

Considerations  
on **Charisms**,  
Healing Ministry, and  
Life in the **Spirit**



REGNUM  
CHRISTI



“ Do not quench  
the Spirit.  
Do not despise  
prophetic  
utterances.  
Test everything;  
retain what is  
good..” (1 Thes 5: 19-21)



Thy Kingdom come!

REGNUM CHRISTI

GENERAL DIRECTORATE  
Via Aurelia 677 – 00165 Rome, Italy

January 9, 2023

To the Territorial Directive Colleges

Dear friends in Jesus Christ,

We send you a cordial greeting in this new year, asking the Lord that this be a time of grace and blessing for each one.

We share with you the document *Considerations on Charisms, Healing Ministry and Life in the Spirit*, fruit of the joint work carried out by commissions of the Regnum Christi Federation and the Legionaries of Christ. Its purpose is to provide a broad context that helps members to understand and contextualize the subject and offer some guidance that helps in discernment of the expression and service of the gifts of the Spirit. It is important that we integrate them within the framework of a deep spiritual life, grounded in the charism that the Lord has given us, and in the teachings and recommendations of the Church.

Given the novelty of expressions of charismatic spirituality introduced in some activities and ministries of different vocations in Regnum Christi, both commissions have worked in coordination to undertake a shared study and propose some orientations and considerations. The commissions have listened to the experiences of a broad group of people with





varied perspectives on the subject, and a representative group of superiors and directors of the different levels of government, including yourselves, as members of territorial directive colleges. The general criteria given in the document seeks, above all, to help to us live the advice of Saint Paul in the First Letter to the Thessalonians: “Examine everything, keep the good” (1 Thes 5:21)..

Recognizing the good that every action of God has in the lives of people, it also seems essential to us to highlight the importance of exercising care for all that pertains to Regnum Christi, with respect for the fact that traditionally there has been a certain sobriety in the expression of our spirituality. The most important guidelines for the spiritual life and practices of prayer for Regnum Christi members are already found in the publication of the new prayer book, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*.



Likewise, it is necessary to recognize and cultivate the sacraments as the ordinary, preferred, and privileged means by which Our Lord shares his life and grace with us. “Sacraments are “powers that come forth” from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are “the masterworks of God” in the new and everlasting covenant” (Catechism of the Catholic Churches, n. 1116).

The document has been approved by the General Directive College and ratified by the general governments of the federated institutions.

We hope that local directors and section directors will read and use this document, and that it will serve to seek and propose paths of discernment and accompaniment to integrate a



diversity of gifts, ministries, and activities, according to the charism given to us, knowing that “to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit” (cf. 1Cor 12:7).

May the Lord, giver of all good, grant us the gift of his Spirit, so that united in him we may be “witnesses of the love of Jesus Christ through the union and charity among us” (SRCF 6)..

United in prayer and our shared mission,



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# 1 Introduction

Several Territorial Assemblies of the Legionaries of Christ asked the 2020 General Chapter to give its opinion on the topic of personal charisms of the Holy Spirit, to discern whether it is compatible with the charism of Regnum Christi and how to harmonize it with certain forms of charismatic spirituality. The Chapter recognized “the value of personal charisms as a manifestation of the Spirit for the good of the community.” It reaffirmed “that the vocation to the Legionaries of Christ is open ‘to the Church in all the many gifts and charisms that the Spirit gives to his Bride.’”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it noted that it “requires a solid theological formation, humility, and integrity of life, close accompaniment by experts and obedience to the competent authority.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it suggested that the general government continue studying the topic and offer more precise doctrinal and pastoral guidelines.



To fulfill this task from the Chapter, the General Director of the Legionaries of Christ established the “Commission for the study of personal charisms of the Spirit and the exercise of prayers of liberation and healing in the apostolate of the Legionaries of Christ” on April 19, 2021. After addressing this topic in a Plenary Session, the General Directive College of the Regnum Christi Federation established the “Commission on Healing Ministry and Charismatic Gifts” on July 1, 2021.



Since then, both commissions have worked together to offer a shared analysis of the situation and propose some guidelines and considerations. They have listened to the experiences of a broad and select group of individuals interested in the phenomenon and a representative group of current and recent superiors and local directors.

Both commissions have acknowledged what the Church has confirmed, that our spirituality, centered on the mystery of Christ, is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the Church. It is evident that the Holy Spirit blows where he

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<sup>1</sup> Legionaries of Christ, Communiqué of the General Chapter (2020), 98.

<sup>2</sup> Legionaries of Christ, Communiqué of the General Chapter (2020), 99.







wills and that we must not impose conditions on him, but that does not exempt those in authority from the need to discern the wheat from the weeds in each case. It is appropriate to remember that the sacraments, the Word, liturgical life, prayer, and the exercise of the theological virtues particularly nourish the spirituality of the members of Regnum Christi. Although it has not been possible to offer overly specific guidelines, these activities, which are an expression of the charismatic spirituality, may eventually be considered as a complement to, but must not replace, other spiritual means proper to the spiritual Tradition of the Church and the richness of the lived experience of Regnum Christi.

The present document is addressed to all Legionaries of Christ, Consecrated Women, Lay Consecrated Men, and lay members of Regnum Christi, but it is especially for those who have asked for greater clarity regarding how to incorporate certain forms of expression of charismatic spirituality in their personal and apostolic life, and for those entrusted with the service of authority.

Its purpose is to offer a brief presentation of the presence of this reality in Regnum Christi, with its positive and negative points, some doctrinal reflections, and some guidelines for Regnum Christi's life and government. It does not seek to be the final word on this topic, but rather help for the current moment, inspired by the Pauline invitation, examine everything, and keep what is good (1 Thes 5:21).





## 2 Description

In the past few years, some members of our spiritual family have introduced some elements of the “life in the Spirit,” also known as “charismatic” elements, in their spiritual lives and their apostolate, often with positive results. It is impossible to define precisely what they consist of, but they can be grouped into three categories:

- Charismatic elements: prayer of praise, sometimes accompanied by external expressions like praying prostrate or lifting one’s arms, the gift of tongues and prophecy, the laying on of hands or resting in the spirit, to mention a few.
- Healing prayers: their purpose is interior, physical, or spiritual healing and liberation from the bonds that block the action of grace.
- Exorcism and prayers of liberation: referring to everything related to the fight against the devil’s action.



These phenomena vary noticeably from country to country and among localities. In some places, there is little interest and scarce presence of these elements in our apostolic works. In other areas, however, they have become very present, leading to a wide variety of prayers of praise, retreats, and activities for healing offered through personal or institutional initiatives.<sup>3</sup> Several aspects of this reality have been incorporated into programs of formation, Eucharistic hours, retreats, and formation activities in Regnum Christi sections. A group of Legionaries, Lay Consecrated Men, Consecrated Women, and lay members sees an opportunity here and feels a call to continue growing in this area. Several territories have formed study commissions on this topic.



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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation, 40. Henceforth, SRCF.





Those who organize or participate in these events mention several positive fruits. They appear to foster the search for the primacy of grace;<sup>4</sup> a more effective openness to the action of the Holy Spirit; in many cases, they strengthen the awareness of being sons and daughters of God sent on a mission; they facilitate a more intimate life of prayer with fewer formalisms; they give a healthier value to emotions in the experience of faith, and transform prayer into a more integrated activity; they enrich how spiritual direction is practiced, with greater attention to the action of the Spirit. In a good number of people, they awaken a drive to evangelize.

In some cases, these elements appear to be an appropriate response to the signs of the times. These charisms were significantly present in the Church's initial works of evangelization and the first announcement of the kerygma. They are helpful in a secularized environment, even if they require a subsequent process of formation and accompaniment. Many of these activities attract those seeking healing for different types of wounds. Often, they produce real and lasting fruits of healing that the individual has not been able to reach with other means like personal effort and psychological accompaniment.

Nevertheless, in some cases, there is a tendency to fall into a disordered interest in these gifts, into an unbounded enthusiasm that leads to absolutizing one's own experience and promoting it as an imposition. This sometimes creates unease. There have been cases of invasive practices, conscience pressures, and boundary violations, at times grave. Deep wounds have been brought to the surface without the professional competence to address them; doors have been opened to extraordinary manifestations of the Evil One without the proper training to confront them.

Some members of the different branches of Regnum Christi, attracted at first by what seemed like authentic gifts of the Holy Spirit, have allowed themselves to be swept away by protagonism, presumption, or frenetic

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. SRCF, 22.



activism. Some communities, apostolates, and localities are experiencing division because of these activities. When the Christian virtues of humility, sobriety, charity, and obedience are lacking, it is possible to suppose the presence of a deception of the enemy who tempts us under the appearance of good (*sub specie boni*).



## 3 Doctrinal reflection

### 3.1 Charisms in the Church

There are fundamental and indispensable graces meant for every Christian, like sanctifying grace that brings with it the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are also virtues acquired through actual grace and infused virtues. These form part of the Christian's journey to union with God and transformation into Christ.

There are also some special gifts that the Spirit distributes "as he wishes" (1 Cor 12:11) for the good of the community. The Acts of the Apostles says that the first Christians prayed to ask for the supernatural action of the Spirit. "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, as you stretch forth [your] hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30). "Extraordinary, or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which have a direct or indirect use for the Church; the charisms are ordered to the building up of the Church, to the good of men and the needs of the world."<sup>5</sup>

Just as a body has many parts with various functions, the Mystical Body of Christ also has different members with different aptitudes. This diversity "is not an anomaly to be avoided" but "a beneficial necessity that enables the body to carry out different vital functions."<sup>6</sup> St. Paul offers a magisterial teaching on the charisms in the first letter to the Corinthians 12-14. He uses this term to refer to the spiritual gifts the Spirit gives the faithful without distinction for the common good of the Body of the Church. St. Paul lists faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues, among others. Still, at the same time, he underlines the preeminence of charity above them all.

The Second Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, contains fundamental teachings regarding ordinary and extraor-

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<sup>5</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 799; Cf. Code of Canon Law, 799-801.

<sup>6</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, 4





dinary charisms in the Church. It affirms that they proceed from the Holy Spirit, who distributes them for the renewal and building up of the Church. These charisms are gifts that “should be received with gratitude and joy,” but “they should not be asked for recklessly.”<sup>7</sup> Those who exercise authority in the Church must discern their authenticity without stifling the Spirit, testing everything and keeping what is good (1 Thes 5:21).

Pope St. John Paul II explained that the Council had the specific intention of affirming that the gifts of the Spirit belong to the ordinary life of the Church and are not principally ordered to the sanctification of those who receive them but rather to the service of others and the good of the Church. The pontiff affirmed that the sovereign power of God is not subject to “an established structure of interventions once and for all.”<sup>8</sup> Just as the charisms held an important place in the early Church, so also in the post-Conciliar years, it appears that “the Holy Spirit has once again asked for the floor,” according to Cardinal Ratzinger.<sup>9</sup>



The call to be a Church “that goes out,” as Pope Francis is asking for, leads us to re-read all of Christian life in a missionary light. The work of evangelization concerns all areas of the Church: ordinary pastoral ministry, closeness to those who have abandoned the Christian faith, and the proclamation of the good news to those who have never been reached by the Gospel of Jesus or who have rejected him. In this indispensable work of the New Evangelization, it is necessary now more than ever to recognize and appreciate the many charisms that can awaken and nourish the life of faith of the People of God.<sup>10</sup>

When one receives these charisms, even the simplest of them, they have the right and the obligation to exercise them for the good of all people

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7 Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* 12.

8 John Paul II, General Audience, March 9, 1994.

9 JOSEPH RATZINGER, *The Ecclesial Movements: A Theological Reflection on Their Place in the Church*, May 27, 1998.

10 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, 1.





and to build up the Church. Everyone should prepare themselves diligently for the apostolate. This obligation is more urgent as an adult because as one gets older, one discovers more precisely the talents with which God has enriched the soul and can better exercise the charisms that the Holy Spirit has given for the good of the brothers more.<sup>11</sup>

## 3.2 Spiritual Renewal in Regnum Christi

Regnum Christi's spirituality is centered above all on Jesus Christ and begins with the experience of his love. By the action of the Spirit, we are sons and daughters in the Son, who becomes the center, standard, and model of our life.<sup>12</sup> Union with Jesus Christ does not occur without an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, who at the same time is the guide and craftsman of our transformation in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Our spirituality, centered on the mystery of Christ, is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the Church. Among the means that we have for living our Christian and apostolic vocation, we have a special appreciation for the care and dignity of the liturgy; a great love for the Eucharist and frequent confession; a deep spiritual life nourished by spiritual exercises, retreats, and tridua of renewal; personal accompaniment through spiritual direction; a solid integral formation; personal and communal apostolic commitment; and team life animated by activities like the "Encounter with Christ."

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11 Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 30.

12 cf. SRCF 12 and 19.

13 *Iuvenescit Ecclesiae* 11: "The gift of the Spirit in the Church is bound to the mission of the Son, accomplished definitively in his Paschal Mystery. Jesus Himself connects the fulfillment of his mission to the sending of the Spirit upon the community of believers. Through this, the Holy Spirit can in no way inaugurate an economy other than that of the divine incarnate Logos, crucified and risen. In truth, the whole sacramental economy of the Church is the pneumatological realization of the Incarnation: the Holy Spirit, therefore, comes to be considered by Tradition as the soul of the Church which is the Body of Christ. The action of God in history always implies the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit, who, in Irenaeus of Lyon's evocative words, are called 'the two hands of the Father.' In this sense, every gift of the Spirit cannot but be in relationship with the Word made flesh."





According to the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation, we are contemplative “because we discover Christ’s presence and love in our hearts, our neighbor, and the world. We seek to be men and women of the interior life, lovers of prayer, and we recognize the primacy of God’s action in our growth in holiness and the apostolate.”<sup>14</sup> This contemplative spirit “is nourished in the sacraments, the Word, liturgical life, prayer and the exercise of the theological and moral virtues.”<sup>15</sup> For this reason, we believe that the liturgical life, “has the Eucharist as its center”<sup>16</sup> and at the same time we believe that the Holy Spirit “is the guide and craftsman of our transformation into Christ and our apostolic fruitfulness.”<sup>17</sup>

In recent years, Regnum Christi has experienced a process of renewal, whose principal protagonist has been the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis recognized it in the words he addressed to the General Chapter and the General Assemblies when he said, “you have opened yourselves with courage to the action of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> This openness to the Holy Spirit is not the same as the exercise of the so-called “charisms of the Spirit” we describe. What is truly important is continuing to be open to allow the Spirit to make all things new.

### 3.3 Liturgy, the Sacraments, Sacramentals, and Popular Piety

The Holy Spirit acts *ex opere operato* through the seven sacraments, which are the ordinary means of sanctification for humanity because they are efficacious signs of grace instituted by Christ. In addition to the

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14 SRCF 20.

15 Rule of Life of the Lay Faithful Associated to Regnum Christi, 3. Henceforth, RL.

16 SRCF 22.

17 SRCF 19.

18 Francis, Address, February 29, 2020.







sacraments, the Church encourages the help of sacramentals, “sacred signs which, by a certain imitation of the sacraments, obtain above all spiritual effects received through the intercession of the Church.”<sup>19</sup> Sacramentals “always include a prayer, are frequently accompanied by a pre-determined sign, like the imposition of hands, the sign of the cross, sprinkling with holy water.”<sup>20</sup>

Among sacramentals, blessings hold the first place (of people, objects, places, at meals). Every blessing praises God and is a prayer to obtain his gifts.<sup>21</sup> The episcopal conferences have promulgated rites of blessings in the past few decades with formulas for blessing people, objects, and places, as well as for imploring the blessing of God on the circumstances of life.

In addition to the sacraments and sacramentals, the “religious sense of the Christian people has found, at every time, its expression in various forms of piety surrounding the sacramental life of the Church, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the Way of the Cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc”.<sup>22</sup> These expressions enhance the Church’s liturgical life but do not replace it.

Some of the elements of “life in the Holy Spirit” described in this document can be compared to sacramentals and to other expressions of popular piety which prolong the liturgical life of the Church without replacing it.

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19 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1667.

20 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1668.

21 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1671.

22 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1675.





## 3.4 Some Charismatic Expressions

### 3.4.1 Prayer of Praise

There is a type of prayer of praise that is not discursive or ritualistic but rather emotional and experiential. It uses music, lights, and images as a catalyst and is commonly known as Praise & Worship. Its origin is in American evangelical music from the last quarter of the 20th century, linked to the genre of “Gospel” music and the Neo Pentecostal movement. This type of prayer has been a great help for many Catholics. If used correctly, it can be a good preparation for liturgical prayer or a way to provide continuity to the Liturgy of the Church. Those who participate in it can unite themselves, more than just with signs, to the heavenly liturgy, “where the celebration is wholly communion and feast.”<sup>23</sup>



“Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most directly that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, not for what he does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God (cf. Rm 8:16), testifying to the only Son, in whom we are adopted and through whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the “one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and for whom we exist”.<sup>24</sup>



There are different ways and forms of prayer that recognize the lordship of God. The prayer of praise, together with other forms of individual or group prayer, helps the one who prays to acknowledge that they are a creature before God all-mighty, brings them to open themselves to receive everything from Him, to relinquish control of their own life. Frequently the

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<sup>23</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1136.

<sup>24</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2639.





one who begins a path of praise feels the desire to pray more in their personal life and opens up to receive more gifts from the Lord, particularly the grace or urge to announce the kerygma and bring others to an encounter with Christ. The Holy Spirit assumes the role of the teacher of prayer and gradually leads each soul by a path and rhythm that only He knows, respecting the soul but also urging it on to deeper intimacy and freedom in Christ. Thus, this path becomes one of healing and liberation.

Music ministry, when moved by a sincere love for God and favored by the anointing of the Spirit, becomes a source of richness for the whole community and those who exercise it. He who sings prays twice. According to St. Augustine, “the one who sings praise not only praises but praises with joy; the one who sings praise not only sings but also loves the one he sings to. In praise, there is a declaration of recognition. In the song of the lover, there is love”<sup>25</sup>.



### 3.4.2 Prayer with the Body

The Catechism teaches that prayer is an encounter. It is the life of the new heart. It is not only the soul that prays with its faculties (intelligence, will, and affections), but the whole person prays, body, soul, and spirit.<sup>26</sup> In the Old Testament, people raised their hands as a sign of praise and danced to express joy and exultation in the presence of the Lord. “Let them praise his name in dance, make music with tambourine and lyre” (Ps 149:3). “Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary and bless the LORD” (Ps 134:2). “All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to God with joyful cries.” (Ps 47:2) “Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth; break into song; sing praise. Sing praise to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and melodious song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn, shout with joy to the King, the LORD” (Ps 98:4-6).

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<sup>25</sup> Saint Augustine, Commentary on Psalm 72:1.

<sup>26</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2702-2703.



In some charismatic activities, people commonly raise their hands to pray and give glory to God. The type of gestures or bodily movements proper to prayer depends on the place's culture, the context, and the situation, as well as the person's spontaneity, keeping in mind the sensibility of those present.

### 3.4.3 Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands is a gesture by which people implore the anointing of the Spirit on someone to ask for a particular grace. It can be a part of asking for the grace of healing: "he laid his hands on them and they were healed" (Lk 4:40; Mk 16:18); sending people out on mission: "laying their hands on them they sent them out" (Acts 13:3); blessing: "and taking them in his arms, he blessed them, laying his hands on them" (Mk 10:16); or to ask for a particular outpouring of the Spirit: "then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:17)

The laying on of hands is a visible expression of solidarity in prayer and intercession for one another as members of the same Body. It is not considered a repetition of the sacramental imposition of the hands of the priest at baptism or the bishop at confirmation. Instead, it expresses a prayer that the Spirit, already present in the person through sanctifying grace, acts with strength and power in their life and the community. Although there is no official rubric approved by the Church for the laying on of hands, in keeping with the indications of various dioceses, it is preferable to leave the imposition of hands on the head only to priests and instead invite the lay faithful to lay their hands on the back or shoulder, so that it doesn't appear as a sacramental gesture linked to Holy Orders.

The laying on of hands is not the only way to implore the anointing of the Spirit. It can be helpful in some contexts because it helps the person sense the community's presence and the power of intercession.



### 3.4.4 Baptism in the Spirit

That which is commonly called “baptism in the Spirit” is an experience of the love of God the Father poured into the heart of the person by the Holy Spirit which transforms one’s life. It is received through total self-giving to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It rekindles the fruits of the sacrament of baptism and confirmation, deepening communion with God and others, awakening zeal for the Gospel, and preparing the person with charisms for service and mission. It is usually received after days or moments of prayer which dispose one to receive this gift of God with greater openness. It is often received in the context of communal prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

According to Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, it is an experience formed by “gestures of great simplicity, calm, and joy, accompanied by attitudes of humility, repentance, the disposition to become like children. It is a renewal and actualization not only of baptism and confirmation but of the whole Christian life – for the married, a renewal of the sacrament of matrimony, for priests, of their ordination, for consecrated persons, of their religious profession. (...) The most frequent and important fruit is discovering what it means to have “a personal relationship” with the risen and living Jesus. In the Catholic understanding, baptism in the Spirit is not a point of arrival, but rather a point of departure toward Christian maturity and commitment in the Church.”<sup>27</sup>

What is essential is not so much the concrete manner in which the “baptism in the Spirit” occurs, which can be one of many ways and is not the only way to experience the Spirit. What is essential is the “spiritual baptism” that makes us live aware “of the gift of divine filiation in Christ received in baptism.”<sup>28</sup>

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27 R. CANTALAMESSA, Lenten Sermon, February 26, 2021. See also R. CANTALAMESSA, *Come Holy Spirit, meditations on the Veni Creator*, Pauline, Bogotá 2011, 73-77.

28 RL 4.





### 3.4.5 Resting in the Spirit

“Resting in the Spirit” is a way of resting in God and abandoning oneself to Him with filial trust.<sup>29</sup> It is generally a phenomenon of falling involuntarily, ordinarily backward, in connection with an intense moment of prayer or healing. This is followed by a time of rest during which the person experiences intensely the peace and presence of God; faith, hope, and charity; the healing and purifying action of God in their past; liberation from bonds and blockages; strength and spiritual consolation.<sup>30</sup>

What is important in this experience of rest is not so much the external falling, which iper se is neither sanctifying nor a sign of holiness, but rather the fruits of the action of the Spirit, who can also act in silence and without external manifestations.



## 3.5 Some Charisms of the Holy Spirit

In addition to sacramental grace, there are other “special graces, also called charisms, according to the Greek term used by St. Paul, which means favor, free gift, blessing. Whatever their character may be, even if extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or tongues, the charisms are ordered to sanctifying grace and have as their end the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity, which builds up the Church.”<sup>31</sup>



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29 Cf. Ps 37:4; Lk 1:37; 12:29; Phil 4:19; 1Pe 5:7.

30 Father Cantalamessa affirms that “among the most common phenomena observed in the Pentecostal and charismatic sphere is the so-called ‘resting in the Spirit,’ a phenomenon that requires much discernment, but whose authentically spiritual character, in many cases, cannot be denied. The person, “touched” by the Spirit, falls, but sweetly, as if someone had placed them on the ground: all mental activity ceases, and when they want to describe to others what they felt in those moments, they only find one word to do so: peace, peace, much peace.” R. Cantalamessa, *Come, Creator Spirit*, 32.

31 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2003.



There are different lists of what these charisms are. In the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, St. Paul enumerates the following: “To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues.” Among these charisms are mentioned the so-called gifts of tongues, of prophecy, and of healing.

### 3.5.1 The Gift of Tongues

One of the most frequently seen charisms is the gift of tongues, that is, speaking in a language that the person who performs it does not know, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It can be given in the form of *xenolalia*, which consists of speaking in an unknown language, or in the form of *glossolalia*, which consists of speaking in an unintelligible manner as an expression of personal prayer or praise. “We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God” (Acts 2:11); “they were astounded that the gift of the holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God” (Acts 10:45-46).

*Glossolalia* can be associated with the prayer of praise. It is a type of prayer in which the one who prays lends the Spirit his lips, tongue, and voice to praise the Father and the Son without following a verbal discourse. It is a vocal prayer without words, expressed through babbling. According to St. Augustine: “one does not utter words; he utters a sound of joy without words... expressing what he feels without reflecting on any particular meaning.”<sup>32</sup> According to St. Paul, “he who speaks in tongues does not speak for men, but for God” (1 Cor 14:2).

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<sup>32</sup> Saint Augustine, Expositions on the Psalms, 99.



There is also the gift of prophesying in tongues, when one receives an inspiration in an unknown language to transmit it in communal prayer. St. Paul refers to this gift when he indicates that it must be accompanied by interpretation (1 Cor. 14:26-27) and in an orderly manner.

### 3.5.2 The Gift of Prophecy

The charism of prophecy belongs to the ordinary life of the Church because every baptized person is priest, prophet, and king. As a prophet, they can receive words, images, visions, or dreams for their own good and that of the community. Prophecy is oriented to edify, exhort, and console, thus contributing to the strengthening of the Church (1 Cor 14:3). Prophecies are in continuity, not in rupture, with the will of God, which is discerned through ordinary means: prayer, listening to the Word, the teachings of the pastors of the Church, the instructions of spiritual directors, family obligations, and the duties of one's state.



Neither the prophet nor prophecy are in themselves proof of their own authenticity, so much so that St. Paul affirms that “we prophesy imperfectly” (1 Cor 13:9). Prophecies must be submitted to the Christian community and to those who exercise pastoral authority. “As for the prophets, let two or three speak, and let the rest judge” (1 Cor 14:29). When necessary, they should submit themselves to the discernment of their pastors.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.5.3 The Gift of Healing

Healing is one of the signs of the Kingdom: “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Mt 11:5). Ac-

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 12.







According to Pope Benedict XVI, “healing is a fundamental dimension of the apostolic mission, of the Christian faith in general.”<sup>34</sup> For this reason, Christianity has been defined as a “therapeutic religion,”<sup>35</sup> and a religion of healing. This does not mean that everyone needs to take a particular path of healing, but that all of us need to encounter Christ, the Physician of bodies and souls.

Praying for healing and interceding for those who suffer are corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which express faith in the living presence of Christ the physician.<sup>36</sup> The action of the Holy Spirit can heal physical illnesses and can also heal and alleviate the weight of other illnesses of a psychological and spiritual nature, seen frequently in our Church, which resembles a field hospital.<sup>37</sup> These diseases have to do with emotional wounds, traumas, complexes, fears, addictions... Christ wanted to associate his disciples with his ministry of compassion and healing (Mt 10, 8; Lk 9, 2; 10, 9).

The Holy Spirit continues to give some people a special charism of healing (cf. 1 Cor 12:9,28,30) to manifest the power of the grace of the Risen One. Some people who exercise this ministry experience a particular call to dedicate themselves specifically to leading people to healing. Indeed, some complementary skills can be learned and developed in this field.

The purpose of various healing itineraries is to bring about the healing of wounds. Healing itineraries enliven the gift of baptism.: in the rite of baptism Satan and his deceptions are renounced, and the truths of the faith are proclaimed. The sacraments contribute to the process of spiritual healing that leads to a return to the embrace of the Father and a personal encounter with the love of Christ. These itineraries also make use

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34 Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Doubleday, 2007.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1506-1510.

37 Cf. Francis, *Address*, September 19, 2014.





of the sacramentals and intercessory prayer, which become an effective aid when received in faith.

Some wounds are so deep that the person also needs psychological help. Professional support may also be necessary on the path of conversion after spiritual healing because there are certain conditioning factors that remain. Inner healing and psychological therapy must be clearly distinguished, the field of action and limits of each should be respected, although they can also complement each other.

## 3.6 The Action of the Enemy

The Catechism teaches that “evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil (dia-bolos) is the one who “throws himself across” God’s plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ.”<sup>38</sup> The action of the enemy can be ordinary or also extraordinary.

### 3.6.1 The Ordinary Action of the Enemy

The action of the enemy “consists above all in tempting men to do evil, influencing their imagination and their higher faculties to be able to position them in direct opposition to the law of God.”<sup>39</sup> His influence can “hide” in a deeper and more effective way: going unnoticed is in his “interests.” The power of Satan in the world is that of leading people to deny his existence in the name of rationalism and of whatever other system of thought that seeks all kinds of escapisms in order not to admit the work of the devil.”<sup>40</sup>

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38 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2851.

39 John Paul II, General Audience, August 13, 1986, 8.

40 Ibid., 8.





The Lord warns us that he who commits sin becomes the servant of sin (cf. Jn 8:34). This form of subjection is called spiritual bondage. It can be ordinary, if it is the fruit of sin that weakens the will, or extraordinary, if it is a bondage resulting from a special action of the enemy. In the first case, the will of the person is subjugated to a certain extent, so that he is not able to choose the good freely in certain situations. It can be a moral submission, such as an addiction or a habitual sin from which one cannot free oneself; a cognitive submission, such as an obsessive and/or self-harming thought that the person cannot get out of his mind; an emotional submission, when uncontrollable negative emotions are unleashed, such as fear, guilt, jealousy or anger; a relational submission, when there is a harmful attachment to a person, a co-dependent or manipulative relationship. It may involve a certain degree of consent to demonic influence.



Although these forms of submission greatly condition the actions of a person, they do not determine them. The grace of God is effective, and the Redemption of Christ is destined for all men.



### 3.6.2 The Extraordinary Action of the Enemy

“Demonic possession” is a form of the enemy’s action in which he takes control of a person’s body and faculties, dominating his words and actions. “It is not always easy to discern what is preternatural in these cases, nor does the Church easily condone or affirm the tendency to attribute many events to direct interventions of the devil; but as a matter of principle, it cannot be denied that, in his eagerness to harm and lead to evil, Satan can reach this extreme manifestation of his superiority.”<sup>41</sup>

There is also demonic “obsession,” which is a serious and continuous form of demonic influence in a person’s mind that causes much suffering

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.





and cannot be explained only by personality or psychological factors. It is characterized by its violence and duration. It can be internal, when it affects the spiritual powers (obsessive thoughts, scruples, irrational fear...) or external, when it affects the external senses, (deceptive impressions in sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch).

“Vexation” is an extraordinary action of the enemy in which he directly attacks the physical body of the person: blows, unexplainable illnesses, wounds...

“Infestation” is the extraordinary action of the devil on a place, an object, or an animal. The objective of the devil is always to perturb man, to bother him, to lead him to discouragement and despair.

### 3.6.3 The Fight against Evil



Jesus gave the ones he sent out power over unclean spirits: “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received; freely give” (Mt 10:1,8). This command is given to everyone who believes: “These are the signs that will accompany those who believe: in my name they shall cast out demons, they shall speak new languages, they shall catch serpents in their hands, and though they drink poison, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover” (Mk 16:17-18). The Lord’s Prayer contains the prayer of self-deliverance par excellence, since Jesus teaches us to ask the Father “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one” (Mt 6:13).

Exorcism is “the casting out of demons from a possessed person by means of the spiritual authority that Jesus entrusted to his Church, performed only by a bishop or a priest authorized by the bishop, using the liturgical Rite





of Exorcism.”<sup>42</sup> Minor exorcisms are liturgical prayers for deliverance from demonic influence during the preparation for baptism or its celebration.

Deliverance prayer consists in interceding to free a person from demonic influence with the power of the name of Jesus, without using a specific ritual. It can include a journey leading the person to an encounter with Jesus, helping them uncover inner wounds, discover attachments, and receive healing and deliverance. All baptized people can offer prayers to be delivered from the Evil One, for themselves or for others, not using formulas that address evil spirits, but formulas that beseech God through the intercession of Our Lady or the saints.<sup>43</sup>

The “healing of the family tree” due to the “inheritance of ancestral sins” is a practice based on the theory that the evils that people suffer today (psychological, moral, social, spiritual, and bodily evils) have their cause in their ancestors, as if they inherited a guilt. This is something different from the prayer for deceased relatives, which the Church has always recommended. It does not refer either to genetically inherited negative tendencies, or those acquired due to the bad actions or bad examples of the ancestors.

The proposed solution consists of healing the family tree with specific prayers that aim to cut off the said inheritance, achieving one’s own liberation and forgiveness of one’s ancestors. Understood in this way, the practice seems to contradict the Church’s doctrine on baptism and to diminish personal responsibility for personal sins.<sup>44</sup> Several dioceses and doctrinal commissions have explicitly prohibited such practices.

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42 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1673.

43 Some experts state that those who are not exorcists should not give direct commands to evil spirits or address them by name out loud, but that prayers of a deprecatory type should be prayed. Other authors propose that the faithful should give direct commands with the authority of baptism itself. Special humility, prudence, and care are required because there is no authoritative pronouncement of the Magisterium on this aspect.

44 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 978: “When we made our first profession of faith while receiving the holy Baptism that cleansed us, the forgiveness we received then was so full and complete that there remained in us absolutely nothing left to efface, neither original sin nor offenses committed by our own will, nor was there left any penalty to suffer in order to expiate them.”





## 4 Orientations

### 4.1 Charisms and the Hierarchy

In addition to admiration of the great richness of the gifts granted by the Spirit, attention must be paid to the fact that their “diversity and variety cannot be to the detriment of unity.”<sup>45</sup> It is evident that “the Holy Spirit blows where he wills, and one should not try to impose regulations and conditions on him.”<sup>46</sup> But this does not exempt the authorities from discernment, since “the Christian community has the right to have its pastors point out to it the authenticity of the charisms and the credit that those who claim to possess them deserve.”<sup>47</sup>

It is incumbent upon all, those who receive charisms and those who exercise the service of authority, to seek and propose ways of discernment and accompaniment that integrate the authentic gifts of the Holy Spirit into the unity of our spiritual family and apostolic body. “The history of the Church testifies that when charisms are real, sooner or later they are recognized and can exercise their constructive and unitive function.”<sup>48</sup>

The Council assigns the judgment of the authenticity and the reasonable exercise of charisms to those who exercise authority in the Church.<sup>49</sup> For us, these authorities are the local bishops and the proper superiors or directors, as well as those responsible for the Regnum Christi Federation.<sup>50</sup> The superiors and directors of the consecrated branches are responsible for the formation and apostolate of their members. The authorities of the Federation, for their part, oversee the formative and apostolic activities of the lay members and the Federation as a whole.

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45 John Paul II, General Audience, March 9, 1994, 4.

46 Ibid., 6.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 7.

49 Cf. Lumen Gentium 12.

50 1. Bishops: authenticity and right use of charisms.

2. Superiors of religious or other consecrated persons: how time should be used personally and apostolically in the light of a vow of obedience, which impacts how they exercise/integrate/complement personal charisms with their RC charism.

3. Director of an apostolate/section: how time should be used in the apostolate, priorities, etc. how they exercise personal charisms in their apostolates and integrate/complement them with their RC charism.

4. RC Federation: suggestions for how certain charisms can complement the fundamental RC charism and how.





## 4.2 Criteria of Discernment

According to St. John of the Cross, the more visible and sensitive a phenomenon is, the more it lends itself to error. For this reason, he recommends living the spiritual life in an atmosphere of silence and modesty rather than in one of sensible manifestations. In the face of possible visions and revelations, he proposes caution and humility as the first general criteria of discernment.<sup>51</sup>

Concerning extraordinary gifts in the spiritual life, applying Ignatian rules of discernment is useful. In the rules for the second week of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius warns that joy and consolation, ordinarily signs of God's action, can also come from the enemy who presents himself "under the guise of good." It is, therefore, necessary to examine these movements to be sure that they do not lead the soul to distance itself from God or toward something different from what it had previously resolved to do when guided by the good spirit.<sup>52</sup> It is necessary to distinguish between the inspirations that come from God and the thoughts of the individual who, favored with the fervor of a previously received grace, erroneously attributes to God what comes from himself or from the evil one.<sup>53</sup>

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51 Saint John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, 22,5: "He who now wishes to ask God, or to desire some vision or revelation, would not only be foolish, but would do wrong to God, not setting his eyes wholly on Christ, without desiring something else or something new (...) And let him be very careful that the soul never gives its opinion, nor does anything, nor admits it, of what those words tell it without much agreement and advice from others. For in this matter there are subtle and strange deceptions; so much so, that I believe that the soul that is not an enemy of having such things, cannot help but be deceived in many of them (either a little or a great deal)." See also *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, II, 18; II, 19, 14; II, 21, 4; and II, 23, 4.

52 As Ignatius himself narrates in his *Autobiography*, he experienced for a time a deep consolation in the vision of a serpent that appeared to him, but then he realized that such consolation left him sad and empty. It was actually an idol, a false substitute for the happiness that only God can give, and a deception of the enemy who dressed himself as an angel of light and tempted him under the guise of good. Likewise, Ignatius fell into the pitfall of temptation *sub specie bonis* when, having to devote himself to study, he left it because he was "tempted" to pray. "One thing prevented him very much from doing his recitation, as is necessary in the principles of grammar. New spiritual thoughts and tastes came to him so abundantly that he could not study. No matter how much he tried, he could not dispel these thoughts, and so little by little he came to know that this was a temptation" (*Autobiography*, 55).

53 Cf. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 336.





Authentic gifts of the Holy Spirit do not contradict the charism of the group to which the person who receives them belongs. On the one hand, it should be remembered that, just as water adapts to the shape of the bottle that contains it, the charisms of the Holy Spirit are received according to one's own identity and nature. On the other hand, it is necessary to keep in mind that Pope St. John Paul II invites us to a "creative fidelity" to our charism, "adapting its forms, when necessary, to new situations and different needs."<sup>54</sup> Pope Francis insists on the need for charisms to be alive and living. "A charism should not be kept like a bottle of distilled water, but should be made to bear fruit with courage, confronting it with the present reality, with culture, with history, as the great missionaries of our institutes teach us."<sup>55</sup>

At the same time, "it is a mistake to claim that the foundational gift of an institute is all-encompassing. It is not reasonable to foster a gift that virtually [in practice] separates a member from communion with the community. Nor is it prudent to tolerate strongly divergent lines of development that lack a strong connection of unity with the institute itself. Diversity without divisions and unity without uniformity are treasures and challenges that favor the growth of the community in prayer, joy, and service, as a witness to the reality of Christ."<sup>56</sup>

Pope St. John Paul II addressed the topic of discernment of charisms on several occasions. At the general audience on June 24, 1992, he gave some criteria for discernment which are still valid today. According to the Pontiff, "we can point out some criteria for discernment generally followed both by ecclesiastical authorities and by teachers and spiritual directors:

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54 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (1996), 37.

55 Francis, Address to the CISM, November 7, 2014.

56 CRIS, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life* (1983), 22.





**a.** Conformity with the faith of the Church of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:3); a gift of the Spirit cannot contradict the faith that the same Spirit inspires in the whole Church. ‘This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God; and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus, does not belong to God’ (1 Jn 4, 2-3).

**b.** The presence of the ‘fruits of the Spirit: charity, joy, peace’ (Gal 5: 22). Every gift of the Spirit favors the progress of love, both in the person himself and in the community, and therefore produces joy and peace. If a charism causes disturbance and confusion, this means either that it is not authentic or that it is not used in the right way. As Saint Paul says: ‘God is not a God of disorder, but of peace’ (1 Cor 14:33). Without charity, even the most extraordinary charisms have no use whatsoever (cf. 1 Cor 13, 1-3; cf. Mt 7: 22-23).

**c.** Harmony with the authority of the Church and acceptance of her provisions. After setting very strict rules for the use of charisms in the Church of Corinth, St. Paul says: ‘Whoever thinks he is a prophet or endowed with gifts of the Spirit must recognize that what I write is the Lord’s command’ (1 Cor 14:37). The authentic charismatic person is recognized by his sincere docility towards the pastors of the Church. A charism cannot arouse rebellion or cause the breakdown of unity.

**d.** The use of charisms in the ecclesial community is subject to a simple rule: ‘Everything should be done for edification’ (1 Cor 14:26), that is, charisms are accepted to the extent that they make a constructive contribution to the life of the community, a life of union with God, and of fraternal communion. St. Paul insists on this rule (1 Cor 14: 4-5, 12: 18-19, 26-32).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> John Paul II, General Audience, June 24th, 1992.

The document *Iuvenescit Ecclesiae* offers the following criteria for the discernment of charismatic gifts, which can also serve as a sign of the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit in a spiritual or apostolic initiative: the primacy of the vocation of every Christian to holiness; commitment to the mission of spreading the Gospel; confession of the Catholic faith; witness to active communion with the whole Church; respect for and recognition of the mutual charismatic complementarity of the other parts of the Church; acceptance of moments of trial in the discernment of charisms; the presence of spiritual fruits such as charity, joy, humility, and peace (cf. Galatians 5:22); the social dimension of evangelization.<sup>58</sup>

One criterion for discerning when a gift comes from the Holy Spirit is to analyze whether it leads to and nourishes ecclesial communion or whether, on the contrary, it isolates the person, separates him from his community, or worse, leads to disputes and bitterness. “The charisms, ministries, commissions, and services of the lay faithful exist in communion and for communion. They are riches that complement each other for the benefit of all, under the prudent guidance of the Pastors.”<sup>59</sup>

Communion should be sought at different levels, but especially in the Regnum Christi Locality, where members of different vocations interact apostolically. For this reason, attention should be given to the different sensibilities and interests of all. An authentic exercise of the charisms must lead to unity, because “the effective presence of the Spirit in the hearts of believers (cf. Rom 5:5) is the root of this unity, even for charismatic manifestations. The charisms given to the person actually belong to the Church herself and are destined for a more intense ecclesial life.”<sup>60</sup>

Unity should not be confused with uniformity, nor should the sound traditions that safeguard the charism be identified with mere customs, which

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58 John Paul II, General Audience, June 24th, 1992.

59 John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (1988), 20.

60 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, 13.



can and should change according to the circumstances of time and place, so that the charism does not become fossilized. The testimony and words of Pope Francis can shed light on this. He recalls that he himself had difficulty with the charismatic renewal in the Church but that later he understood it and deeply appreciated it.<sup>61</sup> And more recently, he has insisted that religious communities be open to the motions of the Spirit in the face of the challenges presented to us today.<sup>62</sup>

It can happen that an authentic gift of the Spirit, for example, the gift of prophecy granted to a saint, is not well received by the community or by the competent superiors. It has often happened in the history of the Church that God inspires in the saints prophetic words for reform and conversion. There have also been cases of those who have deceived themselves by canonizing their point of view as if it were a prophecy. According to John Paul II, one criterion for discerning whether such a gift comes from the Holy Spirit is that “it cannot be carried out with bitterness; it cannot be translated into offenses, in acts or judgments that are detrimental to the honor of persons or groups. It must be full of respect and fraternal and filial affection, avoiding recourse to inopportune forms of publicity; and it must adhere to the indications given by the



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61 Francis, Press Conference, July 28, 2013: “You asked about the Charismatic Renewal movement. I’ll tell you one thing. Back at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, I had no time for them. Once, speaking about them, I said: “These people confuse a liturgical celebration with samba lessons!” I actually said that. Now I regret it. I learned. It is also true that the movement, with good leaders, has made great progress. Now I think that this movement does much good for the Church, overall. In Buenos Aires, I met frequently with them and once a year I celebrated a Mass with all of them in the Cathedral. I have always supported them, after I was converted, after I saw the good they were doing. Because at this time in the Church – and here I’ll make my answer a little more general – I believe that the movements are necessary. The movements are a grace of the Spirit. “But how can you control a movement which is so free?” The Church is free, too! The Holy Spirit does what he wants. He is the one who creates harmony, but I do believe that the movements are a grace, those movements which have the spirit of the Church. Consequently, I don’t think that the Charismatic Renewal movement merely prevents some people from passing over to pentecostal denominations. No! It is also a service to the Church herself! It renews us. Everyone seeks his own movement, according to his own charism, where the Holy Spirit draws him or her.”

62 Francis, Homily on the 26th World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2022: “Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord never fails to give us signs that invite us to cultivate a renewed vision of consecrated life. We cannot pretend not to see them and then go on as usual, doing the same old things, drifting back through inertia to the forms of the past, paralyzed by fear of change. I have said it many times, today the temptation is to go backwards, out of a desire for security, out of fear, to preserve the faith, to preserve the charism of the founder... it is a temptation. The temptation to go backward and preserve the “traditions” rigidly. Let us place ourselves before the Lord in adoration, and ask him for eyes that know how to see the good and discern the ways of God. The Lord will give it to us if we ask him for it. With joy, strength, without fear.”





Lord for fraternal correction (cf. Mt 18:15-16).<sup>63</sup> This was precisely the path that led the prophets to holiness. This is why St. Paul teaches not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil by doing good.

### 4.3 Some Applications

It is not possible to offer concrete indications or to give detailed rules on the subject without falling into casuistry. Clear and universal rules could give us security and avoid the labor of discernment, but it would be a poverty because it would abandon discernment instead of opening people to the ongoing search for God's will.

Those who exercise the service of authority, in order to discern the authenticity of a charism and to establish the appropriate channels to develop it, need the virtue of prudence, which guides the judgment of their conscience and applies moral principles to particular cases, overcoming doubts about the good we should do and the evil we should avoid.<sup>64</sup> As general and stable principles are applied to particular and contingent cases, the degree of clarity and certainty about what to do diminishes. Therefore, in addition to the virtue of prudence, directors must practice the theological virtues, particularly faith. They also need to be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gift of wisdom and the gift of counsel, to discover the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and to distinguish them from the deceptions of the enemy.

*The service of authority and obedience:* It is necessary to proceed according to diocesan guidelines and to have the approval of the respective body (religious/consecrated superior, local Regnum Christi director, or section director if it has to do with the locality or section). Territorial

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63 John Paul II, General Audience, June 24, 1992.

64 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1806.





colleges may determine a process for the approval of such activities at the local level that also includes a subsequent evaluation of the activities. Synodality and community discernment should be encouraged in the governance of these activities, avoiding the danger that they become individual initiatives in which there is no accountability to a higher level. Superiors and directors, remembering that they have a particular responsibility to guard the charismatic patrimony and to promote the development of the common mission,<sup>65</sup> should be very attentive so as not to want to “control” the grace of God.<sup>66</sup>

*Accompaniment:* local superiors and directors must have or develop the ability to adequately accompany those who engage in these types of charismatic activities. A superior or director who is closed from the outset or does not listen or allow himself to be questioned does not seem suitable for accompanying these situations. Pope St. John Paul II advises a reciprocal and effective listening between pastors and the faithful, keeping them united a priori in all that is essential and, on the other hand, encouraging them to normally come together, even in matters of opinion, on pondered and shared decisions.<sup>67</sup> It is recommended to have someone knowledgeable in this area who can advise them, especially if they are inexperienced. In addition, regarding healing, it may be helpful to consult qualified Catholic physicians or psychologists.

*Formation:* those who direct these types of charismatic activities should have a solid theological formation and be accompanied by people who are experts in this area. The territorial colleges and governments of the branches can determine the type of basic formation that will be need<sup>68</sup> In

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65 Cf. SRCF, 4.

66 Francis, Address, June 1, 2014: “Another danger is that of becoming arbiters of God’s grace. Many times, leaders (I prefer the name “servants”) of a group or community become, perhaps without intending to, “managers” of grace, deciding who can receive the prayer of outpouring or baptism in the Spirit and who cannot. If any of you are doing this, I ask you to stop; no more! You are dispensers of God’s grace, not its arbiters! Don’t act like a tollhouse for the Holy Spirit!”

67 John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001), 45.

68 Cf. SRCF 30, 4.





addition to learning the specifics of the life in the Spirit, frequent spiritual direction with a proven expert in the spiritual life, and the experience of month-long Spiritual Exercises with a recognized director are recommended to learn the discernment of spirits. It is also necessary that intercessors and those who accompany others during these activities be well-trained and prepared.






*Balance:* if they are offered, these activities should complement and not overshadow or suffocate other activities and spiritual means proper to the spiritual Tradition of the Church and to the lived and rich experience of Regnum Christi (encounters with Christ, adoration, apostolate...). For the members of the consecrated branches, it is vital to reconcile the dedication to this ministry with their current apostolic assignments and the commitments of consecrated life. It is also essential to avoid absolutizing everything around the healing of oneself or others since the spiritual life is not only about healing but also about growing in the fullness of grace in Christ.



*Interior attitudes:* The attitudes that those who direct these activities must practice are profound humility, integrity of life, prudence, obedience, and a deep interior life. It is necessary to know oneself to be part of a wider body (the Church, Regnum Christi) and therefore to seek communion, avoiding personal protagonism. It is also necessary to know how to recognize one's own competence and incompetence without entering into potentially dangerous areas for the person being ministered to or oneself.

*Liturgical norms:* Those who organize these activities should pay attention to the rubrics of the sacraments and sacramentals and avoid introducing modifications where they are not permitted. They must remember that the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is primarily for the purpose of Eucharistic adoration, and it is not appropriate to combine it with other spiritual activities with a different purpose. As for the type of music in sacred places, appropriate liturgical music should be distinguished from other Christian music suitable for festivals and concerts.





*Safe environments:* In all activities, it is necessary to maintain an atmosphere of profound respect for the person's freedom, to be careful not to violate personal freedom by asking them to open their intimacy or conscience, and not to indicate or impose an invasive approach. If you are going to lay your hands on or have physical contact with the person, it is necessary to ask permission beforehand and follow the codes of conduct.



## 4 Conclusion

These considerations are not the final word on the charisms of the Holy Spirit. They are only intended to fulfill the assignment received to study the subject and to offer some doctrinal indications and pastoral orientations. We trust that they will be helpful to those who have asked for greater clarity and those entrusted with the service of authority.

The Holy Spirit continues to act in the “today” of the Church, as he did on the day of Pentecost. Pope Francis has affirmed that “the charismatic vocation is a Pentecostal grace for the whole Church.”<sup>69</sup> In this sense, the same Holy Spirit who stirs up charisms intervenes throughout history to revitalize them. The external expressions can be varied and change with time. But the secret of every true renewal always passes through a greater openness and docility to the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit pours out his gifts and revitalizes a charism, the fruits produced are always good.



We ask the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Apostles, to intercede for all the members of Regnum Christi, as she did in the Upper Room on the vigil of Pentecost, so that these considerations may help us not to quench the Spirit, to examine everything and to keep what is good (cf. 1 Thes 5:19-21).



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<sup>69</sup> Francis, Address, June 3, 2015.







## 4 Recommended Reading

International Association of Exorcists

1. *Linee guida per il ministero dell'esorcismo alla luce del rituale vigente*, Edizioni Messaggero di Padova, 2020.

Pope BENEDICT XVI

1. Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the young people of the world on the occasion of the XXIII World Youth Day, 2008, July 20, 2007.
2. Address to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, October 31, 2008.

R CANTALAMESSA

1. *Come, Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator*, Liturgical Press 2003.
2. Preaching for Lent, February 26, 2021.



Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

1. *Christian Faith and Demonology*, 1975.
2. Instructions on Prayers for Healing, September 14, 2000.
3. Letter *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* Regarding the Relationship Between Hierarchical and Charismatic Gifts in the Life and the Mission of the Church, September 14, 2016.



G CREPALDI

1. *Lettera pastorale Esorcismo e preghiere di liberazione*, 2019.


Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

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