Society of Saint Pius X

SSPX

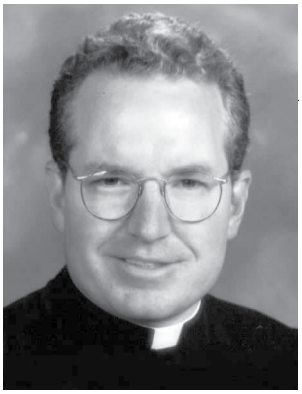


Holy Angels Novitiate

Number 22 ⁘ Fall 2026



Six Professed Religious Brothers of the SSPX with Fr. Andrew Dwyer (center)
Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima (Portugal)



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

It is time for an update from the Novitiate. As you already know, the consecration of bishops was a very important work for the Church and the Society of Saint Pius X and for the world. We took the opportunity to send our professed brothers to this event. Hundreds of religious were present. This was a spiritual treasure to these dedicated souls and will be so for years to come. After this grand event the brothers did a bit of traveling to see European sites. Their first stop was Portugal, to visit the place where the Queen of Heaven came to speak to the young shepherd children of Fatima: Lucia, Francesco and Jacinta. They paid a visit to the great basilica there and the homes of the children. They drove to Spain and visited the Cathedral of Seville, which was spectacular. There also are the remains of Christopher Columbus .

The professed brothers returned to the U.S. and rejoined their fellow novices and postulants to butcher two thousand chickens for our community. Amongst other farm duties are the feeding of eighteen swine, tending to thirty sheep and looking after one hundred plus laying hens. Let us not forget the garden work. The brothers also cared for three men's retreats during the summer months.

At the end of the summer, the brothers were happy to partake in their annual retreat which is always held in late September. We had forty plus brothers in attendance with the retreat master being Father Daniel Themann. The vows ceremony always takes place on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel at the end of September. Two of our brothers made their perpetual vows: Brothers Ignatius and Nathaniel. Six of brothers made their first vows; Brothers: Joseph John, Samuel of Mary, Paul of Mary, John Fisher, Martin Camillus, and Giuseppe Marie. They then began their journey to the seminary in Virginia for their final year of formation. H.E. Bishop Bernard Fellay was present and received the vows of the brothers, with a pontifical ceremony.

A novitiate is a place of formation for the brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X. It is a three-year program that forms the brother in his spiritual, academic, and practical skills in order to be of benefit in our priories, assisting the priests in his work. The three years are: Postulant, 1st year Novice, and 2nd year Novice. Then the brothers will spend a year at our seminary in Dillwyn, Virginia. After this final year they will be assigned to our priories. This September we received seven new Postulants. Deo Gratias!

Be sure to read Father Dean's excellent article: *The Gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Life of a Christian.* I would like to thank all of our benefactors who have donated to preserve this beautiful property for our priests, religious brothers, and seminarians. The brothers pray the rosary daily for our friends and benefactors. I invite you to view our website to see all our past newsletters.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Father Charles J. Ward
Rector

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Life of a Christian

We know about the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Most of us had to memorize these seven gifts when we were preparing for confirmation: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Piety, Fortitude, and Fear of the Lord. So what else is there to know? Much, dear Christian. We need to understand ***what they really are***, not just the list; and we need to know ***why*** we even have these gifts.

It was St. Thomas Aquinas who said, **"The Gifts of the Holy Ghost are perfections of man, whereby he becomes docile to the movements of the Holy Ghost in him."** He backs this up by saying that human beings can be moved in two ways – we can move ourselves by using our reason and free will; or, we can be moved by a higher power. We speak here not so much about physical movement, but of any kind of inspiration or movement of our soul. Now the only powers higher than man are God and the angels. And since His angels do nothing contrary to God's will, they can be said to be the same power. So we can move ourselves using our own reason and free will, or God can move us. And this is precisely what the Gifts of the Holy Ghose allow God to do. Through them He can directly move our soul through His interior inspirations and divine nudges.

Now before we go on, an objection is in order here. And it goes like this: The Holy Ghost is God, He is almighty. Why does He need to give us special gifts so that we can be docile to His movements in us? If He is God, He can certainly



Brothers Retreat with Fr. Daniel Themann

H.E. Bishop Bernard Fellay - First Vows of six Brothers



do with us whatever He wants. We can answer this by saying, yes, God can certainly do whatever it takes to move us. And this would be the effect of His almighty power or of a powerful actual grace, which occasionally God does use – like when He appeared to St. Paul and converted him on the spot! However, the objection does not understand one essential point – that for a baptized person, God is our adopted Father. And a father and child are meant to have a close relationship. This is what God desires with us, His children. And the Gifts of the Holy Ghost are meant to greatly faciliate this relationship between God and His children.

Let's take an example: Say that a parent desires to get their child's attention, to ask them to do something. What does the parent do? They will call to their child. But what if the child is not paying attention? Then the parent will have to shout or insist repeatedly that their child listen to them and force the child to pay attention. However, it goes without saying, that no parent desires to act this way. A parent is pleased if their child is attentive to them from the start. Then all they need do is call in a normal or even quiet voice and their child will respond.

So it is with God and his adopted children. He greatly desires an intimate relationship with us. God has established this relationship by giving us a share in His divine life through sanctifying grace, as well as the power to act supernaturally by infused virtues. But this was not enough for our Heavenly Father. He wanted to facilitate even further His relationship with us, by giving us something which would make us able to easily perceive His slightest desires towards us. These are the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Think of the Gifts, then, as special abilities God gives us, to pay close attention to Him. By the Gifts we are attuned to the Holy Ghost's delicate workings within us.

There is an old analogy about the Gifts; and it is a good one. Consider your soul as a boat on the sea. You are striving to go to a distant shore, which represents eternal lfie. Now before motors came along, there were two ways to move on the water: by rowing, or by sailing. God also gives us two means to move towards eternal life: the supernatural virtues, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The supernatural virtues are like the oars on our boat. It is up to us to use them, but when we do we move in the desired direction. This is the effort and part that we can do. We must always be at our oars, that is, practing virtue, and moving towards eternal life. However, there is a better way; a faster way to move – sailing. But sailing requires that our boat has sails. When the sails are up, the wind is caught by the sails and moves the whole boat with very little effort on our part. By sailing our boat moves faster, and with much less effort than rowing.

Sailing is like being moved by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The sails are the Gifts. We must have sails to be moved by the wind, otherwise we are unable to catch the wind. So it is with the Gifts. Our soul must possess the Gifts in



Brothers Ignatius and Nathaniel make Perpetual Vows



Tomb of Christopher Columbus in Seville, Spain

order to be moved by the Holy Ghost. If our soul is in the state of sanctfying grace, then we possess the Gifts - our sails are up. Then it is simply a question of waiting for the wind to blow; for the Holy Ghost to move us. Howevrer, this is completely outside of our control. Just as sailors cannot command or control the wind at sea, so we cannot control the Holy Ghost, but depend on Him to move us, when and how He desires.

And this is how the virtues differ from the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The virtues are under our control, we can use them whenever we desire, with God's normal help of grace. The Gifts however, are not under our control. We have them, it's true, but we cannot use them directly. We do not possess the switch to turn them on. Only God, the Holy Ghost can do that. So we must wait patiently for Him to put His Gifts in us into motion. **"The Spirit breaths where He wills; and you hear His voice, but do not know where He comes from or where He goes. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit."** (St. John 3, 8)

The Holy Ghost with His gifts dwells in souls who possess sanctifying grace. As wonderful as this is, unfortunately, in many souls the Holy Ghost does not engage His gifts very often. Why not? Because we place conditions that impede the Holy Ghost from using His gifts in us. What are these conditions? Primarily, attachments to venial sins and also a too human way of judging things. Attachments to venial sins act as obstacles which impede the working of the Gifts in our soul. The divine life in souls is lived unconsciously by those who are never recollected and almost never think of their interior. So the Holy Ghost uses his gifts only rarely, or in a weak manner in souls who are rarely recollected and not attuned to His movements.

According to the Dominican theologian, Fr. Arintero: *"In the beginning, we usually live this divine life unconsciously and after the manner of infants, without recognizing...the Holy Ghost Himself, who vivifies our souls, renews our hearts, and enables us to be truly spiritual and to live as worthy sons of God. Great numbers of Christians and even religious...never leave this phase of spiritual infancy, which is that of beginners in the spiritual life. Seldom will they note the continual impulses of the divine Consoler, who secretly moves, sustains, and comforts them. They do not realize*

that they are the sons of God, and although they live by Him, they work according to their own designs and caprices and keep the spirit confined…They usually follow the prudence of the flesh and are guided by the judgments of human prudence rather than by those of Christian prudence… But when souls are strengthened in virtue and having conquered themselves, they conform their wills more and more to that of God, they begin to feel and perceive certain desires, impulses, and instincts which are entirely new and truly divine. As these souls continue to follow the impulses of the Holy Ghost with docility, they gradually perceive His touches more and more clearly, taking note of His loving presence and recognizing the life and virtues which He infuses in them. In this way, they begin, little by little, to work principally through the Gifts."

"Ordinarily, the soul does not perceive these things clearly as supernatural until it is advanced on the path of virtue and so united to the divine will that it does not stifle the voice of the Spirit. At this stage it does not resist His impulses but follows Him with docility, permitting Him to work freely in the soul."

But why are there seven Gifts? Why not just one? Because there are seven different ways that the Holy Ghost can inspire or move us; and we need an ability to perceive each one of these. Some of these are intellectual gifts, some are in our affective powers. But these distinctions are more than we can treat of here.

The faithful should pray often to the Holy Ghost to be more docile to His inspirations. The sequence of Pentecost makes a beautiful prayer to this purpose. Let them also pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the faithful spouse of the Holy Ghost. For, according to St. Louis de Montfort, the Holy Ghost flys to a soul truly devoted to her. It is she who can help us to acquire the dispositions needed for the Holy Ghost to use His Gifts more often in us.



Refurbish Well- for our main house, cost us Thirty Thousand Dollars…

Holy Angels Novitiate is the house of formation for the Brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X in the United States.

The Brothers of the Society are religious dedicated to the glory of God through the service of His priests. They accomplish this primarily through the observance of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—the foundations of Catholic religious life through the centuries—by their prayers and by their example. They also assist the priests of the Society in their apostolates in many different ways according to the needs of each individual priory. Brothers are currently engaged in teaching catechism, serving Mass, maintaining sacristies, and directing choirs. They also care for the material needs of the priests by cooking, performing maintenance, accounting, and completing innumerable small but useful tasks.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of Saint Pius X and its Brothers, recognized the dignity and value of the Brothers' vocation when he exhorted them to be the "guardian angels of our communities." It was his wish that each priory of the Society would eventually have a resident religious Brother. This wish can only be realized through the selfless response of many souls to Christ's call together with the generosity of our benefactors. God will certainly reward all of them abundantly.

Donation Information
Please make out checks or money orders in US dollars only to: "Holy Angels Novitiate."

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