

Catholic Identity: Session 3

We begin our prayer:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You are the head of the Body, the Church,
and You have poured out gifts upon Your people
so that we may grow together in faith and love.
As we open our hearts to Your Word today,
send Your Spirit to guide our listening,
that we may recognize the gifts You have given us
and use them to build up Your Body in unity.
Teach us to speak the truth in love,
to serve with humility,
and to grow into the fullness of life in You,
who live and reign with the Father
and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture and just focus on what the passage is saying. Take notice of any word, phrase, thought or image that catches your attention.

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming.

Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.
(Ephesians 4:7, 11-16)

What word or phrase caught your attention or what thought came to mind as you heard God's Word proclaimed?

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Read the passage again, and this time focus on what speaks to you in this text and how it relates to your life.

You may use the following questions to guide your meditation if needed:

What might God be trying to say to you through that word, phrase or image that caught your attention initially?

What "measure of Christ's gift" do I recognize in my own life—talents, charisms, responsibilities, or spiritual desires? How might God be calling me to use these gifts to more fully love and serve Him and others?

How is Christ inviting me to "equip the holy ones" entrusted to my care "for the work of ministry" (i.e., a life of missionary discipleship)?

If practicing lectio divina *as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.*

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the Scripture passage one more time. What do you want to say to the Lord? Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture a final time, then rest in God's presence. Simply be with Him and listen for His voice. Allow His love and grace to fill you.

After a period of silent reflection conclude your time of prayer with the closing prayer below:

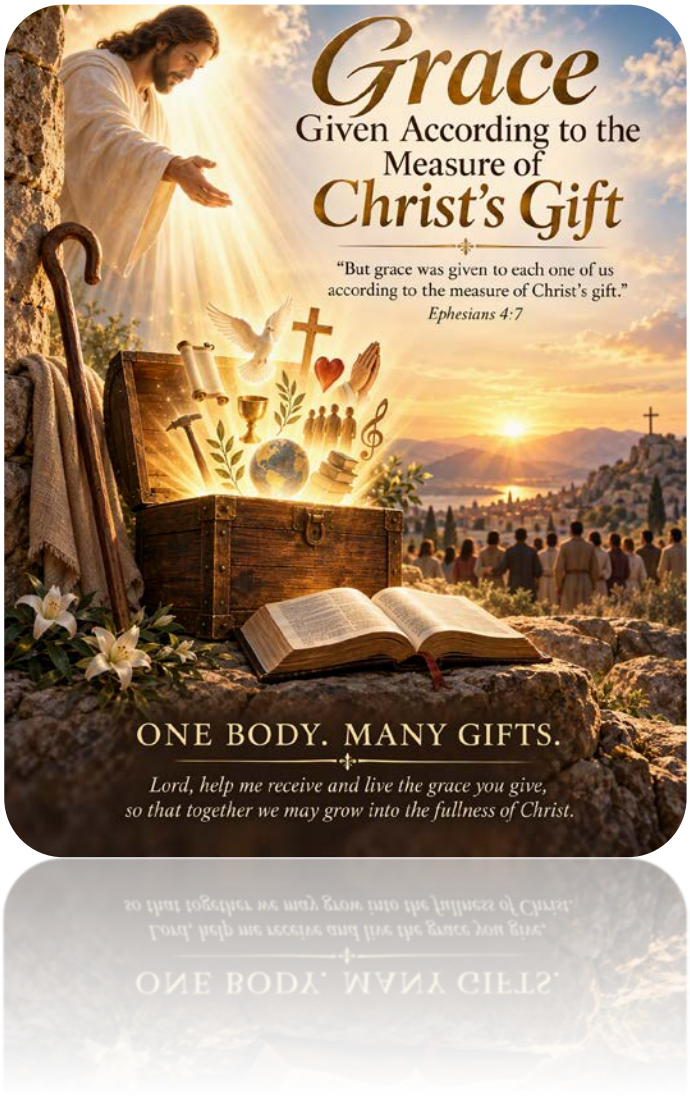
Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
We thank You for the gift of Your Word,
which has reminded us that each of us
has a place and a purpose in Your Church.
Strengthen us to live as one Body in Christ,
sharing our gifts generously,
encouraging one another in love,
and seeking always to grow into the maturity
of faith You desire for us.
May our lives reflect the unity and peace
that come from Your Spirit,
so that the world may see in us
the presence of Your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is Lord forever and ever.
Amen.

Living the Word *(Actio)*

This week ponder one grace that you have been gifted with by God. It could be a talent, blessing, charism, virtue, gift of the spirit, etc. Identify one concrete way that you might be able to use that gift to love and serve God and others more fully.

When you face a challenge or difficult situation this week, pause before reacting. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you so that your response builds up the Body of Christ. Use the grace God has given you to respond with Christ's love, even if it means surrendering your own will in that moment to His.



Excerpts from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.