

PENTECOST *Today* Winter 2019

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
————— Check out our new Theological Corner by Al Mansfield —————



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SHARE THE GOSPEL ANYWHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS



Chairman's Corner

by Ron Riggins

Unity requires intention!

Unity is a consistent Christian theme. The October 31, 2018 CHARIS press release from the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life calls for unity in the Renewal: "CHARIS ... will operate in favor of all expressions of the *current of grace* that is Catholic Charismatic Renewal."

CHARIS envisions unity of relationships—first, within the Renewal; and, then, to work together for unity in the Catholic Church and ecumenically. In this sense, unity in the Renewal is the gateway to other relationships.

Three levels of unity come to mind—acknowledge, tolerate, and collaborate. To acknowledge means accepting the existence of another, which is an initial step towards unity. To tolerate means allowing another to exist, but this may foster silos. The third level, to collaborate, involves working jointly with

others, despite differences, to create something greater. Collaboration is the unity envisioned by CHARIS—it requires intention to overcome differences. Pope Francis has urged us to "widen the tent pegs."

St. Paul directs us to "make *every possible effort* to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). It is not enough to simply call for unity; we must respond obediently with rugged commitment. The ultimate aim of Christian unity is the glory of God (Rom 15:5-7). The unifying love in the body of Christ requires us to be intentional, "being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing ... to come to a mutual understanding in the Lord" (Phil 2:2, 4:2). And the Holy Spirit is the great giver of unity.

What does this mean for the National Service Committee?

With renewed passion we seek to collaborate with others as "boots on the ground" in this new season of CHARIS to bring about unity. Come, Holy Spirit! ♦



Editor's Desk

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner, SSND

In this issue we are introducing a Theological Corner, in order to enhance our understanding of the Renewal. On page 9, **Al Mansfield** treats the topic of Evangelization.

Evangelization is a thread throughout the articles of this Winter 2019 issue of *Pentecost Today*.

We effectively evangelize others by speaking the truth of God's love into their lives (**Leslie Bertucci**, p 3).

As participants in this *current of grace* we are called to evangelize (**Bill Marcotte**, pp 4-5).

Growth in the gifts of the Holy Spirit produces good fruit—evangelization in a parish (**Tori Harris**, p 7).

Young Urban Missionaries are being called and prepared to go out to the streets to evangelize (**Angelus Virata**, p 12).

Mother John Marie, foundress of the Disciples of Jesus Christ, responded to an evangelical outreach to the world for Christ (**Sr. Mary Thomas, DLJC**, p 13).

The 2018 NSC Leaders' and Ministries' Conference exhorted and sent us out to do the work of evangelists (**Deacon Ralph Poyo**, p 10).

Other topics:

We are directed to make every possible effort to preserve unity (**Ron Riggins**, p 2).

Prayer and sacrifice: a remedy for feeling stressed and overwhelmed (**Matthew Bourgeois**, p 6).

We are called to receive God's grace through growth in prayer relationship with the Father through his Son (**Fr. Michael Ackerman**, p 11).

Young adults seek to know the gifts that God has bestowed upon them (**Jane Guenther**, p 15). ♦

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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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The Power of the Truth

*“Then you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”*

John 8:32

by Leslie W. Bertucci

The longer I live, the clearer I see the power of speaking the truth into a person's life. This is the way I was evangelized. This is the way I evangelize every person God puts in my path.

Before I came to know the Lord in a real way at age 19, I had spent most of my life with a very poor self-image. I had been the victim of much verbal abuse and bullying by my peers in elementary school. I had been told, and came to believe, that I would never do anything important, never have any friends, that I had no talents, no intelligence, no attractiveness, nothing to offer anyone. This became a self-fulfilling prophecy in my life.

Everything changed the day my sisters brought me to an Awakening meeting at the University of New Orleans. Awakening is a Catholic program run by college students who put on two retreats a year and hold a prayer meeting on Sunday nights. The moment I walked into that first meeting I was caught off guard as several people my own age literally welcomed me with open arms. They were strangers to me, but intimately familiar with the living God. They told

me the truth about who I really am, about my purpose in life, and about the abundant joy Jesus promised to give me. Then they backed up their loving words with loving actions.

I was drawn to the joy and camaraderie that was so evident among this group of college coeds. I had been longing for this my whole life. As I kept coming back each week, my spirit grew stronger. As I witnessed the powerful truth of the gospel being spoken and lived, I was able to step into my true identity as a child of God. My new friends opened my eyes to the fact that I did have something to offer to the Body of Christ after all, and it was beautiful.

Ever since I was set free by the truth spoken and demonstrated to me, I have sought out opportunities to do the same for others. This has become my greatest tool for evangelization. Whether it's to the lady behind me in the checkout line, the men who change the oil in my car, the students in the classes where I substitute teach, the homeless woman on the street, the people next to me in the church pew, or those living in my home, the power of speaking the truth in love never fails.

Very recently God demonstrated to me the awesome power of the truth. He allowed me to reconnect with a young man who had attended a youth retreat my husband Johnny and I helped put on for our parish church in 2003. David had been forced to attend the retreat to fulfill his Catholic high school graduation requirements. At the time, he wasn't even sure God existed, but he opened his heart to the possibility. He had a profound experience of the Father's love that weekend. Then he disappeared from our lives for 15 years.

David contacted me a few months ago, saying that, although he had fallen far from what I had shown him on that retreat, he had never forgotten the love of Christ that I had shown him. He was now ready to return to God, if God would take him back. So began the beautiful process of pouring out words of truth and love to this young man. After several months, the breakthrough came. David found a priest to hear his confession, was prayed over to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and returned to full communion with the church. He is now determined to speak to others the truth that set him free.

What a joy it is to be the light of truth in a dark world!

*Maybe we all need to hear it again.
Maybe the last time was, I don't know when.
It just needs to sink in again and again
like a song:
We are beautiful, we're beloved, we belong
To the Father who made us.
We are beautiful, we're beloved, we belong. ♦*



A worship leader since 1982, Leslie Bertucci has also served as youth minister, catechist, retreat leader, homeschool teacher, conference speaker and choir director. She and her husband Johnny have five children and two grandchildren.



Evangelization, The Church's Deepest Identity

by Bill Marcotte

In 2014, Pope Francis spoke the following to the Charismatic Renewal:

You, Charismatic Renewal, have received a great gift from the Lord. You were born of the will of the Spirit as "a current of grace in the Church and for the Church." This is your definition: a current of grace.

Pope Francis also gave the Renewal many of his expectations. Concerning evangelization, he said:

The first thing is conversion to the love of Jesus, which changes life and makes of the Christian a witness of the Love of God. The Church expects this witness of Christian life and the Holy Spirit helps us to live the coherence of the Gospel for our holiness.

I expect from you that you share with all, in the Church, the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit (expression that is read in the Acts of the Apostles).

I expect from you an evangelization with the Word of God which proclaims that Jesus is alive and loves all men.

How is this work of evangelization a part of the *current of grace* about which Pope Francis speaks? In answering this question, the following is my reflection concerning my conversion, my work today and the Church's exhortation to evangelize:

Making my way home from our November 2018, NSC National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference in Dallas, I was challenged by all who presented on our theme, taken from a quote by St. Catherine of Siena: *If you are what you should be, you will set the world ablaze.* I left Dallas inspired to strive to obtain what our Lord has called me to since the early 80's: to grow in holiness and to join in the mission of making Jesus known and loved in his Church!

During my junior year at Arizona State University, I was evangelized and baptized in the Holy Spirit. Three months later, through the evangelization efforts of a few Catholic college students, I was invited to "come and see" a Catholic Covenant Community, now called "City of the Lord." It was through this

and other activities, that I felt compelled to join this community where, in turn, I was formed in living the gospel as a Catholic.

I was asked to join seven other college students in a Catholic men's household, and as a birthday gift, I was given *The Catholic Catechism* by John A. Hardon, S.J.. It was in this atmosphere and the reading of that catechism where I heard clearly the call to the *new evangelization*, although I didn't understand what that term meant at the time. One afternoon, after turning the last page of the catechism, the thought came to me that if everybody understood what I now understand, everyone would be Catholic. Then, I heard in my heart the Lord saying to me, *Make that happen! Help those in my Church understand who I am and what my Church is about.* Reflecting on this I can see that my whole life direction from that day to today, has been as a result of this *current of grace* of the Holy Spirit.

Today, I am a Pastoral Associate of a relatively large parish. Over the past six

years, in collaboration with our pastor and staff, we have implemented a “Life in the Spirit” type series called “Discovering Christ”,

developed by Dave Nodar and his team at Christlife. To date, we have led over 500 people through this series. This evangelization series, coupled with two additional seven-week series helps parishioners not only understand the basic kerygma and what it means to be a missionary disciple, but also provides prayer to be baptized in the Holy Spirit during a day long retreat.

As a result:

- ◆ Over 50 men participate in our annual weekend Men’s retreats and Diocesan Conferences.
- ◆ Close to 100 men are serving actively in our Knights of Columbus activities and are our primary evangelizers, challenging the men of our parish to develop a personal relationship with Jesus and to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Parishioners are taking on leadership initiatives in new ministries.
- ◆ Many are now leading and attending bible studies.
- ◆ Our RCIA program is flourishing with many desiring to become Catholic and others who would like to be sponsors.
- ◆ In the last two years, we have implemented quarterly healing Masses, praying for physical and spiritual healing.

This evangelization, on a parish level, is a direct result of this *current of grace* that our Holy Father is talking about

Evangelizing is...the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. The Church exists in order to evangelize.

- Saint Pope Paul VI

and is expecting from the Renewal. No doubt this is, and has been, replicated throughout the U.S. through various renewal movements of the Holy Spirit over the past 52 years.

Pope Francis writes:

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization... Every Christian is challenged, here and now to be actively engaged in evangelization (Evangelii Gaudium, 120).

Today, this exhortation to all the People of God to evangelize is needed more than ever! People in and out of our Church need to know that in Jesus there is *no other name in which we are to be saved* (Acts 4:12). That he is alive! That salvation is offered to all people, *as a gift of God’s grace and mercy* (Saint Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 27). We also need to be reminded, that *the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization* (ibid 75) and therefore, evangelization is not possible without the action of the Holy Spirit (ibid 75).

Evangelization is the work of the Holy Spirit and the Church’s deepest Identity. Pope Paul VI reminds us *...evangelizing is... the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. The Church exists in order to evangelize* (ibid 14). Understanding that this is true, what do you think would happen in our Church

if we fully understood this? If we understood that the Church’s deepest identity lies in the work of evangelization, should we not be, as partic-

ipants in this *current of grace*, about leading people to seek the grace of being baptized in the Holy Spirit? Forming them, and *training them to be evangelizers and to have a mature missionary consciousness so that all become apostles* (Saint Pope John Paul II’s *Ecclesia in America*, 47) to those they live with, go to school with, work with, and recreate with? Fully understood, I believe we would truly set the world ablaze!

As Pope Francis defines the renewal as a *current of grace* of the Holy Spirit, we hear the call to evangelize and to bring forth “*baptism in the Holy Spirit*” to all the Church.

A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel...I once more invoke the Holy Spirit. I implore him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples (EG 261).

I believe that the Holy Spirit, through our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is calling us all in the Church to evangelize! The Pope is particularly counting on us in the Renewal who have participated in this *current of grace*, to do so. ◆



Bill Marcotte is a member of the NSC. He is the Pastoral Associate of St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Chandler, AZ. Bill and his wife Beth have five children and four grandchildren.

Called to Bear Fruit

by Matthew Bourgeois

Saint John Paul II, in an Apostolic Exhortation to the lay faithful in a section titled, *Mission to Communion*, said, “We return to the biblical image of the vine and the branches, which immediately and quite appropriately lends itself to a consideration of fruitfulness and life. Engrafted to the vine and brought to life, the branches are expected to bear fruit: “He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit” (Jn 15:5). Bearing fruit is an essential demand of life in Christ and life in the Church. The person who does not bear fruit does not remain in communion: “Each branch of mine that bears no fruit, he (my Father) takes away” (Jn 15: 2).

Often when I get stressed and overwhelmed with all the responsibilities of life, my first reaction is that I need to do less. Pull back from ministry and the “extras” in my life and recharge. People may often say “you’re doing too much. You need to pull back and take some ‘me time.’” Whenever I do pull back, the Holy Spirit always gives me spiritual heartburn. I feel a burning or pull to do for others and “Woe to me, if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor 9:16). When I stop the giving, and I mean sacrificially giving, I feel like Jeremiah who just wanted to give up sacrificially giving because he was burnt out. As Jeremiah says it: “I say I will not mention him, I will no longer speak in his name. But then it is as if fire is burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow

weary holding back, I cannot!” (Jer 20:9). By nature the charisms of the Holy Spirit are directed to use for the benefit of the Church. Using the gifts to just enhance my own personal prayer life and build myself up when I get into a funk may be a true spiritual tragedy mixed with a tad bit of irony. We all need times of rest and spiritual retreat to be with God but we need just as equally to as Mother Theresa says “Give until it hurts and do it with a smile”.

So, what are we to do when we feel overwhelmed and spiritually drained like Jeremiah? When we look to the scriptures for guidance on this phenomenon, we discover some perhaps surprising advice. “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Matt 11:28-30).

Alright Lord, so let me get this straight. All I have to do is: give some food to the hungry, visit the imprisoned, the sick, the elderly, love the Lord with my whole heart, mind, and soul, and love my wife like Jesus loved the Church and, oh yeah, be perfect just as the Father in heaven is perfect. Wow no wonder I feel stressed and overwhelmed! As we are reminded for human beings this is impossible but with God all things are possible! (Matt 19:26).

Bearing fruit is an essential demand of life in Christ and life in the Church.

The remedy I have found for being stressed and overwhelmed has always been two-fold: prayer and sacrifice. Just like Lent reminds us to do. Pray more and do more; not pray more, do less. Before I was married, I was a Franciscan in temporary vows. I prayed 5 hours a day (as required of me) and worked probably double that. I was exhausted and in a funk. People often said I needed to do less but somehow God had me do the opposite. I started waking up at 3:00 am and praying for others. I would often wake up with a person already on my heart and would say some vigil prayers for them. This act of sacrificial love called me out of myself to do for others and when I imitate Jesus’ love for my wife and my neighbors then I do find rest as well as a light burden. The Holy Spirit is the one producing every good gift in me and when I see just how reliant I am on the Lord, humility is the natural response. ♦



Matthew Bourgeois is a member of the NSC, a youth minister in New Orleans and an owner of a book publishing company. Matt is married to Kristen and they have a two year old son named Nathanael.

Building up the Body of Christ:

Evangelize Using the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

by *Tori Harris*

After encountering the grace of the Holy Spirit, many faithful risk losing their zeal when they struggle to find local outlets that encourage the expression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As a full-time director of a charismatic parish ministry, I've spent the past few years working with my leadership team identifying effective activities and programs that facilitate environments where individuals can use, discern and grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of this work has been stumbling into some of our parish's most effective evangelization programs. Here's a list of our most successful initiatives that you can implement at your parish.

Adoration Healing Service

Each month we offer a contemporary adoration prayer service where teams of two and three gather to pray with parishioners. Any prayer minister who has completed our training program can participate if he agrees to adhere to our parish's guidelines and standards of care. Our healing service regularly draws over 400 guests and is the largest, recurring adoration service in the diocese. This program is ideal for beginners who are just learning the ropes of prayer ministry as the evening has its own rhythm and each supplicant is typically open to receiving prayer.

After-Mass Prayer Ministry Team

After our Sunday Mass, prayer ministry teams are available to pray with parishioners as they leave the Church. If your priest is agreeable, have the entire congregation join the priest in a special blessing for the prayer ministry prior to the final blessing at Mass. This type of program models charismatic ministry to Sunday-only parishioners who may not attend programs during the week as well as creates an expectation that prayer ministry is a normal activity in the parish. It is also an easy way for parents with children to participate in ministry as they don't have to keep their kids out late at night and their older children can get involved by performing simple tasks such as running the prayer line.

Street Evangelization

Gather a small group of parishioners and travel to a busy, public place to witness the Gospel while in docility to the Holy Spirit. Two summers ago, parishioners took an ice chest filled with water bottles to a local park and handed them out to strangers. As the strangers walked by, the parishioners would pray for a word of knowledge and test it as the person approached to receive his free water, "Here's some water. By chance, do you suffer

Prayer Card

✂ ✂

Evangelization

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'
But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent?"

Romans 10: 13-15

from any pain in your lower back?" As a result, a group of mothers felt convicted to have their children baptized, one person felt pressed to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and another joined the upcoming RCIA class.

Treasure Hunts

In a group, pray to God to encounter a soul (a treasure) who is ready to receive the Gospel. Write down any prophetic words or words of knowledge about the location or description of the individual you may receive during prayer. When finished praying, review each person's list and, in teams, go out in search for the "treasure" you prayed for. After joining a neighboring church

Please pray with the NSC
for the following intentions:

Let us pray together...

- ◆ To open our hearts to hear the Gospel and to grant us the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.
- ◆ As Jesus prayed "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Lk 10:2).
- ◆ For all people who share in this *current of grace*, baptism in the Holy Spirit, to have the urgency to go out from oneself, to proclaim the Good News in words and deeds, in their families, workplaces, and wherever the Lord may lead them.
- ◆ For the fire of evangelization to be stirred up in our Church so that future generations may become missionary disciples.
- ◆ That all Christians respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time.

on a "treasure hunt", some of our staff members decided to try it. Our list led us to a breakfast place where we approached a young man who fit our description from prayer perfectly. He confessed that he'd been away from the Church for over a decade, but the night before had woken up from an intense dream where God sternly called him back to the Church. Our meeting that morning was the "sign" that brought him home. Within a week he received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, returned to Mass, and registered as a parishioner.

Training Programs for New Leaders

Multiply your ability to do ministry by raising up effective leaders who can teach and mentor others. Work

with your pastor to identify the skills and knowledge required of a good teacher and start training them. After attending one of our Holy Spirit 101 retreats, a group of high school students expressed frustration that there were no comparable programs being offered for kids their age. They asked if they could participate in a modified training and host a retreat exclusively for teens. As a result, we now have an active teen ministry team that prays for kids at our monthly healing service. ◆



Tori Harris is the director of the Arise Ministry. She is the author of Holy Spirit 101 and lives in Dallas with her husband and son.



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Evangelization: What It Is And Is Not

by Al Mansfield

My wife Patti and I once served on a committee of about 20 people to assess evangelization in our Archdiocese. At one point each person was asked what he or she thought evangelization was. There were as many concepts as there were people – vastly different and sometimes almost contradictory!

So what really is Christian Evangelization? It is announcing the good news of Jesus Christ. It is centered on the Person and saving work of Jesus in his life, death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit. It is the kerygma, the Basic Christian Message as found in the apostolic preaching throughout Acts.

Evangelization, at its core, is concerned with truth—the truth about our human situation. And in this case, truth is a person—the Person of Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6).

There are two great enemies of truth: skepticism, which denies that we can ever know the truth with certainty; and relativism, which denies that there is any such thing as absolute truth. Since these are enemies of truth, it follows that they are enemies of evangelization as well.

It is probably relativism which presents the biggest obstacle to evangelization in our day. Doctrinal relativism would deny that there is only one Savior of the world. Moral relativism would deny that there are absolute, binding moral norms.

For example, it is common to hear today that “there are many different ways

to heaven;” “It doesn’t matter much what you believe;” “all religions are basically the same;” and so on. However, Acts 4:12 states about Jesus, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved.” And in 1 Timothy 2:4-5 we read: “There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.”

Evangelization has a factual, historical content, but it also presents a moral challenge. On the day of Pentecost, once Peter told the crowd that they had crucified the Messiah, they cried out, “What shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38). Evangelization demands the united response of faith and repentance.

True evangelization makes disciples and leads into didache, catechesis, ongoing Christian teaching. In the last verses in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus commands his disciples to make disciples, to baptize them, and to “teach them to observe all that I have commanded” (cf. Matt 28:19-20).

What, then, is NOT evangelization? In the committee mentioned above, some people said evangelization had to do with going to a Catholic school. Others thought it was getting people to the sacraments. Still others emphasized that it was ministry to the poor and needy. As important as all these are, none is exactly what we mean by evangelization. It should also go without saying that just speaking vaguely about “spiritual”

things is certainly not evangelization. In our contemporary secular culture, a lot of “New Agey” chatter is banded about and passed off as somehow being “supernatural” or “otherworldly”.

St. Paul VI stated in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed.” St. John Paul II stated in *Redemptoris Missio*: “The new evangelization is not a matter of merely passing on doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Savior.”

St. Paul gives us perhaps the best insight into what evangelization really is in 1 Cor 2:1-2: “When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” In another place he says, “For what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5).

Evangelization, then, is all about the truth that is in Jesus. ♦

Al Mansfield holds a Masters in Theology, was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1968 and has been a leader in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO) since 1970. Al and his wife Patti serve as Archdiocesan Liaisons and were awarded the papal medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice by Pope Saint John Paul II in 2000.



New Season:

If You Are What You Should Be,
You Will Set The Whole World Ablaze

by Deacon Ralph Poyo

Last November, the NSC held their annual Leaders' and Ministries' Conference in Dallas, Texas. It was a vibrant gathering with more attendees than in recent history. There was a sense, as the theme announced, that we are in a "New Season", and those in attendance couldn't help but realize that they need to be prepared.

Prophetically, the title of the conference gave a signal to the saints in the Renewal that we must be ready for what is to come. As several speakers spoke of the persecution that has begun, many in the audience agreed with simple nods of their heads. They, too, could read the signs of the times, of darkness in the days ahead.

One speaker after another began to unpack the theme for the weekend: *"New Season: If You Are What You Should Be, You Will Set the Whole World Ablaze."* What should we be in these days? If we who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who experience the power of the Holy Spirit will not rise and let our lights shine in this darkness, who will? We are called to set the world ablaze with the light of Christ.

Dave VanVickle started the conference off by giving a wonderful exhortation to the Church present. Using his son as a powerful example of being simply who we were created to be, he called us on to rise and take the mantle of children of light so that others might come to see that Jesus is real.

We had the opportunity to hear the powerful testimony of Sister Betty Banja, SHS who has witnessed so much murder and suffering in Sudan. She shared how, in taking on her baptismal call, she rose to respond and care for the needs of others around her.

We were blessed with the ministry of Matt Lozano of *Unbound Ministries*. Matt brought to light the various ways in which we are being bound, and called for the need to renounce evil in all its forms. He called each of us to examine our own lives and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal within our hearts anything that does not belong to us or the Holy Spirit. Just because we walk in the power of the Spirit doesn't mean that we can't be bound by the lies of our past.



Fr. Tim Hepburn gave the Saturday night keynote that focused on setting the world ablaze. How can we, by our own efforts, set the world on fire? We can't, but when we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow him to work through us in powerful ways, then the world can catch on fire. As Fr. Tim was preaching to the saints who were now ready to follow, it became evident that the fire of the Holy Spirit needed to set us on fire and burn off things that only hold us back.

The empowerment time became something quite different. Instead of being a powerful time of healing for those present, it became a time of renouncing and casting out spiritual strongholds that had been plaguing the participants. The biggest stronghold was the spirit of fear that would prevent us from engaging in the evangelization of those around us.

On Sunday morning, Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR gave the sending keynote that had more of a serious tone. His sense of the need to rise and prepare ourselves echoed the entire weekend, as he used 2 Tm 4:2-5 to exhort us. Let us reflect on this, as we move forward.

"...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tm 4:1-6).



Come, Holy Spirit, and ignite the Church! ♦

Deacon Ralph Poyo was emcee for this conference. He is the founder of New Evangelization Ministries. He and his wife, Susan, have five daughters and four grandchildren.

Prayer that is Transformative

by Fr. Michael Ackerman

From the earliest days of the Church, the Body of Christ has always been a charismatic community of believers. The Acts of the Apostles details the early Church as an institution built upon praising God and enjoying favor with all the people” (Acts 2:47). St. Paul similarly exhorts the Ephesians to be a community “filled with the Spirit, addressing one another [in] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts” (Eph 5:18-19). In recent times, there appears to be a resurgence of this spirit of evangelization and prayer. In my own Diocese of Pittsburgh, the number of Festivals of Praise, nights of adoration, prayer ministry teams, and Life in the Spirit seminars have exponentially increased in the last decade. What has led to this trend? Certainly, there are many factors at work, but indubitably, there exists a desire to grow into a deeper relationship with the Lord, and recapture the lived experience of Christianity’s beginnings.

St. Francis de Sales once stated, “All things are created for the purpose of prayer.” That is exactly what Festivals of Praise have attempted to foster: a time of prayer. A Festival of Praise, a time of Eucharistic adoration coupled with contemporary music, permits an intimate encounter with Christ through praise, silence, and often, although not always, sacramental Confession. It does not merely create an emotive experience, but instead it engages the whole person, mind, body, and soul. Singing, kneeling, standing, raising one’s hands, praying with and for those around us, and simply enjoying silence enhances the understanding of our need for God, and his desire for our friendship. The real benefit of these festivals though stems from the Eucharist. Fr. Benedict Baur writes in his book, *In Silence with God*, “Adoration, loving homage, is the real inwardness, the soul of prayer...” (p 137). The time spent before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament allows a real interaction with a God who loves us. This relaxed atmosphere instills the knowledge that a relationship with God is not static, vapid, or restrictive. Instead, this relationship and God’s constant concern for us are truly invigorating and transformative, and a new generation of Eucharistic-centered Catholics has begun to enter into this experience.

Another development that has born equally as much fruit is the rise of Life in the Spirit seminars, essentially

workshops on the Holy Spirit and charisms. Romans reminds us that “we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings” (Rom 8:26). Life in the Spirit seminars, while varying slightly, invite the Holy Spirit into our lives by teaching us how to release and use the gifts given at Baptism and Confirmation. The final piece of these

seminars is “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” an occasion to ask the Holy Spirit into our lives to empower us with his gifts for ministry and service, evident in St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12 and other texts). Growth in holiness, and the renewal of the Church is dependent upon embracing charisms and allowing his Spirit to renew us. Many Catholics today are often fearful to share their gifts or to talk about a life of faith. The purpose of the Life in the Spirit seminar is to correct this view. Fr. Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote in his classic, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, “to discover God in the common and ordinary is to have a faith that is extraordinary.” Through praying with others, experiencing intercessory prayer, and through learning how not to block God’s grace but to allow the Spirit to come into our hearts, attendees are better-equipped to live a dynamic life of faith.

God’s grace is constantly available to us. The only way to receive this grace is through growing in a prayer relationship with the Father through his Son. The effects of charismatic renewal, Festivals of Praise, adoration, and Life in the Spirit seminars are but a few of the resources at hand to experience and live this experience. It is something the Church needs right now and it is an element of faith that has always been a part of the Body of Christ. ♦



Fr. Michael R. Ackerman, a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, was ordained in 2014. He currently serves as the Director of the Office of Priestly Vocations, Chaplain to the Pittsburgh Serra Club, and Chaplain to the Office for Catholic Scouting.

God’s grace is constantly available to us. The only way to receive this grace is through growing in a prayer relationship with the Father through his Son.



It is our hope and prayer that everyone we encounter will fall in love with Jesus Christ and desire to come into full communion with the Catholic Church.

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Definitely, 2018 was quite a challenging year on many fronts. It was my first year living in the city where God landed me after graduate school—Baltimore, Maryland. This so-called “Charm City” is not only known for seasonings (McCormick) and sugar (Domino’s Sugar) but also as the birthplace of Catholicism in America, the Premier See, and my parish, Basilica of the Assumption is America’s first Cathedral, aka “the Baltimore Basilica.”

Located in the heart of the city, the Baltimore Basilica attracts many graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and workers from nearby universities and hospitals: Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland as well as the Peabody Conservatory. People from near and far come here to be spiritually fed, particularly young adults. They

INTO THE STREETS AND OUT IN THE WORLD IN BALTIMORE CITY

by *Angelus Virata*

come seeking and hungry for more of God. This Bethlehem of Baltimore is a sanctuary that many of us city dwellers need and desire for its simple yet grand beauty, tranquility and superb liturgy. Many young adults who found the Basilica as

their home were looking for the transcendentals—the true, the good and the beautiful. Only the true teachings of the faith is proclaimed and preached here which is the marker that truly sets you apart from the rest in the city. You can feel and see the goodness of the community in their fellowship with one another, fostering a sense of a tight-knit family.

The charm city is also known for its homeless and addict epidemic. I have never seen young adult homelessness as I do here. Our new evangelization initiative to be launched this fall is our Rector’s vision called, “Source of All Hope.” The goal is to develop a community of Urban Missionaries to address the needs in our parish boundaries such as homelessness, apathy for the faith, atheism, the opioid epidemic. We

are currently looking for young men around 21-23 years of age, post-college, who will live in community at the Basilica with our Rector. Together, we will go out into the streets and out into the world to evangelize people from all walks of life, to bring them the gift of faith in Jesus Christ and the hope that only Jesus brings, and to bring them into our parish community that fosters a love for God and his church. It is our hope and prayer that everyone we encounter will fall in love with Jesus Christ and desire to come into full communion with the Catholic Church. At the same time, we will continue to evangelize and catechize our parishioners and accompany them in becoming joyful disciples going out and spreading the Gospel anywhere the Holy Spirit calls them. Come Holy Spirit and enkindle the fire of your love in B’more! ♦



Angelus Virata is the Director of Evangelization at the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville with an MA in Catechetics and Evangelization.

Mother John Marie Stewart Founded the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Charismatic Community

by Sr. Mary Thomas Windfeldt, DLJC

On May 26, 2018 Mother John Marie received her eternal reward. Indeed, she was, as the Scripture says, “a good and faithful servant.”

Mother John Marie left a rich legacy to the Church. One of our dear friends says, the “DLJC [Community] will be a lasting legacy to her evangelical outreach to the world for Christ.” We are grateful for her resounding “yes” to God’s call to found a Franciscan charismatic religious community.

This is her powerful conversion story: “While working on a Ph.D. in medieval literature at Columbia University in New York City during the time of World War II and the Holocaust of millions of Jews—



DISCIPLES
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God’s Chosen People—I had a profound faith loss! There was a religious Sister in my Dante class to whom I went for help. Seeing her deep faith, I asked her to pray for me. One day in my room I went down on my knees and wept as the Lord came to me, restored my faith profoundly, and drew me back to the Church and its Sacraments. The Lord Jesus Christ became the center of my life. Soon I began to make private vows as a religious Sister, and in 1972 as a Franciscan Disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Living the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and our promise of fellowship in the Spirit keeps me fervent in the loving presence of the Lord whose faithful presence and grace enable me to grow deeply united with him and my Sisters in

our Franciscan Community—Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Mother John Marie exemplified the life of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her conformity to the will of God after her reconversion, even in the face of challenges was a strong witness to us and all she came in contact with. Led by the Holy Spirit, she was always quick to say, “Do whatever he tells you.” Her advice was: “Try always to remain faithful to the Lord through prayer, the Sacraments, the Scriptures, and persevere in whatever he is calling you to do in your life. His grace is always sufficient. He will enable you—if you will let him.” ♦



Sister Mary Thomas Windfeldt, DLJC entered the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ on October 18, 1986. She currently works as one of the Editors of Praise Him, the magazine published by the Community. In addition, she has written various poems and articles for the magazine.

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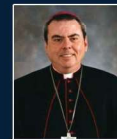
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From the Executive Director

by Walter Matthews

Ordinary Time

We are in Ordinary time. So says our Liturgical calendar. But for us in the Renewal we have been sensing and seeing signs of a “New Season,” in the words of Damian Stayne at the 50th Anniversary Jubilee Conference in Pittsburgh in 2017, “a new season in humility, unity and faith for miracles.” The Lord is moving and sometimes we have only to look to see his loving, merciful action in our lives and in the lives of others around us.

On the other hand, as Fr. Dave Pivonka challenged us in November at the National Leaders’ and Ministries’ Conference in Dallas, we have to admit that it is getting darker “out there”—in the Church and in our society. The ripples of confusion, hurt, and anger are still flowing from last year’s revelations of abuse (sexual abuse, abuse of power, the failure to act, to stop something wrong)—even at the highest levels. Not to mention the wounded lives of so many who were wronged. What one of us has not been affected in some way?

The recent vote of the New York State Legislature to attempt to preempt any rollback of the Roe vs Wade and other pro-abortion decisions is but the latest in a series of affronts to our God, his holiness and his mercy.

A former member of the National Service Committee, now deceased Fr. Emile Lafranz said on a number of occasions, “if the Lord doesn’t punish the U.S. [for what is going on] [and this was said, 20 or more years ago] he owes an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah!”

So if our point of reference is our society and even the Church, then indeed, we may be in a “new season”—of winter—as Fr. Pivonka expressed. However, we who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit are called

to be and are gifted to be men and women of hope, trusting in God’s mercy and love.

As for the National Service Committee, we see the soon-to-be establishment of CHARIS as a new leadership umbrella for the International Renewal as a time of new opportunities and grace. Continue to pray for the transition and, more specifically, for the newly appointed Moderator and 18 Council Members.

From our point of view, the NSC’s recently revised Strategic Plan is in harmony with the CHARIS initiative of Pope Francis, and has positioned us as “boots on the ground” for the CHARIS change. As Ron Riggins, the Chairman of the NSC since January 2018, wrote in *Pentecost Today* in the Summer, “The Holy Spirit was clearly at work as we intensively worked on our strategic plan over the past year, as our strategic priorities closely ‘dovetail’ with the objectives of the CHARIS initiative... We look forward to the new move of the Holy Spirit, working in unity with other entities proclaiming baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

To say things in a different way, our greatest challenge is not the abuse issues, as serious as they are, but the passing on of faith to the next generations.

As a proud grandparent of two new granddaughters born last fall, this is something that is increasingly on my mind. I so long to have a future St. Paul write to my grandchildren (not to ignore my children) what St. Paul wrote to Timothy, “I remember the sincere faith you have, the kind of faith that your grandmother [and grandfather] and your mother [and father] also had. I am sure that you have it also” (2 Tm 1:5).

Ordinary time? No, an extraordinary time! Darkness? Yes, but darkness has never put the light out (see Jn 1:5 - the light that shines in the darkness). The light that is Jesus! Winter?

Perhaps, but more a new season of grace, mercy, and fresh outpourings of the Holy Spirit. ♦

FRIENDS OF THE NSC

As we begin a new year—calendar, of the Renewal, of the “new season”—we want to thank all of those who donated in 2018. Without you, we would not be able to continue to lead and serve this great Renewal.

However, not since 2001 have we had a deficit as great as we did in 2018. We were \$34,000 in the red. There were many reasons for this. Fortunately, the Committee had built up some reserves from previous years. May I ask that our currently active donors prayerfully consider increasing your giving in 2019 by 10% or more. Some can do even more; some cannot do more because of being on a fixed income, changed job situations, etc.

In addition, we again invite all who receive *Pentecost Today* to prayerfully consider giving in thanksgiving for what the Lord has done in your life through baptism in the Holy Spirit and this great Renewal. The Holy Spirit continues to transform us.

With the soon to be transition to CHARIS as a new leadership umbrella for the International Renewal, we expect new opportunities to bring the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit to the whole Church as Pope Francis has encouraged us.

A special thanks to those who recently gave gifts in honor of Claire Matthews and Bishop Sam Jacobs. ♦

Understanding the Movement of the Holy Spirit in One's Heart

by Jane Guenther



In Corinthians 12:8-10 it states that, "To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."

The Holy Spirit is seemingly moving actively with youth and young adults in their desire to know the charisms, learn about them and use them. Many young adults seek to know the gifts God has bestowed upon them through taking a spiritual gifts inventory. Their requests to come for the inventory are so they may determine a ministry or occupation they may have gifts for. They are recognizing that to live a more fulfilling life requires understanding this movement of the Holy Spirit in their own hearts. It is an intentionality of living a faith-filled life. Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is having me present the Spiritual Gifts Inventory to the seminarians so that they may have a better understanding of how to learn their own gifts, using their strength in ministry and to recognize the gifts they will be called to pastor for their parishes in the future. The Confirmation programs in the Archdiocese are recognizing that preparing the confirmands for the

Sacrament is enhanced by their knowing more about the charisms of the Holy Spirit that come forth more fully as we live out of the Isaiahian gifts of the Holy Spirit. Although the scriptural reference to the gifts have been with us the charisms, as St. Paul said, are not limited to those in scripture. The gifts I have actively seen on the rise are those of words of knowledge, healing, service, and prophecy. In Ephesians 4 it states, "that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." May it be so! ♦

Jane Guenther is Director of the Catholic Renewal Center in St. Louis. She is the North American English-Speaking Council member for ICCRS. Jane and her husband John have four sons and eight grandchildren..

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