

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Saint Alphonsus was known above all as a practical man who dealt in the concrete rather than the abstract. His life is indeed a practical model for the everyday Christian who has difficulty recognizing the dignity of Christian life amid the swirl of problems, pain, misunderstanding and failure. Alphonsus suffered all these things. He is a saint because he was able to maintain an intimate sense of the presence of the suffering Christ through it.

St. Alphonsus Liguori is the patron saint of Theologians and Vocations and declared by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori's Story

In his day, Alphonsus fought for the liberation of moral theology from the rigidity of Jansenism. His moral theology, which went through 60 editions in the century following him, concentrated on the practical and concrete problems of pastors and confessors. If a certain legalism and minimalism crept into moral theology, it should not be attributed to this model of moderation and gentleness.

At the University of Naples, Alphonsus received a doctorate in both canon and civil law by acclamation, at the age of 16, but he soon gave up the practice of law for apostolic activity. He was ordained a priest, and concentrated his pastoral efforts on popular parish missions, hearing confessions, and forming Christian groups.

He founded the Redemptorist congregation in 1732. It was an association of priests and brothers living a common life, dedicated to the imitation of Christ, and working mainly in popular missions for peasants in rural areas. Almost as an omen of what was to come later, he found himself deserted after a while by all his original companions except one lay brother. But the congregation managed to survive and was formally approved 17 years later, though its troubles were not over.

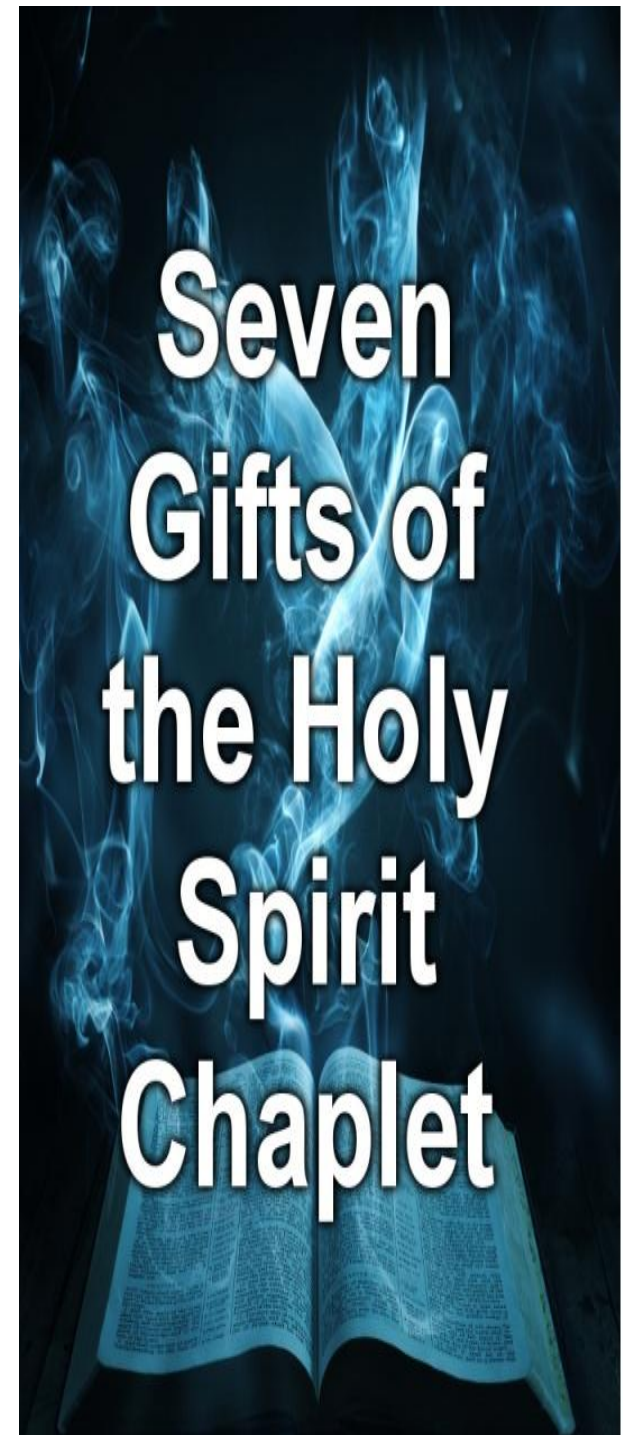
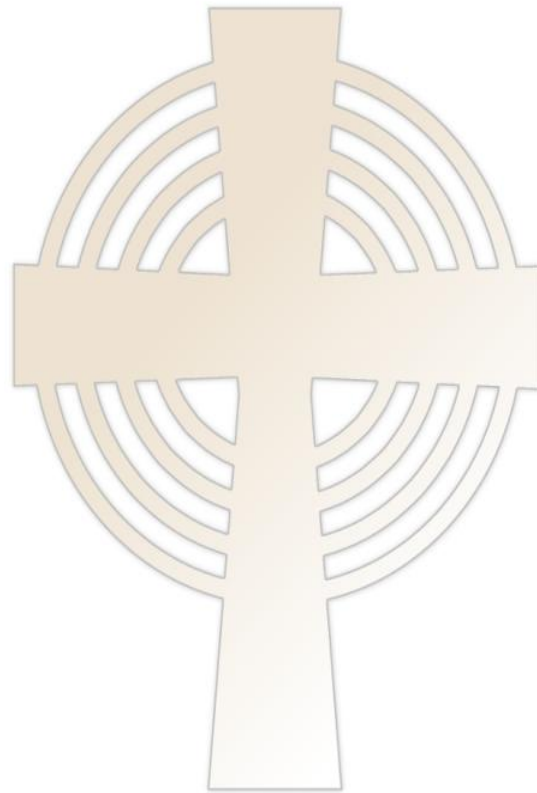
Alphonsus' great pastoral reforms were in the pulpit and confessional—replacing the pompous oratory of the time with simplicity, and the rigorism of Jansenism with kindness. His great fame as a writer has somewhat eclipsed the fact that for 26 years he traveled up and down the Kingdom of Naples preaching popular missions.

He was made bishop at age 66 after trying to reject the honor, and at once instituted a thorough reform of his diocese.

At 71, Alphonsus was afflicted with rheumatic pains which left incurable bending of his neck. Until it was straightened a little, the pressure of his chin caused a raw wound on his chest. He suffered a final 18 months of "dark night" scruples, fears, temptations against every article of faith and every virtue, interspersed with intervals of light and relief, when ecstasies were frequent.

Alphonsus is best known for his moral theology, but he also wrote well in the field of spiritual and dogmatic theology. His *Glories of Mary* is one of the great works on that subject, and his book *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* went through 40 editions in his lifetime, greatly influencing the practice of this devotion in the Church.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are enumerated in the Book of Isaiah 11:2-3. They are present in fullness in Jesus Christ but they are found in all Christians who are in a state of grace. At Baptism we receive seven special gifts from the Holy Spirit. These gifts are freely given to us to help us live as followers of Jesus and to build up the Body of Christ, the Church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are sealed and strengthened within us at Confirmation. These seven gifts help us to respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to make good choices, and to serve God and others.



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How to pray the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit Chaplet

Beginning on the medal or crucifix, pray:

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 favors, I beg You to visit me with Your grace and Your love and to grant me your gifts.

Amen.

On each of the large (red) beads, consider a gift of the Holy Spirit. (below)

On the next 3 big (white / black) beads, pray:

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria

1. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
2. Grant me the gift of piety, so that I may serve You for the future with increased fervor, follow with more promptness Your holy inspirations, and observe your divine precepts with greater fidelity.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
3. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
4. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
5. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
6. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria
7. 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.
Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria

*The meditations on the gifts of the Holy Spirit
were written by St. Alphonsus Liguori*

Our Father

Our Father, Who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed are thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise You, we bless You,
We adore You, we glorify You,
We give You thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
You take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Amen

