

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by Fr. Tom

Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Part 6: Piety – I’ll Have a Slice of That

In our study so far, we have examined five of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. We now move to an exploration of the Gift of Piety. This particular Gift perfects many of the Virtues, including the Virtues of Faith and Hope, as mentioned in our last column.

First, let’s explore the popular definition of piety. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, piety is “the quality or state of being pious: such as either {a} fidelity to natural obligations (as to parents) or {b} dutifulness in religion: devoutness.” [*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “piety”] Using this definition, we might describe someone who goes to Mass or prays the Rosary daily as a pious person. However, as with the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Gift is not so much about an outward expression – in this case, of religion or spirituality. The Gift of Piety is about an inward disposition and an inclination – in this case, toward love for God. In other words, the Gift of Piety has more to do with *why* we pray than *how* we pray or *how often*.

Pope Francis describes the Gift of Piety as a relationship. In a papal audience from 2014, he says, “Through this spiritual gift, we experience ever anew, with joy and gratitude, the loving relationship with God our Father, which has been granted us in Jesus His Son. It is this loving relationship which grounds and perfects our authentic worship of God. The love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit leads us to perceive the Lord’s presence and love in our lives and

moves us to respond joyfully in prayer and adoration. Piety is not mere religiosity. It is that genuine religious spirit which makes us turn to the Father as His children and to grow in our love for others, seeing them as our brothers and sisters, members of God’s family.” [Video of Papal Audience, June 4, 2014, romereports.com]

As we can see from this quote, piety not only perfects our love and worship for God, but also aids in our love for our neighbor. Piety emanates from love. As Piety helps us to express true worship and adoration, it is a perfection of the Virtue of Faith as well. True worship expresses not only Love and Faith, but Hope as well. Our Hope is in the Lord; therefore, Piety helps us set ourselves before Him as children of the Father, a Father who loves and cares for His children.

In addition, as we have stated previously, all of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit spring from Wisdom. Wisdom is judgment based on God’s love for us and on our love of God and neighbor. As we can see from the pope’s remarks above, Piety helps us to express that love through genuine worship of God our Father, as well as our loving response to our neighbors as brothers and sisters.

Next week, we will explore our last Gift of the Holy Spirit – Fear of the Lord.

