

WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Gal 5:22-23

1. Jesus says in Mt 7:16 that a good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. The good tree is a symbol of the person who lives united to Christ through grace. The good fruit is a symbol of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The bad fruit are the works of the flesh.

Consequently, we can say that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the EFFECTS that the Holy Spirit produces in us if we advance in grace.

Similarly, John 15 tells us that Jesus is the resurrected Vine, we are the branches, and the Holy Spirit is the life-giving sap. The fruits are the exterior manifestations of the life of Christ in us. For this reason, we can say that the fruits of the Spirit are Christological fruits, signs that stem from the abiding of Christ in us (John 15:5). They allow us to reflect Christ in a visible way.

2. The Bible provides lists of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These lists are not exhaustive, but they serve to summarize the kind of character

qualities and actions that the Spirit works in us. The most famous list is the one we find in Galatians 5. Here Paul lists nine fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). You can also find other lists of the fruits in Eph 5:9, 1 Tim 6:11, 2 Cor 6:6-7, and James 3:17-18. Again, if someone lives in Christ they will show these fruits.

3. The fruits of the Holy Spirit stand in contrast to the works of the flesh: "immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like" (Gal 5:19-21). This opposition is also expressed as the opposition between the "works of darkness" and the "armor of light" (Rom 13:12). The works of the flesh are chaotic and disordered. The fruits of the Spirit bring harmony and order.

4. Thomas Aquinas says that the fruits of the Holy Spirit, like the fruits of a plant, come in the final stage of perfection and they also bring delight to the soul. (See Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 70, a.1, ad2).

• First, the fruits are the final stage of perfection. They are an expression of spiritual maturity. The fruits are the consequence of walking by the Spirit (Gal 5:16). The fruits of the Holy Spirit are the result of the cultivation of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

• Second, they are connected to delight and sweetness. The fruit of the Holy Spirit allows us to live in a virtuous way with joy and sweetness. We perform virtuous actions with joy. They make spiritual life more enjoyable.

5. They are both similar to and different from the charisms. They are similar because both charisms and fruits are a direct work of the Spirit. They are different because the charisms are more particular to each person. Some people have the charisms of preaching, others of music, etc. On the contrary, the fruits of the Holy Spirit are common to all. They are expected to show in the life of those who live in Christ.

6. The fruits of the Spirit allow us to reflect the resurrected and luminous humanity of Jesus. If we develop the spiritual life and the fruits of the Spirit, we will reflect in our own humanity the love, joy and peace of the Risen Christ. For this reason, we can say that they are an anticipation of glorified humanity: "The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory" (CCC 1832).

