


Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

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

Holy hunger

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is given for the renewing of the church and the world. It begins with the renewal of individual believers. It brings the grace and power to live the gospel message with conviction, courage, and boldness. It stirs in us a desire, a hunger for holiness because we want to be pleasing to God.

John Paul II, in his 2004 Pentecost Eve message, spoke of a mission for us: "New evangelization, which needs mature Christian personalities and strong Christian communities." The spirituality of Pentecost calls us to maturity, and to commitment. It is a way of life. And this way of life must lead to holiness. "It is God's will that you grow in holiness." "God has not called us to immorality but to holiness; hence, whoever rejects these instructions rejects not man, but God, who sends his Holy Spirit upon you" (1 Thes. 4:3, 7-8).

"An encounter with the Lord brings about a profound transformation in all who do not close themselves off from him. The first impulse coming from this transformation is to communicate to others the richness discovered in the experience of the encounter" (*The Church in America*). Do you remember how we could not wait to share our experience with others when we first encountered the Lord and received the Holy Spirit? We are called to become God's witnesses, just as the first disciples were on the day of Pentecost. The **message of hope** should be ever ready on our lips because it is ever present in our hearts and minds. Witnesses must also be an example of what their witness is about. Therefore God's witnesses must be holy, set apart

and different from the culture they are seeking to transform.

The parable of the silver pieces shows us very clearly what God does expect. He does not want us to bury what we have been given, but to multiply it (Matt. 25:14-30). Even if it only produces one more, God expects a return on the gift he has given. "The gift you have received, give as a gift" (Matt. 10:8). The apostles, who stumbled through the three years they walked with Jesus, saw and experienced miraculous, marvelous signs and wonders. Yet, they were unable to stand with him during the final hours of his life on earth. It took the experience of Pentecost to bring an "eye opening" awareness and a "world changing" faith. They were the first to begin living the spirituality of Pentecost. Their faith became bold and expectant. They were willing to suffer for the truth they proclaimed and now believed without a doubt.

"What is it that the bible wants to impress upon us with the revelation of the Spirit as strength and power? This, I think above all else: The Holy Spirit is the one and only true strength and real power that keeps the church alive! Just as the individual believer, the church itself cannot live by its own strength. **It is therefore from the Holy Spirit that the church and every preacher of the gospel has the power to convince and to lead to conversion, to get through to the very heart of a culture**" (Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*).

John Paul II called us to be these witnesses and "**sowers of hope.**" The Renewal has awakened us to this hope. We can witness to hope because we have experienced it and we walk in it. Therefore it must be, should be, can be us. In faith we must proclaim: **IT WILL BE US!** ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editors Desk

Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

O God, you set St. Teresa afire with love for your Son Jesus Christ. Through her example and intercession, lead us deeper into your presence, that we may more and more faithfully hear your word and keep it through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer from the prayers for the feast of St. Teresa expresses the soul's deep desire for holiness, for an intimate relationship with Jesus. It is our desire that the articles in this issue of *Pentecost Today* will renew in each of us the hunger for God and God's reign in our lives that we will be rekindled fires bringing the grace of Pentecost into our everyday world.

Sharing their understanding and experiences of holiness, Bishop Tom Flanagan and Mother Lucy Lukaszewicz awaken us to our real mission in life. Caroline Gambale witnesses to her call to be 'Jesus.' Ralph Martin reminds us of the rich resources we have in the Saints of the church, both as encouragers and challengers in our own journey in holiness. The gift of discernment is an important gift the Lord has given to us to assist us in our walk. Abbot David Geraets' thoughts should give us a greater understanding of this gift as well as the impetus to learn more about it.

Enjoy the reports given on the National Leaders' Conference, the Ars Priests' Retreat and the Portuguese Renewal which give testimony that the Spirit is alive and working among us.

In Ephesians 1:3-10 we read, "God chose us in him before the world began **to be holy** and blameless in his sight." Sanctify your people, Lord! ♦

Called *to love*



"All of the Christian faithful...are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness" (CCC 2013).

At the beginning of my faith journey, if someone would have asked me what holiness was, I would have given them a spiritual "to do" list: daily mass, fasting, Eucharistic Adoration, praying the rosary, obedience to the Church's teachings, etc. Young and spiritually immature, I believed that I could attain holiness if I just did all the "right" things. Then something happened to me that radically changed my perspective. During a flight to Illinois in 1992, my plane experienced a tremendous amount of turbulence. It was the kind of turbulence that would lead any reasonable Catholic to start praying the Act of Contrition. Afraid and believing that my plane was going to crash, I placed myself in the presence of the Lord and prepared my heart to be with him. Then I heard God interiorly say to me, *"You will not die because you have not yet loved."* These words were followed by a profound understanding that heaven was a place of unconditional love, and for anyone to be able to exist in heaven, they must first *become love*. "But Lord," I asked, "don't we have to obey the commandments to get to heaven?" He replied, "When one loves me, they obey my commandments because of their love."

God showed me that love must be the driving force behind everything; that holiness is to *become love* because "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). St. Francis De Sales said, "We must begin with love, continue with love and end with love." When a religious sister had told him, "I wish to acquire love through humility," he replied, "And I wish to acquire humility through love."

We naturally become what we contemplate.

As we contemplate and "fall in love" with Jesus, who is love, we cannot help but become holy.

It should be love that compels us to obey God's commandments. It should be love that leads us to prayer. It should be love that helps us to forgive our enemies. If we do these things with any other motive, we will not become holy but rather fall short and quickly get frustrated with ourselves. As St. Paul says, "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2-3).

I realized that I had the right tools but I was putting the cart before the horse. My focus was much more about *doing* things for God, as if I could achieve holiness through my own means, rather than growing in intimacy and love with God. It is

no wonder that John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* called us to contemplate the face of Christ. We naturally become what we contemplate. As we contemplate and "fall in love" with Jesus, who is love, we cannot help but become holy. Love has a way of doing just that; it has a way of changing us more into the image of the beloved.

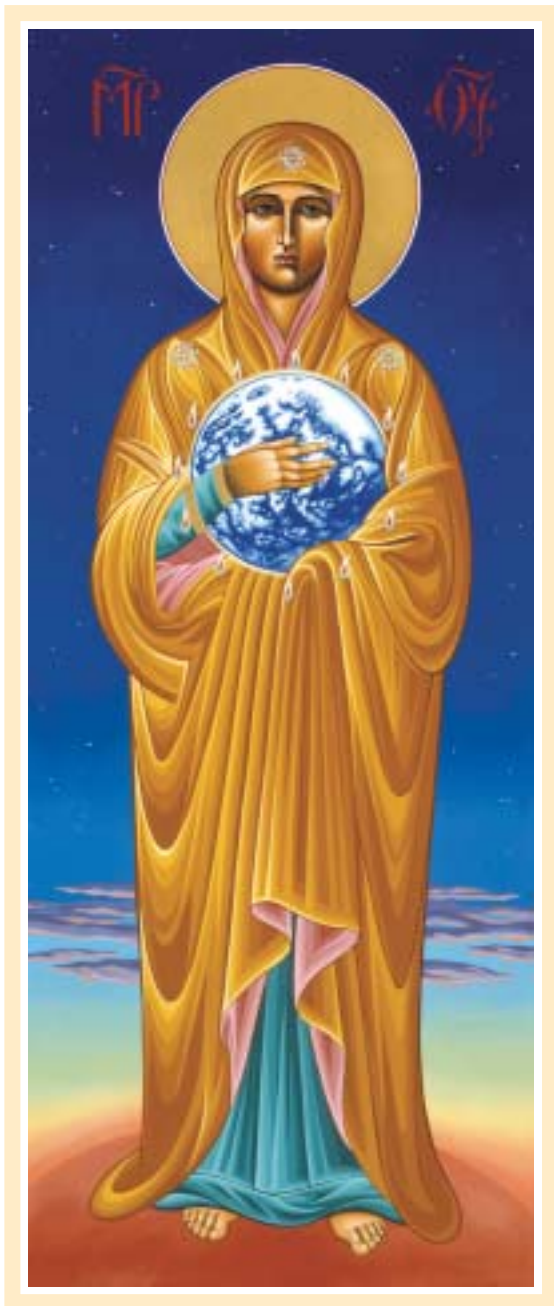
The words God spoke to me on the plane have never left me. It has been my prayer and deep desire to be transformed into love ever since. Even though I am acutely aware of my numerous sins and weaknesses, I rejoice in the truth that holiness is possible for me, not because of anything I have done but because of what Christ has done for me and wills to do in me. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes. 4:3). My spiritual to do list has changed. Now at the very top is written, "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14). ♦

Caroline Gambale is a dynamic and passionate evangelist. She has been active in youth ministry and evangelization for 13 years. Caroline works as a full time youth minister at St. Joseph's Parish in Hillsborough, NJ. She also serves as the Area Coordinator for Life Teen in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. A graduate of Steubenville University, Caroline has spoken at numerous rallies, retreats, and conferences.



Longing for holiness

This stirring of the Spirit initiates a profound response within the soul of every baptized person and...drives the soul to a more perfect charity in love and in service to the people of God.



"Mary Most Holy, Mother of all Nations"
©William Hart McNichols S.J.

by Mother Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC

Pope John Paul II's prayer for the Charismatic Renewal on Pentecost of 2004 was that the spirituality of Pentecost would spread in the church. Not only is it to spread in the church but also it is to be an incentive to holiness. "But you are enthroned as the Holy One, the One whom Israel praises" (Ps. 22:3). The psalmist makes this proclamation to the Lord God whom he depends upon and loves. It is this same proclamation that goes on through the ages through the lips of our beloved and belated John Paul II and every follower of Jesus as we endeavor to be holy as he is holy.

Adam and Eve as they shared in the divine intimacy with God "were in the grace of original holiness" (CCC #375). This was the divine plan of God before man sinned. Throughout the Old Testament to be holy meant to be separated from the secular or profane. It was also a sign of dedication to God's service. God was holy and he identified his separation from all evil. His creatures were holy in relation to him. The people of Israel were holy because they **were** the people of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus calls us to perfection. "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). **The universal call to holiness is not a recommendation but a commandment of Jesus.** God's own perfection is a model for us to follow primarily in love and mercy. God expects his followers to live lives of exemplary holiness. "It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society" (*Lumen Gentium* 40).

This holiness calls us to a greater worship. St. Paul tells us, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). The call to holiness is a call to be consecrated to the worship of God. This means we are set apart for worship. **All our activities are sanctified throughout the day because Jesus is our worship.** Jesus is on our mind and in our heart. He is included in our activities from the rising of the sun to its setting. His name is on our tongue ready to speak. "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). We see our daily activities as an occasion to join ourselves to God, in fulfilling his will and in serving others so as to lead them to communion with God.

The spirituality of Pentecost is undoubtedly a spirituality of holiness. When the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” at Pentecost, they were filled with the holiness of God. **The Spirit of God is holy and he is the agent of our holiness.** He is the source and giver of all holiness. By living in us he makes us into holy temples of God. His work is our sanctification. His breath is life to our souls. It is then we begin to mirror God and share in his divine life. “Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God ‘Father’ and to share in Christ’s grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory” (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132).

Let us look at the first disciple and our model. Mary became a living tabernacle of holiness. She was consecrated for this purpose. As the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary so we too can be vessels ready to receive the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was formed in the holy womb of Mary, so we are formed in the holy womb of the Church. Mary shows us the disposition we need before God. We must both empty out and become humble before our Creator. We must be attentive to the voice of God and respond as Mary did, “I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). We also need to live a life of prayer as Mary did in preparation for being a receptive vessel of God. To live in the spirituality of Pentecost we must be available and ready witnesses to the Spirit of God, actively prepared for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Prayer draws us to the heart of God. On February 14, 1981, as a teenager I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I was at home, at the kitchen table. I was with my foreign exchange sister, my mother, aunt and two sisters. That event changed my life. I was drawn to the heart of God through prayer especially prayer in tongues. Through that prayer I was led to intercession. I began to see God at work answering prayer, healing hearts that were broken and rescuing my friends from the clutches of despair. God continued to draw me to his heart. My whole focus changed because I was focused on God. I was drawn to holiness and the holiness of God. Through prayer, God gave me an insatiable thirst for him (Psalm 63).

Prayer leads us into a longing for holiness—the insatiable thirst for God. In prayer we see God and we desire to be like him. God is pouring out a gift of profound holiness especially in this present generation. Holiness is defined as the perfection of charity. In *Christifideles Laici*, John Paul II says, “The call to holiness is rooted in Baptism and proposed anew in the

other sacraments principally in the Eucharist. Since Christians are re-clothed in Christ Jesus and refreshed by his Spirit, they are ‘holy.’ They therefore have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do. The apostle Paul never tires of admonishing all Christians to live ‘as is fitting among saints’” (Eph. 5:3).

Pope John Paul II continues, “Life according to the Spirit, whose fruit is holiness (Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22), stirs up every baptized person and requires each to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, in embracing the beatitudes, in listening and meditating

on the Word of God, in conscious and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the church, in personal prayer, in family or in community, in the hunger and thirst for justice, in the practice of the commandment of love in all circumstances of life and service to the brethren, especially the least, the poor and the suffering.” This stirring of the Spirit initiates a profound response within the soul of every baptized person and draws upon the personal relationship with Jesus in prayer. It drives the soul to a more perfect charity in love and in service to the people of God.

Mary shows us the disposition we need before God.

★ **We must both empty out and become humble before our Creator.**

★ **We must be attentive to the voice of God and respond as Mary did.**

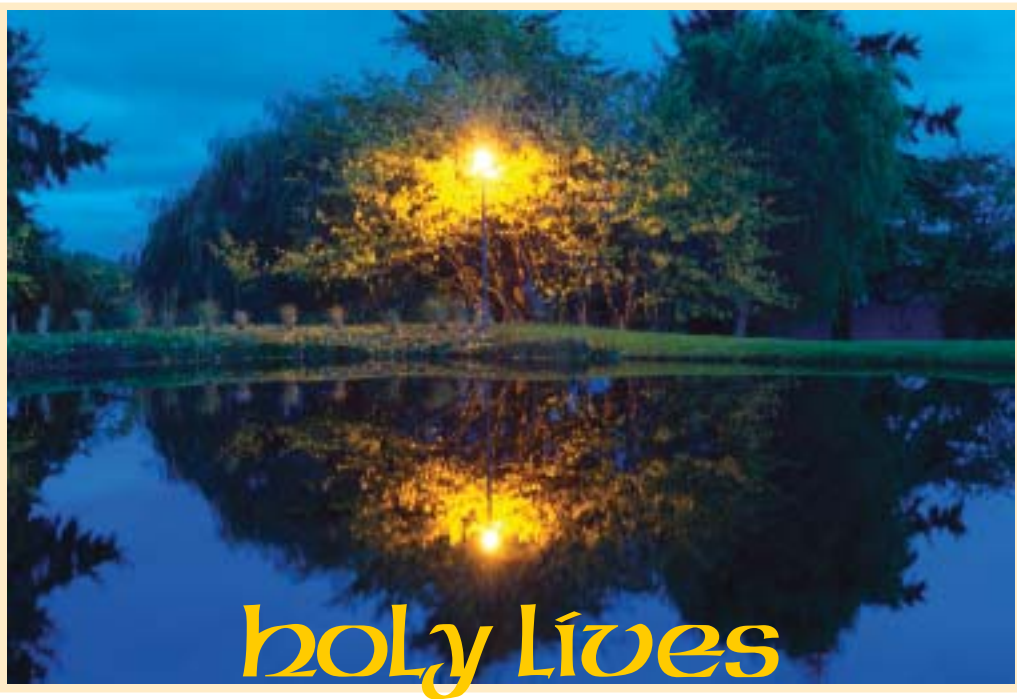
★ **We also need to live a life of prayer as Mary did in preparation for being a receptive vessel of God.**

★ **We must be available and ready witnesses to the Spirit of God, actively prepared for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

On Pentecost eve of 2004, Pope John Paul II said that the ecclesial movements and the new communities are a “providential response,” “given by the Holy Spirit” to today’s demand for the new evangelization. **Living** the spirituality of Pentecost, may our striving for holiness awaken others to the saving love of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. ♦

Mother Lucy Lukasiewicz is the Superior of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, a Charismatic Franciscan Religious Congregation. Before she came to the Disciples, she was involved in the Charismatic Renewal in Nebraska. She resides in Prayer Town, Texas along with the foundress Mother John Marie Stewart and Sisters. The Congregation lives a life of prayer and is active in the apostolate of Evangelization.





Excerpts from a talk given by Bishop Tom Flanagan at the National Leaders' Conference in Chicago, 2005

how blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs." Happiness and holiness come to us through Jesus the Lord and our total dependence on God, not merely on ourselves nor on the power of material things. We need to place our lives in his hands and to surrender to Jesus, our Savior. With God all things are possible, so let us entrust our lives and our journey of faith to Jesus Christ. Saint Isaac Jogues tells us: "We must give ourselves to the work and be faithful to God, and not spoil God's work by our shortcomings." Thomas Merton tells us: "We become saints or holy people not by violently overcoming our own weakness, but letting the Lord give us the strength and purity of God's Spirit in exchange for our weakness and misery." Our call to holiness is our call to be saints. Remember: you are God's creation, fashioned first with his heart—the Sacred Heart of Jesus—and then with his hands. God rejoices and celebrates with his chosen ones because of our talents, our gifts or charisms, and the abilities that are ours and just for us. Let us thank God for each other, let us thank God for our many and abundant blessings. "The Lord your God is with you; he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Holiness is a gift from God helping us to live in a closer relationship with Jesus the Lord. Through the scriptures, our own personal prayer life and the sacramental life of the church, we are blessed, and we are able to walk humbly before God, thus enabling us to have a closer and more intimate relationship with Jesus, our Savior and our friend. Holiness is a task. We have to work at it with all our heart and our entire mind. We need to enter again and again into a

deeper relationship with Jesus. We want to become holy women and men. We pray that with passage of time we will become more Christ-like in our daily journey as we walk along life's weary way with our sisters and brothers. "Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you" (Col. 3:12-13).

pope John Paul II of happy memory exhorted us in this way, "The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living." The Holy Father has called for "a genuine training in holiness," a holiness that leads us to a deep inner peace, a deeper relationship with Christ and a willingness to help others grow in God's grace. God has blessed all of us with many gifts and God wants us to share our blessings with others for the common good of our faith community, our prayer group and with our fellow parishioners in our local parish. Let us share our blessings "for a blessing is no blessing until it is shared." Allow God to help each and all of us to be his disciples and his ambassadors. "This makes us ambassadors for Christ, God as it were appealing to us" (2 Cor. 2:20).

We are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Our call to holiness is not just for some select people or groups; rather the call to holiness of life is God calling each one of us to a life of personal holiness. The call is to all ages, to all nations and for all times. A reporter said to

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Mother Teresa, "Some people say you are a saint!" And she replied, "We are all in the process of becoming saints, you in your way and I, in my way. Our mission in life is to grow in holiness." Our task is to use all the means available to us to do the ordinary things in an extraordinary way. Saints are ordinary men and women like any one of us, doing God's will, in the spirit of the Gospel of John. Jesus said to Thomas "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me" (John 14:6).

Jesus is our model. Mary is our protector and she guides us always to her Divine Son Jesus Christ. In Jesus we will find life, love, joy, hope, goodness and kindness, and through Jesus we grow in personal holiness of life. We become "other Christs" to our family, friends and to all people that we encounter in daily life.

Mary is the Mother of hope; to her we turn in prayer and praise. Mary lived in hope that God's promises would be kept, even at the foot of the cross. Mary is an example and beacon of hope, so let us put our trust in God as we pray: *Mother of Divine Hope, pray for us.* Mary encourages us to live toward the future for which we hope as we grow through life that is filled with sadness, misfortune, disappointments and despair. We are a people who live in the resurrection light and when we look at the face of Jesus we too, like Mary, are uplifted, encouraged, affirmed and we are given a ray of sunshine. Our hearts are filled with hope and we are renewed through the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that God will renew our holiness in the present and in the future and shed his light on us so as to dispel the darkness of a broken world with the light of Christ. "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:13-14). A lighted torch has been given to each one of us, to be the

salt of the earth, and to be that shining light of faith, hope and love to all people that we encounter in our daily life.

Mary keeps saying to us today what she said to the waiters at Cana in Galilee, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Let us have an opened mind, a loving and listening heart, so that we can hear truly the gentle voice of the master saying again and again to his followers, *Come to me. Come follow me. I need your hands and your feet. I need you in this moment of history.* This is our hour of rededication of our life to Jesus, when we say loud and clear. *Here am I, Lord. I have come to do your will. Lord, I am truly your humble and faithful servant.* ♦

Bishop Tom Flanagan is an auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio, Texas. He has been archdiocesan director/liason of the Charismatic Renewal since 1985. He is a member of the US Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Catholic Charismatic Renewal.



Prayer Card



Lord Jesus Christ, whom even the wind and sea obey; this past season we have seen winds and water that seem to overwhelm us.

We cry out, with all who were in the path of recent hurricanes, for your Presence and your Peace to all who suffer from these storms and their effects.

Father of Life, pour out your Holy Spirit to calm the storms that so trouble us. May this be a time of grace and healing for all our nation.

May Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Immaculate Conception, wrap her mantle of care around us to remind us of your victory over destruction, sin and death.

Jesus Christ, you are the Resurrection and the Life; in your Name we pray. Amen.



The National Service Committee and the other national leadership groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have designated the Friday preceding Ash Wednesday as a Day of Prayer and Fasting.

**day of
prayer
and
fasting
feb 24**

Renewal 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 will be the fifth year designated for such a day to strengthen the unity of the Renewal and communion in the Church.



Suggested Prayer Requests

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

- ◆ For the Gathering of National Leadership Groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to be held in Louisiana in January.
- ◆ For a generous response to the Day of Prayer and Fasting for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States on Friday, February 24.
- ◆ That the spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the Church as a renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation.
- ◆ For an increase in the number of Fanning the Flame Partners, that the financial resources for the work of the NSC will always be available in a timely way.

Why include the NSC in your will?

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

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

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

Sent forth to build the culture of Pentecost

2005 National Leaders' Conference, Chicago November 11–13

by *Father Larry Carew*

It wasn't easy getting out of Chicago, by air, on Sunday, November 13th. It was extra windy in the "Windy City" that day. Departure delays abounded on account of that. Nearby, football pros and their fans watched in amazement, as the pigskin just kept going where it wasn't supposed to. The weather may well have been symbolic of the great Wind that had been blowing through the National Leaders' Conference that weekend.

Earlier that day, over six hundred assembled leaders at the Crowne Plaza Hotel listened, as NSC Chairman Aggie Neck challenged us to examine ourselves and face up to whether we might have allowed ourselves to become like the dry bones spoken of in the Book of Ezekiel. Had we allowed our former zeal, expectancy, hopes and dreams, along with our reliance upon the gifts of the Spirit, to degenerate into dry bones?

"We're in the valley of decision..." she declared. In the next breath, we heard her cry out, "Speak to the dry bones, Lord!"

One of the word gift members I met later, at the airport, shared with me that, independently of Aggie, she'd also received, and was ready to share, that very same word from Ezekiel 37. In this passage God does not simply speak and breathe over a lifeless people in order to restore them to life. God decides to do this through a human instrument, anointed with a charismatic gift, called prophecy.

On Friday evening, just before the official opening of the conference, a small group of us, who belong to the NSC Council intercessory network were gathered together in prayer. As we cried out to the Lord on behalf of our brothers and sisters about to assemble, we also found ourselves addressed by Ezekiel 37. At that moment, we knew the we'd been authorized to first prophesy life over dry bones and then to prophesy in intercession, once more, so that God's Spirit would come "from the four winds" and raise us to our feet. After all, if you are going to participate in a new move of the Spirit, you're definitely going to need to be full of the breath of God, not to mention ready to get those feet a movin'.

In a variety of ways, this event was significantly unlike previous national conferences, even though it followed the familiar format of general sessions followed by smaller workshops, etc. On the surface of things, what made this get-together different was the abundance of workshops (thirty-six in all); the emphasis on youth ministry and the youthfulness of the presenters; the availability of "practicum" workshop presentations, where you could get "hands-on" advice on "how to" do ministry, this way or that way; the opportunity to be blessed by the presence, teaching and preaching of not just one bishop, but three: Bishops Sam Jacobs, Robert Carlson and Tom Flanagan; the chance to get a taste of cutting-edge ministry to teens, founded by Sal Solo, a former rock star who now employs music and multimedia special effects in the service of the Gospel; the wonderful privilege of encountering St. Francis Assisi, as he resolves to rebuild the beaten-down Church of his own day, dramatized through the amazingly inspired artistry of actor Leonardo DeFilippis.

Above and beyond all of that, however, what made being there so significantly different from prior gatherings was, for this “reporter,” the fresh ways in which I could sense the Spirit moving. Whenever we charismatics gather together for praise and worship, for instance, it’s rare for not just a few of us to find ourselves simultaneously graced with an array of various experiences of the Divine Presence. In that sense, Chicago’s blessings were no different. Touches of God’s love, Christ’s joy and even the Holy Spirit’s conviction abounded.

Yet, something nearly indefinable made this gathering quite different. At one point, for instance, as the evening general session presider, Cindy Erivez, found herself prompted to suddenly cry out to us: “Ride the wave!” I was nearly knocked off my feet. Something akin to a powerful swell of the Spirit had just swept through the place.

Moments like that signaled to me, and many others, I’m sure, that the Holy Spirit is surely poised to anoint us with fresh power, if we are willing to settle for nothing less and if we are simultaneously determined to follow his lead wherever it may take us.

Music minister Bill Richart gifted all of us with a wonderful new song to sing. He’d written it especially for the conference and the fresh move of the Spirit meant to accompany it. It’s a rousing and lovely hymn entitled: “I Say Yes, Lord.” We delighted in singing it, one more time, just before the conference concluded. As we did, Fr. John Gordon could be overheard, interpreting with side comments. We’d sing: “Oh, send me with your fire from above,” as Father interjected: “Only say it if you mean it!” We’d sing: “Wherever you send me, I’ll go,” while Fr. John threw out the prophetic challenge: “He’s going to take you up on this!”

Moments earlier, youth minister, Paul George, had shared wisdom with us that applied to charismatics, both young and not so young alike: “The bad news is that no one, on his own, can build the culture of Pentecost. The good news is that, through us, God is quite able to build the culture of Pentecost.”

After all, he did it once before with a handful of cooperative charismatics. It appears that he’s determined to do it once again, if he can find a handful of charismatics who prove to be equally cooperative. Are you ready to summon him to breathe life into

your dry bones? Are you ready to ask him to raise you to your feet? Are you ready to help build the culture of Pentecost? **“I say yes, Lord.”** ♦

Fr. Larry Carew is the Bishop’s liaison to the Charismatic Renewal for the diocese of Bridgeport, CT. He has been active in the Renewal for over 30 years. Fr. Larry is the author of the book, Healer of Hearts, Healer of Minds, as well as several retreats on healing.

A black and white photograph of a white dove in flight, wings spread, flying over a desert landscape. In the background, there is a large, prominent rock formation with vertical columns, likely a mesa or butte. The sky is clear.

2006
National Leaders'
Conference

November
10-12
Albuquerque
New Mexico

Come join us in scenic and historic Albuquerque for our next Leaders' Conference.

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Called to holiness: John Paul II and lessons from the saints

by *Ralph Martin*

Pope John Paul II spoke of 3 rediscoveries that the Holy Spirit has led the Church to beginning with the Second Vatican Council which concluded in 1965. One of these is the rediscovery of the “universal call to holiness.”

Before we go much further in our examination of the spiritual journey let’s take an initial look at what “holiness” really means. In the Book of Ephesians we read: “God chose us in him before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love” (Eph. 1:4). To be holy is not primarily a matter of how many rosaries we say or how much Christian activity we’re engaged in; it’s a matter of having our heart transformed into a heart of love. It is a matter of fulfilling the great commandments that sum up the whole law and the prophets: to love God and our neighbor, wholeheartedly. Or as Teresa of Avila puts it, holiness is a matter of bringing our wills into union with God’s will.

Thérèse of Lisieux puts it very similarly: “Perfection consists in doing his will, in being what he wills us to be...who resists his grace in nothing...” Or as Thérèse put it towards the very end of her life: “I do not desire to die more than to live; it is what he does that I love.”

John Paul II urges us to reconnect with the mystical tradition of the Church, embodied in a particular way in the writings of certain saints, as an important resource in helping us respond to the great call to holiness. “This great mystical tradition...shows how prayer can progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved,

vibrating at the Spirit’s touch, resting filially within the Father’s heart.”

He makes clear that this depth of union isn’t just for a few unusual people (“mystics”) but is a call that every Christian receives from Christ himself. “This is the lived experience of Christ’s promise: ‘He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him’ (Jn. 14:21).”

Then John Paul summarizes some of the main wisdom taught by the mystical tradition about the spiritual journey, drawing in particular from the writings of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Therese of Lisieux, and Catherine of Siena. He identifies four principles in the writings of the saints that are essential to a proper understanding of the spiritual journey.

1 Union with God of this depth is totally unattainable by our own efforts; it is a gift that only God can give; we are totally dependent on his grace for progress in the spiritual life. Yet we know also that God is eager to give this grace and bring us to deep union. Without him, we can do nothing but with him all things are possible (Jn. 14: 4-5; Lk.18:27; Phil. 4:13).

2 At the same time our effort is indispensable. Our effort is not sufficient to bring about such union, but it is necessary. The saints speak of disposing ourselves for union, by our spiritual practices. If we really value something we must be willing to focus on doing those things that will help us reach the goal. And yet it remains God’s grace that enables us to live the necessary “intense spiritual commitment.” “You will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search

after him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Dt. 4:29).

3 Much has to change in us in order to make us capable of deep union with God. The wounds of both original sin and our personal sins are deep and need to be healed and transformed in a process that has its necessarily painful moments. The pain of purification is called by John of the Cross the “dark nights.” It is important not to be surprised by the painful moments of our transformation but to know that they’re a necessary and blessed part of the whole process. “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14: 22).

4 And finally, we need to know that all the effort and pain is worth it! Infinitely worth it. The pain of the journey will appear in retrospect to have been light, compared to the weight of glory that we were being prepared for (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Deep union, (“spiritual marriage”) is possible even in this life. Teresa of Avila tells us that there’s no reason that someone who reaches a basic stability in living a Catholic life can’t proceed all the way to “spiritual marriage” in this life, and bear the great fruit for the kingdom that comes from such union.

The teachings of these saints show us how to make this journey, and overcome the obstacles we meet along the way. ♦

Ralph Martin, a long time leader in renewal, has developed a series of audio albums that make accessible the teachings of the saints mentioned in this article and others as well. Available at: www.renewalministries.net. Ralph currently serves as President of Renewal Ministries and Director of Graduate Theology Programs in the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Newsbriefs

Charismatic Retreat at Ars attracts 850 priests

by Fr. Edward O'Connor, C.S.C.

Priests from 71 countries of the world and numerous bishops, on one day 19 of them, made a retreat at Ars, France, during the week that ran from September to October this year.

The retreat was for priests involved in the Charismatic Renewal, **to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit in their ministry**; it was also an impressive testimony to the enormous growth of the Renewal during the 38 years of its history. As one who witnessed the origins of the Renewal in 1967 in two Notre Dame graduates teaching at Duquesne University, and its rather modest acceptance here in the United States, I was astounded to discover how far the Renewal had spread abroad. I had supper one night with a bishop from Malaysia and a priest from Singapore. Frequently I found myself in the company of priests from Africa. One from El Salvador told me that practically every parish in his country had several charismatic prayer groups

The principal speakers were both from Ireland. Father Kevin Scallon, after years of ministry in England and Nigeria, had been appointed Spiritual Director of All Hallows Seminary in Dublin, where he started the "Intercession for priests," a month long retreat. Since 1985, however, he has been mostly collaborating with Sister Briege McKenna, O.S.C.

She was the other speaker, and is, in her own person, a remarkable testimony to



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the Charismatic Renewal. As a young nun with the Sisters of St. Clare, she had been sent to Florida in 1967 to teach kindergarten. However, she was afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis so badly that her fingers were stiff and her feet deformed. A doctor told her there was no hope for a cure; that soon she would be in a wheelchair. A few years later, while attending a conference on the Charismatic Renewal, she was miraculously healed. Shortly afterwards, she received the gift of healing herself. Despite her utter repugnance for such a ministry, she gradually found herself praying over people, many of whom were healed. Some years later, Father Hal Cohen asked her to help him give a retreat for priests. Then, when he fell ill, she had to give the remainder of the retreat herself. That led to other invitations, and since then, her chief ministry has been that of preaching to priests all over the world.

Towards the end of the retreat, all who wished were invited to come forward and be prayed with for what is called the "baptism in the Spirit," the key experience of the Renewal. About two hundred did so, and the rest of the congregation prayed over them. Later, several testified about the spiritual experience they had received.

There was a great deal of singing before and after the talks, and during the celebration of Mass, Lauds and Vespers. But after one or two days, I began to wonder why there was no singing in tongues, as usually happens at a charismatic conference. Not long after that, someone did indeed begin singing in tongues, and a few others joined in. A little later, a bigger group did so, and later a still bigger one. Finally, the whole auditorium thundered, each person singing in the tongue and the melody given to him. One might expect that this would become utter bedlam; on the contrary; it was beautiful and harmonious.

One day, the retreatants made an excursion to visit the shrine of St. Margaret Mary at Paray-le-Monial. On another day, there was a conference on St. Therese of Lisieux. But chiefly the retreat focused on St. John Vianney, the priest who made this little village of Ars famous all over the world, and whose hidden presence seemed to give this retreat its power. ♦

Save this date: June 22-24, 2007.
Plans are underway to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Meadowlands Exposition Center, New Jersey.

Discernment of spirits

The protection of faith

by Abbot David Geraets, OSB

We evaluate the authenticity of any gift by the fruit it produces, not by how flashy it is.

Though often humble in its overt expression, discernment in general, is one of the most important spiritual gifts. For without discernment we often confuse or abuse other gifts of the spirit. Discernment in general is supported by three practical rules.

◆ Jesus says that, “By their fruits you will know them.” We must learn to be good “fruit inspectors” and not bruise the fruit.

◆ Evil cannot long endure on the face of the earth. The devil is in a hurry. God has all eternity. “He is never in a hurry, but neither is he ever late,” as Tommy Tyson used to remind us.

◆ A word from God always builds up and edifies the Body, the Church.

The Charismatic gift, discernment of spirits (*diakrisis pneumatou*), empowers Christians with the ability to tell the difference between gifts of the Holy Spirit and those alleged gifts that may come from some other source. Paul, in the Corinthian text (1 Cor. 12:7) was particularly interested in recognizing the experiences coming from the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Blessed Trinity. He didn't want anything attributed to the Holy Spirit that was only human, angelic or demonic in origin.

Careful observation of scriptures and other Church writings show that early Christians employed the charismatic gift of discernment in three ways. The first, discernment of spirits, empowered Christians with the ability to discern the presence of the risen Lord Jesus Christ in the worshipping assembly—principally in the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:29). In 1 Cor. 11:29, Paul uses the same Greek word (*diakrisis*), “For all who eat and drink without *discerning*,” as he later uses it in 1 Cor. 12:10, when he writes about discernment of spirits. This suggests that the first usage of the gift of discernment is to *recognize* and invite the presence of the risen Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit into the Eucharistic worship and Christian community.

The second way early Christians used discernment of spirits was to *recognize* and invite the presence of angels and saints into their worship and other prayer forms. A special place was given to Mary in both Eastern and Western Churches, but always in relationship with Jesus. When Paul writes about speaking in tongues of mortals and of angels (1 Cor. 12:1), he is writing to people who

have a common knowledge of angels and saints by experience. This *recognition* is another function of the gift of discernment.

A third way the discernment of spirits was used among early Christians was to *recognize* an evil spirit, confront it and reject it, and then get back to worshipping the risen Lord Jesus Christ. To help appropriate the gift of discernment and to perfect the gift once it is received, Fr. Edward O'Connor, C.S.C. wrote a couple of articles for *New Covenant* in the early days of the Renewal that I have found quite helpful. He presents these suggestions under two headings, subjective and objective criteria, for what he considers helpful in *prudential judgment*.

Subjective Criteria

1. **Usage of a charismatic gift** must first of all bear good fruit in the life of the person exercising it, and then in the lives of those receiving ministry.

2. **To be an authentic charismatic** one must be a person of prayer. No pray, no prophet!

3. **Ethics.** A person who would speak God's word, must live it out in their life.

4. **The life and practice** of a charismatic must exalt Jesus Christ.

5. **The life and practice** of a charismatic should manifest the fruits of the Spirit.

6. **An authentic prophet** or charismatic will be the occasion for good happenings. They are the founders of religious orders, charismatic movements or groups and important religious events.

Objective Criteria

1. **Pastoral authority.** Be under some kind of pastoral covering.

2. **Public revelation.** It's contained in Sacred Scripture.

3. **Solid teaching.** Paul's admonition to both Timothy and Titus, “Make sure your teaching is orthodox.”

4. **State in life.** Stay where you are when you receive God's call.

5. **Community.** Salvation always comes in, through and to community.

6. **Spiritual Director.** He or she can be ordained or lay.

7. **Journal.** Keep a record of your soul.

8. **Grace builds on nature.** If something is true on the psychological level, it is also true in an analogous way both on the spiritual and physical level.

These are just a few suggestions about the charismatic gift, discernment of spirits. May my sharing be helpful to you, and may we pray for one another. ◆



Abbot David Geraets OSB is Abbot of the Monastery of the Risen Christ in San Luis Obispo, California. He has been actively involved with giving retreats, counseling, spiritual direction and evangelization on a worldwide basis in the Charismatic Renewal since 1967.



The Portuguese Renewal in the Diocese of Fall River

by Father Henry S. Arruda, Liaison for The Portuguese Charismatic Renewal for the Fall River Diocese

Immigrants from Portugal's mainland, the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, have immigrated to good USA for a long time. Saint John the Baptist Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts, established in 1869, was the first Portuguese parish in North America. The latest influx of Portuguese immigrants into Southeastern Massachusetts, occurred in the 1970's.

Thirty years ago some Portuguese people started to attend unheard-of prayer meetings run by the good Franciscan Fathers at Our Lady's Chapel in downtown New Bedford. Soon afterwards, both clergy and laity from the Portuguese community began organizing what became known as the "*Renovamento Carismático de Etnia Portuguesa*" (*Portuguese Charismatic Renewal*) of the Diocese of Fall River.

Immediately the renewal took root and the numbers of Catholics who participated in these prayer meetings reached, or even surpassed, the thousand mark! Large prayer groups were established at

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Saint John the Baptist and Immaculate Conception, all of New Bedford; followed soon by the formation of other prayer communities at Espírito Santo (Holy Ghost) Church in Fall River and St. Anthony's Church in Taunton. Leaders were formed, and Holy Spirit Seminars, counting hundreds of participants, took place. Since then, the number of charismatic groups in the Diocese of Fall River has increased to nine. I would say that the number of participants in our different communities totals in the thousands.

The Renewal flourished with its impressive participation of people at leadership schools, seminars and conferences. We feel a very special affinity with the renewal communities of Bermuda, Hillmar, California, and some prayer groups from Rhode Island and Connecticut, as we have extended to them a helping hand in their formation.

We, as a rule, sponsor a *Conference*, to which we invite everyone, every other year. At these conferences we gather anywhere from 600 to 800 people. On the alternate year we offer a *Spiritual Retreat* to which 400 to 500 people attend.

Besides these conferences and retreats, and weekly prayer meetings of all communities, we also offer leadership and study schools monthly to all diocesan leaders. We sponsor as well general gatherings of all New Bedford and Taunton prayer groups (*Reuniões Magnas*) every three months, alternating between the New Bedford and the Taunton communities.

Our Diocese also sponsors an annual "*Pentecost Celebration*" and the Portuguese Renewal is the major constituent of that celebration which usually takes place at St. Anthony Church, Taunton, Massachusetts. Our Bishop, George W. Coleman, presides over this celebration.

A very important service offered by the Portuguese Renewal in the Diocese is "*The Cenacle*." People call in with requests for prayers and counseling. Many people have found solace and peace through this ever-loving service. Another service our leadership has provided is support to the various Portuguese communities, particularly those in California, Connecticut, Bermuda and even the Azores!

In conclusion, I see the Lord working through our Renewal in a very real and beneficial way. Many of our participants have, through the renewal, found their way back to the Lord and to the Church. The support the renewal has offered, particularly to immigrants, has been a true blessing to them; and, they become very involved, active members of their particular communities.

We, consequently, hear the Lord, with a loud voice, expressing his joy and encouragement for the wonderful work the Spirit of Jesus is dispensing abundantly amongst the faithful of this specific area of his vineyard. Praise the Lord! ♦

For more information on the Charismatic Portuguese Renewal of the Fall River Diocese, please contact "O Cenáculo" (The Cenacle), tel. 508-992-3829.



From the
Executive
Director

.....
by Walter Matthews

Holiness and a year of opportunities

The National Service Committee has emphasized in recent years (as has been true in every phase of the Service Committee's existence) the call to holiness in the Renewal: of prayer groups, communities, ministries and service committees; of individuals, and, especially, of leaders. A call to holiness and deeper prayer has been a part of the NSC's Renewal Leaders' Gatherings for several years now. It was a focus of the National Leaders' Conference in Nashville in 2003 and the recent National Leaders' Conference in Chicago (see article p.8). In Chicago, Bishop Tom Flanagan, Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio, shared his reflections on holiness for those in the Leadership Track.

No one is exempt from this call to holiness, especially not leaders. "The baptism in the Holy Spirit includes both the Spirit's sanctification and charismatic gifts" (*Fanning the Flame* p.13). We distort what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit if both aspects are not emphasized, taught and lived! If we are to truly respond to Pope John Paul II's call to "build the culture of Pentecost" then our personal and communal holiness must be essential building blocks.

As we move into 2006 "sent forth to build the culture of Pentecost" I want to highlight several opportunities the Lord is providing to us this year.

In April (25-29) the worldwide Pentecostal churches will gather in Los Ange-

les to remember and celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Azusa Street one hundred years ago.

In June Pope Benedict XVI has called for a gathering of participants in ecclesial movements to gather with him on the eve of Pentecost in St. Peter's Square similar to the event that Pope John Paul the Great convened in 1998. On Pentecost the Charismatic Renewal will have a specifically charismatic celebration of Pentecost (June 4) organized and sponsored by ICCRS. The theme is "My soul does magnify the Lord." The NSC will sponsor a Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi that will culminate in these two events.

ICCRS will then convene an International Conference June 5-9 in Fiuggi, outside of Rome, under the theme "Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," followed by an optional pilgrimage to Assisi and San Giovanni Rotondo.

In the fall the NSC, in collaboration with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, will convene the 2006 National Leaders' Conference in Albuquerque. (See ad page 11 this issue.)

Finally, I would like to share with you part of a note I received from Fr. George Kosicki, an early leader in the Renewal and a founding member of the NSC, about my column in the last issue of *Pentecost Today* concerning my interview with Fr. George Montague and Fr. Kilian McDonnell. Fr. Kosicki wrote: "...the *real experience* of the early Church is for the Church today, NOW, 'the real thing' is the fire from heaven. Come, Holy Spirit and set our hearts (and minds) on fire!" ♦

Friends of the NSC

As the National Service Committee prepared to meet in mid-September for its annual Retreat Meeting the impact and devastation of Hurricane Katrina was profoundly before us and that of Hurricane Rita was soon to follow. There was already awareness of how the hurricanes had affected the individual lives of a number of Renewal leaders and participants as well as of the Renewal's ability in several dioceses to go forward due to damage to facilities and/or the cancellation of events.

The NSC decided that it could best show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Renewal in the Gulf Coast area by taking a special collection at the National Leaders' Conference in Chicago to support the most affected Renewal groups.

As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it."

The collection taken received a most generous response of \$7,500 as the 600 leaders present wanted to show support to those affected for their years of fruitful service to the Renewal.

Based upon an assessment of need the National Service Committee has distributed the money to three Renewal Groups in the area: the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans which lost most of their equipment and files because of the flooding; the Center of Jesus the Lord that suffered damage to their Chapel; and the Renewal in the Diocese of Lake Charles which was unable to hold their annual conference due to the lack of facilities in the area being used as shelters.

If you would like to make a special donation to support the Renewal in the Gulf Coast area please send it to Chariscenter USA, PO Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508. Mark it Gulf Coast Renewal.

List your prayer group on our website!
Visit NSC-Chariscenter.org for list and see the links to national and international websites.

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The 2005 Index of articles can be found on our website at:
www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

Bishops speak to the Renewal

In October 2005, I had the opportunity to participate in the "Bishops Speak to the Renewal" Conference in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area.

People gathered to hear speakers in general sessions, bishops speaking to priests, bishops and priests speaking to the laity, a deacon speaking to deacons and a religious speaking to religious. All who registered received a booklet of letters from bishops from throughout the entire US. They had been asked to address these questions: "What are the Strengths of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal? What are its weaknesses? How could the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Church be more effective?"

Bishop Sam Jacobs spoke of how this renewal has been part of the church since Pentecost. The renewal is rooted in the heart of the church. From the early days of this renewal the leaders sought the guidance of the Pope and the Church. International gatherings have been held since early on. John Paul II spoke of his conviction that this is of the Holy Spirit. In 1976 the bishops of the US decided to have liaisons to the bishops in each diocese. Among the many strengths of the Renewal he spoke of were the ecumenical gatherings, the Life in the Spirit Seminars and the rooting and forming of people more deeply in their faith so that they can grow in the life of the Spirit. The Renewal has fostered mature and continual personal conversion, deeper commitment to Jesus Christ, and a profound openness to prayer, especially spontaneous prayer, including praise, thanksgiving, glorification, worship and repentance. This is only one renewal in the church. God gives different graces to different individuals/groups.

Ministry
Update

by Sr. Mary Anne
Schaezner



Bishop Jacobs stated that Pope John Paul II recognized that a great number of men and women have achieved a deeper understanding of their Baptism through this renewal. People are more aware of the call to evangelize, and to give witness to the Spirit. We see how many people have become involved in ministry in their parishes. God has touched us so that we can share it with others. A number of vocations to the church have come out of the renewal.

Benedict XVI stands in the same attitude of Pope John Paul II toward the Renewal. In 2006, for the Vigil of Pentecost, and as a public demonstration of faith in Jesus Christ, the Pope has called for ecclesial movements and charismatic renewal communities to gather in Rome.

This renewal has had its weaknesses. Sometimes the prayer group becomes a prayer club, taking care of its own needs instead of evangelizing and reaching out. We need to get in touch with our original experience so that we can be empowered again. There are times when there is a lack of being fully Catholic. There has been elitism among some, e.g. saying that one is not baptized in the Spirit if one does not speak in tongues. Some groups have little teaching and spiritual formation. Sometimes the charismatic gifts are not active.

Bishop Jacobs concluded his talk by saying that we stand at the heart of the church. We are called to bring the grace of Pentecost to the world and to bring the charismatic gifts to the church. ♦

For Letters, conference talks from US Catholic Bishops to the Renewal or National Leaders' Conference in Chicago contact Colin LaVergne: 888.809.0267, or resurrection@usfamily.net.

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