

Sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Ghost, Part 1

June 9, 2019

“And they began to speak with diverse tongues, as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.”

The Fathers of the Church were fond of comparing this miracle of Pentecost, whereby the gathered people understood the Apostles in their own tongues, to the confusion that resulted from the attempt to build the Tower of Babel. In the latter case, men’s pride led to their inability to communicate with each other; at Pentecost, however, the humble prayers of the Apostles in the upper room led to their receiving the Holy Ghost and many gifts, including the gift of tongues, which enabled them to break down the barriers wrought long ago at Babel.

Though most people who are confirmed do not go around speaking in tongues (I speak here of the real gift of tongues and not the ramblings that we often hear of), they nevertheless receive gifts which can break down barriers of language. This is accomplished through charity. Charity is a universal language and the Holy Ghost is this supernatural charity in the soul for those who are in the state of grace. We have to welcome the Holy Ghost into our hearts and allow Him to rule so that we can be directed by the sevenfold gifts.

These gifts can be considered under three aspects: the spirit of truth, the spirit of holiness and the spirit of strength. The first aspect is the spirit of truth that illuminates the intellect against error. Three gifts can be considered here. First, the gift of knowledge gives us the ability to discern the use of temporal things for our salvation. We must use creatures properly so that we do not become attached to them or to the world. The gift of knowledge gives us a predisposition to see and love the truth. Through lack of this gift, many fail to see the truth. Thus, scientists, who research the things of this world, nevertheless fail to see that God exists; they interpret their findings in ways that are detrimental to our existence here below (e.g. research in embryonic stems cells whereby they destroy human lives to try and benefit others). The gift of knowledge will help us interpret the Law of God and lead to real discoveries in science. Secondly, the gift of understanding cures us from the ignorance of spiritual things and helps us penetrate mysteries more and more. Thirdly, the gift of wisdom helps us appreciate heavenly things and direct our actions to that end. This gift is the blossom and perfection of all the gifts.

Sincerely in Christ,

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