

# PENTECOST *Today*

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

January/February/March 2009

## Prayer and Hope!



- Receive power live, Robert Galea** p. 3
- Step out in hope-filled faith, Fr. Larry Carew** p. 6
- Leaders Conference report,  
Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer** p. 8
- Chuck Matzker on hope amidst  
prayer group struggles** p. 10
- Do you have the gift of encouragement?  
Renee Marazon** p. 12

*CNS photo/Bob Roller*

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



## Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

# Prayer and hope: Telling God what we need

*"Nothing is equal to prayer,  
for what is impossible it makes possible.  
What is difficult it makes easy"  
(St. John Chrysostom).*

*"It is essential to begin the  
practice of prayer with a firm resolution  
of persevering in it"  
(St. Theresa of Avila).*

These two quotations make it very clear that if we believe these words then our efforts at prayer are under girded with a hope that is rooted in faith. This faith is anchored in Scripture and in the teachings of the Church as well as the writings of the saints. This faith is also strengthened in us by the many prayers that are answered. All prayer is answered. It is answered with the wisdom of God. "We need to say to those about to shrug their shoulders and give up the struggle against evil: 'Turn to prayer, and take deep breaths of the Holy Spirit'" (*Come Creator Spirit*).

God himself urges us to ask. St. Augustine tells us "God would not urge us to ask unless he were willing to give." "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. If you, with all your sins, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to anyone who asks him!" (Matt 7:7, 11) The Amplified Bible says of verse eleven "good and

advantageous things." Our hope, our trust must be in the God who loves us. Prayer is not telling God what to do, but prayer is telling God what we need.

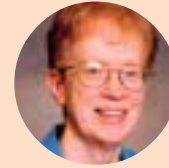
The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. It is a prayer just to say his name. (Jesus in Hebrew means: 'God saves'" (CCC #430). When we say his name it draws us into his presence and in his presence we are safe, we have hope, we are loved. Hope is necessary when we pray. Hope is like a firm foundation that we hold on to. Hope is like the anticipation that is within us as we await something that we know is coming. "In hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen; how is it possible for one to hope for what he sees? And hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance" (Rom 8:24-25).

"Prayer ascends and mercy descends. High as are the heavens and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of man" (St. Augustine).

As I come to the end of my term on the National Service Committee, this will be my last column as Chairman. I want to thank all of you who have encouraged me with your words of affirmation. It has been heartwarming to know that in these past seven years my column has brought inspiration and hope to many of you. It is my hope that I will see you again in many different places. May God's peace be with us always. ♦

*Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.*

*Cover photo: Chaplain, Mercy Sister Natalie Rossi, prays with a Catholic inmate in solitary confinement.*



## Editor's Desk

by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

*May the God of hope fill you with  
all joy and peace in your faith, so  
that in the power of the Holy Spirit  
you may be rich in hope  
(Rom 15:13).*

In this issue we continue to glean from the riches found in the letters of St. Paul. It is our desire that our writers will give you a new thirst for **prayer**, the power that is ours through this gift and great reason to **hope**.

The witness of **Robert Galea** on page 3 is filled with awe and enthusiasm for God's love and presence among the youth of the world.

The articles by **Father Larry Carew** attune our hearts to the importance and blessings of prayer in our lives. Through their writings we can see the harvest of prayer to be one of continued hope.

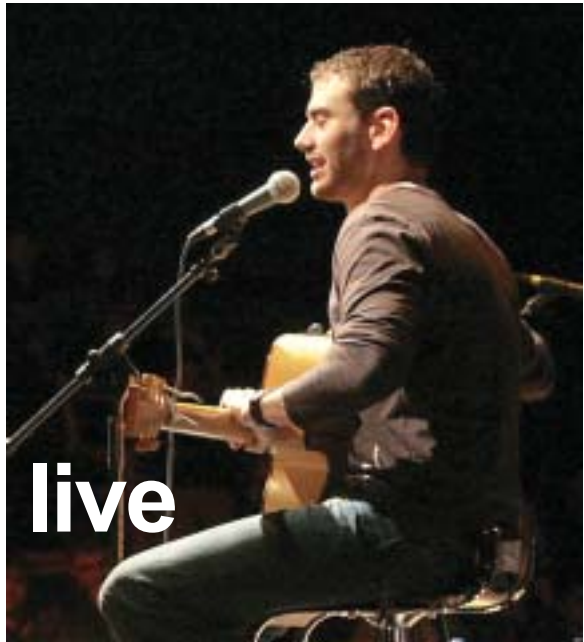
**Sister Mary Anne Schaezner's** reflections on the National Leaders' Conference, *A Future Full of Hope*, may just challenge you in holiness, sharing the Good News, and living in the plan of Jesus. Don't miss it!

Are you today's Barnabas? **Renée Marazon's** article on the charism of encouragement will give you some answers. Struggling groups may find **Deacon Chuck Matzker's** leadership article helpful. He gives suggestions on dealing with difficulties through **POWER**.

May the hope manifested in this issue's articles and the thoughts of our columnists inspire each of us to make a difference for the kingdom of God. ♦

*In 2006 a handful of Renewal leaders in Australia began to pray about how they could gather during World Youth Day, and to pray for the pilgrims and the success of the event. What emerged was the **Receive Power Live** concert under the leadership of the Renewal. Three original intentions that inspired it were: (1) An opportunity for young people to experience a personal encounter with the love of Jesus. (2) To receive the power of the Holy Spirit. And (3) To be inspired to witness Good News throughout the world.*

## Receive the power live



by Robert Galea

*Robert Galea in concert*

**M**y heart was racing as I waited backstage for the *Receive the Power Live* concert to begin. It pounded out of excitement and also due to the fact that I had just run a kilometer or so from the north stage where I had sung the last song at the Friday night Stations of the Cross. On my journey through the crowd there was an obvious atmosphere of excitement amongst the 150,000 plus pilgrims. There was a **great sense** of enthusiasm backstage too as the Catholic and non-Catholic worshippers gathered together, united as the one body of Christ to pray and proclaim God's promises over the cheering and flag-waving youth.

The musicians took to the stage and there came a loud roar from the crowd. Then the music began. Being with the pilgrims over the previous days I knew that the church gathered that night were hungry; hungry for God's Word and ready for worship, even though many present may not have known it themselves. Even more distracted clusters of youth could not help but get caught up in the heart of what was about to happen. From the praise led by Darlene Zschech and Hillsong United, to the moving testimonies (during which I did my best to hold back the tears), to then being led into worship by Matt Maher, you knew God was present. This was then followed by the passionate preaching of Bishop Joe Grech who reminded us that "God does not make rubbish" and that we are "beautifully and wonderfully made." There was no doubt in me that we were witnessing God's Spirit moving among us.

It was then that Jesus was brought before us in the Eucharist. What a moving scene. At this moment I had the privilege of being on stage to witness some of the faces in the crowd. Hands were raised; eyes were closed as many were taking this opportunity to reach out to Jesus. Then Bishop Grech led us in a prayer of commitment to our faith and to walking with Jesus.

No one will ever know for sure the full and visible outcome of the event, but one thing I know is that when hearts cry for Jesus, as they did that night, Jesus cannot help but respond by sending his Spirit! This was a night to remember, one where the young Church of the world gathered in Sydney, Australia to celebrate Jesus and to commit their lives to him. Having witnessed this happening and having myself re-committed my life to know, love and serve Jesus I can say with certainty that the best is yet to come, for those who were present and beyond!!

Never in the history of Australia has there been such a worship concert; and never will I cease to be grateful to Jesus for the opportunity to have taken an active part in this global event. ♦

*Maltese born Robert Galea is currently studying for the priesthood in Australia. He is a singer and songwriter who has written a number of songs for various campaigns and international conferences. His passion is to draw others to the heart of God.*





## Walking in the footsteps of hope

by Father Larry Carew

In November of 2007 I traveled as chaplain with a group of pilgrims as we retraced some of the “footsteps of St. Paul.” It was the second time I’d been given such a privileged opportunity. Over ten years earlier I’d been given a taste of Paul’s wanderings, for just a few days, tacked onto the end of a Holy Land pilgrimage. This time, however, in addition to stops in Ephesus, Corinth and Athens, I was able to visit even more places so dear to the Apostle, like Berea, Thessalonica and Philippi.

During my earlier visit Corinth turned out to be the place of my most memorable blessings. This last time it would be Philippi that would spring the most surprises.

First of all, allow me to briefly recall an episode from my original visit to Corinth. I’d just returned to the hotel after celebrating Mass amidst the an-

cient ruins. I’d preached on First Corinthians thirteen. Everybody appeared to be so blessed.

After we entered the hotel lobby, however, the atmosphere drastically changed. We learned of a mix-up about tips, expected from our pilgrims, for which they’d already paid. Our pious contingent had suddenly become a surly mob.

Ninety minutes later I was able to inform them, at supper, that the confusion had been cleared up. I was pleasant and polite about it on the surface, but underneath I was still so angry with them. As I returned to my room I sensed the Holy Spirit’s conviction: 1 Corinthians 13, “love does not take offense.” It was now undeniable to me that my pilgrims weren’t the only sinners on the block!

Fast forward with me now to November of 2007—to the day before we visited Philippi. We’d just boarded the

bus ready to visit Meteora, a breathtakingly beautiful panorama of mountainous pillars, with monasteries or convents perched atop almost all of them.

I soon learned that Alexandra was not feeling well. She was our tour guide—a walking encyclopedia of Greek history and biblical knowledge. She was also a devout member of the Orthodox Church.

As we ascended a switchback road to visit one of the mountaintop monasteries, I kept sensing that I was getting an inspiration: *offer to pray over Alexandra for healing*. An opportunity soon presented itself and she graciously accepted.

Shortly afterwards, in the monastery Chapel, Alexandra explained to us that most of the lovely frescoes and icons surrounding us were dedicated to the memory of the early Christian martyrs of Greece. She appeared to have completely recovered. But never once, that day, did she ever comment on how she was then feeling.

Until Philippi. The following day, we drove right past the ruins of the ancient city. There, just beyond those ruins was a grove of trees overarching the edge of a river. It couldn’t have looked much different than the way it looked to Paul on the day he first met Lydia there and baptized her in that river, his very first convert to the Faith on European soil.

I decided to lead the pilgrims in prayer, right there at the river’s edge, asking that the flow of the Holy Spirit’s love and power, first given us at Baptism, would now be renewed and deepened for each of us. I then proceeded to sprinkle them with holy water.

Alexandra suddenly surprised us all by breaking the silence, as she blurted out

the following words: "I must now give witness..." She then went on to share how I had prayed over her for healing on the previous morning, concluding with these words: "Only a few minutes after Father laid hands and prayed for me, all the discomfort and weakness left me and I've been fine ever since."

**We walk in the footsteps of St. Paul when we follow his counsel to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts and then step out in hope-filled faith to use them.**

**O**ur next stop was at the very spot where Paul and Silas had been forced to undergo a mock trial, a public flogging and a sentence of imprisonment. Directly across the street from that place can be found the ruins of the jail where those two saintly servants ended up converting their jailer to Christ (Acts 16).

Since I happen to be a part time prison chaplain, I decided to spend a little extra time there to ask the intercession of Paul and Silas for two men in particular. One, I hadn't seen in over a year, the other for over five years. They'd been moved to other facilities, and once they are transferred elsewhere, chaplains are not allowed any further contact with them.

I'd especially sought the prayers of Paul and Silas who'd been unjustly imprisoned at this very location, because the two men whom I'd commended to them, I'd come to believe, had also been wrongly imprisoned. After having spent many hours with both of them in counsel and healing prayer, I'd become convinced of their innocence. As a result, I'd never felt free of the burden of needing to pray for them regularly.

Two days later I was back in the U.S. Even as I left the plane I had the strangest feeling that my pilgrimage was not over. Back at the parish I found a message waiting for me. One of the men I'd just mentioned was seriously ill.

He'd requested to see me. Regulations had been waived. The local warden had already approved my visit.

Eight days after praying for him in Phillippi, there I was at his bedside. An hour later the other man, whom I'd also prayed for there, spotted me in the corridor of the same prison. He

dropped the books he was carrying, ran towards me and scooped me into a big hug. Much to my amazement I received permission, on the spot, to meet privately with him as well on that unforgettable afternoon.

We walk in the footsteps of St. Paul when we surrender our hearts to Christ, as he did on the highway to Damascus. We walk in his footsteps when we confess that we have failed to love with Christ's love and ask him for another chance. We walk in that saint's footsteps when we follow his counsel to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts and then step out in hope-filled faith to use them. We walk in the Apostle's footsteps when we give public witness to the blessings Jesus has poured into our lives. We walk in his footsteps when we allow the sufferings of others to become our own, as we lift them before God's throne in intercession.

Pope Benedict, in his encyclical letter on Christian hope, draws our attention to yet another saint named Paul, another heavenly beacon of hope—a Vietnamese martyr of the nineteenth century, Paul Li-Bao-Tin. This latter day Paul had also decided to write a letter from his imprisonment: "I, Paul in chains, for the name of Christ, wish to relate to you the trials besetting me daily, in order that you may be inflamed with love for God and join with

## Prayer Card

O Lord Jesus Christ, you have given the Church the grace to celebrate a Jubilee Year in honor of your great apostle Paul.

We ask you to pour out your Spirit during this time of grace...

May this be a time of renewal in the Holy Spirit for your Church.

(Msgr. Joseph Malagreca)

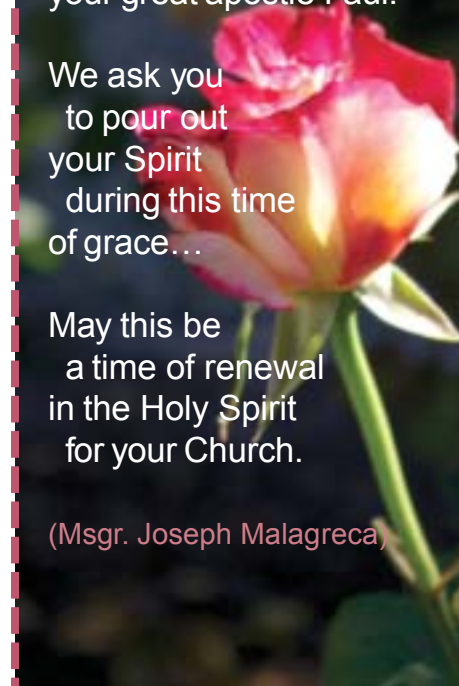


Photo: Tammie Stevens

me in his praises, for his mercy is forever... In the midst of this storm, I cast my anchor towards the throne of God, the anchor that is lively hope in my heart" (*Saved in Hope*, 37).

Casting the anchor of hope... Hope is a boundless supply of energy that heaven supplies. We have to decide to plug into it and then go on to let it carry us forward. ♦

Fr. Larry Carew is the Bishop's liaison to the Charismatic Renewal for the diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Fr. Larry has been working in the healing and prison ministries for some time and has authored materials for use in these areas.





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

- For God's blessing and ongoing fruitfulness of the Gathering of National Leadership Groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (January 9-14, 2009).
- For the promotion of the Friday before Lent, February 20, 2009, as a Day of Fasting and Prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit in our Church.
- For Pope Benedict XVI's hope that "dialogue between pastors and ecclesial movements (like CCR) intensifies on all levels: in parishes, dioceses and with the Apostolic See."
- For the generous financial support of Chariscenter by prayer groups.
- May Charismatic Prayer Groups manifest the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, so that people experience that God is truly in our midst.



## 2008 Leaders' Conference in Nashville

**"Let's stand and celebrate God's work!"**

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

With these words we were exhorted to give joyful praise to God as we entered into the 2008 Catholic Charismatic Leaders' Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This was a time of powerful praise and of a manifestation of joy through song and dance. A young adult music ministry from the Alleluia Community in Augusta, Georgia, led us in praise and worship throughout the weekend.

During this conference we explored the meaning of "A Future Full of Hope." At this time in history there are many reasons for practicing hope, not that life is easy and hope is therefore easy. Rather, many are experiencing difficult and challenging times that call for the virtue of hope.

On Friday evening Al Mansfield of New Orleans shared his experience of Katrina and how that has evoked the virtue of hope for him and his wife, Patti. Al reflected on some practices that will assist us in being strengthened in hope. 1. Receive and welcome the Holy Spirit. 2. Read and consume the Word of God. 3. Pray. 4. Examine your attitudes. 5. Cultivate relationships/friendships in the Lord. Finally, it is easy for us to find God on the

mountain but remember that the God of Day is also the God of Night.

Dr. Tom Curran then took us on a journey of exploring our lives moving forward by asking the question, "What am I going to do with what remains?" Our horizon of hope comes from our relationship with Jesus. We want to find our joy in God. We have hope in God and not in self. God is our absolute future. Tom spoke of what he named "thrown-ness." We are being thrown into the future. We are thrown forward in time. To exist is to be drawn back to God. It is God who is drawing us back. Jesus is the one who draws near to us. We can reflect on this: "God draws near to me." In a sense Jesus says to us, "As you remember, I draw near." Hope is associated with the future—knowing that Jesus draws near to us from the future.

Tom reflected on Advent as a season of hope. It is a time when it is getting darker and colder. Advent means coming; it is Jesus who is coming. God created the world so that Jesus could be born in it. God created you so that Jesus could be born in you. We are people of hope. We have to be a *Gaudete* people, i.e. a people who rejoice (1 Thes 5:16). He posed this question: "Did you live the 2008 that God held in his hand for you? We have one chance. Will we live the 2009 that the Lord has for us?"



above: Tom Curran,  
left: Bishop David Choby,  
Diocese of Nashville  
right: Tammie Stevens.



The Transfiguration is a glimpse of what awaits us. We need Jesus to draw near to us from the future. “You who were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ.” We are people of Pentecost, radiators of God’s Glory. Tom closed by pointing out that to sacrifice is to make holy. He challenged us by using a poker analogy, “We are either all in or we are bluffing.” Jesus was all in for us before we were born. We are planted in the world. We are people of hope!

Saturday opened with Eucharist celebrated by Bishop David Choby of Nashville. This was followed by six tracks with three workshops each, enabling leaders to deepen in an area of interest/giftedness. These included: School of Prayer, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Healing, Ecclesial Maturity, Praise and Worship, and Year of St. Paul.

Late Saturday afternoon we experienced a healing service, led by Judith Hughes and Fr. Richard Loch, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament followed by reflection together on how we had experienced God’s healing.

Ron and Carole Bergman gave witness, on Saturday evening, to their experience of God’s presence in their marriage of 30 years.

Jim Murphy, the main speaker on Saturday evening, reminded us that a leader transmits hope. A leader has vision. As long as there is hope a person can survive. God wants to give us a future full of hope. Jim thinks of hope as long-term faith (cf. Heb11:1). This has three perspectives. 1. The fullness of the Kingdom: Jesus says, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). Jim used the example of a crocus breaking up through the snow in the spring. 2. The hope of our own redemption, our own salvation. Paul reminds us that we

will also be raised by Christ (cf. Rom 8:11). We are children of God. We shall be like Christ, not because we get our act together. It is because of the work of God. 3. Our hope is in the person of God. The world will not be saved by a plan but in a person. Our hope lies in who sits on the throne of God not who sits in the oval office. The Church sees hope as an anchor. We all have stormy seas. Fear takes over when we take our eyes off of the Lord. The capacity of a leader is someone who can go back and gift others. We have to help people cross the gap. We help to sustain them. Pray for a fresh heart. The love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We were exhorted to be open to God and to where and how God may be calling us at this time in our lives.

On Sunday morning Kim Kollins, presently residing in Germany, spoke of Pentecost of the Nations. This takes place in two parts. The first consists of a novena in preparation for Pentecost in order to form a global net of prayer, day and night, around the world. The second is the actual celebration of Pentecost. Kim is a member of the ICCRS Pentecost of the Nations team.

On Sunday morning Michelle Moran, President of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service (ICCRS) exhorted us to go forth in hope and stated that we are called to be people of vision. The Church has given us a marvelous vision, to “put out into the deep.” She spoke of Jesus having crowd control problems and using Peter’s boat, then blessing Peter. She stated that when Jesus uses us he blesses us. When Jesus told Peter to put out the nets he responded with, “We worked all night and caught nothing but if you say so, we will” (cf. John 21:3-6). We have to be people who say, “If you say so, we will.” Like Peter we need to move from testing the waters to walking on



Above and right: conference participants, bottom: Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner and friends.

the water. We need to step out of the boat (cf. Matt 14:29). Peter would say, “Next time I’ll do it sooner.” She reminded us that Joshua told the people to be strong and stand firm “for the Lord, your God, is with you” (Joshua 1:9). We can look to the past with gratitude. We look forward with hope. We are moving along in the journey as a Joshua generation. Some things have died and passed away (cf. Joshua 1:2). We have already crossed a line in terms of all that has happened in the Renewal over the last 40 years. In the spirit of Joshua it’s time to cross the Jordan empowered by the Spirit for mission. Break camp. You have not gone over this road before.

We were sent forth, nourished by the Eucharist, to be people of hope and, in the words of the closing line of the Program Booklet Welcome, “to make a difference in the Church and in our society.” ♦

Photos: Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner



## Prayer and Hope: How to handle prayer group struggles

by Deacon Chuck Matzker

If you are involved in a prayer group, or are a leader of a group, you know this: Trouble will eventually knock on the door, and will walk in, invited or not. It is going to happen. There are some things certain, and one of them is that leaders and groups **WILL** experience difficulties. When that happens, we can feel many things—frustration, fear, inadequacy, depression, anger, exhaustion and even a desire to “scrap it all.”

How can we handle these difficult circumstances? There are many organizational problem-solving processes: interpersonal relations courses, mediation, communication improvement methodologies that can be implemented, but I would like to look at this from another perspective. I would like to share a simple process our Pastoral Team has found to be effective in dealing with difficulties, and strengthening hope. It is identified by five simple words, the first letters of which spell “POWER”: Past, Organize, Word, Enact and Rejoice.

**PAST:** First, we look back, and remember. This gives us perspective and shows that we are not alone, but are in good company.

◆ **Jesus and his disciples experienced difficulties.** Remember the mother of James and John asking Jesus

to let her sons sit one at his right and one at his left in the Kingdom, and the reaction of the other apostles to this: anger and resentment (Matthew 20:21-28). And then there were the apostles on the road to Capernaum, arguing about which of them is the greatest (Mark 9:33-35).

◆ **St. Paul did too.** Just reading Paul’s letters to the communities he founded and pastored gives us a window into his world. While the letters are full of instruction and commendation, there is also correction and advice. How discouraged he must have become at times, but he did not let anything deter him from his mission!

◆ **All leaders and groups experience them**—We are not unique. “In this world you will have trouble...” (John 16:23). A great spiritual director to our Pastoral Team, Fr. Jerry Borer S.J., would help me keep perspective when I tended to take upon myself too much responsibility for success; his question to me in those times always was “Chuck, are you the Savior?”

**ORGANIZE:** Next, we call a meeting of our group leaders to address the problem. In an atmosphere of prayer, unity and honesty, we discuss the issue, each sharing his or her perspective... “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray...” (James 5:13). As a group, we try to make sure our hearts are docile to the Holy Spirit, and open

to correction, and that pride and anger are not at work in our decisions. A spirit of love and humility must prevail. “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:37).

**WORD:** We then spend time in prayer and praise, open to the charismatic gifts, seeking God’s word and the Spirit’s guidance for us in inspired Scripture, prophecy, word of wisdom, etc. The Spirit is always faithful. “Ask and you shall receive” (Luke 11:9). It is after this time of prayer that we achieve clarity and a good sense of the right way to deal with the difficulty. We look at the issue again, and then decide on the proper actions to take.

**ENACT:** It is now that we implement and perform the actions decided upon. However, to do this, we identify which of us is the most loving toward the person(s) we must meet with to address the problem. Those that care for the person(s) most are the ones we send. A wise saying that has always stuck with me is, “The stronger the bond of love, the heavier the burden that can be carried across it.”

**REJOICE:** No matter what the situation or the outcome, we take time to praise God.

◆ “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:4-7).

◆ He is present in the difficulty, and works all things to good. “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who

Photo: Tammie Stevens



have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

◆ In the conclusion of Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians, he says, “Finally, brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Past, Organize, Word, Enact, Rejoice = **POWER**, the Power to deal with difficulties and continue on in hope. Jesus last words to us before ascending to the Father were, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This is our mission still. To do it, we need the Holy Spirit. For leaders and groups, a great way to start the

day would be to pray the prayer of Cardinal Mercier.

“O Holy Spirit, Soul of my soul,  
I adore you. Enlighten, guide,  
strengthen and console me.  
Tell me what I ought to do and  
command me to do it. I promise  
to be submissive in everything  
that you permit to happen to me,  
only show me what is your will.”  
(Cardinal Mercier)

In doing God’s will, there is no reason to lose heart. ◆

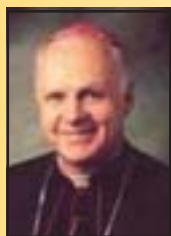


*Deacon Chuck Matzker is the Bishop’s Liaison to the Charismatic Renewal in the Diocese of Colorado Springs. He and his wife Barbara are on the NSC Advisory Council.*

## Day of Prayer & Fasting Friday, February 20, 2009



For the eighth year in a row the NSC is joining with other leadership groups to ask Renewal participants to fast and pray on the Friday before Ash Wednesday for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States and that the Church in our country might be renewed in the grace of Pentecost.



Archbishop  
Edwin O'Brien



Bob Canton



Bishop Oscar Solis



Patti Gallagher  
Mansfield



Jim Murphy

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”* Isaiah 61:1

## Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities

### 15<sup>th</sup> National Convention June 26–28, 2009

#### Baltimore Convention Center

One W. Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland

**\$40 adults**  
**\$20 youth**

(On site registration:  
\$50 adults \$30 youth)

Send conference registrations to:  
AFCCPC

462 Blackshire Rd  
Severna Park, MD  
21146

#### Sheraton Baltimore City Center Hotel

\$149 per night  
(for hotel reservations  
call 1-866-837-5182).

(All sessions in English.)

For more information  
see: [www.afccpc.org](http://www.afccpc.org).

#### Speakers:

Bishop Edwin O'Brien  
Bishop Oscar Solis  
Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle  
Patti Gallagher Mansfield  
Jim Murphy  
Bob Canton  
Bishop Teodoro Bacani  
Grace Bernado  
Fr. Leo Patalinghug  
Fr. Richard Loch  
Fr. William Halbing  
Fr. Daniel Leary

#### Contact:

Agnes Nepomuceno  
443-254-5175 or  
410-987-1694




## Encouragement—the charism that gives hope and transforms lives


by René Marazon


*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit” (1 Cor 12:5-7).*


**S**t. Paul tells us that each one of us, not some of us, not a few of us, but each one of us has a manifestation of the Spirit. That is to say, you, who are reading this article, have at least one way, and most likely, more than one way that others come to know Christ through you.


Do you know what your manifestation of the Spirit is? Do you know for what benefit you have been given your manifestation of the Spirit? Take a moment to read each of the following statements and respond either “yes” or “no” as you do this.

 People who need comfort, reassurance, and encouragement often seek my help.

 Others tell me I am an effective listener and/or counselor who is able to comfort, direct, or encourage them with my words of how God touches lives.

 It is very fulfilling for me to talk with and build up those who are confused or having difficulties in life, whether they are in despair, sorrow or just unsure of themselves.

 People tell me they grow spiritually when I talk with them about the Lord’s love and his care for them.

 One of the most satisfying ways I express my faith is to listen and talk with those who are troubled, depressed, confused or struggling in life.

If you responded yes to four out of five of the statements, the charism of encouragement may be one of your spiritual gifts for ministry. If you did not, spend just a moment thinking about someone you know who fits these statements and thank God for this person who may have the charism of encouragement.

**Encouragement** is the special ability God gives some to uplift, enrich, comfort, offer words of encouragement and reassurance in such a way that others become filled with hope. What is hope? **“Hope** is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (CCC #1817).

People with this charism come to the side of those who are discouraged, in trouble, needing truth to set them free, needing reassurance. Though all receive the theological virtue of hope at Baptism, encouragers are God’s instruments for the re-filling of hope into our lives since the world, the flesh and the devil are continually seeking to drain our souls of hope. Encouragers

have a way that brings us more deeply into hope—the hope of life in Christ Jesus, that does not disappoint but rather lifts us up and sustains us. The person gifted with the charism of encouragement nurtures and fosters hope in others through simple presence and through spoken words. Encouragers are anointed with God’s promises when they speak and there is a confidence in their voices that lifts our spirit and draws our hearts closer to our Lord and Savior. Encouragers seem to bring forth a listener’s reaction that says, “I know this is God’s truth being spoken to me.”

If there were to be a patron saint of the charism of encouragement it surely would be St. Barnabas. Although his given name was Joseph, he was given the Hebrew name Barnabas, which means, “Son of Encouragement,” by the apostles. In this year of St. Paul it seems most fitting to acknowledge that if it had not been for the encouragement of Barnabas, the other apostles would never have accepted Paul into their Christian community. It was Barnabas who persuaded them and the church in Jerusalem that Paul had been converted from a persecutor to an apostle (Acts 9:26-27).

Paul’s persuasive and encouraging style set the stage for him to be sent on mission to Antioch to spread the Good News. “When he [Barnabas] arrived [in Antioch] and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord” (Acts 11:23-24).



## The welcome mat is out A call to all liaisons

by Fr. Larry Carew

**S**aturday, November 15<sup>th</sup> turned out to be a very long day for those privileged to attend the 2008 National Leaders' Conference in Nashville. An early morning Mass celebrated by Bishop David Choby of Nashville came first. We could not help but find ourselves truly affirmed and encouraged by his wonderful homily. Then came the morning and afternoon workshops. Mid afternoon would offer the opportunity to enter into the blessings of a powerful healing service. After dinner, praise and worship, testimonies and the sharing of word gifts cli-

maxed in an unforgettably convicting and prophetic teaching presented by Jim Murphy.

It was now after 10:30 P.M. and, for most, the day's activities had come to a close. But not for all. The Steering Committee of the Association of Diocesan Liaisons was about to host a gathering. It was over in about a half hour. Information was shared about the Association's purpose; its yearly gatherings, held in different settings, East and West, North and South (next Spring we'll be meeting in Spokane); and the richness of learning experiences and fellowship opportunities made available to the association's membership.

It appeared to me that there were about twenty of us gathered there: half of us "old timers" the other half, newly-appointed liaisons. Of course, the Holy Spirit was also in attendance. He was clearly inviting all of us into deeper unity—brothers and sisters, old and new alike.

Please allow me to echo the invitation offered there by liaisons Jane Barz and Deacon Pat Frye. If you are a liaison and haven't joined the Association, please prayerfully consider doing that. You will find yourself very welcomed and so very blessed. (Check us out at [www.nadl.net](http://www.nadl.net).) ♦

*Fr. Larry Carew is the Bishop's liaison to the Charismatic Renewal for the diocese of Bridgeport, CT.*

**S**t. Paul mentions Barnabas rather often in his letters and although he was not one of the original twelve apostles, he was honored with the title of apostle (Acts 4:36). Perhaps Barnabas is the reason Paul could speak with such conviction about encouragement, referring to it as the charism of exhortation. "Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation" (Rom 12:8).

Paul's letters were words of encouragement and hope as well. "As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you conduct yourselves as worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thes 2:11-12).

In this year of St. Paul, let us become more intentionally aware of the charism of encouragement, and name it, nurture it and call it forth in ourselves and in others. Let us thank God for this powerful charism of speech and presence within our prayer groups, our families, our parishes, and our world that has the potential to give HOPE to all of God's children. ♦

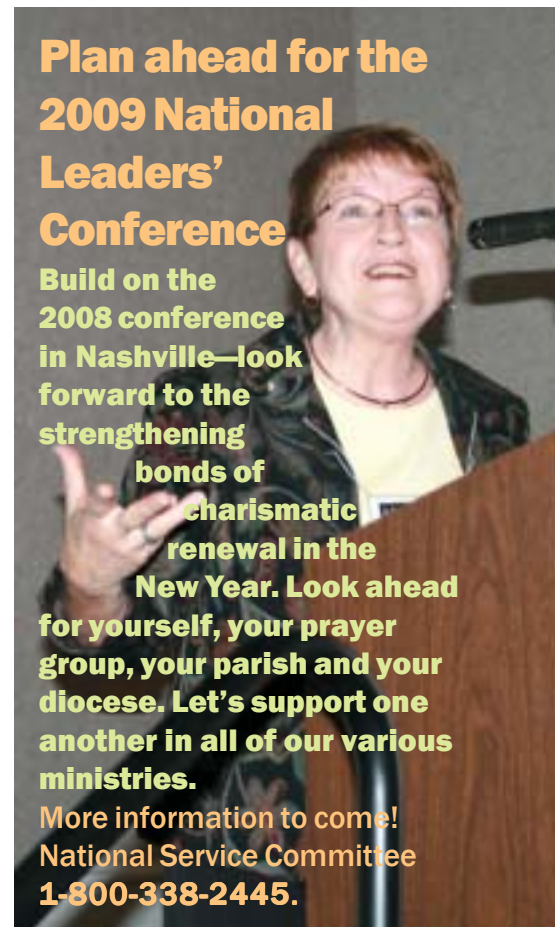


*Renée A. Marazon is a Catholic author, consultant, workshop, retreat, and mission presenter. She is an active member of All Saints Parish in Rossford, Ohio. Renee serves as the Coordinator of the Diocese of Toledo Ministry to Catholic Charismatic Renewal Healing Ministry and Outreach to Parishes Ministry.*

### Plan ahead for the 2009 National Leaders' Conference

**Build on the 2008 conference in Nashville—look forward to the strengthening bonds of Charismatic renewal in the New Year. Look ahead for yourself, your prayer group, your parish and your diocese. Let's support one another in all of our various ministries.**

**More information to come!  
National Service Committee  
1-800-338-2445.**







**From the  
Executive  
Director**

.....  
by Walter Matthews

## Conferences: Work and Blessings

Why “Leaders’ Conferences” and not “General Conferences?” And who is a leader anyway?

For a number of years in the late 1990s and the early years of this new Millennium the NSC, both internally and in dialogue with other leadership groups like the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, heard the Lord clearly call the Renewal to more maturity (“ecclesial maturity”). We also heard a call to a greater focus on preparing the Renewal for further engagement in the Church and in our society: fostering the “spirituality of Pentecost” and building a “culture of Pentecost.” All are challenges to us from Pope John Paul II.

We saw that while there were many Diocesan General Conferences and Days of Renewal not much was being done in many places to strengthen and encourage those already serving in various leading ways, not to mention the formation of new leaders.

For these Conferences we see “leaders” as those serving in positions of leadership in the Renewal such as Prayer Group leaders, prayer meeting leaders, Diocesan Liaisons, Renewal Center Directors, as well as those in full time ministry in the Renewal. We are also reaching out to those serving in music ministries, Life in the Spirit teams, prayer/healing teams, those with prophetic gifts—really anyone who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and is seeking further formation.

As those involved in Conference planning on the local level, a lot of effort goes into these events. The Planning Committee meets by phone for prayer, brainstorming and discussion of Renewal needs and possible speakers. When this year’s Planning Committee identified the theme from Jeremiah, *A Future Full of Hope*, early in the process we were not thinking primarily of our economy or of our government transition. We were thinking about the many veteran leaders who, it seemed to us, were seeking a boost of fresh vision, and renewed faith and trust that leads to hope. The confluence with our focus and the economic and political challenges was truly prophetic.

Further, as so often seems to be true with these events, we needed to trust the Lord for his financial provision. The attendance, due to the economy, was not what we had hoped for nor planned. I am happy to report that thanks to the Lord and to the financial generosity of the attendees we not only left Nashville paying all our bills but with most of the money the Service Committee had budgeted to receive from the Conference for its other projects and operating expenses.

Sometimes it seems that all the effort, including that of staff and many volunteers may not have been worth it. Then one receives emails like these from participants:

*As many discussed, the National Conference had a little something special in the air. I believe it was a real grace and blessing from the Lord to the Renewal and all who attended. I want to express my appreciation for all the effort you and the leadership do to host these events.*

*We were really touched by the leaders’ conference... It was great, to say the least, and I believe it will prove to be a milestone for the Renewal in this country. ♦*

## Friends of the NSC

We want to thank all our Friends’ donors for your giving in 2008 in spite of the economic difficulties. Our Christmas Appeal by Aggie Neck has just been mailed and we are hopeful that by the time you read this we will have reached our budgeting goals for the year.

It did, however, take a Special Appeal to our top donors in order to close the gap when the bottom seemed to fall out in August. Since 2009 is looking to be even more of a difficult year we would really be grateful if those of you who receive *Pentecost Today* who are not donors would send even a small amount. If one thousand recipients of *Pentecost Today* who are not donors contributed \$15 each we would cover not only the cost of one issue, but provide additional funds for the other projects of the National Service Committee.

Allow me to share with you this quote from Bishop Sam Jacobs, former member and Chairman of the NSC and currently one of our Episcopal Consultants, “All of us are experiencing some financial concerns. But gratitude to God for his many blessings should not hinge upon the economic ups and downs of the market. The work of the Gospel needs to continue. I invite you to either continue or become part of the great work that NSC/Chariscenter USA is doing to bring people into the grace of Pentecost, the sanctifying and anointing gift of the Holy Spirit. God has blessed you. Now, he is asking you to bless others through your generous support of the work of the Gospel.”

This is no time to turn back or fall back. This is a time to go forward. We can do so much more together. ♦

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## For Your Information

This is a publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc. The mission of the NSC is to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost within and beyond the church, to broaden and deepen the understanding that baptism in the Holy Spirit is the Christian inheritance of all, and to strengthen the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

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Rudy Pruden,  
Aggie Neck

Fr. Bob Hogan accepts  
for Fr. George Montague

Charismatic gifts are not a consumer product that we sell as one might sell an aromatic perfume. Rather they are gifts that the Holy Spirit freely gives and that we are invited to freely receive. We don't need enough money or enough holiness in order to receive these gifts. We do need to be open and ready to receive. We do not receive these gifts for ourselves only but we receive them that in some way we may be in service to others and promote the reign of God.

Over the past years many people have devoted much of their time and energy to encouraging and nurturing these gifts of the Spirit. In recent years a variety of individuals have been honored at NSC sponsored National Conferences for their dedication and generosity of time in service to the Renewal. This past November three such individuals were honored for their faithfulness and service.

Rudy Pruden was honored for his over 17 years as a member of the National Service Committee. During most of these years he also served on the Executive Committee and as Chairman of the Finance Committee. "At all levels you sought to bring practical wisdom, learned from many years of service in the Church and in government, and your prayerfulness, zeal and prophetic gifts to the many opportunities and challenges facing the Renewal." "In all that you have done and continue to do you have sought to build bridges of understanding and to give voice to the hopes and dreams of those with no voice."

Fr. George Montague, S.M. was honored in this year of celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. His early involvement

## What we have seen and heard

.....

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer



(1971) in Charismatic Renewal "was crucial in helping the Church embrace this movement at the very heart of the Church." Fr. George was also recognized for his writing, "such as the important *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, to situate baptism in the Holy Spirit solidly in the Church's understanding of Pentecost and pneumatology." Along with Fr. Bob Hogan, who received the plaque in Fr. George's absence, he founded a new charismatic religious community, the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple. Fr. George served on the National Service Committee for four years and as a theological consultant to the NSC for the last eighteen years.

Aggie Neck, outgoing chairman (seven years) of the National Service Committee was also honored as "a prophetic voice both within the NSC and in the Renewal ever reminding us of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the power of living baptized in the Holy Spirit, and the challenge and opportunity we have to exercise the charisms of the Holy Spirit." During these years the NSC has "sought to rearticulate its Vision and Mission so that we can more effectively provide leadership and service to the Renewal in the years to come." As Aggie completes ten years of service in January of 2009 we concur with this wish: "May the Holy Spirit continue to be the air you breathe and empower you in all that you do."

As we reflect on the good works of Rudy, Fr. George and Aggie, we can reflect on our lives and ask the Holy Spirit to assist us in being faithful to giftedness and service. Thank you for all that you do to promote the reign of God. ♦

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## January/February/March 2009

### Prayer & Hope!

#### INSIDE:

Receive Power Live, <i>Robert Galea</i>	page 3
St. Paul on prayer, <i>Sr. Bernadette Beamsley</i>	page 4
<i>Fr. Larry Carew</i> visits the jail at Philippi	page 6
Leaders' Conference at Nashville	page 8
Hope in Prayer Group struggles, <i>Chuck Matzker</i>	page 10
The charism of encouragement, <i>Renee Marazon</i>	page 12


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