

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

July/August/September 2006

the gift of healing

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Healing mercy

Mercy is a word that conjures up many images. The dictionary itself lists several synonyms for mercy: charity, clemency, grace, leniency. They are then defined “as a disposition to show kindness or compassion. Mercy implies compassion that forebears punishing even when justice demands it.”

The Greek word that describes mercy says it is to wipe out, obliterated forever. In her Magnificat, Mary proclaims that God is “ever mindful of his mercy” (Luke 1:54). Scripture says of God’s mercy, “Let us fall into the hands of the Lord and not into the hands of men, for equal to his majesty is the mercy that he shows” (Sirach 2:18). “Who can measure his majestic power or exhaust the tale of his mercies?” (Sirach 18:3). My favorite comes from the book of Lamentations, which seems like an unlikely place to find such a promise. “But, I will call this to mind as my reason to have hope: The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning so great is his faithfulness” (Lam. 3:21-23).

When we think of the great gift of Divine Mercy and its celebration on Divine Mercy Sunday it causes us to stand in awe. Pope Benedict XVI highlighted this earlier this year when he said that Divine Mercy is “an integral dimension of a Christian’s faith and prayer.” Pope John Paul II had said: “outside of the mercy of God there is no other source of hope for man.”

God’s mercy is constantly being given to the world. It is always before us ready to be given to us and be embraced by

us. It is mercy that gives healing, it is mercy that sets things right again, and it is mercy that frees us from the punishment due to sin. It is mercy that ultimately calls us to be merciful as he is merciful. It calls us to give mercy in the same measure we have received mercy. Only the grace of God can raise us up to such a level.

Very often the scripture from Luke 6:36-38 is used to create in us the zeal to give in a monetary way. As we look closely at the words we will note that we are told not to judge in order not to be judged, not to condemn in order not to be condemned. We are told to pardon in order to be pardoned and then we read “for the measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” As we struggle to do these things we find that it is not as easy as it looks or seems. This should create in us a desire to cry out to God for the grace to be people of mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

“In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, in the spirit of his messianic mission, enduring in the history of humanity, we raise our voices and pray that the Love which is in the Father may once again be revealed at this stage of history, and that, through the work of the Son and Holy Spirit, **it may be shown to be present in our modern world and to be more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death.** ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy’” (John Paul II, *The Mercy of God*). ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editor's Desk

Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

Whoever tastes the Lord becomes a spring of joy for all the world in pain.

These words I recall from a hymn I once read have both challenged and inspired me. I am continually reminded of my call to be an agent of God’s tender love in my daily life. The articles in this issue seek to explain, demonstrate and encourage each of us to be instruments of God’s mercy through the charism of healing.

Our columnists—**Aggie Neck, Walter Matthews and Sister Mary Anne Schaezner**—each approach this gift from a different aspect. Check their columns for important insights.

Christie Beback in her article gives testimony to her call to be an agent of healing and mercy. She encourages us to hear our call to be the same. **Roy Handy and John Sullivan** show us how to simply, yet effectively bring this charism of healing into our parishes.

Michele Greischar dramatically demonstrates healing prayer ministry in our prayer meetings in her article on page 8 and 9. *Could this happen at your prayer meeting?* Spiritual formation for those in the healing ministry is of utmost importance. **Ron Novotny** gives us some suggestions to strengthen and equip us for this service.

The Lord uses our youth as instruments of healing as we read in **Cindy Erivez’** article detailing healings that take place during the praise & worship of her Youth Prayer Meeting. *Our God is an awesome God!* ♦

Vigil of Pentecost in Rome

Church Celebrates with Renewal Movements

On Saturday, June 3, 2006, the eve of Pentecost, Benedict XVI gave an exhortation to a gathering of some 400,000 members of movements and ecclesial communities gathered in and around St. Peter's Square. This massive meeting presided over by Benedict XVI was the second of its kind. A similar meeting was convoked in 1998 by Pope John Paul II.

Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, during Saturday's meeting addressed Pope Benedict in these words: "Holy Father, you have always told us that wherever the Spirit appears there is surprise, bewilderment and amazement, because it transforms people and changes the course of history, generating fruits that could never be the outcome of human planning. Today we wish to raise our song of praise for the fruits of holy lives, of communion, of courage and missionary creativity that these new charisms make flourish in the Church of our times. They are truly signs of a new Christian spring. "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

In his greetings to the crowd gathered Pope Benedict XVI emphasized several points which were of great encouragement to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and other movements represented at this event:

- ◆ The Holy Father expressed hope that the Church's "pastors will be careful not to extinguish the Spirit manifested in the new movements and ecclesial communities."
- ◆ The Spirit always inspires new gifts, using diverse instruments to achieve his purposes.
- ◆ In him multiplicity and unity go together. The Spirit breathes where he wills. He does so in an unexpected way, in unexpected places, and in ways that had never before been imagined.
- ◆ Multiformity and unity are inseparable. The Holy Spirit

desires multiformity, and desires all to be one body in union with the Church.

- ◆ The Pope said, "One who has found what is true, beautiful and good in his life — the only treasure, the precious pearl! — runs everywhere to share it, in the family, at work, in all the environments of his life."
- ◆ The movements and communities were encouraged to be even more and more involved in the Pope's universal apostolic ministry of evangelization—opening the doors to Christ.
- ◆ "You are called to use your gifts to build an authentic civilization—the civilization of love."

After the Pope's message there was a liturgical memorial of the sacrament of confirmation, characterized by the rite of fire, the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the profession of faith.

Luis Fernando Figari, founder of the Christian Life Movement, and Patti Gallagher Mansfield, of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, thanked the Holy Father at the end on behalf of all the movements and ecclesial communities. In her remarks Patti Mansfield said, "Holy Father, thank you for loving us. Thank you for your constant support and encouragement. Thank you for saying that you are a friend of the movements and that we are a sign of the new springtime. We want to return love for love. Jesus said, 'If you love me, keep my word' (cf. John 14:23), and we stand ready to receive your word, Holy Father, and to follow your direction."

As Archbishop Rylko proclaimed to the Pope, "**We are ready for the mission! The Church can count on us! The Pope and bishops can count on us!**" ◆

This summary is adapted from Zenit.org Vatican News #ZE06060413 & #ZE060604103, June 4, 2006.

Agents of mercy



by Christie Beback

I used to have a nice, respectable view on the subject of divine healing. I definitely believed that God had the *power* to heal. I believed that he *had* healed in the past, especially through the earthly ministry of Jesus. I even believed that on rare occasion, under special circumstances, he healed in our time. This presumably happened because those involved had great holiness or great faith, or God had an extraordinary reason to interrupt the natural order.

It took a lot longer for me to believe that when I pray for healing that anything could possibly happen.

Then, in 1972, my husband and I began to attend the Amazing Grace Prayer Meeting. My views on divine healing quickly changed. Seeing what was happening around me, I came to know that when people of faith *ask*, God often heals. It took a lot longer for me to believe that when I pray for healing that anything could possibly happen. The road to this faith was through humble experience and the taking of baby steps.

It began with feeling a bit guilty about my mother. Here I was seeing wonderful healings occur and at the same time she was suffering from painful, nearly crippling arthritis. I found it difficult, though, to even think of encouraging her to receive prayer. She was a very hardworking, stubborn woman who did not approve of people that “ran to the doctor.” She had actually lost all feeling and control in her left leg because she had refused, for years, to seek medical help for her Sciatica pain. All my

efforts to get her to the doctor had proven fruitless. In light of the fact that I am a Registered Nurse, this was particularly frustrating. She also happened to be a Protestant and I didn’t know how she’d feel about “Catholic prayer.”

Finally, I found myself phoning her and inviting her to attend a Mass and Healing Service. I was certain that nothing would come of it, but to my utter amazement, she came. When prayer for healing was offered she quickly got in the line for the priest’s team and received prayer. At this point I was daring to hope that she would be healed but alas nothing happened.

Months later we went home for the holidays. I noticed my mother was rushing around energetically. Her movements seemed free and easy. There was no facial grimacing. “How’s your arthritis?” I asked. “Oh, that’s not much of a problem any more.” she said. I stared at her, questioning... Finally she shed some light of the situation. “Okay... I went to the doctor,” she said, sheepishly, “and he gave me some pills that seem to really take care of it.”

People say that God heals in different ways. Knowing my mother as I did, I had no trouble seeing this as divine intervention. In fact, her going to the doctor was almost a bigger event to me than an instantaneous healing. I thanked God for rewarding my small baby step so generously.

Agents of mercy

My next faith-building experience involved my father. This occurred about a year later when my parents came for a visit. After putting their suitcases down, my mother pulled a chair into the middle of my kitchen floor, commanded my father to sit in it and announced that I was to pray over his skin cancer. Thoughts raced through my head. Should I try to quickly round up someone from the prayer meeting that actually knew how to pray for healing? I decided this was not feasible. Did my father *want* prayer? It seemed that he was agreeable in a Stoic sort of way. Feeling put on the spot and profoundly awkward, I anointed my father with blessed oil and asked God to please heal the skin cancer. The prayer was painfully short and humble and nothing happened. We all sort of shrugged and went on with our visiting.

The next morning we were in for a wonderful surprise. My quiet, undemonstrative father was smiling like a Cheshire cat. The large skin cancer that had been growing on the back of his ear had totally disappeared! I was in shock and could only praise God for his goodness.

Some months later I had another experience that was to increase my understanding and faith in this area. While on a playground outing with my daughter I met a stranger who was obviously very ill. He had all the signs of end-stage lung disease including a portable oxygen tank. Talking to him I learned that he was suffering from Asbestosis. He was a very sweet man and my heart went out to him. Plucking up my courage I suggested that he seek prayer for healing. I even offered to come, with others, to his house, as he didn't feel he had the strength to attend a meeting or Mass. He was open to this and a few days later three of us knocked on his door. One of my prayer partners had brought a written prayer she wanted him to repeat after her. She said it was a good preparation for re-

ceiving God's healing. As the prayer began I was horrified at how personal and direct it was, especially in light of the fact that the man's extended family had gathered. She led him through asking for forgiveness for all his sins, giving his life to God, forgiving everyone who had ever hurt him, rejecting Satan, you name it. The only thing she left out was a baptismal ceremony. The man, however, prayed along in sweet humility and sincerity. Finally we joined in asking God to heal him. I felt God's love in the room, but no obvious healing occurred.

As it happened, this man died a couple months later. I felt true sadness at his loss. I wanted to offer his wife my condolences but I held back. Had my interference in their suffering just made things worse? Had I stepped out of acceptable bounds in my enthusiasm? Weeks later I did stop by. His wife then told me the story of his death. She had sat at his bedside as the shortness of breath became more and more extreme. At one point she asked him, "Honey, are you scared?" He said, "No. Jesus is right here with me!" Then he died. She explained that he had rarely set foot in a church but that she felt certain he was now with God and this was her greatest comfort.

I have come to believe that we should never neglect to pray for physical healing. God wants to bless and heal and love and help people. He even wants to bring some into his saving grace. His arm is not shortened. He only needs a few baby steps on our part. ♦

Christie Beback was baptized as an adult at Blessed Sacrament Church in Seattle where she happily presents workshops to this day. She has been a speaker for various church programs, including Alpha, and has presented workshops at Catholic Charismatic Conferences.



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Prayer ministry in our

How often have we heard, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have the opportunity to pray for the needs of those in our parish!" Below are two examples of people who went beyond the thought, and beyond the words, and worked together with their pastors to bring this hope into reality. *Holy Spirit, continue to open doors and hearts to the charism of healing in our everyday life.*

Prayer for Healing Ministry

by John O. Sullivan

The Prayer for Healing Ministry at the parishes of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Immaculate Conception in Everett, Washington began in September of 1995. Supported and encouraged by our pastor, Fr. Dennis Robb, we offer this ministry not only to our parishioners, but also to the wider community.

We use a team approach to this ministry. Prayer teams of two trained prayer ministers will pray with an individual, in strict confidence, for physical, emotional, spiritual or relational healing.

Currently we provide prayer teams after the 11:30 AM Mass every Sunday at Our Lady of Perpetual Help and twice a month after the 6:00 PM. Mass at Immaculate Conception. We also offer once a week (for several weeks) one-hour ministry with individuals at the parish office or church during the week, as the need presents itself.

Most of our 25 Prayer for Healing ministers have participated in the two-year training program of *Institute for Christian Ministries* (I.C.M.), founded by Fr. Leo Thomas, O.P. in 1977. In fact, af-

ter the parish purchased the training program from I.C.M., and with the strong support of our pastor we have trained three, two-year groups ourselves. I.C.M. provides a training program that is internationally packaged (information is available on their website: www.healingministry.org/icm).

The reason why this ministry is so important is that we minister to the whole person, not just a part of that person. We do not compete with the medical and counseling professions, but rather complement what they provide, with healing prayer. One of the most important things we are trained to do is to listen intently to what the individual brings to the ministry session without judging or condemning them. In fact, after listening to their request/their story, one of the first prayers we offer is a prayer of affirmation, thanking God for this person and how much God loves them just as they are. This is before we pray for their specific request. This prayer in itself is powerfully healing.

The Prayer for Healing Ministry is also a powerful tool of evangelization and re-evangelization. In the early centu-

ries of our church history, many people came into the Faith via this particular ministry. I remember a few years ago a woman called the parish office. She had been away from the church for twenty-five years because she thought she had committed an unpardonable sin of abortion. I invited her to come into the office that very day. I listened to her distressful story and prayed with her. Affirming her uniqueness as God's beloved child, I asked him to heal her of this tragic event and reconcile her to her loving Savior, Jesus Christ. I asked her if she wanted to go to confession and though she felt nervous, she agreed to do so. Our Assistant Pastor was in the office at that time and was willing and able to hear her confession then and there. She has been actively participating in the sacramental life of the Church ever since.

A testimony often expressed by supplicants, which validates the effectiveness of this ministry, is their experience of the presence of God through those who minister to them. ♦

John Sullivan and his wife, Carmen, are on the staff at Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Immaculate Conception Parishes in Everett, WA. Carmen is director of Religious Edu-



cation, and John is responsible for three outreach ministries: Prayer of Healing, Grief Ministry and Stephen Ministry.



How to bring healing prayer ministry to your parish

by Roy Handy

It was 10:30 in the morning and Mass was letting out at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Toledo, Ohio. Father had just announced that, starting today, the “Healing Team” would be available to pray for any needs of parishioners. A man who had come into the church thinking Mass was just starting heard Father’s announcement. He ran to the front of the church. Weeping, he told the team his life was in a shambles and asked for prayer. Thus began the ministry we call the “Afterglow of the Eucharist.”

Sometime before this, our ministry to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Diocese of Toledo had been to have weekly charismatic Masses and healing services in parishes around the diocese. Those of us who served on healing teams for these Masses felt that we often had our fingers on the pulse of the diocese as we prayed with people. Many times, I had shared with our late Bishop James Hoffman about the needs of the people we encountered. However, we were only able to visit these parishes once a year and we were concerned that this wasn’t enough. Our people needed more help.

One day at a lunch meeting in the Charismatic Renewal office, a group of us began discussing ways to bring prayer to our local parishes. My wife,

Barb, mentioned a book she had read many years ago called *The AfterGlow* about the Holy Spirit in our lives. Another person talked about the Eucharist and how powerful it is when we receive it at Mass.

We decided that we would approach our pastor and parish council with a proposal that teams of parishioners provide prayer ministry after Mass. It would be a ministry for the parish run by the parish, not the Charismatic Renewal office. We would call it the “Afterglow of the Eucharist,” a name previously given to the time of silence we always had after receiving the Eucharist at the charismatic Masses to listen for words from the Lord. We had a brochure made up so the idea could be presented to other parishes as well.

At Good Shepherd, the Afterglow of the Eucharist has been a work of love. The prayer team members are the last to leave the church and before they go, they make sure all the needs of the people are met. Sometimes, two or three people come for prayer and other times we have as many as eight or nine. As long as there are people who need prayer, we remain in the church.

We use a prayer called the “Simple Blessing Prayer” and may pray silently as the Spirit leads us. Since beginning

Prayer Card

For the renewal of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church we pray:

Solemn Blessing of Pentecost
 This day the Father of light has enlightened the minds of the disciples by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May he bless you and give you the gifts of the Spirit forever. AMEN.

May that fire which hovered over the disciples as tongues of flame burn out all evil from your hearts and make them glow with pure light. AMEN.

God inspired speech in different tongues to proclaim one faith. May he strengthen your faith and fulfill your hope to see him face to face. AMEN.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. AMEN. AMEN.

From the Roman Catholic Sacramentary

this parish ministry, the idea has spread to other parishes in the diocese and we have received calls from throughout the country from people who have heard about it and want to start it in their own parishes.

Although all of us who serve on the parish healing team know we are called to pray everyday, it is a special privilege to be able to pray for our fellow parishioners when they come forward after a Sunday Mass. ♦



Roy Handy is a member of Good Shepherd Parish and is Director of the Charismatic Renewal in the Diocese of Toledo.



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

- ◆ That the gift of healing will flourish in the Church, drawing many people toward the mercy and love of God. And for many parishes to undertake weekly healing prayer ministry to their parishioners.
- ◆ That the fruits of the Pentecost Vigil gathering in Rome will be evident in unity among all the Lay Ecclesial Movements and in zeal among their members.
- ◆ For the preparations for the National Leaders Conference to be held in Albuquerque in November and for many people to be able to attend.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ For an increase in faith, hope and love as we exercise all the charisms that the Holy Spirit chooses to bestow on us.

Extra copies of *Pentecost Today* available

Extra copies of the last 6 issues of *Pentecost Today* (going back to January/February/March 2005) are available for distribution to members of prayer groups or at Days of Renewal for a nominal charge of \$5 per 10 copies. Please send your request (including issue wanted) to Chariscenter USA, PO Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508. Requests will be filled on a first come first served basis.

Check out our website

www.nsc-chariscenter.org

Recent additions: a listing of 2006 Regional and Diocesan Conferences with dates and contact information; an annotated list of audio/cd resources from the Leaders' Conferences in Nashville and Chicago.

Ways to provide healing prayer ministry at our prayer meetings

by Michele Greischar

One sunny afternoon in downtown Chicago, Petra and Jon were going to their prayer group for a meeting. To get there, they had to pass the corner of State and Chicago, a spot notorious for panhandlers and aggressive beggars. As they approached, one of the "regulars" reached out to them with his cup. "How about some money, huh?"

Most people's response was to avoid eye contact and to walk quickly past him. But Jon and Petra looked at each other and then at him. Somehow, this situation seemed familiar (Acts: 3:1-10). They didn't really have the money, but what did they have?

What would you do?

Jon asked the panhandler his name, reached out to him and invited him to join them inside for some hot coffee and conversation. The veil of anonymity ripped.

As the trio walked into their meeting space, Mike, stationed at the door, greeted them warmly and welcomed them for the prayer meeting. He was a big guy, but he seemed gentle. Jon and Petra then introduced Bart, the beggar, to Mary and Beth, two members who were making coffee and tending to hospitality. The coffee was hot and satisfying. Beth even found a few cookies for their guest. Jon talked to him for a while and asked if he would like to stay for their meeting. "The coffee's not so bad. I'll hang around for a while," he responded. And he did.

Were Jon, Petra, Mike, Mary and Beth all part of the community's healing ministry?

As they sat down together, Jon told Bart that he would stay with him to answer any questions he had and to explain anything that he didn't understand. Some of the other people in the room wandered over and talked to them.

This was very strange. People were not ignoring him or running away from him. Even big Mike had welcomed him, not sent him away.

Bart noticed that some people were working together setting up chairs; some were getting sheet music and instruments ready. Others sat quietly talking together or laughing. There was an air of expectation, but Petra had disappeared. He asked Jon where she was.

Apparently, Petra and Faith were in another room praying **soaking prayer**. What a wonderful name – soaking, like in a bathtub. Images of warm sudsy water covering his body popped into his mind. Jon said that before each meeting a team was available for anyone who had chronic physical or emotional needs. He said that healing could happen instantly or in stages, and for those who needed repeated prayer for their needs, they could go there and get soaked. The group had also realized that some people came to the meeting with so much agitation that they needed a little time of concentrated prayer before the meetings began. They



were welcome to receive the infilling of God's grace and peace so that they could more fully enter into praise and worship. Jon explained that it wasn't the same as their individual prayer after the meeting, that oftentimes there were no words, just bringing the person into God's heart to soak in his love. That team was committed to 30 minutes before the meeting's starting time.

As more and more people gathered, Bart noticed Petra return to the room. Soon the seats were almost filled and Mike, the greeter, stood to welcome all and to begin the meeting with a peppy song about an "Awesome God." Obviously, these people really liked their God. They smiled and clapped as they sang and they even made some hand gestures with it. These were not the gestures he was used to seeing. Even though Bart didn't know most of the music, it was great to see the smiling faces and to hear the beauty of the others' voices. He felt really different, in a good way.

Being in the presence of a loving God-centered community heals. The walls of isolation wobbled.

As the music, prayers and scripture readings progressed, some people also gave short stories about their lives—ways in which they had seen God working and personal pains in which they knew God was present. Bart noticed that when people revealed these events in their lives, they were respected. No one was left with their raw wound untended; Mike would always say a short prayer for them. And then the group would continue. It seemed this all fit together as a whole. People's little stories did not distract anyone from what

seemed to be a growing sense of the presence and love of God in the group.

There were times of singing, times of scripture, times of reflection and times of sharing. Bart could feel a joy inside him that was quite unusual. Then they all stood and began praying for other people and situations. These people knew what was going on in the world and they asked their God for help. Some prayed for friends and relatives. Suddenly, he thought of his brother. They hadn't seen one another in four years. Bart silently prayed for him, too. He would talk to Jon more about this later. After another great song, the meeting ended. He hadn't felt this good in a long time—in fact he couldn't remember when he had felt so free and happy. He realized he was smiling, big-time and he couldn't seem to stop.

Had Bart experienced healing?

During the break, people came and introduced themselves to him. They asked where he lived and made normal conversation with him. It had been a long time since he had been treated in this way.

After giving Bart some more coffee and a few cookies, Jon explained that in a short while there would be some teaching about the prayer meeting and there would also be Prayer Room Ministry. He was welcome to go to either place if he wanted. Jon said that everyone needs healing prayer. And there are times when we all need prayer for sickness in our bodies or in our families. We all go through times in our lives that are trying and painful. That prayer space was quiet, private and confidential. Jon said that the people who

prayed there were well trained and compassionate. They were to act like the friends in scripture who carried the paralytic to Jesus for healing (Mark 2:1-12). Jon said that each healing not only helps us, but it also strengthens the faith of the community and it gives glory to God. He pointed out the two people who would be praying in the room that night, Paula and Tim. They looked okay. Maybe he would try it. Bart felt like he was seeing the world with new eyes now. Who knows what would happen next?

Filled with God's love, our healing ministry in prayer groups begins before we ever enter our meetings. It includes our manner of driving there, whether filled with peace or with road rage. It includes those we encounter on our way there (and any expletives either said aloud or thought). And it continues with the atmosphere we create in our sacred and in our interpersonal interactions as we meet other members of our group. Do we indeed embrace one another as temples of Jesus Christ, our Living Savior, or do we ignore those we don't like and only talk to those who agree with us? (Matt 5:46-47).

Healing is not just an act or a ministry. It is a way of life. Jesus says to each of us, just as he said to the rich young man, "Come, follow me." (Mark 10:21). Are we willing to leave behind all that has been, and to freely follow Jesus in his walk of compassion and mercy? ♦

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.



The spiritual formation of those in healing ministry

by Ron Novotny

Anyone who wishes to minister to Jesus in the members of his mystical body must desire to be spiritually equipped and formed. Three necessary requirements for ministry are listening, compassion, and faith. Although the fullness of divinity resided in him, Jesus bowed before his creatures in merciful love and service. The healing ministry is a vehicle par excellence of love and mercy. As God the Father sang his love song to his people through Jesus, so he wishes to do so now in us. God's Holy Spirit desires to form us for service. What must we do to cooperate?

“Listen” Some years ago, I remember reading a book entitled *Bought Friendship*. The premise of the book is that people are willing to pay a therapist money each week just to have someone listen to them. There is such a need in all of us to be heard. So although it does not sound very spiritual to talk about learning how to listen, it is a wonderful skill and tool that every person in the healing ministry must use. When a person knows that they are being listened to by someone, they are much more willing to share a little deeper and confide in the listener the secrets of their heart. That of course, is what the healing ministry is all about—tending lovingly to people who present themselves for prayer. Jesus listened to the blind man, the man at the pool, the woman at the well and to

Nicodemus in the darkness of night. He listened to the content without forming an answer or giving a solution or even putting a spiritual interpretation to what they were expressing. He just listened. God is the divine listener and he wants us to imitate him and to grow in this skill. It means giving someone our time, which is not always easy. This attentive listening can be an agent of healing for some! Just being a good listener is an act of mercy.

“Be Compassionate” “Be compassionate as your heavenly Father is compassionate” is a loving command made to each of us, but how much more so to each person in the role of healing. If we could walk in someone else's sandals a mile or so, how slow we would be to judge them and how our heart would melt with love for that person. The minister of healing is a bearer of compassion to each hurting person who needs the healing balm of forgiveness, love and compassion. Jesus is the “school” of compassion and we can learn how to act like him by observing how he encountered each person and looked with eyes of love upon each of them. We ask for his grace to learn how to care for another person, just as a shepherd cares for the sheep that get tangled in bushes, trapped among rocks, or lost on life's journey. Caring does not mean trying to fix the problem or giving “good” advice. Caring and compassion is all about being present to someone

in their pain without interjecting personal comments and details from our own past experiences.

“Believe” It is imperative that all healing ministry be based on our faith in Jesus and his love for each person. It is through faith that we proclaim that Jesus is Lord and the only one “in whom we have boldness and confident access...” The gift of faith grows as we learn to trust our Lord whenever anyone approaches us for prayer and walks away touched by him. We remain keenly aware that it is Jesus who heals and that we can do nothing on our own. Every time that we lay hands on someone it is an act of faith believing that God will use our prayers for his own good purposes. As our faith grows, we allow God to work even more powerfully in peoples' lives.

Hearing and responding to these three gentle commands **“Listen,”** **“Be Compassionate”** and **“Believe”** will better equip us as caring ministers of healing. ♦

Ron Novotny, Ph.D. and S.T.L. is the Director of the Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Clearwater, Florida. Ron has a doctorate in psychology and a graduate degree (license) in Mariology.



Azusa Street Centennial

In 1906 a revival broke out in Los Angeles through the ministry of an African-American by the name of William Seymour. The Azusa Street Revival is looked upon by many Pentecostals as the beginning of a new wave of the Holy Spirit that had been prayed for and preached in the years preceding.

In April, various streams of Pentecostals and non-denominational charismatics gathered to remember and celebrate the Azusa Street Revival but also to pray "that by reflecting on the Azusa Street revival that God will create the necessary hunger

for us to witness a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our day." (Event Guide)

The Centennial was led by a Cabinet that included pastors and lay leaders from the various streams of Pentecostalism and non-denominational charismatic renewal. Among them was Catholic Charles Whitehead of England, former Chairman of ICCRS who was the "Centennial Representative for Europe" due to his capacity as Chairman of the International Charismatic Consultation (an ecumenical body embracing charismatics from mainline Protestant churches, Catholics and others). Whitehead gave a short witness/exhortation on the opening night.

Like the Cabinet the speakers came from far and wide and included Benny Hinn, Paula White, Kenneth Copeland, T.D. Jakes, David Yonggi Cho, and Pastor Jack Hayford. Also present and giving workshops were Catholics Francis and Judith MacNutt. The Centennial featured many gifted praise and worship leaders. At times the flow of singing and praising was very "Pentecostal" though choral singing in tongues was not as prevalent as one might have expected.

It was reported that the Centennial attracted 45,000 participants. It was held in four venues, one of which featured "Dynamic Women in Ministry Celebration" while another featured an International Re-

vival Series with geographic emphasis for each night: Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. On Saturday afternoon and evening all gathered "Together Again 2006" in the Sports Arena for the closing which one Catholic Renewal leader present described as "spectacular" and another "very powerful and very well done."

Did the Centennial usher in a "fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit" as was the organizers hope and prayer? Only time will tell, but in the words of one of the evening speakers from Africa, Pastor E.A. Adeboye, citing Lev 6:12-13: "the fire must always be kept burning...and never allowed to go out."



Pam Stenzel

After years of counseling girls who found themselves in crisis pregnancies, Pam Stenzel realized that many youth were completely unaware of the risks involved with sexual activity. Drawing from her personal story, as well as her visits with teens around the world, Pam tackles today's tough issues of sex with candor, insight and humor.

Watch!

The Choices We Face hosted by Ralph Martin

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All new shows on the air now!**



Dion and Susan DiMucci

This singer and songwriter speaks candidly about his rise to stardom and his arduous journey back to the Catholic Church. His wife Susan shares her deep faith in God and tough love for her husband which helped him overcome the challenges of his drug addictions and rediscover God's plan for their lives.



Michael O'Brien is a well known Canadian Catholic writer and artist. Using apocalyptic themes from his acclaimed Children of the Last Days novel series, Michael explores the current realities and dangers of modern society. Are we living in the final hour?



Adriano Moraes

This Brazilian bull rider entered his first rodeo at age eighteen and five years later won three of the most coveted titles in the world. Watch the amazing story of a man whose personal motto, "Work, faith, and humbleness" characterizes a life of strength and determination that is now dedicated to the work of Catholic evangelization.



And, as always, great teachings by **Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck** and **Sr. Ann Shields**.



www.renewalministries.net

Healing through praise and worship

by Cindy Erivez

What joy there is to see newcomers walk through the door of your meeting place. Curious and nervous first-timers look around the room and call us “weird” in the testimonies they give later. But there is laughter and joy as they continue and tell us that what they saw in us was joy—and they realized that they didn’t have it—but they wanted it.

To watch as God’s people praise his name with joy and thanksgiving can be confusing to the outside world. There are smiles, clapping, laughing, and wild dancing, but there are also tears, people on their knees with open hands lifted up to him—all of this while someone is dancing with the elegance of angels! How can this all be taking place at the same time?

IN HIS PRESENCE, there is the freedom of the heart to love and be loved. One of the first healings that takes place during praise and worship is his manifestation to newcomers through personal revelation—“I AM HERE.” He seems to be recognized by everyone in attendance—even children as young as six years old are deeply moved to the place of worship and release tears of love.

As we go deeper into worship and gain access to his throne room, the physical, emotional and spiritual healings begin to take place—often spoken through the charism known as Word of Knowledge. I have received permission to share two rather dramatic healings that happened recently during praise and worship. One young man came as a guest, and had appar-

ently never been to anything like a prayer meeting. Later he shared that he had been into some “bad stuff.” During the worship, I asked the team to go to specific people and lay hands and pray. After only a few moments, I saw the young man get up and make his way to the men’s room. His arms were raised and the movement of his body made me think of him as drowning. Well, praise, honor and glory to the One who frees us, our Lord Jesus Christ. This young man received deliverance (with assistance) in the men’s room. What a beautiful smile he had when it was over. He immediately hugged us. I got so tickled because he was so happy—and free! He said he experienced “a feeling like a hot iron that pierced my heart with a holy power. And out of the wound fled feelings of hate, greed and addiction. And at the end I felt rest, peace and a feeling of serenity, which gave proof to me that there is someone up there. I believe! There is a God!”

The second healing also took place during praise and worship. The young lady said that her hands became very hot, and as they began to cool, her feet, head and heart got very hot. She said her heart felt as if it was “on fire.” After this experience she felt stronger. She realized how much love she had for the Lord and that she could hear his voice. She was less angry and experienced more love for everyone.

The Lord’s healing grace goes way deeper than what we see on the surface. Transformation reaches all levels of the person. Spiritual, emotional and physical transformation takes place in

his presence. Let’s stay there! We need to learn to “stay there—stay where he is!” It was not his intention that we attend our weeknight prayer meetings and then go home and come back the next week looking for more fuel. We should remain in his presence so that when we return to our prayer meetings we can share what he has been telling us during the week—what is on his mind, and what he wants us to do about it! We are to share about the beauty of his presence and his transforming power. Transformation is a “forever” thing!

Praise and worship is nothing more than loving him as we are. We are to be like the tax collector in the scriptures who came before the Lord in prayer seeing himself as he was—not putting on airs—just needing God’s mercy. It disposes us to want prayer and to want to pray over others for healing and blessing. Praise and worship comes against self-centeredness and brings us to becoming “other”-centered. Praise and worship is all about him. It forms us into people who have an outward focus rather than a personal or inward focus. Most newcomers come in with a “what’s in it for me” attitude. That way of thinking is not unusual for people who have been hurt and need help. But as they enter into praise and worship, their self-centeredness becomes “other”-centered and what we end up with are awesome saints in the army of the ONE WHO IS LOVE. ♦



Cindy Erivez is co-founder and worship leader for the charismatic teen outreach ministry Journey and the Tribe of Judah, from El Paso, TX.

Bishops speak to the Renewal

"I praise the Lord for gifts the renewal has brought to the Church: a generous response to the Council's "universal call to holiness;" a deepened love of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance; a heightened attention to God's word in scriptures; a tender affection and loyal support for your shepherds—our bishops (especially the bishop of Rome) priests and deacons; and hearts open to the Magisterium of the Church. Keep it up! We need you!" (Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, Archdiocese of Milwaukee)

"The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a genuine gift of the Lord to his Church. Since it began in 1967, the Charismatic Renewal has helped people of many nations to experience in a new and powerful way the tremendous love of Jesus for them. The effect of this experience of baptism in the Spirit has often resulted in the 're-evangelization' of Catholics, animating them with a new, heartfelt zeal for living as disciples of the Lord and for inviting others to know him. These people often go on to serve the Church in ways that extend beyond the Renewal itself, which allows the Renewal to have an impact that extends beyond those who are directly involved in its prayer groups. The passion of Renewal members for the Holy Spirit also helps the entire Church to remember that the third member of the Blessed Trinity is indeed a Person, and to respond to the call for a new evangelization given to us by the late Pope John Paul II as the church entered her second millennium. For this reason, I believe that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is an authentic response to the vision of the Second Vatican Council and an ongoing sign that the Lord remains faithful to his Church, directing and energizing her as he promised through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit" (Francis Cardinal George, OMI, Archdiocese of Chicago).

Excerpts taken from *Bishops Speak to the Renewal*. For copies of this booklet contact Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office 2719 E. 42nd Street Minneapolis, MN 55406 Tel: 612-721-2543

Special Request

In 2004 the NSC sent three representatives to a biannual meeting of Renewal Leaders from Central and South America and the US Hispanic Renewal held in Guatemala. We built important relationships that need to be nurtured. The next meeting is this October in Chile and we have no money in the budget to send even one representative. We are looking for dedicated donations to support at least one NSC representative for this important meeting. *If you can help, please write ECCLA on your check or contact us.*

Thank you. ♦



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Bob Canton



**From the
Executive
Director**

.....
by Walter Matthews

Healing and good order

It was early 1972. It was the second week of the group's existence. There was no prayer room, no prayer room ministry, and no healing prayer (spontaneous or formalized). It was the first night of the newly released Life in the Spirit Seminar. It was the night that healing began in my life in a new way which continues to this day both in formalized ways, such as prayers for healing for physical needs and in less formalized ways through love.

Healing prayer, prayer room ministry, etc. have existed in most prayer groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal since the mid to late seventies. However, along the way distortions have crept in and have damaged and are damaging the very fabric of the Renewal.

I recall a story by one of the Traveling Timothies the NSC employed part time in the mid-80s to visit prayer groups to encourage them and to fan into flame the grace of Pentecost. The Timothy attended a group of about a dozen or so seated in a circle. After a time of praise and listening to God's word (two pillars of vibrant charismatic prayer meetings) the leader stood up and announced that it was time for "healing" at which point everyone else stood. The leader proceeded around the circle laying hands on each with each person falling down in the Spirit until there was only the leader and a puzzled Timothy left standing. A few years later there was the emergence of the so-called "Toronto blessing" and its

variations, especially the laughter phenomenon. I know many leaders who were positive to the blessing and the laughter. I know of the witnesses of many whose lives were touched (and healed). I also have heard of the painful divisions caused by leaders who sought to impose the blessing and the laughter on their groups.

More recently I have heard the stories of prayer groups being torn apart by the introduction of new insights about healing or by healing practices.

The role of the NSC since the introduction of healing into the Renewal has been twofold:

- to encourage the openness to and exercise of this important charism, for as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "the Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing so as to make manifest the power of grace of the risen Lord" (1508); and
- to encourage good order, balance, right understanding and teaching.

The Service Committee in recent years has sought to provide good teaching on Healing and Prayer Ministry at the National Leaders' Conferences in Nashville and Chicago. We also endeavor to understand new insights and dialogue with others concerning them.

Following St. Paul we seek to encourage "good order" and discernment: "Do not restrain the Holy Spirit, do not despise inspired messages. Put all things to the test: Keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil" (1 Thes. 5:19-22).

Friends of the NSC

At a Donor Luncheon a few years ago Fr. Tom Forrest told the donors gathered that while there are many worthy charitable organizations to which many Catholics contribute, only charismatics give to charismatic organizations like the National Service Committee. We all know this is true. What one of us does not receive everyday—often unsolicited—multiple appeals from Catholic, other Christian and secular organizations all doing good works. Many of us respond and so we should!

However, what response do you think we would get if we sent out a broad mailing—even to only Catholics—setting forth our mission "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"? We know from past experience when we have tried this: a big yawn!

Only those whose lives have been touched by the Lord in this Renewal value the work of the Renewal and the work of the National Service Committee enough to become and remain donors—our Friends of the NSC. Some who are able make longer five year pledge commitments and become Fanning the Flame Partners. We are grateful to all of you.

But what of the nearly 5000 recipients of *Pentecost Today* who do not contribute? We need you! We could do so much more to serve the Renewal if each recipient of *Pentecost Today* became a donor! Please pray about it.

Also we have just formed a new **1 year pledge group** called Friends 300, Friends 600, Friends 1000. We invite all of our Friends to consider becoming a participant in these new groups by making a one year pledge of \$300, \$600 or \$1000 – or \$25, \$50 a month, or \$250 a quarter.

For more information call us at 1-800-338-2445 or email fundraising@nsc-chariscenter.org

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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.

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Ministry Update

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer



The charism of healing today

Healing is experienced on many levels. It was certainly a curiosity, in the early days of charismatic renewal, to hear that people were praying for one another and healing was actually taking place. This happened not only privately or in small group prayer but in large crowd settings. Something that we might have viewed as other than Catholic was happening in the Catholic arena. Among other gifts the Holy Spirit was awakening the gift of healing.

Some view healing as a gift that gets attention and therefore is sensational. It does attract attention. It can bring attention to both the person who experiences the healing and the person through whom Jesus works to bring about the healing. Here is the point. It is Jesus who ought to receive the attention. It is Jesus who heals. It is Jesus to whom we give all glory and thanksgiving. Jesus healed many people while he lived on the earth. It was often observing the healing and other miracles that caused people to begin to believe that Jesus was sent by God. Then he would challenge them to go deeper.

Healing is a charism that has been active in various ways in the Catholic Church over the years. Recently someone called my attention to a book by Francis MacNutt, *The Nearly Perfect Crime*, (Chosen 2005) in which he traces the history of healing.

We have the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. It is no longer a sacrament that is celebrated only if one is about to die, as in Extreme Unction. At the parish in which I am employed we have anointing of the sick monthly at a weekday Mass. As Catholics we have heard of healing taking place at Lourdes. During a seminar that I teach in the parish, a young woman, not of a Christian faith, shared about receiving Lourdes water from her Catholic fiancé to put on her father who had a terminal cancer. She did this. She asked for his healing. Five years later he is back to work. This shows how God still works outside the boundaries that we sometimes hold so firm, as in the days of the apostles. We pray to particular saints who are patrons of people with particular maladies. In our day we have also experienced that God is calling us to pray with one another for healing.

God calls each of us to be compassionate. We are challenged to allow our encounters with one another to be healing. We are challenged to always be agents of God who wishes all to be whole. Some readers may have attended the Leaders' Conference in Nashville at which Fr. Tom Forrest was heard to say that when we pray for healing, "Don't just pray for eyeballs and toenails. Don't just pray for the pieces and parts of the person. God is not a spare parts dealer! Pray for the whole person to be healed with the healing that comes through the outpouring of the fruits of the Holy Spirit." ♦

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