



## **Friday's Formation Note by Jamie Hall 'Commit Thy Work To God'**

The Epistle for the second Sunday after the Epiphany this year is a delightful little excerpt from First Corinthians, in which St. Paul gives a list of various activities which he mentions as being gifts from or being guided by the Holy Spirit to and in each of us. As he says, there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; varieties of services, varieties of activities – but the same Spirit in each of them. He then goes on to list some of them – some of which we might recognize, some not perhaps so much. The problem is that we have a lamentable tendency to regard the list as exhaustive – that is to say, that the activities on the list are the ones guided or inspired by the Spirit, acting in each of us according to our several abilities, and we tend to have a feeling that perhaps all the other activities or services or whatever we do, or gifts that we have, since they aren't on the list, aren't related to or susceptible to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That they don't count. That they are irrelevant and God doesn't pay attention – or inspire – them. I don't think this is what Paul meant at all. We all have gifts – each one of us, individually given to us when we are created, individually. No two the same. And each of us is free to make use of those gifts as best we can.

The motto of a Scottish clan to which I have a slightly dubious connection is “Commit thy work to God”. The motto of a professional organization to which I have belonged from time to time is “Soli Deo Gloria”. Same idea, different group. And the same idea, I think, that Paul is trying for: it is possible – indeed it seems best – to consider that everything we do, whichever of our gifts it is that we are working with at the time, whether it is at work or a hobby or whatever – is an activity which can be and properly should be committed to God, and can and should be inspired by the Holy Spirit. It doesn't really matter in this regard whether what we are doing is the best possible use of our individual capabilities – I hate to think how many truly great talents of one kind or another have been buried in hum-drum or menial tasks for one reason or another – what matters is that whatever we are doing we should strive to do it with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God.

Will this result in greater secular reward? Probably not, sadly. But hopefully we are, each of us, engaged in something which we can do. Perhaps it may not be the best possible use of our essential abilities – in fact, I suspect it rarely is. But it is what we are doing, and while doing it we can listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and do

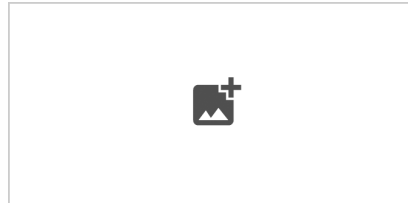
the best we can, to glorify God in our work and our thoughts. Not for the praise (or paycheck) from others, or to display to the world how wonderful we are or whatever, but so that at the end of the day, when we pause to thank God for the day, we can also pause to say for ourselves that we tried to follow our Lord in all we did, and take comfort in knowing that He knows that and understands.

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