

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

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photo. © Dan Karmasek

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Coming together to reflect the light of Christ

“The gift you have received, give as a gift” (Matt. 10:8). “As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another” (1 Pt. 4:10). We are called to be gift. We are gifted to be gift—gift to the church, gift to each other, gift to the nations. No one group or individual has all that is needed. Each gift is like a piece of a puzzle entrusted to God’s people. Alone we cannot be the full picture; alone we cannot accomplish every task. That is why we must work together.

“There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all, and works through all, and is in all” (Eph. 4:5-6). When every member of the body works with the realization that each member has a contribution and each member is given a gift for the whole body, we “form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature” (Eph. 4:13). The fullness of truth is in the body of Christ and not in any one group or individual. When we come together as that body, firmly united under the headship of Christ, we will see that “through Christ the whole body grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love” (Eph. 4:16). “If all members of the body were alike, where would the body be? There are indeed, many different members, but one body” (1 Cor. 12:19-20).

“By making himself known, Christ has not left us alone. The new people of God are born in the Spirit because it was God’s wish to sanctify and save mankind not individu-

ally, without any link among themselves, but he wanted to form them into a people who would recognize him in truth and serve him in holiness” (Pope John Paul II, Rimini, May 1, 2000).

The body of Christ can be compared to a precious stone with many facets. Each facet shows forth a portion of the light of Christ. Each facet manifests a portion of the giftedness that the Holy Spirit gives to the church. Together we bring the treasure of these gifts to enrich the church, to enrich each other, to enrich the nations. There can be no jealousy, no competition, no rivalry among the facets, for when there is, the light of Christ is dimmed and becomes shadowy.

“Whatever shape the Charismatic Renewal takes—in prayer groups, in covenant communities, in communities of life and service—the sign of its spiritual fruitfulness will always be a strengthening of communion with the universal church and the local churches” (Pope John Paul II in his audience with the ICCRS Council, March 14, 1992).

“A new century, a new millennium are opening in the light of Christ. But not everyone can see this light. Ours is the wonderful and demanding task of becoming its reflection” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 54).

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One body

by Fr. Patsy Iaquina

As the vision of Vatican II continues to unfold, Charismatic Renewal is an integral part of this unfolding. In preparation for the Council, Pope John XXIII asked Catholics throughout the world to pray for a renewal “as by a new Pentecost.” The Council was an answer to that prayer. It has not changed the mission of the church to renew the face of the earth, but has spoken to how we are to carry out this mission. This mission is based upon participation—participation in the life of the Trinity. The community of God—Father, Son and Spirit—is impacting the earth in a new way at this time. The Lord Jesus has chosen us to enter this mystery wherever we find ourselves.

Prior to Vatican II most of the ministry was limited to what came from holy orders. During the Council the Holy Spirit, in one of the

many delightful surprises, made it very clear that the basic sacrament for ministry is baptism, not orders. The laity are called to participate in the life and mission of Jesus. The priesthood of the faithful is unfolded and the people of God are to mature and assume their roles in the marketplace. The laity are to proclaim God’s good news at all times and in all places. The laity are to be responsible stewards of the Spirit’s gifts, given for the benefit of all peoples. (The sweep of the Spirit was so strong that it even affected the bishops in attendance. The debate over collegiality was about to split the Council. Yet when the vote took place, ninety percent of the bishops voted for collegiality rather than curial centralization.) Participation in the life and mission of Jesus permeates the documents and affects everyone baptized in the Lord Jesus. This fact would not change even if the number of priests tripled tomorrow.

Photo: Dennis Alderson

Excerpts from the Documents of Vatican Council II

It is not only through the sacraments and ministrations of the church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the people...Allotting his gifts according as he wills, he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices for the renewal and upbuilding of the church...Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the church.

Lumen Gentium, n. 12

The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the church. Through baptism and confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself...The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become salt of the earth.

Lumen Gentium, n. 33

From the fact of their union with Christ the head flows the laymen's right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the Mystical Body of Christ through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to this apostolate...The Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God through the ministry of the sacraments. However, for the exercise of the apostolate he gives the faithful special gifts...From the reception of these charisms, even the most ordinary ones, there arises for each of the faithful the right and duty of exercising them in the church and in the world...in the freedom of the Holy Spirit...in communion with his brothers in Christ and with his pastors especially.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, n. 3

The grace of Pentecost has made us bold to reach out with the gifts of God.

For the people of God to be who God calls us to be, we need evangelization which calls forth conversion. This is not merely church attendance but honest conversion, a transformation of mind and heart. We are to be firmly rooted in Jesus, to have a personal relationship with the Lord, individually and communally. Everyone is to be evangelized, including the people in the pews. Charismatic Renewal truly has been an instrument of God in this area. In baptism in the Holy Spirit we have been lifted from our pews much like the dry-bones-army of Ezekiel. Through the Holy Spirit seminars millions of people have come into a relationship with the Lord and his people. We have been challenged to move deeper in prayer. We have gathered together for prayer, witness, sharing, encouragement, support and teaching. Our music has helped the church make joyful praise to the Lord. Knowing that we are a gifted people, we share our giftedness with brothers and sisters. It is said that a relationship with Jesus is caught more than taught; and, certainly, the fire has caught and taken hold.

Along with RCIA and other renewal communities, Charismatic Renewal has developed a love for and study of the sacred scriptures. On fire with God's love, the scriptures help us to "put on the mind of Christ." We come to understand that the interior life and the external mission are one and the same. It is the great command of Jesus. Love of God and love of neighbor calls forth community. This is not an option, for the very nature of God is community. Where two or three come together in the name of Jesus, the Lord is present. It is the Spirit who calls us together. Whether informally or formally, large or small, structured or loose-knit, intense or relaxed, Christians are drawn together because of the one Spirit. This is where we share our common life and grow in relationship. From small faith communities to large covenant communities, there is a hunger to share the presence of Jesus among us.

The Christian community ministers to its own members and to all people beyond the community. The ultimate call is to bring all under the lordship of Jesus. Therefore gifts are called forth, developed and used for the common good. The people of God benefit from practicing the gifts within community, knowing that mistakes will be made and correc-

tion applied. Healing and wholeness come about in this process. The grace of Pentecost has made us bold to reach out with the gifts of God. Because we are growing at the same time as we are learning to use the gifts, there will be distortions now and then. When Paul tells us to correct, forgive and encourage one another, he is stating that the need is there to do this. The life and mission of Jesus is not tidy and neat, but messy and dirty. After all, conversion could very well begin with acknowledging sin and then moving from sin and its effects into the acceptance of the love of God. But the blessing is that we are progressing in the way, the truth and the life.

Putting out into the deep—as Pope John Paul II invites us to do in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*—we recognize the impossible task given us.



The potential is infinite, the gifts are unlimited. On a human level we are destined to fail, but this is not a human endeavor. With the Spirit of God we have been empowered for the impossible and we are assured of victory.

Former Chairman of the National Service Committee, Fr. Patsy Iaquina is Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield, West Virginia.

Experiencing communion in our everyday lives



Photo: www.comstock.com

It is the heart's contemplation of the Trinity dwelling in us that enables us to see those around us as a gift from God and to make room for them.

by Victor Lenci

I would like to start by giving you three examples that illustrate the “spirituality of communion” that John Paul II talks about in his apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (see n. 43-45).

The first took place one evening as my wife was saying prayers with our daughter just before going to sleep. Her kindergarten class was learning the Our Father and the Hail Mary and the parents had been encouraged to help their children learn these prayers. But, when my wife tried to get her to say the prayers before bed, she refused. Instead of trying a “blunt force” approach, my wife suggested that they sing the prayers, to which our daughter readily agreed, and they still sing these together most nights.

The second took place on a college campus at the beginning of the winter semester. After an open invitation was given by a prayer group member at the end of Mass, I, a sec-

ond-year graduate student, decided to go and see what this “prayer meeting” was about (the bulletin had it lasting a half hour). While I found the exuberant prayer different (and somewhat uncomfortable) and the meeting rather longer than a half hour, it was the sense of community, of love for each other, present in those at the prayer meeting that drew me back again the next and the following weeks.

The final example took place at a parish meeting for parents who had children attending the local Catholic school. At this meeting the school board representative for my parish shared that while there were serious discussions about school issues, there were no “arguments”—that each person present was focused solely on what was best for the children and acknowledged that everyone else there was also focused similarly, giving them a sense of solidarity, of communion, with each other. She also shared that that sense of communion was also strengthened by

everyone’s acknowledgement that the board’s function was to advise the pastor and not to set policy.

The final example agrees with Pope John Paul II’s call that we “know how to ‘make room’ for our brothers and sisters...resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy” (n. 43) and that “the structures of participation envisioned by canon law...are consultative rather than deliberative; yet...[no] less meaningful and relevant. The theology and spirituality of communion encourage a fruitful dialogue between pastors and faithful” (n. 45).

In the second example, my experience when first attending prayer meetings was that those present were living out “a spirituality of communion” which “indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also

[See Communion page 12](#)

You shall be my witnesses

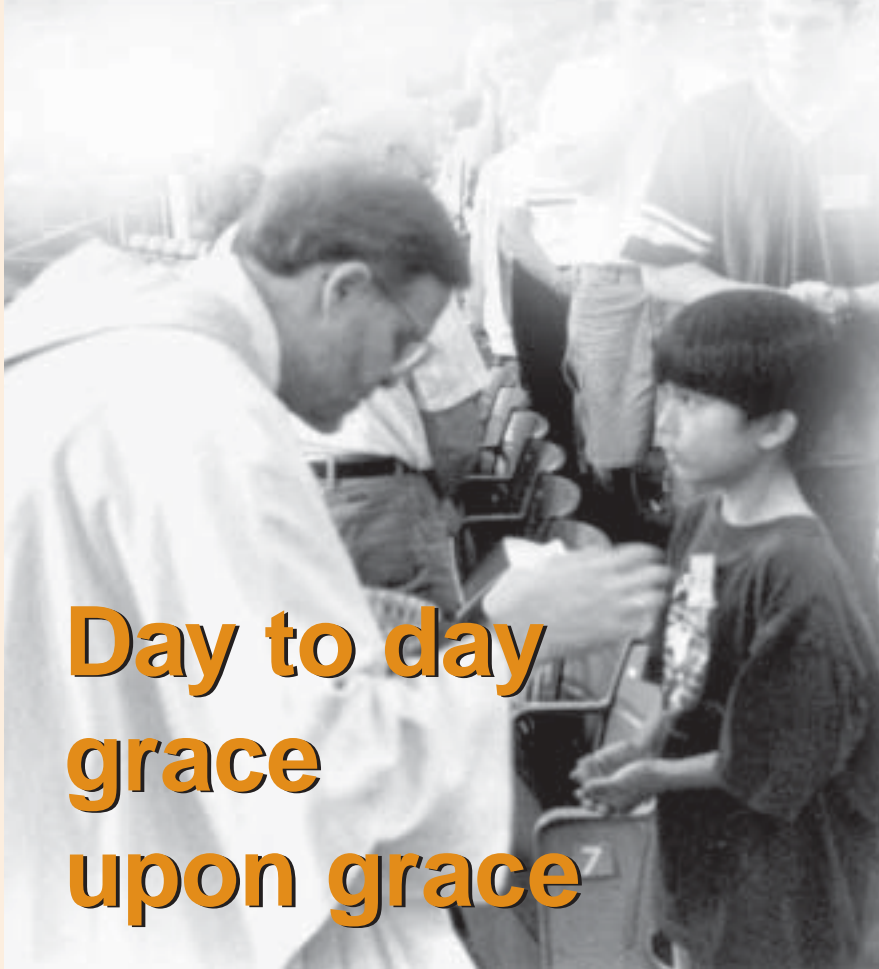


Photo: Vicki Williams

Day to day grace upon grace

Though more fully realized and embraced in this present day, the grace of my baptism was active and effective from the day of its reception.

by Fr. John Esper

Giving witness to the Lord has always impressed me as better coming from those who had been around the block a time or two—having seen and done things along the way that made coming to the Lord interesting, or at least considered by most as a big change of heart. My story is not so much like that, but I claim the path God has me on as my own and, as such, as worthy of telling. I am unique enough as things go, but I suspect the value of my story will be that others may, in some small way, see themselves in it and realize how faithful and constant God has always been for them.

I was born in the early fifties and seven days later baptized into Christ Jesus in the Catholic Church. Unaware, but not knowing otherwise, that was the day I was saved and the day I claimed—through the faith of my parents—Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Admittedly not a personal acceptance of Jesus, it was nonetheless the day of my salvation because it was what God had done for me in Christ Jesus on the cross. It was God's gift and nothing I gained by my own merit. Though more fully realized and embraced in this present day, the grace of my baptism was active and effective from the day of its reception.

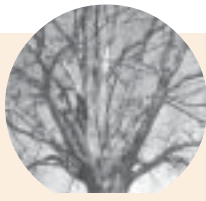
As I look at my life it is clear to me that God has always been with me and I have always tried to be present

to God. I was taught to love God, keep the commandments and value the gospel. I was taught that Jesus loved me and that he died to forgive my sins. I believed what I was taught and have tried to love Jesus, as I knew him, mindful that I needed his forgiveness.

My sins and resistance to the love of Jesus (I was not yet mindful of the Holy Spirit) was not so much the kind of sin made on trips around the block. What had kept me from a fuller and richer awareness of this love is what I believe keeps most of us from a deeper walk with Jesus: I didn't believe in or trust myself. I lived behind a mask of fear and the defenses that those with wounded self-esteem normally hide behind. I believed sin was greater than grace and I acted as such. Now I know otherwise. Grace is always the greater. Love overpowers sin—always.

I continued to grow in age and in wisdom (though more quickly in age) and knew that God was with me. After college and in my late twenties I went to the seminary and began to discover and accept my true inner self. Grace and salvation became more real and could be applied in a real way to my personal struggles. I learned the language, I suppose, that taught me that God was actively working in my life and was in fact using me for his purposes. Grace became real because I knew that

[See Grace page 12](#)



Spiritual Formation

Love

My father had such large, strong hands. The fingers were long, the nails square and the veins prominent. On our many long walks, I was at eye level with those hands. In them was captured both his strength and tenderness, and holding on to his hand, I was free, safe and loved.

God is love. Those of us who have known the love of an earthly father have inched closer to an experience of our Father God, and have an obligation to share that with others. If we love God at all it is because he first loved us. Being the child of a loving father teaches that to us. As children we may have confused our response of love with our parents' knowledge, wisdom, power and authority. Adolescence breaks that illusion for us. Teenagers often see both mom and dad (alas rightly) as basically flawed. Yet those who are most loved usually come to see that the "no strings attached" parental love is present to them even when they least deserve it. Yet, scripture says that even if these desert us, God cannot. We are graven on the palm of his hand. Our Father can't help it. His steadfast love lasts forever. This *besed*, this faithful covenant love of God, is who he is.

Our Father so loved us that he sent us his only Son. To love our Father in return with all our heart and soul and strength means to love him revealed in Christ with Christ's own love in the power of the Holy Spirit. God would not be love without being all three of these persons. Love requires a lover, a beloved, and their relationship. Dom Chautard prays this truth:

Father all holy, thou dost contemplate thyself forever in the Word, thy perfect image—thy Word exults in rapt joy at thy beauty—and, Father and Son, from your joint ecstasy, leaps forth the strong flame of love, the Holy Spirit.

The wonder is that in baptism, our Father makes us one with his Son, which draws us into his own love life. Why is this such a big deal? All who are baptized have waltzed right into the extraordinary freedom of the sons of God. Freedom and love go together.

For many years, one of my favorite rock singers has been Sting. Originally a member of the group "The Police," Sting, who writes most of his own songs, eventually branched out as a solo performer. His lyrics are often profound. One of his more famous songs has this refrain: "If you love someone, set them free...free, free, set them free." His grammar may drive me crazy, but the thought behind his words is exactly right. Love is initiated in freedom, and it results in freedom. In John's Gospel (8:26) we read that if the Son has set you free, then you are free indeed. In him we are free of sin and death, and even better, in him we are made sons and daughters of his Father, our Father, which puts our hand in his. Our daddy loves us. To recognize this "truth" is staggering in its consequences.

I watched a TV program a few months ago about a man who had been wrongly accused of a murder over twenty years ago,

but who now, because of new evidence that had surfaced, had been released from prison. He was beside himself with joy. He was filled with emotion and gratitude. He forgave all those who had been involved in his wrongful imprisonment, and

said he just wanted to live his life in the freedom which he had learned never to take for granted, in whatever time he had left. I felt I was a kindred spirit to that ex-prisoner. When I think of the fact that the Father loves me enough to want to set Christ free to live his life in and through me, I feel sprung from the prison of the law that accuses me daily with the realization that I am not worthy or holy enough. True as that may be, it doesn't matter. My Father loves me. I don't have to earn God's favor. I already have it.

Having a heart for evangelization may well mean that I have experienced the power of God's love freeing me to the point where I want to go out to others and open prison doors and set the other captives free. Love by its nature is shared anyway, and we wouldn't want to stand accused by the words of 1 John 4:20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his



All who are baptized have waltzed right into the extraordinary freedom of the sons of God. Freedom and love go together.



Spiritual Formation

brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” We love God if we keep his commandments, and his greatest commandment is that we love him the most, and others as ourselves. This capacity to love as God loves is offered to every Christian. He not only requires that we love, but he makes it possible. He puts his incarnate love into us directly through the Holy Spirit.

St. Francis used to tell his brothers: “Preach the gospel everywhere. If necessary, use words.” Even if we are not great preachers and feel intimidated by the word “evangelist,” that is how the world will come to know God—by our love. We get love freely and it frees us to give love away. Alone, of all that we do with our

lives, love will survive. Buildings decay. Careers end. Books crumble. The greatest brains can be consigned to oblivion. Only love and what love forms endure. Peter Kreeft puts it succinctly. Love, he says: “...is like a ball in a game of catch. Throw it and it will come back to you. Hold onto it and that ends the game.” Love is like having a game of “catch” with your dad, one with big, strong, yet tender hands. ♦

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



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Love

Outline

- A. Knowledge of an earthly father’s love helps us understand the love of God.
- B. We love God because he loves us first.
- C. God is *hesed* (faithful covenant love).
 - We love him back with his own love.
 - To say *God is love* implies a Trinity.
- D. In baptism we are drawn into the love life of God.
 - We become “sons and heirs.”
 - We become free.
- E. Evangelization is sharing that freedom with others. Love must be shared.

Discussion Questions

1. Little children sing the song “Oh, how I love Jesus...because he first loved me.” What is your response to the theology behind that song?
2. If God is a triune love relationship and we are made in his image, what does that say about how we should live so as to best reflect his image in the world?
3. What is the relationship between love and freedom?
4. What does love from God and for God have to do with love for others?



Serving the community of our parish

by Dean Condon

How can leaders of charismatic groups help their pastors and parish lay ministers accomplish the mission of the parish? Collaboration between charismatic leaders and parish leaders has been a very mixed experience. Sometimes there has been a happy union bearing great fruit. More often, however, the experience has been frustrating for leaders of charismatic groups who have a passion for God and his church, but have been relegated to church basements and feel merely tolerated. How can we bring the wonderful gifts and resources of the Charismatic Renewal to bear on the ministry of the parish? Essentially it means making a three-fold match of gift, mission and need. Here is a three-step process to help make that match.

Step one: understand your gifts

This step requires taking an honest assessment of what the prayer group is able to do ministerially. What are the gifts of your people—both individually and collectively? What kinds of ministries are you able and willing to do? Do you have the human re-

sources needed to do a quality ministry? For example, Life in the Spirit seminars have been effective tools of evangelization traditionally used by charismatic prayer groups. However, not all prayer groups have the resources to do them well or are willing to put forth the effort to do them well.

Once you have identified your gifts and their relative strength, ask yourself about your level of flexibility in applying these gifts. Are you willing to provide these ministries only under certain terms and conditions or are you willing to adapt your ministry significantly to address the needs of the parish? The latter disposition will create a greater potential for ministerial service in ways you may not have yet anticipated.

Step two: understand the parish mission

All ministries in all parishes could be said to fall into one of six basic categories; some ministries will blend into more than one category. If a church is involved in activities that do not fall into one of these categories it

should probably not be doing this activity! Understanding how a ministry fits into these is key to understanding how a ministry relates to the overall mission of the parish.

Each ministry gets its theoretical, relative value based on how clearly it fits into the mission of the parish. Its actual value is determined by also considering the ministry's effectiveness. For example, eucharistic celebrations have a high, clear theoretical value to the mission of the church; however, they will not enjoy practical value unless they are celebrated well. What good is a Mass so poorly celebrated that no one comes?

The six categories are:

- 1. Evangelization.** It includes ministries like RCIA, the Alpha course, Life in the Spirit seminars and ministries that bring inactive or unchurched people into relationship with Jesus and the community.
- 2. Discipleship.** This encompasses faith formation and religious education programs for children and adults, ministry training, Bible studies, sacramental preparation classes and the like.
- 3. Worship.** This covers eucharistic celebrations, sacraments, prayer ministries, prayer groups and any other occasions of worship.
- 4. Community building.** These ministries involve activities that build the relationships of the community's members such as picnics, socials, shared meals, coffee hours, faith-sharing groups, men's and women's groups.
- 5. Social outreach.** This includes ministries such as service to the poor, ministries to the unborn, visitation ministries and Stephen Ministries.
- 6. Stewardship.** This category entails all ministries that take care of the temporal goods of the parish such as building and grounds committees, finance committees and fundraising groups.

Only when you understand how your gifts and ministries relate to the overall mission of the church can you understand their value to the community. Likewise you can then help others understand that value. This understanding will also help you determine how you can work with and integrate your minis-



try into other parish ministries. Each parish will have its own prioritization of the categories giving it its own particular flavor.

Step three: understand your pastor's and pastoral leaders' needs

The pastor has the single greatest impact on the ministries of any parish. On the practical level he is the shepherd, vision setter, gate keeper, manager, presider, CEO and CFO of the parish. Like it or not, right or wrong, he holds most of the cards. His vision, priorities, ministerial style, leadership, needs and passions will tend to dictate the direction of the parish. We might hope that he would become demonstratively charismatic, but experience has shown that we cannot control that reality—nor should we try. Also, it is the rare

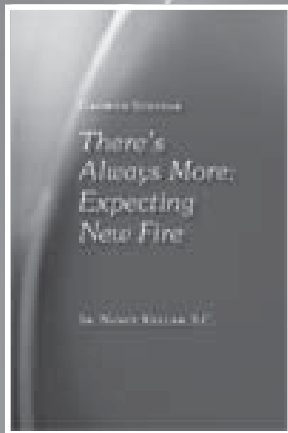
parish where the community, as a whole, is the primary vision setter, and even then it requires a pastor who will and can support the model of collaboration.

Comprehending how your pastor understands his own ministry and parish is crucial to determining the value he will assign to the ministry you can offer. For example, if he does not believe that a charismatic style of worship has any real value, he will not care whether you provide and hold a charismatic prayer meeting. However, if he has a heart for evangelization, you may be able to demonstrate how the Life in the Spirit seminars would be extremely valuable in accomplishing that very goal. Similarly, if you can determine what his greatest passions and needs are, you can then

flex your gifts and ministry to fit those needs and passions. Someone who sets up tables and chairs will be more valuable to a pastor than someone who teaches a Bible study if the pastor cares little for Bible studies and lacks the staff to set up chairs.

In summary, you will make great progress in your ability to help your pastor and his staff if you simply ask yourself: What can I offer? How does it fit in? How will this ministry be valuable to my pastor and other parish ministers? ♦

A former member of the National Service Committee, Dean Condon serves as Pastoral Administrator of Guardian Angels Parish in Rochester, New York.



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to ICCRS
Council**

At its meeting earlier this year, Jim Murphy was re-elected to another three-year term on the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) Council. ICCRS is a body organized to provide leadership, vision and services to the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Its statutes were first approved by the Vatican in 1993. ICCRS is a Private Association of the Faithful.

A former member and Chairman of the National Service Committee, Jim Murphy was first elected to ICCRS in 1996 and re-elected for a second term in 1999.

As ICCRS defines the role, Murphy brings an awareness of the needs, gifts and concerns of the Renewal in the US to ICCRS and is in turn ICCRS' presence in the US. In January of this year Murphy attended the Gathering of National Leadership Groups (see *Pentecost Today* April/May/June 2002, p. 11) and made a presentation about the work of ICCRS to the assembled leaders. ♦

“Bring to life the culture of Pentecost”

Pope John Paul II addresses Italian Catholic Charismatic Renewal leaders

On March 14, Pope John Paul II addressed a delegation of leaders from the Italian Catholic Charismatic Renewal, marking the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the movement in that country. In his remarks, he affirmed the Renewal as a “special gift to the church” and called on leaders to “help bring to life that culture of Pentecost that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly coexistence among peoples.” The following are excerpts from the Pope’s address.

Dear brothers and sisters,

With great joy I welcome you on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of your presence in Italy. I think back with pleasure to the meetings I have had with you in past years. I would also like to thank your directors for wishing to give the Renewal a definite emphasis on collaboration with the hierarchy and with the leaders of other movements, associations and communities.

Yes! The Renewal in the Spirit can be considered a special gift of the Holy Spirit to the church in our

time. Born in the church and for the church, your movement is one in which, following the light of the Gospel, the members experience the living encounter with Jesus, fidelity to God in personal and community prayer, confident listening to his Word, and a vital rediscovery of the sacraments, not to mention courage in trials and hope in hardship.

Love for the church and submission to her Magisterium, in the process of maturing in the church supported by a solid permanent formation, are relevant signs of your intention to avoid the risk of favoring unwittingly a purely emotional experience of the divine, and excessive pursuit of the “extraordinary” and a private withdrawal that may shrink from apostolic outreach...

In the final analysis, all your evangelistic activities tend to foster in the people of God constant growth in holiness. Indeed holiness is the priority in every age, and therefore also in our own time. The church and the world need saints, and we ourselves become holier the more we allow the Holy Spirit to configure us to Christ. This is the secret of the regenerating experience of the “outpouring of the Spirit,” a typical experience that defines the process of growth proposed for the members of your groups and communities. With all my heart I hope that Renewal in the Holy Spirit may be a true “gymnasium” in the church for prayer, asceticism, virtue and holiness.



In a special way continue to love and spread love for the prayer of praise, the form of prayer that recognizes more immediately that God is God, praises him for his own sake, and gives him glory for who he is long before thinking of what he does (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2639).

In our time that is so hungry for hope, make the Holy Spirit known and loved. Help bring to life that culture of Pentecost that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly coexistence among peoples. With fervent insistence, never tire of praying, “Come, Holy Spirit! Come!”

May the Blessed Mother of Christ and of the church, the Virgin at prayer in the Upper Room, always be with you! May the blessing I cordially impart to you and to all the members of the Renewal of the Holy Spirit also go with you! ♦

Regional Leaders' Gatherings

The 15th Regional Leaders' Gathering was held at the Center of Jesus the Lord in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 2-4. The event was held in cooperation with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans. NSC Chair Aggie Neck and member Mark Nehrbas were present.

Upcoming Regional Leaders' Gatherings are scheduled as follows:

November 1-3	Seattle, Washington
November 8-10	Bloomfield, Connecticut
January 31-February 2	Kearny, New Jersey
March 21-23	Lansing, Michigan
March 28-30	Dubuque, Iowa

Contact the Chariscenter office for information on these events.

Communion from p. 5

be able to see shining on the faces of the brothers and sisters around us” (n. 43).

The first example illustrates that spirituality of communion present in the family and highlights that this communion must be a “communion of love” (n. 42) and results in “the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God” (n. 43).

I would like to share some additional examples of how this spirituality of communion is lived out in my everyday life, especially with regard to marriage and family—for these are two important areas for most of us, and all of us are part of one family or another. John Paul II states that “a spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as ‘those who are a part of me’. This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship” (n. 43). While he is talking about many different types of Christian communities, he also includes the community of family, (seen

earlier in n. 43) as one of the communities that must “promote a spirituality of communion” (n. 43).

I see this enfolded in many concrete ways in the community of marriage: having lunch and taking a walk with my wife when possible or meeting for coffee after work; spending time talking in the evenings after our daughter has gone to sleep (sometimes discussing the challenges of parenting); going to a movie while our daughter is at a birthday party; occasionally e-mailing each other at work; and working in the garden together.

I see this enfolded in many ways in the community of family: helping our daughter when she is hurt (physically or emotionally); helping her grow in her relationship with Christ—the first example above highlights how this task is not always straightforward and easy sailing (as most of you who are parents can attest to), but can be quite rewarding; helping her with her schoolwork (for example, she needed to practice counting from one to twenty and practice writing these numbers, and didn’t want to because it was “boring.” She found it fun when I put a group of M&M’s on the table and asked her to sort and count them. In fact, she was enjoying it

so much that she didn’t want to stop at twenty and kept going till she had counted the whole bag and wrote out all the numbers!); helping her learn that there are limits (disciplining falls under this category, for which I’m sure you have plenty of memories); doing fun things together; etc.

For the community of family that extends beyond the nuclear, consider how each of us has been on the receiving end of help in many instances. In all of the above it is the “heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us” that enables us to see them “as a gift from God” and “to ‘make room’ for” them, “bearing ‘each other’s burdens’ (Gal. 6:2)” (n. 43).

Let me conclude with the scripture passage that John Paul II uses to begin the sections where he talks about the spirituality of communion: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:35). ♦



Victor Leuci is a college instructor and a member of the NSC Council.

Grace from p. 6

so much more was happening than I was doing. Something more, something greater was at work. It was a power and a truth that leads me to this day.

By God’s holy gift I was ordained to the priesthood in 1983. I felt then, and I feel now, most myself as a priest. I love the priesthood and I thank God that he called me to this life. Still, so much more happens than what I do. I do what I can do to be faithful, prayerful and prepared, but more often than not it is what God does that stirs my heart to humility and gratitude. God is always faithful, especially when I am not. In this I came to realize and accept the Holy Spirit.

It was in 1996 that I was first baptized in the Holy Spirit. It seemed quite new, but in reality it was what I had known all along. I embraced the Spirit with energy and desire. Ar-

ear of my life in which I had already felt blessed increased, especially in preaching and teaching. I was resistant to accept charismatic gifts but trusted the encouragement of others and now realize that God has used me to heal, inspire or awaken those he has given me. This is what I mean by the more. Jesus is the something more; the Holy Spirit is the power.

Not a small part of me has always wanted and waited for the big moment conversion, and I am not sure that I have really given that up. I know I need healing of various hurts that keep me from loving more freely and openly. Often I don’t understand why God does not just do it for me. I ask and I wait, I am sure, like so many do.

I know the grace is coming. Jesus is too loving, too wise and gentle, to tumble us off a horse unless it is really necessary. The witness of God we can all give is the day to day

grace upon grace that has brought us to the present hour with hope and courage, despite all that has hurt or burdened us. Despite myself and the awareness of my sinfulness, I see and believe that day by day I am being transformed more and more into the person of Christ. That is not always easy, is rarely pretty, and is often painful. But it is happening. And it is happening by the Holy Spirit.

I believe that I have always loved God, but I know now how much more I need and want to love him. I am a fraction of all I desire in him, but I am so daily blessed with the grace upon grace that draws me ever nearer to Jesus by the power of the Spirit. God uses me and I praise him for it. ♦

Fr. John Esper is Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Detroit, and serves as pastor of St. Lucy Parish in St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

From the
Director
.....
by Walter Matthews



Strengthening *communio*

In *Fanning the Flame* we wrote, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit introduces those who have known it to an experience of Christian community that transcends anything they have previously known” (p. 13). This was certainly true in my case thirty years ago when I attended my first prayer meetings at St. Jean Baptiste on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The experience of loving brothers and sisters was one of the pillars that sustained my new life in the Spirit.

So it is not surprising that part of the work of the NSC is to strengthen the *communio* of the Renewal. It does this in a number of ways.

Appropriately, the National Service Committee members begin with themselves as expressed in an internal document adopted in 1996: “The Committee members commit themselves to support, accept, affirm and strengthen one another through personal relationships, shared prayer and ministry.” The Service Committee and the staff and I could not do the work the Lord has called us to do without that sense of community.

Second, the Service Committee has sought from its earliest days to bring other leaders into that deepened communion: first in a structure called the Advisory Committee, but more recently in the NSC Council. Last October the NSC Council adopted the following Mission Statement: “The NSC Council is called by the National Service Committee and gifted by God to work in partnership with the National Service Committee to foster the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.” The partnership is one of brothers and sisters loving, respecting, appreciating and affirming one another.

Third, the NSC has held a number of different types of leaders’ meetings across the

country over the years. In January 1998 the Committee brought together over one hundred leaders in a National Leaders’ Gathering in Houston, Texas. Since then we have held fifteen Regional Leaders’ Gatherings with the aim of strengthening leaders by building relationships within a smaller geographic area.

Another way the Service Committee has worked to strengthen the *communio* of the Renewal is through making the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference an opportunity for brothers and sisters from different areas to meet the NSC and to meet, befriend and draw strength from one another.

We could not do the work the Lord has called us to do without that sense of community.

In this vein, the National Service Committee announces that the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference will be held May 30-June 1, 2003, in San Antonio, Texas, and that the NSC in collaboration with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons will convene its first National Leaders’ Conference since 1979 in Nashville, Tennessee, November 14-16, 2003. We will provide more information in future issues.

Finally, the Service Committee has always encouraged the growth of the relationships among brothers and sisters in prayer groups and in covenant communities. One whole tape in the NSC Leadership Training Videotape series (four half-hour interactive segments) is on “Unity: Building Relationships.”

In *Novo Millennio Ineunte* Pope John Paul II holds out the challenge of a spirituality of communion. “A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a ‘gift for me’” (n. 43).

We who believe that the charisms “closely associated with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, [are] part of the normal Christian life” (*Grace for the New Springtime*) and

want others in the church to value them, must work the harder to appreciate that the gifts others have received are “for me”—for “us” in the Renewal—and that we are diminished without them.

Allow me to conclude with a request. Twelve years ago, the Heart of the Church Consultation which led to *Fanning the Flame*, wrote:

The recovery of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the charisms is needed in all the institutions of the church... We, however, are focusing on the parish because it is there that the needs of the overwhelming majority of Catholics can be addressed. In our vision, a renewed parish is a community worshipping in vibrant liturgy, bonded together by the Holy Spirit, serving one another, committed to ongoing conversion and growth, reaching out to the inactive, the unchurched and to the poor. Such parishes confront us with the gospel and evangelize our culture. In these communities, as in the Acts of the Apostles and the early church, the charisms of the Holy Spirit are identified and welcomed.

Subsequently, we did a survey to identify pastors and parishes that would meet the definition of a renewed parish as delineated in *Fanning the Flame*. We received very few names.

In the last issue I boldly suggested that “it is time for the Charismatic Renewal in the US to start a seminary for candidates for the priesthood.” So, too, isn’t it time to make the vision of renewed parish life a reality?

If you know of a pastor and parish that is “on the way,” please let us know. We would love to hear from you.

In the meantime, let us all continue to strengthen one another and this Renewal through our love for one another and through our acknowledgment that others’ gifts are “for me.” ♦



Ministry
Update
by Virginia King

Friends of the NSC

Recently, one of our donors wrote: “We wish to encourage you in your ministry. I pray that the Lord will use you to bring true revival and renewal in the Catholic Church across the land! God is a prayer-answering God and I praise him and thank him for you all.”

We thank the one who wrote and all those who faithfully support this work.

As we approach the end of the year, we want to ask our Friends to consider a generous year-end gift, perhaps of stock or of life insurance. While the stock market has been on a roller coaster of late, the fact is that you may have stock that has appreciated in value. By giving a gift of stock instead of selling it and making a cash donation, you avoid capital gains taxes and are able to take the full deduction (to the extent allowed by law) of the appreciated stock.

Donation of paid-up life insurance not needed by spouse or family upon your death is also an effective means of supporting this work of renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church. ♦

Serving a unique vision

Renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church! This is the vision of the National Service Committee. Nothing more and nothing less! I can assure you that we do not take it on lightly. We are eleven people—ordinary people, just like you. We come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. And I can guarantee that none of us feels “adequate” to be a leader in this important work of renewal.

We come to this task with fear and trembling, aware of our total dependence on the Lord. We rely on the Holy Spirit who has begun this good work in the church to “carry it through to completion” (Phil. 1:6).

We have, however, been called at this time to serve the church in this unique way. We bring to this Service Committee our various perspectives which enrich and enliven our discussions and our discernment of the direc-

tion that the Holy Spirit is leading Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States.

We are not an “elite” group of leaders but rather a group of simple servants. We each have our own struggles with family, community and ministry. We each have our own testimonies of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in our personal and communal lives. Our stories could be your stories. And one day, you may be the one who is called.

Please pray for the NSC, that we will be faithful to the Lord’s call to serve in this way. We need your prayers very much.

“At every opportunity pray in the Spirit, using prayers and petitions of every sort. Pray constantly and attentively for all in the holy company...pray perseveringly, be attentive to prayer, and pray in a spirit of thanksgiving. Pray for us, too, that God may provide us with an opening to proclaim the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2-3). ♦

Statement of Accountability

For many years we have published in the last issue of the year our Financial Statement from the previous year. It is missing from this issue intentionally. Here’s why.

Because we have waited for our accountants to complete their annual audit or review of our books which they usually complete in July, we have had to wait until the October/November/December issue of *Pentecost Today* to publish the Statement of Accountability, the format recommended by the National Catholic Development Conference to whose principles the National Service Committee adheres.

This delayed report has often caused confusion for our donors. If the current year was in the red, our donors would know the latter from a fund appeal letter; but if previous year had been in the black, the publication of the Statement of Accountability would seem to be contradictory. Similarly, if the previous year was in the red, but the current year in the black, our donors would write about why we had not told them of our need.

So recently the NSC’s Finance Committee decided that we would:

- ✓ not publish the Statement of Accountability for 2001 in *Pentecost Today* this year; it is available from Chariscenter USA (1-800-338-2445) or on our website ;
- ✓ mail the Statement of Accountability to our donors and others with our September appeal; and
- ✓ prepare the Statement of Accountability and make it available to our donors and on the website at an earlier point in the year.

We hope that this will not cause any confusion. We welcome your comments.

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