

PENTECOST *Today*

January/February/March 2003 Volume 28, Number 1

*Go
forth
in the
Spirit*

NEW!

Chairman's
Corner 2

Intercessory
Prayer 9

From the
Director 14

Friends of
the NSC 15

MinistryUpdate 15

Grace for the church 3
Bishop Sam Jacobs takes a look back at the Charismatic Renewal's first thirty-five years and traces how the movement has been a sign of God's life in the church.

Go forth in the Spirit 5
 3500 people gathered for the 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh. **Virginia King** shares the highlights. **Fr. Tim Hepburn** reports on the Youth Track. **Bob Canton, Marie-Josée Joseph** and **Teresa Rosero** cover the Filipino, Haitian and Hispanic Conferences.

Spiritual Formation
Our identity in Christ 7
 "The question we face from the Lord is not just, 'Who do you say that I am?' but, 'Who do you say that *you* are?'" **Dorothy Rangahan** examines the Christian's self identity.

Charisms
Understanding charisms 12
 In this new regular feature, **Sherry Weddell** discusses the nature of charisms and offers suggestions for differentiating spiritual gifts from natural talents.

LEADERS' FOCUS

The beans are burning! 9
Sr. Martha Jean McGarry offers some tips on how leaders can stir things up a bit in their prayer groups.

Newsbriefs 11

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



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 Your Information

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

The National Service Committee-Chariscenter USA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions to defray the cost of this publication are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please mail to:

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*"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

Photos: Gary Yon



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 home-spun 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 hog-wash. 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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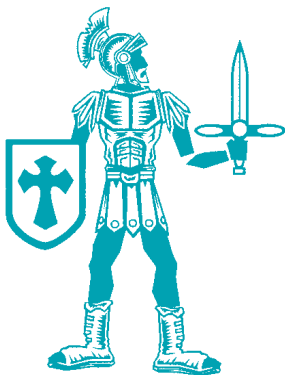
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The beans are burning!

by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry, IHM

Where I live beans are a staple of life. A pot of beans cooking on the stove warms my heart with both contentment and anticipation. However, I need to watch over those beans as they cook and stir them periodically if I plan on enjoying a tasty meal later on. If I fail to tend to the beans as they cook, more likely than not they will burn, and soon the burnt taste will permeate the whole pot. No one wants to eat burnt beans. Something really good is wasted because I did not tend to it.

St. Paul tells us in Hebrews 2 that we need to tend to what we have been given lest we be carried away and reject the gift of salvation we have received. So, too, we need to tend to the gift God has given us in the Charismatic Renewal. Recall also 2 Tim. 1:6, where Paul tells us: "I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have received through the imposition of my hands." Brothers and sisters, it is time to do some stirring and attend to the treasure we have received.

Consider for a moment what God has done for us! Jesus took a bunch of fish (and some of us were probably pretty smelly) and changed us into fishermen and women. What a miracle we are! We were swimming around in the darkness and he drew us up in his net into his glorious light and has given us the privilege of joining in his mission!

I think it is time in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that we get real. What has God called us to? What is the mission he has given us? How are we responding to his call? It seems to be a great time to "stir the beans" so that we might witness anew the mighty hand of God at work in our groups, families and church. I would like to challenge all of us as leaders to make a special effort this year to tend to and to stir up the awesome

gift God has given us in Charismatic Renewal. Shall such a great gift be wasted and discarded because we fail to tend to it?

May I suggest we begin our stirring by doing the following:

Pray. Ask for wisdom and a humble spirit. Desire a heart committed to the stirrings of the Spirit. Seek the grace and the courage to go out into the deep with Jesus.

Examine our mission. Just who are we anyway and what are we about? The Charismatic Renewal by its very nature is evangelistic. Jesus has called us to get in the boat and go fishing with him. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we seek to restore the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and to restore the use of the charismatic gifts to the heart of our daily life.

Examine our prayer meeting / prayer group. Having participated in prayer meetings for some thirty-four years, I have found that they require of me a deep love of God, a commitment to his mission of salvation, a hunger for holiness, and a zeal for souls.

As I have experienced it, there are four facets of a charismatic prayer meeting. I propose these as possible avenues of reflection for us as we assess our own group or community. If we study each of these areas surely we will be following Paul's exhortation to 'stir into flame' the gift that the Holy Spirit has been so gracious to bestow on us.

● The prayer meeting is a **temple of praise** where God's people gather to glorify the Lord in worship, exaltation, and humble openness to his awesome presence and word. How would you describe or rate the praise and worship of God in your meetings?

● It is a classroom or **training ground of the Holy Spirit** where we learn God's word through the Scripture readings. We grow in the use of the gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy, tongues, knowledge, discernment and service. We are trained in holiness by growth teachings on the gifts, sacraments, virtues and Spirit-filled living. Are the gifts of the Spirit operative in our meetings? Do we listen to God's word and respond to it? Can we give testimony to the changes in our lives because we have sat at the feet of Wisdom?

Intercessory Prayer

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

Holy Spirit,
sent to us by the Father
in the name of Jesus,
you help the church by
your presence
and you guide it infallibly.
Renew your wonders
in this our day
as for a new Pentecost.
Grant the church,
united in prayer,
insistent and perseverant,
with Mary the mother of Jesus,
that the reign of the divine
Savior might spread—
a reign of truth and justice,
a reign of love and peace.
Amen.

Prayer of Pope John XXIII

● It is a **community of God's love** where we learn to grow together as members of one body giving glory to God by our acceptance and love of one another, our support of each other in need, our encouragement of one another to be fully alive in Jesus Christ and to be living witnesses of God's love for all people. Our sense of community is broadened as we encompass the needs of others in our prayer, our outreaches of kindness, and above all in the Holy Spirit Seminars we provide regularly. When was the last time you offered a Life in the Spirit Seminar? Does love make your group grow, spiritually and numerically?

● I also experience the prayer meeting as a **spa of healing** where we can experience the

whirlpool and warmth of God's mercy and tender healing in body, soul and spirit. This often occurs as we praise and worship God, reflect on his word, or are ministered to through the prayers of our brothers and sisters. How is healing experienced in your group? Do you provide time to minister to those in need? What is today's miracle in your group?

Surrender our excuses. To all of us who are too old, too young, too busy, too tired, ungifted, blessed with a non-supportive pastor, whose group is too small, and the myriad other reasons why we choose to remain blissfully stagnant, I exhort you to lay your excuses at the feet of Jesus. Rise up as the chosen, gifted, glorious, empowered people you are and let the Holy Spirit use

you to set hearts afire with Jesus. Be faithful servants of the one who filled you with his Spirit. I believe God loves to send forth his Spirit through us.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful! Enkindle in us the fire of your love! Send forth your Spirit! Renew the face of the earth! ♦



A former member of the National Service Committee, Sr. Martha Jean McGarry now serves on the NSC Council. She is the Director of the Catholic Charismatic Center, the renewal center of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Hispanic Conference from p. 6

mor of God). She reflected on our weaknesses and the influence of the devil, making a point of the crisis that our church has gone through. She encouraged us not to focus much on the priests who have fallen; but

instead on the good priests who serve in truth and in love. "The heart must cry and not judge," she firmly advised.

In her other talk, "Be my witness," she made us aware that we are responsible for the welfare and salvation of our brothers and sisters. She quoted 1 Jn. 9: "Whoever says he is in the light, yet hates his brother, is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother remains in the light."

Saturday night all the attendees gathered again. In great joy and as one body we praised, sang and danced. That night we did not have to use the radios for translation because the speaker was Fr. Mario Castañeda, and the Master of Ceremonies was Demetrio Ortega, the coordinator of the Hispanic National Committee. Msgr. Joseph Malagracia did the translation for Fr. Castañeda.

We closed on Sunday with a multicultural celebration. Through praise, readings, songs and dance we proclaimed our unity. Hand in hand we recited the Our Father recognizing our brotherhood and our sisterhood, regardless of who we are or where we are from. We went back home ready to "go forth in the Spirit." ♦

Teresa Rosero is a member of the Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano.

Filipino Conference from p. 6

A Festival of Praise participated in by various Filipino music ministries provided an avenue for those who came to use their gift of music. Some people commented that they received healings of depression, headaches and heaviness of heart during the Festival of Praise. Others claimed that they received the gift of joy and laughter from the Holy Spirit.

The Filipino Conference concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist. Fr. Perry Kenaston from Juneau, Alaska, was the presider. The Mass was followed by a healing service conducted by this writer. Physical, spiritual and emotional healings were claimed.

Patti Isaac, a Regional Coordinator of the AFCCPC, East Atlantic Region, had this to say: "I was indeed touched by the spirit of love and unity that was clearly displayed by the various prayer groups in attendance. The conference was very anointed and powerful, and many people have been touched. The Lord Jesus has undoubtedly been glorified." ♦

Bob Canton is National Coordinator of the Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities.



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

- ◆ For the Gathering of National Leadership Groups in January 2003 in Augusta.
- ◆ For the preparations for the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in San Antonio, May 31-June 2, for God's guidance in each step of the planning and for an abundance of pre-registrations.
- ◆ For upcoming Regional Leaders Gatherings in New Jersey, Michigan and Iowa.
- ◆ For all those in the nation who are presenting or participating in Holy Spirit Seminars.
- ◆ For the NSC, as they welcome and orient new members during this first quarter of 2003.

Please join the NSC and other national leadership groups in a Day of Prayer and Fasting on February 28 (the Friday before Ash Wednesday).

NEWSBRIEFS

NSC and Council Meet

Following its usual rhythm, the National Service Committee met with the NSC Council after the 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh in September. The site of the meeting was the retreat house in Pittsburgh that had been the location of many of the prayer meetings in the early years of the Charismatic Renewal. The Lord moved in a powerful way as the leaders came together to reflect on the Lord's word in the Conference as well as what the members were observing in their various areas and ministries.

There was an extended time of praise and worship after which each one present was asked to write down what he or she was hearing the Lord say or seeing the Lord do. The accumulated prophetic words and images and pastoral responses are still being discerned, but everyone present agreed that the Lord was truly present. As one member summed it up, "I was struck by the fact that I heard no new word tonight, but questions came to mind: 'Why does the Lord keep repeating the same words to us?' [Perhaps] 'we have not heard the word or our human weakness saps the power of the word from us and we need to hear it again and commit ourselves again to God's mission for us.'"

After the NSC Council members left, the Service Committee continued to meet for another day and a half. Time was given to assessing and reflecting upon the Conference and its implications for future conferences.

Internal matters were also dealt with: the establishment of a Development Committee to oversee fundraising initiatives; directions to its Membership Committee about the NSC elections and NSC Council selections; and a review of the tasks proposed by the various Working Groups of the NSC/NSC Council.

The Service Committee was to meet by phone in November, and in person for an extended time of prayer in December. The Service Committee will again meet with the NSC Council in San Antonio after the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference. ♦

NSC conducts Regional Leaders Gatherings in Northeast and Northwest

The National Service Committee continued its initiative of meeting with Renewal leaders in local areas by conducting Regional Leaders Gatherings in the Pacific Northwest and in the Northeast. Forty-three participants representing groups from California, Oregon and Washington State attended the Regional Leaders Gathering November 1-3, in Issaquah, Washington. NSC Chairman

Aggie Neck and members Fr. Art Cooney and Virginia King facilitated the weekend. On November 8-10, fifty-four leaders from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts gathered in Bloomfield, Connecticut. NSC members Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner and Fr. Art Cooney facilitated the Gathering.

Upcoming Regional Leaders Gatherings will be held in New Jersey, January 28-February 2; Michigan, March 21-23; and Iowa, March 28-30. For further information call the Chariscenter office. ♦

**Two-Week Retreat Trips to Poland and Medjugorje with Msgr. Joe James**

March 3–March 15, 2003 ● April 21–May 3, 2003
\$1800 per person

Celebrate the 2003 Divine Mercy Sunday at the new Divine Mercy Basilica in Krakow, Poland, with retreat director Msgr. Joe James, from Slaton, Texas, where he serves as director of the Mercy Retreat Center.

We will stay at the convent of St. Faustina in Krakow, Poland, where St. Faustina lived and died. We will visit:

- ◆ the tomb of St. Faustina
- ◆ the home of Pope John Paul II
- ◆ the famous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa
- ◆ the Auschwitz concentration camp where St. Maximillian Kolbe died.

We will then go to Medjugorje for a few days. There will be healing Mass, confession and daily retreat discussion with Msgr. James.

The cost of the trip is \$1800, which includes roundtrip airfare from New York to Poland and Medjugorje, room and two meals daily, and all transportation for sightseeing. \$100 Deposit.

For more details call Scott Scaria at 860-289-2606. If there is no answer, please leave a message, the call will be returned.

Additional dates for this trip with Msgr. James:
July 22–August 2, 2003,
November 3–November 15, 2003.
These dates are subject to change, based on availability.

CHARISMS

Understanding charisms

by Sherry Weddell

I first met Ellen at a Called & Gifted Workshop in Idaho where she told me her story. Two years before, she had a vivid dream in which she saw the words “works of mercy.” Shortly afterward, she attended her first Called & Gifted Workshop and was startled when she had scored high in the charism of mercy on the *Catholic Spiritual Gifts Inventory*. Ellen felt that this was clearly the prompting of the Holy Spirit and so she took a simple next step and got involved with her parish’s food pantry.

Two years later her world had been turned upside down as an unexpected passion for working with the poor exploded in her life. When wildfires devastated the forests of Idaho that summer, Ellen organized and completely outfitted a fire-fighting team of homeless men. By the time I met her, she was negotiating with the state to open the first day shelter for the homeless in Idaho. “How can I explain what has happened to me to others?” she asked. “Where can I find a spiritual director that understands something about charisms and my particular call to work with the poor?”

As Ellen discovered, discerning and exercising your charisms can radically change your life! That is because charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to Christians by the Holy Spirit to enable them to be powerful channels of God’s love and redeeming presence in the world. As the Second Vatican Council put it:

Indeed, everyone should diligently prepare himself for the apostolate, this preparation being the more urgent in adulthood. For the advance of age brings with it a more open

mind, enabling each person to detect more readily the talents with which God has enriched his soul and to exercise more effectively those charisms which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on him for the good of his brethren (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, n. 30).

None of this will come as news to those involved in the Charismatic Renewal, but many participants in our Called & Gifted Workshops ask, “How come I’ve never heard of charisms before?” All Catholics must be taught, as catechumens in the early church were taught, both to expect the charisms, and to recognize and exercise them effectively when they emerge.

The single biggest challenge when helping others discern their charisms is distinguishing between a spiritual gift and a natural talent or ability. Charisms, or spiritual gifts, differ from natural talents in several important ways. First, charisms are not inherited from our parents, but are given to us by the Holy Spirit whom we received through baptism, strengthened in confirmation and renewed in Eucharist.

Secondly, charisms are supernaturally empowered and enable us to bear fruit for the Kingdom of God above and beyond our normal human abilities. Some charisms are obviously supernatural like the gift of a young friend of ours who is regularly used by God to bring astonishing healing to the seriously ill. Other charisms, like hospitality or administration, may escape our notice altogether because they don’t seem obviously “spiritual” and we may assume that “anyone could do this.”

Another characteristic that sets charisms apart from natural talents is that they are always for others, not for ourselves. We can happily keep a natural talent of music to ourselves like my colleague, Fr. Michael Sweeney, who was trained as a concert pianist but doesn’t like to play for other people. But a charism seems to seek out the persons or situations for which it is intended. We will be restless until we take steps to give it away.

Lastly, we cannot use a charism for evil. You can’t use a charism of writing to write hate literature or a charism of administration to run a drug-smuggling operation! Charisms have only one purpose: to be a channel of the love and redeeming power of God. If we try to deliberately use a charism for evil, it will simply disappear.

Of course, in real life, our charisms and natural talents work together because we are whole people. But when we seek to follow Christ, we are not limited to just the gifts with which we were born. We have been anointed with the Holy Spirit as apostles, ones who Christ sends as agents of his love to the world. ♦



Sherry Weddell is Associate Director of the Catherine of Siena Institute, a program of the Western Dominican Province dedicated to equipping parishes for the formation of lay Catholics for their mission in the world. For more information on the Catherine of

Siena Institute, visit their website at www.siena.org.

Go forth from p. 5

of the Pontifical Council of the Laity. His affirmation of the tremendous benefit that Charismatic Renewal has been in the lives of so many Catholics was cause for great rejoicing. "We are all in amazement and wonder at the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in many forms: how many deep conversions; how many spiritual healings; how many persons have rediscovered the treasure of their own faith, of the word of God, of filial and joyous prayer in the Holy Spirit, of holiness of life...how many Christian communities that, thanks to Charismatic Renewal, have found again their vitality and dynamism!"

Again we were exhorted to be attentive to what the Holy Spirit wants from us in the years to come. Bishop Rylko explicitly called upon us to be faithful to the radical demands of living a Christian life in a secularized culture. He quoted Pope John Paul:

"There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response given by the Holy Spirit to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium."

The Conference was preceded by several events Friday, including a Day for Clergy and sessions on Ministering to and with Youth, Living Community, Women and the Holy Spirit, Christians in Commerce, and the *New Life in the Spirit Seminars*.

There were a variety of special sessions sponsored by the national leadership groups for the Filipinos, Haitians and Hispanics as well as the NSC. There were also sessions for teens and children (see accompanying articles).

At the NSC session on Saturday, Sr. Nancy Kellar spoke of the lack of unity that we have experienced over the years in Catholic Charismatic Renewal. And yet she called us to see in the Conference the hope that the Holy Spirit was pouring out new power for reconciliation.

Tom Curran exhorted us to go deeper, to use the gifts we have been given, to trust the Lord more, and to take responsibility for living the life in the Spirit not only for ourselves but on behalf of others.

Bishop Sam Jacobs reminded us that we need to leave our meeting rooms and go out to where the fish are, to launch out into the deep, beyond our comfort zones.

On Saturday afternoon, there were six different NSC sponsored workshops, each of which focused on a different aspect of being renewed in the grace of Pentecost.

The Conference closed with a wonderful celebration of the Eucharist which included several joyous processions. Bishop Sam Jacobs preached about the mercy God has shown to us, a mercy which has the power to change us into people who can forgive from the heart.

The first thirty-five years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal have set us on course, but the demands of the future are great. This conference sent us forth full of hope in the holiness, power and faithfulness of God. It is our privilege and responsibility to manifest that holiness, power and faithfulness in our lives and to courageously carry that hope into the world. ♦

To order audio and video tapes of the Conference, contact Resurrection Tapes at 612-721-7933 or www.resurrectiontapes.com

Virginia King is a member of the National Service Committee. She serves as Executive Director of Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the renewal center for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Youth from p. 5

These lay apostles were faithful to the call as they ministered God's truth and love.

The program for the Teen Track was relational, deep in truth, and, as Sam Schmidt, a teen participant, said, "really fun." Teens who attended had great examples of openness to the Spirit in the ministry of Youth Arise.

In addition to the excellent music ministry, teens heard one young leader, Simone, tell of how an encounter with the Lord at a retreat broke through her faith crisis and set her on the road of faith. She now uses her singing and testimony for God and others. Another anointed speaker, Michelle, told of her work at a crisis pregnancy center where she saw the results of the "culture of death" in the pain of young

women with devastated lives. She invited and challenged the teens to respond to God's love for them and to choose life.

Tam spoke of the impact of not having an involved father and how his emptiness led him into bad relationships and sinful choices. After his cousin was killed in a drive-by shooting, he had a wake up call and began to seek God seriously. After thirteen years away from the sacrament of reconciliation he returned to Christ's sacrament of mercy.

At the end of the day each teen was invited to explicitly put faith in Jesus Christ and to receive prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Members of the Youth Arise team felt that the teens were really

open to the skits and especially the small group times where they shared their lives, struggles and faith.

As we closed the Teen Track with prayer, I was also praying for the future of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Pope John Paul is calling us to "ecclesial maturity" and I pray to know what that means. The fresh-faced college students of the historic 1967 Duquesne Weekend have matured beautifully; the children of the Charismatic Renewal are grown and having children of their own. I prayed with our spiritual grandchildren—and wondered what their future would hold. ♦

Fr. Tim Hepburn is Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.



From the
Director

by Walter Matthews

The changing face of the Renewal

Recently a reporter for *The Washington Post* called me for background for his article on the impact of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal among Hispanic Catholics in the greater Washington, D.C., area. By the time he called me he had already spoken to a number of others: professors at nearby universities, seminarians, and priests in the local diocese as well as in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. An interesting and challenging thesis had emerged from his prior conversations that he wanted to explore with me: that since the late 80s, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal had become increasingly “ethnic.” He was surprised when I was not surprised!

While I questioned the accuracy of some of the numbers others had given him, I did not question the bottom line: that the Renewal in the US, like the church in the US, has changed.

In fact, for several years now, when reporters call (I get such a call at least once a month), I freely tell them that the growth in the Renewal in the US is among our ethnic brothers and sisters: Hispanics for sure, but also Haitians, Filipinos and Koreans. That is not to say that there is not growth in the Renewal among the white middle class (composed of older immigrant groups such as the Irish, Italians, Polish, Germans, etc.)—after all, we still have many Holy Spirit Seminars being done across the country and more since the NSC’s publication of *The New Life in the Spirit Seminars: Catholic Edition 2000*. However, with some of our long-standing members dying or no longer able to participate due to health, or moving on in ministry, our numbers are lessening. Whereas, among our ethnic brothers and sisters, there is much growth.

This was dramatically evidenced at last Fall’s 2002 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in Pittsburgh celebrating 35 years of the Renewal. About half the attendees were Haitian, Hispanic or Filipino. The strength of the Conference was, for many, this multi-ethnic presence, the multi-ethnic music, and the variety of ethnic speakers and leadership from the stage. (It was for some, however, a difficult stretch.)

This clearly reflects the changes in our church—whether we like it or not, whether we feel comfortable with it or not. In a recent issue of my diocesan paper, an article about the twenty-five active Hispanic Catholic bishops in the US made the point we surely are all aware of: presently Hispanic Catholics are about 39% of the Catholic Church in the US and growing. That may not be true in places like Minnesota, Iowa or St. Louis, but it is clearly so in New York, Chicago, Texas and California.

What has been the role of the NSC in this changing reality? To build bridges and to work for the strengthening of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal among our ethnic brothers and sisters.

As early as 1982 the NSC invited Pepe Alonso, formerly of Mexico then living in Ann Arbor (now in Miami) to join the Service Committee in caring for the growing Hispanic population in the US. Pepe was a valued member of the Service Committee until 1992.

Also in 1982, Sr. Linda Koontz, who works among the poor in Juarez, Mexico, was added to the Committee. In 1984 Marilyn Kramar, an Anglo with a strong ministry to Hispanics in Los Angeles and throughout the country, was added. Both served well until their terms ended in 1990. More recently Ros Hernandez, the Associate Liaison in San Antonio, was elected to the Service Committee.

In the late 1980s the NSC formed a Joint Ad Hoc Committee with the Association of Diocesan Liaisons to further unity in the growing Renewal among Hispanics in the US. In May 1989 a jointly-sponsored national meeting of Hispanic leaders was held. At the meeting a process was begun for discerning a Hispanic National Committee. In June 1990 a national structure was decided upon by the over 140 leaders gathered in Chicago. This structure is called *Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano* (Hispanic National Service Committee).

I still remember the day when Korean Catholics from Cincinnati and a priest leader from Korea came to our offices in South Bend to discuss how we could help them organize in the US. I had met Deacon Joseph Lee of the Twin Cities area in Minnesota years before, so the Korean presence was not totally new to me. The NSC was privileged to help birth the Korean Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States of America in the early 90s. Deacon Lee is now their Chairman.

While the NSC was not directly instrumental in helping the Haitians form their leadership structure, *Le Conseil du Renouveau Charismatique Catholique des Haïtiens D’Outre-Mer*, in 1990, nor the Filipinos the Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities in 1996, we have been very close to both groups and their leaders.

The changing face of the Renewal in the US is not something to be afraid of or to be discouraged by. Rather, it is a sign of hope.

It can become an even greater sign of hope if we all recognize the gifts of one another, see them as something we need, and then work together more effectively in our church and our society to build the culture of Pentecost. ♦

FRIENDS OF THE NSC

One of the most helpful ways a donor can support the National Service Committee is to make a pledge. A pledge can be for any length of time, paid monthly, quarterly or annually, and can be for any amount.

Pledges help us to better plan our income and expenses when we can know that in a given month we will receive a certain dollar amount of donations.

For the pledger making a pledge eliminates the not knowing when you last gave to the NSC!

In addition, if the pledger sends in the pledge before the 10th of the month, then no reminder is sent. Less paper!

We have two types of pledges.

Friends of the NSC make a pledge, usually at the beginning of the year, but also in response to our Pentecost Appeal, for several months or for the year. The amounts vary but range from \$5 a month to \$200 a month. Most are in the \$10 - \$25 a month range.

Fanning the Flame Partners are asked to make a five year pledge at a minimum of \$300 a year or \$25 a month. There are higher giving levels of \$500, \$1000 or more a year.

In both cases, pledges are not a legal contract. They can always be stopped if circumstances change (loss of a job, death of a spouse, etc.)

Please consider becoming a pledger to the work of the National Service Committee!

Thank you for your support.

Special website need

For over a year we have had the NSC website in suspension where no work has been done on it except related to the Conference in Pittsburgh. Why? No money! We need a special gift of \$3500 to get the website cleaned up and running. If you would like to make a dedicated gift of cash or stock or other means for this purpose please call Walter Matthews at 1-800-338-2445. Thank you.



In January, two of our NSC members completed long terms of service on the Committee. I asked them to share their reflections.

Michele Needham Greischar, Ph.D.

Twelve years ago, when Bishop Sam Jacobs called me to tell me that I had been elected to the NSC, I could only respond that I was ready to listen to the Lord who knows all things, and I would trust him in whatever he sent me.

Since that time, God has placed me in some challenging positions. He has called me to teach and to minister nationally and internationally. Disregarding my own sinfulness, he has used me as his instrument. He has walked with me through dark valleys and raised me to the Transfiguration. With him and in him, the way has never been dull.

I have been richly blessed by the people of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I have truly seen Jesus' face in them, from New Mexico to Seattle, from Vancouver to North Carolina, from Ohio to Italy. The people of the Renewal are truly a precious gift, energizing not only the Charismatic Renewal, but also their local parishes and dioceses with vision and service. Because I have known and served them, my life will never be the same.

My hope is that the NSC will continue to relate to the grassroots of the Renewal—that we will continue to form lasting relationships centered in Christ. I pray that together we will continue to spread the good news of the Father's love, of Jesus, crucified and risen, and of the transforming breath of the Holy Spirit. I pray for a new outpouring on our whole church. May God restore us to daily living out of the Acts of the Apostles.

For all, in all and through all, I give thanks to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Deacon Bill Brennan

It seems like yesterday that I received the letter informing me that I had been elected to the NSC. The experience of serving the church and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a member of the NSC for these past nine years has given me a deeper sense of hope. I see the signs of hope for the church in the dedication of brothers and sisters from all walks of life serving God's people in parishes, prayer groups and various ministries. I also see hope in the many ways in which the Renewal has impacted the life of the church—an impact noted often by our Holy Father. These are all signs that the Spirit is moving in the church "as by a new Pentecost." Is there still work to be done? Of course there is. But I know this: God has begun a new thing and he is not finished yet.

I also see signs of hope for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Service on the NSC has allowed me to see the work of the Renewal from a national and international vantage point. I now see more than ever how every prayer group, no matter its size and no matter its charisms and ministries, is a vital link in a chain connecting us all in Christ. And most important of all, I see hope in the evidence that through this renewal of the Spirit, our God is still touching lives and transforming them, enabling average ordinary people to do extraordinary things for the kingdom. This renewal has barely started, and the future is before us.

As I end my time of service, I have a prayer in my heart for the Renewal and for all of those whose lives have been touched by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I pray that we never take this gift for granted, that we open ourselves more and more to the Spirit, that we never forget the moment of the encounter that changed everything—that is, baptism in the Holy Spirit, however it happened for us—and that we never be afraid to step out of the boat and walk on the water with Jesus. ♦



Join us in San Antonio

Home of the Alamo and the beautiful Riverwalk

2003 National Catholic
Charismatic Renewal Conference
May 30–June 1

Remove All Bounds to Hope

*and bring to life the "culture of Pentecost"
in the power of the Holy Spirit*



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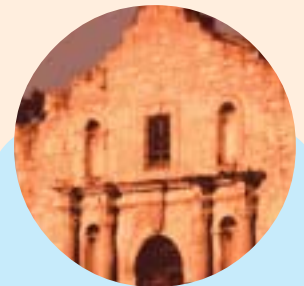
Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ (India)—proclaiming hope
throughout the world

Jess Romero (California)—a living testimony to the
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Peter Herbeck (Michigan)—an energetic witness
to hope

Sr. Linda Koontz (Texas)—missionary of hope

Cindy Erivez (Texas)—witness to hope for teenagers



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