

Prophecy is a gift! We cannot make it happen; we should not “try” to prophesy. All we can do is ask for the gift, yield to the Holy Spirit, and be fully present to God when we are praying.

Prophecy is God communicating to one or many of His children through a human being. We are nothing, and without God, we do not even have breath. This GIFT is not about us. This is about God choosing us to be a vessel of communication for a particular place and time.

The fact that someone has the gift of prophecy is not a sign of personal holiness but of the Holy Spirit working in and through him or her. Because God uses us does not mean that we are holier than anyone else. It's like us using a shovel that is chipped and worn to move earth from one spot to another. It's good enough. It can work. At the same time, it is our favorite shovel. We have had it for a long time, it fits our hands well, and it's just the right weight for the job. We treasure it. Every one of you is treasured by God. He wants to use you. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God accomplishes His work and empowers ordinary people to do things far greater than their human abilities

Prophecy is a beautiful gift that we should all desire and ask for so that God can use us in all the ways that He desires to do so. NO ONE is worthy. However, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and our faith, it is possible. The more we allow God to work in us and through us, the more we see, and know, and recognize Him and build a relationship with Him, the more we desire to be like Him, and the more He transforms us.

What is prophecy

Prophecy is a human speaking on God's behalf

St. Thomas Aquinas characterizes prophecy as a passing manifestation of the Holy Spirit and not a part of the supernatural organism of the prophet. Aquinas divides prophecy into two parts: first, the knowledge imparted to a subject by God, and second, the subject's sharing of that knowledge.

In his book *A Key to the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church*, Msgr. Vincent Walsh defines the charismatic gift of prophecy as “...a gift whereby God manifests to man His own

thoughts so that a message may be given for the individual or for a group of individuals, or for the community.”

It reveals God’s heart, what He wants, or what He thinks

Sometimes it is an exhortation to give encouragement for a group or for just one person. We all hear it as the Spirit allows, and sometimes God uses one sentence to communicate different things to different people! Because He can, because He is God.

Prophecy is always completely in harmony with Scripture. It is **never a new revelation**; it does not replace what we know from the church and from scripture.

"Testing the spirit" (1 Jn 4:1)

When you receive a prophetic image or message, ask yourself

- *Is this in accordance with Scripture and Church teaching?*
- *If I share this, will it bear the fruits of the Spirit such as peace, joy, light, etc...?*
- *Is this prophecy in accordance with reason, even if I don't fully understand it?*

If the answer to these three questions is yes, then you can feel more confident that it is from the Holy Spirit. If the answer to any of these questions is no, then it is better not to share what you have received in the moment. You can always check the prophecy later with a trusted spiritual director or priest.

But, it is different because God is saying something to us in that moment, He says “I see YOU” in this moment and time.

Prophecy is God’s communication to human beings, not our own communication on His behalf

We can never never never “make it up.”

Matthew 12:31 &32

Therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit^{*} will not be forgiven.

32And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

When we get inspiration, we need to discern first, is this God or is it me. We should always pray for the gift of discernment which empowers us to know whether a gift or inspiration comes from God, from our human nature, or from Satan. This gift is especially important when we listen to a prophecy and try to ascertain whether it really is from God. It is also valuable in making decisions as to how we can follow God’s will in our lives.

Prophecy is a divine initiative – I must be called –with this gift there can be a spiritual danger of an inflated sense of self

If someone changes their life or changes decisions after discernment based on prophecy, it can be intoxicating to the person who delivers it and spiritual pride can develop

We need to SUPPRESS PRIDE – we can have no inflated sense of self in this gift.

HOW Does it Work

God can communicate prophetic messages as visions, locutions, smells, flavors, and physical sensations. For example, Elijah heard the whisper of God in the wind, Daniel trembled and fell to his knees at the touch of God's hand during a dream, and Ezekiel tasted honey as he consumed the scrolls God handed him.

Visions are the supernatural perception of an object that is naturally invisible to the person.

St. Teresa of Avila describes the intellectual vision like this:

“So far down in the depths of the soul does this contact take place, so clearly do the words spoken by the Lord seem to be heard with the soul's own faculty of hearing, and so secretly are they uttered, that the very way in which the soul understands them, together with the effects produced by the vision itself, convinces it and makes it certain that no part in the matter is being played by the devil.

Many times, during a prayer meeting, I have seen a hand that is so very large, larger than the room that we were in, and with no clear direction, I just understood that it was the hand of God and he wanted us to know how very big and powerful He. It is something that you see deep inside your soul, not with your eyes.

Locutions are the most common form of prophecy. They are affirmations or statements that are supernaturally affected. During visions, a person 'sees' whereas during locutions, a person 'hears'.

Prophecy comes in 1st person speech; it is God's voice. It sometimes begins with “My people, or My children.....

Sometimes we get a Word of knowledge, and we may say “I have a sense” because the words are not direct, but we have a clear thought that is not our own.

Prophecy reveals the heart of God – it does not instigate a theological discussion

Prophecy requires the participation of an imperfect person who may not perfectly distinguish God's thoughts from his own.

Prophecy is fallible! – We will make mistakes because it filters through the imperfection and personality that is us! People should not make quick decisions on what is heard in prophecy. They must discern and continue to pray about things – The prophet is not 100% sure of what he is delivering! But God CONFIRMS EVERYTHING! He never tells us once!

A prophet has to be careful not to get too wrapped up in the message. Interpreting the prophecy, counseling, or engaging in problem-solving is not part of this gift. The prophet may not even understand the word being spoken. The prophet will often preface the message with, "I'm not sure why I'm supposed to tell you this, but . . ."

For example, an individual may receive a vision of two doors opening. Not understanding the message, he may ignorantly give his interpretation and say something like, 'God is opening doors in your life.' That's wrong! We must share prophecy openly and accurately without adding or subtracting anything because we never know completely what God is doing.

Scripture says "Do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God." Prophecy is for the building up of the Church and it should always lead to a more profound love for God.

WHY do we want it

To build up the church

1st line of the Catechism says:

"God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed lifeIn his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life."

Prophecy is one way that God wants to share Who He is with us. We have limited capacity to see Him, and prophecy is one way that He reveals Himself to us and through us.

Prophets can awaken people to what is going on around them and awaken people from a spiritual apathy or spiritual slumber.

God has used prophecy to communicate with individuals and communities from the beginning of the Church to the present day. It is an important gift that should be welcomed. Saint Paul says, "Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good."

So, we need to desire the gift of prophecy

1 Corinthians 14:1-4

“Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy. “ For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to human beings but to God, for no one listens; he utters mysteries in spirit. On the other hand, one who prophesies does speak to human beings, for their building up, encouragement, and solace. Whoever speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but whoever prophesies builds up the church.

Once we desire it we need to Ask, ask, ask - step out in faith and be willing, and then be obedient!