

PENTECOST *Today*

October/November/December 2008

**Proclaim his
marvelous deeds!**



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Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Where's the power?

Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men and to the needs of the world. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Par. 799).

In April of this year I attended the International Colloquium on "Charisms and Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church" held in Rome.

Evangelization is powerless without charisms

There were 131 participants from 43 countries (see Newsbriefs last issue, p.11). Some key quotes were: "The purpose of this gathering is to give new life to the charisms." "The importance of charisms is they are a powerful factor for evangelization, a chance for the Church." "The gospel proclamation is inseparable from charisms—signs will accompany." "Charisms are co-essential to the structure of the Church. Our duty is to revive them."

This gathering gave me hope that the Church indeed sees the need for the reviving of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have been entrusted with these gifts for the New Evangelization. "Evangelization is powerless without charisms" (Rome Colloquium).

"Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well" (CCC Par. 800). We are instructed

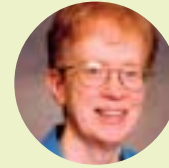
that as "generous distributors of God's manifold grace we are to put our gifts at the service of one another in the measure we have received them (1 Peter 4:10). We are told "The gift we have received we are to give as a gift" (Matt. 10:8). "Charisms are gifts given for the common good and for service to the community" (Rome Colloquium).

It is evident that God intends for us to be equipped for the task at hand, the work of the kingdom. Prayer meetings are one of the places where we learn about charisms and how to use them. However, charisms are meant to be taken and used outside out of the prayer meeting. They are the tools for evangelization, witnessing and the proclamation of the gospel message. These are important times that we live in and God has poured out his Spirit for the task at hand. There is urgency that those who have not heard the message hear it. There is an urgency that those who hear and walk away come to know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

St. Paul exhorts us as he proclaims: "The old order has passed away; now all is new!" "We implore you in Christ's name: be reconciled to God!" and "Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor. 5: 17, 20 and 6:2).

In this Year of St. Paul, we can learn much from his writings and equip ourselves with the words of scripture that he left to the Church as instructions for living a life that is alive with the Holy Spirit's power at work in us. There is a task before us. It cannot be done on our own power. "To do God's work we need the Holy Spirit of our God" (Rome Colloquium). ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editor's Desk

by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor (Luke 4:18).

We celebrate the proclamation of God's Word in this issue. We look at the call, and actually the duty, that each one of us has to spread the gospel. What a blessing that we have been anointed and equipped for such a mission!

What lessons can we learn from St. Paul about proclaiming the Word? **George Martin** in his article "Passing on what we have received" gives us the answer.

Deacon Bill Brennan reminds us that baptism in the Spirit calls and empowers us to tell others the life-saving message of the gospel.

Immersing ourselves in the Word of God prepares and stimulates us to be sharers of the good news. Read about it in **Laurie Manhardt's** article

Our writers show us in a variety of ways how to be evangelistic in our daily living. **Jim Murphy** offers some practical suggestions in how to evangelize. **Therese Boucher** suggests how our prayer meetings and Life in the Spirit Seminars can be evangelistic tools.

We offer the witness (**Chris Kepler**) given on page 3 as encouragement to each of us to dare to bring the love of our Savior wherever the Spirit leads us.

May the encouraging words in this issue work hand in hand with the Spirit of God to awaken in us anew to live and share the love of our life—JESUS! ♦

Out of my comfort zone and into using God's gifts

by Chris Kepler

Franciscan University has a program devoted to the missions. This year I chose to go on the Florida Mission, called Sonlife. The purpose of Sonlife is to bring the gospel to other college kids on Spring break. During the day we go out on the beach to evangelize in pairs. In the evening, we put on retreats, spend time with youth groups, or proclaim the good news on the city streets and in the bars.

One night, we had a healing service for the parishioners of the church where we were staying. One by one, people would come up to our prayer teams and we would pray with them to receive God's healing and grace. I walked up to a guy sitting in the last pew in the back of the church and started to chat with him. He wanted to receive prayer but only spoke Spanish. Since I knew some Spanish, I was able to pray with him. After we started praying, he fell on his knees and began to weep. The Spirit of God stirred within him and for the first time he experienced the real and personal presence of God. As he gave his life to the Lord I could see his heart being softened and a beautiful transformation took place. I didn't do anything extraordinary except use the gifts God gave me to pray with him. It took me out of my comfort zone, but God gave me the strength and the courage I needed. The biggest reason for Christians not evangelizing is *fear*. Doing God's work means we have to step out of ourselves and be willing to lay down our life for him. It may be uncomfortable, but it's worth it.

Before he ascended in heaven, Christ told his followers to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). For many, our first inclination is to brush this commission aside. We say to ourselves: How could Jesus ask such a big thing of me? Surely this message is for somebody else. The task of evangelization seems too overwhelming for the average Christian to be expected to do. I'll just leave evangelization to someone better suited.

It is a common thing for people to think that spreading the gospel is only for a select few whom God specifically chooses and calls. The truth is that Christ was talking to *every* follower of his when he said to "make disciples of all nations."

When we become Christians we receive not only the call, but also the one and only effective tool for evangelization: God's Spirit.

Spreading the gospel isn't just about traveling all over the world in order to baptize the unbaptized and do acts of kindness.

Nor is it just standing in front of a stadium and giving a fiery sermon or healing the sick. Sure, some may be called to these things, but this is not necessarily the definition of evangelization. Even St. Paul says, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing?" (1 Cor. 12:29-30).

Doing God's work means we have to step out of ourselves and be willing to lay down our life for him.

Evangelization is about sharing with others the love and the life you have received from God. Anyone can do it. As a matter of fact, all Christians must do it. God made each of us unique with special gifts and talents. If every Christian would use the gifts God gives us right where we are, all nations would be converted to Christ. St. Paul says, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (Romans 12:6). He is saying that each person is unique and can contribute in a special but different way to build up the kingdom of God. We are one body with many parts.

I've been blessed to be studying theology for the past two years at Franciscan University of Steubenville. One phrase I know very well that has been attributed to St. Francis is, "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words." Proclamation of the gospel begins first with our daily actions. Love is the sign of God's Spirit moving in us. If we truly have the Lord living and working in us, we can't help but have his love overflow to those around us.

Christ calls every Christian to evangelize. He reminds us that "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide... this I command you, to love one another" (John 15:16-17). ♦

Chris Kepler is a junior theology major at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. He has worked with other youth in evangelization ministries and prayer groups.



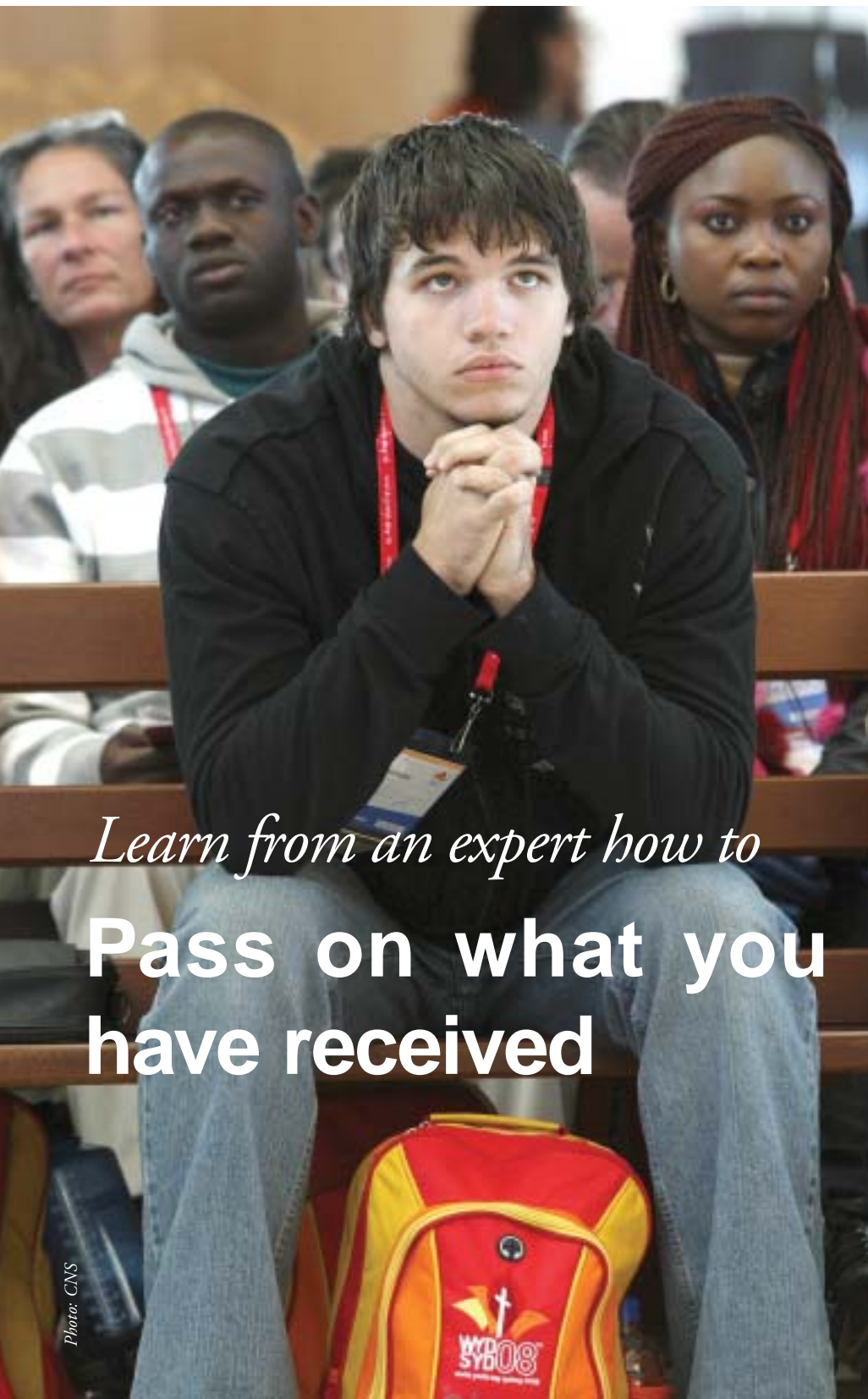
by George Martin

If we want to learn how we can best proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to others, we can look to the foremost proclaimer of all time, St. Paul. Here are some lessons we can learn from him:

Dedication and determination

Paul teaches us by his example. He knew that he was commissioned to preach the gospel: “If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!” (1 Cor. 9:16). Paul dedicated his life to his calling. Whatever else he might have done, he set it aside for the sake of Jesus. Paul was a bright enough fellow that he could have made a better living than as a tentmaker, but this craft supported him while allowing him to make proclaiming Jesus his top priority. Paul let nothing stand in the way of his preaching the gospel—not hardship, not rejection, not failure (see 2 Cor. 11:23-27). One vivid example of his determination occurred during his visit to Lystra, when Paul’s opponents stirred up a crowd against Paul: “They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered around him, he got up and entered the city” again (Acts 14:19-20). I imagine that once back in the city, his first words were, “As I was saying ...”

We do not have Paul’s unique call from God, but we are nonetheless called to proclaim the gospel to those who need to know the wonderful thing God has done for them in Jesus. This takes



Learn from an expert how to

**Pass on what you
have received**

Photo: CNS

Paul's duty was to deliver the message; the power to change lives lay in the message and in the Holy Spirit.

dedication: making a decision to proclaim Jesus to others and setting out to do it. It may mean putting some other things aside—perhaps our pride or our self-concern. And it will require our determination to carry through and be as faithful to our commission as Paul was to his.

Stay on Message

Paul was clear about the distinction between his personal opinions on the one hand, and the good news from and about Jesus on the other. Paul could write, “To the married I give this instruction (not I, but the Lord)...” (1 Cor. 7:10). Paul could also write, “Now to the rest I say (not the Lord)...” (1 Cor. 7:12, indicating that he was giving his personal opinion (see also 1 Cor. 7:25). When Paul preached the gospel, he was not sharing his personal views or giving his opinion; he was handing on to others what he had received as the saving message of the gospel (see 1 Cor. 15:3-5). He was certain that this message was from God and was the word of God. He told the Christians of Thessalonica, “in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13). Because it was the word of God, Paul did not need to embellish it with fancy speaking or “sublimity of words” (1 Cor. 2:1). Paul simply told it as it is.

Following Paul's example, we should do the same. We should hand on to others the saving truth we have received and accepted. We should reject temptations to edit the gospel message to make it more acceptable, touching it up a bit to make it in accord with what we imagine others want to hear. That would shortchange both them and the gospel. Rather, imitating Paul, we should stay on message.

Rely on the Power of the Word and the Spirit

Paul did not regard himself as a superman. He told the Christians of Corinth, “I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:3-4). Paul recognized that he was not an imposing figure or a good public speaker; he allowed that some could say of him, “his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10). But for Paul these weaknesses were a plus. The power of the gospel message does not lie in the one who proclaims it but in the Holy Spirit who inspires the word of God and those who hear it. Rather than try to sway his listeners with his own persuasiveness, Paul told the Corinthians that he relied on “a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4-5). He told the Christians in Thessalonica, “our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction” (1 Thess. 1:5). Paul's duty was to deliver the message; the power to change lives lay in the message and in the Holy Spirit.

Like Paul, we might think that we are not very good speakers. We might draw the conclusion that we are therefore not suited for sharing the good news of Jesus with others. But Paul would say that that is the wrong conclusion. Paul would even say, Be glad that you are not very eloquent, for then you can find it easier to rely on the power of the word of God and of the Holy Spirit. Your job is not to transform hearts; that is the Spirit's job. Your job is to be the

messenger bringing the word of God to others, so that word and Spirit can manifest their power. Learn to trust in the power of the Spirit.

I learned this lesson while leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land. It was my task to bring people to sites where Jesus walked, say a few words about each site, have someone read a scripture passage pertaining to the site, and allow time for reflection. After doing my part, I needed to stand aside and let God's grace work. God touched many hearts in the course of the pilgrimages, often in ways I did not expect and could not have programmed.

Conclusion

Paul offers us a good many other lessons for proclaiming the word of God. He insists on the necessity of the saving word of God being preached (Rom. 10:13-15). He identified with and adapted himself to his listeners, even while holding fast to the gospel message (1 Cor. 9:22). He urged Timothy to proclaim the word whether it was convenient or inconvenient to do so (2 Tim. 4:2). But I suggest that the most important lessons that Paul teaches about proclaiming the word of God are:

- regard it as a mission we are to carry out with dedication and determination
- bring to others the unadulterated good news of Jesus Christ
- rely on the power of God's word and of the Holy Spirit to touch minds and hearts. ♦

George Martin was the founding editor of God's Word Today magazine. He is now writing an exposition of each Gospel to assist in lectio divina. The first two volumes are Bringing the Gospel of Matthew to Life and Bringing the Gospel of Mark to Life, published by The Word Among Us Press.



And then
God did a
radical
intervention
in his life.



St. Paul, baptism in the Holy Spirit and us

by Deacon Bill Brennan

In the very early days of the church, when Christianity was still a Jewish experience, God chose a most unlikely man to be the missionary to the gentile world. What happened to him would affect not only his life but also the entire future course of the history of Christianity itself. It continues to affect us to this day. That man, of course, was St. Paul, and his story is one we are encouraged to reflect upon by the church during this Year of St. Paul. His encounter with God is the key to everything he preached and wrote.

Consider its implications. This was a man who hated Christianity and in particular hated the name of Jesus. He hated them so strongly that he was on a mission to destroy both. He had the authority to imprison and even kill the followers of this man they claimed was the Messiah and the Savior of the world. And then God did a radical intervention in his life, and the rest is history. St. Paul's encounter with the risen Christ and the fire and power of the Holy Spirit while on the road to carry out his mission of destruction was so powerful and impacted on his life

so strongly that he never forgot it. From that day forward, whenever he engaged in what we would call "giving his testimony," he always brought his audience back to where it all began, there on the road to Damascus. His whole life became a great proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus. And in the end, he gave up his life rather than deny the One he served and proclaimed. What is more, scripture presents his experience of God as a classic example of God working in the life of one who has been called and chosen for a true mission of life-giving power.

Photo: Shannon Marraffino




We too are invited by God and by the church to spend our lives sharing the good news of the One who has intervened in our own lives and changed everything.

Today this generation of the church has been graced in an extraordinary manner with the gift we call baptism in the Holy Spirit. It comes in different ways, some of them very strong and powerful, others of them very gentle and quiet. But no matter how it occurs, it produces in us several affects that put us in touch with St. Paul. For example, Jesus comes to life within us in ways we never knew were possible—what I like to call “a moving, breathing, living and active presence,” and like St. Paul, we are impelled to share the good news. Prayer comes alive, scripture comes alive, the sacraments come alive and the church comes alive as never before, and like St. Paul, we draw our nourishment and life from them. Also, like St. Paul, we too can claim that this encounter with the risen Christ and the fire and power of the Holy Spirit has changed our lives and even the direction of our lives. We too discover that the charisms of the Holy Spirit are very real, and that they have empowered us to speak and minister in power. Not only that but our encounter has taken away the fear and self-doubt in matters of faith and practice that kept so many of us so quiet before a world demanding to know what we believed and knew. It is certainly a common experience of those who have been touched by this grace that they are driven to talk about Jesus and how he has affected their lives.

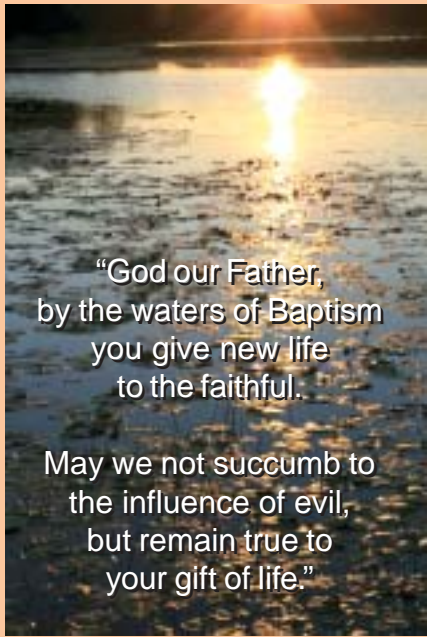
Is it not interesting that this grace has been given to us for the church at precisely the moment in the history of the church when the Spirit has called the whole church to a reawakening of who

and what we are called to be as the Body of Christ in this age? In the words of Pope John Paul II, the agenda of the church moving into the third millennium of Christianity was set at the Second Vatican Council. The teaching of the Council makes it clear, among other things, that every baptized believer is “obligated” to be an evangelist, that is, a proclaimer of the good news of Jesus, who is the Word made flesh, the good news of the Father’s kingdom, the Messiah and Savior of the world. The teaching goes on to describe how every believer is to engage in his or her mission: by what we say (always the easier part) and by how we live. Thus through our words and our lives, we are to bring Jesus into every situation of life we encounter and wherever we find ourselves in both the religious side and the secular side of our everyday lives.

So what can we, who have been so blessed by this extraordinary gift of God’s love— baptism in the Holy Spirit—conclude from reflecting on St. Paul’s experience of the same grace? The answer is clear: what every baptized believer should conclude. We too have been chosen for a mission for God; we too have been called to follow Jesus wherever he leads; we too have been raised to proclaim everywhere “Jesus is Lord;” and we too are invited by God and by the church to spend our lives sharing the good news of the One who has intervened in our own lives and changed everything. We are called to be living evidence that the great adventure of building the king-



Prayer Card



“God our Father,
by the waters of Baptism
you give new life
to the faithful.

May we not succumb to
the influence of evil,
but remain true to
your gift of life.”

(Prayer for Saturday in
the 3rd week of Easter)

Photo: Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

dom continues to this very day. Baptism in the Holy Spirit has empowered us to live the life of Jesus and to do what he was doing, which is what he called his own disciples to do in his name. And this, surely, is what we were baptized to do in the first place—sharing in the work and ministry of Jesus as King, Prophet and Priest. ♦

Deacon Bill Brennan is a former member of the National Service Committee and serves as a diocesan liaison in the Diocese of Stockton. He is the current chairman of the Northern California Coalition of Catholic Charismatic Diocesan Liaisons.





Please pray:

- For the continued outreach of the Renewal worldwide and the work and financial needs of ICCRS.
- For the School of Healing Prayer for Leaders at Jacksonville on October 20–25, 2008
- For the National Leaders' Conference in Nashville on November 14–16, 2008
- That this Year of St. Paul will be a special grace for the Charismatic Renewal and the whole Church.
- That the Bishops' Synod on "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church" will bless the Church with a new thirst and love for God's Word.
- That each of us will accept our call to evangelize and use our gifts to build the kingdom of God among us.

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How to proclaim and receive the Good News in prayer communities

by *Therese Boucher*

Stop and think about the last prayer meeting, ministry meeting or charismatic gathering you attended. Surely there was praise and listening to the word of God. However, did you have time to dwell on God's word, or to share your particular challenges in bringing the good news of Jesus into daily life? Part of proclaiming God's word is letting it echo in our hearts. As St. Paul exhorts us in Colossians (3:16), "Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts."

Walter Matthews, in his NSC leaflet, *Charismatic Prayer Meetings*, offers a good explanation of how God's word is proclaimed at gatherings. He points out that the first element of praise helps us proclaim God's glory. The second element is listening to the Lord through scripture, prophecy and teachings. The third element applies God's loving care through intercessory prayer. But is our experience of "listening to the Lord" successful; or does "listening" become sharing of a string of scriptures and lengthy silences without the opportunity to apply God's word to our lives?

Ponder and pour over the word

If you find it difficult to take prayer meeting scriptures to heart, leaders might occasionally modify a prayer meeting by adding *lectio divina*, or sacred reading, between proclaiming God's word and intercessory prayer. This approach has been used by monastic communities for centuries and can be helpful at ministry meetings, workshops, bible studies and even at

large charismatic gatherings. Here are the steps. They take about ten to fifteen minutes.

✚ The leader of the meeting chooses and slowly proclaims one of the previous scripture readings. The goal is to allow time for group meditation and sharing.

✚ The passage is repeated again, inviting everyone to listen for a word or phrase that strikes the heart or mind.

✚ These phrases are prayerfully repeated out loud.

✚ Next, invite people to share the personal meaning of each phrase with the group (of ten or less). In a group of more than ten, people can share with someone nearby.

Reasons for this approach:

1. As Pope Paul VI pointed out in *On Evangelization in the Modern World*, the first people we should delve into the word with are each other. "The Church begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated... and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe (13)."

2. Sharing meaningful phrases helps us consider the relationship between our daily lives and God's particular word. It often triggers the gift of prophecy, as well.

3. Scripture based faith sharing provides an entry point into the community for new people, especially those who enjoyed small group sharing during a Holy Spirit Seminar.

4. *Lectio* offers a communal model of receiving God's word and a good transition to intercessory prayer for the needs that have surfaced.

Faith sharing during a Holy Spirit Seminar

It is also important to review how we receive God's word during a Holy Spirit Seminar. Too often we think of talks as the key proclamation. But this is not true. Small group sharing is equally important. It is faith sharing that helps people explore their response to the good news and discover concrete ways to live in the Holy Spirit. Faith sharing is like connective tissue, or glue, linking daily life and God's interven-

tion. The Spirit awakens faith as we share our experiences of accepting or rejecting God's word. Successful faith sharing groups also allow participants to feel at home with community members later on. It is one of the first things participants look for after a seminar. And it is ongoing sharing of our relationships with God that connects all of us as a growing community.

But good faith sharing during a seminar does not happen by accident. It happens through deliberate actions, like befriending new people, rather than spending time socializing with old friends. It happens through training at ongoing team meetings where listening and sharing skills are learned. It happens when we nurture people's daily spiritual lives through phone calls and emails. So let us commit ourselves to deeper, more conscious ways of receiving God's word thru sacred read-

ing and faith sharing. Let us pray with the US bishops, "Awakened and energized by the Spirit, let us strengthen our commitment and intensify our efforts to help the adults in our communities be touched and transformed by the life-giving message of Jesus, to explore its meaning, experience its power, and live in its light... This is the Lord's work. In the power of the Spirit it will not fail but will bear lasting fruit" (*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*, USCCB, pg 35). ♦



Therese Boucher is a writer and speaker. She has written several books, among them The New Life in the spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000 which is available through the National Service Committee.

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Transformation and evangelization through bible study

by Laurie Watson Manhardt, PhD

Pope Benedict XVI asked a question at World Youth Day 2008 that could be posed to each of us. “How are you using the gifts you have been given, the ‘power’ that the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you? What legacy will you leave? What difference will you make?... At each Mass, the Holy Spirit descends anew, invoked by the solemn prayer of the Church, not only to transform our gifts of bread and wine into the Lord’s body and blood, but also to transform our lives, to make us, in his power, one body, one spirit in Christ.”

Jesus said “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Do you ever feel like you’re powerless and you’re not going anywhere? To whom could you witness? How can you share the love of God with a needy world? What is God calling you to do for him?

Bible study provides a simple tool for discipleship and evangelization. It can enable you to be transformed by God’s word and become a witness for him. You can leave a legacy, even if you are old, or young, or slow of speech or busy. How can this be done?

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The word of God has power, in and of itself. We hunger for the word. We love the word of God. We want to immerse ourselves in God’s word. But, alas, the busyness of

life, the demands, and the distractions hinder us. We need accountability. We need help. We can’t do it alone. We need someone to stand along side us and to call us on to faithfulness in studying God’s word.

So, gather together a few friends or neighbors. Pray about whom to invite. Pray about who God wants you to serve. Teenagers? Young mothers? Prisoners? Non-practicing Catholics? Couples in mixed marriages? Commit to studying God’s word each week or every other week. Choose a good Catholic bible study plan. Make some refreshments. Open your home and watch God’s power unfold.

God doesn’t need your *ability*. He only wants your *availability*. God wants hearts of service. God is hungry for souls. Are you hungry for souls? Can you open your home for an hour or two each week to invite others to study God’s word with you? You don’t need to be a scripture scholar. You don’t have to have all the answers. Really, nobody but God has all the answers. It is virtuous to be humble. When questions arise, you can say “I really don’t know. But, let me research this, or talk to the pastor and get back to you the next time we meet. This is really a very good question for all of us.”

And, here is what will happen. People will come to your home, maybe only two or three at first. You will break open God’s word together. God’s word has power. The Holy Spirit will transform you into the person he wants you to become. Others will be drawn into God’s love. They will tell their friends and bring others. God will work in power in your life and in the lives of others.

Several years ago, I felt the Lord calling us to have a Catholic bible study for couples in mixed marriages in our home. Being somewhat reluctant, I was dragging my feet. One day driving to the airport with a Protestant woman I hoped to invite, I found the 90 minute drive slipping away. Finally, approaching the terminal, I sheepishly asked, “Would you ever consider coming to a Catholic bible study?” Immediately she responded, “Oh honey, we will be there every single time. We *need* this. What do you want me to bring? Brownies? Cookies?” God made it so easy for her to respond to his grace. What was the cause of my fear and reluctance? Was I relying on myself instead of trusting that God had a plan and that he had everything under control?

On another occasion a teenage boy approached a friend of mine. “Mrs. D. we go to bible study on Wednesday nights but, it sure would be nice if we could have a Catholic bible study to attend.” Now, would we commit our time for just a few teenagers? Would we sacrifice one night a week for just a few young people hungry for God’s word?

What about the young families in our neighborhoods? Do you see them at church on Sunday mornings or are they over at the soccer field? Perhaps a neighborhood bible study with free child care would be an opportunity for you to witness God’s love to the young who don’t know the fullness of truth.

Pope Benedict XVI told the youth that there will come “a new age in which hope liberates us from the shallowness, apathy and self-absorption which deaden our souls and poison our rela-



The Renewal lives

Among the many diocesan and area conferences that took place this year there were several significant ethnic gatherings.

In March the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities held a Regional Conference in Las Vegas with the theme "Lord I'll Go! Send Me." It drew some 400 attendees. Speakers included Bob Canton, Fr. Ramon Valera, Sr. Nancy Kellar, S.C. and ICCRS member Peter Thompson of Canada.

The Alliance has added a number of new regional representatives and named Fr. Ramon Valera as Head Shepherd and Fr. Bill Halbing as

Assistant Head Shepherd. (See www.afccpc.org.)

Hispanic leaders in the U.S. met in Tampa in April for the 23rd annual *Encuentro Católico Carismático Latino Estadounidense* (ECCLE). The theme was "New Pentecost: Healing the Renewal." The speaker was Msgr. Joseph Malagrea of Brooklyn. The *Encuentro* focused on the practical application of charisms, and prayer for renewal of the charisms of tongues, prophecy and healing. At the ECCLE new regional representatives were elected. The new Chairperson of the *Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano* (CNSH) is Fernando Perales of Michigán. (See www.rcchispana.com.)

Korean leaders in the U.S. met in May for their annual Leaders' Workshop in Federal Way, Washington. Fifty

leaders participated. The theme was "Encounter with God, Community and Mission." Msgr. Augustin Park was elected Chairman of the Korean Service Committee.

In early August 3400 Haitians in the U.S. gathered in Orlando for their Annual Conference whose theme was "God has given us a spirit of love, power and self-control." Speakers were Fr. Jules Campion, head of a Biblical Institute in Port au Prince, Fr. Gaetan Boursiquot, former Spiritual Director of the Renewal in Haiti, Lolia Mondesir and Msgr. Joseph Malagrea. There was a clear sense in the conference of the difference between the power of the Spirit expressed in charisms and the Spirit of love and self-control (fruits). Haitian leaders will gather in November for their Annual *Rencontre*. This gather-

ing of 3 representatives of each of the 100 Haitian prayer groups in the U. S. chooses their national leaders. (See www.crccho.org.)

Twenty-two Hispanic leaders from the U. S. joined nearly 700 others (including many priests, four bishops and an archbishop) from over twenty countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean for the 22nd *Encuentro Católico Carismático Latinoamericano* (ECCLA), held in Honduras in late August. The theme was "Renew the Renewal." Teresa Rosero, past Chairperson of the CNSH, reported that the "teachings were great" and were given by Oreste Pesare, Director of ICCRS, Fr. Vicente Borragán of Spain and Cardinal Oscar Ramírez of Honduras. The next ECCLA will be held in 2010 in Perú. ♦

tionships. Dear friends, the Lord is asking you to be prophets of this new age, messengers of his love, drawing people to the Father and building a future of hope for all humanity." Is God calling you to share his word with others? How will you respond? What legacy will you leave? ♦

Laurie Manhardt is a graduate of the University of Michigan with a doctorate in education. She is a wife, mother and grandmother as well as a catechist and bible study teacher. Laurie is one of the authors of *Come and See* - a Catholic Bible Study. See www.CatholicBibleStudy.net.



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Evangelization: Everyone's right, Everyone's duty

People are won to the
kingdom of God,
one heart at a time.

by James Murphy

We have all been to a conference, or watched someone on television speaking eloquently about the things of God. The person speaks with authority, conviction, wit and a finesse that is so compelling. We look at them and say to ourselves "I wish I could evangelize like that."

What we may see at a conference or on television is only one very small perspective of a much bigger understanding of evangelization. It is something every Christian can do...and every Christian must do.

Evangelization is the responsibility of every baptized Christian. Our whole purpose as a Christian is to "make disciples of all nations." When Pope Paul VI said that: "the Church exists to evangelize," he was including all of us in the word "Church." Also, through our baptism, we now work with Jesus to "proclaim good news to the poor, open the eyes of the blind, and announce a year of favor from the Lord." Evangelization is not the privilege of a few, but the moral responsibility of the many. We cannot keep good news to ourselves in the midst of souls starving for Jesus!

The problem comes with our perception of evangelization. We often think of it as a dramatic, eloquent presentation to crowds. But people are won to the kingdom of God, one heart at a time. You don't need to speak to big crowds...you need to speak to one heart, a co-worker, a grandchild, an elderly neighbor.

Forget all the flash and polish. What really touches people is sincerity. You don't have to impress people with how smart you are, or how much scripture you can memorize. Speak to them from your heart. Tell them who Jesus is and what he means to you. Tell them how Jesus has helped you through the struggles of life. The main thing is... talk about Jesus. Pope Paul VI said that no authentic evangelization could take place without speaking the name of Jesus.

People often counter that call of Paul VI by quoting Francis of Assisi "Preach the gospel at all times...and if necessary use words." People use this quote as evidence that we don't have to talk about Jesus, just let our lives be a witness.

St. Francis never said the above quote. He instructed his brothers that they should always ask permission from the local bishop before they preached and if they were denied, they should at least try to live holy lives. But Francis wanted his sons and daughters to preach always, everywhere, to everyone. Francis himself journeyed to the Crusades, walked into the Moslem camp and preached Jesus to the Sultan himself!

Another element of evangelization is sincere dialogue with the other person. Whether it was the woman at the well, Nicodemus, or the rich young man, Jesus was willing to really engage people. Listen to people; ask them questions. Let them talk. Show them respect. This helps people open their hearts to hearing the Good News.

Prayer is an important part of evangelization. You cannot convince anyone to follow Jesus, if they do not have that

grace from God to do so. Faith is a gift. So pray, pray, pray. Pray that God will direct you to the right person to speak with. Pray that you may say the right things, at the right time, in the right way that will have the best effect. Pray that the person you speak with has an open heart and is able to receive the mystery you are sharing.

It is a mystery. If you think you can explain all the mysteries of God and answer everybody's questions, you are mistaken. When somebody throws you a tough question and you are not sure how to answer it, be honest and say so. You can say to them that this is a mystery, but maybe together we can look into that and try to find some answers. Invite that person to a bible study or prayer meeting. Take them to meet a priest or someone who is wise and pastoral and can give you some insight to the problem. The very act of "making the journey" with the new person is actually much more powerful than simply giving them some pat answer that neither you nor they understand.

Take a chance and pray with them. Keep it simple and sincere. God will work powerfully in this little leap of faith on your part.

Remember, evangelization is often simple and humble. It is God's work. Do it with the right heart. God will do the rest. ♦

Jim Murphy is the founder and president of Vera Cruz Communications. He is the former chairman of, and currently a consultant to the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Proclamation of the Word of God

by Arlene Apone

As prelude to Jesus' ministry, John proclaimed: "Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; He will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight" (Mark 1:2-3). This passage (proclamation) from Isaiah's book of consolation to Israel calls for a time of repentance in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

Jesus first words recorded in Mark were: "The time has come, the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15).

From Isaiah to John the Baptist to Jesus, the proclamation calls for the same action in the life of the hearers. We still respond in repentance and in faith, opening ourselves to this call to the good news. The message goes on in every age to all men and women, only now in this age it is proclaimed through us. We are the witnesses of this good news.

St. Paul writes, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is the word of faith which we preach), for if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rm.10:8-9).

Can there be any mistake in the message, or is there reluctance to respond on our part? For some there is still a need to hear, and so in every age we have the same call. Let it be done, according to his will.

This is the Word of God! What a proclamation! ♦

Arlene Apone is a liaison from the Archdiocese of Detroit. She presently serves as chairperson of the Association of Diocesan Liaisons.



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**From the
Executive
Director**

.....
by Walter Matthews

A year of grace

We are now several months into the Year of St. Paul and the Service Committee has been working and will continue to work to foster this time of grace for the Renewal in the United States.

With the other National Leadership Groups we have published a Prayer Card which reads in part, "We ask you to pour out your Spirit during this time of grace to fill the hearts of your people." Copies are available by calling or emailing us or by visiting our website www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

Additionally, as Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner noted in her column last issue, the members of the NSC are providing reflections on different Pauline themes. These are available to you via email or on our website. Reflections by Fr. Richard Loch, Aggie Neck and others are now available.

Several times St. Paul noted that his proclamation of the Gospel did not rest on mere words (1 Thes. 1:5) nor philosophical argument (1 Cor. 2:4), but on the "convincing power of the Spirit" (*ibid*), "but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with great effect." (1 Thes. 1:5).

Several years ago the NSC was challenged by the Lord to make the preaching of the kingdom of God with signs following a constituent part of its ministry. Since then a number of the members have reported new zeal and "effect" as we minister in the power of the Spirit.

At the Jesus is Alive! Pour Out Your Spirit Anew! Rally in St. Louis in early May there was new fire. A similar Rally will be held in Philadelphia in early October.

We expect new fire as we gather for the National Leaders' Conference in Nashville, November 14-16. If you are hungry for more of the Lord, join us there.

We are also cosponsoring the School of Healing Prayer for Leaders with ICCRS and Christian Healing Ministries. Expect new fire.

Pope Benedict XVI told the participants at World Youth Day, "How much our world needs a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

He then challenged the young pilgrims and us in his closing homily:

How are you using the gifts you have been given, the "power" which the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you?

What legacy will you leave to young people yet to come?

What difference will you make? The power of the Holy Spirit does not only enlighten and console us. It also points us to the future, to the coming of God's kingdom...

Through the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, may this Twenty-third World Youth Day be experienced as a new Upper Room, from which all of us, burning with the fire and love of the Holy Spirit, go forth to proclaim the Risen Christ and to draw every heart to him! Amen. ♦

A year of grace indeed!

Friends of the NSC

The Olympic torch has been passed. The World Youth Day Cross has been passed from Sydney to the representatives of Madrid. As St. Paul wrote, "Pass on to reliable people what you have heard from me through many witnesses so that they in turn will be able to teach others" (2 Tm. 2:2).

Certainly one of the ways you can ensure the future of the Renewal and pass on this grace to the next generations is by creating a legacy through your gift giving both now and by including the NSC in your will.

In recent years we have received substantive gifts (for us, no million dollar gifts/bequests here): \$45,000 to begin the Third Millennium Fund which continues to grow and whose income contributes to current programs like the Youth Ministry initiatives; three larger bequests totaling over \$78,000; and last year's Challenge Gift of \$25,000.

Without these gifts the work the NSC does in fostering the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church would have had to be curtailed.

If you are financially secure and thinking about how you could use your resources for good please think of us.

Prayer Group contacts: we encourage you to take a collection for the NSC toward the \$50 for the 50th Jubilee in 2017. Yes, it is 9 years away, but as Bishop Sam Jacobs challenged us at the 40th Jubilee in 2007: we must begin now to think about how we will prepare for and celebrate the Renewal's Golden Jubilee. Please join the many prayer groups that have already responded.

Finally, in this tight economy we could use everyone's year end help. Any donation at this time will help us continue the mission and end the year in the black.

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For Your Information

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What we have seen and heard

.....
by Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer



You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth

I thought of a scene similar to the first Pentecost when I read a report of the Youth Event sponsored by Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Australia at the recent World Youth Day held in Sydney. 150,000 young people participated in "Receive the Power LIVE." The overall theme of WYD was from Acts 1:8: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

In the Acts of the Apostles 2:8-11 there is a description of a large crowd of people from 15 countries present in Jerusalem. Describing World Youth Day Allan Panozza of Australia wrote of seeing that vast crowd of young people and flags from 170 different nations being waved in time to the music.

Music, drama and testimony penetrate the heart of youth. An important aspect is always the mystagogia or reflection on what happened at a later time. We can pray that what was experienced by this generation and their chaperones will take root in their whole beings and that they will come to know Jesus who has reached out to the ends of the earth to touch them and invite them into eternal relationship with him and with one another. If we know anyone who attended we can help them to reflect on their experience by being interested listeners and reflecting with them on the meaning of this event.

Over the summer there have been charismatic conferences in various areas of the United States. I was recently present

at a regional conference in Minnesota. The title of the Conference, "From Maintenance to Mission," encouraged, even urged, each of us to reflect on our lives and to ask ourselves whether we are just maintaining our own spiritual life as it is or if we are really listening for the creative word of God to move us out and forward.

The words of Pope Benedict XVI to the youth are a challenge to each of us. "Dear young friends, the Lord is asking you to be prophets of this new age, messengers of his love, drawing people to the Father and building a future of hope for all humanity." He also asked this question: "Are you living your lives in a way that opens up space for the Spirit in the midst of a world that wants to forget God, or even rejects him in the name of a falsely conceived freedom?"

Lest any of us say, "That is for the young. I am too old;" let us also hear these words of Pope Benedict, attributed to St. Augustine: "If you wish to remain young, seek Christ." ♦

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