

# Expressive Praise & Worship

## The Spirituality of the Missioners of Christ

The Missioners' spirituality is borne from our Four Pillars: the Eucharist, the Blessed Mother, The Charisms/Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Magisterium, or Teaching Authority of the Church. Within this framework, and fully under the authority of the Catholic Church, we strive to provide a diversity of valid Catholic expressions of prayer.

In our experience, the expression which many Catholics are least familiar with, and which generates the most questions, is the prayer form of *expressive praise and worship*. For this reason, we have put together this document to help familiarize you and/or your group with this prayer form, so that all may be open to whatever the Holy Spirit might have in store for us.

## Forms of Catholic Prayer

Prayer is a conversation with God, or more poetically put, "lifting our hearts and minds to God." There are many different types of prayer, such as:

- Petition Prayer: Asking God to help us.

- Intercessory Prayer: Asking God to help others.
- Scriptural Prayer: Reading and meditating on Scripture.
- Contemplative Prayer: A focused, deeper form of meditation, placing ourselves fully in the presence of the Lord.
- Repentance Prayer: Asking God for forgiveness.
- Rosary Prayer: Praying and meditating on different mysteries in Christ's life through the eyes of Mary.
- Liturgical Prayer: Praying the prayers of the Church, including the Holy Mass.
- Thanksgiving Prayer: Giving thanks to the Lord.
- Expressive Prayer: Praising and worshiping God with our whole being.

The highest form of prayer in the Catholic Church is the Holy Mass. All other forms of prayer in some manner connect back to the Mass. Still, as Catholics, we are not limited to just the "main course" of prayer – we get to enjoy the full multiple-course meal, complete with appetizers, drink, dessert, and more! And the proper "consumption" of all parts of the meal truly highlights the main course, as opposed to taking away from it.

Expressive prayer can be seen as one of the courses of the great Catholic Meal. Sure you can survive without it, but why not enjoy the full meal? In addition, as God's most repeated command in the Gospel is to praise Him, it would make sense to make praise of God an important part of our individual and communal prayer life. We understand and believe that the same Holy Spirit which came upon the Apostles at Pentecost – with incredible manifestations of His power, is still at work in the world today. The Holy Spirit has not changed! If God sees fit to provide us with gifts (called "charisms") that serve the Church, then it behooves us to ask for them, seek them, and offer them for the building up of the Body of Christ. One form of opening ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit

and experiencing the presence of God is through expressive praise and worship.

We spend time focusing on Expressive Praise and Worship during our missions, retreats, and Eucharistic rallies because it is a very powerful, very Scriptural way of drawing people into the presence of God. Many people (and it seems, especially the young) are looking to give themselves completely to God. Expressive praise and worship is an act that involves their souls, their emotions, their intellects, and their bodies. It puts God in His proper place. He is the Creator and our God, and we are His creations and the family who adore Him. We challenge young people to show more devotion to God than they would to their favorite rock star if they were at a concert.

## A Revitalization of Expressive Praise

Expressive praise and worship was revitalized in the Church through the charismatic renewal over thirty years ago. It sprang forth from what is known as “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to prayer for a fuller release of the Holy Spirit – a stirring up of His power already within us. It leads to more fervent and effective Christian living and allows the grace of Baptism and Confirmation to operate more fully within us. As Leon Cardinal Suenens said, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the experiential manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, given in the sacraments of Christian Initiation but hitherto unexperienced.”

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”  
(Acts 1:5)

## Sacred Scripture on Expressive Praise

Sacred Scripture teaches us these things about expressive praise and worship:

### ***Our Praise Brings Joy to God’s Heart:***

“Those who offer praise as a sacrifice honor me.” **Psalm 50:23**

### ***Praise Includes Worshipping God With Our Entire Being:***

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”  
**Mark 12:30**

### ***Clapping Your Hands:***

“All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to God with joyful cries.” **Psalm 47:2**

### ***Lifting Your Arms toward Heaven:***

“It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.” **Timothy 2:8**

“Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.” **Psalm 134:2**

### ***Dancing Before the Lord:***

“Let them praise His name in festive dance...” **Psalm 149:3**

“Give praise with tambourines and dance...” **Psalm 150:4**

“Then David, girt with a linen apron, came dancing before the Lord with abandon...” **2 Samuel 6:14**

### ***Praising Him with Expressive Music:***

“Give praise with blasts upon the horn, praise him with harp and lyre...” **Psalm 150:3**

### ***Glorifying the Lord with a Loud Voice:***

“Sing to God a new song; skillfully play with joyful chant.”  
**Psalm 33:3**

“All you peoples...shout to God with joyful cries...”  
**Psalm 47:2**

### ***God Is Deserving of Our Praise:***

“Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created.” **Revelation 4:11**

“How good to celebrate our God in song; how sweet to give fitting praise.” **Psalm 147:1**

## Preparing for Expressive Praise

Seeing many Catholics singing their hearts out to God and lifting their hands up in praise is a beautiful thing. Still, the expressive praise and worship during Missioners' events can be disconcerting at first to those who have not experienced it.

You can do three things to help prepare yourself and/or your group for this experience.

- 1) First give them an overview of what expressive praise is and what they will experience at the mission/retreat/rally.
- 2) Next, assure them that this is not weird or bizarre, but rather a sincere outward demonstration of what God is doing in the hearts of people.
- 3) Finally, do not be afraid to join in and model this form of prayer while at the mission/retreat/rally and afterwards.

## Spiritual Manifestations

*"The spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will join them in their prophetic state and will be changed into another man."*  
1 Sam 10:6

The main focus of the Missioners is to introduce youth and young adults to Jesus Christ and to His Bride, The Church, getting them fully active and engaged in their Catholic Faith. Still, God often chooses to pour out His Spirit on missions and retreats in very powerful manifestations. The main way we see this manifestation is through the expressive praise and worship as described here. Expressive praise is a response to God's power, majesty, and love by way of the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us in our weakness. (Rom. 8:26)

It is important to emphasize that both Scripture and Church teaching support

manifestations, gifts, and charisms of the Holy Spirit. They are not unorthodox; it's simply a stirring up of the gift of the Holy Spirit we all received in the Sacraments of Initiation. All these things are given or manifested to those who will receive them. God is a gentleman; He does not force these things upon people. At all times we are free to accept or reject the gifts He wants to give.

During the mission, retreat, or Eucharistic rally, God may anoint the Praise and Worship; He may give peace and tears. He may give strength and encouragement. He may give the gift of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy. Still, in all these manifestations, whether great or small, we consistently focus the group back onto Christ, remembering to focus on the *giver* of the gifts, not just the gifts themselves

With the amazing power of worship before the Creator of the Universe, emotions may come up. It may be laughter or it may be tears. Sometimes the effect of the Spirit is overwhelming. Young people may experience resting in the Spirit during which they usually lie down. They may appear asleep but in most cases they are able to talk. You should direct prayer to any youth who is resting in the Spirit. This will help direct the youth to healing and a deeper faith.

Again, for those who are new to seeing the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in visible and tangible ways, it can seem strange. To a skeptical world that likes to see God as a distant possibility, this is understandable. It is important to remember, again, that both the Church and Scripture attest to the reality of these manifestations – and they are directed towards the building up of the Church. We encourage you to allow your heart and mind to be open to the Holy Spirit's work.

## The Church on Charisms of the Holy Spirit

### From the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

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

Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world. (CCC 799)

Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms. (CCC 800)

## Eucharistic Adoration

We are living in grace-filled times. Even as we witness the painful purification of our Church and weather attack after attack by forces opposed to the Church, God cannot be stopped. Across this country we are

witnessing the renewal of Eucharistic Adoration and lives are being changed. It is a simple, yet profoundly powerful devotion.

Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord. (CCC 1418)

Wherever Jesus is adored in the Blessed Sacrament, there is spiritual growth. Yet many Catholics are simply ignorant of the tremendous blessings poured out through this form of prayer. On the missions, retreats, and Eucharistic rallies, we invite people to enter into Eucharistic Adoration, to put themselves into the presence of Christ. For many of the youth, despite regular reception of the Eucharist, this is their first "breakthrough" encounter with Christ.

### In conclusion...

The purpose of this paper is not to "sell" the idea of expressive praise, but to present it as an authentic and valid form of Catholic prayer. Familiarizing you with its nature might enable you to be better prepared or to prepare your group for the experience. We have found it to be a powerful spiritual weapon against the powers which oppose Christ on these missions, retreats, and rallies, and we encourage you and/or your group to discern expressive praise as a regular part of your spirituality!

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The Missioners of Christ wishes to acknowledge its extensive use of the "Franciscan University Youth Conferences Manual" in preparing this paper.