

PENTECOST *Today*

July/August/September 2010

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New life in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Chairman's Corner

.....
by Fr. Richard Loch

When we receive the Holy Spirit we are on FIRE with the Holy Spirit. Every day our eyes are opened more and more to God's love and presence in our lives.

Like St. Paul we want to tell everybody - we don't mind traveling to distant places, we don't care if the message is received or not, we have to proclaim the message. We're disappointed when a Sunday Mass goes less than an hour and a half. We don't care what trials, distress, persecutions we suffer, because if we suffer these while doing the Lord's work it is worth it. Like Paul we never grow tired - even while in prison waiting to be put to death we are writing letters, evangelizing the guards and rejoicing in the Lord's love.

Let's be honest. We're all not like Paul. Sometimes we get discouraged. There are times when we just want to leave well enough alone and we don't want to rock the boat. There are times we are tired and figure that we've done enough, let someone else teach and proclaim. It's too far to travel to a regional or national conference.

Sometimes we seem to be suffering from what Timothy had that prompted Paul to write that second letter to him. The good news is that Paul saw that Timothy was running out of gas, was discouraged and maybe about to give up. Paul didn't give up on Timothy. He knew that Timothy was filled with the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would not let Timothy down. Paul knew that Timothy had allowed things to weigh him down and was losing sight of the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes to Timothy and near the beginning of the letter he writes: "For

this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have 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" (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

As we look at how we are living the life in the Spirit let's do so in all honesty and humility. Let's not be afraid to admit that we need to stir into flame the gift of God that we received. We need to put fuel on the fire and remove from our hearts and lives anything that is dampening the fire of the Holy Spirit within us.

I write these words to both challenge and encourage. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was a life-changing experience for me back in May of 1972 and continues to touch me in ways that surprise and delight me. *This is my last column as Chairman of the NSC.* A few weeks ago I received word that I was given permission to join the Benedictine Community at St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, PA. There is a long story around this, too long for this column. But I see this as the fruit of years and years of prayer and discernment and in a more recent period of actively pursuing this call. As I respond to this call and begin my formation I must let go of many activities and committees that I have been involved in over the years, including the NSC. I thank all of you for your faithfulness to the Renewal and your support to the ministries of the NSC. I thank the members of the NSC for their strong commitment to serve the Renewal. In particular I thank Walter Matthews for the prayerful and prophetic way in which he heads the office as Executive Director. He is a man of holiness and prayer who truly is filled with the Holy Spirit. I ask that you keep me in your prayers as I begin this new chapter in my life. ♦

Fr. Richard Loch is Chairman of the National Service Committee.



Editor's Desk

.....
by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry

The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness (Lam 3:22-23).

Over and over again we are reminded that God continues to pour out his love and graciousness. *We pray that your hearts will experience new encouragement and new joy as you witness God's faithfulness exhibited in the articles of this issue.*

A question often asked is 'where are the youth'? Seeing God's grace accomplishing new life in our **youth and young adults**, three of those involved with youth ministry share their stories. (See page 4 and 5.)

Two articles on our life in the Spirit are given for our personal examination and reflection. One is by **Fr. Bob Hogan** on the fruits of the Spirit and the other by **Al Mansfield** who encourages us to refresh our 'Catholic Charismatic conscience.'

What do you know about The Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships? Read **Matteo Calisi's** article for a glimpse at this blessing to the Renewal and to the Church.

For new life to prayer meetings you might want to read **Rudy Pruden's** and **Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner's** insights on teachings with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. (See page 8-9.)

Our columnists, too, give voice to God's favors and mercy as always new, always present in our life and mission. ♦

Prayer steps for lasting freedom and fruitful living

by Fr. Bob Hogan, BBD

For deep and lasting transformation begin each of the 18 prayer sessions with 5-10 minutes of praise and worship. Then talk and reflect with Jesus and the Holy Spirit about the topic of the session for a total of 30 minutes. Be open to the Holy Spirit's inspiration and transforming grace.

1) **Desire:** Read Galatians 5:13-26. Ask the Holy Spirit for the desire to overcome the works of the flesh in your life. This includes all compulsive behaviors (passions and desires) that are self-centered and self-protective reactions, not led by the Spirit.

2) **Revelation:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what are the specific areas of the works of the flesh where he wants to give you freedom. Go through the list of the works of the flesh from Galatians 5.

3) **Commitment to Jesus Christ:** *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"* (v.24). The power of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit are available to those who have made a clear decision and commitment to belong to Christ Jesus. Do you belong to Jesus even more than your family, work, favorite activities, your money, clothes, etc? Talk with Jesus about making this clear commitment to belong to him.

The Power of the Cross: (Steps 4-8)

Jesus' words on the cross have power to "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires" (v. 24). Pray one session with each quote.

4) *"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"* (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34). Process your feelings, passions and desires with the Lord. Express and share with Jesus the areas where you struggle. Read Psalm 22, which Jesus is quoting, to see how this psalm is a processing of feelings that leads to transformation and victory.

5) *"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do"* (Lk 23:34). Truly repent of sin. Accept God's forgiveness for you. Are there areas in your life where you still do not forgive yourself or accept that God has forgiven you? Become so overwhelmed by God's forgiveness of you, that you choose to forgive those who have hurt you.

6) *"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"* (Lk 23:46). Trust yourself and your future to God, letting go of worry and anxiety. Let go of controlling, demanding, complaining attitudes.

7) *"Woman, behold your son... Behold, your mother."* He took her into his home (or "his own," Jn 19:16-27). Take Mary as a spiritual mother who helps you through crosses, troubling times, and struggles with the flesh.

8) *"I thirst... It is finished (accomplished/fulfilled)... Jesus handed over the Spirit"* (Jn 19:28-30). Long and thirst for God's full victory in your life. Proclaim that Jesus has won the victory through his cross and resurrection. It is accomplished/finished. Now receive the gift of the Spirit that Jesus hands over to us from the cross.

The Power of the Spirit:

9) **Accept the Holy Spirit as your Advocate/Partner.** Make a commitment to have a prayer time every day where you invite the Holy Spirit's presence, power, love and self-control to be with you.

Nine Fruit of the Spirit Sessions

(Gal 5:22-23). Over the next nine days pray with each of the fruits of the Spirit allowing the Holy Spirit to form these qualities of Jesus in you. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how each fruit is needed in your heart and in your practical life situations (family, work, relationships, recreation, ministry). Spend time welcoming the Holy Spirit's presence in you, so that the Spirit can fill you with the presence of each fruit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control. ♦

Fr. Bob Hogan is Co-founder of the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple, a Charismatic and Marian Religious community of priests and brothers. He is a member of the NSC and involved with working at the Catholic Center for Charismatic Renewal in San Antonio, Texas.



“Behold I make all things new.”

by Leslie Bertucci, Caroline Gambale-Dirkes and Jane Guenther

Among youth and young adults the Holy Spirit is making all things new. Frequently it is asked: “Where are the young adults and youth in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?” It is not that they are absent. It is that what we knew as expressions of the Spirit manifest among God’s people is happening in new ways. For them it is a very real first experience of the Holy Spirit, not a Renewal of the Spirit as it has become for many of us.

St. Louis

St. Louis began a Young Adult Prayer Group at the Catholic Renewal Center, a monthly gathering to fit into the young adult schedule. The first night Maureen, a woman now in her mid-twenties, stated: “This prayer meeting isn’t going to look like prayer meetings in the past.” Maureen has the perspective to say such a thing. Growing up in the Charismatic Renewal and participating in God’s Gang, the local renewal youth ministry, she knows what has been. We think of the words from 1 John: “What was from the beginning, what we

have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us.”

It is a different and very new expression for them. In a culture that is ever evolving, why would we not expect our gracious God to respond in new ways through the Spirit so that what concerns the Word of Life would be made visible for the sake of our youth and young adults? They expressed clearly that their greatest need is discernment and direction. They seek to know within that intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus what is God’s will for them. Although many of us involved in the Renewal know the need we have through the Spirit to praise God and open most gatherings this way, Maureen and our other young adults have found they have a need to use the Psalms and a more contemplative opening. It is the way in which praise music brings about a vulnerabil-



For them it is a very real first experience of the Holy Spirit.

ity to the Spirit that they don’t feel they are ready for. The praise and music portion of the prayer meeting happens near the end of the prayer gathering.

Southeast Louisiana

In Southeast Louisiana, the Holy Spirit is alive and well in the hearts and souls of many teens and young adults. The words of the prophet Isaiah proclaim: “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (Is. 43:19). Activities sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO) and the Sanctify Youth Group at the local parish of St. Anselm in Madisonville, Louisiana, are a source of this movement. In the last five months

youth have knelt in worship at adoration, leaping in praise, weeping repentantly in confession, and allowing the God of miracles to change their hearts.

A group of 17 high school students, called the Work Crew, play a major leadership role in two of the largest weekend venues sponsored by CCRNO each year: the Holy Spirit Teen and Young Adult Retreat in January, and the youth track of the Southern Regional Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in March. At each of these events, the Work Crew is on stage, modeling praise and worship for participants, performing humorous skits, leading icebreakers and acting in a conversion drama,

which precedes an altar call. This year's crew was a diverse group of students from Catholic, public and home school, who formed a bond that seems will last a lifetime.

After warming up the crowd with a lively paper throw ice-breaker, Work Crew entertained them with Christian rewrites of the popular songs "Party in the USA" and "I Got a Feelin'." The chorus of one rewrite that will resound forever in our brains goes like this: "I put my hands up, I'm praisin' the Lord; the Holy Spirit comes my way. Noddin' my head like yeah; praisin' the Lord like yeah." We didn't even have to change the chorus for the other song: "I got a feelin'... that tonight's gonna be a good night, that tonight's gonna be a good night, that tonight's gonna be a good, good night."

It was, indeed, a very good night. Activities included dance-til-you-drop praise, heartfelt worship, a drama that cut us all to the quick, and a Eucharistic procession that resulted in weeping, crying out for God, and a need to move chairs around quickly as kids rested in the Spirit while Jesus passed by them.

Perhaps the catalyst was the drama the Work Crew performed to the song "Already Over" by the worship band Red. In keeping with the retreat theme "Abba, Father," it featured God and his angels looking on from center

stage at the actions of a dysfunctional family, including an abusive father, a passive mother and an angry daughter. God watched sadly as the father verbally abused his wife and daughter, and the

"I have developed my own relationship with the Spirit and learned how absolutely amazing the Spirit is!"

daughter imitated the father in her treatment of her friends. It wasn't until they cried out to God for help, that he was able to send his angels to do battle for them against the demons that surrounded them, and the family finally repented and reconciled with one another. There was not a dry eye in the room at the end of the performance. Hearts were breaking for all the kids in the audience who identified with characters in the drama, who longed for the healing experienced by the players. It was once said that sometimes God has to break our hearts to heal them. There was definitely breaking and healing going on Saturday night.

Two Work Crew members, Jamee and Jessica Hood, said later: "When it was over, you could hear a pin drop! The drama gave a look into the problems some teens face at home and helped them to know that they are not alone and that God is always there waiting for us to call out to him."

The Work Crew was asked to repeat this performance at the Saturday night session of the March conference, for 1,500 adults. They received a standing ovation, after which we prayed for healing

of family relationships. God healed many hearts that night. It was a testimony for the adults to watch the teens on stage, with their hands lifted in worship, and leaping in exultant praise as the band burst into song at the close of the evening.

These are the thoughts of Work Crew member Sarah Parent: "Before I went on my first CCRNO January Retreat, I had seen people use the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but I never really understood what was going on... I was unaware that people actually had relationships with the Holy Spirit. Through various CCRNO retreats, I have developed my own relationship with the Spirit and learned how absolutely amazing the Spirit is!"

One of the best parts of these events is open-mike time on Sunday afternoon, where the teens share what God has done in their hearts over the weekend. Our favorite testimony this year came from a shy young man named John,

who approached the mike and said, "Before I came on this retreat, I was an atheist... I'm not anymore."

Northeast

Moving Northeast, we see that Steubenville East reaches over 2000 teenagers with the Spirit moving many teens toward conversion. The Friars of the Renewal sponsor a Youth 2000 which is a Eucharistic-centered outreach to teens with praise and worship drawing hundreds of teens monthly from the tri-state area of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Youth 2000 has spread to England, Ireland, Germany, Australia, Panama and the West Indies.

Seemingly, the thread that connects all these regions and the youth and young adults is the desire to seek a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord. In a culture that divides and confuses they are seeking a spiritual connection. It has been said that spirituality is the art of being connected in a disconnected world. Our youth and young adults are leading the way to bring that "Word of life" to our world in a new way. We applaud their openness to the Holy Spirit. ♦

Leslie Bertucci from Louisiana, Caroline Gambale-Dirkes of New Jersey and Jane Guenther of Missouri contributed to this article. Jane and Caroline serve on the National Service Committee.



Giovanna and Matteo Calisi meet with Pope Benedict XVI

Photo courtesy of Matteo Calisi

The Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships

by Matteo Calisi

What is the Catholic Fraternity?

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), widespread among more than 120 million Roman Catholics, is the biggest spiritual movement in the Catholic Church. It is also present in the majority of the other Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities where about 600 million faithful have experienced the grace of “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

The Renewal is widespread in various realities of the Catholic Church. It assumes different forms of the apostolate and different structures such as: Prayer Groups, Covenant Communities, Life Communities, Ecumenical Associations, etc. The variety of these charismatic expressions is a true richness for the Church.

Each of these realities participates in the specific graces of the Renewal. However, even though they have a common denominator—baptism in the Spirit—they are totally independent from one another.

Among the realities of the CCR, the Holy See has officially recognized the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, coming from all over the world, comprised of about a hundred Life and Covenant Communities united by a formal commitment. With the Decree of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, dated November 30, 1990 the Catholic Fraternity was canonically erected as an International Private Association of the Faithful of the Catholic Church provided with an ecclesiastical legal personality. It is the historical institution of the main Communities of the worldwide Renewal. It moved its head office to S. Calisto Palace in the Vatican on April 16, 2010.

The first President, who was encouraged by the Spirit to conceive this International Fraternity, was the Australian Brian Smith with the help and the wise piece of advice of the Texan Bobbie Cavnar, as well as Cardinal Paul J. Cordes, at that time Vice-President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Without them the Catholic Fraternity would not have been born. The founding Communities were twelve in number, coming from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia and France.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity, in the decree of recognition, hoped that the Catholic Fraternity would be able to contribute to the strengthening of the Catholic expression of the charismatic movement. The Catholic Fraternity has neither power of government nor legal responsibility on the member Communities; it has the spiritual and moral responsibility to encourage the development of the member Communities in their Catholic identity and in their growth toward ecclesial maturity.

Pope Benedict XVI, receiving in a Special Audience the Catholic Fraternity (October 31, 2008), affirmed that: “Among these new ecclesial realities recognized by the Holy See is your Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, International Association of the Faithful which carries out a specific mission in the heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (see *Decree of the Pontifical Council for Laity*, November 30, 1990). One of its objectives, conforming to the indications of my venerable Predecessor John Paul II, is to safeguard the Catholic identity of the Charismatic Communities and to encourage them to maintain a strict bond with the Bishops and with the Roman Pontiff” (see *Personal Letter to the Catholic Fraternity*, June 1, 1998).

What have we learned from them?

In his message of November 7th, 2002 at the 10th International Meeting of the Catholic Fraternity, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed vigorously a favorable evaluation of the fruits engendered by the Covenant Communities, already formulated in his previous messages. He affirmed that: "Your contribution to the life of the Church, through your faithful testimony of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, has helped many people rediscover in their own life the beauty of the grace received with the Baptism, the door to the life in the Spirit (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1212). You help them know the power of the full effusion of the Holy Spirit given in Confirmation.

Pope Benedict XVI at the 13th International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity and at the 2nd International Meeting of the Bishops interested in the Catholic Fraternity affirmed that: "... one of the positive elements and aspects of the Communities of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely their emphasis on the charisms or gifts of the Holy Spirit and their merit lies in having recalled their topicality in the Church" (October 31, 2008).

What is the Holy Spirit telling us through them?

According to the spiritual insight of our Covenant Communities, this translates into two very practical aspects:

✠ Come and see, know/learn/experience, have fellowship, feel Jesus, the salvation, the forgiveness of sins, receive the Holy Spirit, the sacraments, the prayer, the Scriptures; then

✠ Go and announce who Jesus is for you and for your Community....

The beginning of the communal consciousness is inevitably based on the lively and personal encounter with Jesus, Lord and Savior in which we feel conquered and grasped by him, as the famous beginning of the first Letter of

Saint John recites (1 John 1:1-4) and from which the *koinonia*, the communion with the brothers of the Community, originates.

The announcement: "what we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:1-3) originates from this intimate union with Christ.

This is simply the underlying ecclesiological aspect of our communities: communicating to the world the reasons for our conversion to Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior and our desire to sanctify ourselves! But there is also a cultural dimension of the Catholic Fraternity which contributes to our growth toward the ecclesial maturity.

Thanks to the Catholic Fraternity we have, as Communities, some missionary realities which allow us to get to know and to participate with other Communities of different cultures and geographical origins which take charge of the common ecclesial challenges such as the new evangelization, ecumenism, doctrinal and spiritual training, etc. This was facilitated and even stimulated by the Pontifical recognition of the Fraternity in 1990 and by the continued exhortations, and the various exchanges among people and communities of very different cultural areas.

What are some of the challenges of the communities?

The Covenant Communities live internally by a formal and stable commitment through the observance of statutes and rules approved by the Bishops and the Holy See. This kind of community commitment varies among the different states of life: consecrated laymen, religious, priests, permanent deacons, families, single men. Each reality lives two community conditions: the common life condition (by sharing spiritual and material goods) and the covenant condition. Each

Prayer Card

Heavenly Father, help us
to love one another
and to live in unity
and in peace with
all of your people.

In many ways we
are a divided people.
We need your
Holy Spirit.
Look upon us with mercy.

Send us the
Spirit of Jesus
to make us
one, in love,
with our neighbor.

"There is one body and
one Spirit, one Lord,
one faith, one baptism;
one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all
and in all."
(Ephesians 4:4-6)

member commits himself to living the community vocation with faithfulness by signing an oath or promise expressed in the hands of the Bishop and/or the moderator of the Community.

Each Community develops a particular call in different sectors of the ordinary pastoral activity. Among the different charisms we recall: the commitment to worship and to the sacramental-liturgical life, the ecumenical commitment, the human and social promotion, the pastoral care of sick people and the ministry of healing, the evangelization and the mission *ad gentes*, the family and youth pastoral activity.

Therefore, the New Communities have to accomplish an important task in the

See **Fraternity** page 8

Prayer Intentions

Please pray with the National Service Committee for the following intentions

1. For all those working on the Leaders' & Ministries' Conference to be held October 29-31 that the Lord would gift them with a unified purpose and vision.
2. For all the various summer conferences being offered that the Lord would use these events to draw his people together through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. For the Lord's blessing upon the NSC's Outreach Events: July 17 in Kansas City, September 10-12 in Denver, October 8-9 in the Diocese of Helena, Montana and all other NSC planned gatherings.
4. For the NSC and NSC Council members as they meet with their respective working group that they would continue to grow in understanding, unity and love as they work together to spread the good news of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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history of the contemporary Church, that is to say, reaching all those who don't go to church anymore by permeating all the dechristianized environments with the Gospel of the living Jesus Christ.

Therefore, those who attribute the sense of the constant interest of Benedict XVI in our Communities to a simple matter of "liking" are wrong. We know with absolute certainty that these realities are a big hope and a richness for the present and future Church. ♦



Dr. Matteo Calisi is head of the Comunita di Gesu. He currently serves as President of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships.

Teaching with Manifestations of the Holy Spirit



by Rudy Pruden and
Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

When we attend charismatic prayer meetings we go with the expectation that the Holy Spirit will be manifested in a variety of charismatic gifts. We expect to be in an environment of praise and worship that invites the manifestations of prophecy, exhortation, tongues, interpretation of tongues, words of wisdom and words of knowledge, healings, and more. Indeed all of the charisms (1Cor 12, Eph 4 and Roms 12) are "manifestations of the Holy Spirit." (1Cor 12:4). One such charism is the charism of teaching.

The charism of teaching

The charism of teaching is a particular empowerment to communicate God's truth and wisdom that enables others to hear and learn God's Word. It is rooted in the Lord's promise that we will "receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8) and his command that we "make them my disciples... and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). Teachings occur in prayer meetings, in Life in the Spirit Seminars, in Growth Seminars and so on. In prayer meetings our teachings may be accompanied by the charisms of exhortation, evangelistic preaching and words of knowledge and wisdom. When exercised in this way we could say that it is a gift of teaching in power, of proclaiming the Word of God in such a way that people's hearts are opened and stirred to respond to God.

Strong vibrant prayer meetings are needed for anointed teaching to be exercised. Dynamic prayer meetings should be the sign of the power that the Holy Spirit exercises in the whole Church. The exercise of the charismatic gifts is directly linked to the fact of being a strong vibrant prayer meeting. Prayer meeting leaders may be gifted, those who provide music may be inspiring, those praying over others may be unselfish and intent on helping others to be unburdened, but not much really happens unless the Spirit of God is working in power at the meeting. This includes teaching with signs following that confirm the word proclaimed (see Mk 16:20).

What happens in vibrant prayer meeting is an indication of what the Holy Spirit wants to happen throughout the body of Christ.

The Body of Christ is built up when its members become more and more Christ-like. When Christ ascended into heaven, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to make each of us "another Christ." The Holy Spirit, teaching through his gifts and charisms, effects the change so desperately needed in the lives of those in the Body. Being directly confronted with a word of knowledge, seeing someone under the sway of faith that allows him to move mountains, witnessing someone miraculously healed, all these can lead to genuine repentance and the desire to truly accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The Holy Spirit is our teacher!

How blessed are we! Jesus our Savior has sent us a counselor, a teacher, a helper. The apostle John tells us: "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).

As Christians we are called upon to see reality, not as the world does, but as God does. We are also called to do the works that Christ did when he walked on this earth. Jesus himself promised us that we would be able to do the work that he did and even greater (John 14:12). In order for us to see reality as God does and to do the works that Christ commanded, we need the wisdom and power that only the Holy Spirit can provide. The role of the teacher is to help us to "see" and to respond.

Model of the Apostles

From the day of Pentecost dynamic teaching has touched hearts and minds: "when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, 'What are we to do, my brothers?'" (Acts 2:37). The apostles were teaching in an effective manner, in the power of the Holy Spirit. People's lives were changed. Hence St. Paul could say that he came to the Corinthians with a "demonstration of the Spirit and power (1Cor 2:1-5) and to the Thessalonians: "For our gospel did not come to you in words only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit" (1Thes 1:5).

Openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit

When we prepare to teach, we need to do our research: reading/studying Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, papal documents and so on.

Our attitude should be that we set the table but that Jesus feeds the listeners! We also need to pray that the Holy Spirit will touch hearts, even the hearts of those who have been sitting there for 40 years. We need to listen for what the Spirit might want to say to us, even if we are the one who has been sitting there for 40 years! Even when we are giving the teaching we want to be open to the possibility that the Spirit will lead one to say something that wasn't part of the prepared teaching.

The Holy Spirit shows his love for us and, in the process, reveals how he works: He uses weak human carriers as the channels of his marvelous gifts.

Lest we say that we could never teach in this way it is clear that God uses fallible creatures like us to help others turn away from sin and towards him. In the Old Testament, King David was used to help dedicate the people of Israel to God, despite the fact that he had grievously sinned with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1-26). Although, as St. Paul tells us, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (Roms 3:23) the Holy Spirit still sends us his gifts and charisms because he loves us and longs for our salvation. Those with the charism of teaching help others appropriate the Spirit's message even though they themselves are not yet saints.

During the teaching

It is not unusual for the Lord to move in power in the lives of those who are listening to dynamic teaching; we should expect that some will experience repentance, others a call to a deeper love of God, spouse, family and community, and some a new understanding or insight. After the teaching there can be prayer that the grace of the teaching be confirmed through manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In this regard it might be helpful if from time to time

the teaching would be given earlier in the prayer meeting rather than later and then enter into such expectant prayer.

Proper discernment is key

Leaders in the Charismatic Renewal need to exercise great care to insure that the teachings given in our prayer meetings, even with manifestations, do not lead people astray. The spirits need to be tested. "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 Jn 4:1).

The Holy Spirit has provided a number of aids. Our first line of defense is Holy Scripture as interpreted and explained by the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit has also given the Church the Holy Father, our bishops, and our pastors, all dedicated to proclaiming and upholding the gospel of Christ. All of us are called to discern ("my sheep know my voice," see Jn 10:4,16) and the charism of discernment is given to help in our communal discernment.

Sent forth

We are challenged to be open to the many ways the Holy Spirit wants to manifest the Spirit's presence in our prayer meetings and in our teachings. Let us not be lazy and satisfied and just teach because that is what we do. Let us ask the Spirit if there is something fresh and new. Let us call upon his presence with the ancient cry of the Church, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, for the Lord wants to work in power **today**. ♦

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Rudy Pruden is presently a member of the NSC Council and divides his time between residences in Holland, Michigan and Washington, DC.