

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How would anyone of us feel if we got to know that someone we loved was soon going to leave us forever?

There is no doubt that we would be saddened and apprehensive of the days to come. Same was the feeling of Jesus' disciples after He told them that He will not be with them for too long.

Jesus knew what His disciples were thinking so, at The Last Supper Jesus spoke about a very special gift that he was going to give his followers:

"Anyone who loves me will be true to my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him and make our dwelling within him" (Jn 14:23By).

By this Jesus meant to tell us that God will actually come to live within those who love him and obey his commands! And where the Father and Son are, of course, the Spirit will be there also. This gift of God-within-us is called the indwelling of the Trinity. As long as we are in the state of sanctifying grace, God will live in our souls. In the New Testament, Saint Paul wrote about this in his first letter to the Corinthians: "Are you not aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? The temple of God is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Cor 3:16-17).

Saint Paul again reminds us that the mystery of God-within-us makes us more than God's creatures - it makes us his children: "The proof that you are sons is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of his Son which cries out 'Abba!' ('Father!')" (Gal 4:6)

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Along with this holy presence of God, the Spirit brings *seven gifts* to our souls at Confirmation. The prophet Isaiah foretold these gifts eight hundred years before Jesus was born: *Read (Is 11:2-3).*

- 1. Wisdom:** Helps us to see that the world is only a temporary place for us, that Heaven is our true home. It helps us to set our hearts on the things that really count in life, such as God, virtue, and prayer.
- 2. Understanding:** Gives us an insight into the mysteries of faith and helps us to explain the faith to others.
- 3. Knowledge:** Helps us to see everything in life in relation to God and eternity.
- 4. Counsel:** Helps us to make correct decisions about God's will for our lives.
- 5. Fortitude:** Gives us the strength to be faithful to Christ even when it is difficult to do so.
- 6. Piety:** Inspires us to worship God and to love him as our Father.
- 7. Fear of the Lord:** Shows us the evil of sin and helps us to live in God's grace. It is also called "wonder and awe" in God's presence because it reminds us that he is great and all-powerful.

The above gifts are not a magic formula given to us; rather like faith, hope, and charity, we have to exercise our spiritual muscles in order to use these wonderful powers.

We must pray to the Holy Spirit asking him to show us how to use them. Try to ask God to help you use them when a need arises. For example, if you are strongly tempted to go to a party where drugs will be used, ask for the gift of fortitude to help you overcome the temptation. The Holy Spirit **will** answer your prayer and show you what to do.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

As we grow in prayer and in the use of these seven gifts, we will see certain effects taking place in our lives. These are called the *fruits of the Holy Spirit*.

1. **Charity:** Love for God and for others.
2. **Joy:** Happiness in living the Christian life.
3. **Peace:** Inner calmness, even in difficulties.
4. **Patience:** Kindly putting up with the faults of others.
5. **Kindness:** Sympathy and concern for the needs of others.
6. **Goodness:** Giving good example in all that we do.
7. **Continenence:** Proper balance in our desire for pleasure.
8. **Mildness:** Being gentle in our words and deeds toward others.
9. **Fidelity:** Loyalty to God and the people we are committed to, such as one's parents, spouse, good friends.
10. **Longsuffering:** Extraordinary patience in enduring suffering.
11. **Modesty:** Respecting ourselves and others in conversations, dress, etc.
12. **Chastity:** Proper attitude toward others and control over our sexual desires.

Jesus told us that we will produce these fruits of the Spirit only if we are united with Him through prayer and the sacraments. In (Jn 1) Jesus says "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who lives in me and I in him will produce fruit abundantly, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Words to know: indwelling; seven gifts of the holy Spirit; twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit