

On fire every day

by Deacon Bill Brennan

Once again, Pope John Paul II, the pastor of the whole church, has affirmed the Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the world. On Pentecost eve of 2004, he called the ecclesial movements and the new communities that have sprung up in our lifetime “a providential answer” “inspired by the Holy Spirit....” He also said: “Thanks to the Charismatic Movement many Christians...rediscovered Pentecost as a living and present reality in their daily life. I desire that the spirituality of Pentecost be spread in the Church, as a renewed thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation...” When we put this latest affirmation into the context of all of the affirming words he has proclaimed *about* and *to* the renewal, how can we not celebrate what he clearly sees as an unfolding work of God in our time? How can we not stand with our Holy Father, as he stands with us, and proclaim to the whole world and to the church that the daily experience of Pentecost is alive and that we are the living evidence of what the American bishops called “grace for the new springtime?”

In light of the Holy Father’s constant affirmation of the renewal, what can we do to cooperate more fully with this incredible grace that has been so lavishly poured out in our lives? There are many things that a prayer group and prayer group leaders can do, if we would listen to our God and obey the promptings of the Spirit. For example, every prayer group can take a look at what it is doing and follow a simple check list: are the charisms of the Holy Spirit flowing; is the thrust of the prayer group’s life

evangelization or has it turned inward; is the prayer group an active participant in the life of the parish and church; are our gatherings truly celebrations of Pentecost; do we truly and sincerely love one another

What can we do to cooperate more fully with this incredible grace that has been so lavishly poured out in our lives?

in the way that Jesus has commanded us to love? In short, are we, both as prayer groups and as individuals who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, living the renewal not just during the prayer meeting but every day in every situation?

If the answer to any of these questions is negative, we obviously have work to do. We can teach what the charisms are about and why we need them. We can explore different ways of reaching out not only to the world around us but also to the church at every level. We can find ways to serve in our parishes and perhaps offer services not currently being offered, e.g., bible studies. We can work harder to make our prayer meetings genuine celebrations of God’s love by emphasizing more the gifts of praise and worship. And we can certainly do more to love one another as family.

Every one of us can rededicate ourselves right now to living out the grace of Pentecost in our lives. If we are in leadership, we can meet together for prayer and reflection aside from the prayer meeting so that we can better listen to what God

is saying to us. We can take advantage of the myriad of resources that are out there in order to continue our own growth in the Spirit. We can even do such basic things as immerse ourselves again in the Word of God, frequent the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and penance, and actively look for opportunities to bring Christ into our everyday life. We can continue to offer Life and Growth in the Spirit Seminars on a regular basis. Not only would we be living the renewal, we would be doing exactly what the church says we all should be doing constantly.

Wherever the Lord has allowed me to go in ministry, I have found myself encouraging people in the renewal not to give up, no matter how many naysayers come against us. St. Paul offered the same encouragement to the early church when he reminded the Corinthians (and us) that God is faithful and that they (and we) have been called by God to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ (1Cor. 1,9). We fellowship with Jesus by living his life fully and by doing what he does. We can live the renewal more fully by recognizing that the charisms we have been given enable us to do what Jesus himself was doing in his ministry and that he has commissioned every baptized believer to do the same. So, what is stopping us? ♦

Deacon Bill Brennan is a former member of the National Service Committee and serves as a diocesan liaison in the Diocese of Stockton, CA. He is the current chairman of the Northern California Coalition of Catholic Charismatic Diocesan Liaisons.





When God arrives, ALL experience the power of the Holy Spirit. This has been the norm in the 65 parishes that experienced the Lits (Life in the Spirit) Retreat in 2004. This program begun in 1982 has brought new life into the church of San Antonio. One local Bishop said, "I know if a parish has a Life in the Spirit Seminar without anyone telling me. I can see the difference. There is a joy, a sense of the Spirit among them." (Bishop Patrick Zureck quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor*, 5/30/04 in an article by Joanne Schmidt.)

Confirmation and Life in the Spirit

Archdiocese of San Antonio

Amazing transformation! Eagerness to serve! Alive in the charisms of the Holy Spirit! Healed and empowered! Who are we describing? None other than the Confirmation students from many of the parishes in the Archdiocese of San Antonio who have been revitalized through Life in the Spirit Retreats.

When God arrives, ALL experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

On any given Saturday, the team of anywhere from 12 to 20 teens plus adults, are on their way to begin a retreat at one of the parishes in San Antonio or surrounding areas. The retreat begins with music. The retreatants are asked if they are there because they 'want to be' or because 'they HAVE to be.' Most 'have to be,' which means that they will not participate. But the Holy Spirit has other plans. By lunch time the youth are clapping their hands, participating in small group discussions and literally getting into the dramas. During the time of the laying on of hands for the stirring up of the charisms of the Holy Spirit found in 1Cor.12, the teens are moved to tears and filled with the presence of the living God. While feeling heat in their hands, they know that God is bestowing the gift of healing upon them. Some experience the voice of God deep in their being calling them for a specific plan. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to their hearts causing them to ask for forgiveness. Others experience healing. Those that in the morning arrived with headaches and backaches are now pain free. All are filled with awe, peace and a desire to serve God and join the team.

In the early years of doing the Lits it was discovered that many parents didn't understand what had happened to their children on the retreat. So now, the parents and sponsors are also asked to attend. Consequently households are being renewed. The bishops of the archdiocese recommended the Lits Retreat to all the parishes in the archdiocese and Bishop Tom Flanagan, the liaison to the Renewal in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, came 'on team.' Bishop Tom participates in six retreats a year as his schedule allows. Because of the popularity of the retreat it became necessary at times to bring several parishes together for a Lits Retreat to accommodate all the requests. Consequently 7 to 12 parishes came together as deaneries, and it is not uncommon for 350 teens and 350 parents/sponsors to receive empowerment at the same time.

This program of the CCCR (Catholic Center for Charismatic Renewal) youth office is envisioned to empower teens to embrace God's promises, live Christian lives, serve God and the church and expose the teens to and use the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The CCCR Youth Ministry offers summer training workshops, disciple teams, and quarterly rallies for youth thus providing follow up after the retreats. ♦

The information in this article was furnished by Rudy and Delfie Garcia who are youth coordinators and service committee members for the Catholic Center for Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas. They have trained youth Life in the Spirit teams who in turn minister in San Antonio and South Texas. Rudy and Delfie are happy to share information on this amazing work of God.

NEWSBRIEFS

New Roles for Bishops Flanagan and Jacobs

Bishop Tom Flanagan, Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio since 1998, and Liaison to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of San Antonio since 1985, was recently asked to serve as the Chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Bishop Flanagan replaces Bishop Sam Jacobs who has been chair since 1992. Bishop Jacobs will remain a member of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Bishop Tom Flanagan has been blessed with many gifts, but is especially noted for his work in unity of the Body of Christ. He is a member of and participates in a myriad of ministries and organizations in the Church.

From that position he sees the need for prayer and a special anointing of the Holy Spirit so that the prayer of Jesus to the Father "...that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:21) can indeed become a reality.

At the recent US Bishops' meeting in Washington DC, Bishop Sam Jacobs was elected Chairman-elect of the Committee on Evangelization. His three-year term as Chairman will begin in November. We are proud that Bishop Jacobs has been asked to take yet another important role that is very important to the Church.

Congratulations Bishop Flanagan and Bishop Jacobs! Our prayers continue to support you in your ministry to the Church and to the Renewal. ♦

You're invited

2005 Cenacle of Prayer for America

In this Year of the Eucharist, return to the Cenacle and come to Miami, Pentecost weekend, May 13-15 for 40 hours of prayer, prior to Pentecost, to pray for America.

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(Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in America*, 76).

Come join brothers and sisters from throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America to "invoke upon ourselves and upon the entire church, an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Pope John Paul II invitation to Pentecost Vespers, 2004). The 40 hours of prayer will include 40 hours of Eucharistic adoration, a Eucharistic procession through downtown Miami and a grand celebration of Pentecost.
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The Year of the Eucharist

Stay with me

by Fr. John Gordon

“Stay with us Lord” (Lk. 24:29) John Paul II begins his letter instituting the Year of the Eucharist, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, quoting this text from Luke’s Gospel. This is the line that the disciples on the road to Emmaus cry out to Jesus as he seems to leave them after opening the scriptures to them. As they say, their ‘hearts were burning within’ and they long that Jesus would stay. Not too much earlier, Jesus in his agony had asked his disciples to stay with him, taking Peter, James and John with him into the garden of Gethsemani. He asked them to stay with him and to keep awake but they could not (Mt 26:40). Now we call out to Jesus “stay with us, Lord!” and he ever vigilant is faithful to that request. And yet his word still spoken to us—“stay with Me.”

In this Year of the Eucharist we are encouraged to stay with the Lord, to abide in his presence. In particular, we are called “to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ’s real presence, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass” (MND 18). We in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have a great desire to be faithful to the Lord’s invitation to stay with him, for we know the power of his abiding presence within us.

How we desire to spend time with Jesus. We long to be in his presence. The fruit of the baptism in the Holy Spirit has us cry out ‘Jesus is Lord!’ (1 Cor. 12:3) and so a Eucharistic Holy Hour is a most appropriate way for us to linger and spend time with Jesus. We know that when we do, we are transformed. The Word of God tells us that looking upon the Lord with unveiled face we are transformed from Glory to Glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

Just as we experience the life changing power of God in the Holy Spirit, so the life changing power of God affects us in Eucharistic Adoration. When I was involved with a weekly holy hour at our youth center, an evening of praise and worship with strong use of the spiritual gifts, there was an adult volunteer who came every week. His wife was taking classes at the time we met and so could not join him. After several weeks she commented to him that he had changed and grown so much recently. He responded, “Of course! How could I not? When you spend time before the Lord you can’t help but get a ‘Son’ burn!” That’s exactly what we want, to get a ‘Son’ burn! Let the fire fall!

For many of us familiar with a charismatic style of praise and worship, the traditional model of the Holy Hour of quiet before God can sometimes be difficult. A sign of maturity in the spirit however, is our desire for that intimate communion to meet the Lord in the silence of our hearts and so there is a great value for us also to spend time before the Lord in the silence that is traditionally part of a Eucharistic Holy Hour. At the same time, there is great value to incorporating some elements of the charismatic praise and worship and in particular, the exercise of the spiritual gifts, in the context of the Eucharistic Holy Hour.

As we seek to take full advantage of the grace of this Eucharistic Year, may our worship of Jesus Christ, our Eucharistic King, be marked with fervor, zeal, reverence, and joy. As we truly come to know him in the ‘breaking of the bread,’ so may we come to adore him in the Real Presence of the Blessed Sacrament.



To be able to offer this kind of devotion on the parish level, sponsored by the prayer group, can be a great outreach. Here are two models that might be used.

Eucharistic Holy Hour

Begin with a period of praise and worship. This would be a time, in particular, to be open to the prophetic word and Scripture. There may be an exhortation, as well, preparing us to adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed. This would be a time of continued praise leading us more and more to reverent worship.

After a period of time, there may be a meditation by the priest on some appropriate theme.

Then the priest would process among the assembly with the Blessed Sacrament. After the procession with the Blessed Sacrament, there can continue to be a time of praise. The Holy Hour will end in the traditional manner, with the prayer, the Benediction, the Divine Praises, and Reposition.

Eucharistic Holy Hour

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed. There is a time of silent adoration. There is a talk of some sort. This can focus on any topic about the life in the Spirit.

There can be a procession with the Blessed Sacrament.

Conclude with Benediction, Divine Praises, and Reposition.

After all this, there can be a time for ministry, such as prayer teams, or perhaps some time for praise and worship along with the ministry of the word, prophecy and scripture. ♦

Fr. John Gordon is Director of the Pre-Theologate Program at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He serves on the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Learn how to create medleys

Ever drive a car that stalls all the time? You drive along, and then...HALT. You start the car up again, drive another few blocks...SCREECH. That's what it's like when you sing songs in a prayer group setting, in a Start-STOP format. For when we sing in a prayer group, we are going someplace—we are going to meet God. It is up to you as a worship leader to learn how to continue the flow of the songs, creating as few distractions as possible. A very powerful tool in this is creating medleys—songs that flow from one to the other. Some of the best medleys can be heard in some praise and worship recordings, where it appears that there is no discernable cut between songs...like John Michael Talbot's "Come, Worship the Lord" series, or most anything by Hosanna!Music or Vineyard Music.

The easiest approach to creating medleys is this: get a list of all your songs, and sort them by key, tempo, and time signature. Songs with the same key, tempo, and time signature are most likely to be able to be medleyed together. If you wish to medley outside this circle, then you need to follow some rules: (1) To medley between different tempos, or time signature, you must play the new time signature as the last measure in the first song. (2) To medley between different keys, you must experiment to find the best chord progression that can act as a pillow between the two songs.

Focus on "vertical" songs

A vertical song is a song that allows the singer to sing directly to God. Examples of this include: "We Exalt Thee," "Open the Eyes of My Heart," and "Entirely to Thee." These songs use the "Lord" as the One to whom we are singing *to*, not merely *about*. If you have a songbook or list of songs, keep focus on those songs

that do exactly this. The more songs of this sort, the more you will be inviting the congregation to sing directly to the Lord, which is the point of the whole worship time. I cannot tell you the number of times that I felt that we were about to have the anointing fall upon us, and it fell flat, all because the lyrical focus of the following song became community-centered, and not God-centered. There are songs that do both. A good example of this is the ever-popular "Shout to the Lord"—a song which alternately sings about God and to God. I do not wish to discourage any use of the song which shifts its perspective, but take note of it, and exercise discernment when needed.

Conclusion

There is no greater joy than to be able to give your offerings to God in a manner that is pure and gracious. The gift of worship leading is both a blessing and a great responsibility. It is a gift to be nurtured and always improved upon. But the blessings can take your prayer group to greater heights in the most gracious thing we can do—worship.

Other steps that are explored in Nick's writing:

- Learn how to teach new songs
- Refrain from entertainment-oriented songs
- Learn how to modulate keys
- Sing outside the book
- Learn the Church Calendar
- Get Copyright permission. ♦

Nick Alexander resides in Milford, CT and is newly wed. He leads worship at the Diocese of Bridgeport's Catholic Charismatic Prayer Meetings and is also a Catholic parodist. You can contact Nick through his website www.newspringtimeworship.com.

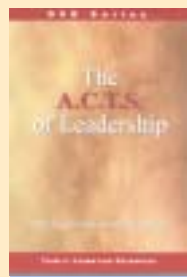
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From the
Director
.....
by Walter Matthews

Year of the Eucharist

What do Fiuggi, Italy; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Brooklyn, New York and St. Peter's Square, Vatican have in common? Each contains a part of the Lord's prophetic call to the Renewal and the NSC.

Elsewhere others reflect on our Holy Father's important words at St. Peter's Square this past Pentecost eve when he declared that he desires that "the *spirituality of Pentecost* be spread in the Church as a *renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation*."

In Fiuggi last October addressing 1,200 delegates from 70 nations at the 11th International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, Pope John Paul II "expressed his appreciation for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal communities and encouraged them to promote the Eucharist as a bond of unity in a troubled world" (Zenit).

The Pope appealed to the attendees and to us: "to be committed in this Eucharistic Year to take initiatives so that the Eucharist will become increasingly a factor of union and cohesion in the People of God, in this world marked by violence and division."

Elsewhere in this issue, Fr. John Gordon of the National Service Committee writes about Eucharistic Holy Hours and the NSC encourages prayer groups to work with their pastors in this way.

At the same time the Service Committee is working with the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) and Hispanic Renewal leaders in the Archdiocese of Miami for the "2005 Cenacle

of Prayer for America" which will include 40 hours of Eucharistic adoration and procession as we gather to pray for America, seen as one America by our Holy Father in *Ecclesia in 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).

We have renamed what we were first calling "A Prayer Summit for America," and then the "2005 Prayer Summit for America" to the "2005 Cenacle of Prayer for America" to embody that which the Cenacle (Upper Room) represents: Eucharist and Spirit.

In encouraging an initiative of the Italian Renewal entitled the Burning Bush Initiative—a call back to the Cenacle for prayer, intercession, and adoration—our Holy Father said, "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 sincerely hope that this initiative will lead many to rediscover the gifts of the Spirit whose original source is Pentecost."

While 1,200 gathered in Fiuggi, Italy, another 1,000 gathered in Guatemala City for the 20th *Encuentro Católico Carismático Latinoamericano (ECCLA)* (The 20th Catholic Charismatic Encounter of Latin America). Twenty-two countries were represented including the second largest delegation, next to Guatemala itself: our Hispanic brothers and sisters in the US under the leadership of the *Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano*.

The members of the Executive Committee of the NSC and I were special guests at the *ECCLA*.

This was my second *ECCLA*. The first was in 2000 in Puerto Rico. Both experiences

have convinced me of the necessity of our breaking down the barriers—through prayer and personal contact—between brothers and sisters in the body of Christ in America.

As our Holy Father wrote in *Ecclesia in America*, "I invite individuals, communities and ecclesial groups, wherever two or more gather in the Lord's name, to strengthen through prayer the spiritual bond between all American Catholics" (76).

The participation of the Executive Committee and myself in the *ECCLA* may have been a small step, but it was a step, prompted by the Lord as he calls the Renewal in the US to new life.

And what of Brooklyn, New York? In mid-September the NSC gathered for its annual retreat/planning meeting. In the May/June/July/August 2004 issue of *Pentecost Today* I reported on the Committee's prior retreat/planning meeting that took place here in Locust Grove, Virginia. So what happened in New York?

Nothing short of a "new anointing surge of the Spirit" as Fr. John Gordon put it. A prophetic word was spoken: "If you really believe you will see the glory of God, hold fast; if you would see the mighty move of the Holy Spirit, hold fast...If you are true to my word, you shall see my kingdom manifested in your presence."

There was freedom and an acute awareness of battle. As my parish priest recently put it, Pope John Paul II's "new springtime" is the same as Cardinal Ratzinger's referring to the present moment as "night."

This Year of the Eucharist may well be for us a breakout time for new grace. It is certainly the Holy Father's sense. It is what was proclaimed in different ways in St. Peter's Square, Fiuggi, Guatemala and Brooklyn. It will be the focus of our time together in Miami for Pentecost. See you there. ♦

Friends of the NSC

We invite you to send a donation today using the envelope enclosed in this issue of *Pentecost Today*. There are over 5,000 recipients of *Pentecost Today* who are not active donors to Chariscenter USA. If you haven't given a donation in the past year, we would especially urge you to consider a donation this month.

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Fanning the Flame Partners

As our friends know, in the Fall of 2001 we launched Fanning the Flame Partners, a five-year pledge program. We now have 130 Partners who have pledged a minimum of \$300 a year for five years (many, of course, at higher levels). Recently 12 have signed up for another five years, four of whom increased the amount.

Since the last time we reported on the Partners we have added:

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Bob and Nancy Schwartz
Bruno and Helen Silvestri
Deacon Ronald and Bette Steinkamp
May Virata
Dennis and Karen Wautlet
Mary Wilson

Guatemala Meeting

If you are reading this column you have most likely participated in charismatic prayer meetings. If you have had the opportunity to be present in gatherings of more than one group you know the sense of unity that the Spirit bestows. Now imagine that instead of being at a national conference where guests from other countries are being introduced, that you are the guest in a country other than your own where a language other than yours is spoken.

In October members of the Executive Committee (Aggie Neck, Josephine Cachia, and Ros Hernandez,) of the National Service Committee, along with Walter Matthews, Executive Director for the National Service Committee, flew to Guatemala to meet with leaders of Charismatic Renewal from 22 Latin American countries. Our representatives had the opportunity to stay with host families. Because of this they had an opportunity to experience the culture, the delicious native foods, the juices from fresh fruits, and the love, joy and peace of fellowship.

Josephine shares that her experience was outstanding and that she felt completely at home with the family that received her as their guest. Aggie relates that she experienced warmth and genuine friendliness even though she doesn't speak Spanish. "We were always included, embraced, and felt that we were truly a part of this gathering."

Ros is the only one who is fluent in Spanish. He comments that although some of the music for praise and worship was the same as what is used in Spanish groups in the USA, there were definitely new sounds and new words that he hopes will move up into the United States. "It is a fast paced sound that moves not only the heart but also your mind and your body."

Ministry Update

by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner



Aggie also commented about the beauty of the country viewed as they flew into Guatemala. The green of the mountains and the lakes high up in the mountains were so breath taking in the splendor of creation.

Josephine found that the conference itself was powerful in its worship and she was encouraged by the attendance of male leadership. Aggie concludes her remarks with, "We are indeed the body of Christ no matter where we gather." Ros adds, "We experienced the presence of God in everyone we met. God bless Guatemala through the beautiful charismatic movement of the Spirit." ♦

Why include the NSC in your will?

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

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You may use this or a similar statement: "I/we bequeath \$_____ (or % of my residual estate) to the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc., P.O. Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628."

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