

Refresh your life in the Spirit

by Al Mansfield



How well are we living out the grace of being baptized in the Spirit?

Charismatic Renewal has been a movement in the Catholic Church for over four decades and it's time to "examine our Catholic Charismatic conscience." How well are we living out the grace of being baptized in the Spirit?

I. Have I experienced a new life in the Spirit?

Has being baptized in the Spirit made a decisive difference in my life? Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., the preacher to the papal household, says that he has had two lives, one before being baptized in the Spirit and one after. Has there been a "before" and an "after" in my life? If not, have I really been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

II. Have I experienced the Holy Spirit bringing me into a living relationship with the Father and the Son?

My wife, Patti, likes to use Romans 5:5 as a definition of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit: "The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Do I have a sense of being a beloved child of the Father, crying out, "Abba, Father" (see Rom. 8:15)? Scripture tells us, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." Is that a living reality in my heart? Do I know the Father and the Son in a more intimate way?

III. Has my prayer life been significantly changed?

Actually a more basic question would be, "Do I have a real prayer life?" Do I give time to prayer every day? Is this like eating and sleeping for me? Have I experienced a greater sense of adoration, praise and thanksgiving to the Lord? Have I entered into a charismatic dimension in prayer, that is, the experience of tongues, prophecy, revelation, guidance, inspirations, etc.?

IV. Am I addicted to the Word of God?

Am I irresistibly drawn to the Word of God, Holy Scripture? Do I "eat and drink" the Word of God, like Ezekiel in the Old Testament and John in Rev-

elations? In the early days of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, it was not unheard of for people to stay up all night reading Scripture. The Holy Spirit produces that hunger and desire for God's Word. Has there been that kind of attraction for Holy Scripture in my life?

V. Am I involved in any way in witness and evangelism?

One of the primary purposes of the outpouring of the Spirit was to give us the power to witness to Jesus (see John 15:26-27; Acts 1:8). Do I have that impulse to share the good news, according to my life circumstances, wherever I am? Do I look for opportunities to bear witness in word and deed?

VI. Do I meet together with other Catholic charismatics for fellowship and support?

Scripture tells us, "Do not neglect to meet together as is the habit of some..." (Heb. 10:25). We know that a way of getting a fire to burn out is to pull the logs apart. In a similar way, if we are pulled apart from each other, our fire will go out, both individually and collectively. Is some kind of regular Catholic Charismatic Renewal gathering an element in my life? If not, is my Holy Spirit fire still burning?

VII. Am I willing to receive and exercise spiritual gifts?

We see especially in the Acts of the Apostles that there is a mysterious link between the coming of the Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts. When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there is an outbreak of charismatic activity. The spiritual gifts are given for the common good (see 1 Cor. 12:7). Scripture states that there are different kinds of gifts, for example: preaching, teaching, faith, miracles, healing, prophecy, revelation, discernment of spirits, giving money, exercising leadership, hospitality, works of mercy, administration, etc. Am I open to receiving and using the spiritual gifts? Am I contributing any gift to the Body of Christ?

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Refresh continued

VIII. Have I experienced a change in my moral life, my attitudes and behavior?

Has there been a real break with serious sin or is serious sin still a regular occurrence in my life? Am I still attached to some deep character flaws, for example, in the use of the tongue? Do I still have what the spiritual writers call an “affection for sin,” a pet sin that I am familiar with and can’t bear to get rid of, for example, a spirit of criticism? Am I able to better love God, whom I cannot see and also love my neighbor, whom I can see (and is apt to be irritating!)?

IX. Have I experienced a change in my approach to the sacraments?

Do I receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, with repentance and faith, as a means of spiritual growth? Has my experience of the Mass changed

so that I enter into the liturgy, join with the priest, and make it my own offering and prayer? Have I experienced a change in my reception of the Eucharist so that it is a blessed time of communion with the Lord and not just a routine formality?

X. Have I experienced a conversion in my mind?

Do I have a desire to learn what the Catholic Church teaches? Am I familiar with the Documents of Vatican II and the Catholic Catechism? Do I know basic Catholic teaching? Do I try to read and understand what the Holy Father says? Am I a well-informed Catholic Charismatic Christian? Do my beliefs influence my actions, my conversations, my vote? Have I not only put on the Spirit of Christ but also put on the mind of Christ?

This can be a rather daunting examination. It certainly is for me! Some in our prayer group took it as a ten-point test to see if we got a passing grade. Let us trust in God’s grace and remember that the Holy Spirit is a gift, which we cannot deserve or earn. Let us close by simply asking the Lord Jesus, the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, to baptize us anew and afresh in the Holy Spirit, with all the gifts and fruit that the Spirit brings. Amen. ♦

Al Mansfield became involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1968 and since 1970 has served as a leader in the New Orleans area. He is presently Coordinator of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans Office.



At the feet of Jesus in Sioux Falls

by Deacon Bill Brennan, Liaison,
Diocese of Stockton, California

At the recent Association of Diocesan Liaisons (ADL) meeting and retreat in Sioux Falls, South Dakota (April 19–23), we were served a royal feast in the Spirit. We had gathered to celebrate the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and to reflect upon and discuss two papers prepared for us, one by Michelle Moran from England and one from our own Father John Gordon from New Jersey. In a curious juxtaposition, we had Michelle's paper but no Michelle (she was stranded in England because of the volcano in Iceland), and we had Father John but no paper (it had been, he explained, snatched up into cyberspace when it was being printed). Between the paper and Father John's oral presentation and everything else given to us through the course of the retreat, we were given much food for thought.

Both presentations gave us much cause to celebrate the truly amazing grace of the renewal in the Holy Spirit that is so much a part of our lives today. Each dealt in its own way with the theme of Royal Priesthood embodied by Jesus

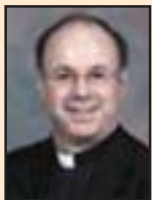
and by ourselves through baptism. And each touched on that priesthood brought to life through the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Father John led us through the biblical foundations of the concept as they pertain to Jesus, and Michelle's paper presented us with a good theological lesson in how the gift we celebrate relates to the Royal Priesthood of Jesus, our own royal priesthood and our baptism. Both reminded us that we have an amazing vision to catch—a vision straight from the heart of God's love.

In his Second Letter to Timothy, Paul urged him to "... stir into flame the gift of God you have through the imposition of my hands (2 Tim.: 1,6)." The footnote in the New American Bible explains that the gift of God to which Paul was referring is the grace that results from the conferral of an ecclesiastical office, and that may well be so. In the original Greek, however, the word translated into "gift of God" is "charisma," and the literal English translation of that word is "charism." A good biblical definition of charism

is "an enabling and empowering gift of God's love that enables and empowers one to do something and to be something." So perhaps, while the use of the word may have been specific to Timothy's situation, it may allow us to apply it to our own situations in a broader fashion.

It has been one of the great privileges of my life to have been allowed to minister in many different areas of this country and abroad, and wherever the Lord has sent me I have found myself proclaiming the message, "Stir into flame the gift of God that you have and think about its implications for your life!" This, I believe, goes to the very heart of the arguments of our presenters as well as to the heart of the church's understanding of baptism. When we exercise the charisms of the Holy Spirit, brought alive by the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are doing what Jesus did, what he commissioned the apostles and disciples to do, and what our baptismal theology argues we are to do.

This is the faith of the church concerning baptism: we have been baptized and anointed to share in the work and ministry of Jesus as King, Prophet and Priest. That means we are expected to participate actively in that work and ministry in everything we do and say. This is certainly one of the great gifts of the renewal to the church: baptism in the Holy Spirit that brings to life the very grace we received at our baptism, grace we all need to stir into flame every day. Yes, we have been given a truly amazing grace, and we should never forget what God has done for us, and we should always be ready to celebrate the Catholic Charismatic Renewal as grace for the new springtime. Come Holy Spirit! ♦



Fr. Richard Loch to Pursue Benedictine Vocation

Fr. Richard Loch, Chairman of the National Service Committee since January 2009 and member since 2002, has resigned effective

July 1 in order to enter the Benedictine Community at St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania. For years he has been attracted to the Benedictines and has been actively discerning this call over the last two years. He noted, "I cannot adequately express how excited I am that this is really happening."

The National Service Committee asks Renewal participants to join us in praying for Fr. Loch in this transition that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide him and form him.

Judith Hughes, member of the NSC since 2005 who is the elected member of the NSC Executive Committee, will serve ad interim to chair meetings etc. The NSC will hold an already scheduled election for a new Chairman in January.



Following in his footprints

by Sr. Anthony Birdsall, DLJC

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9-10). In 1969 when the Lord began speaking to Dorothy Stewart about founding a religious community of charismatic sisters, the above Scripture took on new meaning for her.

Raised a devout Methodist, later converting to Catholicism, then after World War II losing all her faith — who would ever have suspected the plans God had for her life. When she was working on a Ph.D. in Medieval Literature, a Catholic sister in her Dante class who said the words to her that completely changed her life: “I am praying for you every day.” And that started her on her journey home to the Lord and the Catholic Church in 1965.

On January 22nd, 1972 while on retreat at a Poor Clare Monastery the Lord gave Dorothy a Holy Rule to live by. He also gave her the name of the community: Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The community symbol was to be the cross with LOVE underneath it. As Franciscans we are deeply rooted in prayer, from which flows our evangelistic ministries.

Today, thirty-eight years later Mother John Marie, formerly Dorothy Stewart, marvels at the wonders the Lord has done. Women have come from all over the world to answer God’s call to become his Disciples. And now these sisters go all over the United States, Mexico, Africa, and many other coun-

tries to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and the New Pentecost.

Our mission is to evangelize the lost sheep and to bring home those who have wandered from the Church-fold. By means of adult and youth retreats, Life and Growth in the Spirit seminars, parish missions, speaking at prayer

groups and charismatic conferences, the sisters seek to fulfill Pope John Paul II’s call to, “the new evangelization.”

Yes, who would have thought that an unknown Methodist from Stamps, Arkansas would play such a significant role in God’s plans for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal? How far above our ways are his ways! ♦

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**From the
Executive
Director**

.....
by *Walter Matthews*

New Life in Christ Jesus

Have you noticed the NSC's new tag line? It was adopted at the same time as the revised Vision Statement. It has appeared at the bottom of every cover of *Pentecost Today* since the April/May/June 2009 issue in which we announced the revised Vision and Mission Statements: "New life in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit." It replaced "Renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church," which was the Committee's previous Vision Statement.

As the revised Vision Statement took shape it was clear it would be too long to fit on the bottom of the cover of *Pentecost Today* plus it was felt that we needed to express, in a succinct way, the core of what the Lord is about in this Renewal: new life in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul taught: "Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new creation, the old is gone, the new has come" (2Cor 5:17).

As Ralph Martin quoted Pope Benedict XVI last issue, "Christ's entire mission is summed up in this: to baptize us in the Holy Spirit, to free us from the slavery of death and 'to open heaven to us,' that is, access to the true and full life that will be 'plunging ever anew into the vastness of being, in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy' (Spe Salvi, n. 12)." One thinks of Hilary of Poitiers' quote in *Fanning the Flame*: "We who have been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy (maximum gaudium) when we feel within us the first stirring of the Holy Spirit."

Next time you pick up a copy of *Pentecost Today* glance at the cover: don't

miss the tag line, think about what the Lord has done and give thanks.

To promote "new life in Christ Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit" and "assist [...] leadership development" the Service Committee has developed a number of Outreach Events it makes available to local (Arch) diocesan Renewal groups. To learn more about these opportunities visit our website "<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org> and look at the Outreach Events page. You can also view a brief video featuring NSC member Gerry Mader, explaining the outreach events.

We have recently added a new Outreach Event not featured in the video: a retreat for men entitled "A Man's Call to Discipleship." If interested in bringing this to your area please contact us.

Currently the Service Committee has three outreach events scheduled:

July 17 in Kansas City: Praise and Teaching Rally entitled Jesus Lives! Pour Out Your Spirit Anew!

September 10-12 in Denver: an expanded Praise and Teaching Rally.

October 8-9 in the Diocese of Helena, Montana: Day of Teaching and Ministry.

A number of events and locations are being worked on for 2011.

In addition, the Youth Ministry Committee, jointly sponsored by the NSC and the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, is planning a Youth Ministers' Retreat, entitled "Passion for Ministry," October 15-17 in New Orleans. The Retreat is open to any youth minister and his/her spouse. For more information call our office 1-800-338-2445 or visit our website.

Finally, let us use this summer to "re-fresh our life in the Spirit" and "grow in freedom and fruitful living." ♦

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Since our last issue we have received gifts in honor and in memory of the following:
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Two donors did not name their memorials. We give thanks for those individuals and prayer groups who sent gifts in the names of the above.

You can download a form from our website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org/donations.htm. then click on Memorial Form. Or simply write with your donation who you want to give in memory of or in honor of (and the address of the family or of the person/couple) and we will send you an acknowledgement (and a card to them). Even though the Year for Priests is over we will continue to send a copy of *Catholic Charismatic Renewal: Papal Affirmation and Priestly Witness* to any priest honored by a gift.

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For Your Information

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Please mail to:

National Service Committee

Chariscenter USA

PO Box 628

Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628

Tel. (540) 972-0225

www.nsc-chariscenter.org

National Service Committee members:

Fr. Richard Loch (Chairman)

Jane Barz

Johnny Bertucci

Caroline Gambale-Dirkes

Jane Guenther

Fr. Bob Hogan, BBD

Chuck Hornsby

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What we have seen and heard

.....
by Sr. Mary Anne Schaenzer



Called to communicate the Word of God today

“Then there appeared to them tongues of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim”
(Acts 2:3-4).

We heard this powerful event being proclaimed again on Pentecost of this year. Even as we reflect on the past experience of the apostles, and even if we have a good experience as we listen again to the power of their experience, we ourselves are called to enter in and receive that infilling of the Holy Spirit afresh. The Holy Spirit is working ever anew in our day!

We are excited to have some idea of what it may have meant—that the apostles began to speak in different tongues. We understand this as a powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

At the Mass of Pentecost our pastor challenged us to be open, not only to tongues but to what it means to listen to the multi-language and multi-culture of today. How are we called to communicate the Word of God today in addition to speaking?

As if it had all been choreographed our prayer group had a leadership meeting on Pentecost evening. There were about ten of us present. After we had dessert and then some pretty open evaluation of our prayer meetings, a fresh topic came up. Should we begin a website? Is this the language that we need to speak today to draw in new and

younger people? The person who brought this up has the resources and staff to enable that to happen. This in itself is a gift. We recalled the days when I produced a newsletter by typing and pressing down bold letters on paper, one by one, and then going to a print shop. We then advanced to another woman working on a computer. Now we are no longer doing mailings. But we could still provide inspirational articles through the tool of a website and perhaps a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

It was so exciting to experience this fresh thrust on Pentecost evening.

The National Service Committee has given a new look to its website and now has a presence on Facebook. We too continue to work at how we might connect with young adults. After all, the Spirit wants unity of generations. This is not to lose what each generation has to offer but it is to communicate with one another and minister to one another and together.

If you have not looked at the NSC website in awhile, take a look: “<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org>”. There you will find the information about the upcoming national conference, *Power from on High for All Generations*.

Please pray that the Holy Spirit will truly come with power from on high and give us tongues and ears for the multi-language experience of today’s technological world—which is more able to be connected around the world than ever before. ♦

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Bishop Joseph McKinney

1928 – 2010

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Catholic Charismatic Renewal,
Bishop McKinney was NSC Chairman
1978 – 1982.

For more information see our
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