



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

FORTITUDE

There are any number of words that name Fortitude!

backbone, chutzpah, courage, endurance, energy, fitness, guts, heart, moxie, spunk, stamina, strength, vigor, toughness.

Through the gift of Fortitude, the Holy Spirit gives our body and soul a special ability to do and even to suffer extraordinary things. This gift makes us particularly receptive to the special strength that only the Holy Spirit can give to us. This strength is the strength of God Himself!

How did all the martyrs, even young children, undergo horrible torture and death? Certainly not by their own strength. It was the strength of God Himself that was given to them. The Holy Spirit's Gift of Fortitude enables us to be open and to receive the strength of God Himself. As Paul says: "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)

When Temptation is especially strong!

We all need this gift in order to persevere in goodness throughout our life. It will help us to endure physical sufferings for the love of God. It will give us patience when, according to all human reckoning, it is just not possible to be patient any longer. It will help us to resist temptations, especially when temptations are particularly strong or deceptively convincing.

Paraclete Ministry and Vicarious Fortitude... Priests returning to ministry have a special need for the Gift of Fortitude. In the process of returning to the active exercise of ministry, all types of obstacles and difficulties will invariably come up. In the lives of the priests that I have been involved with in their return to ministry, I have seen that Fortitude has been one of the major Gifts needed for them to make this journey. I have also noted – that someone, somewhere was praying and making sacrifices for them. The exercise of the Spirit's Gift of Fortitude in one person's life can affect the transmission of that Gift to others.

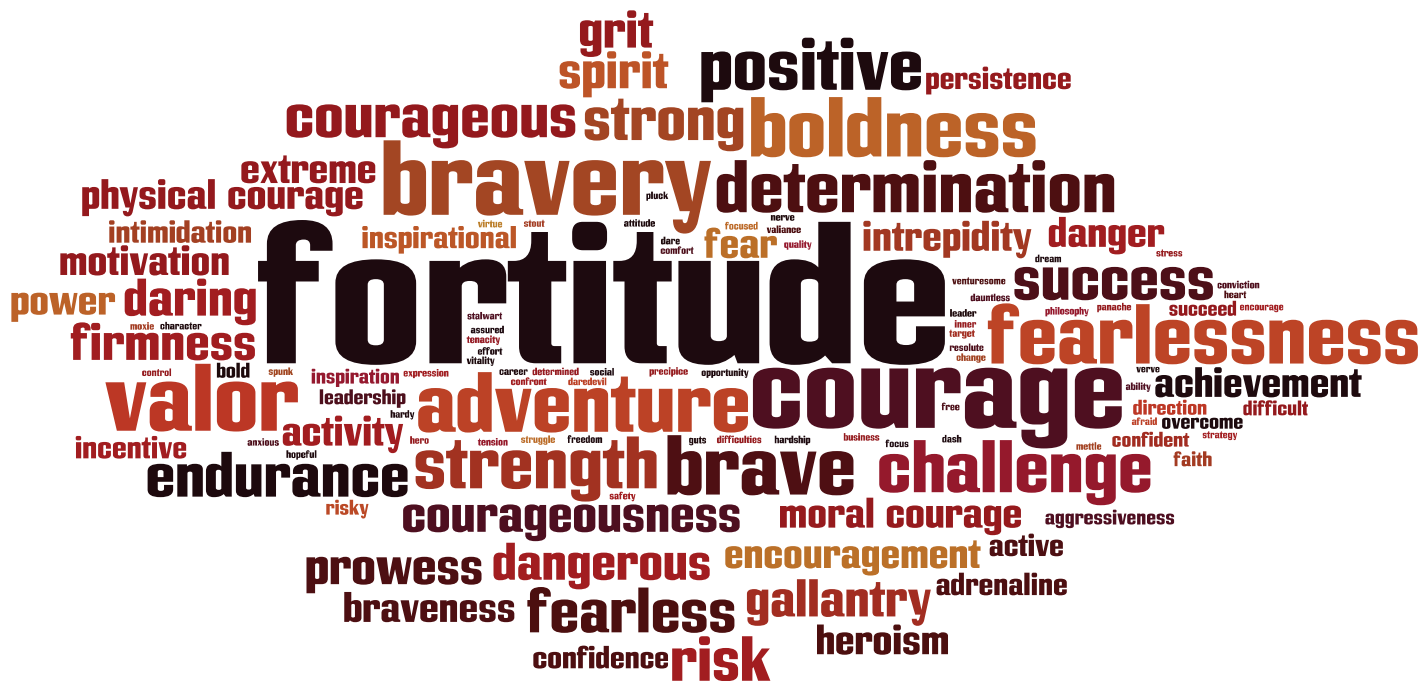


In a rather dramatic way, the blood of the Martyrs of Rome, the North American Martyrs, the Martyrs of Uganda, of Korea, and so on, gave birth to the faith of countless Christians in those countries.

In a less dramatic way, we have been enabled to stand firm in the right path and avoid evil because of the courage of those we admire. Even when we exercise Fortitude in a hidden way, the grace of that Gift could be said to invisibly radiate out from us like an electrical field to someone who needs that burst of spiritual energy in order to decide, resist evil or persevere on a difficult journey in life.

A small group of priests, sisters and dedicated lay professionals gave 10 one-month seminars to priests – training them to assist fellow priests going through difficult times. This was in the Philippines. As the seminars progressed, they ran into problems that tested their perseverance.

At the beginning of one of our most difficult seminars, a key member of the team spent the night in intense



pain and had to be rushed to a hospital to remove a very large tumor. Not withstanding the temporary loss of that staff member to the team, the seminar produced good results that had been completely unanticipated.

In another seminar, two of the team members came down with severe abdominal pain due to Amoebiasis. Again, unexpected results came from that seminar. Some might think that these difficulties and subsequent successes were only coincidental. Those who experienced all did not think so!

What could have slowed us down and made us reluctant to finish the seminars, on the contrary, instilled in us a keen desire and strength to go on.

Throughout the work, despite the setbacks, profound

renewal and conversion took place. The priests who were trained are continuing with this ministry to priests – and thanks to God and His grace – with good results.

And so also do the trials continue – but that has not stopped those engaged in this extension of the apostolate of the Servants of the Paraclete. From this experience, I believe that the Gift of Fortitude not only helps each Christian in difficulty, but it can be transmitted in any community environment and beyond.

Father Peter Lechner sP continues his ministry of training and teaching in the Philippines.

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“Holy Spirit, Divine Light and Strength, who operate constantly in our souls and without whom we are unable to think supernaturally, through your help the Apostles and Martyrs fought and sacrificed themselves out of love for Christ and for the greater glory of the Father.

Deign to accomplish in us all work for sanctification. May we too become true witnesses of Christ in this world and then, in him and through you, glorify the Father forever in the blessed life of Heaven.



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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:

Name:

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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.

Please complete the mass stipend form and return to the Servants of the Paraclete Development Office.

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