

The gift of knowledge

“My people perish for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6)

Knowledge is the gift of the Holy Spirit that enables us to see God and His creation the way He wants us to, in order that we might live aright in His presence and not perish. It is that special gift that shines so bright in us that we no longer live in the darkness of doubts and misconceptions about God, and the things of God. It is our experience of Him as our true and only God, the one in whom we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28) and who is worthy of all our praise, worship and thanksgiving (Rev. 4:11; 5:6-14).

This understanding of the gift of knowledge is reflected in the priestly prayer of Jesus our Lord, recorded in the Gospel according to St. John (17:1-26). In this most wonderful prayer, the Lord speaks of the gift of knowledge in connection with four other gifts that God has bestowed on us. They are the gifts of truth, of faith, of consecration and of eternal life:

Of TRUTH because “I have given them the teaching I received from you, and they received it and KNOW in TRUTH that I came from you” (17:8a). To have knowledge is to seize the opportunity to worship God “in spirit and truth; for that is the kind of worship the Father wants” (Jn. 4:21-24);

Of FAITH because “They BELIEVE that that you have sent me” (17:8b). When we come to knowledge, we proclaim with St. Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to BELIEVE, and now we KNOW that you are the Holy One of God” (Jn. 6:68-69);

Of CONSECRATION because “I go to the sacrifice by which I am CONSECRATED, so that they too may be CONSECRATED in TRUTH” (17:17-19). St. Peter tells us that in obeying the truth, we have gained interior purification from which comes sincere love for God and neighbor (1 Pt. 1:22).

And of ETERNAL LIFE because “This is ETERNAL LIFE: to KNOW you, the only true God, and the One you sent, Jesus Christ” (17:3). And this is at the heart of our relationship with God: He so loved us that He “gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not perish, but may have ETERNAL LIFE (Jn. 3:16).

Dearly beloved, this is a cause for celebration, this should cause us to leap for joy, for when the Spirit of TRUTH (Jn. 14:17) fills us with the gift of knowledge, He does not just place on us the burden of mental activity. Rather, he brings us into a deeper and fuller relationship with God, and enables us to trust God and to allow him to hold our hands on the pathways of our successes and struggles, joys and sorrows, comforts and pains, until we come to eternal life. Yes, our knowledge is our consecration in the truth of God; it makes us holy and sets us apart for God and for his work, so that when our earthly duties are done we will be united with him whose love fills and consumes us.

Knowledge. Truth. Faith. Consecration. Eternal life. All these gifts are ours to keep and cherish, to live and allow to blossom. Then, let all persons rejoice who have knowledge, for in knowing God, they will never perish.