

Please pray with the National Service Committee for the following intentions:

1. Lord, anoint and make fruitful the Gathering of National Leadership Groups: Catholic Charismatic Renewal to be held Jan 11—13, 2010.
2. Lord, inspire thousands of people to join in the Day of Prayer & Fasting on February 12, to “unlock the power” of the grace of Pentecost in all aspects of life in our nation. (see ad on p. 13)
3. Lord, bless the Day of Teaching and Ministry in Camden, the Regional Leaders’ Gathering, September 10—12, in Denver and all other NSC planned events.
4. Lord, supply the needs of all prayer groups and dioceses that are offering Holy Spirit Seminars during Lent, and bring about a great outpouring of your Holy Spirit into the hearts of all who attend, that their lives will be transformed and the face of the earth will be renewed.
5. Lord, empower us with charisms and the fruits of the Spirit, that we might be leaven to advance the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

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Spirit given to us in Baptism and the Sacraments of Initiation. There is still so much work to be done. Let us continue to fan into the flame in our lives the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ♦

Fanning the Flame booklet is available from LaSalle Company, Inc. for \$3.35. 1-800-348-2227 or www.renewed-life.com.

Fr. George T. Montague, S.M. is a well known speaker and an author of more than twenty books in the area of biblical and pastoral theology. In 1995 he began a new religious community in the Marianist family, the “Brothers of the Beloved Disciple.”



STRENGTH

Sharing the charisms with confidence

by Gerry Mader

Recently when attending a small prayer group, I was disappointed by a lack of power in the utilization of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There was little freedom as the leader seemed to be operating off of a schedule and was quite concerned that things needed to be done by a certain time. The music played for a short period of time and then he called for the sharing of word gifts and there were two words, one from the scripture and one delivered by a woman. The prophecy was delivered as though it was just another nice thing to say.

Later we attended an area prayer meeting, where the praise and worship were extended and the words came forth after a powerful time of praying in tongues, and the word was delivered with confidence and with power. It became clear to me that it is so important to building up the body of Christ that all can see clearly that the Holy Spirit is in charge of the meeting and we can be confident that we are to praise, worship, sing with confidence, pray in tongues and prophesy with confidence, so that all will know that we believe that the Holy Spirit is leading us and wants to build up the people of God. As we continue to be confident the Lord will continue to add to our numbers.

“In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (Eph.3:12 NIV).

“...you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your

Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13 NIV).

God, our loving Father, asks us to come and approach him with confidence. If we have asked him and Jesus to send us the Holy Spirit we need to be confident that God is faithful to his promises and that we have received the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. We are called to be confident that we have the first gift which is the Holy Spirit and also are confident that he has given us gifts to build up the body of Christ that we are with. “So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12 NIV).

We in the charismatic renewal have been extremely blessed to have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the accompanied gifts (charisms) of this outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit. Paul challenged the early Christians to be bold and eager to have the gifts of the Spirit but he also said to use them wisely and in proper order.

Paul saw how evangelistic the charisms could be if they were done in such a manner as to honor God. St. Paul never said don’t use them, but rather he encouraged their use as a means of drawing others to Christ. In 1 Corinthians 14, he especially encourages the gift of prophecy because he says that it builds up the body of Christ particularly for new people. He also says that tongues help to build up the individual believer.

Having said all this, what is our current situation as we look at prayer groups today? There are some groups who are saying we need to minimize

the charisms or minimize their use so as not to offend anyone who might come into our group. In other cases some groups are practicing various devotions and it is difficult to know if they are charismatic and what their purpose is.

The more charisms are present the more people will be challenged to seek them from the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 14:31, Paul speaks to the community about the order of prophecy and he suggests that the prophets should prophesy in order so that all may benefit. *“For you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and be encouraged”* (1 Cor 14:31).

So it is with tongues, even though Paul is correcting some behaviors, he is also exhorting the church to use this gift. Prophecy is for the believers who are there and tongues is for unbelievers who may be new to the meeting. “Now I should like all of you to speak in tongues (1 Cor 14:5)... I give thanks to God that I speak in tongues more

than any of you” (1 Cor 14:18). Paul clearly encourages the use of these charisms.

We also see how healing plays such a prominent role in the early chapters of Acts. Peter and John are imprisoned for healing the crippled beggar at “the Beautiful Gate.” Their response is “to evangelize” the Sanhedrin by proclaiming what they had just accomplished in the name of Jesus. The people praised God for what had happened and gave glory to God. All through the Acts of the Apostles we hear about the people praising God for what God is doing through the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:29-31).

The Holy Spirit gave men and women the power to preach and teach, even those who had no formal training but who had an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Among them Peter, Stephen, Phillip, and of course Paul stand out. These are men who became leaders, teachers, preachers, evangelists, deacons, prophets and healers. People who

witnessed by their life and testimony with charisms that testified to the presence of the Holy Spirit did so with the confidence that the charisms they were utilizing were from the Spirit of God. So it is with us today. The more confidently we use the charisms the more winsome we will be and the more others will be drawn to use the charisms to build the body of Christ.

We in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal believe that the charisms experienced in the early church are for today. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit delineated in the recently released NSC mission statement says that the action of the Holy Spirit leads us to ministry empowered by the charisms for evangelization and service. If we are empowered with the charisms by the Holy Spirit, we certainly need to use them with confidence so as to give the glory to the God who gave them to us. ♦

Gerry Mader serves on the NSC and lives in Florida with his wife Lois.

NEW! Booklet & Leaflets



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