

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the Ritual of Confirmation, the Bishop holds his hands over those who are being Confirmed and prays with these words:

“All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding*, the spirit of *right judgment* and *courage*, the spirit of *knowledge* and *reverence*. Fill them with the spirit of *wonder and awe* in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

The seven gifts, or rather, the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit represents for us all the wonderful gifts that God gives us. There is a **diversity and multiplicity** of gifts. Just look over pages 3, 4 and 5 for a number of scriptural references to gifts of the Spirit. Yet there is a **unity and oneness** about these gifts in that they all come from the one and the same source, the Holy Spirit and are all interrelated. When the Holy Spirit touches people’s lives, they are filled to the brim and overflowing with the power and love of God. With these gifts, a bond and relationship can develop that brings us extremely close to Christ; God is present within us like our heartbeat, closer to us than our very breath and life itself. We become empowered to respond to God and God’s plan for us.

There are so many gifts of the Holy Spirit, our church uses the symbolic number of seven to represent all of them. The seven listed above can be found in Isaiah 11: 2-3 as qualities of the Messiah. St. Ambrose [340-397] listed these seven gifts; and St. Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274] is one of the principal theologians who wrote about the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and reflected on their meaning. The gifts are given not just to make the individual person happy but for the good of the whole Church and the good of the entire world.

WISDOM: empowers a person to see and evaluate all things – both joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success or failure – from God’s point of view

UNDERSTANDING: illuminates a persons mind and heart to see the truth, to see things as they really are with an open mind, “with penetrating intuition,” moving beyond the surface to the inner depth of the meaning of all of God’s creation.

RIGHT JUDGMENT [Counsel]: enables a person to judge individual acts as good and ought-to-be -done or as evil and ought-to-be-avoided, to make good and wise decisions

COURAGE [Fortitude, Strength]: enables a person to overcome difficulties or to endure pain and suffering, charging it with energy, perseverance and promptness, enabling the person to live the other virtues heroically, to suffer with patience and joy, to overcome all luke-warmness in the service of God.

KNOWLEDGE: empowers persons to know the teaching of God and their true destiny, allowing them to see the things that become roadblocks to union with God, how to use created things rightly and even in a holy way.

REVERENCE [Piety]: empowers a person to give true worship and praise to God and have a deep respect for all of life and all of God’s creation.

WONDER AND AWE [Fear of the Lord]: enables a person to realize God’s tremendous love, greatness, and majesty, and God’s nearness as well as the person’s total and complete dependence and reliance on God.

QUOTATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE ABOUT THE ACTIVITY AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Jude, chapter: 1, verse: 20

Dear friends, keep building on the foundation of your most holy faith, as the **Holy Spirit helps you to pray.**

2 Timothy, chapter: 1, verse: 7

God's Spirit doesn't make cowards out of us. The **Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control.**

2 Timothy, chapter: 1, verse: 14

You have been trusted with a wonderful treasure. Guard it with **the help of the Holy Spirit**, who lives within you.

1 Thessalonians, chapter: 1, verse: 6

So, when you accepted the message, you followed our example and the example of the Lord. You suffered, but the **Holy Spirit made you glad.**

Colossians, chapter: 1, verse: 8

He is also the one who told us about **the love that God's Spirit has given you.**

Colossians, chapter: 1, verse: 9

We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the **wisdom and understanding** that his Spirit gives.

Ephesians, chapter: 6, verse: 17

Let God's **saving power** be like a helmet, and for a sword use **God's message** that comes from the Spirit.

Ephesians, chapter: 6, verse: 18

Never stop praying, especially for others. Always **pray by the power of the Spirit.** Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.

Ephesians, chapter: 4, verse: 23

Let the Spirit **change your way of thinking**

Ephesians, chapter: 4, verse: 30

Don't make God's Spirit sad. The **Spirit makes you sure** that someday you will be free from your sins.

Ephesians, chapter: 5, verse: 18

Don't destroy yourself by getting drunk, but **let the Spirit fill your life.**

Ephesians, chapter: 3, verse: 16

God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that his Spirit will make you **become strong followers**

Ephesians, chapter: 4, verse: 3

Try your best to let God's Spirit **keep your hearts united**. Do this by living at **peace**.

Galatians, chapter: 5, verse: 22

God's Spirit makes us **loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful,**

Galatians, chapter: 5, verse: 25

God's **Spirit has given us life**, and so we should follow the Spirit.

Galatians, chapter: 5, verse: 22

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**.

2 Corinthians, chapter: 13, verse: 13

I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will bless you and be kind to you! May God bless you with his love, and may the **Holy Spirit join all your hearts together**.

2 Corinthians, chapter: 5, verse: 5

God is the one who makes all of this possible. He has given us his **Spirit to make us certain that he will do it**.

2 Corinthians, chapter: 3, verse: 17

The Lord and the Spirit are one and the same, and the **LORD'S Spirit sets us free**.

2 Corinthians, chapter: 3, verse: 8

So won't **the agreement that the Spirit brings** to us be even more wonderful?

1 Corinthians, chapter: 14, verse: 1

Love should be your guide. Be eager to have the gifts that come from the Holy Spirit, especially the **gift of prophecy**.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 12, verse: 4

There are **different kinds of spiritual gifts**, but **they all come from the same Spirit**.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 12, verse: 7

The Spirit has given each of us a **special way of serving others**.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 12, verse: 8

Some of us can speak with **wisdom**, while others can speak with **knowledge**, but these gifts come from the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 12, verse: 9-10

To others the Spirit has given **great faith** or the **power to heal the sick** or the **power to work mighty miracles**. Some of us are prophets, and some of us recognize when God's Spirit is present. Others can speak **different kinds of languages**, and still others **can tell what these languages mean**.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 12, verse: 11

But it is the **Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us**.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 6, verse: 19

You surely know that your body is a temple where the Holy Spirit lives. **The Spirit is in you and is a gift from God.** You are no longer your own.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 2, verse: 14

That's why only someone who has God's Spirit **can understand spiritual blessings.** Anyone who doesn't have God's Spirit thinks these blessings are foolish.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 2, verse: 15

People who are guided by the Spirit **can make all kinds of judgments,** but they cannot be judged by others.

1 Corinthians, chapter: 2, verse: 4

When I talked with you or preached, I didn't try to prove anything by sounding wise. I simply let **God's Spirit show his power.**

1 Corinthians, chapter: 2, verse: 10

God's Spirit has shown you everything. His **Spirit finds out everything, even what is deep in the mind of God.**

Romans, chapter: 8, verse: 26

The Spirit **helps us in our weakness.**

Romans, chapter: 9, verse: 1

I am a follower of Christ, and the **Holy Spirit is a witness to my conscience.**

Romans, chapter: 12, verse: 11

Never give up. Eagerly **follow the Holy Spirit** and serve the Lord.

Romans, chapter: 14, verse: 17

God's kingdom isn't about eating and drinking. It is about **pleasing God,** about **living in peace,** and about **true happiness.** All this comes from the Holy Spirit.

Romans, chapter: 8, verse: 11

Yet God raised Jesus to life! God's Spirit now lives in you, and he **will raise you to life by his Spirit.**

Romans, chapter: 8, verse: 13

But you will live, if by the help of God's Spirit you say "No" to your desires.

Joel, chapter: 2, verse: 28

Later, I will give my Spirit to everyone.

Your sons and daughters will **prophesy.**

Your old men will **have dreams,**
and your young men will **see visions.**

Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 On the day of Pentecost^a all the LORD'S followers were together in one place. **2** Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. **3** Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. **4** The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.

5 Many religious Jews from every country in the world were living in Jerusalem. **6** And when they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in their own languages. **7** They were excited and amazed, and said:

Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee? **8** Then why do we hear them speaking our very own languages? **9** Some of us are from Parthia, Media, and Elam. Others are from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, **10** Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome, **11** Crete, and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews, and others of us have chosen to be Jews. Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done.

^a **2.1 Pentecost:** A Jewish festival that came 50 days after Passover and celebrated the wheat harvest. Jews later celebrated Pentecost as the time when they were given the Law of Moses.

PRAYER FOR THE SEVENFOLD GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

O Lord Jesus,
through you I humbly pray to God our loving Father
to send the grace of the Holy Spirit,
that the sevenfold gift may be given to us.

May the Spirit send us the gift of *wisdom*
which will help us to see life from
God's own perspective;
the gift of *understanding*
which will enlighten our minds;
the gift of *right judgment*
which will guide us in the way of truth;
and the gift of *courage*
which will give us the strength to vanquish
all that gets in the way of our salvation.

May the Holy Spirit impart to us the gift of *knowledge*
which will enable us to discern your teaching
and distinguish good from evil;
the gift of *reverence*
which will make us enjoy true peace;
and the gift of *wonder and awe*
which will make us shun all wickedness
and avoid all danger of offending you.

To the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit
be given all glory
and thanksgiving forever. Amen.

(An adaptation of a Prayer by St. Bonaventure)