



**TASTE Reflection Questions #4
2018-2019**

Discerning Your Purpose
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1. What is the difference between a talent and a charism? (see page 2)

In Ephesians we read: *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (2:10)*

2. Spend some time in prayer with this verse. Isn't it amazing that our Lord chose YOU for works that YOU ALONE can accomplish? Isn't it amazing that through the power of the Holy Spirit, He equips you with necessary charisms? Do you believe this? Why or why not?

3. Can you think of a time you experienced God's grace (no instance of grace "too small") working in your life for the benefit of another person? Would you like share with us what happened and the impact it had on you?

In his letter to the Corinthians, St Paul tells us, *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7)*

4. Last week we heard about being open and available to do the Lord's work. Have you recognized any opportunities to be open during this past week? Are there areas or opportunities in your own life where you can be more open?

Understanding Charisms & Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts from Catherine of Siena Institute (www.siena.org)



1. WHAT IS A CHARISM (SPIRITUAL GIFT)?

"Charism" is the Greek word used in the New Testament for "favor" or "gratuitous gift." Charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them power both to represent Christ and to be a channel of God's goodness for people. Whether extraordinary or ordinary, all charisms ought to be exercised in the service of God (CCC 2003).

2. ARE ALL BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS GIVE CHARISMS?

Yes. According to Catholic teaching, it is the faith of the Church that you possess one or more of the charisms (CCC 951).

3. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE "GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" AND CHARISMS?

There are gifts of the Holy Spirit that we are given to keep and gifts we are given to give away. The traditional "seven gifts of the Holy Spirit" and the "fruits" of the Spirit are gifts given to us to keep. They are part of our inner transformation as Christians and provide the inner "Christlikeness" necessary for the effective use of our charisms (CCC 1830-1832).

Charisms, on the other hand, are given to us to give away, and are one of the ways God continues to enter the world through our assent and cooperation. They always benefit other people.

4. HOW DO CHARISMS DIFFER FROM NATURAL TALENTS?

Charisms differ from natural talents in several important ways. Charisms are not "in-born;" that is, inherited from our parents; but are given to us by the Holy Spirit, whom we received through Baptism and Confirmation. Secondly, charisms are supernaturally empowering. In other words, they enable us to have an effectiveness that surpasses our natural, human abilities. Finally, we could use a natural talent for an evil purpose, or for our own enjoyment. God will not allow himself to be used for evil, and charisms are always for the benefit of others, rather than ourselves.

As disciples, we offer our entire selves to God - including our personalities, natural talents, education, life experience, and background - to be used for his purposes. But when we serve God, we are not limited to just the gifts with which we were born! Our natural talents can be wonderful tools for God's purposes, and sometimes a charism is added to an existing natural talent by the Holy Spirit after an individual has undergone a deepening conversion.

Some charisms may seem "extraordinary" (such as prophecy, healing, or discernment of spirits) and others quite "ordinary" (such as administration, service, hospitality, or mercy), but all charisms are empowered by God. We use our charisms together with our natural talents and all that we are to serve God and our neighbor.

5. WHY SHOULD I DISCERN MY CHARISMS?

God is calling you to a work of love that will fill your life with purpose and joy, and discerning your charisms can help you discover that call. Understanding your charisms can help you simplify your life and avoid burnout. If you know your gifts, it becomes easier to say "no" when people ask you for things that you don't really have to give. And because it is unusually energizing and fulfilling to exercise a charism, you are much less likely to burn out if you are working in your area of giftedness. The Church is calling all Catholics to participate in a new evangelization, and your charisms empower you to play an essential role.