

Carrying out the Mission: Equipping the Saints

(Source: Weddell, *Called & Gifted I*)

As baptized Christians, we are all on a mission from God and we have been given the very same Spirit that empowered Jesus during his earthly life.

Jn.14:12, 26: Jesus said: "I solemnly assure you, the man who has faith in me will do the works I do, and greater far than these (The) Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you in everything, and remind you of all that I have told you."

The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual tools (charisms) to accomplish our spiritual mission. These empower us beyond our natural talents, skills, and knowledge for service in the mission of the Church.

The Holy Spirit:

- Is imparted to us in Baptism/Confirmation
- Is the source of all gifts
- Teaches, sanctifies, and governs
- Changes us from the inside, interiorly

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are *FOR US*:

The 7 gifts mentioned in Isaiah 11 are for us and our benefit:

Wisdom	Knowledge
Courage (fortitude)	Understanding
Right judgment (counsel)	Piety
Awe and wonder ("fear") of the Lord	

Isaiah 11: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

They make us holy and conformed to Christ. They impart sanctifying grace for living the Christian life.

Gifts (charisms) of the Holy Spirit are *FOR OTHERS*:

- Charisms are spiritual gifts given for the sake of others.
- They are graces of the Holy Spirit.
- The term "charism" comes from the letters of St. Paul in the New Testament. It is a Greek word for "favor" or "gratuitous gift."

By means of charisms we are empowered by God to be supernatural instrument of His providence for the sake of others. If an activity, however noble, is directed toward benefiting ourselves rather than others, it is not a charism (or, possibly, a misuse of a charism).

What is a charism?

A charism is a long-term, habitual ability given by the Holy Spirit that enables a Christian to be an agent of God's purposes in a way that is beyond his or her normal human capacity.

A charism:

- is always for others, not for our sake.
- is given to accomplish God's purposes. The Holy Spirit "distributes them to each as he wills." (1 Cor. 12)
- is supernaturally empowered to bear results for the Kingdom of God, whether the gift seems extraordinary (e.g., prophecy, healing) or quite "ordinary" (e.g., administration, hospitality, encouragement).
- can be recognized by others, even by non-believers.

A charism is different than a natural talent or ability. It is not given at our physical birth or inherited from our parents.

A charism is not the same as a Christian duty or office in the Church. As Christians, all of us have responsibilities in areas where we do not possess a long-term charism. (For example, we are all called to pray for others, but few have the charism of intercession.)

Types of charisms:

- Temporary – any Christian who is open to the Holy Spirit may be used by God in a particular situation with an outpouring of a temporary gift for that situation.
- Shared – in rare instances, a charism can only be exercised when two people are together.
- Group – an entire group or community may share a particular charism or cluster of charisms (e.g., clergy of the Order of Dominicans commonly shares the charism of teaching.)
- Long-term – God consistently works through you over time in a specific manner. Because of their abiding nature, these gifts may be discerned and developed.

Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands, no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Reflection:

Can you think of a time when you were Christ's eyes, hands, feet, or body for someone? What was that like for you?

Have you experienced the Holy Spirit at work in your life through a charism? What happened?