

QUESTION 121

The Gift of Piety

Next we have to consider the gift [of the Holy Spirit] that corresponds to justice, viz., piety (*pietas*). And on this topic there are two questions: (1) Is piety a gift of the Holy Spirit? (2) What does piety correspond to in the beatitudes and in the fruits [of the Holy Spirit].

Article 1

Is piety a gift [of the Holy Spirit]?

It seems that piety is not a gift [of the Holy Spirit] (*pietas non sit donum*):

Objection 1: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 68, a. 1), the gifts differ from the virtues. But as was also established above (q. 101, a. 3), piety is a certain virtue. Therefore, piety is not a gift.

Objection 2: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 68, a. 6), the gifts are more excellent than the virtues, especially the moral virtues. But among the parts of justice, [the virtue of] religion is more important than [the virtue of] piety. Therefore, if some part of justice were supposed to be posited as a gift, it seems that this gift should be religion rather than piety.

Objection 3: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 70, a. 2), the gifts [of the Holy Spirit], along with the acts of those gifts, remain in heaven. But the act of piety cannot remain in heaven; for in *Moralia* 1 Gregory says, “Piety fills the inmost recesses of the heart with works of mercy”—and so it will not exist in heaven, where there will be no misery. Therefore, piety is not a gift.

But contrary to this: In Isaiah 11:2 piety is posited among the gifts.

I respond: As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 68 and q. 69, a. 1), the gifts of the Holy Spirit are certain habitual dispositions of the soul by which it is movable with promptitude by the Holy Spirit. Now among other things, the Holy Spirit moves us to having a certain sort of filial affection for God—this according to Romans 8:15 (“You have received the spirit of adoption which belongs to children and in which you cry out, ‘Abba, Father’”). And since piety properly involves giving worship and service to one’s father, it follows that the piety in accord with which we give worship and service to God as our Father through the inspiration (*instinctus*) of the Holy Spirit is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Reply to objection 1: The piety which gives worship and service to one’s carnal father is a virtue, whereas the piety which is a gift [of the Holy Spirit] gives these things to God.

Reply to objection 2: To show honor to God as the *creator*, which [the virtue of] religion does, is more excellent than showing honor to one’s *carnal father*, which is what the piety that is a virtue does. But to give worship to God as one’s *Father* is still more excellent than giving worship to God as one’s *creator* and *Lord*. Hence, [the virtue of] religion is more important than piety as a virtue, but piety insofar as it is a gift [of the Holy Spirit] is more important than [the virtue of] religion.

Reply to objection 3: Just as through the piety which is a virtue a man gives worship and service not only to his carnal father but also to all his blood relatives insofar as they belong to his father, so, too, piety insofar as it is a gift [of the Holy Spirit] gives worship and service not only to God but to all men insofar as they belong to God. And for this reason piety as a gift involves honoring the saints, “without contradicting Sacred Scripture, whether or not it is understood,” as Augustine puts it in *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.

As a consequence, it is piety itself that gives assistance to those who are in misery. And even though this sort of act has no place in heaven, especially after the day of judgment, the main act of piety, which is to revere God with filial affection, will be what exists principally in heaven—this according to Wisdom 5:5 (“See how they are numbered among the children of God”). There will likewise be the mutual honoring of the saints by one another. But now, before the day of judgment, the saints also have mercy on those who are living in the state of our present misery.

Article 2

Is it the second beatitude (“Blessed are the meek ...”) that corresponds to the gift of piety?

It seems not to be the case that it is the second beatitude (“Blessed are the meek ...”) that corresponds to the gift of piety:

Objection 1: Piety is the gift [of the Holy Spirit] that corresponds to [the virtue of] justice. But it is the fourth beatitude (“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice ...”) that pertains to justice—or even the fifth beatitude (“Blessed are the merciful ...”), since, as was just explained (a. 1), the works of mercy belong to piety. Therefore, it is not the second beatitude that pertains to the gift of piety.

Objection 2: The gift of piety is directed by the gift of knowledge, which is adjoined to it in the enumeration of the gifts in Isaiah 11. But *directing* and *executing* extend to the same thing. Therefore, since it is the third beatitude (“Blessed are those who mourn ...”) that pertains to [the gift of] knowledge, it seems that it is not the second beatitude that pertains to piety.

Objection 3: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 70, a. 2), the fruits [of the Holy Spirit] correspond to the beatitudes and to the gifts. But among the fruits, *goodness* (*bonitas*) and *kindness* (*benignitas*) seem to fit better with piety than does *mildness* (*mansuetudo*), which belongs to *meekness* (*mititas*). Therefore, the second beatitude does not correspond to the gift of piety.

But contrary to this: In *De Sermone Domini in Monte* Augustine says, “Piety fits in with the meek.”

I respond: There are two sorts of agreement that one can attend to in matching the beatitudes with the gifts:

(a) One has to do *with the nature of the* [Scriptural] *ordering* [of the gifts], which Augustine seems to have followed. Hence, he matches the *first* beatitude with the *last* gift, viz., fear [of the Lord]; the *second* beatitude, viz., “Blessed are the meek ...,” he matches with [the *second last* gift, viz.,] piety; and so on for the others.

(b) The other sort of agreement that one can attend to has to do *with the proper nature of the gift and of the beatitude*. And on this score one has to match the beatitudes with the gifts in accord with their objects and acts. And in this sense the fourth and fifth beatitudes correspond to piety more than the second beatitude does. Still, the second beatitude has some similarity to piety, viz., insofar as impediments to the acts of piety are removed by mildness.

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: According to what is proper to the beatitudes and to the gifts, it is necessary for the same beatitude to be matched with both knowledge and piety. By contrast, according to the character of the [Scriptural] ordering, diverse beatitudes should be matched with them—even though, as was said above, a certain sort of agreement is observed between them.

Reply to objection 3: Among the fruits [of the Holy Spirit], goodness and kindness can be attributed to piety directly, whereas mildness is attributed to piety indirectly, given that, as has been said, mildness removes impediments to the acts of piety.