

**In this issue:** *This is what the charismatic ministry is for: to open the human heart to encounter Christ as Savior. Excellent teaching of father Sławomir from Poland, October 3rd 2015 in a workshop during the European conference in Warsaw.*

## Growing in the charismatic ministry

*Fr. Sławomir Plusa*

### 1. Pentecost has an ecclesial goal

The Holy Spirit is the source of holiness, vitality and the development of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. The charisms play an important role in the development of the Church.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 798 states: "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."

### 2. The two temptations

-The Church is threatened by the dominance of the institution and ritual without sufficient linking of the two with evangelization. The Holy Spirit gives charisms primarily for evangelization.

-Exclusively spiritual understanding of the Church and its mission. The false approach to the spiritual riches of the Church can lead to a loss of contact with the situation of the people to whom it is sent. Also, the focus on certain parts of the mission of the Church, e.g. on the ministry of healing, without considering the whole, e.g. prophecy, charity service for the weak, or the sacramental life, leads to unhealthy fruit.

### 3. Basic criterion for discernment charisms

Charisms are in the service of evangelizing communion; a clear sign of the authenticity of the charism is its ecclesiality. The more a

charism directs to look at the essence of the gospel, the more ecclesial its implementation will be.

These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all. (Evangelii gaudium 130).

### 4. Christian identity and charisms

There are two models of life, of which only one is Christian.

*The first* one is based on creating a sense of human security by strengthening control over life, over its various manifestations, such as the place among other people (relationships), undertaking the ministry in the ecclesial community, etc.

*The second* one, which is the fruit of faith in God, is based on total submission to God's control over our lives. The development of a charismatic ministry is possible if we surrender our life entirely to Jesus Christ and allow Him to rule over every sphere of our lives.

When we surrender our life to Christ, our confidence in God's presence and action in our lives increase. Charisms are in disposition of the Holy Spirit in a totally free way. They are one of the manifestations of His grace.

A necessary environment for their development is the inner consent of man to his total dependence on God and His grace (in Greek: *charis*). Mary is the model for us. The angel says: you are filled with grace (in Greek: *kecharitomene*) (Luke 2). The fruit of acceptance of this the grace is giving Christ to others. This is what the charismatic ministry is for: to open the human heart to encounter Christ as Savior.

Pope Francis states:

"He sends his Spirit into our hearts to make us his children, transforming us and enabling us to respond to his love by our lives. The Church

is sent by Jesus Christ as the sacrament of the salvation offered by God. Through her evangelizing activity, she cooperates as an instrument of that divine grace which works unceasingly and inscrutably. Benedict XVI put it nicely at the beginning of the Synod's reflections: 'It is import always to know that the first word, the true initiative, the true activity comes from God and only by inserting ourselves into the divine initiative, only begging for this divine initiative, shall we too be able to become – with him and in him – evangelizers.' This principle of the primacy of grace must be a beacon which constantly illuminates our reflections on evangelization." (Evangelii gaudium no. 112)

The first objective of the action of the Holy Spirit in us is the development of our true identity. It consists of three elements:

- 1) Building the child's heart in us (theological faith together with hope and love).
- 2) Making us similar to Christ in His belonging to the Father and being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Qualifying us to respond to the grace – willing (act) to share our faith, to co-work with grace.

There are four missions (channels of grace) of the Holy Spirit: invisible - virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; visible - the sacraments and charisms.

Charisms are the gifts of God's grace and actualizing gratuitousness and power of salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit. St. Paul uses here the following terms:

*charismaton* (1 Corinthians 12:4) - the gifts, the *charismata iamaton* (12, 9) - the gift of healing, *charismata this meidzona* (12, 31) - greater gifts.

But it is the Spirit who does all this (1 Cor 12: 11).

The Holy Spirit is the author of the new identity of man whose fruit is life (identity, development until fullness) and ministry (evangelisation) in their own family and the family of the Church. Charismatic ministry is born of faith in God - the heart of man is subjected to the love of God to share it with others.

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. (CCC 800)

Charisms are not the invention Renewal, but are part of the order of grace. Service with the use of charisms is a barometer of the quality of life-giving breath of Church and Renewal in the Holy Spirit (Ph. Madre).

## 5. Charisms

The simplest classification of charisms is to divide them into two groups: ordinary and extraordinary (CCC 799).

*Ordinary* charisms are very important. They are the use of natural gifts in a spiritual way, i.e. in deep submission to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who, in this way is changing people's hearts. They promote the internal development of communities and make every day, ordinary testimony feasible and reliable.

There exists a number of different divisions of *extraordinary* charisms that make evangelism the space of manifestation of God's love and power. They can be divided into charisms of *words* (the gift of tongues, translations and the gift of prophecy), the charisms of *action* (healing, miracles, the charism of faith) and the charisms of *knowledge* (discernment, wisdom, knowledge).

## 6. The factors supporting the growth in the ministry with the charisms

- Continually ask to be filled with love for God and people and thank for it.
- Cling to the word of God and the sacraments, endure in prayer of praise (Acts 4:24-31).
- Receive the purifying action of grace (disclosure of idolatry - Jer 2:13; disclosure of the fears, aspirations of the body - Psalm 56:3-4).
- Remain in the community, because this is where the charisms are revealed; proclaim the love of God and Lordship of Jesus to others (Acts 9: 17-22).
- Surrender oneself to God for disposal by faith and trust (Mk 16:17; Rom 4,19-21; Heb 10:35-38).
- Let God teach you (Ps 25:4-5).
- Tread the enemy (Mk 14:14-15).
- Ask often for the charism of faith.

## 7. Obstacles and errors

- Spiritual authoritarianism
- Lack of courage in faith
- Lack of spiritual bond with the person to whom one serves
- Doubts rooted in the rational mentality

**On the same topic from the same conference:**

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[Teaching of the Catholic Church on charismatic renewal](#)  
Testimony on [reconciliation in Slovakia](#).  
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This Info-letter started in 1999 and is issued by the European sub-committee of ICCRS (the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services). Chairperson: Christof Hemberger. Editor: Kees Slijkerman  
Donations in SEPA-area (most of EU): to ICCRS, IBAN DE84 7509 0300 0003 0100 74, BIC: GENODEF1M05  
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