

### **Remember Confirmation?**

When was the last time you thought about your Confirmation? What do you remember about that day? How about this, when was the last time you used your Confirmation, the Gift of the Holy Spirit that you received and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you received? The second Sunday of advent's readings remind us of Confirmation, because the Gospel speaks about Jesus' baptism, the fruits we ought to bear, and how Jesus will baptize in water and the Holy Spirit. The second reading talks about how we ought to be confirmed in our faith. And the first reading is the source text for the prayer that the bishop prayed over us when we were confirmed when he asked the Lord to pour out his Spirit upon us.

### **Remember quadriceps?**

When was the last time you thought about your quadriceps, you know, those muscles on the front of your thigh? And when was the last time you used them? I can tell you, I haven't thought about them much since the last time I strained something when playing snow football. But I use my quadriceps every day to lift my leg. I can also tell you, that these muscles were not injured at all in my recent troubles. However, there is a connection to the tendon that I did injure. So, although my quadriceps were in perfect condition, they weren't used at all for a number of days. They got a vacation. Once everything was attached and ready to start moving a little, my quadriceps had grown accustomed to the life of Riley. So when someone told me I should move those muscles, and I told those muscles to move, nothing happened. It's a bit disconcerting, to think about moving one of my own muscles and to receive no response at all, not even "please call back again on Tuesday."

### **Coax or die.**

Thankfully, there are physical therapists, experts in the movement and requirements for movement in the body. My physical therapist gave me some exercises to coax the quadriceps into movement. I'm still not bending my knee much, but I can lift my whole leg forward and sideways. It would be a disaster, for my big, strong quadriceps to take early retirement at the expense of my leg, my range of motion, and my everyday life. But not only that, it would have been a disaster for the quadriceps itself. Imagine that big, strong muscle shriveling away for lack of use. Oh, it wouldn't have disappeared or cease to exist, it just would not be what it was made to be. A shadow of its former self and useless to the body.

### **Active waiting.**

Do you see know where I am going with this? Jesus tells us to be prepared many times in the Gospel. We are in this season of anticipation, but, if we are to await rightly the coming of the Lord, we will need to do something to prepare rather than just waiting around. Advent is a season of activity. It isn't the activity of reception, like Christmas, of jumping up and down like a puppy when its master returns (No jumping for me right now!). Rather it is anticipation, coaxing lax muscles into activity, strengthening them for the action to come, training them for the movements which will be required.

### **Preparing to bear fruit.**

We have been given gifts which are to bear fruit. But if the fruit is to grow, branches must have been developed which are strong enough to bear it. Every branch, every twig, every leaf is vital. As I wait for my tendon to heal, I am not simply vacationing. I am practicing those movements which will be necessary for its full use later on. As I wait for the Lord, I practice the movements of my soul necessary for his coming. I am praying for the Church, for this parish, and for the needs of many. I am reading and meditating on the Scriptures, the life of Christ, and the lives and writings of the saints. I am thinking about the Holy Spirit's activity in our parish and trying to discern where next the Lord is calling us to act. And, still from my chair, I am seeking to do what I can as your pastor. All of this is Confirmation at work.

#### **12.4.16**

**PS** Did you know that Bishop Kagan is doing a "Faith Matters" Youtube series on the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit? Check them out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfF3ItU9bsM>