

Your grace is enough

Charismatic conferences and events over the last six months have responded counter culturally to the worldwide economic difficulties with the Lord leading his people to turn to him and trust him alone.

At the Diocesan Charismatic Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas the planning committee was led to take the Lord's promise to St. Paul, "My grace is enough for you" (2 Cor. 12:9) and turn it into a statement of trust and abandonment, "Your grace is enough." This statement of trust and abandonment was expressed in different ways in the conferences and events contacted.

At the 18th Charismatic Congress of the Haitian Catholics in the U.S. the several thousand attendees heard the Lord speak of the power of the Cross for inner healing and hope as they gathered under the theme, "We preach a Messiah crucified and resurrected." (see 1 Cor. 1:23) 250 youth in their separate session were challenged to a deeper realization of the sacrifice of Jesus and nearly all of them were moved to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Haitian experience was multiplied at the nineteen youth conferences sponsored by the Franciscan University of Steubenville, four on the campus and fifteen off campus involving 36,500 attendees who gathered under the theme, "Above All." Amidst the competing realities that young people (and all of us) face, such as the desire for immediate gratification, they heard a

call to enter into a long journey and live for him, since God is bigger and better. There were many signs of conversion: from resting in the Spirit to the "opening of hearts" with over 60% of the attendees first timers.

At the Power of the Word Conference hosted by the Mother of God Community in Gaithersburg and at the Charismatic Conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Damian Stayne of England was used mightily not only in the proclamation of the Word but in the signs and wonders the Lord did in both places to confirm the Word. In Gaithersburg, Damian shared that he has seen a greater outpouring of the "miraculous" in the last two years as we move into what he called a "season of the miraculous." In Steubenville, over 200 participants claimed some kind of healing. The prophetic challenge was the call to repent of unbelief and grow in expectant faith for the miraculous. There is more power, and more signs and wonders to come...the new Pentecost is getting ready for phase two.

The experience of God's grace in the form of physical healing was part of the International Conference held in South Korea in early June. While the conference drew over 1,000 people from 43 countries, 50,000 attended an open rally. The Lord moved both during the conference and after through the ministry of Bob Canton: instant healings of blind, paralyzed and deaf people, and deliverance in the mighty name of Jesus to some who were oppressed by demonic spirits.

At the Association of Diocesan Liaisons Conference in April, those who gathered to reflect on St. Paul's teaching received a prophetic word that challenged them and all leaders to a deeper level of trust and willingness to risk and obey. The word proclaimed and discerned promised, "Eye has not seen nor ear heard what I am about to do through them but it will require surrender, surrender of old ways, old ideas and familiarity...if they are open to receive my heart they will see many miracles—the blind will see, the lame will walk, even the dead shall rise."

Msgr. Joseph Malagrea of the Diocese of Brooklyn challenged the liaisons that Paul taught, mentored, and sent to be the leaders, a number of people of another generation. He then asked, has the leadership in the Renewal done that? It is not a matter of drawing them into our "wave" of the Spirit. They are caught up in a new "wave" of the Spirit with its own challenges and gifts for it is a new time.

At the North American Conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships in June the attendees heard a no less important word for the times in which we live. The word comes from John 15:14-17: that we are to love one another, that we are called into fellowship/friendship with the Lord (and the Father and the Spirit), and that the Lord chose us to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

As the experience of recent conferences and other events gives witness, we continue to live in exciting times: times of God's miraculous interventions. The message of physical and inner healing is linked to trust in the Lord's care, mercy and grace. Truly, "your grace is enough." ♦

Pope Benedict addresses charismatic communities & fellowships

His Holiness Benedict XVI addresses the participants at the meeting of Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, October 31, 2008.

Below are excerpts of the address.

❖ As I have been able to affirm in other circumstances, the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities which blossomed after the Second Vatican Council, constitute a unique gift of the Lord and a precious resource for the life of the Church. They should be accepted with trust and valued for the various contributions they place at the service of the common benefit in an ordered and fruitful way.

❖ What we learn in the New Testament on charisms, which appeared as visible signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit, is not a historical event of the past, but a reality ever alive. It is the same divine Spirit, soul of the Church, that acts in every age and those mysterious and effective interventions of the Spirit are manifest in our time in a providential way. The Movements and New Communities are like an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in contemporary society. We can, therefore, rightly say that one of the positive elements and aspects of the Community of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely their emphasis on the charisms or gifts of the Holy Spirit.

❖ Among these new ecclesial realities recognized by the Holy See is listed also your Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, International Association of the faithful that carries out a specific mis-

sion in the heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. One of its objectives, conforming to the indications of my venerable Predecessor John Paul II is to safeguard the Catholic identity of Charismatic Communities and to encourage them to maintain a strict bond with the Bishops and with the Roman Pontiff.

❖ I was pleased to learn that the Constitutions propose to establish a Permanent Formation Centre for the members and leaders of Charismatic Communities. This would allow the Catholic Fraternity to better appreciate its own ecclesial mission oriented to evangelization, to the liturgy, to adoration, to ecumenism, to the family, to youth and to vocations of special consecration. Safeguarding the fidelity to the Catholic and ecclesial identity on the part of each one of your communities will permit you to render everywhere a living and active witness of the profound mystery of the Church.

And it will be this indeed that promotes the capacity of the various communities to attract new members. I entrust the work of your respective conventions to the protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, living Temple of the Holy Spirit, and to the intercession of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, examples of holiness and spiritual renewal, while I affectionately impart to you and to all your communities a special Apostolic Blessing.

These excerpts were taken from a special issue of the ICCRS Leadership Formation. Volume XXXV, Number 1. January-February 2009. The full text of the message is available on the NSC website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

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Brothers of the Beloved Disciple

Once baptized in the Holy Spirit, you never know what is going to happen. In the early 1970's two Marianist priests, Fr. Bob Hogan and I (Fr. George Montague), felt our sails filled with the wind of the Holy Spirit. But we had no idea where this Wind would take us. Of course, like other Marianists we were involved with charismatic prayer groups. But the Lord began to stir our hearts with this dream: what would our Marianist community life and mission be like if empowered by the Holy Spirit in his full role, charisms included? We would be Marian, welcoming Mary as the Beloved Disciple did at the foot of the cross, but also charismatic. We had hoped to make it a community within the Marianists, but as we explored further with our superiors—who, praise God, were supportive of the idea—it became evident that we could not achieve the dream canonically within the Marianists. We would have to go

through the Archdiocese of San Antonio. In 1997 Father Bob and I received permission to begin with two candidates in a house on Davy Crockett Street. We were walking a path through unknown woods, but out of the forest leaped benefactors with a rent-free house, a red Toyota, an old but little used Silverado truck, and very substantial monetary gifts. In the midst of a flood in 1998, I retrieved a letter from our mailbox: the Archdiocese recognized us as the first step toward becoming a full-fledged religious community! What a flood! Two years later the Archdiocese offered us a parish, St. Mary Magdalen, with a former convent for our residence. We were joined by another Marianist, Father Joseph Mary Marshall, and in 2004 our first priest for the new community was ordained, Father Will Combs. We now have two more aspirants, one of whom wishes to serve as a brother. Praise the Lord! ♦

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Love continued from page 3

are to cherish and cultivate. For Paul says the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are opposed to each other. Docility to the Holy Spirit at work in us is needed, and this often demands death to our own will and ego.

So what is the secret to a victorious life of living in the fruits of the Spirit? Jesus tells us quite clearly. He says that we are to remain in him. As a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can we. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. If we remain in him we'll bear much fruit. Without him we can do nothing (Jn. 15:4-5). Only as we abide in the Vine, who is Christ, can we bear the fruit of **love, joy and peace**. And the key word is abide, which is the constant ongoing union with Jesus.

Aids to abide in the vine include daily spending quality time alone with the Lord, as well as walking and talking with the Indwelling Presence of Jesus, who is the fount of all love, joy and peace. Daily prayerful reading of God's Word, frequent Confession, regular Mass and Communion are our nourishment. As Jesus says, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (Jn. 6:56).

The fruits of the Spirit are our inheritance as sons and daughters of God. We can't obtain these gifts by seeking them. They are byproducts of our living in the Lord. When we are loving, joyful and peaceful we bring joy, comfort and consolation to those we meet. Probably those closest to us could give us a good idea as to how habitually we are living in the fruits of the Spirit.

It's so clear, so simple and yet not always easy. To have true love, joy and peace we need to be intimately united to Jesus, the Vine. It means living not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17). ♦

Sister Christine Edwards, S.F.P. is a Franciscan Sister of the Poor. She is Co-Founder and Co-Director of Lighthouse Community and Lighthouse Renewal Center and also serves as Chairperson of the Charismatic Regional Service Team for the Cincinnati Archdiocese and the Covington, Kentucky Diocese. She is on the NSC Council.



Our liaison call

by Gail Riedman

We are called as ambassadors, or conduits between our Bishop and our community to be a constant giving gift as we help build our church. It is truly a humbling and exciting call, constantly transforming as we minister and meet the varied needs of our community. More and more the Lord is calling us to be prepared to do whatever he calls us to do. His work depends on those who are willing to listen, surrender to his will, trust, obey and act.

This year the title of our Leadership Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, October 23-25th 2009, is "Equipping us for Our Mission as Leaders and Ministers." What a wonderful title to prepare us for what we have been called to do as leaders! In our last Theological Symposium, Msgr. Malagracia presented a paper on St. Paul, titled "All in All." The paper was magnificent.

Two words continually reflected throughout the paper were **perseverance** and **flexibility**. After his transformation, St. Paul had to be flexible and persevere in each task he was presented with. Whether he was in Syria, Turkey, Capernaum, and other cultures, St. Paul learned to trust the Lord in his spoken word and his call to evangelize. We are also being called to be flexible and to persevere as we continue to build up the church and evangelize others. The Lord also calls **us** to be committed, by being willing to discern and pray in an instant, to call on the Lord for healing prayer, to praise in all circumstances and to be bold.

Throughout my ministries in Europe, Korea, Panama and United States as a Spirit-filled Catholic and Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal, the Lord has presented me with many challenging situations. When I was obedient and said "yes" to his call; everyone and every-

thing would flow perfectly. Each ministry was achieved with perseverance and flexibility. I knew I couldn't answer the call without our Triune Lord's help—the Father, always present with his **unconditional love**, our Lord Jesus, his Son who gives us life, forgiveness and direction, and the Holy Spirit teaching us wisdom, truth, discernment, and the joy of the Lord as our strength. I also thank God for the richness of our faith and the gifts of the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist which continually feeds us and reminds us, that he never abandons us and constantly works, with and through us. Yes, it can be overwhelming sometimes, but never impossible, because **without** him we are nothing, but **with** him, we are able to answer our call as Liaisons. **Praise God every day. It helps!** ♦

Gail Riedman, Steering Committee, Secretary, Association of Diocesan Liaisons.

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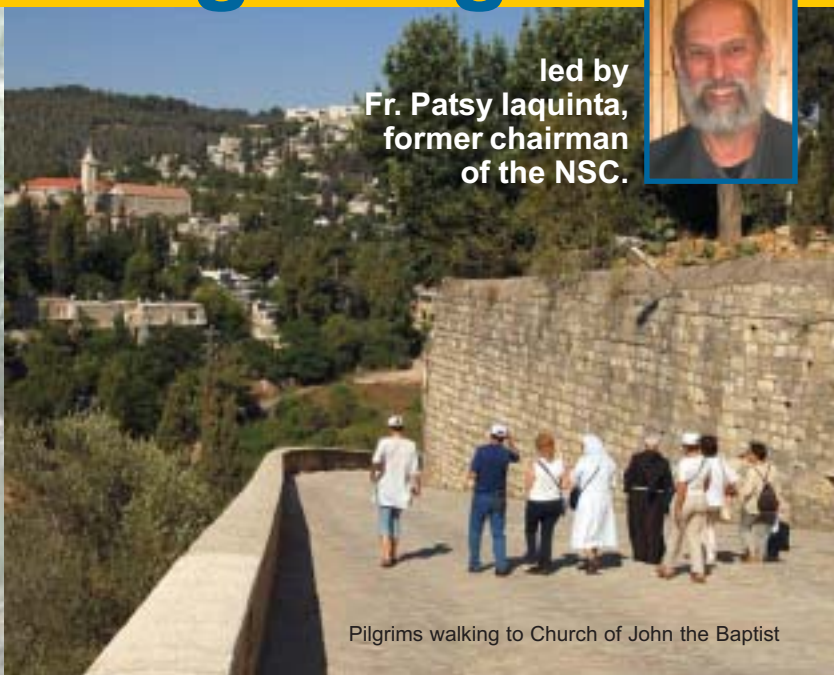
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From the Executive Director

.....
by Walter Matthews

We have the resources you need

“Assisting leadership development” as expressed in the revised NSC Mission Statement has been one of the services of the National Service Committee since our beginnings. We do this in a number of ways: through Leaders’ Conferences, Outreach Events and *Pentecost Today* itself. One of the hidden ways we seek to assist leadership development is through the recording of the main talks and workshops at the Leaders’ Conferences held in recent years and then making these recordings available for sale not only on site but through our website www.nsc-chariscenter.org/resources.htm.

If you visit that section of the website you will find (at the bottom of the page) a link to the recordings list. We have grouped the cds/audiotapes and in some cases videotapes and dvds into several areas:

- ▶ Charismatic Renewal at the Heart of the Church
- ▶ Charisms
- ▶ Conversion/Holiness
- ▶ Evangelization
- ▶ Healing & Prayer Room Ministry
- ▶ Prayer and Intercession
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Prayer and Worship
- ▶ Practical Tools for Moving Forward
- ▶ Prayer Groups
- ▶ Prophetic Call of the Church to the Charismatic Renewal
- ▶ Spirituality of Pentecost
- ▶ Theological/Historical
- ▶ Youth to Young Adult Ministry

Under Leadership you will find talks by Jim Murphy “Holy and Skilled: Qualities of Fruitful and Effective Leadership” and Jim Beckman’s “Raising Up and Training Leaders.”

If you are concerned about Praise and Worship you’ll find Aggie Neck’s “His praise shall be ever in my mouth’ (Ps. 34:2), Praise as a Way of Life,” and Bill Richart’s “Leading Praise and Worship with Whatever the Lord Provides.”

If you want to improve your Life in the Spirit Seminars try Therese Boucher’s “Successful Life in the Spirit Seminars.” If you want to reach young people preparing for Confirmation get Ros Hernandez’s “Life in the Spirit and Confirmation: San Antonio Model.”

If your prayer group needs strengthening look for David Thorp’s “Vision and Role of Prayer Groups” or Deacon Bill Brennan’s “Stir the Vision into Flame!”

The choices are many and the teachings and exhortations are solid. Our speakers are gifted men and women such as Fr. George Montague, Bishop Sam Jacobs, Sr. Nancy Kellar, S.C., Linda Schubert, Dave Mangan, Chuck Hornsby, Tom Curran and so many more.

Whether used for personal growth and enrichment or by a whole prayer group for communal growth and enrichment these audio resources are essential tools if the Renewal is to continue to grow and bear fruit, and to pass this grace on to the next generation.

Hope to see you in Raleigh at the National Leaders’ and Ministries’ Conference, October 23–25 where speakers such as Ralph Martin, Aggie Neck, David Thorp, Mark Nimo and others will inspire and teach us. If you are not able to come, look for the Audio Recordings on our website. ♦

Friends of the NSC

We are grateful to all those who partner with us as “Friends of the NSC” for as of the end of the summer the Committee’s donations are about what we projected in these very difficult economic times.

We again invite recipients of *Pentecost Today* who are not active donors to consider even a small donation of \$10 or \$15 in support of this work of continuing to proclaim “the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the love of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit which leads to the renewal of the grace and culture of Pentecost.”

In 2002 **Gerry Mader**, at that time a member of the NSC Council, was asked by the NSC to assist the Service Committee with our outreach to our Fanning the Flame Partners and others. Earlier this year Gerry, a member of the Service Committee since 2005, informed the Service Committee of his decision to retire as Development Manager effective July 31.

The Service Committee would like to thank Gerry for his service over the past seven years. He has helped us receive the abundant provision that the Lord gives us through his people.

At this time we are privileged to announce that **Robert King** of Seattle has taken over as Donor Outreach Manager effective August 1. (This is the part time position Gerry held, now retitled.) Robert has been involved in the Renewal since 1990 when he was a high school student. Since college he has worked and served in the Church in a number of capacities including fund raising. He was able to visit Chariscenter USA in mid-August. He shared, “The Holy Spirit is the driving force in my life. He always calls me deeper into the life of Christ and the love of the Father.” He is looking forward to helping the NSC spread the good news of God’s love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We welcome Robert and we ask our Friends to pray for him as he takes up this important work and welcome him when he calls.

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For Your Information

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What we have seen and heard

.....
by Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner



Ecumenical roots

In this issue of *Pentecost Today* one can read Fr. Peter Hocken's article regarding the ecumenical character of the charismatic renewal. This reality is true in my own experience.

For me the journey was definitely one of being prayed for by both Catholics and Protestants. This is a grace of this renewal. In the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota we were blessed for many years with both a large Catholic Conference and a large Lutheran Conference. Each denomination invited a speaker of the other denomination as a main session speaker. In Mankato, Minnesota the River of Life Prayer Community, ecumenical from its very beginning, held a healing conference for many years and would alternate inviting a Catholic one year and a person of another denomination another year as its main speaker.

Much of my ministry has been with both Catholics and Protestants. I was part of the ecumenical charismatic prayer group, River of Life, for 21 consecutive years and even worked for them for six of those years. (I also ministered to Protestants as a hospital and hospice chaplain for 11 years.) I am back in Mankato ministering as a Parish Pastoral Associate and I am blessed to again be meeting with the River of Life prayer group. This autumn River of Life is celebrating its 40th anniversary as an ecumenical prayer group. While, as with many prayer groups, the size swelled and then diminished, this group never lost its ecumenical character, always willing to acknowledge that we are not all the same in our doctrinal beliefs but always seeking, and

at times struggling, to be one in what we do share and that is faith in the Triune God. Our prayer, even today with a small group, is deep in praise and worship, often leading us into a time of silence after almost an hour of praise that includes extended periods of singing in tongues. We have been blessed over the years with the charisms of tongues, interpretation, prophecy, teaching and healing. Within our group, one can pray with anyone, no matter one's denomination.

One might say that we have nurtured the fruit of the Spirit, that is love for one another. *May God be praised!* ♦

2009 INDEX

Find each article published in the 2009 edition of *Pentecost Today* on our website.

Some of the categories available for your resource material include:

- ⇌ Fruit of the Spirit
- ⇌ A Dimension of Vision
- ⇌ Join the Journey
- ⇌ Charismatic Renewal Today
- ⇌ Strengthening Prayer Groups
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David Thorp
Aggie Neck
Mark Nimo

Chuck Hornsby
Fr. Bob Hogan, BBD
Judith Hughes
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And others

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