

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

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



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

Father, make us one

At the Last Supper Jesus prayed for his disciples. He prayed for their protection and that they would be consecrated in truth. Then he prayed for all believers: "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe (and be convinced) that you sent me" (John 17:20:21).

The oneness that Jesus prayed for goes beyond being one with those we know and love, those who are of the same language, the same culture or the same race. It is a oneness as defined by John Paul II. He called it a spirituality of communion, which "indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*).

Twice within the past year I have had the opportunity and the honor of being with brothers and sisters who were not of the same language, culture or race. It was a time of grace and of stretching. What drew us together was our love of God. Praying in tongues was a language that made us one. Praising God was a form of prayer that united us.

One of these events was the Prayer Cenacle for America which was held in Miami on Pentecost weekend. The technology of communication allowed us to hear speakers in our own languages simultaneously. We sang songs in English and in Spanish. The Haitian community was also represented. We prayed in each other's languages.

The times we spent together were marked by oneness. This event of forty hours of prayer for America proved that the Body of Christ is one body, with one faith, and one hope. This gathering was prayerful, powerful and exciting.

"A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as 'those who are a part of me.' This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. It also implies the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*).

Seeing the positive in others, and knowing it is a gift from God, would free us all from so many things that bind us. For instance, competition and jealousy would not have a place in such an atmosphere. To have good friendships that are deeply rooted in Jesus is a gift that is beyond price. It is only in God and through his love in us that we can live this oneness that Jesus prayed for: "I have given them the glory you gave me that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that their unity may be complete. So shall the world know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me" (John 17:22-23).

When we can recognize that Jesus lives in each of us it certainly changes the way we want to interact with others. When we come to the awesome realization that God does indeed love us as he loved Jesus our focus becomes clearer and more Christ centered.

Father make us one, that the world may know that you sent your Son. *Father make us one.* ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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Cover: CNS photo by Bob Roller, World Youth Day vigil.

Our brothers and sisters

Katrina Impact

Amidst the many stories of lives profoundly changed we want to report briefly on the impact of the Hurricane on the Renewal in the Gulf area.

The Center of Jesus the Lord, founded by the late Fr. Emile LaFranz and now led by Fr. John Copuci, which stands on the edge of the French Quarter, suffered damage but still stands. All members of the core community are okay.

Al and Patti Mansfield, long time leaders in the Renewal, had left town prior to the weekend to bring their son to Franciscan University of Steubenville. They and their whole family are safe, but their house and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal New Orleans office were under water.

Bishop Sam Jacobs is safe. The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux (an hour southwest of New Orleans and much closer to the Gulf Coast) suffered power outages, damaging wind and flooding but nothing like New Orleans. The impact on the poor in the area is great. While the Diocese has a population of 200,000 it has

now become “home” to 10,000 homeless evacuees. Bishop Jacobs has stated, “we are facing a devastating situation beyond imagination.” Bishop Jacobs wrote that he spent the first week “ministering at one of the shelters for evacuees from New Orleans. We have about 1200. As some leave others come...”

Aggie Neck is also safe. The Diocese of Alexandria got rain and wind but no damage to speak of. It too is home to thousands of evacuees.

There were 100 prayer groups in the (arch) dioceses most effected, involving perhaps a couple of thousand Renewal participants. A small number compared to the huge number of people in the area, but nonetheless every life is significant.

As Paul George, a former LifeTeen leader and a member of Bishop Jacobs’ staff wrote in early September, “They are using our area as a place for refugees. They are busing them in the backs of moving trucks to different centers around here. These are people without homes, many have lost loved ones, they have

no clothes but what was on their backs. These are people whom you see on TV on their rooftops. Right now we have around 10,000 homeless refugees in our area and we are unable to meet all their needs of clothes, toiletries, food water, etc. Most of the power is still out in our area and stores are closed and we can’t get food. They say the damage is just as much or worse than the tsunami. Many of these people need counseling from the loss and trauma.

Let us continue to pray for the relief, sheltering, relocating and rebuilding efforts.

Let us pray for all whose lives have been affected.

Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in the Charismatic Renewal - that in the midst of personal challenge they can be a light and hope in the midst of darkness and despair.

For an update on how Hurricane Katrina affected the Renewal in the Gulf area and people we know visit our website at www.nsc-chariscenter.org. ♦

by Msgr. Joseph Malagrea

On January 6, 2001, at the Solemn Mass that concluded the Jubilee Year, Pope John Paul II issued his Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. His hope was to launch the Third Millennium of faith in Jesus into a new evangelization. *As the New Millennium Begins* is now a roadmap for the Catholic Church in the beginning of this age. As a Catholic priest, I take the Holy Father's words very seriously and attempt to implement his vision for the Church. And as a member of this great Ecclesial Movement we call the Charismatic Renewal, I believe that we Catholic charismatics should be at the vanguard of the Church in realizing the Pope's vision. Just as the Charismatic Renewal was so prominent in celebrating the Jubilee with the Church, let us also be prominent in the work of evangelization in the New Millennium.

Novo Millennio Ineunte is a treasure of teaching. One of the most beautiful sections of this document is found in paragraphs 43-46, entitled by John Paul 'A Spirituality of Communion.' The Pope says, "To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings.... Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up... A spirituality of communion means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity

Photo: CNS photo by Bob Roller, World Youth Day vigil



Communio

of the Mystical Body, and therefore as 'those who are part of me'."

In this article, I would like to reflect with you on the unique role that the Charismatic Renewal can play in the Church in helping the Church realize this goal. Pope John Paul II has always taught that the "Ecclesial Movements"—of which the Charismatic Renewal is one of the largest—have an important influence in church life. In *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, he writes (#46): "another important aspect of communion is the promotion of forms of association, whether of the more traditional kind or of the newer ecclesial movements, which continue to give the Church a vitality that is God's gift and a true 'springtime of the Spirit'."

Let's look at the Charismatic Renewal's role in communion under four titles: 1. The Baptism of the Spirit; 2. The dynamic of community; 3. The multi-cultural face of the Renewal; and 4. Eucharist.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

All of us who call ourselves "Catholic Charismatics" have experienced the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus in our lives. We have had a personal experience of being reborn, refreshed, renewed, empowered and sent by the Spirit of the Lord. And we greatly desire that this experience of new

life in the Spirit be the norm for all Christian life. Is this not the particular grace of the Charismatic Renewal? All Christian life is life in the Spirit. Every aspect of Christian life—prayer, liturgy, evangelization, teaching, conversion, healing, faith, love and unity—finds its source and its strength in the Holy Spirit. When the Pope teaches about the spirituality of communion, the Charismatic Renewal immediately understands that the Holy Spirit is the only One who can truly make us one. Is it not also true that the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, while intensely personal, is also shared? The very basis of this Pentecostal Movement is that the Spirit of Jesus is poured out on the whole Church. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit" (Gal. 5.25).

The dynamic of community

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit... As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ" (1 Cor. 12.4,14).

You could say that this passage of the bible—1 Corinthians 12—is the foundational passage of the Charismatic Renewal. This is the passage about the "charisms" which are given to all. Here are found the biblical teachings about the

gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gifts of healing and miracles and discernment—all that is fundamental in the teaching of the Charismatic Renewal.

But really, the entire passage of 1 Corinthians 12 is about “communion”; it is about the unity of the Body of Christ, even though there are many gifts, many manifestations, and many services.

And so, it is essential to the very structure of the Renewal to promote “community.” This has manifested itself in the Renewal in many forms: prayer groups, covenant communities, charismatic alliances and associations. All these forms of community have always been promoted as the work of the Holy Spirit in his design for the outpouring of the gifts and the building up of the Church.

It is this charismatic perspective that the Holy Father asks for in his promoting of the spirituality of communion. We charismatics need to promote community more—and not only among ourselves, but in union with all the movements of the Church.

The multi-cultural face of the Renewal

As Roman Catholics we have the joy of belonging to the universal Church of Jesus. This “catholicity” is part of our very identity. When we receive Holy Communion, we are aware that this Jesus, who is our Living Bread, is received by brothers and sisters in every nation and in every tongue. We express our worldwide unity by our celebration of the Eucharist; by our faithfulness to the Holy Father and the Magisterium; by our sacramental and Marian spirituality; and by the entire Catholic life that we share.

Here in the United States we have a unique experience of Catholic life because of the fact of immigration. All over

this country old and new immigrant groups live together, sometimes in harmony but, unfortunately, sometimes in resentment. Many of us worship the Lord in parishes where Mass is celebrated in different languages and with different ethnic communities. This experience of the mixing together of peoples can be very enriching; it can also be very stressful. The Church throughout the United States is struggling with its multicultural nature. At present, the Charismatic Renewal in the United States is also multicultural. Besides the traditional Renewal in English, there has arisen a very large Hispanic Renewal; a Haitian Renewal; a Korean Renewal; a Filipino Renewal; an Indian Renewal; a Vietnamese Renewal and so on. The Charismatic Renewal reflects the nature of the Church in the United States, and we in the Renewal have the same struggles and difficulties that the wider Church has in achieving communion.

It has been my privilege to have worked in the Hispanic Renewal and the Haitian Renewal for all my priesthood, so I write this article out of the many powerful experiences I have had in Catholic charismatic life with those two ethnic communities.

I believe that the Charismatic Renewal in the United States has a powerful tool of unity that we can offer the wider Church: the shared experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. In my diocese, the Diocese of Brooklyn, for example, there exists various structures in different languages for the Charismatic Renewal. But all charismatics regularly gather for shared events: Pentecost Vigil, Vigil on the national Day of Prayer, Charismatic Conferences, Leaders’ Days, etc. The struggle to understand each other and appreciate each other is always present, but I believe we give a great wit-

ness of unity in our common prayer and our united gathering.

The Renewal has done this on a national level many times. For many years, the members of all the National Leadership Groups in the Charismatic Renewal have had a yearly gathering in January and have developed deep fraternal relationships. I look forward to the year 2007—the 40th Anniversary of the Charismatic Renewal—when a National Multi-ethnic Congress is being planned.

The Eucharist

Of course, the source and summit of communion is Jesus himself in Holy Communion. Pope John Paul II has given us this wonderful “Year of the Eucharist” to celebrate all aspects of this Sacrament, and so Communion is highlighted throughout the year. One of the great joys of being both Catholic and charismatic is to see how Catholic life is enlivened by Spirit-filled prayer. I believe it can be said that the Eucharist, which is the center of Catholic life, is also the center of charismatic life. How many charismatic Masses or healing Masses are fundamental to our experience? Eucharistic adoration has been renewed and promoted strongly in the Charismatic Renewal. All our conferences and events are deeply Eucharistic. And, for the Year of the Eucharist, the Charismatic Renewal has promoted Eucharistic themes across the nation. As we promote “a spirituality of communion,” we promote a Eucharistic spirituality—it is all one. In the power of the Spirit, in the communion of the Body of Christ, may the prayer of Jesus be fulfilled, “May they all be one.” ♦

Msgr. Joseph Malagrea is pastor of the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anne in Queens Village, NY. He serves as a liaison to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Diocese of Brooklyn, and as advisor to the Hispanic and Haitian Charismatic Renewals in the US.



Holy Communion

by Fr. William Halbing

It is good to examine how Jesus taught us around the table. When Jesus sits down at table, which he does frequently in the scriptures, he does so to teach the importance of life. He wants to teach us about fellowship (one of the four prongs of a healthy vibrant Christian Church as described in Acts 2:42). Fellowship (in Greek, *koinonia*, and in Latin, *communio*) is the act of sharing or holding in common. What do we have in common with Jesus? What do we have in common with one another?

Jesus is always sitting down with “common” people to share a meal. Oftentimes Jesus gets berated for who he keeps company with. (Even in the word “company” we have the meaning of sharing the same bread, *com panis* in Latin means “with bread”.) But he chooses this way because of the banquet that is to be given to those that he loves.

I read in the sacred scriptures five specific actions of the Lord before the actual partaking of the food (Mark 6, Matthew 14, Luke 9, Luke 24).

1) Jesus takes: Our Lord receives the simple elements of the earth: bread, fish and wine. For the miracle of the fellowship to happen, Jesus first receives simple gifts from us. We give him of our smallness and he will share with us abundant life.

2) Jesus looks up: Here our Lord enters into deep fellowship with Abba Father and what he receives from the Father he bestows upon the gifts given to him and more importantly upon the partakers in the communion fellowship.

3) Jesus blesses: Nothing is worth eating until the Lord himself has received the prayer of consecration. It must be made holy. When table fellowship begins, the Jew offers *todah* or thanksgiving. The food to be shared is offered to God and studied. It is studied so that everything that we take in is consecrated to God.

4) Jesus breaks: This shows the very heart of sacrifice—someone has to pay for the meal. This generates abundance. That which is broken multiplies.

5) Jesus gives: Our Lord first gives to his premier disciples to distribute to the masses. As the food was being passed from hand to hand, it was multiplied.

When Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, he said that we must DO THIS IN MEMORY OF HIM. So often we hear that these words are merely symbolic, quite the opposite is true. A study of the word “remember” (*zikhar* in Hebrew) demands that we live the sacrifice of the past as if it is happening now, because it really is.

For the past ten years of my life I have worked with an orthodox rabbi. He has taught me that Jews must celebrate Passover and table fellowship as if the actual event is happening for the first time ever. Imagine a Passover celebrated with the

**Our communion with God and one another brings us
to the extreme of love,
especially to the extreme of forgiving and
embracing our enemies.**

belief that the blood of the lamb was placed on the doorpost of your house and saved your first-born from death. What an effect it would have on you for the rest of your life! You would tell everyone what had happened.

Imagine what will happen to our world when Catholics really believe the same about the teaching of the Eucharist—that Jesus is truly present body, blood, soul and divinity; that every Eucharist is the first Eucharist; that every Mass is the Last Supper. Yes, then the world would know that Jesus is alive!

In the Eucharist, Jesus shows the ultimate meaning of sacrifice. St. Paul gives us a magnificent phrase in Philippians 2:5-11, *kenosis*—pouring out your life for those around you whether they asked to receive it or not. As we share the meal together we are receiving that which will continue to give us life.

Now we are ready to enter the mystery with rejoicing and fear. We rejoice because Jesus has truly given us himself through the sacred meal. We are in fear or awe, for who can fully comprehend what has been done for us? Isaiah the prophet reminds us that when we hear the true word of God we should tremble (Is. 66:2). Is this what you experience?

This is the most incredible meal with the most incredible results. Now we are ready to receive the full vow made to us long ago; “I am your God and you are my people,” the wedding vow of the bible. Through the cups of the Passover I have been called out of my slavery. I have been saved from the past. I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

In Matthew 15 a woman with a demonized daughter was willing to take from Jesus even a crumb. Yes, beloved, one crumb from the table of the Lord can save your soul.

Our communion with God and one another brings us to the extreme of love, especially to the extreme of forgiving and embracing our enemies.

How could we forget that at the Last Supper Jesus tells us to wash one another’s feet? Communion transforms us to do exactly what he did. When I have obeyed these very words of Jesus, I have experienced more conversion to the Lord as I literally have kissed the feet that I was washing. What a taste!

Communion can and does continue even after our betrayals of the Lord. The risen Lord Jesus re-institutes the Eucharist on the night of the Resurrection in the town of Emmaus. I call this the First Supper. So powerful is the presence of the Lord that the bread is still there after Jesus vanishes from the sight of the disciples. This is the first time of Eucharistic adoration!

When you share Eucharist, when you spend time in Eucharistic adoration what does Jesus teach you? What lessons of life does he share with you? How does Communion change your life? ♦

Fr. William Halbing is pastor of St. Antoninus, a charismatic parish in Newark, NJ. He is a well known conference speaker, bible teacher and has been involved in Hispanic ministry.



Prayer Card



Pray for the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.

Holy Spirit, come and be with us.
Guide and enlighten us.

Open our hearts and minds to
your presence.

Help us, that we may understand
that the worst of sorrows in this
world passes away and that we
are here to prepare for an eternal
life with our Heavenly Father.

Help us to find our comfort, our
solace, our strength, in the Cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us
to be open always to the mystery
of the Cross. Give us the courage
and grace, O Holy Spirit, always
to pray with trust and hope and
confidence.

Fr. Benedict Groeschel

Attention: Pentecost Today Readers

Each issue of *Pentecost Today* costs the National Service Committee about \$8000 to produce and mail. In order to assure that we can do four issues in 2005, a donor has offered a Matching Grant of up to \$3000. This Grant would only match those donations that are received from *Pentecost Today* readers who are not already active donors to the NSC.

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Suggested prayer intentions:

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

- ◆ That those involved in Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the US will be generous in offering aid to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.
- ◆ For the National Leaders' Conference in Chicago in November.
- ◆ For the ministry of Pope Benedict XVI.
- ◆ For the Lord's guidance in the confirmation process of new Supreme Court justices.
- ◆ That the gifts of the Spirit will be richly manifested in our prayer groups.

Hospitality



by Angelina Sarmiento

When preparing hospitality for any event in our ministry, I am always reminded of scriptures in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In Genesis, Abraham entertained the Lord and two angels, not recognizing who they were for a while (Chapter 18:1-8). He offered them his hospitality with everything he had. Consistent with the custom of the time in typical Bedouin hospitality, nothing was too good for his guests. As a gracious host, he also stood while his guests ate. Because of his graciousness and generosity, the Lord's covenant to be "...a father of many nations" was reaffirmed (Genesis 17:4). After the meal, the Lord told Abraham, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:10).

In our reality, our willingness to give all the kindness that we are able to give to each other and especially to those who come to us as strangers, is one measure by which we are able to live the gospel of love that we all preach. As we love and humble ourselves in serving one another, we allow God's grace and healing presence to overshadow and fill our gatherings.

In my experience, I have come to conclude that it is not only God's Word that we share and 'break open' at our meetings and conferences that open hearts to conversion. It is also the fellowship that is shared at these gatherings that helps one internalize the grace of Pentecost. It is the extended hand, the warm embrace, the food that is shared, and the cup of drink that we offer to one another that bring to life God's great desire to heal us and his call to follow him (Matthew 9:10).

Recently, I read that there is a statistic that says that two out of every three people who attend church services on a regular basis in this country are hurting in some way. According to the article, this means that if you are not hurting today, chances are that the two people on either side of you are burdened in some way. Furthermore, the article contends that one of the reasons people attend church services is to bring their cares and burdens before God in the hope that he can transform them. With this in mind, we must allow God to use our charismatic events as an opportunity to comfort and strengthen his people.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke tells us that the early church communities "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... They ate their meals with exaltation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42, 46-47).

In our prayer groups in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, we relive the experience of the early church communities through the very same things that St. Luke has mentioned in scripture. For the last nineteen years, we have grown in our spirituality and in our number. But more importantly, through the years we have experienced a closeness and bond with each other that has been fostered and nurtured by our fellowship on a regular basis.

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