

PENTECOST Today

January/February/March 2003 Volume 28, Number 1

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in the
Spirit

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Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

“After all these years...how you've changed!”

Last year's anniversary marking thirty-five years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal was certainly a reason to celebrate. Even if we personally have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit that long—if it is a celebration of a day or of years—there is cause for rejoicing here (1 Pt. 1:6)!

“How has baptism of the Holy Spirit changed my life?” How indeed are we different? What wonders do we see now that could have only come from this encounter with God? This is what we celebrate. Let's look at some areas of change.

“Love” seems like the simple, obvious answer, but it is more than simple, more than obvious. How many of us really felt that God loved us personally, knew us individually, and cared about everything we cared about? This was one of the startling realizations for me. The first Scripture to really “grab” my heart and get my attention was Romans 8:38-39 where St. Paul declares with absolute confidence that nothing, nothing, nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is still a favorite of mine and sometimes I need to read it just to let myself feel the wonder of it again.

“Faith” should have changed for us. Not just the faith that says I believe, but the charismatic dimension of faith that is listed in the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:9. The faith that allows us to believe the impossible is possible. The faith that helps us to believe the sick upon whom we lay our hands will be healed (Mk. 16:18) can stir up a boldness to profess and proclaim the good news. It is the faith to know that no matter what our physical eyes see, no matter what our physical ears hear, all things are possible. Step-

ping out in faith means more than just taking a step, it means not hesitating, not fearing, for we know that we know that we know God is calling us to do so. This faith brings forth tangible, visible results that we can see, touch and feel.

“Hope” now becomes a word of holy anticipation. We know that for which we hope has everlasting potential. It leads us to a destination. Hope, Scripture says, will not leave us disappointed (Rom. 5:5). God has a plan to give us a future full of hope (Jer. 29:11). When there is hope in our hearts, we feel light and vibrant. Our outlook becomes optimistic and the situations we face become opportunities to practice what we say we believe. Hope is like “waiting on tiptoe” for we don't want to miss what we know is coming.

The things that have become important to us include a personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, Scripture, the Eucharistic banquet, family, friends and relationships. All these take their proper place in our priorities; we know whose we are and what we are because of him.

The list could go on and on. Each of us has a list that confirms for us the wonders of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

Thirty-five years is really a short time in any great move of the Holy Spirit, or in the plan of our God. The best is yet to be! “A journey has begun for each one of you. This leads to an awareness and greater and greater love for Christ. Do not interrupt the journey undertaken! Trust: Christ will complete the work which he himself began” (Pope John Paul II, April 2000). ♦

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

PENTECOST Today



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*"For the promise
is made to you and
to your children
and to all those
far off."*

Photo: Gary Yon

Grace for the church

35 years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal

by Bishop Sam Jacobs

As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, I would invite you to join me in reflecting on the pastoral wisdom provided by the teaching authority of the church, as it has been given to the Renewal over the past thirty-five years. In that pastoral oversight we will find many references to the graces from God to this manifestation of the Spirit in our world.

One of the many graces and blessings that the Lord has endowed this Renewal with has been the decision from the very beginning to come under and remain firmly rooted in obedience to the lawful authority of the Magisterium.

In 1975 Pope Paul VI recognized that one of the characteristics of the Charismatic Renewal was its desire to be at the heart of the church, under the authority of the church, in union with the church, for the sake of the church. For the Pope this was a clear sign of the role of the Holy Spirit as the primary agent of this spiritual renewal.

What is more marvelous is the fact that the foundation for this relationship of obedience

God is saying something to the church through this move of the Spirit; namely, the grace of Pentecost is timeless and without boundaries.

and union was laid prior to the Duquesne weekend experience. Pope John XXIII prophetically involved the whole church in the initial preparation for Vatican Council II through intercessory prayer. Some of us may remember the last part of that prayer: "Divine Spirit, renew your wonders in our time as though for a new Pentecost, and grant that the holy church, persevering in unanimous and continuous prayer, together with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and also under the guidance of St. Peter, may increase the reign of the Divine Savior, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Amen."

This "amen" of the church was validated by the "amen" of God in the Council and in the fresh release of the Holy Spirit as in a new Pentecost, beginning in Pittsburgh and going to the ends of the earth.

This consistent teaching and work of the Spirit in the church was recognized and affirmed specifically about the Charismatic Renewal years later by Pope John Paul II. He said: "The Spirit has guided the church in every age, producing a great variety of gifts among the faithful. Because of the Spirit, the church preserves a continual youthful vitality, and the Charismatic Renewal is an eloquent manifestation of this vitality today, a bold statement of what 'the Spirit is saying to the churches' (Rev. 2:7)."

What is that grace which the Holy Father is acknowledging? God is saying something to the church through this move of the Spirit; namely, the grace of Pentecost is timeless and without boundaries. In the words of Peter on the Day of Pentecost: "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:28-29).

Less than ten years after the Council prepared the way for the renewed work of the Spirit in the church, the First International

Leaders' Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was held in 1973. Addressing the group, Pope Paul VI listed some of the obvious fruits which participation in the Renewal brought forth in those baptized in the Holy Spirit. "Certain common notes appear in this Renewal: the taste for deep prayer, personal and in groups; a return to contemplation and an emphasis on praise of God; the desire to devote oneself completely to Christ; a great availability for the calls of the Holy Spirit; more assiduous reading of the Scriptures; generous brotherly devotion; the will to make a contribution to the service of the church. In all that, we can recognize the mysteries and discreet work of the Spirit, who is the soul of the church."

Paul VI asked two questions in which he further identified why the Holy Spirit was renewing the spiritual life of the church through this particular spiritual movement. "How then could this 'spiritual renewal' not be a 'chance' for the church and for the world? And how, in this case, could one not take all the means to ensure that it remains so?"

A "chance" to do what? A chance to recapture the vision of God and to return once more to the original plan of God for the people of the New Covenant. A chance to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be anointed and empowered for the work of the Gospel. A chance to be led by the Spirit in the renewal of the life of the church. Later, that chance would be identified as a "grace for the new springtime."

Continuing this awareness of the grace of Pentecost, John Paul II, speaking to international leaders of the Charismatic Renewal in 1979, stated: "I am convinced that this movement is a sign of the Spirit's action... a very important component in the total renewal of the church."

To further identify particular graces of the work of the Spirit as evidenced in this movement, John Paul said: "Renewal in the Spirit will be authentic and have real fruitfulness in the church, not so much according as it gives rise to extraordinary charisms, but according as it leads the greatest possible number of the faithful, as they travel their daily

paths, to make a humble, patient, and persevering effort to know the mystery of Christ better, and to bear witness to it."

The two graces "to know the mystery of Christ better" and "to bear witness" are again not the sole rights and privileges of we who call ourselves charismatics. They belong to the very nature of one who is baptized in water and the Spirit. What this Renewal seeks to do is to help people know, understand and live out these two expressions of the will of God for everyone who glories in the name Christian.

As we remember the past thirty-five years of grace given to us by the Lord, we give thanks. As we gaze with expectancy and with readiness to respond to the future, we need to ask God for yet other graces: the grace of clarity of vision and the grace of renewal of commitment.

What is that vision? It is all that the Spirit has said to us both in the scriptures and through the teachings of the church over the centuries. The church is by nature and call charismatic. This has nothing to do with a movement; it is simply the revealed plan of God. It was the plan of God that Jesus, in his humanity, should evidence for us the pattern of full human living in relationship to God. Jesus revealed that God desired to pour out his Spirit on all who ask. And so Pentecost took place, not once, but continuously in the life of God's people over the past two millennia.

That same grace of Pentecost has been given to each of us. That was a "myth moment" in our journey. In using the word "myth," I do not mean it in the sense of a fictional event, but rather as something which transcends our ability to understand it—a moment of undeniable, transforming grace. Where we have strayed far from remembering and living out of that myth moment, we need to return to it and be renewed by it. In fact, it is to be the ever-present reality in our lives. It is the grace that God desires to give us.

Again, look at the pattern, Jesus. His baptism in the Jordan was that myth, grace event in his life on earth. The Father af-

firmed his love and the Spirit anointed and empowered him with all he needed to fulfill the Father's plan as Messiah. When Jesus entered into any struggles or difficulties which in his humanity would distract him from the call of the Father, he would remember his myth moment and be renewed in his commitment to the Father, obedient even to death on the cross.

For Paul, the myth moment was his experience with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Throughout his trials and hardships, he remained faithful and zealous because of that grace, as that moment was recalled and his commitment was renewed.

What was that myth moment, that Pentecost grace in our own lives? When and where did God so break through and bring us to transformation and renewal of spirit? What is the vision God gave us? Are we living out of that vision or has that vision become clouded and confused?

As we return to the vision, we must also ask for the grace to act on this vision. In the words of Paul to Timothy: "I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have received through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God" (1 Tim. 1:6-8). ♦

This article is excerpted from Bishop Sam Jacobs' address to the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh last September.

Former chairman of the National Service Committee, Bishop Sam Jacobs is bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana. He also serves as Chair of the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which in 1997 issued the pastoral statement, Grace for a New Springtime.





Go forth in the Spirit

2002 National Conference celebrates the 35th Anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

by Virginia King

It was with great joy that approximately 3500 worshippers gathered to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Pittsburgh last September 13-15. Yet the gathering was much more than a celebration.

During the general sessions and various workshops we were reminded of the universal call to holiness, of the reality of the power of the Holy Spirit, and of the fruitfulness of faithfulness. The thread that tied all these themes together was the need to embrace the cross of Jesus.

A particularly beautiful aspect of the 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference was the unity in prayer and in fellowship experienced by the brothers and sisters of many different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. The variety of music and the leadership and presentations at the general sessions reflected the diversity of the conference participants.

Go forth in holiness

At the Friday evening session, Ralph Martin identified Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a witness to the whole church to take seriously the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit who prepares us to face the challenges of the new millennium. The Holy Spirit is focusing us on the universal call to holiness. “The thing that holds us back from holiness is not the circumstances of our life but the sluggishness of our hearts,” said Martin.

Tammy Evevard spoke about the fruit of thirty-five years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal as evidenced in the lives of youth and young adults who have learned to rely on the Holy Spirit to bring the light of Christ to a confused and confusing world.

Go forth in power

On Saturday evening we were reminded that “we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today...” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 58). Through presentations by Aggie Neck and Fr. Mario Castañeda, our hearts were opened to trust more completely in this power of the Holy Spirit. The session concluded with Bob Canton leading a time of healing ministry.

Go forth in faithfulness

Our hearts were uplifted on Sunday morning by Laurette Felix’s inspiring witness to the faithfulness of God in her life.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the presentation by Bishop Stanislaw Rylko

See **Go Forth** page 13

“Grandchildren of the Renewal” celebrate 35th Anniversary

by Fr. Tim Hepburn

Recently, at a family gathering my mom said to her grandson, “Wyatt, Gamma is your daddy’s mommy and Grandy is your daddy’s daddy.” My nephew Wyatt, didn’t quite understand the explanation of our family tree, though he is very much a part of our family.

I was reminded of this scene as I spent the day with teens at the Teen Track of the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference celebrating the Renewal’s 35th Anniversary. These teens are the “grandchildren” of Charismatic Renewal—part of the family of those baptized in the Holy Spirit, even though many of the ones to whom I spoke don’t know what the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is. While thousands of mature Catholic charismatics on the convention floor of the David Lawrence Convention Center joyfully sang “Marching in the Light of God” and other praise songs from the 70s and 80s, about three dozen teens were singing more recent praise songs in a small upper room. Some had hands raised in praise, some looked bored, but all were given the chance to rise up in faith.

Teen sessions were led by members of Youth Arise, a ministry from Tempe, Arizona. Youth Arise is a timely title for a Catholic lay organization whose mission is to help young adult leaders become Christian apostles to their contemporaries.

See **Youth** page 13



Hispanic Conference

by Teresa Rosero

Hispanics from across the nation joined brothers and sisters from different backgrounds and different languages in Pittsburgh. The first night we were spread out in the large auditorium of the Lawrence Convention Center. Yet, nobody felt strange. We felt welcomed and at ease. It did not matter if some couldn't communicate too well in English. The welcoming smiles spoke of the same Holy Spirit that had brought us together to celebrate his presence in our midst.

On Saturday we had our own conference. Then, we went beyond the smiles. After greeting and chatting with each other, we started our day praising the Lord and thanking him for the grace of bringing us together.

We had three talks and the celebration of the Eucharist. The talks were given by Fr. Mario

Castañeda and Madre Evangelina Trujillo. Fr. Mario is a priest from the Diocese of West Palm Beach. Madre Evangelina co-founded the missionary/religious congregation *Siervas de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo*.

Fr. Castañeda based his first talk, *No se angustien por nada* (Don't you worry about anything) on Phil. 4:6-7 and Mt. 6:25 ff. He encouraged us to internalize and appropriate the advice of Jesus who assures us that his Father takes care of us at all times. He complemented this talk with his second teaching about "The power of the cross" in which he reminded us that Jesus has already paid a price so we could live in peace and without worries.

Madre Evangelina's first talk was based on Ephesians: *Pónganse la armadura de Dios* (Put on the ar-

[See Hispanic Conference page 10](#)

Filipino Conference

by Bob Canton

"Go out into the deep for a catch." "Do not be afraid for I am with you." "Be holy and walk in the path of righteousness." "I want you, my people, to soar like an eagle." These are the prevailing messages that we heard from the various speakers of the Filipino Conference which was held during the National Conference in Pittsburgh. With "The Holy Spirit, the Consuming Fire" as its theme, the Filipino Conference featured speakers Bishop Sam Jacobs, Fr. Bill Halbing of Newark, New Jersey, Fr. Ed Abano of Piscataway, New Jersey, and myself from Stockton, California. An estimated three hundred people attended the Filipino Conference.

All the speakers issued a challenge for the laity to go forward with the Catholic Church in its thrust for evangelization. "The times are urgent and we cannot

afford to fold our arms and just be satisfied to be on the 'sea-shore', so to speak, instead of going out into the deep for a catch, a catch for boatloads of souls," according to Bishop Jacobs.

The words of Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you," seemed to be the main message of the four people who shared their life-changing encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ: Terri Albarracin from Columbus, Ohio, Butch Nunes who lives in Queens, New York, Dr. Ray Caparros who hails from Baltimore, Maryland, and Rose Lontoc from Jersey City, New Jersey. Each testified to a time in their lives when fear had gripped them because of sickness and afflictions that they or their loved ones had suffered, but the Lord Jesus healed and set them free.

[See Filipino Conference page 10](#)

Haitian Conference

by Marie-Josée Joseph

Over one thousand Haitian brothers and sisters from different states gathered for the Haitian Conference at the 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh.

On Saturday morning, the participants in the Haitian Conference gathered at the Hilton Hotel. After the time of praise, Bishop Stanislaw Rylko, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, delivered a message on

Rev. 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'"

In his address Bishop Rylko focused on the power of the Holy Spirit in different manifestations: healing, vocations, evangelism, etc. He invited us not only to look at the past of the Charismatic Renewal but to focus on the future, and one way to do so is to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He reminded us that the Charismatic Renewal should always remain a school of evan-

gelization and engagement for the mission of the church and the world.

Marie-Josée Joseph pointed to the Holy Spirit as the one who fills our hearts with divine graces. The soul in possession of the Holy Spirit has no other life, but the love for God.

In the afternoon there was a marvelous celebration of the Eucharist. The conference came to an end with an inspiring hom-



ily by Msgr Joseph Malagrecia on the "Power of the Cross."

It was a blessed and spirit filled day for the Haitian brothers and sisters. ♦

Marie-Josée Joseph is a member of the Le Conseil du Renouveau Charismatique Catholique des Haïtiens D'Outre-Mer.

Photos: Gary Yon



Spiritual Formation

by Dorothy Ranaghan

Our identity in Christ

by Dorothy Ranaghan

My husband and I have watched the Today Show on NBC every morning for over thirty years. One day last year, Matt Lauer was conducting an interview with a man who had just written a book called *Connectedness*. It attempts to show how this phenomenon has been discovered to be invaluable to our health. Matt kept questioning the author, asking “why?” “Why does your research indicate that the better our connections to other people, the more our health improves?” I talk back to the television set, and so I found myself saying out loud, “I know, I know!” Why was I saying that? Simple. God’s blueprint intends for us to be connected in relationships as part of who we are, because it is who God is—three loving persons—and we are made in his image. We share in the inner life of the God who is love. By nature we are intended to be most fully who we are when in loving relationships with others. The better we love, the more human we become, and the more we mirror the life of God into which baptism has brought us. Needless to say the author of that book didn’t answer the question to my satisfaction. His partial truth, however, was on the right track.

If, as I once read, what we believe reality to be will influence how we live, then the reality of who are we as Christ and as church should influence our daily lives. Who we are is not in doubt. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, baptism takes us “into communion with [Jesus] and with one another”; “she is united in him in his body.” Who is this “she”? The church. Who is the church? You and I. The church of Jesus is the continuation of the incarnation in the world. We can never forget that the church is not a building or a thing. We are that church. The Christian, we are told, is another Christ, the anointed one. But do we believe it? The question we face from the Lord is not just the one Peter was asked: “Who do you say that I am?” The question from him to us is rather, “Who do you say that *you* are?”

We know that St. Paul has said, “It is no longer I, but Christ [who lives] in me” (Gal. 2:19). We have been brought into his life. We have become identified with, one with him. That is a problem for some of us. We have no problem saying “Amen,” to the fact that God wants to use us or to live in us. We think that makes sense. After all, he made me, he is my Lord, and he can do with me what he wants.

We don’t mind seeing ourselves as tools. We say, “Lord, you come into *my* life.” The problem comes when we try to grasp the inverse, as he says to us, “*You* come into *my* life.” We are called to live his life. We have been made one with him, and that union now means that where I am, he is. In him, and with him, and through him, we give glory to the Father. As individuals, you and I are not the whole Christ, which is why we are connected, a body. But if I may be allowed to use a homespun analogy—when we eat a piece of rhubarb pie, we know it is fully and totally pie. It is no less pie because it is not the whole pie. It is pie, and we know it.

More often than not we, or at least I, sell ourselves short. Many of us so exaggerate our imperfections that we assume that either Christ couldn’t live in us at all, or that he will only shine forth from us in extraordinary, charismatic moments. That is a lot of hogwash. What we need to grasp is the truth that there will never be an ordinary moment in our lives again. We have been transformed. All our moments are Christ-ed, charismatic moments. Because we have been changed, because we have been radically identified with Christ, we have been made one with him. So, when we pray, when we work, when we do our duties, when we eat, when we love those around us, when we do homework with our kids, or entertain the neighbors, it is Christ within us who prays, labors, loves, eats, checks out the stock market, listens to music, eats again, and does the dishes. (Christ in me does *lots* of eating.) Our everyday lives become filled with purpose and power once we grasp this fact that in Christ, as church, even our simple actions help build his kingdom.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to this fuller vision of the life of Christ in us, because it is that same Spirit who changes those in whom he comes to dwell. It was uniquely true of Mary, that when the Spirit came upon her, the Word of God took flesh in her. But it is also true that when he comes to live in us, he makes the Word of God incarnate in us. The same kind of new excitement that we felt when we first discovered that we had underestimated the power of the Holy Spirit within us starts churning inside each Christian who begins to glimpse the sublime truth that what we have always believed of the life of Christ within us is truly true—not just a metaphor, but a reality.

Spiritual Formation

A minister once told me that he was speaking at a meeting and someone came up to him and said, “I see Jesus in your eyes.” The minister said simply, “Yes, I believe you do. He lives in me and every once in a while he peeks out.” That’s humility. And it is close to the truth. The truth, however, is even stronger. Christ doesn’t just haunt our bodies and peek out. It is he who is staring at you when I do, and it is he himself that I can touch and experience in you. Before one another, we are on holy ground. We don’t need to take off our shoes like Moses before the burning bush; but Moses knew God was in the bush. The world will be changed forever once we begin to “connect,” and to act on the realization that individually, and corporately, God in Christ is in us, his church. ♦

A writer and retreat director, Dorothy Ranaghan and her husband, Kevin, live in South Bend, Indiana.

Outline

- A. Our connectedness mirrors the triune God.
- B. Baptism takes us into communion with Jesus and one another.
 - 1. We are the church.
 - 2. Christ truly lives in us.
- C. All our actions are his and meant to build his kingdom.
- D. The more we learn to see Christ in ourselves—and in one another—and act with his power and authority, the more the world will see him in the church.

Questions for reflection

- 1. What human “bonds of love” have you experienced? Did they fulfill you and give you joy?
- 2. Are you ever aware of building the kingdom by the excellence of your work?
- 3. Has your consciousness of Christ living in you changed the way you pray?



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