

A large, stylized graphic on the left side of the page, resembling a flame or fire. It features a color gradient from dark red at the bottom to bright yellow at the top, with white and light yellow shapes cut out to suggest fire's movement.

Uniquely HIS

IN OUR PERSONAL VOCATIONS AND CHARISMS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TOOL

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Uniquely HIS

AN OVERVIEW OF CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHING ON PERSONAL VOCATION AND CHARISMS

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “personal vocation” was introduced at the Second Vatican Council. The doctrine of the “charisms” is still developing too.

Scripturally-based, both evolve from the truth of our being many members in the one Body of Christ – each with spiritual gifts or charisms (words used interchangeably) to fulfill a particular function in the Body. The teaching also emphasizes an order in our interdependent functioning, comparable to the human body (1 Corinthians 12:14-26).

Because many Catholics are unfamiliar with the church teaching on this subject, I am presenting an overview of what I researched and found in *Christifideles Laici* (The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People) and *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I Will Give You Shepherds) in particular.

The work of leading Protestant and Catholic authors on spiritual gifts, combined with references to personal vocation and charisms in various Church documents, have been sifted into this overview. I have also included my personal experience of personal vocation and the gift discernment process.

I begin with slightly-revised, authored articles as published in a column in *The Catholic Sun* (Diocese of Syracuse, NY) in 1997. Descriptions of the charisms, Scripture references and roles suited to the gifts are included, as well as a Gift Inventory to use as a tool in discerning one’s charisms.

Presenting this church teaching and promoting its potential is, no doubt, my personal vocation calling. As a young woman I knew I wanted to give my life to the Church but I did not experience a call to Religious Life or to be a missionary. But the Second Vatican Council was describing my experience when it introduced the concept of personal vocation. I believe I am a life-long example of the teaching and yet, only more recently taking my “proper place” too.

Thanking all who helped to make *Uniquely His* possible, I pray its contents will serve as an introduction to this exciting teaching. May it stir up the grace of God in each of us and within the Body, igniting the Holy Spirit in its diverse and yet one, united fire of love. Most importantly, may it deepen our desire to discover, develop and fulfill the unique vocation and mission entrusted to every baptized Christian, to and for the glory of God.

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UNIQUELY CALLED AND GIFTED

“...each member has ‘his own special gift,’ as Saint Paul teaches. Although this ‘gift’ is a personal vocation and form of participation in the Church’s saving work, it also serves others, builds the Church and the fraternal communities in the various spheres of human life on earth.” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis* (REDEEMER OF MAN)

An interview with Dr. Germain Grisez, author and professor at St. Mary’s College in Emmitsburg, MD, was published in *Our Sunday Visitor* (Huntington, IN) in 1990. It was entitled, “When did you last hear about personal vocation?” The same question could be asked today.

Grisez believed that the personal vocation concept introduced by the Second Vatican Council didn’t get implemented well, in part because other issues and debates were occurring which served as a distraction. Also, “...in the heat of the turmoil after the Council, it didn’t seem like a terribly relevant idea to the big arguments that we’ve been having. It got ignored.”

Yet Grisez believed that “raising consciousness of personal vocation would promise extremely important fruit for the lives of each Christian and for the life of the Church as a whole.” And as Pope John Paul II states, “This personal vocation and mission defines the dignity and responsibility of each member of the lay faithful.” (*Christifideles Laici*).

What we have in the church teaching on this subject is a God-designed, Scripturally-based, plan of how we are interdependent and complementary members in the one Body of Christ. This is manifested in the form of diverse vocations, charisms, ministries and services which work together for the good of the whole (body).

We also see that the gifts or charisms are linked to the personal vocation – these too, being woven together in each unique individual, just as the many members of the one Body of Christ are interconnected as a whole.

The paradigm shift in process today, indeed goes back to the Council’s emphasis that baptism is the fundamental sacrament and that each of the baptized is called uniquely by name, entrusted with a state-in-life vocation as well as personal vocation. This vocation includes special gifts so one’s unique mission, as well as our commonly-shared mission, might be fulfilled.

In *Christifideles Laici* we find: “The call is addressed to everyone: lay people as well are personally called by the Lord from whom they receive a mission on behalf of the Church and the world...”

Also, “...each member of the lay faithful should always be fully aware of being a ‘member of the church,’ yet entrusted with a unique task which cannot be done by another and which is to be fulfilled for the good of all.”

SPECIAL GRACES, UNIQUE MISSION

“It is obvious that in addition to a considerable development in the doctrine of the charisms, there has also been a new flowering of active lay people in the Church; it is not by chance that the two facts have occurred at the same time. It is all the work of the Holy Spirit...” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, GENERAL AUDIENCE, SEPTEMBER 21, 1994

Summarizing the Church teaching on this subject, we are told that each baptized person in Christ’s body is called, has a personal vocation to be discerned, a mission to fulfill, a task to perform which is given to no one else. This vocation is also more clearly identified when knowing our charisms because these special graces are linked to, and serve, the vocation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines charisms as “special graces” or “promptings of grace.” Individuals become “channels” of these spiritual gifts for God’s purposes – exercising abilities in a way or form greater than a human talent or natural gift. They are specifically intended to serve the Reign of God, through us as members of the Body, in the Holy Spirit.

The common Greek word for spiritual gift is *charisma*. The word *charis* means grace, and *charismata* meaning gifts of grace. There are over 20 references to these gifts of grace in the New Testament, especially in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

Because there is no Church-sanctioned list of the charisms the Church recognizes (I was told this in 1997 but it may be different now) or descriptions of the various charisms found in church documents, we are on new ground without all the answers. We do know there is “a great wealth of graces both for prayer and contemplation, and for action,” that charisms empower a person “...to carry out the tasks to which he is called...,” and that some are extraordinary and others “humble, everyday charisms.” (Pope John Paul II, General Audience, March 9, 1994)

The charisms also help to identify the personal vocation, the unique task or mission each baptized Christian receives. One of the best descriptions of personal vocation is found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “...where each individual can discover the truth of his own being and the identity of the personal and unrepeatable life project which the Father entrusts to him.”

To use Mother Teresa as an example, we can say she, as a Missionary of Charity, had a consecrated religious vocation. Within that religious vocation her personal vocation was to “serve the poorest of the poor” (as she herself identified it). And her personal vocation was fulfilled with the help of her mercy and missionary charisms.

So each one of us is truly on a mission from God – our shared mission with its unique, personal mission – with an “unrepeatable grace” within the one Body of Christ. God doesn’t give us a phone call to tell us what it is, but it is a call and it can be discerned over time. It is planted like a seed in the deepest part of our being, unfolding gradually and coupled with charisms.

CHARISM DIFFERENCES

“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...” The Catechism of the Catholic Church

A lady was sharing with me how her detail-oriented co-worker drove her “up the wall” until it dawned on her that this might be her co-worker’s gift. She found herself not only welcoming the trait but suddenly realizing how her co-worker actually complemented her own weakness in that area.

Discerning whether a natural talent or skill is a human gift, or if it possesses the special grace that makes it a charism, can often be difficult.

Talents and charisms are alike in that both are abilities from God. It appears too, that charisms are given in line with the human gifts a person already has. It’s like God raises the human gift to be a “channel” of grace for His purposes. For example, a man who is a talented salesman may find he has the charism of evangelism.

Charisms, in being special graces to build up the Body, also produce more-than-normal results. Both the person who is the instrument of God’s grace, as well as the person or group who benefits from it, seem to realize there is a power or force operating beyond the usual.

For instance, people get healed when a person who has the charism of healing prays for them. Or, if the charism is teaching, people learn. The extraordinary quality of grace will accomplish what it is meant to do.

Roles also differ from charisms. Roles are functions we all are called on to perform. We fulfill roles as Christians. We are all called to pray, for example. But those with the charism of intercession give more time to prayer and find it easy to do so because it is so personally fulfilling.

Fruits of the Spirit and charisms also differ. The fruits are internal virtues which serve us and are meant to be part of every Christian’s life. They are intended to be a common possession of all the baptized filled with the Holy Spirit.

But spiritual gifts are outward focused as we become the “hands, heart, and feet” of the Body of Christ for the benefit of others. Also, each of us has only some of the charisms; they are not a common possession shared by all. The percentage of any one gift being given to the overall Christian population, according to the research, is quite low (around five percent). And when you consider the various combinations of charisms or “gift mixes,” percentages get lower as uniqueness increases.

EXAMPLES OF CHARISMS

“Such a cooperation (between bishops, priests, deacons, religious, laity) presupposes a knowledge and appreciation of the different gifts and charisms, of the diverse vocations and responsibilities which the Spirit offers and entrusts to the members of Christ’s body.” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I WILL GIVE YOU SHEPHERDS)

Knowledge of the charisms includes acknowledging their ongoing distribution according to the needs of the times (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*) and appreciating the ongoing development of their definitions.

In church documents we see several of the possible 26 gifts of grace noted in Scripture. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example, mentions the healing charism (1508), gifts of miracles and tongues (2003), wisdom, faith and discernment gifts (2690).

Most of the Protestant and Catholic authors who have written about the gifts seem to be in agreement about the qualities of the various spiritual gifts although they use different wording.

For instance, the gift of “administration” generally means designing and efficiently carrying out a plan of action to accomplish goals. The significant ability or special grace is the excellent coordination and organization of the multiple tasks involved.

The gifts of “knowledge” and “wisdom” can be difficult to discern in their slight difference – “knowledge” meaning to gather, compile and analyze large quantities of information, and “wisdom” meaning having the insight as to how knowledge can be applied in specific situations to best accomplish the goals.

The gift of “teaching” includes a special grace to use knowledge to foster others’ learning, understanding and well-being so it is effectively applied in their lives.

“Leadership” as a charism is not about getting people from point a to point b, as much as it is the sharing of a vision which touches others’ hearts and minds to the point of their committing themselves to work together to make the vision a reality.

Also, some gifts are for assisting individuals (helps), while others are directed toward group goals (service). Some are verbal (exhortation or encouragement) and others, the practical deeds (mercy). Other commonly-recognized charisms include: evangelization, giving, hospitality, intercession, missionary, pastor/shepherding, prophecy, public tongues and interpretation of tongues.

Spiritual gift inventories serve as a tool to help us identify our possible charisms. The results give us a place to start in the discernment process, reflecting how the Holy Spirit seems to be using us in a regular way at a particular time.

IDENTIFYING CHARISMS

“Indeed, God with his call reaches the heart of each individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple, gives himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to embrace the gift entrusted to him as a completely unique person, and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him.” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I WILL GIVE YOU SHEPHERDS)

Each baptized person has a “proper place,” a unique function or task given to no one else. One’s purpose or place in the Body of Christ is determined by the “gifts differing,” according to the grace given to each (Romans 12:6).

Discovering our gifts is often key to unlocking our potential as well as God’s plan in our life. It affirms our best self, the authentic or “real” self, as it was created to be. God’s will or plan for each one of us is written into our very being. And identifying our spiritual gifts will assist us in the discernment of our personal vocation.

Some of the clues or questions we can ask ourselves to begin the gift identification process include: What energizes me, excites me, is my deepest joy, passion, hope or desire? What do I love to do and do well? What is my dream, who are my heros/heroines, what do I read and do in my free time?

Or to reverse this: What makes me cry, wakes me up at night? What makes me angry or frustrated because of deep care or personal cause? What are my wounds? (Lloyd Edwards, a Protestant author of spiritual gift books, believes there is a connection between our suffering and spiritual gifts).

The answer becomes signposts because our deepest desires lead us to the heart of our identity, the essence of our person, in addition to the possible gifts and the personal vocation. When exercising our charisms, we are energized and renewed. When we are living our vocation, we experience “being home” and “where we belong.”

There is also confirmation of one’s charisms by others. Because of the special grace that is operative or manifested, people often mention that it appears to be a gift. The power of the Holy Spirit becomes evident both to the person serving as the instrument of grace, as well as those who benefit from the gift.

Discovering our God-ordained part in the Body of Christ – the task or project uniquely ours by God’s design - is to also find that which most personally relates us to our Creator. We draw closer to the mystery and power of God, the place where we are most connected to the Spirit of God.

BENEFITS OF CHARISMS

“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...” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I WILL GIVE YOU SHEPHERDS)

In relation to the church, some of the purposes and benefits of charisms as described in church documents including *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* are: to make her mission effective; for the common good; on behalf of communion; in response to the varied needs of the church in history; and for the apostolic vitality and the holiness of the entire Body of Christ.

In relation to the world, purposes include: for the well-being of humanity and the needs of the world; for the good of all; to help build up the entire community, or the communities in the various spheres of human life on earth.

Whether building up the Body of Christ or society and our world, for the individual who has been gifted with these special graces, it is a form of participation in the church’s saving work. It also accomplishes the involvement of the entire People of God in the life and mission of the church.

If we are to bear the fruit and benefits of charisms, we must first identify them in ourself and know the gifts of others too. Once we have done that, more benefits await us, especially concerning our relationships. Instead of differences dividing us, we will not only be able to welcome others in their differences but, in recognizing the interdependency, we will realize our need for these differences.

In knowing others’ gifts, we can benefit by surrounding ourselves with those who have the gifts we do not have. A study was done, for instance, testing hundreds of clergy and thousands of the laity. It was found that only about two percent of the clergy have the gift of administration, while the range in the laity was between 35-40 percent.

How often too, we see groups or boards that are lopsided because everyone has the “let’s go” group of gifts without the benefit of the “let’s be careful” or “let’s stay together” grouped gifts to balance it out. We need those who weigh the consequences of decisions as much as those who are the decision-makers.

Gift-based functioning reaps healthier fruit too. Speaking as someone with a prophetic gift, someday we will realize that seeing the glass “half empty” can often reflect a gift rather than a bad attitude or negative disposition. The ability to see what’s missing or wrong, what needs to be done or changed, also serves the good of the whole (body).

CHARISMS AND PERSONAL VOCATION

“The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one’s vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one’s mission.” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Christifideles Laici* (THE LAY MEMBERS OF CHRIST’S FAITHFUL PEOPLE)

Every baptized person is called to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Every disciple of Christ is also equipped with certain charisms in order to fulfill their unique task and vocational call.

For those in the married or single lay state, we’re told that “this personal vocation and mission defines the dignity and the responsibility of each member of the lay faithful” (*Christifideles Laici*). For priests, it’s about “...a vocation ‘within’ the priesthood...” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*).

How then, do the charisms support or get woven into the personal vocation?

Charisms serve the vocation because they become the tools or the special graces that make it possible to carry out the unique mission. For example, Billy Graham’s gift mix of teacher and evangelizer (and likely a missionary gift too) serves his unique life project and makes the fulfillment of his mission possible.

In fact, it is because of the connection between the charisms and one’s vocation that we can work in reverse to better identify the vocation by first discovering the charisms.

For instance, Mother Teresa, as a Missionary of Charity religious, would not have likely had a personal vocation to “serve the poorest of the poor” throughout the world if she was not also given the mercy and missionary charisms to fulfill that calling.

Pope John Paul II seemed to be pointing out this interconnectedness of charisms and vocation to seminarians during his 1995 visit to the United States: “You must enter into an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit and with all your gifts in order that the Lord’s intention for you may become clear.”

Called by name, we are like a package uniquely carved and gifted by God, which needs to be unwrapped and discovered in order to fulfill a mission. Our differences – the form and focus our service takes, the expression of our evangelization, and even how our sensitivities and wounds color and shape how love and truth will be manifested in us – all serve God’s purpose and plan.

Monsignor Richard Antall, author and former missionary to El Salvador puts it well: “We trust that the Divine Artist knows how to express the beauty of His grace in the infinity of variety that is human life and personality” (*The Way of Compassion*).

PERSONAL VOCATION

“In every man there is a loneliness, an inner chamber of the peculiar life into which God only can enter. There is a chamber also – a chamber in God Himself, into which none can enter but the one, the individual, the peculiar Man – out of which chamber that man has to bring revelation and strength for His brothers. This is that for which he was made – to reveal the secret things of the Father.” -GEORGE McDONALD

McDonald – a Scottish preacher who Christian apologist C.S. Lewis called “his master” – believed every individual has a peculiar (unique) relationship with God, each “being made after His fashion like no one else.” In *Christifideles Laici* we find a similar description: “...through the Incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion to every person...”

Cardinal John Henry Newman also spoke of each one “being created to do something or to be something for which no one else is created” and having “a place that no one else has.”

The above quotes reflect the meaning, purpose and importance of personal vocation. While each of us “...is seen in relation to the whole body, each offers a totally unique contribution on behalf of the whole body” (*Christifideles Laici*). We all share a common mission in the one Body of Christ. But we are all also given a unique vocation and mission, which becomes the diversity in the unity.

As the Holy Father’s August (1997) Prayer Intention described it: “In the church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission,” with each having “their own assignment” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*). The differences between the members of Christ’s Body serve its unity and mission.

In a video, *Communications with God*, several authors of books on life-after-death experiences shared what impressed them. Grace Bubalka, author of *Beyond This Reality*, described what she saw, saying it is like a huge quilt that has no sides, top, bottom, front or back, and how each thread, every piece, is crucial to the whole.

When we grasp this fuller picture of God’s ordained design and the purpose of diversity in the one Body of Christ, we can each take ownership of our diverse function, responsibility, charisms and vocation according to the church-outlined blueprint. That the fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is to discover their vocation is no surprise in view of the full design.

And as author Lloyd Edwards states in *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts*: “The kind of work God usually calls you to do is the kind of work that you need most to do and that the world most needs to have done.” Or as Frederick Buechner describes it, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

PASTORS AS CONDUCTORS

“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...capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life, marked by...a fruitful cooperation with the lay faithful, always respecting and fostering the different roles, charisms and ministries present within the ecclesial community.” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, Pastores Dabo Vobis (I WILL GIVE YOU SHEPHERDS).

One of the main points made throughout the Church teaching on this subject of vocations and charisms, is that there is an order within the diversity of members in the one Body of Christ, their varied functions and responsibilities.

For instance, there is among the gifts “...in the first place, the grace given to the apostles to whose authority the Spirit himself subjects even those who are endowed with charisms.” We are also reminded that “...what distinguishes persons is not an increase in dignity, but a special and complementary capacity for service...” (*Christifideles Laici*).

To summarize the priests’ and pastors’ role in relation to the laity, it is one of helping people to identify and embrace their gifts, assisting them in the discovery of their vocation as linked with those gifts, and then orchestrating the “...diversity and complementarity of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities” (*Christifideles Laici*).

The “new style of pastoral life” asked of priests is described in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “In addition to the attention which must be given to a variety of persons and their vocations, (it) also 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.”

So, “...the priests’ part as instructors of the people in the faith (is) to see to it that each member of the faithful shall be led in the Holy Spirit to the full development of his own vocation.” He also “...builds up the unity of the Church community in the harmony of diverse vocations, charisms and services.

One of the first things we, as church, need to do for the above to occur is to recognize and communicate more clearly and accurately that every person is called and has a vocation. The meaning or use of the word “vocation” has changed since the Second Vatican Council.

“The church fulfills her mission when she guides every member of the lay faithful to discover and live his or her vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity.” In fact, “the more the laity’s own sense of vocation is deepened, the more what is proper to the priest stands out” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*).

LIVING THE TEACHING

“The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often repressed and buried, the more these realities will be at the service of the kingdom of God...” -POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Christifideles Laici* (THE LAY MEMBERS OF CHRIST’S FAITHFUL PEOPLE)

The involvement of the laity in the church – the “new flowering,” the “new springtime,” the “new evangelization” (Pope John Paul II) – will arrive as more baptized disciples seek and discern their “proper place” in the Body of Christ according to their special graces and unrepeatable personal vocation.

We, as members of the Christ’s Body, can turn this vision into reality by following the blueprint given to us by the Holy Spirit in the various church documents. I personally find *Pastores Dabo Vobis* presenting the fullest picture of God’s plan, particularly for our parishes. We’ve learned that “calling forth” the complementary charisms, including collaboration with the laity and coordination of the diverse vocations, is the responsibility of the pastors and priests. We also know the first step for everyone: “... to have a knowledge and discernment of his or her own charisms and those of others...” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*).

We’ve also learned that it is the duty as well as the right of the lay faithful – under the priests’ guidance and with their instruction and assistance – to exercise one’s charisms and to discover one’s personal vocation so as to fulfill one’s mission or “unrepeatable life project.” Our intended or destined place in the Body of Christ can be identified. It will be a “part” that is different from all others and a part which all of the members of Christ’s Body need and will benefit from.

As we now study and discuss “Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” we need to take care to place this in the larger context of personal vocation, with the vocational call given its proper emphasis. All are called to service, all are called to evangelize, but these according to the charisms received. While some will find their personal vocation includes service as “lay ecclesial ministers,” most of the laity will find their vocational call in the world – the foremost arena of the laity’s vocation.

The “new pastoral style” of orchestrating the diverse vocations, charisms, ministries and services – likely not part of our pastors’ seminary training – will reap the benefit and blend of today’s seminary candidates who will be “...specially able to discern the needs of God’s people and their various charisms...” as called for in *Ecclesia in America*. Until then, we will be in a transition period as the new gets woven into, and eventually replaces, the old pastoral style.

The potential of what this one Church teaching offers to the Church and the world today, is truly immense. In the world it also holds the key to changing education, our places of work, family life, not to add the means to create authentic unity in diversity (racially, culturally, etc.).

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES

ADMINISTRATION: the special grace to effectively and easily coordinate and organize a large project or several smaller projects all at the same time.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Corinthians 12:28	Acts 6:1-7; 27:11	Luke 14:28-30
Exodus 18:17-23	Genesis 39:2-5; 41:46-49, 53-57	Titus 1:5

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Organizing service projects, special events, Hope Appeal, etc., parish administrator, staff person, parish council, board member, project coordinator, youth leader, committee chairperson/member, adult education, school projects coordinator, conference organization, liturgy commission, religious education/DRE, sports coach, fundraising, Christian service coordinator, computer support, data entry, database manager

DISCERNMENT: the special grace to intuitively sense or recognize what is of God, or human origin or not of God, which turns out to be accurate.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 John 4:1-6	Matthew 7:15; 16:21-23	Mark 13:22-23
1 Corinthians 2:14; 12: 4-11	2 Peter 2:1-3	Ephesians 6:12
1 Kings 3: 5-12	Acts 5: 1-11; 16:16-18; 17:10-12	Hebrews 5:14

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Spiritual direction or counseling, various leadership, healing prayer and intercession, discernment of prophecy, prison and outreach ministries, bible study or evangelism leader

ENCOURAGEMENT: (Exhortation) - the special grace to effectively listen and to verbally strengthen, comfort or counsel others in a way that is personally helpful and promotes growth.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 4:36; 11:23-24; 14:22	Romans 12:8	Luke 22:32
1 Corinthians 2:1-16; 12:8-9	2 Corinthians 9:5	1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 5:14
Hebrews 10:25		

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Eucharistic minister to homebound and hospitalized, 12 step/support groups, spiritual direction or counseling, religious education, prayer team greeter, grief or prison ministry, Liturgy of the Word for children, parish council, mentor

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES (CONT'D)

EVANGELISM: the special grace to share the Good News, one's faith or spiritual experience in a way that draws others closer to Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

2 Timothy 4:1-5 Ephesians 3:8-9; 4:11-14 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6; 2:13
2 Corinthians 4:1-4 Luke 9:1-6 Romans 10:14-15; 15:15-16
1 Timothy 4:13; 5:17 Acts 5:27-32, 42; 8:5-6, 26-40; 10:36; 11:20-21; 13:32; 14:21; 21:8

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Religious education/DRE, RCIA/returning Catholics program, youth leader, religious writing, evangelization programs, apologetics, lector, missions, Bible study/group facilitator, outreach programs, hospital visitation, prison ministry

FAITH: the special grace to have such great trust in God and belief in His Will in a given situation that one acts in faith or obedience without concern of the outcome.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 6:8; 11:22-24; 27:21-25 Romans 4:18-21 Mark 2:5 1 Corinthians 12:9; 13:2
2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7 Luke 7:9; 17:5-6 Hebrews 11 John 11: 41-42

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Diocesan committees/planning, leadership roles, fundraising, intercession, Bible study/evangelization leader, starting new ministries, raising children, parish council

GIVING: the special grace to give oneself or one's resources in very generous or sacrificial ways to further the mission of Christ and the Church.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 6:30; 8:2-3; 18:12; 21:1-3 Mark 12:41-44 Acts 4:34-36 1 Corinthians 13:3
2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-11 Romans 12:8 Malachi 3:10

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Churchyard maintenance, social justice/outreach programs, missions, hospitality, special giving projects-holidays, building/repair funds, diocesan/parish giving programs, various fundraising, tithing/stEdwardship, Christian service programs, starting new ministries, parish finance committee

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES (CONT'D)

HEALING: the special grace to become God's instrument, through prayer, in physical, inner or relational healing.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Corinthians 12:9, 28 Luke 9:1-2 James 5:14-16 2 Kings 5:9-14
Tobit 11:1-19 Acts 3:1-10; 5:12-15; 9:32-35; 28:7-10

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Eucharistic minister to homebound and hospitalized, healing prayer team, medical professional/therapist, prayer groups, spiritual direction or counseling

HELPS: the special grace to support, assist and enable another person to be more effective in their service, ministry or vocation.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Romans 16:1-2 1 Corinthians 12:28 Mark 15:40-41
1 Timothy 5:10 1 Peter 4:9-10 Acts 9:36

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Usher or greeter, spiritual direction, parenting, office or bookstore help, Eucharistic minister or altar server, religious education – teaching or assistance, parish support staff or volunteer

HOSPITALITY: the special grace to open one's heart to welcome and receive others as Jesus, often by providing food or shelter.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 24:28-29 Romans 12:13; 16:23 2 John 10-11 Acts 16:14-15; 21:16-17
3 John 5-8, 10 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:10 1 Peter 4:9 2 Kings 4:8-11
Galatians 4:14 Hebrews 13:1-2 Genesis 18:1-8

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Healing team ministry, shelter work with homeless and poor, usher coordinator or greeter, organizing conference or social event, hospitality committee, refugee settlements, small Christian communities

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES (CONT'D)

INTERCESSION: the special grace to pray regularly and faithfully for extended periods for the needs of others in knowing from past experience that prayer can move mountains.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 12:5-17; 16:25-31	James 5:14-16	1 Timothy 2:1-2
Colossians 1:9-12; 4:12-13	John 17:1-26	2 Corinthians 1:8-11
2 Maccabees 12: 39-45	Luke 22:41-44	Genesis 18:22-32

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Group intercession, prayer chain, intercessory networks, evangelization efforts, Charismatic movement, personal intercessions for leaders, prayer group, parish council, RCIA and returning Catholics team, healing prayer teams, spiritual direction or counseling, parish renewal program, prayer partner, Eucharistic minister to homebound and hospitalized

KNOWLEDGE: the special grace to seek, collect, organize or analyze information and data to effectively advance the good and growth of God's people and the mission of Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Corinthians 2:14; 12:8; 13:2,8	2 Corinthians 11:6	Wisdom 7:16-21
Colossians 1:9; 9-12; 2:2-3	Romans 15:14	Ecclesiastics (Sirach) 38:3,6
Proverbs 2:1-6; 24:3-4		

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Religious education, RCIA, conferences, teaching or writing, apologetics, ecumenical relations, parish council, researcher or historian, Bible study/evangelization

LEADERSHIP: the special grace to share a vision or ideal with others in such a way that they desire your direction and become motivated to work together to make it happen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Romans 12:8	1 Timothy 3:4; 5:17	Mark 9:35	Acts 6:2-4; 7:10; 15:7-11,13-21
1 Kings 3:5-12	1 Thessalonians 5:12	Hebrews 13:17	Nehemiah 2:17-18

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Sports coach or manager, various planning committees, parish council, youth leader, board or committee chairperson, religious education, RCIA, founder of movement, organization or groups, small group leader, liturgy coordinator

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES (CONT'D)

MERCY: the special grace to experience deep empathy and compassion for those who suffer and respond with acts of loving service and assistance.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 20:29-34; 25:34-40 Luke 10:30-37 Mark 9:41 Romans 12:8
Acts 9:36; 11:28-30; 16:33-34 2 Timothy 1:16-18 John 8:3-11 James 2:15-16
1 Corinthians 13:3 1 Thessalonians 5:14

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Eucharistic minister to homebound or hospitalized, social justice projects, food banks, prison ministry, counselor, shelters for homeless and poor, volunteer chore services, outreach service and programs, holiday giving coordinator

MISSIONARY: The special grace to experience global concerns with a great zeal to live one's mission and further the salvation of all peoples worldwide.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 8:4-5, 26-39; 9:10-19; 13:2-3; 22:21 Romans 10:15 Matthew 28:16-20
1 Corinthians 9:19-23 Ephesians 3:8-9

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Priesthood, religious life, social justice, tithing/stEdwardship, work with foreign students and refugees, inner city efforts, peace corps, work with racial/cultural/linguistic minority groups, missionary/lay apostolates, founder of movements or organizations, outreach/evangelization efforts, small Christian communities

PASTORING (Shepherding): the special grace to commit oneself to the nurturing, formation and growth of a group of Christians for an extended period of time.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

John 10: 1-18 Acts 20:28-31 Ephesians 4:11-14 1 Peter 5:1-3 John 10:1-8; 21:16
1 Timothy 3:1-7 Ezekial 34:11-16 Titus 1:9 Isaiah 40:11
1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Prayer group or Bible study leader, priesthood, religious life, pastoral care, youth leader, visitations, pastoral administrator or staff, small Christian communities, parenting, teacher, outreach and evangelization efforts

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS, SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ROLES (CONT'D)

PROPHECY: the special grace to envision God's will clear enough to communicate a message, truth or call to God's people, of actions needed today for change tomorrow.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Romans 12:6	1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 13:2; 14:1, 3-5	Luke 3:1-18; 7:26
Hebrews 1:1-2	Acts 11:28; 15:30-35; 21:9-12	1 Timothy 4:13-14
Revelation 19:10	Luke 3:1-18; 7:26	Ephesians 4:11-14

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Spiritual direction or counseling, Charismatic movement, healing prayer teams, religious education/teacher, prayer groups, religious writing, consultant, intercession, adult education, social justice ministry, small group facilitator

SERVICE: The special grace to see tasks which need to be done to support and accomplish organizational goals, and being moved to do them or to offer one's assistance.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 22:24-27	1 Timothy 5:10; 6:2	2 Timothy 1:16-18	Galatians 6:2,9
Romans 12:7	Acts 6:1-7	Titus 3:14	2 Corinthians 8:19-20
1 Corinthians 12:28; 16:15-16		John 13:3-5, 12-17	

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Building/finance/other committees, parish support staff, usher or greeter, youth leader, volunteer chore services, Eucharistic minister or altar server, activities/events coordinator, nursery/child care, Liturgy of the Word for children, food service, church decorations/drama costumes, parish council, loaning library, building/yard maintenance, religious education/DRE, Christian service coordinator, outreach services, typist, computer support/data entry, various misc. assistance

TEACHING: The special grace to effectively communicate ideas and information, or teach new skills, in a way that advances people's development, growth, and understanding of the subject.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 18:24-26; 20:20-21	Matthew 28:19-20	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11-14
1 Timothy 2:1-2; 3:2; 4:13-14; 5:17; 6:3-4		Romans 12:7	2 Peter 2:1-3

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Public school or religious education teacher/DRE, adult education and RCIA, writing, Liturgy of the Word for children, small group facilitator, seminar/workshop leader, Bible study leader, apologetics, spiritual direction or counseling, prison ministry

WISDOM: the special grace to understand and apply knowledge and truths with deep insight into the most effective course of action to take to accomplish the goal.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

James 1:5-6 Romans 12:8 1 Kings 3:5-12 Proverbs 2:1-6; 24:3-4
Acts 6:3, 10 2 Peter 3:15-16 Wisdom 7:7-14 1 Corinthians 2:1-13; 12:8
Colossians 1:9-12

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Pastoral administrator/staff, consultant, seminar/workshop/retreat presenter, religious education/DRE, adult education and RCIA, parish outreach, writing, committee member, fundraising, spiritual direction or counseling, parish council

CREATIVE ABILITY: (to include the following)

CRAFTSMANSHIP: the special grace to physically and artistically create or design something, often with one's hands, which beautifies God's world or edifies His people.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 16:14; 18:3 Ecclesiastes (Sirach) 38:27-34 Exodus 30:22-25; 31:1-11
2 Chronicles 34:9-13

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Landscape design, interior design or architect, clothing design, Living Stations, calligrapher/illustrator, woodworking, creative homemaker or crafts, icon painter

MUSIC: the special grace to compose, perform or direct musical arrangements in a way that positively affects others and is experienced as a ministry personally.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Chronicles 16:41-42 2 Chronicles 5:12-13; 29:29-30; 34:12 James 5:13
1 Samuel 16:14-23 Deuteronomy 31:22 Psalm 150

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Liturgy committee, organist or instruments, composing or arranging, dramatist, directing musical group or children's choir, banner making, music education or therapy, choir

WRITING: the special grace to effectively express oneself in written works which convey human experience, truth, beauty or instruction in a way that deeply affects the reader.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Peter 3:15-16 1 Acts 15:19-20 Philippians 3:1 1 Timothy 3:14-15
Romans 15:15-16 Jude 3 2 Chronicles 34:14-21

POSSIBLE ROLES:

Poet/lyricist, public relations or advertising, journalist or freelance writer, novelist/essayist/speech/ghost writer, teacher, dramatist, apologist

TAKING THE INVENTORY

You will notice that 20 gifts have been used in the inventory and may wonder why others are not included. One reason was to keep the inventory shorter with 100 statements, five statements for each gift, rather than 26 gifts requiring 130 statements.

I have dropped both “public tongues” and “interpretation of tongues” in that the two are often found together as charisms. Also, to know if one has the gift of tongues, for instance, does not require a discernment process as true with other charisms.

Some may have the gift of “miracles,” but again, it will be known if miracles are happening. “Celibacy” was one I had hoped to include as more Christians find themselves living the single state, but being dropped, hopefully those who have this grace already know it.

I have also combined the “creative gifts” of craftsmanship, music and writing. A high score in ANY of the five creative-gift statements likely indicates a possible charism, especially if others have confirmed the gift.

In having compared the various statements used by other authors of spiritual gift inventories, while trying not to stray too far from their knowledge and research, I have introduced a wider interpretation of at least two of the gifts: “giving” and “missionary” in particular.

For instance, “missionary” no longer means just going to a foreign land to preach the Gospel or even “feeling at home” in a difficult culture. As Pope John Paul II speaks of the “new missionary spirit,” there is a shift occurring in its meaning. It is even associated with the new spirit one experiences when discovering one’s vocation and the zeal to fulfill that mission.

I have not limited “giving” to only financial generosity as most other inventories do. Great self-giving occurs in many forms, with the poor among us often being the richest self-givers.

The inventory is not a test “to be passed” but a tool to help you identify how God appears to be using you at this time. These could be life (natural) gifts or charisms. The inventory results give you a place to start. Learning what gifts you do not have is as important as identifying those that may be special graces.

If most of your totals are high numbers (five or more 20s, the highest number), you may wish to take the inventory a second time. Although we are usually “multi-gifted,” more fine-tuning is needed if there is not a fairly wide range of numbers in the totals.

It is a lengthy process to discern not only how God has uniquely gifted each one of us but to recognize which are human talents and which may be the special grace of charisms. There is also the discernment process as to how the charisms are woven into the personal vocation and identifying that calling. And if one of the three general states-in-life hasn’t yet been chosen, the inventory results can be helpful in discerning that vocation too.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY FOR CATHOLICS

Read each statement then rate it in terms of how true this is for you. Circle "1" if it is not true, "2" if sometimes true, "3" if often true, and "4" if most always true. Your first response is usually the most accurate.

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| 1. I have a strong desire to "take the lead" when a group or situation is inefficient, disorganized or chaotic. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. I experience Christ's presence in the poor, discerning authenticity in them and others. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. I enjoy sharing hope and God's promises when people are in need of comfort or consolation. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. I often think of those who do not believe in Jesus and am eager to share the Word of God with its Good News. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. I know God is faithful and I confidently expect God to work in difficult situations. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. God has given freely to me and I give back freely, often in "hidden" ways. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I believe and know from experience that God does miraculous healing in our times. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. I generally work behind the scenes without wanting public recognition for what I do. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. Making others "feel at home" and welcomed comes easily to me and I enjoy it. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. I experience my prayer for others as a gift and ministry that extends beyond the role of all Christians to pray. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. I discover new insights and truths from reading and by discussing life experiences with others. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. I find myself wanting to "take charge" when a group is "spinning its wheels" because I can see what needs to be done for better results. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. I reach out to the ignored or rejected, or to hurting persons when no one seems to notice and care about them. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. I have and enjoy friendships with those from a different culture and ethnic background. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. I have had the responsibility of nurturing, guiding and affirming a group of Christians for an extended period of time. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. I seem to sense or know God's will in particular situations or concerning decisions to be made. | 1 2 3 4 |

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| 17. I prefer working on task-oriented projects rather than in the person-centered ministries. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I have shared biblical and spiritual truth with others in a way that helps them to grow and develop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. I can sum up and resolve problems and affect situations quickly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. I experience singing, playing a musical instrument, or being part of a musical or drama event as a prayer ministry and praising God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. Coordinating a large project or tackling several tasks at the same time comes naturally to me and is something I enjoy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. I recognize the spirit of God at work in situations, activities, people, relationships, and during prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. I am moved by difficulties and the pain of others, and find myself encouraging them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. I have been instrumental in leading others to belief in Christ and the Word of God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. My faith is a great source of comfort and strength, knowing God has the power to do what seems the impossible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. Sharing my resources and using my gifts for good causes to further the Reign of God is a deep joy in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. I have prayed with, or for, others and healing has occurred at the time or soon after. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. I prefer short-term tasks, helping one individual, rather than long-term projects or helping with organizational needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. I am intent on meeting new people and making them feel welcomed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. I give regular periods of time to prayer, knowing prayer is powerful before God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. My insights into spiritual truths have helped others draw closer to God or to better understand Scripture and Church teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. Because others look to me for leadership, I often take this responsibility in group settings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. The sight of misery moves me deeply as does the plight of the poor, forgotten and destitute. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. I have zeal to share the Good News and my faith journey wherever I am, wherever I go. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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| 35. I am attracted to longer-term commitments to groups or communities to assist them in their spiritual growth and goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. My love for truth moves me to speak out with authority and conviction even when it is difficult. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. I delight in being called upon by others to perform special works or to assist with the needs of a group or organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. I enjoy developing ways of presenting material so that others can learn and understand easily. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. I intuitively know or arrive at conclusions which prove to be right or true. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. I find writing, rather than speaking, a more satisfying way to express myself and my faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 41. I have an eye for seeing the big picture and the various tasks that work together to accomplish the goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 42. I know when something is not right or of God, picking up contradictions easily. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 43. A counseling ministry would be very suited in my sensitivity to the needs of the confused, troubled and distressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 44. When I share the difference that Christ makes in my life, others are moved to deepen their own faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 45. I have seen "mountains moved" by not doubting God's Word and promises and by placing full trust and faith in God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 46. I have made great sacrifices – financially or personally – for the benefit of God's people and participation in Christ's mission in the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 47. When I touch and pray for a person's wholeness, restoration or healing, a warm tingling or flowing energy is experienced in myself or the other person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 48. Doing routine tasks is enjoyable because I know it makes another's ministry more effective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 49. I enjoy providing food and/or lodging especially to people in need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 50. People come to me with prayer requests which I take very seriously. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 51. I often gain some new insight or perspective about God's ways which excites me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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| 52. I have succeeded in bringing a group to its goals, turning an idea or vision into reality. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 53. I find myself involved in service or ministries which help the hungry, abandoned, alone or afflicted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 54. I can and want to live simply, here or abroad, so others might simply live. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 55. My heart is moved to speak up when people are unable to see or experience God at work in their lives and situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 56. I find it difficult to be a passive, non-confrontive person when injustice is happening or error is promoted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 57. Doing a variety of routine tasks behind the scenes is where others will most often find me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 58. Offering a variety of examples and experiences comes easily to me when teaching or making a point. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 59. I believe I have learned to apply spiritual truths in my life more deeply than other people I know. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 60. I find joy in art-related projects (such as creating, drawing, acting or designing beautiful works including color design, photography, graphic arts, hand-made items). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 61. I enjoy working out the details to organize facts, people or resources which includes keeping an on-going list of things to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 62. I realize the presence and manifestation of grace at work in others and myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 63. I can empathize with a person in crisis, guiding and offering a positive view of encouragement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 64. I enjoy sharing my faith with others and it comes naturally to me to do this. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 65. My trust in God, including God's providing our material needs, amazes others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 66. I believe that all is God's – nothing being mine apart from God, and that I am a good steward. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 67. People who are ill or going through a difficult time often ask me to pray for them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 68. People see me as a "practical-help person" and often come to me for this type of assistance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 69. My home is a place of ministry and gathering, where others feel comfortable and at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

70. Praying for others is an essential part of my day and I personally benefit in giving time to it. 1 2 3 4
71. I enjoy and give time to discerning, analyzing or organizing principles, information or truths concerning God's Reign, the Scriptures or Church teaching. 1 2 3 4
72. People follow my direction, have confidence in my vision, and become motivated to accomplish the goals of the group. 1 2 3 4
73. In having gained the trust of the poor and needy, I serve them in practical, helpful ways. 1 2 3 4
74. I believe I have a unique mission to fulfill in life and have discerned what it might be. 1 2 3 4
75. Others seek my advice, counsel and guidance, and I make myself available to them. 1 2 3 4
76. Things come to pass several years after I recognized or concluded its need. 1 2 3 4
77. I would rather respond to needs instead of delegating tasks for others to do. 1 2 3 4
78. When listening to another's teaching (verbal or written), I often think of better ways of presenting the topic and/or expand on the topic. 1 2 3 4
79. I sense what needs to be done and have spoken up or directed others to act even though I lack "credentials" in this area. 1 2 3 4
80. Manual, maintenance or repair work comes easily to me and I enjoy it. 1 2 3 4
81. I have successfully coordinated and completed multiple-task projects or initiated new programs. 1 2 3 4
82. I am quick to detect false teachings, errors and selfish motives in others by their words or actions. 1 2 3 4
83. Others have told me that my words have brought them greater faith and peace. 1 2 3 4
84. Others have told me that I helped them to discover God's love and presence in their lives. 1 2 3 4
85. Others have found greater trust and faith in God by the witness of my own unwavering confidence in God. 1 2 3 4
86. I have given generously, and at times from my need, knowing that God returns a hundredfold to the cheerful giver. 1 2 3 4
87. Others have told me that my prayers for healing have been answered. 1 2 3 4

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| 88. Others have told me that my assistance made a difference or empowered them to accomplish something important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 89. Others have told me that I made them feel comfortable, welcomed and at ease. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 90. Others have told me that my prayer is powerful and had made a difference. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 91. Others have told me that my shared insights helped them to appreciate something better or to look at something in a new way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 92. When I share my ideas or beliefs about what can be achieved, others' feedback is positive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 93. Others have told me that I am a very compassionate person and that my caring response made a difference. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 94. Others have told me that I relate well with those of a different race or nationality and seem to feel "at home" with them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 95. Others have told me that I helped their faith "come alive" with greater peace and joy in Christ's love. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 96. Others have told me that my courage inspires them and that they agreed with me when I spoke up. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 97. Others have told me that my willingness to complete practical tasks to meet the group's needs was appreciated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 98. Others have told me that something I said or wrote made a difference in their life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 99. Others affirm the depth of my understanding and insights especially regarding complex issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 100. Others have told me that they were blessed or deeply affected by my creative or artistic ability (music, writing, craftsmanship or other artistic creations). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TIPS AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

Although *Uniquely His* is most suited for use in a workshop or small-group study, it can also “jump start” any baptized Christian into the discernment process of identifying their personal vocation and charisms. As Pope John Paul II stated, “The best preparation for the new millennium can be expressed by applying the teachings of Vatican II to the life of every individual and of the whole Church.” Applying these teachings to the lives of individuals can start here.

Practicing and experimenting with one or two of your highest-rated gifts is helpful. Pray for guidance and seek assistance from a priest or spiritual director. There is a “knowing” which accompanies use of a true charism and taking our destined place in the Body of Christ. It will “fit” our authentic self, the deeper self at the heart of our identity where God and grace reside.

When two or three charisms are discovered, embrace them as the teaching asks. Take seriously “the duty and the right” to put your gifts at the service of the Church and the world. This sometimes means pulling back on tasks in certain areas (others are gifted to do these) and concentrating more fully on the service or work most suited to your charisms and vocation call.

While I realize *Uniquely His* only touches on the highlights of the church teaching on this subject, it does provide us the means to move forward. If “every life is a vocation” as Pope Paul VI said (*On the Development of Peoples*), identifying your charisms is a big piece of your vocational DNA! Also, “the Holy Spirit, the giver of every gift and the main principle of the Church’s vitality, does not only work through the sacraments,” states Pope John Paul II (General Audience, March 9, 1994). The Holy Spirit also distributes to each his own gifts as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11), pouring these out on the People of God, he added.

I am personally convinced that meditating on the truths of this teaching and moving forward holds the key to more than we can even imagine, including the key to unity in diversity so needed in our times and the new evangelization. By each of us taking our proper place, appreciating and welcoming the place or part of others, and understanding how all the equally-valued, unrepeatable parts work together in unity, the Holy Spirit can manifest new life-giving miracles of grace among us and in the world.

I believe a prophetic statement made by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in *The New World*, 1/7/83, was preparing us for this time: Any analysis “limited to vocations to the priesthood and religious life implicitly assumes that these are the only real vocations. To the extent this attitude prevails, it can only worsen the crisis posed by the shortage of priests and religious.”

Just as our understanding of all things evolves with time, the Holy Spirit provides today’s understanding that ALL are called and gifted, ALL share and participate in the saving mission of Christ and the Church, each with his or her “own assignment” – a personal vocation planted in each one of us! The use of the word “vocation” HAS changed; it applies now to each of us!

As the cover so beautifully captures, may we move forward together to live this church teaching, each as uniquely called and gifted – each *Uniquely His*.

TOTALS FROM SPIRITUAL GIFTS/CHARISMS INVENTORY

								TOTAL			GRAND TOTAL
1		21		41		61		Administrative	81		
2		22		42		62		Discernment	82		
3		23		43		63		Encouragement	83		
4		24		44		64		Evangelism	84		
5		25		45		65		Faith	85		
6		26		46		66		Giving	86		
7		27		47		67		Healing	87		
8		28		48		68		Helps	88		
9		29		49		69		Hospitality	89		
10		30		50		70		Intercession	90		
11		31		51		71		Knowledge	91		
12		32		52		72		Leadership	92		
13		33		53		73		Mercy	93		
14		34		54		74		Missionary	94		
15		35		55		75		Pastor/Shepherd	95		
16		36		56		76		Prophecy	96		
17		37		57		77		Service	97		
18		38		58		78		Teaching	98		
19		39		59		79		Wisdom	99		
20		40		60		80		Creative Ability	100		
								Waiting Gifts			Working Gifts

INSTRUCTIONS:

In the space next to each statement number (1-100), write the number rating (1-4) you gave to each statement. (Note that after four columns of ratings, you skip over to the column to the right of the gift words.)

Add the ratings of the first four columns across and put the total in column to the left of gift words. Then add that total with the rating to right of gift word and put that grand total in its marked place.

In the grand total column, circle the three highest numbers, and up to five numbers IF all of the next highest numbers (ties) can be included. Otherwise stay with just the three or four highest numbers.

Then go to the first total column and circle the three to five highest numbers which were NOT CIRCLED in the grand total column. (Do the same regarding any tie numbers, staying with a maximum of five circled ratings.)

Presenter will explain the difference between working and waiting gifts. The working gifts are those circled in the grand total column. The waiting gifts are those circled in the first total column.

Presenter will also explain "Creative Ability" ratings and their interpretation. Because three creative gifts were combined in the inventory, it makes each of the individual ratings more important.

NOTES

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IDENTIFYING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

...is one of the most **EXCITING** and **RENEWING** experiences in a Christian's life. And even more exciting is learning about this neglected church teaching on "personal vocation," which can change your life! You are here for a reason that is "unrepeatable."

"Uniquely His will be a valuable tool for those who wish to explore their God-given potential through the use of their special charisms. Discernment of the Lord's intention for one's life becomes clearer through each page." – **REV. JAMES F. QUINN**, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF VOCATION PROMOTION, DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE, NY

"After a 35-year business career I felt 'called' to pursue...my own 'personal vocation' but hardly knew where to begin. Sheila's articles on spiritual gifts and vocation (published in "The Catholic Sun") and her spiritual gift inventory, proved to me that I was on the right track. Through the process of discernment and with a sense of restored inner peace, I am learning to become 'who I was called to be.'" – **JOAN E. WHITE**, SYRACUSE, NY

"The use of individual gifts and charisms within a parish community is of vital importance to every parish and diocese in our country. Often, the challenge seems to be educating clergy, religious and members of the parish communities in the "HOW TO" and in supplying appropriate instructional materials for all." – **REV. DONALD H. KARLEN**, EASTERN REGION VICAR, DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE, NY ALSO PASTOR OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, UTICA, NY

"I needed to verify certain 'hunches' that I have been testing recently, as far as who I am and my purpose. I left Miss Mellick's workshop carrying a lovely sense of relief, comfort and contentment." – **DEI GOLOWSKI**, WHITESBORO, NY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sheila Mellick, freelance writer and lecturer, was self-employed as a Vocation Specialist. She served as Parish Minister and Coordinator of Religious Education at parishes in the Syracuse (NY) Diocese, and as an Interfaith Volunteer Project Director. She was eager to develop a model of gift-based parish functioning in the Midwest. Note: [Sheila passed away on December 22, 2001. The Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Cleveland purchased the rights to reproduce this material.]

QUESTIONS?

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