

The Renewal helped us understand that prayer is not just speaking to God; but also listening and letting God reveal himself to us. We recognized the longing in our hearts as a call to go more deeply into the spiritual. We are called to draw into the possibilities the Holy Spirit gives us, those turning to satisfy that longing in material things or in false spiritualities.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit opened our eyes to recognize the world of evil, of demons, and to call them what they are, to recognize sin as sin and not excuse it. We are called to challenge the excuses given for sin, “just the way I am, my family is like this,” and to reveal by the new freedom in our lives the possibility of healing and deliverance.

We are called to be one and to call others into unity. “Father, may they be one even as we are one” (Jn. 7:11).

Life in the Holy Spirit taught us that community is an essential part of Pentecost and that we can’t grow in relationship to God unless we are growing in relationship with one another. The Spirit teaches us that joy comes from putting the needs of others ahead of ourselves, that other centeredness makes us better individuals. We learn the paradox that in losing ourselves, we find new life.

In contrast, modern culture teaches that salvation comes from self-realization, self-help, that success equals individualism and independence. “I’ll do it my way.” Society calls sin in relationships “personality clashes” that are irreconcilable.

In the Spirit we learn the possibility of hearts changing, of reconciliation, of unity in diversity. We are called to prophetically proclaim that in the

Spirit unity between races, genders, age groups, and religions is possible.

We are called to be missionaries and to call others to mission. “May they be one, so that the world may believe that you sent me” (Jn 17:21). The Holy Spirit calls us to an evangelization that is proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are to proclaim that God sent his Son Jesus into the world that we might know him, that knowing him is a gift offered to anyone who has the ears to hear and the heart to believe.

We are challenged to persevere, to become even more zealous in the face of

people who consider our zeal for the gospel disrespectful of other people’s way to God. By our lives and words, we are sent to proclaim the Word of God’s infinite love for each and every human person. Please God then, like the failing monastery, our prayer groups will thrive again because of our love. ♦

Sister Nancy Kellar, SC has served in various leadership positions in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. She has taught throughout the United States and in more than 50 countries.



PENTECOST OF THE NATIONS...for a new culture of Pentecost
An ICCRS 10-Day Pentecost Project May 2–11, 2008

In 2002, Pope John Paul II urged the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to “bring to life that *“culture of Pentecost,”* that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly co-existence among peoples. With fervent insistence, never tire of praying “Come Holy Spirit! Come! Come!”

In response to this urging, International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) has launched a two-part project called ***Pentecost of the Nations...for a new culture of Pentecost.*** Part I of this project involves a Pentecost Novena (nine days of prayer from Ascension Thursday to the eve of Pentecost) and Part II is a Pentecost Day Celebration. 2008 is a first phase of a three-year journey during each Pentecost season, culminating in 2010 at an international event in Jerusalem, sponsored by ICCRS. More information can be found on the NSC website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

In the last two years, many countries and tens of thousands of people on all continents have participated in the *Burning Bush Initiative* and *Operation Upper Room*, worldwide prayer events that had the goal of weaving a dense global prayer network of adoration and intercession.

Join the Prayer Network

The United States is actively participating in this worldwide network of intercession—and you are invited to become part of this network! We are praying on behalf of our nation and our Church, and also upholding in prayer the various events sponsored by ICCRS and by the National Service Committee (NSC) of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the U.S. If you are willing to make a one-year commitment to this international network, contact Kathleen Haner, NSC Coordinator, USA by email at usintercessorsnetwork@gmail.com, or write 1540 Vaughn Lane E, Port Orchard, WA 98366, for the Commitment/Registration form. By registering you will be notified through this network of future intercessory prayer requests made by NSC and/or ICCRS.

For additional resources, information and special prayer intentions contact Kathleen Haner at
usintercessorsnetwork@gmail.com.

Return to the “Upper Room of Jerusalem” in one heart and in constant prayer becoming “burning bushes” in adoration and intercession.



Hail Mary, for the Lord is with thee; Blessed are all women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Relating to Mary: some practical steps

by Barbara Ryan

“Barbara, you’ve been chosen to carry Mary’s crown for this year’s May crowning procession.” I was only 6 years old, a first grader at Christ the King Catholic School in suburban Chicago, and didn’t fully understand what Sr. Dionetta was saying to me. It was a lovely spring day in May, the entire school sang “On this Day, ‘O Beautiful Mother’” as I handed the flowered crown to the eighth grade girl who placed it on Mary’s head. My heart filled with waves of joy and I remember thinking, “I have another mother and she really loves me.”

It’s a memory living within my spirit for more than 60 years, becoming more vivid with the passage of time. However, in spite of such an early awakening to the role of Mary, there are sometimes long periods of dryness and emptiness regarding her presence. Then my rosaries and devotional Marian readings seem to be more of a burden than a blessing.

These spiritual deserts led me to discover one of the secrets of relating to Mary: her motherly love is boundless and transcends our attempts to ‘feel’ connected. She gently companions us through all the dark days of life, just as she stood at the cross of her Son, Jesus. The heart knows this even when our feelings don’t seem to register any emotions.

I’ve found the following suggestions to be helpful for maintaining an ongoing relationship to the Mother of God.

✿ Slowly read the scriptures regarding her life on earth, especially Luke’s Gospel, which contains the majority of Marian stories. As you read, invite the Holy Spirit to open

your mind and heart to a deeper awareness of Mary’s role in the life of her Son. It may be helpful to read these well-known passages aloud and write down the bible verses that seem to speak to you. Invite Mary to bring her maternal, gentle nature to any place in your body, mind or spirit needing healing.

✿ Recognize Mary as a prayer partner. When Jesus spoke to John, he said, “Behold, your mother.” From ancient times to the present the Church teaches us to invoke Mary as an intercessor. I often invite her to join me in prayer, especially when a situation seems particularly difficult. On one occasion when I was interceding for a woman who was in an adulterous relationship, the power of Jesus Christ set her free the minute I asked Mary to join us in prayer.

✿ Tell others about the role of Mary in the life of a Christian. Catholics are sometimes hesitant to share their understanding of Mary’s loving support. Telling our experiences of graces received from her seems to make her more ‘real’ in our lives. One person gave me quite an argument, citing all the reasons it was spiritually dangerous to have any devotion to the mother of Jesus. I knew this man to be a prayerful and committed Christian so I asked him to put the question to Jesus. That evening he prayed, “Lord, what shall I do about your mother?” Several days later he phoned to say, “Jesus told me he loved his Mother very much and he expected me to do the same.” He became deeply devoted to Mary and never tired of telling others the story of his ‘conversion.’

✿ Attend a regular Marian novena or rosary group in a local parish. When private prayer time seems dry and meaningless, it helps to join with others who are calling upon Mary's gentle touch. There appears to be a deeper concentration of prayer power when "two or three are gathered together" (Matt. 18:20). If there are no novenas or rosary groups in your parish ask the pastor if you may lead one. If he seems reluctant to do so, invite someone to join you at home or elsewhere. I have a number of non-Catholic friends who began saying the rosary with me in my home when I explained it was a meditation on the life of Jesus Christ. Eventually, some of them went through the RCIA program and joined the Catholic Church.

✿ Use music as a reminder of Mary's presence. There are hundreds of Marian CD's containing hymns and ancient Latin chants invoking Mary's love and protection. I often have various favorites playing in my home and car as 'background music' for whatever is happening in my everyday busy life. This was a common practice when my five children were very young. They could sing the words long before understanding the meaning.

✿ Make an imaginary pilgrimage to one of the Marian shrines. Not everyone has the ability to travel to Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe or the numerous other places where Mary appeared. There are hundreds of books and movies about the various recognized apparitions of the Mother of Jesus. As you image the scene, listen with your heart to the words said to the visionaries. Invite Mary to bring her maternal, gentle, nature to any place in your body, mind or spirit that may need healing.

The woman who calls herself the "handmaid of the Lord" (Lk. 1:18) always leads us closer to her Son, Jesus and deeper into the heart of the Father. ♦

Barbara Ryan is President of Beloved Ministry and, as a Roman Catholic lay-



woman, has been actively involved in evangelism since 1965. She travels nationally and internationally as a retreat director, conference speaker and workshop leader.

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and how I wish it were already blazing!"
Luke 12:49

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Charism of Service

by Veronica Murphy

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" Luke 1: 38.

One prayer meeting, as our prayer group studied the first chapter of Luke, I was struck by the above verse. The word "handmaid" seemed to keep flashing before my eyes. I began to imagine myself as a young girl in Mary's position. What would I have done if an angel of God appeared before me? As my mind walked with the Lord through this little interior vision, I was led to think about Mary. She simply and profoundly answered the angel with a "yes" that would change the world. When considering the charism of service, one has to consider Mary the Handmaid of the Lord. What was it in Mary's life that gave her the ability to answer yes without reservation? How can I find this ability in my own life?

Before giving a possible answer to these two questions, I want to engage you in a dialog about our call as Catholics/Christians. I feel that God has been preparing me for many years to follow his will and do whatever he asks. When I first began to go to prayer meetings, I prayed to follow the Lord and do whatever he asks of me. There used to be a song called, "Lord make me like you." The words were:

"Lord make me like you, please make me like you, you are a servant, make me one too. Oh Lord, I am willing, do what you must do to make me like you, Lord. Please, make me like you."

I loved this song and it became my most fervent prayer. The Lord answered this prayer. Soon enough, I found myself helping at many different levels in prayer groups, but even

more than this, the Lord helped me focus on others in a different way. I began to see people with the Lord's eyes. The more my prayer life grew, the more I was able to see people more positively. I wanted to be of service to those the Lord called me to and I wanted to learn from as many as the Lord brought my way. This is no claim to be perfect in anyway, but simply a desire to serve the Lord that the Lord has answered.

Theologically, our call to serve comes out of our Baptism and Confirmation. Sadly enough, many people do not call upon the power of the Lord that comes from these sacraments. They need a renewing in the Holy Spirit to continue their journey towards a truly adult faith (a faith that will withstand all the joys and sorrows of life). Everyone is called to serve in some capacity, but the charism of service is a bit deeper than this. If a person has the charism of service, he/she will begin to see ways to solve problems. Or the person will understand how to remove obstacles and have a desire to do what it takes to remove those obstacles. In my opinion, there will also be a commitment and a joy to the process

Going back to my original thoughts on Mary, I asked what was it in Mary's life that gave her the ability to answer yes without reservation? How can I find this ability in my own life? In a round about way I answered these questions. As Catholics we believe that Mary was without sin: "full of grace." God had a plan for her life and he must have prepared her to reach the point where she would know and believe the angel's words to her. Certainly, her parents taught her the Jewish faith, but just learning about God is not enough to have the ability to answer his call espe-

cially if it might put your life in peril. There has to be a relationship or a bond. Where can we find this bond? I believe we can find this bond the same place Mary did. If we take the time to open ourselves to God's plan for our life in everything we do and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our comings and our goings, God will open a whole new world to us. With our focus surrendered to the Holy Spirit, we may find ourselves doing things we could not imagine or helping people that we normally would avoid. One of my favorite scriptures is Sirach 6:36, which in a nutshell says: when you find a wise person, sit at his feet and wear out his door mat. I think we need to do just that in our relationship with Jesus. We need to learn as much as we can, live a life of prayer, and be open to serving others just as Jesus did. To serve as Mary did when she said yes.

For some people, the thought of laying down their whole life/plans to the Lord may seem just too much to do. We all have things we want to accomplish or plans that we feel are important, but in the end we have to ask if these things will matter in heaven. What is important about service is that service is simple. The key is placing our lives at the service our King and God just as Mary did. God always seems to work out the details as we go along. If we are faithful in small matters, perhaps we will be put in charge of larger matters, but what joy it will be when we hear Jesus say, "well done good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23). ♦

Veronica Murphy is Vice-principal at St. Rita Catholic School, Dayton, Ohio. She co-leads the Cross and the Dove prayer group, and is co-liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the northern part of the Cincinnati Archdiocese with husband Bruce Murphy.



Leadership groups challenged to embrace Year of St. Paul

The Gathering of National Leadership Groups: Catholic Charismatic Renewal met in Miami, January 14-16 and were challenged by Msgr. Joseph Malagrec, a longtime member of the planning committee for the Gathering to “put the whole Charismatic Renewal at the service of the Church in the Year of St. Paul celebrating the 2000th anniversary of his birth.”

This was the tenth year in which members of the National Service Committee, the Diocesan Liaison Steer-

ing Committee, the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities, the *Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano*, *Le Conseil du Renouveau Charismatique Catholique des Haïtiens D’Outre-Mer*, the Korean Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States of America, and the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Communities and Fellowships of Pontifical Right met in the configuration. There were three earlier meetings of national leaders convened by a Subcommittee

formed by the NSC and ADL and chaired by Bishop Sam Jacobs.

Msgr. Malagrec noted that just as the Renewal had responded to the Jubilee Year in 2000 and the 3 years of preparation (1997-1999) such that the more we took it seriously, the more we lived it, the more graces were available to us, so too the Year of St. Paul offers an opportunity for grace.

About sixty leaders attended including most of the members of the newly formed Youth Ministry Committee. As always the participants spent time in prayer, small

groups for sharing, and by Committees for processing.

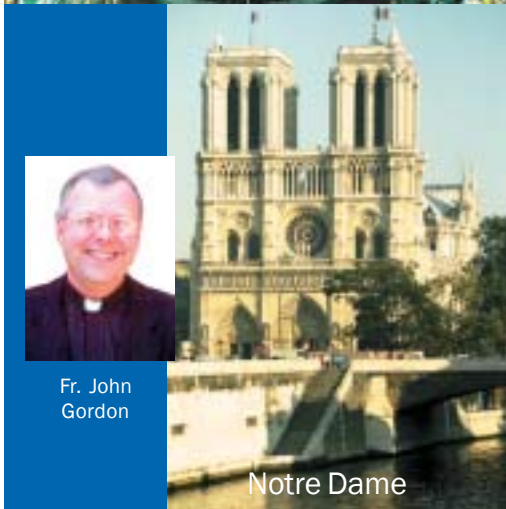
One of the ideas that emerged from the NSC discussions in response to Msgr. Malagrec’s challenge was that the NSC will write a once a month reflection on one of the Pauline themes and make it available via email and on our website.

The Gathering will also develop a Prayer Card on the Year of St. Paul for distribution in the Renewal.

The next Gathering will be held next January in a site yet to be determined. ♦



Lourdes night procession



Notre Dame



Fr. John Gordon

Marian Shrines

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**From the
Executive
Director**

.....
by Walter Matthews

The pattern of Mary

“**O**ne of the basic principles of the Catholic charismatic renewal is that our Spirit-filled life needs to grow and develop in a fully Catholic context of faith and practice. The teaching of the church about Mary... is a major element within this basic principle. Leaders of prayer groups need to understand and put into practice in their own lives the teaching of the church about Mary. We also need to be able to help Catholic participants in our groups to do the same” (Kevin Ranaghan, *NSC Newsletter*, May 1983).

Twenty five years later these words seem so obvious. At the time they were not so.

Given the Renewal’s early connections to Pentecostals and other charismatic Protestants there was “ignorance about the blessed Virgin...among some Catholic charismatics”(ibid).

Thanks to the work of the NSC, Diocesan Liaisons and others since then the US Bishops could affirm in 1997 in *Grace for the New Springtime*, “Authentic Marian devotion and imitation is a welcome and growing dimension of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States...It is thus with great anticipation that we find within the Renewal this joyful awareness of the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit.”

Among other activities the NSC recently sponsored a Pilgrimage to the Shrines of Mexico including that of our Lady of Guadalupe praying for “the outpouring of the Holy Spirit” on the Church in America.

We are now planning a Pilgrimage to the Marian shrines of Europe to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Mary’s appearances to Bernadette at Lourdes. (See ad on page 13.)

At the core of these initiatives is our continuing affirmation that, “the Spirit calls each of us and the Church as a whole, after the pattern of Mary and the Apostles in the Upper Room, to accept and embrace the baptism in the Holy Spirit as the power of personal and communal transformation with all the graces and charisms needed for the upbuilding of the Church and for our mission in the world” (*Fanning the Flame*).

As reported in the last issue, Aggie Neck and I will travel to Rome to participate in the Colloquium on Charisms sponsored by ICCRS and the Vatican. Please pray that this Colloquium will have a significant effect on the Church’s understanding and openness to the charisms we have experienced in this Renewal. What the US Bishops called in *Grace*, “normal Christian life.”

In January the NSC spent most of a day in prayerful discussion facilitated by Deacon Dean Condon on “Where do we go from here?” examining aspects of the Committee’s vision and mission, public identity, and services and office. The discussion continues. One of the challenges he brought to the Committee was the question of how good organizations and ministries become great: in the intersection of passion (for the Renewal), speciality (what can the NSC bring that is unique, anointed) and resources (of time, money and people).

Mary’s willingness to say “yes” and to receive the Word made flesh, her humble service (“Behold the handmaid of the Lord.” Lk. 1:38) and maternal intercession (“They are out of wine.” Jn. 1:3) will help us find our way forward. ♦

Friends of the NSC

Thanks to the generosity of our donors the NSC ended 2007 in the black. There was both a positive response to our Matching Gifts Appeal (we raised \$26,900 slightly more than the \$25,000 given to us initially) as well as to our Christmas Appeal. The extra Matching Gifts money supported the publication of *Pentecost Today*, the Youth Ministry Committee and the Third Millennium Fund.

If you would like to make a similar Challenge Gift, please call Walter Matthews at NSC headquarters or Gerry Mader at 239-267-2684 our Development Manager.

As we move forward in 2008 the Service Committee is again facing a financial challenge. In order to maintain the many services the NSC provides the Committee needs the support of many.

If you are not an active donor we ask you to prayerfully consider using the enclosed envelope or going to our secure website at www.nsc-chariscenter.org/donations.htm to make a donation.

A donation of any amount will help the Service Committee continue to work for the renewal of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.

We would like to encourage our donors to consider becoming a member of Friends 300/600/1000 or a Fanning the Flame Partner.

Friends 300/600/1000 are those donors who make a one-year pledge of one of the above amounts. These pledges can be paid monthly, quarterly or annually.

A Fanning the Flame Partner is one who makes a pledge of \$300 or more for five years. This longer commitment better helps the Service Committee in budgeting for its future service. Please call or write for a descriptive brochure.

Let us work together through our one-year gifts, or our pledges of one or five years to continue to fan the flame, especially in this Year of St. Paul!

Executive Director

Walter Matthews

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For Your Information

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What we have seen and heard

.....
by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner



Pentecost continues

The story of Pentecost goes back to the post resurrection experience of the disciples and Mary in the Upper Room. "All these [the eleven apostles] devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). In this issue of *Pentecost Today* we read articles which speak of Mary and Pentecost and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This connects us to the experience of the Apostles. It is recorded that Mary was there. I recall back in my college year of 1966-67 that I received a letter from Faith, a woman of another Christian denomination, a Japanese convert from Buddhism. We had been communicating by mail regarding the experience of the Holy Spirit today. I had already been praying the prayer, "Come, Holy Spirit" with some intensity before being introduced to her through written communication. In her efforts to encourage me to be open to the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts, she quoted the Acts of the Apostles, impressing on me that even Mary was there.



Our newest addition to the National Service Committee, elected in January 2008, is Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR, a

Franciscan priest from Franciscan University in Steubenville. He has been ordained for eleven years and is currently serving the University as the Director of the Study Abroad Program in Gaming, Austria. He will return to the United States in late spring. Fr. Dave has been involved in the renewal for over 20 years. He served with the NET Team for one year and the FIRE Team for four years. He has spoken at charismatic conferences across the United States and Canada. Father has also produced a series of talks on the spirituality of freedom and 'Generation Why' which discuss the youth culture. A new book by Fr. Dave, to be released this Easter, is titled, *Spiritual Freedom: God's Life Changing Gift*. Fr. Dave was born and raised in Durango, Colorado and has four brothers and one sister. Welcome, Fr. Dave! ♦

In January the Service Committee met for its Annual Meeting and reelected Judith Hughes (Norwich, CT), Fr. Richard Loch (Scranton, PA), Gerry Mader (Ft. Myers, FL), and Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner, SSND (Apple Valley, MN) and elected Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR (Steubenville, OH). In September, after prayerful discernment, the Committee extended the term of Aggie Neck as member and Chairman until January 2009.

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