

## UNDERSTANDING THE GIFT OF TONGUES

### INTRODUCTION

The charism of tongues is probably the most misunderstood of all the spiritual gifts. There can be confusion over the difference between speaking (prophetically) in tongues and praying in tongues. There can be misunderstanding about whether exercising the gift of tongues is a “proof” of having been baptised in the Spirit. And there can be unnecessary fear of asking for the gift of tongues. This article is intended as a brief clarification of some aspects of what is taught by Scripture and the Catholic Church on these points, so that this powerful gift can be more widely used for the building up of the Church. It is not intended to be a complete explanation of the charism of tongues: at the end of the article there are references to other writings on the subject.

Several of the explanations below are taken from answers given by the Doctrinal Commission of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS), which has now transformed into CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service). CHARIS was inaugurated by Pope Francis on 8th June 2019. It is a body established by the Holy See, through the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life endowed with public juridic personality. At the inauguration, Pope Francis stated that he expected CHARIS:

- “to share baptism in the Holy Spirit with everyone in the Church. It is the grace you have received. Share it! Don’t keep it to yourselves!
- “to serve the unity of the Body of Christ, the Church, the community of believers in Jesus Christ. This is very important, for the Holy Spirit creates unity in the Church, but also diversity. The personality of the Holy Spirit is interesting: with the charisms he creates the greatest diversity, but then he harmonizes the charisms in unity. Saint Basil says that “the Holy Spirit is harmony”; he creates harmony: harmony in the Spirit and harmony among us.
- “and to serve the poor and those in greatest need, physical or spiritual. This does not mean, as some might think, that suddenly the Renewal has become communist. No, it has become evangelical, for this is in the Gospel.”

(More details about CHARIS can be found on their website [www.charis.international/en/](http://www.charis.international/en/) )

Other comments are from Catholics with considerable pastoral and practical experience in the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### WHAT IS BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT?

“Let us first look at what is meant by Baptism in the Spirit. As generally understood in the Charismatic Renewal, Baptism in the Spirit refers to a life-transforming experience of the reality and presence of the risen Lord Jesus and of the Holy Spirit and his gifts. It is not a sacrament itself but a coming to life of the fundamental graces of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. It enables the power and efficacy of these sacraments to come to fruition in a new way, resulting in a new empowerment for service and evangelization....

“Baptism in the Spirit is indeed a grace meant for every baptized Christian. One of the strongest affirmations of the universality of this gift was made by Pope Benedict XVI in his Regina Caeli address on Pentecost Sunday, 2008, when he said, ‘Today I would like to extend this invitation to everyone: Let us rediscover, dear brothers and sisters, the beauty of being baptized in the Holy Spirit; let us be aware again of our Baptism and our Confirmation, sources of grace that are always present. Let us ask the Virgin Mary to obtain a renewed Pentecost for the Church again today, a Pentecost that will spread in everyone the joy of living and witnessing to the Gospel’....

“At the same time, however, it must be recognized that the CCR (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) is also a specific movement in the Church with its own distinctive spirituality, structures, forms of prayer, and patterns of Christian life. The CCR was raised up by God to treasure and foster the grace of Baptism in the Spirit in a particular way, but it is not the only way of responding to this grace....”

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*(Taken from "Is Baptism in the Spirit for everyone? Q&A by Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2010. Link [HERE](#))*

"The heavenly Father, who is a loving Father beyond all earthly imagining, is longing for us to turn to him to ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit. People know that they have been baptized in the Spirit by its rich effects and fruits. At its heart is a new level of knowledge of Jesus as Saviour and Lord. There is a love for Scripture, a facility to hear the Lord and a receptivity to exercise charisms of the Spirit."

*(Taken from "Is Baptism in the Spirit received only through the laying on of hands in the Life in the Spirit Seminar?" Q&A by Doctrinal Commission– International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2011. Link [HERE](#))*

It is worth emphasizing that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit also helps us to develop an ongoing and growing relationship with this person of the Blessed Trinity. Our minds and hearts are opened to the reality that the Holy Spirit is a friend, a teacher, a guide, an advocate, rather than an impersonal wind or powerful force or nondescript grace. Our personal relationship with Him is something to be experienced, not just a doctrine to be intellectually appreciated.

### IS THE GIFT OF TONGUES AN ESSENTIAL SIGN OF BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT?

Some Christian denominations maintain that if you don't have the gift of tongues, you have not been baptised in the Spirit. This is not the understanding or the teaching of the Catholic Church. In Acts chapter 10 and 11 there is the account of how Cornelius and his household were baptised in the Holy Spirit: 'While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.' (Acts 10: 44-46) The ICCRS Doctrinal Commission comments: "This evidence was crucial for those who had challenged Peter, who when they "heard this, stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, 'God has then granted life-giving repentance to the gentiles too'" (Acts 11:18). Clearly, the observable evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit was an essential part of the Church's understanding of the Christian life, even though no single effect—such as tongues, for example—was ever considered a "litmus test" of having received the Holy Spirit."

"These are characteristic effects of baptism in the Spirit. Although they differ in each person, the following are common:

- A personal encounter with Jesus, experiencing his unspeakable love
- Strong awareness of the Holy Spirit and his supernatural gifts
- Freedom from sinful tendencies
- The healing of relationships
- The Mass coming alive
- Scripture coming alive
- Prayer springing from the heart
- Praying in tongues
- The release of other charisms
- Awareness of the spiritual battle
- Zeal to evangelize"

*(Taken from "Is baptism in the Holy Spirit necessary for those who receive confirmation as adults? Q&A by Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services 2017 Link [HERE](#))*

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“It is not necessary to speak in tongues to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BIHS). I have known Catholics who have clearly received the BIHS and powerful spiritual gifts of healing and prophecy, yet who do not pray in tongues. However the gift of tongues normally comes sooner or later to Christians involved in the Charismatic Renewal.” (From *“The Catholic Charismatic Renewal”* by Dom Benedict M. Heron OSB CTS Publications 1992. ISBN 0-85183-878-20)

### IS THE GIFT OF TONGUES FOR EVERYONE?

#### **Answer from Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2011**

“Does God want to give the gift of tongues to everyone, or only to some people? The teaching of St. Paul appears at first glance to be ambiguous on this question. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul mentions tongues and prophecy along with other gifts and affirms that Christians do not all receive the same gifts (12:29-30). But in 1 Corinthians 14:4 Paul says, “Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy”. Later in the same chapter he speaks of the possibility of all speaking in tongues (14:23) and of all prophesying (14:31). How can we resolve this seeming contradiction?

“The answer lies in understanding different functions of the gift of tongues. Tongues can serve as: (1) a sign of the presence of the Spirit (thus the appearance of tongues in Acts when people receive the Spirit); (2) a prayer language valuable for one’s own spiritual growth (1 Cor 14:4,18); and (3) a prophetic means of addressing the community when accompanied by the charism of interpretation (1 Cor 14:5,27- 28). Paul indicates that the third use, addressing a message to the community (accompanied by an interpretation) belongs only to some, while the second use, tongues as a prayer language, is available to all. On Pentecost, for example, the apostles, the Blessed Mother, and many others (about 120 people) “all spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them the ability” (Acts 2:4). But they went on to serve the Lord in a wide variety of ways, with diverse charisms for building up the body of Christ.

“Many CCR leaders can testify that if people desire the gift of tongues as a prayer language and if they are taught how to yield to it, they receive this charism sooner or later. Some people, through misunderstanding or bad experiences of being pressured to pray in tongues, develop a block about this gift. In those instances, it is wise to recommend that they not concern themselves about tongues, but simply continue to seek and be open to the Spirit in other ways. Some will end up receiving the gift of tongues; others may experience the Spirit working through them powerfully in other ways.

#### **“How can someone receive the gift of tongues when praying alone?”**

“While some people find it easier to begin praying in tongues in a group, others find it easier to do so when alone. So what to do? When you are praying and directing your mind to the Lord, ask for the help of the Spirit. Then stop praying in your own language, and allow yourself to speak to God in any syllables or sounds that come out of your mouth. It may sound like baby talk at first. Don’t worry. God is as pleased as any human father who delights in seeing his son or daughter trying to communicate with him!

“Keep speaking to the Lord, letting go and allowing the range of sounds you are making to the Lord to grow wider. The biggest temptation for people at this stage is to pay too much attention to what they’re doing and get inhibited, or to think “It’s just me, not the Holy Spirit”, and quit. Instead, keep praying and the gift will become clearer and stronger. Pray that way for five, ten, or fifteen minutes a day. After a month or so, you will most likely see a fluency that you recognize does not come from yourself, but really is the Holy Spirit forming your speech into a language you don’t know.

#### **“How can someone grow in the gift of tongues?”**

“Practice is the main thing. We can pray in tongues when we’re driving the car, taking a walk, sitting in church or taking a shower. It is a great way of “praying constantly” (1 Thes 5:17) or “praying at all times in the Spirit” (Eph 6:18). When we pray in tongues it is the Holy Spirit praying through us (Rom

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8:26-27; 1 Cor 14:2), so it is an excellent way of communing with the Lord. Another thing that helps is praying regularly with others who exercise the gifts of the Spirit.

“Whenever you find yourself challenged, either by a ministry need or family need, intercede for it in tongues. When you are seeking guidance from the Lord, intercede in tongues and then listen to what the Spirit seems to be saying. Try singing in the Spirit, letting the Lord supply the melody as well as the words. Ask the Lord to give you the interpretation of what you are praying in tongues. Perhaps alternate prayer in tongues and prayer in your own language, letting the Spirit guide your words in both. Ask the Lord to give you other tongues in which to pray and then allow the Spirit to speak them through you.

“Lord, help us to open up to all your gifts and to become docile sons and daughters, musical instruments through whom you can play any tune that you choose.”

(Link to article [HERE](#))

### CAN SEVERAL PEOPLE PRAY OR SING IN TONGUES AT ONCE?

#### Answer from Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services 2012

“To answer this question, let me first emphasise that there is no specific Catholic teaching on how to use the gift of tongues. The brief references to tongues in Church teaching simply affirm that tongues is one of the charisms given by the Spirit and that all charisms are intended for the common good of the Church (see the Catechism, par. 2003). Thus to discern pastoral guidelines for the proper use of tongues, one must turn to the teaching of St Paul in 1 Cor 12-14, along with common sense and the practical wisdom that comes from experience.

“Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians implies that there are two different forms of the gift of tongues. The distinction between the two is sometimes described as “praying in tongues” and “speaking in tongues.”

“Praying in tongues is the gift of tongues as a prayer language, an overflowing prayer and praise of the heart that is expressed aloud but not with rational sounds. “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit” (1 Cor 14:2). This gift is something very close to contemplative prayer. Paul notes that it is valuable for a person’s own spiritual growth (1 Cor 14:4), and he indicates that this form of tongues is available to all (1 Cor 14:5). This form of tongues is very common in the Charismatic Renewal today, and several of the saints also seem to have had it, including Augustine, Bernard, Teresa of Avila and John Vianney. St Teresa wrote, “Our Lord sometimes gives the soul feelings of jubilation and a strange prayer it doesn’t understand... It seems like gibberish and certainly the experience is like that, for it is a joy so excessive that the soul wouldn’t want to enjoy it alone but wants to tell everyone about it so that they might help this soul praise our Lord” (Interior Castle, VI.6.10). It should also be noted that there are many recorded cases of miraculous tongues, where the speaker spoke a language unknown to himself but known to a listener.

“Speaking in tongues is tongues in the form of a public message spoken to the assembly, a less common gift. In this case, Paul instructs that the message in tongues must be followed by an interpretation. Otherwise it is meaningless to people and has no capacity to edify them. When a message in tongues is followed by an interpretation, it is actually a form of the gift of prophecy. Paul emphasises the superiority of prophecy because of its capacity to strengthen, encourage, and console the members of the body of Christ. “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified” (1 Cor 14:4-5; see 14:28).

“The disorder that Paul corrects is evidently a disordered use of this second form of the gift of tongues. What seems to have occurred in Corinth is that people were speaking messages in tongues out loud

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without respect for proper order or for another person who was already speaking. This is why Paul instructs them, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged” (1 Cor 14:29-31).

“This brings us to the question, can people pray in tongues all at the same time? While we cannot know with certainty what occurred in the Corinthian gatherings 2000 years ago, contemporary charismatic experience does seem to correspond in many ways with what Paul describes. We know from contemporary experience that when many people pray or sing in tongues together (the first use of tongues described above), there is a deep harmony brought by the Spirit. Sometimes there is a remarkable harmony in the musical tones; but more importantly, there is a spiritual unity brought about by worshipping the Lord in one accord. Each person is praising God in a different tongue, but the tongues all blend together in unity. This is the opposite of the discord Paul describes when the gift of speaking in tongues is used improperly—that is, when several people are trying to get attention for a message in tongues at the same time.

“Paul reminds us that the ultimate standard for the use of tongues and of all charismatic gifts is love. “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). Love is the motivation and goal that gives the gifts their value. If we are faithful to Paul’s counsel, both praying and speaking in tongues will glorify God and contribute to the upbuilding of the Church in love.” ([Link to article HERE](#))

### SHOULD WE ASK FOR THE GIFT OF TONGUES?

Some people maintain that the teaching in Lumen Gentium 13: “extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly asked for” means that we should not ask for charisms (such as tongues or healing) at all, as to do so would be a sign of pride. The following answers explain how all the charisms should be “eagerly desired” (1Cor 14:1) since they are given for the building up of the Church. We should, of course, not ask out of selfish motives – that would indeed be rash – but should always be motivated by love and selfless service.

**Answer from Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services 2014, given in response to the question “What is the difference between mystical experiences and charismatic manifestations?”** (Relevant sections underlined by us for emphasis)

“There has often been confusion between mystical experiences and charismatic manifestations. Part of the reason is that for a long period of time in Church history, charisms were neglected. Although they never disappeared from Catholic theology, they were no longer part of the life of most ordinary Catholics. Vatican Council II rectified this neglect, especially with its strong affirmation of charisms in Lumen Gentium 12. Since then charisms have been manifested among the faithful in an abundance not seen since the early Church. These gifts are part of the equipment God gives us for carrying out the mission of the Church, so it is important to understand charisms and how they differ from mystical graces.

“The Catechism provides a good definition: *“Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world”* (799).

“What is important to notice in this definition is that the purpose of charisms is to serve others and build up the Church. Charisms are not for the personal benefit of the receiver, but for the sake of ministering to others. They are, by definition, gifts to be given away. This accords with the teaching of St. Paul, who wrote, *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”* (1 Cor 12:7). Paul then lists a wide diversity of charisms, and explains that it is through their harmonious

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interaction, when each member of the Church is using his or her charisms to serve others, that the body is built up in love.

“Even extraordinary charisms such as healings, miracles, or the reading of hearts are gifts for the sake of others. When people are healed through a charism of healing, for example, they experience the Lord’s power, love, and compassion. They are confronted with the fact that God is real and that the good news of the kingdom is not just a comforting idea, but is true! This is why the supernatural charisms are so powerfully effective for evangelization.

“Mystical experiences, on the other hand, are private gifts given by God for the benefit of the individual. These experiences might include, for example, raptures, visions, locutions, wounds of love, and inner consolations. In general, they are not gifts that can or should be given away.

“A very important principle follows from the distinction between the two. Whereas mystical experiences should not be sought or asked for, charisms should be sought and asked for. Spiritual writers such as St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross warned of the dangers of seeking after mystical experiences. This can lead us focus on experiences of God instead of God himself, and can expose us to the danger of pride, self-absorption, or even deception by the devil. When mystical experiences occur, they should be discerned with a spiritual director and, if authentic, should be accepted gratefully, but not given excessive attention.

“On the other hand, Scripture exhorts us to desire and seek after charisms because of their potential to build up the Church. After listing spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says, “Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 12:31). “Strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy” (1 Cor 14:1).

“Although Paul does not make a formal distinction between charisms and mystical experiences, we can glimpse this distinction in his writings. In 2 Corinthians, he obliquely describes a mystical experience he had, but he refrains from sharing the content of this experience: “I know someone in Christ who, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows), was caught up to the third heaven... and heard ineffable things, which no one may utter” (2 Cor 12:2-4). This experience was a special grace for his own personal strengthening. Similarly, his vision of Jesus one night in Corinth (Acts 18:9) was a personal grace to help him persevere in his mission. On the other hand, he exhorts believers to share charisms such as prophecies for the sake of building others up, encouraging, consoling, or convicting of sin (1 Cor 14:3, 24-25).

“From the descriptions above it is evident that there can be some overlap between charisms and mystical experiences; there is not always a sharp distinction between them. A vision, for instance, can be a charism (a form of prophecy) to be shared with others in a prayer meeting, or it can be a private mystical experience. To discern the difference, someone who has a vision in a charismatic setting should prayerfully consider whether it seems to be for himself alone or for the sake of building up others; if for others, then he or she should submit it to the discernment of the leadership.

“Since charisms are essential to the life of the Church, leaders should not just wait passively for charisms to appear and then decide how they must be properly pastored. Rather, they should actively cultivate charisms, mentor and encourage those who take steps in practicing them, and help people grow in their use.” (Link to Article [HERE](#))

### **Answer from Charles Whitehead KSG, former President of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Council**

“Like every gift from God, speaking in tongues should be desired and actively sought, but it will not be given to everyone any more than the other gifts will. 1Cor.12:29-30 implies that not everyone will speak in tongues, and this is consistent with our understanding of how gifts are given – to one this gift, to another that gift. Some classic Pentecostals regard speaking in tongues as the only acceptable

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evidence that someone has been baptised in the Holy Spirit, but this is not the view held by Catholics and most Protestants." (From "Towards a fuller life in the Holy Spirit" Chapter 4, by Charles Whitehead.)

### **Answer from Dr Maria Heath, Chair of Charis National Service of Communion (CNSC) England & Wales**

It is good to ask for gifts from our Father. He does want us to ask for the gift of tongues. It's a prayer gift.

*"Today, I would like to cry out to all of you gathered here in St Peter's Square and to all Christians: Open yourselves docilely to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charisms which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us! Do not forget that every charism is given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church." (From the Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II meeting with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Saturday, 30 May 1998. Full text [HERE](#))*

The gift of Holy Spirit, the gift that contains all gifts, is here referred to in relation to asking:

*"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for [f] a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:9-13)*

*"Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church. There are sacramental graces, gifts proper to the different sacraments. There are furthermore special graces, also called charisms after the Greek term used by St. Paul and meaning "favour," "gratuitous gift," "benefit." Whatever their character - sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues - charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church." (Catechism of the Catholic Church para 2003).*

### **Answer from Fr Anthony Meredith, Vicar General of the Rosminians (The Institute of Charity)**

Let me try and answer as best I can as a Catholic, and a priest.

Yes, We should eagerly desire and seek the spiritual gifts. We should not seek any particular gift out of context... but always ask and we shall receive.

I may be stating the obvious, but that means we are already in the process of coming to the Lord and reaching out to him and believing we can rely on him...believing that the Heavenly Father will only give good things to those who ask, believing he will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

He will not force anything even spiritual gifts on us.

On our part our commitment to him, who is fully committed to us, is to keep turning to him, to keep listening to him, and to be ready to help and be helped by our fellow Spirit filled Christians. This allows God to give freely to us.

Many of us have already experienced this, and we want to enter into an ever-deeper relationship with God, into the fullness of the life of the Holy Spirit. This means turning away from all that is incompatible with the life of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-38 comes to mind: if anyone is thirsty let him come to me, let him come to me and drink if he believes in me. From his breast will flow fountains of living water.

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It seems to me that we come to God to ask, to draw deeply from the springs of life, and to be open totally to all God wants to give us, especially the spiritual gifts. In God's Presence we find true freedom and are ready to accept everything he gives us and have the freedom not to exclude any of his gifts.

I was just so overwhelmed by the abundance of the Holy Spirit that I found myself bubbling over and open to tongues - I did not want to resist.

I have never actively asked for the gift of tongues, though I have asked for joy in my heart to keep me praising especially at difficult moments. I have asked at different times for all the other gifts. Tongues, like all the gifts, is a result of experiencing the presence of God in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And this convicts me too of my sin, and repentance becomes a joy.

I see no reason why we should not ask for the gift of tongues.

### **Answer from Ros Powell, Catholic Evangelist**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the gift of tongues is one of the special graces or "charisms" of the Holy Spirit: *"Whatever their character - sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues - charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church."* (CCC paragraph 2003)

Biblical passages that I use re the gift of tongues are:

Acts 2:3 – when the Holy Spirit descended upon the twelve apostles on Pentecost Sunday, they began to speak in tongues.

Acts 2:6 says that men from fifteen different nations each heard the apostles speaking in their own language.

1 Corinthians 14:14 "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays."

Mark 16:17 – The Great Commission tells us that right before Jesus ascended into heaven, He prophesied *"they will speak in new tongues."*

– Acts 10:44-46 –after Peter preached the gospel, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word, and they (including the Gentiles) began to speak in tongues.

– Acts 19:5-6 – after Paul baptized and confirmed about twelve Ephesians, they spoke with tongues.

– 1 Cor. 12-14 – Paul teaches that members of the Corinthian church had the gift of speaking in tongues.

When praying for Holy Spirit gifts I usually quote St Teresa of Avila who says that "We pay God a compliment by asking great things of him"

There are recorded instances of saints speaking in tongues over the centuries: Saint Dominic, Anthony of Padua, Francis Xavier, John of the Cross, Ignatius of Loyola

When praying with people for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (I have prayed with thousands over the many years) I usually ask the person if they know what the gift of tongues is. If they don't know I usually give them a quick biblical lesson. Then I ask "would you like to receive the gift of tongues?" If they say yes, after praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts, I ask them to ask the Lord for the gift of tongues.

I like the scripture in Revelation 22:17 that says: *'The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.'*

The bible tells us to *"eagerly desire the spiritual gifts"* (1Cor 14:1)

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From my own experience: Some years ago, at the Birmingham conference two Irish ladies came into my workshop, they told me that they had been in Catholic Charismatic renewal from the beginning (over 50 years) yet neither of them spoke in tongues, so I prayed with them asking them to ask the Lord for the gift, and they both received a beautiful gift of tongues, they were blown away!

When myself and my team go into prisons, around 80% of the inmates receive Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues.

## FURTHER READING

1. More detailed explanation of the difference between speaking and praying in tongues: "Glossolalia, Xenolalia and Xenoglossia Q&A by Doctrinal Commission – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2015." Link [HERE](#)
2. "A Practical Guide to the Gift of Tongues" – John Vaughan-Neil (ISBN 978-1-903623-47-3)
3. "Sounds of Wonder – 20 centuries of Praying in Tongues and Lively Worship in the Catholic Tradition." By Deacon Eddie Ensley Ph.D. (ISBN 978-1-61956-172-4)
4. "Renew Your Wonders – spiritual gifts for today" (especially Chapter 9) by Damian Stayne (ISBN 978-1-912237-00-5)
5. "Towards a fuller life in the Holy Spirit" (especially chapters 4 and 5) by Charles Whitehead. (ISBN 978-1-903623-50-3)
6. "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" by ICCRS Doctrinal Commission (ISBN 978-1-903623-67-1)

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[www.altonrenewal.com](http://www.altonrenewal.com)