

## Chapter 2 – Charism (Definition)

- A. Origin
  - The origin of the word Charism is found in the Greek word *jarisma* meaning “generous giving,” “a gift”
  - In the Church, the word Charism maintains the Greek meaning of “Grace” or “Gift,” adding from God, the Pauline meaning of divine origin which the Charism is granted to all baptized for the common good.
  - By definition then – **A Charism is a gift from God.**
- B. Chrisms in the Church
  - There are two elements that contribute to defining what a Charism is:
    - First, the charism is a gift granted for “All” – It is at the service of others
    - Second, the charism is a gift granted to “one” or “some” in particular, not to everyone in the same manner
  - There have always been charisms in the Church
- 1. Definition
  - Paul used various definitions of the word charism: he considered charism to be a spiritual gift granted by God to those whom He has chosen by chance for a Christian vocation. (1Cor 1:7)
  - From this comes the definition of Charism, **as a Gift freely given that God confers upon some people for the good of the community.**
  - Charism then ,can be understood in its theological concept as a spiritual gift granted by God to a believer, who in living a religious experience of special intensity, is capable f making an extraordinary impact on the spiritual life of a group or during a time in history.
  - A Charism therefore is:
    - A gift that proceeds from Grace
    - A gift with a character of public service
    - A gift in service of the Gospel, of which it gives testimony to...
- 2. Diversity of Charisms

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- Charisms are innumerable, of varied importance according to how much or how little they serve on the edification of the Church and above all, of different nature, according to the specific work to be accomplished.
- Lists of Charisms
  - Theologians and authors who have studied the charisms have established different lists and groups of charisms
  - More than lists, they can be considered as diverse forms of, or manifestations of the Spirit (1Cor 12:7)
  - There are many charisms – The most complete list is found in Chapter 12 of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. In it (1Cor 12:8-10), nine charisms can be found that can be separated into three groups
    - Charisms of the mind: Wisdom, Understanding, Discernment of Spirits
    - Charisms of action: Miracles, Healing, Faith
    - Charisms of speech: Prophecy, Tongues, Interpretation
  - Amongst all the charisms – **The primacy is in love.**
    - Love is the charism of all charisms, the most excellent and the one to which all others are subordinate.
- 3. Finality
  - “To each person, the manifestation of the Spirit (the charism) is given for the common good.” (1Cor 12:7)
  - The common good is the edification of the Church, the Body of Christ
  - Charity comes first – Charity is the only reality that will never come to an end
  - The fruits of the charisms are in reality for the sake of evangelization, the manifestation of the power of God among us, of conversion, in order to confirm, as St. Paul tells us in Rom 1:16) that the Gospel is a power of God for the salvation of all those who believe.
  - All charisms should function in harmony with each other... “now the body is not one member, it is many” (1Cor 12:14), this makes it possible for unity to exist by means of mutual complementarity.
  - The charism put into practice as service to our neighbors produces progress in the spiritual life although, not by the charism itself, rather, by the act of service.
  - Charisms are therefore only assistants of evangelization

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- They are granted in order to strengthen the faith of those among whom these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God manifest themselves
- When a charism is exercised as service towards others, it can be confirmed that such exercise is a path of growth in faith and love.