

The Gift of Intelligence

Dear pilgrim,

What is the gift of intelligence?

Among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of intelligence occupies an essential place. It is not a question here of human intelligence, the fruit of study or logic, but of a supernatural light which God sheds into our souls to make us penetrate the mysteries of the world.

faith. Our reason alone can comprehend certain truths, but it remains limited before divine realities. The gift of Intelligence then comes, like a ray of sunshine through the cloud, to illuminate inwardly what we already believe.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, in the *Summa Theologica* (Ia-IIae, q. 8, a. 1), that by this gift " *the soul grasps the truths of the faith not by reasoning, but by a simple and direct intuition* ," a light that makes invisible realities almost tangible. Thanks to this gift, the spirit of the believer penetrates into the profound meaning of the Scriptures, into the value of the sacraments, into the beauty of the mystery of God. It is not a new science, but an inner clarity that transforms our way of seeing.

Three characteristics of this gift

John of St. Thomas, a great disciple of the Angelic Doctor, describes in his commentaries on the gifts of the Holy Spirit three effects of the gift of intelligence. The first is a liberation of the mind: the Holy Spirit dispels the mists of confusion and enables us to see clearly the



The Descent of the Holy Spirit, Titian (1545)

things of God. The second effect is a spiritual intuition: this gift does not proceed from human reasoning, but from a direct, almost contemplative perception of divine truths. Finally, it produces an orientation towards God: understanding is not an end in itself, but provokes an impulse of the heart that draws the soul to its Creator.

Thus, Intelligence teaches us to recognize the presence of God beyond appearances. The Christian enlightened by this gift is not content with knowing that God acts, he understands how and why God acts, even through the most ordinary events of his life.

The place of intelligence in the order of gifts

The prophet Isaiah enumerates the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "*On him shall rest the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord*" (Is 11:2). Wisdom and Intelligence appear side by side, like two inseparable sisters. Wisdom makes us taste God himself, while Intelligence reveals to us the depths of God.

Wisdom and Intelligence may be compared to light and sight: Wisdom gives the warmth and sweetness of light, but it is Intelligence that makes it possible to discern what this light illuminates. Without light, sight is useless; without a look, the light remains sterile. Thus these two gifts complement each other: one makes us love God, the other makes us understand Him.

What Intelligence Helps Us Do

The gift of intelligence teaches us to read the Word of God with the heart. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus testifies to this in her *Story of a Soul* (Manuscript A, folio 83): "*If I open a book composed by a spiritual author, I immediately feel my heart tighten [...] but it is above all the Gospel that keeps me going during my prayers; I find everything that is necessary for my poor little soul.*" This simplicity of the gaze, this direct contact with the Gospel, is precisely the work of the gift of intelligence: God speaks, and the soul understands that this word is addressed to him personally.

This gift also makes the Christian a missionary. For he who has understood the things of God inwardly cannot keep them to himself: the contemplated truth becomes fire. The layperson who lives by this gift becomes a luminous witness: he understands the deep meaning of what he believes and communicates it

not by learned arguments, but by the clarity of a life enlightened by faith. In his family, his work, his daily commitment, he sees the world in the light of God and helps others to do the same.

The Gift of Intelligence and Bliss

Saint Thomas links this gift to beatitude: " *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God* " (Mt 5:8). In fact, seeing God presupposes a pure gaze, free from passions and illusions. Intelligence acts fully only in a soul that is clear, humble and detached from sin. The pure heart is not encumbered by what passes: it becomes a mirror in which the divine light is reflected .

This is why the mission of the laity begins with his own purification. How can I enlighten others if my own eyes are blinded? The missionary is not primarily a man who speaks, but a man who sees. Whoever sees God in the silence of prayer will know how to show Him in the noises of the world.

Practical consequences for our mission

For us, pilgrims on this earth, the gift of Intelligence is a light to act. Being a missionary as a layperson does not necessarily mean going to the end of the world; it is first of all to live each day with a supernatural gaze. This gift teaches us to recognize God in the banality of everyday life, to discover his Providence in the most ordinary events.

Thanks to the gift of Intelligence:

- I understand that my home, my work, my relationships are places where God calls me to bear witness;
- I see the hand of God in trials as well as in joys, and I become able to console those who doubt;
- I transmit the faith not as a lesson, but as a light received from above.

In this way, this gift transforms the life of the laity into a living mission: every gesture, every word, every encounter becomes a sign of God's presence.

Conclusion

Let us ask the Lord, on this pilgrimage, to grant us the grace of the gift of Intelligence. May he purify our hearts so that our gaze may become clear, may he enlighten our minds so that we may penetrate the mysteries of the faith, and may he set our lives ablaze so that we may become missionaries in the world.

By allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds, we will truly become witnesses of Christ: men and women who understand, live and radiate the light of God.



Some reference works...

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