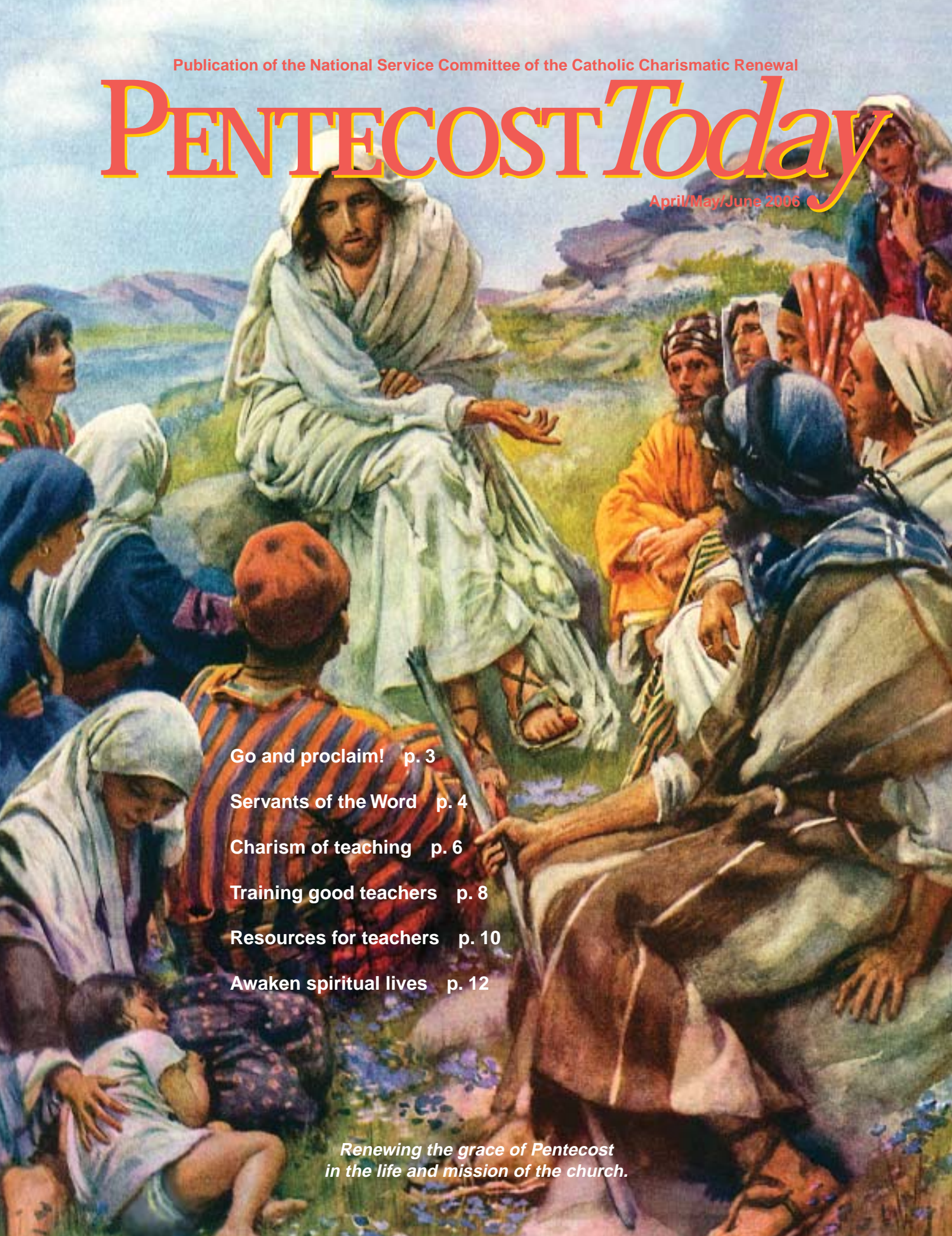


Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

April/May/June 2006

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



Chairman's
Corner
.....
by Aggie Neck

Share the joy

“All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and that one book is Christ, because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church #134).

With that being noted, we can see that to be a servant of the word is to be a servant of the Word made flesh, Jesus the Christ. He came so that none would be lost, and that all would come to know the love of the Father. Does not a servant carry out the will of the master? Jesus tells us, “What I tell you in darkness, speak in the light. What you hear in private, proclaim from the housetops” (Matt. 11:27).

If the word is Jesus, then it seems logical that to be a servant of the word we must know the word. The word must be read, studied, spoken and proclaimed. To read the written word is to know the Word made flesh. If a servant loves the one they serve, they want to know everything about him and they also want to tell every one they know about the wonderful master they have. We know that to tell, to proclaim the word is not an option, but a duty. Jesus tells us, “When you have done all you have been commanded to do, say ‘We are useless servants. We have done no more than our duty’” (Luke 17:10).

And this duty is not a burden. For those who know and love the word, it becomes the desire of our hearts. This duty is a gift to the servant. It allows

us to be a part of our master’s plan. It enables us to share in the joy of the plan as we proclaim it to others. There can be no mediocre proclaiming, for that which we proclaim is the word of life. It requires zeal and an excellence in our proclamation.

“Indeed, the whole created world eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God” (Rom 8:19). A promise follows this verse “because the world itself will be freed from its slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God” (v. 21) that is why we work and this is why we pray, so that none will be lost. This is indeed the will of the one we serve.

It requires zeal and an excellence in our proclamation.

So, there remains a mission for the servants of the word: to speak, to teach, to heal, and to love as the master loves. “Thanks be to God, who unfailingly leads us on in Christ’s triumphal train, and employs us to diffuse the fragrance of his knowledge everywhere!” “We speak in Christ’s name, pure in motivation, conscious of having been sent by God and of standing in his presence” (2 Cor. 2:14, 17).

Let our prayer be that when we see the Word Incarnate, our Jesus, face to face, we can hear those words, “Well done good and faithful servant. Come and share your master’s joy” (Matt. 25:21). ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editors Desk
.....
Sr. Martha Jean
McGarry

Let us, who have been baptized in him, listen to the voice that calls us beloved and gives us a work to do—the work of the Gospel proclaimed and lived in love of God and neighbor.

In this issue we invite you to journey with us in exploring the **charism of teaching**. Aggie Neck starts us out with a reflection on the importance of *knowing* the Word made Flesh—Jesus. Do we attempt to teach a Jesus that we ourselves do not know?

David Thorp presents several paths we can take to fulfill our call to be **servants of the Word** wherever God has placed us.

Sister Nancy Kellar and Bill Brennan give us deep insights into the charism of teaching and the call to be teacher in our groups and ministry, along with suggestions for preparing a teaching. To aid us further, some practical helps for teachers can be found in Virginia King’s article and Therese Boucher’s suggestions for a one-day Life in the Spirit Seminar.

Mark Berchem witnesses on youth’s efforts to be servants of the Word through the ministry of NET and Walter Matthews in his column gives a great account of the National Service Committee’s continuing determination to bring forth the Word among us through conferences, regional gatherings and published materials.

Check out the quotes from our bishops located in *Bishops Speak to the Renewal* box. Do they challenge you? Excite you? Encourage you? Are you ready to share your gifts? ♦



Go and proclaim!

by Mark Berchem

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Jesus was very clear with his disciples when he commissioned them to carry on his work, “Go and proclaim.” There is no doubt what Jesus was asking of his church.

Somewhere in our past, many Catholics lost a sense of their responsibility to “Go and proclaim.” Evangelization left our vocabulary. That helps explain why twelve young Catholics traveling around in a van and sharing about their love for Jesus were viewed as odd. NET Ministries began in 1981 at the St. Paul Catholic Youth Center, whose staff was profoundly influenced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. As the first NET team embarked upon its mission, the most frequently asked question was, “Are you sure you are Catholic? I didn’t know Catholics talked about Jesus.” Well, yes they do! Thanks to the profound influence of Pope John Paul II, the Church has reawakened to its most important work.

“The number of those who do not know Christ and do not belong to the church is constantly on the increase. When we consider this immense portion of humanity that is loved by the Father and for whom he sent his son, the urgency of the Church’s mission is obvious... I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the church’s energies to a new evangelization. No believer in Christ can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples” (Redemptoris Missio, John Paul II).

Each year, NET recruits and trains 90 young adults who commit a year of their life to “Go and proclaim.” Since NET’s beginning, over 1700 faith-filled young Catholics have served as team members. After completing 5 weeks of training, the NET teams (10-11 members) travel around the country conducting retreats for Catholic junior and senior high school students. Over 1.5 million young people have heard the gospel proclaimed on a NET retreat. Using a variety of means—talks, testimonies, small group discussion, skits, music, prayer ministry, and liturgy—the team members proclaim the message of

God’s love and mercy in a language that young people can understand.

Our young people today have so many voices clamoring for their attention, and ultimately, their heart. Now more than ever, the gospel must be proclaimed to our youth, by both word and witness. Simply stated, that is the mission of a NET team. Faithful to the church, they share their love for Christ with the young people they meet. Different personalities with different life experiences, they each appeal to a different set of youth, thus maximizing the number of youth who can identify with the person proclaiming. The message becomes all the more believable when the young people find someone on the team with similar background or life experiences.

But in the end, what brings the message home, is the lived example of faith in the life of the team. Faith is meant to impact how we live. There is no more powerful proclamation than seeing a group of people loving and serving one another for Christ’s sake. Today more than ever, young

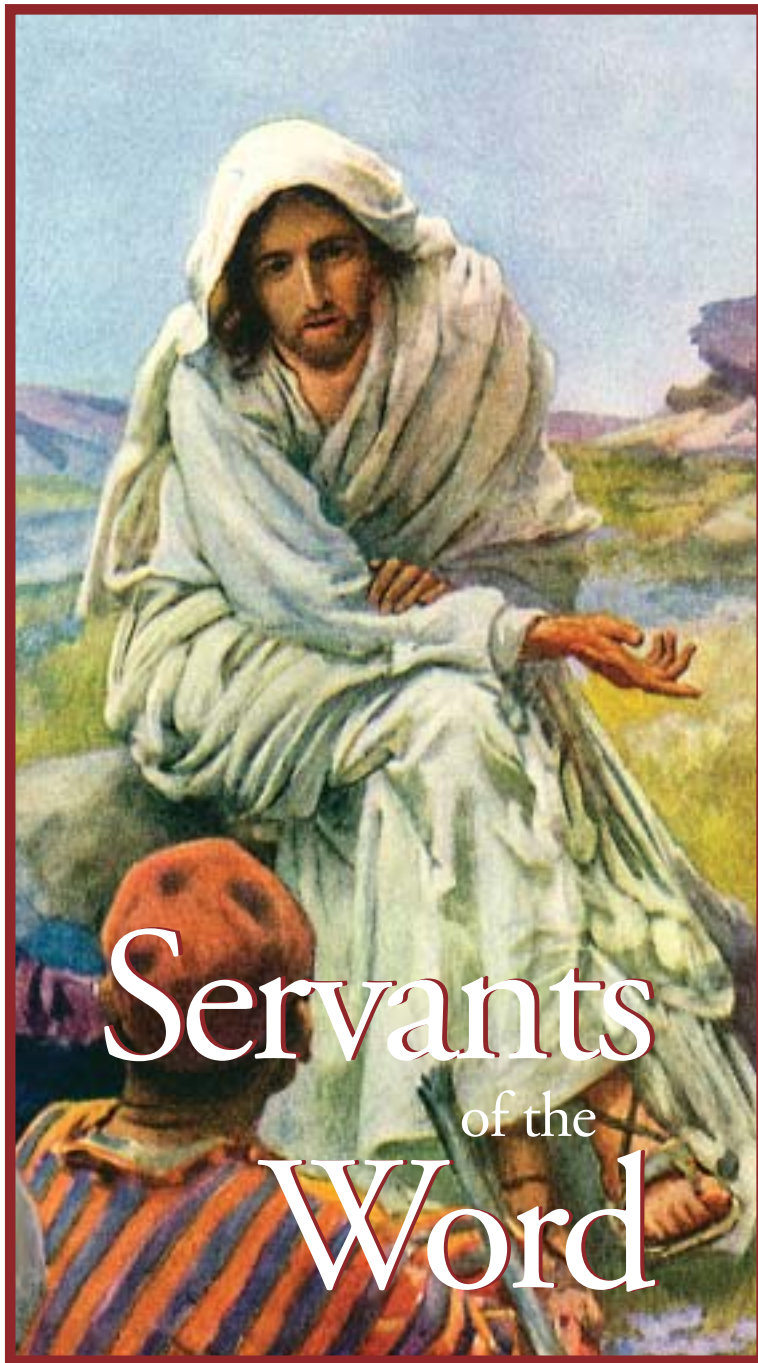
people listen with their eyes. What a loud message it is to see the NET team members relate with love, honor, and respect towards one another. Christ told us as much when he said, “the world will know you are my disciples by your love for one another” (John 13:35).

Today, more than ever, young people need to hear the gospel proclaimed. People of faith need to heed the Lord’s commission to “Go and proclaim.” Young Catholics are responding to that call. They are serving the church’s mission of evangelization with great generosity. NET team members are impacting the lives of thousands of young people as they challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the church.

For information on NET Ministries, please see our web site: www.netusa.org, or contact us at ministry@netusa.org. ♦

Mark Berchem, M.S.W., M.S.T. is the founder and Executive Director of NET Ministries, a national evangelistic ministry.

Photos: Mark Berchem, NET



by David Thorp

“You’ll know it’s Jesus’ voice because it sounds like Jesus.” We all stared back at the retreat director with kind of blank stares. “Oh, great,” I thought, “another mysterious answer.” It was a question-and-answer time during our weekend retreat and one of us had asked, “How do I know it’s Jesus’ voice that I’m hearing in prayer?” Fr. Tom Forrest, the retreat director, then held up his bible and said, “Here’s how you learn what Jesus sounds like.”

As I reflected on Fr. Tom’s answer I could more and more see the wisdom—and the challenge—of it. I could know what Jesus, the Living Word of God, “sounds” like. I could know not just the general tone of his “voice” but also the nuances and inflections, the subtleties and specifics of his “voice” if I spent more time listening to him speak through the scriptures. And, the more I listened, the better I would be able to even sound like Jesus when I spoke. I heard a call on that retreat to become more deeply rooted in the bible so that I could be better prepared to make use of God’s word; at home, in ministry and in daily conversation.

At Home

The pastor of our parish encouraged all families to establish a prayer corner somewhere in their home as a way to tie together our worship at Mass and the domestic church. Prominent in the corner, he recommended, was a bible. The bible was to be a visible reminder that we live by “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3). But, this was not to be just a display but a book that one would pick up and bring to prayer. In our home we kept changing the page to which the bible was open, usually to each Sunday’s gospel as a continuation of our prayer on Sunday. Visitors would look at the bible when they came into the room where we had it displayed and this sometimes became a topic of conversation. Even our children noticed and commented!

The bible came into our Advent every year. My wife and I had created a Jesse tree early in our marriage. Each day in Advent had a symbol, re-telling the history of salvation. Each day had a passage of the bible connected to it. We sometimes read the passage; at other times, we just talked about it in a more summary form. But we always attached what we were doing to the word of God. Advent and Christmas were rooted in the bible for our family.

The bible also was integrated into table conversation. We didn't do bible study as we ate our evening meal. But, as one of our children talked about something that was going on at school or in what seemed like the endless angst of relationships, my wife or I would recall for them some incident in the bible in an effort to lead them to a different and more healthy perspective on things. Sometimes the stories were something that they were somewhat familiar with (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son). At other times the story was more obscure and required longer telling (I loved that!) in order to draw out the point and its connection to their lives. Despite, "Oh no, another sermon!" we persisted because we wanted them to know "the voice" of the bible.

And, the use of the bible persists even as our children have become older. Recently, I've had trips to art museums with two of my children. You cannot look at medieval art without the bible being depicted. From time to time I'd say, "I really like this one" as I pointed out some aspect of the painting. Then I'd add, "Do you know the story behind this painting?" Their "no" was a perfect lead in to recalling something in the bible.

In Ministry

In my ministry of teaching I have sought to lead people to the bible because I am confident of its truth. I do so because I want people to go to the bible more and more for their own growth. It is the well that never ceases to give refreshment. If I can draw their attention to one part of the bible they will be more likely to go back for another drink.

In evangelizing and in speaking about the truths of our Catholic faith I also find it so critical to start with the bible. There is widespread suspicion of institutions today. Saying, "The Church says..." often is not a helpful beginning point; there seems to be a resistance. Saying, "Let's see what it says in

the bible" or "Let's read Jesus' words" often gains a better hearing. What "the Church says" never contradicts the bible and grows from the revelation in the bible. Why not start there?

The Church is a place to start in RCIA sessions. Especially when there are candidates coming from Christian communities rooted in the bible, I have found that showing Catholic teaching is rooted there as well helps people to grasp the teaching of Catholicism more easily. And, where there are difficulties in understanding what the Church teaches, by going to the bible we now have a common ground on which to stand.

The bible is an "evergreen" book. That is, the situations that it records... are very familiar to us today.

In evangelization we are trying to connect others with a person—Jesus. We want them to come into a new relationship with him. **Speaking the words of the bible centered on Jesus keeps our evangelizing focused and helps others to connect to him.** Being connected to the Body of Christ is vital to evangelization as well; it's just not the first step in a several part "dance."

In Conversation

The more I study the bible the more I am convinced that there is not a great deal that is new with the human condition. The bible is an "evergreen" book. That is, the situations that it records, despite the passage of centuries and the differences of culture, are very familiar to us today. Believing that the bible is wisdom that provides both illuminating insights into life and God's unique perspective, I have made use of the bible in casual conversations.

When someone shares a difficulty in life, if I know the bible (know what "Jesus

sounds like"), I am able to share a passage that can provide consolation. It might be a psalm or something from the actions or words of Jesus. When someone is at a loss where to turn with a particular problem or in making a decision, the more bible I know the better I can guide them to reflect on a passage that I've found helpful or some insight I've gained from our prayer with the bible.

When people question the position I have taken on a moral issue, pointing to the bible has been very helpful. I'm saying that my position is not simply because "I say so" or "The Church says so" but because I believe God has revealed it to be so. If the person is a Christian this gives us a common source to continue our discussion. If the person does not accept the authority of the bible, it gives me the opportunity to say why I find the bible to be a reliable guide. And, I have the opportunity to ask them what guide they follow so that I can better understand why they have a different position. I believe that the most reliable, most firm guide for all of life and for every life is the bible as it is lived and understood in the context of the Church. If I'm willing to speak about the bible maybe I can lead them to see this and to see the deficiency in any other guide.

There are so many ways that the bible can be a part of our daily lives: at home, at work, in ministry; in casual conversations and in heated discussions. But, of course, for the bible to be this part I have to know the bible—not just my favorites, but all seventy-three books—so that I can know what God "sounds" like, so that I can sound like God. ♦



David Thorp is Assistant Director of the Spiritual Life Center of Marian Community, a private association of Christ's faithful in Medway, Massachusetts.



Charism of teaching

by Sister Nancy Kellar, SC

The teacher is a shepherd of people and the most important thing for him or her is to know the Shepherd. “Whoever is called ‘to teach Christ’ must first seek ‘the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 428). “From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him” (*CCC*, 429).

I. The gift - Who should teach?

The gift of teaching is one of those listed among the spiritual gifts. “To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8). “It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

Teaching is a gift for making Christian truth clear, life-giving and attractive. There are different gifts for different kinds of teaching. Some are gifted to give exhortative teaching that calls the community back over and over again to live the basic gospel message. Others have the gift of informative teaching that helps the community develop new understanding of the Christian life. The ideal is for a balance of both of these so that the variety of the different gifts may be used for the upbuilding of the community.

Those who have the charism for teaching should teach and in the church there is often a close link between teaching and pastoring. The Pope and bishops are both pastors and teachers for the church. In prayer groups and communities there is often a similar connection.

Those who have the overall responsibility for a group are often also given the gift of teaching. That is not to say that all leaders have teaching gifts or have them in the same degree. Nor is it to say that only leaders should teach, but there is often a link between the two that we need to notice.

A person who teaches needs a sense of his or her own unworthiness. “I am a man of unclean lips...seraphim touched lips...uncleanness removed...whom shall I send? Send me Lord” (from Is. 6:5-8). A sense of sinfulness calls us to a reverential humility, to a fear of the Lord, realizing that we are handling the sacred when we handle the word of God. It requires such reverence so that the teacher uses the time with responsibility, not using the time to ‘grind an ax’, to give pet peeves or pet opinions. A sense of inadequacy leads us to rely on God’s power and not our own.

A teacher needs to be willing to be purified. If God wants us to minister in any way he is going to see to it that we are purified, that we are pruned. “Not many of you should become teachers, those who do will be called to sturdier account” (James 3:1). We will be called to account by our own words and also by the words of others.

God sent an angel to Isaiah; but to us he sends our neighbor. Most of us recoil at the suggestion that our work for the Lord and his people ought to be regularly evaluated; but good order and effective service are impossible without regular evaluations. In fact evaluation can be liberating and upbuilding when undertaken in love and commitment.

Encouragement is one of the primary purposes for evaluation. The branches that are producing fruit are pruned to produce more.

II. The Call - Why teaching?

Teachers are people who are willing to respond generously to God’s call to serve. We need to be willing to respond, “Here I am Lord, send me” (Is. 6:5). We need to move from seeing service as something I have to do, to something I am privileged to do. We need to be convinced that we will grow as we serve. Service is not a reward for holiness, but a means to it.

When I was prayed with for the baptism in the Spirit (36 years ago) I was asked, “What gifts do you want?” I knew nothing about charismatic gifts; but I remembered God was pleased with Solomon when he asked for wisdom and I was a teacher. I asked for the gifts of wisdom and teaching. When I returned to my classroom the next day and gave my witness of the new life in the Spirit that I was experiencing, the youngsters said

“Sister, something happened to you, you never talked like that before!” I realized I was experiencing the charismatic gift of teaching. The gifts are not just for prayer meetings; they are for life and need to be brought into our daily life.

At the same time we need to be convinced that short teachings in our prayer meetings and community gatherings are a part of the way God wants us to continue to bring people to know Jesus and to help them grow in the Spirit.

Jesus wants his people to be taught. He sent out the apostles with the threefold command to preach, to teach and to heal. “He sent them forth to proclaim the reign of God and to heal” (Lk. 9:2).

Teachers need to be willing to persevere without seeing results or getting credit for the effort. “Preach the word, stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient, constantly teaching without losing patience” (2 Tim. 4:2).

III. The Work - How to teach?

While teaching is a gift it is also the fruit of prayer, study and discipline. We need to find the balance between not preparing, leaving it all up to God and over-preparing so that the Spirit can't get in.

When I give a teaching I prepare usually having three points (which you may have noticed); but as I step up to the podium I imagine the anointing that is around it and I try to be attentive to it, stepping into the anointing as the assembly prays for me and for themselves.

Learning to give a teaching is like learning to cook. You need the right ingredients, the right seasoning, and the right timing.

The right ingredients: The ingredients are the basic contents of a teaching. They are the information, knowledge, truth, understanding, and insight that the per-

son who is teaching aims to impart. They may come from personal reflection on the teachings of Jesus in scripture, the teaching of the church, from the writings of church fathers and the popes, the truths passed on to us in the traditions of the church and everyday experience in the world or from the suggested content of a seminar outline.

The right seasoning: These are the stories and personal experiences that explain or clarify, that is, add spice to the basic ingredients. The truth needs to be presented in a clear fashion that people can take in and use. It shouldn't be too theoretical. It should be practical. We should do it in such a way that people can say, “I know what you mean; that is just the kind of thing that happens to me.” When we reach people at that level they will be able to receive and apply the teaching we give them more thoroughly.

The right blend: A good teaching blends inspiration with information. It needs to touch the heart as well as open the mind. The teachers need to be touched in their own spirit by the anointing of the Holy Spirit if their words are to motivate and draw others toward the truth they are communicating. Inspiration does not equal emotion. It may involve emotion, but it goes deeper than emotions that are on the surface of our lives. If inspiration only appeals to the emotions it does not go deep enough.

The right timing: One of the most difficult things to achieve in a good teaching is the right timing. If it is too short the information will not have enough clarification. If it is too long it will not keep the attention of the people. It helps to start with a story to get peoples attention and to end with questions that lead them to make concrete applications of the information, and with prayer that gives them time to respond to the inspiration.

Prayer Card



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

Father, we thank you for providing shepherds for your people, and especially we thank you for the priests who are being ordained this year.

We ask that all your shepherds may continue to guard the rich deposit of faith with the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within them, and to bear with courage their share of the hardships which the gospel entails.

Father, protect them from the evil one and keep them in your love always.
Amen.

*I will appoint over you shepherds,
after my own heart, who will
shepherd you wisely and prudently.*
Jer 3:15

Conclusion: Good teachers are Christ's gift through the power of the Spirit. We should expect the Lord to provide them. If our prayer group or community does not have them we need to ask the Lord to give them. If they are not very good we should ask him to improve them. ♦

Sister Nancy Kellar, SC has served in various leadership positions in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal on the local, diocesan, national and international level. She has taught at conferences and workshops throughout the United States and in more than 50 countries.





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

- ◆ That God will raise up many gifted teachers to make Christian truth clear, life-giving and attractive.
- ◆ For a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all priests who are ordained this year.
- ◆ For multitudes to pray the Pentecost Novena this year and that it bear much fruit for conversion and Christian unity.
- ◆ For the gathering of Lay Ecclesial Movements with Pope Benedict XVI at the Pentecost Vigil in Rome.
- ◆ That many dormant spiritual lives will be awakened in the Holy Spirit Seminars that are being conducted throughout the country between Easter and Pentecost.

Attention: Pentecost Today Readers

If you are one of the 5,000 recipients of *Pentecost Today* who have not made a donation to the NSC in the last year, we encourage you to send a donation today. The suggested donation is \$15 per year. This is a small amount for such a valuable resource.

Please make your check payable to: **Friends of the NSC** and mail it to: NSC-Chariscenter USA, PO Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628. Thank you for your support.

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

Identifying, raising up and training good teachers

by Deacon Bill Brennan

Anyone who has been in leadership long enough has probably met more than once the brother or sister who has experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit as a life-changing encounter and has become convinced that God wants him or her to teach everybody else in the prayer group what life in the Spirit is all about. Sometimes the person turns out to be a genuine blessing for the prayer group and beyond. At other times, however, the person, insisting that he or she has been sent by God, makes the leadership cringe because of bad teaching and/or delivery.

I am reminded of the lady, a friend of mine who has, sad to say, left the church for a “Bible-believing church,” who made a point of telling me how happy she is in her new church, adding that she does not need the church to tell her what the scriptures mean. God, she explained, is telling her directly what they mean (inside I cringed). I am also reminded of an important concept for leaders always to keep in mind: sometimes bad teaching can be worse than no teaching.

Good teaching remains one of the great needs in many prayer groups to this day. Without it, prayer groups run the risk of remaining stuck in entry level renewal or, even worse, in permanent spiritual immaturity. They may never hear the Spirit’s invitation to go deeper into the Spirit and deeper into life in the Spirit. They may never, in effect, come to know the true adventure that awaits all of us if we, as Pope John Paul II wrote, are docile to the Holy Spirit. And bad teaching may lead them into outright error.

How can we as leaders help prevent this from happening? How can we identify, raise up and train good people to be good teachers? I believe this is one of the great opportunities and challenges facing all who are called to lead God’s people. Our role is to shepherd and feed those who have been placed in our care and to do it in cooperation with and not opposition to the recognized teaching authority in the church. The starting point in facing this challenge is with ourselves.

If good leaders are to be responsible leaders, they must first of all recognize in themselves their own need to be taught. They should be grounded firmly in the scriptures and in the teaching of the church. They should be willing to take advantage of all the opportunities that are available to us to grow, whether they be conferences, bible studies (formal and informal, group or individual), seminars, theology courses, spiritual reading, constant study, etc. Why go to all this trouble? Because leaders and teachers who are unteachable can be a deadly threat to the spiritual health of a prayer group. And leaders who are not well-grounded themselves in what scripture and the church teach are not in a position to instruct others how to be well-grounded. Using the tools that are given to us can equip them to recognize bad teaching when they hear it and deal with it. The tools can also equip them to make prudent and informed judgments when it comes to identifying and raising up potential teachers in a prayer group.

See **Identifying** page 9

Identifying from p. 8

Here are some simple tests well-grounded leaders can use as they observe potential teachers in their prayer meetings:

- ✓ is the person's sharing in line with what both the church and the scriptures teach;
- ✓ when speaking, is the person clear, articulate and coherent;
- ✓ when attempting to explain a scripture passage, is the person understandable in the delivery;
- ✓ does the person use the excuse of sharing or teaching to monopolize the prayer meeting time;
- ✓ does the person seem to know the difference between teaching and preaching;
- ✓ and does the person seem to rely only on personal interpretation of scripture?

These and other tests can be used to identify those who may be called into a teaching ministry as well as those who should not teach. In themselves, however, they are not necessarily indicators that a person is not called to that ministry. Rather they can be a signal that with a little help he or she can become a good teacher. Not to use them, on the other hand, can be dangerous for the prayer group. Leaders who take their role seriously enough to use these kinds of tests can make them part of their own discernment process as the Spirit moves. They can then prepare to offer encouragement, help and even some training if necessary.

Finally, we all need to be reminded now and then that we can trust the Spirit which has been given to us. As St. Paul wrote to the early church at Corinth, we were given every spiritual gift un-

der the heavens when we received Christ Jesus (see 1 Cor. 1:1-9). Therefore the One who called us to servant-leadership can be counted on to give us what we need to lead well, responsibly and always in the Spirit. ♦

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



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To order audiotapes and cd's
of the *2005 Conference on
Healing* consult the above
website, the conference was
powerfully graced.

Resources for teachers

Practical resources for preparing teachings—how to use the web, *Pentecost Today*, other magazines & books, tapes, etc.

by Virginia King

“I can’t wait to tell you about the book I just finished...” If someone started a conversation like this, you would probably be attentive to hear what they had to say. Their enthusiasm would indicate that the book was compelling and that they think you would also be interested in it.

When considering teachings for a prayer meeting or other setting, it’s not always necessary to do a lot of original research. Simply reporting on a book that was helpful to you can be an excellent short teaching. And not only does it convey the information to others, but it also reinforces it for you.

Likewise, there are many other resources available that can be summarized or reported on for informing or exhorting our brothers and sisters at a prayer meeting. Very often the articles in *Pentecost Today* lend themselves to this purpose. If an article is helpful to your spiritual growth, chances are it will be a blessing to others as well.

As you acquire tapes or CD’s of conference talks, don’t just listen for your own enjoyment and edification. Instead prepare a report on what you heard and share the wealth with others. If there’s a particular topic that your prayer group needs teaching about, you can do a search on the internet for applicable articles

from reliable sources. I have quite a number of Charismatic Renewal web pages saved in my “favorites” folder so I can search them when I’m looking for information on a particular theme.

Many of us have bookshelves full of “classic” books on Charismatic Renewal and spiritual growth. Try re-reading some that you haven’t read for many years. You will be amazed at how relevant they are and also how you will gain new insights that you may not have had the first time you read them. Share those insights with others.

If we keep our eyes and ears open, we’ll find many opportunities to extend the ministry of those who have a charism of teaching by simply reporting to others what they have taught us. And in the process, you just might discover your own hidden charism. ♦

Virginia King is the Executive Director of the Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office and has served in that position since 1984. Virginia has served on the National Service Committee since 2001.



Spiritual formation of a teacher

After reading Sr. Nancy’s article about the charism of teaching, we might ask, “What kind of spiritual formation would a person who is called to teach cultivate?”

Frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist

This will help foster the attitude of humility, of reverence for the word of God and for the message that he gives us to present, and of utter dependence on the Lord for this ministry of teaching.

Regular, faithful personal prayer

Daily personal prayer firmly establishes our ministry under the Lordship of Jesus. Sit in the presence of the Lord and allow him to love you, and to teach you how to love. A good teacher is one who is easily taught. Pray for wisdom, pray for an increase in the charism of teaching, pray for the people whom you will teach.

Praying and studying Scripture

Scripture must be part of our prayer and also part of our study. Allow the word of God to take deep root in your heart and in your mind and in your spirit.

Familiarity with Church teaching

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other church documents are foundational to our teaching, even if we don’t quote them directly.

Seek regular evaluation from a spiritual director and/or a loving community

Be eager to grow in your charism and eager for suggestions that will help you improve. Let it be known that you are serious about this, that you are seeking constructive criticism and not just affirmation.

“Preach the word, stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient, constantly teaching without losing patience” (2 Tim 4:2). ♦

Newsbriefs

Leadership Groups Meet

Forty one leaders met in Schriever, Louisiana in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux for the Gathering of National Leadership Groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This was the eighth such meeting bringing together members of the National Service Committee, the Filipino, Haitian, Hispanic, and Korean National Committees, the Steering Committee of the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, Representatives of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, and a representative of the US Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. A number of young adults engaged in ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit to youth and college age young adults were also present. The Gathering is convened by the Chairpersons of the NSC (Aggie Neck), the DLSC (Fr. Bill Delaney, S.J.), and the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee (Bishop Robert Carlson), a representative from the Catholic Fraternity (Dennis McBride of the Alleluia Community), and a representative of the ethnic committees (Msgr. Joseph Malagrecia).

Bishop Carlson was not able to attend the Gathering. However, Bishop Sam Jacobs, Past Chairman of the Bishops'

Ad Hoc Committee and in whose diocese we met, was able to attend.

The Gathering of National Leadership Groups has its roots in a gathering convened by the National Service Committee and the Association of Diocesan Liaison in St. Louis in 1995 to build bridges of understanding and communication between various strands of the Renewal.

At this year's Gathering the various groups agreed to:

- ★ foster life in the Spirit Seminars during the Easter season;

- ★ promote a Holy Spirit Novena from Ascension through Pentecost (see article page 13);

- ★ encourage participation in the Pentecost Vigil with Pope Benedict XVI and the Renewal Movements in St. Peter's Square in Rome;

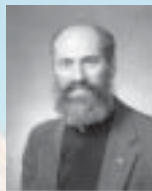
- ★ continue to work together on the 2007 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference June 22-24 in Secaucus, New Jersey to cel-

Fr. Patsy Iaquina & the National Service Committee
invite you on

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www.nsc-chariscenter.org

brate the 40th anniversary of the Renewal and to hear the Lord for the future; and

- ★ to continue to work toward a National Youth Ministers Committee by 2008.

The next meeting will be held January 2007 in Miami. ♦

National Service Committee Meets

The National Service Committee gathered in mid-winter at the Lumen Christi Retreat Center in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux just prior to the Gathering of National Leadership Groups.

In addition to the election (see Ministry Updates, p 15) the principal order of business was the adoption of the Service Committee's 2006 Budget and continued discussion on some action goals to supplement the Service Committee's Mission Statement (see p 15). The Committee adopted three such goals:

- strengthen the local Renewal;

- reach youth and young adults with Life in the Spirit and link them to new or existing charismatic situations;

- communicate and encourage others to communicate with bishops and priests.

The actions associated with the above goals are modest (see the reference to "Teaching Days" in the Executive Director's Column p 14) given the scarcity of funds.

The Service Committee then met with the Diocesan Liaison Steering Committee chaired by Fr. Bill Delaney, S.J. of Los Angeles. The two Committees have been meeting for prayer, fellowship and discussion of a variety of Renewal issues for years. The topic of most interest this year was the development of a Youth Ministry Committee to bring together those working in the power of the Holy Spirit with youth and young adults.

The Service Committee has several conference calls scheduled and will meet again in person for its Retreat Meeting in mid-September. ♦



Awaken dormant spiritual lives – one-day Life in the Spirit Seminars

“Live as children of the light... Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”
(Ephesians 5:8,14).

by *Therese Boucher*

The Scriptures invite us to follow Jesus in the light of the Holy Spirit. The voice of God beckons us. “Be alive and awake in my Spirit! Share my light with those around you!” And so we become evangelists, teachers, and witnesses. We awaken those who seem to be asleep in the Spirit, and we stir up the embers of faith expressed in the Creed. One way to do this is to offer Life in Spirit seminars that rely on the message of the gospel and promote a renewed relationship with Jesus through the workings of the Holy Spirit. The first choice in offering seminars is the weekly format, although many groups offer one-day seminars. The advantage of one-day seminars is that they help people step back from daily routines and sample new ways to relate to God. The disadvantage is that new experiences with spontaneous prayer, scriptural meditations, baptism in the Spirit, the laying on of hands and the use of charisms need nurturing over time.

The New Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000 is designed to imitate the weekly format and support of RCIA sessions. When a decision to use a one-day format is made, great care must be taken in adapting the material. Condensing or eliminating talks, faith sharing times, and brief wit-

nesses, may compromise the goal of awakening lasting faith. Examine the pastoral goals behind your decision. Severely condensed seminars that wake people up, or “get them baptized in the Spirit,” are like hasty spiritual remodeling experiences that revamp the landscape of people’s faith without addressing the long-term needs of a budding, daily relationship with Jesus.

Consider two additional pastoral goals: ongoing faith formation, and inviting people into the Church as the mystical Body of Jesus. Taking the first goal seriously suggests a daylong seminar with several witnesses, but only one or two talks from the *Life in the Spirit Seminars*, so that the majority of the talks can be offered in at least two additional sessions. Here is the reason why. People need the support of a spiritual family and sponsors, as they learn, make mistakes, and start over in their faith. It takes two months to start a new habit like daily prayer, reading scripture, or using God-given charisms. It is the sustained witness of team members that illustrates following Jesus through these practices.

The second goal is inviting people into faith communities where sacraments are experienced as “powers that come from

the body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #116). Community can only be formed and tested through sustained sacramental, charismatic relationships with God and with each other. The Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Church and beckons us to greater participation in liturgical life. We want to counteract what Cardinal Paul Poupard, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, calls a “degraded form of believing: believing without belonging” (*Cardinal Poupard’s Take on Secularization in the West*, Dec. 18, 2004 Zenit.org). We want to discourage jumping from parish to parish, movement to movement, and religious experience to religious experience. Instead, the Holy Spirit encourages belonging and commitment to a faith community. God can use us to invite people to come home to the Church. Their greatest need is not just waking up to life in the Spirit, but living in the Light that rises every morning and gathers us together to “live as children of the light” (Ephesians 5:8).

Seminar Options:

Evangelistic “Jesus Lives! Day”

Include several back-to-back three minute witnesses to Jesus (each based on a different title for Jesus), the explanation talk, God’s Love [and Salvation]. Then offer five [or six] regular weekly sessions. (For an outline of “Jesus lives! Day” visit www.nsc-chariscenter.org.)

Jesus Lives! Day

Followed by three double sessions with two talks during each session. Sessions are offered weekly or biweekly.

Life in the Spirit Mini-retreat

The first daylong session includes three talks. The second session offers three talks, and the third session offers two talks. When sessions are two weeks apart,

add weekly one-to-one telephone or email contact between sessions.

All of these options can include the use of the *Prayer Journal for Baptism in the Spirit* and an invitation to meet together between sessions at a specific parish liturgy.

Proposed Schedule for double sessions.

A daylong mini-retreat or seminar would include at least one double session, possibly another one after lunch.

Opening prayer (10 minutes)

Presentation or talk (15 minutes)

Witness about the session topic (5 minutes)

Small sharing groups (20 minutes)

Break (20 minutes)

Presentation or talk (15 minutes)

Witness about the session topic (5 minutes)

Small sharing groups (20 minutes)

Closing Prayer (20 minutes) ♦

Therese Boucher is a writer and speaker. She has trained diocesan laity ministry teams, Life in the Spirit Seminar teams and faith-sharing group leaders. Therese has written several books among them revised Life in the Spirit Seminar Team Manual.



The New Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000 is available through the National Service Committee.

Bishops Speak to the Renewal

“Charismatics should be told from the very beginning: This is not just about you—it is about evangelizing the whole world. If you don’t evangelize, you will stagnate spiritually. If you do not evangelize then you are not using the gifts the Holy Spirit gave you. He gave you these gifts to share, not to hoard for yourself. God wants to transform you as you give yourself to the Holy Spirit as an evangelizer. (Bishop Robert Hermann, Archdiocese of St. Louis)

“In my mind the Catholic Charismatic Renewal can become more effective by becoming more integrally involved in the local parish. Evangelization for one thing: CCR can stimulate and assume leadership in this at the local level. We need to reach out to those who no longer reach out to us in the Church. We need to bring in those who have no where to go or have gone elsewhere. Become evangelizers—allow your marvelous gift of prayer to be a springboard for reaching out to others. Take on the leadership; become evangelizers—that is to be a gospel people.” (Bishop Donald W. Trautman, Diocese of Erie, PA.)

Excerpts taken from *Bishops Speak to the Renewal*. For copies of this booklet contact Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office 2719 E. 42nd Street Minneapolis, MN 55406 Tel: 612-721-2543

You are urged to pray a Pentecost Novena

In 1897, Pope Leo XIII established a solemn novena to the Holy Spirit to be prayed each year between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday, to invoke the Holy Spirit for the unity of all Christians. This novena was modeled after the very first novena, celebrated in the Upper Room by Mary and the disciples who gathered to wait and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In 2004, Pope John Paul II encouraged the Burning Bush Initiative, an invitation to Catholics “to return to the Upper Room, so that, united in contemplation of the Eucharistic Mystery, they may intercede for full Christian unity and for the conversion of sinners.” A primary focus of the Burning Bush Initiative is to promote world-wide celebrations of the Pentecost Novena, whether by individuals, parishes, dioceses, communities or other devotional groups. Catholic Charismatic Renewal can serve the whole Church

by encouraging the Pentecost Novena and by offering to lead prayer services in parishes and other settings.

This year especially, as we anticipate the gathering of Lay Ecclesial Movements with Pope Benedict XVI on the eve of Pentecost in Rome, it is an opportune time for us to stress the importance of this Novena and to do all in our power to enable many to participate in it. The Burning Bush Initiative website has suggested prayers for the 9 days, in several different languages, as well as many suggestions of ways to present the novena within a parish or diocese. We strongly urge you to check it out at: <http://www.burningbush.beatitudes.org/english/index.htm>.

For a flyer that lays out the Burning Bush Pentecost Novena on 8 ½ x 14 paper, ready to reproduce, you can contact Chariscenter USA at: www.nsc-chariscenter.org. ♦



From the
Executive
Director
.....
by Walter Matthews

Passing on the grace of Pentecost

I remember the night that the priest who was the leader of our prayer group said to me, “next week I want you to start giving Introductory Talks” and handed me an early edition of the *Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual*. So only a few months old in the Spirit, I became a witness that next week and each week thereafter for several months, telling others who came to the talks: this is who I was, this is what the Lord has done and is doing with me

Several months later the priest told me that he could not make the meeting the following week and that he wanted me to lead the prayer meeting and “toward the end give a brief summary of what the Lord says in Scripture, prophecy and sharing during the meeting.” I was terrified but willing. Thus with fear and trembling I became a “teacher”.

From the very beginning of this Renewal teaching of all sorts—Introductory Talks to the Life in the Spirit Seminars; LSS talks themselves; witnesses; talks on charisms, on being leaders, on walking in faith, on baptism in the Holy Spirit, about Catholic truths; practical talks on living the Catholic Christian life; talks on and about the Scriptures—has been part of the ministry of the National Service Committee.

The NSC works to help leaders and others till the soil so that others can receive the grace more effectively, and to provide the teaching that enables the grace to be lived in the participants’ lives and in prayer groups. As Fr. Raniero

Cantalamesa has exhorted, “We must begin again to use this gift better, to run good seminars with effective baptism in the Spirit. We must awaken Christian lives which are dormant or spent.”

In the early years the communities in South Bend and Ann Arbor, that formed the nucleus of the Renewal’s early national leadership, put their resources together to convene conferences at Notre Dame where teaching was a constituent element. They also began a publication that became *New Covenant* that served the Renewal well for so many years with solid practical teaching, articles on charisms and inspiring witnesses.

We believe that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift that belongs to the Christian inheritance of all those sacramentally initiated into the church. It is this understanding that is embodied in *The New Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual: Catholic Edition 2000* which the NSC published in 2000 and has reprinted several times since. The NSC has published several other books and booklets with the same aim: to provide solid teaching to the Renewal.

This emphasis on providing solid teaching continues to be manifested today at our conferences where the talks are recorded not only on audiotapes but also on videotapes, cd’s and dvd’s. It has taken particular expression with the NSC’s decision in 2003 to convene the National Leaders’ Conference in Nashville and then again this past November in Chicago. The need is so great we will have another National Leaders’ Conference in Albuquerque this November. This publication, *Pentecost Today*, continues the legacy begun in the early days that was embodied in *New Covenant*: to put solid material in the hands of leaders and other Renewal participants.

Friends of the NSC

Please see special insert, Friends column will return next issue.

In 1998 the NSC began convening Regional Leaders’ Gatherings to provide solid teaching on the mission and the key elements of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal such as baptism in the Holy Spirit, charisms, vision, praise and worship. As a result of recent discussions the NSC has adopted a goal “to strengthen the local Renewal” with one proposed action being to develop “Teaching Days” for leaders that we can bring into (arch)dioceses, working, of course, with local liaisons and Renewal Centers to identify needs.

In the late 1980’s the NSC developed a series of videotapes on Leadership Training. This 4-part series is still available. More recently the NSC produced an updated Leadership Formation Series entitled *The A.C.T.S. of Leadership*, with talks and panel discussions on Apostolic, Communal, Theological and Spiritual Formation.

The NSC website has many purposes, one of them is certainly teaching by providing archived issues of *Pentecost Today*, and adding supplemental materials which we are not able to publish in *Pentecost Today*.

In Second Timothy Paul wrote: “Take the teachings that you have heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also” (2:2). This is the work of any teacher: to pass on the content in a way that the student who becomes the teacher can in turn pass on to others. This has been and continues to be the work of the NSC. ♦

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For Your Information

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

NSC pilgrimage and election

This past autumn NSC members, Fr. John Gordon, Aggie Neck and Virginia King accompanied about 50 people on a pilgrimage in Italy that ended by marking the end of the Year of Eucharist in Rome.

Fr. John Gordon reflects, "A pilgrimage is an opportunity to be renewed in faith, to receive particular and unique graces, as well as to grow in Christian fellowship. On our recent pilgrimage we were privileged to share life together for just over a week; in that time we experienced the Lord draw us together, and to himself. Going on pilgrimage continues to be a grace for me, and I am sure it is for all those who went."

Aggie Neck shares, "This was one of my most inspirational experiences. Perhaps it was because it focused on the Eucharist, and we visited so many places of miracles and saints. The experience of visiting the Vatican and all that it has kept through the centuries enables us to step back into time and know the depth and history of our Catholic faith. I believe that a pilgrimage broadens our awareness of spiritual truths. Perhaps this is why throughout history pilgrims have felt the call to visit holy places. It focuses our attention on the eternal goal."

Virginia King, who has made a number of pilgrimages, believes that, "The value of the pilgrimage is not fully evident until it's over. While on pilgrimage, my senses are filled with sights and sounds that are new and intriguing. The Masses are beautiful and full of power. My fellow pilgrims may start out as strangers, but by the end of the pilgrimage they are truly brothers and sisters to me. We have shared each other's joys and sorrows, and have helped 'carry' one another

Ministry
Update

by Sr. Mary Anne
Schaenzer



through difficult portions of the journey. It is only after I have been home for weeks or months that the fuller impact of the pilgrimage begins to emerge in my consciousness. Memories of the holy places we visited, and the lives of the holy people who had been there before us, strengthen my faith. Having visited Assisi strengthens my "friendship" with Francis and Clare. My appreciation of the intercession of St. Padre Pio is deepened after visiting San Giovanni Rotondo. My experience of the unity of the Body of Christ is more profound after attending Mass in St. Peter's Square."

The NSC is sponsoring another pilgrimage, this time for the gathering of ecclesial movements in Rome at Pentecost of 2006. Fr. John Gordon is looking forward to the grace that this pilgrimage will be. More details are at the website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

During the recent NSC election process, three members, Josephine Cachia, Fr. John Gordon, and Chuck Hornsby were re-elected to terms of three years. Our newest member is Scott Kaldahl of Miami.

We welcome Scott who was born in Washington, DC and grew up in New York. Since 1977, he's lived in Miami. Scott came into the Charismatic Renewal in 1974 during a weekend retreat. He's served the renewal in Miami as a prayer group leader since 1985. He also has served as MC for the local diocesan conference as well as conferences in Raleigh, NC. Scott has a passion for lively, authentic worship of the living God. Scott and his wife Carolyn have 4 children and will celebrate 25 years of marriage this May. Scott has served on the NSC Council for the past three years. ♦

PENTECOST *Today*

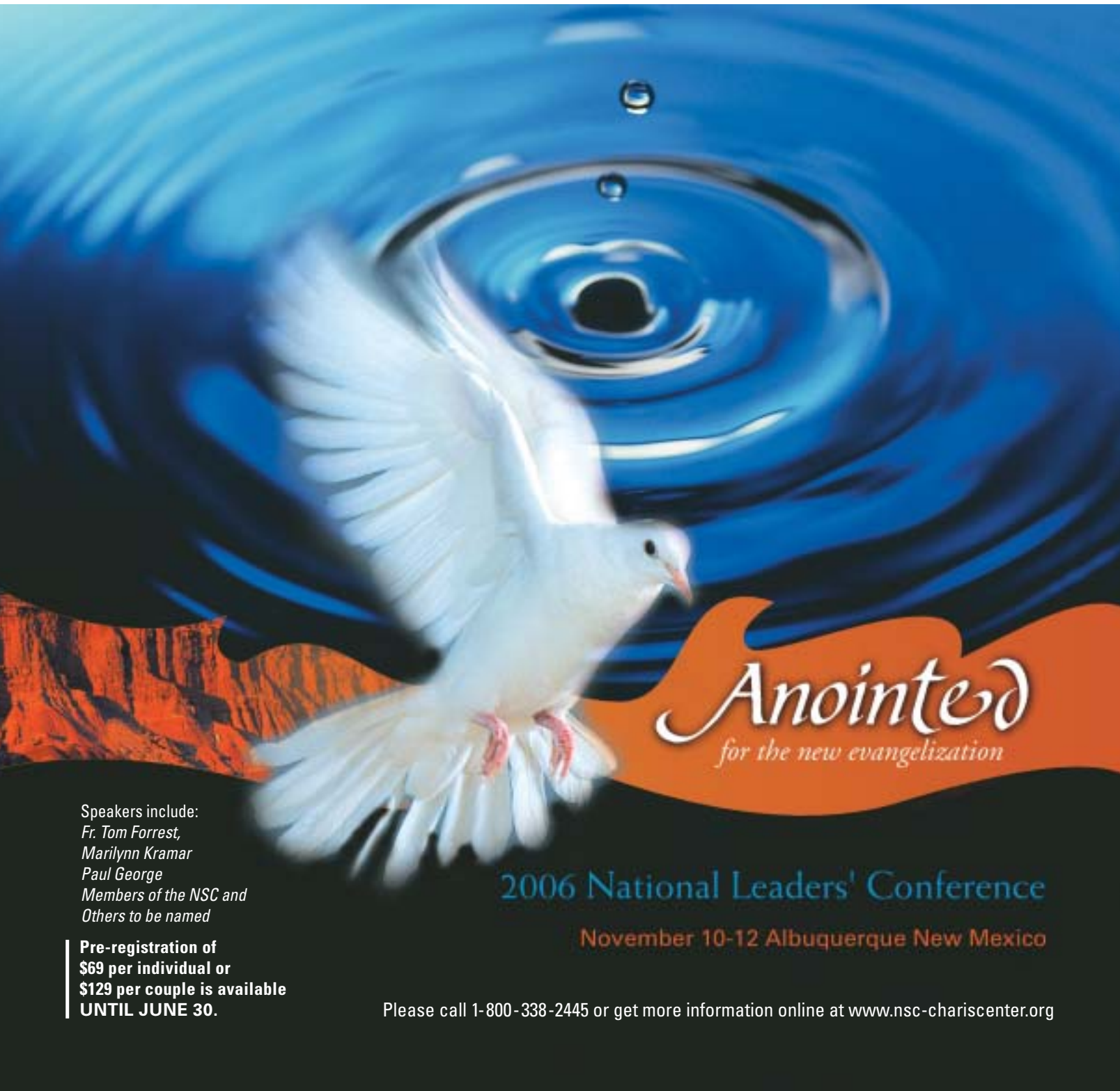
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