

Charism Workshop

“And He gave gifts to men.” (Ephesians 4:8; see also Romans 12 and 1 Cor. 12)

Charism Fundamentals

1. The Giver has gifted us.
2. We receive seven *sanctifying gifts* of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism – sealed at our Confirmation and nurtured through virtue.
 - a. These gifts assist us in the moral life and help us to become holy and fit for heaven by making us docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. As we grow in a grace-filled life of virtue, fruit is manifested – evidence of the Holy Spirit perfecting us through these gifts.
3. The Holy Spirit also gives us special gifts of grace that associate us with His work, which is the sanctification of souls and the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church (CCC 2003); these special graces include sacramental graces, graces of state, and *charisms*.
 - a. Charisms directly or indirectly benefit the Church (CCC 799). They are “whole life” gifts given for the sake of others and empowered by God.
 - b. Charisms enable us to be instruments of His providence, purpose, and provision. They are a way God uses you over and over again for the sake of others.
 - c. They impact the Kingdom of God in a way we cannot accomplish on our own.
 - d. They are always for others, not ourselves.
4. Missional discernment is the spiritual work of a lifetime.

Personal Dimension

1. They serve a missional purpose – which we can call our *personal vocation*.
 - a. Discernment over time leads to a sense of a “general area of call.”
 - b. “God with His call reaches the heart of each individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple, gives Himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to embrace the gift entrusted to him as a completely unique person and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him” (St. Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*).
2. Charism discernment should include the consideration of a gift mix.
 - a. A gift mix is a combination of charisms God has given you.
 - b. Each charism affects how other charisms are expressed.

“Only, let everyone lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him.” (1 Cor. 7:17)

Communal Dimension

1. To flourish in the way God desires requires maturation and formation – personal, spiritual, intellectual, relational.
2. Maturation and wholeness happen through relationships; we need one another to become the people God has designed us to be (1 Cor. 12:12; see also Rom. 12:4-5).
3. Our charisms are not meant for ourselves; they are to serve the Body of Christ.

4. The holy development of the Body of Christ requires us to 1) take our own maturation seriously and 2) to commit to being builders and equippers of others' development.

Signs of a Charism

Discernment of charisms requires experimentation and reflection. As we partner with God to "test" potential charisms (with lighthearted, playful curiosity), we want to be open to *noticing*:

1. Your experience (feelings)
 - a. Give us energy
 - b. Seem like a "fit" (joyful satisfaction)
 - c. Give us a sense of the presence of God (like prayer)
 - d. A pattern unfolds over time
2. Your effectiveness (fruits)
 - a. What God does through your gift
 - b. Where you bear exceptional fruit
3. Your feedback received (feedback)
 - a. Direct (others speak with charism language)
 - b. Indirect (others recognize or intuit your gifts)

Called to Bear Fruit

1. The fruit He most longs to see is evidenced in our love of neighbor – what we have done for the other (Mt. 25:31-46). Jesus wants to see us build up His Body, the Church.
2. No one else can glorify God in the particular way that we can.
3. The fruit we bear through our charisms depend upon our openness to being His instrument, our yeses to the divine appointments He providence permits, and – more than anything – our intimacy with our Lord.
4. The more we live a life of grace, of virtuous habits, of docility to the Holy Spirit, of pure and sincere resolution to do His will, the more He can work through our charisms to build His Body, the Church. That He might be glorified...!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. How can a deeper understanding of charisms enrich you personally?
2. What discernment insights do you have regarding your own potential charisms?
3. What discernment insights do you have regarding another's potential charisms?
4. What does your heart tell you about God's mission for your life?
5. What would you like the Holy Spirit to reveal to you?
6. What is the next best step to take in the discernment of your charisms?