

The 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are **Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord**. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. (*CCC, 1831*)

The Catholic Church derives this information on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit from scripture:

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. (*Isaiah 11:2-4*)

- 1. Wisdom** - Wisdom is not the quoting of facts. Wisdom is a gift that allows a person to understand things from God's point of view. In other words, Wisdom allows a person to recognize truth. A person with the Gift of Wisdom is able to take this truth and use it to glorify God by choosing Godly solutions to problems.
- 2. Understanding** - Understanding is the second gift of the Holy Spirit, and people sometimes have a hard time understanding (no pun intended) how it differs from wisdom. While wisdom is the desire to contemplate the things of God, understanding allows us to grasp, at least in a limited way, the very essence of the truths of the Catholic Faith. Through understanding, we gain a certitude about our beliefs that moves beyond faith
- 3. Counsel** - The Gift of Counsel is also known as a Gift of Right Judgment. Counsel, the third gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the cardinal virtue of prudence. Prudence can be practiced by anyone, but counsel is supernatural. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we are able to judge how best to act almost by intuition. Because of the gift of counsel, Christians need not fear to stand up for the truths of the Faith, because the Holy Spirit will guide us in defending those truths.
- 4. Fortitude** - The Gift of Fortitude is also known as the Gift of Courage. Through this Gift a person is no longer afraid to stand up for God and His truths. A person who has the Gift of Fortitude will stand up for good against evil and is convicted to take a stand when the occasion arises.
- 5. Knowledge** - The Gift of Knowledge allows a person to understand the meaning and purpose God has for him and to live up to this meaning. It differs from wisdom in that it is an action, not just a desire to live up to the ways of God. It differs from Understanding in that it is not just ability, it is a knowing.
- 6. Piety** - Piety, the sixth gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the virtue of religion. While we tend to think of religion today as the external elements of our faith, it really means the willingness to worship and to serve God. Piety takes that willingness beyond a sense of duty, so that we desire to worship God and to serve Him out of love, the way that we desire to honor our parents and do what they wish.
- 7. Fear of the Lord** - The Gift of Fear of the Lord puts God in the proper perspective. A person with this Gift understands the greatness and awesomeness of the Lord. They want to serve Him because of who He is. A person with the Gift of Fear of the Lord understands who they are and why they are here in relationship to God; In other words, everything they are is due to the wonder, love, grace, and perfection of God. They are totally dependent on the Lord as a child is to a parent. The Gift of Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. Once a person understands who God is and desires to please Him, they can begin to understand things from God's point of view or have Wisdom.