



Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

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Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* are “permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1830).



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There are seven *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*:

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

A *Gift of the Holy Spirit* is an ability of the soul to do something. What is it the Gifts help us to do? They help us respond with ease to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit in his love for us wants to inspire us from time to time – perhaps continually. But that is not enough – we need to be open and respond to His inspirations.

The *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* are like spiritual vitamins that strengthen us to listen and respond to His inspirations. Another example would be the hearing aids that some people use to hear and understand better what is being said. The Gifts are like hearing aids attached to the “ears” of the heart.

The prophet Isaiah lists the seven *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (11:3). There are many more gifts but these seven are traditionally listed as the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.

In the Bible the number seven signifies a fullness. By referring to “seven” Gifts, the Bible is telling us that the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* add a certain fullness to our lives as Christians.

Part of the “fullness” of our Christian life is sharing in the Priesthood of Christ – whether in the form of being an ordained priest and/or as a member of Christ’s Priestly People. A *Gift of the Holy Spirit* helps us to respond with ease to the Holy Spirit’s inspirations!

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

KNOWLEDGE

The gift of the Holy Spirit, knowledge, is often confused with both wisdom and understanding. Like wisdom, knowledge is the perfection of faith, but whereas wisdom gives us the desire to judge all things according to the truths of the Catholic Faith, knowledge is the actual ability to do so.

Like counsel, it is aimed at our actions in this life. In a limited way, knowledge allows us to see the circumstances of our life the way that God sees them. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we can determine God's purpose for our lives and live them accordingly.

The gift of knowledge allows one, as far as is humanly possible, to see things from God's perspective. It "allows us to perceive the greatness of God and his love for his creatures" through creation.

It will be a few months until Christmas, but an issue of Priestly People that was written about the Gift of Knowledge is very appropriate as reflection of the Gift of Knowledge is shared.

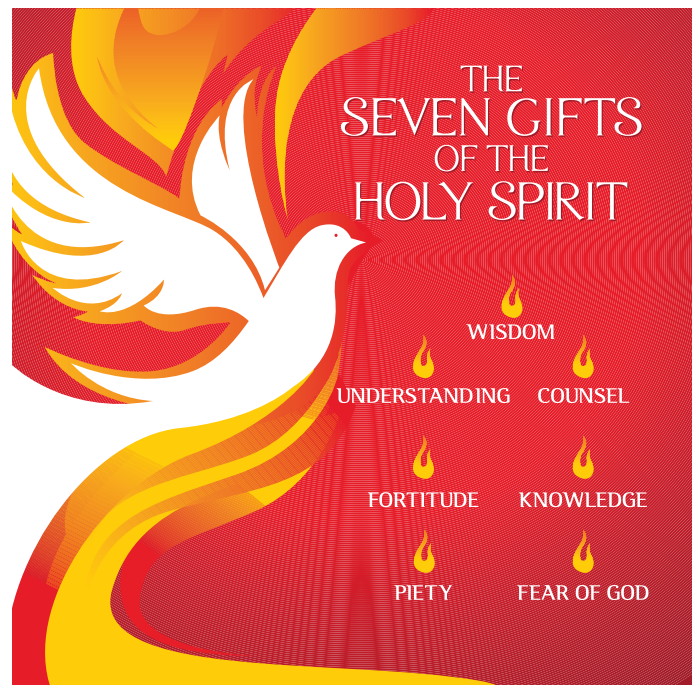
Each year, millions, perhaps, billions of Christmas Cards are sent and received throughout the world. Many of these cards depict the Christ child along with Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds, the Angels, etc. Each card can become the means for entering a little bit more deeply into the true spirit of Christmas.

(Currently Facebook, ZOOM, and other electronic methods of communicating have overtaken cards for many folks – but nonetheless – messages of greetings and blessings are sent among family and friends).

When we receive such a card, we might pause a few brief seconds and in a childlike way simply look at the scene depicted on it. This can be our way of showing appreciation for Christ's coming among us. Before putting down the card or other representations of a Christmas scene and going on our way, we might briefly become conscious of the impression it is creating within us.

Among the many impressions we might experience within us as we contemplate the scene in Bethlehem, may be a sense of the poverty of the Christ Child

God who created and possesses all things; yet is so poor when He comes to us that He has neither cradle nor home. Why did God come to us as a poor child. I believe He did this so that He might give us, in addition to Himself, the beginnings of the Gift of Knowledge.



By the Gift of Knowledge, one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we are helped to know in an intuitive manner the true value of all created things. As we gaze upon the poverty of the Christ Child, we come to grasp the truth that material things in themselves are not where lasting happiness lies.

However, material things in so far as they are an expression of the goodness and beauty of God – starting first with the little created body of God Himself – have immense value. This is the Gift of Knowledge, knowledge of the value of all created things in relation to God. With this Gift, “the soul turns earnestly to God.”

St. Francis of Assisi is a saint who is an excellent example of what I am trying to say. As a young man he left his father’s business and lived a life of holy poverty because he saw that all created things were as nothing when compared to the love of Christ. Although he himself owned nothing but the poor shepherd’s cloak on his back and lived only on the meager food people would give him, he was profoundly in love with the beauty of nature, as coming from and representing the beauty and goodness of God.

It was undoubtedly this supernatural gift of the true knowledge of created things in their relation to God



that inspired Francis to dance with joy on Christmas Eve when he gazed upon Christ in the manger scene at Greccio. St. Francis made the first known Christmas crib with his own hands, undoubtedly it was in his heart that he first understood the poverty and the beauty of the new Creature-God, and all of creation which now bears the mark of immense beauty wrapped in poverty.

We pray that God will bless you abundantly with KNOWLEDGE that you might know of His providence in your life.

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*Absolute and all-knowing God, Nothing is hidden from Your sight.
In the prescience since the beginning, All knowledge existed within You.
Kindly share Your knowledge with me, Making me aware of what is meant to be,
Permitting my soul to understand it, And wisdom to agree with its outcome.
Provide me with the gift of discretion, To prudently apply received knowledge,
To ensure the fulfillment of Your Will. Your knowledge shines forth forever!
Amen*



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MASS STIPENDS

We appreciate the many mass stipends that we receive. We thank you for supporting that part of our ministry. The Servants of the Paraclete receive mass stipends from our donors and they look forward to celebrating liturgy with those who offer masses for loved ones, friends and family members.

Thank you for supporting our Mass Stipend Ministry!

Name of the person to be remembered in a mass celebrated by a Servant of the Paraclete

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Please send an acknowledgement card on my behalf to:

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You will receive acknowledgement of the mass stipend donation in your donor thank you letter. No need to send an acknowledgement card to yourself if you are the donor.

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