

The Gift of Knowledge

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Quick Review

Gift	Faculty	Virtue
Fear of the Lord	Concupiscible appetite	Temperance
Fortitude	Irascible appetite	Fortitude
Piety	Will	Justice
Counsel	Intellect	Prudence
Knowledge	Intellect	Faith
Understanding	Intellect	Faith
Wisdom	Intellect	Love

The Capacity to Know

- Among the most precious of the treasures that make up our intellectual wealth is the capacity to know. Knowledge scrutinizes the world, probes into the depth of all phenomena, of all beings, and, recognizing the wonders God has wrought in the natural order, leads, as notably in our own times, to astonishing discoveries.

The Science of the Saints

- In the supernatural order, there is a very profound science that also makes wonderful discoveries: it is what the Scriptures call “the science of the saints.” We read in the Book of Wisdom: “She guided him [the just man] in direct ways, (...) and gave him knowledge of holy things” (10:10). This knowledge of the saints is divine knowledge. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift of Knowledge

- The gift of knowledge gives us an understanding of creatures after the divine manner so that we may be able to lift ourselves from them to God.
- The gift of knowledge is not discursive. It is intuitive; it has the divine character proper to the action of the Holy Spirit. It gives us an insight into the mysterious relationships between creatures, and particularly into the great, the transcendental, relationship that creatures have with God.

Seeing Created Things as God Sees Them

- In the light of the gift, all are reflections of divine goodness, heavenly beauty; at the same time, they are adequate means of helping us to God, luminous ladders by which we ascend to heaven.
- Creatures considered thus, in their intimate relationship with God, have two distinct characteristics: their own nothingness and the stamp of divinity upon them. A deep insight into this double aspect is a necessary condition of any understanding of them and such insight is had through the gift of knowledge.

Seeing Created Things as Mirrors of God's Love

- We can see how the saints discovered the vanity of created things in the life of St. Francis Borgia and St. Francis of Assisi. But at the same time, these saints also found created things as a mirror of God's love.
- In the high degree of the gift of knowledge, we enjoy a vision similar to the beautiful and profound one Adam and Eve must have had in paradise before the fall. With what penetration he must have contemplated the universe; with what appreciation he must have beheld the splendid verdure of paradise!

Complete Detachment

- In the perfection of the gift of knowledge is found complete detachment. Souls who are not subject to the thrall of creatures discover the holy liberty of the children of God, the joy of freedom, the deep happiness of perfection. At the same time their outlook becomes celestial and they behold the world differently—with a divine glance.

A New Outlook Towards Suffering

- Let us not end these considerations without indicating another excellent and apparently strange effect of the gift of knowledge in its higher degrees. Souls who possess it look at suffering and humiliation differently than others. This unusual and, at first sight, inexplicable love of suffering is noticeable in the lives of the saints.