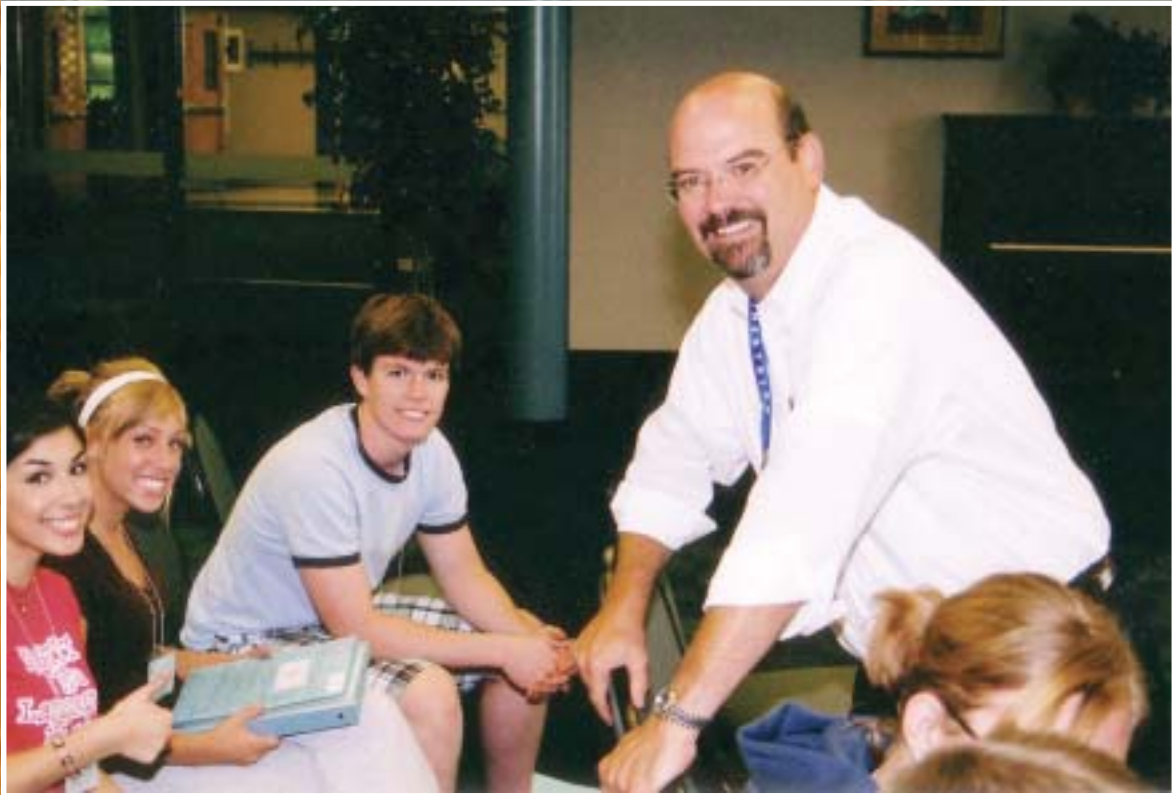


Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

January/February/March 2008

“Behold the fields are already white for the harvest.”



Mark Berchem, NET Ministry team

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Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Update your equipment

The risen Christ, before his ascension into heaven, sent the apostles to preach the gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15) and conferred on them the powers needed to carry out this mission (*The Church in America*, John Paul II). You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses...yes, even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 2:8). Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift God wants to give to those who follow him so they will be equipped for the mission.

Webster's Dictionary defines witness as "one who has personal knowledge of something." The message must be alive in us, a driving force that causes us to speak, to proclaim and to witness. St. Paul exhorts Timothy "to preach the word, to stay with the task, whether convenient or inconvenient; correcting, reproving, appealing; constantly teaching and never losing patience. As for you, be steady and self possessed; put up with hardship, perform your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2,5).

The mission of evangelization today calls for a new program which can be defined overall as a "new evangelization." "I appeal for a commitment 'new in its ardor, methods and expression' to take up this project and to cooperate in carrying it out. In accepting this mission, everyone should keep in mind that the vital core of new evangelization must be a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the

Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Paschal Mystery" (*The Church in America*).

God sent his Son, Jesus, so that all would be saved. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to instruct us in everything, and remind us of all that he told us (John 14:26). If the "new evangelization" is to bear fruit, it must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As the early Church gathered to pray about the threats and persecution they were receiving, they prayed: "Grant to your servants even as they speak your words, complete assurance by stretching forth your hand in cures and signs and wonders to be worked in the name of Jesus, your holy servant" (Acts 5:29-39).

Let us invoke the Holy Spirit to come and water our dryness, to breathe life into our mission of evangelization, to stir into flame within us the gifts we have been given to be fruitful witnesses, and to confirm the message with signs and wonders. Let us lay down all preconceived ideas and plans of what evangelization is and ask for the wisdom to see and understand what the "new evangelization" we are challenged and called to be a part of asks of us. The torch is now in our hands, the gifts have been given to us, the mission is still vital. We are the people God has called and gifted to continue the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editor's Desk

by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

"One generation praises your deeds to the next and proclaims your mighty works." (Ps. 145:4)

Evangelization has long been a mission of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. It has often been written about in *Pentecost Today* and in the writings of Church and Renewal leaders.

In this issue our writers offer new insights, encouragement, and challenges to all of us to bring this mission alive in our prayer groups, communities, Church and personal lives. In a variety of ways the Spirit makes it happen in and through us.

Peter Herbeck's article motivates us to mission. Are we/our prayer groups tangible proofs of the outpouring of the Spirit?

Mark Berchem has been involved in youth ministry for many years. He offers many insights into conversion friendly youth ministry. Don't miss his article.

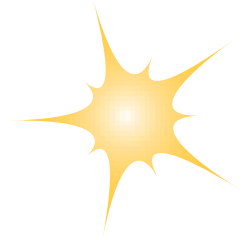
Prayer groups are called to be evangelistic. Gerry Mader gives us some simple ways to make it happen.

Serving the poor—a way to evangelize? The article on page 3 by Sister Linda Koontz will answer the answer and hopefully stir us into action.

Marilyn Quirk reminds us in her article that prayer is the key to fruitful evangelization efforts. Fr. Tim Hepburn extends this concept further by taking a look at holiness as foundational to evangelization.

May this issue remind us that God isn't finished with us yet! Evangelize!

Good News to the Poor



One cold rainy day in Juarez, Mexico, we were serving the children lunch on a hillside. The long line included many small girls carrying infants. Their mothers work in the factories for a low wage



Sr. Linda Koontz

and the children care for the newborns. One small frail child pulled on my sleeve and said, "Why did you come here?" I whispered in her ear, "Jesus told me to come." Excitedly she responded, "He must be Good." I will never forget this child. Her words pierced my heart and helped me to see the truth of Matt. 5:14-16. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Men do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before men so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father." We used this child's words to bring the good news of Jesus along with the much-needed lunch.

The world needs a witness more than a cure for cancer! People are dying spiritually all around us. We are called to be carriers of Jesus' love and light. Our acts of kindness and the sharing of our material goods cause the poor to rise up and say, "Jesus is

alive!" God hears the cry of the poor and sends his disciples to do something about the situation. He has anointed us to bring good news to the poor—the good news of salvation and new life in Jesus Christ. We cannot speak good news and be bad news! Our message must be undergirded with actions that demonstrate unselfishness. We are called to serve the poor and see that the kingdom of God increases. The baptism of the Holy Spirit breaks our shell of selfishness and propels us into this very mission of evangelization. Bringing Jesus' love to the poor is a very practical means of evangelization.

I was standing on a hillside in Juarez one day and noticed that a woman was struggling to wash clothes in a small bucket of water. The water barrel stood empty beside her cardboard shack. She had not been able to buy water for some weeks. Within, I said, "Lord, why don't you do something about this mess!" Immediately I heard with my heart these words, "I'm waiting for you to do something about it, build her a house!" My excuses began to roll in, "But Lord, I don't know how, her husband is a drunk, etc." "Go pray for him." I took a friend and we talked to the couple about the healing power of Jesus. "Do you want us to pray for you," I asked. "Please do it," he yelled. As we prayed, the man jumped up and took off his shirt. He said that he was on fire! God healed his alcoholism that day as he received Jesus into his life. He began a journey of healing from an

abusive childhood. The husband helped build the house along with some men from the prayer group. These men had been unemployed. They knew how to build but had no opportunity. Through God's provision, we were able to provide jobs by building small houses for those who lived in cardboard shacks. We have blessed about 30 families who had no home.

Feeding the hungry has provided the opportunity to bring Jesus to many. Tomas and his wife came to our prayer meeting. The elderly man always stood in the back row with his metal pot in hand. Each week I put a chicken in his pot. This pattern continued for several months. During Christmas we had a wonderful time of worship, praising the Lord and preaching the gospel. As the anointed singing increased, I looked up and saw Tomas in the front row with tears running down his cheeks. Tomas had come forward to commit his life to Jesus. Tomas died the next year. I like to say that 'our Father used a chicken to draw Tomas to himself.'

It is through such acts of love by his disciples that Jesus has chosen to reveal himself to a broken world. The Spirit of God is upon you to bring the Good News to the poor.

Sister Linda Koontz, SNJM is the director of Spirit of the Lord International Mission, an evangelistic outreach among the poor.

Charismatic Renewal and the New Evangelization

by Peter Herbeck

In his historic speech to the lay movements on Pentecost 1998, Pope John Paul II provided the members of the movements and the Church at large with an important prophetic and pastoral understanding of what the “Spirit is saying to the Church” in our time through the lay movements. That speech, which has been referred to many times in this publication over the past nine years, continues to provide insight into the meaning of the Holy Spirit’s work in and through the Charismatic Renewal.

For me, it has provided a vision, an optic through which to understand the goal and purpose of the renewal in the Holy Spirit. To summarize it in one word, the fundamental goal of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is mission.

Radical Change

Pope John Paul II saw the emergence and flowering of the movements as a direct consequence of the Spirit’s action during the Second Vatican Council. He saw the Council as an encounter with the Holy Spirit, an experience of “a renewed Pentecost,” when the Spirit “intervened” to bring about “events of amazing newness” and to “radically change persons and history.” The radical change, as he saw it, came about because “the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements” (John Paul II, *The Church wishes to spread Christ’s fire*). At the core of her being the Church is charismatic. She lives and moves and bears fruit through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

The lay movements are “tangible proof of this ‘outpouring’ of the Spirit” (John Paul II). They are realities that are born of the Spirit; they are a living signs of the Spirit’s desire to bring about “radical change” in the Church. The movements reveal dimensions of

that radical change. Though they are many and varied, the movements share certain common denominators that provide insight into the “radical change” the Spirit is seeking to produce. All the movements are fundamentally missionary in nature. They share an apostolic impulse—the desire and capacity to bring people into an encounter with the living Jesus Christ, to bring them into concrete experience of communion in him and to launch their members into the evangelistic mission of the Church.

The Holy Father used the term “new Pentecost” to refer to the movements because he wanted to “acknowledge the development of the movements and

“The primary function of the Spirit is not to give understanding, but to give movement, not to shed light, but to impart dynamism”

new communities as a *source of hope for the Church’s missionary action*” (John Paul II, *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*). They

inspire hope because they show us what the Spirit is doing and what he intends to do with the entire Church.

New Pentecost for a New Evangelization

In order for us to truly understand the purpose and therefore the ongoing mission of the Charismatic Renewal, we need to lay hold once again of the meaning of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit has brought about a “new Pentecost” because he desires to produce the fruits of the first Pentecost. Pope John Paul II said that, “Pentecost was not only a moment of intense emotion; it was the start of a dynamism of supernatural origin, which developed through the Church’s history. As on the day of Pentecost, “so in our times the Holy Spirit continues to inspire missionary

enthusiasm and to give hierarchical and charismatic gifts” (John Paul II, *The Church is missionary by her nature*). The renewal in Spirit is given to produce this “missionary enthusiasm.”

Pentecost was more than emotion, more than a dynamic religious experience or a new kind of prayer. The Spirit came to equip the Church for mission. Again, “the Paschal Mystery of the Son of God, in a way ‘bursts out’ at Pentecost to extend the mission of Christ the Lord in time and space” (John Paul II, *The Church wishes to spread Christ’s fire*).

The Spirit desires that the Charismatic Renewal allow the Paschal Mystery of the Son of God to “burst out” once again in order to “extend the mission of Christ the Lord.”

Move Out!

The apostles’ experience is the paradigm for the “new Pentecost” in our time. Pentecost began in the upper room with a personal and corporate encounter with the power of the Holy Spirit, but the end result was a harvest of souls. The day of Pentecost moved the apostles—literally. They not only received the charisms of the Spirit, but also a new interior dynamism, a power which stirred their deepest energies and thrust them into the streets of Jerusalem to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus to all their fellow Jews.

This is the heart and the message of the Charismatic Renewal. The Spirit is being poured out to move the Church into mission. The Holy Father reminds us, “The primary function of the Spirit is not to give understanding, but to give movement, not to shed light, but to impart dynamism” (John Paul II, *The meaning of the Spirit in the Old Testament*). The “new Pentecost” is meant to provide the motive power for the “new evangelization.”

If we want to cooperate with what the Spirit is saying to us through this renewal movement, it will necessarily entail direct engagement with the evangelistic mission of the Church. It is possible to receive the Holy Spirit in power and at the same time

to resist the movement the Spirit is trying to produce in us. I believe this very dynamic has occurred in many of our prayer groups. Some have stagnated and dried up because they failed to move with the Spirit, finding no mission apart from maintaining a weekly prayer meeting.

The Spirit has come not only to awaken in us a desire for prayer and the exercise of spiritual gifts, he has come for something much greater, to give us his thirst for souls. The result of this “new Pentecost” is not an experience, nor a new kind of prayer, nor even healing for our lives; it ultimately is meant to lead to a harvest of souls. The Lord is calling us to join him, to discover our deepest identity, to walk with him in the fields that are “already white for harvest.”

As Pope Benedict the XVI reminds us in his recent book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, “Being with him (Jesus) includes the missionary dynamic by its very nature, since Jesus’ whole being is mission.”

A Word to the Church

The renewal in the Spirit and the existence of all the lay movements are meant to be a sign and a word to the whole Church, to clergy and laity alike. It is a summons to every Catholic to lay hold of the essential missionary nature of the Church. In the words of Pope John Paul II, the laity “should think of her (the Church) as an essentially missionary community, whose members all have the duty and responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every nation, to all who need God, whether they know it or not,” and through the life of the movements to see what it means for the laity to, “have discovered the fullness of their Christian vocation and to have accepted the divine mandate of universal evangelization, the gift of the Holy Spirit, who seeks to accomplish in the world an ever new Pentecost” (John Paul II, *Mission of the Laity*). ♦

Peter Herbeck is the Vice President and Director of Missions for Renewal Ministries, a lay organization devoted to Catholic renewal and evangelization throughout the world. He works to equip Catholic lay people to respond to the Holy Father’s call for a new evangelization.



Conversion-friendly youth ministry

by Mark Berchem

Over the past 30 years of working with youth, I have had innumerable conversations with parents, youth workers, and priests who were all lamenting the high number of young people who seem to disappear from the Church. The teen years seem to be a time of decision for many young people, and although many parishes have active youth programs, many are in need of something that will help their young people stay involved in their faith beyond high school.

Why do so many young people seem to lose interest in their faith? How can we lead and keep them close to Christ? What can we do in our parishes to assist our young people in awakening to the reality of God's tremendous love for them?

My observation is that many parish youth programs are unclear about the ultimate goal of youth ministry. Many youth programs appear to focus on having fun, learning basic doctrine, and doing service projects to help others. Obviously all these things are good and should be part of a viable youth program, but there is a more fundamental goal that must be present: We must bring our young people into a committed relationship with Jesus Christ. Conversion must be THE goal of our youth ministry efforts. We must help our young people encounter the love of Christ and respond to his call to follow him and become his disciple.

We know that conversion is a spiritual matter. We can't force someone to convert, but we can create a "conversion-friendly" environment that will increase the chances of a young person experiencing the grace of the Holy Spirit through conversion. Helping a young person come to a deeper conversion to Christ must be the central focus of our youth efforts.

But before we all clamor for our youth workers to do more, let's ask the question—whose job is it anyway? Who is responsible to share our faith with young people? Certainly parents, priests, youth ministers, and catechists are on the list. But the truth is, all of us, each in a manner suited to our place in life, can help our young people come to know Jesus Christ.

Faith is caught, not taught. Being around people of faith helps young people be more open to entrusting themselves to Christ. Young people listen with their eyes, and seeing faith lived out is so important. Young people need to see living witnesses—men and women living their faith in daily life. All of us have a part to play. Today's teenagers are getting involved in Church activities, but it is incumbent on all of us to do what we can to help them meet Jesus Christ, experience his love, and choose to follow him. Your

witness of faith makes an impact. Look around at Mass on Sunday. Notice how many adults seem to ignore any young people. Smile! Be welcoming. Introduce yourself at the greeting of peace if appropriate. Let them know you are glad they came. If you know their name, go out of your way to say hello every week. What kind of change could we affect, if every adult in our parish paid even a minute's worth of attention to the young people of our parishes? Let's be more eager to help out at youth events, masses, and religious education classes. Sponsor a young person on a mission trip or retreat and then get together and let them share about their experience.

Be willing to share about your love for Christ with others as appropriate. Be a good example. Live a virtuous life. Pray! Pray for specific young people you know or meet who seem distant from God. Many people have experienced conversion because someone was praying for them. Organize a group of intercessors. We all know that conversion is a spiritual work. Let's get a set of people praying specifically for our youth.

What about those who are working directly with our young people? What can the parish youth team do to help awaken faith in the younger genera-



NET Ministry team in session

tion? I've already addressed the importance of a faith-filled community, but let me identify five more characteristics of a conversion-friendly environment that I believe increase the chances of a young person experiencing the grace of conversion.

Explicit proclamation. Don't presume that young people have heard the basic gospel message. Regularly share about God's love and mercy, recount the significant events of Christ's life, and the foundational tenets of our faith. Have a variety of people share about how Christ has made a difference in their life. Young people really want to hear the truth that will set them free. The sharing doesn't have to be spectacular! Genuine and honest sharing about your struggles and openness to God will draw young people in.



NET team members in prayer

Regular invitation to respond to Christ's invitation. Young people need to be invited to respond to the invitation of Christ. Too often we present the call of Christ without inviting young people to respond. Regular encouragement to turn to the Lord, to decide to follow Jesus, to entrust oneself to Christ, can provide the necessary "push" a person needs to move closer to God. Including moments of quiet prayer gives God an opportunity to speak to the hearts of our young people.

Good worship. Worship puts us directly in contact with God. Uplifting music, preferably taken directly from

sacred scripture, helps young people become more aware of being in God's presence. Having a talented musician who can lead praise and worship during a prayer meeting or liturgy should be a high priority for any youth program.

Conversion opportunities. Conversion doesn't usually just happen. Few of us are "zapped" by God. Rather, conversion more likely happens during moments when a person's heart is more disposed to God. We don't know when conversion will happen, but we do know when it is more likely to happen. Some of these moments for young people include Reconciliation services, Eucharistic Adoration, retreats, mission trips, youth rallies, praise and worship times, bible studies and conversations with a faith mentor. If we are intent on helping our young people experience a deeper conversion in their life, we should be sure to include these types of conversion opportunities in our youth programs.

Discipleship. Young people also need discipleship—formation regarding how to live as a disciple of Christ. As young people experience an awakening of faith, we must provide them with the basic tools needed to sustain the newfound faith. Learning how to pray, how to actively participate at Mass and how to live a chaste life when confronted with other options are a few of the key tools a young person needs in order to have a sustainable faith that endures beyond high school. Yes, it is important to understand the major tenets of our faith, but even more important is knowing how to live one's faith. I can't tell you how many times I have heard a young adult bemoan that, although they attended Catholic schools or religious education for years, no one ever taught them *how* to pray.

Helping a young person come to a deeper conversion to Christ is a great

Prayer Card



For the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the Church and in the world we pray:

Rejoice always.
Pray without ceasing.
In all circumstances
give thanks,
for this is the will of
God for you
in Christ Jesus.
Do not quench
the Spirit.

2 Thessalonians 16-19

honor. The two most important actors are God and the young person. God provides grace and invitation. The young person must receive grace and entrust themselves to Christ. As a youth worker, whether paid or volunteer, we can be a bridge that connects our youth to Christ. Creating an environment in which conversion is the aim is one of our most important and rewarding tasks. ♦

Mark Berchem is Executive Director of NET Ministries, Inc. He and his staff have successfully trained and sent out over 1500 young adults to share the Gospel with over a million youth.





Please pray for the following initiatives, activities and concerns of the National Service Committee:

- ✦ For the National Leaders' Conference to be held in Nashville, November 14-16
- ✦ That we will allow the gifts that serve the Renewal to be stirred up among us
- ✦ That the gift of giving may bring an abundance, allowing the NSC to continue in its mission
- ✦ That in this New Year prayer groups will strengthen and grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- ✦ For wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be ever present in the lives of the NSC.

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.

You may use this or a similar statement: "I/we bequeath \$ _____ (or % of my residual estate) to the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc. P.O. Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628."

Please let us know if you have included us in your will so that we can properly thank you.

What is an *evangelistic* prayer meeting?

by Gerry Mader

Talking to many people about how the Catholic charismatic renewal has changed I often heard people lament, "It's not like it use to be in the early days." I agree it often is not the same. Yet one thing even today can be similar. Prayer meetings were evangelistic—a place where people would come and meet Jesus, desire more, and want to invite others. Surely this can take place today bringing new life and purpose to the meetings.

What does an evangelistic prayer meeting look like? I believe it should be welcoming, winsome and proclaim the good news that Jesus is alive and that his Holy Spirit wants to reveal the Father's love for us.

Let's look at those three aspects.

Welcoming: Are we enthusiastically inviting new people to the prayer meeting? Do we offer to pray for needs when we are told there are needs? Do we invite them to come and pray for those needs? For the prayer group to be evangelistic we must be inviting people in a friendly and welcoming way. We must trust that an encounter with the Lord and with those attending the prayer meeting will allow them to be at peace and enjoy the fellowship and love which we are exhorted to have, "...let everything be done in love" (1Cor. 16:14).

I felt that I was being welcomed "home."

When visitors come into the meeting for the first time, the group's hospitality should be evident. Someone will make it a point to welcome them and get their name, introduce them to others and explain briefly what to expect at the prayer meeting. In some large groups this is an assigned ministry hopefully based on a recognized gift of hospitality. I know for me that when I traveled for work and visited prayer groups like this, I felt that I was being welcomed "home."

Winsome: I heard this word many years ago when someone was defining what a prayer group and meeting should be like and it has stuck with me ever since. It means pleasant, appealing, endearing and engaging. An evangelistic prayer meeting should be alive in the Holy Spirit in praise and worship, both in music and voice. It should be uplifting to our spirits as we welcome the Holy Spirit in songs of praise to Jesus (See Psalm 150: 5-6). The praise and worship should take our minds off of ourselves and unto the Lord. The praise should help us to know that we are praying to a living, resurrected God, who is with us and in each of us. "Do you not know you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16)?

The leader or praise leader should be a sign of the joy and love that we have experienced today and all the past week. He/she should be pre-prayed (pre-prepared) and enthusiastically call the community to praise. We, the participants, who have been coming for a time, should also give witness by the praise in our