

# The Gift of Praise

January 30, 2011

I am excited to speak and teach tonight on the "Gift" of Praise. I asked to share on Praise. I wanted to for 3 reasons;

1. Mother of God community has received the *"gift" of praise and the "calling" to Praise by God.*
2. Mother of God community has a *particular heritage* of praise, not identical to everyone else's, but in keeping with the community's charism. What I mean is that there is a diversity within those traditions and generations who share this gift and calling. Our gift and calling to praise God is *particular and is characterized by our charism.*
3. As time passes we must remind, re-explore and revive this gift and calling. My goal is to help to revive this gift and calling in the community.

If this talk doesn't change us then it has missed the mark. How will this talk change us? Listen for the Holy Spirit. Listen to what He wants you to come away with. It is probably a simple point; a conviction, an action, an area to change. LISTEN

Praise is central to our calling as charismatic Christians! Central to who we are as members and friends of the Mother of God community. Central to who we are both individually and corporately.

We have been given the GIFT and CALLING to praise

This talk will be in 3 parts;

1. Introduction to the outpouring of the gift of Praise unique to the time we are living in
2. Reminder of how the Church has always understood Praise
3. The particular calling to praise for Mother of God community

## **I Intro- the "outbreak of Praise upon the earth"**

Praise of God is NOT new. As long as God has been gathering a people He has been praised. But this age in which we are living is unique. This past 100 years the gift of praise has ERUPTED upon this earth in an unprecedented manner.

God has brought this about himself, for His reasons, by His Spirit. This is NOT a program that men thought up.

This EXPLOSION of praise has transformed the Christian Church and the World. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is how God has brought forth this praise like a river over the whole world.

1900- few

1955- 50 million

2010- 600 million, 1/3 of Christians, worship in this way (including 150 million Catholics)

Worldwide- the fastest growing churches, the largest churches (stats)

Why has God done this today, in this way? What are His aims? What is His DESIRE? What is He preparing? Praise is His work! His will. His desire. His initiative.

### **God desired a new intimacy between God and man**

Others talk about today's world. The coldness in our culture. Secularism etc that this was THE WAY that God needed through to get to man. But you cannot deny that charismatic praise is a unique prayer expression where people have an EXPERIENCE of God an EXPERIENCE of His love and where we EXPERIENCE love for God.

### **God has brought people into a whole new INTIMACY**

Praise is;

- joyful
- From the heart
- Engages the entire body-person-
- An outpouring of love- between my heart and God's
- Song of the heart
- Involves repentance
- Comes out of conversion- and recalling/ knowing from where I was saved and for what I am saved

In praise we enthusiastically vocalize how we feel, what we believe, what we desire

- We kneel
- We weep,
- We smile
- We raise our hands
- We jump, we dance

Songs used to be about God. Now they are to God

Praise is a participation in Heavenly worship (Church triumphant)- when we read in REV- Elders and saints, Angels and multitudes, :holy, holy, holy is the lord God almighty..." It makes you think that, here at this prayer meeting, we are being prepared for Heavenly worship!

Praise involves LONGING- Anticipation of Christ returning- Bride longing for her lovers return- She LONGS with all her heart, mind and soul. The Spirit and the bride saying COME!

### **Again; God has desired a new intimacy between God and man**

### **II- Praise has always been present in the life of the Church**

New but not new. The Church has always understood the primacy of the prayer of praise. [but never has it broken out upon the world in the hearts of so many as it is today]

**Scripture**-Many, many scriptures, "if we do not praise you the rocks will cry out!"

**CCC 2639, 2644** (get out the Catechism, look them up J )

**Saint Ignatius of Loyola**- "I must look ONLY to the end for which I am created, that is, for the Praise of God our Lord and for the salvation of my soul"

**The future of the CCR p. 95**, "In the Catholic Charismatic Renewal the Praise is sung and celebrated in continuity with the entire biblical and liturgical tradition of the Catholic Church."

**St. Augustine**- "What does it mean to sing in jubilation? It means to realize that you cannot express in words what your heart is singing. People who are singing... who have begun to exult with joy in the words of a song, as if filled with such great joy that they can no longer express it in words, leave off the syllables of the words and go into the sound of Jubilation. For jubilation is a sound which signifies that the heart is giving utterance to what it cannot say in words. And for whom is such jubilation fitting if not for the ineffable God? For He is ineffable whom one cannot express in words; and if you cannot express him in words, and you cannot remain silent either, then what is left but to sing in jubilation, so that your heart may rejoice without words and your unbounded joy may not be confined by the limits of syllables. Do sing to Him in jubilation."

**Terms**- Doxology, Praise, Adoration, Worship, Jubilation

**Liturgy**- The liturgy is filled with praise. We may not always be tuned into it. Gloria- glory to God in the highest... Lord God, heavenly King we worship you. We praise you for your glory

**God has desired intimacy between God and man**

### **III- We are a people CALLED by God to such Praise**

Lets agree that Praise is both gift and Calling. God has given us this gift and has divinely commissioned/ called us to it. It is an integral expression of our faith & spirituality. There are many very valuable expressions of Faith & Spirituality. We have a particular calling to Praise. Praise is Gods desire, Gods plan, Gods will and God's provision for us.

**At the heart of praise; there is intimacy between us and God.**

- God is able to express Himself to us in a way that goes beyond thinking
- We are able to express love for God with our whole being

The Spirituality of Praise expresses a relationship

There are many benefits for God and man when we praise. There is healing, conviction, Gods love is revealed and we express our love for God etc.

In praise I often realize in praise that my heart and the faculties of my body are doing what they were created/ intended to do. My heart, the seat of affections, was created to adore God. In praise my

tendency to self love gives way to love God. My mouth, proclaiming God's praises, is operating at its greatest vocation. My knees and arms raised is not all they are capable of doing but it is their highest calling.

**I started out by saying that there was a wide diversity in expression and experience of Praise and Worship.** Some groups are more focused on music. Some sing one song after another and that is their praise. It is exuberant and lifts the soul. It is beautiful.

Critical Points for MOG members; Praise in keeping with our charism

Though songs and music has always been important MOG praise is more than that. Our praise shouldn't depend on the music. Yes music lifts our hearts. The truths expressed in the lyrics can help center our minds on truth but our praise goes beyond the songs.

I am seeking to renew our vision for praise that goes beyond singing. Sometimes I find that another song starts but my heart is focused on vocalizing Gods praises (particular truths are alive) and I just keep on praising instead of joining into the song.

**MOG charism- Pondering God's Word and having the life-giving truth revealed**

So I conclude that The MOG community charism of Praise is about Truth & Revelation;

- We praise God because we know the truth and in the process truth becomes more personal, more real
- We will to praise. Praise can be work. We engage our minds to remember our faith in who God is. To recall scriptures.
- Our praise grows because Truth stirs our hearts
- Love and desire grows
- Faith grows
- cycle

As we praise recalling truth [through song, my own prayer life, the scriptures] we pray through another truth and then another. In the midst of this blending of truth, love, desire etc. God opens up the truth and we gain new understanding; revealed knowledge or revelation. Truth that we understood in part we now understand in a new way. A scripture that we are praising with suddenly becomes illuminated and we have understanding that we didn't have before. God's love becomes more real, more comprehensible, more believable.

Praise is a mystical experience of God.

Praise is contemplation; sometimes while praising out loud. Sometimes in silence.

Praise is not an intellectual exercise but it does involve the mind. Truth somehow pierces below intellect/ knowledge to touch the heart. We don't praise long simply on truths. Truth has to pierce the heart. Knowledge is felt as truth is revealed in the heart. From the head to the heart. Praise develops from truth being near enough that we can grasp it.

Truth is brought into our mind and onto our lips in a variety of ways;

- Songs
- Scriptures
- Database
- Heard on brothers lips- pick up on that

There is a stage when truth is revealed, when we are touched with the profoundness of truth when we are moved to worship. Worship is the goal. Where we are no longer working for truth but we KNOW.

#### **Dilemmas in Praise;**

- Not clear on truth [lost clarity, forgotten God's goodness, other things have become attractive (example in marriage- drawn by attractions in the world. Become deceived. Forget
  - Mind is dull
  - Heart is hard
- Distractions
- Sin- given self over to other things

This is why PM leaders often discern a call to stop, examine, repent or cast out.

#### **Ask you all to consider**

1. is Praise a **gift** that God has given?
2. are you **called**, in a particular way, by God to praise?
3. do you see Praise as God has called us to in MOG as beginning with the work of man to proclaim truth and ends as a work of God to reveal himself mystically?

Can we come to SNPM prepared to respond, as a body, to seek His face in praise responding to this calling that he has graciously lavished upon us?

Please work to arrive early each week so we can dedicate ourselves to this calling as a body. It makes a very big difference if we are all here ready to pray at 7:00.

Thank you all and God bless you this week in your personal prayer times that prepare us as a body to praise God together.