

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF PROPHECY

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Mother of God Prayer Meeting
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SOME BACKGROUND NOTIONS

- A. Old Testament vocabulary (see for instance [1 Sam 9:7-10](#))
 - 1. *Nabi*: someone called and calling
 - 2. *Hazeh/roeh*: a seer
 - 3. *Ish Elohim*: a man of God
 - 4. In the Greek Bible, usually *prophetes*: someone who speaks for someone else.

- B. Examples of prophets
 - 1. Abraham ([Gen 20:7](#))
 - 2. Moses ([Amos 2:11](#); [Num 11:24-30](#))
 - 3. [Aaron ([Ex 7:1](#); [Num 12:1-8](#))]
 - 4. Miriam ([Ex 15:20](#))
 - 5. Deborah ([Jgs 4:4](#))
 - 6. Groups of prophets ([1 Sam 10:6-13](#), etc.)
 - 7. Cult prophets ([2 Kgs 22:14-17](#), etc.)
 - 8. Court prophets ([2 Sam 7:11](#), etc.)
 - 9. CLASSICAL PROPHETS

- C. Summary: a prophet is someone called by God and entrusted by him with a message for God's people. He/she is characterized by: love for God's people, a gift of intercession, and fidelity in a vocation that often involves suffering. They loved God's word, often studying their predecessors.

PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. A. John the Baptist ([Lk 1:76](#); [7:26](#), etc.)

- B. "The apostles and prophets" ([Eph 4:11](#)) "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had **called** me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood" ([Gal 1:15-16](#); compare [Jer 1:4-5](#)).

- C. Prophecy in the early Church
 - 1. Agabus: [Acts 11:27-30](#); [21:10-14](#) (note Paul's discernment of this)
 - 2. [1 Pet 4:10-11](#): "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever **speaks**, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever **renders service**, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." *All gifts of "speaking" (teaching, exhorting, prophesying, etc.) pertain in one way or another to prophecy, as do many gestures that deliver a message to God's people.*

- D. St. Paul's teaching on prophecy ([1 Cor 14](#))
 - It is a gift of the Spirit ([1 Cor 12:8-11](#))
 - It is within the Body of Christ ([1 Cor 12-14](#); [Rom 12](#); [Eph 4](#))
 - It is a precious gift for building up the Body ([1 Cor 14:12](#))
 - It must be discerned ([1 Cor 14:29](#))
 - It is never compulsive ([1 Cor 14:32-33](#))
 - It is more useful than tongues ([1 Cor 14:5](#), 39-40)

- E. "Charismatic" gifts and "apostolic" gifts
 - Charismatic gifts are immature. They can be given to anyone and they have a valuable role. They do build up the Body, but that part of the Body most built up is the person himself who has begun to exercise this gift.
 - Apostolic gifts are mature. They abide in a person of solid virtue whose life, both moral and emotional, is in order. Such a person exercises the gift(s) principally for the good of the Body rather than for his own edification, and does not flinch in the face of opposition and suffering. Such gifts are a precious grace for the Church.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- A. We should pray that prophecy be given to the Community, through ourselves or others. Think of the importance of prophetic guidance in the life of the Community.
 - Our understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and its contribution to the Church: "...baptism in the Holy Spirit makes Jesus Christ known and loved as Lord and Savior, establishes or reestablishes an immediacy of relationship with all those persons of the Trinity, and through inner transformation affects the whole of the Christian's life." (Grace for the New Springtime. A Statement of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 6, 1997).
 - The reading of Scripture, the life of prayer, accent on the interior life

- B. We should be eager to prophesy and build up the Body
 - Pray for it during the week
 - "Work" on it, discuss it with someone who is gifted
 - Have the prophecy discerned at the prayer meeting

- C. Things to be alert to
 - That our own personality, emotions, prejudices, pet ideas, etc., not dominate the prophetic word
 - That we not be unduly put out if our word is not discerned as suitable for the whole Body
 - That we not be afraid of "trying" out of love for the brethren

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE STUDY AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Study the life of one of the biblical prophets mentioned in the talk (using Scripture cross-references and notes if helpful). What are some characteristics of this prophet that stand out for you, and that you can learn from?

2. What are the most important prophetic words you have ever received? What do you think are the most important prophetic words or teachings that Mother of God Community has ever received?

3. Are there any fears or obstacles that would prevent you from exercising prophecy or other spiritual gifts? How can you move from exercising gifts in a "charismatic" way to exercising them in an "apostolic" way?
4. Pray through Paul's teaching in [1 Cor 14](#). What do you think are the most important ways that Mother of God Community could draw more fully from this teaching?