



THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

According to Catholic Tradition, there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The standard interpretation has been the one that St Thomas Aquinas worked out in the thirteenth century in his *Summa Theologiae*:

- 1. Wisdom** is both the knowledge of and judgment about “divine things” and the ability to judge and direct human affairs according to divine truth.
- 2. Understanding** is penetrating insight into the very heart of things, especially those higher truths that are necessary for our eternal salvation—in effect, the ability to “see” God.
- 3. Counsel** allows a man to be directed by God in matters necessary for his salvation.
- 4. Fortitude** denotes a firmness of mind in doing good and in avoiding evil, particularly when it is difficult or dangerous to do so, and the confidence to overcome all obstacles, even deadly ones, by virtue of the assurance of everlasting life.
- 5. Knowledge** is the ability to judge correctly about matters of faith and right action, so as to never wander from the straight path of justice.
- 6. Piety** is, principally, revering God with filial affection, paying worship and duty to God, paying due duty to all men on account of their relationship to God, and honoring the saints and not contradicting Scripture.
- 7. Fear of God** is, in this context, “filial” or chaste fear whereby we revere God and avoid separating ourselves from him—as opposed to “servile” fear, whereby we fear punishment.