

Year of Charisms and Grace for the Church

Document issued by the 5-Year Committee of the National Leadership Groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the U.S.

In the response to the challenge the Lord gave us at the 40th Anniversary Conference in 2007 and in union with International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, the National Leadership Groups for the Renewal proposed and are fostering a 5 year preparation for the 50th Anniversary Jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 2017.

In that preparation, 2014 is the “Year of Charisms and Grace for the Church.” During the Year we will:

- Explore Charismatic Renewal’s identity as a movement.
- Celebrate being fully Catholic (ecclesial maturity) and fully charismatic.
- Promote greater and more mature use of the charisms.

Explore Charismatic Renewal’s identity as a movement: fostering baptism in the Holy Spirit as grace for the Church

In 1996 Cardinal Leon Suenens wrote that “to interpret the Renewal as a ‘movement’ among other movements is to misunderstand its nature; it is a movement of the Spirit offered to the entire Church and destined to rejuvenate every part of the Church’s life.” Those who were the first responders to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the “Duquesne Weekend” and shortly thereafter “quickly understood that this grace [of baptism in the Holy Spirit] was for the renewal of the whole Church.” (*Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, p 62)

So first there is the reality of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit so asked for in the prayer of the Church for the Second Vatican Council: “Renew [your] wonders in our day, as by a new Pentecost”—this in the century dedicated by Pope Leo XIII to the Holy Spirit!

Then, second, there is the movement, not as a superfluous extra but as itself a grace. “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal too arose as an unexpected grace, a surprise of the Spirit, unplanned and without formulated goals and programs. . . . The organization of the movement was subsequent to its inception.” (*BHS*, p 14) While the Renewal does not have any identifiable founder figure, one of the keys often associated with the movements, nor “a single entity with a unified organizational structure,” we are “rather a stream of movements and groups united by a common experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, including prayer groups, covenant communities, schools of evangelization, healing ministries and a wide variety of other groups and ministries, some ecumenical and some solely Catholic.” (*BHS*, p 91) We are a gift and grace for the Church!

While a tremendous blessing for the Church the Renewal's diversity causes us to work harder at both our identity and our unity. Why? For the sake of the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit poured out not for the few but for all.

As many as the Renewal has touched in our nearly 50 years, there are so many more Catholics who have not yet opened their lives to the Person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit, so many continued divisions in the Body of Christ not yet overcome by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who seeks to rebuild the unity intended by the Father, and so many unchurched and unbaptized who have not yet experienced that personal encounter with Jesus Christ that is salvific, transforming and life-giving.

We recommend:

1. In this year of 2014, as we make our way to the Renewal's Jubilee in 2017, and in preparation for 2015, the Year of Unity, we encourage deeper reflection and conversation among Renewal leaders and participants about the Renewal's identity as a movement given to the Church (to all) to foster the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit as transforming and empowering grace for the new evangelization.
2. Appropriate teachings be developed and given on this question of the Renewal's identity.
3. Conference, Day of Renewal, and similar event leaders are encourage to include the Renewal's identity as part of events in 2014.

Celebrate being fully Catholic (ecclesial maturity) and fully charismatic

The Second Vatican Council taught that the Church is both hierarchical and charismatic (*Lumen Gentium*, 4). In Catholic Charismatic Renewal we embrace and celebrate the role of the hierarchy (pope, bishops, priests, deacons), the importance of the Magisterium (teaching authority of the pope and bishops), and the charismatic dimension of the Church in which the Holy Spirit continues to impart his gifts to every member of the Church for the building up of the Body of Christ, evangelization and service.

Fully Catholic means that persons supporting charismatic renewal (individuals, groups, ministries) work in communion with the Catholic Church (teachings, leadership, ministry). Pope John Paul II called this "ecclesial maturity." The characteristics of ecclesial maturity (*Christifideles Laici*, 30) include:

1. Giving primacy to the call to holiness;
2. Fidelity to the Church's Magisterium in doctrine and morals;
3. Communion with the pope and the local bishop;

4. Sharing in the mission of the Church;
5. Commitment to furthering the dignity of the person in human society.

We seek to keep these five characteristics in mind so that our groups work fully in communion with the Catholic Church. We embrace and celebrate all Catholic teaching, structures and ministries, while bringing to them our call to be a reminder in the Church of the ways the Holy Spirit is important for each area of Catholic life.

Fully charismatic means that we seek to live in union with the Holy Spirit in his full role. We foster the dynamic grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit which empowered the members of the early Church at Pentecost. The action of the Holy Spirit includes:

1. Experiencing union with God.
2. Inner transformation (the Spirit of Truth and Love forms in us a new mind and heart), leading to personal holiness.
3. Ministry empowered by charisms, including the gifts of tongues, prophecy, healing, anointed preaching, and one-to-one witnessing for the purpose of evangelization and service.
4. Building communities that witness to a renewed Catholic life.

We seek to be formed, empowered, and led by the Spirit. We embrace and celebrate all the charisms, and charismatic activity throughout the history of the Church that has been tested and affirmed by the Church. We seek to grow in the gifts of Isaiah 11 and the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5).

We recommend:

1. Renewal leaders at all levels are encouraged to examine the Renewal for its ecclesial maturity and the fostering of the full role of the Holy Spirit.
2. Participants in the Renewal are encouraged to examine their life in the Spirit in terms of being fully Catholic and fully charismatic.
3. Teachings on the charisms, Isaiah 11 gifts, and fruits of the Spirit are encouraged throughout the year.

Promote greater and more mature use of charisms

“Baptism in the Spirit brings about the release of charisms...These charisms are understood as gifts not primarily for the recipient but for the upbuilding of the Church and the work of evangelization. Wherever the Renewal is healthy and the exercise of the charisms is mature, the emphasis is not on the miraculous or extraordinary nature of these gifts but rather on their

capacity to mediate God's love and build up the body of Christ.” (ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 20)

In 2014 we are encouraging ourselves to grow in a mature use of the charisms and to also use the charisms on a wider and more diffuse scale. Part of our call to grow in ecclesial maturity centers around these challenges.

It is important that good formation materials on the charisms are widely disseminated to a broad spectrum of Renewal participants. St. Paul found it necessary to write correctives to a number of the churches because the charisms were sometimes used in a disruptive fashion. Paul was clear that he was not suggesting that the charisms be suppressed but they be used appropriately and kept inside the context of the virtue of love. Good formation always is preferable to correction as we move toward maturity. There are many good sources for formation on the use of the charisms including ICCRS documents on the *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* and *Guidelines on Praying for Healing*, the National Service Committee Leaflet series, and a number of spiritual gifts inventories. These and other resources provide basic instruction on the nature of the charisms and on their use.

It is also important that the charisms not be viewed primarily as simply activities at a prayer meeting. The charisms are given for the building up of the Church and for the transformation of the world. The potential for stirring up the gifts as part of the new evangelization is enormous, but that will require a reworking of how individuals understand the charisms and how to use them in different settings.

The charisms poured out on the Church at Pentecost, used in various ways throughout its history, and renewed in the Catholic Church almost 50 years ago are dynamite (*dunamis* see Lk 24:49, Acts 1:8) for the building of the kingdom. The signs of the times indicate a great need for such power. We cannot do the work of God without the resources of God. As we move toward the Jubilee year may we learn to use our charisms often and well in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We recommend:

1. Read or re-read *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*
2. Teach and encourage the exercise of the full spectrum of charisms both in Renewal activities and other Church services and ministries, but also in daily life.
3. Leaders are encouraged to help Renewal participants identify and use more powerfully and effectively their charisms. Pope John Paul II encouraged, “A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and praise it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a ‘gift for me’.” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 43)

Finally, **we recommend** that at your conferences and major events during 2014 that the theme of “charisms” and “grace for the Church” appear in your title as part of our 5-year Journey together to the Jubilee in 2017.

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