

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Wisdom.** Through wisdom, the wonders of nature, every event in history, and all the ups and downs of our life take on deeper meaning and purpose. The wise person sees where the Spirit of God is at work and is able to share that insight with others. Wisdom is the fullest expression of the gifts of knowledge and understanding.
- **Understanding.** The gift of understanding is the ability to comprehend how a person must live her or his life as a follower of Jesus. Through the gift of understanding, Christians realize that the Gospel tells them not just who Jesus is; it also tells them who we are. The gift of understanding is closely related to the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.
- **Right judgment.** The gift of right judgment is the ability to know the difference between right and wrong and then to choose what is good. It helps us to act on and live out what Jesus has taught. In the exercise of right judgment, many of the other gifts—especially understanding, wisdom, and often courage—come into play in the Christian’s daily life.
- **Courage.** The gift of courage enables us to take risks and to overcome fear as we try to live out the Gospel of Jesus. Followers of Jesus confront many challenges and even danger—the risk of being laughed at, the fear of rejection, and, for some believers, the fear of physical harm and even death. The Spirit gives Christians the strength to confront and ultimately overcome such challenges.
- **Knowledge.** The gift of knowledge is the ability to comprehend the basic meaning and message of Jesus. Jesus revealed the will of God, his Father, and taught people what they need to know to achieve fullness of life and, ultimately, salvation. The gift of knowledge is closely related to the gifts of understanding and wisdom.
- **Reverence.** Sometimes called piety, the gift of reverence gives the Christian a deep sense of respect for God. Jesus spoke of his Father, God, as “Abba,” a very intimate name similar to “daddy” or “pappa.” Through the gift of reverence, we can come before God with the openness and trust of small children, totally dependent on the One who created us.
- **Wonder and awe.** The gift of wonder and awe in the presence of God is sometimes translated as “the fear of the Lord.” Though we can approach God with the trust of little children, we are also often aware of God’s total majesty, unlimited power, and desire for justice. A child may want to sit on the lap of his loving Father, but sometimes the believer will fall on her knees in the presence of the Creator of the universe.

(All points are taken from *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, by Brian Singer-Towns et al. [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2004], pages 374–375. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)

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