

# The Gift of Counsel

“We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)

# The Gift of Counsel Perfects the Virtue of Prudence

The gift of Counsel perfects the virtue of prudence, **enabling it to discern promptly and surely**, by means of a kind of supernatural intuition, what is most fitting especially in difficult cases, this in view of eternal life.

With the virtue of prudence we reflect and unfailingly search out the better means for achieving some goal, profiting from past experiences, studying the circumstances of a present affair to be dealt with, so as to adopt a wise solution. With the gift of Counsel comes the Holy Spirit who speaks to the heart, and **makes us understand in an instant, what we must do.**

# The Martyrs

The glorious martyrs of all times, according to the promise of Jesus [cf. 12: 11-12], do not respond to tyrants with replies carefully calculated according to the dictates of human prudence, but **follow the interior impulses of the Holy Spirit** experienced in their moment of risk.

St. Peter, arrested by the Sanhedrin after Pentecost, was given the order not to preach Jesus Christ any longer, but he replied immediately through an evident prompting of the Holy Spirit: **We must obey God rather than men** (Acts 5: 29). Human prudence would have suggested not to compromise oneself; the Counsel of the Holy Spirit, by contrast, suggested a frank response so as not to deny or betray the mission received from the Lord.

# Looking Into the Mind of God

Let us imagine that we could **look into the divine mind** in order to discover in that infinite mirror of light the proper thing to do in every circumstance, as we might look, on earth, into the brilliant mind of a learned man to find the correct answer to a problem.

This is the way of the gift of counsel. **When we work under its direction our decisions will be quick, sure, and audacious.** With what boldness do the saints proceed, with what security and with what rapidity! They do not follow the counsels of men, nor the dictates of their own reason. They have a higher norm: eternal reason, the mind of God, that illuminates their spirit and lays before them the road they should follow.

# It Helps Us See What Comes from Selfishness

The gift of Counsel gives to the soul a supernatural light which **makes it see clearly if the promptings of reason or of the heart come from nature or from grace**. A soul who has received the gift of Counsel constantly walks in the living splendor of a supernatural light, sees to the very core of every prompting of the heart, and uncovers all the malice nesting there, and all the tricks of Satan or illusions of a corrupt nature.

# The Degrees of the Gift of Counsel:

- 1) the soul succeeds rapidly in doing the will of God as regards what is immediately necessary in the spiritual life;
- 2) this Gift shows us the will of God, our designated way, not only in the necessary things of our spiritual life, but also **in the things that, while not absolutely obligatory, are very beneficial and useful for helping us to reach God;**
- 3) the soul seems to rise from the earth and **to live in another, higher world.** The hand of God guides it with security, without mishap, and without timidity.

# Cultivating the Gift of Counsel

Let us cultivate this gift of Counsel first of all by **imploring it** of the Holy Spirit with fervent and incessant prayer each day. To such ardent and continuous prayer, it is necessary to unite a **profound recognition of our misery and of our foolishness**. The Holy Spirit lowers himself to the humble and resists the presumptuous and proud [cf. 1 Pt 5:15].