

Reflection on Initiative
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“I can’t be bothered.” These words, often thought but unspoken, somehow find their way into our vocabulary. They also speak an important reality – one that we must guard against ourselves, and one we must encourage those we love to resist...

“Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” These words, spoken at the sacrament of Confirmation by the Bishop, express an important reality about each of us too – that God has given us all of the gifts and talents we need in order to be happy and successful in life. At the same time, using those gifts – taking initiative – can present challenges at different moments in our lives.

Part of every teenager’s learning includes finding the value in taking initiative. The thought that, “I can’t be bothered” really works against developing this value. And while teens may never actually say those words, it’s pretty safe to say that we’ve all experienced “that look” or “the attitude” that speaks even louder than words. Maybe it has to do with getting homework finished or studying for a test. Or maybe we hear that phrase when we ask for chores to get started. Just the other day, I heard it loud and clear when talking about college applications and the work they entail.

But here’s the thing – where would each of us be if God “couldn’t be bothered?” What if God didn’t give His many gifts to each of us? What if the Holy Spirit wasn’t stirring within each of us? What if Jesus didn’t want to be bothered by those who came to him seeking his healing, his consolation, his love, his peace...

Managing our time, setting priorities, finding motivation, and using our gifts and talents – these are all things that we can do to be good examples to those around us. How might you spend a few moments talking to your own children or those you have influence over about what motivates you, about what helps you take initiative, even when you’d prefer not? How can you teach others that it’s good “to be bothered?”

The challenge, then, is for each of us to take initiative – to get started – with work, with studying, with mentoring the youth, with prayer, and with life!