



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

- ✦ For the National Leaders' Conference to be held in Nashville, November 14-16
- ✦ That we will allow the gifts that serve the Renewal to be stirred up among us
- ✦ That the gift of giving may bring an abundance, allowing the NSC to continue in its mission
- ✦ That in this New Year prayer groups will strengthen and grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- ✦ For wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be ever present in the lives of the NSC.

Why include the NSC in your will?

As you know the National Service Committee relies almost entirely on gifts from individuals to continue its mission. We ask you to please consider a gift to the National Service Committee when you make your will or update it. Making a gift to the NSC can be as simple as adding a codicil to your existing will or estate plan.

You may use this or a similar statement: "I/we bequeath \$ _____ (or % of my residual estate) to the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc. P.O. Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628."

Please let us know if you have included us in your will so that we can properly thank you.

What is an *evangelistic* prayer meeting?

by Gerry Mader

Talking to many people about how the Catholic charismatic renewal has changed I often heard people lament, "It's not like it use to be in the early days." I agree it often is not the same. Yet one thing even today can be similar. Prayer meetings were evangelistic—a place where people would come and meet Jesus, desire more, and want to invite others. Surely this can take place today bringing new life and purpose to the meetings.

What does an evangelistic prayer meeting look like? I believe it should be welcoming, winsome and proclaim the good news that Jesus is alive and that his Holy Spirit wants to reveal the Father's love for us.

Let's look at those three aspects.

Welcoming: Are we enthusiastically inviting new people to the prayer meeting? Do we offer to pray for needs when we are told there are needs? Do we invite them to come and pray for those needs? For the prayer group to be evangelistic we must be inviting people in a friendly and welcoming way. We must trust that an encounter with the Lord and with those attending the prayer meeting will allow them to be at peace and enjoy the fellowship and love which we are exhorted to have, "...let everything be done in love" (1Cor. 16:14).

I felt that I was being welcomed "home."

When visitors come into the meeting for the first time, the group's hospitality should be evident. Someone will make it a point to welcome them and get their name, introduce them to others and explain briefly what to expect at the prayer meeting. In some large groups this is an assigned ministry hopefully based on a recognized gift of hospitality. I know for me that when I traveled for work and visited prayer groups like this, I felt that I was being welcomed "home."

Winsome: I heard this word many years ago when someone was defining what a prayer group and meeting should be like and it has stuck with me ever since. It means pleasant, appealing, endearing and engaging. An evangelistic prayer meeting should be alive in the Holy Spirit in praise and worship, both in music and voice. It should be uplifting to our spirits as we welcome the Holy Spirit in songs of praise to Jesus (See Psalm 150: 5-6). The praise and worship should take our minds off of ourselves and unto the Lord. The praise should help us to know that we are praying to a living, resurrected God, who is with us and in each of us. "Do you not know you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16)?

The leader or praise leader should be a sign of the joy and love that we have experienced today and all the past week. He/she should be pre-prayed (pre-prepared) and enthusiastically call the community to praise. We, the participants, who have been coming for a time, should also give witness by the praise in our

own language and with the charisma of tongues. We have been touched by the love and power of God's Holy Spirit and we rejoice in all the blessings we have received. We have been called to share our gifts and each should be ready to hear the Lord and use his/her gifts. There is a certain sense of freedom that comes from authentic praise from the heart. It is almost tangible. "Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Lord is there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). This freedom is not chaos, but a freedom that allows all the gifts to flow without a lot of urging from the leader.

I have been at prayer meetings where every phase of the meeting was over-directed by the "leader" with phrases such as "now we will have 10 minutes of silence." There may be times when we should be silent in the meeting but it should come out of a sense of the awesome presence of God and his glory and his love and after a time of worship. "Do not stifle the Holy Spirit" (1Thes. 5:19). Worship is about awe and about being humbled in the knowledge that the living God is present to us in the Holy Spirit. "All of us are being transformed from glory to glory" (2Cor. 3:18).

Proclamation: Proclaim his marvelous deeds! Under this heading I am including prophecy, teaching, preaching, sharing, witnessing and testimony. All of these should be done as much as possible working with the power of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is God's now word that needs to be discerned by the speaker and the community. Prophecy needs to be proclaimed powerfully with the trust that it is God's now word for his people. Prophecy is to encourage, exhort and proclaim the living God's availability to guide, heal, change and redeem us. In our prayer group we also believe that witnessing is a key element in evangelizing those present and encouraging them to witness to others. Our teaching and preaching should

help us to grow into an ever-deepening knowledge of the Trinity and God's love for us all.

Everyone is called to be ready to use the gifts that God has given us. All should be done with zeal and the desire to build up the body of Christ. "When you assemble one has a psalm, another instruction, (teaching), a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything should be done for building up" (1Cor. 14:26).

May all that we do proclaim his marvelous deeds and draw others to baptism in the Holy Spirit through our evangelistic prayer meetings. ♦

Gerry Mader has held many leadership roles in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Currently he serves on the NSC and on Diocese of Venice Charismatic Commission.




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