Charism Gifts Building Up the Church[1]

(Excerpt from the *Rule of St. Michael)*

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The following is an excerpt from section VIII of the *Articles of Observance* of the *Rule of the Order of the Legion of St. Michael,* nos. 196-235. It contains a summary of thought about the "charismatic gifts" from the Church and from how we understand a Catholic Worldview. It also gives a list of thirty gifts listed or implied in Scripture. The research to write this section was conducted at the Seminary Library of Conception Abbey in Missouri, the Scriptorium Library of the Order of the Legion of St. Michael, documents from Catholic websites, materials from various sources of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and field research.

SPECIAL NOTE: Although some endnotes contain bibliographic information, most of the endnotes convey important and extensive additional text and quotations that are necessary additions and further explanations to the main text. Please be sure to read the endnotes as you read along in this document.

196. Our love of God and our neighbor, our devotion and growth in spirituality and piety, the expression of our faith and love in good works is only the beginning. We must *"…rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control"* (2 Tim 1:6-7)

197. We have a solemn obligation to not neglect the gifts that God has so graciously given us. We are not to be timid or commit the sin of timidity, but to accept and to utilize for the greater glory of God the gifts He has given us and to do so with a Spirit of Power, Love, and Self-discipline (2 Tim 1:7).

198. With His grace and His gifts, we may exercise our purpose to build-up the Church and the Faithful in order to bring the Gospel message to the world. In this, we exercise the Power of the Spirit, expressed in Love, and maintained through self-discipline. When we do this, we truly become Ambassadors for Christ.

199. **Papal Encouragements:** The expression of the charism gifts of the Holy Spirit, to whom we are imbued, sealed, and empowered when we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, is the normal way of Christian life. The Charismatic Renewal has reminded us of the need to experience the fullness of the Spirit that we received in the Sacraments. In this renewal Pope John Paul II, of happy memory, remarked, *"I am convinced that this movement is a very important component of the entire renewal of the Church."*[2]

200. Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, as Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote in a Foreword to the book, *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness,* by Cardinal Suenens who was at the time the Papal delegate to the Charismatic Renewal:

> *At the heart of a world imbued with a rationalistic skepticism, a new experience of the Holy Spirit suddenly bursts forth. And, since then, that experience has assumed a*

breadth of a worldwide Renewal movement. What the New Testament tells us about the charisms – which were seen as visible signs of the coming of the Spirit – is not just ancient history, over and done with, for it is once again becoming extremely topical.[3]

201. The Council Fathers of Vatican II also praised the movement of the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of charism gifts:

Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church.[4]

202. The Church gives a beautiful commentary on the Holy Spirit and His gifts:

The Council presents the Church as the New People of God, uniting within itself, in all the richness of their diversity, men and women from all nations, all cultures, endowed with manifold gifts of nature and grace, ministering to one another and recognizing that they are sent into the world for its salvation (Church, nn. 2 a 5 13). *They accept the Word of God in faith, are baptized into Christ and confirmed in his Pentecostal Spirit, and together they celebrate the sacrament of his body and blood in the Eucharist:*[5]

> *It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity. By distributing various kinds of spiritual gifts and ministries, he enriches the Church of Jesus Christ with different functions, "in order to equip the saints for the work of service, so as to build up the Body of Christ".*[6]

203. **<u>Episcopal Encouragements</u>:**[7] The Charismatic Renewal has also received praise and blessing from many bishops. Three examples include Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, of Santa Fe:

I believe that the Renewal has been a great blessing for countless thousands of Catholics in our country. It has drawn people closer to their Catholic faith and devotion to the Holy Spirit and to prayer.

Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., of Louisville observes:

The strength of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal begins with the spirit of its people, many bringing a renewed passion and deep commitment to their faith. They are true evangelizers, reminding us of the power and presence of the Spirit in our lives. They challenge us to see the Pentecost event not merely as a one time happening, but as an ongoing phenomenon. They invite us to recognize that the Spirit-given charisms, both ordinary and extraordinary, are still at work in the Church.

And finally, Bishop Robert Hermann, of St. Louis, identifies a major strength of the Renewal:

The strength of Catholic Charismatic Renewal is its ability to get Catholics more deeply involved with the Word of God, Jesus and his Scriptures. It enables people to enter more deeply into the spiritual life, so that they hunger to read the Word, hunger to reflect on the Word and hunger to live the Word. It opens the eyes of Catholics to a deeper understanding of the Sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. It helps Catholic enter more deeply into discernment about their lives. Finally, it also inspires Catholic to share their faith with others an to get more involved in working in the Church.

204. **Cautions in the Midst of Encouragement:** We agree with these strengths of the Renewal. Overall the Renewal is a blessing to the Church and her people, but we also recognize and agree with Bishop Josu Iriondo, of New York, the Bronx who warned: *"The work of the Charismatic Renewal is immense and visible but it also has its great problems."*[8]

205. Colin B. Donovan, one of the "experts" of the Question and Answer Forum of the Eternal Word Television Network website, offers an important perspective to the Church's encouragement of the Renewal:

> *…the Church on the one hand recognizes that the Holy Spirit moves where He will, and so she does not want to oppose His working, and on the other, that the Church must discern the authenticity of each charism, lest it be a deception of the evil one. For this reason to say that the Charismatic Renewal is approved by the Church is not a blanket approval*[9] *of every alleged charismatic gift or every charismatic group or individual within the Church. The discernment of the Holy Spirit's action is an ongoing necessity within the Church and within the Charismatic Renewal.*[10]

206. Another astute observation comes from Bishop Edward P. Cullen of Allentown:

> *I don't see any weaknesses intrinsic to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In its actual practice, however, (dys)function can and has arisen. I found that such dysfunctions flowed from some flaw in those who carry leadership responsibility in the movement.*[11]

207. These articles will explore some of those problems and dysfunctions within the overall context of encouraging our members to be involved in deepening their lives with the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

208. **Charismatic Expressions in our Community:** Indeed the Church has recognized that the Spirit of God has moved through His people historically in many ways, including through the exercise of *Charism ("spiritual") Gifts*. These gifts, according to Scripture and the Church, are meant to be uplifting to the Church and to build-up its people. Our Community is open to the expression of such gifts when they are exercised in ways proper to the orderly conduct of the meeting and situation, as prescribed in Scripture, and in such a way as to be uplifting to the spiritual health and growth of the Community. The nature of such extraordinary gifts, however, must include precise catechesis.

209. Therefore, within our Community, such expressions shall adapt themselves to the directives and norms set by this section of our *Articles of Observance,* by the discernments of the *Superior,* Spiritual Advisor, and Spiritual Visitor of our *Order,* and norms set by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Inventory of Spiritual Gifts

210. The Holy Spirit may bestow many gifts upon us to build-up His Church. Though not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive, the thirty major gifts listed here are all found in one form or another in Scripture.[12] The gifts are arranged by *Category* and include a "brief" definition in parenthesis. Scripture references are listed in brackets:

1) **Sacrificial and Consecrating Gifts (10)**:[13]

Charity

…ability to express the love of God to the Church, to neighbor, and to the world in such a way that it becomes a model of perfection of the purity and fidelity of our Lord's love, and which includes in its expression such selfless ways as to perform *Heroic Acts of Charity*[14], and to sacrifice unto death for one's neighbor *[Jn 14:23; 1 Cor 13; Jn 15:13]*

Virtue[15]

…ability to practice *Heroic Virtue:* the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) *[Wis 8:7; 1 Pet 4:7; Lv 19:15; Col 4:1; Ps 118:14; Jn 16:33; Sir 5:2 (37:27-31); 18:30; Titus 2:12]* and the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) *[2 Pet 1:4; 1 Cor 13:13; Rom 1:17; Gal 5:6; Heb 10:23; Titus 3:6-7; Jn 15:9-12; Mt 22:40; Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 13; Col 3:14]* in a continuing extraordinary way out of just and worthy service to the People of God and the Church

Martyrdom

…ability to willingly and joyfully sacrifice oneself for the cause of Christ in service to others and to the Church, in fidelity to His Truth, in the face of persecution, ridicule, loss of reputation or position, or other sufferings from the world, friends, or family — even unto death *[1 Cor. 13:3]*

Celibacy

…ability to offer to God one's chastity, with Christ as one's exclusive Spouse[16], and thereby renounce, for the greater glory of God and for His service, one's right to marriage and family *[1 Cor. 7:7; Mt 19:1-12; 1 Cor 7:32]*

Poverty

…ability to renounce and be unencumbered with the material riches and things of this world, which distract from the sacred things of God, in order to serve others and the Church that others might come to know the wealth of Christ *[Mt 19:21; Eph 3:9ff; 2 Cor 8:9]*

Obedience

…ability to renounce the will and desires of the self to order and direct one's life and thereby to submit to another's authority, in the service of God and the Church, so that others might know the freedom of being co-heirs in God's kingdom *[Jn 8:29; 4:34; 14:15,21]*

Substantial Silence

…ability to *be still and know that God is God*[17] in a manner that quiets the self and thereby reaches profound levels of meditation and

contemplation in such a way that others may profoundly come to know the presence of the Lord *[Ps 46:10; Zec 2:13]*

Substantial Solitude

…ability to be alone with God without need of the normal human interaction and social intercourse in such a way that others may come to a profound knowledge of the presence of the Divine Companion *[Lk 5:15-16; Mk 1:35; Mt 6:6]*

Prayer

…ability to pray boldly, strongly, and unceasingly for others in such a way that they might experience the divine action of Jesus' love in their lives *[Mt 6:6; Pr 15:8, Phil 4:6; Jas 5:15; Eph 6:18]*

Penance/Mortification

…ability to live a life of penance and mortification in such a way that others may turn daily to a conversion to Christ and further to be inspired to the perfection that arouses the soul to God *[2 Tim 2:4; Mt 5:39-48]*[18]

2) **Speaking Gifts (10):**[19]

Apostleship

…ability to minister, evangelize, and pastor in cross-cultural, missionary settings *[1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11]*

Prophecy

…ability to preach or proclaim the Truth of God with clarity and to apply it to a particular situation with a view to correction or edification. Prophecy may sometimes speak to future events, but is primary a supernatural gift of preaching *[Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 28; Eph 4:11]*

Evangelism

…ability to effectively communicate the Faith in such a way as to bring people to Christian conversion; and to effectively disciple others into the fullness of the Christ-life *[Eph 4:11]*

Pastoring/Shepherding

…ability to provide spiritual leadership, counsel, food, guidance, and guardianship in group settings and to individuals *[Eph 4:11]*

Teaching

…ability to explain effectively the Truth of God in such a way that those being taught not only understand the Truth in a profound way, but are profoundly inspired by the Truth *[Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11]*

Exhorting

…ability to counsel or to encourage those in spiritual, emotional, or physical need *[Rom 12:8]*

Word of Knowledge

…ability to discover, know, and communicate deep spiritual Truths. In extremely rare instances, such as with St. Padre Pio, this gift may include the ability to "read souls" *[1 Cor 12:8]*

Word of Wisdom

…ability to apply and communicate knowledge wisely *[1 Cor 12:8]*

Tongues[20]

…ability to speak in a language not previously learned for the purposes, when interpreted, of prophecy and edification of the Church. This is <u>not</u> a private prayer language[21]) *[1 Cor 12:10, 28]*

Interpretation

…ability to interpret a language not previously learned into one's native language for the purposes of prophecy and edification of the Church *[1 Cor 12:10]*

3) **<u>Ministering Gifts</u> (10):**

Ministry/Helps

…ability to lend a hand or to serve others in a supportive role in a joyful and productive way *[Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28]*

Hospitality

…ability to provide open house and warm welcome to neighbor and for those in need, particularly travelers or others in need of shelter and assistance *[1 Pet 4:9, 10; cf. Rom 12:13]*

Giving

…ability to give of one's fiscal and personal resources to the Lord's work with simplicity, generosity, liberality, and delight *[Rom 12:8]*

Government/Ruling

…ability to administer, manage, and lead in God's work *[Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28]*

Showing Mercy

…ability to be compassionate with strength, cheerfulness, and action to those who are in need as evidenced by *Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy*[22] *[Rom 12:8]*

Faith

…ability to see something that God wants done and to sustain unwavering confidence that God will do it regardless of obstacles *[1 Cor 12:9]*

Discernment

…ability to perceive good and evil spirits; and also to perceive the spirit of truth from the spirit of error in a profound and sublime manner *[1 Cor 12:10]*

Exorcism

…ability to help people, in the face of intimidation from the Enemy, with spiritual afflictions (harassments, bondage, oppression, possession) caused by demonic attachments and forces; to discern the issues and needs required to facilitate healing and freedom for the afflicted through spiritual counseling and if necessary through "simple" or "solemn" rites. [Note: "Solemn" Rites of Exorcism are reserved to a priest designated by a local Ordinary and are conducted only upon the Ordinary's permission] *[Mk 1:25-26; 3:15; 6:7, 13; 16:17]*

Miracles

…ability to facilitate an event of supernatural power that is palpable to the senses and is accomplished as a sign of divine commission *[1 Cor 12:10, 28]*

Healing

…ability to intervene in a supernatural way as an instrument for the curing of illness and the restoration of health as a sign of divine compassion *[1 Cor 12:9, 28]*

Proper Understanding of the Gifts

211. It is the responsibility of the *Superior* and the *Vice-Regent for Formation* to ensure that all members receive the proper teaching and catechesis concerning charism *("spiritual")* gifts. This is especially important because of the mandate of St. Paul for the People of God to *"fan into flame"* the gifts of the Spirit given to them for the benefit of the Church and her people. Proper instruction is also important because of the frequent misunderstandings and misdirected teachings concerning the "charismatic" experience.

212. The first understanding of the "gifts" is to ensure that we, as Catholics, define our "charismatic" experience with Catholic theology, doctrine, and praxiology (orthodoxy & orthopraxy). The second understanding of the "gifts" is to ensure that we, as Catholics, approach that foundation of Catholic orthodoxy, as *"Catholics"* with the fullness and excellence of the all that Catholic principles and philosophy can teach us. It is not enough to be orthodox. Orthodoxy is only the springboard of our lives as

Catholics. To be fully Catholic in fact, in practice, in demeanor, in spirit, in thinking, and in passion must order our lives and our activities to fulfill the principles and philosophies that compose the "Catholic Worldview." It is an analysis of the Catholic Worldview that offers us profound insight into the differences between the Pentecostal charismatic experience, for example, and that of the Catholic experience. We must be more than orthodox charismatics; we must be truly and fully Catholic charismatics. Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Ratzinger, refers to one of the central principles of the Catholic Worldview in his "Foreword" to Cardinal Suenens book:[23]

> *First he* (Cardinal Suenens) *raises the basic question which is decisive for the fruitful growth of the Renewal. What is the relation between personal experience and the common faith of the Church? Both factors are important: a dogmatic faith unsupported by personal experience remains empty; mere personal experience unrelated to the faith of the Church remains blind.*
>
> *The isolation of experience constitutes a serious threat to true Christianity – a threat extending far beyond the Renewal movement. Even if this isolation has a "pneumatic"* [spiritual] *origin, it is the price that has to be paid for* [it is the result that comes from] *the empiricism* [the notion that experience and the senses are the only, or the primary, source of knowledge] *that dominates our time*
>
> *Such an isolation of experience is closely linked with the Fundamentalism that separates the Bible from the whole of salvation history and reduces it to an experience of self with no mediation whatsoever. It does justice neither to historical reality, nor to the breadth of the mystery of God. Here, too, the true answer lies in a comprehension of the Bible, in union with the whole Church, and not merely in an isolated historicist reading.*
>
> *All this shows once again that charism and institution overlap, and that what matters is not the "we" of the group but the great "we" of the Church of all times, which alone can provide the adequate and necessary framework, enabling us both to "hold on to what is good" and to "discern spirits."*

213. The two principles of Catholic Worldview described here are 1) that reason must always lead the way and guide experience, feelings, and emotions; and 2) our experiences must be integrated in the whole Body of the Church and not isolated into individual groups or movements.

214. Colin B. Donovan summarizes the Church's position on the Renewal:

> *The Church clearly wishes to follow a middle course, between a rationalistic skepticism and a blind credulity in alleged working of the Holy Spirit. In the past the Church had condemned what it called Pentecostalism, understood as the total dependence, even theologically, on the presence and manifestation of the charisms. Such a dependence is blind, for it fails to allow itself to be guided by the full content of the faith and the judgement of the Church's teaching authority. It is total when such "gifts" displace the means of grace in the life of the Christian, such as the sacraments. On the other hand, the Church cannot condemn charisms, since they are part of the patrimony of our apostolic faith. What we have seen in our time is the appearance of the Charismatic Renewal, an apparent outpouring of the extraordinary charisms. This doesn't mean that one has to be charismatic, that charismatics are better Catholics, or that every alleged charism is authentic. Yet, as the Council noted, the Church must respect the workings of God, discerning the authentic from the inauthentic.*[24]

215. Taking the advice of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI (in the comments he made when he was Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) and the general guidance of the Council Fathers, we must take the time to carefully evaluate the "charismatic" experience.

216. The central imperative to any evaluation, we believe therefore, begins with the admonition that we cannot approach this personal charismatic experience from the isolated historicist, doctrinally inaccurate, and subjectively empirical approach of Pentecostalism. We must, rather, evaluate the "charismatic" experience with solid Biblical exegesis, listening closely to the teachings of the Saints and Doctors of the Church and with Sacred Tradition on this subject, using reason, deliberation, and discernment in union with the whole Church. We must be guided by that reasoned evaluation and not by the senses apart from reason or by mere personal experiences and ideas that are more vulnerable to misguidance or even to self-delusion. Clarity, from a Catholic point-of-view, is our goal.

217. We have outlined various Charism Gifts in the previous paragraphs, but more is needed to fully understand the true nature of the Gifts. We first offer information to help clarify the differences between genuine "charismatic" gifts and other kinds of gifts. We then offer an analysis of what to avoid in our Catholic expression of the Gifts by detailing the errors and problems of Pentecostalism, many of which have unfortunately bled into the Catholic expression of the charisms.

218. **What Charism Gifts are Not:** There is often confusion about the nature of genuine charism gifts. Charism gifts are not the Seven Gifts of the Spirit mentioned in Isaiah (Baptismal Gifts) given to all persons during the Sacrament of Baptism and strengthen in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Charism gifts are not the special grace of the perfection of prayer given to those in mystical union (Mystical Gifts). Charism gifts are not for personal benefit and edification (Private Gifts), but are for public service. Charism gifts are neither natural talents or gifts (Natural Gifts) nor parasensory/preternatural abilities (Extraordinary Natural Gifts). Charism gifts are neither ordinary grace (Situational Gifts) nor are they spontaneous inspirations or knowledge (Impromptu Gifts). Charism Gifts are also not ministerial offices.

219. ***Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Baptismal Gifts):*** St. Justin Martyr identifies the seven gifts in Isaiah 11:2 as *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* which were bestowed on Christ in their fullness and which are again given *"by Him, from the place of His Spirit's powers, to all His believers according to their merits."*[25] As believers, through Baptism and Confirmation, we are recipients of the *gift* of the Holy Spirit, and are thus recipients of His sevenfold gifts:

1) *wisdom*
2) *understanding*
3) *counsel*
4) *fortitude*
5) *knowledge*
6) *piety*
7) *fear of the Lord (reverence).*

220. The fullness of these gifts in our lives is determined by our merits, but without these gifts in some measure, we would not be able to live the Christian life at all. These gifts make the Christian life possible. Without them (without Christ), we *"can do nothing."*[26] The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit *"complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations."*[27]

221. Since it is important to know the definitions of these Seven Gifts of the Spirit, we have duplicated *in toto* in the endnotes the definitions given in the *Apostolate's Family Catechism*. [28] We advise all members to study and to know these definitions since all baptized believers are given each gift to help them in their Christian life.

222. Although some of these gifts appear to be the same as the *"charismatic"* gifts, they are not. *All* seven of these gifts are given to *all* believers in one measure or another so that it will be possible for them to live the Christ-life. The various *"charismatic"* gifts, on the other hand, are given to this person or to that person as God so pleases[29] as an *additional* supernatural and particular gift to enable the person not only to live the Christian life, but to perform ministry and service to build-up the Church and the People of God for the greater glory of God.

223. ***Perfection of Prayer (Mystical Gifts):*** The charism gifts are not mystical gifts and cannot aspire to the perfection of prayer that God grants to those in mystical union with Him. The *Letter to Bishops on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation* states that, *"it should be remembered that charisms are not the same things as extraordinary ('mystical') gifts (cf. Rom 12:3-21)"* (n. 25). [30] The Mystical Gifts are given to founders of Institutes and other saints by a special grace not available to everyone. The *Christian Meditation* document instructs (n.24):

> *There are certain "mystical graces," conferred on the founders of ecclesial institutes to benefit their foundation, and on other saints, too, which characterize their personal experience of prayer and which cannot, as such, be the object of imitation and aspiration for other members of the faithful, even those who belong to the same institutes and those who seek an ever more perfect way of prayer.*[(1)]

[(1)] *No one who prays, unless he receives a special grace, covets an overall vision of the revelations of God, such as St. Gregory recognized in St. Benedict. or that mystical impulse with which St. Francis of Assisi would contemplate God in all his creatures, or an equally global vision, such as that given to St. Ignatius at the River Cardoner and of which he said that for him it could have taken the place of Sacred Scripture. The "dark night" described by St. John of the Cross is part of his personal charism of prayer. Not every member of his order needs to experience it in the same way so as to reach that perfection of prayer to which God has called him.*

224. All the Faithful are called to the ordinary level of mystical experience that is the "living experience of God" through the gifts of the Spirit, but the extraordinary mystical gifts are given by God only to those called to mystical union and thus they are not to be sought after:

> *The Christian's call to "mystical" experiences can include both what St. Thomas classified as a living experience of God via the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the inimitable forms (and for that reason forms to which one ought not to aspire) of the granting of grace.*(Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia, IIae, 1 c, as well as a. 5, ad 1)[31]

225. ***Private Benefit and Edification (Private Gifts):*** St. Paul is very clear on this point—for a gift to qualify as a "charism" gift it must serve the Church and her people in ministry, encouragement, and building-up the faith (Eph 4:11-12; 1 Pet 4:10-11; 1Cor 12:7; 14:3). If a "gift" does not do this, then no matter how wonderful the gift or how much fruit the gift produces in the life of the person with the gift, it is not a "charism" gift.

226. ***Natural Talents and Gifts (Natural Gifts):*** In addition, it is important to note that while there may be corollaries and similarities to natural talents and gifts, *"charismatic"* gifts exercise a *"supernatural"* ability and grace that is not dependent upon any natural talent or upon any disposition or ability that may *naturally* develop with human effort, maturity, or intelligence. The faculties of human intuition and "hyper-sensitivity" are also "natural" gifts—that are often mistaken for supernatural gifts in a religious sense or extrasensory perception in a secular sense.[32]

227. ***Parasensory Sensitives and Preternatural Abilities (Extraordinary Natural Gifts):*** Charism gifts are not parasensory or preternatural abilities (commonly thought of as ESP-type abilities), although there can be similarities with certain charism gifts. Parasensory and preternatural abilities most likely originate from the extraordinary spiritual abilities that were available to mankind before the Fall when man was both physically and spiritually perfect and whole. Access to those spiritual abilities was generally lost to man after the Fall and will not be restored to him until the next life. The theory is that in some instances remnants of these pre-Fall (preternatural) abilities appear in certain spontaneous situations. It is not uncommon for a mother, as an example, to simply "know" that her child has been in an accident even though that child is 1000 miles away. Such bonds of love often appear to be a common denominator in the spontaneous expression of these preternatural abilities.

228. In other cases, in vary rare occasions, some people may seem to have an on-going ability or "sensitivity" to know things that cannot otherwise be known by normal means—such as the nature of a person's illness, that a long lost brother will knock on the door on Thursday, or where a lost child is located.

229. Father Amorth, the exorcist for the Diocese of Rome, discusses the possibilities of legitimate "sensitives" in his books, *"An Exorcist Tells His Story* and *An Exorcist: More Stories."*[33] Father Amorth warns, however, that it is *"very difficult to find true seers or sensitives. On the other hand, there are a multitude of people who believe they have and are reputed to have these gifts. We need to be very careful."*[34] In addition, Father La Grua, speaking about non-charismatic healing, warns in his book, *La preghiera di quarigione* there *"may be the danger of evil infiltration"* and thus the need for *"extreme prudence."*[35]

230. Given that natural abilities can so easily be misinterpreted as parasensory and preternatural abilities, and that such abilities can be fraudulent, or in some cases even be demonic, extreme caution and prudence is an understatement. Even remote

consideration of the validity of such abilities should be under extreme scrutiny and discernment using strict criteria by those qualified to render a judgment.

231. There is rarely, if ever, a need for on-going preternatural abilities. We certainly are not to seek them or try to develop any such abilities that we believe we have. [36] It is usually advisable to ask God to remove from us such abilities unless it is His will for us to have them. If God wants us to have them, then He will also call us to practice such abilities for a specific purpose. This is a rare thing. God's graces, in His normal economy of ordinary and extraordinary graces (such as through natural talents, spontaneous inspirations, and charism gifts), are the common and usual way He gives us His gifts. The reason for this is obvious due to the dangers the practice of preternatural abilities present to our souls.

232. We agree with Father Amorth that we must always be on guard and vigilant against the temptation to go *"outside the common sacred means to obtain grace"* and thus risk *"unwittingly falling into the trap of magic."*[37]

233. ***Ordinary Grace (Situational Gifts):*** Charism gifts are extraordinary graces given by God to His people according to His purposes. God may also bestow ordinary grace to his children. For example, God will give us sufficient graces to handle all situations that arise in our lives, both good and bad. He has promised this in Romans 8:28: *"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose."*

Our Father also gives us the ordinary graces we need to perform ministry in our Christian life. In the ordinary course of our service and good works in Christ, our Father gives us whatever grace is needed to perform that service or good work in accord with our responsibilities, calling, and state-in-life. This grace comes to us ordinarily and may or may not be accompanied, as God wills, by a "charism" gift.

For example, we may not all have the "charism" gift of evangelism, yet we all have a responsibility to share our faith with others (1 Pet 3:15). We may not all have the "charism" gift of exhortation, yet we are all called to encourage and build-up each other (1 Thes 5:11). In this way, we see ordinary graces working alongside the charism gifts.

Similar direct corollaries can be made with each of the "charism" gifts (except for the "signifying" gifts of tongues, interpretation, miracles, and miraculous healing). Thus, while we may not possess a particular charism gift, we remain with the responsibility to participate to the level of our abilities, talents, and ordinary grace given to us in the service or ministry that gift represents.

234. ***Spontaneous Inspirations and Knowledge (Impromptu Gifts):*** Another kind of ordinary grace from God involves spontaneous inspirations or knowledge granted to us to help us with a particular situation or moment. Jesus Himself reveals that this kind of grace is available to us with His words in Luke 12:11b-12: *"…do not worry about how or what your defense will be or about what you are to say. For the holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say."* This spontaneous (*at*

the moment) grace is not a "charism" gift, but an ordinary gift that a Father gives to His children when they need it. Another example is that God may choose, on rare occasions, to reveal to a person some private personal information about another person. This does not automatically constitute the charism gift of *"word of Knowledge,"* or any other charism gift, as many may suppose. It most often is merely another kind of spontaneous (*at the moment*) grace given by the Spirit according to the needs of the moment to uplift or to assist another person.

235. ***Offices:*** In addition, one should not confuse gifts with offices. A person may have the gift of pastoring, for example, without being in the office of pastor. Conversely, one may hold the office of pastor without having the charism gift of pastoring. It is a great grace when one has received the charism gift that corresponds to the needs of one's office, but often that is not the case.

236. **Purpose of the Gifts:** [38] It is especially important to emphasize that God gives these gifts[39] as *He* wills for the edification, uplifting, and building-up of the Church and of the Faithful (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:11-13). Thus for the health of the Body, God gives every Christian at least one gift, and some may have several gifts (1 Pet 4:10), so that within the community all the gifts that are needed will be present and available (1 Cor 12:12-31; 13:13). That is, He will ensure the presence and availability, but we who have been given those gifts must accept the responsibility and stewardship to develop, offer, and implement our gifts for the good of the Church, and not to neglect them (1 Tim 4:12, 14). We are, in fact, to *fan into flame* the gifts God has graciously given to us (2 Tim 1:6) so that the Church will be healthy and able to live out its mission to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

237. **Misdirected and False Teachings:** There is much misdirected and even false teaching found in the Pentecostal and Protestant "charismatic movements", and even sometimes among the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. As pointed out above, Catholics ought to take care to ensure their beliefs and practices with the charismatic experience are not only fully obedient with Catholic teaching, but also consistent with the praxiology, philosophy, and worldview of Catholicism. Catholics in the Renewal need to take care that they do not seek to create a Pentecostalism within the Church. We need to always avoid "seeking the gifts of the Giver and not the Giver of the gifts." Indeed, in respect to the Catholic worldview they ought to divorce themselves altogether from the following problematic or erroneous Pentecostalisms*:* [40]

(a) On Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Sacramental Grace: The concept of *"baptism in the Spirit"* must not be confused with "another act of sacramental grace" as is taught in many Pentecostal charismatic circles. Fortunately, few Catholics mistake that the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," as understood by the charismatic movement, is an act of sacramental grace. The pastors of the Church have, on this point, published its proper definition: that *"baptism in the Holy Spirit"* is not another act of sacramental grace but rather the *"personally experienced actualization of grace already sacramentally received, principally in baptism and confirmation."* [41]

(b) On "Baptism" in the Holy Spirit as a Historical Event: A corollary to subpara. (a) above is the idea of a specific date when we were "baptized" in the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostals are correct in the idea of a specific date. That date is the day we are received in the Sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation. There are no other dates by which we are "baptized" in the Holy Spirit.

We can, however, speak of a *"historical re-awakening or release of the Spirit"* in the sense that in a particular moment in our past we came to realize (re-awaken) for the first time the power and gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives and may have specifically asked God to bring that *actualization* upon us. From then on, because we now know of the possibility of the intimate filling and power of the Spirit, we can continue to experience and *actualize* the "filling" of the Holy Spirit, to greater or lesser degrees, as God gives us the grace to do so and as we live out the Christ-life of holiness in our own daily lives.

Most people, however, may experience this intimate and personal relationship with the Holy Spirit without ever having an emotional or historical event take place (other than the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation).

(c) On Using the term "baptism": Although the Church has instructed the Renewal on the proper definition of the "baptism" of the Spirit, the use of the term, *"baptism" in the Holy Spirit,* is nevertheless misleading and is a "Pentecostalism." A more accurate term would be a *"re-awakening or filling with the Holy Spirit"*[42] since existentially and ontologically that is the phenomenon actually taking place.[43]

The term "baptism in the Holy Spirit" in the context of the charismatic experience was born in theological error. Pentecostals do not believe in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Thus when they read the passages in the book of Acts about laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit, they misinterpreted it to be some additional post-conversion act that must be performed. That is not true. *The gift of the Spirit may not be separated in any way from conversion…*[44] There are no instances in the New Testament of the "laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit" outside of the Sacraments.

(d) On the Laying on of Hands and Anointing with Oil: The practice of anointing with oil and laying on of hands to "receive the Holy Spirit" was adopted by Pentecostals, as explained above, because they did not understand the doctrine of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Given this theological bias, it is not surprising that they misinterpreted the passages in the Book of Acts[45]. As such, it appeared to them that this "laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit" was a separate act and experience from that of conversion, rather than as an act of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

As Catholics we know that there is no need for us to "receive the Holy Spirit" in some extra-Sacramental way. As the Catechism instructs us, Confirmation gives us ***"the <u>full outpouring</u> of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost"*** (CCC 1302) We already have the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, there is no need for any additional forms of quasi-liturgical ceremonies or actions to "receive" the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

In addition, the Magisterium has repeatedly warned the Faithful against performing rites and prayers that too closely resemble the Sacraments or the actions and prayers reserved to priests.

The *Instruction on Prayers for Healing*,[46] for example, makes this point:

> *Confusion between such free non-liturgical prayer meetings and liturgical celebrations properly so-called is to be carefully avoided.*

Another example is found in the *Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest*:

> *In using sacramentals, the non-ordained faithful should ensure that these are in no way regarded as sacraments whose administration is proper and exclusive to the Bishop and to the priest. Since they are not priests, in no instance may the non-ordained perform anointings either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil.*[47]

Pope John Paul II reminds us that:

> *…the particular gift of each of the Church's members must be wisely and carefully acknowledged, safeguarded, promoted, discerned and coordinated, without confusing roles functions or theological and canonical status.*[48]

Also in the *Collaboration* Instruction:

> *Every effort must be made to avoid even the appearance of confusion...*
>
> *To avoid any confusion between sacramental liturgical acts presided over by a priest or deacon, and other acts which the non-ordained faithful may lead, it is always necessary to use clearly distinct ceremonials, especially for the latter.*[49]

Finally, in a letter sent to us from the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Monsignor Mario Marini, Undersecretary, writes:

> Prot. N. 1116/00/L
>
> Rome, 24 June 2000
>
> This Congregation for Divine Worship has received your letter dated 4 May 2000, in which you ask whether the Instruction *Ecclesiae de mysterio* on Lay Collaboration in the Ministry of the Priest, article 9, should be interpreted as prohibiting the use by laypersons of blessed oil as a sacramental.
>
> While a certain degree of prudent reserve in this matter is indeed advisable, it is clear that the exclusion of traditional devotions employing the use of blessed oil, and in which there is no likelihood of confusion with the sacramental of Anointing of the Sick by a priest, is not the intention of this Instruction. Excluded instead would be any use by a layperson of oil, which even if not the Oil of the Sick blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday, would be interpreted as replacing the sacramental Anointing by a priest, or which would in any way be seen as equivalent to it, or which would be employed as a means of attaining for laypersons a new role previously reserved to clergy.

> The intention of the person using the oil, the clarity with which such an intention is expressed by such a person, and the understanding of those present will all be relevant in determining the likelihood of misunderstanding and therefore the degree to which such a practice should be avoided. In this matter as in all similar cases, such a practice is subject to the supervision of the local Pastor and ultimately of the diocesan Bishop.
>
> Thanking you for your interest and with every prayerful good wishes for a blessed Easter Season, I am,
>
> Sincerely yours in Christ,
> Mons. Mario Marini
> Undersecretary

The common practices of the Charismatic Renewal of the quasi-liturgical *"laying on hands to receive the release of the Holy Spirit"* is often done without regard to the understanding of those present that the Congregation requires. Even when permission has been attained by a group's Pastor, the actual practice among many groups tends to be quasi-liturgical in appearance. Many individual Charismatics seem present themselves as quasi-priest in their demeanor even if verbally claiming they are not. Thus, in much of the Charismatic Renewal this practice can be both potentially theologically problematic and certainly too closely resembling what is reserved to bishops and/or priests.

(e) On Receiving the Gifts through "baptism" in the Holy Spirit: Since the spiritual *("charismatic")* gifts are a manifestation[50] of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we must determine how we are so "baptized." As previous quoted, the Catechism affirms that upon the Sacrament of Confirmation we are given *"the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit…"* (CCC 1302); "baptism" of the Holy Spirit comes with the Sacrament. (see para. 237(c) above for discussion on the improper use of the term "baptism.") The Faithful, therefore, ought to have realized and experienced the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit and His Gifts upon receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sadly, many or even most do not. This is the value of the Charismatic Renewal—to have reminded us of what we ought to have already known and experienced.

The "gifts," however, are available to us without any quasi-liturgical rites or prayers that mimics, however loosely, the baptism of the Holy Spirit received when we accept the Sacrament of Confirmation. Our goal, if we did not realize it when we were Confirmed, is to realize this fact now and thus to "discover" (not to seek) that gift or gifts we have been given and then begin to *"fan them into flame."* To repeat the excellent warning of Colin B. Donovan (Donovan, [article online]), against *"seeking the gifts of the Giver and not the Giver of the gifts."*[51]

(f) On the Predominance of Sensualism (Empiricism): The primary problematic characteristic of the charismatic experience in Pentecostalism and in much of the Catholic Renewal, even greater than the undue emphasis on Tongues (see subparagraph. (i) below), is the predominance of Sensualism. Sensualism is the

notion derived from Empiricism[52] that the senses (experiences and emotions) are sufficient principle of all our ideas and knowledge.[53]

Indeed, God has created us as sensory beings. We experience the world through our senses. We are, in fact, a *"sacramental people."* A "sacrament" is a visible manifestation discerned by the senses of an invisible reality. This is why God has given us the Seven Sacraments and numerous "sacramentals"—because He knows we experience reality through our senses. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: *"Man's natural path to knowing things only his mind can grasp is thorough what he perceives with his senses … All our knowledge originates in sense-perception…"*[54] Once such knowledge is gained, it must be tested and authenticated. Reason informs our sense perception. This is the role of reason. This is why Vatican I dogmatically proclaimed (*De fide*) that God can be certainly known by human reason by virtue of creation:

> *[The fact of positive supernatural revelation]. The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things; "for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" [Rom 1:20]*[55]

The Great Angelic Doctor helps us to understand. He teaches us that in God's creation of living creatures exist up to three "souls." The first soul is the "vegetative soul." This is the life force of all living creatures—plants and animals. Next is the "sensitive soul." This gives animals the faculty of experiencing the world about them and responding to that world through the senses. The third type of soul is the "rational soul." This is the faculty that is the "image of God" given only to human beings. Human beings have all three kinds of soul; animals have the sensitive and the vegetative; plants have only the vegetative.

And thus the *Catechism* concludes:

> *Feelings or passions are emotions or movement of the sensitive appetite that incline us to act or not to act in regard to something felt or imagined to be good or evil.* (CCC 1763)
>
> *In themselves passion are neither good nor evil. They are morally qualified only to the extent that they effectively engage reason and will.* (CCC 1767)

While human beings experience the world about them through the faculty of the sensitive soul (the senses), those experiences must be "qualified" and interpreted by the rational soul (reason). Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, identifies this empiricism (sense predominance), when isolated from reason, as a threat to Christianity[56]. This leads us back to the official Church teaching that the senses, the passions, must be *governed by reason* (CCC 1767).

Given this teaching of the Church, it is critically important for those who are involved in the Charismatic Renewal to "reason" through their experiences and not presume anything about their experiences on the weight of their experiences alone. We need to "test the spirits," we need to know the presumptions behind the things we believe, we need to know where our beliefs and practices originate, we need to evaluate and to analyze the suppositions, consequences, and ramifications of what we believe and practice. To not evaluate and test our experiences against such

"reasoned" analysis is to flirt with imprudent, problematic, or even erroneous ideas and notions that can lead us astray or at least rob us of the fullness of the victorious Christ-Life. Many in the Renewal exaggerate the empirical if not isolate it from reason. The leader of the Charismatic Renewal in Canada offers us an example of this exaggeration in his book, *Understanding the Charismatic Gifts,* in which it is suggested that we will "just know" if our Tongues was not from the Holy Spirit.[57]

The *Letter to Bishops on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation* speaks in some detail about the danger of one aspect of this exaggeration. This Curia document is important to review, since the phenomenon of Tongues is very similar to the effects of classical meditation.[58]

(g) On Spiritual Gluttony: It is often the case with very devout Catholics, especially those in the Charismatic Renewal, that another kind of Sensualism sets in — spiritual gluttony. Spiritual gluttony can two forms. 1) some are so covetous of the Eucharist that they will steal the Eucharist to have it, or will have great fits if a daily Mass is not offered when the Pastor is on vacation. This is patently improper and sinful. 2) the second type of spiritual gluttony is the seeking of "sensual sweetness", the desire to experience that in which they feel and taste God emotionally, without regard to reason. St. John of the Cross, in his work "The Dark Night of the Soul" (I, vi), defines this sort of spiritual gluttony (a term he uses). He explains that it is the disposition of those who, in prayer and other acts of religion, are always in search of sensible sweetness; they are those who "will feel and taste God, as if he were palpable and accessible to them not only in Communion but in all their other acts of devotion." The great Saint warns us that this "gluttony" is a very great imperfection that can produce great evils.

(h) On the Distribution of the Gifts: Another very common example of misdirected teaching is that each of us has the all of the *"manifestation gifts."*[59] In light of this false teaching, it is important to re-emphasize and for members to understand that we do *not* all possesses the same *"charismatic"* gifts — *the gifts are varied* (1 Cor 12:14) *and are distributed by God as He sees fit"* (1 Cor 12:18), not as we desire. Despite this clear statement of St. Paul, leaders of the Charismatic Renewal teach the opposite. For example, Father Coughlin, in his book previously cited, states:

> *These are the gifts that to some degree are present in each of us although one or the other may predominate, making us have a particular motivating force or direction in our lives.*[60]

It is fascinating to note that Father Coughlin quotes Romans 12:6-8 immediately before the statement quoted above. *"These are the gifts…"* refers to the Romans passage he quotes in his text. That quote from Romans begins with these words: *"Let each one of us, therefore, serve according to our* ***<u>different</u>*** *gifts…"* He repeats several times throughout his book that everyone has all the charism gifts.[61]

(i) On What Is Evidence of Spiritual Maturity: Although most Catholics generally understand this point correctly, it is important, in the face of misdirected teaching on this subject among non-Catholics, to understand that *no* particular *charismatic gift is evidence of spirituality or maturity*. No particular gift is evidence

of *"baptism in the Holy Spirit."* Neither is the manifestation of a *"private prayer language"* evidence of *"baptism in the Spirit"* or of some level of maturity or spirituality. The gift of a *"private prayer language",* as with all gifts, may be given by God to whom He pleases and as He sees fit. Thus, not everyone will exhibit this particular "gift." [62]

The *true evidence* for spirituality, maturity, and *"baptism in the Spirit,"* according to Holy Scripture and Church teaching, is the *"Fruit of the Spirit"* which is *love* (1 Cor 13:1-3; Gal 5:22-26).

While Catholics in the Renewal understand this point intellectually and articulate the point correctly in their rhetoric, their behavior often implies something else to an onlooker or a seeker. The emphasis on Tongues (subpara. (i) below) and especially the idea that Tongues is the way to "pray in the spirit" or to pray more "perfectly" (see subpara. (j) below) are two major ways that at least implies that being "spiritual" requires "Tongues." An attitudinal assent, praxiology, and consistent understanding throughout the charismatic experience must follow intellectual assent to this doctrinal point.

(j) On the Emphasis on the Gift of Tongues and Other Sigil Gifts: Despite the clear teaching of Scripture, the Charismatic Renewal, in one fashion or another, to one degree or another, seems to maintain an emphasis upon the Gift of Speaking in Tongues and upon a private prayer language. St. Paul spends a great deal of time admonishing the Church at Corinth against their immaturity and abuse of the Gifts, and especially that of Tongues. One of St. Paul's instructions on this subject is found in 1 Corinthians 14:6-12:

> *Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will any one know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will any one know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*
>
> *But earnestly desire the higher gifts. (1 Cor 11:31a)*

Father Coughlin, however, writes, *"each gift is of equal value. No one is greater than another."*[63]

Pentecost Today, a journal of the Charismatic Renewal, illustrates the emphasis on Tongues in the passage quoted below that suggests the principle that Tongues is a "gateway" to the other gifts. We believe that the Church teaches us that the Sacrament of Confirmation is the gateway to the charism gifts of the Spirit.

In the *Life in the Spirit Seminar,* the script is often repeated that Tongues can be a gateway to the rest of the gifts. When asked why, the response is that Tongues is the

easiest gift to obtain. We agree—Tongues is easily manifested psychgenically, which is why we must be so cautious about it. This "gateway" and "easiest gift" approach to Tongues can create a great deal of pressure to speak in Tongues. With the idea of Tongues as a "common gateway", we would suggest that the danger of a psychogenic phenomenon is more likely.

In addition, as we have written in several sections in these Articles, we believe there is a more precise rendering of Scripture in its teaching on the nature of the gifts. The Church states that we receive the "fullness" of the Holy Spirit as it was with the Apostles at Pentecost when we receive the Sacrament of Conformation. When that being true, and since the gifts come with the Spirit, we must receive whatever gift God has for us at the Sacrament of Confirmation and we thus need to "discover", rather than to "seek" from a "I wanna" list, what gift or gifts may have been given.

There is also an implication suggested in the quote below that Tongues is a fuller way to pray. This too, is problematic:

> *Praying in tongues is "a common gift of prayer by which we can surrender our voice and thoughts to God, what Father Montague describes as a 'spirit-language' that gives voice to our inner self before God… [it] can be a gateway to the charismatic dimensions of faith. It gives a person a clear experience of being fully active in prayer, yet touched by the presence of the Holy Spirit."* [64]

***Purpose of Sigil Gifts**:* The primary purpose of the Sigil Gifts was to authenticate the ministries of Jesus, the Apostles, and the early Church. The Scripture indicates this purpose (e.g., Mt 9:6; Jn 14:31; 1 Cor 14:22, et al.), the witness of history affirms it, and the Magisterium confirms it:

> *By the end of the second century, extraordinary and miraculous charisms had largely disappeared from the Christian communities. St. Gregory the Great, who lived in the sixth century, noted this fact and explained it by pointing out that such charismatic signs were necessary in the first days of the faith, but not in later years.*(1) *When the visible family of faith had become rooted in the world, then the Church itself with its marks of unity, faith, and love became the principal sign of God's presence.*(2) [65]

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(1) Cf. St. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia,* hom. 29.4 (MG 76.1215-1216).
(2) Cf. First Vatican Council, Session 3, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith* (April 24, 1870), ch. 3 (DS 3013-3014)

Danger in Seeking Sigil Gifts: There are three primary reasons for great caution in seeking after the Sigil Gifts of Tongues, Interpretation, Miracles, and miraculous Healing. The first is the presumption that these gifts are to be re-established as a norm in Christian life today when their primary purpose, as discussed above, was as a sign to authenticate the ministries of Jesus, the Apostles, and the early Church. We ought not to make presumptions about the workings of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who, in His sovereignty, decides what gifts to grant us and when. While the Sigil gifts may have a use to build-up the Church today, since both the Scripture and the Vatican Council teach us that their purpose was as a sign to those days, we need to be very circumspect. Are we in another era

where signs such as these are necessary to authenticate ministry or the Church? To say yes, contradicts the dogmatic teaching of Vatican I as cited above. With such statements from the Church in the past, this issue must be submitted to the scrutiny and discernment of the Magisterium.

The second reason is the inherent danger of "seeking after a sign." Jesus Himself warns us that: *"an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah"* (Mt 16:4). We can be so desirous for a sign, so eager to be given a sign, that the human psyche will provide one for us. We may get want we want because we want it so badly that our minds will conjure it up; every fiber of our being may be convinced of it, yet what we are experiencing may not be coming from God but from our own psyche. Such desire and eagerness can also leave us vulnerable to people with fraudulent gifts whose purpose is to exploit us.

The third reason to avoid seeking after a sign is that the Evil One can easily counterfeit these particular gifts. Tongues, for example, can be and is imitated by Satan often. Satanists, shamans, occultist, witches, pagans, the insane, and the demon possessed all speak in tongues. The first symptom of demon possession listed in the official Rite of Exorcism is speaking in tongues.[66] This does not mean that all those who speak in tongues are possessed. No! It means that the Evil One can and does imitate Tongues and other gifts—or even imitate an "angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14) if need be to hoodwink us into his snare. Thus, we need to be very careful and not seek these gifts, but only accept them if the Lord gives them to us. Even then, we must always "test" the spirit behind the tongues or any of the other sigil gifts. Besides, St. Paul admonishes us to "desire the greater gifts" of which Tongues is not!

Colin Donovan summarizes:

> *St. Paul's experience at Corinth demonstrated rather early in the Church how susceptible these charisms are to exaggeration. … he would even warn the Corinthians that the devil can appear as an angel of light (1 Cor 11:14). Similarly, both St. Peter and St. John (1 Pet 5:8-9; 1 John 4:1) warn us of this danger.*
>
> *St. Thomas Aquinas in his* Summa Theologiæ *[ST II-II q177] tells us that the Holy Spirit does not accomplish the charism directly but through the mediation of angels. Since they are within the power of angelic nature, they are also capable of demonic imitation… It is for these reasons that most spiritual writers, especially the mystical doctor St. John of the Cross, warn us not to* seek *such extraordinary phenomenon… Vatican II made this warning part of its teaching*[67] *on the charismatic gifts.*[68]

Three Apostles (Sts Paul, Peter, and John), the Council Fathers of Vatican II, and two Doctors of the Church (St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross) urge great caution and circumspection concerning the extraordinary gifts. Such cautious circumspection of the finer details within the Renewal founded on reasoned evaluation over empiricism seems rare in the Renewal.

Testing the Gifts: God has commanded us to *"test the spirits"* (1 Jn 4:1) to see if they are of God. Testing the spirits is essential since these extraordinary gifts are so easily counterfeited by Satan as is evidenced by the numerous use of them, especially of Tongues, among Satanist, witch doctors, occultist, and false prophets.

Thus, anyone who believes the have the gift of Tongues, Interpretation, Miracles, or miraculous Healing, (as well as those who believe they have a private prayer language), should have their "gift" tested according to the Biblical norms (1 Jn 4:2-3) to assure that the "spirit" behind the Gift is indeed the Holy Spirit.[69]

Candidates for membership in our *Order* who speak in Tongues, or believe they have any of the other sigil gifts, must have their "gift" tested. The test is to be conducted by a competent third party and never by oneself since with a third party there is less danger in deluding oneself or being fooled by a spirit not of God.

(k) On Tongues as the way to Pray in the Spirit: It is also a misdirected notion that a private prayer language is needed to *"pray in the spirit."* Since we know that "tongues" is not a gift that everyone receives, are we to believe that only some of the Faithful are given the privilege of praying in the Spirit? God forbid! We are instructed in Scripture (Eph 6:18) to pray in the Spirit. God would not instruct us to do something that we cannot possible do. The idea that the two are the same thing comes from Pentecostalism with the usual justification for the notion based upon a misinterpretation of Roman 8:26-27:

> *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

Even a casual reading of this passage reveals that it does not refer to "tongues." St. Paul tells us that this experience is one that is *"too deep for words."* That phrase is from the Revised Standard Version-Catholic Edition. The New American Bible uses the phrase *"inexpressible groanings;"* and the Douay-Rheims uses the phrase *"unspeakable groanings"*—all translations say the same thing—that the experience is without "any words". Tongues is a language, it is words. Thus, the experience mentioned in this passage is something too deep for our native language or for a prayer language—for any language. Rather, the verse tells us, the Spirit knows our hearts and <u>intercedes for us</u> to the Father <u>without words</u>. It is the Holy Spirit who prays for us. We are not the ones praying in this case, in any language or without language; the Holy Spirit is interceding for us. The Holy Spirit does not need to use vocal cords, or our tongues, to pray for us.

(l) On Tongues as the way to Pray More Perfectly: It is part of the regular script in the Renewal to explain that Tongues allows a person to pray and to praise God more perfectly. This notion is largely based on the misinterpretation of Roman 8:26-27 as discussed above. The ever more perfect prayer, however, is not Tongues, according to the Church, but that special grace granted by God to those in mystical union with Him (cf. para. nn. 223ff).

The experience of Tongues does have, nevertheless, an effect similar to contemplative prayer allowing it to easily be mistaken for higher forms of prayer. The notion of Tongues giving a person a closer access and experience of God is sourced in that Pentecostals do not have a tradition or understanding of contemplative prayer. For them, Tongues became the "contemplative" journey to

intimacy with God. Catholics are in no need for Tongues to achieve intimacy with God. We have the fullness of the Faith in the Real Presence of the Most Holy Eucharist and the ancient traditions of true contemplative prayer to which, at some level, all the Faithful may participate. This genuine contemplative prayer, for those called by God, may lead to the highest intimacy with God in this life of mystical union.

The Renewal, however, seems to have co-opted the Pentecostalism of seeking closer intimacy with God through Tongues since, as the standard script goes, "it is the easiest gift." Closer intimacy with God, however, is not an easy way. Genuine contemplation requires great commitment of years of prayer and devotion. There are no short-cuts, although the immature and impatient continually seek an "easy" and "faster" way, such as through Tongues and also through the so-called "centering prayer."[70]

In as much as a genuine expression of Tongues gives the speaker an intimacy with God, we share with him in praising God. To seek Tongues, however, as a method of intimacy, particularly as an easy technique, or as a more perfect way, we must reject.

(m) On the Exercise of the Gifts in Orderly Fashion: With all this in mind, when legitimate and God-given spiritual *("charismatic")* gifts are manifested they are to be exhibited with order, decorum, and love — God is not a God of chaos and division (1 Cor 14:26-33, 36,40). The Church states:

> *Anything resembling hysteria, artificiality, theatricality or sensationalism, above all on the part of those who are in charge of such gatherings, must not take place.*
>
> *Those who direct healing services, whether liturgical or non-liturgical, are to strive to maintain a climate of peaceful devotion in the assembly and to exercise the necessary prudence if healings should take place among those present; when the celebration is over, any testimony can be collected with honesty and accuracy, and submitted to the proper ecclesiastical authority.*[71]

(n) On Spiritualizing Normal Experiences: Another common error with many in the charismatic movement, and a cousin to the error of Sensualism, is interpreting nearly everything spiritually. Normal experiences do occur. Even wildly unusual and bizarre experiences can and do fall within the mathematical probabilities of coincidence. Even Sigmund Freud, with all his symbolic imagery, remarked that, "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar."

A common cold is a common cold, not an infestation of the "demon of a cold" as some Pentecostal charismatics suggest. Waking up just in time to run to the basement before a tornado hits the house may be an alarm of the Holy Spirit, but may just as easily be one's subconscious hearing the sound of the wind.

There is a danger in rashly spiritualizing our normal experiences. The danger is that indiscriminate attribution of normal experiences to spiritual causes damages

the proper discernment abilities leaving us open and vulnerable for benign misinterpretations at best and evil manipulations and subtleties at worse.

A very common spiritualization is to be inspired to quote a Scripture verse when giving a presentation before an audience. The speaker may say something like, "The Holy Spirit just inspired me to read this verse to you." The inspiration is more likely to be a result of normal human insight than a special phone call from the Holy Spirit. Indeed to attribute all insight to a special revelation from God is to insult God by failing to realize the power He has given to His creation. After all, human intellect, intuition, and wisdom are God's gifts to us, too.

To put this in perspective, which is a parent to be more proud? — a child who quotes a verse in their presentation because daddy suggested it directly to them? or, a child who comes up with the inspiration on his own because daddy did such a good job of raising the child in the faith?

We believe the use of our human intellect, intuition, and wisdom informed by the Faith under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church pleases our Father. We should gratefully and joyfully acknowledge this natural gift.

(o) On Avoiding Parasensory Definitions and Practices of Gifts: One of the most disturbing influences of Pentecostalism is the tendency to define and to practice certain "gifts" in a way that is tantamount to mediumism or other forms of ESP (Clairvoyance, telesthesia, and precognition) [72]. For example, the Gift of Knowledge is often defined and practiced in such a way as to be really clairvoyance or telesthesia and the Gift of Prophecy as to be pre-cognition.

The Gift of Knowledge is usually the ability to discover, to know deep and profound knowledge about the faith, and to communicate that knowledge. It is not a clairvoyant or telesthesic ability to know occult (hidden) things about people (such as personal information, hidden illnesses, and secret details). The only exception is in the extremely rare instance where God gives a very holy person, such as St. Padre Pio, the gift of "reading souls." Outside of this very special and rare gift, it is never necessary to know such hidden things in order to pray for someone—God know our needs and the needs of those for whom we pray.

Concerning the gift of "Reading of Souls," St. Padre Pio did not "perform" his ability to read souls on T.V., before crowds, or to reveal trivial information about people. He used it in the Sacrament of Confession to help the penitent to know himself in order to make a good confession and be healed. It is unlikely to witness genuine "reading of souls" outside the Sacrament of Confession, or perhaps the private setting of Spiritual Direction.

Often the charismatic minister will say, "The Spirit is telling me that there is someone in the audience with bone cancer." One must wonder who the "spirit" is as it is not the style of God to display His graces like a "performance."

The Gift of Prophecy is mostly the supernatural ability to reveal and to preach the Truth of God. Only sometimes might this involve conditional predictions of future

events. Many charismatics who claim the Gift of Prophecy, on the other hand, receive regular predictions (pre-cognitions) as special messages to particular individuals. Again, the exercise of this "gift" often has the flavor of mediums and clairvoyants and often reveals trivial information.

In general, the common attributes of people exercising mediumistic and clairvoyant abilities hiding under the guise of Spiritual Gifts include, but are not limited to, a "show biz" flavor, or other performance atmosphere, a very individualistic focus apart from any benefit to the community of the People of God, and a typical tendency to reveal information that is either trivial or unnecessary. Such display of these gifts also tends to call attention to the person with the "gift."

It should be noted that the second primary symptom of possession according to the official Rite of Exorcism is the ability to know hidden things that cannot be known by normal means.[73] Let us exercise great caution.

(p) On Avoiding Pride in Spiritual Warfare: The people in the first century Church at Corinth were plagued with immaturity, pride, and exaggeration about the charisms of the Spirit. Their imprudence engendered a canonical book in Holy Scripture (St. Paul's letters to the Corinthians) and a papal admonishment and warning (from Pope Clement I). Similar exaggerations and immaturities are self-evident in the various Pentecostalisms of today as described in these articles.

One of the ramifications of these imprudent understandings charismatics have concerning the charism gifts is found most acutely not only in the empiricalism and the improper emphasis on Tongues and sigil gifts, but especially in the practice of Spiritual Warfare. The misunderstandings and prideful practices of gifts such as prophecy, tongues, healings, and word of knowledge have direct relevance to the imprudent practices and beliefs in Spiritual Warfare that is so common in the Renewal.

The areas of erroneous teaching in Spiritual Warfare among charismatics are numerous, but include:

(1) the notion that demons cannot be in proximity to the Holy Spirit and thus Christians, or at least devout Christians, cannot be demonized;
(2) thinking that demons are around every corner (negative spiritualization of normal things). One extreme example is the idea that even a common cold is caused by a "demon of cold" to be exorcized. Less extreme examples include the automatic presumption of personal problems coming from a demonic harassment;
(3) an arrogant confidence in our authority over demons. While in the Catholic Renewal the first example of error is rare, and the second error rare in the extremes, but more common with less extreme spiritualizations, this third error is quite common.

A brief answer to these three errors includes:

(1) First, the devil and God speaking directly to each other is found in the book of Job. Proximity was apparently not a problem. Secondly, demons, angels, and God are spirits. As spirits, they live outside of the material world of time and

space. Thus, there is no such thing as "place" and "proximity" in the way that we understand it. Thirdly, God is omniscient; He is everywhere. This is a dogma of the faith. Since God is everywhere, He is in the "place" where demons are found and there is no place demons can go where God is not.

(2) While the first cause of evil and evil effects in the world may be the devil, the particular and proximate cause of a common cold is a virus, not a demon. The immediate and proximate cause of most of our personal problems is ourselves and are own sins and imperfections. It is said that there are three stumblingblocks to mankind's spiritual growth and friendship with God: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. We would suggest that the effects of a fallen World (such as viruses, illnesses, disasters) represent perhaps 7% of the sources of our problems and the devil's direct effects representing perhaps around 3%. The vast majority of our problems (90%), spiritual and otherwise, result from our own weaknesses of the flesh. We cannot lament,*"the devil made me do it."* Most of the time, but not all of the time, we do it to ourselves.

(3) There is a tendency within the Renewal, taking the lead from the Pentecostals, to *hubris* when it comes with dealing with demons. Oftentimes, charismatics act like cowboys who think they can ride in on a horse and with a prayer to kick demon hind-ends with impunity. Even the great St. Michael the Archangel did not take such an attitude (i.e., Jude 9) and Jesus admonished his disciples against pride and arrogance (Lk 10:20):

> *Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*

In 1985, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued legislation proscribing certain practices in Deliverance prayers and ministries.[74] These proscriptions were necessary precisely because of the exaggerations and abuses of charismatic deliverance teams. It is important to note that some people in the Renewal when they learn of this legislation choose to ignore it in favor of the way they wish to do things. Such spirit of disobedience will be noticed by the demons they seek to disturb. Nothing can be more dangerous.

Nowhere is a precise and reasoned approach, and obedience to the Magisterium needed, as in Spiritual Warfare. The typical empirical approach and infiltrations of Pentecostalisms of many in the Catholic Renewal has no place in Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance ministries and is dangerous.

238. **Discernment of the Gifts in our Order:** Thinking or beliefs about spiritual *("charismatic")* gifts that is contrary to the basic principles outlined in these paragraphs leads to pride, envy, strife, and division which is sinful and contrary to our charism. Thus, the manifestation of spiritual *("charismatic")* gifts shall always be under the direction and discernment of the *Superior*.[75] We must always remember that although the Church generally recommends the Charismatic Renewal, such recognition is not an endorsement of errors or imprudence of individual groups or persons.[76] In the final discernment, we must remember St. Paul's ultimate warning in 1 Cor 13:1-3:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

239. In addition to spiritual *("charismatic")* gifts, in considering members for leadership positions, we also look for the personal qualities listed in 1 Tim 3:1-13. Regardless of these qualifications and guidelines, however, decisions made to elect or appoint someone to any position shall be based upon discernment of God's will for the candidate and for the *Order*, even if the candidate has certain impediments or otherwise may not seem to qualify.

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[1] We break from the usual format for codifying provisions and teachings of a Rule of Life, which normally consists of shorter statements and leaving detailed teaching of the subjects to the Formation Master. In this subject of the *Charisms of the Holy Spirit*, however, because of the vast misunderstandings on this subject, it is our purpose to present a more complete essay and teaching within our Rule itself.

[2] Pope John Paul II, (speech given to a group of international leaders of the Charismatic Renewal, 11 December 1979).

[3] Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness,* with a foreword by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983), ix.

[4] Church, no. 12.

[5] Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism (March 25, 1993), n. 11.

[6] Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (21 November 1964), n. 2; quoted in Directory, n. 11; Eph 4:12

[7] Minnesota Catholic Charismatic Renewal, *Bishops Speak to the Renewal: A Collection of Letters from U.S. Catholic Bishops on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Minneapolis: Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office, 2005). All the quotes from bishops in this paragraph number come from letters from the respective bishop published in this book.

[8] Ibid.

[9]Underlines and bold type in quotes throughout this document indicates our emphasis of points within the quotation.

[10] Colin B. Donovan, *Charismatic Renewal — General,* EWTN Catholic Q&A, Frequently Asked Questions, n.d. [article online]; available from http://www.ewtn.com; Internet

[11] *Bishop's Speak to the Renewal.*

[12] The gifts listed here are the various possible gifts we find suggested by Scripture, Tradition, and the Saints. They are either specifically mentioned as spiritual gifts by St. Paul in Scripture, implied as spiritual gifts (i.e. martyrdom), or inferred based upon the characteristics of spiritual gifts as graces of supernatural ability for the good of the church. Whatever number of gifts that may exist, to qualify as a

"Charism (Spiritual) Gift" it must manifest itself in ways that are extraordinary and beyond what the person might be able to do from natural talents or abilities and must also be for the benefit of the Church and her people. God, in His wisdom and economy, may grant "charism" gifts in numerous ways and in numerous areas not listed here. In no way is this list to be considered definitive or exhaustive.

[13] The Sacrificial and Consecrating category especially represents gifts of a nature that require a super-grace to overcome the natural human nature. For example, it is not normal human nature to be self-sacrificing, but some people seem to have an extraordinary grace to be able to do so. Such individuals may have a *"gift of penance/mortification"* or perhaps even the *"gift of martyrdom."* It is equally unnatural for human nature to forswear the right to private ownership, or to marriage, or to make independent decisions. Yet, the gifts of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience are given to many people in religious and secular life. It is also unnatural for humans to manifest charity or virtue in a consistent and extraordinary way leading to Heroic Acts of Charity. Neither is it natural for humans to be profoundly silent or alone, yet some are given the charism to do so. Others are given the charism to pray for others in a way that is beyond normal human ability. It takes a supernatural grace to accomplish these gifts.

[14] *Heroic Acts of Charity* are acts by which one offers to God all the merits of a good deed performed during life, or all the suffrages and benefits gained after one's death for the souls in purgatory. This requires an abandonment of all the spiritual graces and benefits one receives in this life to lessen one's punishments in purgatory so that one's graces and benefits can be applied to others. Thus one must resolve firmly to live a life without sin so as to avoid the punishments in purgatory.

[15] *Catechism,* nn. 1805-1829; Peter Kreeft, *Back to Virtue* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992). This book is *highly recommended*.

[16] John Paul II, To Men and Women Religious on their Consecration in the Light of the Mystery of the Redemption, *Redemptionis Donum* , reprinted by St. Paul Editions with permission from *L'Osservatore Romano,* English Edition (Boston: St. Paul Editions, Daughters of St. Paul, 1984), n. 8.

[17] Ps 46:10.

[18] *Hom. In Cant* (also see *Catechism,* no. 2340):

> *He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. He never stops desiring what he already knows.*

[19] When discussing *Spiritual Gifts,* especially these more classical gifts, one should take St. Paul's discussion in full context. Please refer to at least Romans 12:4-8, 9-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 13:1-3.

[20] Tongues are one of the "sigil" gifts. See the discussion of "sigil" gifts in para. 237 (i).

[21] In order to qualify as a "spiritual gift," according to St. Paul, the gift must be manifested and used for the purposes of service, ministry, and building up (edifying) of the Church. A Private Prayer Language does not qualify as a "charism gift" in this Pauline context. If God gives such a gift to a person, it may indeed edify the person to whom the experience is given, but it is a "private" gift and a private benefit. (see endnote #62).

[22] The *Spiritual Works of Mercy* are: 1) counsel the doubtful; 2) Instruct the Ignorant; 3) Admonish the Sinner; 4) Comfort the sorrowful; 5) Forgive injuries; 6) Bear wrongs patiently; 7) Pray for the living and the dead.

The *Corporal Works of Mercy* are: 1) Feed the hungry; 2) Give drink to the thirsty; 3) Clothe the naked; 4) Shelter the homeless; 5) Visit the sick; 6) Visit the imprisoned; 7) bury the dead.

[23] Suenens, x.

[24] Donovan, [article online].

[25] St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho,* Chapter 87, quoted in Stravinskas, *Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v.,* "The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit."

[26] John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; cf. Romans 8:5-8, 26-27; Luke 24:44-45.

[27] *Catechism,* no. 1831.

[28] Father Lawrence G. Lovasik, *The Apostolate's Family Catechism*, Abridged One-Volume Edition (Bloomindale, OH: Apostolate for Family Consecration), q. 137:

> **Q. 137. What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?**
> The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are *wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord*. They are the gifts listed in Isaiah 11 which were to characterize the Just Man — the Messiah.
>
> These seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are the qualities given to the soul which make the soul responsive to the grace of God. They help us to practice virtue.
>
> Just as charity (the most perfect of virtues) embraces all the other virtues, wisdom is the most perfect of gifts, since it embodies all the other gifts.
>
> 1. The gift of *wisdom* strengthens our faith, fortifies our hope, perfects our charity, and promotes our practice of virtue to the highest degree. Wisdom enlightens our minds to discern and relish things divine, so that the appreciation of earthly joys loses its savor, while the Cross of Christ yields a divine sweetness.
>
> 2. *Understanding*, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, helps us to grasp the meaning of the truths of our holy religion. By faith we know them, but by understanding we learn to appreciate and relish them. Understanding enables us to penetrate the inner meaning of revealed truths, and through them, to quicken us to the newness of life.
>
> 3. The gift of *counsel* endows our souls with supernatural prudence, enabling them to judge promptly and rightly what must be done, especially in difficult circumstances. Counsel applies the principles, furnished by knowledge and understanding, to the innumerable concrete cases which confront us in the course of our daily duty. Counsel is supernatural common sense — a priceless treasure in the quest of salvation.
>
> 4. By the gift of *fortitude*, our souls are strengthened against natural fear, and are supported in the performance of duty. Fortitude imparts to our wills an impulse and energy which moves them to undertake without hesitancy the most arduous tasks, to face dangers, to trample underfoot worldly considerations, and to endure without complaints the crosses of daily life.
>
> 5. The gift of *knowledge* enables our souls to evaluate created things for their true worth, that is, in their relationship to God. Knowledge unmasks the pretense of creatures, reveals their shallowness, and points out their only true purpose as instruments in the service of God. It shows us the loving care God has for us even in adversity, and it directs us to glorify Him in every circumstance of life. Guided by the light of knowledge, we put first things first, and prize the friendship of God beyond all else.

6. The gift of *piety* begets in our hearts a childlike affection for God as our most loving Father. It inspires us to love and respect, for His sake, persons and things consecrated to Him, as well as those who are vested with His authority, i.e., the Blessed Virgin and the saints, the Church and its visible head, the Pope, our parents and superiors, and our country with its rulers. He who is filled with the gift of piety finds the practice of his religion, not a burdensome duty, but a delightful service.

7. The gift of *the fear of the Lord* fills us with a sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread nothing so much as offending Him by sin. It is a fear that rises, not from the thought of hell, but from sentiments of reverence and childlike submission to our heavenly Father. It is the fear that is the beginning of wisdom, because it detaches us from worldly pleasures that can separate us from God.

[29] 1 Corinthians 12:8-11.

[30] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to Bishops on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation (15 October 1989), nn. 22-25. The fuller context of the cited material follows:

> *22. Finally, the Christian who prays can, if God so wishes, come to a particular experience of "union." The Sacraments especially Baptism and the Eucharist, are the objective beginning of the union of the Christian with God. Upon this foundation, the person who prays can be called, by a special grace of the Spirit, to that specific type of union with God which in Christian terms is called "mystical."*
>
> *23. Without doubt, a Christian needs certain periods of retreat into solitude to be recollected and, in God's presence, rediscover his path. Nevertheless, given his character as a creature, and as a creature who knows that only in grace is he secure, his method of getting closer to God is not based on any "technique" in the strict sense of the word. That would contradict the spirit of childhood called for by the Gospel. Genuine Christian mysticism has nothing to do with technique: it is always a gift of God, and the one who benefits from it knows himself to be unworthy.*
>
> *24. There are certain "mystical graces," conferred on the founders of ecclesial institutes to benefit their foundation, and on other saints, too, which characterize their personal experience of prayer and which cannot, as such, be the object of imitation and aspiration for other members of the faithful, even those who belong to the same institutes and those who seek an ever more perfect way of prayer. There can be different levels and different ways of sharing in a founder's experience of prayer, without everything having to be exactly the same. Besides, the prayer experience that is given a privileged position in all genuinely ecclesial institutes, ancient and modern, is always in the last analysis something personal. And it is to the individual person that God gives his graces for prayer.*
>
> *25. With regard to mysticism, one has to distinguish between "the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the charisms" granted by God in a totally gratuitous way. The former are something which every Christian can quicken in himself by his zeal for the life of faith, hope and charity; and thus, by means of a serious ascetical struggle, he can reach a certain experience of God and of the contents of the faith. As for charisms, St. Paul says that these are, above all, for the benefit of the Church, of the other members of the Mystical Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:17). With this in mind, it should be remembered that charisms are not the same things as extraordinary ("mystical") gifts (cf. Rom 12:3-21), and that the distinction between the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" and "charisms" can be flexible. It is certain that a charism which bears fruit for the Church, cannot, in the context of the New Testament, be exercised without a certain degree of personal perfection, and that, on the other hand, every "living" Christian has a specific task (and in this sense a "charism") "for the building up of the body of Christ" (cf. Eph 4:15-16), (29) in communion with the hierarchy whose job it is "not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good" (LG, n. 12).*

[31] Ibid., endnote 29.

[32] Intuition and hypersensitivity account for much of the phenomena that people mistake for supernatural gifts or extrasensory perception (ESP). For example, a counselor may perceive the true problem of a client without the client revealing it. Some may mistake this for the Gift of Knowledge or even ESP. In actuality, the perception of the counselor may be sourced in twenty-five years experience of observing client behavior. The counselor has simply recognized the behavioral cue either through cognitive or by

subconscious recognition. Human intuition, thus, is often a practiced wisdom of human experience. In similar manner many instances attributed to ESP is purely human perception. Some people, for example, have a unique and acute ability to observe subtle body language and nuances of tones of voice that reveal things about a person that others may not notice. This observational ability tends to be subconscious thereby the misinterpretation that it may be of supernatural or extrasensory origin.

[33] Fr. Gabriele Amorth, *An Exorcist Tells His Story* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 157-163; idem, *An Exorcist: More Stories* , 161.

[34] Amorth, *An Exorcist,* 159-160.

[35] Father La Grua, *La preghiera di guarigione* (n.p., n.d.); quoted in Amorth, *An Exorcist,* 160. Prana Therapy or healing, also called "bioplasma" is being researched by science, but as yet has not been sanctioned it. Father La Grua, in the complete quote referenced here states:

> *If healings occur through an energy that the healer transfers to the sock person, either through a psychic charge or through a different store of energy, they have nothing to do with charismatic healings. Additionally, there may be the danger of evil infiltration. That is why we need extreme prudence.*

Father Amorth reports, at the same reference as above, that a Venetian exorcist, Father Pellegrino Ernetti told him that the validity of Prana healings is probably *"two for every thousand."*

[36] Seeking preternatural gifts or developing such gifts places us in great danger of acquiring occult powers from the Evil One even though that may not have been our intent. We dangerously open a door that should not be opened. Our Father knows this and thus sternly warns us against such "mediumistic" powers (Deut 18:11; Lev 20:27).

Some of the legitimate charism gifts are similar to the preternatural gifts — tongues, interpretation, miracles, healings, and some aspects of the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and prophecy. If we try to "seek" these gifts, we may find them, but not the gifts we were hoping for. This is why St. John of the Cross and Vatican II warned against such "seeking" (see para 237 (i) "Danger in Seeking Sigil Gifts" for more discussion on this).

[37] Amorth, *An Exorcist,* 162.

[38] *Catechism,* nn. 798-801: This section of the *Catechism* dealing with spiritual gifts is very important to the present discussion and is therefore reproduced here (one should also be referred to other references listed in the *Catechism* concerning these paragraphs);

> ***798*** *The Holy Spirit is "the principle of every vital and truly saving action in each part of the Body." He works in many ways to build up the whole Body in charity: by God's Word "which is able to build you up"; by Baptism, through which he forms Christ's Body; by the sacraments, which give growth and healing to Christ's members; by "the grace of the apostles, which holds first place among his gifts"; by the virtues, which make us act according to what is good; finally, by the many special graces (called "charisms"), by which he makes the faithful "fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church.*
>
> ***799*** *Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world.*
>
> ***800*** *Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms.*
>
> ***801*** *It is in this sense that discernment of charisms is always necessary. No charism is exempt from being referred and submitted to the Church's shepherds. "Their office [is] not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good," so that all the diverse and complementary charisms work together "for the common good."*

[39] Although God may, in His sovereignty, give charism gifts to whom and when He pleases, by virtue of the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit conferred in the Sacrament of Confirmation (the real "baptism in the Holy Spirit") we are gifted from that point even if we have not realized it. Our task then, we would suggest, is not to "seek" the gifts we want to have, but to "discover" the gifts we have already been given by God's grace and glory, who alone knows best what gift or gifts we should have. As Colin B. Donovan remarks in his article on the Charismatic Renewal: when we "seek", we run the risk of "*seeking the gifts of the Giver and not the Giver of the gift*" (see endnote #40 below). It much safer, as well as more humble, approach, it seems to us, is to ask, "*Father, whatever gifts you have given me, or want me to have, help me to know Your Holy Spirit in my life and to fan into flame those gifts.*" (also see para 237 (i) entitled, "Danger in Seeking Sigil Gifts").

[40] Donovan, [article online]:

> *An authentic charism would not pull one away from the Church. If a Catholic leaves, seeking an emotional boost he no longer finds in the Church, he is seeking the gifts of the Giver and not the Giver of he gifts. Participation in the life of the Church should lead any Catholic (Charismatic, traditional, or ordinary) into a deeper relationship with the Eucharist, the Blessed Mother and the Pope. If it does not, something is spiritually wrong with that particular individual or with the guidance he is receiving within his group. Since a charism does not give the person any special infallibility or sanctity, given the extraordinary character of such gifts it is especially necessary for individuals possessing them to guard the purity of their faith, lest pride, self-seeking or emotionalism lead them astray, and they others. The reality that some have left the Church for Pentecostalism, or sought to create it within, points to the dangers.*

[41] Matthew Bunson, ed., *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac,* 2000 ed. (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1999), s.v., "Charismatic Renewal", 303.

[42] Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18.

[43] J. Byrne, ed., *Threshold of God's Promise: A Handbook for those seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Notre Dame, IN: True House, 1970). The Introduction of this book offers explanation of the nature of "baptism in the Spirit":

> *For some, there has been a failure to make a total act of self-surrender — a personal act of faith — to Jesus. For others who seem to have made this full commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savor, there is a hollowness, a lack of life or power. In many ways these Catholics resemble the disciples before Pentecost. They believe in Jesus, have witnessed the resurrection and Ascension — but are timid and afraid.*

And in the chapter, *Waiting for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit:*

> *The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not magic, nor is it an isolated religious experience. It is a direct consequence of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus who was the anointed One of God. Preparation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit cannot be understood unless it is seen as a powerful deepening of a personal relationship with Jesus. To pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to join with the local community and the whole body of Christ in asking Jesus to release His power in our lives. In order to make such a prayer, we must acknowledge Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.*

James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1970), 226. Dunn reiterates that "baptism in the Spirit" is not an additional act of sacramental grace:

> *According to Luke and Paul, baptism in the Spirit was not something subsequent to or distinct from becoming a Christian… The gift of the Spirit may not be separated in any way from conversion…*

[44] See the James Dunn quote in endnote #43 above.

[45] The three examples of the Sacrament of Confirmation began first in Jerusalem with Pentecost itself recorded in Acts 2:1-42; the in Samaria in Acts 8:14-17 has a sign of believers untied with the Jerusalem Church, and finally the sign that the Holy Spirit was given even to the uncircumcised (Gentiles) in Acts 10:44-48. This completed the Revelation of what God intended—for His grace to be bestowed upon all who would believe.

[46] Congregation For the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Prayers for Healing* (14 Sep. 2000), art. 5 §2.

[47] Holy See, Instruction, *On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of The Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry Of Priest* (15 August 1997), art. 9 §1.

[48] John Paul II, Discourse at the Symposium on "*The Participation of the Lay Faithful in the Priestly Ministry*" (11 May 1994), n. 3, l.c.; quoted *Collaboration*, "Conclusion."

[49] *Collaboration*, art. 6 §2.

[50] 1 Corinthians 12:7ff.

[51] See endnote #40.

[52] Empiricism is a word derived from the Greek meaning, "experience." It is a theory that all our mental understandings are a product of purely sensory experience.

[53] Donald Attwater, ed., *A Catholic Dictionary,* 3rd ed. (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc, 1997), s.v. "Empericism"; "Sensualism."

[54] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa *Theologiæ*, trans. & ed. Timothy McDermott (Allen, TX: Thomas More Publishing, Christian Classics, 1989), 547 (*Summa:* IIIa, 60 no. 4).

[55] First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, 2; quoted in Lugwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma,* tran. Patrick Lynch and ed. (English ed) James Canon Bastible (St. Louis, MO: B Herder Book Co., n.d.), 1, 1, §1, 1; Denzinger, 1806; cf. 1785, 1391.

The Latin original of this declaration quoted in Ott:

> *Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et vetrum, creatorem et Dominum nostrum per ea, quae facta sent, naturali rationis humanae lumine certo cognosci non posse*
>
> God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty, by the natural light of reason from created things.

Ott's explanation:

> *The definition of the Vatican stresses the following points: a) The object of our knowing is the one true God, our Creator and Lord, therefore an "extramundane," personal God. b) The subjective principle of knowledge is natural reason in the condition of the fallen nature. c) The means of knowledge are the created things. d) The knowledge is from its nature and manner a knowledge of certitude. e) Such knowledge of God is possible, but it is not the only way of knowing Him.*

[56] See para. 212 to review the quote from Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) from the Foreword of the book, *Renewal & the Powers of Darkness.*

[57] Father Peter B. Coughlin, *Understanding the Charismatic Gifts* (Hamilton, ON: C.C.S.O. Bread of Life Renewal Centre, 1998, book handed out in a "*Life in the Spirit*" Seminar in Watertown, South Dakota in May 2006), 75:

Sometimes people are concerned with the origin of the gift and are afraid the Tongues may be false (originating from their own spirit). It should be generally presumed, in this case, that it is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and not one's own spirit, since one would know if they were "making it up."

This is a most remarkable statement for a person to make. The ability for human beings to delude themselves is quite high. Phenomena like "tongues" can easily be a psychogenic experience. For a priest, let alone the top charismatic priest in Canada to give this advice is extremely troublesome and alarming. Father Coughlin repeats his alarming advice on page 74:

The biggest block to praying in Tongues initially is "head knowledge," in that a person is responding to the Lord from their head (intellect) rather then from their heart… (they) don't understand the why of Tongues, which is a yielding of control of the tongue over to the Lord.

The good Father's advice seems to be saying that we are to turn off our intellect (that faculty God has given us to guide us and to help us discern truth from error through the virtue of Reason), so that control of our "tongue" may be given over to the Lord. Nowhere in Scripture or Tradition are we advised to suspend our intellect with its faculty of reason in order to "yield control" over to the Lord. Such advice is reflective of the Gnostic heresy called Pseudognosticism. A footnote in the document cited below in Endnote #58 defines pseudognosticism as a notion that *"considered matter as something impure and degraded which enveloped the soul in an ignorance from which prayer had to free it, thereby raising it to true superior knowledge and so to a pure state. Of course, not everyone was capable of this, only those who were truly spiritual; for simple believers, faith and observance of the commandments of Christ were sufficient."* Rhetoric in the Catholic Renewal that "tongues" allows one to pray "more perfectly" seems to reflect this pseudognostic notion.

SPECIAL NOTE: This book is decidedly not to be recommended in our view as it contains many spiritually dangerous ideas. We also do not recommend Dove Publications of Pecos, New Mexico as their literature contains much Pentecostalism, though from the particular brochures we reviewed Father Coughlin's book is far more problematic.

[58] Christian Meditation, nn. 8-11, 18-19.

The good Father's advice also describes a similar practice in Eastern Meditation whereby one suspends the intellect and yields oneself to the "spirit." The Letter to Bishops states in a section called, "*Erroneous Ways Of Praying':*

8. Even in the first centuries of the Church some incorrect forms of prayer crept in. Some New Testament texts (cf. 1 Jn 4:3; 1 Tim 1:3-7 and 4:3-4) already give hints of their existence. Subsequently, two fundamental deviations came to be identified: Pseudognosticism and Messalianism, both of concern to the Fathers of the Church. There is much to be learned from that experience of primitive Christianity and the reaction of the Fathers which can help in tackling the current problem.

In combating the errors of "pseudognosticism" the Fathers affirmed that matter is created by God and as such is not evil. Moreover, they maintained that grace, which always has the Holy Spirit as its source is not a good proper to the soul, but must be sought from God as a gift. Consequently, the illumination or superior knowledge of the Spirit ("gnosis") does not make Christian faith something superfluous. Finally, for the Fathers, the authentic sign of a superior knowledge, the fruit of prayer, is always Christian love.

9. If the perfection of Christian prayer cannot be evaluated using the sublimity of gnostic knowledge as a basis, neither can it be judged by referring to the experience of the divine, as "Messalianism" proposed. These false fourth-century charismatics identified the grace of the Holy Spirit with the psychological experience of his presence in the soul. In opposing them, the Fathers insisted on the fact that the soul's union with God in prayer is realized in a mysterious way, and in particular through the sacraments of the Church. Moreover, it can even be achieved through experiences of affliction or desolation. Contrary to the view of the Messalians, these are not necessarily a sign that the Spirit has abandoned a soul. Rather, as masters of spirituality have always clearly acknowledged, they may be an authentic participation in the state of abandonment experienced on the cross by our Lord, who always remains the model and mediator of prayer. Both of these forms of error continue to be a "temptation for man the sinner." They incite him to try

and overcome the distance separating creature from Creator, as though there ought not to be such a distance; to consider the way of Christ on earth, by which he wishes to lead us to the Father, as something now surpassed; to bring down to the level of natural psychology what has been regarded as pure grace, considering it instead as "superior knowledge" or as "experience."

10. Such erroneous forms, having reappeared in history from time to time on the fringes of the Church's prayer, seem once more to impress many Christians, appealing to them as a kind of remedy, be it psychological or spiritual, or as a quick way of finding God.

> Similar techniques were subsequently identified and dismissed by St. Teresa of Avila who perceptively observed that "the very care taken not to think about anything will arouse the mind to think a great deal," and that the separation of the mystery of Christ from Christian meditation is always a form of "betrayal" (see: St. Teresa of Jesus. Vida 12, 5 and 22, 1-5).

11. However, these forms of error, wherever they arise, "can be diagnosed" very simply. The meditation of the Christian in prayer seeks to grasp the depths of the divine in the salvific works of God in Christ, the Incarnate Word, and in the gift of his Spirit. These divine depths are always revealed to him through the human-earthly dimension. Similar methods of meditation, on the other hand, including those which have their starting-point in the words and deeds of Jesus, try as far as possible to put aside everything that is worldly, sense perceptible or conceptually limited. It is thus an attempt to ascend to or immerse oneself in the sphere of the divine, which, as such, is neither terrestrial, sense-perceptible nor capable of conceptualization. This tendency, already present in the religious sentiments of the later Greek period (especially in "Neoplatonism"), is found deep in the religious inspiration of many peoples, no sooner than they become aware of the precarious character of their representations of the divine and of their attempts to draw close to it.

The passions (empirical faculty) are neither good nor evil in themselves, but they must be guided by reason, as already mentioned, and must be guarded from their natural tendency toward selfishness. The emptying of the mind (turning off the intellect) in prayer refers to this emptying of selfishness, not a denial of created things, of which the intellect is a major gift. Paragraphs 18-19 of the Letter to Bishops speaks of this:

18. The seeking of God through prayer has to be preceded and accompanied by an ascetical struggle and a purification from one's own sins and errors, since Jesus has said that only "the pure of heart shall see God" (Mt 5:8). The Gospel aims above all at a moral purification from the lack of truth and love and, on a deeper level, from all the selfish instincts which impede man from recognizing and accepting the will of God in its purity. The passions are not negative in themselves (as the Stoics and Neoplatonists thought), but their tendency is to selfishness. It is from this that the Christian has to free himself in order to arrive at that state of positive freedom which in classical Christian times was called "apatheia," in the Middle Ages "Impassibilitas" and in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises "indiferencia."

This is impossible without a radical self-denial, as can also be seen in St. Paul who openly uses the word "mortification" (of sinful tendencies). Only this self-denial renders man free to carry out the will of God and to share in the freedom of the Holy Spirit.

19. Therefore, one has to interpret correctly the teaching of those masters who recommend "emptying" the spirit of all sensible representations and of every concept, while remaining lovingly attentive to God. In this way, the person praying creates an empty space which can then be filled by the richness of God. However, the emptiness which God requires is that of the renunciation of personal selfishness, not necessarily that of the renunciation of those created things (i.e., the intellect) *which he has given us and among which he has placed us.*

[59] 1 Corinthians 12:7: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesy, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

[60] Coughlin, 3.

[61] e.g., Coughlin, 71: "*Yet everyone who wants it could yield to the gift* (of tongues), *since <u>it is present in everyone</u> who believes and is filled with, or baptized, in the Holy Spirit*" and "*The spirit indwells <u>with every</u> gift…*"

[62] In addition to the text of endnote #21, it is also important to emphasize and repeat the point made in the main text that God may not give this "gift" of a Private Prayer Language to everyone. Not having such a "gift" does not depreciate the level of one's spirituality, maturity, or grace in any way. However, Father Coughlin seems to disagree and to assert, rather, that those filled with the Spirit will have this and every other gift. See endnote #61 above.

[63] Coughlin, 5.

[64] "Charisms and the New Life in the Spirit Seminars," *Pentecost Today,* July/August/September 2001, 12; quoted in Therese Boucher, *A Prayer Journal for Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Locust Grove, VA: National Service Committee, Chariscenter USA, endnote 11.

[65] Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, Ronald Lawler, and Thomas Comerford Lawler, eds., *The Teaching of Christ: A Catechism for Adults* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1995), 143.

[66] Congregation of Sacred Rites, Philip T. Weller, trans., *The Roman Ritua* (25 January 1952), with additions from have been published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* and in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* and in the Instruction (26 September 1964), complete ed. (n.p.: Bruce Company, 1964), Part XIII, chap. 1, no 3:

> *Signs of possession may be the following: ability to speak with some facility in a strange tongue or to understand it when spoken by another; the faculty of divulging future and hidden events.*

[67] Church, no. 12; English translation, Father Austin Flannery, *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Doctuments*, vol. 1, New Revised Edition 1992 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 363-364:

> *It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. 1 Cor 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written. "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (1 Cor 12:7). Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church. Extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly desired, nor is it from them that the fruits of apostolic labor are to be presumptuously expected. Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts, through their office not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good. (cf. 1 Thes 5:12, 19-21)*

The Council Fathers of Vatican II specifically admonish us that we are not to *"rashly seek"* after the extraordinary gifts. Other translations of the document do not include the word, "rashly", but state, *"Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after…"*

[68] Colin B. Donovan, [article online].

[69] There are two accounts from priests that illustrate the need for discernment and testing. The first is an experience of Father Anthony, a Carmelite priest who attended a charismatic meeting. At the meeting, one or two people stood up and spoke in "tongues" while another interpreted. Father Anthony then stood up and spoke in tongues. The "interpreter" interpreted Father Anthony's tongues. At this point father Anthony knew that the interpreter had a false gift. He stood up and informed her that her gift was false, that her interpretation was in error. In fact, Father Anthony has recited the Lord's Prayer in the Polish language.

The experience of another priest is chilling. The Father was at a charismatic meeting where a woman was praising God in Tongues. After the meeting, the Father approached the woman. He asked her if she knew

what she was saying when she was speaking in tongues. She replied that she was praising Jesus. The Father informed her that she happened to be speaking his native language and that she was not praising God, but was cursing God.

These two true stories should give anyone who speaks in tongues great pause no matter how wonderful they think their tongues speaking has been for them. We can never underestimate the power of self-delusion, nor the power of the evil one to fool us.

[70] "Centering prayer," we would suggest is an attempt to rob God. It seeks to attain the levels of intimacy with God that are really reserved to the gifts of the higher forms of contemplation and to mystical union. It seeks to acquire the mystical gifts that God only gives to a few. It says, in essence, "God, you did not give me the gift of mystical union, so I will steal it through the techniques of "Centering Prayer."

The *Letter to the Bishops on Some Aspects of Christian Mediation* (n. 23) reminds us:

> *Without doubt, a Christian needs certain periods of retreat into solitude to be recollected and, in God's presence, rediscover his path. Nevertheless, given his character as a creature, and as a creature who knows that only in grace is he secure, his method of getting closer to God is not based on any "technique" in the strict sense of the word. That would contradict the spirit of childhood called for by the Gospel. Genuine Christian mysticism has nothing to do with technique: it is always a gift of God, and the one who benefits from it knows himself to be unworthy.*

[71] *Prayers for Healing,* art. 5 §3 and art. 9.

[72] *Clairvoyance* is the acute intuitive insight or perception of things that cannot be known by normal means. *Telesthesia* is a form of clairvoyance that response to distant stimuli by extrasensory means (such as perceiving a person's illness). *Pre-cognition* is another form of clairvoyance that predicts future events. All of these abilities are forms of *"divination"*(foretelling future events or revealing hidden knowledge through supernatural means). God is to the point—He condemns divination (e.g., Deut 18:10).

[73] See endnote #66.

[74] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, [Letter to Bishops], On The Current Norms Governing Exorcisms, *Inde Ab Aliquot Annis*, (29 September 1985), trans. Father Gabriele Amorth, Prot. no. 291/70; AAS 77 (1985): 1169-70; *EnchVat* 9, nn. 1663-67; quoted in *An Exorcist,* 189-190.

[75] Donovan, [article online]:

> *There is yet another dimension of the discernment which needs to be considered. Since charisms are given to build up the Church, there is no necessary connection with personal sanctity. Saints, sinners and even unbelievers have manifested these gifts. The pagan prophet Balaam was given the Divine spirit of prophecy in order to authenticate Israel as the People of God (Num 22). Thus the moral state of the recipient (good or bad) does not by itself indicate a true or false charism. When actually under the constraint of the Spirit of God, however, the true charismatic could not say or do anything contrary to that Spirit. No one could claim, for instance, that the Spirit of God led him to get drunk or do anything sinful, although he might at other times do such things.*

[76] Ibid.:

> *For this reason to say that the Charismatic Renewal is approved by the Church is not a blanket approval of every alleged charismatic gift or every charismatic group or individual within the Church. The discernment of the Holy Spirit's action is an ongoing necessity within the Church and within the Charismatic Renewal.*