

## **SOME IMPLICATIONS THAT VATICAN II'S BIBLICAL TEACHING ON THE CHARISMS HAS ON LAY EVANGELIZATION IN THE MAGISTERIUM OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**

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To the relief of many the new evangelization called for by John Paul II does not solely depend on the efforts of the clergy. Nor is this evangelization primarily about the hierarchy's responsibility to embark on new initiatives or even change the way they do things in order get more people into the pews. Rather, the new evangelization, for it to be effective, necessarily involves the forming and equipping the laity who according to the Second Vatican Council are 'co-responsible' for and indeed have their own share in the mission of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Not only did the Council envision a greater collaboration between clergy and the laity in the mission of the Church, but it also provided the theological framework necessary to send forth the laity in the power of the Spirit for the building up the Church in the world. Rather than limiting the work of the Spirit to the hierarchical dimension of the Church, the council significantly restored and developed the biblical teaching of the charisms and gifts of the Spirit as given to each member of the Church for the sake of building up the body of Christ.

If the Church is to fulfill the task of the new evangelization in the power of the Spirit, the laity need to discover and use the charisms of the Spirit which are given for the purpose of evangelization. This paper will briefly outline the Church's renewed teaching on the charisms in and since Vatican II through the magisterium of John Paul II and consider some implications this teaching has for the call of the laity to apostolate. After considering the renewal of the

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (AA), 2; See also Pope Benedict XVI, *Address*, "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility" May 26, 2009. [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20090526\\_convegno-diocesi-rm.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090526_convegno-diocesi-rm.html).

charismatic dimension of the Church at the council in part one, we will then discuss briefly the meaning of the term charism in Scripture and theology. Finally in part three we will consider the Church's teaching from Vatican II through the lens of the pontificate of John Paul II on the charisms as it concerns the lay faithful and their call to evangelize.

### ***1. Vatican II and the Charismatic Dimension of the Church***

A sharp disagreement arose among the council fathers during the discussions of Vatican II on the text of the *Lumen gentium*. Cardinal Ruffini argued that the charisms of the Spirit were largely a thing of the past and was concerned that if the Church emphasized them the primacy of the hierarchical church would be in danger. In response Cardinal Leon Suenens of Belgium delivered what was to become the decisive speech in which he argued that the charisms are not only still given to all of the faithful today, they are necessary to the makeup of the Church.<sup>2</sup> Suenens' position prevailed and the final text therefore includes clear and affirmative language about power of the Spirit's work in the Church through the charisms given to each of the faithful. As a result the teaching of an ecumenical council furthered a significant development in Church teaching.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Cardinal Joseph Suenens, "The Charismatic Dimension of the Church." In *The Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. Hans and Yves Congar. Glen Rock, NJ: Deus Books, 1964. See also his book *A New Pentecost?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1975), 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Vatican II's theology on the charismatic dimension of the Church was not the result of a solitary but influential bishop at the council. Rather it was the fruit of many decades of scholarship and theological development. According to Jos Moons, the theology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Church experienced a renewal of the understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church to the extent that he says there was a "rediscovery of the Holy Spirit" in Catholic theology. Moons argues that from the late nineteenth century when the Spirit's work in the Church was limited to the guidance of the hierarchy and the sanctification of believers to the Second Vatican Council where a full acceptance of the charismatic dimension of the Church there were several notable developments in ecclesiology and Christology. Most of the theological development occurred after Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in which the Pope proposed a more *organic* understanding of the Church; rather than understanding the Church as the "perfect society" Pius XII uses the Pauline image of the Body of Christ in which he understands the Church as the mystical Body of Christ which is both institutional and deeply spiritual. Eventually through the work of major theologians such as Rahner and Congar the two aspects of the Spirit's work in the Church—the Spirit's work in the

The words ‘charisms’ or ‘charismatic’ are mentioned fourteen times in the documents of Vatican II.<sup>4</sup> The council’s teaching on the charisms in the life of the People of God is primarily found in *Lumen gentium*. In chapter one, “The Mystery of the Church” the council affirms that the Holy Spirit gives charismatic gifts to the Church.

The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple. In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits.<sup>5</sup>

The activity of the Spirit in the Church is not limited to the hierarchy, as from above, but is also present through the charismatic gifts with which he equips the faithful, as from below. Rather than being opposed to each other, the hierarchical dimension of the Church is set in a *complementary* relation to the charismatic dimension of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

Later in chapter two, “The People of God” the council is even more specific regarding the gifts given to the Church as a whole. In the section which describes the faithful participation in the *prophetic office* of Christ, the Council states:

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, "allotting his gifts

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Church both in the charisms of each member and His work in and through the hierarchy—were put in complementary relation with each other. See Moons, Jos. "The Holy Spirit in pre-conciliar ecclesiology. The beginnings of a rediscovery?," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 74, no. 3 (2013): 240-254.

<sup>4</sup>They can be found in *Lumen gentium* (LG) 4, 7, 12, 25, 30 and 50, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (AA) 3 and 30, *Presbyterorum ordinis* (PO) 4 and 9, *Ad gentes* (AG) 4, 23, 28 and *Dei verbum* (DV) 8. Not all of these references deal with charisms of the Spirit as given to the laity of every rank. The two exceptions can be found in LG 25 and DV 8 where the word ‘charism’ refers to the gift (charism) infallibility given to the Church.

<sup>5</sup> Second Vatican Council, LG, 4. Cf. AG, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Vanhoye notes that council here “purposely avoids the error of an interpretation that separates the two categories; in fact, the hierarchical gifts are usually accompanied by various charismatic gifts which make the pastors “fitted and ready to assume” their ecclesial responsibilities in a personal, spiritual fashion. The lay faithful receive other charisms, which make them fit and ready to render other forms of service in the church and in the world.” In “Charism,” in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds. Rene Laurentin and Rino Fisichella, (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994), 107.

to everyone according as He wills, (1 Cor 12:11) He 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 which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit." (1 Cor 12:7) These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church. Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after rashly, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12, 19-21).<sup>7</sup>

While much can be said about this paragraph a few of points are critical for our study. First, the council's teaching that each of the faithful receives gifts or charisms is rooted in the biblical witness of St. Paul where the teaching of the Spirit's work in all of the "faithful of every rank" through his charisms gifts is officially brought forward as true for today. In a major commentary on the documents of Vatican II, Aloys Grillmeier comments, "It is significant that special gifts of grace are said to be distributed among the faithful 'in every state of life.' Such gifts are not confined to laypeople as distinct from the clergy, nor to religious in contrast to those in the world. Both the permanent appointment to an office and the transitory bestowal of a charism are for service to the body of Christ."<sup>8</sup> In grounding the council's teaching in the Scriptural witness of St. Paul and his teaching on the charisms, the council strongly suggests that the charismatic activity of the Spirit found in the apostolic Church is not confined to history, but can be found today.

Second, the purpose of the gifts is to make the faithful of every rank able to "contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church." If the purpose of the charisms is the renewal and building up of the Church, their exercise cannot be considered a part of a personal

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<sup>7</sup> Second Vatican Council, LG, 12. Cf. LG, 7, AG, 23 and 28.

<sup>8</sup> Aloys Grillmeier, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter II," in *Commentary on the Documents on Vatican II*, ed Herbert Vorgrimler, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 166.

spirituality, but rather are given for the sake of apostolate. Precisely because the charisms are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church, they are to be “to be received with thanksgiving and consolation.” Put another way, if the Spirit gives the charisms to the faithful for the needs to the Church, the use of them is an essential part of their call to mission and cannot be reduced an expression of their call to holiness. Their use concerns the building up of the body of Christ, not an expression of one’s individual spirituality, even if they will have their unique expressions from person to person. Finally the Church extends a special responsibility regarding the judgment of charisms of the faithful to the pastors of the Church, the members of the hierarchy. This mutual dependence between clergy and laity will become important later as we consider the laity and their call to evangelization.<sup>9</sup>

Referring explicitly to the teaching of LG 12, Raniero Cantalamessa explains that because of the renewal of her charismatic dimension the Church can now breathe again with two lungs:

This shows clearly that [charisms] are an essential part of the very nature of the Church that is both hierarchical and charismatic, institution and mystery: the Church that lives not by sacrament alone but also by charism. The two lungs of the Church body are once again working in full accord. The Holy Spirit breathes into the Church from two directions, and both are now again fully recognized: *from above*, channeled through the sacraments that Christ instituted and entrusted to the apostolic ministry, and *from below*, channeled through each cell of the body, that is through all the members of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

The pneumatological renewal in the ecclesiology of Vatican II in which the Spirit breathes in the Church ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ thus provides a *theological foundation* for the laity to

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<sup>9</sup> In LG 7, the council notes the “special place” the apostle has over those who are gifted with charisms. “There is only one Spirit who, according to His own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives His different gifts for the welfare of the Church. What has a special place among these gifts is the grace of the apostles to whose authority the Spirit Himself subjected even those who were endowed with charisms.”

<sup>10</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa, *Come, Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator*, (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 2002), 184

take seriously the Spirit's work in their apostolic endeavors. Since charisms are given to each member of the faithful as channels of divine grace for evangelization, the laity can have confidence that God has gifted them uniquely for evangelization.

John Paul II regarded the rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church at Vatican II as one of the council's greatest contributions to the life of the Church precisely because of the Spirit's fruit that has been born through evangelical movements that include lay members of the Church.<sup>11</sup> In his 1998 message to the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, John Paul II confirms this teaching of Vatican II,

“I have often had the occasion to stress that there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension, of which movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because the both help make the mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world.”<sup>12</sup>

As a faithful interpreter of Vatican II, John Paul II confirms the council's teaching and even makes it clearer by affirming that both dimensions are essential to Church's nature. He also rightfully understands that the divine constitution of the Church demands what we understand that there are two co-essential aspects of the Church necessary to make the mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world.<sup>13</sup> Just a few days later John Paul II reiterates this point when commenting directly on LG 12,

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<sup>11</sup> See Ralph Martin, “Charisms: What are they? Who are they for? What does the Church teach?,” *Our Sunday Visitor*, June 13, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, *Message for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities*, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1998. [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19980527\\_movimenti.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980527_movimenti.html), (accessed October 29, 2015), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ten years after Vatican II Cardinal Suenens makes a similar point. “We must never forget that the Church cannot exist without its charismatic dimension to be deprived of this dimension would not be merely an impoverishment, it would be a negation of the Church's very being. The Church without charisms would not only be a Church missing a part of itself—like a man deprived of his hands—it simply would not be a Church at all: its very essence would be affected.” See Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books), 21.

“The institutional and charismatic aspects are co-essential as it were to the Church’s constitution. They contribute although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God’s people. It is from this providential rediscovery of the Church’s charismatic dimension that, before and after the Council, a remarkable pattern of growth has been established for ecclesial movements and new communities.”<sup>14</sup>

Because of the fruit born by the Spirit in the new movements of the Church, John Paul II understands that the rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church is providential for the growth of the Church.<sup>15</sup> The Holy Father is so moved by the fruit he sees in the Church that he pleads with those gathered in St. Peter’s square. “Open yourselves docilely to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charisms which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us!”<sup>16</sup>

The renewal of the charismatic dimension of the Church in the Second Vatican Council was distilled into the clear and concrete teaching on the charisms in the life of every believer. This teaching is found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which draws heavily from the texts of Vatican II. In the section on the Church, the Catechism defines charisms as “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.”<sup>17</sup> All members of the Church

<sup>14</sup> John Paul II, *Speech Delivered at Meeting with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities*, May 30, 1998, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19980530\\_riflessioni.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980530_riflessioni.html), (accessed October 29, 2015), 4.

<sup>15</sup> Given the multiple direct references to Paul’s teaching on the charisms, it is clear that the primary meaning of the term *charism* in Vatican II is the individual charisms given to the faithful. John Paul II, however, also understands the post-conciliar eruption of new ecclesial movements such as Focolare, Neocatechunal Way, Communion and Liberation, Charismatic Renewal, etc as *secondary* expressions of the rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church. In the speech a few days before John Paul II regarded the movements as “one of the most significant fruits of that springtime in the Church which was foretold by the Second Vatican Council, but has often has been hampered by the spread of secularization.” See John Paul II, *Message for the World Congress*, May 27, 1998. For more on the movements and lay evangelization see chapters eleven and twelve of Brendan Leahy, *Ecclesial Movements and Communities: Origins, Significance, and Issues*, New York: New City Press, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *Speech Delivered at Meeting with Ecclesial Movements*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no. 799.

are to receive charisms with gratitude, but it falls to the hierarchy to discern the charisms of the laity. Because charisms are a “wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ” they must be used according to charity which is the true measure of the charisms.<sup>18</sup> In the section on the laity, the Catechism describes the Church community as a “communion of charisms” and directly quotes LG 12 which says, “The Holy Spirit distributes special graces among the faithful in every rank.”<sup>19</sup> Finally, in a third section, on grace, the Catechism says,

“There are furthermore *special graces*, also called charisms after the Greek term used by St. Paul and meaning ‘favor,’ ‘gratuitous gift,’ ‘benefit.’ Whatever their character—sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues—charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of the charity which builds up the Church.”<sup>20</sup>

Again quoting LG 12 the Catechism teaches clearly that the charisms are for the sanctification and building up of the Church. As we have seen, the Council’s renewed teaching on charisms and the charismatic dimension of the Church has not only been confirmed and developed by John Paul II, it has become the standard teaching of Church as seen in the Catechism published in 1992.<sup>21</sup>

## ***2. Meaning of “charism” in Scripture and its theological development***

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<sup>18</sup> CCC, no. 800.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, no. 951.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, no. 2003.

<sup>21</sup> For a concise exposition of John Paul II’s teaching on the charisms and LG 12 see his Wednesday audience, “The Spirit: The Source of Spiritual Gifts” on February 27, 1991 in John Paul II, *The Spirit: Giver of Life and Love* (A Catechesis on the Creed), (Boston: Pauline Books, 1996), 362-367.

The rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church at Vatican II is rooted deeply in the witness of Sacred Scripture. In fact, in *Lumen gentium* and the other places where charisms are discussed Scriptural citations abound.<sup>22</sup> The magisterial teaching on charisms is so rooted in the New Testament that outlining even briefly a biblical theology of charisms is well beyond the scope of this study.<sup>23</sup> In its place we will only very briefly sketch the *meaning of charism in Scripture* and discuss the development of the term in theology.

The Greek word *charisma* occurs seventeen times in the New Testament and is used in various ways. Generally the word can denote the “free gift” of salvation (cf. Rom 6:23) but more specific uses include the gift of a “state of life” such as virginity in 1 Cor 7:7 or other “gifts” of the Spirit in terms of ordination and baptism in 1 Tim 4:14 and 1 Tim 1:6. Most of the references of charisms in the New Testament, however, are used in a more technical sense in terms of “gifts” of the Spirit. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines the word *charisma* in the New Testament as “a gift freely and graciously given, a favor bestowed, a grace, in its technical meaning, a charism is a spiritual gift or talent granted to someone by God for building up the body of Christ.” (Eph 4:12).”<sup>24</sup> These charisms or gifts of the Spirit in the technical sense cannot be reduced to natural talents or acquired skills. Rather, charisms are “supernatural gifts that either enable what is humanly impossible (such as healing or miracles) or enhance a natural gift, such as teaching or service, to a level of supernatural efficacy...Charisms are distinct from

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<sup>22</sup> Scriptures that are especially referred to in LG and AA are 1 Cor 12:11, 1 Cor 12:4, 7; 1 Cor 14, 1 Pt 4:10, Jn 3:8, and 1 Thess 5:12, 19-21.

<sup>23</sup> Since Vatican II there has been significant theological work done to develop a deeper theological understanding of the charisms in the life of the Church. One noteworthy project is the doctoral dissertation by Paul Njiru in which he only focuses only on two passages, 1 Cor 12:4-11 and Rom 12:6-8. This work demonstrates the rich theological depth of the Scriptural texts on the Spirit’s activity in the Church through the charisms. See Paul Njiru, *Charisms and the Holy Spirit’s Activity in the Body of Christ: An Exegetical-Theological Study of 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Romans 12:6-8* (Tesi Gregoriana, Serie Teologia 86). Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Williamson, Peter, “Charisms.” In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Supplement 2010 (Vol 1), 254.

sanctifying grace given at baptism, in that they are given not primarily for the personal sanctification of the recipient but to be exercised for the good of others.”<sup>25</sup> The word *charisma* in most common use in the New Testament is a gift of the Holy Spirit given for the good of others.

There are several lists of the charisms in the epistles in the New Testament (1 Cor 12, 1 Peter 4, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12). The most extensive treatment of charisms is found in 1 Cor 12-14 where Paul teaches that these ‘manifestations of the Spirit’ are given to each believer for *service* to the body. These charisms are discussed in terms of the diversity of the body of Christ and must, therefore, be understood in the context of Paul’s teaching on the unity of the body of Christ. Put another way, since the diversity of charisms flow from the unity of one Spirit, the Church’s unity is expressed precisely in her diversely gifted members. The nine charisms Paul speaks about in 1 Cor 12:8-10 are utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, discernment of spirits, prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues. While it is clear from the text that not everyone has all of the gifts, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “earnestly desire the greater gifts.” (cf 1 Cor 12:27-31) Paul pauses his discussion of these charisms in 1 Cor 13 to emphasize the primacy of the way of love. Love is not only the aim of the Christian life; it is also the end for which the charisms are given. The charisms are temporary and imperfect, but what lasts is love. The balance between love and the charisms is found in Paul’s exhortation, “Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Cor 14:1) From here he speaks about the proper ordering of charisms in the context of liturgy of the Church.

In Romans 12:6-8 Paul again emphasizes the diversity of gifts in the unity of the Church and tells the Romans to use the gifts that God has given them; (v.6) he names the charisms of

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<sup>25</sup> Doctrinal Commission of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS), *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, (Rome: ICCRS, 2012), 45-46.

prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, liberality, one who gives aid, zeal, mercy, and cheerfulness.(12:7-8) In Ephesians 4:10-12 Paul emphasizes that each member of the body of Christ receives charisms but that some are given *leadership roles* in the Church: “some are called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers” (v. 4). For Paul, the charisma of apostleship has a special status among the gifts in that it oversees the proper ordering of the gifts of the body to the good of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12:28). Importantly, those endowed with these leadership gifts are to “equip the saints of the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ,” (v.12) that is, they are to ensure that each of the faithful are guided into fruitful roles of service. Other charisms of the Spirit are witnessed in other places in Scriptures and reveal that the apostolic Church was ripe with “manifestations of the Spirit” *from below* for the sake of mission.<sup>26</sup>

According to the *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, the textual differences of the word ‘charisma’ in the New Testament “demonstrate the fact that the term charisma did not have, even in the NT, the technical meaning that came to be given to ‘charism’ in later theology.”<sup>27</sup> The term charisma later developed in Latin theology in the category of *gratiae gratis datae*, which are “graces freely given,” as seen in the theology of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>28</sup> These graces were distinguished from sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) which makes one pleasing to God such as the grace received at baptism. Thomas understands the charisms in

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<sup>26</sup> The ICCRS lists other occasions of the charisms in the New Testament. They can refer to: “visions and revelations (Acts 9:10; 10:3; 11:5; 16:9; 18:9; 2 Cor 12:1-4), exorcisms (Acts 8:7; 16:18), intercession (Acts 12:5; 2 Cor 1:11), hospitality (Acts 16:15), son (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:16), voluntary poverty (1 Cor 13:3; Phil 4:12), and martyrdom (Acts 7:59-60; 12:3; 1 Cor 13:3).” In ICCRS, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Vanhoye, 104.

<sup>28</sup> Because the Latin Vulgate rendered the Greek word ‘charisma’ into the Latin words ‘gratia’, ‘donum’ and ‘donatio,’ the term ‘charism’ did not appear much in Latin theology. Instead a theology of different types of graces and gifts developed. (Ibid., 103) Thomas treats the list of charisms most fully in *Summa Theologiae* I-IIae, q. 111, articles 4-5 and in II, IIae, q.171-78.

1 Cor 12:8-10 to be a complete list of *gratiae gratis datae*. Thomas interpreted Paul's words, "To each is given to the manifestation of the Spirit for usefulness" (1 Cor 12:7) to mean that they were useful *for others*, and thus inadvertently excluded in the teaching on *gratiae gratis datae* the other but albeit more rare instances of charisma in the New Testament. Charisms in theology soon were narrowed to the gifts that the Spirit gave to the faithful the usefulness of the body, even if other instances of charisma in Scripture defy such a narrow definition. For various historical and theological reasons this special category of graces in which both ordinary and extraordinary charisms are given to the faithful were, in large part, left out of many works on theology. They appeared from time to time in works of *mystical theology*, but were not considered in a significant way in the magisterial teaching of the Church until the Second Vatican Council.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. *Charisms and lay evangelization*

Within the renewed theology of the laity at Vatican II there is a rediscovery of the universal call to *mission* for every member of the Church. The laity, according to *Apostolicam actuositatem*, have "the right and a duty" to engage in the apostolate, that is evangelization. Their call to evangelization is no longer considered as a sharing in the call of the hierarchy to mission; their call is now rooted theologically in baptism and confirmation and therefore the laity share *directly* in the mission of Christ and are called to go forth and proclaim Christ in the world.<sup>30</sup> It is in the context of their call to mission that the council's rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church becomes particularly relevant to the laity. *It is by means of the gifts and charisms given to the laity by the Spirit that the lay faithful are equipped to fulfill*

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<sup>29</sup> Vanhoye, 105.

<sup>30</sup> Second Vatican Council, AA, 2-3.

*their call to evangelization.* Drawing directly on LG 12, the clearest example of this teaching as applied to the laity in Vatican II is found AA 3:

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7), "allotting them to everyone according as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10), to build up the whole body in charity (cf. Eph. 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who "breathes where He wills" (John 3:8). This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12,19,21).<sup>31</sup>

There are a few important points to draw from this. First, the charisms of the Spirit are given to individual lay persons for the sake of the apostolate and are therefore meant for the building up of the body of Christ in charity. The Spirit's work in the laity through the charisms, therefore, is meant to serve both the sanctification of the members of the Church *and* the mission to proclaim Jesus to the world in evangelization. If the purpose for which the Holy Spirit gives charisms to the laity is, at minimum, the fulfillment of their individual duty to evangelize, then the acceptance of these charisms cannot be considered *optional* with regard to that very call. The acceptance and use of the charisms of the Spirit on the part of the laity are *essential* for effective, Holy Spirit led evangelization.

This leads to the second point: the laity "have the right and the duty to use [the charisms] in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church." It is particularly noteworthy that the language of "right and duty" that is predicated of the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 3.

fundamental call of the laity to the apostolate is also here applied to the laity regarding the charisms of the Spirit. Just as the laity have the “right and duty” to evangelize, they also have the “right and duty” to use their charisms for the sake of the evangelization. There seems to be a strong theological parallel between the universal call to evangelization and the necessary but individual *means* by which one fulfills that call through charisms of the Spirit. If this is the case, then the final point here takes on more significance: it is the *pastors* of the Church who must make a “judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good.” Here we see that the complementarity of the hierarchical and charismatic dimensions of the Church working together *for the sake of mission*. The hierarchy cannot ignore the Spirit’s activity in the lives of the faithful but must take care to discern carefully the charisms of the laity and retain what is good. Precisely because the council teaches that the mission of the Church does not depend solely on the clergy, it regards as a “noble duty” on the part of the pastors to help the faithful recognize their ministries and charisms for the sake of working well together for mission.<sup>32</sup> Put a different way, the laity need the assistance of the pastors and clergy of the Church in order to use the charisms that God gives to them. The laity, in fact, have a right to such guidance.

A similar, but more precise, point is made in *Presbyterorum ordinis* in the context of discussing how the laity and the priests of the Church need to work together. “While trying the spirits to see if they be of God, priests should uncover with a sense of faith, acknowledge with

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<sup>32</sup> Second Vatican Council, LG 30. “For their pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church. They also know that they were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind.” (Ibid)

joy and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity.”<sup>33</sup> This line underscores the appropriate attitude (joy and with a sense of faith) the clergy should have toward the giftedness of the laity and their requisite *responsibility* toward them. Priests cannot remain passive in the face of Spirit’s work in the laity. They, in fact, have several responsibilities regarding the charisms of the laity. Priests are to 1) *test* the charisms, which is another way of saying discernment 2) *uncover* them, 3) *acknowledge* them, and 4) *foster* them. When priests are intentional in assisting the laity in these ways with the appropriate attitude, the hierarchical members of the Church set the laity up for success for evangelization.<sup>34</sup>

In his 1987 Apostolic Exhortation on the lay faithful, *Christifidelis laici*, Pope John Paul reiterates the Council’s teaching on charisms and the lay faithful and expands on it in various ways.<sup>35</sup> He confirms Vatican II’s teaching on the charismatic dimension of the Church and calls the laity to be active for the sake of the mission.

The Second Vatican Council speaks of the ministries and charisms as the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are given for the building up of the Body of Christ and for its mission of salvation in the world. Indeed, the Church is directed and guided by the Holy Spirit, who lavishes diverse hierarchical and charismatic gifts on all the baptized, calling them to be, each in an individual way, active and co-responsible.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Second Vatican Council, PO, 9.

<sup>34</sup> The laity also have the responsibility of preparing themselves for the apostolate. In the context of discussion lay groups or associations that promote the formation for the apostolate *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 30 says, “Indeed, everyone should diligently prepare himself for the apostolate, this preparation being the more urgent in adulthood. For the advance of age brings with it a more open mind, enabling *each person* to detect more readily the talents with which God has enriched his soul and to exercise more effectively those charisms which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on him for the good of his brethren.”

<sup>35</sup> John Paul II had invited laity to participation the 1987 Extraordinary Synod on the Laity and was so encouraged by the gifts and charisms of the laity that he spoke strongly about them in his homily inaugurating the Synod. “*Ringraziamo lo Spirito Santo per tutti i “doni”, che sono diventati la loro parte per il bene della Chiesa. Desideriamo che questi doni, questi carismi, risplendano pienamente e portino frutti in pienezza.*” [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1987/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19871001\\_sinodo-vescovi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1987/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19871001_sinodo-vescovi.html), (accessed Nov 11, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles laici* (CL), 21.

Referencing LG 12 regarding the charisms of the Spirit poured out upon each member of the Church, John Paul adds the language that the laity are called to be *active* and *co-responsible* for the mission of the Church. As we have seen above these two ideas are inextricably linked together; the Spirit bestows gifts to the laity *because* they are co-responsible for the mission of the Church. The Lord does not call the laity to a task without giving the gifts necessary to complete that task.<sup>37</sup>

In the section on ‘charisms’ John Paul roots his theology of the charisms in the life of the laity in Scripture and the documents of Vatican II. After he defining the charisms he writes

Whether they be exceptional and great or simple and ordinary, the charisms *are graces of the Holy Spirit that have, directly or indirectly, a usefulness for the ecclesial community, ordered as they’re to the building up of the Church, to the well-being of humanity and to the needs of the world...* Even in our own times there is no lack of a fruitful manifestation of various charisms among the faithful, women and men.<sup>38</sup>

The Holy Father is aware that God is indeed pouring out these charisms among the faithful, and that they that are ordered to the usefulness of the ecclesial community. In this sense he reiterates that charisms are to be received with *gratitude* both on the part of the one who receives them and the Church community as a whole because they are a “singularly rich source of grace for the vitality of the apostolate and for the holiness of the whole Body of Christ, provided that they be gifts that come truly from the Spirit and are exercised in full conformity with the

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<sup>37</sup> In his encyclical letter, *Veritas splendor* (1993), John Paul II quotes Novation on the role of the Spirit in the mission of the Church, a quote that John Paul II says “express[es] the authentic faith of the Church.” Novation says that it is the Holy Spirit “who confirmed the hearts and minds of the disciples, who revealed the mysteries of the Gospel, who shed upon them the light of things divine. Strengthened by his gift, they did not fear either prisons or chains for the name of the Lord; indeed they even trampled upon the powers and torments of the world, armed and strengthened by him, having in themselves the gifts which this same Spirit bestows and directs like jewels to the Church, the Bride of Christ. It is in fact he who raises up prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, guides tongues, works wonders and healings, accomplishes miracles, grants the discernment of spirits, assigns governance, inspires counsels, distributes and harmonizes every other charismatic gift. In this way he completes and perfects the Lord's Church everywhere and in all things.” (108)

<sup>38</sup> John Paul II, CL, 24.

authentic promptings of the Spirit.”<sup>39</sup> The gratitude on the part of the believer and the Church thus flows from the fact that the charisms are rich source of grace for the holiness of the Church and its mission to evangelize. From this gratitude, John Paul then speaks about necessity of priests discerning the charisms of the laity.

There are multiple references to charisms of the Spirit in John Paul’s Apostolic Exhortation on seminary formation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992). Of particular relevance is the section where John Paul II exhorts priests to respect and foster the roles charisms and ministries of the laity for evangelization.

Today, in particular, the pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization calls for the involvement of the entire People of God, and requires a new fervor, new methods and a new expression for the announcing and witnessing of the Gospel. This task demands priests who are deeply and fully immersed in the mystery of Christ and capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life, marked by a profound communion with the pope, the bishops and other priests, and a fruitful cooperation with the lay faithful, always respecting and fostering the different roles, charisms and ministries present within the ecclesial community.<sup>40</sup>

The fruitful cooperation with the faithful for the sake of the pastoral task of the new evangelization requires priests to respect and foster the charisms of the faithful. Later the Holy Father also insists that part of the responsibility of fulfilling the office of governing (*munus regendi*) involves “the ability to coordinate all the gifts and charisms which the Spirit inspires in the community, to discern them and to put them to good use for the upbuilding of the Church in constant union with the bishops.”<sup>41</sup> If priests are responsible to coordinate all the gifts and charisms of the faithful for the building up of the Church, they need to be trained how to do so in

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 26.

seminary formation. John Paul also strongly maintains that each member of the Church needs to first discern and have knowledge of his or her charisms in order for them to be used for the good for the whole Church.

For the abundance of the Spirit's gifts to be welcomed with joy and allowed to bear fruit for the glory of God and the good of the entire Church, each person is required first to have a knowledge and discernment of his or her own charisms and those of others, and always to use these charisms with Christian humility, with firm self - control and with the intention, above all else, to help build up the entire community which each particular charism is meant to serve.<sup>42</sup>

According to John Paul, discernment and knowledge of one's own charisms is a necessary prerequisite for all the faithful in order to bear good fruit for the Church. If this is true, then before priests are to assist the laity in discerning their charisms they must already have discerned and come to know their own charisms. In other words, a priest will not be in a position to coordinate the charisms of the faithful for evangelization unless he first aware of his own. It almost goes without saying that, according to John Paul, the ideal place for such formation of priests and their responsibility toward the charisms of the laity is the seminary.

#### 4. *Some implications*

The rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church at the Second Vatican Council as interpreted by John Paul II has many implications for lay evangelization. This rediscovery coupled with the universal call to mission on the part of the laity provides the necessary *theological foundation* for the laity to seek, and expect to discover, the charisms of the Spirit given to them for the sake of mission. Since it is now magisterial teaching that the Church has two co-essential dimensions through which the Spirit leads and guides the Church in fulfilling her mission, that is in its charismatic and hierarchical dimensions, the clergy committed

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 31.

to the new evangelization can go forward in confidence knowing that God has equipped the laity with charisms of the Spirit to effectively evangelize. This leads to some very practical implications for lay evangelization.

First, since the laity no longer have any theological justification to remain passive to clerical leadership in evangelization, the laity should be summoned to confidently seek and discover the charisms of the Spirit and use them in faith for evangelization. It is theologically inaccurate and detrimental to the mission of the Church to reduce the discovery and exercise of charisms to an optional spirituality. The laity need to be reminded that each of them has indeed been given a “manifestation of the Spirit” which helps them bring the love of Jesus to others in a unique way.

Second, if the laity have a right and a duty both to apostolate and to use their charisms for the sake of evangelization, then more efforts need to be made on the part of hierarchy to help the laity discover and use and order their gifts for effective evangelization. This necessitates that clergy not simply allow lay members to use their charisms as a sort of concession, but they need to actively teach on them, help the laity acknowledge them and to foster their use for the good of the Church. Part of the promotion of the dignity of the laity that priests are called to involves assisting them in understanding how they have been equipped by the Spirit for mission. Only in this way can the laity and clergy work together for a new evangelization. Unfortunately, this aspect of priestly responsibility is conspicuously missing from the fifth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*.<sup>43</sup> If a pastor is not experienced in this aspect of the Christian life, which

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<sup>43</sup> The priest’s responsibility toward the charisms of the laity is virtually non-existent in the current edition of the *Program for Priestly Formation* (2006). While there are several references to ‘charism’ in terms of the gift of celibacy and the charisms of religious orders, there is only *one* reference in the entire document regarding the charisms or gifts of the Spirit. The one reference is found among the list of evaluative criteria for *pastoral formation*, in which the seminarian needs to have the “ability to carry out pastoral work collaboratively with others and an

unfortunately is often the case, then at least he has a responsibility to enlist the assistance of experts who have experience in teaching about and activating in the lives of the laity the Spirit's work in the charisms.<sup>44</sup>

Next, the hierarchical Church needs to promote actively those lay associations and ecclesial movements which promote a greater awareness of the charisms of the laity so that more of the faithful can learn to use them for the building up of the body. These new movements, associations, and communities represent the extraordinary fruit of the Spirit's activity in the body of Christ and need to be encouraged and fostered by the pastors for effective evangelization. While the pastor always needs to discern the reality of the work of the Spirit in his people, he should never quench the work of the Spirit in his people but rather promote them as authentic expressions of the charismatic dimension of the Church. In particular, various renewal groups or initiatives in parish life, such as charismatic prayer groups, Christ-Life, Alpha or any other initiative that activates the charisms in the life of the laity, should be promoted and pastored.

Finally, in order for the laity to truly become co-responsible for the mission of the Church the clergy need to approach the Spirit's activity in the laity with deep humility. Priests need to recognize that the Lord *can and will* reveal his plans and purposes to them in ordinary and extraordinary ways through the laity. Since the unity and mission of the Church flow from the

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appreciation for the different charisms and vocations within the Church.” Not only is the document silent on the importance of the charisms of the Spirit in priest's own vocation, but there is also no mention on the necessary training for future priests how to discern, acknowledge, uncover, and foster the charisms of the laity as spelled out in *Presbyterorum ordinis* section nine. Given the heightened role the council envisions regarding on Spirit's action in the laity through the charisms for evangelization, this omission in the *Program for Priestly Formation*, the very document which serves as the *Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis* of priestly formation in the United States, is particularly striking.

<sup>44</sup> One helpful way of achieving this end is having the laity go through the tried and tested *Called and Gifted* program offered by the St. Catherine of Siena Institute. ([www.siena.org](http://www.siena.org)). There are also very helpful resources on the charisms through the Doctrinal Committee of the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Committee*, a private association of the faithful recognized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. ([www.iccrs.org](http://www.iccrs.org)).

diversity of its members and gifts, only a humble cadre of clergy can acknowledge where the Spirit is moving outside of the hierarchy and thereby bless that spiritual movement through unwavering formation and support of laity's gifts and initiatives for evangelization. After all, if the efforts to fulfill the call to a new evangelization require both clergy and laity to work together according to the Spirit, then only a leadership which practically discerns and accepts all of the Spirit's work in the laity can allow for effective teamwork for the Lord. A direct result of such humble leadership is the actual *easing* of the burden priests, who too often take upon themselves of the entire mission of the Church, a mission that is meant to be shared with the laity. Given the shortage of priestly vocations, the prospect of fruitful cooperation with the laity and the subsequent easing of pastoral burden would be a most welcome gift to already overworked priests.<sup>45</sup> Only when clergy humbly accept with gratitude and foster the gifts and charisms of the Spirit given to the laity can the Church, clergy and laity alike, fulfill the new evangelization called for by Pope John Paul II and effectively proclaim Jesus to the world that needs him the most.

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<sup>45</sup> In his 1999 Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, John Paul II maintains that when priests take care to discern the charisms and strengths of the lay faithful and thereby position the laity for co-responsible leadership in the Church, they are more free to dedicate themselves more fully to their duty to proclaim the gospel. "[Priests] should be careful to discern the charisms and strengths of the faithful who might be leaders in the community, listening to them and through dialogue encouraging their participation and co-responsibility. This will lead to a better distribution of tasks, enabling priests 'to dedicate themselves to what is most closely tied to the encounter with and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, and thus to represent better within the community the presence of Jesus who draws his people together'. The task of discerning charisms also includes knowing how best to use those priests who show an aptitude for special ministries." (39)

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