

Statement on Year of Mission in Mercy 2016

YEAR OF MISSION IN MERCY 2016

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

As we near the 50th anniversary of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we call the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 2016 is designated a Year of Mission in Mercy. We do so in recognition of the Holy Father's call for a special Holy Year of Mercy, December 8, 2015 until November 20, 2016. It is a way for the Church, he said, to "make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy."

In his Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (*Misericordiae Vultus*), the Holy Father refers to this year as "an extraordinary time of grace." (5) "In the present day, as the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action." (12) "In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of throwing open the doors of his heart and repeats that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. The Church feels the urgent need to proclaim God's mercy. Her life is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy." (25)

Our Year of Mission in Mercy has four emphases:

- Renew our zeal for souls
- Promote Life in the Spirit Seminars,
- The New Evangelization, and
- A Culture of Pentecost.

RENEW OUR ZEAL FOR SOULS

As we reflect back and look at 50 years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and celebrate that at our Jubilee in 2017, it is important that we not think of the Jubilee as the end of something but as a milestone along the way. Ours is a missionary movement. It has been so in the past and it must be so in the future. Because of that we want to go into 2017 with a fervor that is forward looking. We live in a Church that is in need of renewal, and we live in a world that has lost its way. Baptism in the Holy Spirit has brought renewal to literally millions of people and it has rescued many from the clutches of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But there are many that still need to be rescued and renewed. The culture of death is thriving and it has many in its grasp.

Pope Francis' call to mercy perfectly coincides with the call to mission. For us to go out with a missionary zeal requires us to move beyond our comfort zones. If we do not care enough, we will be complacent. We must have a change of heart before we will muster a change of action. "Jesus asks us also to *forgive* and to *give*. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received mercy from God." (*MV*, 14) We must have a hunger for souls. We must remember that the lost are lost, the blind are blind, and the confused are confused. It is here that mercy and mission meet. In 2016 may Jesus fill our hearts with mercy so that we will go out proclaiming the love of the Father, the Lordship of Jesus, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

PROMOTE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

The greatest tool we have for evangelization in the Renewal is the “Life In the Spirit Seminars” (or other introductions to being baptized in the Holy Spirit and life in the Spirit). Sometimes a weekend version is offered as a way for people to have an *experience* of the Holy Spirit. While the weekend is often very profound and moving, it cannot offer the same depth of teaching and formation as the 7-week or longer introduction. In this Year we encourage Prayer Groups, Renewal Centers, and Parishes to offer and promote the seven-week or longer versions.

Lack of good speakers and workers is often listed as obstacles to offering one of these Seminars. If your group is small you might consider asking another Prayer Group or Parish to work with you. If you are a larger group, offer your services to other groups. “Great” speakers are not needed as much as someone to simply tell their story in relationship to the topic of the talk. There are also several DVD series available now that have all the talks recorded. These are a very good resource. The real work of the Seminar is in the “small groups” where people begin to share their lives and experiences. Through the leaders and other members, all are encouraged on their faith journey as they begin to understand what a “life led by the Spirit” can look like.

A personal invitation to attend a Seminar is always the best. For many people this type of event is the perfect “next step” on their faith journey. They might not even know what a Life in the Spirit Seminar is and your invitation and explanation can be exactly what they are looking for. Be prepared to quickly and powerfully share why you think they should attend and what they can expect when they do. Invite the un-churched and nominal Christian as well as those in the pew each week.

In addition to sharing the good news of the Gospel, which includes leading a life led by the Holy Spirit, these seminars promote a sense of unity in Christ and community with others. They are an opportunity for our brothers and sisters to come to know “Jesus Christ...the face of the Father’s mercy” (*MV*, 1) and the Holy Spirit in a profound and remarkable way that will empower them to find a new and fuller life in the Spirit.

PROMOTE THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has reawakened to its identity and mission, which Pope VI summarized in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “The Church exists to evangelize.” Pope St. John Paul II first articulated the concept of “The New Evangelization” in 1983. It is to be new in its fervor – a reference to the Holy Spirit, in its methods – a reference to modern media – and in its expressions – a reference to lay initiative and ecclesial movements.

The fields, as Jesus said, are “already white, ready for harvest.” (Jn 4:35). They include:

1. Catholics who have been sacramentalized but do not have a living relationship with Jesus;
2. Within countries that were “Christian” but have populations of people who do not know the Lord Jesus;
3. Going out to peoples (*ad gentes*) who do not know the saving Gospel of Jesus.

Recently, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, urges all members of the Church to “*take the first step, become involved, accompany, bear fruit and celebrate.*” His emphases of “*going out to the peripheries,*” “*smelling like the sheep*”, and “*acting in mercy, especially to the poor and marginalized*” are moving throughout the Church. This echoes Pope Paul VI who stated that, sharing

the Gospel of Jesus and faith in Jesus is a work of mercy, and is the greatest act of love one can give his neighbor.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and in fact all the ecclesial movements born after the Second Vatican Council based in baptism in the Holy Spirit, believe that Jesus has founded us for the purpose of the New Evangelization in this time. We exist in the Church today to assist the Church in the New Evangelization.

We promote with “fervor” the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit so that Christians may be set on fire for the sharing of the Gospel. As above, Life in the Spirit Seminars, the many charismatic retreats, vigils, conferences and congresses are “new methods” for the purpose of evangelization. Not to ignore the many new initiatives utilizing new media tools as Facebook, Twitter, and so on. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal and all the ecclesial movements based in baptism in the Spirit are “new expressions” with wide lay initiative, involvement and leadership for the purpose of evangelization.

What can we do to promote the New Evangelization:

- Have a serious and honest discussion in your Community, Ministry, Prayer Group or Gathering. Ask yourselves these questions: “Is our Group ‘new’ in fervor, methods and expression?” and “Are we engaged in evangelization, or are we self-concerned?”
- Promote a Life in the Spirit Seminar with emphasis on “new people.” Make it a priority to have at least 60% people who have never made the Seminar before.
- Plan at least one evangelistic event for non-churched people. Spend more time planning how to reach these people than you do how to run the event. Make a strategic plan for outreach, to get people who do not usually come to church. Be imaginative in ways of contacting and inviting people.
- In addition to an event, let your community plan organized “visits.” Brainstorm on how and whom to visit and pray with. Ask Jesus to lead you. Do one-to-one evangelization.
- Have your Prayer Group or Community be involved in some “work of mercy” – hospital visits; soup kitchens; food pantries; prison visits – any sort of work with people who need a brother or sister. (See *MV*, 15)

PROMOTE A CULTURE OF PENTECOST

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the grace of Pentecost, is a call to discipleship and mission. We are to be witnesses (Acts 1:8f), and we are to be in mission.

Our mission includes bringing to “life that ‘*culture of Pentecost*’ that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly co-existence among peoples,” as Pope John Paul II encouraged us in 2002, and Pope Benedict echoed. For the two Popes “culture” is certainly more than prayer meetings or even other religious activities. It embraces all that the Church is! Pentecost is to be a living, experienced reality within the Church “where the Holy Spirit is known, loved, and frequently invoked; where the whole way of life flows from the active presence of the Spirit and his gifts.” (ICCRS’ *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p93).

The culture of Pentecost is not to be confined in the Church but through the Church needs to spread in our society in our economics, politics, international relations, and, of course, our “culture” in the sense of the arts, music, film and so on, transforming a “culture of death” into a “culture of life”; with an

uncompromising commitment to the human dignity of all persons; and a passion that true justice, with mercy and love, be available to all.

This is a mission of global proportions. It moves us from our daily lives of witness to lives that, to quote the bumper sticker, think globally and act locally. This mission needs to become part of our very souls. We are called and challenged to move beyond our comfort zones.

Promote a culture of Pentecost in these ways:

- Live Pentecost in our daily lives. Never tire of praying, Come Holy Spirit! Come! Come!
- Proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the Person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit so that others may also experience a renewal of the grace of Pentecost personally and communally.
- Teach about this dimension of the call to mission and challenge all to see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our day in new and deeper ways.

In conclusion, as Pope Francis has recently exhorted the Charismatic Renewal, “And with Bibles, with the Word of God, go, preach the novelty that Jesus has given us. Preach to the poor, to the marginalized, to the blind, to the sick, to the imprisoned, to all men and women. The Spirit is within every one, who wishes to be helped to open wide the door to make him flourish again. May the Lord accompany you in this mission, always with the Bible in hand, always with the Gospel in your pocket, with the Word of Christ.” (Message to the 38th Italian National Convocation, July 3-4, 2015).

National Leadership Groups: Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Bob Canton, *National Coordinator*, and Ray Caparros, *Board Member*
Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities

Marianne Skrobiak, *Chairperson*, and Jane Barz, *former member and Chairperson*, DLSC
Association of Diocesan Liaisons to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Dan Almeter, *North American Representative*, and Chuck Hornsby, *Committee representative*
Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships

Msgr. Joseph Malagrecia, *Spiritual Advisor*, Andrés Arango, *Coordinator*, and Teresa Rosero, *Member*
Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano

Msgr. Joseph Malagrecia, *Spiritual Advisor*, and Marie Josée-Joseph, *Administrator*
Le Conseil Du Renouveau Charismatique Catolique Des Haïtiens D’Outre-Mer

Johnny Bertucci, *Chairman*, Walter Matthews, *Executive Director*, and Rev. Bob Hogan, BBD, *former member and Chairman*
National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal