

One mind struggling together

(Philippians 1:27)
by Deacon Michael R. Wesley

One of the blessings that can come from a charismatic prayer group is an experience of community. Also known as fellowship or *koinonia*, the effect of this gift is that people are authentically drawn together in love by the power of the Holy Spirit. Community doesn't just happen, though. It needs to be nurtured and given the opportunity to bear fruit.

One of the ways our prayer group has been doing this is by encouraging people who are not serving in a ministry to become a part of one. Someone from the prayer ministry, for instance, might ask one of our members to help them pray with people. Another per-

son might be asked to help out with hospitality or bring goodies to the next prayer meeting. Since we use a PowerPoint program to display our songs we frequently ask people to press the "down" arrow on the laptop to rotate the slides. Giving people a ministry in the prayer meeting, even temporarily, gives them a sense of being a part of a community.

Celebrating special events is also a good means of developing community. Once a year we celebrate the anniversary of our prayer group with a Mass or Communion service and a potluck. We do this for Christmas as well. To celebrate the beginning of Lent this year we had an all night charismatic prayer vigil to end abortion, and to obtain peace in Jerusalem.

Praying together throughout the week is another way that our prayer group has been striving to grow in community. Once a week we come together

for our Worship for Revival. Following the exposition of the Eucharist we offer to God a charismatic bouquet of praise for revival in the Church. Occasionally, someone will ask us to pray with a family member in their home. These are intimate, grace-filled moments of praise, sharing and song when our prayer group becomes a part of this member's family. We have found that a deepened level of community is formed when we not only pray together, but share in each other's needs.

St. Paul calls out to us, in Philippians 1:27 to be a community "...one in spirit, with one mind struggling together for the faith..." What's exciting about this is that the grace needed to obtain this kind of unity in our prayer groups has already been given to us by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:1-7). ♦

Deacon Michael R. Wesley is one of the leaders of Holy Fire Prayer Group in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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The mystery of community: Growing in ecclesial consciousness

by Walter Matthews

About a year into marriage I was giving a talk when I heard the Lord say to me, “You are doing this all wrong!” “Lord, what do you mean?” “You are speaking just as you used to before you were married!” “What?” “You are speaking as a single not as a married man.”

The Lord then began to show me that I was no longer just a “me” but I was an “us.” We are one by our sacrament of Matrimony: “so they are no longer two, but one flesh” (Mt. 19:6).

In an analogous way, through the Sacraments of Initiation we are made one in Christ: with him (and the Father and the Spirit) and with one another.

It is one thing to “be married” and another to live that reality every day, every hour. In the same way, it is one thing to profess that “we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church,” and another to develop what Pope John Paul II called “an *ecclesial consciousness*, which is ever mindful of what it means to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ, participants in her mystery of communion and in her dynamism in mission and the apostolate” (*Christifidelis Laici*, 64).

How might we develop and deepen such ecclesial consciousness?

First, reflect on our life situations and vocations for in them we can find the seeds of connection, communion, that move us beyond an isolated view of ourselves. No man (or woman) is an island. God—who is a communion of Persons—has made us in his image and likeness. We too are to be a communion of persons (See *CCC* 383).

Second, we who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit have been introduced “to an experience of Christian community that transcends anything [we] have previously known” (*Fanning the Flame*). We see in others, brothers and sisters who love the Lord as we see ourselves loving him and our desire is to be together with them. As we deepen our consciousness of our lived experience in the Renewal we grow in our ecclesial consciousness.

Third, Pope John Paul II offers his own answer to the question of how do we grow in an ecclesial consciousness when he writes “Therefore I make a strong appeal to one and all... never to become tired of maintaining – indeed always taking an active part to fix deeply in one’s mind, heart and life – an ecclesial consciousness ...” (*CL* 64).

Just like in a marriage where one or both parties tire of maintaining their commitment to die to self and love the other (“their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving” Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* 19 quoted in *CCC* 1644), we may tire of dying to self and loving the other members of Christ’s body and lose our ecclesial consciousness.

Further, it is not enough to simply not tire but we must actively engage the reality. For me, while I often introduce my wife to the audience to whom I am speaking if she is present I also “introduce” her if she is not. They may not see her but I do and it helps remind me that I do not go alone, that she always goes with me.

The Pope exhorts us that this ecclesial consciousness must take root in our

minds (“let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind” Rms. 12:2), in our hearts (“love one another constantly from the heart” 1Pt. 1:22) and in our lives, everyday and not just on Sundays!

Fourth, let us deepen our ecclesial consciousness by making each Mass and the reception of the Eucharist an “epiphany of communion” with Jesus and one another. “Receiving the Eucharist means entering into a profound communion with Jesus... This special closeness... cannot be adequately understood or fully experienced apart from ecclesial communion... The Eucharist is both the *source* of ecclesial unity and its greatest *manifestation*. The Eucharist is an *epiphany of communion*” (*Mane Nobiscum Domine*, 19-21).

Fifth, in this Year of St. Paul, reread and restudy what he wrote about the Church as a body of Christ using the analogy of the human body in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 (see Fr. George Montague’s article this issue), about being “citizens together with God’s people and members of the family of God” (Eph. 2:19), and about being “God’s building” and “God’s temple” (1Cor. 3:9-17).

As we grow in our ecclesial consciousness and self awareness as members of the Body of Christ we grow deeper in love with Jesus Christ (with the Father and the Spirit), with the Church and all its members and our hearts are opened to that love of neighbor Pope Benedict XVI has written so movingly about in *Deus Caritas Est* (see #18-20) and to the mission of evangelization and transformation of society—building a civilization of love.

Walter Matthews, a long time leader in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal serves as Executive Director of the National Service Committee.

International Colloquium on Charisms

One hundred and forty invited Renewal leaders and theologians from forty-six countries attended an International Colloquium April 3-6 in Rome on: "Charisms and the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church." It was co-sponsored by ICCRS and the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL).

Speakers from the U.S. were Fr. Francis Martin, Francis MacNutt, Fr. Bob Faricy, S.J. and Dr. Mary Healy. International speakers included Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa and Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko of the PCL.

Aggie Neck and Walter Matthews of the NSC were

among the sixteen participants from the U.S. including representatives of the Hispanic, Haitian, and Filipino leadership groups in the U.S.

Our time was spent in prayer, Eucharistic celebrations and fellowship; listening to talks on the Biblical, Patristic and Theological Approaches, and Discernment and Accompaniment of Charisms; and Roundtables featuring shorter talks on "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" and on "Healing."

There were two Study Group times: one on "Baptism in the Spirit" and the second on the "Correct Use of the Charisms." There was also some time for questions for the speakers.

The overall aim of the Colloquium was to reflect on the understanding of and use of the charisms in the Church from the perspective of the experience of the Renewal.

A highlight of the Colloquium was the comprehensive talk by Dr. Healy that seemed to take in much that had been said earlier in the Colloquium and move all of our thinking forward: The Second Vatican Council had laid the theological foundation for the resurgence of "everyday" charisms that emerged in the Renewal. Whereas, the Church is more comfortable referring to, identifying and celebrating the charisms associated with the new movements and ecclesial communities, it is the Renewal that has brought to the fore an aware-

ness of the charisms available to the faithful of every rank.

Michelle Moran, President of ICCRS, in her report in the recent issue of the *ICCRS Newsletter* (May-June 2008) concluded, "It seemed appropriate to hold this Colloquium just after our 40th Anniversary. As the Church has rediscovered the charismatic dimension it is highly appropriate at this stage in our history we consolidate and reflect on what has taken place. We can then be open to the future unfolding of the Lord's vision for the [Catholic Charismatic Renewal]." (To read her full report go to www.iccrs.org/communication/NL/newsletter.htm). They hope to publish a fuller report with the papers presented at a later date. ♦

Why include the NSC in your will?

As you know the National Service Committee relies almost entirely on gifts from individuals to continue its mission. We ask you to please consider a gift to the National Service Committee when you make your will or update it. Making a gift to the NSC can be as simple as adding a codicil to your existing will or estate plan.

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What Paul teaches us about the charisms

by Kay Murdy

Everything we claim as our own flows from God's graciousness. The Greek word is *charis*, which is used in the New Testament for the "grace" or "favor" of God to heal and save us. The gifts that come from the Spirit are called "*charisma*," free expressions of God's *charis* toward us, which enable us to be channels of God's *charis* to others.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the analogy of the body to teach us how the charisms unite the Church, which is the body of Christ: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (12:12).

Paul emphasizes that unity does not mean uniformity. Just as every part in a body has a role to play, there are a variety of gifts that function differently within the Church. These gifts come from the Spirit, and are given, not for the glory of the individual, but for the "common good" (12:7).

In chapter twelve of 1 Corinthians, Paul uses the generic term *pneumatika* for the "spiritual gifts" (12:1), as a corrective to an overemphasis on a few gifts by the 'super spiritual' Corinthians. In verse four, the word *charisma* is used for the "gifts" of the Spirit. In verse five, the word *diakonia* signifies the variety of "services" that Paul attributes to Christ. In verse six, *energema* are the "activities" or "works" of God the Father whose power (energy) is manifested in the world in visible ways.

In verses eight to ten Paul lists nine examples of the Spirit's manifestations:

Gifts of Grace (*charis*) The power to speak, sometimes called Word Gifts *Prophecy, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues*.

◆ **Prophecy** is God's message spoken through an individual to the community. Prophecy does not necessarily mean predicting the future. Paul says the purpose of prophecy is for the "upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" of God's people (14:3).

◆ **Tongues (*glossolalia*)** are God's messages spoken through an individual, which must be interpreted for the good of the community. It is akin to the language of lovers, or of a parent to a child. Yielding to tongues opens us up to receive and use the other gifts.

◆ **Interpretation of Tongues** is the ability to interpret (not translate) a message given in tongues into the vernacular. Tongues along with interpretation amounts to prophecy.

Gifts of Service (*diakonia*) The power to know - *Wisdom, knowledge, Discernment*. These gifts are the ability to express and understand various aspects of God's nature or plan in a manner that brings effective results.

◆ **Wisdom** is the facility to offer a solution to a problem or to give insightful teachings that opens the hearer to God's wisdom.

◆ **Knowledge** is the ability to clearly communicate God's word or doctrinal truths, or to know how God is working within an individual or in the community at a particular time.

◆ **Discernment** is the capacity to know whether a gift or inspiration has at its source the Holy Spirit, is of human origin or of evil influence. Paul says that the Spirit always bears witness to Jesus (12:3).

Gifts of Works (*energema*) The power to do - *Faith, Miracles, Healing*. Jesus' preaching was always accompanied by cures, miracles and deliverance that led the people to faith and enabled them to experience as well as hear the good news.

◆ **Faith** is a supernatural infusion to know with full certainty that God will bring something about. (Charismatic faith is not the same as the virtue of faith with which we receive our salvation in Christ.)

◆ **Miracles** are God's supernatural interventions into the natural realm to demonstrate divine power. Miracles help strengthen faith or bring about faith.

◆ **Healing** is the manifestation of God's power to restore a person's spiritual, psychological, or physical well-being. This may be instantaneous or gradual, and often through the use of natural means.

These are not all the charisms illustrated in the New Testament. They are also found in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. At least 27 gifts are listed covering a broad range from gifts like prophecy and healing to teaching and almsgiving. Charismatic gifts are as important for the Church today as they were in Apostolic times. These gifts work to bring unity, to empower, and serve the Church's needs.

The Church has declared: "Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the church"

Now what?

by Deacon Patrick Frye

We stand at a crossroads in the Renewal. We've looked back at the first 40 years with all its blessings and challenges and now we look forward in hope. Many of us are like the disciples after the Lord's Ascension, looking up to the sky wondering, "Now what?"

Ascending back to the Father, Jesus said, "Go... make disciples of all nations." Now the risen Christ expands his message to the ends of the earth. He will do it through his disciples. But the disciples still didn't understand. The angels asked, "Why are you standing here looking at the sky?" There was work to do.

One word stands out for me in this passage, "disciples"... He doesn't say, "Make followers" or "believers" but "make disciples of all nations."

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church it says disciples speak to others about what they see, hear and believe. They proclaim Jesus in order to lead others to faith in him. They invite others into the joy of being in communion with him. Disciples keep the faith, live it, profess it, confidently bear witness and spread it.

Our history in the Church is that people viewed this role for clergy, religious and a few laity who were called into leadership. Even in the Renewal certain leaders are looked at as those gifted for discipleship. Now, more than ever, we must claim our common discipleship as children of God, bathed in water and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told us, "You will receive power when my Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses." This Holy Spirit power, received at Baptism, makes it possible for Jesus to teach,

counsel, heal, awaken, transform, and open hearts to the Father through those who serve God's people.

Never hesitate to share God's love, or to use your gifts to build God's Church and change this world. Jesus gives each of us the same power which governed his life so that we can give it to everyone else.

Leaders, ordained or laity, come and go but "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever." His Spirit works through each and every one of us so that we may build his Church Community.

"Now What?" Let's move on together in faith. Let's be the Body of Christ. ♦

Deacon Patrick Frye was appointed Liaison for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in 2002. He is on the steering committee for the Association of Diocesan Liaisons and is on the NSC Council.

(Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #12).

Paul stresses the fact that no one has all the gifts (1 Cor 12:29-30), but each person should be open to manifesting any gift at any time. He exhorts us to "strive" for the gifts and not to suppress them (14:1, 39). We must widen our expectations and try not to limit what God can do through us. We need to adopt the attitude of Mary: "Be it done unto me according to your will." Paul says the effect of the gifts upon unbelievers should lead them to say: "God is really among you" (14:25). ♦



Kay Murdy is an author, columnist and speaker. Kay and her husband Bob have been married for 48 years and reside in Whittier, California.

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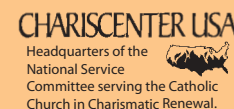
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**From the
Executive
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.....
by Walter Matthews

Called to serve as brothers and sisters

One of the first decisions made by the first leadership team our prayer group formed in 1973 was to meet weekly, apart from the large prayer meeting for which we had accepted responsibility.

During those weekly meetings we shared about how we saw the Lord acting in our lives, our struggles, and our faith and trust. We grew in our love for the Lord and one another. We became what we were by virtue of our sacramental baptism: brothers and sisters in Christ.

“From the communion that Christians experience in Christ there immediately flows the communion which they experience with one another: all are branches of a single vine, namely, Christ” (*Christifidelis Laici*, 18).

Though we were committed to serve the Lord and the prayer group, and to love one another, we were five different people: we didn’t always agree, we sometimes struggled to love one or the other of us, and, as needed, we repented and restored our relationships.

Like that early prayer group leadership team, the NSC “members commit themselves to support, accept, affirm and strengthen one another through personal relationships, shared prayer and ministry...They are brothers and sisters becoming one for the sake of the common work,” as an internal document states.

The Committee members seek to extend this love by developing personal relationships of mutual love and support with the members of the NSC Council so that their partnership in the work of the Renewal can be fruitful.

Because relationship is at the heart of this Renewal, when the Service Committee developed the Regional Leaders’ Gatherings in 1998 we described their purpose as “to strengthen leaders in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal by building relationships with attending leaders from within a smaller geographic area, encouraging their networking with the NSC and one another...”

Nationally, one of the purposes of bringing together the Gathering of National Leadership Groups has been to build up the unity of the Renewal in the U.S. by breaking down the “not knowing” one another and becoming brothers and sisters.

In the Unity Statement adopted in the first meeting we committed ourselves to “work...for unity in all relationships through repentance, reconciliation and friendship.” (For a copy go to www.nsc-chariscenter.org/PDF/Unity_statement.pdf.)

All the groups and communities in the Renewal—certainly all the leadership or core groups/pastoral or service teams—should consider adopting the Unity Statement as an explicit commitment to serve as brothers and sisters.

As Pope Benedict XVI taught in *Deus Caritas Est*, “Since God has first loved us (cf *1 Jn* 4:10), love is now no longer a mere ‘command’; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us.”

Friends of the NSC

With this year’s Pentecost Appeal we launched our \$50 for the 50th Anniversary Appeal to Prayer Groups.

At the 2007 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference, Bishop Sam Jacobs challenged us to begin to think and pray about preparing for the Renewal’s Jubilee in 2017. We have begun to do so and have even made some suggestions to ICCRS about what they might do on the international level as we approach our Jubilee Year.

Because of the success of our \$40 for the 40th Anniversary Appeal to Prayer Groups last year we have decided to make the \$50 for the 50th Anniversary an annual component for the next ten years.

We recognize that this will be a “tight” year for many, including prayer groups, but our trust must be in the Lord and so we do not hesitate to be bold in asking prayer groups to either continue to support us or, for the many that have not yet become active donors, to begin to do so. We need you for we can do so much more together.

In one of those surprises of the Spirit, we received earlier this year a bequest for nearly \$13,000 from a couple from Louisiana who had died a few years ago. They had been active donors for six years in the 1990’s but their giving in most years never exceeded \$100. They decided to include this generous gift in their will as others have over the years. May they rest in peace and we ask that you please say a prayer for them.

“Let us go forth as heralds of hope...In this way, the Church in America will know a new springtime in the Spirit” (Pope Benedict XVI).

Executive Director

Walter Matthews

Editorial Board

Fr. John Gordon

Fr. Bob Hogan, BBD

Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer, SSND

Editor

Sr. Martha Jean McGarry, IHM

Production Manager

Jean Beers

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For Your Information

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Please mail to:

NSC-Chariscenter USA

PO Box 628

Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628

Tel. (540) 972-0225

www.nsc-chariscenter.org

National Service Committee members:

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Josephine Cachia

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Fr. John Gordon

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What we have seen and heard

.....

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer



Communicating by print, podcasts, online, blackberries...

What we see and hear and *how* we see and hear: When it was written in the Acts of the Apostles that, "It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20), the way of sharing was by speaking in person and hearing in person.

This was long before our current ways of communicating with one another, long before the printed word, long before the various media opportunities we employ today, long before the speed with which we can communicate in numerous ways across oceans.

For some of you there is great comfort in taking *Pentecost Today* into your hands in the comfort of your chair at home and allowing yourself to be inspired, motivated, and informed. Some of you wrote this on the survey we took at the Leaders' Conference in Albuquerque. For some of you, well, maybe you are not even reading this column in this paper magazine because you read the written word online or on your Blackberry or ... Many of us grew up listening to a radio and eventually watching a black and white television. Now many listen to pod casts and read and listen online.

Communication is instant and constant.

We are trying to keep up—but we have a long way to go. You can find *Pentecost Today* online. We are trying to offer more online. We want to use every possible avenue to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ, to speak of what we have seen and heard. If you have ideas of avenues we could take, please commu-

nicate that to us. Here I am referring not so much to the content as to how we communicate the content.

The special Jubilee Year of St. Paul, proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, will begin on June 28, 2008. One of the ways that the National Service Committee would like to celebrate The Year of Saint Paul is by offering monthly articles written by National Service Committee members. Our hope is to email articles to interested parties. There are many email addresses that we already have for a variety of reasons. If you would like to be sure to receive these articles as they are published, please contact us through our website, www.nsc-chariscenter.org, (select *Contact us*) and give us your email address along with your request to receive the Year of Saint Paul articles.

We also invite you, if you have not done so recently, to donate \$15 or more, to continue receiving *Pentecost Today*. You can do this online (as above) by selecting Donations, then making a donation today, and selecting *Pentecost Today* as the purpose of your donation or by sending a check through the mail. Whether you receive a paper copy or read this online, there are expenses to be covered.

We believe that *Pentecost Today* is one effective communication tool through which we can share what we have seen and heard and proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We want to do more. Thank you for helping us with your ideas and financial gifts. ♦

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