

PENTECOST *Today*

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



Chairman's Corner

.....
by Aggie Neck

Healing the land

There are many facets to healing: healing of the mind, healing of the soul or spirit, physical healing, healing of the emotions, and inner healing. There is, however, another type of healing: the healing of the land.

Webster's Dictionary offers some insights. "Heal: To restore to original purity or integrity. To return to a sound state." Our nation and our world are in need of such a healing: a restoration of original purity and integrity, a return to a state of soundness and wholeness.

How often do we quote 2 Chronicles without really paying attention to what is implied? "And if my people upon whom my name has been pronounced humble themselves and pray and seek my presence and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and revive (heal) their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

In the interpretation offered in his book, *Praying for the Government*, Derek Prince points out that this passage is not for all people. This passage is directed to the "people upon whom my name has been pronounced." That is those who know the Lord, those who have accepted him as their Lord and Savior. That is us.

"Does any other nation change its gods?—yet they are not gods at all! But my people have changed their glory for useless things. Two evils have my people done: they have forsaken me, the source of living waters; they have dug themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water" (Jer. 2:10, 13).

This nation has strayed too far from God. This nation has allowed an expression of religious freedom for things that are no gods at all while placing the one true God on trial. This nation seems to be "at war" with Christianity. Those things that have been held dear to our ancestors and to us are being torn

down, symbols removed, sin justified and values ridiculed. Those who speak out against sin are declared judgmental. If you proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord you are considered out of touch with "reality." We must continue to declare the reality of the spiritual realm. The real world is the kingdom of God and this world is passing away.

Many times in prayer I cry out to the Lord for his mercy and his peace for this nation and for all the nations. I ask him to grant us this, even though we don't deserve it. I ask that for the sake of the righteous God would spare the nations. I know that when Abraham asked God's mercy for Sodom and Gomorrah, he bargained and God agreed to spare them for the sake of ten righteous. I try to calculate how many righteous it would take for the whole world to be healed, to be restored to its original purity and integrity. Then I realize it is all grace.

Does this mean we don't do anything? Certainly not. In the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Pope John Paul II has proclaimed, "The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living" (n. 30).

A healing of our land is a healing that deserves our utmost attention, our zealous efforts and our passionate prayers. Those of us who have become temples of God's Holy Spirit, are not only called upon by God to proclaim the good news of his kingdom, but qualified by God himself for such a mission. Let us stir into flame the gift of God's Holy Spirit and rouse each other to fervent intercession for the healing of our land.

Hear the cry of your people, Lord. Have mercy on us and heal our land. ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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Restoring the gifts of healing

Reflections on thirty-five years of healing ministry

by *Barbara Shlemon Ryan, RN*

Healing services have become commonplace in Roman Catholic Churches throughout the world. It is not unusual to learn of someone with a terminal illness being declared “healed” by the medical community after receiving the “laying on of hands.” Recently a couple brought their 3-year-old son to a Eucharistic healing service where the pastor and several prayer ministers prayed for the child. He had been diagnosed with a malignant tumor of the bladder and surgery was scheduled for the following day. When the surgeon performed the procedure he was astonished to find the tumor had completely disappeared and there was no trace of cancer in the boy’s body.

The opportunity to attend healing services in the Catholic Church was not always as readily available as it is today. The first seven years of the modern

Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement were devoid of any form of healing services on a national level. Teachings on the reception of spiritual gifts placed strong emphasis on the charisms of speaking in tongues, interpretation and prophetic words, but gifts of healing were generally avoided in prayer meetings and national conferences.

The reason for this oversight by Renewal leaders was an expressed fear that people might focus on a “selfish need to get healed” instead of the “more important need for spiritual growth.” Teachings on healing and healing services were not encouraged in the early years of the Renewal. When someone with the gift of healing was invited to speak to a charismatic gathering, the leaders would program much praise, worship, witnessing and teachings into the event and ask the healing minister to give a short and

The charism of healing came out of the closet, never again to be “on the fringe” of the Renewal!

simple service in order to avoid focusing on this charism. Thus healing remained on the fringe of the Renewal and continued to be equated with saw-dust-floor tent meetings.

Francis MacNutt is credited by many with breaking the taboo against this charism. As a Dominican priest his workshops and seminars on healing began to break down the barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding among Catholics. His insistence on the centrality of healing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ eventually influenced the National Service Committee to permit the first national public healing service to be held at the 1974 Na-

From the beginning of my personal spiritual journey in 1965, I was convinced that healing prayer was an integral component of the medical profession.

tional Conference at Notre Dame. The persons who participated in that historically memorable event were: Bobbie Cavnar, Fr. Tom Forrest, Fr. Francis MacNutt, Fr. Michael Scanlan, Sr. Breige McKenna and myself. At least 30,000 were present in the Notre Dame football stadium that weekend and many were healed (including one legally blind woman who had her sight restored). The charism of healing came out of the closet, never again to be “on the fringe” of the Renewal!

The Catholic Church has a long history of legitimizing the charism of healing. More than one hundred years of Lourdes pilgrimages plus the many miracle cures associated with the saints makes healing prayer less suspect and more acceptable than in some mainline Protestant churches. However it is important to note that Protestants anointed with gifts of healing (i.e., Kathryn Kuhlman, Agnes Sanford, and Tommy Tyson) were very influential in launching many Roman Catholics into healing ministries.

In recent years, a renewed appreciation of the healing power of the Eucharist has prompted the scheduling of regular healing Masses in nearly every diocese in the United States. Participants in these services are often reminded of the prayer recited prior to receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.”

Recently I received a letter from a woman who was given a diagnosis of an aggressive form of breast cancer necessitating

chemo and radiation. The first chemo treatment knocked her out for two days with nausea and exhaustion. Before the second one, she went to the chapel and asked to receive Holy Communion. As she received the sacred host, she said, “Jesus, I’m sorry to be medicating your body in a couple of hours, but would you fight tooth and nail with your glorified body so the side effects are minimal? Thank you in advance.”

She says, “It was so marvelous how I never again got sick even one more time, nor was I ever so weak that I had to miss Mass.” She also says, “Every Catholic should think about receiving Communion before any medical procedure.”

Catholic belief in the power of blessings brought the use of sacramentals (i.e., blessed salt, water and oil) back into common usage. The early church encouraged Christians to routinely bless their sick family members with oil and there is a current trend back to this tradition.

From the beginning of my personal spiritual journey in 1965, I was convinced that healing prayer was an integral component of the medical profession. As a registered nurse I often prayed with my patients and they frequently reported feelings of peace and serenity. Even if the medical diagnosis remained critical, their faith level seemed to increase. It is interesting to note that the medical community in the United States has begun considering the importance of spiritual care of the sick. Nearly all medical schools include a course on spiritual healing in

which the students are encouraged to look beyond current medical treatment.

“We want to tell patients that they can have a medical approach, a spiritual one or a combination”, says Dr. Dale Matthews, an internist at Georgetown University. “There is a growing sense that traditional medicine is coming to its limits,” he states. Several years ago Matthews started asking patients if they wanted to pray with him. “If there are no atheists in the foxholes, then it is unethical for doctors to ignore a person’s religious beliefs,” he reasons.

What about those who retain their infirmities despite repeated prayer efforts? Years of experience have taught me to stop expending energy asking, “Why aren’t they all healed?” and to recognize the problem is too complex for my mind. I have learned to direct my efforts toward praying for the sick, leaving the results up to the Creator who is all-knowing and all-loving. I have absolutely no doubt that God wants wholeness for all of us and I await the day when “there will be no more death, no more mourning or sadness, the world of the past has gone” (Rev. 21:4). ♦

A registered nurse, Barbara Shlemon Ryan is President of Beloved Ministry. One of the founding members of the Association of Christian Therapists, she travels nationally and internationally as a retreat director, conference speaker and author. Barbara and her husband, Tim, reside in central Florida.



In the palm of God's hand

by Fr. Richard J. Loch

Jwent to my first charismatic prayer meeting during my freshman year of college. Like so many others who were drawn to the Renewal in the late sixties and early seventies, I was attracted to the experience of God's love. I already loved God and the church, and I had answered God's call to serve by entering the seminary after high school. Something happened when I started attending the prayer meeting and the Life in the Spirit seminar. When I was prayed over for baptism in the Holy Spirit, the gift I received manifested itself with tears. I realized for the first time how much I was loved by God and I was overwhelmed. My experience echoed the First Letter of John, "... not that we have loved God, but that he loved us..." and it dramatically changed my relationship with God. My love and work were no longer only attempts to please God, but became my response to the love God pours out on me.

Our God is a loving God who generously pours out his gifts upon us. I was amazed at the beauty and power of these gifts. The gifts of praise, prophecy and tongues united, uplifted and empowered our prayer time. After the prayer meeting there was time for ministry. We prayed over the sick for their aches, blood pressure and successful surgery. God's gift of healing became more and more believable as we heard testimonies from those who claimed to be healed.

When I was ordained a priest I experienced the great joy of celebrating the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and did so with the faith that it truly is a sacrament of healing. Over and over again I have been amazed at the hopeless situations that have been drastically turned around after receiving this sacrament. People have recovered from serious surgery, survived head trauma, and pulled through chemotherapy.

I have also had times when I stood in disappointment because the miraculous healing I had so fervently prayed for

and desperately hoped for did not happen. These are the times that call for real faith in knowing what to say or not say in the midst of disappointment and grief. The darkness of those moments could easily overshadow the light of Christ's victory, but for me there was always at least a flicker that moved me to go on and not lose faith.

My own time to cry out for healing came on November 27, 1991. I had gotten up that morning and was about my usual routine of prayer and preparation for the day. There was a little votive candle that I lit while I prayed. At one point as I walked from my bathroom into my bedroom I smelled smoke. I continued into my study where I saw a small fire burning in the corner of the room (at least I perceived it as being small). My initial impulse was to run back into the bathroom and fill a wastebasket with water. By the time I came back the entire side of the room was engulfed. I threw the water on it, but it did little good. Then I went for the door. The door would not open. I pulled and pulled but it would not budge. There was no place to go.

This was the most terrifying thing I have ever experienced. I remember thinking, "It's all over," and "I can't believe my life is going to end this way." I sat on the floor, began to say the Act of Contrition, braced my leg into the door frame and grabbed the door knob for one last pull. It opened!

I looked at my arms and realized that the skin on my arms and hands had melted and was hanging from me like melted wax. The janitor soon arrived and took me to the ER. A few hours later the hospital determined that the burns were too much

When I pray over someone I do so with gratitude in my heart for what the Lord has done for me, and I ask the Lord to do the same for the one I'm praying with.

[See Palm page 10](#)



Abounding hope: 2003 National Conference renews participants

by Virginia King

“Remove all bounds to hope—bring to life the culture of Pentecost in the power of the Holy Spirit.” This was the powerful theme for the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference which was held in San Antonio, May 30–June 1, 2003. As is true each year, when we show up, the Lord does a mighty work!

I was filled with hope simply by being in the presence of hundreds of people who had gathered to praise Jesus, the source and summit of our hope. I was filled with hope when I listened to a testimony of a San Antonio teen-ager who was prompted by the Holy Spirit to come to the convention center, even though she didn’t know anything about Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and whose faith was enlivened during the weekend.

I was filled with hope even as the Lord challenged me through the presenters to

deeper commitment, even to the point of praying for the grace of martyrdom. Each of the testimonies and teachings contributed an important piece to the big picture.

I bought three copies of the tape of the talk given on Sunday morning by Fr. Fio Mascarenhas. I knew I needed to have extra copies to give away! His testimony of being transformed from total despair to radiant hope by the power of the Holy Spirit was one of the most inspiring I have ever heard. If this had been the only message of the weekend, it would have been worth the time and expense to attend. But it was just one of many such messages!

There were many highlights of the weekend including having both Archbishop Patrick Flores and auxiliary Bishop Tom Flanagan, of the San Antonio Archdiocese, presiding at the opening and closing Masses respectively. What a welcome the people

of San Antonio gave to all the attendees at this National Conference!

We were blessed with an outstanding bi-lingual (Spanish and English) music ministry, with edifying testimonies and with energetic and challenging teachers. There were, at certain times, three different sessions simultaneously in Korean, Spanish and English. In addition there was a Youth Explosion for the teen-agers and Children’s Ministry for the younger ones.

Even before the Conference officially began, there was a small group of pilgrims who spent three days touring the missions of the San Antonio area, praying and preparing for the blessings of the Conference. In addition, there was a Day for Clergy which attracted seventy priests and deacons to a time of teaching and ministry led by Fr. Bob DeGrandis. Forty-nine religious education directors and other parish personnel

attended a day of teaching about integrating the Life in the Spirit Seminar into parish Confirmation preparation programs.

Tapes of the sessions at this conference may be ordered by contacting the San Antonio Renewal Center at 210-226-7545.

Now is the time to mark your calendar for the 2004 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference which will be held in Lowell, Massachusetts, June 25–27. It’s worth the effort and expense to gather together once a year with so many wonderful brothers and sisters! I hope to see you there! ♦

A member of the National Service Committee, Virginia King serves as Director of Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Seattle.



Spiritual Formation

by Dorothy Ranaghan

Greater Works

What are the works of Jesus? The answer to that question is daunting enough, until we try to make sense of this promise of Jesus: “Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing...[in fact,] he will do even *greater* things than these, because I am going to the Father...” (John 14:12). Whoa! That’s staggering. The works of Jesus, according to his own words, were to “preach the good news to the poor...proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed” (Lk. 4:18). His actions show him doing all that and more—healing the deaf, the crippled, the lepers and the possessed. Even the dead were raised. How are we supposed to top that?

Traditionally, the answer to that question has been that through the power of the Spirit, whom Jesus sent after his return to the Father, our greater works are not in the nature of the events themselves, but in number and scope. For example, more people were brought to life in Christ after the initial sermon of Peter at Pentecost (three thousand in one day) than is recorded for Jesus during his entire ministry. This view sees the “greater works” in reference to the immense multitudes brought to the Lord by the ministry of the apostles. Their influence covered the whole Roman world, while Jesus never traveled beyond the boundaries of Palestine.

Logic carries the weight of that argument. Yet I would be leery of limiting the power of the Holy Spirit. In the power of that Spirit, Christ continues his ministry today—in me and in you—and I don’t think we have begun to tap that power. We, who are collaborators of Jesus in his work, act as Christ, in Christ. What does Christ in us wish to do? “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (Jn. 15:7). What is the “whatever” that we wish?

It has been thirty-six years since we began to experience healings and miracles in the wake of the great Pentecos-

tal movement known as the Charismatic Renewal. We have come to know that there is more power in the life of the Spirit—and greater works for us as Christians—than we had previously come to expect. But in the last five years, it has become abundantly clear that there is still...“more.” Much more. The Lord seems to be stirring a renewal of expectant faith and signs and wonders. I have seen more healings in the last few years, hundreds of them, than I did in the previous thirty years of charis-

If faith is the key, then the door through which we unlock the miraculous is compassion.

matic life. In my own community, the People of Praise, it is linked to the increasing awareness of our being Christ

in and for the world. Boldness and compassion are more evident as that realization deepens. The end result is doing more of what Christ was doing—and wants to continue to do—with power.

Some of the recent healings I have seen include the restoration of sight to a girl blinded in an accident, deliverance of a young man from alcohol and cocaine addiction, reversal of a heart condition, the straightening of a ureter coiled dangerously around an artery, healing of an infection in an arm that was scheduled to be amputated, and miraculous healing of both a baby with a life threatening disorder and a man with a terminal illness. If not greater works than Jesus did, these results of prayer are certainly greater works than *we* have done before. There is always “more.”

The works of the disciples, which proceed from the Holy Spirit, continue the ministry of Jesus. It isn’t over. Christ lives in us by the power of the Spirit. Do we believe that? Does it change the way we think and act? Expectant faith is clearly a key to miracles, those signs of the revelation and salvation of Jesus. I find myself echoing the words of C.S. Lewis: “A far inferior degree of faith is, I hope, acceptable to God. Even the kind that says, ‘Help thou my unbelief.’”

If faith is the key, then the door through which we unlock the miraculous is compassion. When a believer is moved by genuine compassion, he/she is moved by God’s love. Scripture seems to indicate that if we follow that

prompting, we will see miracles. If we ignore it, we frustrate the plan of God. The heart of Christ was moved with compassion when he healed the blind beggars, cured the sick, fed the multitude. He wept with compassion for Lazarus. Then he raised him from the dead. "Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing."

I want to be an "anyone." It means putting on the mind and heart of Christ, letting him be formed in us, so that we want to do what he wants to do. Then, when we pray, the Father will dance and rejoice over his Son, whom he will not refuse. "Signs will accompany those who believe" (Mk. 16:17).

How is our faith? Do we believe we have power over our situation, over sickness, nature, even death? Do we believe that we have the power to calm wind and waves, to change governments, to turn back armies, to do whatever has to happen, to do whatever the Father wants to do?

Do we ache with compassion to do the very things the Father desires? We may see mountains move when we do. Don't worry. I've read the scholars. I know all about Semitic hyperbole in biblical language. But, the Hebrews believed that the mountains held the sky in place, like pillars defining their universe. When Jesus talked about moving mountains, therefore, some believe he was implying that he and his followers could undermine the foundation, and change the very shape of the world. I believe such greater work is not only possible, but that it is our task. Are the desires of our hearts one with those of God, or are our puny, hardened and divided hearts limiting the work of Christ? When both we, and the mountains, begin to sense the presence of Christ within us, the trembling will begin.

HOLY SPIRIT POWER CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

By Bob Williams

*Father Michael Scanlan of Franciscan University supports book.

*Ad Hoc Committee of Bishops approves book for publication.

*Adam Cardinal Maida of Detroit issues Imprimatur for book.

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Outline

- A. Doing "greater" works than those of Jesus—the standard explanation of the text.
- B. Charismatic Renewal has taught us not to underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. The role of expectant faith and compassion in experiencing "more."
- D. Moving mountains; changing the world.

Discussion Questions

- ▲ What does expectant faith mean to you?
- ▲ In what way is compassion a precursor to miracles?
- ▲ Since Christ is in you, how should that affect your prayer to the Father?
- ▲ What things could be involved in changing the world as we know it?

This column concludes our twelve-part series on Spiritual Formation. The Editorial Board wishes to express its deep appreciation to Dorothy Ranaghan for sharing her gifts and wisdom over these past three years. ♦

Why include the NSC in your will?

The National Service Committee relies almost entirely on gifts from individuals to continue its mission. A bequest will help our ongoing work of renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.

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 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.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and enkindle in them
the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit,
and we shall be created
and you shall renew
the face of the earth.

O God,
who by the light
of the Holy Spirit
instructed the hearts of
the faithful,
grant that by that same Spirit
we may be truly wise
and ever rejoice in his
consolation,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Calling out to the Holy Spirit as a way of life

by *Therese Boucher*

Remember the heart pounding experience of taking a test in school? It was a natural time to pray for inspiration and wisdom. My sophomore English teacher, Sister Henry Marie, always chose this prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.... O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructed the hearts of the faithful, grant that by that same Spirit, we may be truly wise..." The remarkable thing is that she taught us to pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit every day, not just when there was a test.

How often do we call out to the Holy Spirit? How often do we expect a new Pentecost and a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit? How many of us expect to relive the church's ancient feast of Pentecost on a day-by-day basis? It is easy to expect the Spirit's arrival when we worship together, or when we attend seminars and conferences, but how many of us seek the Holy Spirit in our daily efforts to follow Jesus? And when we falter, do we know how to reach out to the Holy Spirit, who is our helper?

The need to connect with the Spirit is at the heart of a new book entitled, *A Prayer Journal for Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, published by the National Service Committee. It is a tool for reliving the journey towards Pentecost and rediscovering the power to follow Jesus. It can be used for the first time during a *New Life in the Spirit Seminar* or just when we need God's intervention in our lives. The *Prayer Journal* helps us call out to the Holy Spirit by using images for the Spirit, insights about the sacraments and

pieces of the Creed. Each of the seven weeks focuses on a particular name for the Holy Spirit, a Scripture passage and a statement of faith. Each week can also be used separately or as part of a longer private retreat.

"Wherever you are in your faith journey the Prayer Journal can be picked up and prayed with over and over again. It offers many dimensions for daily prayer. It helps me pray with all my senses and helps me experience the many ways to call upon the Spirit. Also the journal reinforces the importance of praying with the whole church. Even when we pray by ourselves, we are not alone in our journey. The Spirit's presence in church documents can comfort and guide us" (Karen Wasielewski).

Through the unfolding sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, God gives us a refreshing spring of leaping, life-giving water. The experience of seeking this spiritual water and quenching our inner thirst should be as common as drinking liquids to sustain our bodies. We are created for life in the Spirit in the same way that fish are created to live in water. This is not a new insight. If we read Acts of the Apostles closely, we discover that the apostles sought the Spirit often and that there were at least three "Pentecosts" described in Acts.

The *Prayer Journal* can be a tool for personal prayer, for group formation and for evangelization. A Cistercian monk, a young soldier in Iraq, a priest in Siberia and members of several prayer groups have used this journal to experience a new Pentecost. With the new *imprima-*

tur given by the Bishop of Trenton, the Journal may also be used for sacramental preparation. Each week explores a different facet of the basic message of the Gospel and offers insights about surrendering to the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. Brief explanations for baptism in the Holy Spirit, evangelization and baptismal vows are included as well as an exercise for praying with a newspaper. Finally, the *Prayer Journal* is a response to the US bishops' request that faith formation tools be updated in the light of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The act of journaling can be a powerful way to stay in touch with the Spirit. Betty Pinsonault explains: "Journaling gives me an opportunity to write down all my thoughts, emotions, feelings, and bring them before the Lord. Putting my thoughts down brings me peace and calmness. Then when I look back, I see what the Holy Spirit has been saying and

See Calling page 10



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

- ◆ That God will continue to pour out his Spirit upon the youth of our country and increase opportunities for them to experience baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ That the charisms will be exercised in the church with maturity and selfless love.
- ◆ For planning and preparations for upcoming events sponsored by the National Service Committee:
 - ✓ Regional Leaders Gatherings in Chicago and Denver
 - ✓ National Leaders Conference in Nashville
 - ✓ 2004 National Conference in Lowell, Massachusetts.
- ◆ For those who serve the Catholic Charismatic Renewal on the local, regional, national and international levels, especially those experiencing difficulty at this time.
- ◆ For spiritual, physical and financial protection and provision for the mission of the National Service Committee.

Palm from p. 5

for them to handle and arranged for me to be flown to the regional burn center. I had first and second degree burns over 40% of my body. I was on the ventilator because of damage to my lungs. At one point the doctor told me that if I made it I would be a respiratory invalid.

I tried to pray but I kept drifting in and out of consciousness. About the only prayer I remember getting through was the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner." I was getting frustrated and I thought, "Lord, I want to pray; why can't I pray?" I sensed the Lord saying, "Richard, you don't have to pray, because everyone is praying for you." The sense I had is one that is hard to articulate. I can only say that I really felt as though I was in the palm of God's hand and was being lifted up. A new peace flowed through me, and with that peace a new strength.

Calling from p. 9

I reflect on insights and inner healings that have taken place." Jackie Frenz shares: "I don't have any set way of journaling—sometimes it is an analogy that has come to my mind while gardening; sometimes it is a pity-party when I feel down; sometimes it is just a chat with the Lord; sometimes it is an inspiration concerning a Scripture or a quote in a book. When I feel like I'm in a pit I like to read my journal to see how far I *have* gone in my spiritual life."

Journal entries also help us pray the Scriptures, the creed, the names of Jesus, the titles of the Spirit, sections from the *Catechism* and quotes from the saints. One entry is by St. Richard of Chichester: "Merciful Friend, Brother and Redeemer, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day." Each daily entry also ends with the first few lines of a journal prayer that can be finished by the reader. An example would be: "Come, Holy Spirit of Truth. I know so little about Jesus. Give me a new passion for following him. Give me the grace to become more of a disciple, ready to listen when..."

It was shortly after this that I began a rapid recovery. The oxygen mask was removed, I was able to sit in a chair, and finally I was moved out of the intensive care section of the unit. The doctor was amazed that I didn't need skin grafts, nor did I end up with any noticeable scars. I don't fully understand what happened, and I cannot find the words to describe what I experienced, but I know I experienced the presence of God. The peace I experienced is a peace I had never experienced before.

This changed my approach to healing prayer in that I know firsthand of the healing power of God. When I pray over someone I do so with gratitude in my

The prayers for each of the seven weeks form a mosaic of God's promises to those who would call out to the Spirit everyday:

- Come, Holy Spirit,
Lord and Giver of Life.
- Come, Spirit of Truth and Hope.
- Come, Consoler Spirit,
and be my Help.
- Come, Holy Spirit, Living Water.
You are the Spirit of Christ.
- Come, Holy Spirit, Giver of Gifts,
anoint us.
- Come, Holy Spirit, Blessed Light and
Living Flame of Love.
- Come, Holy Spirit, Soul of the
Church, Seat of Wisdom.
- Come, Holy Spirit, Sanctifier
and Breath of God.
- Come, Holy Spirit. Come, Paraclete.
Make the world your temple. ◆

Therese Boucher is the author of the New Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000 and A Prayer Journal for Baptism in the Holy Spirit, both published by the National Service Committee.



heart for what the Lord has done for me, and I ask the Lord to do the same for the one I'm praying with. There are still the times I wonder why I was healed while others aren't. I have found that more and more this wondering has led me to a deeper awe at the mystery of God, and a stronger desire to surrender more fully in trusting God. ◆



A member of the National Service Committee, Fr. Richard Loch is a priest of the Diocese of Scranton, where he serves as Pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish.

NEWSBRIEFS

Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities convenes 12th National Convention

Over 2000 adults and 250 youth attended the 12th National Convention of the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities in East Brunswick, New Jersey, on the weekend of June 27-29, 2003. Participants came from across the country, gathering for teaching, reflection and exhortation on the theme, "I chose you; go and bear fruit that will last."

The tone for the weekend was set by the Friday evening Festival of Praise. The high-energy, three-hour session featured music, liturgical drama and a special presentation by the youth.

During his address to the convention on Saturday, Bishop Chito Tagle of Cavite, Philippines, exhorted the participants: "I challenge all of you to be true to your calling as baptized Christians, to become effective witnesses to the risen Christ and to proclaim Jesus, who is the good news, wherever you go."

Bishop Paul Bootkoski of the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey, called upon Filipinos to minister to people of different races within their local communities. "It is your obligation, your faith, your family values, your warmth, that we Anglos and others need in this country. God is calling you, Filipinos, to witness to us. I challenge the Filipino youth, especially, to go out and to bring that faith spirit, that family spirit, that we sorely need in this country. Please keep your beautiful family traditions and culture, even though you are living in this country. Don't ever lose it."



Bishop Sam Jacobs appointed to Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

Pope John Paul II has appointed Bishop Sam G. Jacobs as the third Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana. Bishop Jacobs will be installed on Friday, October 10, at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral in Houma.

Bishop Jacobs served as a member of the National Service Committee from 1982-1993, and as NSC Chairman from 1987-1993. He was consecrated a bishop in 1989, and was appointed to the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana, at that time. He currently serves as Chair of the US Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Reflecting on his new appointment, Bishop Jacobs wrote:

As priest and bishop God has blessed me in so many ways. He has given me a pastor's heart and a deeper awareness and understanding of the role of the priest and bishop as a spiritual father. While administration is not my

Other speakers included Fr. Leonardo Polinar, Fr. Ed Abano, Fr. Joe Cadusale, Sr. Nancy Kellar, Jim Murphy, Walter Matthews, Msgr. Joe Malagrega, Fr. Leoncio Santiago, Fr. Bill Halbing, Fr. George Da Roza, and Bob Canton.

The young people gathered for four Saturday and Sunday youth track sessions. Each session was memorable with energy-filled praise and worship, dynamic speakers, powerful personal testimonies and challenging small-group interaction. ♦

strong point and does not energize me, God gives me the grace to do my best. But what really renews me is the ability to minister in the power of the Spirit. I have been a happy priest/bishop for these thirty-nine years because of the grace of God and the many opportunities he has provided me to minister in his name, his love and truth.

Fourteen years ago I was asked what motto would I choose as bishop. What immediately came to mind is something that I have tried to live early on in my priesthood. Jesus Christ is Lord. I have dedicated myself and my ministry to the Lordship of Jesus. With Paul I am convinced that in him I can do all things. I plan, with the help of God's grace and the support of the people of this diocese, to be the Shepherd God calls me to be at this time and in this diocese. I ask for your prayers.

Let us pray for Bishop Jacobs as he assumes this new assignment. ♦

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CHARISMS

Repealing the tax on charisms

by Sherry Weddell

Several years ago, an acquaintance approached me at a charismatic conference to ask a question. She had recently met another woman who seemed to be blessed with a charism of healing. The other woman complained about a problem she was experiencing; when she didn't have a chance to pray for someone, energy would build up in her to the point that she had to swim hundreds of laps to burn it off. The woman speaking to me was puzzled. "That didn't sound right to me," she said.

My friend's instincts were right. The Holy Spirit is not *compulsive*. Compulsivity occurs when our own unresolved and unrecognized issues, fears and angers get mixed up with the expression of our charisms and our attempts to serve God.

I once knew a woman who had a genuine charism of helping others. Unfortunately, she could not *not* help you. So hungry was she for the affirmation she received as a result of the use of her gift, that she would rush in to help one individual and then drop them in order to begin helping someone else. She had people half-helped all over the place! Her husband wryly summed up the situation: "Underneath that compulsion, there's a charism somewhere."

When our charisms first manifest, we may feel dazzled by the possibilities of what God can do through us, but our actual lived trust in God is usually still exceedingly low. We want to serve God unselfishly but in our hearts we are still convinced that we need to be looking out after ourselves. In these circumstances, nearly all of us will experience the temptation to consciously or unconsciously use

the exercise of a charism to manipulate others into meeting our own needs.

Before we know it, our need to be in control, to heal old wounds or to prove something to our parents or friends or children significantly distorts the expression of God's gifts. We intend to give God's charisms away "freely" but we discover that we have been conducting a subtle negotiation with the recipient of God's "free" grace. "I will give you *this* and in exchange you will give me *that*." One sure sign of this is when we find ourselves irrationally disappointed or angry at those whom we are "serving" through the exercise of a charism.

I have certainly seen this in my own life. Do you know what people do at the end of a really great workshop? They leave! We share this incredible day together and then they leave me and go about their business! I distinctly remember the day when it dawned on me that the fact that I felt depressed over people leaving at the end of a workshop was extremely odd. I realized I had been, unknown to myself, pursuing another agenda besides teaching how to discern charisms. I was adding a small, personal "tax" onto God's gift of teaching—trying to extort a little something extra to give me what I thought I needed.

Thank goodness, our Lord likes to hang with tax collectors because we are all going to find ourselves in this situation at some point. Only a modest level of self-awareness and honesty is required to be brought up short by the specter of our self-seeking. The remedy is growing in the graced habits of trust and detachment.

Detachment involves two movements: choosing at this moment to entrust my real and felt needs to God's love and then

choosing to share that which God has given me to give, without any strings attached. No covert tax-collecting; no payback of any kind required. God will provide what I need so you don't have to. Of course, since we got into this situation through our inability to trust God, doing this is hardly spontaneous; but it is possible with the help of God's grace.

Now before I teach, I direct all participants to ask Christ directly in prayer for what they have come seeking. When it's all over, I don't spend time replaying events and conversations and trying to determine—as I once did—if people "liked" me or if I was "successful." I prayerfully release all that transpired into the hands of God and then turn my attention to the next thing in front of me. Over time, this practice has become a source of real freedom. It keeps me grounded in the present moment where, as C. S. Lewis notes, "all duty, all grace, all knowledge and all pleasure dwell" (*The Screwtape Letters*). It short circuits my endless navel-gazing and compulsive bargaining and moves me just a little closer to genuine trust.

So next time you become aware that you are driving a hard bargain over the use of your charisms, don't waste your time feeling ashamed. Join the rest of us who are beginning to see how much we need to grow in trust and detachment. Do yourself and everyone around you a favor. Freedom is only a habit away. ♦

Sherry Weddell is Associate Director of the Catherine of Siena Institute, a program of the Western Dominican Province dedicated to equipping parishes for the formation of lay Catholics.





From the
Director
.....
by Walter Matthews

Healing and the NSC

Remember, as if it were yesterday, the 1974 National Conference at the University of Notre Dame that Barbara Shlemon Ryan writes about in this issue's lead article. I was there. The healing session was electrifying. News reports after the Conference were headlined "Catholic Charismatics Introduce Healing" and "Healing Service at Charismatic Conference." It was new, startling and controversial.

I was not working for the Service Committee at the time, but I later learned that there had been many arguments pro and con about introducing healing into the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Healing had already "appeared" in several mainline denominations including Lutheran, Methodist and Episcopalian. Some Catholics—the then Fr. Francis MacNutt and Barbara Shlemon (now Ryan) among them—had been involved in praying for healing for several years.

Still the Service Committee hesitated. Is it legitimate to pray for healing? Is it appropriate to pray in large assemblies, as opposed to privately or in sanctuaries (like Lourdes)? Are there authentic charisms of healing? Do people who claim healing really get healed? What about those who don't get healed?

Thirty years later, healing is an accepted charism within the Renewal at both local and national levels. Healing Masses, retreats and prayer for healing at conferences are fairly regular events in most dioceses. Since that groundbreaking 1974 National Conference, the National Service Committee has included prayer room ministry, the Sacrament of Penance and either a healing service or prayer for healing at nearly every national conference.

Over the years, the National Service Committee has sought to maintain relationships with the many itinerant healing ministries. Various ministers of healing have been included on the NSC Council (formerly Advisory Committee) from time to time. One of the tracks at the National Leaders' Conference in Nashville in November will be on "Healing and Prayer Room Ministry."

Nevertheless, thirty years after healing first emerged in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, some of the questions mentioned above continue to be raised both inside the Renewal and within the church. That is why it was a very positive affirmation three years ago when the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued its "Instruction on Prayer for Healing" (see article in *Pentecost Today*, January/February/March 2002, p. 11).

The purpose of the Instruction was to offer guidelines (norms) for the relationship of public healing prayer to liturgical services. Before dealing with such norms the Instruction discussed some doctrinal aspects. These included:

Healing characterized Jesus' ministry and these "healings are signs of his messianic mission" (n. 1).

"Presuming the acceptance of God's will, the sick person's desire for healing is both good and deeply human, especially when it takes the form of a trusting prayer raised to God" (n. 2).

"The power to heal is given within a missionary context, not for their own exaltation, but to confirm their mission" (n. 3).

"The 'charisms of healing' in 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30...are...to be understood...as a gift granted to a person to obtain graces of healing for others" (n. 3).

"The 'charism of healing' is not attributable to a specific class of faithful...consequently, in prayer meetings organized for asking for healing, it would be completely arbitrary to attribute a 'charism of healing' to any category of participants...the only thing to do is to entrust oneself to the free decision of the Holy Spirit who grants to some a special charism of healing in order to show the power of the grace of the risen Christ" (n. 5).

We in the Renewal should take heart in the affirmation contained in the Instruction. Encouraged by the document, the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, with the Pontifical Council for the Laity, in 2001 sponsored a colloquium on "Prayer for Healing and the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church." The papers of the colloquium have been published as *Prayer for Healing*, available from ICCRS or your Catholic bookstore.

Is the work of integrating prayer for healing into the life and mission of the church over? Hardly. While there are many healing Masses and services sponsored by the Renewal as well as by priests and lay people who feel called by the Lord to pray for healing, there is still much skepticism and, sadly, much rejection.

The Service Committee will continue to work for the maturing of the healing charisms in the Renewal and for their integration and acceptance in the life and mission of the church. ♦



Friends of the NSC

Friends of the NSC is the designation for those who have become donors to the NSC/Chariscenter USA and supporters of this work of renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.

While there are about 3000 Friends of the NSC—for whom we are very grateful—we send *Pentecost Today* to over 7000 people. That means that one out of two recipients of *Pentecost Today* are not active donors. If you are such a recipient, we encourage you to become a donor. More information on the mission of the National Service Committee and on how to make a donation can be found on page two of each issue of *Pentecost Today*.

We would like to introduce and thank the following for becoming charter members of Fanning the Flame Partners. (Fanning the Flame Partners make a five-year pledge of support.) If you would like more information about Fanning the Flame Partners or would like to become a Charter Member, call us at 1-800-338-2445.

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Barbara Meehan
Tom and Linda Reilly
Spirit Life Center, Plainview,
New York
Deborah Tourville

Aggie Neck, chairman of the NSC, is the co-founder and director of Servant House, a house of prayer in Marksville, Louisiana. In recent years Aggie has been travelling internationally to speak at conferences and retreats. Aggie shares with us a few of the events she has participated in recently.

“This past May, I was in Albuquerque for a Women’s Day sponsored by the renewal center there. They hold this event every year on the Saturday before Mother’s Day. I gave two talks: ‘Service Leads to Greatness’ and ‘Transformed and Renewed.’ Also in May, I gave my testimony at a Magnificat breakfast in Stark County, Ohio.

“In August, I was at the semi-annual Regional Leaders Gathering sponsored by the Renewal in New Orleans. The theme was on various forms of prayer; I spoke on intercessory prayer. There were people there from all the dioceses in Louisiana as well as four neighboring states. In addition to the teaching, this gathering provides a forum for the leaders to share with one another about what the Lord is doing in their local areas. At these gatherings, I’m often given the opportunity to tell about the work of the NSC and update them on future events and available resources.”

Josephine Cachia is on the Executive Committee of the NSC. Her “day job” is director of the Charismatic Renewal Office in Brooklyn, New York. She wrote to tell about some exciting developments for their office.

“Several months ago the building that our office is in flooded and some of the ceiling in the outer hall came tumbling down. The building has not been properly maintained for many years and, consequently, erosion and mold became quite apparent. Through the years we have enjoyed being in this facility. However, it was obviously time to relocate.

“I was aware that there was a vacant convent in the vicinity where I live, and I prayed that the pastor would rent us space there. I met with him and at the end of our conversation he told me we would be foolish if we didn’t take this opportunity to move in! We will now have a chapel, spacious meeting rooms and the hope of sponsoring mini-retreats in the twenty-bedroom facility.

“God always has the plan. We just need the vision—and sometimes the ceiling has to cave in before we can see the vast and wonderful providence of the God we serve.”

Virginia King: “As a member of the NSC, I serve on a number of sub-committees, as all the NSC members do. My local ministry is as director of Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Seattle. In that capacity I was privileged to participate in the first-ever Korean-American Family Life in the Spirit Seminar, sponsored by the National Korean Service Committee. I worked with KSC Chairman Deacon Joseph Lee, along with a wonderful group of leaders from the Seattle-Tacoma area.

“The concept behind this family retreat was to strengthen the life in the Spirit in each household, with special emphasis on families where the husband and wife are from different cultural backgrounds. Not only are the spouses impacted by the cultural differences, but the children are as well. I coordinated the English-language track, which included non-Korean spouses, and teen-agers and young adults from these families. This event was so successful that they are already planning to repeat it next year!”

From this little bit of sharing, you can see that the National Service Committee is an active group of people. Please pray for all the NSC members and for the staff at Chariscenter USA. We need your prayers to be able to properly discern and serve the Charismatic Renewal. God bless you! ♦

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Pentecost Today

Volume 28, 2003

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CATHOLIC BIBLE SCHOOL

At the National Conference in San Antonio, Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ invited students from the US to his Catholic Bible School in Mumbai, India. The full cost of living and tuition for the two-month course on the whole Old Testament and New Testament is only \$300.

Those interested may contact Fr. Fio at fiio@ysnl.com or tel/fax 011-91-22-26427648.

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