afraid of someone and have acted unwisely?
- Can you think of times when you have been unkind to someone you do not understand?

When we love God we learn to REVERENCE all that God has made and to treat God's creation with WONDER and AWE rather than with fear. In this way we learn to respect one another.

Our trust in God gives us **COURAGE** to overcome our fear. And when we are no longer afraid we can come to **UNDERSTAND** one another.

When we see one another with the **KNOWLEDGE** that comes from love we can make **RIGHT JUDGMENTS** in **WISDOM**.

It is only by growing in this spirit of love and trust that we can help to build God's kingdom on earth.

Look at Mark chapter 12 verses 28-34.

- What does Jesus say is the first of all the commandments?
- And what is the second?
- Why does Jesus say to the scribe: "You are not far from the kingdom of God"?
- Is it possible to keep the first commandment and not the second?
- How can you try in your life to put these two commandments into practice?

Look at Galatians chapter 5 verses 22-23.

- Write down the fruits of the Spirit listed in this verse.
- Try to explain the meaning of some of the words in this list. (You could draw or cut out magazine pictures or tell a story to show what these words mean.)
- What difference will it make to the people around you if your life shows the fruits of the Spirit?

Look at Acts chapter 2 verses 32-37.

- Why were there no needy people among the believers?
- How should we as Christians treat the things that we own?
- Can you think of some small way in which you can share something you own with somebody who has less?

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

This is one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible and it is a description of love. Read it out aloud slowly and let the words sink in to you.



Perhaps you could learn some of these verses by heart. Come back to this passage often as a reminder of the way of love which you are trying to follow as a Christian.

Confirmation and the Eucharist

When you are baptized into Jesus Christ and confirmed with the Holy Spirit you become a full member of the family of the Church. And this means that you can share fully in the family feast of the Eucharist. Up until this time you have been present at Mass but you have not been invited to receive Communion. And in the early days of the Church the CATECHUMENS (who were the people learning to be Christians who were not yet baptized) were not even allowed to be present for the second part of the Mass. But when you are confirmed you will be able to take a full part in the Mass. And so we must go on to think about the meaning of the family feast.