

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

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Proclaim His marvelous deeds!

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Renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Make our joy complete

To proclaim: to declare publicly, typically insistently, proudly, or defiantly, and in either speech or writing **to announce.**

To witness: to testify, **to attest,** to publicly affirm by word or example that of which you have personal knowledge.

When we state that the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus is a priority for all who acknowledge him as Lord, we can see by the above definitions that we mean an active and bold declaration of that which we know by experience. We are to do so with pride and conviction and by our example.

The Apostle John wrote as he witnessed about Jesus: "This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched....Indeed our purpose in writing you this is that **our joy may be complete**" (1 John 1: 1, 4). It is in sharing our witness, that which we have personal knowledge of, that our joy becomes complete.

Proclaiming and witnessing can be done in simple ways and in our everyday routine. We do not have to be famous evangelists, or teachers. When we share what God has done in our lives, we become witnesses. We want to proclaim, we want everyone we know and love to hear this good news. We cannot hide it under a bushel basket, we cannot hold it in, for it is a message that cannot and will not be silenced. Jesus himself said if his disciples were to keep silent, then the very stones would cry out (Luke 19:20).

"No one can say Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). As St. Paul

wrote these words, I am sure he remembered his previous passion for destroying Christians. It was the baptism of the Holy Spirit that removed the spiritual blindness that had made him oppose the truth of the Lordship of Jesus, and healed his physical blindness as well. St. Paul is not the only person who ever needed spiritual blindness removed. We could look at our own lives and thank God for the person(s) who had such a belief in Jesus that they could not wait to share this good news with us. Will you and I be witnesses that someone will remember?

Witnessing must be a joyful event. No one can believe a message that is sad, condemning or forced. We must be joyful about our mission. Who would want to follow someone who considers their work a burden, or who thinks they need to retire and someone else must now do the work. **The reason we share is that our joy may be complete.** "This explains why we work and struggle as we do; our hopes are fixed on the living God who is the savior of all men, but especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

"And this is why the Charismatic Renewal has been such a gift to the Church; it has led a host of men and women, young and old, into this experience of the love which is stronger than death. I pray most fervently that your communities and the entire Charismatic Renewal will 'put out into the deep' of prayer in order to 'put out into the deep' of mission" (John Paul II, June 2001, taken from *And Then Peter Stood Up*).

May the words of Isaiah be fulfilled in each of us: "The Lord has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them" (50:4). ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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Cover photo: Tom Edwards



The Holy Spirit is irresistible as it takes youthful enthusiasm and turns it into a powerful encounter with God.

Duc in Altum (Put out into the Deep). Participants, including youth, youth ministers, priests and other adults are trained to give talks, testimonies, conduct small groups and write skits. Fifteen year old, Tara Devereaux was a *Duc in Altum* participant who returned to become a member of Youth to Youth. She cherishes her experience, “*Duc in Altum* was the most profound experience of my life. I finally know what it feels like to really live. I never imagined that love could be this powerful, that fun could bring this much happiness, or that God could give me so much joy.”

Anyone wanting more information about YtY or of their upcoming events may visit their website at: www.youthtoyouthcatholic.com. ♦

Theresa Vandercar is a coordinator of Youth to Youth Catholic Evangelization. She lives in Flushing, Michigan with her husband Nick and their three children.

Youth to Youth Catholic Evangelization

by Theresa Vandercar

Youth to Youth Catholic Evangelization (YtY), is a group of young people committed to growing in the love and knowledge of Jesus and his church, and sharing that with the world. YtY is based out of the Mt. Zion Catholic Pastoral Center, a covenant lay community of Flushing, Michigan. These high school students and young adults, making up two teams, are on the road three weekends a month, reaching out to youth, families and parishes. Bringing the love of God wherever they go, YtY conducts retreats and special programs, using songs, skits, talks and personal testimonies.

YtY has ministered in 38 dioceses throughout the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, and Iceland.

Natalie Marzonie’s seven years in YtY have shown her that, “Young people seek truth, wanting to find the reality behind the facade of perfection and beauty that the world places in front of them. Youth delve into life, trying new things, wanting to know and experience them. The Holy Spirit is irresistible as it takes youthful enthusiasm and turns it into a powerful encounter with God.” “I think it’s great to share the love of God with

other kids my own age,” says 14 year old team member, Lance Cican. “I’ve felt God’s love for me and I want other kids to know how much God loves them too.”

First year member, Briana Gatica states that being in YtY is both rewarding and enriching, “Rewarding because I can help change someone’s life and enriching because I am with young people who truly love God and inspire my faith.” “The Story of Salvation” is a musical production, written by members of YtY, and performed by all of the Mt. Zion youth. It combines

music, drama and comedy to recount the story of God and man, beginning with creation and ending with Pentecost. 13 year old Tricia Stankiewicz recounts a valuable lesson she learned participating in this drama, “There may be times when we want the part with a lot of lines or to be the center of attention, but when we do that, we are missing the point of why we are performing. We are sharing God’s love for us. Our focus should be on God, not on our lines or ourselves.”

Youth to Youth holds a week-long evangelization training called



Slovakia



Tanzania

Partners in proclamation

by Tom Edwards

“What caused me to believe in Jesus Christ?” It is a question that should constantly remind every believer of the means by which God has elected to bring a people to himself. The answer would have to include the fact that someone made known to me the gospel of Jesus Christ! Through a spoken word, a published word, perhaps through a living example someone made known to me the Good News. It may have been a parent, a teacher, a priest. It might have been a friend or a stranger. It was someone, and quite likely it was many, who proclaimed the Word of God to me and to you.

On the eve of Pentecost, May 29, 2004 the members of 1800 Italian prayer groups which belong to a branch of charismatic renewal called Renewal in the Spirit gathered at St. Peter’s Basilica. By car,

by train, by special coaches, some 20,000 members rushed to Rome in answer to a surprise summons by the Holy Father. In his homily the Pope addressed himself especially to the Renewal in the Spirit. In his greeting he spoke of the multitude of men and women, young people and adults, who have rediscovered Pentecost as a living reality in their daily lives. He said to them, “I hope that the spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the Church as a renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation.” It is clear from the Holy Father’s exhortation and from the holy scriptures that the life of a praying, holy, Eucharistic people will result in the proclamation of the gospel.

Indeed the “proclamation” of the gospel is the primary mission strategy given to the church. This proclamation is inextricably linked to the ful-

fillment of all things and is mysteriously essential to the termination of this present age and the complete revelation of the kingdom to come. Jesus said: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14).

It is not difficult to note that we live in a world which is not only contrary, but hostile toward the ways of God. We shouldn’t think this strange; it’s always been this way. Thousands of years ago nearly the whole world had become totally corrupt. What was God’s response to this? He used the man who really believed in him to be a “living proclamation;” thus “...he preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, together with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the godless world...” (2 Pet. 2:5b). St.

Peter, who directs us to consider Noah’s obedience, also says to every New Testament believer “...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you a reason for your hope...” (1 Pet. 3:15).

The scripture uses the image of a “wilderness” to depict a world separated from God and in need of reconciliation. It is not coincidence that both John the Baptist and Jesus began their ministries in the wilderness. The “wilderness” is a picture of a God-forsaken place. It is an accursed place of abandonment and devoid of life and fruitfulness. It typifies the life of a people removed from a garden, separated from the land of milk and honey. The wilderness speaks of dryness and death. It symbolizes a lost and barren soul. But it is precisely the place where God makes available his deliverance. John the Baptist



Ghana



Alaska

The church (_____) has been
put your name here
commissioned to make proclamation.

came in the wilderness proclaiming a Kingdom of Life.

You and I have been chosen to speak into a wilderness today. Yes, here and now in the midst of the most technological and materially prosperous society, we are confronted daily by a populace enslaved to what the Holy Father has rightfully termed the “culture of death.” It is a spiritually hostile environment. The spiritual ruler of this dark kingdom hates the light of the gospel. Just as a ruler named Herod reacted to the first coming of a new born king by slaughtering hundreds of babies, our current generation produces a mentality that slaughters thousands as an offering to the gods of comfort and prosperity. Who among us is not aware of extremely strong forces at work in our

midst with a view towards eradicating all symbols and vestiges of Christianity from public life? This should be of no surprise to any Christian. Jesus made it clear: “No slave is greater than his master, If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you...” (Jn. 15:20a).

Bogged down in this quagmire of the wilderness world are millions of souls. Quite likely most of us have friends, family, acquaintances that are lost in the wilderness world. And yet Jesus has died on a cross so that each of them might come to life in him. The truth of Jesus can only be accessed by that which transcends “reason” alone. It must be received through “faith.” As St. Paul tells us: “But what does it say? The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,

that is the word of faith that we preach. For, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!’” (Rom. 10:8-10, 14-15).

The church has been commissioned to make Proclamation. [Read that last sentence again and substitute your own name for “the church!”] Do you get it? Yes indeed it is the church and all of the people who are “living stones” who form it. It is all of us who believe and live now in the midst of this worldly wilderness. The task

before us is difficult and fraught with many obstacles. It is not an easy task to make something grow in the wilderness. Yet we serve an almighty God with whom all things are possible, a God who specializes in bringing the desert to bloom—a God who calls us, prepares us, and sends us as PARTNERS IN THE PROCLAMATION. ♦



Tom Edwards and his wife live in St. Augustine, Florida. As a full-time lay Catholic

evangelist and missionary for 30 years, his ministry and parish missions have been received in many countries. He also serves as a country-coordinator with Renewal Ministries. For more information see: www.catholic-evangelism.homestead.com.



Declare his glory among the nations

by Greg Trainor

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all the peoples.
(1 Chronicles 16:24)

We are living in a great time. This is a season of grace and mercy. The Holy Father describes our day as a “new springtime” for the gospel: “God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity, and we can already see its first signs” (*Redemptoris Missio*, 86). The work of preaching the gospel to the nations has seen great progress in recent years, but we have only seen the beginning of what will become a much greater work.

A day is coming when we will see conversions in massive proportions among the nations of the world. Just as we saw the freedom that came to preach the gospel in most of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Block come in just a few short years, so we will see similar openings come in other areas of the world such as Muslim Northern Africa, the Middle East, India, China, and Oceania. When God’s time is right, this won’t be a difficult or bloody process. It will be a great outpouring of God’s love, grace, and mercy. Billions will be made new in Christ.

An explosion of Pentecost

The 1900’s brought an explosion of Pentecost. The century began with less than one percent of all Christians being charismatic or Pentecostal and ended with one out of every four Christians having a personal experience of Pentecost. Yet, that same century saw a decline in the

percentage of the world’s population that is Christian!

For millions of Christians throughout the world, Pentecost has remained a personal experience. They have received a tremendous personal benefit from this new flow of the Holy Spirit in their lives, but they have failed to recognize that God has brought a new Pentecost to the Church so that we can preach the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the hour that we are living in: a time when every day people like you and me can preach the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and demonstrate it to be true by healing the sick and performing miracles in the name of Jesus!

The hope of the Gospel

We have such a glorious hope to offer the world by preaching the gospel. The gospel offers the greatest hope the world will ever know. It offers life: “...I have come that they might have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). When someone accepts the gospel, it brings dramatic results. God promises that they will become born again (cf. John 3:3-7), a new creation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), a child of God (cf. John 1:12), more than a conqueror (cf. Rom. 8:37), and an heir to the kingdom of God (cf. Gal. 4:4-7). God also promises that he will move in powerful signs and wonders when we proclaim his word (cf. Acts 4:29-31).

It is by the very nature of the gospel and its promises that it will bring dramatic, life changing results. We have no hope greater than the gospel to offer the world. It must be proclaimed!

The focus of our family’s ministry over the past 19 years has been to proclaim the *kerygma*, the basic message of the gospel and call people to conversion. Pope John Paul II describes the kerygma as “the initial conversion-bringing proclamation of the gospel” (*Redemptoris Missio*, 19). It is “the proclamation of the Christ-event,” (*RM*, 16) proclaiming the significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We invite the lost to come to Jesus as their Savior and pray for the sick to be healed in Jesus’ name. St. Paul says that: “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power...” Whenever we preach the gospel, we demonstrate it to be true with signs and wonders worked in the name of Jesus. By God’s grace and the power of his word, we are seeing many come to know Jesus as Savior. Many are receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Mere words cannot describe the sweet presence of the Holy Spirit that descends when the gospel is proclaimed, hearts are opened, and people are restored.

Evangelization and the Mission Field

There has been a tremendous growth in Catholic charismatic renewal over the past fifteen years in the area of evangelization. All over the world, hundreds of Catholic programs and schools of evangelization have been raised up to teach people how to evangelize. Over the past ten years, we have seen a tremendous growth in the area of mission outreach from ministries and prayer groups in the renewal in North America. Our own work is just a small part



of a great work that the Holy Spirit is doing in the world today.

Lydia and I were both school teachers. We were a young, married couple with two children in diapers when God called us to the full-time work of preaching his word. A few days before we were to leave on our first trip to preach in prayer meetings, a stranger handed me a check at a prayer breakfast. It was just enough money to pay two bills and buy the gas needed to get to the first meeting. God has continued to lead us and provide as we go forward in his call. He has taken us, one step at a time, to preach his word throughout the US and Canada, Eastern Europe, Russia, Cuba, Trinidad, and West Africa.

We have preached in almost every imaginable situation: parish missions, prayer meetings, healing services, drug rehabilitation centers, prisons, jails, bars, city streets, harvest festivals, sports coliseums and farms. If I were to sum up 19 years of ministry with one scripture, I would use St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power" (1 Cor. 4:20). We have seen God's power open the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, cause the dumb to speak, cripples to walk, and deliver people from demons.

Our family has been involved in mission outreach to Ghana, West Africa since 2001. We have been conducting week-long schools of evangelization, teaching participants to proclaim the gospel in the streets and to pray for healings and miracles. In just the past two years, we have trained more than 950 in these schools. Along with our children, we have preached the gospel in the towns and villages often seeing Muslims and those of traditional religion coming forward to accept Jesus as Savior. In this past year,

evangelization school participants worked in conjunction with the 58 young priests that we have trained to preach the gospel in the streets. In four villages, so many non-Christians were baptized, that new Catholic churches had to be established in each village. God is a great God!

Let God use you

It is a great and glorious work, the work of the gospel, and God wants you to be a part of it. Ask God to use you to proclaim Jesus to the world around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to flow from you in power to anoint you to preach the gospel, heal the sick and perform miracles. If you are willing, God is able to use you! ♦



Greg & Lydia Trainor are Catholic lay evangelists. They have four children. Greg & Lydia founded the Holy Spirit Missionary Association and live in North Palm Beach, FL. You can learn more about their ministry at: www.hsma.net.

Prayer Card



Pray for the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.

Pentecost Sequence:
Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit, come!
And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine!

Come, Father of the poor!
Come, source of all our store!
Come, within our bosoms shine.
You, of comforters the best;
You, the souls
most welcome guest;

Sweet refreshment here below;
In our labor, rest most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.
O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of yours,
And our inmost being fill!
Amen. Alleluia.

by St. Rabanus Maurus

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