

CORE ELEMENTS OF BRIDGETTINE CHARISM AND ITS CHARISMATIC FEATURES

O.SS.S SISTERS' DELEGATION

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Core Elements of O.S.S.S Charism and its Charismatic Features

Introduction

The word charism is derived from the Greek term '*Karisma*'. '*Karis*' means to give gratuitously and '*ma*' indicates the result of an action and means - gifts, favours.

- According to St. Paul the word charism designates a special gift, a special grace or a state of life and it communicates roles, virtues, ministries etc.
- Vatican II defines it as a special gift or a grace of Divine origin, bestowed by the Holy Spirit on faithful Christians for the renewal and building up of the Church. Charisms are supernatural gifts and are not considered natural gifts that adorn the person, like talents, personal qualities, intelligence etc.
- Charisms are gifts given by God freely and gratuitously for the building up of the Body of Christ.

- The charism of an Institute is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to a person or a group, to serve others and especially to build up and renew the Body of Christ; it is a plan thought of by God for these persons.
- The Charism is the soul of an institute, its vital principle. It implies a particular way of sanctification and of apostolate. The charism is the connecting point between identity and belonging and constitutes the specific form with which we are called to identify ourselves. It is the **form** of our **faith**, our way of **being**, and the form of the **image of Christ**, which we must **reproduce** in our life.

Various aspects of O.SS.S Charism

- The Charism is that **gift from above** which expresses the plan that God the creator has for each of us, as sisters of O.SS.S and by means of which we realize our **specific likeness** with **God Himself**.
- The sister of O.SS.S must acquire the awareness that the charism of the Institute is her **identity**, the **name** which God has given her, what she has **to become**, what gives her **positiveness**, a stable and radical positiveness which makes her part of a new family: the Institute to which she belongs.

- The charism has also a **human and psychological dimension** it reveals to us what **we are** and what we are called to be. It is our **name**, therefore it does not have only a spiritual and institutional characteristic, but it indicates the way to personal **self-realization**. It is not a general indication of a way to live, but a detailed proposal of life which embraces all the aspects of existence.
- The Charism is also a gift to be lived **together**, with the sisters who form part of the community, one's religious family. The gift of the Spirit creates bonds which are stronger than those of flesh and blood. It is a gift which has to be shared, so as to understand it better and live it, to give a visible and convincing witness of it.

- And finally the Charism is a gift to be lived for **others** for the good of all; more particularly the charism expresses the love and providence of the father for the most needy, according to our mission. “The nature of the charism directs their energies, sustains their fidelity and directs the apostolic work of all towards the one mission” (Vita Consecrata 45).
- It is important, right from the initial stage to be clear about the functional characteristic of the charism, it is not enough to know the original contents of the charism, to study the history the roots and the sources of the charism but it has to be understood that all this belong to us, they are our **roots**, our **history**, our **identity** and our **realization**. Yes the charism is our self, it is the name by which God has called us to be sisters of O.S.S.S, it is our past but also what we are called to be, it is the condition for being happy.

Essential Elements of O.SS.S Charism

- At the birth of our Charism, there is a **theophany**, the **revelation** of a **particular Face of God** and at the same time the discovery of **our name**. In prayer our founders discovered the project of God for them and for us, the divine image to be lived in their own history, and to be manifested to the brethren. We as sisters of O.SS.S are **born** when in prayer we discover **our self** in this relationship with God and we allow the mystery we have prayed about to become our identity.

- God revealed Himself to our Foundresses and in showing **His Divine face**, He has revealed to Mother Elizabeth **their human face**. Once we have recognized **our face** and our **destiny**, the need arises to **conform ourselves to it**, to listen and respond to the action of God in us. She, interpreted her personal experience in the light of God the Father, Providence, and Mercy. From this special experience of God she gradually discovered the plan of God for her and for others.

- She realized that her identity consisted in **being child** and in **assuming** the sentiments and the attitudes of the Son. To conform herself to Christ is the only way to live her vocation, to be the image and likeness of God. Our identity as sisters of O.SS.S is defined by the Charism and we effectively and affectively form part of our Religious family in which that Charism is concretized. The sense of **belonging** to the institute become **true**, when there is **love** for the **Institute** and sincere affection for the **community** just as it is, for the specific sisters who form part of it, with their limitations and weaknesses, their gifts and their ailments. It is living together as sisters, we realize that we have a common project which becomes clearer and richer.
- Mother Elizabeth entrusted the Charism in the hands of her successors and breathed her last.

WHAT ARE THE CORE ELEMENTS OF O.S.S.S CHARISM?



She murmured: "Go to Heaven with hands full of love and virtues".



