



**Pontiac Area Vicariate Assembly  
October 26, 2009  
Meeting held at St. Andrew Parish**

**Welcome**

At 7:00 PM, Vicariate Pastoral Council Chair Jack Cashman welcomed everyone to the Assembly. St. Andrew pastor, Fr. Tom Slowinski, gave an opening prayer. Jack introduced the evening's speaker, Sherry Weddell.

Sherry Weddell created the first gifts discernment program designed especially for Catholics and co-founded the Catherine of Siena Institute in 1997. Since then, she has taught tens of thousands of lay and ordained Catholics in North America, Europe, Oceania, and Asia about the discernment of gifts and vocation and evangelization and has trained thousands of parish leaders to help Catholic men and women discern God's call.

**Keynote Address**

Sherry began her presentation with the parable of the sower and compared it to her own challenge putting in a garden in poor soil at high elevation in Colorado. Her point was that understanding what we have to work with will allow us to attain the greatest result. She defined "Charism" as a gift from God, given to us to be used for the sake of others. Charisms can and must be discerned, and are different from talents that can be used for our own benefit. They often manifest after a point in life when our faith becomes personal, or when we meet the person or situation that calls for the gift. Discerning our charism(s) aids us in discerning our vocation or mission in life.

Sherry said that any given individual might have one or several charisms. Common charisms are:

Administration	Craftsmanship	Encouragement	Faith
Healing	Hospitality	Knowledge	Mercy
Music	Prophecy	Teaching	Wisdom
Celibacy	Discernment of Spirits	Evangelism	Giving
Helps	Intercessory Prayer	Leadership	Missionary
Pastoring	Service	Voluntary Poverty	Writing

The next topic developed was the relationship of charisms to parish and community. Traditional Catholic practice has been that people go away to discern their charisms and often enter religious life. The flipside of this attitude is the notion that lay people are not gifted with charisms and hence have nothing to offer, or if they have such gifts they need to leave the parish to fulfill them. One of the main goals of the Catherine of Siena Institute and Sherry's "Called and Gifted" discernment process is to challenge this idea. She stated that everyone in parish leadership bears responsibility for exercising their charisms and fostering and supporting the vocations of all baptized people.

Sherry addressed the unique call of priests to teach, sanctify, and govern. While various church documents spell out what priests are called to do, she stressed that the whole church has the responsibility for the vocation of each member. On an individual level, a charism always carries with it a certain leadership duty in the particular area of giftedness.

The Catholic Church is currently faced with some unfavorable demographic trends. Among baptized Catholics, only 15% of Generation X (current age 30s and early 40s) and 13% of Millennials (18-30 year-olds) attend Mass on a regular basis. Sherry said rather than panic at a coming leadership vacuum, we should help everyone discern their charisms. As this occurs, vocations will increase.

Very briefly, five steps of discernment were reviewed. They are: Explore the possibilities, Experiment, Examine your experience, Evaluate effectiveness, and Expect feed back from others. Sherry stressed throughout her presentation that this material was usually taught in a multi-day seminar.

Some charisms are typically welcomed and fostered in a parochial environment. Other charisms are not found frequently, and when present in a parish that parish can be at odds with other parishes in the diocese. Understanding that all charisms are valuable, it is better to appreciate and encourage people with charism profiles different from our own and different from the norms of the group.

Individual discernment of one's charisms makes life with God "real." This process can be a catalyst for spiritual growth and discipleship and unleash creativity and initiative. Knowing our own gifts is critical to being fruitful in our work and offers protection from cynicism and burnout. On a larger scale, pastoral planning can expand if different parishes, with different sets of dominant charisms, can work together in complementary ways.

(Note: Sherry's presentation is available on the PAV website at <http://www.pontiacareavicariate.org/vpc/vpcmeetings.htm>.)

**Question and Answer Session**

After a brief break, Sherry answered questions from the entire audience.

**Q:** Relationship between personality type and charisms?

**A:** None – any personality type can have any charism. Charisms will be manifested in different ways, depending on the person. Introverts take longer to discern their charisms and tend to underestimate themselves while extroverts overestimate their gifts.

**Q:** If our charisms are not for our own benefit, can they be a cross?

**A:** There is a cost to being a disciple and an act of obedience involved with charisms. While this disconnect can be painful sometimes, it can also awaken hope.

**Q:** Does everyone have charisms?

**A:** The Church teaches that all baptized have at least one.

**Q:** Discuss temperament and charisms.

**A:** Charisms are independent of one's strengths and weaknesses. Over a lifetime how God uses us can change. It is also possible to have a temporary charism.

**Q:** How can we use our charisms to benefit our parishes?

**A:** Experiment because a parish setting provides many low-risk opportunities to use our gifts.

**Conclusion**

The program concluded at 9:00 PM with a closing prayer by Fr. Jerry Brzezinski.

**Attendance (88 people)**

Barb Williams	CCRT
Janet Lumetta	Christ the Redeemer
Mary Teuber	Christ the Redeemer
Dale Youngpeter	Christ the Redeemer
Carol Youngpeter	Christ the Redeemer
Rakhi McCormick	Genesis Ministries
Kathy Schiffer	Guest House
Sr. Karen Hawver, SC	Holy Family
Sandy Favrow	Marist Academy
Sr. Connie Schoen, OP	Oak Park, IL
Judy Gordon	PAV
Fr. Richard Cavellier	Sacred Heart
Janet Dinsmoore	Sacred Heart
Ann Meyers	Sacred Heart
Ann Thomas	Sacred Heart
Ron Anderson	St. Andrew

Patricia Anderson	St. Andrew
Dianne Bubnar	St. Andrew
Allyson Denyer	St. Andrew
Kathy Diewalk	St. Andrew
Rick Fournier	St. Andrew
Valerie Fournier	St. Andrew
Sr. Rebecca Hodge	St. Andrew
Janet Iamarino	St. Andrew
Lisa Juriga	St. Andrew
Betsy Koerber	St. Andrew
Richard Koerber	St. Andrew
Juanita Mallmann	St. Andrew
Pat Metz	St. Andrew
Barbara Mihalic	St. Andrew
Cecilia Mrock	St. Andrew
Fr. Tom Slowinski	St. Andrew
Leah Smarsch	St. Andrew
Joe Soncrant	St. Andrew
Betty Strnad	St. Andrew
Kit Wojcik	St. Andrew
Tony Wojcik	St. Andrew
Bonnie Banaszek	St. Benedict
Karen Boregson	St. Benedict
Sue Camilleri	St. Benedict
Rochelle Flanigan	St. Benedict
Grace Imbrunone	St. Benedict
Gregg Peterson	St. Benedict
Marguerite Rouleau	St. Benedict
Cathy Settle	St. Benedict
Theresa Wetherbee	St. Benedict
Alejandra Barnes	St. Damien
Cindy Gillies	St. Irenaeus
Art Seidler	St. Irenaeus
Nancy Seidler	St. Irenaeus
Dave Teeter	St. Irenaeus
Toni Ziarko	St. Irenaeus
Jerry Bishop	St. John Fisher
Nancy Mason Bordley	St. John Fisher
Laura Borroni-Bird	St. John Fisher
Dick Brennan	St. John Fisher
Fr. Jerry Brzezinski	St. John Fisher

Jerry Drongowski	St. John Fisher
Deb Fristad	St. John Fisher
Carolyn Gross	St. John Fisher
Nancy Isken	St. John Fisher
Scott Kehrer	St. John Fisher
Laura Kennedy	St. John Fisher
Donna Koehn	St. John Fisher
Beth Kudla	St. John Fisher
Dairdre McGlothlin	St. John Fisher
Terri Nelson Drongowski	St. John Fisher
Mercy Nicosia	St. John Fisher
Monte Oberlee	St. John Fisher
Joe Pauwels	St. John Fisher
Michelle Pittel	St. John Fisher
Laura Rangos	St. John Fisher
Kirsti Reeve	St. John Fisher
Nancy Ritter	St. John Fisher
Greg Schultz	St. John Fisher
Mary VanGilder	St. John Fisher
Mary Ann Weller	St. John Fisher
Denise Donaldson	St. Joseph
Jerry Dywasuk	St. Joseph
Neil Ferstle	St. Joseph
Kathy Hasty	St. Joseph
Steve Lawless	St. Joseph
Jack Cashman	St. Mary of the Hills
Joan Cashman	St. Mary of the Hills
Dila Dusovic	St. Paul Albanian
Rev. Anton Kcira	St. Paul Albanian
Shaqe Nicaj	St. Paul Albanian