


Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

January/February/March 2006

- 
- Our true love p. 3
Longing for holiness p. 4
Bishop Flanagan on personal holiness p. 6
Chicago leaders conference p. 8
John Paul II & lessons from the saints p. 10
Discernment of spirits p. 12
Portuguese renewal p. 13

Comstock Images

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Holy hunger

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is given for the renewing of the church and the world. It begins with the renewal of individual believers. It brings the grace and power to live the gospel message with conviction, courage, and boldness. It stirs in us a desire, a hunger for holiness because we want to be pleasing to God.

John Paul II, in his 2004 Pentecost Eve message, spoke of a mission for us: "New evangelization, which needs mature Christian personalities and strong Christian communities." The spirituality of Pentecost calls us to maturity, and to commitment. It is a way of life. And this way of life must lead to holiness. "It is God's will that you grow in holiness." "God has not called us to immorality but to holiness; hence, whoever rejects these instructions rejects not man, but God, who sends his Holy Spirit upon you" (1 Thes. 4:3, 7-8).

"An encounter with the Lord brings about a profound transformation in all who do not close themselves off from him. The first impulse coming from this transformation is to communicate to others the richness discovered in the experience of the encounter" (*The Church in America*). Do you remember how we could not wait to share our experience with others when we first encountered the Lord and received the Holy Spirit? We are called to become God's witnesses, just as the first disciples were on the day of Pentecost. The **message of hope** should be ever ready on our lips because it is ever present in our hearts and minds. Witnesses must also be an example of what their witness is about. Therefore God's witnesses must be holy, set apart

and different from the culture they are seeking to transform.

The parable of the silver pieces shows us very clearly what God does expect. He does not want us to bury what we have been given, but to multiply it (Matt. 25:14-30). Even if it only produces one more, God expects a return on the gift he has given. "The gift you have received, give as a gift" (Matt. 10:8). The apostles, who stumbled through the three years they walked with Jesus, saw and experienced miraculous, marvelous signs and wonders. Yet, they were unable to stand with him during the final hours of his life on earth. It took the experience of Pentecost to bring an "eye opening" awareness and a "world changing" faith. They were the first to begin living the spirituality of Pentecost. Their faith became bold and expectant. They were willing to suffer for the truth they proclaimed and now believed without a doubt.

"What is it that the bible wants to impress upon us with the revelation of the Spirit as strength and power? This, I think above all else: The Holy Spirit is the one and only true strength and real power that keeps the church alive! Just as the individual believer, the church itself cannot live by its own strength. **It is therefore from the Holy Spirit that the church and every preacher of the gospel has the power to convince and to lead to conversion, to get through to the very heart of a culture**" (Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, *"Come Creator Spirit"*).

John Paul II called us to be these witnesses and "**sowers of hope.**" The Renewal has awakened us to this hope. We can witness to hope because we have experienced it and we walk in it. Therefore it must be, should be, can be us. In faith we must proclaim: **IT WILL BE US!** ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editors Desk

Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

O God, you set St. Teresa afire with love for your Son Jesus Christ. Through her example and intercession, lead us deeper into your presence, that we may more and more faithfully hear your word and keep it through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer from the prayers for the feast of St. Teresa expresses the soul's deep desire for holiness, for an intimate relationship with Jesus. It is our desire that the articles in this issue of **Pentecost Today** will renew in each of us the hunger for God and God's reign in our lives that we will be rekindled fires bringing the grace of Pentecost into our everyday world.

Sharing their understanding and experiences of holiness, Bishop Tom Flanagan and Mother Lucy Lukaszewicz awaken us to our real mission in life. Caroline Gambale witnesses to her call to be 'Jesus.' Ralph Martin reminds us of the rich resources we have in the Saints of the church, both as encouragers and challengers in our own journey in holiness. The gift of discernment is an important gift the Lord has given to us to assist us in our walk. Abbot David Geraets' thoughts should give us a greater understanding of this gift as well as the impetus to learn more about it.

Enjoy the reports given on the National Leaders' Conference, the Ars Priests' Retreat and the Portuguese Renewal which give testimony that the Spirit is alive and working among us.

In Ephesians 1:3-10 we read, "God chose us in him before the world began **to be holy** and blameless in his sight." Sanctify your people, Lord! ♦

Called *to love*



"All of the Christian faithful...are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness" (CCC 2013).

At the beginning of my faith journey, if someone would have asked me what holiness was, I would have given them a spiritual "to do" list: daily mass, fasting, Eucharistic Adoration, praying the rosary, obedience to the Church's teachings, etc. Young and spiritually immature, I believed that I could attain holiness if I just did all the "right" things. Then something happened to me that radically changed my perspective. During a flight to Illinois in 1992, my plane experienced a tremendous amount of turbulence. It was the kind of turbulence that would lead any reasonable Catholic to start praying the Act of Contrition. Afraid and believing that my plane was going to crash, I placed myself in the presence of the Lord and prepared my heart to be with him. Then I heard God interiorly say to me, *"You will not die because you have not yet loved."* These words were followed by a profound understanding that heaven was a place of unconditional love, and for anyone to be able to exist in heaven, they must first *become love*. "But Lord," I asked, "don't we have to obey the commandments to get to heaven?" He replied, "When one loves me, they obey my commandments because of their love."

God showed me that love must be the driving force behind everything; that holiness is to *become love* because "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). St. Francis De Sales said, "We must begin with love, continue with love and end with love." When a religious sister had told him, "I wish to acquire love through humility," he replied, "And I wish to acquire humility through love."

We naturally become what we contemplate.

As we contemplate and "fall in love" with Jesus, who is love, we cannot help but become holy.

It should be love that compels us to obey God's commandments. It should be love that leads us to prayer. It should be love that helps us to forgive our enemies. If we do these things with any other motive, we will not become holy but rather fall short and quickly get frustrated with ourselves. As St. Paul says, "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2-3).

I realized that I had the right tools but I was putting the cart before the horse. My focus was much more about *doing* things for God, as if I could achieve holiness through my own means, rather than growing in intimacy and love with God. It is

no wonder that John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* called us to contemplate the face of Christ. We naturally become what we contemplate. As we contemplate and "fall in love" with Jesus, who is love, we cannot help but become holy. Love has a way of doing just that; it has a way of changing us more into the image of the beloved.

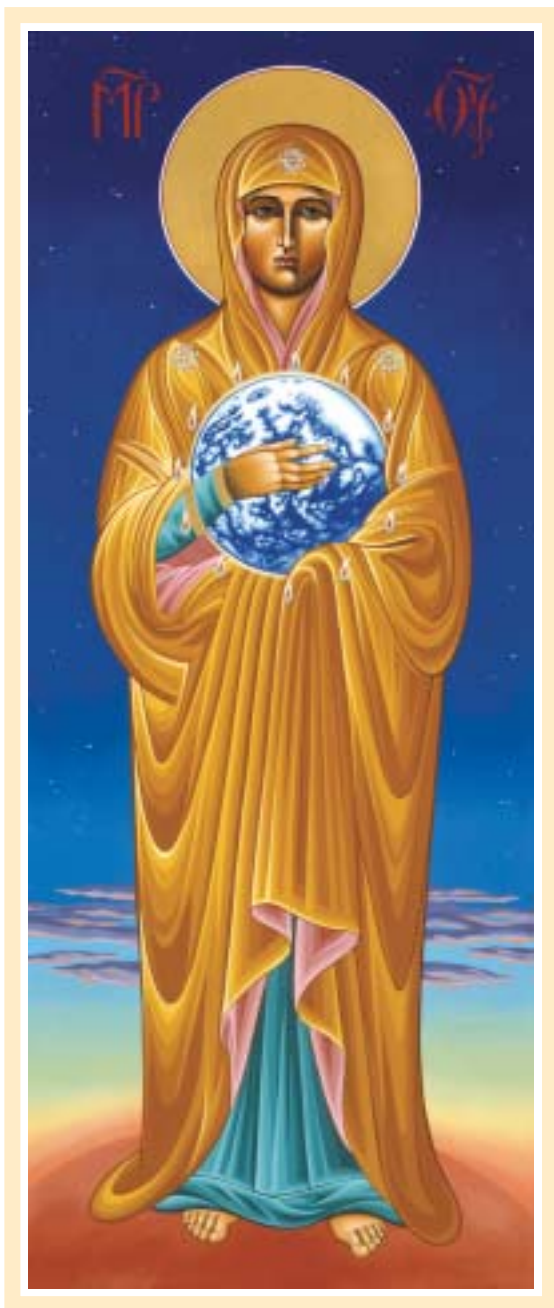
The words God spoke to me on the plane have never left me. It has been my prayer and deep desire to be transformed into love ever since. Even though I am acutely aware of my numerous sins and weaknesses, I rejoice in the truth that holiness is possible for me, not because of anything I have done but because of what Christ has done for me and wills to do in me. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes. 4:3). My spiritual to do list has changed. Now at the very top is written, "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14). ♦

Caroline Gambale is a dynamic and passionate evangelist. She has been active in youth ministry and evangelization for 13 years. Caroline works as a full time youth minister at St. Joseph's Parish in Hillsborough, NJ. She also serves as the Area Coordinator for Life Teen in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. A graduate of Steubenville University, Caroline has spoken at numerous rallies, retreats, and conferences.



Longing for holiness

This stirring of the Spirit initiates a profound response within the soul of every baptized person and...drives the soul to a more perfect charity in love and in service to the people of God.



"Mary Most Holy, Mother of all Nations"
©William Hart McNichols S.J.

by Mother Lucy Lukasiewicz, DLJC

Pope John Paul II's prayer for the Charismatic Renewal on Pentecost of 2004 was that the spirituality of Pentecost would spread in the church. Not only is it to spread in the church but also it is to be an incentive to holiness. "But you are enthroned as the Holy One, the One whom Israel praises" (Ps. 22:3). The psalmist makes this proclamation to the Lord God whom he depends upon and loves. It is this same proclamation that goes on through the ages through the lips of our beloved and belated John Paul II and every follower of Jesus as we endeavor to be holy as he is holy.

Adam and Eve as they shared in the divine intimacy with God "were in the grace of original holiness" (CCC #375). This was the divine plan of God before man sinned. Throughout the Old Testament to be holy meant to be separated from the secular or profane. It was also a sign of dedication to God's service. God was holy and he identified his separation from all evil. His creatures were holy in relation to him. The people of Israel were holy because they **were** the people of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus calls us to perfection. "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). **The universal call to holiness is not a recommendation but a commandment of Jesus.** God's own perfection is a model for us to follow primarily in love and mercy. God expects his followers to live lives of exemplary holiness. "It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society" (*Lumen Gentium* 40).

This holiness calls us to a greater worship. St. Paul tells us, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). The call to holiness is a call to be consecrated to the worship of God. This means we are set apart for worship. **All our activities are sanctified throughout the day because Jesus is our worship.** Jesus is on our mind and in our heart. He is included in our activities from the rising of the sun to its setting. His name is on our tongue ready to speak. "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). We see our daily activities as an occasion to join ourselves to God, in fulfilling his will and in serving others so as to lead them to communion with God.

The spirituality of Pentecost is undoubtedly a spirituality of holiness. When the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” at Pentecost, they were filled with the holiness of God. **The Spirit of God is holy and he is the agent of our holiness.** He is the source and giver of all holiness. By living in us he makes us into holy temples of God. His work is our sanctification. His breath is life to our souls. It is then we begin to mirror God and share in his divine life. “Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God ‘Father’ and to share in Christ’s grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory” (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132).

Let us look at the first disciple and our model. Mary became a living tabernacle of holiness. She was consecrated for this purpose. As the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary so we too can be vessels ready to receive the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was formed in the holy womb of Mary, so we are formed in the holy womb of the Church. Mary shows us the disposition we need before God. We must both empty out and become humble before our Creator. We must be attentive to the voice of God and respond as Mary did, “I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). We also need to live a life of prayer as Mary did in preparation for being a receptive vessel of God. To live in the spirituality of Pentecost we must be available and ready witnesses to the Spirit of God, actively prepared for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Prayer draws us to the heart of God. On February 14, 1981, as a teenager I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I was at home, at the kitchen table. I was with my foreign exchange sister, my mother, aunt and two sisters. That event changed my life. I was drawn to the heart of God through prayer especially prayer in tongues. Through that prayer I was led to intercession. I began to see God at work answering prayer, healing hearts that were broken and rescuing my friends from the clutches of despair. God continued to draw me to his heart. My whole focus changed because I was focused on God. I was drawn to holiness and the holiness of God. Through prayer, God gave me an insatiable thirst for him (Psalm 63).

Prayer leads us into a longing for holiness—the insatiable thirst for God. In prayer we see God and we desire to be like him. God is pouring out a gift of profound holiness especially in this present generation. Holiness is defined as the perfection of charity. In *Christifideles Laici*, John Paul II says, “The call to holiness is rooted in Baptism and proposed anew in the

other sacraments principally in the Eucharist. Since Christians are re-clothed in Christ Jesus and refreshed by his Spirit, they are ‘holy.’ They therefore have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do. The apostle Paul never tires of admonishing all Christians to live ‘as is fitting among saints’” (Eph. 5:3).

Pope John Paul II continues, “Life according to the Spirit, whose fruit is holiness (Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22), stirs up every baptized person and requires each to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, in embracing the beatitudes, in listening and meditating

on the Word of God, in conscious and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the church, in personal prayer, in family or in community, in the hunger and thirst for justice, in the practice of the commandment of love in all circumstances of life and service to the brethren, especially the least, the poor and the suffering.” This stirring of the Spirit initiates a profound response within the soul of every baptized person and draws upon the personal relationship with Jesus in prayer. It drives the soul to a more perfect charity in love and in service to the people of God.

Mary shows us the disposition we need before God.

★ **We must both empty out and become humble before our Creator.**

★ **We must be attentive to the voice of God and respond as Mary did.**

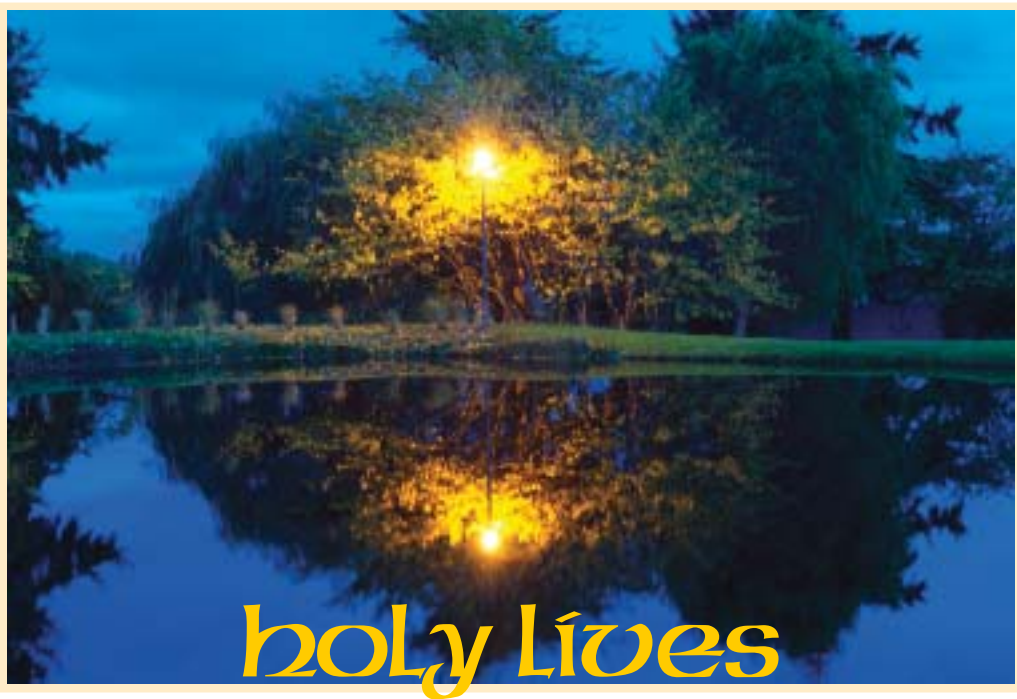
★ **We also need to live a life of prayer as Mary did in preparation for being a receptive vessel of God.**

★ **We must be available and ready witnesses to the Spirit of God, actively prepared for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

On Pentecost eve of 2004, Pope John Paul II said that the ecclesial movements and the new communities are a “providential response,” “given by the Holy Spirit” to today’s demand for the new evangelization. **Living** the spirituality of Pentecost, may our striving for holiness awaken others to the saving love of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. ♦

Mother Lucy Lukasiewicz is the Superior of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, a Charismatic Franciscan Religious Congregation. Before she came to the Disciples, she was involved in the Charismatic Renewal in Nebraska. She resides in Prayer Town, Texas along with the foundress Mother John Marie Stewart and Sisters. The Congregation lives a life of prayer and is active in the apostolate of Evangelization.





Excerpts from a talk given by Bishop Tom Flanagan at the National Leaders' Conference in Chicago, 2005

how blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs." Happiness and holiness come to us through Jesus the Lord and our total dependence on God, not merely on ourselves nor on the power of material things. We need to place our lives in his hands and to surrender to Jesus, our Savior. With God all things are possible, so let us entrust our lives and our journey of faith to Jesus Christ. Saint Isaac Jogues tells us: "We must give ourselves to the work and be faithful to God, and not spoil God's work by our shortcomings." Thomas Merton tells us: "We become saints or holy people not by violently overcoming our own weakness, but letting the Lord give us the strength and purity of God's Spirit in exchange for our weakness and misery." Our call to holiness is our call to be saints. Remember: you are God's creation, fashioned first with his heart—the Sacred Heart of Jesus—and then with his hands. God rejoices and celebrates with his chosen ones because of our talents, our gifts or charisms, and the abilities that are ours and just for us. Let us thank God for each other, let us thank God for our many and abundant blessings. "The Lord your God is with you; he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Holiness is a gift from God helping us to live in a closer relationship with Jesus the Lord. Through the scriptures, our own personal prayer life and the sacramental life of the church, we are blessed, and we are able to walk humbly before God, thus enabling us to have a closer and more intimate relationship with Jesus, our Savior and our friend. Holiness is a task. We have to work at it with all our heart and our entire mind. We need to enter again and again into a

deeper relationship with Jesus. We want to become holy women and men. We pray that with passage of time we will become more Christ-like in our daily journey as we walk along life's weary way with our sisters and brothers. "Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you" (Col. 3:12-13).

pope John Paul II of happy memory exhorted us in this way, "The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living." The Holy Father has called for "a genuine training in holiness," a holiness that leads us to a deep inner peace, a deeper relationship with Christ and a willingness to help others grow in God's grace. God has blessed all of us with many gifts and God wants us to share our blessings with others for the common good of our faith community, our prayer group and with our fellow parishioners in our local parish. Let us share our blessings "for a blessing is no blessing until it is shared." Allow God to help each and all of us to be his disciples and his ambassadors. "This makes us ambassadors for Christ, God as it were appealing to us" (2 Cor. 2:20).

We are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Our call to holiness is not just for some select people or groups; rather the call to holiness of life is God calling each one of us to a life of personal holiness. The call is to all ages, to all nations and for all times. A reporter said to



m

Mother Teresa, "Some people say you are a saint!" And she replied, "We are all in the process of becoming saints, you in your way and I, in my way. Our mission in life is to grow in holiness." Our task is to use all the means available to us to do the ordinary things in an extraordinary way. Saints are ordinary men and women like any one of us, doing God's will, in the spirit of the Gospel of John. Jesus said to Thomas "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me" (John 14:6).

Jesus is our model. Mary is our protector and she guides us always to her Divine Son Jesus Christ. In Jesus we will find life, love, joy, hope, goodness and kindness, and through Jesus we grow in personal holiness of life. We become "other Christs" to our family, friends and to all people that we encounter in daily life.

Mary is the Mother of hope; to her we turn in prayer and praise. Mary lived in hope that God's promises would be kept, even at the foot of the cross. Mary is an example and beacon of hope, so let us put our trust in God as we pray: *Mother of Divine Hope, pray for us.* Mary encourages us to live toward the future for which we hope as we grow through life that is filled with sadness, misfortune, disappointments and despair. We are a people who live in the resurrection light and when we look at the face of Jesus we too, like Mary, are uplifted, encouraged, affirmed and we are given a ray of sunshine. Our hearts are filled with hope and we are renewed through the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that God will renew our holiness in the present and in the future and shed his light on us so as to dispel the darkness of a broken world with the light of Christ. "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:13-14). A lighted torch has been given to each one of us, to be the

salt of the earth, and to be that shining light of faith, hope and love to all people that we encounter in our daily life.

Mary keeps saying to us today what she said to the waiters at Cana in Galilee, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Let us have an opened mind, a loving and listening heart, so that we can hear truly the gentle voice of the master saying again and again to his followers, *Come to me. Come follow me. I need your hands and your feet. I need you in this moment of history.* This is our hour of rededication of our life to Jesus, when we say loud and clear. *Here am I, Lord. I have come to do your will. Lord, I am truly your humble and faithful servant.* ♦

Bishop Tom Flanagan is an auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio, Texas. He has been archdiocesan director/liason of the Charismatic Renewal since 1985. He is a member of the US Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Catholic Charismatic Renewal.



Prayer Card



Lord Jesus Christ, whom even the wind and sea obey; this past season we have seen winds and water that seem to overwhelm us.

We cry out, with all who were in the path of recent hurricanes, for your Presence and your Peace to all who suffer from these storms and their effects.

Father of Life, pour out your Holy Spirit to calm the storms that so trouble us. May this be a time of grace and healing for all our nation.

May Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Immaculate Conception, wrap her mantle of care around us to remind us of your victory over destruction, sin and death.

Jesus Christ, you are the Resurrection and the Life; in your Name we pray. Amen.



The National Service Committee and the other national leadership groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have designated the Friday preceding Ash Wednesday as a Day of Prayer and Fasting.

**day of
prayer
and
fasting
feb 24**

Renewal participants are encouraged to pray for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States and that the Church in our country might be renewed in the grace of Pentecost.

This will be the fifth year designated for such a day to strengthen the unity of the Renewal and communion in the Church.