

# PENTECOST *Today*

April/May/June 2001 Volume 26, Number 2

## GIFTED & SENT



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A quarter of a century ago Pope Paul VI published *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, defining evangelization as the “vocation proper to the church.” **David Thorp** takes a look at how this document has shaped the church and how the Charismatic Renewal has embraced its vision.

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*Renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.*

## Chairman's Corner

by Fr. Patsy Iaquinta



# Kicking it up a notch

"Bam! Kick it up a notch! Life!  
Zest! Fire! Taste! Essence!  
Make it happy! It's smiling!  
They like being together! Bam!  
Another notch!"

Flipping through the channels, I had landed on the food network. The host was preparing a meal, obviously gifted in what he was doing. He interacted with the people, all the while accomplishing the task he set out to do. Those assembled certainly were not passive onlookers, waiting to be served. They were active participants, encouraging and egging-on the host. They were filled with joy, laughter, expectation and hope as they anticipated the final outcome—a sumptuous, glorious banquet.

Something inside me jumped. This was like liturgy at its finest. I first thought of *Babette's Feast*, a film written by Isak Dinesen. It is a classic study of liturgy and Eucharist, food, self-sacrifice and service. Then my mind went to the Scripture story of the great banquet of the king—inviting everyone, the wedding feast, the ultimate banquet of heaven.

Food! Food! Food! Jesus multiplied food. His first miracle was at a wedding feast. He told stories during, after and about banquets. He dined with tax collectors, sinners, lowly, rich and haughty people. It was during a meal that he blessed bread... after the meal, he took the cup... During all these times, he is unfolding the good news about God. God has come to share with us his most intimate self. Through Jesus, conversion takes place and sin is replaced by the Spirit of God. What Jesus has begun in time we are to continue, for he has sent his Spirit to us. By the life-power of this Spirit, God's kingdom is established. Gifts are given to be used and shared among the

people of God. The fire and zest of life is to be shared with all, whether it is rejected or received. The good news of conversion and infilling of the Spirit is meant for all and we cannot hold back. We have been chosen to proclaim the good news, to point out the source of hope, not just for the future banquet but for present nourishment.

I found it quite interesting that the master directing this great banquet did not use exotic foods and spices. He used the common, ordinary staples found anywhere. He took the variety of spices and blended them in at the proper time and in proper proportion. (Some might call this being in right relationship.) At the proper time, he will "bam! Kick it up a notch!" He brings his creation to another level and again later on, he may "kick it up another notch." Oh! The assembly loved it and delighted in it and entered into the action. They looked forward to banqueting together and were filled with joy along the way.

Our God has been "kicking it up a notch" throughout all of history as he prepares for the great banquet. We have had tremendous *kairos* moments. These we continually celebrate. The greatest moment was the Incarnation, Jesus. He is the main course. Then there was Pentecost. And over and over the Holy Spirit breaks into the world to "kick it up a notch." Vatican II and the recent outpouring of the Holy Spirit are the latest. And our own response to the God Spirit within us has given new life.

As I watched this program I sensed a tremendous presence of the Lord teaching me of his love, joy, peace, friendship and intimacy.

Boy, do I have an anchovy pasta recipe that will knock your socks off! ♦

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# PENTECOST Today

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# Evangelii Nuntiandi

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Twenty-five years later

The church...exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God.

## A movement of evangelization

by David Thorp

“This is not a tongues movement or a healing movement,” proclaimed the priest to participants at a Charismatic Renewal conference sponsored by the dioceses of upstate New York. “It’s not a music movement or a prophecy or gifts or prayer movement. The Charismatic Renewal is a movement of evangelization.” He was reminding us of the mission of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and went on to encourage us to find ever-more-creative ways to live out this mission.

The speaker echoed the words of Pope Paul VI in his groundbreaking apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*) and challenged us that, since we were Catholics, we were obligated to take them seriously. In that stirring document—really a heart cry—the pope wrote: “Evangelization is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God” (n. 14).

Pope Paul VI issued this exhortation just over twenty-five years ago. While evangelization had always been a part of the church’s life, the boldness of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* made it a watershed document for the life of the church. After their 1974 synod the bishops of the world gave the Holy Father the fruit of their discussion, “stating that they awaited from him a fresh forward impulse, capable of creating within a church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization” (n. 2). He accomplished this brilliantly.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has sought to be carried by this impulse and has been a dedicated servant in this new period of evangelization. Leaders and members of the Charismatic Renewal, even if they had not read Pope Paul VI's words (many were very well versed in them and used them for teaching and exhortation) or did not make explicit reference to them, have consistently applied them to the movement. They, too, saw that "the grace and vocation proper" to the Charismatic Renewal, "her deepest identity" is evangelization.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has been a dedicated servant in this new period of evangelization.

Such a response from the Charismatic Renewal movement seemed most appropriate—almost required. In chapter 7 of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Pope Paul VI emphatically stated that "evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit" (n. 75). I count more than twenty-five distinct statements about how the Holy Spirit is involved in, responsible for and prodding evangelization. In a movement dedicated to renewing the grace of Pentecost in our day, the Charismatic Renewal could not absent itself from the ministry of evangelization and remain true to God's grace for it.

From the first prayer meeting that I attended I saw the desire to live out the words of Pope Paul VI. That meeting—like, I am sure, many others worldwide—always ended the same way. We were encouraged to live out the good news in our daily lives in such a way that the witness of our lives would, as Pope Paul VI wrote, "stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live" (n. 21). And judging from testimonies that I've heard, people did see something. How often certain phrases were repeated in these testimonies, phrases like: "I saw something in these people that I didn't have;" or "I didn't know what it was but I knew there was something different about him/her/them, and I

wanted it;" or "I had never seen Catholics like that before; I knew they had what I was looking for."

There was also repeated encouragement to tell others about Jesus. We were always to be ready to explain to others "who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have" (1 Pt. 3:15). We were taught, sometimes formally but often informally through the example of leaders and the weekly testimonies of prayer group members, how to make a simple and clear proclamation about Jesus Christ. We were being prepared to tell others what Jesus had done in our lives and to announce, as Pope Paul VI wrote, "the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God" (n. 22).

And we were encouraged to practice what Sr. Nancy Kellar has long called Come and See Evangelization. "Just bring a friend to a vibrant prayer meeting," was the message, "so they can see what God is doing for others and can do for them." So many times that simple invitation to another person was the beginning of a whole new life.

When new people came, prayer groups were ready with perhaps their greatest evangelization tool—a series of talks and small group discussions aimed at presenting the basic Gospel message and inviting people to make a conscious and deeper commitment to life with God. These initiation programs—most widespread of which is the *Life in the Spirit Seminars*, but also *Born of the Spirit, You Shall Receive Power, Thy Kingdom Come* and others—have had millions of participants and are further evidence of how seriously the Charismatic Renewal has taken the call to evangelize.

Healing services and special rallies were organized as further efforts to reach out with the good news. Explicitly evangelistic ministries responding to the call of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* have grown from the Charismatic Renewal: NET, which forms teams to minister to high school students; Magnificat, a ministry to Catholic women; Charisma in Missions, reaching Spanish-speaking Catholics especially in California but also throughout the western hemisphere; LAMP Ministries which evangelizes with the poor.

Pope Paul VI called for "serious preparation for all workers of evangelization" (n. 73). From the Charismatic Renewal has come, among others, the International Catholic Programme in Evangelization (ICPE) with training bases and outreaches worldwide; *Evangelization 2000*; the Association of Catholic Coordinators of Schools of Evangelization; and the John Paul II Bible School (where?). In Latin America, especially Brazil, there has been a literal explosion of schools of evangelization to train Catholics to share their faith with others. In intensive and practical programs, some as long as eight months, Catholics are being prepared for evangelistic work.

There have been great efforts in evangelization through the media conducted by ministries associated with or birthed in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal: radio and television programs, music ministries, audio and videotape production, magazines and publishing houses.

Ten years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was issued Bishop Paul Cordes, who was then the Holy Father's representative to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, addressed the National Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He concluded his talk with a charge: "You are instruments of this same Holy Spirit in our time. You are instruments for your families, for your parishes and communities, for your neighborhoods, for your social and political environments. Be truly what you are. Be a movement of evangelization—as individuals and as communities. Bring deeper love to Jesus and his church. Be intelligent apostles who never get tired of winning others for the faith. Be influential by your word and action, by your way of life and your good example."

Bishop Cordes could well have said: "Never tire of being a movement of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. You have lived this exhortation. To be true to your identity as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal you must continuously live out its challenge everyday." ♦



A former member of the National Service Committee, David Thorp currently serves on the NSC Council. He is Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Boston.

I stood up and joyfully and willingly said my “yes,” never imagining where that “yes” would lead.



# What a “yes” can do

by Jan Heath

**E**arly in 1990 I was sitting on a beach in Brisbane, Australia, intending to have some prayer time. In the stillness I heard the words, “Go to Indianapolis.” I knew what was happening there. Some months before, a priest, Fr. Jack Soulsby, SM, had invited me to join a group who would be attending an ecumenical conference on “The Holy Spirit and World Evangelization.” I laughed and replied, “It’s OK for you to go, Father, but I am a married woman with four children and a family business to run.” I gave him a definite “no.” Yet, here I was hearing that I was to go.

I knew it would be easy to test this call. If my husband let me go it would be proof enough! I approached the subject that night and told him about the conference. He said, “Why don’t you go? It will be a good experience for you.” Next morning at breakfast I asked the children, “How would you feel if Mum went to the United States of America for two weeks?” “Buy us some Reeboks,” they replied. No problems there!

The conference was awesome and overwhelming. 25,000 from so many different denominations! We heard that a call was being perceived from the Holy Spirit that the whole body of Christ was to be mobilized to reach out to a generation that was ignoring God. Teaching was given to us in the Catholic gatherings on how to evangelize, using a program by John Boucher called *Bringing Christ to My Everyday World*. On completion of the training the emcee, Fr. Chris Aridas, told us to take that program home and see what we could do with it. I have used it on four continents and in over twenty countries.

Fr. Tom Forrest inspired me as he shared the vision of a Decade of Evangelization from 1990-2000. At the end of the conference there was a call given: “Who will say ‘yes’ to the Holy Spirit for this work of evangelization in our time?” Along with many others I stood up and joyfully and willingly said my “yes,” never imagining where that “yes” would lead.

On returning home to Australia I began to be invited to share what I had seen and heard at the conference so far away in the USA. I had never in my life spoken in public and I went to many churches and venues “in fear and trembling.” At first most of the invitations came from denominations other than my own. This was a totally new and good experience for me.

A local Catholic newspaper ran an article on the conference and the call I was putting out for Catholics to evangelize. Soon invitations came from other states in Australia and the neighboring countries of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. In 1993 I was invited to go on an evangelizing outreach to Africa. Once again my husband gave his blessing, though it cost him three months of struggle before he came to peace about it.

Since then I have been on ten short-term missions to Africa. I have seen thousands upon thousands come to the Lord. He has

See **Yes** p. 13

# Called through reconciliation to mission

by Mark Nimo

The apostle Paul helps us to grasp the relationship between reconciliation and mission in the following passage of scripture.

From now onwards, then, we will not consider anyone by human standards, even if we were familiar with Christ according to human standards, we do not know him in that way any longer. So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old order is gone and a new being is there to see. It is all God's work. He reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us a ministry of reconciliation. I mean, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone's faults against them, but entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ. It is as though God were urging you through us and in the name of Christ. We appeal to you, be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:17-20)

In baptism we are called and sent as a Christian people to share in the life and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through ongoing repentance we are transformed and changed, giving rise to a new creation, doing away with our old manner of behavior and patterns of thinking. We are to be reconciled not only to God, but also to our neighbor. The message of reconciliation would always generate sparks of repentance, renewal and revival.

The church has the responsibility to announce and live out this message of reconciliation. Who constitutes the church?

My own journey of faith has taught me to personally accept responsibility, to go into mission, through the experience of being reconciled to God. I was born into a Catholic family on April 8, 1964. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1964, which happens to be the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, I was baptized and incorporated into the family of God, the

church. My parents sought day and night to teach me the ways of God as I grew up. I am the fifth of seven children.

By the age of twelve I had received first communion and confirmation. I began to face many challenges to living my Christian faith when I was put into boarding school for my high school. I embraced forms of behavior which were contrary to the Gospel. I kept pushing God to the periphery of my life, whilst a strong passion for martial arts, rock music, parties, nightlife and wrong relationships took the center stage. I had turned my back to God when at the age of twenty I went into a crisis.

Faced with the prospect of becoming a father, I battled with the thought of aborting the baby or committing suicide. It was in the midst of this battle that a member of my parish community, who was involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, invited me to a prayer meeting. Through the praise and worship, prayer, teaching and fellowship in this group, I discovered how God the Father loved me unconditionally. It became clear to me that I had to be reconciled to God through acknowledgment of my sin and repentance.

By God's grace I was able to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. I knew that God had touched me in a special way as I began to experience a new sense of freedom. I was instructed through the Life in the Spirit Seminars and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. My daughter was born and I did not have to commit suicide. I gave Jesus Christ permission to rule as Lord over all areas of my life: my past, present, future, thoughts, relationships, vocations, sexuality, etc.

This act of reconciliation with God opened the doors for reconciliation with my parents and the mother of my daughter. I could not hold and keep the joy of this discovery in my heart alone. I always received a nudge from

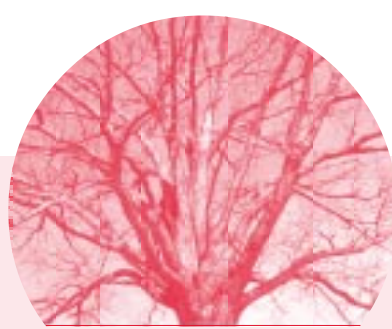
the Holy Spirit to share this good news, that Jesus Christ took my guilt, shame and sins upon himself and died on the cross. As if this was not enough, he gave me a share in his new life through his resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I am under obligation to make this known and like St. Paul, I say, "Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). It is for his own name's sake that God delivers, heals, restores and saves us. He therefore sends us out to participate in the mission to bring this message of reconciliation to all creation. This is not an optional extra but a command! Freely you have received, freely you must give.

In conclusion, it might be helpful to take a look at the church, which was born at Pentecost some two thousand years ago. What was the secret behind the apostolic zeal with which the early apostles preached the message of reconciliation? If the church exists in order to evangelize, then what should be its priority in forming the people of God? We may perhaps draw a few lessons from the words of Leon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens of blessed memory.

In 1987 Cardinal Suenens stated frankly, "If you were to ask me whether Vatican II was indeed a new Pentecost, I would say 'yes' in terms of grace that was offered and 'yes and no' in terms of grace received." Nevertheless, when asked his hopes for the year 2000, he replied that we should rediscover the *secret of Pentecost*, which is a mystery of conversion (*ad intra*) and of apostolate (*ad extra*).

The key to understanding the relation between reconciliation and mission largely depends on the rediscovery of the secret of Pentecost by everyone baptized in the church. ♦

*A member of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) Council, Mark Nimo directs the Catholic School of Evangelization in Takoradi, Ghana.*



## Spiritual Formation

# Hope

by Dorothy Ranaghan

“Who wants to live forever?” These words form the haunting lyrics of a song by Freddy Mercury of the rock group “Queen.” Immortality. The notion that one cannot die has fueled the imagination of mere mortals for ages, and has spawned a vast body of literature. These tales, sometimes about vampires or of a whole race of beings who cannot die, are often mournful, hopeless, since there is a heavy burden of sorrow and loneliness in a long life where all those whom you have loved are lost to death and you are left to grieve again and again and again. Is such a life worth living?

Many in the younger generation have answered that question with a resounding “no.” They have accepted the nihilism of our age and their music sings of aimless, senseless, meaningless existence. One group, called “Nine Inch Nails,” sings: “I don’t know what I am. I don’t know where I’ve been. Human junk, just words and so much skin. Stick my hands through the cage of this endless routine, just some flesh caught in this broken machine.” They sing of hopelessness. They don’t believe in anything, at least not in anything or anyone steadfast. Life, with its ocean of sorrows, does at times seem too much to bear for a day, let alone forever. The words of Dante inscribed over the gates of hell, “All hope abandon ye who enter here,” point to the logical end of hopelessness.

Recently I read of a woman on the verge of despair who knelt in a darkened church and cried out, “God, all I need is a little hope. Is that too much to ask?” A few minutes later the doors of the church opened and a mother and child walked in. Before the mother could stop her, the little girl scampered up the aisle, stopped beside the troubled woman and declared in that uninhibited and precocious way of children, “Hi! I’m Hope.” Whether this was cosmic irony or our Father’s sense of humor is for you to decide. But it is not “our” hope. A few months ago a newspaper headline grabbed my attention. “Lack of hope fuels Palestinian rage.” The uncertainty of a humanly foreseeable solution to many of the world’s troubles underlies present fear and dangers. But even if peace talks were succeeding in every corner of the globe, fueling great optimism, it would still not be “our” hope.

Christian hope is based on certainty. It is the firm conviction that the promises of God are true. We have hope because we know who we are, and that we are linked intimately with God, with his plans and purposes, his very being. Christ is the plan and promise of the Father, and the hope he incarnates and brings is life with him in his kingdom forever. We believe that God himself in the person of his Son conquered death so that we can—we *will*—live forever, free of sorrow and pain.

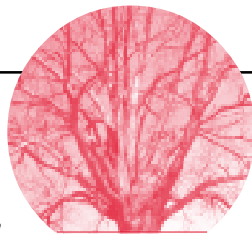
Jesus is alive. He is acting. He brings life and freedom, and he, risen and alive, is the cause of our hope and joy. After we die we will rise like him, and his Father has prepared an inheritance for us. The eternal life of the children of God begins here in a real way because Christ lives in us.

Hope, therefore, is not just oriented to the future, but is grounded in the present. What grounds our hope is not wishful thinking, but a lived experience of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the “finger of God pointing out where he is acting in history all around us so that we can see all the ways of hope” (Segundo Galilea).

Because of the Spirit, hope is the actual experience of all the good things we hope to enjoy forever. Now. It utterly changes the meaning of life, our way of living, and the value we place on everything. For one thing it means that while we “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ,” we don’t wait passively. Hope for eternal life gets translated into action as we build the kingdom of God, the kingdom of peace, joy, love and justice in all the environments in which we live and work. Everywhere—in business, in education, in culture and entertainment, even in cyberspace. Everything we do becomes charged with the eternal and takes on new meaning and importance. It is kingdom building.

Our work in this world will be made perfect in the world to come. But humankind has to participate in the construction of this future, this “forever.” Like a seed growing within us, this reign of God is both here and coming. It is our call. It is our promise. It is our hope, and it will “not disappoint us” (Rom. 5:5).





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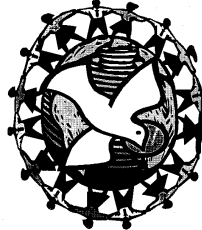


**Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities**

## 2001 National Conference (North America)

*"Come and assemble, gather together." Isaiah 45:20 (Theme)*

**May 25, 26, 27, 2001 (Friday to Sunday)**  
**L.A. Convention Center**  
**1201 So. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA**



Invited speakers include **Bishop Ramon Arguelles, Bishop Ted Bacani, Sonny de los Reyes (BLD), Fr. Jim Clark, Bo Sanchez, Bob Canton (healing), Walter Matthews, Msgr. Fred Bitanga, Jeff Smith, Dominic Berardino, Fr. Leonardo Polinar, Kay Murdy, Fr. Ed Abano, Cardinal Ricardo Vidal** (main celebrant and homilist) and other prominent speakers.

*Everyone is invited to come and assemble with us!*

*Let us gather together in prayer, open to receive the Spirit's flame.*

*May it come to rest in our hearts and disperse the divisions of word and tongue.*

*With one voice and one song may we praise the Lord in joy and thanksgiving.*

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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### Hope

Humans need to know that life has meaning.

Lack of hope leads to sorrow and despair.

Hope does not lie in changing circumstances. Christian hope is based on certainty and stability.

We have hope because Jesus has conquered death and now we can live forever.

The Holy Spirit gives us experiential knowledge of the power and joy of the life of Christ within us.

The life of Christ is in us and the kingdom that he builds now in, with and through us is where we will live our forever.

#### Reflection Questions

How is hope related to questions of life and death?

Why can't hope be placed in transient or fluctuating desires?

What is the nature and source of Christian hope?

What does the fact that the life of Christ pulses within me mean for my daily activities? Will these activities have any meaning in the life to come? ♦