

## **Charisms (Gifts of the Spirit)**

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### **1) What is a Charism or Spiritual Gift?**

- a) Charism: Greek word for “gratuitous gift,” usually translated as “spiritual gift.”
- b) Charisms are special abilities given to Christians by the Holy Spirit to enable them to be powerful channels of God’s love, manifesting God’s presence in the world.
- c) They are “manifestations of the Spirit” (1 Cor. 12: 7) for some benefit; for building up the Church, encouragement, and solace (1 Cor. 14: 3).
- d) To be used in charity for service to build up the Church (Catechism 2003).
- e) We should seek charisms for all the “callings” and responsibilities God gives us.

### **2) Lists of Charismatic Gifts in Paul and Peter’s Letters:**

Romans 12: 4-8: Prophecy, ministry (service), teaching, exhortation/preaching, almsgiving (contributing financially), works (acts) of mercy. 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11: Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, mighty deeds (miracles), prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues. Ephesians 4: 7-16: Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. 1 Peter 4:7-11: Hospitality (relating), preach (speaking), serve (doing).

**3) Understanding the Lists:** Since the lists differ, Paul does not seem to imply that these are the only gifts or the only ways that the Spirit works. These are not intended to be exhaustive lists of the charisms. They are intended to show examples of the variety of ways the Holy Spirit manifests his presence in the Church.

**4) Comparing Charisms and Natural Talents:** Charisms are not inherited from parents or achieved through education and practice. They are give to us by the Holy Spirit. Charisms are supernaturally empowered. They are focused outward toward service of others. They enable us to be effective in serving God in ways beyond our normal human abilities. We serve with a power, love, and wisdom that is beyond our own human abilities.

- a) As disciples of Jesus, we offer our entire selves (personalities, life experience, education, natural talents, background) to God to be used for his purposes. Our natural talents can become tools for God’s purposes. Sometimes natural gifts, offered to God, can become supernaturally empowered charisms.
- b) The traditional “seven gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Isaiah 11) are the gifts we receive in union with Jesus, the messianic King. They enable us to have Godly characteristics in the ways we are called to be leaders. We are servant leaders with wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge (piety) and fear of the Lord, enabling us to make Spirit-inspired judgements, and to bring peace and reconciliation to enemies.
- c) The fruit of the Spirit (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control: Galatians 5: 16-26) are the Spirit-inspired,

Christ-like qualities that enable us to relate with others in an other-centered, unselfish way.

- d) The Isaiah 11 gifts and the fruit of the Spirit give us the inner qualities that enable the most fruitful and effective use of our charisms.
- e) The charisms are gifts to be given away. They are focused outward for serving others and manifesting God's presence to others.

#### 5) **Attitude Toward Charisms:**

- a) Paul describes charisms as part of the normal experience of the Church, and integral to the functioning of the Church.
- b) Paul exhorts his readers four times to "strive eagerly" for the gifts ( 1 Cor. 12: 31; 14: 1, 12, 39), and not to "forbid" them (1 Cor. 14:39) or "despise" them (2 Thess. 5: 20), but "test" them (1 Thess. 5: 21) and use them "properly and in order" (1 Cor. 14: 40). We should seek them in prayer and ask others to pray with us for the gifts that we believe that God is calling us to seek. We need to step out in faith in exercising (practicing) the gifts.
- c) Catechism of the Catholic Church: See #798-801, 688, 951, 1508, 2003. The Church recognizes and encourages the use of charisms since they "benefit the Church" (#799); "are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ" (#800). They are to be "accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well" (#800).

#### 6) **Types of Spiritual Gifts:**

##### **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.
- 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 practically apply our faith 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.
- 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.

### Prophetic Gifts

- 5) Prophetic Gifts (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.

### 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.
- 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.

### Service Gifts

- 10) Service Gifts: You are a consistent, practical person. You like to do things that help people. These gifts include **helper**, **contributer**, **hospitality**, **benefactor** (financial), and **works of mercy** (poor, elderly, sick, orphan). You like to help in practical ways.

### Evangelization Gifts

- 11) Evangelization: You love God's Word in Scripture, especially the call to bring other's 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.