Charismatic – Who Me?

We have all met them, fascinating people who seem to draw us in like a magnet, those with charm, with whom we hang on every word. We may wonder – is it nature or nurture? Were these unique gifts which show themselves in such mesmerizing ways, a part of the person since birth or gathered and developed along the way?

But, what of the word itself? Charismatic is a derivative of charisma, which takes its meaning from the Greek charis meaning a favor or a grace (“Charisma”). This would certainly give credibility to the nature over nurture argument. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) defined charism as “graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church” (p.799). These spiritual gifts are given to the faithful, not so we can be labeled individually charismatic but, so the faithful can use these gifts for the good of all the Church. They show themselves in the energy, inspiration, and impetus of service in the Church. We can see examples of these profound spiritual gifts in the lives of the saints and in the religious communities they founded. Take, for example, St. Francis, who desired nothing more than to live humbly and follow Christ and the Franciscans today, who today live simply in community and give service in a number of ministries.

The Spirit continues to give graces in abundance to those willing to accept His gifts and offer those gifts in service to the Church. So, are you charismatic? You certainly are. How will you use the gifts God has given to you for the good of all His Church?
