

NOW with ENTHUSIASM

Charism, God's Mission and Catholic Schools Today

enthusiasm (n.)

c. 1600, from Middle French *enthousiasme*, and directly from Late Latin *enthusiasmus*, from Greek *enthousiasmos* 'divine inspiration, enthusiasm (produced by certain kinds of music, etc.),' from *enthousiazein* 'be inspired or possessed by a god, be rapt, be in ecstasy,' from *entheos* 'divinely inspired, possessed by a god,' from *en* 'in' + *theos* 'god'

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BBI – THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
MISSION AND EDUCATION SERIES

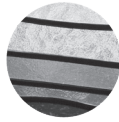


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2

AN INDWELLING SPIRIT WHO IRRUPTS

The fruits of the Spirit are different. What the Spirit brings is ...

Gal 5:22

Jesus' promise to his friends that the Spirit of God would continue to abide with them, and would continue to reveal God to them,¹ has sustained the Church in hope.² The fulfilling of this promise has renewed the Church and purified it time and again. It has been, as Jesus said it would be, a source of consolation, in the sense of this being the antithesis of fear and despair. With each person and through each community a new aspect of the image of God is revealed. Christ has been formed in these people and these communities,³ and the life of God has come to be incarnated in them and among them together.⁴ And where need has been greatest, where a sense of the absence of God has been most keenly felt, it is there that the Spirit seems to be most active, for the God who is love yearns to be revealed and to bring life.

There is a basic principle of Christian anthropology here, one that informs the discussion that follows. It is that there is a spiritual way of understanding what it means to be human which is of its very essence, and which is integrally bound up with its physicality and temporality. Religious or spiritual experience is not a tack-on, but part of the nature of being human. To be mystical is not some other-worldly phenomenon, something eerily pursued with Ouija boards or clouds of incense in an attempt to connect with some parallel universe or to be magically transported to some higher realm. It is no out-of-body experience. It is to be in touch with and responsive to the Spirit of God in the here and now. Mary is the archetype of this and, in that sense, the model of Christian discipleship. Without delving into the broad theological discourse around nature and grace, or

¹ John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13.

² Rom 5:5.

³ Gal 4:19; Col 1:27-29.

⁴ John 14: 1-3, 18, 27; 16:20, 33.

debates about metaphysics or neo-Thomistic thought,⁵ it is important that we name some key Pauline concepts, since the following discussion on charism and spirituality depends on them.

As incredulous as the early Christians might have been with the proposition, and as well we may we, Paul tells us that God's Spirit dwells in us,⁶ prays in us,⁷ wants to bring alive the Risen Christ in us.⁸ And among us.⁹ The signs of this are evident in our ordinary human living, both personally and communally. We see it, Paul tells us, when 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' prevail in our lives, and when 'immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, licentiousness, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness and moral promiscuity' do not.¹⁰ This is the life of the Spirit. It is lived out in the relationships and concrete circumstances of a person's life.

Most fundamentally, the Spirit of God seeks communion, harmony and love, since this is the inner life of God. This life of God seeks to be alive and at work in us. At the start of Part II of his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, as Benedict XVI turns to address the life and work of the Church he draws on this important Pauline understanding and quotes St Augustine: 'If you see charity [caritas], you see the Trinity'¹¹. The Pope then goes on to teach:

*The Spirit, in fact, is that interior power which harmonises [believers'] hearts with Christ's heart and moves them to love their brothers and sisters as Christ loved them.*¹²

God dwells in us, and God reveals Godself in human reality.¹³ God's revelation is one of love and in love, and the Church has no other purpose

5 While a comprehensive treatment of this huge field of discourse is clearly beyond the scope of this book, the theological questions around the operation of nature and grace, and philosophical questions around essentialism and ontology, are of course germane to what is being considered. From Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century to Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich in the twentieth, much ink has been spilt on these subjects. Some entry points for Rahner have been cited in Chapter 1. A helpful introduction to this scholarship, specifically from the perspective of understanding Christian spirituality in its different traditions and expressions, is provided by Michael Downey: Downey, M (1997), *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, Paulist Press, New York.

6 Cf. Rom 8: 9,26; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:18; Gal 4:6.

7 Rom 8:2, 15, 26-27.

8 Gal 2:19-20; 2 Cor 4:11; Phil 1:20-21.

9 1 Cor 12-13; Eph 2:19-22, 4:1-6, 25-32; Col 3:5-17.

10 Gal 5:19-23.

11 *Deus Caritas Est*, #19.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Paul Tillich, the twentieth century Protestant theologian and philosopher, is one who had a highly developed theology around the action of the Spirit being manifested in history, linked to his understanding of the nature of humanity. For an introduction, see: Bullock, VT (1971), *A critical examination of Paul Tillich's doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Durham University, Master of Letters thesis, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9624/>

than to serve this end. The Church does this as the ‘mystical body of Christ’. The incarnational theology that informs such a concept is captured simply in the statement popular in Catholic devotion:

*Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*¹⁴

It is not some poetic figure of speech being used here. It is, rather, a profound theological statement that can be seen to align with Paul’s understandings. We can apply the word ‘yours’ both individually and communally to Christians.

This is always a work-in-progress, Paul hastens to add; a glimpse and promise of what will be but is not yet realised.¹⁵ Anyone who has spent time in a Catholic school would understand this readily. They are likely to be able to cite many examples of wonderful moments of grace in the course of their own teaching ministry and in the broader life of the school, but perhaps add many examples to show that things are far from a pure and complete expression of the life of God. It is well, nonetheless, for all of us to lift our heads out of the figurative scrums that the freneticism of school life can induce, and to be in awe of what is at play. God is seeking revelation and the life of God is seeking expression.

The human response to that is often inadequate or misdirected, and the gap between the ideal and the actual can be disheartening for us, sometimes piercingly so. ‘But,’ encourages Paul, ‘the Spirit comes to help us in our weakness’, so that despair should not become the fruit of hardship or set-back in ministry.¹⁶ Paul uses powerfully figurative language to describe inadequacies and battles of human experience in this partial unfolding of God, and how the Spirit is at work in it. Childbirth, with its attendant pain, is a rich example.¹⁷ Central to this movement of the Spirit is the Pauline concept of spiritual giftedness. It is from this idea that the term ‘charism’

14 Although widely attributed to the sixteenth century Carmelite reformer, mystic and Doctor of the Church, Teresa of Avila, the statement is not found in her writings. Its provenance is disputed.

15 Cf. Rom 8:19–22; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:4–6; Eph 1:13–14; Phil 3:12–13. Paul uses the term *sarx* (σάρξ, literally ‘flesh’, but a more complex concept) in contradistinction to *pneuma* (πνεῦμα, Spirit). See also Rom 8:1–13. He does so not to imply in any sense that the life of the Spirit is a disembodied phenomenon, or that it is inherent evil to be humanly alive in time and place. The theology of the body occupies a considerable body of theological discourse, and was a theme developed particularly by St John Paul II. So, also, is the flesh/spirit antithesis in the Pauline and also Johannine Scriptures a subject of much exegetical commentary.

16 Rom 8:26a. See also Paul’s consideration of the trials of apostolic life in 2 Cor 4.

17 Rom 8:22.

has re-emerged in today's Church, in ways that to some extent align well with its Scriptural origins in the Pauline texts, but in other ways that have developed further meanings.

WHAT IS CHARISM?

'Charism' is a term that has come to be applied with both increasing frequency but widening cast in recent decades, including in Catholic education. The resulting imprecision has not always been conducive for understanding the life of the Spirit, which is how the concept is most validly approached. The first point to highlight is that the term is conceptual, and theologically so. Charism is not a commodity, something concrete that can be acquired or deployed. A school cannot go to 'get' a charism from somewhere. Comments like 'We are a charism school' or 'Our school has such-and-such a charism' can be misconceived in this regard. In some circles, the word's meaning has been diminished to become little more than a grab-all, jargon way of labelling a distinctive pedagogical style, a set of characteristic cultural expressions associated with a particular group, a nostalgic or even cult-like attachment to some founder or religious institute, or a circle-the-wagons effort to keep everything as it has been. None of these – in their intuition for self-preservation or individuation or divisiveness – tend to accord easily with the signs of the Spirit that are found in the Christian Scriptures. What did Paul and other writers of the Letters mean by the term, and how has it come to be used in the Church's discourse today, especially in connection to Catholic education? To what extent is it valid to continue to develop new understandings of the original Scriptural sense of the concept?¹⁸

Paul drew from the Greek word *charis* (χαρις, meaning 'gift' or 'grace') to coin the word *charisma* (χαρίσμα) which is usually rendered in English as 'charism', or sometimes more simply as 'gift'. It is not a word that has been found elsewhere in the Greek literature of his time, and one theory is that it was a colloquial term for gift, generous gift, or gracious gift.¹⁹ Paul

18 The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has recently treated these questions in some depth. See (2016), *Iuvenescit Ecclesia. Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church regarding the relationship between the hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the life and mission of the Church*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/faith/documents/rc_con_faith_doc_20160516_iuvenescit-ecclesia_en.html

19 This is the view of Nardoni, E (1993), 'The Concept of Charism in Paul', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 55, 1, pp. 68–80; and Hanna, T (2006), *New Ecclesial Movements*, St Paul's, Sydney. For a concise summary of the history of the term in Christian theological discourse, and especially its reclamation and reappropriation in the twentieth century, see, Leahy, B (2011), *Ecclesial Movements and Communities. Origins, Significance and Issues*, New City Press, New York, pp. 81ff. A thorough Scriptural, historical and theological exploration of the concept of charism can be found in a recent study of Yves Congar's approach to the topic by Johnson Mudavassery O.Carm. See Chapter 2 of: Mudavassery, J (2016), *The Role and Function of Charism in the Theology of Yves Congar*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main.

uses the word fourteen times, mainly in Romans and First Corinthians; it appears elsewhere in the New Testament in another three instances.²⁰ Charisms are first described in terms of God's gracious initiative towards humanity, including of Christ himself (Rom 5:15-16; 6:23; 11:29; 2 Cor 1:11). Then, and especially in First Corinthians, Paul associates charisms with manifestations of the Spirit, as concrete expressions of the life of God in people. He does not see them as just human talent or generic capacity, but as divinely sourced giftedness. Despite this, they are not portrayed, for the most part, as extraordinary or eccentric gifts, but as expressions of God's grace that are necessary for the full and healthy functioning of the community and for its benefit. Where the gifts are perhaps unusual or individual – such as the gift of tongues (*glossolalia*), to which Paul gives extended attention (1 Cor 14, *passim*) – then he places them in a context of usefulness for the whole community. There is an inherent and characteristic diversity among the *charismata*, but not in any competitive or negatively comparative sense. They are either needed to complete the whole, or to allow the individual to pray, to complement others in the community, or to serve it and its purposes. Paul's analogy to the different parts of the one body, Christ's body, is perhaps his most eloquent statement of this (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-30; Eph 4:12). In short, the gifts reveal the 'multiform grace of God' (1 Pet 4:10).

The context which Paul uses for his understanding and discerning of the place of the *charismata* is of primary importance. It is an ecclesial context. He describes these gifts as God's way of giving life, fullness and efficacy to God's life in the Church. Complementarity is a central principle, not in the functional sense of there being some advantage in having a balanced organisational chart for the structure of the Church and role allocation within it, but in a more organic sense of full expression of life in the Body of Christ, with people with their diverse giftedness living as members of this Body. Prophecy, governance, teaching, preaching, pastoral ministry, almsgiving and administration are all expressions of this (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 4:10-11). States of life – such as marriage, virginity, widowhood – are understood in a similar fashion (1 Cor 7:7). Paul perceives some natural order of giftedness, judging that apostles, then prophets, then teachers should have prominence, followed by those with gifts of miracles, healing, and languages (1 Cor 12:27-28). Again, this is done

20 Rom 1:11; 5:15-16; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Cor 1:11; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10. (To describe the two instances in 1 and 2 Timothy as not from Paul is, of course, to favour the argument that these letters, although in Paul's name, were not written by him.)

only as part of the body of Christ and, therefore, for serving God's mission in Christ.

Discernment of gifts is critical for Paul because he sees that not all giftedness is born of the Spirit. Some talents serve evil or idolatrous ends (1 Cor 12:1-3). Paul's concern is for the common good (1 Cor 12:26), for the building up of the Church, and for anything that is conducive to signs of the life of the Spirit. Above all other gifts are faith, hope and love. These are the ultimate signs that the Spirit is active (1 Cor 12:31-13:13). It is most especially love – and the ways that love finds human expression in patience, graciousness, humility, selflessness, gentleness, forbearance, truthfulness, forgiveness, trust, service and endurance – that provides the surest evidence that life in the Spirit is being incarnated. It is to this overriding criterion and this context that Paul most frequently returns in his consideration of the *charismata* (cf. Rom 12:9-13; 1 Cor 14:1; Eph 4:15-16.)²¹

There is, therefore, some underpinning consistency of understanding in the Christian Scriptures on the subject of charisms: they are gracious revelations, in time and place, of the life of God made manifest in and among people; they are sourced in faith, induce hope, and are expressed through love and in pursuit of love; they are diverse but complementary, and always at the service of the Church as it undertakes God's mission. At the same time, however, it needs to be recognised that the New Testament does not offer a fully developed or systematic theology of charisms. The word is used in different ways. It sometimes refers to the appearance and work of Christ directly, to roles and states of life in the Church, or to shared and individual spiritual giftedness. In different instances, charisms are described as coming variously from God (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 12:28; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10), from Christ (Eph 4:7) and from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-11). It is legitimate, therefore, for the Church to continue to build and refine its understanding of the concept, and to expect that God's Spirit will continue to unfold its expression and meaning in time.²²

It was in the first half of the twentieth century that the Church began to reflect more explicitly on its inner life in these terms.²³ This paralleled

21 For a detailed treatment of each of the occurrences of 'charism' in the New Testament see: Nardoni, *op. cit.* For a succinct but thorough overview, see *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #4-8.

22 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #8. See also Nardoni, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

23 The Church's evolving self-understanding throughout its history is a study in itself. Avery Dulles SJ and John Fuellenbach SVD are two scholars of the last century who have led modern thinking in this field, proposing fresh insights for how the Church is most appropriately understood. Dulles' (1974), *Models of the Church*, Doubleday, New York, has been a seminal work. Dulles also posited that Vatican I was not ready to offer any teaching on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, judging it to be too ethereal a notion. From that perspective, Pius XII's Encyclical was a significant step in the way the Church understood God's movement within and among its members. Dulles' later preference to see the Church as a community of disciples aligns with emphases within this book.

the contemporaneous opening of a new theological discourse around the concept of 'spirituality'.²⁴ Neither 'charism' nor 'spirituality' was new in the life of the Church; they were simply new insights for understanding and naming how God's ever-creative and renewing Spirit was active among the Risen Christ's disciples. A catalyst for development in the Church's understanding was provided by Pius XII's Encyclical on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, a teaching which carried multiple mentions of the work of the Spirit in the Church through its 'gifts' which are variously described 'charismatic', 'heavenly', 'spiritual' and from 'the Paraclete'.²⁵ It was, though, the Second Vatican Council which sparked the reappropriation of the term 'charism' in a major way.²⁶ The sentence that is often regarded as 'most emblematic'²⁷ in the Council's teaching is found in *Lumen Gentium*:

*The Church, which the Spirit guides in the way of all truth (John 16:13) and which he unifies in communion and in works of ministry, he both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with its fruits (Eph 4:11-12; 1 Cor 12:4; Gal 5:22).*²⁸

In one of the debates during the drafting stage of this Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Belgian Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens rose to make a memorable and influential intervention. This champion of Vatican II argued strongly for the twin dimensions of the Church that came to be included in this paragraph of *Lumen Gentium*, and about which Pius XII had written two decades previously. Without the order and structure from its hierarchy, he acknowledged, the Church would be adrift and without form; but

24 This has already been touched on in the previous chapter, and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Leahy (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87, points to the emergence of 'charism' in German theological discourses in the 1950s, something that had been developing during the previous half-century. It was not a term, however, that had much currency beyond a relatively small number of theologians.

25 *Mystici Corporis Christi* was written in 1943, during some of the darkest days of World War II. It provided a fresh and more balanced perspective for understanding the nature of the Church. Within its teaching is the call to holiness of all the members of the Church, including lay people, and the importance of the Church's charismatic identity to complement its hierarchical one (17). It includes twenty mentions of the 'gifts' of the Holy Spirit. It was indicative of the shift that was occurring away from the Tridentine concept of the Church as the 'perfect society', to use the expression championed by Cardinal Robert Bellarmine SJ in the Catholic Reformation period, to an emphasis that was more concerned with mystery and communion.

26 Belgian theologian Benjamin Wambacq O. Praem made a useful analysis of the term charism as it emerged from the Council: Wambacq, BN (1975), *Le Mot Charisme, Nouvelle revue théologique*, 97, 345-55. John O'Malley is another theologian who has discussed it, seeing 'charism' as a term that became part of the 'lexicon of the Church' that developed after Vatican II. See: O'Malley, JW (2008), *What Happened at Vatican II*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, p. 56.

27 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #9.

28 *Lumen Gentium* #4, 12, in Flannery, A (ed.) (2008), *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations. The Basic Sixteen Documents* (revised edition), Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN.

without the charismatic giftedness of the Spirit, it would be hollow and sterile.²⁹

Lumen Gentium took this a step further in a defining paragraph which described what these ‘charismatic gifts’ look like in practice:

God distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church. Whether these charisms³⁰ be very remarkable or simply and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church.³¹

The Pauline concepts are obvious, but the Council’s teaching now applied them – and, specifically the term ‘charism’ – not to the Christian communities of the New Testament age but to the Church of the present time, and indeed of all times. It was a theme that the Council took up elsewhere, including on its decree of the Laity:

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), ‘allotting them to everyone according as he wills’ (1 Cor 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be ‘good stewards of the manifold grace of God’ (1 Pet 4:10), to build up the whole body in charity (cf. Eph 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise[s] for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who ‘breathes where He wills’ (John 3:8). This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers [sic] in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1 Thess 5:12,19,21).³²

Blessed Paul VI, in applying this Vatican II conceptualisation of charism to the consecrated life *per se* as well as to individual founders,³³ helped to expand the way it was to be understood and used theologically. ‘Charism’

29 Suenens, J (1964), *The Charismatic Dimension of the Church*, in Y Congar, H Kung, D O’Hanlon (eds.) *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, Sheed & Ward, London. See also: Leahy (2011) *op. cit.*, pp. 53–55, for a commentary on the significance of Cardinal Suenens during and after the Council.

30 Some translators prefer ‘charismatic gifts’ to ‘charisms’; others stay with the Latin word *charismata*.

31 *Lumen Gentium*, #12.

32 *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, #3.

33 See Pope Paul VI (1971), *Evangelica Testificatio, On the renewal of the religious life according to the Second Vatican Council*, #2, 11.

subsequently became a term recurrently used by Saint John Paul II, and which he employed increasingly to refer to founders and movements in the Church, for example:

*The Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in the Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace called charisms. They can take a great variety of forms both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history.*³⁴

The linking of founders with the concept of charism has turned out to be quite significant, perhaps its most prominent application in the post-conciliar period.³⁵ It is an understandable and apposite application to make because it has been the founders of religious movements and religious orders who have been so manifestly gifted in their evangelical living and who have contributed most fruitfully to the renewal or upbuilding of the Church at various moments in time.³⁶ While every Christian has his or her personal charismatic giftedness, these women and men have been giants of the Christian story through the ways they have responded to the Spirit dwelling within them. It is for good and abundant reasons that so many of them have been canonised. Typically, they have been people of transparent and intense sanctity who, through choice or circumstance, or a combination of both, have brought vitality, challenge, freshness, urgency, reform, relevance, accessibility or inspiration to how the gospel is lived and witnessed. The Church has been made purer, more credible, and more effective, as a consequence of their witness and work. They have been people that Paul would readily discern to be attuned to the Spirit since they would tick all of his charism boxes: their own personal holiness was evident, their spiritual giftedness was used for others and for the purposes of the Church, and the signs of the Spirit were abundant in them and, where applicable, in those who gathered about them. Their gospel response suited their historical context and the needs in Church and society at that time. Indeed, it was the way that they were able to realise *missio Dei* in the context of their time and place that made them so effective. They were recontextualisers of the gospel.

34 *Christifideles Laici*, #24.

35 This is not to suggest that the term is not used usefully in other senses, for example to refer to a general state of life or a particular role in the life of the Church. The theologian and Scripture scholar, Sandra Schneiders IHM, for example, writes of the 'charism of religious life' and links it with the 'charism of prophecy' in the first volume of her trilogy on religious life in the twenty-first century. See: Schneiders, SM (2001), *Finding the Treasure: Locating Religious Life in a New Ecclesial and Cultural Context*, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ.

36 The term 'religious order' is used generically here to refer to all the various ways the Church categorises people who lived a consecrated life.

The persecutions of empires and rulers, the growth of wealth and the moral laxity in cities, the destruction of culture and learning, the missionary needs of foreign lands, the confusion of heresy and power plays, the jadedness or dulling of existing forms of Christian living, the insidiousness of greed and corruption, the perniciousness of indulgence and greed, the devastation of disease and war, the injustice of ignorance and poverty, the depersonalisation of industrialisation and urbanisation, the challenges of rationalism and secularism, the failed promises of false prophets and religious charlatans, the advances of knowledge and new ways of knowing, have all generated new contexts in different periods of history. And so too have emerged Paul of Thebes, Anthony the Great and the Desert Fathers and Mothers; Benedict of Nursia and his Rule, and growth of western monasticism; Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the reforms of the medieval Church; Dominic de Guzmán, Francis of Assisi and new ways of living as mendicant friars in cities and towns, and with that the emergence of the great Catholic universities; Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, and the insights of mysticism and the reforms of the spiritual life; Meister Eckhardt, Thomas à Kempis, Thomas Aquinas and the flowering of late medieval theology and spirituality; Ignatius of Loyola, Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul, and the revitalisation of personal spirituality, scholarship and ministry in the Catholic Reformation; John Bosco, Madelaine Sophie Barat, Marcellin Champagnat, Mary MacKillop and the hundreds of founders of the new apostolic institutes of the nineteenth century to minister in education, health, social services, and missionary work; Dorothy Day, Joseph Cardijn, Andrea Riccardi, Chiara Lubich and the plethora of new ecclesial movements and social justice initiatives of the twentieth century. This short list is, of course, neither representative nor exhaustive, but just a toe-dipping into the vast pool of both need and response that has been and is the Church. The point is the ‘multiformity and providentiality’³⁷ of God’s Spirit active in the Church.

It is the unfolding story of God’s people, God’s revelation of Godself in time. Generation has succeeded generation, and the life of the Spirit has irrupted in innumerable people and communities. Mothers and fathers – countless uncanonised saints among them – have nurtured it in their children. Teachers and pastors – quiet heroes too many to name – have helped it to be learned and discerned. The spiritual wisdom and insights of great renewing movements have flowed and intermingled like spiritual bloodlines through the centuries. This has been how the Spirit’s gifting has been mediated. Extraordinary founders have not arrived by spaceship with some magically imbued packet of grace tucked under their arms. This is not their charism. Their charism is they themselves. It is God’s reign in them. It

37 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #10.

is who they have become through the spiritual accompaniment of family, of educators and of priests, from prayer and learning and received tradition, and, importantly, from the time and place and events of their actual living.

To speak of the ‘charism of the founder’ has become a familiar phrase in popular Catholic discourse. From one perspective, this is an entirely valid application of the concept, one that finds frequent treatment among theologians and commentators, and one wholly in line with the Magisterium of each of the Popes of the post-conciliar period. It is arguably one of the most authentic ways to use the word ‘charism’ because the application aligns so readily with the concept’s Scriptural origins and with the teachings of Council. There are, however, two qualifications that need to be made, two reasons to be careful with its use. The first springs from the dangers of possible misunderstanding that can come from its lexical first-cousins ‘charisma’ and ‘charismatic’; the second emanates from applying the concept of charism in the same ways to a founder as to the generations of the group or movement which follow the founding period. Let us take each in turn.

Although ‘charism’ has a quite specifically theological meaning sourced in a graced way of realising *missio Dei* that suits time and circumstance and, in terms of this discussion, a particular person, this is not necessarily the case with the other two words. Charisms can only be authentic in the context of Church, in ways that build up and equip the community of Church to bring timely effect to *missio Dei*. They are always Christocentric. They always bear their fruit through tangible and attestable signs of Christ-life, most tellingly in giving people reason and means for their growth in faith, hope and love. The two words ‘charisma’ and ‘charismatic’, which come from the same etymological root, do not carry the same inherently spiritual or ecclesial senses. This can be even more confusing in Latin languages such as Spanish and Italian, where there is only the single word ‘charisma’. In English, ‘charisma’ has more to do with charm, emotional attraction, popularity, and personal magnetism. Its adjective is ‘charismatic’. A person can be described as a ‘charismatic leader’ but in a wholly non-Christian sense, even where the leader’s ends’ could be malevolent or cultish.³⁸ In the context

38 The German sociologist and philosopher Max Weber (1864–1920), as part of his broader social theories, developed the concept of ‘charismatic authority’ and ‘charismatic social movements’. In Weberian theory, such is exercised through individuals with exceptional personal qualities and character, and always for noble ends. Weber considers how such charismatic elements survive as an organisation continues in the generations after the founding charismatic leader. Weberian and Neo-Weberian theory remains strongly present in the literature of leadership and social theory. One study that explores leadership in Catholic education with Weberian concepts is McMahon, JR (1993), *Educational Vision: A Marist Perspective*, doctoral thesis submitted within the University of London Institute of Education. Another is that done by Sister Michele Aronica RSM on the transition of leadership in the Catholic Worker Movement following the death of Dorothy Day in 1980: Aronica, MT (2017), *Beyond Charismatic Leadership. The New York Catholic Worker Movement*,

of our concerns here, the confusion is exacerbated by founders of spiritual movements also being typically charismatic people in this wider sense. Their personal qualities are compelling for others who are attracted to follow them and learn from them. There is no dichotomy, of course, between the human ‘charisma’ of the founder, and his or her theologically-understood ‘charism’, for the former is how the latter is incarnated and made manifest. It is helpful, indeed, when a founder is a humanly charismatic person. At the same time, nonetheless, there is a risk in such cases that later generations can come to distort their image of a founder. This can happen when the spiritual dimension of the founder is overlooked or diminished, in a way that the founder’s characteristic way becomes expressed only in terms of human values that are not explicitly named or understood as essentially evangelical. For this reason – at least in the English language where it is possible – there can be advantage in adopting the word ‘charismic’ to be the adjective that is linked to ‘charism’, and leave ‘charismatic’ as that for ‘charisma’. This will be the practice mostly adopted in this book, even though it is recognised that ‘charismatic’ is the more usual descriptor found in Church documents and theological writing.

A second caution addresses a more complex question. It is axiomatic of charismatic founders that they are likely to attract around them others who are inspired to follow them in their distinctive path of Christian discipleship and their efficacious means of spreading the gospel. Christian community gathers, sometimes with exponential growth in the time of the founder and for one or two generations that follow the founder. The community might name itself and its way of evangelical living, or come to be named by others in the Church, for example as Jesuit, Benedictine, Franciscan, Lasallian or Salesian. Often the name of the founder is adapted into this name of the group and/or its spiritual and apostolic characteristics. It is common then to extend the application of the term ‘charism’ to refer to this group or to its distinctive way of Christian living and ministering. Thus, expressions such as ‘the Augustinian charism’ or ‘the charism of the Josephites’ are frequently used, proposing that a ‘charism’ can have a corporate and continuing identity. John Paul II often used the term in this way, for example:

The apostolate is always born from that particular gift of your founders, which received from God and approved by the Church, has become a charism for the whole community. That gift corresponds to the different needs of the Church and the world at particular moments of history and, in its turn, it is

*extended and strengthened in the life of religious communities as one of the enduring elements of the Church's life and apostolate.*³⁹

In *Vita Consecrata*, the Pope uses 'charism' no fewer than eighty-six times, the majority in this collective sense – often referring to the 'charism of the institute'. He calls for each religious institute, as a collective entity, to show a 'creative fidelity' to its charism.⁴⁰ He also casts his view beyond the limits of the vowed members of a religious institute to write that:

*Today, often as a result of new situations, many Institutes have come to the conclusion that their charism can be shared with the laity.*⁴¹

Thus 'the charism' could be understood as able to be lived out in a variety of ways that suit the states of life of different members of the Christian community. This has been increasingly accepted and affirmed. The Congregation for Catholic Education, for example, addressed the same question a decade later, with specific reference to how this could occur in Catholic schools.⁴² More recently, Pope Francis has written with a similar understanding of charism as something corporate, transmissible, and able to be developed:

*The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelising Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. They are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safe-keeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ and then channelled into an evangelising impulse.*⁴³

While the term is able to be applied in this collective and evolving sense is common both in official Church documents and probably even more so in less formal discourse in the Church's different communities, it is also important to recognise some unintended risks in doing so. The first is the commodification of what is understood as 'the charism' and its possible disassociation from a living Christian community. The life of the Spirit, in its Pauline sense, can never be reduced to an idea, philosophy, or set of cultural characteristics. It is not something to be objectified. While a

39 John Paul II (1984), *Redemptionis Donum*, Apostolic exhortation to Men and Women Religious on the Consecration in the Light of the Mystery of the Redemption, #15, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031984_redemptionis-donum.html

40 *Vita Consecrata*, #36–37.

41 *Ibid*, #54.

42 Congregation for Catholic Education (2007), *Educating Together in Catholic Schools, A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, #27–29, 36.

43 *Evangelii Gaudium*, #130. See also: *Christifideles Laici*, #24, for a similar understanding.

community will want to develop a language, a written and symbolised wisdom, a cultural expression – and needs to do so – it is the life of the Spirit in the community itself that is primary. Commodification risks sucking the life – literally the Spirit – out of a charismatic founding, most especially its evangelical life or, to repeat Pope Francis's term above, its evangelising impulse. In the context of Catholic education, what is loosely called 'the school's charism' or the charism of its sponsoring community, can unwittingly drift towards becoming little more than a set of pedagogical principles, cultural traits, generic values named in an idiosyncratic way, or traditional practices and rituals. The degree to which the school's governing body, its leadership team and faculty, and even its students, feel spiritually associated as a Christian community, and to be sharing in God's mission in the Church, may in practice diminish.

In its consideration of how a founder's charism might be more widely appropriated in a community, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith proposes some alternative nomenclature and makes this key point:

The relationship between the personal character of the charism and the possibility of sharing it expresses a decisive element in its dynamic, insofar as it touches upon the relationship that, in the ecclesial communion, always links person and community. The charismatic gifts, when exercised, can generate affinities, closeness, and spiritual relationships. Through these, the charismatic patrimony originating in the person of the founder, is shared and deepened, thereby giving life to true spiritual families.⁴⁴

'Charismatic patrimony' legitimises the bringing together of the spiritual essence of a founder's charism with an ongoing heritage by situating it in a continuing experience of personal relationships in community – in a 'spiritual family'. It is a rich concept and one well suited to the subjects being considered. 'Family' suggests interpersonal bonds of a particular intensity and permanence. People belong to a family; families have homes; they are held together by love. While the term 'community', with its allusions to *communio/koinonia*, may be richer theologically, 'family' has its own figurative strength. Qualifying it with 'spiritual' names its essential identity as a distinctive expression of shared life in the Spirit. The same document is then careful to avoid using the term 'charism' in a collective sense, preferring to associate more with a founder or founding experience. It makes extensive use of the term 'charismatic gifts' which, while arguably a tautology, does place emphasis on the continuing experience of the Spirit among the members of the ongoing group.

⁴⁴ *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #16.

So, while it may be a rich concept theologically, the term ‘charism’ does call for sensitivity in its application. This is especially so when used in relation to groups that trace their origins to a particularly inspirational founder or founding experience, and want to carry on the insights and wisdom that came from that person or that time. This is nowhere more the case than with groups involved in the Church’s service ministries – (in traditional language, its corporal works of mercy) –including education. One way to exercise such care in the use of ‘charism’ is to limit the use of ‘charism’ to the person of the founder or founding group, and to look for other terms for describing the ways that a community develops and takes forward its founding intuitions.⁴⁵ The terms ‘spirituality’, ‘spiritual family’, ‘charismic tradition’, ‘ecclesial movements’ and ‘ecclesial communities’ serve this purpose.

FROM PERSONAL CHARISMS TO COMMUNALLY LIVED SPIRITUALITIES

In the Jubilee Year of 2000, the regular meeting of the Union of Superiors General in Rome took as its theme ‘Charism and Spirituality’. It was indicative of the degree to which these terms were occupying the thinking of religious institutes at a defining time in the Church’s history. Claude Maréchal described the founders of these institutes as people who had some of the ‘great gospel ideas’ of the Christian story. In an often-quoted expression, the Assumptionist Superior General went on to say that the ways that these ideas had been subsequently taken up by people inspired by those founders had given individual Christians ‘a story to join, a community to

45 Some writers offer the view that it is never an appropriate application of the concept of charism to use it in relation to the community which continues after a founder. Bernard Lee SM is an example of someone who sees that ‘a charism’ cannot be transmitted because the all founding conditions are not going to be replicated. He proposes the concept of ‘deep story’ as what lies at the heart of the continuing group, and discusses principles for how a religious institute can move forward with its defining story. See Lee, BJ (2004), *The Beating of Great Wings: The Challenge of Rebuilding Religious Life for Active Apostolic Communities*, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic CT. Other writers focus on how a group needs to stay in touch with its founding intuitions, and even needs to enter a conscious process of refounding by reappropriating the founding intuitions for new times and needs. Gerard Arbuckle is an example of someone who has been a leader in this discourse, as mentioned in the previous chapter and taken up later in this one. (See: Arbuckle, *op. cit.*) Other writers are more at ease with use of the term ‘charism’ in a collective and ongoing sense. In reference to Catholic education, see, for example, Lydon, J (2009), ‘Transmission of the charism: a major challenge for Catholic education’, *International Studies in Catholic Education*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 42–58. For a less theological consideration see Cook (2015), *op. cit.* Cook writes of ‘corporate charism’ and ‘group charism’. For an earlier work of Cook see: (2010), *Discovering charism: what is it and where can my school get one?* A Presentation at the Fifth International Conference on Catholic Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia, (August); Cook, TJ and Simonds, TA (2011), ‘The Charism of 21st-Century Catholic Schools: Building a Culture of Relationships’, *Catholic Education, A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 318–33.

which to belong, a work to do, a way to pray, a face of God to see.⁴⁶ He was describing, in accessible language, how the charism of a founder could grow into something that was a good deal more: a story, a community of mission, a distinctive way of Christian discipleship, and a recognised place in sharing in God's mission in the Church. It was in and from these spiritual families that inspirational paths of gospel living and evangelising have stood the test of time and have proved perennially fruitful. These founders have graced successive generations of Christ's disciples to recognise and to love their God, and to share in God's mission. They have made the gospel present and accessible for them, offering people a 'doable discipleship'. They have become the spiritualities of the Church, lived and developed by its spiritual families.

Each has grown in answer to an evangelical need – an absence or dimness in the Reign of God – for this is where the Spirit seeks most earnestly to bring Christ-life to birth. People have felt anointed personally by God to bring effect to *missio Dei* and, with the indwelling Spirit of God irrupting in them, good news has been heard by the poor, captives have found release, the blind new sight, and the downtrodden justice.⁴⁷ Some movements have lasted for a relatively short period, serving a time and circumstance; others have gone on for two or three centuries, and some for many. They are the multi-faceted story of the Church, and God's revealing of Godself in it.

A conceptual framework for charism and spirituality therefore suggests itself – at least in relation to the genesis, the character, and the place of the Church's spiritual families. A founder (or founding group) is charismatically gifted to respond personally to a profound encounter both with God's Spirit within and with evangelical need. Such need is in the founder himself or herself, in others, and more broadly in church or society. The concrete expression of the founder's graced response, in time and place, is inspired and inspiring. It opens the way for the life of the Spirit to irrupt not only in the founder, but in resonant ways also in others who find the founder's way of gospel living to be attractive and accessible. A like-hearted community gathers. A characteristic way of Christian living and evangelising develops. For those who feel drawn to it, it is compelling. That is to say, it is more than simply a clear lens on the gospel for them; it has the effect of fanning their own giftedness into a flame.⁴⁸ As the founding experience unfolds and as a community develops and grows, its ways of living and sharing the

46 Maréchal, C (2000), 'Toward an Effective Partnership between Religious and Laity in Fulfilment of Charism and Responsibility for Mission', in *Charism and Spirituality, Proceedings of the 56th Conference of the Unione di Superiore Generale, USG, Rome*.

47 Cf. Luke 4:14, 18–19.

48 Cf. 2 Tim 1:6

gospel develop characteristics that are spoken about, written down, and symbolised. A language for their way of gospel living follows, and with it an accumulating wisdom and a discerned expertise.⁴⁹ A literature grows, both formal and informal. Perhaps it comes directly from the insight and pen of the founder, perhaps from the community of the first generation as it reflects on the founding. As more time passes, the wealth of experience and wisdom expands, to the stage where it can be faithfully passed on within the community. At some point it must be taken up by a generation which has had no direct experience of the founder(s) or the founding time. It begins to be taught as well as being caught. When and if that happens, the community crosses a bridge towards being the custodians and co-creators of a school of Christian spirituality. It is recognised as such by the Church's pastors. There has been a progress from a *charism* associated with a person, to a *spirituality* of the Church.⁵⁰

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it this way:

*In the communion of saints, many and varied spiritualities have developed through the history of the churches. The personal charism of some witnesses to God's love for humanity has been handed on, like 'the spirit' of Elijah to Elisha and John the Baptist, so that their followers may have a share in this spirit. A distinct spirituality can also arise at the point of convergence of liturgical and theological currents, bearing witness to the integration of the faith into a particular human environment and its history. The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are essential guides for the faithful. In their rich diversity, they are refractions of the one pure light of the Holy Spirit.*⁵¹

49 As part of a widely-cast compendium on Christian approaches to prayer, Robert Wicks has selected eight authors to write about praying in several spiritual traditions – the Franciscan, Carmelite, Dominican, Benedictine, Salesian, Augustinian, Ignatian and Mercy traditions. Each author draws on the accumulated wisdom of his or her tradition, showing how prayer in that tradition began with the distinctive emphases or insight of a founder or foundress, but has evolved as others have followed in that tradition of contributed their own wisdom and experience. Methods or orientations to prayer represent one of the most helpful and fruitful elements that spiritualities of the Church offer people to assist them to come into the presence of the indwelling God and to respond to this presence. These eight chapters of this handbook provide a rich window in the novelty, diversity and wisdom that have entered the spiritual life of the Church through its various traditions. See: Wicks, RJ (ed.), (2016), *Prayer in the Catholic Tradition. A Handbook of Practical Approaches*, Franciscan Media, Cincinnati:

50 Various writers on the growth of the Church's spiritualities understand their origin and growth in similar ways. One of the most influential in modern time has been Peruvian theologian and philosopher Gustavo Gutiérrez OP. Gutiérrez proposes that growth is a three-stage process: the powerful religious experience which gives an individual a new insight into Christian living; the gathering of a group that reflects on this and expresses it in writing, art, formation processes, prayer and evangelising so that it becomes a new school of spirituality; and finally its entry into broader ecclesial life, and its continued development. See: Gutiérrez, G (1983), *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, Orbis, Maryknoll, pp. 52-53.

51 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Edition for Australia and New Zealand), St Paul's, Sydney, #2684.

There are, in this conceptualisation, both personal and communal dimensions. And from them comes the third essential dimension for any Christian spirituality: its expression in selfless and loving service of others. Let us turn first to the personal, for this is the core of any spirituality. Mystics of all ages typically use evocative language to capture their experience of human seeking for the Divine. For the Psalmist it was a panting,⁵² for Augustine it was a restlessness,⁵³ for others a thirst, a hunger, a yearning, or a burning. It is a primal urge within us. Ronald Rolheiser has famously written of all longing being a ‘holy longing’ in this sense.⁵⁴ Its sating is a profoundly satisfying and fulfilling experience. Spiritual masters such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Teresa of Avila and Francis de Sales have put it in ecstatic terms, intuitively drawn to the love poetry of the Song of Songs to find Scriptural resonance for it. There is a twin dynamic of yearning at work here: the deep passion for communion in each person, that can only be satisfied divinely, is met by a prior yearning of the Spirit within the person to irrupt in the person’s lived experience. This irruption occurs in prayer, in personal relationships, in values and the principles of life, in a commitment to truth and a vision of beauty, and ultimately in an impulsion to concrete love and service.

The initiative is God’s. This is not in any magical, paranormal sense as if an alien God visits from some otherworldly heaven. No, the driving urge to integrity, communion, and love that springs up from within is the very life of God within us, seeking incarnation. When the word ‘spirituality’ first appeared in the seventeenth century it was used pejoratively to describe the questionable intensity of individuals’ ‘spiritual’ experiences. It was, nonetheless, an apt coinage for it was taken from the Latin *spiritus*, translating the *pneuma* of the Christian Scriptures – the Spirit which blows where it will.⁵⁵ By the early twentieth century writers were beginning to use the term more universally for human experience of the Divine.⁵⁶

52 Ps. 42.

53 St Augustine’s oft-quoted sentence comes from his *Confessions* (Book 1, #1). ‘You have made us for yourself, O God, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.’ The sense of restlessness, longing and yearning is a central theme in Augustinian spirituality.

54 See: Rolheiser, R. (1999), *The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirituality*, Doubleday, New York; (2014), *Sacred Fire, A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Spirituality* Crown Publishing, New York. The considerable popularity that Rolheiser’s insights have achieved, as may also be the case for Henri Nouwen’s, is arguably due to the way that this basic restlessness of the human condition is described in a grounded and contemporary way. Both draw on the experiences and wisdom of the great mystics, such as John of the Cross, and re-present these in accessible language and imagery.

55 Cf. John 3:8.

56 Influential Lutheran theologian Rudolph Otto was, for example, proposing the idea of the ‘numinous’ at the core of all human spiritual experience. Otto’s 1917 book was one of the most impactful publications of the last century in this field: Otto, R. (1917; 1950), *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, (JW Harvey, trans.) Oxford University Press, New York. While Otto’s ideas regarding spiritual experience have been much critiqued, and do not sit comfortably with some of the incarnational theology and

From this emerging strand of scholarship, the Christian story could be seen through a new lens, and interpreted through a fresh conceptual framework – that of multiple spiritualities, often linked to a founding figure or time. Scholars began to write, for example, of Origen and Alexandrian spirituality, Anthony and the spirituality of the desert, Gregory of Nissa and Cappadocian spirituality, Columba and Brigit and Celtic spirituality, medieval spirituality, monastic and apostolic spiritualities, mystical and ascetical spiritualities, eastern and western spiritualities, spiritualities named after saints and founders – Augustinian, Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan and Ignatian, for example. With the growing diversification of Christianity came spiritualities associated with new denominations – Lutheran spirituality, Anglican, Calvinist, Methodist, Baptist, Mennonite, and so on. The list is long, and growing. The bloodlines that flow through the various strands of Christian spirituality have mixed, mingled, and been mutually enriching. One major strand – and the one from which emerged many of the apostolic religious institutes associated today with Catholic education around the world – is collectively known as the ‘French school of spirituality’. More accurately understood as western European rather than exclusively French, it emerged as part of the Catholic reformation. The French school gave rise to a range of spiritual families, which have developed spiritualities that although varied and distinctive in their own ways, all tend to emphasise a mystical and personal encounter with Christ. It is a theology that captures both the immanence and majesty of God and is notable for quite affective and relational styles, generosity in service and mission to the marginalised. These spiritualities stood in contrast to more rigorist, moralist and ascetical spiritualities of the time.⁵⁷

The term ‘spirituality’ has come to be applied – like ‘charism’ – with increasing breadth and, arguably, growing imprecision and ambiguity. For example, terms such as liberation spirituality, feminist spirituality, earth

Catholic doctrine that informs the exploration of charism and spirituality in this book, they do align with the proposition that there is an inescapably spiritual dimension and explanation to all human maturity. His sense of the awe that is attendant on spiritual experience matches the place of humility as the essential spiritual disposition of the Catholic mystical tradition. Another early influential writer was Pierre Pourrat. Like others of the French-associated thinking on spirituality – for example the editorial group behind the definitive *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* mentioned in Chapter 1 – Pourrat places emphasis on tension between the mystical and ascetical dimensions of spirituality. See: Pourrat, P (1918), *La Spiritualité Chrétienne* (4 Vols.), J Gabalda, Paris. Most of the early discourse was premised on the idea of a single Christian spirituality.

- 57 A comprehensive survey of Christian spiritualities, their origins and essence, from a number of perspectives can be found in: Holder, A (ed.) (2011), *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester. For an introduction to the field, see also: Sheldrake, P (2013) *Spirituality, A Brief History*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester; Schmidt, RH (2008), *op. cit.*; Downey, M (1997), *op. cit.*; Cunningham, LS & KJ Egan, (1996), *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*, Paulist Press, New York. For a consideration of historical, theological and anthropological approaches to the study of spirituality, one the leading writers of the present time is Catholic theologian Sandra Schneiders IHM.

spirituality, or post-modern spirituality are contentious in some quarters.⁵⁸ While each of them, and many others, have a validity in that they refer to insights that can reveal another of the innumerable faces of God, and bring relevance and spark to the gospel, they may also be more ideological or hermeneutical in their substance. That does not diminish their evangelical authenticity nor the insights they provide, but they may be better labelled as theology or philosophy in some instances. A Christian spirituality, like a charism, is not essentially about ideas or a system of meaning. While it is likely to be a richer and more enduring spirituality if it has indeed developed an extensive wisdom literature that is the fruit of reflection on experience, and if it has fostered ongoing dialogue and scholarship, and from this has developed an effective method for undertaking its particular field of ministry, these are not its essence. A Christian spirituality is, rather, about personal encounter with and response to the life of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ and experienced in his indwelling Spirit. Additionally, a Christian spirituality has a communal expression, and a spiritual family in which the spirituality is lived out and continually developed. This community shares responsibility for living the tradition, for inducting and forming others in it, and for keeping it intuitively in touch with its founding. Thirdly, it expresses itself in concrete evangelical outreach and service. It is about love realised. If a narrative – even a deeply theological one – is dissociated in practice from these three constitutive elements then it is not rightly regarded as a Christian spirituality.

Additionally, ‘spirituality’ is a word that has currency outside Christian and even religious discourse. While Christian people have no copyright on the term and no control over its etymological development, it is important that they themselves are clear on what they mean by it. For example, a ‘new age spirituality’ that is focused on pursuing self-actualisation, leading a stress-free lifestyle, and achieving personal satisfaction, is something different from a Christian spirituality which is concerned intentionally with fostering a discipleship of Jesus Christ and all that that implies in self-giving love and service of other people. That the word μαθητης (*mathetes*, ‘disciple’) occurs more than 250 times in the Gospels and in Acts, highlights the centrality of this concept for any path of gospel living. From those scriptures, some clear elements of this discipleship present themselves: a sense of conversion, a choice to follow Jesus in a way of life that is lived according to evangelical imperatives, relationally, joyfully, celebrated sacramentally, and with a

58 Such breadth is partly informed by the conceptual orientation that is being taken. See Sandra Schneiders for a discussion of historical, theological and anthropological approaches to studying spirituality. Schneiders, S (2011), ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality’, in Holder, *op. cit.*

commitment to carry to the world news of Christ risen.

When a school draws on one of the charismatic traditions of the Church to shape its identity, this is done most authentically at a spiritual level. It is for spiritual reasons that the tradition came into the life of the Church, to allow the life of the Spirit to become manifest in people, the reign of God to prevail, so that the Risen Christ is at the heart of the Church, its communities, and its work. Christian discipleship is the purpose and fruit of this. Because Christian spiritualities are found primarily in living spiritual families – and only vicariously in books and manuals, symbols and labels – it follows that these spiritual families need to be present in an influential even defining way within the school community – in its governance, in its leadership, in the people who in practice shape its identity.

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A 'CHARISMIC CULTURE'

Much of the foregoing discussion has considered personal charism and its growth into spirituality theologically, with some historical references. Another way to approach this conceptualisation of the life of the Spirit is to do so anthropologically. This can be especially relevant and helpful in a school context. There is both validity and risk in doing so. The validity is sourced in the principle that there is no dichotomy between the life of faith and the physicality and temporality of human existence. Christian faith always needs a context of time and place, a cultural context; the Word of God has taken flesh and come to dwell in our midst, and in this we have seen the glory of God.⁵⁹ At the same time, a focus on human behaviours, human values and human meaning-making and rituals, risks neglecting or even omitting spiritual awareness.

As spiritual families grow, they inevitably develop cultural expression, as do the sub-strands, the individual communities, and the works of those spiritual families, such as schools. This is not a dangerous by-product to be handled with care. It may indeed carry some dangers, and care is certainly required, but the development of a culture is necessary if a spirituality is to grow from a personal charism. In the context of the Catholic school, this is something that has long been recognised:

59 1 John 14. Alongside the Pauline sense of the indwelling Spirit of God is the Johannine sense of humanity, and the disciple of Christ, as the figurative 'Temple' where God dwells, replacing the literal temple in Jerusalem. For an introduction to the concept of Temple in John's Gospel see: Coloe, ML (2001), *God Dwells With Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, Michael Glazier Inc., Wilmington.

... faith which does not become culture is faith which is not fully received, not assimilated entirely, not lived faithfully.⁶⁰

In fact, it is in entities such as individual schools, networks of schools, and teams and central offices which support such networks, that culture is likely to be most significant and therefore most worthy of scrutiny. In large and diverse international spiritual families, it is their local cultural expression that is likely to be most salient. But whether local, regional or global, a culture is necessary for a spirituality to be lived. In Chapters 4 and 5 there will be further consideration of how cultures operate in individual schools. Here, let us approach the matter more conceptually.

The application of the anthropologically-derived term 'culture' to individual human organisations such as corporations, non-government agencies, and schools – rather than to societies, ethnic groups or religions which had been its more normal use since the nineteenth century – has been common since at least the 1980s. It is now well enough established that the concept of 'organisational culture' is a recognised sub-field of cultural anthropology, with its own extensive body of literature.⁶¹ Close on the academic heels of this was a parallel and partly-related application of the concept of culture to schools, and linked closely to the school effectiveness and school leadership discourse that was beginning to grow.⁶²

60 'Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education' (1977), in *The Catholic School*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, #33.

61 Peters and Waterman were prominent in the 1980s as the field of organisational culture was being empirically developed. See, for example: Peters, TJ & Waterman, RH (1982), *In Search of Excellence, Lessons from America's Best Run Companies*, Harper & Row, New York; (1985), *The Passion for Excellence: the leadership difference*, Fontana, London. From the perspective of Catholic cultural anthropology, Gerard Arbuckle has long written and researched in this field. See, for example: Arbuckle, GA (2010), *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville; (2013), *Catholic Identity or Identities?: Refounding Ministries in Chaotic Times*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville.

62 This has been a rich field of scholarship for forty years. Two researchers who had a shaping influence on discourse during the 1980s and 1990s were Deal and Kennedy. See, for example: Deal, TE (1985), 'The Symbolism of Effective Schools', in *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 85, No. 5, pp. 601-20; (1993), 'The Culture of Schools', in Sashkin, M and Walberg, HJ (eds), *Educational Leadership and School Culture*, McCutchan Publishing, Berkeley; Deal, TE & Kennedy, AA (1991), 'Culture and School Performance', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 29, 2, 72-82; (1992), *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, Addison-Wesley, Reading MA. Tom Sergiovanni became influential in the field at the same time, especially in terms of cultural leadership in schools. See, for example: Sergiovanni, TJ (1984), 'Leadership and Excellence in Schooling: Excellent schools need freedom with boundaries', *Educational Leadership*, 41, 5, 4-13; (1990), *Value-Added Leadership: How to get Extraordinary Performance in Schools*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego; (1992), *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*, Jossey Bass Publishers, San Francisco; (1994), *Building Community in Schools*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco; (1996), *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco; (2004), *Strengthening the Heartbeat*, Jossey Bass Publishers, San Francisco. In Australia: Headley Beare (University of Melbourne) and Patrick Dignan (Australian Catholic University) were among those leading discourse in school culture and leadership. See, for example: Beare, H (1987), *Metaphors About Schools: The principal as a Cultural Leader*, in WS Simpkins, AR Thomas, EB Thomas (eds) *Principal and Change: The Australian Experience*, University of New England Press, Armidale; Beare, H, Caldwell, BJ & Millikan, RH (1989), *Creating An Excellent School*, Routledge, London;

How has the term been used? The first thing to recognise, as for other terms already considered, is that ‘culture’ is a theoretical construct, a way for conceptualising and coming to an integrated understanding of the binding beliefs, meaning-making, defining myths, shared values, and normative behaviours and ritualising of an identifiable group of people. While these elements are all real – in their being observable or inferable – the unifying and integrating of them as ‘a culture’ is essentially conceptual. ‘Culture’ is like ‘charism’ and ‘spirituality’ in this sense. It is not something to be commodified, nor can it be acquired or adopted in ways that are independent of the lived context of a group, or only tenuously connected to it. This is a criticism of the rather instrumentalist or utilitarian ways the term has sometimes been purloined in the commercial and sporting spheres, or indeed in education, in the interests of maximising effectiveness or fostering excellence. While the achievement of desired outcomes is a correlate of cultural factors, and there is an inevitably a functional relationship at work, the primary emphasis must be on the community itself, the people in all their complexity.⁶³ There is, additionally, some degree of metaphor in the application of a term sourced from anthropology to a group such as an organisation or spiritual movement. It is, nonetheless, a metaphorical application that has proven to be useful.

Especially from the perspective of incarnational theology, the concept of culture does provide a way of describing the human reality in which the spiritual life is incarnated. Thus, identity and values, myths and legends, sagas and heroes, symbols and rituals, language and art, music and sacred sites, and accepted ways of knowing, acting, relating, ordering, responding, judging, rewarding and punishing, and choosing and ostracising members, and generating meaning, are all typically understood to be constitutive of culture – and they can all be understood as the defining cultural characteristics of a living spirituality.

Culture is always deeper than a simplistic *how* ‘we do things around here’. It is, before that, *who* is doing these things, *with whom* and *for whom*, *why* are they doing them, *what* do they understand themselves to be doing, and *when* and *where*. The *how* is expressive of deeper identity, belief, purpose, and world view.⁶⁴ Cultural and even spiritual traditions are sometimes

Duignan, PA (1987), ‘Leaders as Culture Builders, in *Unicorn*, 13, 4, 208–213; Duignan, PA (1997), *The Dance of Leadership: At the Still Point of the Turning World*, Australian Council for Education Administration Monograph. Subsequent developments in understanding school culture is well treated in the early book in this BBI-AITE *Mission and Education* Series, D’Orsa, J & T (2013), *op. cit.*

63 Commentators such as Sergiovanni (see above) increasingly came to this emphasis on the primacy and priority of community.

64 In the context of Catholic education, and its essential characteristics, Tom Groome has described this another way, but perhaps with the same essential meaning. He writes of a characteristically Catholic anthropology, cosmology, sociology, epistemology, historicity, politics, spirituality and universality that makes Catholic schools Catholic. See Groome (2001), *op. cit.* This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

simply and erroneously understood at the expressive level, the *how*. While the *how* is an integral and important dimension of culture, it is not its core. To observe or to take part in a ritual, for example, but not to have a grasp of what it is that is being ritualised, is to miss its purpose and significance, and not to be affected by it. If such a person is a member of the group which is undertaking the ritual, then it will be nothing more than a set of actions. Similarly, for such people, the core myths of the group – which figuratively carry its core-identity, beliefs and values – are likely to be little more than folk stories. Its sacred sites would be visited as tourism rather than pilgrimage. Its language might be known, but with the head and not the heart.

All groups and communities have cultures. These cultures will all find themselves somewhere on the spectra of functional to dysfunctional, strong to weak, mature to underdeveloped, and sustainable to disintegrating. Members of a group will relate to its culture in ways that range from meaningful to irrelevant, inspiring to alienating, fully engaged to observational. In a strong and functional culture, the core beliefs, values and purposes, and the chosen means for nurturing and expressing these, will have higher degrees of homogeneity and resonance among members of the group, so that people make meaning and define their world in largely resonant, though not necessarily identical ways. A mature culture will have developed rich and wise ways to mythologise, ritualise, articulate, symbolise, dialogue, self-critique, induct, form, nurture, bond, and witness. The relationship between these expressive elements and the members of the cultural group will be reciprocal: people will shape the culture, and the culture will shape people. It all comes back to the people, the community.

At the heart of any personal charism is a deep experience of the Spirit which yearns to bring Christ-life to birth, and a graced response to this. A charismatically gifted person, such as a founder, is someone who is graced to respond with effect, simultaneously and co-relationally, to a deep encounter both with the Spirit and with concrete human need. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the coming of the Reign of God, in real people and real time, are the essence of what it is about. As a personal charism moves towards becoming a spirituality, and this spirituality is expressed culturally in a living and self-identifying spiritual family, as it must be if the Kingdom is to be incarnated, then the challenge is to keep Christ at its heart. Christ-life, in all the human manifestations that St Paul uses to describe it, must remain the heartbeat of all its mythology, its symbols, its language, its values, its community-building, its formation, and its work. To the degree that it does so, its culture may be called charismatic. To the degree, on the

other hand, that members of the community lose touch with that heart of their founding story, then their shared spirituality will dissipate, and their culture – irrespective of any apparent strength or functionality – will fade from being authentically charismatic.

AS CONTEXTS CHANGE

A telling sign of the evangelical robustness and durability of a spiritual family is found in how it responds to changes in its context. One common reason that some movements last only a short time is that their cultures are quite context-specific – developed to work evangelically in particular times and places, to respond to particular needs, to be suited to particular lifestyles or states of life, and ritualised and articulated in the Beguines or the Knights Templar of medieval times, or many of the apostolic foundations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That such groups flowered for a time and then either died out or continued only minimally is not to devalue their evangelical authenticity or effectiveness. We need to recognise, however, that their vitality was connected in a defining way by the circumstances of their founding. They gave people a way of living the gospel for a time and served well the needs of God's people during this time – inspired and enlivened by the same Spirit that always brings life to the gospel of Jesus. But that time passed. Indeed, this has been the fate of the great majority of spiritual movements in the Church's story. Only a minority has lasted more than several generations, and a small fraction for more than two or three centuries.⁶⁵ Similarly, specific strands of a spiritual tradition or styles of living out that spirituality may cease or diminish. Examples include medieval-style monasticism, the lay penitent movement that flowered after the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century, and the kind of lay confraternities established in the sixteenth century by the Jesuits. While charismatic intuitions that prompted such developments continued – spiritualities such as Benedictine or Augustinian or Ignatian – needed to find continually fresh means of expression or else risk fading relevance.

Europe is dotted with the ruins of medieval abbeys and monasteries. Some had a violent end, but many others just gradually emptied. An illustration is provided by the ruins of the Abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in south-central

65 One influential theorist on this topic, specifically in relation to religious institutes during the sharp decline in the consecrated life in the 1960s and 1970s in many parts of the Western world, was the French Jesuit Raymond Hostie. See: Hostie, R. (1972), *Vie Et Mort Des Ordres Religieux*, Desclee de Brouwer, Paris. Hostie posited that most religious institutes lived through a predictable life-cycle that involved a founding period of 10-20 years, followed by consolidation lasting a similar time, then an expansion during the subsequent century. Most then stabilised for a time or began to decline. Few lasted more than 250-300 years.

France. As for many other monastic communities, this eight-hundred-year-old centre of spiritual life was completely ransacked in the ecclesiastical purges of the French Revolution, its monks expelled and the buildings looted. It had been one of the most significant centres of Benedictine life in Europe – with hundreds of monks in community at La Chaise-Dieu itself at any one time, and countless others in almost three hundred dependent monasteries and priories across Europe. It had produced scholars, artists, abbots, bishops and even a pope. While it is tempting to shoot the blame for its destruction at the secularist and perhaps greedy revolutionaries who destroyed it, the truth is elsewhere: by the late eighteenth century, this Abbey was already in terminal decline. There was only a handful of old monks still living there in 1790 when the militants of the Revolution threw them out. Only a shadow of what it had been at its height, the Abbey's demise had been happening for some time. What had gone wrong? What had led to this once-vibrant hub of the gospel of Jesus to diminish and become an anachronism that had long since ceased attracting young men to embrace its way of life? 'La Chaise-Dieu' meant 'the House of God,'⁶⁶ originally a fitting name for such a centre of the Christian spiritual life, but ironically by the time of its demise it was a place of empty choir stalls and the cold void of an abbey church. What had caused this spiritual death?

With a touch of extra irony, the answer hides in a three-panel fresco that survives in the old abbey church – *La Danse Macabre* ('the Dance of Death'). The fresco depicts twenty-three figures from medieval church and society – a pope, a prince, a preaching monk, a merchant, a peasant, and so on.⁶⁷ Each is dancing with a skeleton, as a chilling reminder of their mortality: their rank, power, prestige and wealth, or lack of them, are all transitory. The fresco was probably painted in the late fifteenth century, but by the eve of the nineteenth, it portrayed a society that no longer existed. And therein was also the problem for the monks of La Chaise-Dieu: they were living in ways that addressed the context and need of another time. Their abbey had been founded and thrived on Benedictine spirituality – one of the richest spiritual traditions of the Church, one that has provided and continues to provide countless people with a richly effective way to embrace the gospel of Jesus. There was and is nothing anachronistic about the essence of Benedictine spirituality. Where the Chaise-Dieu monks went wrong was their failure to bring it into dialogue with the spirit of their age. They continued in a medieval time warp, inattentive to the liberating movements of thought and profound societal realignment that

66 From medieval Occitan or *lengua d'oc*, 'Chasa Dieu'.

67 This genre of art occurs in other churches across Europe, and dates from the time of Black Death.

marked the Enlightenment. It was a liminal time, and they neither read its signs nor made an attempt to reinterpret their tradition for a new era. Their ruin was not so much at the hands of external adversaries, but the result of their own lack of readiness to renew and to reimagine their spiritual heritage for their own times. It offers a salutary lesson for any spiritual family.

All spiritualities grow out of a need to recontextualise the gospel for a new time. At their origin, they are inherently disruptive in their novelty. They emerge from their time and present the gospel in ways that are prophetic, relevant and compelling for the people of that time. They speak with cogency, and for that reason they take root and grow. They provide ‘providential answers’ for specific circumstances.⁶⁸ As these circumstances inevitably change over time, or as a spirituality is taken by members of its family to different geographical locations and social situations, it needs to continue to recast itself in ways that address these new contexts. There is the need for the spiritual family to show creative fidelity to its founding spiritual intuitions – maintaining the essence of the founding insights, but developing new language, rituals and symbolism that are influenced by dialogue with the new ways of knowing and interpreting that are abroad. In this way, the spirituality retains accessibility, relevance and engagement for people. Where such a transition – sometimes through a more radical reform – does not occur, the spirituality loses the vital edge that created its original appeal. But more: it is essential that a spirituality not only recontextualises time and again, but that it retains an intuition to do so, to be disruptive, to be prophetic. More colloquially put, a spirituality that is robust and enduring will be one that continues ‘to cut through’. In saying this, it is critical to understand that ‘the spirituality’ is not an objective commodity, but is the lived gospel experience of a community of people. It is the members of the spiritual family who need to remain intuitively agile and adaptive, deeply attentive and responsive to the reality of their world, as were their founders.

For example, mendicant orders were able to recontextualise monasticism for emerging urban environments; the Cistercians renewed Benedictine life for their times; Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross revisioned eremitical Carmelite life and recast it in ways that internalised the spiritual journey and revitalised their communal expression of it; Ignatius was one of a number who took the consecrated life out of its conventual restrictions and into the school and the missionary field; in the early-modern and modern eras, many of the centuries-old religious orders adapted their monastic

68 Cf. *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* (quoting John Paul II), #2

ways in the light of new forms of apostolic life that emerged during these times.⁶⁹ While foundational literature and wisdom are kept, new patterns of living and praying are developed, and new documents are written – for new times. Recent decades have seen new scholarship and new publications, for example, on Jesuit education or Marist education, or many other Catholic educational traditions that have emanated from various spiritual families. If such fresh thinking and writing were not occurring within a spiritual family, one would need to question if its members had lost their collective intuition to recontextualise. It is likely to be one sign that they were in decline.

Another telling sign of when a spiritual family's culture has lost its charismatic heartbeat is when its rituals, symbols, behaviours, and other expressive elements of its culture are tenaciously protected and preserved, but with little or no reference among its members to the core Christocentric beliefs and values that are supposed to be being represented. If the evangelising impact of such ritual and meaning-making is dulled by other factors such as simple nostalgia, tradition, circle-the-wagons insularity, hero-worship, gimmickry, or other plays on emotion, then the culture is unlikely to be one that is alert enough to the gospel to be able to recontextualise it with much effect.

It is one that will more likely be ossifying or insulating, each a process that is antithetical to the free movement and influence of the Spirit. These do not need to be negative factors. Schools, for example, may have strong academic, emotional intelligence, leadership, arts, community service, or sporting emphases that are justifiably pursued and ritualised accordingly. Yet the community may lose a sense of evangelical imperative in them. The critical element is the degree to which the purpose for doing all of this is understood by the community – *missio Dei*.⁷⁰

Spiritual families – and nowhere more so than in Catholic schools – can find that their tradition is a double-edged sword. One of the strengths and riches of a spiritual tradition is just that: it is a tradition. Tradition is a function of history. It is by drawing from the story of the spiritual family that cultures are built – the heroes who are honoured, the sacred places that are visited, the events that are recounted, the literature that is studied, practices that are handed on, and so on. But when a spirituality becomes anchored by its history, even defined for the most part by it, then it risks not living the gospel

69 Many historians of Christian spirituality trace these and other adaptations and reformations. See, for example: Maas, R. & O'Donnell, G (eds) (1990), *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, Abingdon Press, Nashville. See also Sheldrake, *op. cit.* for a comprehensive treatment of this.

70 Cultural anthropologist Gerard Arbuckle, for whom mythology is a key element of a culture, points to 'myth drift'. He claims that this can happen unknowingly in a school as it drifts to make life intelligible for its members in ways other than spiritual ones: Arbuckle, G (2016) *op. cit.* pp. 10 ff. Jim and Therese D'Orsa, while recognising that apparently secular purposes and explicitly evangelical ones can serve the same ends – such as justice or social inclusion – state that the enduring challenge for Catholic schools is 'securing the quality of mission thinking' (2013) *op. cit.* p. 228.

but preserving an artefact of it. Thus a measure of the ‘evangelising impulse’ of a community is likely to be found in how it treats its prophets.

Doing things in new ways is not straightforward, especially in places or communities with strong cultural norms. School communities can be stubbornly resistant to change, students as well as staff. There are various reasons for this, ranging from psychological insecurities to change-fatigue, but many of these can be addressed through skilled change-management processes. If the source of change-resistance is, however, a subtler disconnection with the living of the gospel of Jesus, then the influence of what has culturally developed in the school may be working against evangelical vitality and responsiveness rather than for it. At its worst, it can become toxic to a promotion of the Reign of God. School cultures that exploit, negligently tolerate, or simply fail to address anti-evangelical practices such as abuse of power, pursuit of achievement for self-serving or inequitable ends, rivalry, shouting, envy, petty bickering, deceit, emotional bullying, immoral conduct, or exclusion, are working against the Spirit – whatever results are being achieved academically or otherwise. Read Galatians 5:19–20. Any culture needs ongoing critiquing and purifying through the lens of the gospel.

Robust Christian spiritualities are those that remain strong because of their historical and cultural circumstances, not despite them. The members of their spiritual families have a disposition towards attentiveness, engagement, and creativity. They want to understand their world, and to meet people where they are. They seek to be alert to what is shaping people’s values and leading them to make meaning. For example, the post-modernist distrust of institutional narratives and ambit truth claims, the curious counterpoint between xenophobia and the promotion of inclusion that plays out in many Western countries, the discrediting of organised religion and the normalising of secularism, the way the digital revolution is transforming ways of knowing and relating – these are all cultural influences that a spiritual family needs to attempt to comprehend. A genuinely charismatic one will feel the impulse to do so. For those spiritual families which share in the Church’s ministry of education, this becomes even more immediate since so much of the *raison d’être* of the Catholic school is about attempting integration of faith, culture and life.⁷¹

71 Bishop Michael Putney is one commentator who has provided some insights into the changing context in which the Catholic school finds itself, and how the Church needs to reorient itself in the light of this. See: Putney, M (2005), ‘The Catholic School and the Future’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, Vol. 82, No. 4, pp. 387–398; (2008), ‘A New Ecclesial Context for Catholic Schools’, in Benjamin, A and Riley, D (eds), *Catholic Schools, Hope in Uncertain Times*, John Garratt Publishing, Melbourne. The New South Wales Bishops also addressed the changing context in which schools operate and the Church’s preferred response to this in their 2007 document *Catholic Schools at a Crossroad*, Catholic Education Commissions of NSW and the ACT and (2007) *Catholic Schools at a Crossroad, Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT*.

Empirical studies, such as the *Enhancing Catholic Schools Identity Project* (ECSIP), are useful for serving such intuition.⁷² The data that have emerged from ECSIP, specifically in Belgium and Australia, demonstrate just how much the secularising, pluralising and detraditionalising trends in those societies are inexorably impacting on those who comprise Catholic school communities. The prevailing interpretation of the data, and the trends evident from them, is that the traditional assumptions that have underpinned the identity of the Catholic school, and have shaped its life and work, have changed radically or are in the process of so doing. Catholic schools which once served largely homogenous Catholic communities now find themselves working in a growingly post-Christian and quite heterogenous context. To march on in denial of this change is likely to be at best ineffective for the work of evangelisation, and probably quite counter-productive.⁷³ ECSIP proponents argue for dialogue and recontextualisation, but also underline the value for the Catholic community itself of being educated comprehensively and having the opportunity for effective catechesis so that its members can engage meaningfully in such dialogue. There does not need to be any undervaluing of the power of *kerygma*, or any commitment to bringing young people to the fullness of the gospel, but there is the recognition that the soil needs to be readied for good sowing.

In many Western countries, those responsible for Catholic schooling are finding themselves in situations that in some ways parallel Catholic schools in most Asian countries: serving a minority Catholic community, but predominantly providing a service to society by an approach marked by integral education and the promotion of social harmony. All this with a view to building a readiness for young people to make a critically aware and responsible contribution to building a society marked by fairness, compassion, equity, ecological care, and peace. Such is an authentic participation in *missio Dei*. Indeed, the 2017 document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating for Fraternal Humanism*, recognises this as the core of the purpose of the Catholic school.⁷⁴ This document focuses on the

72 In Australia, a perennially useful source of data is the National Church Life Survey: www.ncls.org.au. Census data is also always revealing: www.abs.gov.au/census. Similar research bodies operate in other countries, e.g. the Pew Research Center in the USA: www.pewforum.org. And Faith Survey in the UK (also with Irish and continental European data and trends): faithsurvey.co.uk.

73 Boeve (2016), *op. cit.* and Sharkey (2013), *op. cit.* argue this way. Each writer considers at length the implications of the data from the ECSIP research and other related material, in the context of Catholic schools in Flanders (Belgium) and Victoria (Australia) respectively. He argues for recognising who it is who make up Catholic school communities, what are and are not sources of meaning for them, what this might mean for who is enrolled and employed in Catholic schools, and how the life of the gospel and the Church is expressed. Both favour inclusivity and dialogue as key elements of any future approach.

74 Congregation for Catholic Education (2017), *Educating for Fraternal Humanism, Building a Civilisation of Love Fifty Years after Populorum Progressio*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome.

‘humanising’ purposes of education, and the promotion of inclusivity in schools and genuine dialogue. In doing so, it restates orientations for Catholic education that have been important to the Church’s hopes for it since *Gravissimus Educationatis* and *The Catholic School*.⁷⁵ At the same time, while such documents have understood the role of the Catholic school in society in quite broad ways, in some countries there has been a more narrowly conceived catechetical emphasis in Catholic schools.

This is a recognition that evangelisation and secularism are not necessarily oppositional concepts. The proposition that the concepts can be more integrated, and that the Catholic school can be a catalyst for this coming together, is the kind of thinking that underpinned the support that Benedict XVI gave to the ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’ initiative by the Pontifical Council for Culture in 2011. In his message to the launch of this forum, he wrote:

Dear young people, it is up to you, in your own countries and in Europe as a whole, to help believers and nonbelievers to rediscover the path of dialogue. Religions have nothing to fear from a just secularity, one that is open and allows individuals to live in accordance with what they believe in their own consciences.

*If we are to build a world of liberty, equality and fraternity, then believers and nonbelievers must feel free to be just that, equal in their right to live as individuals and in community in accord with their convictions; and fraternal in their relations with one another. One of the reasons for this Court of the Gentiles is to encourage such feelings of fraternity, over and above our individual convictions yet not denying our differences.*⁷⁶

‘New Evangelisation’ is a term that has, at least since John Paul II’s first Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, taken on a narrower Eurocentric focus than its original conceptualisation in Latin America. The latter-day meaning, which has in some quarters led to some degree of restorationist thinking and acting, is captured by this extract from the Encyclical:

... countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptised have lost a sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live

75 *Gravissimus Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education proclaimed by His Holiness Paul VI, 28 October 1965, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977), *The Catholic School*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome.

76 Benedict XVI (2011), *Message to Courtyard of the Gentiles*, 26 March, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome.

a life far removed from Christ and his gospel. In this case what is needed is a 'new evangelisation' or a 're-evangelisation'.⁷⁷

The source of the term is, however, in another continent and another context – the watershed meeting of the Latin American Catholic Bishops' Conference (CELAM) in Medellín in 1968. The Medellín meeting was influenced by various thinkers and theologians, not least the Jesuits, and among them Pedro Arrupe SJ, their new Superior General. From Arrupe, CELAM took the phrase 'preferential option for the poor' and gave it to the whole Church of Latin America, along with the term 'new evangelisation'. This meeting, which sought to liberate the people from the preventable 'institutionalised violence' of poverty and hunger, also introduced the concept of 'basic Christian communities' (BECs) as the locus for the empowerment of poor people, especially through programs of literacy. This was the beginning of what came to be called 'liberation theology', developed by theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez OP. Paul VI took all of this up in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975).

The original sense of the 'new evangelisation' was more rooted in interpreting the implications of the gospel for the lived reality of people, particularly marginalised people that the Church was neglecting. It was, in essence, the kind of recontextualising that has needed to happen time and again in the story of the Church, and the kind of process in which every ecclesial community has needed to enter for its relevance and vitality to continue. It is always marked by engagement with the needs and aspirations of people, rather than the language and idealism of a past time.

SPIRITUALITIES AND INSTITUTIONALISATION: A CREATIVE TENSION

Ideally, the Church will be a space where 'charism and institution are always complementary',⁷⁸ but the reality is frequently enough something else. Leo Joseph Suenens' intervention during the drafting of *Lumen Gentium*, mentioned above, named a tension that is always present in the Church. This tension is not a case of the white-hats against the black-hats, right against wrong. The extensive prescriptions in Canon Law regulating the power of bishops with respect to religious institutes and similar entities, and vice

77 John Paul II (1990), *Redemptoris missio, On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, #33.

78 Benedict XVI (2009), *Attract to Christ Men and Women of All Ages*, address at Castel Gandolfo to Members of the Franciscan Family participating in the 'Chapter of Mats', 20 April, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

versa, and the need for a document such as *Mutuae Relationes*,⁷⁹ are evidence that it is not always plain-sailing when it comes to the Church's acceptance of both its 'hierarchical and charismatic gifts'.⁸⁰ There is a creative tension that exists not only between the institution of the Church and the groups which have care of its charismatic traditions, but it is a tension that arises within these groups themselves. It is not a simplistic dualism.⁸¹

Over the centuries, the Church's hierarchy has responded in mixed ways to new irruptions of the Spirit among the Church's members. Some founders of new ways of living the gospel have met with ready acceptance and have been immediately welcomed as providential. Others have come up against more suspicion and resistance. While Ignatius of Loyola's new form of religious life for men quickly gained acceptance, Mary Ward's for women did not. Angela Merici, Mary MacKillop and many others – women perhaps disproportionately among them – found less-than-favourable responses to what they were proposing, at least initially. Similarly, some apostolic institutes founded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries felt that the Church forced them into paradigms of religious life that were ill-suited for what their founders had in mind. The pastors of the Church do have a legitimate and necessary role to discern authenticity and value in new ways of gospel living – as did St Paul and the early churches – and need criteria for doing so.⁸² They also have the responsibility of enabling these new ways to become part of the life and organisation of the Church, and indeed to ensure that they do. If they are genuine irruptions of the Spirit then, *de facto*, they cannot be outside the Mystical Body of Christ

*A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all. Something truly new brought about by the Spirit need not overshadow other gifts and spiritualities in making itself felt. To the extent that a charism is better directed to the heart of the Gospel, its exercise will be more ecclesial. It is in communion, even when this proves painful, that a charism is seen to be authentic and mysteriously fruitful.*⁸³

79 This document, the English title of which is *Directives for the Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church*, was jointly promulgated in 1978 by what was then known as the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops.

80 *Lumen Gentium*, #4.

81 Indeed, the CELAM Declaration of 1968 and the growth of liberation theology to which it gave impetus through the 1970s is a stand-out example of how such complementarity of charism and institution can play out fruitfully. This all stemmed from the hierarchy of the Latin American Church taking the lead by being responsive to what the bishops discerned to be genuinely evangelical in the work of theologians and pastors close to the lived reality of the poor. It was the Church working with its institutional and charismatic dimension in sync.

82 This will be developed further in Chapter 4.

83 *Evangelii Gaudium*, #130.

Enabling these new ways is a responsibility that belongs to both the pastors of the Church and to the spiritual families themselves. *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* is almost entirely concerned with addressing this question, prompted mainly by the exponential growth of new ecclesial movements. Welcomed and championed by John Paul II, these movements, in their structures, exercising of authority, and ways of Christian living particularly in local church situations, have generated some questions and created tensions, particularly at parochial and diocesan levels. In addressing such issues, *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* names two ‘fundamental’ and ‘inseparable’ criteria for how the relationship between hierarchical and charismatic gifts should be developed: (a) the avoidance of ‘juridical straight-jackets that deaden the novelty’ that emerges from specific spiritual experiences, and (b) respect for ‘ecclesial regimen’ that allows the new charismatic entities to work as part of both the local and universal Church.⁸⁴

Whatever the noble theological rhetoric that may be used to describe the co-essentiality and complementarity of the hierarchical and charismatic giftedness of the Church, this can be compromised by the very human behaviours that play out in structures and bureaucracies. Bureaucracies, at least unhealthy ones, tend to favour uniformity, confusing it with unity. Similarly, they can confuse management with leadership, and control with authority. They can tend to avoid diversity and heterogeneity, misreading it as disunity or disloyalty. Nor are collegiality and subsidiarity their natural habitat. ‘Blue-sky’ thinkers and whistle-blowers are kept in check or, worse, ostracised. The literature of organisational culture is replete with such tendencies. At its best, the Church should not be marked by this kind of culture, but the experience of the centuries has shown that it has sometimes fallen well short of the ideal. The risk applies just as much within spiritual families themselves as it does to diocesan offices and agencies.

Charismic movements are not immune from the downsides of bureaucratisation in their own life.⁸⁵ As a movement grows, so does its management and infrastructure, its rules of life, its general body of texts, along with its customs and accepted practices. For example, by the end of the sixteenth century, the spiritual and educational intuitions and insights of Ignatius had grown into the Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions and a *Ratio Studiorum*, and its educational institutions had begun to be associated with a particular stratum of society. Other groups with long histories in education, for example the Benedictines and Augustinians, had previously developed their pedagogical principles, sourced in Rules and their founding insights.

84 *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, #23. See also #8-10, and *Lumen Gentium*, #12.

85 Weberian and Neo-Weberian theory (see above) deals extensively with the development of bureaucratisation in organisations following the charismatic leadership of a founder.

These days, charismatic traditions involved in education typically have reference texts that distil the characteristics of their approach, and which are often used as touchstones for school communities. Such documenting of method, expectation, characteristics, and general ways of proceeding are all necessary, and potentially very helpful for capturing and building wisdom, and maintaining integrity of purpose and method in a group. But they can also freeze it. And they can insulate it from its original sharpness. Vatican II's call to religious institutes to 'renew and adapt'⁸⁶ sprang from a recognition that many of them had become barnacled, anachronistic and petty in their ways of life, and this was often reflected also in their approaches to their educational ministries. A spiritual family that is not continually looking for fresh expression and resourcing may be one that is being unhealthily institutionalised.

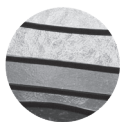
As the members of religious institutes – because of ageing or lower numbers – become less directly connected with the schools and other ministries with which they have been associated, there needs to be care that the people who succeed them are attuned spiritually to the evangelical heartbeat of the spiritual family. The Church cannot afford to see echoed in the spiritual families twenty-first century the sclerotic state that so much of religious life had found itself in before Vatican II. Institutional paralysis needs to be eschewed. The Church may head in that direction, however, if those at all levels in schools – governance, leadership or direct service of young people – are people whose hearts and minds are shaped by priorities that are different from the founding evangelical impulse of the movement. Both for their own charismatic integrity, as well as for the prophetic role they are called to play in and for the Church more broadly, spiritual families need to develop self-critiquing strategies, and to be open to external critiquing from the Church.

THE SPIRIT BRINGS LIFE

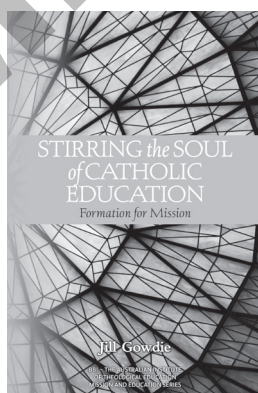
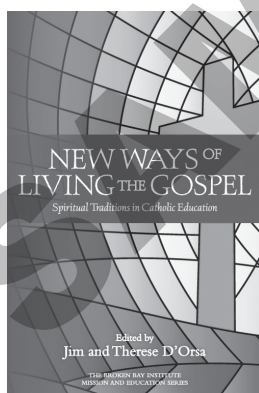
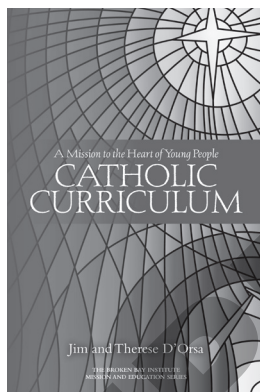
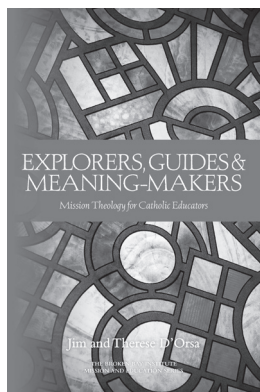
The life of the Spirit is the spirit of life. 'Charisms' and 'spiritualities' are no magical-mystery phenomena like kryptonite from a parallel universe in the back-pockets of super-founders. They are conceptual constructs that the Church has developed for integrating its understanding of the vivifying triune God that continually seeks to create, to reconcile, and to bring all into communion, and to do so in the here and now, in and among people. All people are gifted with this indwelling God by their very nature, but some have been extraordinarily sensitive and responsive, literally *enthused*.

86 Cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, #2, 4, 18, 25.

Around such people, others have been inspired to gather, and providentially novel ways of Christian discipleship have developed, ways that have catalysed the coming of the Kingdom in particular temporal contexts. It is God being God. The inner life of God has continued to be incarnated. In quintessentially human ways – in culture – this Christ-life has become manifest and new spiritual families have emerged. In and through these communities the Church's spiritualities have been developed and lived. They have given people accessible and effective ways for sharing in *missio Dei* in and from the Church. They have helped to enrich, enliven and renew the Church, especially when it has been most in need. A Christian spirituality has no existence without a continuing spiritual family whose members are inspired and formed by its evangelical intuitions, and impelled into mission from them. Those spiritual families that have been able to adapt and renew their spiritualities for fresh and emerging contexts have endured. Among them have emerged some of the Church's most efficacious educational traditions.



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