



FREE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO

CHARISMS

what they are, what the Church teaches about them,
and why discerning yours is one of the most powerful
ways you can intentionally serve the Church

M A N Y P A R T S M I N I S T R I E S

W E L C O M E !

I'm so glad you're here.

There is nothing that fires up my heart like the urgency and the tragedy of looking out into a room of dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of Catholics and knowing that so many of them – most, I think, in a majority of cases – **have no awareness of how the Holy Spirit is *already* present in them and how they have *already* been empowered to serve and build the Church through grace and their charisms.**

Charisms are an expression of the grace of God, and therefore tied to the very lifeblood of the Church. When we let them go unnoticed, unseen, and unappreciated we are often inadvertently casting aside some of God's greatest gifts as if they were only the wrapping paper.

If we want to embrace the vibrant freedom of life the Holy Spirit wants to give us, not just as individuals but as the Body of Christ, we need to do two things:

1. We need to know who we are in relationship to God and understand what He says about us so we can accept those truths for ourselves.
2. We need to identify, value, and nurture the gifts God wants to give us, including our charisms.

The goal of everything we do at Many Parts Ministries is to empower you (*and every baptized person*) to identify, value, and nurture the role you play in the Body of Christ, because Christ has no hands and feet but us. If any part of the body is weak or undeveloped we all are worse off.

Whoever you are, you are valuable to the Church and we need you. Thank you for letting us invest in you, and don't hesitate to lean in. The Holy Spirit has so much more to show us all. Let's rest in His grace together.

Jill Simons

ABOUT ME

I am a Catholic, a wife and mother of 4 and I serve as Creative Director to the Christian women's lifestyle brand Pink Salt Riot as well as the Executive Director of Many Parts Ministries. I am a graduate of the Encounter School of Ministry and am in the process of becoming a certified spiritual director, while also working as a Catholic speaker and podcaster.



SO WHAT ARE CHARISMS?

Let's start with the Catechism.

This is Paragraphs 799-801 from the Catechism of the Catholic Church on Charisms:

*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.*

*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.*

***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." {our emphasis added throughout.}*

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ME?

In short, it means it's well worth spending some time seeking what specific graces, or charisms, you have received from the Holy Spirit for the upbuilding of the Church.

As it says in Paragraph 801 - it is truly always necessary to be aware of what the Holy Spirit has given you to work with and to bring those gifts to the Church as a whole. We know from the New Testament that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are diverse and all are necessary. If any part of the Body of Christ fails to value, and therefore fulfill, its role, the whole Body suffers.

HOW DO I GET THEM?

You get baptized.

When you cooperate with grace by being baptized, you open the door to the Holy Spirit in your life. And one of the ways He makes Himself at home is by bringing a pretty awesome housewarming gift: grace. And, as we know from the last page, a charism is an expression of grace in your life so your charisms are in there with everything else – presents from the Holy Spirit that exist in their immature but very real iterations from the moment of baptism. Think of this as the candle stage – there, but small, bringing light to a small area.

These small housewarming gifts grow to powerful inheritances in the sacrament of Confirmation when the full power of the Holy Spirit comes to fruition in each person. I affectionately call this the flame thrower stage. The candle becomes not just a source of light for one person, but an actual assault weapon to use against darkness – your gifts are mature & ready to go out & mean business. *But how lame to just leave your flamethrower to gather dust in the garage, am I right?*

It is one of the great tragedies of the modern Church that **often people do not see and fully value the great weight of the gifts we receive in these sacraments**, typically because they just aren't aware what is happening spiritually in these moments.

These intense moments of grace are of vast significance in our personal faith walk, not just because we receive God's favor for us as His beloved children, but also because **we are invited to take up the mantle of God's family and serve in its name**. Each of us receive unique tools to do that.

These are our charisms.

WERE YOU BAPTIZED AS A BABY?

If you were, you have no memory of being without your charisms, and because of that I have found that **people in this category have a unique tendency to undervalue their charisms**. I often see people in this boat having little sense of the supernatural nature of their charisms as they have no memory of being any other way and consider the expression of the charisms as simply an outpouring of who they are and always have been.

Discernment can be more challenging in this case, but is far from impossible. My main recommendation would be to not dismiss things you perceive to be "normal" or "boring" in your life, but look at them carefully and objectively to discern their source.

SO WHAT ARE THE ACTUAL CHARISMS?

**There are twenty-four Charisms I
will explain in depth in this packet:**

ADMINISTRATION *KNOWLEDGE*
CELIBACY *LEADERSHIP*
CRAFTSMANSHIP *MERCY*
DISCERNMENT *MISSIONARY*
ENCOURAGEMENT *MUSIC*
EVANGELISM *PASTORING*
FAITH *PROPHECY*
GIVING *SERVICE*
HEALING *TEACHING*
HELPS *VOLUNTARY POVERTY*
HOSPITALITY *WISDOM*
INTERCESSION *WRITING*

LET'S GET INTO WHAT THEY ALL DO

The definitions for each of the 24 listed charisms are my own, synthesized from various writings on the charisms throughout the last 50 years. These definitions are a starting point, and there are as many unique expressions of the charisms as there are Christians in the church.

(I have excluded the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues as they are not discerned in the same way other charism need to be discerned - the receiver of these charisms will know when and if they have received them, especially after receiving prayer for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit - which is outside the scope of our discussion today - but they are also charisms.)

The main thing to remember about charisms are that charisms are supernatural, charisms are effective *(classical example being that when those with a teaching charism teach, students actually learn), and charisms are not static.* We continue to grow into our charisms and even develop new charisms as we grow and change in our relationship with God. This understanding comes directly from the parable of the talents (*Matthew 25:14-30*) - those whom prove themselves to be good stewards of what they have been given will be given more. That is why charism discernment is best understood as an ongoing process, to be returned to again at future points in life, to continue listening attentively to what God has for you in your current season.

The expressions listed for each of the charisms are not meant to be an exhaustive list but a starting point for understanding the charism and how it can be expressed in the world. However, **many of the most exciting and innovative expression of charisms come in blends and roles we might never expect** - hi-lighting the endless creativity and wisdom of the Holy Spirit moving in the church and the world.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHARISMS



01 Administration

empowers an individual to undertake and accomplish the planning and execution of projects and goals in a way that exceeds simply learned skills.

EXPRESSIONS: CFO, team leader in a larger organization, accountant, bookkeeper, event planner, manager, executive administrator in any industry

02 Celibacy

empowers an individual to be most fulfilled and fruitfully by remaining unmarried in devotion and obedience to Christ. Always in conjunction with other gifts and creates a freedom to use and pursue those gifts totally.

EXPRESSIONS: priest, religious life, call to the vocation to be permanently single

03 Craftsmanship

empowers an individual to show God's goodness to the world through artistic, creative, or skilled work that brings order and beauty into other's lives.

EXPRESSIONS: artist, woodworker, metalsmith, weaver, seamstress, quilter, painter, sculptor, dancer, hair stylist, esthetician, graphic designer, photographer

04 *Discernment*

empowers an individual to accurately and intuitively sense the spiritual source of something - whether it be God, human, or demonic. *EXPRESSIONS*: people with this charisma can often "stumble" into deliverance ministry, counseling or advisory roles, or important decision making positions as they seem to have reliable intuition.

05 *Encouragement*

empowers an individual to be an effective emissary of God's love and nurturing nature through their presence, ability to listen, and words of comfort and counsel.

EXPRESSIONS: childhood development, whether in the medical field, parenthood, daycare, or school; counselors, mentors, spiritual directors, speakers, and writers

06 *Evangelism*

empowers an individual to share their faith in a way that is supernaturally effective - encouraging both conversion and dedication to the faith in those they minister to.

EXPRESSIONS: missionary of any kind, be it in a church, college campus, school, or abroad; speaker, radio or TV host, any kind of minister in a formal church setting

07 *Faith*

empowers an individual to trust God and His will to a supernatural degree and gives them great freedom to operate out of that trust in a way that builds the faith of the community. Faith is not exclusive to a certain set of job or vocational circumstances, but it a powerful gift to be shared in any role, especially as a pastor, spiritual leader, counselor, minister, or member of society.

08 *Giving*

empowers an individual to be a conduit of God's provision by practicing supernatural generosity with their time, talents, and resources. *EXPRESSIONS*: philanthropist, non-profit founder or worker, individual who feels called to both a role that can make a lot of money and being remarkably generous with that compensation (such as lawyer, doctor, entrepreneur, investor, financial industry etc.)

09 *Healing*

empowers an individual to become a special expression of God's love in the world by curing illness and restoring health - be it physical, inner, or relational. This can be through applied medical expertise that is extraordinarily efficacious OR through prayer or laying on of hands by a non-medically trained person.

10 *Helps*

empowers an individual to be a particular support to another person's service, ministry or vocation through the use of their own talents and gifts. We see this charism most frequently in those with a "right hand man/woman" type role in any organization. Often they are "paired" with a visionary leader and content to execute on many of the foundational and behind the scenes tasks required to bring the vision to life.

11 *Hospitality*

empowers an individual to open one's heart and home to welcome others as if they are Christ himself, often by providing food, shelter, or relationship. *EXPRESSIONS*: hosting guests, Airbnb host, restaurant staff, hospitality committee, welcome wagon, hotel staff, host family for missionaries or students, church greeters

12 *Intercession*

empowers an individual to pray without ceasing for the intercessions of others with great faith that prayer changes things and they often serve as a means by which God's love reaches others. This charism can co-exist with any kind of job or vocation, but it typically characterized by a deep desire to bring others to God in prayer.

13 *Knowledge*

empowers an individual to use their mind, study, and analytical skills to synthesize information that helps us better understand God and the world. EXPRESSIONS: teacher, researcher, scientist, philosopher, data analyst, IT workers, programmers

14 *Leadership*

empowers an individual to share their vision for growth and change with others in a way that motivates and compels others to participate in that vision under their direction. EXPRESSIONS: any kind of leadership role from big to small - from father/mother to CEO. The key to this charism lies in the clarity of vision and the identification of the skills and gifts of others to bring that vision into being.

15 *Mercy*

empowers an individual to share in Christ's own empathy and compassion for others and urges them to practical actions to love and serve them. EXPRESSIONS: activist, political reformer, outreach worker, non-profit sector, work with the homeless, sick, underprivileged, youth, attorney, teacher, daycare worker

16 *Missionary*

empowers an individual to be a channel of God's love and goodness, caring deeply about the salvation of people all over the world and being urged to act on that call by ministering to those in other cultures. Obviously there is the concrete example of being a missionary, but this charism also applies to those who serve "another culture" in their own homeland by working or being active in the secular world.

17 *Music*

empowers an individual to share God's goodness through music (whether vocal, instrumental, etc.) in a way that invites others into deeper relationship with God. This charism is often hard to discern vs. natural talent, but I find it helpful to add the litmus test of looking at not just the beauty or skill of the music, but at whether or not the music made invites others into a sense of wonder, faith, or experience of prayer.

18 *Pastoring*

empowers an individual to both build effective Christian community and enter into long term relationships of Christian formation that elevates the faith life of the people they serve. EXPRESSIONS: religious & social leaders who walk with people in much the same way as Christ, discipling a small group of people for a long time.

19 *Prophecy*

empowers an individual to hear from the Lord and share His messages with others in a way that encourages, instructs, and invites them into deeper relationship with God. EXPRESSIONS: prophecy goes hand in hand with many roles, but is especially effective when paired with leadership, decision making, and visionary roles.

20 *Service*

empowers an individual to see the needs in a community or organization and then do what is necessary to bridge the gap and support task at hand. EXPRESSIONS: service industry personnel, operations staff, volunteer

21 *Teaching*

empowers an individual to communicate ideas, skills, and information in a way that is effective and empowering to those they teach, for the good of the student's personal and spiritual formation. EXPRESSIONS: classroom teacher, professor, religious leader, HR, trainer, mentor, homeschool

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22 *Voluntary Poverty*

empowers an individual to live in solidarity with the poor in a chosen and joyful way that helps build other's faith and confidence in Jesus. Voluntary poverty can coexist with many vocations and jobs, but commonly goes hand in hand with a religious vocation in an order that takes a vow of poverty or has a charism of poverty.

23 *Wisdom*

empowers an individual to creatively apply knowledge with insight to help solve problems, accomplish goals, or make decisions. EXPRESSIONS: visionary leadership roles, directorial positions, fundraising, non-profit and charity work; especially seen in positions which require large amounts of complex decision making.

24 *Writing*

empowers an individual to use words to express truth, beauty, and goodness in ways that reflect the fullness of the human experience and deeply affect the reader.

EXPRESSIONS: journalist, author, screenwriter, blogger, secretary, any other role that requires writing with clarity and insight

THE BODY OF CHRIST IS DIVERSE.

Not everyone is called to every charism, which is part of what makes the body of Christ vibrant and diverse.

I always like to point out that **charism discernment is just as much about creating space and permission to say no to tasks that are NOT suited to your giftings**, which creates space for others to step up and use their talents.

Whenever we fall into the trap of thinking we are the only means by which God can accomplish a mission or task, we step into pride and performance and block others from exploring their own gifts, not to mention that we're totally forgetting the fact that God can and will provide.

I like to encourage those participating in the ongoing charism discernment process not only to test and step into their possible charisms, but intentionally withdraw from activities that frustrate and annoy them that they are doing primarily out of obligation or a sense that no one else will (ie. you feel like YOU have to provide, instead of trusting God to provide..

That said, **all Christians are called to love, pray, show mercy, live in faith, share the faith, and give of their time, talent, and treasure.** We do not abdicate those responsibilities if those don't happen to be our charisms.

I hope this overview of the charisms has been helpful and peaked your interest to find out your own. **If you're ready to begin your charism discernment process, we've got something for you on the next page.**

FAQS

01 *How do you discern your charisms?*

Typically charism discernment starts with taking a charism inventory or assessment (we have one you can take on the next page) to help narrow the focus of discernment to 4-6 charisms that are your most likely candidates. From there people can pray about the options, test them in their Church community and seek feedback on their effectiveness in those roles.

02 *Can kids discern their charisms?*

Kids who have been baptized and even possibly received Confirmation *have* their charisms, but what they *might not* have is the self-awareness to truly see the charisms present in themselves. This will of course vary from child to child, but in general I have found that children younger than high school upperclassmen are not self-aware enough to take an inventory. I typically recommend exposing kids to the idea of charisms but waiting until high school, or ideally college, to discern what they are.

03 *How is a talent different from a charism?*

Talents are another kind of gift we all may receive, but they are in the natural realm. Talents do not rely on grace or a sacrament to confer them, and they also remain proportionate to the effort we invest in them, ie. they require our effort and practice to progress. Talents also may be primarily for our benefit as an individual, whereas charisms are always for the good of the whole Church and not just us individually.

04 *How many charisms do people have?*

Number of charisms varies. Theologically every baptized person has at least one, but in the hundreds of people I have walked through this process with I have yet to discern with someone who had less than three and I have seen as many as nine in a person in their nineties who had a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord. The parable of the talents is true here: if you steward well what you are given you will often have more charisms given to you over the course of your life.



READY TO SEE WHICH CHARISMS THE HOLY SPIRIT MIGHT HAVE GIVEN YOU?



We have an amazing online Charism Assessment that will give you tons of valuable personalized information to kickstart your charism discernment process. Find out your most likely charisms and get personalized tips on how to test them out!

[TAKE THE ASSESSMENT](#)

