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LIVING PROPHETICALLY

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This article explores how to live prophetically. As Charismatics we can limit the prophetic gifting to a small amount of time in a prayer meeting. How shall we use the Charisms to live a prophetic lifestyle?

The experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit opens us to a new kind of personal relationship with the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. It is the Holy Spirit himself that is the most precious gift we can receive. He is God giving himself to man. The Holy Spirit equips us with gifts which serve our personal sanctification and charisms which aim to serve and build community. We embrace charisms in their multitude and diversity with both joy and apprehension. It is the service of charisms that makes us "charismatics." However, there is a risk that this extremely valuable endowment may be understood only as a certain tool for performing specific activities, usually in the context of prayer meetings or various charismatic services. Such treatment of charisms limits their impact on our daily lives. This particularly applies to the charism of prophecy, which we understand as the transmission of the current word of God directed to the community of people or to the person for whom we pray.

However, we must remember that a charismatic prophet is not a mechanical tool but a living person invited to cooperate with God freely and consciously. Openness to the charism of prophecy requires nurturing an intimate relationship with God who directs his word to a specific person. The Word of God is alive and effective (see Hebrews 4:12) and must be heard and accepted in the depths of my heart. Therefore, the service demands shaping a constant sensitivity to God's word through permanent listening to his voice: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). In young Samuel's experience these words meant a new stage in knowing God. Samuel could effectively communicate the word of God to others only by becoming an attentive listener. Daily examination of our conscience, meditating on the Word of God and listening to his voice in the prayer help us shape such an approach today.

The charism of prophecy makes us sensitive to the word of God addressed to the community or individual people for whom we pray. This sensitivity is very valuable both in the prayer and in the Christian life. Personal experience of the living word of God strengthens the bond

with God. The Holy Spirit makes us sensitive to various ways of God speaking. Not only does He speak through the Holy Scriptures, internal inspirations, thoughts, imaginations, but also through the word of another person, events and the beauty of nature. As the poet said: "You have spoken to me through everything" (C.K. Norwid).

Moreover, living prophetically every day requires readiness to share God's word with others. God's word brings my faith to life, which brings comfort, exhortation and specific solutions. Sharing this experience can be very helpful to others, too. The Holy Spirit awakens in us the concern about the broken, the sorrowful and the discouraged, so that they can find support and help in God. God also invites modern prophets: "Comfort, give comfort to my people. says your God" (Isaiah 40:1). It is an expression of love and care of one's neighbor so that he will not be left alone.

Furthermore, obedience to the word of God plays a crucial role in a prophet's lifestyle. It is necessary to be determined to pass on the word of God, no matter if it pleases the people or not. The prophetic lifestyle is expressed by readiness to go against the contemporary current and secular modernity. Whoever lives in the spirit of prophecy does not succumb to the temptation of "betrayal of God for a pair of silver pieces of barren peace" (Blessed Father J. Popiełuszko). Obedience to the word of God means submission that shapes our everyday decisions, choices and attitudes.

Finally, the prophetic lifestyle requires the attitude of humility. Indeed, it is not the prophet who decides whether the passed word is a prophecy or not. It must be discerned by the community and the people responsible for it. It is very important to submit to the discernment service of the Church's pastors. Due to the transmission of the prophetic word, a prophet cannot claim any privileges for himself. Ministering the charism of prophecy teaches humbleness while surrendering to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and courage while passing the word. Humility is a very valuable virtue allowing the revelation of the priority of God and the actual action of the Holy Spirit. Thanks to this virtue we can put the good of the Church above our personal reasons and benefits.

Therefore, we should not separate the ministry of the charism of prophecy from the prophetic Christian's every-day lifestyle. 🏡

THE NEWNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

■ Shayne Bennett · Catholic Fraternity Executive Member



“Whenever the Spirit intervenes, he leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness; he radically changes persons and history” (Pope John Paul II, Meeting with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, May 1998).

When I look back on my own life, I can honestly say that I have experienced the reality of the words of Pope John Paul II. As a sixteen-year old, I was already looking for more. Having grown up in a Catholic family and taught by a missionary order of priests, I experienced a real disconnect between what I had been taught and what I had been experiencing. There was an adventure burning inside me to discover whether God was real and what difference God could make to my life. In fact, I was quite annoyed to hear that Jesus had died for me and yet I felt so much emptiness. Surely, if someone dies for you, it is for your good – not just for nothing.

I found an answer to my question some months later when I was studying for my final exams. One of the priests came to the library and invited me and some of my friends to the weekly prayer meeting. As usual, we said no. His only response was “you’re starting your exams next week, if I were you I’d be praying right now”. Well, maybe he had a point so off we went to the prayer meeting. As soon as I walked in, I knew it was a mistake. They were playing guitars and looking happy and my first thought was “these guys don’t know how to pray – prayer is not happy”. Anyway, I persevered through the prayer meeting saying two Hail Mary’s quietly and hoping it would end quickly. Finally, it finished and I was ready to leave. As I was gathering my things, the teachers began praying for the students and some of those students fell down in the Spirit. That was different - but not enough to keep me there. I headed for the door where I encountered one of the other teachers who looked at me and asked, “Have you been prayed with yet?” I didn’t know how to respond but told him I was happy if he wanted to pray for me. From there, it became a little bit crazy as he prayed in tongues very loudly and I could hear my friends laughing because I’d been caught trying to leave early. However, somewhere in all that activity, everything became quiet internally and at that moment I encountered Jesus and I knew that he loved me. He gave me an experience of the power of the Holy Spirit as I received the gift of tongues and was filled with a joy that was incomparable to anything I had ever experienced. Now this was a new experience!

What happened the following week completed something of the picture. As I was standing under the shower, thinking about this wonderful experience, a deep conviction became

planted within me – if this can happen to me, it can happen to anyone – I have to tell the whole world.

“I have to tell the whole world” is the story of the next 40+ years of my life. This “baptism in the Holy Spirit” is a gift to be shared. God had poured out his new life in me, not that I should hold it to myself but that I should freely give testimony to God’s goodness and invite others to be open to experience this life of God for themselves. Little did I realise that sharing this good news would stretch me further than I wanted to be stretched but in essence it was always stretching me to love more.

In 1974, I began working full time in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), not receiving a wage, but living by faith (being stretched). I would travel across the country with Brian Smith (one of the early leaders of CCR and the founder of the Emmanuel Community here in Brisbane) to reach out to both young and not so young sharing the message of the gospel. Two years later, I joined the Emmanuel Community where my wife Shanelle and I have lived out our more than 40 years of married life. We served in the community, but my passion was always the mission. God gave us the opportunity to move out beyond our own nation as we spent time with communities in the United States; assisting the development of communities in South East Asia and then Africa. We have served as Directors of NET Ministries (a youth evangelisation ministry) and trained more than 1,000 missionaries from countries all over the world. Today I continue to work with NET Ministries helping to develop new models of campus ministry at university which includes evangelisation and discipleship. For the last 9 years I have been Director of Mission at the Holy Spirit Provincial Seminary in Brisbane while Shanelle works with Mercy Ministries as a Pastoral Associate for an Aged Care facility. Her main role is caring for the aged and preparing them for life after death. We are the parents of three married children and now have 10 grandchildren with another on the way (we are happily being stretched to love more each day).

Living in the “newness of God” involves being receptive each day to the grace of the Holy Spirit who sends us on a mission of love. The newness of the Holy Spirit is not about novelty, it’s about surrendering your whole life, and when you do, you have no idea of the adventure you have just embarked upon. It is taking up our personal responsibility to renew the world.

In this season of Pentecost, let us each say “YES” again to the newness of the Holy Spirit who causes us to participate in a revolution of love and tenderness. 🏠



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THE THEOLOGY OF KINDNESS

Jane Guenther · ICCRS Council Member



There seems to be a general lack of kindness in the world and it seemed that a study of the fruit of the Spirit, Kindness, would help us see where we might find greater clarity and conviction for the use and growth of kindness in our daily interactions. Galatians 5:22 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (NIV). In *The Spiritual Life*, Adolphe Tanquerey states: “When a soul corresponds faithfully to the actual graces which set in motion the virtues and the gifts, it performs acts of virtue, at first imperfectly and with difficulty, then more perfectly and with greater relish so that the heart is filled with holy joy. These are the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and they may be defined as acts of virtue which reach a certain degree of perfection and fill the soul with holy joy.” (The Spiritual Life, Pg 635-636) Kindness is a virtue which “lifts the spirits” and “touches the hearts” of the people we encounter in our lives. When kindness is amplified by grace theologians call it an infused or supernatural virtue gifted to us in baptism, and when that virtue of kindness becomes part of our very nature – perfecting us in grace – it is a manifestation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Kindness therefore involves acts of kindness, and these acts of kindness can increase by way of practice, prayer and sacramental life. Tanquerey reiterates this, “These fruits differ from the virtues and gifts in the same way as acts differ from the faculty which produces them. Moreover, the designation of fruit does not correspond to every act of virtue, but only to such as are attended by a certain spiritual sweetness. At the outset, acts of virtue often demand great effort and are at times distasteful to us. But once we have grown accustomed to the practice of virtue, we acquire facility and perform these acts without great difficulty, nay, rather with pleasure such as we take in the acts which we perform as the result of an acquired habit. It is then that we call them fruits. It is therefore through the cultivation of the virtues and the gifts that the fruits are obtained; and through these the beatitudes, which are prelude to eternal bliss.” (ibid, pg. 636) St. Thomas Aquinas states in the *Summa*, “The fruits are virtuous deeds in which one delights.” (Summa Theologica, Q. 70, a. 2). It seems then that the goal is to become proficient in engaging in these acts of kindness in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

When we think about being kind, our reflection should begin with God Himself. A beautiful passage that shows this is Titus 3:4-6:

But when the kindness of and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy

Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (NIV).

The late Father Lovasik wrote a wonderful book called *The Hidden Power of Kindness* (Sophia Press). Father Lovasik says that even a kind smile or a small compliment can bring joy to someone. I think we should resolve to pray to the Holy Spirit to ripen the fruit of kindness in us! “Ask and you shall receive” (John 16:24).

Regarding this power of kindness, Father Lovasik states: “Not only is kindness due to everyone, but a special kindness is due to everyone. Kindness is not kindness unless it is special. Its charm consists in its fitness, its timeliness, and its individual application. Kindness adds sweetness to everything. It makes life’s capabilities blossom and fills them with fragrance. Kindness is like divine grace. It bestows on men something that neither self nor nature can give them. What it gives them is something of which they are in need, or something which only another person can give, such as consolation. Besides, the manner in which this is given is a true gift itself, better far than the thing given. The secret impulse out of which kindness acts is an instinct that is the noblest part of yourself. It is the most undoubted remnant of the image of God, given to us at the beginning” (The Hidden Power of Kindness, p.6).

Here are Fr. Lovasik’s simple rules for being kind:

DON'TS

1. Don’t speak unkindly of anyone.
2. Don’t think unkindly about anyone.
3. Don’t act unkindly toward anyone.

DO

1. Speak kindly of someone at least once a day.
2. Think kindly about someone at least once a day (this teaches us to think kindly, which in our secret thoughts we’re prone not to do).
3. Do an act of kindness to someone at least once a day (and as this virtue grows such acts can be multiplied).

When you are unkind, says Father Lovasik, make a short act of contrition and resolve to produce acts of kindness in your life. Practicing these simple rules isn’t easy and will require conscious effort and self-denial, but keeping them will lead to growth in holiness as we become less self-centered and more humble. Kindness, like patience, involves a certain form of mortification. Kindness is a type of love or charity. Frankly, it doesn’t cost us very much to be kind, or to say a kind word to someone. 🙏



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

IS IT LEGITIMATE TO SPEAK OF “IMPARTATION” OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

People today often speak about an “impartation” of the Holy Spirit from one person to another. Is this valid and legitimate for Catholics?

The term “impartation” as it is often used today is a way of speaking about how a grace of the Holy Spirit can be passed on from one person to another. The grace may be a specific charism or manifestation of the Spirit, or a fresh infilling with the Spirit, or baptism in the Spirit. Those who have a particular anointing are often the very people whom God uses as instruments to impart that same anointing to others in the Body of Christ. Impartation in this sense is not to be confused with the full gift of the Holy Spirit that is given through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, nor with the gift of ordained ministry that is conferred through the sacrament of Holy Orders. The fact that the Holy Spirit can overflow from one ordinary believer to another is a sign of the interconnectedness of the body of Christ, in which all the members are joined and knit together in love (Eph 4:16).

There are many examples of impartation of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. Sometimes it takes place through the laying on of hands; on other occasions it is simply through prayer or even just by being in the presence of another Spirit-anointed person. In the Old Testament, for example, God took some of the spirit that was on Moses and bestowed it on seventy elders so they could share the burden of leadership with him (Num 11:16-25). Later Joshua was filled with the Holy Spirit so that he could succeed Moses as leader of Israel; in this case it was through Moses’ laying on of hands (Dt 34:9). In a more spontaneous way, a prophetic spirit was imparted to King Saul simply by his coming into the presence of some prophets (1 Sam 10:10-11). The prophetic anointing of the prophet Elijah was transferred to his spiritual son Elisha before Elijah was taken up to heaven (2 Kg 2:9-15). Elisha begged for a “double portion” of his master’s spirit—that is, his anointing for healings, miracles, prophecy, and bringing God’s people to conversion—and he received what he asked for.

In the New Testament, after Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation, she visited her cousin Elizabeth, and simply by her presence and her greeting, the Holy Spirit was imparted from Mary to Elizabeth and her unborn child (Lk 1:41-44), with the result that Elizabeth began to overflow with joy and praise of God. In Acts, an ordinary believer named Ananias was sent by Jesus to impart the Holy Spirit to Paul through the laying on of hands (Acts 9:17). Later,

Cornelius and his friends were filled with the Holy Spirit simply by hearing Peter’s anointed preaching of the gospel (Acts 10:34-44).

In his Letter to the Romans, Paul wrote that he longed to visit the believers at Rome so that he could impart a spiritual gift to them to strengthen them (Rom 1:11). It is not surprising that Paul desired to do so, since he knew well that the source of all his own fruitfulness in ministry was the anointing of the Holy Spirit (see Rom 15:17-19).

All these examples are distinct from the sacramental gift of the Holy Spirit that is given in Baptism (see Acts 2:38), in Confirmation (see Acts 8:14-17), and in Holy Orders (1 Tim 4:14).

Throughout Church history we also see examples of impartation of the Spirit, where spiritual goods are continually shared among the faithful in heaven and on earth. St. Francis Xavier taught little children to heal the sick, passing on to them in some way his gift of healing and evangelization. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, after reflecting on Elisha’s request of Elijah, asked “all the saints in heaven to obtain for her a double portion of their love”; that love then bore great fruit in her own life.

It is evident from all these examples that impartation of the Holy Spirit can occur in a wide variety of ways, but always with for the purpose of God’s grace and power being more fully operative in a person’s life. Impartation is not something human beings can do by their own power. It is an act of God, dependent on his will and his grace. However, it is something we can pray for and seek. Indeed, Jesus taught, “Ask, and it will be given you.... If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk 11:9-13). And Paul continually exhorts believers, “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18) and “earnestly desire the spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 14:1). God loves to release the gifts we are seeking through others in the body of Christ. This keeps us humble and dependent upon one another.

It is important to avoid claiming that one has received an impartation of the Spirit just because one has been prayed for by a particular person. The graces of the Holy Spirit are known by their fruit. The only way to know if you have actually received an impartation is if the Holy Spirit begins to be manifest in your life in a new way according to the gift sought. 🙏