

Conference on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit through Mary

Sons and Daughters of the Lamb Retreat

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Words of Introduction – The Gifts of God & taking Mary into your Heart

Some people are more graced & gifted w/ the gifts of the HS than other people. **1 Cor 12:11** says that the HS “apportions to each [believer] individually as He wills” ... **Eph 4:7** says: “grace [is] given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” ... **Heb 2:4** says that God distributes the gifts of the HS according to His own will. So not all God’s children are equally graced.

What we want to work on is being grateful for the gifts & graces that others receive, not envious or jealous of them. If we do that – if we appreciate & thank the Lord for the gifts that others have – then we’ll have the joy & the peace & the hope in our hearts that the Lord wants us to have.

We know that grace is, in its simplest terms, a free gift of God. God’s grace is a free gift, & it’s a gift that meant to give us freedom as well. As St. Paul says in **2 Cor 3:17**: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”. The Lord wants us to have that spirit of freedom ... & no one, after Our Lord, had it as much as Our Lady did.

We want to keep in mind a basic spiritual principle, which we see illustrated at the foot of the Cross. From the Cross, Jesus entrusted Our Lady to St. John, saying to him: “Behold your Mother!” (**Jn 19:27**). After that, St. John writes: “And from that hour, the disciple took her into his own home”. The Greek text literally says: “He took her into his own”, meaning “into his heart”. Welcoming someone into your heart means opening yourself up to love them & to be loved by them, & that’s what we’re called to do regarding Our Lady – to welcome Her into our lives & into our heart, so that we can receive Her love, but also so that we can be more filled w/ the HS ... & that’s what we’ll talk about in this conference.

Intro: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me

The **prophet Isaiah**, in announcing the coming of the Messiah, declared that “the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom & of understanding, the spirit of counsel & of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge & of piety, & he shall be filled w/ the spirit of the fear of the Lord” (**Is 11:2-3**). [note: the Septuagint & the Vulgate include the gift of piety; the Hebrew text doesn’t].

Since, through baptism, we are incorporated into Christ, then we share in these same gifts ... we share in the same Spirit that guided Him in His earthly ministry.

We know that Our Lord was led by the HS in His ministry. John the Baptist testified that the Spirit descended upon Our Lord during His baptism (**Jn 1:32**) ... we hear in **Mt 4:1** that Jesus was led by the HS into the wilderness ... we hear Him rejoicing in the HS in **Lk 10:21** ... so, if God’s plan is to conform us to the image of Christ (**Rom 8:29**), that means that we too are to be “Spirit-led” in our lives ... & that’s what the gifts of the HS are meant to do.

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A little later we will make a distinction b/t charismatic gifts & sanctifying gifts, so stay tuned for that.

Luke 1:35

Foundational text for our spiritual life: Lk 1:35 ... this text is the pattern for how God works in the world, how He enters the world, how He sanctifies the world ...

“The angel said to [Mary], “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God’.”

This verse speaks of 2 people working together: Mary & the HS. One of them is a human person, one of them is a Divine Person.

The 1st person is Mary. **Mary** is a human person, She’s a pure creature – She’s the purest of creatures, so much so that She’s **the Immaculate Conception**.

Being the Immaculate Conception, Mary was the only person to be totally sanctified by God from the moment of Her conception. **A&E** were created sinless; Mary was conceived sinless. We could call Her the HS’s **first masterpiece**.

Mary was conceived sinless, She remained sinless all throughout Her life, & She was also filled w/ every grace & blessing. So IC means “conceived w/o sin” but also, at the same time, “filled w/ the grace & the gifts of the HS”.

The 2nd Person is the HS. The **HS** is a Divine Person, the 3rd Person of the Bl. Trinity. He is called **“Love”** [the Love of the F&S is the HS]; He’s called **“Gift”** b/c in Him God gives Himself; He’s also called **“the Sanctifier”**, b/c our sanctification is especially attributed to Him [even though it’s the work of all 3 Divine Persons].

So, in **Lk 1:35**, we see Mary & the HS working together in order to do what? In order to form Jesus Christ & to bring Him into the world ... the world which was created “by Him & for Him” (**Col 1:16**).

In that sense, we can say that Jesus Christ is the **second masterpiece** of the HS – hierarchically He’s first b/c He’s much greater than Our Lady since He’s a Divine Person, but chronologically – in time - He’s 2nd.

Guess who the **third masterpiece** of the HS is? Hopefully, it’ll be you & me! That’s what our spiritual life is meant to be about ... about Mary & the HS working together to make me another one of God’s masterpieces.

Spouse of the HS

Another title for Our Lady is **Spouse of the HS**. It seems that St. Francis of Assisi was the 1st person to give Her this title in one of the prayers he composed.

When Our Lady says to **St. Bernadette at Lourdes**: “I am the Immaculate Conception”, She’s invoking that title as Her identity. **St. Maximilian Kolbe** had an interesting way of looking at this ... he said that the HS is the uncreated Immaculate Conception, Mary is the created Immaculate Conception ... & he said that, just as spouses take the name of their spouse when they’re wedded, so too, Our Lady took [or was given] the name of Her spouse ... & so She’s called the IC.

Why would St. Maximilian call the HS “the uncreated IC”? In the Bl. Trinity, the F generates the S ... the S & the F spirate the HS ... so the HS is somewhat like a “conception” in the that respect [He’s the fruit of the love of the F&S] ... but the HS Himself is not fruitful w/in the Trinity like the F&S are. You could say that, in a sense, He’s “sterile” b/c there’s no Divine Person that proceeds from Him.

The HS is only fruitful ... where? Outside of the Bl. Trinity. He is only fruitful through & w/ His Spouse, who is Our Lady.

St. Maximilian Kolbe said that “the Son [meaning the 2nd Person of the Bl. Trinity] is incarnate: Jesus Christ. The HS is quasi-incarnate [he said][in] the Immaculata”. In other words, Our Lady is so intimately united to the HS that She’s almost like what the HS would be if He had taken flesh.

Mother of God

If we go back to the Annunciation ... there, we see the union & the fruitfulness of Mary’s bond w/ the HS unfolding. When the angel Gabriel calls Mary “full of grace”, he’s saying that She is full of the HS. The angel asks Her consent to be the Mother of the Savior, & seconding the motion of the HS, She freely gives Her consent. St. Paul calls this “the fullness of time” (**Gal 4:4**) ... it means that this is when God’s whole plan for creation began to be realized or executed.

[pause] So why is Mary the IC & the Spouse of the HS? B/c Her mission is to be the Mother of God. With & through the HS, She brings God into this world “in the flesh”, & She gives to Him her DNA, Her features, & everything that a true mother gives to Her child.

We could say that Mary was created primarily to be a Mother.

Mother of the Church

But She’s not just the Mother of God, the Mother of Jesus ... She’s also the Mother of the Church. She’s Mother of what **St. Augustine** called “the whole Christ”, meaning Jesus first as the head of the Church, & then us as the body or members of the Church.

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So through Mary & w/ Her, the HS conceives Christ – meaning 1st Jesus Himself, then us, His brothers & sisters ... the HS nourishes us through Her & helps us to grow through Her ... just as He did w/ Jesus, so too, He does the same thing w/ us.

Redeemer & Coredeptrix

So w/ Her “yes” at the Annunciation, Mary said “yes” not only to Her 1st born Son, Jesus, but She also said “yes” to all of us at the same time ... all of Her spiritual children.

If She **gave birth to Jesus** on Christmas Day, when did She give birth to us? On Good Friday ... when She reaffirmed Her “yes” on Calvary & was rewarded for that “yes” when She received & spiritually gave birth to St. John & w/ him, all of the other children that God would give to Her.

Just as Jesus entrusted the HS to the Church, so too, He entrusted His Mother to the Church as well. They are 2 inseparable gifts given to us by the Son of God: the HS & Mary.

And we know that a mother normally doesn't just give birth to a child & that's it ... a mother nourishes her child, educates him, helps him to grow & to mature ... but, in the case of us & Our Lady, it's the Spouse – it's the HS - & it's the Son who provide the resources that She needs for Her children ... mainly, **grace**.

And we always have to keep in mind ... what's God's plan & purpose for me? He says it very clearly in **Rom 8:29**, when St. Paul says that God “has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son”. In simpler words, God's plan is for us to become like Jesus, to the fullest extent possible for us. Who better to help us do that than the one who raised Him & who knows & loves Him better than anyone else?

Mediatix of All Graces

But there's another reason that Mary is so important for us in the spiritual life. She's also the **Mediatix of all graces**. We know that all graces come from the Redemption & from the Redeemer – from Jesus & His saving death on Calvary. Jesus is the source of all grace. He acquires that grace of us on Calvary ... He distributes that grace as the One Mediator b/t God & men (**1 Tim 2:5**) ... but everything that He is & that He does, He shares w/ His Mother. He has Her share in the acquiring of grace as Coredeptrix ... He has Her share in the distribution of what they acquired, making Her Mediatix of All Graces.

We can look at it from another perspective ... in the action or the work of God, everything proceeds from the Father through the Son & by the HS to Our Lady - & that's how God the Son & all grace comes into the world – it comes from the Trinity to Our Lady. And this is all done in order to bring us back to the Heavenly Father. So, to go back to Him, we go **in the reverse direction** – we go

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through Our Lady, w/ the HS (who is Her Spouse), to the Son, & the Son brings us back to the Father.

St. Maximilian Kolbe writes: “If all the souls that have lived on this earth, and all those that still struggle here could make known the all-powerful influence the Immaculata has exercised over them, and her maternal solicitude for these souls redeemed by the precious Blood of her divine Son, what an incalculable number of volumes would be required! All these persons would relate only what they had been able to discover as special graces received through Mary. But in fact every grace that comes to a soul comes from her hands, for she is the Mediatrix of all grace; and at every moment new graces penetrate into the souls of men. There are graces which enlighten the intellect, which strengthen the will, which draw us toward what is good. There are ordinary and extraordinary graces; some graces directly concern our natural life, and others have to do with the sanctification of our souls. Only at the last judgment, only in Heaven will we discover with what loving attention our Heavenly Mother watched over each one of us without ceasing, over every soul individually, because all are her children. She strives to shape them after the model, Jesus, her first-born, the archetype of all sanctity, the Man-God.” (Sketch, 1940)

Pentecost

After Calvary, after the Resurrection & the Ascension, there was Pentecost. Pentecost was the pouring out of the HS upon humanity ... & so it was fitting for Our Lady to be present there. If everything that the HS gives to the world comes through Mary, then His gifts go through Her as well.

St. Maximilian Kolbe writes: “Till the end of the world it will be the task of the HS to form the new members predestined to glory in the mystical body of Christ. And, as St. Louis de Montfort shows, this task is carried to completion w/ Mary, in Mary & through Mary”.

St. Maximilian writes elsewhere: “St. Augustine said: ‘The ruin of mankind came about through the poison injected by a woman; the regeneration of mankind is the salvation brought about through a woman’. What St. Bernard said has been translated into deeds by the Immaculate Virgin: ‘Such is the will of God, who decreed that we should obtain everything we need through Mary’ (Miles Immaculatae, I, 1938)”.

Another quote: “When we reflect on these two truths: that all graces come from the Father, by the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that our holy Mother Mary is, so to speak, one with the Holy Spirit, we are driven to the conclusion that this Most Holy Mother is indeed the intermediary by whom all graces come to us. (Conf. Sept. 25, 1937)”

Spiritual Gifts in General

Something that we mentioned before is that one of the names for **the HS is “Gift”** b/c it’s through Him that God gives Himself. Every gift that the HS gives to humanity is given through Mary, His

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Spouse, & it's given to form Jesus in us – to make us more Christlike - & it's given for the building up of the Body of Christ & for the spreading of the Kingdom of God.

And since every gift passes through Mary's hands & through Her Heart, then every gift has Her fingerprints on it as well & will naturally draw us closer to Her the more I put those good gifts to use. **The gift leads to the Giver.** The HS is the "Giver" w/ a big "G" & Mary is the "giver" w/ a small "g". So the gifts of the HS are also gifts of Mary. Plus, the HS would naturally want to bring me not only closer to the Father, closer to the Son, & closer to Himself ... but also He'd want to bring me closer to my Mother.

Charismatic vs. Sanctifying Gifts

When we speak of the Gifts of the HS, we can distinguish 2 types of gifts: there are the sanctifying gifts of the HS & the charismatic gifts. The **sanctifying gifts** are known as the 7 gifts of the HS: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, fear of the Lord. These are the gifts that are given to us at baptism to form us into the image of Christ. They are supernatural habits of the soul.

So **actual graces & sanctifying graces** are what Christ communicates to us through Our Lady & through the HS ... **the sanctifying gifts** – or 7 gifts – are divine habits which make me docile & positively disposed to the work of the HS in my soul & in my life. They help me to promptly obey the inspirations of grace that I receive.

[pause] **Charismatic gifts** include what are called word gifts, teaching gifts, & signs of power gifts. Word gifts include praying & speaking in tongues & interpreting them, prophecy; teaching gifts include discernment, & expressions of wisdom & knowledge; signs of power gifts include miracles, healings, & the gift of faith. Charismatic gifts are meant to build up the body of Christ – they're gifts given primarily to help others.

CCC 2003 says charismatic gifts are oriented towards sanctifying grace & are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church. For example, St. Gregory the Great says that miracles are extraordinary graces of the HS that function primarily as witnesses to outsiders that Christianity is a supernatural religion.

Everyone is meant to have & put to use the **sanctifying gifts** of the HS; the **charismatic gifts** are given freely by the HS, as He wills. So, for us personally, the sanctifying gifts are more important than the charismatic gifts. Remember, Jesus says that He will appear on the Last Day & many will say to Him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name & cast out demons in your name & do many mighty works in your name?" And Jesus says that He will declare to them: "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers" (**Mt 7:22-23**). So there are people who have & use charismatic gifts, but they aren't necessarily living in God's grace ... & so their good works are of no use to them.

In the spiritual life, your first duty is to save & sanctify your own soul ... & then we're called to help save & sanctify others. Usually the 2 go hand-in-hand, but your own soul is your spiritual priority. So my living in a state of grace & cultivating the sanctifying gifts of the HS should be the priority ... then, yes, I'm also called to put to good use whatever charismatic gifts the Lord may have entrusted to me.

7 Sanctifying Gifts of the HS

The 7 gifts of the HS are meant to perfect in us the virtues that, as followers of Christ, we are called to practice. There are the 3 theological virtues of faith, hope, & charity, & there are the 4 cardinal virtues – the moral virtues of prudence, justice, temperance & fortitude ... we're called to live & to practice all of these virtues ... but the gifts of the HS are meant to perfect those virtues in a way that we can truly live being guided by the HS.

Note: Virtues are the 1st floor of the house; Gifts are the 2nd floor – i.e. in order to have a 2nd floor, you 1st need a 1st floor!

[cfr. Tanqueray, *The Spiritual Life*, p. 609ss]

When we act virtually, we act under the impulse of grace; but w/ His gifts, God Himself takes the initiative & acts in a superhuman way. Before we have the time to reflect & consult, God sends us divine intuitions, lights & inspirations which act in us w/o our deliberation ... but not w/o our consent. Under the influence of the gifts, we're more passive than active – our activity consists in mainly consenting to God's operation & allowing ourselves to be led by the HS ... & hopefully in promptly & generously following His inspirations.

The **virtues** are more **active** – they are us “doing the right thing” ... the **gifts** require more docility & receptiveness, so they're more **passive**. They enable us to receive & follow the movements of God's grace operating w/in us. In this case, as Aquinas says, the soul is not the mover, but the thing moved.

W/ the virtues, we act according to the principles & rules of prudence – we reflect, deliberate, take counsel, make choices, etc. **W/ the gifts**, we let ourselves be led by divine inspiration which suddenly & w/o any reflection on our part urges us to do one thing or another.

Since the share of grace is far greater in the case of the gifts than the virtues, the acts performed under influence of the gifts are more perfect. It's under the influence of the gifts that heroic virtue is practiced & heroic acts are performed.

An **illustration** of this ... practicing virtue is like rowing a ship using the oars; being led by the gifts is like harnessing the wind w/ a sail & letting that move the boat instead.

Another illustration: a musician strikes the strings of a harp to produce a beautiful sound is like the Christian who practices the virtues ... but if the HS comes & begins to pluck the strings of the soul, then the soul's under His influence [i.e. His gifts]. This is an image that the Fathers use to describe

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the action of Jesus on Mary's soul. They say that She's a "most melodious harp used by Jesus to delight the Eternal Father".

At first, **the docility to the HS's gifts** is merely being receptive to them ... but then they need to be cultivated to attain their full development. So the person becomes more passive under the Hand of God but at the same time more active in His service & in the practice of good works.

The more docile & united we are to the HS, the source of all sanctity, the holier we will become ... & the gifts place us under His direct action. The HS enlightens our mind w/ His lights, points out clearly what we must do ... He enkindles our heart & strengthens our will to make us accomplish God's will. It's through the gifts that the soul is raised to the contemplative life.

Everyone one of us who is baptized has these gifts. God gives them, however, according to the measure that He wants to give them to us & according to our fidelity – according to our cooperation. It was only to Our Lady that He gave these gifts "without measure", we could say.

Cultivating the Gifts of the HS

1. In order to run, you first need to know how to walk. In order to be guided by the gifts of the HS, you first need to live the virtues that correspond to them: faith, hope, love ... prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude. The virtues pave the road & the gifts are like the car that you're able to drive down the road in.

Aquinas, in his Summa, says that "the moral & intellectual virtues precede the gifts, since man, through being well subordinate to his own reason, is disposed to rightly be subordinate to God". So you can't really be controlled by your passions & be led by the HS at the same time ... you have to have dominion over your passions & formed good habits of humility, or obedience, of meekness, of chastity. Before grace can fully guide us, nature has to be tamed.

Think of it like **riding a chariot or a stagecoach** ... if the horses that are pulling the chariot or the coach are wild, then it's going to be a wild ride! ... & you'll probably get injured or at least not go where you're supposed to go & all that ... first, the horses need to be tamed. ... God wants us to first be virtuous before He allows us to be guided by His gifts.

2. We also cultivate the gifts by **combatting the spirit of the world**, which is opposed to the spirit of God. St. Paul, in **1 Cor 2:12+14**, says: "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God ... the unspiritual [or natural] man does not received the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, & he is not able to understand them b/c they are spiritually discerned". So the more we detach from the spirit of the world & the things of the world which are not necessary for us to be immersed in, the more room God's Spirit has to operate in our minds & in our hearts & lives.

3. Also, to be more attuned & more disposed to the action of the HS, we should try to practice **interior recollection**, which means frequently thinking about God living not just near us but also inside of us as well. In this way, we never lose sight of His presence, even in the midst of very absorbing occupations. Spiritual writers will call it “withdrawing into the shrine of your heart” or into “your inner cell”, like Our Lord says in the Sermon on the Mount: “When you pray, go into your room [meaning your heart] & pray to your Father who is in secret” (**Mt 6:6**).

The Psalmist says in **Ps 85:8**: “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints, to those who turn to him in their hearts”.

The Imitation of Christ, Book 3, chapter one, opens by saying: “I shall listen to what the Lord God will say deep within my heart. Blessed is the soul that listens to the Lord speaking within and that receives a word of comfort from him. Blessed are the ears that are attuned to the soft whisper of God’s voice and that ignore the buzzing of the world ...” & it continues in that vein.

4. We must work on **not deliberately resisting the inspirations** that the HS gives us. Sometimes they need to be properly discerned, but not openly resisted.

Ps 95:7 says: “O that today you would listen to [the Lord’s] voice”. And Our Lord said in **Jn 8:29**: “I always do what is pleasing to him [to the Heavenly Father]”. That should be our aim as well.

5. Also, we should **invoke the HS** in our prayers, in our activities. “Come, HS, fill the hearts of your faithful & enkindle in us the fire of your love” ... or the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The 7 Gifts & Mary

[from Roschini’s *Dizionario di Mariologia*, p.137-139; also Tanqueray, p.616ss]

Counsel. [perfects prudence]

The gift of counsel perfects the virtue of prudence [prudence, generally speaking, is having wise discernment & making wise choices]. Counsel’s a gift that makes us be guided promptly & surely by a type of supernatural intuition regarding what we need to do, esp. in difficult cases. So the object of the gift of counsel is good direction in particular actions & situations.

When Jesus says to the disciples: “**When they deliver you up**, do not be anxious about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (**Mt 10:19-20**) – that’s a good example of the gift of counsel at work.

Our Lady is called “**the Mother of Good Counsel**”. Her soul was always turned towards God from whom She perceived His inspirations w/ great ease. The words of **Prov 2:11** apply to Her: “Counsel shall keep you, & prudence shall preserve you” (D-R). This tendency of Our Lady to turn to the Lord & receive His divine illuminations in all the circumstances of Her life helped Her to maintain Her soul in peace, even in the moments of greatest suffering.

If we **ask Our Lady** for the gift of counsel, She'll give it to us b/c She wants us to be guided by the right Spirit, not by the wrong spirit (or simply by our own personal likes or dislikes).

Piety. [perfects virtue of religion]

The gift of piety perfects the virtue of religion which is connected to justice. Religion means offering to God what is due to Him ... piety produces in our heart a loving affection towards the Lord – the affection of a loving child - & also a tender devotion to spiritual persons & things & activities.

I think of the **last 2 Joyful mysteries** in this vein ... the offering of Jesus in the Temple is like practicing the virtue of religion [giving to God what's due to Him] ... the searching for the child Jesus in the Temple is like the work of the gift of piety [searching for & serving the Lord w/ a heart full of love].

In Mary, the gift of piety produced a very, very tender love towards God & of course an incredibly tender love towards Her Son & a love for all of the prayers & activities that revolved around the worship of God. She had the tenderest love for God b/c Her Son was God!

If we ask Her, She'll give us a great tenderness towards Him as well.

Fortitude. [perfects fortitude]

The gift of fortitude perfects the virtue of fortitude. Fortitude is strength in adversity; it's faithfulness in the midst of difficulty. As a gift, it gives to our will an impulse & an energy that makes us capable of doing what's right & of joyfully suffering & undertaking great things & overcoming great obstacles. In a sense, it gives us God's strength.

How does this apply to **Our Lady**? Well, think of the greatness of the work that God gave Her to accomplish ... & think of the immense difficulties that She had to confront. Unlike us, She didn't have to battle against "**her flesh**" b/c She was sinless ... but against "**the world**" & "**the devil**" – her battle was unprecedented. Through the gift of fortitude, She leaned constantly on the Lord, never lost hope, & overcame every difficulty & suffering in helping Her Son to redeem humanity.

One of **Abraham Lincoln's** biographers described him as a man of "velvet steel" – meek on the outside, hard as steel interiorly in his resolutions. That description could very well apply to Our Lady & the gift of fortitude working in Her life. And we should ask Her for that gift as well, especially when we have to go through difficulties which seem truly above & beyond our strength.

Fear of the Lord. [perfects temperance & hope]

The gift of the fear of the Lord perfects the virtue of hope [theological virtue] & also the virtue of temperance [moderation in pleasurable things]. You can fear the Lord for 2 reasons: one, b/c you're afraid to be punished or go to hell – that's what's called "**servile fear**", the fear of a servant ... or 2)

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you can fear the Lord meaning that you're afraid to hurt or disappoint Him. That's called "**filial fear**" – the fear of a child who loves their parent & wants to please them.

The gift of the fear of the Lord helps the virtue of hope b/c it makes us fearful of displeasing God & being separated from Him ... it helps w/ the virtue of temperance b/c it helps detach us from sinful or false pleasures which could make us lose the grace of God. It's a gift that inclines our will to a filial respect for God, making us avoid sin b/c we don't want to displease God, & it encourages us to hope in His powerful assistance.

Mary's fear of the Lord was great, but it wasn't servile. She didn't fear punishment from God & She couldn't lose God through sin b/c, by a special grace, She was impeccable. Her fear was a reverential fear caused by a vivid sentiment of the infinite majesty & power & goodness of God.

There was freedom in the fear of the Lord that She had ... we should ask her for this gift as well, so that we can experience the freedom that God wants us to have as well. As St. Paul says in **2 Cor 3:17**: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom".

Science [knowledge]. [perfects faith] [also talk about intellect & wisdom]

The gift of knowledge helps us to judge rightly regarding created things & their relations to God ... **the gift of intellect** [or understanding] reveals to us the intimate harmony of the truths God has revealed [so the truths of Divine Revelation] ... **the gift of wisdom** makes us judge, appreciate, & enjoy that harmony.

All 3 of these gifts give us a quasi experiential knowledge of God b/c they help us to know divine things not by means of simple human reason but by means of superior light that makes us grasp them as if we've had a direct experience of them.

The object of **the gift of knowledge** is created things in as much as they lead us to God – to God who made them & who sustains them in being. Created things in this way are like a staircase that leads us to the Lord. **[note: that painting of Murillo of St. Francis embracing Christ & stepping on the world]**

To **Our Lady** God conceded a vast knowledge of natural & supernatural things & He also infused in Her a divine instinct or intuition that allowed her to judge accurately the worth of the things of God & to see how all human knowledge comes from the font of all truth, which is God Himself. Her Magnificat that She shares w/ Elizabeth is a great example of this.

So if we want to see the created world more from God's perspective, we should ask Our Lady for the gift of knowledge.

Intellect [understanding]. [perfects faith]

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Closely associated w/ the gift of knowledge is the gift of understanding. The gift of understanding is not limited to only created things ... it extends to all revealed truths & allows us to grasp them in a deeper way. It doesn't make us wholly comprehend them – only God can do that – but it helps us to understand that, even though spiritual & divine truths can be obscure, they are credible [i.e. we can believe them] & we can begin to see how they harmonize & fit together.

With **Mary**, She had the light of faith that helped Her understand God's truths & His mysteries, but She also had this gift of understanding which gave Her glimpses of intense light that helped Her to have a profound intelligence regarding God's plans, especially the role that She Herself would have to accomplish.

So if we want to see how created things & God's truths fit together better, we can ask Our Lady for the gift of understanding.

Wisdom. [perfects charity]

The gift of wisdom is considered the most perfect of the HS's gifts. It perfects the virtue of charity ... it resides in the intellect & in the will ... it gives light & warmth, truth & love to the soul. Just as charity is the sum & the mother of all the virtues, the gift of wisdom is the sum & mother of all the HS's gifts. In this way, the gift of wisdom helps us to discern & judge divine things in their highest principles & makes us "taste & enjoy them", we could say.

Our Lady, more than any other creature, received a greater participation in the virtue of charity. She also possessed the gift of wisdom more than anyone else. With it She knew how to instinctually discern divine & spiritual things from human & earthly things. This divine wisdom filled Her soul w/ a sweetness that was almost infinite.

Conclusion

So the gifts of the HS – whether they be charismatic gifts or sanctifying gifts ... the gifts come to us through Our Lady's mediation. Devotion to Her will help to foster whatever gifts we've been given. And certainly, we are free to ask the Lord for whatever gifts we'd like to have ... but be sure that the Lord will ask you to put to good use those gifts.