

PENTECOST *Today*

April/May/June 2003
Volume 28, Number 1

*charismatic
renewal:
today &
tomorrow*



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



“I will pour out my Spirit...”

At the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII prayed to the Holy Spirit: “You help the church by your presence and you guide it infallibly. Renew your wonders in this our day as for a new Pentecost.” We in the Charismatic Renewal know that this prayer was answered. We know that this was a fulfillment of Scripture passages that speak of God’s promise to send the Holy Spirit. “I will pour out my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing upon your descendants” (Is. 44:3). “It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out a portion of my Spirit on all mankind” (Acts 2:17).

Oh, what a gift to be living in this holy time! The Renewal began because the church cried out to God for help, the help of the Holy Spirit, and God answered this request. The Renewal of those early years was exciting, but it was also a time of mistakes, a time of learning, and a time of trying again. The fervor of the moment urged us on in spite of human weaknesses. We saw new signs and we experienced new wonders. Our spiritual awakening began a journey for us that became a way of life.

The Renewal today numbers approximately 120 million Catholics worldwide, according to figures provided by ICCRS. These are faithful people who serve the Lord with all their heart, their soul, their mind and their strength (Mk. 12:30). These are days that show us there is more—so much more—to be done. These are days that are challenging and exciting and full of promise and hope. God is not finished with his plan. “I say that my plan shall stand, I accomplish my every purpose” (Is. 46:10). His plan stands firm, it stands strong and full of potential for those who believe. Regardless of how old we say we are, how young we say we are; regard-

less of how long or short a time we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, God is not finished using those who have said yes to his call.

Saying yes to God should be something repeated over and over again. Today would be a good day to repeat that yes and ask God to renew our zeal. “He who serves God willingly is heard; his petition reaches the heavens. The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds; it does not rest till it reaches its goal, nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly and affirms the right” (Sir. 35:16-18).

The future, the tomorrow of the Renewal, is yet to be fulfilled. We are the people who will pass on to generations yet to come the history, the hope and the promise of these graced years. The mighty move of the Holy Spirit among the young people of today is a sign that God is not finished yet. The mature should not say to the younger, “You have no experience.” The young should not disdain the wisdom of those who have served longer. Rather the zeal of youth and the experience of years of service should blend and unite us all. The harvest of the Lord stands ready and ripe in fields shining and white. The call of the harvest Master sounds forth. It is his will that none be lost. “You are not to spend what remains of your earthly life on human desires but on the will of God” (1 Pt. 4:2).

Lord, send out your Spirit! “Give new signs and work new wonders; show forth the splendor of your right hand and arm” (Sir. 36:5). Then, we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth! ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee. She co-directs Servant House, a Catholic Charismatic House of Prayer in Marksville, Louisiana.



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For Your Information

This is a publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc. The mission of the NSC is to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost within and beyond the church, to broaden and deepen the understanding that baptism in the Holy Spirit is the Christian inheritance of all, and to strengthen the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

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. Please mail to:

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CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL AND THE PRESENT:

What is God doing today?

by Tom Curran

There's a story about a preacher who would go around giving parish missions. He was known for his powerful style, preaching the Word with hellfire and brimstone. He would preach on one side of the church with the microphone clipped to his shirt, then step over the wire to the other side of the church where he'd fume; then he'd step back over to the other side and fume some more. A family was seated in the second row with a little girl who watched as the preacher stepped over the wire and pointed his finger with his hellfire and brimstone message. Finally she leaned over to her mother and asked, "Mom, if he breaks loose, are we in trouble?"

If I had to name what seems to be happening in the Renewal today, I'd have to say that it seems as if the Renewal has become domesticated. It has lost its teeth. I hear many people in the Renewal recall, "When I look back, I see a time when people would say that if we broke loose, the world's in trouble!" But leaders today are saying, "If we *don't* break loose, *we're* in trouble!"

What is it that God seems to be saying to the Renewal today? The key to going forward, to breaking loose, to moving into

That is the dramatic situation that we face some thirty-five years into the Renewal.

Are we handing on, or are we betraying the grace that we have received?

what it is God has for us today, is being set free. Sometimes when we think of being set free, of experiencing more of what God wants to do in us, we tend to think of having more intense experiences. "Let's have more experiences of God's anointing, of God's power, of God's visitation. "Let's go to the prayer meeting." And so we go to the prayer meeting and we go *up*—and then after the prayer meeting we go *down*. But we haven't gone anywhere. And then the next week we come back and we go *up* and then after the prayer meeting we go *down*. And then we go to a conference and we go *up* and then we go back to our homes and we go *down*. But we still haven't moved anywhere! If we want to fulfill what God has for us in the Renewal, we have got to do more than just have more intense experiences. When we go up, we have got to *stay up* and we've got to *move!* We have to move where God leads us.

Moving to where God leads us means translating the graces given to us into a dramatic testimony that people cannot ignore. The Lord wants to forge our very lives into a dramatic testimony. "Go out into the deep!" Our call is not to be satisfied with what we've been given.

One Renewal leader put it this way; he said, "I have a keen conviction that God wants to do more in our ministry but God is not entrusting it to us because we are not as surrendered as we need to be to safely receive what he wants to give." That is wisdom! We are held accountable for what we are given, and God will be slow to entrust us with gifts that we might quickly betray.

This is the principle of tradition. The word in Latin for tradition is *tradere*. It means two things: it means "to hand on", but it also means "to hand over", as Judas handed over Jesus to the Pharisees. *Tradere* is a dramatic call: that which has been entrusted to you, you are called to hand on to others. The heritage of blessings that have come to us in the Renewal, we are called to hand on to others—and to fail to hand it on is to *hand it over*, is to betray. That is the dramatic situation that we face some

thirty-five years into the Renewal. Are we handing on, or are we betraying the grace that we have received?

Personally, I do not believe that God wills that Charismatic Renewal be a footnote on this page in the history of the church. God is not done with us yet, and so we need to enter into the process of conversion, the process of repentance, the pro-

cess of going deeper. How does that happen in our lives?

“Behold, we possess this treasure in earthen vessels to make it clear that it’s surpassing power comes from God and not from us” (2 Cor. 3:7). We are broken vessels; we are earthen vessels. But God has entrusted us with such a treasure. What specifically can we do? I want to suggest some practical

things that we can do to move toward being set free to fulfill what God has for us.

The first call is to use the gifts that we have been given. What has God given to you? Put your gifts at the service of God and the church.

The second thing is: take care of unfinished business. Do you have something that God has been calling you to do for a long time, but you have been delaying? Maybe you don’t see how God is going to provide for you to get it done. You are faced with a dramatic choice now. Are you going to trust in God’s call, or are you going to trust in what you can see and make happen? We are going to move more fully into what God wants for us if we entrust ourselves into the hands of God.

Finally, we learn in the Renewal to put our lives at the service of others; but I want to propose to you something else. If we are going to move forward into what God intends for us, we will need to go beyond simply trying to be of service to others and begin to live for the *sake* of others. We need to begin to see that the grace which we have been given has been given not only for us, but has been given for the sake of others.

My brothers and sisters in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, we have been brought together at this conference not just for ourselves, but on behalf of others. We have experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit not just for ourselves, but on behalf of others; we have received gifts and graces not just for ourselves, but for the sake of others. I pray that together we will go forth from this place not just for ourselves, but for the sake of and on behalf of others. ♦

A Catholic lay evangelist, Tom Curran is Executive Director of Trinity Formation Resources. This article was excerpted from his address at the 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh.



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CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL AND THE FUTURE:

A vision for the formation of lay Christians

by Bishop Stanislaw Rylko

I believe the basic task the church confronts at the threshold of the third millennium is the formation of the lay faithful. Since the Second Vatican Council we often speak of the “hour of the laity” in the church. Lay Christians, in order to answer fully to the call of Christ in the historical moment at the beginning of the millennium, should be well prepared and aware of their vocation and mission; that is to say, aware of their own identity as Christians. The apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* reminds us that formation is at the same time a *duty* and a *right* of the lay faithful (cf. n. 63). It is an urgent need in an increasingly secularized society where the dominant culture is often hostile to the Christian faith.

Consequently, the key objective of training is to form a clear Christian identity in the lay faithful, who will then be able to give authentic witness in everyday life. Let us examine closely the meaning of *Christian identity* and pinpoint its essential elements.

The Christocentric dimension: The Christian identity springs from a vibrant and mature faith in Jesus Christ. It involves the whole person. It is a faith demanding a definite choice and personal commitment. To have one’s own name written in the Baptismal Book is not enough to form a clear Christian identity. A personal ex-

perience of God, a vital encounter with Jesus, is of pivotal importance.

The ecclesial dimension: The Christian identity grows and develops within the ecclesial community. It becomes an ecclesial identity. For the Christian the link and reference to the church is essential. The relationship with the church is animated by deep faith and filial love. Here the church is understood not as something abstract, but as a concrete entity as parish or diocesan community vitally connected to the greater structure of the universal church.

The sacramental dimension: This is the most important feature that encompasses practically all that I have said before: Christian identity is of a sacramental character because it originates from Baptism. This is of central importance. Unfortunately the central role of the sacrament is not well understood in all its depth nowadays. Sometimes the celebration of the sacrament becomes exclusively the occasion for a family celebration, a solemn rite without concrete consequences in people’s lives.

There is a learned saying that well expresses our Christian identity: *operari sequitur esse*—action follows being. Baptism changes the very being of a person. The Christian receives a new life, engrafted in Christ, dies with him in order to be raised with him, and becomes a new creation.

Therefore, his action, his life must be different. It must correspond to the newness of life started with Baptism. Here we can find the basis and the center of Christian formation. I think the Renewal in the Spirit has understood this very well. Baptism in the Spirit in the Catholic charismatic communities, when it is correctly understood, constitutes a special form of rediscovering of the sacrament of Baptism with all the consequences in Christian life. Many people all over the world have rediscovered the beauty and the wonder of the baptismal vocation thanks to the formative pedagogy typical of Renewal in the Spirit.

I would like to add two important elements:

◆ To be a disciple of Christ is demanding and requires sacrifice; being a sign of contradiction is deeply engrafted in the Christian identity. The Christian is called to live in the world as salt and leaven, to have the courage to go against the current.

◆ Finally, it is important to remember that the question of Christian identity is an ever-open question that cannot be closed once and forever. It is a never-ending task and a never-ending challenge. To examine our Christian identity is something we face every day in every situation.

There are two main arenas of Christian formation: the family and the parish. The

[See Future page 13](#)

Making the connection: Youth ministry and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

by Fr. Tim Hepburn

While participating in the teen track at the 35th Anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh last Fall, I came to an important realization. Even when raised in a charismatic family or community, teens often have no connection to the Charismatic Renewal movement and little knowledge of the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Those at the National Conference last Fall were no exception. Although they were at a Charismatic Renewal conference, I heard no references to the movement nor to the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The grace was there, but the “family history” was not.

While there are some notable teen ministries which have direct or indirect associations with the Charismatic Renewal, many do not see themselves as part of the movement. I was not surprised to see that Youth Arise incorporates the initiatives of Life Teen and the Franciscan University of

Steubenville into their training of young adult leaders. Teen ministries like these would, I believe, have been impossible without the grace of baptism in the Spirit in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Now, in many ways these ministries are forming our future as a movement.

For example, each summer over 28,000 teens attend summer youth conferences sponsored by Franciscan University whose charismatic roots are legendary. On Sunday morning at each conference, teens are led to ask in faith for the strengthening of the Holy Spirit. Many times Sunday morning finds over half of the participants committing their lives to Jesus as Lord, singing spontaneous praises to God in their native and other tongues, and pledging their lives to Christian vocation. Yet these same teens have often never heard of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. They often do not know that what they are experiencing is what the Charismatic Renewal calls being “baptized in the Spirit.” They

just call it being Catholic. In this way, baptism in the Spirit is penetrating the heart of the church and we should give thanks.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, at least in its anglo-American expression, is somewhat separated from her grandchildren. They may be experiencing aspects of the grace that gave birth to this renewal, but they often don't relate to the structures and traditions of the renewal. The National Service Committee has diligently sought to foster relationships with ministries who bring baptism in the Spirit to youth, including those not explicitly connected to the Charismatic Renewal. Still, like a grandparent put aside, I have been disappointed at the response of vibrant youth movements who don't see their need for Charismatic Renewal anymore—disappointed because we still have much to give.

Is God calling the Charismatic Renewal to reevaluate its service to the “morning watchmen of the new millennium?” We must move forward in the knowledge that our teens and young adults still need baptism in the Spirit, but in the ecclesial maturity that asks how they will receive the grace of Pentecost for this new day. This thirty-six year-old movement still has much to accomplish until the proclamation of the Gospel is at the heart of the church, until the charisms are integral in all Catholic formation and until the holiness of God fills the earth. At the close of the 35th Anniversary Conference, I was blessed by Bishop Stanislaw Rylko's call to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to ecclesial maturity and I am quite sure that by “ecclesial maturity” he did not mean growing old. Thank God for Youth Arise, Life Teen, the Franciscan University and the many other youth ministries. Thank God for renewing our youth. ♦

Fr. Tim Hepburn is Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. He serves as Campus Minister of Georgia State University, Emory University and Agnes Scott College.

HOLY SPIRIT POWER CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

By Bob Williams

“The power Bob describes can absolutely revolutionize one's life, one's family, one's job and one's world...Is Bob Williams right or is he wrong?” *From Introduction by Jim Murphy*

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Freedom in Christ

While browsing in a gift shop recently, I picked up an assortment of note cards with delicate and striking artwork. It surprised and delighted me to discover that the artists were all handicapped men and women who paint with their feet. Many of us think that freedom means doing whatever we want, with few restraints; and yet many, with great restraints, use their freedom to overcome obstacles and to act. With two good hands, I cannot paint even a stick man. These artists refused to accept their “handicap” as a restraint and entered into the creative process. This is freedom.

“What we believe reality to be will influence how we live” (K. J. Koller). If freedom is the power to act or not to act, and our actions form our lives, what belief system motivates our actions? If our “reality” is that we have been made one with Christ in baptism so that his life and mission continue among us, does it affect our daily lives? The mission of Jesus was to “proclaim liberty to captives...to set the downtrodden free.” Have we begun to grasp how fully freed we have become? The Son has set us free, and we are “free indeed” (Jn. 8:36). Or are we? Are we free of sin and free of our “old self?” One of my favorite Christian songs refers to Jesus as our “freedom waker.” Are we awakened, or have we allowed ourselves to be “burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1)?

What truth do we tell ourselves? We will act in accordance to our perceptions. If I believe psychological type-casting, (e.g. “I am an alcoholic,” “I am codependent,” “I am depressed,” “I am an introvert,” “I am an under-

achiever,” “I am a #3”) then, I will accept all the restraints in that profile. I will have taken on a new yoke. Do I believe the power of the blood of Christ is inadequate to my need/problem/captivity/old self? The more we reaffirm our identity in Christ, the more our behavior will reflect our freedom.

Our actions have meaning and value for building the kingdom of God. We have choices to make. Free choices. With each choice we expand or limit further choices. If we choose what we cannot have (e.g. another man’s wife), then we have chosen un-freedom.

We are not free to choose the consequences of our actions, yet even some of these can be undone. Did you, for example, fail to listen to your own wishes and desires and choose a vocation that pleases your parents, but which leaves you discontent? Like my friend who left his bank job for medical school at a non-traditional age, you are free to change that decision. We are free to make the choices that guide our lives.

With our freedom, we are always meant to choose to love. Love is an action, not a feeling. Love is a choice; the only truly free choice. If we seek merely to be happy, we may remain selfish, and we may not love. But if we live in Christ and as Christ, our choices will always be based on love, and we will find the blessedness of doing the will of the Father.

Our freedom is about the possible. We limit Christ when we set our boundaries too close, too soon, too low. All things are possible with God. Have we set him free to live his life in, with and through us? Let’s wiggle our toes and paint our way out of the restraints we have placed on ourselves. The world is waiting for the kingdom-building acts of love chosen out of the glorious freedom of the sons and daughters of God. ♦

Outline

- A. An example of acting to overcome obstacles.
- B. Freedom is the power to act or not act.
- C. The perception of our reality will influence our actions.

- D. The Son has set us free from sin and from our old self.
- E. Accepting our freedom in Christ vs. taking on a new yoke of slavery.
- F. We are meant to choose to love.
- G. Our freedom is integral to moving the plan of God forward.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does the work of Christ affect our freedom?
2. How do our choices reflect our view of freedom?
3. What restraints do you experience on your own freedom?

National Conference to convene in San Antonio

You are invited!

The National Service Committee, at the invitation of the Catholic Charismatic Center in San Antonio, will convene the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in San Antonio, Texas, May 30-June 1 and you are invited!

Why San Antonio? Because it is a beautiful and historic place with its Riverwalk, the Alamo and the many missions nearby. But more importantly because exciting things are happening in the Renewal in San Antonio: over forty local parishes have their Confirmation students and their parents attend Life in the Spirit Seminars before Confirmation; San Antonio is the home of a fledgling religious order, the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple, led by Frs. George Montague and Bob Hogan, and the fully-alive Catholic parish they lead.

Why this National Conference? In Pittsburgh we heard the Lord say clearly that he is not done with this Renewal.

We are called to “remove all bounds to hope,” and to “bring to life the ‘culture of Pentecost’ in the power of the Holy Spirit.” The conference will feature:

- ◆ Gifted speakers who will help us make the journey (see back page ad).
- ◆ Special sessions in Spanish and Korean.
- ◆ Youth sessions.
- ◆ Children’s sessions led by the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ from Texas.
- ◆ Ministry for healing and empowerment.
- ◆ Two pre-events on Friday, May 30: A Day for Clergy, and a Day on Confirmation and Life in the Spirit.
- ◆ Jim Murphy will host a special pilgrimage prior to the Conference.

Visit our website, www.nsc-chariscenter.org to register or for more information.

Why include the NSC in your will?

The National Service Committee relies almost entirely on gifts from individuals to continue its mission. A bequest will help our ongoing work of renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.

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