

PENTECOST *Today*

October/November/December 2001 Volume 26, Number 4



RENEWAL AROUND THE WORLD

LEADERS FOCUS

What in the world is going on? 1

Over the past thirty-four years, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has spread across the globe. Today the movement thrives in some parts of the world; in other areas, it struggles. We asked four leaders to share their perspectives on what is happening in the Renewal in their countries.

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Put
out
into
the
deep

Photos: www.Comstock.com, Bob Canton

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

Chairman's Corner

by Fr. Patsy Iaquina



Beyond borders

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 13:13).

So often I question how we listen to and open the Scriptures. How universally do we apply the truths of the Gospel? Do we indeed understand that we are individual members of the world-wide church family? What does this mean on the local level? What are the roles of brothers and sisters as they relate to one another nationally and internationally?

We can never turn in on ourselves because love demands that we reach out.

As a gifted and blessed people, we are to share this gift with those around us. How do we do this in the local prayer group and parish? What of the prayer group or the parish next door? Do we have a sense of responsibility as a part of the larger body? When we identify the gifts that we have in our assembly, how broadly do we apply them? When brothers and sisters who are beyond our "usual" range of ministry are in need, how do we respond? We can never turn in on ourselves because love demands that we reach out. If all that we have is placed at the disposal of the body of believers, then even this world is too small an arena. We are to reach out to the farthest limits. Jesus' death and resurrection impact not only our lives but all of creation.

Our challenge is to move beyond "our" parish, "our" prayer group, "our" diocese, and understand that we are a part of something much larger. As we live our life of Christ from where we are, that love is extended beyond what we can dream and imagine. As we read

witnesses from throughout the world, we come to the realization that we are a part of that body. Somehow, somehow, we are connected to what is happening in all parts of the globe. We affect and are affected by the actions of other brothers and sisters. Although our primary responsibility may be elsewhere, we must realize our connectedness to all Christians.

As St. Paul traveled, he shared gifts, personnel and finances with communities that he did not establish. He spent little time in the Jerusalem community, yet he begged financial assistance for the poor there. He wrote to the Roman community before he met them, giving instruction and encouragement. He understood the body of Christ to be beyond the people to whom he directly ministered. Although his primary ministry was to the Gentiles, he reached out to all, and through his writings continues to do so.

If we are comfortable with where we are right now, then the Lord is calling us to growth and conversion, to take the next step, to stretch. It may be within our local group or beyond it. But our life with the Lord Jesus is always growing and stretching. We share on regional, national and international levels through publications and gatherings. We become aware of other parts of the body of Christ. We can respond and strengthen the body as we challenge and are challenged to grow.

Let us become mindful of where the Lord has placed us and of our responsibilities in our present circumstances. From here we become aware of the Lord's activity in our lives. And from his presence within, we reach out into the deep. ☞

Fr. Patsy Iaquina is chairman of the National Service Committee. He is pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield, West Virginia.

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India

by Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, S.J.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in India in 1972 and has spread to practically all of the 140 dioceses of the three Rites (the Latin, the Syro-Malabar, and the Syro-Malankara). It is most widespread in Bombay, Goa, Kerala, Delhi, Andhra, Bangalore and Madras. The National Service Committee has been officially recognized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, with Bishop Valerian D'Souza as Ecclesiastical Assistant. Cardinal Ivan Dias of Bombay and several other bishops are personally involved. I serve as Chairman.

There is reason for hope, because many youth are being drawn, including some non-Christians who are finding in Jesus the answers to many of their life-questions.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal runs a residential Catholic Bible college for lay people, has a bimonthly national magazine, *CHARISINDIA*, publishes many books and teaching materials in English and in ten other regional languages, and organizes at both national and regional levels regular conventions, leaders' seminars and retreats, through which it pastors the approximately 100,000 Catholics actively involved in the Renewal. (Perhaps another half-million Catholics have attended charismatic retreats and programs).

The use of the gifts of the Spirit, joyful praise and deep worship, many initiatives of social service (pro-life, literacy, etc.), a committed witness in daily life to the lordship of Jesus, and efforts at evangelization are some of the tested characteristics of the Renewal in general. Still we recognize that we have many miles to go in reaching the full stature of Christ! One area of concern is that large numbers of people are attracted to retreat centers which focus on healings, visions and other signs and wonders, which encourage a neo-Pentecostal praise and spirituality. As a result, authentic "Catholic" renewal almost gets hijacked.

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What in the world is going on?



Benin

by Jean Pliya

I am very grateful to the Holy Spirit who has blessed the Catholic Church of Benin, West Africa, with the Charismatic Renewal movement. In 1975 the Christian faith in my country was under some threat from the dictatorship of the Marxist-Leninist ruling power. Humiliated, Christians were frightened. I asked the Lord to show his power, so as to deliver us. He told me to proclaim the Good News according Mark 16:15-18, and led me in 1977 to the renewal in Spirit.

Nowadays there are more than 150 prayer groups, each one of them between two hundred and a thousand members strong.

My first experience of charismatic prayer took place in my own family. My children were praising, clapping their hands and laughing. My parish came to know the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, then other parishes and the fire spread through all the dioceses of Benin with the support of the bishops.

Nowadays there are more than 150 prayer groups, each one of them between two hundred and a thousand members strong. Their main activities are teaching Life in Spirit seminars, strong and living praise, healing prayers, and evangelization in Benin and in other West African countries (even in Muslim ones). Every two years more than twelve thousand people participate in the pilgrimage that we organize.

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France

by Cathy Brenti

The Jubilee years have given the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in France many opportunities to interact with other Catholics and to be involved in various projects, at various levels. However it is clear that we are now at a turning point. Shall we go on trying to keep running those existing renewal groups and other old church structures? Or shall we let the Lord set our hearts on fire for the renewal of the whole church and all society?

Chains of prayer and fasting are developing in order to intercede for loving relations within families, for unity among Christians, for renewal of political life and a more humane economy. Indeed, as French Christians, our diminishing ranks and shrinking institutions and budgets do not leave us any options other than interceding for a new Pentecost.

We need not be afraid of our weaknesses, to proclaim our faith and to testify to our love. More and more people are convinced of the necessity of such a change, but it implies both personal and collective surrendering of our beloved projects and pride.

On Pentecost 1998 at the first meeting of ecclesial movements and communities, Pope John Paul II said: "Since the very beginning of my ministry as the successor of Peter, I have always considered these movements as a wonderful spiritual source for the church and the

See **France** p. 4

Japan

by Francis Mathy, S.J.

The Charismatic Renewal in Japan resembles the *bonsai*. While small in size, it is teeming with vitality, growing steadily, tended and shaped by the expert hands of the master gardener.

The obstacles to the movement's growth have been formidable. The resistance of the average Japanese Catholic to charismatic renewal is probably greater than anywhere else in the world. Because of the natural reluctance of Japanese to display their emotions and the formalism of a Catholic Church life that is cold, duty-oriented and lacking in true community, charismatic renewal has had tough going. Most of the Japanese bishops and clergy seldom have a good word to say for it and keep it well at a distance. (The priests involved in the Renewal are mostly foreign missionaries.) But even so, people have kept coming to us, making the Life in the Spirit seminars, receiving a new in-filling of the Holy Spirit and then acting like Spirit-filled people all over the world!

At a time when converts are becoming fewer and fewer, a great number of Japanese have had their first encounter with Christ in our prayer groups and have gone on to baptism and a full church life.

Our numbers have continued to increase at a small but steady pace. Charismatic Renewal arrived in Japan in 1972, when two Spirit-filled Sisters from the United States came to Japan with the express prophetic mission of planting the Renewal here. Their efforts, aided by the Protestant Canadian evangelist Les Pritchard and his team, resulted in the first Japanese Catholic charismatic prayer meeting being held at the Redemptorist church in Tokyo in mid-November. The first Life in the Spirit seminar followed shortly after. Assembly of God Pastor Yoshiyama and other Japanese Pentecostal ministers and lay people were very helpful to us in this initial period. Members increased week by week, and soon this prayer meeting—later moved to the campus of Sophia University—became a kind of center for the expansion of the Charismatic Renewal all over Japan, as far north as Hokkaido and as far south as Okinawa. ☞

We are divided into six regions, each with its own leadership, each with its own yearly three-day regional conference, and each regularly conducting Life in the Spirit seminars. Every third year there is a national conference. Responsible for the over-all planning is a national committee of five members assisted by an auxiliary committee composed of representatives of each region. There are only a few regular prayer groups that meet once a week, but there is a vast number of small groups of four or five that meet in homes. For these, the national and regional conferences serve an important purpose, since they provide the opportunity to praise and worship the Lord to their hearts' content.

Another characteristic is that from the beginning the leaders have encouraged those receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit to use their

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Thanks to the Charismatic Renewal's blessing, many people have converted themselves to Jesus Christ and most of those who left the Catholic Church to join sects are coming back. The occult practices of the voodoo religion are being rejected. There are also charismatic groups in some high schools and at the university where the Holy Spirit is also stirring up vocations to the priesthood. In 1994, as national leader of the Charismatic Renewal, I was invited by Pope John Paul II to attend the Synod of African bishops in order to speak about evangelization and human advancement in Africa.

However, in the last three or four years, we are noticing some problems such as a decrease in the size of prayer groups or an excessive emphasis on physical healing and deliverance. Now the Holy Spirit is leading us to live out a new blessing, to open evangelization schools and to promote activities for the youth in our groups.

Praise the Lord and glory to Jesus! ☞

Jean Pliya serves as National Leader of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Benin and is also a member of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Council.

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On the other hand, there is reason for hope, because authentic Catholic Charismatic Renewal is also finding new dynamism and fruitfulness all over the country, and many youth are being drawn to it, including some non-Christians who are finding in Jesus the answers to many of their life-questions. I think it is right to conclude that through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Spirit is equipping and motivating the church in India to "launch out into the deep," in accord with Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter for the third millennium. ☞

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

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Their strength is to search—even in their diversity—for unity between them and also with the diocesan church.

whole humankind, gift of the Holy Spirit for our time, sign of hope for all...each community is different, but all are united in the very same communion and for the same mission."

Since 1975, many of these Catholic charismatic communities have existed in France. Their strength is to search—even in their diversity—for unity between them and also with the diocesan church through common events as varied as walking pilgrimages for youth, social or health pastoral initiatives, and common times of reflection. Some of the largest among these are *Béatitudes*, *Chemin Neuf*, *Emmanuel*, *Pain de Vie*, and *Verbe de Vie*.

The Christian world longs for our country to be faithful to its tradition. The Holy Spirit is taking us back to our roots so that we may fully follow its lead. ☞

A leader of the Charismatic Renewal in France, Cathy Brenti is a member of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Council.

by Gerry Mader

How wonderful of the Catholic Church to remind us in the year 2000 of the Jubilee of the Old Testament. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee it was truly a blessed and joy-filled year.

Our Jubilee theme, "Celebration! Jubilation! Exultation! Jesus Christ is with Us," set the tone and gave us direction in all that we did that year. The pastoral discerners—the Archdiocesan Catholic Charismatic Renewal leadership team—believed God was calling us to stretch our vision and to be open to newness. We responded by discontinuing our normal activities for a year, by reaching out in new areas of involvement and collaboration within our diocese, and by celebrating the charisms of the Holy Spirit in all our evangelization efforts.

We held archdiocesan-wide prayer meetings to celebrate and rekindle the fire of the early days.

Using the theme "Opening the Doors to the Grace of Jubilee," we opened the year, as well as our hearts, with a New Year's Eve celebration which included liturgy, dinner, shared witnesses and a prayer meeting. Near midnight, our hearts bursting with joy and gratitude, we prayed-in the Jubilee with a canticle of praise, recalling how hearts have been opened through God's Holy Spirit throughout history.

Recalling our earlier experiences of being baptized in the Holy Spirit—the joy, awe and love we felt in our new relationship with Jesus, and the empowerment of gifts we received to serve one another—we held archdiocesan-wide prayer meetings to celebrate and rekindle the fire of the early days. These also became opportunities to share this gift with others and to be refreshed for the Jubilee journey.

In March, keeping with the Vatican Jubilee calendar, our Renewal office collaborated with the Archdiocesan Offices of Social Concerns and Women by cosponsoring a Jubilee for Women. This included a benefit performance of "A Woman Called Truth," a story of the

The fruit of Jubilee 2000



great abolitionist, women's rights activist, and slave woman, Sojourner Truth. The purpose was to celebrate Christ's presence in efforts to support women in need and to showcase and raise funds for local outreaches and agencies that serve women and children. The evening was well attended and over \$14,000 was raised for seven shelters; new volunteers came forth as well. Truly a work of God in Jubilee Year 2000!

The local Renewal also collaborated with three parishes in a new evangelization effort, using the *Ashes to Fire* process published by CHARISM of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. This process uses the Lenten-Easter-Pentecost season as a natural means to evangelize. Three parishes in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, desired to bring renewal into their community and to develop greater levels of collaboration between them. They also wanted it to be lay driven, but fully supported by the clergy. We sat with the leadership team from the three parishes and worked on the entire process with them: workshops on evangelization, Ash Wednesday services, witness talks at all the Masses, a three-day mini-mission, scripture study, and a concluding Life in the Spirit seminar with over one hundred people baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Because the fruit was so abundant—a new grace of collaboration between the parishes and a greater zeal for God—they repeated the process this year, bringing new parishioners into the planning process. Seeing these results,

another parish, St. Joseph in Big Bend, Wisconsin, decided to implement this program. A wonderful fruit of the Jubilee year!

Pentecost Week was celebrated with a flurry of activities around the archdiocese. The celebration began with a Life in the Spirit seminar on Pentecost weekend, with prayer for baptism in the Holy Spirit celebrated during Pentecost Mass. Other events including prayer meetings and Masses for healing were offered the following week. Our special guest speaker was Msgr. William John-Lewis, who turned out to be one of the greatest blessings of the Jubilee. A gifted preacher and singer from the Commonwealth of Dominica, Msgr. Bill was used by the Holy Spirit to move hearts in profound and mighty ways. So moved, we invited our new found friend back to produce a CD! Later he returned to speak and minister at an annual Christmas gathering.

Jubilee 2000 was the seed for the "new springtime" and I believe the growth will continue well into this new millennium. Come, Holy Spirit, refresh us! Come, Holy Spirit, renew us! ☩



Gerry Mader is a member of the National Service Committee Council, and serves on the leadership team for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

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by Bob Canton

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name, they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:15-18).

In my heart, I kept on hearing this passage while preparing to conduct healing crusades in



Bangkok, Thailand, and Kuching, Malaysia, which were held on February 24-March 3, 2001. Deep in my heart, I knew that the Lord Jesus would let me witness again signs and wonders, healings, miracles and conversions of heart for his greater glory and honor. Three people accompanied me on these crusades: James Blubaugh of Jesus and Mary Prayer Group, Columbus, Ohio, and Al Pineda and Victoria Montesa who belong to the San Lorenzo Ruiz Prayer Group, Jersey City, New Jersey.

Our first stop was in Bangkok where a healing workshop was held on February 24 at the Holy Redeemer Hall. A healing crusade was conducted the following day at the Holy Redeemer Church. Both events were sponsored by the Spirit of Love Charismatic Servant Community and Holy Redeemer Parish.

Of the total Thai population of 65 million, only 2% are Christian; 95% are Buddhist, and 3% are Muslim. Some who attended both activities were Buddhists

and Muslims. I had the opportunity to ask some of them why they came to these Christian events, and most of them replied that they came to “satisfy their curiosity”, to see for themselves what a healing workshop and a healing crusade were all about. The Lord Jesus did not disappoint them. He showed them that he is the God who heals, a God who cares and loves them, a God who saves.

Many were healed of every kind of ailment and disease including emotional and spiritual maladies. The blind were able to see, the deaf could hear again, tumors disappeared, cancers melted away, the lame threw away their canes and ran around praising the Lord for his mighty deeds. A nun, Sr. Mila Martires of the Daughters

of Charity, who hails from the Philippines and now resides in Chiangmai, Thailand, had been diagnosed by doctors to have a systemic lupus erythematoses. She received prayer for healing and on the following day went for a check up at Camillian Hospital. The results of her blood tests and other examinations show that her lupus has been totally healed.

A lady named H o n g s i r i Theeranvavilai had her sight restored after six years of blindness caused by glaucoma. Elizabeth Phadungjaroen, who had been suffering from asthma for twelve years, received her healing. A man born deaf and mute, Nopakeaw ‘Micah’ Nimausa, was able to hear for the first time in his life. Grace Yuktanan’s tumors in her breast instantly disappeared.

Louis Pepper, an American residing in Bangkok, was full of bitterness and anger towards people who had hurt him. He decided to forgive and, as a result, he experienced inner peace and joy. These were only some of the recorded healings that took place during both events. A Thai tailor who also is a Buddhist stated quite firmly that from what he had witnessed during the healing crusade, he now knows that it is Jesus who heals. He wanted to know when

the next healing crusade would be held so that he could bring his sick friends. He wanted them to experience and to know the healing touch of Jesus.

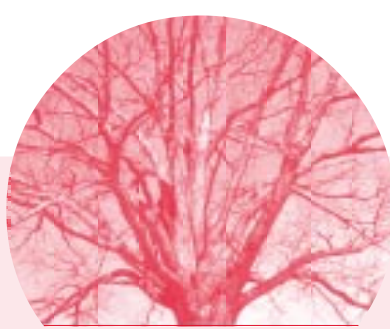
The Spirit of Love Charismatic Servant Community has since been conducting a monthly Mass and healing service at the Holy

A Thai tailor who also is a Buddhist...wanted to know when the next healing crusade would be held so that he could bring his sick friends. He wanted them to experience and to know the healing touch of Jesus.

Redeemer Church as an answer to the demands and requests of the parishioners who attended the workshop and the healing crusade. The Rev. James Thanu Krathong, C.Ss.R, parochial vicar of Holy Redeemer Church, has offered to be the regular celebrant of the healing Mass. “The Lord is quenching their thirst for him,” commented Joan Daengsvang, the head servant leader of the prayer community. “The Lord has opened a wide door for us to evangelize and to minister to Christians and non-Christians alike who come,” she recently wrote. She also reports that more people are now attending their weekly prayer meeting.

More signs and wonders, miracles, healings and deliverance took place during the healing workshop and crusade in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The country has a population of ap-

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Spiritual Formation

The world and the Christian

by Dorothy Ranaghan

“The world is too much with us.” This lament of Wordsworth is often a heartfelt cry of Christians. It’s a mistake. Does the world pose problems for us as we try to live our lives in, but not of it? Absolutely. At times we feel like we are drowning in the grief of the world, its promiscuity, pornography, drugs, violence, corruption, greed, pollution and downright hostility to the gospel. But this same “world” was “so loved” by God that he devised a great plan to save it. We are part of that plan. Call me Pollyanna if you choose, but life in the world does not always have to be experienced as a “valley of tears.” For all the difficulties and challenges involved in living out the gospel of Jesus in this world of ours, I see the obstacles as challenges to be met joyfully, not roadblocks leading to gloom and depression.

Recently I read about an interview conducted by Johnny Carson many years ago with Dolores Del Rio (a Mexican actress who was quite famous in the 20s and 30s). She was at the time over 70 years old, and Carson asked her the secret of her flawless skin. She said she had decided years ago “never to laugh or smile too broadly, nor to frown or cry without restraint.” How sad. Wrinkles and laugh lines, like stretch marks, are visible traces of life lived to the fullest. Some Christians have a “Del Rio” approach to the difficulties and challenges of living out the gospel in the world. Do nothing excessive, nothing radical, just “lay low” and hope that you make it through unscathed.

These coping mechanisms are not solutions. They are understandable, because when evils in the world surface we can feel overwhelmed and instinctively enter retreat or avoidance mode. We begin to look like settlers circling the wagons or racing for the fort, escaping together into a safe place. But, we will not have truly lived, nor will the gospel ever take root, if we turn away from the world. If there is any wisdom in the “run for the fort” approach, it is in banding together. If we are isolated we may well get picked off—and no Christian is meant to go it alone. There is not only more safety in numbers, but we will be more effective in all that we do if we stand together as the “body” of Christ.

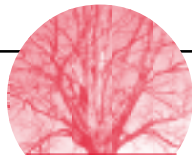
Rather than sealing ourselves off, we are meant to form “raiding parties.” We have to become offensively engaged in the world. I am reminded of a media executive, Bob Briner, whose 1993 book, *Roaring Lambs*, questioned the wisdom of Christian artists “hiding” in Christian companies that sell only Christian products to Christian consumers. His dream was to sign a roster of artists who were united both by Christian convictions and a commitment to build honest relationships with producers and promoters in the big leagues of “secular” music and video. I hope he has succeeded.

The “world” which hates Christ and his followers is human life and activity organized in economic, political and cultural unrighteousness, and involves suffering. When we are effectively opposed to such a world, we incur its hatred; but at the same time, we participate in the happiness of those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. That is part of our joy. But there is more. We are not just to oppose the unrighteousness in the big issues of abortion, euthanasia (and the whole culture of death), economic disparity, racial discrimination, resource shortages, the arms race, and many others, but also to work actively to bring righteousness, peace, order, beauty and all kingdom values to every environment in which we live—in education, business, politics, culture and entertainment, art, music, media technology, the internet. We intersect all of these “circles.” Christ, risen and alive, is in us, and through us he is still in the world and in each and all of these “circles.” In us and through us God still loves the world. Every day as we climb out of bed we can plant our feet on the ground and pray as Christ himself, “Father, show me what I can do today in the power of your Spirit to order the world in which I live according to your plan.”

We can then look for ways to make a difference. They surely won’t come about by letting fear rule us, or by inventing clever ways of fleeing the world. In the immortal words of the captain in Tim Allen’s comic movie, *Galaxy Quest*, “Never give up; never surrender.”

Perseverance is difficult. But individual pleasure is the idol of our secular age. Just because something “feels good,” does not make it right, and suffering for the sake of righteousness





will not feel glorious. But my personal pleasure is not large enough for a moral universe. There is a wider horizon to the gospel, which is more concerned with the relationship of humans one to another, and with the social structures so necessary to making that common good or happiness possible. We would do well to de-emphasize the mournful aspect of life in the world, and begin to enjoy building the kingdom here and now.

The world is indeed very much with us, and that is not all bad. In fact, a form of this present life will go with us into the next. The work we do now will usher in the new heaven and the new earth. Every good song, every amazing book, every righteous business deal, every discovery, every right relationship, every decision of our daily lives, therefore, pulses with eternal significance. It is building the kingdom of God. If we really put on this mentality, depression will ease up because our daily activity will not look as transient as footprints in the sand, slated to be washed away, but rather will be activity filled with meaning and a form of permanence. To think differently is to labor under the old Platonic dualism, the delusion about escaping this mortal body and this world and going to heaven.

For us that dichotomy has been bridged. Heaven has entered earth. All things were created in Christ and for him, and his incar-

nation in our world has changed our world forever. Heaven, or the happiness to which we are called, is, as Pope John Paul II has reminded us, a "living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity." That "meeting with the Father, which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit," has already begun in this world, therefore, in those who have entered into the life of Christ. If heaven isn't in your heart now, it won't be in any future world, either. "For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, ...we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured. This will be so when Christ hands over to the Father a kingdom eternal and universal: a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.39). ☩



Dorothy Garrity Ranaghan is a founding member of the People of Praise Community. A former member of the National Service Committee and former editor of the Chariscenter USA Newsletter, Dorothy currently does writing and retreat work. She and her husband, Kevin, live in South Bend, Indiana, and have six children and seven grandchildren.

Discernment

Teaching Outline

A. The world: obstacle or challenge?

The "Del Rio" approach: avoidance/escape

B. Engagement together as the body of Christ

What we oppose

What we bring to the world

C. Christ still in—and still loving—the world

Building the kingdom vs. individual pleasure

Eternal significance of our work in and for the world

D. Ushering in the new heaven and new earth

Reflection Questions

What is the "Del Rio" approach and what do you think of it as an approach to Christian life in the world?

What are some ways to band together for Christian action in the world? Why should we be motivated to do this?

What attitude toward the world is fostered by the realization that "heaven has entered the world?"

In what way does our work in the world really matter or make a difference?

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The church, which has a capacity of a thousand people, was so packed on the first night that Fr. Lawrence Chua, the pastor of the parish, set up tents outside the church equipped with a wide screen T.V. monitor.

proximately twenty-eight million and only 5% are Christian. Islam is the official religion of the country. Two successive days of the healing workshop were held at the Continental Hotel and three successive nights of the healing crusades took place at Holy Trinity Church. The church, which has a capacity of a thousand people, was so packed on the first night that Fr. Lawrence Chua, the pas-

tor of the parish, set up tents outside the church equipped with a wide screen T.V. monitor.

Once again, the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit showed that everything is possible with him. Seven blind people regained their eyesight. Cysts and tumors instantly disappeared, including that of Maureen Voon. Paralyzed people

walked from wheelchairs, including seventy-eight year old Joseph Lim. A twelve year old boy named Thaddeus Sii had a cast around his broken arm. He received prayers and the x-rays taken the day after the crusade showed that the bones had fused together as if his arm had never been broken. Boniface Raweh was completely healed of total deafness, and numerous other healings took place.

On the second day of the crusades, the Holy Spirit impressed upon me to exhort the people to renounce their practice of idolatry and occultism and to refrain from going to Bomohs or mediums and spiritualists, and to stop consulting palm readers and fortune tellers because these practices are an abomination to the Lord. They were encouraged to put their complete trust and faith in the Lord Jesus who can heal them and give them abundant life. Consequently, many threw away their amulets and lucky charms and, as a result, innumerable healings took place including the deliverance of many people from the clutches of evil spirits.

Every night we prayed for the release of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and many, including Buddhists, Muslims and Taoists, received the gift of tongues. Many people rested in the spirit, not only those inside the church but also those outside, many of them praising the Lord in tongues for the first time. This attracted the residents who live around the vicinity of the church, who came to investigate closely what they heard. What they saw for sure was the glory of God being manifested in their midst.

Bishop Anthony Lee from the Diocese of Miri, who celebrated the Masses with Fr. Chua during

the crusade, commented that the Holy Spirit had started a revival in that city. Pauline Lim, the head servant leader of the prayer community, said, "This is God's visitation to his people in Kuching, and many of us—for sure—will never be the same again. Many people found a hunger and thirst for God like they had never experienced before."

Three weeks later, a Life in the Spirit seminar was conducted by the Emmaus Charismatic Community as a follow up to the healing workshop and crusade. Ms. Lim recently wrote that the Life in the Spirit seminar was the most anointed and the highest attended so far in their diocese. A seminar for the youth was held a month later, and this generated a new youth ministry for their prayer community. Yes, we are in total awe of what we have witnessed and experienced in these two non-Christian countries in Asia, and we continually give glory to the Lord Jesus, the divine physician, who is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

"Now glory be to God who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinity beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts or hopes" (Eph. 3:20). Our God is truly alive and working wonderfully in our midst. ☸

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