**Definition of Discernment**:

The word Origin and History for discern is late 14c., from Old French discerner (13c.) "distinguish (between), separate" (by sifting). Discernment is a prayerful process to be used to discover more deeply the spiritual gifts one has received. These gifts can be offered in service to God, in love to all those we encounter; home, work, school, community, and church.

The Uniquely His inventory used during a Formed to Live Joyfully retreat serves as a beginning to discern spiritual gifts by helping to recognize patterns in one’s life that may not previously been seen. This tool is designed to sort the patterns of a person’s life that may take the presence of a charism. It is a good place to “start” but it should not be the end.

**Why Discern Charisms**

Charisms are instruments of healing and evangelization that reveal Jesus to others and render his presence. They serve as the primary means Christ is revealed through you to others. We are instruments, agents of God’s purpose in this world, channels of his love, truth, and healing provisions specifically given to be used for others. You will be restless unless you can give them away.

Besides the fruits of what they do in the life of other people, they represent a call for you. These are not hobbies, but clues for you of how God is calling you. It’s a major clue as to your vocation, serving as tools given to you so you could accomplish your unique mission for God. They enable you to maximize the gifts of your fruitfulness.

For a variety of reasons, people may think they are not gifted. Question is: Are you baptized? It’s too late—you are gifted!

**Read below some beginning steps to Discernment of Charisms**:

* **Pray**. Prayer is talking and listening. Take time in prayer, ask for guidance.
* **Review your life journey**. Your charisms can be used once or over the span of your lifetime. Prayerfully review the meaningful experiences of your life to find evidence of your charisms in action.
* **Acknowledge your charism exists**. What does it look like in your life, feel like, what have been the implications? Dare to dig deeper!
* **Experiment.** This step is most important. You cannot serve the charism by dreaming about it; rather you need to test it in community since they are given for the sake of others. For example, if you have the gift of music, you must make music so others could “hear it.” Playing an instrument in the comfort of your home is not enough.
* **Evaluation of your experience**. Examine your experience in the moment of using it and prayerfully reflect after. Remember, as you experiment, you may not be energized or joyful the first time around due to initial fear that may arise by trying something new. Thus this takes a longer period to discern your charism. What to watch for:
* **Signs of the gifts**: an unmistakable inner experience of peace, energy, joy and satisfaction. You feel you are where you belong, experiencing the presence of God.
* **Evidence** of supernatural fruitfulness, unusually effective and successful results in what you are trying to accomplish (e.g., in the charism of healing, people ARE healed; charism of teaching, people do learn; etc.)
* **Expect and look for affirmation from others over time.** How have others affirmed you, whether personally acknowledging or being drawn to you due to your gifts (e.g., someone with the gift of encouragement likely has had strangers tell them their whole life story after a chance encounter.)