What is the difference between the human virtue of wisdom and the Holy Spirit’s Gift of Wisdom?
Why is Wisdom almost synonymous with Love?
Can you name someone you believe has received the Gift of Wisdom? Explain.
How would your life be different if you received the Gift of Wisdom?
How can you receive the Gift of Wisdom from the Holy Spirit?

I. The Gift of Wisdom

1. Wisdom is the intellectual virtue by which the results of reasoning are traced back to their principles (insight) and unified in one vision of the truth by seeing how the whole of creation and of history reflect the power, truth, and love of God. Human wisdom is philosophy. Sacred wisdom is of two kinds (1) the acquired faith-wisdom we call theology, and (2) the Gift of Wisdom which is the perfect flowering of faith.

2. The Gift of wisdom is intimately associated by St. Thomas with the theological virtue of Love, because in this life our deepest understanding of God does not come from the reasoning of theology but from our likeness (connaturality) to God through love. As we understand a friend because we love him, so we come to understand God by loving Him. Aquinas also connects it to the Beatitude "Blessed are the peace-makers" because true wisdom brings peace with God, our neighbors, and ourselves. This is the peace of God of which the New Testament and the liturgy so often speak, a peace that Jesus gave to His apostles after the resurrection and which the saints experience even in their suffering and martyrdom.

Wisdom is God-given knowledge, not learned from books, that provides us with a more intimate and joyful insight into God and His mysteries. This gift enables us to better know God and divine things. It can be illustrated by the words of Jesus when He states, “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.” (Mt 11:25) In other words, there is a type of revelation that no amount of studying can produce as it is directly infused into our soul by God. It allows simple souls to “see with the eyes of God”.

The concept of a heavenly wisdom can further be seen in scripture where James contrasts it with earthly wisdom. "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. Wisdom of this kind does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. (James 3:13-17)

St. Augustine tells us, "Wisdom is the knowledge of Divine things." It allows us to “see things from God’s perspective”. In his book, The Three Ages of the Interior Life, R. Garrigou-Lagrange writes, “The gift of wisdom, the principle of a living contemplation that directs action, enables the soul to taste the goodness of God, to see it manifested in all events, even in the most painful, since God permits evil only for a higher good, which we shall see later and which it is sometimes given us to glimpse on earth.” The gift of wisdom enables us to better understand how God will often allow crosses to enter our lives in order to bring about a greater good. We may not comprehend exactly what the greater good is, but we will be more inclined to trust God's judgment.
The saints teach us that wisdom is closely related to the virtue of charity. Therefore, the more one loves God, the more capable they are of receiving this gift. And the more that the gift of wisdom increases in the soul, the more capable of loving God one becomes.

II. The Gift of Wisdom: The Intellect as the "Disciple of Love"

In the Gospel, Our Lord described one of the effects of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, because He is within us, instructs us as Jesus says, "in everything." At first we are inclined to consider this dimension of the gift of the Holy Spirit in a kind of quantitative sense. There is this great body of knowledge. So much to learn! So many books to read! So much to think about! Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we who have received the indwelling grace will have His assistance in the very difficult task of mastering what is to be learned.

In a qualitative sense the Holy Spirit's presence in us will cause us to look at everything in a new way. Our Lord in the Gospel is really making reference to the gift of Wisdom, the highest of the Holy Spirit's seven gifts. The gift of the Holy Spirit's Wisdom is different from the virtue of wisdom.

The virtue of wisdom is something we get by our own hard work, by human effort, while the gift of Wisdom is just that—it's a gift. The gift of Wisdom comes from asking God for it.

The Holy Spirit's gift is a kind of knowing and judging that comes from what St. Thomas says is "connaturality," that is, in the gift of Wisdom, the Holy Spirit and I become one. He establishes the harmony of sympathy, a dynamic unity, so that what He knows about the things of God and everything else is what I see, too. I see with the Holy Spirit's own eyes. By this gift of Wisdom, the Holy Spirit shares with you and me His view, His vision of how all things, all being—whether First Being or created being—how it all fits together.

As St. Thomas points out, this vision that comes from the gift of Wisdom is, like that of the virtue of wisdom, the fruit of love. For St. Thomas, the practical intellect's judgment is ultimately determined by inclination, not by thinking things through. And the proper perfection of practical judgment is "truth by agreement with desire." Here, the intellect "is the disciple of love." It's love that teaches us how to judge, it's love that gives the right judgment. And that's how it is in Wisdom.

Here, the object is not grasped by investigation, not by study, not by long hours of pondering the text, but it is delivered over to the docile intellect through love. For in practical judgment, and even more so in Wisdom, we know wisely because we love rightly. It is because the Holy Spirit has poured into us the Love of God (St. Paul said—"the love of God has been poured out in us"). Because the Holy Spirit does that, the loving that is directed to God, by God, and the loving that God directs to all that He has made—because of that loving in us, we are wise with God's own Wisdom.

It is to be related to God and what pertains to Him. You have to do this in such a way that you allow for the right ordering into the ultimate whole. That will happen through study. That is the virtue of wisdom. The gift of Wisdom is a way of seeing all things, a way of seeing that comes from our sharing in God's love.
Another way to say this is to affirm that this gift of Wisdom is having the very heart and mind of Christ. That's the work of the Holy Spirit throughout salvation history, wherever He is—hovering over the waters in Genesis, hovering over Our Lady at the moment of the Annunciation, hovering over the bread and wine during the Eucharist. It is His job to shape the matter into the Christ-form. This is His work in the world. In our being instructed by Him, He shapes our hearts and our minds into the heart and mind of Christ.

III. Another perspective on the Gift of Wisdom

This Wisdom we ask for, this being instructed in everything by the Holy Spirit, is nothing else than the Wisdom of the cross, the Wisdom that understands everything in the light of the cross. The ultimate meaning of everything you investigate, all of these things find their ultimate meaning in the Cross of Jesus Christ. This is Wisdom.

There are three types of wisdom:
- The wisdom of God (I Corinthians 2:6-7) See readings
- The wisdom of the world (I Corinthians 2:6) See readings
- The wisdom of man (Ecclesiastes 1:16-18) See readings

Wisdom, like the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit, accompanies sanctifying grace, makes a person well disposed to receive the inspirations and movements of the Holy Spirit, and completes and perfects the virtues of those who receive them.

What is specific to wisdom is that it makes the soul responsive to the Holy Spirit in the contemplation of divine things and in the use of God's ideas to judge both created and divine matters. It affects a filial fear of God, as well as a welcome peace in the heart of man.

Pope John Paul II says that it is not enough to simply provide data on the situation and to make a "scientific" inquiry to come up with a picture of today's sociocultural and ecclesial circumstances. An interpretation of the situation is even more important, though it is not always easy to do so; such interpretation has to be done within the context of a Gospel discernment.

"This discernment is nourished by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit who evokes everywhere and in all circumstances, obedience to the faith, the joyous courage of following Jesus, and the gift of wisdom, which judges all things and is judged by no one (see 1 Corinthians 2:15)

We ask for the gift of wisdom not only for special undertakings, but to follow God's will, which is a continuous task for the Christian. The whole person is "called to seek and love God 'with all one's heart, and with all one's soul, and with all one's might' (see Deuteronomy 6:5), and one's neighbor as oneself (see Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-39)." To do so, we should "never cease to ask the Almighty for the gift of wisdom in the struggles of everyday life (see Wisdom 9:10)
With this gift we constantly use God's standards and not ours. Or better still, we try to make our standards conform (cum-foma) to God's. We aim for a sort of "connaturality" with God, in such a way that a prior conformity to God's will makes us always will what is good.

The gift of wisdom is one that should be sought eagerly, however it is not easy to attain. Wisdom is a light that helps guide us through the darkness of this world. When we use wisdom we learn to make choices based on God’s perspective and the needs of other people, rather than our own wants and desires. Wisdom helps us to think and act in ways that allow us to live a life that is pleasing to the one who created us.

The gift of wisdom is finally, according to the enumeration of Isaias, the highest of all, as charity, to which it corresponds, is the loftiest of the virtues. It leads the apostles and Father’s of the Church to judge all things by relation to God, the first Cause and last End, and to judge them thus, not as acquired theology does, but by that connaturalness or sympathy with divine things which comes from charity.

By His inspiration, the Holy Ghost makes use of this connaturalness to show us the beauty, the sanctity, and the radiating plenitude of the mysteries of salvation, which correspond so well to our deepest and highest aspirations.(22)

The gift of wisdom, the principle of a living contemplation that directs action, enables the soul to taste the goodness of God, to see it manifested in all events, even in the most painful, since God permits evil only for a higher good, which we shall see later and which it is sometimes given us to glimpse on earth.

The gift of wisdom thus makes us judge everything in relation to God; It reminds us that all that glitters is not gold and that, on the contrary, marvels of grace are to be found under the humblest exteriors, as in the person of many of the saints.

This gift enables the saints to embrace the plan of Providence with a gaze entirely penetrated with love; darkness does not disconcert them for they discover in it the hidden God.

As the bee knows how to find honey in flowers, the gift of wisdom draws lessons of divine goodness from everything.

Wisdom reminds us, as Cardinal Newman says, that: “A thousand difficulties do not make a doubt” so long as they do not impair the very basis of certitude.

It is the gift of the wisdom of love, which makes us taste and see how good is the Lord. This gift fills our soul with all kind of goods. The soul then becomes more and more sensitive to the love of God which communicates Himself and attracts everything with strength and mildness. Love which is the source of all what is created, in which everything finds its achievement. This spirit of wisdom allows us to surrender to this love fervently, peacefully and joyfully. It is the gift of the union with God.
The Book of Wisdom

Chapter 7

1 I too am a mortal man, the same as all the rest, and a descendant of the first man formed on earth. And in my mother's womb I was molded into flesh
2 in a ten-months' period-body and blood, from the seed of man, and the pleasure that accompanies marriage.
3 And I too, when born, inhaled the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth; wailing, I uttered that first sound common to all.
4 In swaddling clothes and with constant care I was nurtured.
5 For no king has any different origin or birth,
6 but one is the entry into life for all; and in one same way they leave it.
7 Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.
8 I preferred her to scepter and throne, And deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,
9 nor did I liken any priceless gem to her; Because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.
10 Beyond health and comeliness I loved her, And I chose to have her rather than the light, because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.
11 Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands;
12 And I rejoiced in them all, because Wisdom is their leader, though I had not known that she is the mother of these.
13 Simply I learned about her, and ungrudgingly do I share- her riches I do not hide away;
14 For to men she is an unfailing treasure; those who gain this treasure win the friendship of God, to whom the gifts they have from discipline commend them.
15 Now God grant I speak suitably and value these endowments at their worth: For he is the guide of Wisdom and the director of the wise.
16 For both we and our words are in his hand, as well as all prudence and knowledge of crafts.
17 For he gave me sound knowledge of existing things, that I might know the organization of the universe and the force of its elements,
18 The beginning and the end and the midpoint of times, the changes in the sun's course and the variations of the seasons.
19 Cycles of years, positions of the stars,
20 natures of animals, tempers of beasts, Powers of the winds and thoughts of men, uses of plants and virtues of roots-
21 Such things as are hidden I learned and such as are plain;
22 for Wisdom, the artificer of all, taught me. For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, Manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, Not baneful, loving the good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, 23 kindly, Firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, And pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle.
24 For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity.
25 For she is an aura of the might of God and a pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nought that is sullied enters into her.
26 For she is the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God, the image of his goodness.
27 And she, who is one, can do all things, and renews everything while herself perduring; And passing into holy souls from age to age, she produces friends of God and prophets.
28 For there is nought God loves, be it not one who dwells with Wisdom.
29 For she is fairer than the sun and surpasses every constellation of the stars. Compared to light, she takes precedence;
30 for that, indeed, night supplants, but wickedness prevails not over Wisdom.
1 Corinthians 2:6-7
6 Yet we do speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away.
7 Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory.

Ecclesiastes 1:16-18
16 Though I said to myself, "Behold, I have become great and stored up wisdom beyond all who were before me in Jerusalem, and my mind has broad experience of wisdom and knowledge";
17 yet when I applied my mind to know wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly, I learned that this also is a chase after wind.
18 For in much wisdom there is much sorrow, and he who stores up knowledge stores up grief.

1 Corinthians 2:15:
15 The spiritual person, however, can judge everything but is not subject to judgment by anyone.

Wisdom 9:10:
10 Send her forth from your holy heavens and from your glorious throne dispatch her, That she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is your pleasure.