

Spring 2015

# PENTECOST *Today*

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

## BUILDING UNITY

One Body,  
One Spirit  
*Johnny Bertucci*

Covenant  
Community  
*Bruce Yocum*

To lay down  
your lives for  
each other  
*Andrés Arango*

Our ascent  
*Tom Mangan*

Proclaim that  
Jesus is Alive  
*Joe Difato*

A desire to build  
community  
*Dorothy  
Ranaghan*

*New life in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit*





## Chairman's Corner

by Johnny Bertucci

## We are not afraid! God is with us!

*"But the Master comes,  
and the foolish crowd  
Never can quite understand  
The worth of a soul and the change  
that is wrought  
By the touch of the Master's hand."*  
Myra Brooks Welch

**A**s a teenager, I was invited to attend a prayer meeting at my parish. Soon after, the Master came and touched my soul. My life has never been the same. Thirty-six years ago, at the age of 17, unexpectedly, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Since then, I have been on an incredible journey with the Lord.

This past January I was elected Chairman of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I am both nervous and excited at the same time. My prayer is for courage, humility, and charity.

**Courage** to step out of the boat and follow Jesus wherever he may take us.

**Humility** to lay down our agendas and take up his agenda.

**Charity** to cover every aspect of our lives together.

One of the things Pope Francis said, when asked what he expects of the Renewal, was this: "I expect from you that you share with all in the Church the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit." As we approach our Jubilee, let us never lose our passion for bringing others into this life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ and the love of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A quote attributed to St. Joan of Arc, as she was preparing to march out to battle, is "I am not afraid. God is with me. I was born for this!" The Catholic Charismatic Renewal "was born for this." As we respond to the Church's call for the New Evangelization, as we celebrate our Jubilee, may the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, through the intercession of St. Joan of Arc, say: "We are not afraid! God is with us! We were born for this!" ♦

*Johnny Bertucci is Chairman of the National Service Committee.*



## Editor's Desk

by Sr. Mary Anne  
Schaenzer, SSND

In this Year of Unity, the theme of unity threads itself through the articles of this issue: at times it is woven with a thread of ecumenism. Instead of reading these articles like charms on a bracelet that may be unrelated to each other, we can read them like facets of a diamond: in a variety of ways we are encouraged to tend toward unity.

Johnny Bertucci (p 3) offers suggestions for challenging ourselves to become better unified within the Renewal.

Bruce Yocum (pp 4-5) relays the rapid development of Covenant Communities since 1970. "The dynamic of the Spirit tends powerfully to unity."

Andrés Arango (pp 6-7) shares four practical ways to live the challenge of laying down our lives for our friends. Who are our friends? He addresses that too.

Sr. Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC (pp 8-9) introduces the theme—*In the Spirit, through the Cross, One Body*—and several speakers for the November 13-15, 2015, National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference in Herndon, Virginia.

Joe Difato (pp 10-11) shares how his community follows the words of Pope Francis to go into the streets and announce the gospel "with the Word of God which proclaims that Jesus is alive and loves all men." He illustrates the particular way in which the Spirit gives them words of knowledge for ministry to people whom they do not know.

Tom Mangan (p 12) exhorts us to engage in the continual ascent that leads us into the presence of God.

Finally, Dorothy Ranaghan (p 15) writes of her experience of the movement in the Renewal toward authentic Christian community and spiritual ecumenism. "The best is yet to come."

Over the years there have been divisions but the Holy Spirit is at work in marvelous ways to restore unity. In which ways will you and/or your group work toward a greater unity? ♦

## PENTECOSTToday

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### For Your Information

The mission of *Pentecost Today* is to serve and be a voice for the National Service Committee's mission "to foster the dynamic grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit." We do this by publishing articles that instruct and give practical wisdom, with a particular emphasis on strengthening leaders and leader formation, in a visually appealing and inviting format.

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# Unity: one body, one spirit

by Johnny Bertucci

*"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"* (John 17:20-21 RSVCE).

**T**hat the world may know! Our unity is essential if we are to be effective participants in the New Evangelization. We best show the world who Jesus is by the love we show one another and by our unity. To the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, Pope Francis recently said: "Seek the unity which is the work of the **Holy Spirit** and do not be afraid of diversity." The **Holy Spirit** creates unity in diversity. If that is so, then the Charismatic Renewal should be the most unified of all movements within the church, having as its identity **baptism in the Holy Spirit**. We are incredibly diverse, and thus by our unity we should be able to present Jesus Christ to the world.

Unity is born of the Holy Spirit. Division is born of the devil. It has too often been the case that the Renewal has been divided. As such, our witness has been weakened. We have been entrusted with a grace, a current of grace, meant for the entire church, indeed, the entire world. And perhaps, as Pope Francis has warned against, we've become controllers of that grace.

With such a fractured Renewal, the work of unity becomes even more important. So how can we be better unified with the other charismatic leadership groups, ICCRS (International Catho-

**What is relevant is Christ's agenda, an agenda where love and unity are the cornerstones presented to the world as evidence of his saving power.**

lic Charismatic Renewal Services) and the Church at large?

† We can follow the example of ICCRS and the Catholic Fraternity. Pope Francis recently thanked these two groups for agreeing to share office space at the Vatican. "I am aware that it may not have been easy to make this decision and I thank you sincerely for this witness to unity and grace which you offer to the entire world."

† We can support Bishop Sam Jacobs' initiative with Catholic ecclesial movements and new communities, an initiative in which all the ecclesial movements and new communities can come together and share our unique gifts with the Body of Christ.

† We can encourage the signing of "Fostering Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Covenant of Understanding." Signing this document testifies to the unity in our diversity.

† We can be present at those events that are not our own. We can attend with no other agenda other than supporting our brothers and sisters in the cause of the New Evangelization. We can do far more for the salvation of souls together than apart. Perhaps that is why Jesus so strongly stated that they be one and we love one another so the world may know the Son.

Rather than fighting to enlist the saved in our cause, maybe we could fight to save those who are lost. Do we not have the hidden treasure? Do we not have the pearl of great price? Then let's sell all, buy the field, and invite the world to the feast.

I would like to close with Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Whenever division rears its diabolical head, we need to remember Galatians 2:20. I am a dead person, crucified with Christ. My feelings, my agenda, my preferences, are not relevant. What is relevant is Christ's agenda, an agenda where love and unity are the cornerstones presented to the world as evidence of his saving power. We need to guard against being jealous when a ministry other than our own is able to proclaim the gospel in power and bring others into the kingdom. We are to rejoice.

Let us set out to seek those opportunities that will allow us to be united, of one mind and purpose, as encouraged by the vision statement of the National Service Committee: "inviting all people to experience the Holy Spirit who opens us to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and the love of the Father." ♦



*Johnny Bertucci is a member of the National Service Committee and was recently elected Chairman. He and his wife Leslie have five children.*





# Covenant Community and the Call to Unity

We were caught up in a roaring river of God's grace and swept along.

**We are not the only stream on this mountainside!**

It all happened so rapidly! In the autumn of 1967 there was nothing. By May of 1968, 300 people were gathering in the main hall of the Newman Center at the University of Michigan. We went from obscurity to coverage in *Newsweek* magazine, from a local group to relationship with other groups in Lebanon, the Philippines, Nicaragua. By 1971 we had a fully staffed year-round guesthouse to help welcome the 1500 visitors who came each year. It was head-spinning. It was exhilarating and it was a bit dangerous.

We knew we had been caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We knew for one thing that we Catholics had been swept along in the great river of God's work that began with Pentecostalism at the start of the twentieth century, and before we knew it we were an ecumenical community. Protestant and Pentecostal brothers and sisters just started showing up. When we evangelized at the University, some of those who responded were Lutheran, or Baptist, or Methodist. What could we say to them? "Oh, sorry, didn't mean to evangelize you—we are a Catholic group"?

The Pastor at the Newman Center said, "If God sends them, you need to receive them." For good measure, the Bishop said the same.

Charismatic prayer groups started springing up all over the country, and soon, all over the world. The first National Service Committee was organized. The first conferences were held. *New Covenant* magazine was published.

*by Bruce Yocum*

**C**ovenant community was born in almost the same moment as charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church. In 2010 we celebrated forty years of covenant community, dating from the first covenant commitments in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1970, but we had been living community for a year or so before that.



**B**ack in those years some of us would go on vacation in the springtime down in the Blue Ridge or the Great Smokey Mountains, where the spring rains and melting snow formed gushing rivers coursing down the mountain sides. You had to be careful because one misstep and you could be pulled in and pulled along. Well, that is what happened to us spiritually. We were caught up in a roaring river of God's grace and swept along.

We were all university students back then, or recent graduates, and all of our projects and plans were abandoned as we felt the power of this river of grace and yielded to its pull. Community came about because we were pulled or pushed together by that same grace. It was as if we had all become magnetized and just stuck together. What we read in the Acts of the Apostles we saw in our own lives:

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).*

Now when you are caught up in a rushing torrent it can be very hard to keep your head up and see where you are: that river becomes your world and you think that's all there is.

But after some time in this roaring flood the river broadens and deepens, the current is more powerful but less dramatic and thrilling. Then you can get your head up and look around and... Lo and behold! We are not the only stream on this mountainside!

A few years ago in Stuttgart Germany, representatives of more than two hundred and fifty "new movements and communities" came together to celebrate "Together for Europe." We were there, together, from many nations, from many churches, thrown together by the force of the Holy Spirit who is renewing the Church. This meeting was a response to the meeting with Pope Saint John Paul II in Rome in 1998, a meeting he called together so that he could address the many streams of renewal that were springing up and changing the face of the Church.

What is the place of covenant community in all of this? Some years ago Don Schwager described it this way:

What is the significance of covenant community for today? **First, it is a sign-post** of what God is bringing about through the gift of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is a visible public sign of the Lord's work of renewal in bringing people into a revitalized relationship with God, and it is a sign of the unity he desires for all his people. The unity we already have as brothers and sisters in Christ stems from Baptism and the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. This gift of life together enables Christians of different traditions to recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and to live together in real shared life. This unifying grace is a hallmark of God's work today.

**Second, covenant community is a servant of the renewal.** It is meant to be a prophetic sign to the rest of the charismatic renewal, and to the churches, and to the world of the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian unity. It's a message to everybody, but not everybody is called to this particular form of community. People should be able to visit covenant communities and see how the Holy Spirit is renewing his people and restoring to them a fuller shared life together. It is part of the nature of a sign that you cannot be everything. Covenant communities... are only a part... of God's work of renewal and restoration.

The dynamic of the Holy Spirit tends powerfully to unity. If we in charismatic renewal are to be an effective and genuine sign of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we must be a sign of unity as well—unity with one another within the Renewal, unity amongst the various ministries and manifestations of the Renewal, unity with other new movements, unity with Christians from other churches, and unity with the leaders and pastors of the Church. ♦



*Bruce Yocum has been involved in charismatic renewal since the very beginning, and was involved in the formation of the first covenant communities. He has promoted charismatic renewal and the building of covenant communities internationally. He is a member of the Servants of the Word, a lay ecumenical brotherhood, and currently lives in Monterrey, Mexico.*





## Endeavor to lay down our lives for each other

Working for unity is not optional.  
It is a commandment from Jesus.

by *Andrés Arango*

In the Upper Room, after washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus gave his final discourse. Jesus had a message that he wanted his disciples to remember. The evangelist John presents several themes. One that it is very important for us in the Charismatic Renewal as well is the promise of the Holy Spirit. In addition, Jesus invited the apostles and us to participate in an incredible mission, the same mission that he himself took on as he gave his life on the cross for us. Jesus says to us: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friend” (Jn 15:13).

The National Leadership Groups of the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the U.S., walking our journey to the great jubilee in 2017, have declared 2015 the “Year of Unity.” One of the invitations for this year is that we are challenged to “lay down our life” for our friends. But who are our friends? Sometimes, we think of those who think, pray and talk like us as our friends. However, I want to urge us to recognize as friends all of those who have accepted

Jesus Christ in their hearts and are promoting, in one way or another, baptism in the Holy Spirit and the culture of Pentecost in the modern world. However, in order to “lay down our life for others” we have to be ready to broaden our understanding of how we can do this.

The document for the Year of Unity 2015 provides us with four practical ways to live this challenge to “lay down our life”:

### 1. **Pray together.**

One of the great gifts of the Renewal in my life is that it taught me to pray. In other words to have spontaneous conversations with God. However, through the years it’s likely that our way to pray has become a routine. We might think the way that we learned to pray in the Renewal is the “right” way. When I moved from Colombia to live in the U.S., the prayer group that I began to attend was predominantly for people from Mexico. At the beginning, praying with this



group was very difficult for me because the songs and the style of prayers were very different from those to which I was accustomed. Over time, I learned not only to appreciate their method of prayer, but I grew to love to pray in this new way. I am Hispanic and I love to pray in Spanish, but I also enjoy attending English services and experiencing the way the Holy Spirit moves there. We need to pray together for unity.

## 2. Be clear in your vision for a unified body of believers celebrating the commonality of all.

No matter our culture, language or expressions of spirituality, we all share the gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we are signing a Covenant of Understanding this year, recognizing that while we have experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are also invited to share this gift with the whole church, as Pope Francis invited us to do in his talk at the Olympic Stadium in Rome last June.

## 3. Be open and vocal about the gift each group brings to the renewal of the Church.

Traveling in several states, Canada, and countries in Latin America, I have found that the Holy Spirit gives charisms in some places in particular ways. I have seen some countries in which many leaders are anointed with the gift of preaching, while in other countries the gift of healing seems to be very common. Some cultures are more inclined to worship and praise, and others to adoration. We have to recognize and rejoice in what the Holy Spirit is doing in diverse ways with his servants. We need to avoid any kind of jealousy or competition, as we are called to work in unity in order to bring many people to an encounter with Jesus.

## 4. Commit to ongoing communication and cooperation with the different groups.

In Romans we are told, "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ" (Rom 12:5). Very often we are too worried about what others are doing in the Renewal. Why do they worship in the way that they do? Who has the largest evangelistic event? Who has more people in their communities? Why are they doing a Life in the Spirit seminar? We are called right now to a time of maturity in the Renewal. One way to show this maturity is by working in unity. Sometimes we spend too much time gossiping and judging others. Today, in this Year of Unity, we are called to work together. We need to unite and use all of our charisms to continue to build the Body of Christ. This is an urgent matter for evangelization. The Church hopes that the Re-

newal is able to help people fall in love with Jesus and receive the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We need to be in communication with our brothers and sisters from various expressions of the Renewal in order to work together to this end. In addition to organizing events, we must also create processes in which everyone is included independent of culture, ethnicity or language background. We are called to live as a people of a New Pentecost—not as a people of the Tower of Babel!

For me, the Charismatic Renewal is a lifestyle, a call to live as Jesus lived, filled with the Holy Spirit and devoting our lives to the service of the Father. Working for unity is not optional. It is a commandment from Jesus. Today, every person who has experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit is invited to enter the Upper Room, the same place of Pentecost, and remember his words. And so we ask the Holy Spirit to give us the grace to give up our agendas and work only for the plans that God has for the Renewal. We are called to listen, respect and collaborate with our brothers and sisters to build the culture of Pentecost. ♦



*Andrés Arango is the Chairman of the CNSH (Hispanic National Service Committee) and the Vice-president of CONCLAT (Latin-American Council for the Charismatic Renewal).*

## Prayer Card



**Come Holy Spirit.**

Inspire and enlighten us so we who are many and of one heart and one soul, may endeavor to lay down our lives for the body of Christ.

Help us to recognize and respect our differences and to celebrate together our common faith in Jesus Christ.

May our effort of peace and unity be a sign to the world of the unifying effect of a life led by the Holy Spirit.

We ask your blessings on the many ministries birthed by the Spirit which seek to bring all people to Christ through the power of that same Holy Spirit.



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

- ◆ That we find ways and opportunities for community and group prayer with other streams in the Renewal
- ◆ That we all receive a clear vision of the unity desired by God for the Church and within the Renewal
- ◆ That we see and celebrate each unique charism of the many streams of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and their gift to the renewal of the Church
- ◆ That in our hearts we commit to seeking communication and cooperation with all people striving to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus.
- ◆ That the planning committee for the 2015 National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference, to be held November 13-15, receive all the graces needed to plan a dynamic meeting that will encourage all who attend to work in the power of the Holy Spirit for the restoration of one Body of Christ.



### 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.



# 2015 National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference

by Sr. Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC

Plans are underway for the National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference, November 13-15, 2015 in Herndon, Virginia, near Dulles Airport. The National Service Committee and NSC Council are teaming up with the Diocesan Liaison Steering Committee to put on this conference for leaders, as well as all those, young adults and others, seeking a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ and the fire of the Holy Spirit. The theme is: *In the Spirit, through the Cross, One Body*.

[That he] "might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph 2:16-18).

The featured keynote speakers are Charles Simpson, Charles and Sue Whitehead, and Caroline Gambale-Dirkes. Other speakers will have been added by the time you read this. Please see our website for more information.

Charles Simpson is a pioneer in the modern Charismatic Renewal movement. He wrote and served alongside other notable bible teachers on the board of *New Wine*, including Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford and Derek Prince.

Charles and a team of pastors founded Covenant Church of Mobile in 1973, based on organic home cell-groups centered on making disciples of Jesus Christ and extending Christ's kingdom around the world. In 1985, out of a strong ongoing emphasis on praise and worship, Covenant Church of Mobile and *New Wine* gave birth to Integrity Media which became the largest praise and worship music company in the world. Charles served on Integrity's Board of Directors from 1985 to 2011, until Integrity Media became part of the David C. Cook Company.

Charles Simpson is the author of numerous books. He is a spiritual father to pastors and consultant to churches and businesses. He resides in Mobile, Alabama.



Charles and Sue Whitehead come to us from England. After life-transforming touches of God's love and baptism in the Holy Spirit, Charles and his wife Sue became involved in an ecumenical charismatic prayer group. Charles was the chairman of the National Service Committee in England and then was elected to ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) and almost immediately became the president. He held this position for 10 years. Charles has traveled world-wide proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. He has written books and pamphlets about the work of the Holy Spirit. He serves in many committees on local and international levels.

Caroline Gambale-Dirkes is a dynamic and passionate speaker. She has been active in evangelization and youth ministry for 23 years. She was the former Eastern Regional Director for Life Teen,

Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of Newark, and Director of Evangelization at St. Joseph Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey.

Presently she does multigenerational evangelization through 2Tim4 Ministries, which she co-founded with her husband Dan. Caroline also serves as a member of the National Service Committee.

Caroline is a 1993 graduate of the Franciscan University of Steubenville with a bachelor's degree in Theology and Psychology. Caroline has spoken internationally at numerous diocesan rallies, retreats and conferences including the National Charismatic Leadership Conference, Steubenville Youth Conference, National Catholic Youth Conference, and Life Teen Adult Training Conference. In 2013, she received the National Evangelization Team Dis-

tinguished Alumni Award for her ongoing commitment to evangelization.

Besides these tremendous teachers, we have other speakers and tracks to assist in leadership growth and development. We are coupling the dynamism of young adults with that of trusted leaders who have deeply impacted our society.

In this Year of Unity our conference will have a definite ecumenical focus which is evident in the lives of many of our speakers. We hope that you will accept this invitation to come and will encourage future leaders to join you at this Conference. ♦



*Sr. Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC, is a member of the National Service Committee. She belongs to the Franciscan order of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Come*

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*Editor's Note: In response to the Holy Father's words at the Italian Renewal's 37th National Convocation where he was asked to tell the Renewal what the Pope expects from us, the Editorial Board of Pentecost Today decided to reflect on several points made by Pope Francis. The following reflection is the third.*

# Proclaim that Jesus is Alive

by Joe Difato

**M**ore than any other call, Jesus urged his followers to evangelize. All of the gospels tell us to “go out.” Luke’s gospel even suggests that Jesus would put the entire church at risk for one lost sheep (Lk 15:4). And, he said that nothing brings more joy in heaven than a lost sheep or a lost coin being found (Lk 15:7; 10).

Stories like these were on the heart of Pope Francis when he spoke at the 37th National Convocation on the Charismatic Renewal last June. He told us to go into the streets and announce the gospel “with the Word of God, which proclaims that Jesus is alive and loves all men.”

I am a coordinator of an ecumenical covenant community in Jacksonville Florida. Our covenant has three primary principles: 1. To come into the presence of the Lord in prayer and to use the spiritual gifts/charisms; 2. To live a radical life for Jesus with like-minded brothers and sisters; 3. To change our environment.

## Change Your Environment

In this third area, changing our environment—and with the Pope’s call to evangelize in mind—I’d like to tell you some of the things we are doing. In our evangelistic efforts we want to lift up our environment—with love, patience, kind words and generosity—no matter where we are or with whom.

To that end, each community member is asked to personally witness to one person a week. Corporate-wise, our weekly apostolic prayer meeting is also evangelistic with plenty of praise, singing and witnessing. Community members serve in twenty-seven different parishes—and that often means evangelization. We hold conversion courses and Life in the Spirit seminars in a number of these parishes. Three people evangelize students on the University of North Florida cam-

pus. Each month we celebrate the Lord’s Day together with evangelistic gatherings that include prayer, witnessing, dinner and fun. Periodically we hold community-wide recreational activities—for married couples, for singles, or for young children.

## Words of Knowledge

One way that we use to evangelize centers on receiving words of knowledge. The Holy Spirit wants to give us “clues” that touch people. Community members pray for these clues each week. Then they go out in teams of two or three to the stores, the parks and the streets to test these words.

God wants to give words of knowledge to everyone. The key is being open to the leadings of the Spirit. Most often, words of knowledge come to us as we pray for them and try to sense what the Spirit is saying. But sometimes they come in a moment. For example, you might be walking out from church and suddenly, you sense your heart being pulled toward a person. On numerous occasions I have been led by the Spirit to reach out to a person or ask if I can pray with them or over them. Numerous people have joined our community simply because someone stepped out with a word of knowledge.

Recently a team went into a Target store with written clues in hand. The clues were big man, blue jeans, holding hands with a small girl. The team saw a huge man, six foot six, wearing blue jeans and walking with a young girl. Thinking he might be the intended one, the team walked up to the man, showed him the written clues and said, “God loves you.” As they chatted, the man said he was a former college football player now wracked with pain in his right knee and going through a divorce.

As the team prayed with the man, he broke down and cried out loud with tears right in the store. It was a bit embarrassing but then, a few moments later God healed his knee. The pain was gone. More than anything, the man was touched because he could not believe that God cared for him. His faith was rejuvenated and he said that he would start going to church again. This is just one of hundreds of



## Charismatic Leaders meet for first time in Tulsa

In this Year of Unity, about 35 leaders attended the Charismatic Leaders Fellowship meeting, held for the first time in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The key speakers were a Pakistani former Muslim now living in Columbus, Ohio, who spoke and taught on the origins of Islam and how the Koran can be used to evangelize Muslims; and a Messianic Jewish Rabbi who spoke on the Messianic Jewish movement and an initiative that includes Fr. Peter Hocken entitled *Toward Jerusalem Council II*.

Billy Wilson, a Pentecostal Leader of Empowered 21, who last year became President of Oral Roberts University, came, welcomed us to the campus, and shared about Empowered 21, which is subtitled "Serving a Movement... Empowering a Generation."

Their goal is, "That every person on earth would have an authentic encoun-

ter with Jesus Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit...by Pentecost 2033."

Among the attendees there were representatives of the Alleluia Community, several communities represented in the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Communities and Fellowships, as well as a key leader in the Sword of the Spirit. There were also several international attendees, including Dr. Matteo Calisi of Italy, former President of the Catholic Fraternity. There were leaders of various denominational streams of the Renewal, and various charismatic/Pentecostal ministries.

As Pope Francis encouraged us, "I expect that you give witness of spiritual ecumenism with all those brothers and sisters of other Churches and Christian communities who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior." ♦

### Proclaim from page 10

witnesses that happened simply because we stepped out with the gift of words of knowledge.

The Spirit gave words to Peter in prayer (Acts 10:9-13); to Paul in a dream (Acts 16:9-10); and through an angel, to Philip (Acts 8:26). The same Spirit wants to give us messages from heaven. All we have to do is pray and ask.

### **How Beautiful**

Scripture says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News." Those feet are yours and mine. Forty-four years ago I was baptized in the Spirit. It was the best moment of

my life. I long to tell people about my conversion and about God's love. It's the least I can do for Jesus who did so much for me.

May we answer the call of Pope Francis. By any and every means, let us do our best to be God's agent of change in every environment—no matter the who, the when, or the where. ♦



*Joe Difato is the founder and writer of The Word Among Us magazine. He and his wife, Felicia have six children, they live in Jacksonville, Florida.*

## NSC welcomes new members

At the National Service Committee Planning Retreat in March the Committee took up its suspended Election Process and elected Jim Beckman and Bill Marcotte.



**Jim Beckman** has been involved with parish ministry, evangelization and leadership development for more than thirty years. A graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville in 1987, he has since served in various leadership roles in national, regional and local ministry. For twenty years, he served as a host of Franciscan University's summer Youth Conference. For a number of years he served as the Director of Catechesis for the national Life Teen Program. Currently he is a Scholar in Residence at the Augustine Institute in Denver. He and his wife, Meg, have five children.



**Bill Marcotte** has been active in youth, young adult and adult evangelization pioneering a variety of methods of evangelization and catechesis for over thirty years. He has spoken at International, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Life Teen, and Diocesan Conferences. He has also coordinated international youth events. He first became involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1982 through the City of the Lord Covenant Community in Phoenix. Bill has a Masters in Theology with an emphasis in Scripture. He and his wife Beth, live in Tempe, Arizona and have five children. ♦

# Our Ascent

by Thomas W. Mangan

*At break of day, as heavenward  
The pious monks of St. Bernard  
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer  
A voice cried through the startled air,  
Excelsior!*

Henry Wordsworth Longfellow

“Ascent” most aptly describes the enormous challenge we face as Christians. It is in making the ascent that we are ennobled and inspired to be Christlike. Every day we are either moving onward and upward to the Father or we are sinking into the status quo. There is no middle ground for us. Our worship, both personal and communal, must be upward bound. I think the songs of ascent (*Ps 120-134*), the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration and the Upper Room are metaphors for disciples, like us, who want to be Christlike. We want our relationship with the Lord to reach the summit. As God’s people ascended Mt. Zion with joyous singing of the psalms so must we. Somehow I don’t think “slogging to Mount Zion” is what the Lord has in mind for us.

We should be dissatisfied with conventional Christian living. We were built for the higher places; we were meant to ascend to unimaginable heights. Encounter happens on Mount Carmel, Mount Sinai and, yes, even Calvary’s mount. If Zacchaeus would climb a tree to see Jesus, how much more should we be driven to deeper, more meaningful times in prayer and adoration? Every day our cry should be: “I will see Jesus!” How sad it will be for some believers to reach the end of their lives and say, like Jacob, “Surely the Lord was in this place (at Mass, in the prayer meeting, or in my personal prayer time) and I did not know it” (*Gen 28:16*). But how wonderful it will be for those who can say with Jacob the very next verse: “How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven” (*Gen 28:17*).

Think of it, spread out before us spiritually, well beyond our physical boundaries, is a banquet table to which we are invited to sit with the Lamb of God. Imagine God and us at table together! It is a feast set for all of us who ultimately hunger and thirst to be changed into the glory of Christ’s image. Every day we are invited to join him through prayer. That is, to be in his most holy presence, to be in awe of

him. Imagine us being mere candles in the face of a full sun! I heard it put this way once: we are invited to “an eternal and uproarious banquet.”

In some small way our prayer times (personal and communal) and our liturgical worship reflect this magnificent encounter. The words of Mary come quickly to mind: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!” How can we leave this divine presence and not be joyful? My life is drawn to God away from the dust of the earth. Because my passion for him is Spirit-driven, my confession is not boring or lifeless. My ardor and adoration are seen. My Godliness is manifested in loud praise. As Calvin Miller said, “Pardon me! I must break forth with song before the rocks grow tongues.” Our praise is evidence that Christ is alive in us today. Prayer is not about asking, but *being*; it is about experiencing the very presence of God at the center of our souls. By an act of will we quiet ourselves and retreat from the haste around us so that the invited Lord will come to us:

*And so I find it well to come  
For deeper rest to this still room  
For here the habit of the soul  
Feels less the outer world’s control  
And from the silence multiplied  
By these still forms on either side,  
The world that time and sense have known  
Falls off and leaves us God alone.*

John Greenleaf Whittier

Prayer, in all of its forms, from quiet meditation to festal shouts, is never laborious; it is blessed communion with Almighty God who engages us beyond our flesh and beckons us to rise and meet him. Climbing is our way to perfection. Clawing every inch of the way to get into the heart of God is sometimes necessary. “Going up” requires hard work, spiritual discipline and a steady effort as we are going against gravity and our many petty inclinations.

Worship is the pivotal action that shifts us from earth to heaven. We are propelled by the Holy Spirit in our drive to find Christ. The Holy Spirit makes us spiritually hungry for him. The Holy Spirit drives us in need to be in his presence. However, great care must be taken as Christlikeness is habit-forming. Once you have tasted it, you will want much more. ♦

*Tom Mangan is a member of the National Service Committee.*



# Liaisons: Annual Convocation

by Deacon William Brennan

On April 20-24, 2015 the Association of Diocesan Liaisons convened their annual Convocation. This is always a wonderful time of connecting with other liaisons, meeting and listening to exciting speakers, encouraging others and being encouraged by others in similar diocesan ministry.

Liaisons, appointed by the bishop of their respective dioceses, have both the responsibility and the opportunity to tap into the very heart of the Church as they are in service representing the bishop to the Renewal and the Renewal to the bishop. Liaisons, along with other Renewal leaders, are able to pass on the consistent affirmation of recent Popes and Bishops regarding Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

In addition to being encouraged, renewed and reinvigorated in the Spirit the yearly convocation is an occasion for every liaison to receive information as to what is happening in the Renewal throughout the country and in the various dioceses. It helps us to recognize that each one of us is a vital link to the broader Renewal, both nationally and internationally. Coming together once a year provides a time of inspiration and opportunity to draw closer to the Spirit, who will always lead us to Jesus and through Jesus to the Father. In short, this convocation is for every liaison.

Every one of us can experience the holy fire of God's steadfast love. It is the Diocesan Liaison Steering Committee's hope and prayer that every liaison will consider joining us for next year's convocation. Why not start making plans now to attend? ♦

For information on the Diocesan Liaison ministry go to [www.associationofdiocesanliaisons.org](http://www.associationofdiocesanliaisons.org).

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## A Chance for the Church

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, in his 5th Lenten Homily 2015 states: "What I would like to highlight at this moment is one specific point: in what sense and under what aspect can one say that this reality is a chance for Catholic Church...? I think it is this: it allows us to restore to Christian salvation the rich and inspiring positive content summed up in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"The primary goal of Christian life is once again shown to be, as St Seraphim of Sarov said, 'the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.'" He then quotes St. John Paul II: "The Catholic charismatic movement is one of the many fruits of the Second Vatican Council, which, like a new Pentecost, led to an extraordinary flourishing in the Church's life of groups and movements particularly sensitive to the action of the Spirit.... How many lay faithful—men, women, young people, adults and the elderly— have been able to experience in their own lives the amazing power of the Spirit and his gifts! How many people have rediscovered the faith, the joy of prayer, the power and beauty of the Word of God, translating all this into generous service in the Church's mission! How many lives have been profoundly changed!" ♦

## From the Executive Director

.....



by Walter Matthews

## Forward in Faith

**A**t our recent NSC Planning Retreat, we heard: "I have called you out of the boat: do not turn your face away. Trust in me in doing the ridiculous to see the miraculous." To what was the Lord referring?

The Service Committee had decided, in a Special Election, to elect not one but two new members (see page 12). In January, after the reelection of Jane Barz, Johnny Bertucci and Sr. Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC, and the election of Ron Riggins (see last issue, page 14), the Committee suspended the Member Election process so that they could surface the names of younger leaders, even young adults or those in young adult ministry, to be considered for election. The Committee named fourteen people. After nomination balloting a number of the fourteen were approached about their willingness to serve. Three were on the election ballot.

The quality of those on the ballot, and the awareness that Caroline Gambale-Dirkes will transition off the Committee in January, prompted the decision to elect two instead of one new member. More importantly, the sense was that if the Renewal is to take seriously the Lord's call to identify and raise up new and younger leaders, we too have to step out of the boat in order to reach younger generations.

After prayerful discussion and reflection, the word came about moving forward on the waters with finalizing a Job Description and process for hiring a full-time Young Adult Coordinator.

We have been moving toward this since launching the *Toward the Jubilee: 50 Years of Grace for the New Evangelization* Campaign over eighteen months ago. The Campaign seeks "to raise \$1 million with two goals in mind: expand our events and electronic outreach to newer audiences, particularly youth and young adults (included here is the hiring of a young adult minister for this area of outreach); and strengthen the long-term financial stability of the NSC through the Third Millennium Fund for the New Evangelization."

We are simultaneously excited and challenged. Please keep the process and us in your prayer. (Call me if you want to contribute to the Campaign for this purpose *over and above* your annual giving.)

In his first Lenten homily this year, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa compared the meaning the word *metanoia* (repent, turn your mind around, convert) had in the Old Testament and on the lips of John the Baptist, with the meaning the word had in the beginning of Jesus' preaching: "not because Jesus enjoyed changing the meaning of the words, but because with him the reality changed." He continued, "To be converted no longer meant to go back; it meant, rather, to take a leap forward and to enter, through faith, in the kingdom of God who came among men. To be converted is to take the so-called 'decision of the hour,' in the face of the realization of God's promises."

One could say in this moment that we are taking a "leap forward...through faith" relying on God's promises!

Finally, for those on our email list receiving our eNewsletter we have just switched the way we deliver the eNewsletter to you. If you did not receive it and would like to, go to our website and sign up. ♦



## Friends of the NSC

Thank you to our many Friends who have helped us in the first months of the year. We especially thank those new donors who used the envelope included in the last issue of *Pentecost Today*, as well as those who are using the website where one can make a secure credit card donation. The website is simple to use and cost effective for us.

**Speaking of the website**, have you checked out the redesign of the website? Please do so and give us some feedback. We are adding new material and making edits nearly every day.

We also want to thank those who gave in memory of Ben and Irene Bickerton, Clara Casey and Beryl Kinney. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

If you have not given yet this year in support of the mission of "fostering the dynamic grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit" we encourage you to be generous. As St. Paul taught us,

"And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. He will make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts..." (2 Cor 9:10-11).





## A desire to build community

In March of 1967 the word boredom disappeared from my vocabulary. There was and is no time to be bored, because the Spirit poured out on us then was a Spirit of boldness and power!

As we approach the golden jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, it is important to remember that we have been swept up in one of the greatest works of the Spirit in history. That is not my hyperbole speaking, it is just the simple and profound truth. To quote Pope Saint John Paul II, "The charismatic renewal is an eloquent manifestation, a bold statement of what the Spirit is saying in the church." If the figures we have are accurate, there are over 150 million Roman Catholics in over 120 countries that have experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit.

One of the most significant works of the Spirit that we have seen is the movement towards authentic Christian community. Whether it is in the loosely structured small Christian community concept in parishes or the highly organized Catholic and ecumenical covenant communities, there has been an

### There is a new heart and hope for ecumenism.

impetus, a call, a desire to build community. And it is very often within these communities that the gifts of the Spirit remain most in evidence.

Most importantly, there is a new heart and hope for ecumenism. Not just for theological doctrinal dialogue, but what is known as the ecumenism of relationships, a "spiritual" ecumenism. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an "ecumenical grace" for the church. Walls of separation, division and suspicion began to crumble in the wake of this Pentecostal outpouring whose origins were thoroughly ecumenical. We have come to know that from the many streams of Christianity we are already significantly one and are called to deepen that reality.

The best is yet to come. The Spirit is saying "go out, preach the gospel, heal the sick, change the world." And as the Anglican theologian N.T. Wright so beautifully put it, "The announcement of Jesus as Lord of the whole world which all Christians since Pentecost are

meant to announce, meets the resistance of economic, social, cultural and above all political forces of the wider world. But the Spirit given to us is greater than this resistance so that God's work may be done through us." It is not, Wright says, just that God intends that the Spirit will declare that the world is in the wrong, but that it is "we, trembling, but in the power of the Holy Spirit who will make that declaration." Let those who have ears..... ♦

*Dorothy Garrity Ranaghan is a founding member of the People of Praise, a charismatic, ecumenical covenant community. Her latest book is Blind Spot: War and Christian Identity from New City Press.*



### PLEASE PRAY

For the Second Gathering of Leaders and Key Representatives of Movements and New Communities which will be held June 3-5 in Louisiana. Over 40 movements and new communities have been invited.

The National Service Committee-Chariscenter USA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions to defray the cost of this publication are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Caroline Gambale-Dirkes  
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Tom Mangan  
Bill Marcotte  
Ron Riggins  
Casey Sprehe  
Tammie Stevens

**Feedback:** We would love to hear from you; please visit our website [www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org) and fill out our online evaluation. Thank you!

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Nov. 13-15, 2015 Herndon, VA (near Dulles Airport)



Charles and  
Sue Whitehead



Caroline  
Gambale-Dirkes



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**Principal speakers include Caroline Gambale-Dirkes, Charles Simpson, and Charles and Sue Whitehead.**  
Also speaking are Jim Beckman, Maurice Blumberg, Chuck Hornsby, Tom Mangan, and Marianne Skrobiak. Others to be named.

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Charles  
Simpson

