

A Catechetical Review:

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Wisdom: it is the capacity to love spiritual things more than material ones;

Understanding: in understanding, we comprehend how we need to live as followers of Christ. A person with understanding is not confused by the conflicting messages in our culture about the right way to live. The gift of understanding perfects a person's speculative reason in the apprehension of truth. It is the gift whereby self-evident principles are known, Aquinas writes;

Counsel (right judgment): with the gift of counsel/right judgment, we know the difference between right and wrong, and we choose to do what is right. A person with right judgment avoids sin and lives out the values taught by Jesus;

Fortitude (courage): with the gift of fortitude/courage, we overcome our fear and are willing to take risks as a follower of Jesus Christ. A person with courage is willing to stand up for what is right in the sight of God, even if it means accepting rejection, verbal abuse, or physical harm. The gift of courage allows people the firmness of mind that is required both in doing good and in enduring evil;

Knowledge: with the gift of knowledge, we understand the meaning of God. The gift of knowledge is more than an accumulation of facts, it also helps us to choose the right path through life.

Piety (reverence): with the gift of piety/reverence, we have a deep sense of respect for God and the Church. A person with reverence recognizes our total reliance on God and comes before God with humility, trust and love. Piety is the gift whereby, at the Holy Spirit's instigation, we pay worship and duty to God as our Father, Aquinas writes;

Fear of the Lord (wonder and awe): with the gift of fear of the Lord/wonder and awe, we are aware of the glory and majesty of God. A person with wonder and awe knows that God is the perfection we desire: perfect knowledge, perfect goodness, perfect power, and perfect love. This gift is described by Aquinas as a fear of separating oneself from God. He describes the gift as a "filial fear," like a child's fear of offending his father, rather than a "servile fear," that is, a fear of punishment. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.