

What Gifts of the Holy Spirit Should You Pray For?

By Fr. Edlefsen

WISDOM. Pray for this one if you would like a deeper prayer life, or if you feel far from God. Wisdom gives us a supernatural outlook on everything. It's also handy when you feel stressed, distracted or anxious. When Wisdom kicks in, we can enjoy and savor the presence of God: "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Wisdom is the greatest of the Gifts, because **it perfects the virtue of Charity or Love (Agape)**. At times, Wisdom fills us with great peace and a sense of intimacy with the Trinity. Also, through Wisdom, we come to know Christ like an old friend. It is a contemplative Gift. **It produces the Beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."**

UNDERSTANDING. Pray for this one when you want deeper insight into the Bible, the Creed or the teachings of the Church. Great for Bible studies! Keeps you attentive to the readings and prayers at Mass. Students should pray for Understanding before studying religion. Through Understanding, the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind with intuitive supernatural insight, so that you can penetrate the deep mysteries of God's revelation. It's a contemplative Gift. **Understanding perfects the virtue of Faith.** Understanding also has a remarkable side-effect: it clears up the mind. It's helpful for people who need a purified imagination and memory. **It produces the Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God."**

KNOWLEDGE: Pray for this one if you're confused about life, or if you're wondering why "bad things happen to good people" or why "good things happen to bad people" or if there is someone or something in your life that you can't figure out. Through Knowledge, the Holy Spirit gives intuitive insight into the human condition. Be careful with this one, though. The insight that you receive may not be what you expect or want, but over time it will make you wise and free. "The spiritual man appraises all things" (1 Corinthians 2:15). St. Francis of Assisi was a living icon of this Gift. You will begin to see the vanity of "worldliness" and the tragic reality of sin as it really is. And yet, you will embrace everything in Creation as a revelation of the Father's Mind. If you have trouble controlling yourself with sensual pleasures (food, drink, sex, luxury, etc.), it will begin to sober you up. Knowledge performs "surgery" on you sensuality. **It perfects the virtue of Temperance.** It brings an initial sorrow that is followed up by a supernatural consolation and peace. **It produces the Beatitude, "Blessed are the sorrowful, they shall be consoled."**

COUNSEL: We're often confronted with situations in which we do not know what to say or do. Our best judgment — and all the best advice — clears up nothing. We don't even know what is charitable. But God knows exactly what we should say or do, and what we should not say or do. In this case, Counsel is for you. I recommend praying for this daily, so that you're ready to receive the Spirit's Counsel when He wants to give it and when you need it. Also, pray for it before having an important discussion or giving important advice — especially in difficult situations. Through Counsel, the Spirit puts his

good word on your lips, his action in your heart and his thought in your mind. **Counsel perfects the virtue of Prudence (good judgment). It produces the Beatitude, “Blessed are merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Counsel is the Gift of Mercy.**

PIETY: This Gift is not what you think it is. It gives a deep sense of gratitude to God the Father for creating us and our loved ones, and to God the Son for suffering and dying for us. Piety heals and sanctifies our affections and emotions. Pray for this Gift if you’re having relationship troubles with your spouse, parents, children, relatives, friends neighbors or co-workers. It help us be charitable to people we don't like. Also, pray for this Gift if you suffer from emotional difficulties, or if you have had painful experiences in life that need healing. It’s most fruitful to call upon the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph first, and then to silence the mind, when praying for Piety. Piety also works best after an extended period of meditation (perhaps 20-30 minutes) so you can wind down and feel the sanctifying effects of the Holy Spirit anoint your soul through this Gift. Let your memories and emotions run freely — like a dog let off the leash — in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Consoler. **Piety perfects the virtue of Justice, and it produces the Beatitude, “Blessed are the gentle of heart, for they shall inherit the earth.”**

FORTITUDE: Pray for this Gift when your Catholic faith is challenged. Fortitude gives perseverance in keeping the faith in the midst of life’s trials, especially persecutions. It gives a supernatural endurance in trials that last a long time. "The one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Matthew 24:13). The martyrs are the greatest witnesses to Fortitude. **This Gifts perfects the virtue of Courage, and it produces the Beatitude, “Blessed are those who thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.”**

FEAR OF THE LORD: Pray for this Gift when you are tempted to commit sin, especially serious sin. The sense of “fear” that we receive through this Gift is NOT like the fear we would have for a “boss,” someone who “hold something over us” or someone who would harm or threaten us (servile fear). Rather, it’s the kind of “fear” that comes with love (filial fear): fear of doing something that will offend a loved one or harm a friendship. Through the Gift of Fear, we fear offending God. Therefore, sins that we once thought attractive become repugnant, and we lose our taste for them. **Fear of the Lord perfects the virtue of Hope, because it holds the promise of freeing us from everything that keeps us from God and Eternal Life. It perfects the Beatitude, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs in the kingdom of heaven.”**

Still not sure what Gift to pray for?
Then just say this little prayer often:

**“Dear Lord, grant me Wisdom,
the attendant at your throne.”**
(Book of Wisdom 9:4)