

Prayers and Meditations

Throughout our day of recollection, there will be several opportunities for quiet prayer. The following prayers and meditations may help to focus our mind upon the presence of the Holy Spirit. It may be helpful to continue to meditate upon these thoughts even following the feast of Pentecost, as a way of staying close to the Spirit and allowing the fruitful graces of this great feast to grow within us.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom
Understanding
Counsel
Fortitude
Knowledge
Piety
Fear of the Lord

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Charity
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Generosity
Gentleness
Faithfulness
Modesty
Self-control
Chastity

Prayer invoking the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer for Purity

O God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may more perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy Name. Amen.

Prayer of Cardinal Mercier

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen and console me. Tell me what I should do. Give me Your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Let me only know Your will. Amen.

Prayer for Union with the Holy Spirit

O Holy Spirit of Light and Love, to You I consecrate my heart, mind, and will for all time and eternity. May I be ever docile to Your Divine inspirations and to the teachings of the holy Catholic Church whose infallible guide You are. May my heart be ever inflamed with the love of God and love of neighbour. May my will be ever in harmony with Your Divine Will. May my life faithfully imitate the life and virtues of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him, with the Father, and You, Divine Spirit, be honour and glory forever. Amen.

Prayer of St Augustine to the Holy Spirit

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.

Prayer of St Alphonsus de Liguori

Holy Spirit, divine Consoler, I adore You as my true God, with God the Father and God the Son. I adore You and unite myself to the adoration You receive from the angels and saints.

I give You my heart and I offer my ardent thanksgiving for all the grace which You never cease to bestow on me.

O Giver of all supernatural gifts, who filled the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with such immense favours, I beg You to visit me with Your grace and Your love and to grant me the gift of holy fear, so that it may act on me as a check to prevent me from falling back into my past sins, for which I beg pardon.

Grant me the gift of piety, so that I may serve You for the future with increased fervour, follow with more promptness Your holy inspirations, and observe your divine precepts with greater fidelity.

Grant me the gift of knowledge, so that I may know the things of God and, enlightened by Your holy teaching, may walk, without deviation, in the path of eternal salvation.

Grant me the gift of fortitude, so that I may overcome courageously all the assaults of the devil, and all the dangers of this world which threaten the salvation of my soul.

Grant me the gift of counsel, so that I may choose what is more conducive to my spiritual advancement and may discover the wiles and snares of the tempter.

Grant me the gift of understanding, so that I may apprehend the divine mysteries and by contemplation of heavenly things detach my thoughts and affections from the vain things of this miserable world.

Grant me the gift of wisdom, so that I may rightly direct all my actions, referring them to God as my last end; so that, having loved Him and served Him in this life, I may have the happiness of possessing Him eternally in the next. Amen.

A Meditation of St John Henry Newman on the Holy Spirit

I adore You, O Almighty Lord, the Paraclete, because You in Your infinite compassion have brought me into this Church, the work of Your supernatural power. I had no claim on You for so wonderful a favour over anyone else in the whole world. There were many men far better than I by nature, gifted with more pleasing natural gifts, and less stained with sin. Yet You, in Your inscrutable love for me, have chosen me and brought me into Your fold. You have a reason for everything You do. I know there must have been an all-wise reason, as we speak in human language, for Your choosing me and not another—but I know that that reason was something external to myself. I did nothing towards it—I did everything against it. I did everything to thwart Your purpose. And thus I owe all to Your grace. I should have lived and died in darkness and sin; I should have become worse and worse the longer I lived; I should have got more to hate and abjure You, O Source of my bliss; I should have got yearly more fit for hell, and at length I should have gone there, but for Your incomprehensible love to me. O my God, that overpowering love took me captive. Was any boyhood so impious as some years of mine! Did I not in fact dare You to do Your worst? Ah, how I struggled to get free from You; but You are stronger than I and have prevailed. I have not a word to say, but to bow down in awe before the depths of Your love.

The Writings of St Basil the Great on the Holy Spirit

To the Spirit all creatures turn for their sanctification; all who live virtuously seek him, and are, by his influence, refreshed and helped towards their own natural end.

He is the source of holiness, the light of our understanding, for to every mind he offers his own light for the discovery of truth.

He is simple in essence, but manifold in power. He is present to each in his fulness, and in his fulness is present everywhere. He is divided, but does not suffer by the division; all share in him, but he remains whole, like a sunbeam whose kindly influence benefits each creature as though it were present to that creature alone, and shines over land and sea and dissolves in the air.

Through him hearts are raised on high, the weak are led by the hand, those who are advanced gain perfection. He it is who shines on those whose hearts are purified and stainless and makes them truly spiritual through the common union they have with him.

Even as bright and shining bodies, once touched by a ray of light falling on them, become even more glorious and themselves cast another light, so too souls that carry the Spirit, and are enlightened by the Spirit, become spiritual themselves and send forth grace upon others.

This grace enables them to foresee the future, to understand mysteries, to grasp hidden things, to receive spiritual blessings, to have their thoughts fixed on heavenly things, and to dance with the angels. So is their joy unending, so is their perseverance in God unfailing, so do they acquire likeness to God, so – most sublime of all – do they themselves become divine.

St Cyril of Jerusalem, on the Holy Spirit

When the dry tree is watered it brings forth shoots. So too the soul in sin: when through penance it is made worthy of the grace of the Holy Spirit, it bears the fruits of justice. Though the Spirit is one in nature, yet by the will of God and in the name of Christ he brings about multiple effects of virtue.

His approach is gentle, his presence fragrant, his yoke very light; rays of light and knowledge shine forth before him as he comes. He comes with the heart of a true protector; he comes to save, to heal, to teach, to admonish, to strengthen, to console, to enlighten the mind (first of the man who receives him, then – through him – the minds of others also).

As a man previously in darkness, suddenly seeing the sun, receives his sight and sees clearly what he did not see before, so the man deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit is enlightened in soul and sees beyond the power of human sight what he did not know before.

Lumen Gentium on the Holy Spirit

When the work which the Father had given the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost that he might forever sanctify the Church. In this way all believers would have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit. He is the Spirit of life, a fountain of water springing up to eternal life. Through him the Father gives life to men who are dead from sin, till at last he revives in Christ even their mortal bodies.

The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple. In them he prays and witnesses to the fact that they are adopted sons. By the power of the gospel he allows the Church to keep the freshness of youth, and leads her to perfect union with her spouse. The Spirit and the bride both say to the Lord Jesus: “Come!”

Thus, the Church shines forth as a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Homily of Pope Francis for Pentecost, 2018

The Spirit frees hearts chained by fear. He overcomes all resistance. To those content with half measures he inspires whole-hearted generosity. He opens hearts that are closed. He impels the comfortable to go out and serve. He drives the self-satisfied to set out in new directions. He makes the lukewarm thrill to new dreams. That is what it means to change hearts. Plenty of people promise change, new beginnings, prodigious renewals, but experience teaches us that no earthly attempt to change reality can ever completely satisfy the human heart. Yet the change that the Spirit brings is different. It does not revolutionize life around us, but changes our hearts. It does not free us from the weight of our problems, but liberates us *within* so that we can face them. It does not give us everything at once, but makes us press on confidently, never growing weary of life. The Spirit keeps our hearts young – a renewed youth. Youth, for all our attempts to prolong it, sooner or later fades away; the Spirit, instead, prevents the only kind of aging that is unhealthy: namely, growing old within. How does he do this? By renewing our hearts, by pardoning sinners. Here is the

great change: from guilty he makes us righteous and thus changes everything. From slaves of sin we become free, from servants we become beloved children, from worthless worthy, from disillusioned filled with hope. By the working of the Holy Spirit, joy is reborn and peace blossoms in our hearts.

Dom Marmion on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Let us now say a word on each of the seven gifts. This number does not constitute a limit, for the action of God is infinite, but rather, like many other biblical numbers, it denotes plenitude.

The first mentioned is that of **wisdom**. What does wisdom here signify? It is a supernatural gift whereby to know or esteem Divine things by the spiritual taste with which the Holy Spirit inspires us. It is an intimate, a deep knowledge that relishes the things of God. This gift is to have not only the knowledge, but the relish for celestial and supernatural things. This gift makes us prefer, without any hesitation, the blessedness of God's service to all earthly joys. But to experience this, we must carefully put away all that draws us towards the unlawful pleasures of the senses.

The gift of **understanding** makes us search deeply into the truths of faith. You read a text of Holy Scripture; you have read and re-read it many times without having been struck by it; but, one day, a sudden light flashes, illuminating to its depths, so to speak, the truth set forth in this text; this truth then becomes altogether clear to you and often a principle of supernatural life and action. Is it by your reflections that you have arrived at this result? No, it is an illumination, and intuition of the Holy Spirit Who, by the gift of understanding, makes you penetrate further into the inmost and deep meaning of the revealed truths so that you may hold them the more firmly.

By the gift of **counsel**, the Holy Spirit responds to this prayer of the soul: *Lord, what will you have me do?* It is a disposition whereby the child of God is enabled to judge of things according to principles above those of human wisdom. Sometimes, natural prudence, always limited, points out how to act in such or such a way; then, by the gift of counsel, the Holy Spirit shows higher principles of conduct which ought to direct the actions of the child of God.

Owing to our fallen nature, we often need strength to carry into effect what God requires of us; it is the Holy Spirit Who, by the gift of **fortitude**, sustains us in particularly difficult moments. There are pusillanimous souls that fear the trials of the inner life. It is impossible that these trials should be wanting; they are even so much the deeper in proportion as God calls us higher. But let us fear nothing: the Spirit of fortitude is with us, to support valiantly the adversities we meet with as we come nearer to God. It is this strength that makes the martyrs and sustains the virgins. The world wonders to see them so courageous, because it imagines they find their strength in themselves, while in reality they draw it from God alone.

The gift of **knowledge** makes us see created things in a supernatural way as only a child of God can see them. This gift makes us know created things, including ourselves, from God's point of view; it makes us know our supernatural end and the means of arriving at it, but with intuitions which preserve us from the false maxims of the world and the suggestions of the spirit of darkness.

The gift of **piety** is one of the most precious, because it concurs directly in regulating the attitude we ought to keep in our relations with God: the blending of adoration, respect and profound reverence towards the Divine Majesty; of love, confidence, tenderness, perfect abandonment and holy liberty in the presence of Him who is our Heavenly Father.

Lastly there is the gift of **fear**. It seems strange, does it not? to find, in the Prophecy of Isaiah, this expression: "He shall be filled with the Spirit of fear." How can this be? How can Christ, the Son of God, be filled with the fear of God? It is because there are two kinds of fear of God: first there is the fear which thinks only of the chastisement due to sin; that is servile fear, wanting in nobility but not always without use. Then there is the fear which makes us avoid sin because it offends God; that is filial fear.