

FROM FATHER JOHN: *“The Lord is just in all his ways, merciful in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he destroys. My mouth will speak the praises of the Lord ; all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.”* (Psalm 145 17 – 21)



St. Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, *“Sisters and brothers, I could not talk to you as spiritual people, but as fleshly people, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, because you were unable to take it. Indeed, you are still not able, even now, for you are still of the flesh. While there is jealousy and rivalry among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving in an ordinary human way?”* (1 Cor 3:1 – 3) I think what St. Paul is saying when he tells the Corinthians that he had to talk to them as fleshly people is that they are stuck in their secular culture and not becoming the disciples, the spiritual people that they are called to be.

The same thing can happen to us. We can get so immersed in the secular culture that we fail to grow into the spiritual people our Lord Jesus calls us to be. And when this happens, we fail to allow the Lord to touch our heart and our soul, to transform us into who he created us to be.

It’s easy to get stuck in the secular culture because we live in the world, we have to deal with the world, we have to deal with other people, we have to deal with the trials and tribulations of the world, we have to deal with all the worldly worries we have, with emails, text messages, we have to pay the bills, etc. We can easily get pulled so far into our worldly concerns that they can become an obstacle to our relationship with our Lord and God.

Even good things can pull us into the secular world and culture. I’ll use my mom and my nieces and nephew as an example of how this can happen. When my nieces and nephew were in their

late teens and early twenties, my mom would call them on the phone. They never answered. She would leave messages. They never called back. At the same time, my dad, sitting ten feet away from my mom in his recliner would text one of my nieces or nephews. He would get a text back within minutes with a response to whatever his text said. This happened over and over again. My mom, a little bit upset, finally asked my dad, "why won't they answer me when they answer you right away?" He told her not to get upset, just text them. So, my mom began texting her grandchildren and they would respond just like they did with my dad. My mom began texting them more and more, then started to text her friends, etc. Now my mom is a texting machine. She texts people 100 hundred times more than I do.

A good thing, communicating with her grandchildren, pulled my mom into a part of our secular culture that she was never part of before. It's an easy trap to fall into. Sometimes, the devil uses things that are generally good to pull us away from the Lord.

So how do we avoid that and become spiritual people? The first thing we need to do is understand what it means to be a spiritual person and to do that we have to understand the word spiritual. Words have meaning and the meaning of this word is important. The word spiritual comes from the word spirit which comes from the Latin *Espiritu Sanctus*. Which means Holy Spirit. So, we cannot be spiritual without having the Holy Spirit as an integral part of our lives.

So how do we abide with the Holy Spirit, how do we allow the Holy Spirit to become an integral part of our lives?

We need to recognize that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in our baptisms and then the 7-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation. This means that we must accept the fact that the Holy Spirit lives within us. We need to go to Mass every Sunday and every day if possible because when we hear the word of God proclaimed and receive the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit comes alive within us. Sin separates us from God and clouds our ability to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of Reconciliation restores our relationship with God and the Spirit within us.

Prayer allows us to communicate with God and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We need to read the sacred Scriptures. The more we read the scriptures, the better we get to know our Lord Jesus which allows us to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us all day long. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to transform our lives but, be ready, because our life will change if we really ask God to transform us.

When we do all this, we grow closer to the Lord, we hear the Holy Spirit and we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, lead us and guide us, and we will become who God created us to be. We will set the world on fire and find the fulfillment and joy that God desires for us as we journey to eternal life in heaven.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.