

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

July/August/September 2005

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

The lifeline of prayer

It is essential to begin the practice of prayer with a firm resolution of persevering in it. (St. Theresa of Avila)

In the Gospel of Matthew we read, "Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." We know and can see from these words that prayer is not just about asking. It is also seeking and knocking. Seeking whom? The Lord Jesus, God Almighty Father, the Holy Spirit, this is whom we seek. Seeking leads to finding, finding to knowledge and wisdom about things that are really important. The one who knocks enters. What do we enter, what door will be opened? We enter into the presence of the living God who receives us with love and joy.

It seems that these things describe the perseverance of praying and seeing a breakthrough. This is exactly what we saw in the forty hours of prayer for America. Praying until there was an entering into the presence of God, and knowing we were being touched by that presence in profound ways. It was glorious, it was empowering, and it was anointed. I believe it was so because of the many hours of personal prayer that undergirded each of those who came with a vibrant faith that God would do something mighty as we gathered, and he did.

Prayer for the individual believer begins with the foundation of personal prayer time, that time alone with God. Prayer is a jewel with many facets. There are so many ways to pray. We can pray anytime, anywhere. We just need to learn how to pray at every opportunity, praying in the Spirit and using prayers and petitions of every sort (Eph. 6:18). The Holy Spirit helps us to pray, teaches us to pray, stirs our spirits to prayer and makes prayer become vibrant and alive.

"The habitual difficulty in prayer is distraction. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: **for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to**, and this humble awareness before the Lord would awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our hearts to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

Prayer is essential for the life of the soul. "If we only knew how to hear the cry of our own soul when we have neglected to pray for too long a time and so been deprived of the Holy Spirit, we would hear the cry 'I can't breathe. I'm suffocating!' If someone is about to faint we usually hold them and say, 'Breathe. Breathe deeply!' We need to say the same to those about to shrug their shoulders and give up the struggle against evil: 'Turn to prayer, and take deep breaths of the Holy Spirit'" (*Come Creator Spirit* by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa).

"Nothing is equal to prayer, for what is impossible it makes possible. What is difficult it makes easy" (St. John Chrysostom). Therefore, we can be people of hope. Our God can help us, will help us and does help us. **We do have time for prayer.** There is no amount of busyness that can shut out prayer. There is no place that can silence prayer. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Rom. 8) and we are drawn into higher levels of prayer because we long to spend more and more time with the Lord.

"Prayer ascends and mercy descends. High as are the heavens and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of man" (St. Augustine). Oh, praise the living God! Let our hearts rejoice and our prayers be bold and mighty! ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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Cover photo: Mary Anne Schaezner



Eucharistic adoration & intercession

The Burning Bush Initiative

The call to intercede for conversion of sinners and full Eucharistic Christian unity are the primary goals for this intercession.

by Fr. Scott Ardinger

Long live the Pope! Our great Pope, John Paul II, who is now with the Lord, called for a “New Evangelization” all throughout his pontificate. On the Eve of Pentecost, 2004 he blessed the Charismatic Renewal with a primary place in this New Evangelization. In that same moment of blessing, during Vespers, Pope John Paul II encouraged the initiative known as the Burning Bush, which is a call to “incessant adoration, day and night, before the Most Holy Sacrament; an invitation to the faithful to return to the Cenacle.” This initiative is a call to intercession before our Eucharistic Lord using the Charismatic gifts of the Spirit, primarily the gift of tongues to intercede for the Church and the world. The call to intercede for conversion of sinners and full Eucharistic Christian unity are the primary goals for this intercession.

Kim Catherine-Marie Kollins, who received the inspiration for this initiative from the Lord, has through her community in Europe begun Burning Bush Houses of Prayer. In July, 2004, I heard of this initiative through one of the Catholic Charismatic covenant communities in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, the People of

God community. I immediately recognized the Burning Bush as the very initiative the Lord put on my heart for the past 5 years. Since my ordination as a priest, almost 4 years ago, I have felt drawn to Eucharistic intercession and the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. So with the Burning Bush initiative already approved and even “encouraged” by our Holy Father, I knew I had to begin putting into motion the establishment of a Burning Bush House of Intercession in our Diocese, the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Through Fr. Michael Camilli, M.S.C., our Secretary for Evangelization who represents the Bishop in all the initiatives tied to Evangelization, which includes the Charismatic Renewal, we received permission to use the Retired Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Priests’ Villa chapel for our house of prayer. They have a beautiful small chapel in Center Valley, PA with Jesus in the Eucharist always reserved in the tabernacle. The agreement was that those intercessors who wished to come and pray would sign up for a four hour space of prayer, adoration, worship and intercession on any given day. A young adult named,

Ms. Karen Rumore, who is from my parish, St. Jane Frances de Chantal parish in Easton, Pennsylvania agreed to become coordinator of the newly established Sacred Heart of Jesus Burning Bush House of Prayer. She contacted every parish and prayer group we knew and began to set up prayer teams to come and pray. A prayer team could be as small as one or two intercessors or as large as a group of ten.

The goal is for the Burning Bush to relocate with permission of our Bishop one day to a free standing house of prayer that would be accessible 24 hours a day. This initiative is very attractive to youth, young people, and college students as well as young adults and those who have been in the Charismatic movement for a long time. The vision the Lord has placed on my heart is that the Burning Bush would one day grow into a missionary and intercessory community, perhaps even a religious association of women and then a religious or even priestly association of men. I believe the Burning Bush is going to grow in America. I have already heard of groups gathering in Washington State and Louisiana. This is still very new for us, but I believe it is a wonderful move of the Spirit in the Charismatic Renewal. Anyone who senses the call to Eucharistic, charismatic intercession please consider beginning a Burning Bush House of Prayer or come to Allentown to see what the Lord is doing. There is a website you can visit to learn more, as well as an email contact. “Come let us adore Him!” ♦

Website

www.SacredHeartBurningBush.com

Email

Love@sacredheartburningbush.com .



Fr. Scott Ardinger is a priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Ordained in 2001, he has been involved in the Catholic Charismatic renewal since 1999.

Listen, that you may live

by Sr. Ann Shields

So many workshops, conferences and retreats today on prayer speak of various forms of prayer and the need to find the form of prayer that helps you, that meets your needs. Such a statement may be very reflective of the idolatry of self so prevalent in our culture. Everything today that is advertised, offered, sold, appeals to the assured personal benefits “you” will receive.

But prayer is, first of all, the means by which we enter into the presence of God to offer Him the praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving he deserves. It is a time to meditate on his word that we may be conformed to his teaching, growing in obedience to his word; that our wills may be more ‘docile’ to the voice and action of his Holy Spirit. It is a time to bring him our needs, asking for his strength and wisdom and guidance. It is a time to listen and wait upon him: “As the eyes of a servant are on the hand of his master, as the eyes of a maid are on the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until he have mercy upon us” (Ps. 123:2).

So, the first thing about prayer is about what we give to God—what we as a son or daughter owe our Father in heaven who gave each of us life in Jesus Christ. We were dead in our sin; we could do nothing to change our fatal condition until the Father who so loved the world gave us His only Son that we might have life. Familiar words, yes. But sometimes it is so familiar that we lose the enormity of that gift, of what we have received “without price”.

The Holy Spirit is given to us that we primarily might be able to worship God in spirit and truth. That we might be given that wisdom, counsel, fortitude and knowledge by which we reflect his image and become a sign of that image to the world.

“Shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus” (Cardinal Newman). That kind of prayer has no thought for self but simply that I be a temple of the Holy Spirit bringing his life in my daily thoughts, words and actions to those God gives me.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help me to be docile, that is, to be teachable. My part is to read God’s word daily, asking that my life be conformed to it. It is to read the catechism, the teaching of the Church, to inform my mind and my heart of God and the ways of God. In this way I develop a well-formed conscience and a way of life that reflects the centrality of Jesus Christ in my life.

It is a time to praise him and thank him and adore him for blessing me with the gifts of faith and hope and love; for the abilities to read and to understand.

contemplate the face of christ

It is time to ask the Lord that my will be more and more reflective of his. Adrienne von Speyr, in her book, *Handmaid of the Lord*, said of Mary that there was in her, “no hesitation, no calculation, no reserve.” Can we move more in that direction? Of course, if we are willing! So, praise and worship, thanksgiving and surrender are always our goals when we come to prayer. It is hard work to establish the foundation stones but IT IS WORTH IT!

Listen to John Paul II in section 32 of *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI): “This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer...we know well that prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray, as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master him-

self, like the first disciples: ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ (Luke 11:1). Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: ‘Abide in me and I in you’ (John 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ to contemplation of the Father’s face. Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the source and summit of the Church’s life, but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future, because it returns continually to the sources and finds in them new life.”

“...Prayer can progress as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the Divine Beloved, vibrating at the Spirit’s touch, resting filially within the Father’s heart,” NMI, #33.

Listen to those words: everyone of us, baptized in Christ, can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, enter into an intimacy, a union with the Divine Lover; we can have a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that causes us to vibrate, much like a good violin will “sing” at the touch of a breeze; we can rest with utter confidence near the heart of the Father as a son or daughter. That, brothers and sisters, is a portion of your inheritance, which can be yours now. Don’t get caught up in what the

world offers, even if it has a Christian label. Don't get caught up in the false dichotomy between contemplative and charismatic prayer. Both are necessary; both are available to you by the graces of Baptism and Confirmation.

contemplate the suffering face of christ

How do we get there? Obviously, it is all based on grace and our willingness to follow the Lord's action as He leads each of our souls. But there are some practical steps which facilitate our openness to grace.

In addition to the prayerful reading of God's word daily and the teaching of the Church through the Catechism, as I mentioned above, John Paul II urged us in his encyclical, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, to read, to pray through the lives of the saints. See how they surrendered to God; see how they prayed; see how they served. Let that kind of spiritual reading inspire and encourage you.

In the same document he speaks of the call to holiness: 31b and 32. "Such an ideal must not be misunderstood as though it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few uncommon heroes of holiness. The ways of holiness are many according to the vocation of each individual." So, as you approach prayer, learn from the wisdom of others, yes, be inspired and encouraged, but let God form you in your relationship with him, as he wishes.

John Paul also asked us to take time as often as possible, some time each day, to **contemplate the face of Christ**—all of us. How do we do that?

First, is the very difficult task of 21st century man and woman to quiet the heart, the mind, and the body. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. He is a most excellent teacher. Sometimes it takes me fifteen minutes to quiet my heart from distractions, burdens, plans, etc. But if I ask the Holy Spirit to help and just wait, the quiet of being in the presence of God begins to settle and brings peace to soul and body.

Then John Paul advised us to **contemplate the suffering face of Christ**. I use Isaiah 52 and 53—the suffering servant passages—to reflect on what Christ has done for me. I gaze upon him with wordless thanks. Day in and day out, such reflection and contemplation changes me. Sometimes it's five minutes in a day, sometimes a half hour or an hour.

Then we are asked to **contemplate the risen face of Christ**. I reflect on the passages of the resurrection and again a quiet settles on me, giving birth to hope and confidence. (It is not my personality). It is simply obedience to what the Holy Father asked of us that produces grace and gives me what no technique can ever do. I've prayed that way in part for the last four years with no obvious fruit until recently, to my surprise, I noticed that I am beginning to see his face, so to speak, in the sometimes distressing disguises of others.

Where I would normally be impatient or irritable, or threatened, I find that I see with new eyes and treat people with greater respect and patience. I know that fruit is from those times of contemplating the face of Christ. But, even if I saw no fruit it would be right to persevere to honor and love him!

Only after this time is given to God do I approach intercession. When we pray for others and their needs or our own, the first thing we need to deal with is to be able to pray in Jesus' name. "Whatever you ask in my name I will do." When I was much younger, I used to preface or conclude all my prayer for others by asking "in Jesus' name," as if the mere articulation of the name did the job!

contemplate the risen face of christ.

When we ask in someone's name for anything we are expressing their desire or intention, not ours. An example I often use is this: When I was a child, my father would often send me to the corner grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread or extra milk, etc. I would tell them, "My dad asked me to get this and he will pay at the end of the week." They believed me because, in truth, I was asking according to his will, his intent, not mine. I am sure if I asked for a dozen candy bars or a quart of ice cream I would have been quizzed: "Was that really what my father told me to do?"

To ask in Jesus' name is to ask according to his purpose and plan. We can come to the Lord with all kinds of needs: relationship difficulties, financial and health concerns, addicted relatives and friends and all our myriad human concerns. God DOES want to hear those needs. But he tells us in Mt. 6, seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be yours as well. So, to ask in Jesus' name is to ask for what is first in God's heart: That this person be converted, that this person repent of sin, that this person find true happiness in the hope of eternal life. God wants for all those we pray for, that they come to a deep personal relationship with him, that they know the freedom, peace and happiness of being his sons and daughters. Pray for those things first and daily. Then mention to God all the human and practical concerns. But put first in your prayer what is first in God's heart.

Again, listen to these words of Cardinal Newman's prayer—a prayer that Mother Teresa prayed daily and asked me to do the same: "Shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus." ♦

Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Sr. Ann Shields is the Superior of the Servants of God's Love, a



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Cenacle of Prayer for America

40 Hours of Prayer Pentecost 2005 in Miami

by Mary Anne Schaenzer, SSND

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy
Sacrament of the Altar!
Bendito sea Jesus en el Santísimo
Sacramento de Altar!

The Divine Praises, Alabanzas al Santísimo Sacramento, were proclaimed many times during the 40 hours of the Cenacle of Prayer for America, *Cenáculo de Oración por América*, May 13-15, 2005 in Miami, Florida.

“When the day of Pentecost came all believers were gathered in one place.” We were gathered for prayer in a kind of return to the Cenacle (Upper Room). Participants were welcomed by the planning committee composed of members of the United States National Service Committee, of the *Renovación Carismática Católica Hispana de La Archdiocesis de Miami* and the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS). This latter is the organization that the Holy See considers in charge to “coordinate and promote exchange of experiences

and thoughts among catholic charismatic communities throughout the world” as Archbishop S. Rylko, President of the *Pontificium Consilium Pro Laicis*, reminded in his greetings letter to the assembly, quoting John Paul II.

Emphasis during this 40 hour period of prayer was on prayer for one America from the most northern location of North America to the most southern tip of South America. At the very opening of this sacred time flags representing the many countries of the Americas were processed in, many flag bearers wearing native dress of the country. Each one announced, some in their native tongue, “I am from...” or “I represent...” and then, “I am here to pray for America!”

Throughout the weekend, yes, even throughout the night, various numbers of participants were present before the Blessed Sacrament. There were a variety of expressions of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Eucharist was celebrated on both Saturday and Sunday. Prayer forms included song and jubilation, tongues and

silence, the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, worship, intercession and thanksgiving. Interspersed throughout were meditations and reflections, and processions. Blocks of prayer time were conducted in the two predominant languages, Spanish or English. At the general sessions, excellent translation was provided via radio so that everyone could fully understand and participate. At other times the unity of the Body made translation unnecessary.

The Cenacle was a response to Pope John Paul II’s call in *Ecclesia in America* to intercede with Mary under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother and Evangelizer of America, for a fresh “outpouring of the Holy Spirit...so that the new evangelization [of America] may yield a splendid flowering of Christian life.”

In addition the Cenacle was a response to the call in this year of the Eucharist, “to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ’s real presence...in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass” (*Mane Nobiscum Domine* #18).



Opposite: Blessed Sacrament exposed, above: Nicolás de Jesús Cardinal López Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo, left: Flag procession
Photos: Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

In our Eucharistic worship we prayed in preparation for Pentecost so that the “spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the church as a renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation” (Pope John Paul II, Eve of Pentecost, 2005).

One of many highlights was the Saturday evening procession with the Eucharist to Bayfront Park, downtown Miami, where we spent an hour in song and prayer, and also listening to a meditation exhorting us to recognize that we come to Pentecost with the conviction that the Spirit is prompting us to live the Gospel.

On the eve of Pentecost, 2004, Pope John Paul II encouraged the initiative known as “Burning Bush” promoted by Renewal in the Spirit. During this weekend we became a burning bush, touched with tongues of fire by the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Tom Forrest, in the homily for Pentecost, stated, “The task ahead of you is never as great as the power behind you.” (An article that I read on the airplane expanded my reflection on that one statement as follows.) We could consider ourselves being prepared for liftoff. By the Holy Spirit we are empowered with the thrust of a forward force that works to overcome our drag, our resistance, and gives us a lift, a push upward that works to overcome the gravity of our heavy spirit. We are called to repent of dragging our feet and weighting ourselves down with resistance to the ways of God, and to allow the Holy Spirit to direct our lives in

such a way that we will be propelled and compelled by the power, the dynamite, of the Living God.

All present were blessed by the eloquent messages of many women and men. This variety of predominantly English and Spanish speaking people shines a light on the many expressions of the Body of Christ. On Sunday morning we interceded with God in song prayer to rain down the Holy Spirit upon us. The atmosphere was filled with expectation. We experienced dwelling and praying in the presence of God.

The Presider at Eucharist on the Feast of Pentecost was His Eminence Nicolás de Jesús Cardinal López Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo. One of the final words given at the celebration of the Pentecost Eucharist assured us that, “From this body I am stirring new gifts.” As one speaker proclaimed, God wants unity that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit may be in us and that we may be submerged in God. God moves in the human spirit, enlightens the mind, comes up on the human will, and comes upon our imagination.

One participant wrote of being in awe of all that took place during this weekend. Others commented on the deep peace that they experienced. Now we are challenged to allow the living God to move through us and to open us to all ways that the Holy Spirit chooses that the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. We must have the

Prayer Card



Pray for the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.

Father of light, from whom every good gift comes, send your Spirit into our lives with the power of a mighty wind, and by the flame of your wisdom open the horizons of our minds.

Loosen our tongues to sing your praise in words beyond the power of speech, for without your Spirit man could never raise his voice in words of peace or announce the truth that Jesus is Lord.

Opening prayer for Pentecost

power of the Holy Spirit to be productive and to bear fruit.

Let us all, wherever we may be, receive the divine breath, the holy breath that Jesus breathes upon us. Let us receive the good breath of the Holy Spirit that is renewing the Eucharistic Church which we are. ♦

Cenacle Audiotapes Available

You can order audiotapes in either English or Spanish for \$5 per tape plus shipping from Renovacion Carismatica Catolica Hispana, 500 NW 22nd Ave. Miami, FL 33125.

Call for a full list: 305-631-1007



Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner is a member of the editorial board of Pentecost Today.

Challenges of the Prayer Room Ministry

by Michele Greischar

Suggested Prayer intentions:

Please pray for the following initiatives, activities and concerns of the National Service Committee:

- ◆ For all who are involved in preparations for the National Leaders Conference that will be held in Chicago, November 11–13, and for many pre-registrations.
- ◆ For all who attend the various Charismatic Priests, Deacons and Seminar-ians retreats this year, that this experience will bear fruit in their lives and in their dioceses.
- ◆ For a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all who attend World Youth Day in Cologne in August.
- ◆ For God's protection and provision for all who serve Catholic Charismatic Renewal at the National, Diocesan and Parish level, that we will be effective in helping the Church to spread the Spirituality of Pentecost "as a renewed thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation."
- ◆ For the NSC, as they meet for their annual retreat in September, that they will clearly discern the Lord's direction for the coming year.

Scripture, like life, is full of paradoxes. "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; ...For everyone who asks, receives, ..." (Luke 11:9-10). These are strong statements, deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of prayer ministers. We pray in expectant faith for the needs of others, and we thank the Lord that in his mercy our prayers have been answered. But what happens when someone returns to the prayer room with the same problem and the same need? I am reminded of the parable of the persistent widow and the dishonest judge, wherein Jesus illustrates "... the necessity for them (us) to pray always, without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1-8). In this parable, Jesus teaches his disciples the importance of returning to prayer when it is needed. Sometimes situations and/or people need extended prayer.

The challenge in these situations, I think, is more for the prayer minister than for the supplicant. Our efficient knowledgeable selves have prayed in faith. We have followed the "right formulae." Could we ministers be failures at prayer? Surely not. It must be someone's fault. We are tempted to blame, shame or reject the supplicant. We've prayed; God hears; God answers; stop coming for prayer. But it's not always that simple. Here's our paradox. At times, we forget that prayer is not an assembly line process, but God's own mysterious creative process.

I believe that "repeat supplicants" are gifts sent by God for those ministering healing. Tapping our very core of love and patience, and challenging us to see them with God's eyes rather than with ours, they demonstrate clearly to us that God alone is the healer; we are only his ministers.

Therefore, we must become more attuned listeners to the Spirit of God within us. With his wisdom, we may be led to other avenues of prayer.

If instead of shaming, blaming or rejecting the repeat petitioner, we joyfully invite the person into an experience of God's deep unconditional love, walls to healing can be lowered in the recipient as well as in the ministers.


One effective way of dealing with these cases is Soaking Prayer. Here, a team can set aside time exclusively for prayer in the Spirit for the person. There is no need to repeat the description of the situation or any progress. The team is simply committed to praying for a specified amount of time on a regular basis for the fullness of God's love to soak into the person. We do this unconditionally, regularly and with great thanks and praise for God's goodness. Concretely, we might invite the repeat supplicant to come each week for a period of ten minutes of soaking prayer. It is necessary for those praying to be committed to this form of loving prayer, as well as to holding the boundaries of time. When we pray soaking prayer for others, we ourselves are greatly blessed, experiencing the promise of James 5:16: "...pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Practically, we might sensitively check whether the person is receiving medical or psychological help. Always, we respect the individual's integrity. Just as we might take multiple vitamins while eating a healthy diet, so we might receive multiple prayers while availing ourselves of professional sources. One does not negate the other.

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We might also encourage growth in spiritual discipline. The sacraments increase our intimacy with God. Eucharistic celebrations and Reconciliation are paths to healing. Spending time each day in prayer either before the Blessed Sacrament or in our own holy space lifts burdens that are often below our conscious level. Meditating on the mysteries of the rosary keeps us centered in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. And turning to the scripture on a regular basis draws us into the truths of our life in Jesus.

In some cases, perhaps the prayer ministers may encounter blocks that seem demonic. If it seems that additional help is needed, then consult with elders who might give direction and assistance.

Finally, through baptism we belong to the communion of saints. The saints triumphant do pray with us. Making that reality more concrete for one another is helpful. Oftentimes, our non-answered prayers

involve issues that may be rooted in alienation from a supportive community. In prayer, we can bring the individual into our heavenly family: union with Mary, as an unconditionally loving mother, with Joseph, who cares and nurtures each of us as he did Jesus, and with the child Jesus, as a healing, playful sibling. Certainly, St. Monica provides a model of a mother's persistent prayer for a straying son. St. Timothy is an example for young leaders in the Church. Who among us hasn't called on St. Anthony for help in finding something lost? We have a family of heavenly intercessors. Let's use our family resources in our prayer ministry.

With rejoicing and with thanksgiving, let us embrace the people and the paradoxes we encounter in our prayer room ministry. With our hearts and minds strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us praise God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the gift of serving his people. ♦

Is Your Prayer Group Listed?

The NSC website www.nsc-chariscenter.org has a searchable database of Liaisons, Renewal Centers, Ministries and soon of Prayer Groups. Information requests have been mailed to liaisons and Renewal Centers. In (arch)dioceses where there is no Renewal Office requests have been sent directly to prayer groups.

Is your prayer group listed? If not, please contact us at chariscenter@nsc-chariscenter.org. We want to hear from you!

Dr. Michele Greischar has been a psychotherapist in Chicago for the past 30 years. A past member of the National Service Committee, she now serves on the National Council. She and her husband Richard have three adult children.



1980 Thank God with us for **25** years of service 2005



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Steubenville Youth Conferences

by Sally Dubroc

Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio is the co-host of nine youth conferences across the country. It also hosts three youth conferences on its college campus. More than thirty thousand young people will attend a Steubenville conference this summer. This year's theme is "Experience the Glory" and we know that God's Glory is going to be manifested in awesome ways.

What happens after the weekend experience? As coordinator of the Steubenville South conference for the past several years, I have prayed about and pondered upon this question. One thing the Lord has shown me is that good follow up begins with prayerful and focused preparation. The key to working with young people is relationship. The building of this relationship has to start months before the conference. This will help to establish an element of trust which will ensure open and honest communication. **It is important to explain to the youth that the conference is a beginning, not an ending, to a life journey with Jesus Christ.**

What can we equip them with as they go back into their home environments? **Here are some suggestions:**

- ✦ Give each attendee a list of websites with good Catholic youth resources. The Steubenville South website has a forum for young people and also a list of resources that pertain to youth issues. The Internet is the largest form of communication among young people today
- ✦ Invite your priests and families to attend the first gathering of the youth the week after the conference. This will provide a safe forum for the youth to share their experiences.
- ✦ For many of the young people, the Saturday night session is the most powerful part of the weekend. The session is centered on Eucharistic procession and Eucharistic adoration. **It is important to make the youth understand that this same Jesus is present in their home churches, adoration chapels, and in their own hearts.** Regular Eucharistic

adoration as a group should be a major part of the conference follow up.

- ✦ For some young people, the conference is the first time that they get in touch with a past hurt or pain. It is important to walk closely with them, reminding them that God is bringing this up for healing. Sometimes, the young person will have to seek counseling as follow up after the conference. This should be made available to the young person as part of the healing process. It is also good to invite a professional counselor to come in and address the youth from time to time. The issues that they are dealing with can some times seem overwhelming but I have found that what they need the most is to know that others deal with the same things and also that sharing with some one will be the beginning of freedom.
- ✦ Encourage the young people to pray, read scripture, have times of praise and worship, and receive the sacraments often. Teens are more likely to do all of these things in structured settings rather than alone. Adults should work together in planning these things.

Fruits of the follow up can be seen in the spiritual growth and evangelistic enthusiasm of the youth. It can also be seen in the increased number of conference attendees. This year some 5500 will be attending Steubenville South with one third being brand new to the conference. The youth who attend the conference are doing a great work of spreading the good news! For more exciting information that would be helpful to those involved in youth ministry or for those who are looking for ways to assist in this work check out our website: www.steubenvillesouth.com.

Youth leaders are essential to providing for the needs of the young person. For many adult chaperones, the Steubenville confer-

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ences are a time of personal conversion and transformation. One of the things that youth ministers and adult volunteers need is spiritually mature, spirit-filled people who can serve as mentors for them. The Charismatic Community in my diocese has provided a place for me to go and seek prayer and counsel. These awesome people of God are spread throughout our country **and I see these people as invaluable in the follow up process from the conferences.** So, how do we pull these people into the process of follow up for our teens? Every prayer group leader should find out which churches in their area are sending groups to a Steubenville conference. The next step is to reach out to the adults who are bringing youth to the conferences. Make them aware of local prayer meetings, healing services, houses of prayer, and other resources that can help them in their

own faith journey. Prayer groups can intercede for the needs of the conference participants. Some members may feel led to serve as prayer ministers if there is a conference in their area.

God has placed a special anointing over the Steubenville conferences and the Holy Spirit has brought the Sacraments to life for many who attend a conference. God is bringing up an army of young people who desire to be radical. It is truly a glorious time for the Church! ♦



Sally Dubroc has served as Coordinator of the Steubenville South conference which has been held in Alexandria, Louisiana for the last several years.



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Word of Knowledge

Excerpts in this article are taken from Word of Knowledge by Fr. Robert DeGrandis, SSI.

Word of Knowledge is word or fact given to us by the Holy Spirit by which we gain information necessary to heal and renew members of the body of Christ. Often this is not recognized as a movement of the Holy Spirit and people wonder where this thought or idea is coming from.

Word of Knowledge comes as a thought, a vision, a word, a sense or by an emotion. With time, encouragement and continued use of the Word of Knowledge you will develop and come to recognize the way in which this charismatic gift will be manifested through you.

Understanding Word of Knowledge and seeing it manifested leads one to increased praise. Through Word of Knowledge, I

have seen miracle upon miracle performed as the Lord has set his people free of spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological bondages.

A Word of Knowledge often unlocks negative secrets of a person's past which frequently require deep forgiveness. It is my experience, and it is the experience of many, that as we allow the Lord to heal us in these negative, repressed areas, then the space in our souls which was previously occupied with this repressed material can now be filled with his love. The Lord wants to fill us with his love, more than we could ever hope or imagine.

In every example of the Word of Knowledge, we must emphasize the need for discernment. We need to ask the Lord if this is really from him. We should always seek first that it is indeed the Lord manifesting himself in these situations. If there is any uncertainty, the next proper step is to check your Word of Knowledge with your prayer partner or someone who has a strong gift of discernment. As with most issues in the spiritual realm, we want to move with a balance of the two—with caution that we are not operating out of ourselves and also with confidence that what we have asked the Lord we shall receive. We move with confidence and caution.

Inner Healing and the Word of Knowledge

In the medical profession, healing is basically divided into two parts, diagnosis and therapy. The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit—Word of Knowledge and Word of Wisdom—are commonly referred to as the spiritual diagnosis and the spiritual prescription of the inner healing ministry.

The first part of inner healing prayer is diagnosis—this is the Word of

Some General Principles

- Word of Knowledge reveals facts that are unknown.
- Word of Knowledge is God's diagnosis.
- Word of Knowledge enables the ministry of Jesus to flow through us.
- Word of Knowledge comes in many ways—visions, words, feelings or sacred scripture readings.
- There is continued growth in all the gifts, especially Word of Knowledge.
- Priests can often use this gift in confession and counseling.
- Word of Knowledge points out barriers to God's love.

Knowledge. We ask the Lord, "Lord, where is the problem? What area of this person's life needs healing? Jesus, I ask you to reveal to me the source of his problem. In what area of this person's life are we to be focusing our prayer?" So with one ear you are listening to the person and with the other *inner* ear you are listening to what the Lord is revealing. To simplify and clarify, you might say that the Word of Knowledge is received in answer to the question "Where is the problem, Lord?" Word of Wisdom is received to a follow-up question "What do we do about it or where do we go from here?" The Holy Spirit generally reveals the answer to both if we ask.

We need to ask the Lord what we are to do once we receive a Word of Knowledge. We should not always state openly what we have received through the Word of Knowledge. Sometimes instead of speaking the word received we should simply say a prayer of blessing: "Bless this person in mind, body and spirit." This way we are not invading the person's privacy. Prudence needs to be exercised even more particularly with Word of Knowledge because we are dealing with such deep levels of a person's being. ♦

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Filipino Renewal – alive and vibrant!

by Bob Canton

“My people, I desire for you to continue your works of evangelization. Continue to win more souls for my glory and for my Father’s kingdom. Reach out with love and boldness and humility to those who are lost and to those who don’t know me and bring them back to me. Do not leave anyone behind but lead your brothers and sisters to me. Do it in love and in my name for my glory and for my Father’s glory. Continue to bear fruit, the fruit that will last, in my name and present it to me so that I in turn can present it to my Father. Do not rely only on your own power, but trust fully in the power of my Holy Spirit to guide you. Remember, I am the source of your strength and your wisdom and your very existence. I am the source of every good gift. Open wide your heart and mind and your entire being to me. Know that I am with you. Trust in me and in my love for all of you.”

These words of prophecy were received by 63 leaders and some guests during the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities (AFCCPC) National Leaders’ Meeting held in Las Vegas, Nevada last March 2005. Through this message and other similar prophecies, the Filipino leaders of the Renewal have discerned that the Lord Jesus has affirmed their works in the Renewal and he wants them to continue to evangelize with more zeal and fervor and vigor than ever before. The leaders have also decided, among other things, to form Speakers Bureau for each region (the Alliance has 14 regions in North America) to meet the growing demands for Life in the Spirit Seminars and Growth in the Spirit Seminars and retreats in their respective region.

The AFCCPC, which is the umbrella organization of all the Filipino Charismatic Catholics in North America, holds this



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National Leaders’ Meeting twice a year. The AFCCPC has been sponsoring a biennial National Convention since 1997 and Regional Conferences annually. Furthermore, two Regional Conferences are scheduled for 2005: the Mid Atlantic Regional Conference to be held in the Baltimore Convention Center on September 23–25 and the South Pacific Regional Conference on Nov. 18–20 at the Ontario Hilton and Convention Center in downtown Ontario, California.

Among AFCCPC’s mission is to serve and to help unify and build up the Filipino Catholic Charismatic prayer groups and prayer communities and to enable them to evangelize and proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ with the fire of the Holy Spirit. It also aims to be a major contributor in the efforts of other Catholic Renewal Service Committees in bringing the renewal to the heart of the church and to individuals through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is estimated that there are currently around 1,000 adult and young adult prayer groups and prayer communities under the AFCCPC umbrella throughout North America. Most of the concentration of these prayer groups and prayer communities are in the metropolitan areas in the states of New York, New Jersey, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia, Texas, Florida, Arizona, Nevada, Alaska, and in Ontario, Canada. The AFCCPC also publishes and maintains an English language newsletter, *The Trumpet*, on a quarterly basis and a website, www.afccpc.org.

The Alliance is reaching out more to youth and young adults by sponsoring seminars, retreats and spiritual formations that are specially geared for them. Youth and Young Adult tracks have been part of the National and Regional Conferences to minister and to reach out to them. Many of them have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit during these events and as a result, many have either formed or joined existing youth-oriented prayer groups.

It is very heartening to see many Filipinos in the Renewal who have been very active in their services to their parishes. When you receive the release of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you experience the power of the risen Christ. As a result, it transforms you and you become more zealous in your service for the Lord and his people. Praise God, this has been happening to many of us, and this is indeed a grace from God.

It is the hope and aspiration of the entire Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities that we will be equal to the challenges that are posed before us and that we will become all that the Lord wants us to be for his glory. ♦



Bob Canton is the National Coordinator of the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities. He resides with his family in Stockton, California.



From the
Executive
Director

by Walter Matthews

Sent forth from the Cenacle

Elsewhere in this issue you can read of the spiritually powerful Cenacle of Prayer for America that the National Service Committee, in collaboration with others, gathered in Miami over Pentecost weekend.

It was forty hours of prayer and Eucharistic adoration for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon one America. In his important Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* our recently deceased Holy Father, Pope John Paul II the Great, challenged us to think of ourselves as one America: “the decision to speak of ‘America’ in the singular was an attempt to express not only the unity which in some way already exists, but also to point to that closer bond which the peoples of the continent seek and which the Church wishes to foster as part of her own mission, as she works to promote the communion of all in the Lord.” (#5)

The Cenacle brought three strands together: **First**, we were responding to the Holy Father’s call in *Ecclesia in America* to intercede with Mary under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother and Evangelizer of America, for a fresh “outpouring of the Holy Spirit...so that the new evangelization [of America] may yield a splendid flowering of Christian life.” (#11)

Second, in this Year of the Eucharist we sought “to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ’s real presence ...in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass...Let us take the time to kneel before Jesus present in the Eucharist in order to make reparation

by our faith and love for the acts of carelessness and neglect, and even the insults which our Savior must endure in many parts of the world.” (*Mane Nobiscum Domine* #18).

Although we did not know it when we began planning this event in May 2003, the Cenacle was a type of “Burning Bush,” the initiative of the Italian Renewal Pope John Paul II commended on the eve of Pentecost last year:

This involves perpetual adoration, day and night, before the Blessed Sacrament; it is an invitation to the faithful to “return to the Upper Room,” so that, united in contemplation of the Eucharistic Mystery, they may intercede for full Christian unity and for the conversion of sinners. I warmly hope that this initiative will lead many to rediscover the gifts of the Spirit whose original source is Pentecost.

Third, we spent 40 hours in prayer (also with meditations, reflections, and processions) in preparation for Pentecost so that “the spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the church as a *renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation*.” (Pope John Paul II, Eve of Pentecost 2004)

This “call to prayer” is an intrinsic part of the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the work of the NSC. In 1999 and 2001, on the eve of and at the end of the Year of the Great Jubilee, the NSC had organized smaller Prayer Summits! While it is certainly true that some have been called and gifted for a ministry of intercession, *all of us* renewed and empowered in the Holy Spirit are called to intercede, “for the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express” (Rms 8:26).

We were encouraged in this latest initiative by the number of dioceses, communities, prayer groups, and individuals, who though they could not be with us in Miami, took up this latest “call to prayer”.

But the Cenacle—of Spirit and Eucharist—is always a call to be sent forth...to build the culture of Pentecost, as Pope John Paul II encouraged us to do.

Second National Leaders Conference

It is in this vein that the NSC, in collaboration with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, is convening its second National Leaders’ Conference in recent memory, November 11-13 in Chicago. The theme is *Sent Forth to Build the Culture of Pentecost*. The keynote will be given by Bishop Sam Jacobs. The format for Saturday will follow that of the Leaders’ Conference in Nashville in 2003: 8 or 9 workshop tracks will be offered during the morning and afternoon on Saturday. Topics to be covered include: Charismatic Renewal at the Heart of the Church; Spirituality of Pentecost; Healing; Leadership; Charisms; and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

All leaders—of diocesan teams, of prayer groups, communities and ministries, brothers and sisters exercising ministries of praise and worship, healing and other gifts, as well as those who minister to youth and young adults “in the power of the Spirit”—are invited to attend.

Invitations will be issued through local liaisons and Renewal Centers. If you do not have a liaison or Renewal Center please call us at 1-800-338-2445. We want to see you there! ♦

Friends of the NSC

"Friends of the NSC" are those who by their donations support the work of the National Service Committee and its headquarters Chariscenter USA. Without our Friends this work could not continue in its present form. We rely on and pray for your continued support.

Here is how some of our Friends think of us: "Your work is quite important." "Thank you very much for this service of evangelization, education and unity." "Thank you and may Jesus bless you in all you do for the Renewal and for His people."

We are always in need of making new "Friends". If you are already a donor, please invite one or two other members of your prayer group or community to become a Friend of the NSC. We would appreciate it.

Where We Stand

In ambiguity and in trust!

As of the end of May our Income is somewhat less than projected for the year, while our regular non-conference expenses are as projected! There is ambiguity as to the financial results of the Cenacle of Prayer for America due to the less than expected attendance. We are, however, prayerfully hopeful that we will emerge from the Cenacle without additional NSC debt.

However, we are likely not to realize from the Cenacle the net of monies for which we had planned for the NSC's other programmatic initiatives.

On the other hand, earlier this year the Committee learned that it had received a generous and unexpected bequest, which, hopefully, will offset any shortfall from the Cenacle. The Lord provides and we are grateful.

As you may know, due to years of leanness the NSC has little or no cash reserves. By God's grace we pay our bills on time with the monies we receive from the donations of our Friends and Fanning the Flame Partners. We still have some long term debt that we are slowly paying down.

Please prayerfully consider adding us to your will. Your gift may offset some future shortfall and be a cause for great rejoicing!

As Catholic Christians we have such a rich inheritance at our disposal during our lifetime here on earth. We have our sacramental system, which empowers us to become children of God and heirs of heaven; which provides us with forgiveness and nourishment; which calls down on us the same Holy Spirit who enflamed Jesus leading him to do the Father's will; which makes holy the marriage of man and woman and the ordination of priests; and which brings healing in this life or safe passage to eternal life. We are so blessed!

But that is not all. In *Lumen Gentium*, n. 12, we read: "It is not only through the sacraments and church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Allotting his gift 'to everyone according as he will' (1 Cor. 1:11), he distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks or offices advantageous for the renewal and upbuilding of the church, according to the words of the apostle: 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit' (1 Cor. 12:7). These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the church."

We are the recipients of grace, the very life of God! We are gifted. We bear fruit. We are called to proclaim the word of God. We are called to be the hands of God. We are called, not just to feel good, but to work hard. We are called to pray and to intercede, but we are also the recipients of the prayer and intercession of others.

What is more, we are called to believe in Jesus and to do the works that Jesus did and even greater (John 14:12). We need to see our ministry, no matter what it is, as doing the works of Jesus. We need to

Ministry Update

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner



ask for and to receive the equipping of God in order to do the works of God. We are called to work in unity with one another, to be the body of Jesus, ministering and receiving ministry.

As I began this column I was thinking of the effort that the NSC makes, as it deliberates, to be of one mind and one spirit, to understand the statements, concerns and suggestions of one another, and to work under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. With the help of modern technology we continue conversations according to our committee activities. We are challenged, as individuals with ministry (many with full time positions), with families, with friends, to share what we have received because, as we read in the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, n. 3, "From the reception of these charisms or gifts... there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the church and in the world for the good of mankind and for the upbuilding of the church." ♦

Attention: Pentecost Today Readers

Each issue of *Pentecost Today* costs the National Service Committee about \$8000 to produce and mail. In order to assure that we can do four issues in 2005, a donor has offered a Matching Grant of up to \$3000. This Grant would only match those donations that are received from *Pentecost Today* readers who are not already active donors to the NSC.

If you are one of the 5,000 recipients of *Pentecost Today* who have not made a donation to the NSC in the last year, we encourage you to send a donation today. The suggested donation is \$15 per year. This is a small amount for such a valuable resource.

Please make your check payable to: **Friends of the NSC** and mail it to: NSC-Chariscenter USA, PO Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628. Thank you for your support.

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