

## Exercising Prophetic Leadership:

# Power from Silence

■ Br James Shin



*Power leadership means the Power to be loved and the Power to love. Many a times, leaders, do not move forward because they lack the power to be loved. They lack the opportunity to stand in awe and be still at the foot of the Triune God. All Christians know that God is love and that he loves us, but it is another thing being immersed in His love and experiencing His embrace. There is no power except that which comes from the power of silence:*

Today's people are afraid of being silent and being lonely. They meet someone, or chat on the smartphone and through the Internet, or make themselves connected through SNS such as facebook, or spend time to indulge in games in order to escape loneliness. They have to see and hear something in order not to become nervous. They cannot stand the silence. Staying silent by not doing anything and not meeting anyone makes them really hard.

As Pope Francis pointed out in his apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*), many of us are caught in sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness by consumerism and the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures. Our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns and there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades (Article 1-2). We will be liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption thanks solely to renewed encounter with God's love (Article 8).

Even leaders of CCR may lose the balance, when they serve for healing and proclaiming the word, by choosing to focus on the service rather than to take silent time. They vindicate themselves saying "Action is Prayer." They do not stay with the Lord nor to take time to immerse in his love and all of sudden they lose the strength and would not go forward any more.

Jesus is a model for charismatic leaders. He did many actions and used the greatest charisms.



However, he went out to find a quiet place when he faced the important moments. As we know well, before he began his public life, he fasted and prayed in a desert for 40 days led by the Holy Spirit. He overcame the devil's temptations. He received the power of the Spirit on the way back to Galilee from the desert and started evangelizing. The powers came upon him through fasting being alone, and praying in silence (Lk 4:14-15).

Many believers came to Jesus after they experienced the astonishing actions such as healing, miracles, deliverance and etc. Nonetheless, Jesus left the crowds and went to find out a remote place such as mountain and prayed alone and took time for silence (Mk 1:35, 6:46). He also sternly commanded the healed not to tell others about their healing (Mt 8:1-4).

In addition, before he chose the twelve Apostles, he climbed a mountain and prayed alone (Lk 6:12). Choosing twelve Apostles was the most important work among his works. Like this, when Jesus did important work, he prayed alone and in silence he took time to become united with and to share love with God.

Regarding Contemplative prayer, Article 2717 of CCC says: Contemplative prayer is silence, the "symbol of the world to come" or "silent love." Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. In this silence, unbearable to the "outer" man, the Father speaks to us his incarnate Word, who suffered, died, and rose' in this silence the Spirit

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of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus.

From Article 2709 of CCC, St. Teresa defines that “contemplative prayer is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”

Action and contemplation are in inseparable relation in the spiritual life. When one does deep contemplation, one who becomes amazed will naturally take action to deliver to neighbors the love he experienced. When one practices true actions of love diligently, one will naturally stay in contemplation.

Therefore, contemplation and action are not two but one. One in contemplation can act and one in action can contemplate that these two become one. We have to know how to be loved by God and will serve others with powers of the Spirit in right way.

Before Jesus died on the cross, he pointed at John and said: “Woman, this is your son.” (Jn 19:29) Jesus let Mary become Mother for all of us by giving John mother Mary as a gift at the greatest moment of his suffering. He gave to the Apostles for evangelization many charisms and Mary as their supporter and advocate.

Pope Francis calls Mary Star of the new evangelization by saying: “This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization.” in Joy of the Evangelization. Mary is the one who “kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”(Lk2:19) She is the one who suffered most among the characters in the Bible but she overcame everything by contemplating God’s love in silence.

It brings to mind the Icon of the Theotokos: Mary, being embraced by Jesus, she leaning her head and resting upon him whom she is holding, her mouth shut and eyes open to the world. That is the power of silence.

Silence does not mean that one is merely not speaking externally. But It is inner silence, having a conversation of love with God and immersing in his love. In order to pay attention to his word and to receive his love, we must cut off noise that disrupts silence.

Like a loving couple finds a quiet place away from the noise for their conversation, we need to get away from inner noise for spiritual conversation and love with God.

Inner noise leads us to judge the one who does wrong, to rage against others, to justify wrong accusations as well as listening to the whisperings of darkness and temptations.

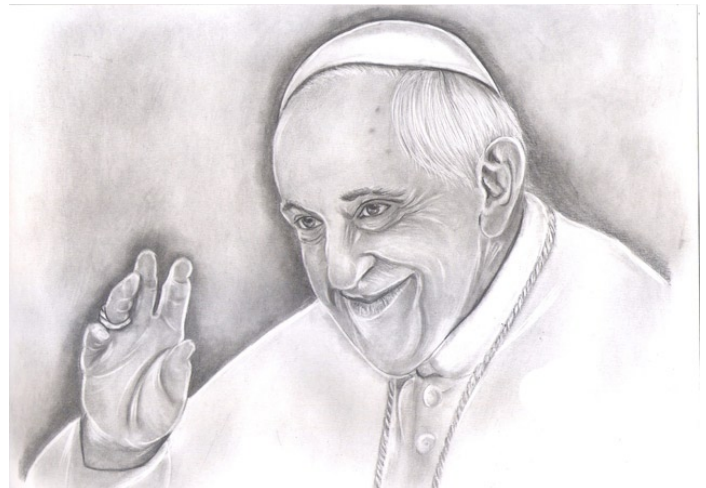
We ask for the graces of repentance and forgiveness in order to remove noise and to contemplate God’s love in silence.

Unless we repent, we cannot pray, unless we forgive, we cannot love, and unless we are grateful, we cannot praise.

Let God have a chance to love us.

By making Jesus a model and relying on the intercession of Mary, of silence and contemplation, we deeply experience God’s love and evangelize this world.

Please let Pope Francis’ prayer become ours:



*Virgin of listening and contemplation,  
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal  
wedding feast, pray for the Church, whose  
pure icon you are, that she may never be  
closed in on herself or lose her passion for  
establishing God’s kingdom.  
Mother of the living Gospel,  
wellspring of happiness for God’s little  
ones, pray for us.  
Amen. Alleluia! 🕊*

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# Contagious Joy and Friendship

■ Dn Christof Hemberger



*Everyone longs for life in abundance. We want to see and experience that our lives have meaning and are directed towards that meaning. Ideally, the consequence is a life where we sense profound peace, joy, fulfilment and satisfaction. So far I have not come across anybody who does not have at least some longing for this. In addition to this joy we feel as human beings when we sense fulfilment in our lives, there is a longing for friendship and connection. We need one another and depend on each other, and even beyond that: As humans we are relational beings, created for relationship and directed towards relationship.*

Jesus has sent us into the world (“You are not of the world, but you are to live in the world”), and we are to make a difference in the world: we are to be salt and light, right where we live, to work and act. I believe Jesus used these two images on purpose when wanting to encourage us to have an effect on the world: It is not so much about speaking but about being: salt cannot speak, you can only taste salt. We are to bring taste into this world, just as salt gives taste to the soup. Light cannot speak either – light can only shine. Light can be seen best in darkness that is where people live in fear, need and difficulties. Salt and light make a difference in the places where they are used. But how can we make this difference where we live? How can we succeed in shaping the world with what we are shaped by?

It is all about being: We are to have an influence on the people and the world around us by living and being in this world and with these people. We can exercise this influence by living what shapes us, that is by simply being the way we are. This is how we become living testimonies.

We can only shape with what is inside, what determines who we are. If loneliness reigns in my heart, this loneliness will also express itself. If there is longing in me, this longing will also become obvious through my words and deeds. If joy and satisfaction live in me, these will be seen in the way I behave.

What is inside us? What shapes our innermost being? What determines who we are?

For me, my baptism in the Holy Spirit was one of the most defining moments of my life. I did not feel a whole lot – and I did not understand a lot at that time either. All of this gradually came later. But in that moment, I realized that God had accepted me just as I am and was and that nothing and nobody in this world can separate me from this acceptance! I am loved by God and can call myself a son of God!

In a way, God has uncovered truth about myself deep down in my heart: I became aware of my identity (to the degree I could grasp it back then). Even now – many years later – I keep experiencing this knowledge about myself in my life, taking hold of it ever more deeply. God uses every opportunity to inscribe this truth into my heart in a new way.

This knowledge about my identity is what shapes me as a person and as a disciple of Christ. And it is this certainty flourishing inside and spreading which draws the attention of others. For this certainty about my own identity as a child of God is the founda-

tion of the joy I experience deep down about being a son of God. And it is this joy that shines forth through me into my world.

Some time ago, a friend who did not live a personal relationship to God inquired whether he could ask me a question. “You know”, he said, “I know lots of people but you have something that none of them have. Please tell me what is different in your life from the lives of the others. You have something I cannot find words for...” My friend had realized that there was something that is more and deeper than what he knew. The joy and satisfaction the Lord has given me, which is rooted in my identity as a beloved son of God, is deeper and bigger than what the world can give.

I believe this is what Jesus wanted from us when he commissioned us to be salt and light in the world. We are to learn from him and grow in holiness. And we are to let him use us by being living witnesses in the world: People who have both feet on the ground and whose joy about their identity as sons and daughters of God is visible.

When I speak about joy here I deliberately do not mean the satisfaction that stems from being happy about human actions and their results. The joy Scripture speaks about, the joy God gives and I have written about above is deeper, wider and more comprehensive. It is the result of the transforming love of God in our life and existence. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about this transformation in our lives. This is the reason he is often called “Spirit of joy”. Only God can give this joy that transcends our human abilities and limitations. It is so far-reaching that people can sense it deep in their hearts even though they are in difficult situations, undergo trials or even experience suffering.

This joy can express itself in various ways. One of them is in friendships. People who do not know God and thus cannot access the joy he gives are looking for fulfilment of their lives in many things – also in relationships to other people. Therefore, it can happen easily that these relationships and friendships are abused for they are used to fulfil the longings in the person’s heart; they can, however, not do that as the foundation is missing: God as the origin of the fullness of life. We are trying to get from others what only God can give: the certainty that we are loved and accepted just as we are.

Joy and friendship can have many faces. It is expressed differently in various cultures and generations. People have differing personalities which influence their understanding of joy and living relationships.

In all these differences, there is, however, a common factor: friendship and relationships are an expression of our longing for closeness and intimacy. Joy springs forth from a heart that knows God and is deeply touched by him in one’s being.

Wherever we live this as Christians – no matter how it is expressed in our day-to-day living – it will make a difference. This difference is fundamentally important for it shows the people around us (=world) that we Christians by the action of the Holy Spirit have something in our lives that they long for and that Jesus has promised: life in abundance. 🏠





## QUESTIONS TO THE ICCRS DOCTRINAL COMMISSION

The ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, currently headed by Dr. Mary Healy, is in consultation with theologians and experts from around the world.

If you have a question about the CCR, please send it to [newsletter@iccrs.org](mailto:newsletter@iccrs.org)

# How to Evaluate Prosperity Teaching?

Forms of prosperity teaching have spread very widely in charismatic and Pentecostal circles. The common element in all prosperity teaching is that God is a God of blessing, and that obedient faith will lead to a life of increasing blessing in all spheres, including finances and possessions. As Catholics, we often feel uneasy with this teaching, and are aware that it seems far removed from the message of Pope Francis who desires a church of the poor for the poor. Some may be confused that Pope Francis sent a video message to a conference organized by Kenneth Copeland, a leading prosperity teacher. The Pope's example is instructive. He rejoiced because these Christians love the Lord Jesus, and desire to praise Him. His message did not endorse a particular teaching. It was an example of openness and love for all others who confess the name of Jesus.

The biblical passages appealed to by prosperity teachers are mostly from the Old Testament. Through the law of Moses God sought to make Israel a holy people (Lev 19:2). Part of this schooling was to learn that obedience leads to blessing, and disobedience leads to all kinds of disasters (see for example Deut 28). So this teaching is not without some biblical foundation.

However, the Israelites experienced that the wicked can flourish and that the just can suffer, often at the hands of the wicked. This experience leads to ardent prayer and heart-searching before the Lord, as we see in Psalm 73 and in the book of Job. Gradually there emerges the idea that the suffering of the righteous is important for the deliverance of the people. This finds its deepest expression in the fourth servant song that we hear in the liturgy of Good Friday, (Is 52:12 – 53:12).

But the full revelation concerning the suffering of the righteous awaits the coming of the Messiah Jesus, and in particular his death and resurrection. The Gospels bring a message that is new: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt 16:24-25). Here the Christian is invited to follow the self-sacrificial life of our Lord and Saviour.

When messages about God's desire to bless everyone make no reference to the cross, and to the words of Jesus concerning

self-renunciation, then something essential is lacking and the message is distorted. This remains true, even when preachers say that Jesus took all his sufferings upon himself so that we can simply enjoy blessing, that is without suffering. We are saved by the passion of Jesus, and not by our own sufferings. But as we suffer because we follow Jesus, our sufferings are deeply purifying and contribute to filling up "what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His Body." (Col 1:24).

In some ways, the prosperity teaching is a reaction against a distorted presentation of Christian faith in which suffering seems to be exalted for its own sake, and the oppressed and afflicted never hear the good news of deliverance and freedom. Our duty to the suffering is to show them the love of Jesus and to present them his life and teaching. We do not bring hope by saying that their suffering is bearing great fruit, especially when they do not have a living knowledge of Christ.

The prosperity teaching emphasizes how blessing will follow generous giving. Texts like 2 Cor. 9:6 are often cited. There is a "seed faith" teaching that if you sow with money donations, you will receive back a hundred or a thousand fold in material blessing. It is true that there is a moral obligation on Christians to support the mission and ministry of the Church. In the Old Testament the Israelites were obliged to set aside ten per cent of their produce for the Levitical priesthood (Lev.27:30-33). Paul tells the Corinthians to "lay something aside" on the first day of each week (1 Cor 16:2). The Church today does not teach an obligation to give ten per cent; the Catechism says that the precept "You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church" means that "the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability." (para 2043). The Church leaves us free to decide how to support the work of God; how much to give to our parish, how much to a community or church group, how much to charitable work.

What can Catholics learn from the prosperity teaching? As Christians we must learn to submit the realm of money, finances, property, and possessions to the Lordship of Jesus. Priests should teach about this as part of living under the authority of Jesus, rather than simply making appeals for funds. If we submit all areas of our lives to the Lord, the funds will be there.