THE HOLY SPIRIT

Only one thing is important – eternal salvation. Only one thing, therefore, is to be feared – sin. Sin is the result of ignorance, weakness, and indifference. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Light, of Strength, and of Love. With His sevenfold gifts He enlightens the mind, strengthens the will, and inflames the heart with love of God. To ensure our salvation we ought to invoke the Divine Spirit daily, for “The Spirit helps us in our infirmity. We know not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit Himself asks for us.” (Rom. 8:26)

**The Gift of Fear of the Lord (Reverence)**

The gift of Fear of the Lord fills us with sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread nothing so much as to offend Him by sin. It is a fear that arises, not from the thought of hell, but from sentiments of reverence and filial submission to our heavenly Father. It is the fear that is the beginning of wisdom, detaching us from worldly pleasures that could in any way separate us from God. “They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls.”

(Ecl 2:17).

# The Gift of Piety

The gift of Piety begets in our hearts a filial affection for God as our most loving Father. It inspires us to love and respect, for His sake, persons and things consecrated to Him, as well as those who are vested with His authority, His Blessed Mother and the Saints, the Church and its visible Head, our parents and superiors, our country and its rulers. He who is filled with the gift of Piety finds the practice of his religion, not a burdensome duty, but a delightful service. Where there is love, there is no labor.

# The Gift of Fortitude

By the gift of Fortitude the soul is strengthened against natural fear, and supported to the end in the performance of duty. Fortitude imparts to the will an impulse and energy, which move it to undertake without hesitancy the most arduous tasks, to face dangers, to trample under foot human respect, and to endure without complaint the slow martyrdom of even lifelong tribulation. “He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.” (Mt 24: 13)

# The Gift of Knowledge

The gift of Knowledge enables the soul to evaluate created things at their true worth – in their relation to God. Knowledge unmasks the pretense of creatures, reveals their emptiness, and points out their only true purpose as instruments in the service of God. It shows us the loving care of God even in adversity, and directs us to glorify Him in every circumstance of life. Guided by its light, we put first things first, and prize the friendship of God beyond all else. “Knowledge is a fountain of life to him that possesses it.” (Prov 16:22).

# The Gift of Understanding

Understanding, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, helps us to grasp the meaning of the truths of our holy religion. By Faith we know them, but by Understanding we learn to appreciate and relish them. It enables us to penetrate the inner meaning of revealed truths and through them to be quickened to newness of life. Our faith ceases to be sterile and inactive, but inspires a mode of life that bears eloquent testimony to the faith that is in us; we begin to “walk worthy of God in all things pleasing, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:10)

# The Gift of Counsel

The Gift of Counsel endows the soul with supernatural prudence, enabling it to judge promptly and rightly what must be done, especially in difficult circumstances. Counsel applies the principles furnished by Knowledge and Understanding to the innumerable concrete cases that confront us in the course of our daily duty as parents, teachers, public servants, and Christian citizens. Counsel is supernatural common sense, a priceless treasure in the quest of salvation. “Above all these things, pray to the Most High, that He may direct thy way in truth.” (Ecl 37:15).

# The Gift of Wisdom

Embodying all the other gifts, as charity embraces all the other virtues, Wisdom is the most perfect of the gifts. Of wisdom it is written “all good things came to me with her, and innumerable riches through her hands.” (Wis 7:11). It is the gift of Wisdom that strengthens our faith, fortifies hope, perfects charity, and promotes the practice of virtue in the highest degree. Wisdom enlightens the mind to discern and relish things divine, in the appreciation of which earthly joys lose their savor, whilst the Cross of Christ yields a divine sweetness according to the words of the Savior: “Take up thy cross and follow me, for my yoke is sweet and my burden light.” (Mt 11:30)

# The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit perfect the supernatural virtues by enabling us to practice them with greater docility to divine inspiration. As we grow in the knowledge and love of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit, our service becomes more sincere and generous, the practice of virtue more perfect. Such acts of virtue leave the heart filled with joy and consolation and are known as Fruits of the Holy Spirit. These Fruits, in turn, render the practice of virtue more attractive and become a powerful incentive for still greater efforts in the service of God, to serve Whom is to reign.

From the Novena to the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit