

PENTECOST *Today*

October/November/December 2006

Sowers of Hope



**Pope Benedict XVI & 2006
Pentecost Vespers** p. 3

**Tom Curran on hungering &
thirsting for God** p. 4

**What is the core of life in the
Spirit?** p. 6

**Using the gifts in our prayer
meetings** p. 8

**The Holy Spirit's guidance for
spiritual journaling** p. 10

**ICCRS conference held after
Pentecost Vigil in Rome** p. 11

The charism of tongues p. 12

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

This was how he wanted us to sow the Good News, without hesitation and generously scattering it everywhere.

Joyfully sowing hope

About a year ago at an NSC meeting, as we were praying I had a vision of a large field, plowed and ready for the seed. Then I saw a very large hand and it dipped into a sack of seed and began to scatter it very generously over the field, reaching all the way to the back area. I felt the Lord was saying that this was how he wanted us to sow the Good News, without hesitation and generously scattering it everywhere. We were not to do so sparingly, but as those who sow with a hope of a great harvest. In the vision the hand just kept bringing out more and more seed until the ground was covered with it. I remember how this vision and the words made my spirit "leap for joy", for it was a joyful sowing that was taking place.

Sow: To set something in motion, to begin an enterprise. To introduce into a selected environment. Implant. To set in motion.

In his 2004 Pentecost Eve address, John Paul II called us to be "sowers of hope." If there is any thing that the world needs now, hope would certainly be on this list. The hope he was speaking of was not the "I hope it happens" kind of hope, but the hope that does not leave us disappointed.

Hope: To cherish a desire with expectation of fulfillment. To long for with expectation of or belief in obtainment. To expect; to trust. **Hope is anticipation.**

In the Bible dictionary I consulted, there is a unique reference to hope.

"The Hebrew terms which designate hope express the tension of a bow ready to shoot its arrow to infinity. This hope thus represents a search, an absolute confidence and a concentration of all of one's energy flowing from God's covenant with Israel. It does not rest on human resources and initiative, but on the all-powerful presence of God. It is unshakable in spite of all the vicissitudes of the history of Israel. It is the constant on which many of the words of the prophets are predicted. This hope was confirmed and reinforced by the coming of the Messiah, the Incarnation and redemption of Christ. Christian hope takes its character from this absolute witness of love and God's fidelity to his promises. It brings the gospel to the far corners of the world as well as souls to a more complete assurance of salvation until the end of time."

We want to introduce into a selected environment the seed of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We want to implant into our society the spirituality of Pentecost. We want to set in motion a transformation of a culture that must become a culture of Pentecost. This is the hope we must sow unsparingly, and joyfully.

"This explains why we work and struggle as we do: our hopes are fixed on the living God who is the savior of all men, but especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editor's Desk

Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).

As we prepare for the 40th anniversary of the Renewal in 2007 we take time in this issue to reflect on being fully charismatic, and as such, sowers of hope in our world today. A couple of areas that we take a serious look at are the charisms and our call to holiness

Aggie Neck in her article encourages the use of the charisms in our prayer meetings and gives us some helpful suggestions to aid us. Walter Matthews turns our attention to the gift of tongues—its purpose, value, uses and fruit.

Being fully charismatic is not complete without our efforts to respond wholeheartedly to our call to holiness. Therese Boucher shows us how journaling can be a great resource for growth in our spiritual life. Do you delight in prayer? In his article Tom Curran draws us to the wonders of intimacy in prayer. Don't miss it!

Our columnists share encouraging reports from the June 2006 Pentecost gatherings in Rome. Enjoy, too, Patti Mansfield's address to our Holy Father. We are indeed people of the Church called to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost, within and beyond the Church. ♦

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).



Pope Benedict XVI addressed by Patti Mansfield at 2006 Pentecost Vespers

Dear Holy Father,

With all our hearts we thank you for inviting us to meet with you on this glorious feast of Pentecost. We are your sons and daughters; we are sons and daughters of the Church, children of Mary, and we are the fruit of the Second Vatican Council.

Holy Father, I was given the grace, in February 1967, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit at a retreat for students from Duquesne University which marked the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Immediately I turned to the Documents of Vatican II for guidance in understanding my experience. What I read in *Lumen Gentium*, 12 about the charismatic gifts encouraged me to be open to the Holy Spirit and his surprises. Every movement and community has its own special history, but in each one exists this same reality: “The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rm. 5:5).

Holy Father, thank you for loving us. Thank you for your constant support and encouragement. Thank you for saying that you are a friend of the movements and that we are a sign of the New Springtime. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my word” (cf. Jn. 14:23), and we stand ready to receive your word, Holy Father, and to follow your direction because we love you.

St. Catherine of Siena called the Pope of her day, “Daddy, the sweet Christ on earth.” We echo her tenderness and

affection today by calling you, Pope Benedict XVI, “the sweet Christ on earth” for us. We place ourselves in full availability to your service in the New Evangelization. For it is not ourselves that we preach—not our movements, our communities, nor our works—no, it is not ourselves that we preach, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake (cf. II Cor. 4:5).

Holy Father, you have cried out to the Church and the world: “Deus Caritas Est!” May we join you in proclaiming that Jesus himself is indeed the pearl of great price and the treasure hidden in the field worth giving up everything else to possess (cf. Mt.13:46).

Thank you, Holy Father, for calling us here to the heart of the Church, for it is here that we discover the vocation we share as ecclesial movements and new communities. Our vocation is love! Today we make our own the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and we say: “In the heart of the Church, our Mother, we want to be and we will be love!” ♦

Patti Gallagher Mansfield was present at the Duquesne Weekend in February, 1967, which marked the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. For the past forty years she has been a witness around the world to the grace of being baptized in the Spirit. Her book, As By A New Pentecost has been published in many languages. She and her husband, Al, work fulltime in New Orleans with the Charismatic Renewal and are recipients of the Papal Medal, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

Hungering and

We can encounter this burning in our hearts

by Dr. Tom Curran

(This is a brief excerpt from the “Come Holy Spirit” series. You can listen to the complete talk on CD by ordering from www.mycatholicfaith.org.)

“Stir into flame the gift of God that you have...” 2 Tim 1:6.

One of the ways that we can seek a deeper stirring into flame of the gift of the Holy Spirit is through the stance of prayer that is called the prayer of desire. It’s the prayer of one who loves, of one whose passion is for God.

I’m not talking about being emotional in prayer. I’m talking about being volitional in prayer. The act of love is an act of the will. You can express passion without being emotional. Think about what you are passionate about. Are you passionate about your garden? Are you passionate about a hobby? Or about a sports team? It doesn’t always equate to emotions and yet there is emotion involved.

The prayer of desire, the prayer of one who loves, is prayer that says, “Father, I love you. Jesus, I love you. Spirit, I love you.” Now, saying that, speaking in a personal way in love to the persons of God, is a striking thing. When you take up this stance, the prayer of the one who loves, you are going to learn several things. You will realize how little you love God. In fact, what comes to be revealed when you say to someone, “I love you,” is in fact how much better I need to love you, how much more my love could be. When I say to my wife, “Kari, I love you,” what automatically rebounds in my face is the ways in which I am not loving her, the ways in which my love for her isn’t as deep as it could be, or should be. And what begins to grow in me is a hunger, a thirst, a desire to love her better. If we take up the stance of the

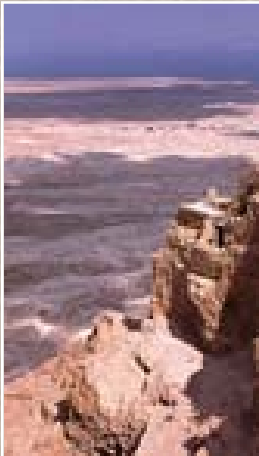
prayer of desire, it’s going to stir up within us the realization that we don’t love God well enough and a desire to love God more.

Take a moment to pray Psalm 63. “Oh, God, you are my God—for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting, like a dry weary land without water.” When you pray that, you will realize, “No, it doesn’t.”

Again, we can pray Psalm 42, “As the deer yearns for running streams so my soul is yearning for you, my God.” When we pray it, we will go on to pray, “God, you know, I’m not there yet, but I want to be. Make it real in me, God. I want to experience the fact that I am like a dry parched land without water. I actually want to experience within me this yearning for you.” As we take up the stance of the one who loves, we will come to know and experience this hunger and thirst for God.

We are going to experience something even more profound and important than this revelation of our hunger and thirst to love God. We will learn the truth that even more than we hunger and thirst for God, God thirsts for us. Even more than you thirst to encounter God, he thirsts to encounter you. He thirsts to love you.

The Catechism talks about John 4, where Jesus asks the woman at the well for water. She says to him, “Who are you to ask me for water?” And Jesus says, “If you only knew who was asking you for water, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The Catechism says that Jesus’ asking her for water is a sign of God’s desire to encounter every human being (cf. CCC 2560). It’s a sign of God’s desire to encounter you. Watch out. God has his eyes set on you and he hungers to be



“Oh, God, you are my God—for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting, like a dry weary land without water.”
Psalm 63



Thirsting for God

able to love you. Would you like to know that? Take up the prayer of the one who loves.

There is a difference between our thirst and God's thirst. Our thirst is a thirst to receive. We are that dry land. His thirst is to empty, to pour out, to give. Why? Because God loves us! St. Thomas Aquinas says that to love someone is to have a heart open to receive to oneself the beloved. When you love someone, you are welcoming the beloved into your heart. That loved one impresses himself/herself into your heart. And the experience of doing this is delight.

The word delight – *delexio* – is the same root as the word to describe the delight that's involved in a woman breastfeeding her baby. When a woman is breastfeeding her baby, that is called delight. Now where's the delight that's involved in a nursing baby? It's both the delight of the mother *giving* and the delight of the baby *receiving*. You are God's delight. And God intends for you to delight in him.

Is 62:3-5 says, "You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the Lord, you shall be a royal diadem held by your God. No more shall men call you forsaken or your land desolate, but you shall be called 'my delight' and your land 'espoused.' For the Lord delights in you and makes your land espoused. As a young man marries a virgin your builder shall marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you." It is God's intention for us that we would know this reality, that we would encounter it, that we would experience it. The path to doing that is taking up the stance in prayer of the one who loves, the prayer of desire. When we do, the Holy Spirit will make it real.

I encourage and even challenge you to take up this stance in prayer for the next two weeks. Every day spend at least 10 minutes praying with Psalm 63 or Psalm 42. By the end of those two weeks, you will see that, in fact, the Holy Spirit

will make your desire real. You will perceive a tangible change in your relationship with God.

Remember the reaction of the disciples on the road to Emmaus? When Jesus spoke to them, when he pours out his love for them, their hearts were burning. We can encounter this burning in our hearts, this burning of God's love. This is what God intends.

Do you want to be further aided in your own stirring of love? Gaze on the crucifix. Or, watch a movie like the "Passion of the Christ." Then you will get an insight into God's passion for us. We will come to know that we are his passion. And as we are in the presence of that passion that he has for us it will stir that passion in us. That passionate commitment for God—God will become our passion.

Now, what is so incredible about being Catholic is that we don't simply have to experience this by looking at the crucifix, but we can come into the very presence of Christ's passion, and death, and resurrection at Mass. Here we find in fact the prayer of desire most perfectly displayed and manifested. "Take this, all of you and eat it. This is my body given for you. This is the cup of my blood shed for you." That is passion!

I challenge you—if you take the stance of the prayer of desire, of the one who loves, you will know what it is to have the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, stirred into a flame within you. ♦

Dr. Thomas Curran is director of Trinity Formation Resources, a non-profit ministry dedicated to helping Catholics understand, live and share their Catholic faith. Tom has a graduate degree from the Gregorian University in Rome and a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Catholic University. He and his wife, Kari, and their five children live in Federal Way, WA. Tom can be contacted at www.mycatholicfaith.org.



*"As the deer
yearns for
running
streams so
my soul is
yearning
for you,
my God."
Psalm 42*





New life in the Spirit

What is the core of new life?

by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa

Excerpted from *Life in Christ: A Spiritual Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* Published by: Liturgical Press, 1990 (www.litpress.org).

In the time of Jesus, Pentecost for the Jews was the feast celebrating the giving of the law on Mount Sinai and of the covenant. St. Augustine exclaimed: “Who could fail to be struck by this coincidence and at the same time by this difference? Fifty days pass between the celebration of the Passover and the day on which Moses received the Law written by God’s finger on tables of stone; similarly, fifty days after the death and resurrection of the one who, like a lamb was slaughtered, the finger of God, that is the Holy Spirit, filled the faithful who were gathered together.”

Suddenly the prophecies of the new covenant become clear; “This is the covenant which I will make with the

house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them and I will write it upon their hearts” (Jer. 31:33). “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances” (Ez. 36:26-27).

It is also a sobering thought because in order to put the new heart into action, it is necessary to silence the old one: one must die to oneself.

Pentecost was not just the fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel who spoke of all sorts of charisms: dreams, visions and wonders, but also and above all of the prophecies promising a new heart and a new spirit.

The Holy Spirit has written the new law on our hearts by pouring his love

into them: “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). The fire of the Spirit was given to us at Baptism. We must remove the ashes suffocating it so that it can once more burst into flame and make us capable of loving.

New life in the Spirit is a life of love

A Christian, St. Peter said, is someone who loves with “all his heart.” But what heart? The new heart! When we love “from the heart,” it is God, present in us with his Spirit, who loves in us; God’s own love passes to others through us.

Christian love can be distinguished from all other types of love by the fact that it is the love of Christ: “It is no longer I that love, but Christ who loves in me!” You and I can be a radiating center of God’s love! Yet there is nothing exalting or intoxicating in this thought. It is the most sobering of thoughts, because “what have you got

that wasn't given to you?" (1 Cor. 4:7). It is also a sobering thought because in order to put the new heart into action, it is necessary to silence the old one: one must die to oneself.

New life in the Spirit is a life of humility

Humility does not principally consist in *being little*, nor does it consist in *feeling little*. Humility in itself, in its most perfect state, consists in *making oneself little!* Perfect humility consists in constantly making oneself small, not for the sake of some personal need or benefit, but for the sake of love, to *elevate* others. That is what the humility of Jesus was like; he made himself so small as to "annihilate" himself for us.

Jesus said: "Learn from me for I am humble of heart." This is an invitation to make ourselves small for love, to wash, as he did, our neighbors' feet. In Jesus we realize the seriousness of this choice. It is not a question of stooping and making himself small every once in a while. Jesus made himself small in the same way that he became flesh, that is, permanently and to the very end. He chose to belong to the category of the small and humble. To be "meek and humble of heart" also means to belong to the humble and poor people of God.

New life in the Spirit is a life of obedience

The true basis of Christian obedience is not an *idea* of obedience, but an *act* of obedience. It is based on the fact that "Christ became obedient even unto death" (Phil. 2:8); that Christ "learnt to obey through suffering and having been made perfect he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation" (cf. Heb. 5:8-9).

Christ's obedience is an interior, absolute submission to God. The greatness of the obedience of Jesus is measured *objectively* "by what he suffered" and

subjectively by the love and freedom with which he obeyed.

In Christian life obedience is something essential; it is the practical and necessary counterpart of accepting the lordship of Christ. There can be no real and effective lordship without man's obedience. In Baptism we accepted an "obedient" Lord, one who became Lord precisely because of his obedience (cf. Phil. 2:8-11). Christian obedience, from this point of view, is not so much submission as likeness. To obey such a Lord is to be like him, because he, too, obeyed.

New life in the Spirit is a life of purity.

The Apostle Paul said it is not lawful to be immoral because we no longer belong to ourselves but to Christ. "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ... and that you are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:15,19). The supreme value to be safeguarded is no longer to be masters of ourselves, but to let Jesus be our master. "The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord!" (1 Cor. 6:13). The ultimate motivation for purity is, therefore, that "Jesus is Lord!"

The Lordship of Jesus

We must now resolve to choose Jesus again as the only Lord of our life. This is what makes baptism effective. We release the sacrament within us because a new strength flows from it and the charisms given to each one of us for the common good can manifest themselves. The simplest way to express this decision is by learning to say: "Jesus is Lord!" with the inner persuasion that made it possible for the Apostle Paul to say: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

To say "Jesus is Lord" in this way and with faith means to mysteriously take part in his death and resurrection. To

Prayer Card



For the renewal of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church we pray:

Father, inflame our hearts
with the Spirit of your
love, so that we may think
and work according to
your will and love you in
our brothers and sisters
with sincerity of heart.

Amen

say "Jesus is Lord" is not only to affirm something but to make a decision; it means to freely enter into his sphere of power and recognize him as one's Lord. It's as if we were saying "Jesus is *my* Lord, the reason for my existence. I no longer want to live for myself but for him!" What power these simple words contain! Through them the Gospel is at work, which is "God's power for those who believe." ♦

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap., is the preacher to the papal household, a position he has held since 1980. He is former professor of history of early Christianity, head of the dept. of religious studies at the Catholic University of Milan, member of the International Theological Commission and author of numerous books. He lives in Rome.



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

- ◆ For the courage to be sowers of hope
- ◆ For the success of the Third Millennium Fund campaign
- ◆ For the National Leaders' Conference that will be held in November
- ◆ For a blossoming of a new zeal for evangelization in prayer groups throughout the country
- ◆ For faithfulness to our call to be fully charismatic

How do we encourage the use of charisms in our prayer meetings?

by Aggie Neck

Did you ever give a gift to someone and they put it aside and never even used it or wanted it? Or, perhaps, they “played around” with it for awhile, never knew what to do with it, or how to use it, and then they just ignored this gift and even forgot that they had received it. It is disheartening to say the least, even disappointing, because you thought it was such a wonderful gift, one you would have chosen for yourself.

Sometimes I think this is how God must feel as he looks at us and sees that in many instances this is what is done with the gifts he poured out on us, on the Renewal, with great expectations for their use.

As we look at the question: “how do we encourage the use of charisms in our prayer meetings?” we must first come to understand that they are not just for the prayer meetings. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used in our spiritual walk and they are tools for evangelization and a sign to us that God is actively moving in our lives. They are visible evidence that God is using signs and wonders because he wants to reach out to all peoples, every person, and wants to be a partner in our labor.

Prayer meetings are the training places for living “life in the Spirit.” This is where we see and experience the move of the Holy Spirit and we are then equipped to go forth and be instruments of God’s plan.

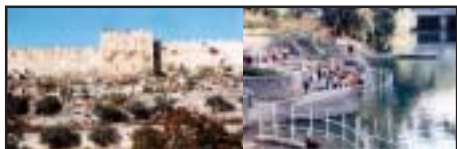
Expectant faith is absolutely necessary to yield to the gifts. This faith is also a

gift that is listed in 1 Corinthians 12. It is an essential element, for faith is the foundation on which we stand that enables the gifts of the Spirit to be manifested. We should teach and encourage expectant faith.

I firmly believe that in order for the gifts to flow in our meetings there must be an atmosphere that opens us to the move of the Holy Spirit in our midst. This is done during the praise and worship time. Praise must lift us up beyond ourselves to give the glory, honor and praise that rightfully belongs to God. This praise should then lead us into worship and worship will bring us into the presence of our God.

During our time of praise there ought to be more than just singing. It should also be a time of spontaneous vocal praise that declares to the Lord our awareness of who he is and expressing the gratitude and awe that we feel and know belongs to the God we love. What this does is help us to focus more on what we have sung and to speak it out in affirmation of our beliefs. In both praise and worship there should be times of praying and singing in the Spirit.

As we enter into worship there will be times when we will come before the Lord and just “Be still and know that he is God.” We must not be afraid to let silence remain for awhile, for this is a time to listen; it is a time to feel the presence of God and let ourselves enter into that presence. After a time that seems appropriate there should be a word of encouragement that calls forth



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