

PENTECOST *Today*

January/February/March/April 2004

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Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Building a foundation for the culture of Pentecost

Find hope in the phrase “building a culture of Pentecost.” The idea of working toward the fulfillment of this goal gives me hope. What a glorious day that will be!

However, I do believe that in order for that to happen there needs to be an environment of Pentecost on which to build. Who will provide this environment? Who will lay the foundation on which the culture of Pentecost will emerge and flourish? It is you and I. It is the people who have experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit and are walking the walk, as well as talking the talk.

“Nothing is more apt to confirm our faith and hope than holding it fixed in our minds that nothing is impossible with God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 274). Our faith can and will take a giant leap when we believe that what the Pope has asked is not an impossible task. St. Augustine said, “God would not urge us to ask unless he were willing to give.”

How do we go about providing the environment necessary for this to happen? We begin to live and to speak about what we believe. We pray, pray and pray some more. Then the environment takes on this atmosphere of vibrant faith where people, businesses, governments and nations are transformed and we are surrounded with an all-encompassing presence of the living God and everything is made new.

Does this sound like pious platitudes? Well, it isn't! It is a dream inspired by the Holy Spirit. It came first into the heart and mind of John Paul II. It comes to us as we allow the Holy Spirit to awaken in us the reality that the culture we find ourselves in is not God's plan for the world. The kingdom of

God isn't just a lot of words. It is to be lived. It is power! (See 1 Cor. 4:20). This experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is not an event that is for a season; it is an experience that is life-changing. It causes us to see the plan of God as it applies to our individual and collective lives.

The various leadership groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have set aside the Friday before Ash Wednesday as an annual day of prayer and fasting. Prayer groups everywhere are invited and encouraged to join in this united intercession for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church and the face of the earth. The date is Friday, February 20. This type of united prayer is one way to bring about the transformation of the culture.

As we build this environment for the culture of Pentecost here are some suggestions:

1. Proclaim the Gospel in power and truth.
2. Bring down strongholds and destroy them by the power that comes to us through the Lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit within us.
3. Believe in the miraculous. Our faith should bear fruit.
4. Give comfort and consolation to those in pain and sorrow. We must not hesitate to be compassionate.
5. Be joyful people. We must rejoice with those who rejoice and spread joy wherever we are.
6. Fear must be replaced with trust in God.
7. We must bring the rule of God to our cities, states and nation. We should not let the rulers of the world take away our God-given order.

“There is a need for witnesses to ‘the things of above’ contemplated and lived out in everyday existence” (John Paul II). The Catholic Charismatic Renewal strives to be those witnesses. “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).

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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For Your Information

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Son first, sinner second

by Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

It was in this time, when the Lord had emptied me, that he chose to fill me again.

For the past thirty-one years, my life has been built on a “culture of Pentecost.” I experienced this in 1968 when, for the first time, I failed a university examination. I had joined the Society of Jesus in 1963, after graduating in chemistry. My superior sent me back to the university to specialize so that I could become a professor of chemistry in our Jesuit university in Bombay. I was very happy. I said to myself, “I’m going to be a famous professor of chemistry.” In my daydreams I even dreamt that one day I would get the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

So you can imagine my consternation, shock, confusion, and humiliation when I failed the exam. This was something quite extraordinary because I knew everything and I had gotten the gold medal at the university the previous year. Everybody was expecting me to top the class. But as I walked into the examination hall, my mind went blank. I couldn’t remember anything.

I appeared for the exam a second time some months later, again preparing myself very well. But again, as I walked into the examination hall, my mind went blank. And I failed the second time. Now, as you can imagine, it became a crisis of faith for me.

I appeared for that examination a third time. This time, as I walked into the hall, I whispered this prayer; “I know, Lord, that you don’t love me. So I’m not going to ask you anything for myself. But I hope you still love my poor mother.” Mummy had been making novena after novena and offering Masses that her poor Fio would pass the exam. But my mind went blank there in the hall. And I failed the third time.

This was a real crisis of faith from then on. I stopped praying to God. I could not believe that God loved me. When people said, “Pray more,” I said, “That’s all rubbish.” And slowly I began to rebel within myself. I became bitter, turned in upon myself. I was a wreck spiritually, emotionally and physically. Spiritually, I could not believe in God and I was rebellious. Emotionally, I could not face people any more because I thought they would be laughing at me because of my three failures. And physically, I had suffered from asthma all my life, and in these days I was hospitalized many times. I could not walk much. I could not play games. I was gasping for breath most of the time. I had all kinds of dietary restrictions.

It was in this time, when the Lord had emptied me, that he chose to fill me again.

One day I was moved to kneel before my crucifix. As I knelt before that crucifix I could sense a prayer coming from deep within. This is what Romans tells us, when we do not know how to pray, the Spirit comes to our aid. I felt myself saying, “Lord, I am useless. I have no future. But if you have a plan for my life, here I am.”

This was my real surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. All along before that, I was telling the Lord what he had to do for me. Now I was saying, “Lord, if you have a plan for me, here I am.” And that completely transformed my life.

Immediately, even as I was kneeling there, the response of God became so clear to me. It was a voice that spoke to me interiorly, “Fio, you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” At once, my mind started working. “Well pleased? How can

And yet,
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into my life.

he be well pleased with me?” And yet, though I could not understand it intellectually, from deep within my heart a joy began to bubble up. I leapt to my feet, threw my hands up in the air and shouted, “Jesus, you’re alive!”

That was my baptism in the Holy Spirit. I was completely healed in all three ways. Since then I’ve never had a problem with asthma. It was completely healed and I’m able to be vigorous for the Lord. I told you I had dietary problems. Until then, I couldn’t eat ice cream. Now I can! A whole bucket if you give it to me!

Emotionally I was healed. I told you I could not face people. But once God said to me, “Fio, you are my beloved son,” that gave me a new sense of my own self worth, not based on human achievement, not based on human reasons, but on the realization that God loves me; I am his son.

Spiritually, I was healed. I now have an invincible, intuitive, spontaneous conviction that God loves me. That brings up within me a deep sense of humility, that it is not my own merits, and a sense of tremendous gratitude to God.

So what happened to my chemistry? I appeared for that examination a fourth time—soon after this experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit—and everything went well. I passed with a first class. As a result, I’m qualified to teach chemistry at any university in the world. But do you know, I never taught chemistry again!

When I was ordained in 1975, three years after my baptism in the Spirit, my Jesuit Provincial said: “Fio, you are qualified for two apostolates. Which do you want to choose?” I said, “What are they?” He said, “Well of course, there’s chemistry. But, you had an experience of God and you are able to communicate it to others. Why don’t you get into the Charismatic Renewal and be full time for it?”

Over the years I have had the opportunity to go to over eighty countries to speak at conferences. Wherever I went, I would ask people, “If I was a chemistry professor, would you have invited me here?” From this I realized that God did the best thing he could do for me by bringing me through that period of suffering. Otherwise I probably would have been too proud and too much a “head” person to

get involved in the Renewal. He had to do something to bring me to the source of life, to the Lord and giver of life.

To God, each one of us is a son or a daughter first—a sinner second. That was my experience. I was a sinner. I rebelled against God. I had given up prayer. I did not believe in him any more. And yet, he loved me first. It is not because I deserved it, but because he knew that I was misguided, lost in the desert. His amazing grace came to bring sight to my eyes and to bring hope into my life.

This is true not only of me, it is true of you. When God looks at each one of us, he does not see us first as a sinner. That is what the accuser of the brethren would like us to think, that first of all we are sinners. No! First of all is not what we are of ourselves but what God has made of us. His Son had to die on the cross to make of us a new creation. And so when God sees each one of us, he says: “That is my son. That is my daughter.” Only afterwards is the realization that we are also sinners.

Look at the parable of the prodigal son. Here was a boy who had rebelled—who in every way was a sinner. As he came back to his father he recognized, “I can never be a son again. I will always be a sinner.” And what did he do? He came to his father thinking he would say: “I am no longer worthy to be your son. Treat me as a servant.” But the father would have nothing to do with that attitude. He ran and he embraced his boy and said: “You are my son first and always. Nothing can change this, not even your sins.” In grace and in disgrace, we remain sons and daughters.

So say that out loud: “For God, I am a son/daughter first. A sinner second.”

When Jesus taught us to pray, he said, “First remember that you are a child, and cry out as a child, ‘Abba, dear Daddy.’”

The first three phrases of the Our Father are three kisses that we as children implant on our Father’s cheeks. “Abba, Daddy, holy be your name”—the first kiss.

“Your kingdom come”—the second kiss.

“Your will be done”—the third kiss.

See **Son**, page 13

The test of maturity:

Charismatic Renewal and evangelization in the third millennium

by Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko

One of the greatest challenges the church is called to face at this beginning of the millennium is the never-ending task: evangelization. As always, the church listens attentively to the words of Christ: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). The church founded by Jesus Christ has been sent to evangelize the world and lives in a permanent state of mission. Mission is the reason for her existence!

The pope invites us today to a “new evangelization.” What is the element of novelty that should characterize the evangelizing action of the church in our times? The novelty is determined by the unprecedented character of the actual world situation. The widespread process of secularization, religious indifference, moral and religious relativism (even in the countries with a long Christian tradition), terrorism and war, scientific progress more and more dissociated from ethical values—all these require a new attitude in the way we evangelize. The present situation calls for an intensification of efforts on the part of all evangelizers so as to find new ways of proclaiming the gospel, more respondent to the spiritual demands of contemporary man.

Evangelization is a very complex concept and it entails several strictly connected processes, among which stand formation and proclamation. In today’s world, both processes face great difficulties and obstacles. The actual culture generates fragmented and debilitated personalities



The parish needs to have within itself a micro-structure of smaller communities.

which are therefore unstable and incoherent. This kind of culture influences even Christians. Consequently the Christian identity becomes weak and confused, faith is divided between routine and tradition, superstition, magic and new age; religious belonging is superficial and distracted; unable to have a significant impact on people’s lives and behavior.

Today, there is a lack of places where people can be formed in depth. Christian families are often in crisis and fail in giving a solid basic foundation to their children’s faith. Parish life, still an indispensable support structure to the life of the church, is not self-sufficient any longer. Often our parishes are too big and anonymous. They are not successful in creating in the faithful a sense of communion and closeness. So the formation and proclama-

tion offered in our parishes have a generic character because of the diverse people to be addressed. It is difficult for them to be centers of authentic Christian formation.

What should be done? In order to be a place of formation—to offer the faithful a truly effective and missionary formation in a ‘personalized way’—the parish needs to have within itself a micro-structure of smaller communities. In other words, the parish needs the ecclesial movements. Only in this way can the process of formation and of Christian initiation truly reach the personality of each person in depth.

The task of evangelizing within ecclesial movements is directed primarily to Christian formation of mature personalities. It

See **Test** page 13

Summer Conferences 2003: Just live it!



What started off as a simple conference for a couple hundred youth has turned into one of the largest ministries to Catholic youth in the United States.

by Fr. Dave Pivonka

God is alive and his presence may be most clearly seen in teenagers. Yes, you read correctly. Those kids with strange hair and odd speech, with parts of their bodies pierced that never should have been pierced. Yes, those people. God's Holy Spirit is alive and well in the younger generation and he is moving in power. One of the places this can be seen best is at youth conferences sponsored by Franciscan University of Steubenville. One need only spend thirty-six hours at one of these conferences in order to see God's anointing. Many people ask what makes the youth conferences so powerful. In order to answer we should look to their beginnings.

In 1975 Fr. Michael Scanlan, then President of Franciscan University, thought it would be a good idea to offer conferences for high school students. As the years passed more and more teens visited the campus of Franciscan University in order to experience God's anointing. Soon the conference grew so large that the Univer-

sity had to sponsor two conferences during the summer. And the youth kept coming...and coming. Soon Franciscan University could not handle the numbers of teens who wanted to be a part of what God was doing. In 1994 Bishop Sam Jacobs, then of Alexandria, Louisiana, offered to host a Franciscan University youth conference. It would be called Steubenville South. The first conference gathered a few hundred teens and then it grew...and grew...and grew. God was doing something very special. Franciscan University simply couldn't handle the number of teens who wanted to experience God's grace, love and mercy. So Steubenville East at the Shrine of Our Lady of LaSalette in Attleboro, Massachusetts, was born. And the young people kept coming...and coming.

Next came Steubenville West in Arizona, Steubenville St. Louis, Steubenville of the Rockies in Denver, Steubenville Atlanta, Steubenville North in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Steubenville Charleston, South Caro-

lina and Steubenville San Diego. What started off as a simple conference for a couple hundred youth has turned into one of the largest ministries to Catholic youth in the United States with thirty thousand high school teens participating in Steubenville Youth Conferences during the summer of 2003.

So, why did thirty thousand teens attend Franciscan University Youth Conferences last summer? What makes the conferences so powerful? The answer is quite simple: God. The conferences are not complicated. An environment is created where God is able to work. Each year a theme is developed which will provide direction to the conferences. Last summer's theme was "Just Live It." The scripture which gave further direction was John 15:16: "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain." (Knowing that you can't wait to know the theme for 2004 here is your sneak preview: "Rise Up: A Catholic Revolution." Things are shaping up for an

amazing summer!) In the summer of 2003 the youth were challenged to really live their faith. On the one hand it is easy to say we love God but it is much more difficult to really *live* our love for God.

One of the greatest difficulties our young people (and a few *older* people) have is a tendency to compartmentalize their lives. They go to Mass and youth group but also go to parties and get drunk or get involved in harmful relationships. Due to many influences of our culture, many youth have lost a real sense of right and wrong. They may do the “church thing” but also be in-

Through dynamic preaching, anointed worship and the celebration of Eucharist, teens are experiencing a God who is able to fill the emptiness in their lives.

involved in behavior that will lead them away from God. Many of them feel this struggle, this battle raging inside them. Something planted deep inside them (grace) hints and sometime screams to them that there is more, that there is freedom from the world in which they are trapped.

Young people have a longing for the spiritual; every human person has a longing for the spiritual. Deep in our hearts we know that there must be something more. Unfortunately many teens look to other places to fill this emptiness. When these same teens come to the Youth Conference they encounter a God who is alive and active. Through dynamic preaching, anointed worship and the celebration of Eucharist, teens are experiencing a God who is able to fill the emptiness in their lives. They experience a God who helps them come out of the shadows, a God who allows them to see things more clearly. One teen stated: “I realize that I had been lied to. All the time. The world had been lying to me and didn’t really care about me. I found in God truth that helped me realize who I am and who God is.”

It is by the power of God’s Holy Spirit that these teens are experiencing Jesus. These teens are truly experiencing a new Pentecost. Lives are being changed. Hearts are being renewed. Minds are being healed.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are being poured out on these young people. They are experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit. They may not know the traditional language; the word “charismatic” may not mean anything to them. In fact, they would probably deny being part of a “charismatic movement” because the language is foreign to them; but they are being filled

with the Holy Spirit. That cannot be denied. They are experiencing a call to go out with others and to share what they have experienced. The Holy Spirit is becoming more evident in their lives. The fruit can be seen in more and more teens desiring to attend the Youth Conferences. Teens come each summer and say, “I want what John or Debbie got last year.”

God continues to raise up a generation of young people. History shows that God often chooses the young to teach the old, and we pray that the Holy Spirit continues to shower grace on a generation of young people. May they continue to experience God’s love and power so that they may be a light in a world that so desperately longs to see. ♦



Fr. Dave Pivonka is Vice President for Mission Effectiveness at Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Festivals of Praise

Recognizing the powerful encounter with Christ that occurs at a Steubenville Youth Conference, the National Service Committee and the Association of Diocesan Liaisons at their January 2003 meeting in Augusta, Georgia, discerned a need for participant follow-up. The two groups formed a committee that also includes staff from the Steubenville Conference Office and youth ministers from various parts of the country. Gatherings called Festivals of Praise are being tested in off-campus settings with youth leaders, liaisons, and leaders in the Renewal helping to organize these events. These gatherings will be held several times a year and include music, praise, worship, a short teaching and end with a Eucharistic procession. The goal is to offer numerous opportunities to have a vibrant experience of the Holy Spirit that will bear fruit into adulthood, opening them to the power of prayer and giftedness in the Holy Spirit. The first Festival of Praise is scheduled to be held in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, in January. ♦



Day of Prayer and Fasting

Friday, February 20, 2004

The various national leadership groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have designated the Friday preceding Ash Wednesday as a Day of Prayer and Fasting. The date this year is Friday, February 20th.

Participants are encouraged to pray for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States and that the church in our country might be renewed in the grace of Pentecost.

This is the third year the national leadership groups have designated such a day. In doing so, the leaders hope to strengthen the unity of the Renewal and communion in the church.



**Fr. Tom Forest
awarded
*Pro Ecclesia et
Pontifice***

Pope John Paul II has awarded the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* to Fr. Tom Forrest, CSsR, who served on the National Service Committee from 1975-1978. Fr. Forrest also served as Director of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office and as chair of ICCRS in the 1980s, and as Director of Evangelization 2000.

The papal award, given on the occasion of Fr. Tom Forrest's 50th anniversary of priestly ministry, "is designated primarily for those distinguished by their activities and excellent works," and was sent with "warmest felicitations from the Holy Father."

The National Service Committee rejoices with Fr. Tom Forrest and prays that God may continue to bless him throughout this 50th anniversary year. ♦



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Exploring the call to build the culture of Pentecost

by David Thorp

Pope John Paul II often uses phrases that capture the imagination. They are the words of a prophet who sees and understands more clearly than most the action of God. Pope John Paul II has used such prophetic phrases as: “New Advent” to describe the years before the Great Jubilee; “New Evangelization” to call us to action; “New Springtime” to announce what God is doing now; “building the civilization of love” as a task before us; and the “docile school of Mary” as a place to learn the disciple’s life.

The meanings of these phrases are not evident on first reading. We can easily give a pious nod to them—as sometimes happens when prophetic words are spoken at prayer meetings or conferences. We say, “Amen,” or applaud immediately after they are spoken. And then we move on without really understanding the words or without allowing them to propel us deeper into life with God and explode us further into apostolic action. In a sense, we dismiss the words and dismiss ourselves from their instruction to us.

Leaders in prayer groups, in particular, have a responsibility to meditate on such prophetic words from the Holy Father and on other words that come in prophecy. As they do so, leaders will begin to see some implications of these words. Leaders will begin to be changed by them. Through teachings they can help prayer group members hear and respond.

Speaking to *Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo* (Renewal in the Holy Spirit), the most representative charismatic body in Italy, the Holy Father used one of his evocative phrases. As he concluded his address Pope John Paul II said: “In our

time that is so hungry for hope, make the Holy Spirit known and loved. Help bring to life that *culture of Pentecost* that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly coexistence among peoples” [emphasis added].

As leaders in Charismatic Renewal, we should not be content with merely quoting this phrase at conferences and prayer meetings. It is too important to be dismissed like that. We should seek to understand it and call people to respond.

I would like to share the beginning of one understanding of the “culture of Pentecost”—a fairly broad one that needs to be adapted to specific groups and circumstances.

1. *Wait for God’s empowerment. Then—once empowered—don’t keep waiting, but act.* In the first chapter of Acts of the Apostles the disciples are told to wait for the “promise of the Father” and are assured that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit and “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.” Waiting and receiving were necessary before they went charging out; they had to go out once they were baptized and had received. This is to be our pattern. Don’t go before being empowered; don’t sit around once you are empowered. Do we decide to move and then invite God to come along and empower our plans? Or, do we keep waiting for another word or for more “anointing” and all we are doing is making God wait?

2. *Be constantly willing to be surprised and stretched by God.* Pentecost was already a Jewish Feast; that is why so many people from so many places were outside the Upper Room in Jerusalem. It was cel-

Intercessory Prayer

For the renewal of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church we pray:

Father of light,
from whom every good
gift comes,
send your Spirit into our lives
with the power of a mighty wind,
and by the flame of your wisdom
open the horizons of our minds.

Loosen our tongues to sing your
praise in words beyond
the power of speech,
for without your Spirit
man could never raise his voice
in words of peace
or announce the truth that
Jesus is Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

*Opening prayer from the liturgy for
the Feast of Pentecost*

ebrated in certain ways. But what a different Pentecost it turned out to be! Pentecost in Acts 2 was something quite new. Is it always “Pentecost as usual” for us? Are we ready for surprises of the Holy Spirit? Are we getting stuck in a rut? Am I, our prayer group, our leadership team willing to have a strong wind drive through us?

3. *Speak so as to be heard in many “languages.”* Parthians, Medes, Cretans and Arabs were among those who heard the disciples speaking to them in their own languages. How willing are we to adapt our message to the audience (yes, without compromising it) so they can hear us? Can we speak in their “language” or do we con-

[See exploring page 10](#)



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

- ◆ For the Gathering of National Leadership Groups in Miami in January.
- ◆ For the elections of members to the NSC in January.
- ◆ That every meeting of the NSC will be anointed with the wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Lord's purposes for this ministry, and that every decision will reflect God's inspiration and faithful stewardship by the NSC members.
- ◆ For planning and preparations for upcoming events sponsored by the National Service Committee:
 - ✓ Festivals of Praise for Youth in Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, in January;
 - ✓ Regional Leaders' Gatherings in Denver, February 6-8;
 - ✓ 2004 National Conference in Lowell, Massachusetts, June 25-27.
- ◆ That the "culture of Pentecost" will take root in our world.

Exploring from p. 9

tinue to insist that we speak only in our "language"—that is, in the jargon that we are comfortable with in Charismatic Renewal, in parishes, in our ethnic group or culture?

4. *Give away whatever you have.* In Acts 3, a beggar cries out to Peter for alms. Having no money to give, Peter gives what he has: his confidence and trust in Jesus' power to heal. I know the lesson is to give Jesus away, to act with faith. But the lesson is also to give whatever you have (if Peter had money, I'm convinced he would have given that, too). Do not hold on to anything as exclusively your own. Be willing to put it at the disposal of those in need. It is the "culture of Pentecost" that we see being built in Acts of the Apostles (2:44-45; 4:32-37).

5. *Be bold; don't shrink back.* In Acts 4 we read three times of the boldness of this early community. It does not say they were obnoxious, but they pressed forward with conviction. We need to have a similar, unbending conviction about the kingdom of God, about the civilization of love. Why do we allow ourselves to be intimidated? Why do we allow ourselves to be stopped

from speaking or advocating for this kingdom, from building this new civilization?

6. *Stretch and build unity.* The church faced the possibility of breakups early on. Recall the Hellenists' complaint that their widows were being neglected and the great consternation when Gentiles starting accepting Christ and being joined to the community. But the church stretched to preserve and build unity. How are we to build unity? What kind of stretching do we have to do—in the Catholic Church, in the body of Christ, across religious, racial, ethnic, economic, age lines?

I am sure that there are other aspects of the "culture of Pentecost" that we need to learn and bring to life. I am sure there are other prophetic words that we are called to hear and live.

How does the "culture of Pentecost" challenge you and your group? How are you helping others to hear and live it? ◆

David Thorp is Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Boston and Director of Evangelization at the Spiritual Life Center of the Marian Community in Medway, Massachusetts.

NEWSBRIEFS

National Leaders' Conference

The 2003 National Leaders' Conference was held November 14-16 at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. About seven hundred leaders from across the country, and as far away as Alaska, participated in the conference which was convened by the National Service Committee in collaboration with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons.

The theme was "Charismatic Leadership for the New Millennium: Led by the Holy Spirit." The Friday evening keynote address was given by Fr. Tom Forrest. Saturday featured a selection of thirty workshops presented by twenty speakers. John Michael Talbot was present and gave a wonderful concert on Saturday evening.

More will be available about the Conference in the next issue.

The NSC highly recommends that prayer groups purchase a set of audiotapes/CDs of the talks (see ordering information on this page). ◆

National Leaders' Conference Audio/Videotapes/Cds

Most of the thirty workshops at the 2003 National Leaders' Conference are available on audiotape or CD. In addition, Fr. Tom Forrest's Friday evening keynote talk, the Sunday morning session and four workshops are available on videotape.

For more information and for a complete list of available tapes/CDS, contact:

Resurrection Tapes
2719 E. 42ND
Minneapolis, MN 55406
612-721-7933
resurrection@usfamily.net

NEWSBRIEFS

Twelve Days of Blessings

Over twelve hundred leaders from throughout the world, including a contingent from the United States of over a hundred strong, participated in the Twelve Days of Blessings International Leaders Gathering organized by the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS).

The first two days were a leaders' consultation involving seven hundred leaders. This was followed by a four-day retreat led by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM cap., Preacher to the Papal Household. About eleven hundred leaders participated. Some six hundred leaders ended the Twelve Days with a pilgrimage to holy sites in Italy.

The event was held at the Mariopolis Centre in Castel Gandolfo near the Holy Father's summer residence. The Mariopolis is the International Headquarters for the Focolare movement. The collaboration between the Charismatic Renewal and the Focolare on the international level has increased since Pope John Paul II convened the movements on the eve of Pentecost 1998. Chaira Lubich, foundress of the Focolare, gave a talk during the retreat on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Focolare movement.

The keynote address for the consultation was given by Charles Whitehead, Chairman of the National Service Committee of England and former President of ICCRS. The talk set the tone not only for the Consultation, but for the retreat and pilgrimage as well.

Allan Panozza of Australia, the current Chairman of ICCRS, wrote in the program booklet about ICCRS' hope for the gathering:

"You have responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit by coming here to be a living witness to the diversity of the worldwide Renewal, and I have no doubt that Jesus has something special for you to receive and to which you might give testimony in your own time. When you return to your homes may you be refreshed and inspired in the same way as the Apostles were after they had spent time alone with Jesus. I pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit will be upon each of you during these days '...until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God' (Eph. 3:19)."

All the talks and homilies were audiotaped and are available. We highly recommend the talk by Charles Whitehead, all the talks by Fr. Cantalamessa, the powerful witness of a couple from Spain on tape P1686 #6, Bishop Joseph Grech's and Bishop (now Archbishop) Stanislaw Rylko's on P1686 #5 (see box for information on ordering audiotapes). ♦

Twelve Days of Blessings audiotapes available

To order audiotapes, contact Vocepiù, Corso Italia 46, 20122 Milan, Italy; phone 0258301229; fax 02 5830149; e-mail: info@vocepiu.it.

Series P1685 includes five tapes from the leaders consultation. Series P1686 includes seven tapes from the retreat.

The two series may be ordered together or separately, or individual tapes may be purchased.

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Fr. John Gordon, Associate Director of Pre-Theologate, Franciscan University of Steubenville



Host: Mark H. Nehrbas, National Service Committee Member



Reflections on Charismatic Leadership in the New Millennium: Led by the Holy Spirit

**National Leaders' Conference
November 14-16, 2003,
Nashville, Tennessee**

Tammie Stevens

Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Seattle

The National Leaders' Conference opening session was an amazing time of drawing close to God's heart and answering the call to repentance. Through praise and worship led by the music ministry from the Alleluia Community and Fr. Tom Forrest's keynote address, we were called to lay down our burdens and allow God to refill and refresh us.

Saturday was a day to sharpen our skills and gain new tools, with thirty workshops offered. One workshop I attended was on praise and worship in which Josephine Cachia and Fr. Richard Loch did a wonderful job encouraging and challenging us to look at our life as prayer and to step out of our prayer to work. Saturday ended with a concert by John Michael Talbot. He called it a musical retreat and that's truly what it was—an encounter with God through the songs that we shared.

Sunday morning Aggie Neck gave an amazing talk on "God's Wildest Dreams for Us" and Fr. Tom Forrest spoke to us about fidelity, the forgotten fruit of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Edward Kmiec of Nashville joined us for the closing Mass.

One of the most important things I learned this weekend is that docility to the Holy Spirit means saying to God, "I'm teachable." We need to remember that no matter how much we have learned, how long we have been involved in the Renewal, or how long we have had a relationship with God, there is always more!

Roy Handy

Director, Ministry to Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Toledo

Excitement, expectancy, jubilation and hope were in the air in Nashville. I walked away from Friday evening's session feeling elated, marveling at Fr. Tom Forrest's apparent love of the Lord and his excitement in sharing the word of God. On Saturday I attended Jim Murphy's, Dr. Michele Greischar's and Renee Marazon's workshops. I believe that every leader attending the sessions got more than they expected. At the Sunday Mass, Bishop Kmiec was open and frank about situations that confront all of us in the Renewal every day of our lives. I look forward to the future with great expectations. Eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God, the Holy Spirit, has in store for us. Let us keep preparing for that time.

Jim and Darlene Shorn

River of Life Prayer Group, North Mankato, Minnesota

What stood out most for me (Darlene) was Linda Schubert's workshop on knowledge and prophecy. Linda presented this workshop in such a way that the participants could actually practice. Many stated that the word shared with them was just what they needed to hear. I had sometimes thought that I might have these gifts but didn't know what to do with it. It was encouraging to know that I could have a word for someone and could express it.

My (Jim) overall impression comes from the message of Fr. Tom Forrest. In the keynote address he said that he sees the Holy Spirit moving through all the gifts and fruits of the Spirit today. The whole weekend led me to conclude that the Charismatic Renewal, as a pouring out of grace, is broader than what people might usually highlight. I not only received much good information but was also blessed in a powerful way during the sprinkling rite at the beginning of the Sunday liturgy. I am still experiencing that blessing.

Jolene Carpenter

Administrator, Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office, Minneapolis

The strength and scope of the Renewal is evident when meeting people from so many distant places. It helps us remember that we are a vital part of something much larger than just our local prayer groups. Although I came late to Arlene Apone's workshop on "Discernment and Use of Charisms in Healing Prayer" I soon found out why this one was crowded to overflowing. She did a wonderful job teaching and explaining the basics of discernment in praying for healing for others. The grace and power of the Holy Spirit is being used by God through the Renewal all over the world, especially in Africa and the Asian countries. As Fr. Forrest exclaimed, "Thirty-seven years! We are just starting!"

Jean Pensis

Green Bay, Wisconsin

I really didn't know what to expect coming into the conference. I thought that I might find a whole lot of tired, burnt out leaders at the conference. I was wrong. The Renewal is alive! There was a fresh wind of the Spirit moving through everybody. This gave me expectant faith for what is about to happen. I cannot help but sense there is a major move of God that is going to be happening in the Charismatic Renewal! Lord give us holy boldness! Move freely through us to bring Jesus to all those we meet! Come Holy Spirit blow where you will! ♦

It is very important that we don't forget to bring more and more people to this fountain of grace.

Then, Jesus said, "OK, now you have truly relished this relationship of child to father, now look at yourself in the second half of the prayer." That is when we remember that we are sinners. "Forgive us our sins." Jesus never wants us to start our prayer, even when we are sinners, with that recognition. Though it is important, something else is more important. What comes first is our recognition: "Daddy, your Son has made me your son/daughter. Abba, I kiss you." And then we ask for whatever else we need.

This is part of the culture of Pentecost that I believe each one of us needs to promote. That is what we are doing in our prayer groups—relishing our sonship/daughterhood in God; praising him, remembering his great deeds, and offering ourselves to him; and leading others, sharing with them this faith, this hope, this love. It is very important that we do not give up on our Life in the Spirit seminars, that we don't forget to bring more and more people to this fountain of grace. That is the culture of Pentecost. ♦

This article was adapted from a talk given at the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in San Antonio.



A former Director of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services in Rome, Fr. Fio Mascarenhas now serves as Chairman of the National Service Committee of India.

is a formation that has the starting point in a deep conversion of the heart. At the beginning there is always a personal encounter with the person of Christ, who enters one's life and changes it radically. In the field of Christian formation the great originality of pedagogical methods of the movements emerges. We are dealing with a Christocentric formation stressing what is essential in the baptismal vocation of every Christian. It is a radical pedagogy that is not afraid of high ideals of Christian holiness. It is a formation conducted in small communities as irreplaceable points of formation and of support—especially in our society characterized by solitude and anonymous relationships. It is an integral formation involving all the dimensions of life. Finally, there is the deep sense of belonging to the church and a great love for the church. Ecclesial movements present themselves as live laboratories of faith in which Christians are born and grow in maturity, living their vocation and mission in depth.

Christian formation must always have a strong missionary dimension because Christian vocation is in itself vocation to the apostolate. Therefore ecclesial maturity in the movements can be verified by their commitment to evangelization. Mission makes us rediscover fully our vocation in the church. It defends us from the temptation of a selfish withdrawal into oneself, and from the danger of seeing the community as a comfortable refuge in which to hide from the actual problems of the world.

In order to accomplish fully what has been explained already, there are some important conditions. It is essential for the movements to insert themselves "humbly" in the life of the parish, avoiding any attitude of superiority or pride, like those who know more or better. It is a strong warning for all lay leaders of any community.

At the same time, the responsibility of bishops and priests in this field is great and fundamental: they should be able to accept and welcome the ecclesial movements in their dioceses and parishes in a fatherly way, recognizing them and respecting their specific characteristics.

John Paul II is a great master of the new evangelization for all of us today, a tireless pilgrim of the gospel, notwithstanding his eighty-three years. At the very beginning of his pontificate he launched a heartfelt appeal that still touches the deepest chords of our soul: "Be not afraid! Open wide your door to Christ!" These are prophetic words, a synthesis of his pastoral program of new evangelization for the world today.

Now, after twenty-five years, the elderly pope does not cease to exhort us: "Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today. We need discerning eyes to see this, and, above all, a generous heart to become instruments of his work" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 58).

Following the thought of the Holy Father, my wish for you is that you acquire a "generous heart" and "discerning eyes" to discover in the Charismatic Renewal and in the other ecclesial movements precious gifts of the Spirit: hope for humanity. May you become ever more authentic apostles of the new evangelization! ♦

This article was adapted from a talk given at Franciscan University of Steubenville in June 2003.

Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko serves as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.



From the Director

by Walter Matthews

Strengthening leaders, strengthening renewal

If we are to respond to the call of our Lord, spoken by Pope John Paul II, to “make the Holy Spirit known and loved [and] help bring to life the culture of Pentecost that alone can make fruitful the celebration of love and friendly coexistence among peoples,” then the role of leaders is crucial. And the role of forming and strengthening leaders is even more crucial. As Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko observed at the 2002 National Conference, “There is also an urgent need to form leaders so they are adequately prepared to avoid the danger of the ‘blind leading the blind.’”

So it was that the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) convened the Twelve Days of Blessings just outside of Rome in mid-September (see Newsbriefs, p. 11). Several members of the National Service Committee and I were privileged to attend all or part of the Twelve Days along with over one hundred other leaders from the US.

The essence of the first two days could perhaps be summarized in a quote and an image.

The quote comes from Charles Whitehead’s keynote in which he sought to respond to the question, “What is the nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?” Toward the end he addressed the participants directly with the question, “Is my leadership in the Charismatic Renewal something I can lay down when I feel I’ve had enough?” He answered:

I do not believe that the call of God is something we can take up or lay down as we choose. It is not for us to try to give back to God his anointing. There’s no such thing as “retirement” for a

Christian... One day God may ask us to withdraw from leadership—but that’s for him to decide, not us. But it is our task to train up new leaders, and to give them positions of responsibility so that the work will go on. We have been entrusted with something truly remarkable. It’s God’s gift to us—it’s not ours to control or do with as we choose, or give back to him... Our responsibility is to live this grace of the Charismatic Renewal as fully as we can, trusting in the Lord, and sharing it with everyone we meet.

I encourage you to get the audiotape (see information on p.11).

The second phase of the Twelve Days was a retreat on holiness given by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa. Among the many powerful words Fr. Cantalamessa offered was the image Michelangelo gave to one who asked how he could sculpt such beautiful art from stone. Michelangelo responded by saying, “The art exists; I just chip away that which should not be there.” So too, Fr. Cantalamessa offered, is our holiness. Given to us through Christian initiation and our ongoing participation in the Eucharist, our holiness emerges more and more as that which should not be there is chipped away. (Ouch!)

It was with the same vision of forming and strengthening leaders that the NSC, in collaboration with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, convened the 2003 National Leaders’ Conference in Nashville in mid-November (see Newsbriefs, p. 10).

In his keynote talk, Fr. Tom Forrest challenged us to “use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to spread the fruits of the Holy Spirit.” He also exhorted: “The Charismatic Renewal is just beginning! We have great things to do!”

The seven hundred leaders present were offered a rich banquet of workshops. The conference was both a summing up of thirty-five plus years of wisdom and a new beginning.

Adapting the words of Pope John Paul II about the graces from the Jubilee, it could be expressed another way:

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a “new program.” The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 15).

By God’s grace the NSC will continue to work to strengthen leaders so as to strengthen this Renewal, so that together we will be able to bear the mature fruit of a grace given for the whole church.

Finally, on behalf of the National Service Committee present and past, I want to thank Dorothy Ranaghan for her columns in *Pentecost Today* over the last three years (not to mention her earlier editing of *Pentecost Today’s* forerunners, the *NSC Newsletter* and *Chariscenter USA Newsletter*). At the start we set before her the task of reviewing and rephrasing those basics of Christian maturity we all need in order to grow into the complete Catholic Christians we are called to be. She has done an excellent job; we have all learned from her wisdom. May we follow her example and pass it on. *Ad multos annos.* ♦

Friends of the NSC

At the time of this writing, we have just mailed our annual Christmas appeal. We hope you have received it and have responded. Thank you for your support in 2003 and we look forward to your continued support in 2004.

2003 was a blessed year with the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference and the National Leaders' Conference (the NSC's first National Leaders' Conference since 1979), Regional Leaders' Gatherings in New Jersey, Michigan and Iowa and the continued sale of the *New Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000* and related materials.

One new way you can help make this new year even better is to consider a pledge for 2004. Pledges help us to better plan our income and expenses, as it enables us to anticipate the amount of donations we will receive each month.

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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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Please contact us for other ways to give. And please let us know if you have included us in your will so that we can properly thank you.



Ministry Update

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

David Thorp

National Service Committee member David Thorp serves as Liaison for Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Boston and as Director of Evangelization at the Spiritual Life Center of the Marian Community. David shares an evangelization experience with us.

"This past May I traveled to Hungary with a small team—three married couples from Boston and a permanent deacon from London, Ontario—for two weeks in mission. This trip, like many others I've made over the past five years, was under the sponsorship of Renewal Ministries, headed by Ralph Martin. In two weeks we were in six different cities, working alongside Hungarians, where we proclaimed the basic gospel message and preached the power of the Holy Spirit, offered teachings for married couples, encouraged prayer groups and local leaders, and joined in a night of intercession for one of the cities. We prayed with groups of fifteen and served at a rally for seven hundred. There were always requests for prayer ministry—often lasting hours. People were hungry for the word of God but also desired to experience the presence and power of God touching their needs. They came with such expectancy that God could and would help. God did not disappoint. The experience this past May was like previous trips: it called for great trust in God, letting go of our ideas, plans and even our way of doing things, and for relying on God to provide everything needed to do whatever we were called to do. In his mercy, God provided. And, he changed us even as he ministered through us."

Chuck Hornsby

NSC member Chuck Hornsby is a member of the Alleluia Community in Augusta, Georgia. He is the overall head of the Alleluia Community School and serves on its school board. At this school he also teaches philosophy and coaches volleyball. He serves on the Community's pastoral team, which is responsible for pastoral care and accountability. He is also on the Community's formation team and prays for inner healing and deliverance. Chuck shares the following.

"In early 1972 I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. I had been a 60's hippie and had experienced a radical conversion. I wanted to follow Jesus with my whole heart and was quickly thrust into various forms of leadership, but I was very weak and broken as a person. I became a member of the Alleluia Community in 1977. I needed formation, healing, deliverance and leadership so that my desire to follow Jesus completely could move from a frustrating goal to a developing reality. Community has been for me an ongoing source of God's instruction, his healing, and especially his love. Love covered a multitude of my sins and healed a multitude of my wounds. I met my wife in community. I have raised my children in community. My community brothers and sisters have supported me in all the ups and downs of life, have helped me see my weaknesses and have called my gifts into service to help build the body of Christ. I fully expect that one day they will put the last shovel full of dirt on my grave in the Alleluia Cemetery. Then I hope to hear the Father say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' If he does I'll tell him, 'I couldn't have done it without all the help you sent me.' Thank God for community!" ♦

National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference

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