

“DO NOT QUENCH THE SPIRIT”:  
CHARISMS IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH  
REPORT OF THE SIXTH PHASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC-  
PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE (2011-2015)

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- the whole report '*Do not quench the Spirit': Charisms in the life and mission of the Church*, published by the *Potifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* on the web, and also in *Information Service* N. 147 (2016/I) page 47-62 (pdf and print);
- more on this dialogue on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) and
- more from the Vatican on charisms.

Kees Slijkerman, november 28th, 2016

# **“Do Not Quench the Spirit”: Charisms in the Life and Mission of the Church**

## **Report of the Sixth Phase of the International Catholic–Pentecostal Dialogue (2011-2015)**

### **I. Introduction**

1. Catholics and Pentecostals rejoice in the renewed emphasis given in recent decades to charisms in the life and mission of the Church. Together they affirm that the Holy Spirit has never ceased to bestow his charisms on Christians in every age to be used for the spread of the gospel and the upbuilding of the Church. Over the past century the experience of charisms has taken a more central role, thanks largely to the witness of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

2. Catholics and Pentecostals are very grateful to the Lord for bestowing these divine gifts. At the same time, they recognize that the exercise of charisms is sometimes a source of tension and concern in various parts of the world. Serious questions have been raised concerning the authenticity and the manifestation of charisms: What is their source? How may charisms best be defined and understood? Who provides oversight? And how is oversight to be offered in order to ensure the proper use of these charisms?

3. On the basis of this common ground and common concerns, the International Catholic–Pentecostal Dialogue explored “Charisms in the Church: Their Spiritual Significance, Discernment, and Pastoral Implications.” The primary goal of this dialogue is to foster mutual respect and understanding between the Catholic Church and Classical Pentecostal leaders and churches in light of the prayer of Jesus that all may be one (Jn 17:21). The choice of this topic is a sign of continuity of this dialogue. In preparatory meetings in 1971, the Steering Committee noted that the dialogue would “give special attention to the meaning for the Church of fullness of life in the Holy Spirit.” This attention was to “be directed to both the experiential and theological dimensions of that fullness of life.”<sup>[1]</sup> The

current report is the first one offered by an international bilateral dialogue that addresses the relevance of charisms to the life and mission of the Church.

4. Participants began their study with a general overview of charisms (Rome 2011), and then focused on three specific charisms — discernment (Helsinki, 2012), healing (Baltimore, MD, 2013), and prophecy (Sierra Madre, CA, 2014) — identifying common approaches, interpretations and challenges. This report was drafted in Rome in 2015. The aim of this phase has been to present a shared reflection on charisms in their theological, pastoral and spiritual dimensions, highlighting elements that both Catholics and Pentecostals can affirm together as well as clarifying the challenges and differences they must face.

5. Concerning charisms in general and these three charisms in particular, Catholics have no exhaustive official teaching and Pentecostals possess no comparable body of teaching that may serve as a resource for a single position. The Bible does provide the necessary elements, however, for a shared theological and pastoral reflection on the subject. Moreover, the lively experience of charisms in the Christian communities of the New Testament is not only paradigmatic, but also a source of inspiration that can encourage Christians to foster a better reception of the gifts of the Spirit today. Discovering anew the spiritual wisdom granted to the Church by the Holy Spirit throughout the centuries is essential to addressing this important topic. This report offers a common understanding and appreciation of charisms in general and of three charisms in particular. Further theological reflection, with the same constructive attitude and candor that characterize this phase of dialogue, will be needed to deepen our common understanding of these and other charisms.

6. The dialogue has been co-sponsored by the Catholic Church, through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and by a team of Classical Pentecostals, all of whom have support for their participation within their communities, and some of whom have been officially named as representatives of their churches. The Pentecostal churches that have sent official participants include the Church of Pentecost of Ghana, various national churches that are part of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, the *Verenigde Pinkster- en Evangeliegemeenten* of the Netherlands, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and the Open Bible Churches. The dialogue has also been supported from its beginning by the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

7. This phase has been led by the Catholic Co-chair, the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh, North Carolina, USA, and the Pentecostal Co-chair, the Reverend Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Assemblies of God, Pasadena, California, USA. Monsignor Juan Usma Gómez, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has served as the Catholic Co-secretary and the Reverend David Cole, Open Bible Churches, has served as the Pentecostal Co-secretary.

8. Participants shared reflections on charisms in their spiritual, pastoral, and theological dimensions, and pressed one another with demanding questions regarding their understandings of charisms, the ways charisms are exercised within their respective communities, and the difficulties they have encountered in the exercise and discernment of charisms. Their work, conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust, was supported through the presentation of scholarly papers followed by serious discussions, times of prayer within the group, and times of worship in one another's churches. These experiences contributed to their insights and observations. As a result, the participants in this dialogue are convinced of the significance of charisms for the Church today. It is their hope that readers of the report will discover afresh the importance of charisms in the lives of their churches as they bear witness to the gospel.

## **II. Charisms in the Life and Mission of the Church**

### **A. What Pentecostals and Catholics Hold in Common**

9. Together Catholics and Pentecostals affirm the charismatic nature of the entire Church. Charisms are essential both for the life of the Church and for her evangelizing mission. They are expressions of God's love for his people and manifestations of his living presence among them. Freely and sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit, charisms equip believers to participate in God's saving plan and to praise and glorify God. Pentecostals and Catholics acknowledge the presence of charisms in the history of both traditions, and encourage one another to "pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts" (1 Cor 14:1).<sup>[2]</sup>

10. Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit given to all believers (1 Cor 12:7, 11). For Catholics, the foundation for receiving spiritual gifts is baptism and confirmation, although the Spirit often bestows gifts at later moments, especially in view of a new calling to service or mission. For many Pentecostals, Spirit-baptism is the essential gateway experience for the receiving of certain charisms. Catholics and Pentecostals agree, however, that charisms are not confined to the sacraments or to Spirit-baptism.

11. Although charisms are available to all believers, they are operative when Christians rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel and to serve one another. Charisms manifest the creativity of the Spirit and are given generously and often beyond all expectations. Both the more extraordinary charisms (such as healings, miracles, prophecy, and tongues) and those that seem more ordinary (such as service, teaching, exhortation, contribution, administration, and acts of mercy) are vital for the life and mission of the Church.

12. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the community of faith, including both clergy and laity, is called to engage in a process of discernment to determine whether certain words or deeds are genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Scripture teaches that the ultimate standards for discernment of charisms are truth and love (1 Jn 4:1-3; 1 Cor 13:1-3), the goal of our walk with God in Christ begun in baptism/conversion.

13. Charisms are gifts of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 4:8-12). Christ's presence in the world is revealed not only in his works of power but also in the weakness, poverty, and suffering that is part of the human condition (2 Cor 12:9). Even the most powerful charisms do not exempt Christians from taking up the cross and embracing the cost of discipleship. Pentecostals and Catholics prophetically challenge cultures and theologies that deny the significance and spiritual meaning of suffering. While they believe, for example, that God's power is revealed in healings, miracles, and his provision for his people, they are critical of any emphases that would contribute to escapist or triumphalist tendencies in the Church.

14. Catholics and Pentecostals can rejoice together over the gifts that each of their communities represents to all Christian traditions. Catholics recognize that Pentecostals have awakened a greater sensitivity to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts in the Church in the contemporary era. Pentecostals do not view the Pentecostal outpouring as being confined to Pentecostal churches, but see the charisms as a gift to the entire Church. They are thankful that Catholics and other Christians have recognized the Pentecostal witness to the significance of charisms in the life of the Church. Both Catholics and Pentecostals recognize the contemporary outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a grace for the whole body of Christ that has exceeded their expectations.

## **B. Biblical Foundations**

15. For both Pentecostals and Catholics, the understanding of charisms is rooted in Scripture.

16. The Old Testament bears witness to the Spirit's presence and activity from the beginning of creation (Gen 1:2). The Spirit's charismatic activity throughout the history of the people of God can be seen in people such as Joseph (Gen 41:25, 38-39), Moses (Deut 34:10-11), Bezalel (Ex 31:2-6), the seventy elders (Num 11:17, 25-30), and Joshua (Num 27:18). Judges were those in Israel whom the Spirit endowed with special graces that transformed them into heroic liberators and

leaders of the people (Judg 3:10, 6:34; 11:29, 14:19, 15:14-15). Saul, David and the other kings also received special gifts for the exercise of their roles as leaders of the people of God (1 Sam 10:6, 16:13). Solomon, for example, received a special gift of wisdom (see 1 Kings 3:6-15). The prophets of the Old Testament received the Spirit of God to carry out their prophetic ministry in a charismatic manner (2 Kings 2:9-14). Joel prophesied the eschatological outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit on the whole people of God (Joel 2:28).<sup>[3]</sup>

17. In the New Testament, the Gospels reveal Jesus as the Messiah who was sent by the Father and upon whom the Spirit descended at his baptism (Lk 3:21-22). In his opening sermon at Nazareth, Jesus identified himself as the one anointed by the Spirit to preach good news to the poor and to demonstrate the presence of the kingdom of God by healing the sick and setting free the oppressed (Lk 4:18-21). Jesus' reply to the questions raised by John the Baptist pointed to his charismatic activity as evidence that he was the promised "Anointed One" (Mt 11:4-6). Jesus commissioned the Twelve (Mk 6:7; Mt 10:1; Lk 9:1), then later the seventy (Lk 10:9), and gave them authority to preach and to heal and cast out demons (Mk 6:13; Lk 9:6). In the longer ending of the Gospel of Mark the risen Jesus promises that charismatic manifestations and protection from evil will distinguish his followers:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mk 16:17-18)

18. All four Gospels record the prophecy that Jesus is the promised one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33). The Acts of the Apostles show the fulfillment of this promise on the day of Pentecost. The dramatic narratives in Acts demonstrate the continuation of Jesus' ministry in the Church through the proclamation of the gospel accompanied by signs and wonders. Charisms of prophecy (Acts 2:17, 19:6, 21:9), healings (Acts 4:30, 5:16, 8:7, 28:8), and

miracles (Acts 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 8:6, 14:3, 15:12) regularly accompanied the proclamation of the gospel as the Church grew.

19. The New Testament letters, particularly those of Paul, use the term *charisma* (derived from *charis*, “grace”) to refer to the special gifts of the Holy Spirit through which God builds up the Church (1 Cor 12:4). These gifts, or charisms, take a variety of forms, reflecting the freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them and sovereignly distributes them. Paul does not give a comprehensive explanation of the gifts of the Spirit, nor does he offer an exhaustive list of the charisms; rather, his emphasis is on the initiative of the Spirit and the diversity of his gifts among believers. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11:

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. . . . All these are activated by the one and the same Spirit who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

20. St. Paul encourages believers to desire charisms eagerly (1 Cor 12:31), to “strive to excel in them for building up the church” (1 Cor 14:12), and not to extinguish them (1 Thess 5:19-22). He also teaches that there is a need to discern charisms (1 Cor 12:10) and that charisms are to be exercised in the Church in an orderly manner since “God is a God not of disorder but of peace” (1 Cor 14:33; cf. 14:40). In Romans 12:6-8 he writes, “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us; prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” (see also Eph 4:9), and further, in his first letter to Timothy he exhorts, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders [*presbyteroi*]” (1 Tim 4:14).

### **C. Brief historical observations**

21. Catholics and Pentecostals affirm that in all ages and cultures the Holy Spirit equips Christians with charisms to witness to the

gospel and build up the body of Christ. They reject the idea that charisms ceased after the age of the apostles or at any other point in history. They acknowledge, however, that for many centuries the charisms were not “front and center” to church life. The Spirit was assumed to be present but, at times, with little expectation of his spontaneous action. Nevertheless, the contributions of the Cappadocian Fathers, the monastic movement in its various expressions, the medieval revivals associated with the Franciscans and Dominicans, and other streams of renewal within the Catholic Church have brought ongoing attention to the Holy Spirit and his charisms and are seen as signs of the action of the Holy Spirit.

22. Among the reasons given by scholars for the decline in the manifestation of charisms are the large influx of unformed converts after Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire, the ecclesial reaction to the excesses of charismatic movements such as Montanism, latent Manicheism with its disparagement of the body, an underdeveloped pneumatology, and the responses to various heresies. Later in history, the Reformation debates, Enlightenment rationalism, and a climate of skepticism toward the supernatural contributed to a waning of expectation of the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit.

23. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that the twentieth-century Pentecostal revival brought renewed attention to the charisms as essential to invigorating the Church’s life and mission. Attention to the charisms was further intensified with the dawn of the Charismatic Renewal in the Protestant and Anglican churches in the 1950s and 1960s and with the emergence of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1967. The teachings of Vatican Council II had a particular role in the revival of charisms and the affirmation of the importance of the charismatic dimension of the Church (cf. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* 12). The growth of Pentecostal and charismatic movements, especially in the global South and East, have helped to revitalize Christianity throughout the world.

### **D. The Church as a community enlivened by the Holy Spirit**

24. Together Pentecostals and Catholics affirm that the Holy Spirit constituted and animated the Church at Pentecost, bringing forth God's eschatological new community to proclaim and show forth the kingdom of God. The Spirit empowered the disciples after Pentecost to carry on the mission of their Lord, and God bore witness to the gospel with signs and wonders done in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Spirit (Mk 16:17-18; Acts 14:3; Heb 2:4). The Church is missionary by her very nature. The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of the Church's mission, who directs and empowers the Church in all her activity.

25. God marks believers with the seal of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22), who dwells in each believer as a temple (1 Cor 6:19). Through the Spirit, believers are sanctified and are "like living stones... built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5).

26. The Spirit endows believers with spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. The Spirit is the principle of unity (*koinōnia*) amid the diversity of charisms and ministries (1 Cor 12:4-5). As God distributes charisms in his sovereignty, he invites his children to draw near to the Giver of the gifts, affirm their goodness, and earnestly desire those gifts. Pentecostals are encouraged by the Catholic Church's teaching that "From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who 'breathes where He wills' (Jn 3:8)" (Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* 3; cf. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* 12).

27. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that the Holy Spirit equips the Church with both institutional and charismatic gifts (1 Cor 12:28). The institutional dimension of the Church is the Holy Spirit working through the leadership structures established by Christ. The charismatic dimension is the Holy Spirit working among believers of every rank continually, spontaneously, and often unpredictably. These two dimensions are co-essential to the Church, and are

complementary. The institutional is charismatic in that it is animated by the Spirit and must rely on the Spirit, and the charismatic is institutional in that it must be discerned by the Church and rightly ordered in the service of the Church. Catholics and Pentecostals recognize and appreciate the healthy tension that exists between the charismatic and institutional dimensions. Both are subject to Paul's admonition: "I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment" (Rom 12:3).

28. Pentecostals and Catholics agree that the Holy Spirit raises up leaders and endows them with gifts to teach and lead the Christian community and to help it grow in holiness. Authority in the Church is a gift of God and it must be exercised as service, following the example of Christ (Mk 10:42-45). It is Christ himself who is the chief shepherd of the Church (1 Pet 5:4). Catholics understand church leadership primarily in terms of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, deacon. Pentecostals assert that in Classical Pentecostal denominations similar leadership structures are in place, though the exercise of oversight may at times be more diffuse. Both recognize that authority must always be exercised according to the leading of the Holy Spirit if they are to avoid the risk of its improper use.

### III. Reflection on Specific Charisms

29. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit bestowing his divine gifts is a blessing for the Church. True charisms are to be prayed for, expected, and relied upon as divine gifts. Nevertheless, in many places, instead of joy, awe, renewal, and building up of the body of Christ, the exercise of charisms is a source of tensions and concerns. Catholic and Pentecostal leaders alike are concerned that at the root of these tensions lies an insufficient discernment of the charisms, contributing to manipulative and dishonest practices such as promising certain results or certain charisms, claims of spiritual superiority on the part of those exercising charisms, and consequently, the discrediting of other churches and Christians. Catholics and Pentecostals resist any exercise of charisms which seems to put them above the Word of God. The International Catholic-Pentecostal

Dialogue has therefore chosen to study three charisms which are important for the life of the Church but which can be sources of misunderstanding or tension: prophecy, healing, and the discernment of spirits. The hope is that these joint reflections will help local communities to address these points in discussion and come to a more deeply shared appreciation of these charisms and their exercise.

## A. Prophecy

30. Scripture places a high value on the charism of prophecy (Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor 14:1, 39). Those who prophesy are divinely called and inspired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the message that God has given to them (1 Cor 12:10-11). The prophetic message may speak of God's past actions; it may address the present situation in which God calls his people to holiness, covenant fidelity, and social justice; or it may reveal God's promises for the future. The words given through the charism of prophecy originate with God and are given with the purpose of building up the people of God (1 Cor 14:3).

### 1. Prophecy in Scripture

31. Throughout the history of salvation God chose to reveal himself, his saving plan, and his purposes to human beings in a variety of ways; among them, through prophecy (Heb 1:1). Prophecy in the Old Testament serves as the backdrop for understanding the charism of prophecy in the New Testament. God called specific individuals to speak on his behalf (Ex 4:15-16; Isa 6:1-13; Jer 1:4-10; etc.), conveying his word and interceding for his people. Sometimes God revealed the message through visions or dreams (Job 33:14-18; Isa 6:1-13; Jer 1:11-13); at other times through thoughts, impressions, or "whispers" such as in the still small voice heard by Elijah (1 Kings 19:12); and in yet other cases through an audible voice such as that given to the boy Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-18).

32. While all genuine prophetic words originate with God and are communicated to the prophet by means of divine inspiration, the human element must not be overlooked, as the prophets put that message into words the

people could understand. The prophet received a sense or vision or word from the Lord and then delivered it in ways that reflected the prophet's own language, personal background, education, and cultural context. Prophets often employed figurative language, symbols, or actions (Isa 20:2-6; Jer 13:1-11; Hos 1:2-8, 3:1) which sometimes required interpretation or application (Hos 12:10; Ezek 20:45-49).

33. In many respects the Old Testament prophets acted as the living memory and the conscience of the people, reminding them of God's faithfulness, of God's expectations and desires for them, and repeatedly calling them to turn away from sin and to love God with all their heart, soul, and might (Deut 6:4), and their neighbors as themselves. Sometimes their messages were words of judgment to those who were recalcitrant. On other occasions they brought hope-filled promises for the future (Jer 32:36-41; Ezek 11:17-21). Very often there was resistance to the prophet's challenging message or even violent persecution of the prophet (Isa 6:9-10; Neh 9:26; Lk 11:49; 13:34).

34. The people of God were warned repeatedly about the possibility that they might fall prey to false prophets, those who were not faithful in conveying God's message or who claimed divine inspiration when there was none (Deut 13:1-5). Confrontations between true and false prophets, as in the case of Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer 27:1-28:17), demonstrated the need for discernment to distinguish what was true from what was false.

35. The New Testament shows that the age of prophecy did not end with the coming of Christ. John the Baptist may be viewed as the last of the prophets in the Old Testament tradition (Isa 40:3-5; Lk 16:16), who pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's messianic hope (Jn 1:26-27, 29-34). As the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all prior biblical prophecy and is the Prophet *par excellence* (cf. Lk 4:24, 13:33; Jn 6:14; 7:40). He not only speaks God's word; he is that Word in its fullness (Jn 1:1-5; Heb 1:1-4).

36. With the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the whole Church became a prophetic community (Acts 2:17-18). All

Christians have a prophetic role and are expected to be prophets in a general sense, proclaiming the gospel to those around them; however, there are others who receive the charism of prophecy in a more particular way (1 Cor 12:11, 29; Rom 12:6). Prophecy is one of the most important charisms given by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church, especially through words of exhortation or comfort (1 Cor 14:1-4). Paul, in fact, exhorts Christians to “strive for” this charism (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1). It is within the community of faith that believers are expected to receive, hear, discern, and interpret prophetic words (1 Thess 5:19-22).

37. The charism of prophecy was given not only to major figures, but also to ordinary people. For instance, Elizabeth (Lk 1:41-45), Zechariah (Lk 1:8-23, 59-64), Simeon (Lk 2:25-35), and Anna (Lk 2:36-38) prophesied and praised God regarding his redemptive promises. Philip’s four unnamed daughters prophesied as well (Acts 21:9). There is no single pattern for the exercise of prophecy in the New Testament. Some such as Agabus were itinerant prophets, who traveled from city to city to proclaim their message (Acts 11:27-30, 21:10-14), while others were a permanent part of a specific community (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor 14:29-33).

38. The Revelation given to John by the risen Christ (Rev 1:3) is most like the writings of the Old Testament prophets. It employs the symbolism found in Jewish apocalyptic literature, but it also conveys a number of clear prophetic messages, as Christ calls believers and churches to faithfulness and endurance (most notably in Rev 2-3), while also providing them with hope through his promises (Rev 19:9, 21:3-8).

## 2. Prophecy in Church History

39. Following the apostolic period, prophetic gifts continued to play a role in the life of the Church for centuries. Figures such as Ignatius of Antioch (*To the Philadelphians* 7:1-2) and Polycarp of Smyrna (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 5) both prophesied. The subject of prophecy was addressed in early liturgical and devotional documents (*Didache* 11:3-12, 13:1, 3-4; *Shepherd of Hermas* 11). Such documents

defined the activities of prophets and provided specific criteria that assisted congregations in discerning true from false prophets.

40. Christian writings from around the Roman empire were full of prophetic references, especially through the third century. Irenaeus (AD 130-200) in Gaul (*Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 99; *Against Heresies* 2.32.4), Justin Martyr (circa AD 100-165) in Rome (*Dialogue with Trypho* 88.1), Tertullian (AD 180-253) in Carthage (*A Treatise on the Soul* 2:3; 9:3-4), and Cyprian (AD 200-258), bishop of Carthage, all made repeated references to visions, dreams, and the gift of prophecy. Cyprian claimed to have experienced visions that directed his personal movements (*Letter* 10 [8].4.1; 16 [9].4.1; 58 [55].5.2) and reported that episcopal synods in North Africa considered the messages from visions and prophecies when making their appointments to ecclesial offices (*Letter* 39 [33].1.1-2; 40 [34].1.1). The charism of prophecy continued to find expression through both lay and ordained Christians, both in local congregations and in monasteries and convents.

41. At times, those who claimed to speak on behalf of God through prophecy raised tensions when they confronted legitimate ecclesial authorities with their claims. The Montanists were one such group. Montanist exaggerations and the resulting distrust of charisms on the part of church leaders deeply marred the future understanding and exercise of prophetic gifts. By the time the Montanist threat had been set to rest, this charism was rarely exercised.

42. In later centuries, Scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas taught the existence of the charism of prophecy, but without making reference to any contemporary prophets (*Summa Theologica* II-II, 171-175). The Protestant Reformers, on the other hand, taught that the charism of prophecy refers solely to preaching. John Calvin wrote that “prophecy... is simply the right understanding of Scripture and the particular gift of expounding it” (Calvin, *Epistle to the Romans* 12:6). Martin Luther criticized the “Heavenly Prophets” of his day for following only a “living voice from heaven”. They make for confused, disturbed, anxious consciences,



and want people to be amazed at their great skill, but meanwhile Christ is forgotten” (Luther, *Letter to the Christians at Strasburg in Opposition to the Fanatic Spirit*, 40:70).

43. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements that began in the twentieth century have led to a renewed reception of charisms that were often ignored or even excluded in the past. As a consequence of the witness of these contemporary movements, prophecy is being more widely allowed to play its part in God’s equipping of the Church for ministry (cf. Eph 4:11-12). There is a renewed expectation of its bestowal on ordinary Christians, and that the Lord might speak through prophetic words on a regular basis. The manifestation of prophecy demonstrates the nature of the prophecy to the wider Church, makes the Church more conscious of this dimension in her life, and brings the Church into greater conformity to the witness of Scripture.

### 3. Prophecy in the Life of the Church

44. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that there is a broader and a narrower meaning to prophecy. In the broader sense, every Christian shares in Christ’s role as Prophet, Priest and King, and is expected to engage in prophetic ministry. They exercise that prophetic role by declaring the coming of the Kingdom of God through teaching, evangelization, service, and challenging unjust social and cultural realities. They also do so by bearing witness to Jesus Christ as Lord within their particular vocation and through the events of their daily life. For example, Catholics affirm that a faithful consecrated life (the life of a monk, nun, religious sister or brother, or consecrated lay person) is in itself a prophecy of the coming kingdom and the marriage of the Lamb (cf. Rev 19:7). So too a Christian’s commitment to promote justice and peace and to witness to the values of the kingdom may be described as prophetic.

45. In the narrower sense, one who has the charism of prophecy communicates a word from God that has an *ad hoc* character; it is addressed to people at specific times and within specific contexts. It may be addressed to an individual or to a congregation or community gathered for worship.

46. Prophecy must be consistent with Scripture and church teaching. A prophetic word cannot add to the deposit of faith, that is, what God has once and for all revealed (cf. Heb 1:1-2). However, it can bring new insight into God’s revelation, making it more explicit, or applying it to the present context, or interpreting the signs of the times, or foretelling future events, or recalling God’s past deeds, or encouraging the faithful, or calling them to conversion. Prophecy may come in the form of visions, dreams, or words of wisdom or knowledge.

47. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that in the Church today, people who receive the charism of prophecy are called to be people of good character who live in a manner that corresponds to the gift. The exercise of prophetic ministry in the Church implies a commitment to teaching and correction; those who prophesy must be willing to have their prophetic words tested by the people of God (1 Cor 14:29, 38).

48. They further agree that an attitude of openness and expectancy for prophetic gifts and other charisms is necessary for providing the space needed to cultivate and exercise these charisms. Although God has sovereign freedom to act when he chooses (cf. Dt 23:4-5; Jn 11:49-52), we can open ourselves to receive his gifts. Jesus admonishes his followers to ask, seek and knock, which implies that their receptivity is a key element of receiving the Spirit: “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches, finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. . . . 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 11:9-10, 13).

49. Participants in this Dialogue recognize a need to address those theologies that marginalize the charism of prophecy, or claim that there is no further need for this gift since Scripture has taken its place. The Holy Spirit is always at work, even in ways that are not easily noticed by those among whom he works. Where there is no expectation that the Holy Spirit will speak through the charism of prophecy, individuals or communities may not be able to hear the voice of the Spirit when he

does speak, or the Spirit may choose not to speak at all. The Holy Spirit is free to act as he wills, as Jesus proclaimed, likening the movement of the Spirit to the blowing of wind: “The wind blows wherever it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (Jn 3:8).

50. In the teachings of Jesus, prophecy has a link to martyrdom. Martyrdom is the fullest witness to Christ that one can give and it is made possible by the Holy Spirit, and thus, it has a striking charismatic and prophetic character. Jesus predicted times of persecution and told his disciples that when they were called before synagogues, governors and kings, they should not be anxious regarding their response. “When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matt 10:19-20). In the patristic era this promise was repeatedly invoked as providing strength to Christians when they confessed before government officials that they were followers of Christ (Cyprian, *Letter* 10 [8].4.1; 58 [55].5.2; 76.5; 81 [82].1).

51. The persecution of Christians has been a reality from the earliest times in Christian history. Sadly and deplorably, it remains so today; however, as Tertullian memorably stated, “the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians” (*Apology* 50.13). Catholics and Pentecostals affirm together that whenever Christians suffer discrimination, persecution, and martyrdom, through their confession of Christ in words and deeds they exercise the gift of prophecy. In any discussion of the “ecumenism of martyrdom” the role of the Holy Spirit and of the charism of prophecy must be recognized.

## **B. Healing**

52. The New Testament includes healing among the charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church (1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30). The existence of this charism, which reveals God’s love and compassion for the sick, is reason for profound gratitude to God. The charism of healing relates not only to

physical healing, but also to other forms of healing such as relational, psychological, emotional, and spiritual.

### **1. Healing in Scripture**

53. Healing is an important part of biblical revelation in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament God revealed himself as the God of the covenant who heals his people: “I am the Lord who heals you” (Ex 15:26; cf. Ex 23:25-26). His promises concern both physical and spiritual wholeness: obedience to God results in divine blessing, good health and long life (Deut 7:12-15; Prov 3:7-8), while disobedience results in curses such as sickness and premature death (Deut 28:15-68). Although sickness is among the evils with which human beings are afflicted due to sin (Ps 38:3, 107:17), it is wrong to assume that sickness necessarily results from personal sin, as the book of Job makes clear.

54. The Old Testament includes some instances of individual healing, including the healing of barren women such as Sarah (Gen 21), Rebekah (Gen 25:21), Rachel (Gen 29:31, 30:22), Samson’s mother (Judg 13) and Hannah (1 Sam 1). Through the prophets Elijah and Elisha, God healed diseases such as leprosy (2 Kings 5:17-18) and even brought dead people back to life: the widow’s son (1 Kings 17), the Shunammite woman’s son (2 Kings 4), and the man thrown into Elisha’s grave (2 Kings 13:21). During the dark period of the Babylonian exile, the prophets spoke of the future restoration of God’s people through the coming of the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord (Is 42:1, 53:11). One of the prominent signs of the advent of the Messiah would be outstanding miracles of healing (Is 35:4-6, 42:6-9, 61:1).

55. The Gospels describe the fulfillment of these promises in Jesus, who proclaimed the kingdom of God and demonstrated its presence through his miracles, healings, and exorcisms (Mt 4:23; Mk 1:34; Lk 6:17-19). Jesus’ healings are a prominent dimension of his public ministry, bearing witness to the radical newness of the kingdom. “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and

every sickness among the people” (Mt 4:23). In his inaugural sermon at Nazareth, Jesus proclaimed the eschatological jubilee, announcing liberty from bondage to sin, Satan, and sickness (Lk 4:18-19). His healings flow from his work of atonement (Is 53:4-5; Mt 8:16-17). They are a revelation of God’s mercy and compassion toward those who suffer, and anticipatory signs of his definitive victory over evil through his cross and resurrection. They foreshadow the new creation by which humanity is restored to the fullness of life. Thus the book of Revelation speaks of the tree of life in the heavenly kingdom, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2).

56. Many of the Gospel healing accounts emphasize the importance of the faith of the recipient. Jesus asks, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” (Mt 9:28) and exhorts, “Do not fear, only believe” (Mk 5:36). Very often he says to those he has healed, “your faith has made you well” (Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34, 10:52; Lk 7:50, 8:48, 17:19, 18:42). The healings give Jesus the opportunity to teach about faith (Mt 8:5-13, 17:14-21) and obedience (Mt 7:21-23, 8:2-4, 12:43-45). They confirm that he is the one who has authority to forgive sins (Mt 9:1-8) and who came to reinstate the outcast (Mt 8:2-4, 9:20-22, 15:21-28; Lk 7:11-17, 13:10-17, 17:11-19).

57. The Gospels indicate that the influence of evil spirits is at times a contributing factor in illnesses or disabilities. Jesus spoke of the woman bent over for eighteen years as bound by Satan (Lk 13:16). His healings of a mute demoniac (Mt 9:32-33; cf. Lk 11:14), a blind and mute demoniac (Mt 12:22), and an epileptic boy who had a mute and deaf spirit (Mt 17:14-18; Mk 9:25) imply that in these cases the afflictions had an underlying demonic cause.

58. Jesus’ commission to his apostles to proclaim the kingdom included the command to heal the sick and do other mighty works (Mt 10:1, 7-8). Jesus later delegated healing power to the seventy whom he sent out two by two (Lk 10:1-12). After his resurrection, the risen Lord mentions healing of the sick through the laying on of hands as one of the signs that will accompany believers as they proclaim the gospel (Mk 16:18).

59. Acts describes the early Church’s fulfillment of this commission after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, by which Jesus’ disciples were empowered to bear witness to him (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4). Healings done “in the name of Jesus,” that is, through his presence and power, were a prominent part of the ministry of the apostolic church, especially through Peter (Acts 2:43, 3:1-8, 5:12, 15, 9:27, 32-42) and Paul (Acts 14:3, 16:7, 19:11-12). Other disciples who were used in bringing healing to the sick include Philip and Ananias (Acts 8:7-8, 9:17-18).

60. The New Testament letters indicate that healings were an ongoing part of the life of the Church. Paul describes healing as a charism of the Holy Spirit given in a special way to some (1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30), but healing also occurs through prayer and anointing by church elders (Jas 5:14-15), as well as the prayer of ordinary believers (Jas 5:16). Thus the New Testament reveals the ministry of healing as a part of the normal life of the Church.

## 2. Healing in Church History

61. The writings of the Church Fathers demonstrate that healings, exorcisms, and miracles continued to take place in the early centuries of the Church. The writings of Justin, Origen, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, for example, show that healings and exorcisms were frequently done by ordinary Christians, especially in the context of evangelization. Irenaeus wrote,

Those who are in truth his disciples, receiving grace from him, perform miracles in his name so as to promote the welfare of others, according to the gift which each one has received from him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that frequently those who have been cleansed from evil spirits both believe in Christ and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions and utter prophecies. Still others heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yes, moreover, the dead have even been raised up, and remained among us for many years. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.32.4)

62. In the course of time, the ministry of exorcism became restricted to specially authorized people. There was also a growing tendency to assume that charisms of healing were limited to people of unusual sanctity or monastics who practiced strict asceticism.

63. Following the development of Christianity in Europe, healings and miracles continued to be part of Christian life. Among Catholics, belief in miraculous healings continued through the centuries, especially at shrines and through the intercession of the saints. In the modern period, however, the rise of science led to a widespread tendency to view illness and healing in strictly physiological terms. Following the Reformation, Protestant Christians tended to neglect or deny miraculous healing in reaction to Catholic claims of the miraculous. The Enlightenment, with its rejection of the transcendent, led to further skepticism towards the miraculous.

64. A new emphasis on healing arose among Protestants in the nineteenth century with the Holiness movement, and was further intensified with the advent of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century. Pentecostals emphasize that healing is intimately tied to Christ's atoning work (Is 53:4-5, Mt 8:16-17) and thus must be part of the preaching of the gospel.

### 3. Healing in the life of the Church

65. Pentecostals and Catholics are united in affirming that Christ continues to heal today, even in miraculous ways. Christ's whole work of redemption is a work of healing, since he heals humanity of all the spiritual and physical brokenness caused by sin, including ultimately death itself.

66. Healing is an essential dimension of the ministry of the Church. Healings take place through those who have a charism of healing as well as through the faith and prayer of ordinary believers. Catholics also recognize healings through the intercession of saints, especially of Mary, the mother of the Lord (cf. Lk 1:43), through shrines such as Lourdes, and through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and the Anointing of the Sick. Most Pentecostals believe healing is available through the Lord's Supper; it is a

common practice among Pentecostals to anoint people with oil for healing. Many Pentecostals send handkerchiefs that have been anointed, or over which prayer for healing has been said, to those who are ill, believing that such actions are consistent with the actions of Paul in Acts 19:11-12.

67. Healings have special significance in the context of the proclamation of the gospel, since they vividly demonstrate God's love and the reality of the kingdom. Jesus' commission to his disciples to proclaim the gospel both in word and in signs and wonders is still valid today (cf. Mk 16:17-18). As in the New Testament, so in Church history the evangelization of new areas has often been accompanied by a remarkable abundance of healings.

68. Catholics and Pentecostals recognize that God also heals people through ordinary medical means. The pastoral care of the sick, including health care and counseling, is thus an important part of the Church's ministry (Mt 25:36). These ministries are a way of cooperating with God's healing work.

69. To affirm the reality of divine healing is not to deny the reality of suffering or the fact that God often brings great good out of suffering. Pentecostals and Catholics recognize that suffering, when it is accepted in faith, has a unique capacity to conform a person more fully to Christ. The patient endurance of suffering is a mysterious source of grace for the sufferer and for others (cf. 2 Cor 4:11-12; Col 1:24).

70. Healing is a free gift of God, not something that is earned or deserved. Expectant faith, however, can dispose a person to receive healing. Very often a healing elicits greater faith in the recipient and in others. Likewise, forgiveness and letting go of resentments can open a person to receive healing (cf. Mk 2:1-12). In praying for the sick, discernment of the spirits is sometimes necessary to determine whether deliverance from the influence of evil spirits is needed.

71. The charism of healing is not necessarily a sign of holiness (Mt 7:22-23; Acts 3:12). On the other hand, holiness opens a person more

fully to the Holy Spirit and his gifts. The charism of healing is not intended to be exercised in isolation but in communion with the Church.

72. Claimed healings may at times be counterfeit, and even genuine healings may be used erroneously for personal gain or prestige, or for proselytism. Because the charism of healing carries the risk of exaggeration and of manipulation of vulnerable people, there is need for prudent and continuous discernment. There is wisdom in having claims of healing verified by medical professionals insofar as possible (cf. Mk 1:44), but without implying that no healing has taken place unless it is verified. When healings do occur, the right response is to give praise and thanks to God (cf. Lk 17:17-18). There is also a need to prepare the sick in case their prayers are not answered the way they expected them to be. Sometimes healing may come in the form of joyful acceptance of one's suffering (cf. 2 Cor 12:8-10), or even of imminent death.

### C. Discernment of Spirits

73. Catholics and Pentecostals both understand discernment of spirits as the charism of discerning the source of a spiritual manifestation, whether it is the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit, or merely the human spirit. This charism enables the people of God to distinguish what is true from what is false or wrong. What is true comes from the Spirit of God, while what is false arises from other sources. Catholics and Pentecostals have a general agreement in interpretation as they look to the key passages of Scripture regarding discernment.<sup>[4]</sup> There are, however, some differences in the way this charism is applied in daily Christian life.

#### 1. Discernment of Spirits in Scripture

74. Although the term "discernment" is not used frequently in Scripture, biblical teaching and examples of discernment are abundant. The importance of distinguishing between truth and error, and between true and false prophets, is vividly portrayed throughout the Old Testament (1 Kings 18:20-40; Jer 23:9-22; Ezek 13:1-23), in Jesus' teaching in the Gospels (Mt 7:15-20), and in the early church

(e.g. Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11; or the slave girl with a spirit of divination, Acts 16:16-18). Gifts from the Holy Spirit are exercised in view of the growth of the entire body of Christ, for the benefit of humanity and in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms (cf. 1 Cor 13).

75. A key New Testament passage on the subject of discernment is found in Paul's list of charisms in 1 Cor 12:8-11: "To one is given through the Spirit... prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits [*diakrisis pneumatōn*]. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses." Paul values not only the gifts that declare messages from God (word of knowledge, word of wisdom, prophecy, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues), but the gifts that discern the genuineness of those messages, which are in need of discernment because they are delivered by fallible men and women.

76. In 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul provides instruction regarding order in public worship services, he seems to point to discernment as a charism that was as common as prophecy; it was needed whenever prophetic gifts were exercised, so the church could determine whether they were spiritually edifying to the gathered believers. Paul's instruction was to allow two or three to prophesy in a worship gathering, which would be followed by the discernment of the rest of those gathered: "let the others weigh what is said" (1 Cor 14:29). Thus, a certain degree of immediate discernment was seen as integral to the practice of spontaneous charisms in public worship.

77. It is the disciplined practice of discernment that helps the gathered community to express other charisms freely in an atmosphere of support and encouragement with accountability. This is confirmed in St. Paul's clear admonition to the church in Thessalonica: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:19-21). The believers were to embrace the freedom of the Holy Spirit and exercise charisms with the full expectation that the same Spirit would grace them with the charism of discernment of spirits, which would

help protect them from false teaching and disunity.

78. Not every prophecy or other charismatic manifestation should be accepted at face value. Jesus told his disciples that false prophets would arise as wolves in sheep's clothing (Mt 7:15). The apostle Paul said that savage wolves would not spare the flock (Acts 20:29). The first letter of John also warned that there were false prophets present, who apart from the discerning of spirits would cause havoc in the Church (1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:1). John emphasized the importance of discernment in verifying the authenticity and orthodoxy of those who claimed to have a message for the church:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.... From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 Jn 4:1-6)

79. So throughout history and now in our time, all over the world both Catholics and Pentecostals continue to face challenges regarding the proper understanding and exercise of charisms. Thus, the Church must continue to test those who claim to have received charisms from the Spirit to discern whether they are from God. Discernment safeguards orthodoxy, and its proper exercise will always lead to the true confession and witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

## 2. The Exercise of the Charism of Discernment of Spirits

80. Pentecostals and Catholics affirm together the singular importance that Scripture places on the continuing need for discernment in the life of the Church. The differences in emphasis on the exercise of discernment have much to do with other basic differences between Catholics and Pentecostals, such as the role of tradition, the emphases in personal and communal spirituality, and the levels of expectancy with regard to charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

81. Generally, Catholics tend to use the term discernment more broadly as the dynamic process of seeking the truth and the will of God. From this perspective, discernment takes place when the Holy Spirit enters into a mysterious dialogue with and guides a person in responding to God. Constant spiritual discernment leads to greater maturity in the Christian life: "Then you will be able to discern the will of God and to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect" (Rom 12:2). Yet Catholics are receiving from Pentecostals a greater appreciation for the more specific moments when the exercise of a charism of discernment is helpful in protecting and building up the Christian community.

82. Pentecostals, on the other hand, tend to focus on discernment in the more specific sense of "discernment of spirits" (1 Cor 12:10). Many Pentecostals give greater priority to the discernment that occurs through the charism than to the ordinary corporate process of discernment (Acts 6:1-6, 15:1-35); however, all acknowledge that this process is essential to discerning the will of God as well as the mind of the community (cf. Acts 15:6-7). Like Catholics, Pentecostals are concerned with finding and doing the will of God. They seek God's will through prayer, study of the Bible, and consultation with mature believers and leaders; and also consider such factors as personal desires, opportunities, circumstances, and the like. Although the term "discernment" is not always used for this process of seeking God's will, it is in fact a process of discernment. Pentecostal pastors, as shepherds of their flock, are expected to offer leadership to their congregations, often providing the initial insight into the discernment process and taking ultimate responsibility for any decision made.

83. Among Pentecostals, those recognized for their ability to discern, either because they have a demonstrated charism of discerning spirits or because of their spiritual maturity, are often those who know the Scriptures well and "whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil" (Heb 5:14). This would often include those on a church's pastoral staff, elders, and others recognized for their wisdom and trustworthiness. This should not suggest that the "discerning of spirits" is anything other than a charism, but the fact that

it is a charism does not mean it has no rational component.

84. Discernment within the Pentecostal community may follow rational lines of thought (Mt 7:20; Acts 13:1–3, 15:6–21; 1 Thess 5:19–22; 1 Jn 4:1–3) or it may be more trans-rational or intuitive in nature (Acts 16:16–18). It is sometimes done by groups as in 1 Cor 14:29, where one prophesies and the others are enjoined to weigh what is said. Many times the discernment process, especially at the local level, is accomplished in helpful and redemptive ways within the community of faith. It may take place in the context of oral prayer requests, times of shared prayer, or personal testimonies; in charismatic manifestations, especially prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, or tongues with or without accompanying interpretation; in personal times of prayer around the altar; in reading and discussing the Bible together, preaching the Word of God, or hearing the Word of God preached. It should be apparent, then, that while a word or action may be discerned to have the authority of the Holy Spirit in such situations, it is typically viewed as possessing an *ad hoc* kind of authority. In other words, such authority is limited to a particular occasion or location.

85. Pentecostals acknowledge that in their history, they have generally prioritized the *practice* of discernment, often without engaging in thorough theological reflection on the subject. Pentecostals also acknowledge that many times the exercise of discernment in their churches has not always proven to be consistently reliable. The Pentecostal practice of anticipating or seeking an immediate manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst can at times lead to the expectation that the charism of discernment will be manifested automatically and routinely. The occurrence of such practices points to the need for better teaching on the subject as well as corporate discipline within the Pentecostal community, and the continuing need to discern those who are particularly trusted to make discerning judgments.

86. Catholics believe that the “discernment of spirits” is necessary to verify the divine origin of a charism (Vatican Council II, *Constitution On the Church* 12, cf. also CCC, par. 800, 801)

and that, in keeping with 1 Cor 12:10, discernment is itself a charism, a gift of the Holy Spirit and not just a social communitarian process exercised by human agency. Although the Catholic Church has not developed a specific teaching on the charism of the discernment of spirits, throughout its history this charism has been realized in a variety of forms. These have become a part of the spiritual heritage of the Church.

87. Even in the exercise of this charism there is not a general model or a single pattern. Often discernment of spirits is integrated into the wider process of discernment, understood as seeking the truth and the will of God on personal and ecclesial levels.

88. Catholics believe that ordained ministers have a specific responsibility to recognize and discern the charisms of the faithful. “While trying the spirits to see if they are of God, priests should uncover with a sense of faith, acknowledge with joy and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity” (Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* 9). The charism of discernment is exercised by the ordained ministry especially in the spiritual guidance of the faithful, including the sacrament of reconciliation. As a charism, however, discernment of spirits may be bestowed by the Holy Spirit on any of the faithful. Discernment is an exercise in which clergy and laity have complementary roles. Those endowed with the charism of discernment of spirits serve the Church in communion with pastors who have ultimate responsibility for discerning charisms in the Church. Catholics also celebrate the renewal of the experience of charisms in recent decades through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which includes the regular practice of the charism of discernment of spirits.

89. Both Catholics and Pentecostals acknowledge that the closer one is to God the more one is able to discern his will and to understand what is true; the more one “walks in the Spirit” (Gal 5:25) the more easily one can recognize his movement and his work. Throughout history God has blessed the Church with holy men and women who have a certain intuitive sense of what is from God. The effective occasions of the discernment of spirits often flow out of the close relationship

one maintains with the Lord who distributes these charisms.

90. With the renewed attention to charismatic manifestations in the whole Church has also come recognition of the need to discern genuine manifestations from those which masquerade as genuine. Throughout the world both Catholics and Pentecostals continue to face challenges regarding the proper exercise of charisms, particularly discernment of spirits. Pentecostals and Catholics often need instruction in distinguishing real words of the Lord from their own pious wishes. Thus, the Church must continue to test charisms, in order to discern whether they are from God.

#### **IV. Pastoral Oversight Regarding the Exercise of Charisms**

91. Catholics and Pentecostals welcome and celebrate the great variety of charisms in both traditions, a sign of vitality in the Church. Catholics and Pentecostals recognize that they are called to be good stewards of these gifts: “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received” (1 Pet 4:10).

92. As was the case in St. Paul’s dealings with the early church, the exercise of charisms can also become a factor in tensions and divisions among Christians today. In order to deal effectively with pastoral challenges that arise in the use of charisms, Christian communities and their leaders must exercise oversight, expect accountability (1 Cor 14:26-33; 1 Thess 5:19-22), and “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). Pastoral oversight includes welcoming and fostering charisms, discerning them, coordinating their harmonious exercise among believers, and guiding them to best serve the mission of the Church.

93. God always “tests our hearts” (1 Thess 2:4); ultimately it is he who judges, and all human discernments are submitted to him. But at the same time, he helps us to test, to discern and to act accordingly.

94. Since charisms are distributed to all believers, the whole community has a responsibility to verify the work of the Spirit.

Discernment is an essential and continuous process in the Christian life, at both personal and ecclesial levels. Catholics and Pentecostals submit their discernment questions to the supreme authority of the Word of God (which for Catholics also includes Tradition), guided by the Holy Spirit and church teaching. In the discernment process, Christian communities look to the *regula fidei* (rule of faith) and to pastoral leadership, and are aware that reason and experience play a role as well. It is understood that our various communities have differing and complementary perspectives in their understanding and praxis with regard to these levels of authority.

95. Catholics and Pentecostals have these common criteria in exercising discernment:

- The manifestation of a charism must align with Scripture and reflect a faith rooted in the mind of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 2:16);
- It must conform to Church teaching and the *sensus fidelium* (sense of the faithful);
- It should build up the Church, promoting unity and charity;
- The individual exercising the charism should be a person of spiritual and moral maturity;
- The individual exercising the charism should be responsive to pastoral leadership.

96. Discernment can be considered as spiritual wisdom and a learned practice in the dynamic of the Christian life guided by the Holy Spirit; it cannot be reduced merely to a set of rules or a method of evaluation. There is a means of discernment that transcends the rational, a spiritual sensitivity that has an intuitive dimension.

97. Catholics emphasize that the ecclesial dimension is essential to discernment. The whole People of God are called to discern the movement of the Spirit. And yet no charism is exempt from being submitted to the Church’s shepherds. While operating within this structure, at the same time Catholics welcome the invitation from Pentecostals to be more open to the surprising ways of the Spirit and his manifestations.



98. Pentecostals emphasize the responsibility of every individual believer to expect, exercise, and discern charisms. The discerning of charisms needs to be done in community and not in isolation, for the sake of accountability. The diversity in Pentecostal ecclesial structures and the high degree of autonomy among independent Pentecostal churches challenge their ability to ensure adequate accountability. Pentecostals are growing in their acknowledgment of the value of the ecclesial community and of working together with leadership, and in this they find common ground and a positive example among Catholics.

With their distinctive starting points, Catholics and Pentecostals accept the opportunity to learn from one another's traditions, and integrate into their respective approaches what they have learned.

99. Catholics and Pentecostals agree that there is a great need to provide theological education and formation at all levels, both for the faithful and for their leaders. This should include instruction on the theology of charisms and how they are exercised in a proper way. Such education and formation will help to ensure the health and growth of Christian communities into maturity.

100. The understanding and exercise of charisms and their oversight require a deep personal relationship with God. Charisms flourish especially in the context where ongoing spiritual growth is fostered in both individuals and the community as a whole. With regard to charisms in the Christian life in general, the virtue of humility and a teachable attitude are essential.

101. The exercise of any charism, but especially those charisms that may bring attention to an individual, is potentially open to manipulation and misuse. Cultivation of one's spiritual life enables Christians to be more prepared to receive and exercise charisms with integrity. The mysteries of God are inexhaustible, and he continues to invite us to be in awe of his grace and open to his divine gifts: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are

his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom 11:33).

102. Pastoral oversight of charisms benefits from utilizing sound principles from the human sciences, which can be helpful in matters related to the exercise and discernment of charisms, and also in the broader context of pastoral leadership.

103. In this postmodern culture, with its emphasis on individualism, materialism, and secularism, Catholics and Pentecostals recognize significant challenges as they invite the faithful to rely on God and the charisms of the Spirit. Yet it is within this same culture that they witness so many people, especially the young, looking to the sacred and that which transcends this world so as to discover a deeper meaning and purpose to their lives. Thus, the participants in this Dialogue embrace this moment in history as an opportunity to find new and creative ways to inspire others to a receptivity to and a reliance upon the charisms of the Holy Spirit.

104. The participants in this Dialogue accept the ecumenical challenge represented by their shared appreciation for the charisms. As they deepen their awareness of the work of the Spirit within their respective communities, they agree to seek ways to present in greater unity the beauty of life in the Spirit, enriched by charisms, to all of their brothers and sisters in faith communities around the world. The charisms are intended to be instruments of unity in the one body of Christ, and any learning about them should produce greater unity. As St. Paul admonished, in all expressions of charisms, the more excellent way is love (1 Cor 12:31).

## **V. Summary and Conclusions**

105. Catholics and Pentecostals both recognize that the charisms that the Holy Spirit bestows on the People of God are intended for use by all Christians and are not limited only to those who participate in "renewal" movements. Praying for, expecting, and relying on the responsible exercise of charisms results in the upbuilding of the Church and effective ministry to the world. Catholics and Pentecostals are therefore invited to rediscover

the role of charisms and reignite the use of these gifts in their respective communities. The participants in this Dialogue wish to encourage all other Christians to do the same.

106. The exercise of charisms, when accompanied by holiness of life, glorifies God and empowers the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). Pope Francis has said that the Renewal is “a current of grace, a renewing breath of the Spirit for all members of the Church... You, Charismatics, have a special grace to pray and work for Christian unity, so that the current of grace may pass through all Christian Churches” (Address to the Renewal in the Holy Spirit Movement, 3 July, 2015).

107. Those who exercise various charisms must avoid the temptation of using them merely as instruments for personal gain. Catholics and Pentecostals also resist any exercise which seems to put prophetic words above the Word of God. Appropriate discernment helps avoid pastoral problems and results in a better appreciation of the spiritual significance of charisms. In a similar vein, Jack Hayford, a senior leader within the global Pentecostal movement, has noted that

Our welcome to spiritual gifts will never violate the Word. We ask the Holy Spirit to be present here and to distribute gifts among us according to His will. All the gifts are present in the Church, and every believer is urged to be free and responsible to minister gifts with sensitivity. We are covetous of their manifestation, but not gullible as to their demonstration. Graciousness in ministry, submissiveness in spirit and order in operation of the gifts is scriptural and, therefore, insisted upon....[\[5\]](#)

108. During the time spent together in the Dialogue, the participants felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in their prayers, in their discussion, and in being together. They tried to perceive together the prophetic inspirations of the Spirit uttered through each one of them. They listened together to the whispers and the wordless groaning of the Spirit (1 Kg 19:12; Rom 8:26), and they felt his wind blowing among them. The dialogue was itself a kind of

“charismatic” experience, filled with gifts from the Holy Spirit.

109. What has become clear from this study together is that there is a significant unity in the way Pentecostals and Catholics understand these gifts and seek to ensure their proper exercise. Given the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who gives these charisms to the one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27; Rom 12:4-8; Eph 4:4-16), it should come as no surprise that such *unity* surrounding these charisms should exist. But there are also differences in the way Catholics and Pentecostals understand these gifts, their exercise, discernment and oversight.

110. From these five years of reflections, it seems clear that if unity in the Body of Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12:13), the charisms, as his free gifts, are meant to be divine tools contributing to the restoration of that unity which is the will of Christ (cf. Jn 17:21).

111. In the meantime, Catholics and Pentecostals are invited to exercise their own individual charisms with renewed consciousness of their role in building up the Church and promoting Christian unity. Catholics and Pentecostals are also convinced that, as Novatian, a third-century Christian, declared while reflecting on the true faith of the Church,

It is the Holy Spirit who confirmed the hearts and minds of the disciples, who revealed the mysteries of the Gospel, who shed upon them the light of things divine. Strengthened by his gift, they did not fear either prisons or chains for the name of the Lord; indeed they even trampled upon the powers and torments of the world, armed and strengthened by him, having in themselves the gifts which this same Spirit bestows and directs like jewels to the Church, the Bride of Christ. It is in fact he who raises up prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, guides tongues, works wonders and healings, accomplishes miracles, grants the discernment of spirits, assigns governance, inspires counsels, distributes and harmonizes every other charismatic gift. In this way he completes and perfects the Lord's Church everywhere and in all things. (Novatian, *De Trinitate*, 29.9-10 [CCL 4, 70]; quoted by Pope John Paul II in

the Encyclical Letter *The Splendour of Truth, Veritatis Splendor*, 108).

112. How the results of this Dialogue might be shared and disseminated will become evident as readers choose to apply them to their own situations. Participants in this phase of the Dialogue invite readers to consider employing this report in different and creative ways. They might include one or more of the following possibilities.

- It could be used as a common text for further discussion between Classical Pentecostals and Catholics on the local or national level.
- It could be used in studies of ecumenism, since it is the first bilateral document in which charisms have been examined in any depth.
- Professors may assign this report in courses that look at the variety of bilateral dialogues in which the Catholic Church participates, in courses related to Pentecostalism or to the Charismatic Renewal, or in courses on spirituality.
- Students training for ministry would benefit from reading this report carefully as they explore possibilities for developing greater ecumenical understanding, appreciation, and cooperation between Catholics and Pentecostals in the future.
- Pastors, clergy, and others in pastoral ministry may find this report useful for sermon illustrations or for practical advice on how to provide teaching and leadership when these gifts are present.
- Bible and Sunday school teachers in local congregations or parishes may

find this report helpful in explaining the positions of their own churches as well as the positions of their Catholic or Pentecostal partners, by reading it alongside the biblical texts that speak directly of the charisms (e.g. 1 Cor 12-14; Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:7-16, and 1 Pet 4:10-11).

113. The participants in this dialogue have discovered that they share much common ground concerning charisms, though they also recognize that much more work must be done if Catholics and Pentecostals are to reap what the Holy Spirit is sowing in their respective communities. As Pope Francis has observed, “If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us” (*The Joy of the Gospel* 246).

114. Participants in this dialogue offer this report with the hope that it will challenge all readers to deeper faithfulness to the gospel, boundless openness to the Holy Spirit of God, and better appreciation for all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Participants in this round of the International Catholic–Pentecostal Dialogue are convinced that reports such as this may be used as effective tools in bringing Catholics and Pentecostals closer to one another. As they grow closer to Christ and rely upon the Holy Spirit for continued guidance, their hope and prayer is that others will join them in pursuing the Lord’s call to unity (cf. Eph 4:3). Participation in this ongoing journey would make a substantial gift to promoting Christian unity.

## Appendix 1: Participants\*

### *Catholic Participants*

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh, NC, USA. Co-Chair (2011-2015) *S*

Rev. Ján Ďačok, Gregorian Pontifical University, Slovak Republic/Rome (2012) *P*

†Dr. Ralph Del Colle, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, USA (2011)

Dr. Mary Healy, Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, USA / International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) (2013-2015) *P*

Rev. Peter Hocken, Vienna, Austria, (2014) *P (in absence)*

Rev. Lawrence Iwuamadi, Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Nigeria/Switzerland (2013-2015)

Sr. Maria Ko, FMA, Holy Spirit Seminary/Facoltà Auxilium, Hong Kong, China/Rome (2011-2015)

Rev. Marcial Maçaneiro, SCJ, Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, Curitiba, Brazil (2011-2015)

Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, Centro Pro Unione/Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome (2011-2015) *P*

Msgr. Juan Usma Gómez, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican/Colombia, Co-Secretary, (2011-2015) *S*

#### *Pentecostal Participants*

Rev. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Co-Chair 2011, 2013-2015) (Assemblies of God, USA) *S, P*

Rev. David Cole (Acting Co-Chair 2012) (Co-Secretary 2011-2015) (Open Bible Churches, USA, Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America) *S*

Rev. Jelle Creemers (Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium) (2013) *O*

Rev. Nino González (Assemblies of God, USA) (2011)

Rev. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Pentecostal Church of Finland, Finland) (2012) *P*

Rev. S. David Moore (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, USA) (2011-2015)

Mrs. Karen Jorgerson-Murphy (Assemblies of God, USA) (2011) *O*

Rev. Opoku Onyinah (Church of Pentecost, Ghana) (2011-2014) *P*

Dr. Daniel Ramírez (United Methodist Church, USA) (2011) *O*

Rev. Joseph Suico (Assemblies of God, The Philippines) (2011)

Rev. Paul Van Der Laan (Verenigde Pinkster Evangeliegemeenten, The Netherlands) (2011)

Rev. Keith Warrington (Elim Church, England) (2011) *P*

*\*(S: Steering Committee; P: Paper; O: Observer)*

#### Appendix 2: Papers

2011 Rome

Rev. Keith Warrington, “The Charisms in the Church Their Spiritual Significance, Discernment and Pastoral Implications”

Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, “Charisms in the Church: Our Common Ground. A Catholic Perspective”

2012 Helsinki

Rev. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Pentecostal Practice and Theology of Discernment: An Interim Report”

Rev. Fr. Ján Ďačok, SJ, “Discernment: A Catholic Perspective”

2013 Baltimore, MD, USA

Rev. Opoku Onyinah, “Healing: A Pentecostal Perspective”

Dr. Mary Healy, “A Catholic Perspective on Healing”

2014 Sierra Madre, CA, USA

Rev. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “A Pentecostal Perspective on Prophetic Gifts”

Msgr. Peter Hocken, “Prophecy”

#### Appendix 3: [Previous Reports](#)

Final Report 1972-1976, in: Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Information Service [IS]* 32 (1976/III) 32-37 and in: *One in Christ* 12:4 (1976) 309-318.

Final Report 1977-1982, in: *IS* 55 (1984/ II-III) 72-80 and in: *Pneuma* 12:2 (1990) 97-115;

Perspectives on Koinonia, in: *IS* 75 (1990/IV) 179-191 and in: *Pneuma* 12:2 (1990) 117-142

Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness, in: *IS* 97 (1998/I-II) 38-56 and in: *Pneuma* 21:1 (1999) 11-51. The first four reports are gathered in: Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch, eds., *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications / Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 713-779.

On Becoming A Christian: Insights from Scripture and the Patristic Writings with Some Contemporary Reflections, The Report from the Fifth Phase of the International Dialogue between Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders and the Catholic Church (1998-2006), in: *IS* 129 (2008/III), 162-215.

The first five reports are published in Wolfgang Vondey, ed., *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010, 2013) I: 101-198; II: 95-216.

#### Webpages

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index\\_pentecostals\\_it.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_pentecostals_it.htm)

<http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj4/rcpent97.html>

[http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj18/2007RC\\_Pent\\_Dialogue.pdf](http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj18/2007RC_Pent_Dialogue.pdf)

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[1]. Steering Committee Report (Rome, 26 October 1971), in J. Sandidge, *Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1977-1982): A Study of Developing Ecumenism*, (Leuven 1985), vol. 1, p. 52.

[2]. This document uses the terms “charisms” (Greek *charismata*) and “spiritual gifts” (Greek *pneumatikoi*) synonymously, while recognizing that some scholars distinguish between them based on Paul’s usage in 1 Cor 12-14. Among many Pentecostals and Catholics, “spiritual gifts” is a more familiar term than “charisms.” All biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1989).

[3]. Isaiah 11:1-2 describes the Messiah as endowed with the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge and fear of the Lord (the Septuagint adds piety). Catholic tradition has come to view these as the seven sanctifying gifts of the Spirit, given to all Christians in baptism and confirmation (See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I-II, q. 68; Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus* 9; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC, published in 1992], par. 1831). These gifts are thus distinct from the charisms, which are given in different measure to different people.

[4]. Already in the first phase of the Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989) both traditions affirmed the scriptural mandate for spiritual discernment. (cf. Final Report I, 38).

[5]. Jack Hayford, *Glory on Your House* (Tarrytown, NY: Chosen Books, 1991), 208.

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Above was the text of the whole report as it was copied on November 25th, 2016 from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/pentecostals/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_2011-2015\\_do-not-quench-the-spirit\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/pentecostals/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_2011-2015_do-not-quench-the-spirit_en.html).

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Their address for all correspondence:

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity  
VA – 00120 Vatican City

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[0417fr](#) 'N'éteignez pas l'Esprit': les charismes dans la vie et dans la mission de l'église - Rapport de la sixième phase du Dialogue international catholique-pentecôtiste (2011-2015)

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[0203uk](#) ON BECOMING A CHRISTIAN: INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE AND THE PATRISTIC WRITINGS Report of the Fifth Phase of the International Dialogue Between Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders and the Catholic Church (1998-2006)

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[0227uk](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) Baptism in the Holy Spirit A longer section of 0203.

[0205uk](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) Cecil Mel Robeck on the dialogue. Lecture November 2007, Amsterdam

[0002uk](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) EVANGELIZATION, PROSELYTISM AND COMMON WITNESS, The Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue 1990 - 1997 Between the Roman Catholic Church and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders

[0004uk](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) Some central parts of The Report from the Fourth Phase

[0192uk](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) PERSPECTIVES ON KOINONIA, Report from the Third Quinquennium of the Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders 1985 - 1989.

[0010](#) on [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) *Overview of reports and comments in Dutch, English and German.*

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