

Charisms for Daily Life and the Life of the Parish

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In Catholic Charismatic Renewal we have tended to focus on charisms within prayer meetings, but it is important that we, as a renewal movement, model the importance of charisms for evangelization, daily life, and the life of the parish. Charisms allow God to manifest his love, power, presence, words, wisdom and guidance through us to others. First, I would like to talk about aspects of St. Paul's teaching on charisms/spiritual gifts (I will use these terms interchangeably although there are some distinctions). In the Charismatic Renewal we have focused, at times, mainly on the charisms of healing, prophecy and tongues. However, it is important to explain clearly all aspects of charisms so that people can understand, and become more receptive, to the ways that charisms can be active in our daily life and the life of the parish.

Explaining Charisms Clearly: Important Terms and Considerations

1) **Manifestations**: Charisms are manifestations of the Spirit, showing forth and demonstrating the presence of the Holy Spirit: "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit" (1 Cor 12:7). They mediate God's love, presence, power, and guidance. When a charism is active in a person, people see not only that individual's act of service, but experience God reaching out to them through that person. They experience that "God is really in your midst" (1 Cor 14:25). Let me share some examples to clarify this point.

At times I have to set up the chairs for an event. I do it because “somebody has to do it,” and sometimes I wish that someone else would be available to do it, so I would not have to do it. It is good that I still do the service, but I am not manifesting the charism of service. People who are operating in the charism of service are happy to help out in any way they can; do it with joy; and ask if there is any other way that they can help. This person is manifesting the attitudes of “Jesus, the servant,” who came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life for others. The Holy Spirit is manifesting Jesus’ attitude of service through this person.

When I preach or teach I want to manifest the charisms of preaching and teaching. When someone comes up to me after a presentation and says “I enjoyed your talk; you were so energetic, funny and clever; you made it interesting,” I am not sure whether I was manifesting the charism of preaching/teaching. The focus of the person was on me and my presentation. However, if someone comes up to me after a presentation and starts explaining to me how the Lord was convicting them, calling them, or enlightening them through what I said, then I have a better confirmation that the charism of preaching or teaching was operating. They were not focusing mainly on me as a presenter, but experiencing the Holy Spirit manifesting himself to them through the speaker.

When charisms are operating, people experience God working in their midst, rather than being focused on the person offering the service. Charisms are “manifestations of the Spirit” in which God is acting through various “forms of service” and “workings” produced by God in everyone (1 Cor 12:4-6).

We sometimes say that an actor is very “charismatic,” meaning that he or she really grabs people’s attention by the way they speak or act. This is not the same as a true

charism described in the Scriptures. Charisms are not inherited from parents, or a personality style, or achieved through education and practice alone. They are given to us by the Holy Spirit. While charisms can build upon natural or learned abilities (ex. a trained teacher), they are supernaturally empowered. They enable us to be effective in serving God in ways that are beyond our normal human abilities. We serve with a power, love, guidance and wisdom that are both beyond our human abilities, and manifest God's presence to others. When a charism is operating, God is being experienced and recognized through its use; rather than the focus being on the person demonstrating the charism.

As disciples of Jesus, we offer our entire selves (personalities, life experience, education, natural talents, background, etc.) to God to be used for his purposes. Our natural talents can become tools of God's purposes. Sometimes natural gifts, offered to God, can become supernaturally empowered charisms. We cannot make God give us a particular charism, but we should have a strong expectation that God will empower us with charisms for whatever service he asks of us, so that God is manifested to people and God is glorified.

2) For Each Individual Follower: Paul uses the words "each individual" and "everyone." The charisms are for each and every follower of Jesus, each member of the body of Christ. There is an expectation that each person who follows Jesus will manifest the presence of the Spirit to others. Every part of the body of Christ with each person's spiritual gift is needed for the good of the Church (1 Cor 12:14-31). The gifts work in

harmony with each other. What may seem to be a less dramatic gift (service and administration versus healing and miracles), may be more needed in a particular situation. It is important to help people to understand that charisms can be active in every aspect of our daily lives. Every follower of Jesus can exercise the gifts every day as the Holy Spirit leads and empowers them!

St. Paul's teaches that God gives some charisms (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher) "to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12). People who are given charisms for these ministries have a role in encouraging and enabling all of God's people to be equipped with charisms for the work of ministry. A carpenter who goes to do his job without his equipment is severely handicapped in accomplishing his task. In a similar way followers of Jesus who seek to serve others without the equipment of the charisms are severely handicapped in accomplishing their ministry.

First of all, every member of the body of Christ should be helped to understand the particular "equipment of charisms" that they need for the tasks and ministries that God has called them. Then, the second step is to help them to receive these charisms as God's empowerment in order to fulfill the ministry God has entrusted to them. Jesus told his apostles after the resurrection not to go forth until they are "clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49).

3) Charisms Focus on Service to the Church and Evangelization: Charisms are forms of service for the good of others, the building up of the Church, evangelization, encouragement, solace and sometimes correction and redirection: "One who prophesies

does speak to human beings, for their building up, encouragement and solace... whoever prophesies builds up the Church” (1 Cor 14:3-4). Unbelievers experiencing the gift of prophecy will be evangelized, having the secrets of their hearts disclosed, experiencing that “God is really in your midst” (1 Cor 14:24-25). In the prophetic messages to the seven Churches in Revelations 2-3 we have examples of prophecy that combine encouragement, correction and redirection: “I know your works, your labor and your endurance... Yet I hold this against you... Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first” (Rev 2:2-5). When God gives correction in a prophetic word, he also gives us a new direction. Prophecy that corrects, but does not redirect, should be discerned carefully, since it may be false prophecy. Charisms should build up the Church; serve people; and open people’s hearts to the good news of Jesus.

4) Strive Eagerly for Charisms: St. Paul calls us to actively seek charisms; striving eagerly for them. Four times St. Paul calls the Corinthian community to “strive eagerly” for spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1, 12, 39). We should not “quench the Spirit” or “despise prophetic utterances” (1 Thes 5:19-20). While charisms are freely given by God and God dispenses them as he wishes (1 Cor 12:11), the call to “strive eagerly” seems to imply that our human cooperation (effort, eagerness and receptivity) helps us to receive the gifts that the Spirit wants to bestow on us.

The word “strive” is used to show that we need effort in cooperating with the Holy Spirit. We need effort, preparation, and study. We are to ask, seek, and knock to receive the gift, and the gifts, of the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:9-13). “Active cooperation” is important. It is not only hearing the call, but acting upon it, that allows God to work in us and

through us (Mt 7:24-27). The charisms come as a gift, an empowering of the Holy Spirit, but our actions dispose us to receive these gifts. In order to receive a gift wrapped in a package you first have to take off the wrapper and open the box. Active striving builds a greater focus and expectancy in us, and disposes us to receive charisms. Here are some actions that can dispose us to receive charisms:

- Reading and studying about charisms;
- Talking with someone who seems to manifest a certain charism;
- Spending time in prayer reflecting on a charism and asking for it;
- Asking for prayer from other people for that charism;
- Willingness to step out in faith in the use of a charism;
- Reflecting on whether you and others see good fruits from your use of this charism;
- Willingness to receive feedback (testing) to purify the use of a gift from trusted, wise leaders.

The word “eagerly” relates to our having right desires, attitudes and receptivity. We need “active desire,” as well as, “active cooperation.” We need the proper motivation of love (described in 1 Cor 13); expectant faith; zeal to serve and evangelize; openness to yielding and surrendering to the Spirit’s impulses and calls; and a growing inner enthusiasm and peace in seeking a gift.

A gift is not a merit badge. It is at the service of God and the Church. We **want** God to work through us. We know that our human power, wisdom and love are not enough to meet the needs of our Church and world. We need divine power, wisdom and love. Jesus said that “the harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few” (Lk 10:2). Jesus is

“eager” to work through us, so we should be eager to work for him, and let him work through us! Persons with expectant faith that God will work through them speak out like Mary, “Let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Active desire and eagerness creates in us receptivity to the Spirit’s gifts. The attitude that God wants is, “I want charisms, and I’m going after them, because God wants to work through me! God is calling me to seek his gifts for the sake of building up the Church!”

Also, we should have the “eagerness of compassion” as we see the hurts of our world and those who are lost. Jesus often is “moved with compassion” before he manifests a charism of healing. Mary’s compassion leads her to visit Elizabeth where the Holy Spirit manifests himself in prophetic words. Mary’s sensitivity and compassion lead her to intercede (charism of intercession) with Jesus when they have run out of wine at the marriage feast of Cana (Jn 2:1-12). Her intercession leads to the manifestation of the charism of miracles as the water is changed into wine. The result is that “his disciples began to believe in him” (Jn 2:11). They experience charisms that have an evangelizing effect on them. They believe that God is in their midst.

There will be growing eagerness in a person as he or she has a deepening sense that a particular gift is important for the ways God is calling him to serve others. They will have a growing spiritual (humble) attraction to this gift; a greater desire to learn more about the gift and talk with people who manifest this gift. He or she will have a spiritual sense that certain gifts fit the direction that the Lord has been leading in their lives.

5) Test the Gifts: Charisms are be tested and discerned: “Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil” (1

Thes 5:20-22). People can misinterpret an inner impulse (thought, feeling, impression), and the devil can lead people in false uses of spiritual manifestations. People can call a natural talent or “charismatic personality” a charism. Charisms manifest divine presence, power and fruitfulness. This is described in the three signs of a charism that are given in the Discerning Charisms Workbook (Catherine of Siena Institute):

1. An unmistakable inner experience of peace, energy and joy when you are using the gift.
2. Unusually effective and successful results in what you are trying to accomplish.
3. Other people’s direct or indirect recognition of the gifts presence (p.7).

I would describe these signs as:

1. The Sign of the Presence of God (which can include a sense of presence, peace, energy, joy).
2. The Sign of Fruitfulness.
3. The Sign of Affirmation

The book, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Doctrinal Commission) gives us some basic criteria and requirements for testing and discerning charisms:

- Acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus and authentically serves the mission of the Church (p. 46-47).
- Focuses attention on Jesus Christ and gives glory to him, rather than drawing attention to the individual.

- In the case of a “word gift” like prophecy, is fully consistent with Catholic teaching.
- Contributes to the building up of the body of Christ in love.
- Avoids an overemphasis on method or technique, as if a successful outcome such as healing is due to the individual’s expertise rather than the free gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Avoids anything resembling occult practices, such as conversing with demons, and is marked by simplicity and humility, trusting the Lord to act as he wills.
- Is marked by a spirit of obedience, both to pastors of the Church and to those in legitimate authority in the local setting (p. 88-89).

In Catholic Charismatic Renewal where people are being encouraged to be open to spiritual gifts, and to “strive eagerly” so that God will work through them in the service of the Church and evangelization, I believe that we need to more upfront and active in reminding one another that charisms are to be tested and discerned. We should be saying to one another: “I want my gifts to be tested so that I can serve the Lord in a more pure and mature way, and overcome ways that I may misuse the gifts.” We are to desire and seek feedback and testing from our bishops, pastors, Charismatic Renewal leadership, prayer group leaders, parish ministry leaders, spiritual directors, theologians, and people who are recognized as having a particular charism. “Lone Ranger” use of charisms is not the teaching of the Scriptures. Charisms are to work in harmony with each other, since we are all parts of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12). We are to seek feedback from one another and the Church, and help each other to mature in the use of charisms.

Any time a person believes that they may have received a prophetic inspiration they should test it by asking whether: 1) It is faithful to Catholic teaching; 2) There is a sense of God's presence; 3) There is a sense of peace/clarity that the message brings; 4) There is not a sense of confusion, compulsion or hurt/angry feelings; 5) The message is meant just for me or is it to be shared with someone or the prayer group; 6) This is the right timing to share it; 7) An inner, peaceful sense of encouragement to share it remains with you.

I have developed some guidelines in testing the charism of prophecy (including prophetic words in prayer ministry). The guidelines cover both the signs that God is leading someone to be open to this charism, and the proper use of the charism:

- **Signs of longing** in the person to hear and be led by God's word.
- **God's Power:** Persons who realize that God's word has power to touch hearts and lives.
- **Expectant faith** that God wants to lead and touch us by his word.
- **Is this message only for me** or is it to be shared: Ask the Lord this question.
- **Waiting and persevering**, not rash (see Habbakuk 2:1-4 and Jesus' parable (Mt 25:1-13) about the wise and foolish virgins waiting for the bridegrooms arrival; some did not bring extra oil, and were not ready when the bridegroom arrived).
- People who are so anxious to give a "word" that they do not wait long enough to hear all that God wants to show them, letting the full "word" blossom, or they do not seek God's timing about when to share the "word."
- **Sensing connections:** Listening to the body of Christ (group) and listening for the body of Christ. Ask the Lord regularly:

1. What are you saying to me?
 2. What are you saying to us (as a group)? Having a “group mentality,” looking for connections in “words;” how they fit together; what is most important (see Eph 4:11-16). Prayer group leaders need to grow in this sensitivity.
- **Gluttony:** Be careful to avoid “gluttony” for “words,” visions, experiences. Treasure the one’s that you receive, and let them transform you. One “word from God” that truly transforms us is better than many exciting words/visions that do not bear lasting fruit.
 - **Vocal Presentation:** Sometimes people have the attitude that words from the Lord must sound authoritative and bold, so they speak very emotionally and loudly. Authority is **not** in the loudness or emotion, but in the “word” being spoken as Jesus would speak it. Jesus’ words, at times, are strong, gentle, compassionate, challenging, or encouraging.
 - **Long words:** Some people think that “long words” are better. They continue too long and the influence of the message is lessened. People should be able to remember the beginning of the message when you get to the end of the message.
 - **Correcting/Redirecting:** “Words” are mainly upbuilding, encouraging, comforting, exhorting, but at times correcting-redirecting. The Lord always redirects when he corrects (Rev 2 & 3).
 - **Levels of prophecy:** God, normally, uses only what we are prepared to receive. People who pray, read Scripture, and listen consistently can receive more. While there are different levels of prophecy, we are all called to be prophetic people (Numbers 11: 24-30; Joel 3:1-2, 1 Cor 14:1-5).

- **Influence of the Flesh:** We need to face our temptations to prophesy or pray in the flesh, rather than in the Spirit. We need ongoing purification. Here are some examples of ways the flesh can influence us:
 - a) Quick responders whose minds are sparked quickly by an idea, sparking another idea, or people with active imaginations. One idea sparks another so they go on too long in the prayer, or sharing a word, and it loses its full effectiveness.
 - b) Wanting others to feel my immediate love and concern leads to giving a word or praying too quickly.
 - c) Wanting people to see me as “capable,” so I say something quickly. I worry that people are thinking, “Why is he taking so long to pray for me? Doesn’t he know what he is doing?”
 - d) Feeling left out: If others who are praying with me for someone are saying many things, I feel that I have to come up with something.
 - e) Be aware of wanting to get an inspired “word” for someone so much that I share something I remember from the past.
 - f) Be aware of liking the attention that I am receiving from the person for whom I am praying. I can become more focused on the person and less focused on the Lord.

This may have seemed to be quite a long reflection on testing and discerning charisms. However, I think that it is important. Charismatic Renewal ought to be in the forefront of calling for, and developing, approaches to testing and discerning charisms. It is important to help people overcome fears of having their gifts tested and discerned.

Instead, we should want this testing, so we can serve the Lord better; more purely and maturely.

6) A Charism Is Meant to be an Act of Love: St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 teaches us that exercising a charism must be an act of love. If we manifest charisms of speaking in tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith and miracles, but do not have love, we gain nothing. Before Jesus manifests the charisms of healing or miracles, often the Gospels report that he was moved with compassion/pity (Mk 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; etc.). We want others to know God's love. The Holy Spirit inspires us to love others with the heart of Jesus. The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). We long for people to be set free. We are moved by their concerns, hurts and wounds. As Jesus, who is God, became one of us, we seek to walk in the other person's shoes. This attitude of love allows the charisms to obtain their full fruitfulness. A charism is not a merit badge. It is an act of love.

7) There are More Charisms Than Those Listed in the New Testament: In the New Testament there are 4 major lists of charisms:

- Romans 12: 4-8: Prophecy, ministry (service), teaching, exhortation/preaching, almsgiving (contributing financially), benefactor, works (acts) of mercy.
- 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11, 27-31: Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, mighty deeds (miracles), prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostle, teacher, assistance, administration.
- Ephesians 4: 7-16: Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher.

- 1 Peter 4:7-11: Hospitality (relating), preach (speaking), serve (doing).

Some charisms are mentioned in more than one list. However, the lists show significant variety. It would seem that St Paul and St. Peter are not trying to give us a complete list of all the charisms, but are giving us examples of the many ways the Holy Spirit can manifest his presence through a person for the good of the Church.

I have experienced in people many charisms that are not in these lists: Inspired music and songs; inspired art and architecture; intercession; inspired devotions; inspired Religious Communities; celibacy, obedience and poverty; martyrdom; etc. These can be understood as:

1. Other manifestations that are not mentioned directly in lists of charisms in the Scriptures;
2. Manifestations demonstrated in other parts of the Scripture;
3. An aspect of one of the charisms that is mentioned in the lists.

For example, there can be many forms of prophetic gifts that speak God's word to us. There are many forms and levels of teaching gifts and gifts of healing. There can be many forms of service gifts in which we experience Jesus, the servant, through others (practical assistance, financial giving, hospitality, service of mercy, etc.). There can be many forms of inspired wisdom, inspired courage, and inspired love where God's presence is being manifested to others through a person.

8) Charisms in an Hierarchical and Charismatic Church: Pope John Paul II in his address at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements (May 27, 1998) stated that the hierarchical (institutional) and charismatic dimensions of the Church are co-essential:

“The institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension...are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world.” Apostles and pastors (hierarchy) are included in the lists of charisms in the Scriptures. Both the hierarchical and charismatic dimensions of the Church need to be led and empowered by the Spirit: “The institutional (or hierarchical) dimension refers to all that was instituted by Jesus during his earthly life, including the choice of the twelve apostles; his conferral of authority upon them; his command to preach the gospel, to baptize, and to celebrate the Eucharist (all the sacraments)...The charismatic dimension refers to the gifts poured out spontaneously at Pentecost and afterward by the Holy Spirit, who freely distributes his graces when and where he wills. The institutional is passed down from generation to generation and belongs to the permanent visible structure of the Church. The charismatic is given by the Lord in an unpredictable way” (Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.69). The hierarchical dimension is a gift of the Spirit and is essential in testing and discerning the charismatic dimension. The charismatic dimension brings new life and dynamism to the hierarchical dimension.

9) Signs That Lord Is Calling You to “Strive Eagerly” and Seek a Particular Gift:

People need to know what to look for in seeking to be open to a charism that the Holy Spirit wants to bestow on them. I offer here some of the major areas of charisms with descriptions of signs that God may be leading a person to seek a particular charism. If God has given someone a “calling” or some responsibility, that person should “strive eagerly,” asking for the charisms needed to fulfill this calling or responsibility

A) Leadership Gifts

- 1) Pastoring Gifts: You tend to hear God's Word within a wider vision for the whole community, not just your own immediate circumstances. You are aware of making connections for yourself and others. You have a heart for people, but also for practical guidance and organization. God's vision for a group, discernment, studying God's Word, and praying for wisdom are important to you. You are asked to lead a group.
- 2) Teaching: You love to learn about Scripture and Church Teaching. You can organize ideas in a way that helps make them clear for others. You have insights about ways to apply our faith practically to daily life. You can speak in front of others with peace, clarity and enthusiasm. You can be faithful to Church teaching.
- 3) Administration: You have a heart to serve a group by helping it to be organized well. You have practical wisdom and vision about the right ordering of things. You feel a sense of accomplishment in doing practical organization. You recognize in your group the need for someone to serve the group through the charism of administration.
- 4) Exhortation: You tend to hear God's Word especially in terms of inspiring and calling God's people forward. You have a Spirit of zeal that helps to overcome timidity in people's hearts.

B) Prophetic Gifts

- 5) Prophecy, prophetic images, word of knowledge, word of wisdom: You love reading and praying with Scripture. You have a consistent personal prayer life in which you sense the Holy Spirit's inspirations, guidance, wisdom and knowledge. You have a

desire for God to guide, build up, encourage and console his people through his personal prophetic guidance. St. Paul calls us especially to seek the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1). At Pentecost Peter quotes Joel 3:1-5 that implies that the Messiah will pour out a spirit of prophecy on all of his followers. It would seem that all of us should desire this gift for the good of the Church, since this gift enables us to hear God's word and guidance for ourselves and for others.

C) Prayer Ministry Gifts

- 6) Healing/Miracle Gifts: You feel attracted to praying with and for others. You believe that Jesus has given his followers power to heal in his name, and that God still gives miraculous signs.. You have a compassionate heart for the sick and hurting. In your own prayer life you cultivate living in the presence of God. People tend to come to you and ask you to pray for them.
- 7) Discernment: You have a love for prayer, and have a growing desire to know when God is moving and leading you and others, rather than the world, the flesh or the devil moving and leading you. Praying and listening for guidance and wisdom is important to you.
- 8) Intercessory Prayer: You have a love for prayer, and for praying for other people. You feel called at times to sacrifice something for the good of others. Your heart goes out to hurting people. You believe that God uses prayer to change the world.
- 9) Tongues: You having a desire to grow in prayer. You feel like you do not have the words to praise God adequately. You sense that God is leading you to grow in childlike faith. You sense that God is leading you to become more sensitive to

inspirations. You have a growing desire to intercede for others as God leads you.

D) Service Gifts

- 10) Service Gifts: You are a consistent, practical person. You like to do things that help people. You are aware of practical services that a person or group needs. These gifts include **service/ministry, almsgiving (financial and practical needs), hospitality, benefactor (supports causes/ministries), works of mercy (poor, elderly, sick, orphan)**. You find joy in helping people in practical ways.

E) Evangelization Gifts

- 11) Evangelization: You love God's Word in Scripture, especially the call to bring other people to a commitment to Jesus. You have a zeal for the salvation of people. You can persevere in sharing God's Word, even when you do not see much response. You like to talk individually with people.

The growing attractions that I describe for these charisms can be signs that God is leading you to seek a particular charism. Another type of sign can be when a person experiences a spiritual sense of God's calling them to a particular service or ministry. When someone has offered himself fully to God for his service, they can expect that God wants to spiritually empower natural or learned abilities in their lives. Also, when God has placed a particular responsibility in one's life, our desire is to fulfill it with the Spirit's charismatic power, love, and wisdom. Callings, abilities, and responsibilities may become charisms when we offer these for God's service. God wants to empower our service.

Charisms for Daily Life

We can now reflect on the ways charisms can be active in our daily life situations. Some charisms may be manifested regularly in one's life, while other charisms may be manifested for a particular time and situation. Only one time in my life has God given me the charism of an inspired song. However, I have felt led by the Spirit to use that song many times in my ministry and it has born good fruit. An openness to urgings (promptings) of the Spirit to speak, pray, or serve with charisms in our daily lives becomes stronger when we develop certain spiritual practices. Let us reflect on some practices that help to create this openness:

Spiritual Practices

- 1) Daily Prayer Life:
 - a) Offer yourself for the Lord's work in the morning.
 - b) Welcome the Holy Spirit as your partner and guide.
 - c) Including in your prayer these elements which dispose you to the Holy Spirit:
 1. Praise and Worship: The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that this form of prayer opens us to the Holy Spirit: "Praise is the form of prayer that recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS...By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God" (#2639).
 2. Quieting: You allow the Spirit to come and rest upon you, quieting and focusing your inner spirit. You gain a "listening attentiveness;" open to the

Spirit's presence, guidance and empowerment.

3. Scripture: Scripture is the living Word of God and the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17). Knowing and pondering Scripture makes you more docile to the Holy Spirit.
 4. Conversation: The Holy Spirit gives us understanding, wisdom, strength, love, and charisms as we talk with God about the events, experiences, and relationships of our day.
 5. Intercession: The Holy Spirit leads us in praying for particular needs, persons, events, etc. The charism of intercession can open us to other ways the Lord wants us to serve.
- d) Pray about your day in the evening to see if you missed any chances to serve and evangelize, and to see if God places someone on your heart to reach out to tomorrow.
- 2) Be open to prophetic leadings throughout the day (words of knowledge/wisdom).
- a) Ask the Lord regularly if there is something that He is leading you to say or do. Be natural with people, not “super-spiritual.”
 - b) Be open to the prompting to invite someone to have a conversation, pray about a concern, or invite them to come with you to a prayer group, Mass, etc.
 - c) Be open to the Lord's urging you to share your testimony (be brief).
Always ask permission (“Is it okay if I share something about my life with you?”).

- d) Take spiritual authority over any situations that you sense that evil is at work (ex. people arguing at the grocery; an atmosphere of fear, hatred, jealousy, bitterness, lust, etc.). Do this interiorly. Also, be aware of ways the Holy Spirit may call you speak, or reach out, in the situation.
- 3) Ways to grow in awareness of spiritual promptings.
- a) Pray for a greater zeal for the salvation of souls (the lost).
 - b) Pray for a greater zeal to serve.
 - c) Pray to grow in being compassionate, like Jesus.
 - d) Pray for zeal to enter the battle against evil with Jesus, so people can know freedom in Jesus.
 - e) Pray that you become an inviting person, like Jesus.

It is good to prayerfully reflect about particular areas of our lives (family, work, etc.), so that we are more aware of ways that the Holy Spirit may be calling us to serve others, or has given us a responsibility where we should seek the equipment (empowerment) of the charisms to fulfill the responsibility. How can we apply this daily openness to the Holy Spirit's promptings in order to use the charisms in various areas of our lives? Let us look at some major areas.

Application to Major Areas of our Lives

Family Life: Parents are called to be the first and most important teachers of their children. All parents should seek the charism of teaching. They may not be called to be teachers for classes or groups, but the Holy Spirit can enlighten them in ways to teach their children. Parents can be greatly helped by the charisms of a word of knowledge and

a word of wisdom to know the right way to teach and discipline their children. A word of wisdom can let parents know when it is time to encourage a child, reward a child, teach a child, or discipline a child.

When we have a regular daily prayer life, at times, the Holy Spirit will give us a prophetic urging to call, contact, or visit a family member. Twice in my life God gave me a strong prophetic sense in prayer to change my plans and go visit one of my sisters. On the one occasion I was going to shorten my visit with my parents to see my sister. When my parents came to the bus station for me, the first thing my mother said to me was “It’s too bad you are not going to have a chance to see _____(my sister).” My mother named the sister that the Lord had put on my heart! This was a confirmation for me, and the visit bore good fruit.

Some level of pastoring gifts and administrative gifts are needed in a family for the good order of the household. Many families do not know how to live and work as a cohesive unit. These charisms can strengthen this ability. When we strive eagerly for gifts, like pastoring or administration, we may begin to experience the Holy Spirit forming new insights and abilities in us. The charism does not always come in its fullness immediately, but we clearly notice the new insights and abilities that God is forming in us. Family members will also notice the difference.

The charism of mercy can be sought for those caring for elderly parents, or family members with special physical, psychological or emotional needs. The task of taking care of persons with special needs can feel overwhelming at times. The charism of mercy gives us a share in divine compassion, strength, patience, and understanding for the people we are serving.

The gift of evangelization will be important in family life, and in all the areas of our lives that we are considering, because we should “always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence” (1 P 3:15-16). We are to proclaim the good news of Jesus in every place and circumstance to the ends of the earth! This starts with our own family.

Work: Our job situations often need charisms of service, leadership, words of knowledge/wisdom, hospitality, and evangelization. In our work situations we want to manifest Jesus, the servant, who came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life for others. The effort and attitude that we display in our work can manifest Christ’s presence in us. We demonstrate an “other-centered” and joyful service, rather than negativity and self-seeking.

If we oversee people, we should seek pastoring gifts, so that we can lead and work with people like Jesus, the Good Shepherd. If we have administrative responsibilities, we can pray for the charism of administration. I experienced God forming the gift of administration in me when I prayed for this gift after I became the director of the Charismatic Renewal Center for San Antonio. I found myself becoming more aware of the practical steps needed for planning, preparation and follow through on projects, and greater peace in my administrative tasks.

Words of knowledge and wisdom help us to know how to best respond to situations with co-workers that arise in our work environment. The charism of hospitality helps us to build good relationships with our co-workers. These good relationships create an environment in which the charism of evangelization can be effective.

Neighborhood and Activity Groups: Charisms of hospitality, service, and evangelization strengthen us in reaching out to people in our surrounding areas and activities. I have been a coach of a number of sports. Coaches can pray for pastoring and administrative gifts that allow them to help people to work together. This sense of teamwork can open doors for evangelization. Openness to prophetic inspirations in prayer allows God to show us when to reach out to someone, and to understand the needs of the people around us.

Relationships: All of our relationships will be strengthened through charisms of hospitality, service, prophetic insights, community building, and evangelization. When the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost the followers of Jesus experienced a new closeness, hearts of service, a united purpose in their relationships with one another, and a new boldness in bringing the Good News of Jesus to others (Acts 2:42-47; 4:23-37).

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a wonderful example of manifesting charisms of prophecy, hospitality, service, intercession, word of wisdom, faith, mercy, and motherhood in the Holy Spirit in her daily life (see Luke 1-2; John 2:1-12; 19:25-30; Acts 1:13-14).

Charisms for the Life of the Parish

All groups and ministries in a parish will be more fruitful if they are operating with the charisms. Parishes include many groups and ministries: Knights of Columbus, Altar Society, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, St. Vincent de Paul, Faith

Formation for all ages, Prayer Groups, Bible Study/Sharing Groups, etc. I believe that parishes would increase their fruitfulness if all these groups went through the type of process that I outline here:

1. **Naming the Call**: We come to understand that the group has a calling from God. We name more clearly what the group/ministry's call is from God. We are called not only to be a member of a group, but we are responding together to a call from God to grow together and serve together.
2. **Naming the Service**: We name the ways that the group is called to serve. What are the various tasks and services (responsibilities) that are part of the group's calling?
3. **Understanding the Holy Spirit**: We learn the ways that the Holy Spirit is essential in our lives and ministries. Here is one description of the Holy Spirit's major roles:
 - **Union**: He brings us into an ever deepening union with God. A personal relationship with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
 - **Holiness/Transformation**: He transforms us inwardly (holiness). We become more like Jesus in the ways we relate and serve. We die to the flesh and grow in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5).
 - **Charisms**: He empowers us with charisms. We serve/minister and evangelize with a love, power, and wisdom that is led and empowered by God. God is manifesting himself through us.

- **Builds community:** We are formed as a group/ministry into a true community, the body of Christ. We learn to work together, using all the gifts in the group. We are a part of one another in the body of Christ.
4. **The Role of Charisms:** We learn about the charisms, and how particular charisms are important for specific areas of service/ministry. The first part of my presentation can be used for numbers 4, 5 and 6.
 5. **Discerning Charisms:** We discern the charisms that the group and the individuals in the group need for their ministry.
 6. **Receiving Charisms:** We “strive eagerly” and pray for these charisms. We grow in cooperating with the impulses and movements of the Holy Spirit in us.

I would like to mention that The Called and Gifted Small Group Process (Catherine of Siena Institute) is a helpful process and resource in understanding and growing in charisms.

When speaking with priests, I have mentioned that we have to be careful with the shortage of priests that we do not become administrators of the sacraments only. While this role is important and essential, we also are called to be true pastors who help to equip the members of the Church with spiritual gifts. The New Evangelization needs the empowerment of the laity! The Second Vatican Council called pastors to this activity: “For their sacred pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church...it is their noble duty so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may contribute in this common

undertaking with one heart” (Lumen Gentium,#30)...”While testing to see if they be of God, priests should discover with the instinct of faith, acknowledge with joy, and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity” (Presbyterorum Ordinis, #9).

Pastors with their parish staffs would be strengthened by going through a process (maybe every two years) of seeking a renewed empowerment of the Holy Spirit through the charisms, and then doing this kind of process with all their parish ministries/groups. This process also could be done as part of parental training classes, so parents can learn to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit, as well as, partnership with each other. A deepened understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and the charisms in all of pastoral ministry would strengthen our churches. May all of our Churches be fully alive in the Holy Spirit and empowered by the Spirit, like the early Church in Jerusalem (see the first seven chapters of the Acts of the Apostles).