



**for Confirmation Candidates and Sponsors**

**Dear Candidates for Confirmation and Sponsors,**

As you begin this time of sharing in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation you may be wondering what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are and why you are working with them. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

*The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make us docile in following promptings of the Holy Spirit.*

*The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe. They belong in their fullness to Christ, son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them.*

*We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at our baptism. Confirmation is when these gifts are “stirred” for a purpose: to spread and defend the faith as true witnesses. Because we were too young to reflect on these gifts when we were baptized, preparation for Confirmation helps us to focus on those gifts we know we have and those we need to open up to receive in their fullness. By being aware of these gifts, we can more readily recognize God and thus be all that he created us to be.*

*I suggest you take time individually to fill in your reflections and then take time to share. As you begin each time together, pray this prayer to the Holy Spirit:*

***Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful***

***And enkindle in them the fire of your love.***

***Send forth your spirit and they shall be recreated,***

***And you shall renew the face of the earth.***

*I hope that as you journey together, you may recognize the Holy Spirit, who is passionately in love with you!*

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(Definitions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are taken from [The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living](#) excerpts from works of Fr. [Thomas Keating](#) by S. Stephanie Iachetta

## **The Seven Gifts of the Spirit**

The seven gifts of the Spirit...are acts and movements of the Spirit that purify and raise us to a divine mode of knowledge through the growth of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, which are the transforming virtues in the Christian scheme of things. Isaiah 11: 2 lists these gifts as Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, and Fortitude, Knowledge...Fear of the Lord....and Piety. The presence of the Holy Spirit within us is inviting us to listen to the delicate inspirations that gradually take over more and more aspects of our lives, ad to transform them from expressions of our false self into manifestations of our true self and of the infinite goodness and tenderness of the Father.

Ephesians 4: 24: NIV

Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

(The Daily Reader for Contemplative Reading by Fr Thomas Keating page 196)

## **Secret of Sanctity**

## **Gift of Reverence**

The Gift of Reverence keeps us true to ourselves and to God. It tells the truth in love and will not back down for motives of self-defense or security. Reverence is not only the fear of offending God prompted by love, but it is loyalty to one's own personal integrity: to do what one believes is right no matter what the stakes are....As the Gift of Reverence grows stronger, our trust in God expands. Humility is a profound sense of our weakness and nothingness, but at the same time an even greater trust in God's infinite mercy and compassion. The Gift of Reverence puts together these apparent opposites.

*1 Timothy 1:15-16 NLT: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-and I was the worst of them all. But that is why God had mercy on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners.*

*Name some ways you show respect (reverence) for other people and things.*

*Describe how we show reverence to God, to Jesus and to one another when we celebrate Mass together.*

*Think of a place where you most feel reverence. It might be a church, a special place in nature, or your own private place in your home. Why is it a place of reverence for you?*

*The gift of Reverence will help me*

## **Gift of Fortitude/Courage**

I am with you always.....mt 28:20

The Gift of Fortitude.... gives energy to overcome major obstacles in the way of spiritual growth.... The Spirit shows us how to sanctify our role in life so that we remain in the divine presence. This is why methods of remaining in God's presence are so valuable and necessary if we are seriously pursuing the spiritual journey...Little by little, the Gift of Fortitude, in conjunction with the other Gifts, transmutes the energy of anger designed by nature for defensive purposes into zeal for the service of God and the needs of others. It sustains difficult ministries and welcomes the vicissitudes of daily life instead of fighting or resisting them or giving way to feelings of frustration. It establishes a certain firmness of mind and heart in doing good and enduring evil, especially when these are difficult. It manifests its inspiration in the Beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be satisfied."

*Romans 12:11: "In the service of the Lord, work not halfheartedly but with conscientiousness and an eager spirit. ( pg 202 The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living.)*

List three things in your life right now that you think take a lot of courage.

Choose one of the following Scripture passages, read it and describe how courage is found in this story.

Matthew 15: 21-28

Acts 7: 54-60

Think of a person who has the gift of courage.

What makes them courageous?

Look up the word courage in the dictionary and write the definition.

Tell about a time when you had the strength to do what wasn't easy, to stand up for the unpopular, to speak the truth, or to put yourself on the line for what was right.

## **The Gift of Piety/Wonder and Awe**

*Forgive as the Lord forgave you Col 3:13 NIV*

The Gift of Piety mellows the sense of reverence for God and over-strictness with ourselves. It inspires a great spirit of kindness and understanding toward others, meekness in bearing their faults, willingness to forgive, and genuine affection for them. The Gift of Piety awakens in us a child-like attitude toward God and also a sense that everyone is our brother and sister. It sees people as companions on the journey, rather than competitors. An attitude of total forgiveness of everyone and everything is the most mature fruit of the Gift of Piety. As the sense of belonging to the human family as a whole continues to grow, this oneness extends to the earth, the environment and all indeed, to all creation. One begins to perceive all things in God and God in all things.

*Ephesians 4:32 NIV: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Pg 203*

*Tell about a time that you felt wonder and awe.*

*Read one of the passages below and explain the gift of piety/wonder and awe found in this passage.*

*Psalms 136*

*Mt 9: 1-8*

*Luke 5: 1-11*

*John 6: 30-41*

*Acts 3: 1-10*

*Name some things or people who inspire wonder and awe in you.*

*Who is it that demonstrates piety toward you? Who is it that is most accepting and loves you just as you are?*

## **The Gift of Counsel/Right Judgment**

*"The Counselor... will teach you all things...." John 14:26 NIV*

**The Gift of Counsel...**not only suggests what to do in the long range, but also what to do in the details of our daily lives. The more open we are to the Spirit, the more the Spirit takes over our lives...three stages frequently occur in action that is prompted by the Spirit. The first is that you feel called by God to do something that requires great effort, and sometimes the project is initially a huge success. The next stage is that your initial success fails. You feel that you made a mistake and are humiliated. You resolve never to take a similar risk. Finally, there is the triumph of grace, often totally unexpected. Those three elements almost always go together....All you have to do is to take the first step.

The Gift of Counsel is a peaceful inclination to continue to do what we are doing or to change what we are doing. We can ignore it. It is a suggestion. Take it or leave it. To develop that sensitivity requires work on our part to maintain interior silence, but once it is established the only time we have to take action is when we notice a loss of peace. That means that we are off course. As long as that peace is in place, we are in deep prayer all the time, whether we are praying formally or not. Whether we are counseling or doing heavy manual work, as long as that sense of inner quiet and peace is there, God is not asking us to think about or to judge the situation. He merely wants us to stay on course, to do his will in the present moment.

Romans 12:2 NAB: *Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.* Psalm 73: 23-23 *" You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel....."* (Pg 204-5)

-List three decisions you have made in the last two weeks. How did you make these decisions?

How do you feel about the outcomes?

-Describe a difficult situation you think you will face in the future. Describe how you might deal with this, and what your choices might be.

-Read Matthew: 25: 31-46 Answer the following:

Do you think the king in Jesus' story was too rough in his judgment? Why or why not?

In what way do you think the people in the story (not the king) are the ones making judgments?

-How hard is it to do and to be your very best? Be specific?

What areas of your life do you have the greatest need for right judgment?

## **The Gift of Knowledge**

*"Your face Lord, do I seek." Psalm 27:8*

There is a certain humbling character that the Gift of Knowledge imparts—namely that we are basically prone to illusion and that our way of looking at life is not the only way and certainly not the most accurate. Such knowledge opens us, like the opening of mind and heart, to the reality of God just as God is....The gift of knowledge is a intuition into the fact that only God can satisfy our deepest longing for happiness....The Spirit of God provides perspective for the energy that is channeled into the daily frustration of our immoderate desires. The Spirit says to us: "You will never find happiness in any of your instinctual needs. They are only created things, and created things are designed to be stepping-stones to God, and not substitutes for God." The Spirit presents us with the true source of happiness, which is the experience of God as intimate and always present.

Ps 27:8 "Come" my heart says, "seek his face!"(pg 206)

What do you think as you read the meaning from Fr Keating of this gift?

How do you search for Truth in your life?

Do you want the gift of knowledge or do you prefer to think that you have all the answers? Explain.

If you want to talk to someone who is not baptized, what would you think is important to tell them about Jesus?

## **The Gift of Understanding**

The Gift of Understanding reveals what is hidden in the major truths of Christian doctrine. ; The Gift of Understanding perfects deepens and illumines faith as to the meaning of reveals truth, adding new depths to the mystery to which we consent. For instance, it could be some aspect of the Holy Trinity or the greatness of God. It could be the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. It could be the infinite mercy of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In other words, it is not merely the affirmation of something we believe and assent to. A characteristic of the gift of Understanding is that it provides a kind of living experience of the mystery. One or two of those experiences can last a lifetime and make such a deep impression as to reorient one's whole spiritual life once and for all.

*1 Corinthians 2:10, 12 NRSV: These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God...We have received...the Spirit that is from God so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.*

**Have you ever had an "AHAA!" moment" when it all made sense? Explain.**

**Who do you feel has the Gift of Understanding and why?**

**Make a list of qualities you think you would find in someone who has the gift of understanding.**

## **The Gift of Wisdom: The Divine Perspective**

*Christ...the wonderful wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1:24 NLT*

The Gift of Wisdom provides us God's view of things, a kind of divine perspective on reality that penetrates through events and perceives the divine presence and action at work, even in very tragic and painful situations. To see God in suffering is indeed a high level of the Gift of Wisdom. Some things are to be learned in this perspective that cannot be learned in any other way. The Gift of Wisdom is the source of the Beatitude of the Peacemakers, those who have established peace within themselves and who have ordered their own great variety of faculties into a unity that submits to God's direction and inspiration. They are also able to establish peace around them—whether it be in their families, communities or the workplace.

*Matthew 5:9 NAB: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (+ Pg 211)*

How easy is it for you to submit to God's direction in your life? Explain.

What do you fear about submitting your life to God?

Do you tend to live for the moment or do you try to look ahead and consider the future? Have you ever contemplated the future of your soul? How would this affect your life?

Who do you know that is wise?

What makes them wise? How did they become wise?

Write some words of wisdom to live by.

# Reflections on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gift(s) of the Holy Spirit I learned the most about were \_\_\_\_\_ because:

The gift(s) of the Holy Spirit I am most aware of in myself is \_\_\_\_\_ because...

The gift(s) of the Holy Spirit I am most aware of in my sponsor/candidate is \_\_\_\_\_ because...

The gift of the Holy Spirit I want to cultivate in my life is \_\_\_\_\_ because.....

## Consent to God's Presence

If we emphasize what God is doing for us, we start the spiritual journey from a different place than has been traditional in the past. We begin the journey not with ourselves and what we are going to do for God, but with God and what God is doing for us. We consent to God's presence, letting God decide what he wants us to do. God seems to want to find out what it is like to live human life in us, and each of us is the only person who can ever give him that joy. Hence our dignity is incomparable. We are invited to give God the chance to experience God in our humanity, in our difficulties, in our weaknesses, in our additions, in our sins. Jesus chose to be part of everyone's life experience, whatever that is, and to raise everyone up to divine union.

*Acts: 17:28 NRSV: In him we live and move and have our being.....*

*+ from: The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living Fr. Thomas Keating*