



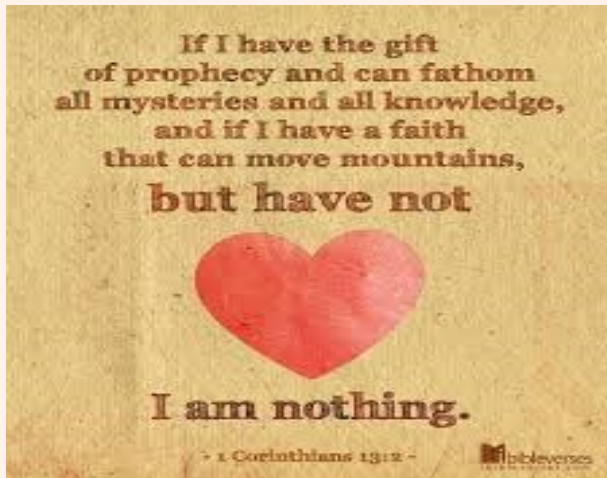
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The Love of God and The Gift of Prophecy

Part 1

By Debbie Rony

The Love of God and the Gift of Prophecy are not normally two phrases that I would not associate with each other but I believe that the Holy Spirit wants to reveal more of each of these two things, in the upcoming months and years ahead. We live in dark times and we need a powerful dose of each of these if we are to navigate the dangerous waters we are in through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I would like to show you through this article how the love of God is manifested through the charismatic gift of prophecy. I will point out the purpose of giving prophetic words to an individual as well as a group, how the gift works through us, common obstacles we may face, the do's and don'ts of giving prophetic words and most importantly, how to let the Lord use us to love one another through this gift. Some of this teaching is based on the book, *The Gift of Prophecy*, by Robert DeGrandis.

Let's begin by defining the gift of prophecy and its purpose. The following definition and characteristics of prophecy is taken from The Catherine of Sienna Institute's Spiritual Gifts Workshop and its workbook called "The Catholic Spiritual Gifts Inventory." "Through the charism of prophecy, God awakens his people to hear His Word and unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy can take many forms: a prophetic exhortation, that calls people to action, a word of knowledge or word of wisdom through which God reveals what he is doing in the life

of an individual or community; a prophetic prayer or song which is received from the Holy Spirit rather than composed, an interior vision (not an apparition), prophetic actions through which God's word is dramatized or a message delivered in tongues and then interpreted." These are the different forms prophecy can take as the gift is manifested through a person. As to God's purpose of giving us the gift of prophecy, Fr. Degrandis says, "Prophecy is the forth-telling of the Mind of God. The Lord wants to speak to us today and He is going to speak to us today. The Lord wants to communicate to each individual His love and what He has for them. We should not be surprised by the extent of the Father's Love. He gives us His Son who gives us the Spirit, the Church, and the Sacraments. Why should He not communicate what He is thinking at the time, if we but ask. I Corinthians 2:10 says, "this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God." Indeed prophecy is a gift of the Spirit to reveal the Mind of God and the depths of God here and now. This is prophecy. And it is for all."

Therefore, first we find that the gift of prophecy is for each Christian person as an individual. Of all the spiritual gifts listed in Corinthians, prophecy is given the highest priority. 1 Corinthians 14:1-4 says, "Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, **above all that you may prophesy**. For one who speaks in tongues does not speak to human beings but to God, for no one listens; he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, one who prophesies does speak to human beings, for their building up, encouragement, and solace. Whoever speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but whoever prophesies builds up the Church. Now I should like all of you to speak in tongues but even more to prophesy."

So, according to scripture, prophecy is the gift we should desire the most and we are supposed to strive for it. Why? Because it is for the building up, encouragement, and solace of us all. In fact, aren't these three things manifestations of loving our neighbor? To love is to comfort those who mourn, to love is to encourage the downcast or depressed, and to love is to fortify and strengthen God's people. We can do all of this through the gift of prophecy. Fr. Degrandis says prophecy acts like a car charger for your battery when it's been drained of power or even if it is all together dead!

The Love of God continued...

A word of prophecy has the powerful effect of strengthening us in our faith and can even breathe new life into the person who hears it. Just look at the condition of the Church right now! I think we need the outpouring of this gift more than any other. We live in dark times where confusion, oppression, depression, despair, anger, illness, abortion, abuse, poverty and every kind of evil is rising. We are in desperate need of this gift to love the Body of Christ. I want to stress the point that this gift is not just for use in prayer group meetings! The Body of Christ includes all baptized Christians. We should desire the gift of prophecy to minister to those who don't know the Love of God or have a deep intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus. We can receive this gift to minister to the most lost, the most discouraged, and maybe the most desperate to hear a Word from God. That means we have to look outside the walls of our prayer groups and inner circle of friends or family. It's certainly a good place to start but ask God not to keep you there.

Fr. Degrandis goes on to say, "Therefore, the words of prophecy are inspired by God and through exercising the gift of prophecy we are loving one another for we are sharing one another His love, concern, healing, and guidance". 1 John 4: 16 says, "God is love". He loves us with an everlasting love and we are vessels of His love to overflow onto others. This means using the charismatic gifts, including prophecy, as a tangible expression of His love. So, you see, the place of all prophecy should begin with LOVE. If you don't start with love you are already headed down the wrong path right out of the gate. 1 Corinthians 13: 1-2 says, "If I speak in tongues of men and angels but have not love I am a noisy gong or a clashing symbol. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to move mountains but have not love, I am nothing." I believe there is a reason Paul uses this imagery in describing the spiritual gifts not used in love and for love. Has anyone actually heard a clashing cymbal or a noisy gong? For one thing, it hurts our ears and our first instinct is to inwardly cringe and cover our ears. Prophetic words not given from a place of love or not done in a loving, gently manner has the same effect of turning people away from us, away from the Church, away from the Charismatic Renewal, and maybe even from God. The charism of prophecy requires a great deal of emotional and spiritual maturity in a person if it is to be used fruitfully.

So what are some ways in which we can be a noisy gong? For one thing, a spirit of harshness is not from the Lord. The Holy Spirit is most often gentle and peaceful. James 3:17 says, "Wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity." Secondly, many prophetic words may be given out

of what is called emotionalism, which is just someone's tendency to be overemotional; so for instance the words may come out as excitement, anger, anxiousness or even sadness. When we receive prophecy, we receive it in our own spirit but it still has to work through our **flesh** to come out. So, the more fleshly someone is (read last month's article on our "old self vs. our new self!") the more prophetic words can become "tainted" by our flesh. Lastly, some prophecy may be given to meet one's own unconscious personal needs. So, for instance, the need to "fix" someone or a situation and our own feelings of needing to help may get mixed in. Maybe there is an unmet need to feel appreciated, validated, or wanting the approval of others. These are all ways that the gift of prophecy can come out as what Fr. Degrandis calls non-prophecy. It is still "good" and even "holy" but it is driven more by the flesh than by the Spirit. This is common, especially in people new to the gift of prophecy. However, the Holy Spirit still works with that person as they are purified, sanctified, and crucified in their flesh. As we grow in holiness, we will grow in the gift and the flow will be more pure and less tainted. It gave me great comfort when I read something about this "taintedness" in the book by Fr. Degrandis because he said that in all his years in ministry and going to hundreds and hundreds of prayer groups that he didn't see much false prophecy (which is from the devil through false prophets) as he did fleshly prophecy. This is to be expected as people grow in their gift. But it is not a reason to stop them from giving a word. The leaders in the group are to discern and counsel people in private when necessary in a spirit of gentleness and humility. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 says, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good." A good friend of mine often says, "Take the meat and throw away the bones!"

I want to pause for a moment to make a distinction between the gift of prophecy and the role of a Prophet (who may often be a very passionate person.) Ephesians 4:11 says "And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelist, others as pastors and teachers." These are specific roles that are given to SOME but not all. I have already pointed out that the gift of prophecy is for **all**. Verse 12 says that these roles of Apostles, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher are given, "to equip the holy ones (that's us) for the work of ministry; for building up the body of Christ." So, Prophets are given a unique place in the Body of Christ and their anointing tends to be greater not only in the giving of prophetic words but also the type of prophetic words. Like the prophets of Old Testament, New Testament prophets, like in the Book of Acts, tend to give dire warnings. To sum it up, not all who prophesy are Prophets but all Prophets prophesy!

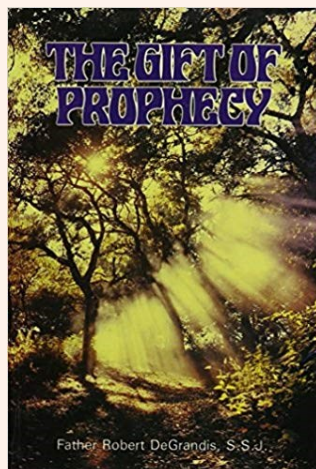
The Love of God Continued....

Now back to the subject at hand: what can you expect when you receive a prophetic word? Once you begin opening yourself to the gift, the Lord may bring you the prophetic word in the same way for a while until you get used to receiving. It can come in a word, a vision, a song, a bible verse, and even a 1st person Word from the Lord. By 1st person I mean that when it comes out of a person it's like this: "I love you with an everlasting love. I formed you in your mother's womb and I know you better than you know yourself. Love me with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength." This is a direct one to one word from the Lord to the person or group. Not all words come this way but it is powerful word when it does. A 1st person word from the Lord carries a weight to it that when spoken should elevate the anointing in the room and the praise of everyone hearing it.

Some people have asked, "What does it feel like when you start receiving a word?" Some people, who have more experience in giving prophetic words, say they have a knowing that they can't necessarily explain. It's not in their head so much as it is in their heart. Remember that we talking about prophecy as revealing the heart and mind of God so it can come through the mind or through the heart. Others may feel a strong peace come over them, a warm tingling, or a "quickening" of their spirit. For some, it may just be a strong urge to speak. However it "feels" to you is usually unique to you. God may give you any one of these strong feelings, especially in the beginning, to make you more aware of His presence.

Often, prophetic words are given in a group setting like a prayer group, conference or retreat. One person may get a word of prophecy and then someone else in the group gets a similar word (which we call a confirmation) or maybe even a continuation of the same prophecy. The Spirit will use many people in the same meeting if He is allowed to and then there is a prophetic flow that happens. One thing to point out here is that it is important to follow the leading of the Spirit. Don't feel like you have to keep going and going once you open your mouth to give the Word. The flow of the Spirit can be a little sputtering in the beginning but don't feel like you need to add to the word on your own. This is most often when people will move out of the Spirit and into their own flesh. Sometimes, our own ideas, feelings, and counsel may get mixed in. **This is not**, I repeat, not a reason to be afraid of speaking out a prophetic word. . It takes time and experience to discern where the Spirit ends and you begin so you have to keep practicing!

Recommended Reading by Fr. Degrandis



Stay tuned for next month's article

The Love of God and The Gift of Prophecy Part 2: The Do's and Don'ts



Show Some Respect

By Maria Muratore

Today's world is seriously lacking in respect, for people in general, and for positions and offices of authority, like parents, teachers, bosses, leaders, police—and even God. Disrespect is epidemic partly because it's contagious. When you're hearing it, reading it and seeing it all around you, it's difficult not to pick it up. In the world of entertainment our TV programs, movies, the Internet, and music etc. are filled with rudeness, irreverence and profanity. Wholesome humor can be a wonderful thing but much of the world's humor is lewd, sacrilegious and designed to shock. It's an effort to get laughs at someone else's expense with belittling insults and ridicule.

Disrespect is shown by words or lack of (the silent treatment), tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and actions. Disrespect is shown by what people *do*—like insulting others—and by what they *fail to do*—being polite, courteous and thoughtful. In addition, verbal abuse and disrespect are often a precursor to violence and other forms of abuse. In fact, disrespect is a precursor to *hate*. We frequently hear about the problem of *bullying* at schools. Why aren't kids being taught humility, respect, compassion and kindness toward all people? Tragically, many young bullies grow up to be adult bullies. Even how a person dresses shows respect or disrespect. Many people today hardly ever dress up, even for church!

Bible tells that disrespect would be a characteristic of people in the end times. Paul wrote that people would *"be lovers of themselves...blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving,*

unforgiving, slanderers...brutal...haughty" (2 Timothy 3:1-4). Isaiah wrote: *"The people will be oppressed, everyone by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable"* (Isaiah 3:5). God made every human being *"in the image of God"* (Genesis 1:27). Every person is a potential child of God with an eternal destiny. That's why every human being deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. The Bible is largely about *relationships*, emphasizing love for God and love for all people. Mutual respect, a part of love, is fundamental to good relationships.

The following verses are just a few of the Bible's practical instructions regarding our attitudes and actions:

"Honor your father and your mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 19:19).

"Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10).

The apostle Peter warns of severe consequences for those who *"despise authority"* (2 Peter 2:10). And many other scriptures address the topics of love, mercy, kindness and peacemaking as well as pride, anger, and dissension. Let's all be mindful of not only loving our neighbor but showing kindness and respect for them as well. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in every facet of your life and actions. Let this new year be an opportunity to start fresh with a new perspective on how we communicate and treat one another in our daily life.

January 2019 Instagram Retreat Reflection by Nicole Muratore



I spent the weekend at retreat on the beach for a much-needed time for learning and self-reflection. The major theme for our weekend was "A w a k e n." We talked about ways to recognize and combat evil in our everyday life, also known as spiritual warfare. The devil never sleeps, looking for the cracks and openings in our lives to attack using fear, intimidation, and our own insecurities against us. Low self-esteem and a lack of confidence are the devil's weapon of choice to take us down. Don't let this scare you. There will be situations intended to distract, confuse us and cause panic. Our instant reaction to panic and fear is to flee, which is what he wants because it's an easy victory for him. But we need to prepare for battle, and stick it out.

How can we fight back? How do we grow in our faith at the same time? Here are a list of things that stuck out to me and should help you:

- Pray for God's protection in advance. There are prayers of protection you can recite.
- Put your armor on by praying the rosary daily.
- Speak life and goodness into the world.
- Love one another.
- Practice forgiveness when it is hard.
- Let go of bitterness.
- Go to confession regularly, cleansing yourself of sin.
- Have courage by trusting in the Lord.
- Have perseverance.
- Keep praying and don't give into the distractions that come your way.
- Be bold.

God wants us to sit in silence with Him at times. You can have a whole conversation with God without actually speaking, allowing the Holy Spirit to enter your heart. And believe me, I talk a lot so this is hard for me sometimes, lol. Focus on God. Awaken. Open your eyes to the world around you.

You can follow Nicole on Instagram: [Instagram.com/notoriouslynicole](https://www.instagram.com/notoriouslynicole)

Upcoming Events...

February 17th

Dynamic Catholic Event "Find Your Greatness"

1pm-5pm Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Pinehurst NC

For more info contact Beth Renwick renwickle@aol.com

February 17th-18th

Parish Mission Guest Speaker Fr. Dave Pivonka

7pm St. Michael the Archangel Church, Cary NC

February 27th

Healing Mass

7pm St. Bernadette Catholic Church , Fuquay-Varina NC

April 6th

Save the Date! Ignited by Truth Conference

NC State Reynolds Coliseum

Guest Speakers include Fr. Larry Richards and Peter Kreeft

<https://ignitedbytruth.org/>

***For more information about these events and registration please visit our website at
www.ccsraleigh.weebly.com***