Religious Life

Religious Life:

A Reflective Examination of its Charism and Mission for Today

By

Loan Le

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FOREWORD

This book, which originated as a doctoral dissertation prepared at the Sydney College of Divinity in Australia, has the potential to make a major contribution to the evolution of Catholic Religious Life in women's Congregations not only in South Vietnam, the author's home country, but throughout Asia and beyond.

Religious Life as an institution in the Catholic Church can be traced back to the first century. However, the form of the life among women with which most Catholics and others are familiar in the cultural "west" (Europe, United States, British Isles, and countries culturally and religiously related to them in one way or another) is very young in Asia. Many Asian-founded Congregations were started by non-Asian missionaries and the theology of the life bequeathed to them by these founders, like much else in non-northern hemisphere Christianity, was "imported" from the missionary-sending countries who brought Christianity to them before the notion of "inculturation" had gained much theological traction. Furthermore, the theology of this lifeform, in the sending countries, was codified and increasingly legalized by the Vatican throughout the late modern period and this "classical" version of the life was assumed, by the missionaries, to be the definitive one.

Some Congregations, like the Congregation to which the author of this book belongs, were founded just before, during, or immediately after the Second Vatican Council. So these Congregations had not only the challenge of assimilating and adapting a culturally very western institution to Asian sensibilities but also coping with the upheaval that the renewal of Religious Life in western Catholicism was undergoing in the immediate wake of the Council. One might say that they faced the triple challenge of developing Religious Life itself in their context, culturally adapting it to its new Asian context, and going through a "renewal" of something that had not existed among them long enough to be thoroughly enculturated prior to the call for renewal.

Among the most difficult challenges faced by traditional Religious Congregations in the cultural "west" after the Council was the re-theologizing of their life and mission. This was particularly difficult in relation to the issues which are the central concern of this book: charism and mission. Vatican Council II called all Religious Congregations

(though it had in mind, quite clearly, the traditional orders in the "western" Church) to "return" to and revitalize their living of the "spirit and charism" of their founders/foundations, and to bring their ministries into accord with the renewed theology and spirituality of "mission" propounded by the Council. However, the Council documents, although referring to these categories as something commonly understood, were and are of little help in developing a theological understanding of either concept, "charism" or "mission", or of how either is related to the ministry or ministries, that is, the evangelizing works, such as catechizing, teaching, nursing, and social work, for which women's Religious Congregations are so well known both in their home countries and in their cross cultural missionary settings.

Loan Le's excellent theological education has prepared her to take these very difficult "practical" questions to new theological depths, an absolute necessity if the future of these new Congregations or the new cultural versions of older Congregations which now have provinces or foundations in non-western settings, are to survive and thrive in these new contexts. She correctly discerned that it was vital for these new Congregations to understand deeply and clearly what the Council was simply taking for granted before they could engage such questions as whether, to what extent, and how they, in their very different contexts could "renew" and "adapt" what, in fact, they had not actually lived,—(Le's Congregation, e.g., was founded three years before Vatican II began)—namely, the history that was being called to renewal and transformation by the Council.

The situation is complicated by the fact that many, if not most, of these new Congregations were founded, as was Le's, by western missionaries (very often men) who bequeathed to them a form of Religious Life assumed to be "perennial", "classical", even divinely-ordained. (Le's Congregation, e.g., was founded by a French bishop even as Vietnam itself was being convulsed by the Vietnam War). This classical model included not only relatively external features of the life such as habits, horaria, living arrangements, governmental structures, devotional practices, ways of carrying on ministry, and so on but also spiritualities and theologies of life and ministry. Le's concern is with the latter issues, the spirituality and theological foundations, because she realizes (correctly, in my opinion) that the theological underpinnings of the lifestyle elements are the justification for and the legitimation of those elements.

By investigating in depth the two categories, "charism" or the foundational and shaping inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and "mission" or evangelical vocation and impulse, which are the deep resources of the identity and action of a Congregation, Le attempts to establish the

theological meaning of these terms, suggest how they can be discerned in the experience of a particular Congregation, determine how they are related to each other and together to the ministry(ies) of the Congregation.

Although her project is large and formidable her method has two notable strengths. First, she has chosen to place the questions, and keep them, not in a deductive systematic theological framework but in a broader context of Scripture, history, and the social sciences in interaction with theology. Such a framework allows for a more inductive investigation that stands a better chance of taking appropriate account of the cultural influences on Religious Life in a non-European/western context as well as distinguishing what is truly of the nature of the life itself and what is more culturally and historically relative.

Second, she chose to focus her research by concentrating concretely on the work of two theorists of modern/contemporary Religious Life as resources for her own thinking about Religious Life in the 21st century in Asia. The theorists whose work she studies and analyzes are well-chosen for her purpose precisely because, though both are Religious, they are in other respects quite different and complementary. One is a male Religious, Jean-Marie Roger Tillard (1927–2000) who was a European-educated French Canadian, a cleric, a Dominican, i.e., a member of a particular (mendicant) form of Religious Life, who worked on the theology of Religious Life just before and during the Council. The other is myself (1936–), a woman Religious, who is an American, a member of a Congregation that is classified in canon law as "apostolic", whose major theological work on Religious Life began just after the Council. Tillard was, by profession, a systematic theologian with a particular interest in sacramental theology and ecumenism. My specializations are in Scripture and spirituality with a particular interest in their connecting link, hermeneutics. This variety and balance, with emphasis on both continuity and development, lends a breadth and depth to Le's study that will make it especially valuable for reflection by its intended audience.

It will be clear to readers that the purpose of Le's work is not to solve the serious questions it engages—a project that would be pre-mature at this point—but to limn the situation that calls for serious reflection by Religious and theologians but that must be carried on in diverse cultural and ecclesiastical contexts. By finding a way to make typical major approaches to these questions available to those who must do the reflection, and using this material to further refine the questions, Loan Le has made a valuable contribution to what must be an ongoing discussion and discernment among Religious, both those in long-established Congregations and especially those in Congregations maturing in new

cultural and ecclesial contexts. She lays out the questions, provides foundational material for engaging them, draws out some tentative implications, and leaves the discussion open to what will emerge.

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INTRODUCTION

After the publication of the Vatican II documents—*Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chapter VI (21 November 1964) and *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life (28 October 1965)—Religious Institutes began a period of intense study and research into the charism of their own particular Institute. The outcome of such study has in fact led to tensions in some Religious Institutes between the interpretation of their Institute's charism and its relation to both the mission of Religious Life and that of their particular Institute. This has been most noticeable in the case of apostolic Religious Institutes. After studying their origins and discerning appropriate ways they might respond to the needs of their contemporary world, some apostolic Religious Institutes have experienced considerable confusion in interpreting their particular charism and mission—whether their charism was deeply related to their mission or whether the relationship is merely accidental; whether their mission was an expression of their charism or whether it is, in fact, the charism itself; whether their charism is confined to the carrying out of a particular mission, or whether it goes deeper than mission and is, in fact, the essential spirit that nourishes and inspires daily life, irrespective of what they may be doing in the name of mission.

It is now more than fifty years since the process of the renewal of Religious Life began in response to the Second Vatican Council. How well has the meaning of charism and mission in relation to Religious Life been understood and integrated within Religious Institutes since this Council? A survey from the literature concerning Religious Life shows that for decades prior to Vatican II, indeed right up to the present day, a good number of theologians have been involved in researching and writing about Religious Life, its theological meaning and purpose, especially with respect to its charism and mission. Despite such exhaustive work, the significance of charism and mission with regard to Religious Life remains an open question. Merkle's assessment of this situation in 1998 could still be relevant, "We live in a situation of a paradox today. After thirty years of renewal of religious life, its future and meaning stand in question."[1]

[1] Judith A. Merkle, *A Different Touch: A Study of the Vows in Religious Life* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), vii.

This book aims to address the question, "What then is the theological understanding of charism and mission in relation to Religious Life and in what way might they relate to each other?"

The research focus of this book will remain within the context of the Roman Catholic tradition. Since Religious Life is a part of the life of the Church of God, its charism and mission cannot be understood outside of the context of the Church. The charism of Religious Life will therefore be examined within the context of the life of the Church and the mission of Religious Life will be investigated within the context of the Church's understanding of its mission. The scope of the study on "charism" extends from the early Church until now; that on "mission" extends from the Second Vatican Council to the present day.

While including a comprehensive review of the literature relating to charism and mission with regard to Religious Life, the research centres specifically on the works of two contemporary theologians, Jean-Marie Roger Tillard OP (1927–2000) and Sandra Marie Schneiders IHM (1936–), who have reflected at length on charism and mission in the period leading up to Vatican II and then on the implementation of its documents regarding Religious Life. Tillard's work on Religious Life took place during and after the Second Vatican Council, from the early 1960's to 1980's, concentrating significantly on the renewal of Religious Life, while Schneiders writes on Religious Life two decades after the Council, from 1980's to 2014, reflecting the dynamic developments that had occurred in Religious Life. Though both are members of Religious Institutes within the Roman Catholic tradition, they offer theological understandings of Religious Life from the perspectives of different genders and from different cultural backgrounds.

Tillard's theology of Religious Life, in Maldari's words, "originates in and is nourished by the work of Vatican II and by his reading of the contemporary *sensus fidelium*."[2] Notably, as a systematic theologian with a specific interest in sacramental theology and "communion" in the context of ecclesiology and ecumenism, Tillard was drawn to concentrate his writing on Religious Life as a "sacrament of God's presence" in the mystery of the Church. This vision led Tillard to critique the effort of a "skin-deep" renewal of Religious Institutes, such as rewriting Constitutions and Regulations and simply adjusting the structures of community life. For

[2] Donald C. Maldari, "The Identity of Religious Life: The Contributions of Jean-Marie Tillard Critically Examined," *Louvain Studies* 14 (Winter 1989), 325; see Tillard's articles in Jean-Marie Roger Tillard & Yves Congar, eds., *L'Adaptation et la rénovation de la vie religieuse: Décret "Perfectae Caritatis"*, Unam Sanctam Series 62 (Paris: Cerf, 1967).

Tillard, Religious were experiencing "a crisis in faith", and he attempted to develop a renewal *in depth* through engaging in a lucid and serene examination of what is fundamental to living Religious Life.[3]

Schneiders, on the other hand, with her specializations in Scripture and Christian spirituality and particularly with her precise theology rooted in the experience of women Religious, has developed a theology of Religious Life, applying a methodology which she calls "inductive". For her, "developing a theology of religious life today is not a deductive process of drawing out the implications of an *a priori* definition; nor is [it] the result of theological reflection on religious life a relatively static synthesis which can be used as a prescriptive guide for the living of 'true' religious life."[4] Rather, it is "an inductive process beginning in a praxis which is always developing."[5] She describes this inductive process as "an ongoing project involving three constantly interacting moments: description, interpretation, and evaluation."[6] In other words, it is a process of "describing and analysing what religious life is, as it is actually lived, from a whole set of perspectives."[7]

The book has two main parts. The first part consisting of three chapters, focuses on a theological investigation of the meaning of charism in relation to Religious Life. Chapter one recalls how the concept of charism has been understood in the tradition of the Catholic Church and become the subject of fresh study in recent times. This chapter will examine the writings of the Apostle Paul, the Tradition literature, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and theological thought concerning charism since the Second Vatican Council. It will then investigate how Religious Life has come to be understood as a charism of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter two studies Tillard's writing on the charismatic nature of Religious Life. Tillard believes that "Religious Life is charismatic"; it belongs to a mysterious realm of reality, to the activities that the Holy Spirit of God raises up.[8] This chapter will explore how Tillard understands the concept of charism and how he applies the term charism in relation to

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[3] Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, "The Theological Viewpoint: Religious Life, a Choice Rooted in Faith," in *Faith and Religious Life*, edited by Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, et al. (Ottawa: Canadian Religious Conference**,** 1971), 13–36.
[4] Sandra M. Schneiders, *New Wineskins: Re-Imagining Religious Life Today* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), 18.
[5] Schneiders, *New Wineskins*, 21.
[6] Schneiders, *New Wineskins*, 19.
[7] "A Conversation with Sandra M. Schneiders," 6.
[8] Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, *Religieux aujourd'hui* (Brussels: Lumen Vitae, 1970), 55.

Religious Life in general, to a Religious Institute's founder, and to a particular Religious Institute itself.

Chapter three reviews Schneiders' insights on the subject of the charism of Religious Life. From her readings of Vatican II, Schneiders claims that,

> One of the most ambiguous contributions of the Council to the renewal of Religious Life was its evocation of the theological category of 'charism' in relation to the life. The primary context for the evocation of this category was the effort to recognize the distinctiveness (virtually repressed by the revision of Canon Law in 1917 and the revisions of constitutions which followed it) of various Religious families in the Church and to validate appeal to that distinctiveness in the process of renewal of congregations and orders. This important and invigorating emphasis led not only to deep reflection on the founding inspiration and unique identity of various groups but also to considerable confusion, and even disillusionment in some quarters.[9]

This assessment leads Schneiders to conclude that the theology of charism has not been "a particularly developed category" in the conciliar documents. She regards this as "a blessing" and has therefore made an effort to invest the term charism "with appropriate and usable meaning compatible with its fundamental meaning of 'grace given to an individual [or to a group?] for the Church'."[10] While defining Religious Life as a charism, Schneiders has outlined three levels of charism in relation to that life, namely, the charism of Religious Life itself, the charism of a form of Religious Life, and the charism of a particular Religious Institute.[11] This chapter will examine how Schneiders has interpreted the category of charism with regard to Religious Life.

The second part of the book, consisting of three chapters, will consider the meaning of the mission of Religious Life. The first chapter, chapter four, deals with the wide-ranging perspective on mission in the Church documents and other theological literature. Central to this chapter will be

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[9] Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*, 283.
[10] Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*, 284.
[11] In fact, in her writings, Schneiders outlines four levels of charism in relation to Religious Life: the charism of Religious Life itself, the monastic and ministerial charism (focusing more on the latter), the charism of a particular Religious Institute, and the charism of the individual called to Religious Life. However, she does not pay much attention to the last one and it seems that this last one could fit better in the arguments of other levels. Therefore, the review will focus on the three levels.

the developments in theological understanding of mission since Vatican II. By way of anticipation, the chapter will try to find answers to these questions: where does mission come from, what is the mission of the Church, and what is the mission of Religious Life?

Chapter five reflects on Tillard's writings relating to the mission of Religious Life. Tillard wrote extensively in response to the crisis within Religious communities, especially since Vatican II, when Religious found themselves confronted with many questions concerning the meaning and purpose of Religious Life in the Church and in the world. This chapter will examine Tillard's reflections on some problematic views about the mission of Religious Life, his understanding of the mission of the Church and Religious Life, and how he resolved certain problems concerning the mission of Religious Life.

Chapter six focuses on Schneiders' insights on the mission of Religious Life. Returning to the Gospel for the meaning of "world", Schneiders has based her theology of the mission of Religious Life on the basis of "Religious Life as an alternate world" within the world. This chapter will investigate the problems that Schneiders identifies with regard to the mission of Religious Life, how she understands the mission of the Church and of Religious Life, and how she then responds to certain ensuing problems relating to the mission of Religious Life.

The concluding chapter of the book, chapter seven, aims to clarify the theological understanding of charism and mission in relation to Religious Life, the innate connection between charism and mission in the life of each Religious Institute and their fundamental role in the understanding of Religious Life.

PART I:

CHARISM AND ITS RELATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

CHAPTER ONE

CHARISM: MEANING AND DEVELOPMENT

There are different schools of thought among scriptural and theological scholars concerning the word "charism". In this chapter, I will examine how the concept of charism was understood in the tradition of the Catholic Church and has been given new life in the contemporary world through the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. By way of anticipation, my examination will firstly, focus on the time when the term first appeared with its religious connotations in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Secondly, it will explore how the term came to be understood in Tradition. Thirdly, it will consider to what extent the term charism features in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Fourthly, it will identify the development of theological thought concerning charism since the Second Vatican Council. Finally, it will investigate the different interpretations of charism in relation to Religious Life.

Because the terms *charisma* and "charism" have been used interchangeably in Church literature, I will make a distinction between the use of the word *charisma* (plural *charismata*) in the writings of the Apostle Paul and in the theological Tradition, and the use of the word "charism" in the documents of Vatican II and contemporary theological literature.

1.1 Charisma in the Writings of the Apostle Paul

In the New Testament the term *charisma* (χάρισμα) appears seventeen times—sixteen times in Paul's writings and once in 1 Peter 4:10.[1] There is

[1] Romans 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; and 1 Peter 4:10.

According to Potts, "Paul's letters were written in Greek ... Christian theologians writing in Latin in the second century transliterated χάρισμα into the Roman alphabet, resulting in 'charisma'" (John Potts, *A History of Charisma* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 5–6).

a degree of scholarly acknowledgement that it was the Apostle Paul who introduced *charisma* into Christian vocabulary with particular religious connotations.[2] Although the word *charisma* was found in ancient literature, its use was incredibly rare—once in Theodotion's translation of Psalm 31:22; twice in manuscripts of the Septuagint (Ecclus 7:33; 38:30), with no reference to God; and twice in Philo's *Legume Allegoria,* with reference to creation (however, some commentators on Scripture believe that the word *charisma* was not used by Philo in the original text, but was added by the later editor).[3] John Potts, who has recently published a work on the history of *charisma*, concludes, "most scholars accept that Paul's use of the term 'charisma' was original."[4] In this sense, Paul can be regarded as the one who introduced the word *charisma* into Christian theological language.

As part of his analysis of Paul's use of *charisma*, Enrique Nardoni proposes that Paul probably adapted *charisma* from the colloquial language of his time where the term signified "gift" or "present".[5] In

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[2] Wilfrid Harrington, "Charism," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), 180; Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Communion in the New Testament," in *Essays on New Testament Themes,* Studies in Biblical Theology 41, (London: SCM Press, 1964), 64; Ivan Havener, "Charism and Ordered Ministries in the New Testament: An Overview 1Cor 12: 28–30," in *Church and Ministry: Chosen Race, Royal Priesthood, Holy Nation, God's Own People*, edited by Daniel C. Brockopp, Brian L. Helge, and David G. Truemper (Valparaiso, IN: Institute of Liturgical Studies, 1982), 29; Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 36.

[3] James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 206; Siegfried Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 2–3; Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 35; Kenneth Berding, "Confusing Word and Concept in 'Spiritual Gifts': Have We Forgotten James Barr's Exhortations?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, 1 (March 2000), 40; see also Hans Conzelmann, "χάρισμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 402–403.

Concerning *charisma* in Philo, James R. Harrison, in *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 279–280, notes that "there remain text-critical argument among scholars concerning the presence of charisma in *Leg. All*;" citing U. Brockhaus, J. Wobbe, and Hans Conzelmann.

[4] Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 35; see also Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit,* 206.

[5] Enrique Nardoni, "The Concept of Charism in Paul," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55, 1 (January 1993), 69; see also Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 280.

Greek, *charisma* is derived from the root word *charis* (grace), and is also related to both *charizesthai* (to show oneself generous) and *eucharistein* (to give thanks). Being formed with the aid of the suffix *ma*, *charisma* expresses the outcome of the action signified by the verb, and thus has the general meaning of "freely bestowed gift", or "gifts of grace", or "gracious gift".[6] In order to grasp Paul's adaptation of *charisma*, it is essential to understand the meaning of its root—*charis*. Potts explains,

> In Paul's time charis possessed a remarkable 'semantic versatility', encompassing favour, grace, thanks, gratitude and the acts of bestowing or receiving gifts. Paul adopted and adapted the term for his own purposes. While he used the Greek word, Paul's notion of grace was influenced by the Hebrew concept denoted by the root *hnn* (the giving of favour or grace) used throughout the Old Testament, translated as 'charis' in the Septuagint. Yet Paul transformed charis (and by implication its Hebrew equivalent) by emphasising the free gift of God's grace.[7]

A degree of scholarly agreement shows that Paul developed his use of *charisma* in the context of a theology built on *charis* (grace).[8] However,

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[6] Avery Dulles, "The Charism of the New Evangelizer," in *Retrieving Charisms for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Doris Donnelly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 34; Albert Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987),* vol. 1, edited by René Latourelle (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 440; Francis A. Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal: A Biblical and Theological Study* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1982), 17; Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata,* 1–2; L. Philip Bames, "Miracles, Charismata and Benjamin B. Warfield," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 67, 3 (1995), 221–222; see also William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* revised and edited by Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1078–1081; Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 1978; David L. Baker, "*The* Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12–14," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 46, 4 (October–December 1974), 225; Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* translated and revised by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 58–59.

[7] Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 33.

[8] Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 17; Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata,* 2, citing P. Bonnetain, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément 3:1002; Hans Conzelmann, "χάρις," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 393–395; Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 33–34; see also Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 202–209.

while adapting *charisma* from *charis*, the sense in which Paul uses the word *charisma* is always a "preferred term for giftedness" bestowed by God.[9] It is never applied to a gift given by one human being to another. This is different from the use of the word *charis* itself, which is sometimes used to designate a favour given by a person.[10]

The question then arises, if Paul invented the word *charisma*, did he use it as a technical term? According to Kenneth Berding, "To be considered a technical or somewhat technical term, a word must be used consistently in related contexts with more or less the same meaning."[11] A good number of scriptural scholars agree that Paul used *charisma* sixteen times with a broad semantic range.[12] It refers to the gift of redemption and eternal life (Romans 5:15–16; 6:23); to the gift of particular blessings (Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 7:7); to the gift of being rescued from danger of death (2 Corinthians 1:11); to the gift of specific endowments upon individuals for the upbuilding of the Christian community, or in Paul's words the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:7; 7:7; 12: 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; Romans 12:6; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). Albert Vanhoye expresses it this way: Paul's use of *charisma* "could be given its general sense of 'free gift' (*Geschenk, Gabe*)." This general meaning is then qualified by other words in various contexts and in a way that varies from one text to another; "these variations prove that no fixed concept of charism yet existed."[13]

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[9] Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata,* 10.

[10] Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 457.

[11] Berding, "Confusing Word and Concept in 'Spiritual Gifts'," 41.

[12] Nardoni, "The Concept of Charism in Paul," 68–74; Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 454–459; Berding, "Confusing Word and Concept in 'Spiritual Gifts'," 40–43; Norbert Baumert, "'Charism' and 'Spirit–Baptism': Presentation of an Analysis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12, 2 (April 2004), 149; Norbert Baumert, "Charisma und Amt bei Paulus," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, edited by Albert Vanhoye (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1986), 203–228; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 262–267; Max Turner, "Spiritual Gifts Then and Now," *Vox Evangelica* 15 (1985), 30–31; Donald A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 21; John Koenig, *Charismata: God's Gifts for God's People* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 95–104; Havener, "Charism and Ordered Ministries in the New Testament," 29–30; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 33.

[13] Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 456.

Given this range of meanings in Paul's writings, the use of *charisma* does not have a technical meaning by itself. Concerning the relationship between *charismata* and the Spirit in Pauline writings, Vanhoye claims that while this relationship is thrown into strong relief in 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7–11, it cannot be said that there is any clear link between *charisma* and the Holy Spirit in Paul's teachings.[14] Gordon Fee also makes the crucial point that in Paul's writings the word *charisma* "on its own … has little or nothing to do with the Spirit; it picks up Spirit overtones only by context or by explicit qualifiers."[15] This is also supported by Norbert Baumert who states that in Paul's writings *charisma* is not "a technical term for 'certain capacities given by the Spirit for the upbuilding of the church', as is usually said," whereas charism today is a "technical term", having "a strong pneumatological connotation".[16]

Some Pauline exegetes accept that a connection between Paul's use of *charisma* with the contemporary understanding of charism is only found in 1 Corinthians 7:7; 12:4–11; and Romans 12:3–8.[17] For example, Francis Sullivan writes,

> the word *charisma* is found in association with the equally Pauline notion of the Christian community as 'body of Christ'. Here the word appears in the plural and describes the gifts of grace which are distributed among the members of the community, with a view to the role or function which each is to have. Our modern word 'charism' corresponds to this … distinctively Pauline use of the word…. The charisms are the manifold ways in which the graciousness of God is manifested in the lives of individual Christians, especially by making them effective instruments of grace to others in the body of Christ.[18]

Vanhoye agrees with Sullivan, admitting that "in these texts, it seems possible to translate *charisma* as 'charism'."[19] This point will be discussed in detail later. I now focus on how *charisma* was understood within the Catholic Tradition.

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[14] Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 457.
[15] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence,* 33.
[16] Baumert, "'Charism' and 'Spirit–Baptism'," 149–150.
[17] Dulles, "The Charism of the New Evangelizer," 34; Havener, "Charism and Ordered Ministries in the New Testament," 30; Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 455–456; Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 18.
[18] Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, 17–18.
[19] Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 456.

1.2 Charisma within Tradition

From among the writings of the early Church Fathers, there is little reference to the theology of *charisma.* For example, Arthur Piepkorn discovered just a few references to *charisma* in the literature of the Apostolic Fathers. The word *charisma* appeared only once in the first letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthian Christian community; once in the Didache; and four times in the documents of Ignatius of Antioch.[20] Piepkorn notes that in all of these references, the term *charisma* "does not imply anything that is abnormal or irregular. It is to be recognized as a gift of God which He bestows—as He bestows His *charis*—in accordance with His own sovereign decision and for which He is to receive glory in Jesus Christ."[21] For Piepkorn, whatever the *charisma* may be in an individual and concrete case, the use of the term by the Apostolic Fathers has the same meaning as Paul's use of the term; "*charisma* implies nothing more than 'a gratuitous gift of God'."[22]

While the Apologists offer little more detail regarding the use of *charisma*,[23] Johannes Oort found that the meaning of the term was gradually, over time, linked with the Holy Spirit and a variety of ecstatic phenomena associated with healing, prophecy and glossolalia.[24] In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin Martyr claims that, "God imparts charismata from the grace of His Spirit's power to those who believe in Him according as He deems each man worthy thereof."[25] In the same text, he

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[20] Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 1, 38; *Didache* 5, 2; Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 17, 2 (once); *Letter to Polycarp* 2:2 (once); *Letter to Smyrneans* (twice); cited in Piepkorn, "Charisma in the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers," 372–373.

[21] Piepkorn, "Charisma in the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers," 373.

[22] Piepkorn, "Charisma in the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers," 386–387.

[23] Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 11.

The Apologists is a name given to a group of Christian writers, primarily in the 2nd century, who attempted to defend Christianity and criticize the Greco-Roman culture (J. Tixeront**,** *A Handbook of Patrology***,** Early Christian Writings, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/tixeront/section1-2.html [accessed 9 June 2014]; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Apologist," http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/30100/Apologist [accessed 9 June 2014]).

[24] Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4–5.

[25] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 87; cited in Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 131.

points out the diversity of *charismata*, "for one receives the Spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another the fear of God."[26] Further, in his *Apology* he refers to *charismata* in miraculous healings and exorcisms.[27]

Likewise, Irenaeus of Lyon testifies to the relation between *charismata* and the Holy Spirit. According to Irenaeus, "where the Spirit of God is, there is also the Church and all grace."[28] In his readings of Irenaeus, Oort describes him as "a theologian of the Holy Spirit *par excellence*" whose work reveals the Spirit as "the source of all *charismata*."[29] Oort comments that while speaking of "the *charismata* as living realities in the church of his time," Irenaeus gave information about the exercise of glossolalia, prophecy and healing.[30] As Irenaeus wrote,

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[26] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 39, 2; cited in Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4. Oort cited from E. J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), 136; M. Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris dialogus cum Tryphone,* Patristische Texte und Studien 47 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 135.

[27] Justin Martyr, *Apology* 2, 6; cited in Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 11.

It would be useful at this stage to consider the Montanist movement in the latter half of the second century. According to Stephanou, "Montanism (whose founder was Montanus) emerged sometime between 173 and 180.... Montanus and his numerous followers were accused by their contemporaries of, among other things, exercising this charisma [the prophetic gift] in a state of frenzy and convulsion.... On the one hand, its alleged extremes and bizarre expressions of prophecy are condemned. On the other, the Montanists are accused of saying that prophecy is not a permanent part of the Body of Christ" (Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 132; see also Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 11–17; Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit,"3).

Tertullian (160–220), while being Bishop of Carthage, vigorously defended the church against Gnostic heresies; however, in his later life, 'Tertullian supported the Montanists, and quarrelled sharply with the church as a result' (Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 70–71).

[28] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* (Against Heresies) 3, 24, 1, in *Sources Chrétiennes* 211, 474; cited in Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: Doctrine & Confession," 2.

[29] Johannes van Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: Doctrine & Confession," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67, 3 (2011), 2; see also Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4.

[30] Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4.

> we also hear that many brethren in the church, who have prophetic *charismata*, speak in all kinds of tongues (*universis linguis*/*pantodapais ... glōssais*) through the Spirit and reveal the hidden things of people, for their benefit, and explain the mysteries of God.[31]
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> For some (of Christ's true disciples) do certainly and truly drive out demons, so that those who are thus cleansed from the evil spirits often believe and join the church. Others have foreknowledge of future things, they see visions and utter prophetic words. Again others heal the sick by laying their hands upon them and let them rise up healthy. Moreover, as we have said, the dead even have been raised up and lived with us for many years. What shall I say further? It is impossible to name the number of all *charismata*, which the church, dispersed throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ.[32]

Oort maintains that for Irenaeus, *charismata*—gifts of the Spirit—are embedded in the life of the Church. The critical criterion for the genuineness of the *charismata* is that "they are inspired by love, meaning that they serve to benefit the whole congregation (*Adv. Haer*. 4, 33, 7)."[33]

By the mid-third century, in Ronald Kydd's words, "the tide of charismatic experience within the Church has ebbed considerably."[34] Potts agrees with Kydd, saying that "although the charismata still preserved a place in the writing of theologians ..., that place shrank within church doctrine in the third century."[35] Ted Campbell observes that while there were references to *charismata* in fourth century Church literature, there were "none so dramatic as previous cases."[36] Eusebius, Bishop of

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[31] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5, 6, 1, in *Sources Chrétiennes* 153, 73; cited in Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4.

[32] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 2, 32, 4, in *Sources Chrétiennes* 294, 340–342; cited in Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4.

[33] Oort, "The Holy Spirit and the Early Church: The Experience of the Spirit," 4. More discussion on Irenaeus on prophetic *charisma* is found in Ash, "Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church," 235–336; Frederick F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1958), 217.

[34] Ronald Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 79. Kydd's survey and analysis of the early Church literature, which ends at 320, shows that there is no evidence of charismatic experience within the Church after 260 (Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*, 4).

[35] Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 77.

[36] Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 11.

Caesarea and also a church historian and a biblical scholar,[37] spoke of the *charismata* as "flashes of light that make the church radiate."[38] With reference to 1 Corinthians 12:8, while reaffirming the diversity of *charismata* in the Church, Eusebius mentioned only wisdom, knowledge, and faith.[39] Athanasius of Alexandria spoke of the *charismata* "which the Spirit divides to each and bestowed from the Father through the Logos," mentioning specifically at least two *charismata*, "miracles" and "the gift of discernment".[40] Basil the Great stated in his homily *On Faith*, "We believe therefore and confess one only true and good God ... and one only Spirit, the Paraclete Who divideth and worketh and charismata that come of God."[41] Cyril of Jerusalem referred to *charismata* in general, affirming that prophecy and exorcism were still exercised in the Church in his day.[42] In his commentary on Cyril, Campbell says that "Cyril's statement might indicate no more than that the institutionalized offices of 'Prophet' and 'Exorcist' were recognized in his day."[43]

There are different points of view on the lack of explicit evidence of *charismata* in the Patristic writings. Eusebius Stephanou observes,

> The primary purpose of these earliest writings was to meet certain practical needs that had arisen within the Church. They were not formal expositions of faith and practice. They were not exhaustive treatises. They were primarily concerned about correcting certain deviations and problems pertaining to discipline and unity. Obviously, the charismatic aspect of the Church's life was not controversial and there was no specific need to even mention the charismata.... Other issues that touched on pastoral leadership

[37] Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1984), 129.

[38] Eusebius, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 6, 2; cited in Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 135.

[39] Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 76, 16–17; cited in Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 136; and in Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 11–12.

[40] Athanasius, *Epistle*, 3, 5; 49, 9; 1, 4; cited in Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 136–137; see also Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 12.

[41] Basil, *On Faith*; cited in Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 138.

[42] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catecheses*, 13, 23; 16, 12; cited in Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 12.

[43] Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," 12.

> demanded more attention because of the perils of false doctrine and disunity.[44]

This assessment is supported by Hunter who says that the Patristic writings are "primarily pastoral—not theological—in orientation."[45]

Nigel Scotland brings a different perspective, claiming that the practice of *charismata* evidently did not finish with the passing of the Apostles; however it appears "to have declined somewhat once the Christian Church became the established faith of the Roman Empire following Constantine's conversion in 312 AD." Moreover, he adds that "the development of a church hierarchy and the associated growth in power of the bishops gradually damped down the gifts of the Holy Spirit."[46]

During the sixth and seventh centuries, "the experience of the charismatic life was gradually confined to those who embraced the monastic state."[47] Kilian McDonnell and George Montague link this with the Syrian ascetic movement.

> With the Syrians, the charisms became monasticized. They are for the ascetics and only for the 'perfect' ones. This ascetical understanding became the dominant one for centuries following. Though not limited to monastics, the charisms were thought to belong to consummate holiness, even become a necessary sign for the canonization of saints.[48]

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[44] Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 128–129.

[45] Hunter, "Tongues-Speech: A Patristic Analysis," 125.

[46] Nigel Scotland, "Signs and Wonders in the Early Catholic Church 90–451 and their Implications for the Twenty-First Century," *European Journal of Theology* 10, 2 (2001), 166.

[47] Stephanou, "Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," 142.

[48] Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, 2nd revised edition (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 381.

According to McDonnell and Montague, "The Syrian ascetic movement was an indigenous manifestation, independent of the early monastic movement in Egypt. Possibly Syrian monasticism traces its history back to the beginnings of Christianity. Some evidence exists that Syrian monasticism was only 'a continuation (though subject to certain exaggerations) of discipleship, taken literally by some as an imitation of the poor, homeless, celibate Jesus.' Syrian culture gave Syrian monasticism its own distinctive character. In a more pronounced way than its Egyptian counterpart, Syrian monasticism was open to religious experience" (McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 304). Here McDonnell and Montague based their argument on Sebastian Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Variorum, 1984), 1:3, and R. Murray, "The Features of Earliest

Charismata are manifested only in the life of those who die to the world. They are just "for the few and are linked to monastic holiness."[49] Concerning the literature of this period, Potts remarks that the word *charisma* "faded into disuse" in the Church documents.[50]

It is the thirteenth century before we see any real further development in the theological understanding of *charisma* through the writing of Thomas Aquinas. Although Aquinas himself did not use the term *charisma* explicitly in his writings, there is agreement among theologians that Aquinas' term of *gratia gratis data* is to be identified with *charisma*.[51] In the course of his treatise on grace in *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas distinguished two forms of grace—*gratia gratum faciens* (sanctifying grace) and *gratia gratis data* (grace gratuitously given).[52] Serge-Thomas Bonino summarizes these two forms of grace thus,

> Sanctifying grace (or grace *gratum faciens*) is a created participation in the divine nature, as much at the level of being as of acting. It brings about one's union with the last end, which is God. Graces gratuitously given (*gratis datae*)—or charisms—are given to some so that they may dispose

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Christian Asceticism," in *Christian Spirituality*, edited by Peter Brooks (London: SCM Press, 1975), 66.

[49] McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 336.

[50] Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 94. For Potts, though "the word charisma faded into disuse, it would be imprudent to conclude that the idea of charisma lay dormant;" the idea of *charisma*—as spiritual gift, including supernatural aspects—still emerged in the theological writings.

[51] Serge-Thomas Bonino, "Charisms, Forms, and States of Life," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, edited by Stephen J. Pope (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 340–341; Dulles, "The Charism of the New Evangelizer," 34; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, vol. 45, "Prophecy and other Charisms," translated by Roland Potter (London: Blackfrairs, 1970); Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' after Vatican II," 441; John Joy, "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal: Theological Interpretation of the Experience," *Antiphon* 9, 2 (2005), 151 (note 44); Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 99–100.

Raniero Cantalamessa, in his book, *Come, Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator*, translated by Denis & Marlene Barrett (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 174, states that Scholastic theology defines "a charism as *gratia gratis data* (grace given gratuitously)."

[52] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, I–II. q.111, a.1, http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/htm (accessed 15 October 2010); see also Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishers, 2003), 115.