

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

September/October/November/December 2004

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Jesus (Jim Caviezel) in the carpentry scene from The Passion of The Christ, a film by Mel Gibson. ©2003 Icon Distribution Inc. All Rights Reserved. A Newmarket Films release. Photo credit: Philippe Antonello.

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

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For Your Information

This is a publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc. The mission of the NSC is to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost within and beyond the church, to broaden and deepen the understanding that baptism in the Holy Spirit is the Christian inheritance of all, and to strengthen the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The National Service Committee-Chariscenter USA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions to defray the cost of this publication are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please mail to:

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Chairman's
Corner
.....
by Aggie Neck

To know Jesus Christ

"No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). I remember very well the first time the realization of the awesome uniqueness of Jesus as God and Lord and Jesus as Man became an awakening moment in my mind, heart, and spirit. I was reading an article on the divinity and person of Jesus. It was as if a veil had been removed from my mind, and my understanding of Jesus. I wanted to shout "Hallelujahs." I wanted to jump for joy. It was the clearest revealing moment for me of the wonder of who Jesus was and what Jesus did by becoming Man.

This moment would not have been possible had I not first been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This moment was the direct result of the power of the Holy Spirit leading me into the knowledge of Jesus as Lord, Jesus as Savior, Jesus as the one who conquered sin and death, Jesus as the risen Lord of glory. It was the moment when I could have answered the question "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15). Without hesitation and without doubt I would have given the same positive response with the same boldness as Peter.

Perhaps even today we could ask the question with a different thrust. If we say that Jesus is Lord, and if we believe that he is the hope of the world, then how do we live that and how do we proclaim that? Are we as bold with this statement outside of the prayer meetings? Are we as eager to make this statement in the face of opposition? Are we so rooted in the truths about Jesus that nothing can shake our faith or our declaration of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

What happens to each of us, as we become alive in this knowledge, is that we have an unshakable faith that is the foundation for

the way we live our lives. There is an awareness of how much we really do love Jesus. It is a constant presence of love that causes us to desire to be holy, to conform our lives to the will of God, to be willing to say yes to anything and everything that he would ask of us. There is also this hope that drives us forward knowing there is a goal, knowing there is a vision and a mission. St. Paul says it so powerfully "The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me. I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I will not treat God's gracious gift as pointless" (Gal. 2:20-21).

In his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Pope John Paul II writes: "In Christ, religion is no longer a 'blind search for God' (cf. Acts 17:27) but the response of faith to God who reveals himself. It is a response in which man speaks to God as his Creator and Father, a response made possible by the one Man who is the substantial Word in whom God speaks to each individual person and by whom each individual person is enabled to respond to God. What is more, in this Man all creation responds to God. Jesus Christ is the new beginning of everything. In him all things come into their own, they are taken up and given back to the Creator from whom they first came" (Par. 6).

When we sing the song "Lift Jesus Higher, Lift Jesus Higher, Lift him up for the world to see," we are singing words that are proclaiming our mission. We have indeed been commissioned by the Lord Jesus to "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." "Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

There are many who are searching for something to hope in, to believe in. We have what they are searching for. We have the Good News of Jesus Christ in our hearts. Let us continue to be attentive as the Holy Spirit shows us ever new ways to proclaim the Gospel!

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

Are you looking for more?



by Mary Ellen Rossman

Autumn and Winter are times in the year when we stand back and reflect on the past to see what we have, and still want to accomplish before the year's end. As I look back over the years the one thing I am most grateful for are the trials and tribulations that brought me to my knees to ask God for more.

Each time of crisis brought me closer to God because he was able to teach me something new and wonderful about his love for me and his wisdom in dealing with me. I found that he could accomplish an even greater good or deeper revelation if I just let him. Being raised in a Catholic environment I had loved the Lord and tried to be a good Catholic. I followed all the rules and regulations but felt by the time I reached my 30's that there had to be more.

God's word says that when his people cry out to him, he will answer. It doesn't say when we think about our problem he will answer. It says, **cry out**, and that's what I did. At that time I was a mother of four young children. I was juggling food shop-

ping, laundry, cooking, changing diapers, loving and caring for the needs of my husband and children. It was then that I realized I didn't have what I so desperately needed - to be able to go beyond my own love. I knew I needed more love, more patience, more joy, more peace. I was doing everything right, but I just didn't have it. It was then that I cried out to God and told him I needed a practical God.

Through various circumstances God began to reveal to me that I was right in believing I didn't have what I needed. He began to show me it is not about doing everything on my own. He wanted to be a partner with me. He wanted to lead me in the power of his Holy Spirit. I had been working very hard in my flesh, but He wanted to empower me in his Spirit. Jesus told the Samaritan woman (John 4) that the time was coming when true worshippers would worship the Father in Spirit and truth and the Father would seek out people such as these. Saint Paul in Romans 8 explained that we could operate on our own (in the flesh) or in the Spirit.

Looking back over the years I am most grateful that Pope John XXIII prayed for renewal when he called on the Holy Spirit to bring life to the Church as by a new Pentecost. It was shortly after Vatican II that the Holy Spirit began to give me the more I so desperately needed. It was at a

**It says, cry out,
and that's what I did.**

charismatic conference at Notre Dame that Ralph Martin explained about the gift of Divine Love and the critical importance of surrendering our lives to the Lordship of Jesus. The Spirit gave me a revelation of who Jesus is, and what he did for me in taking my just punishment upon himself on the cross. Jesus proved his love for me and now I am able to love with his love. The Holy Spirit empowered me to surrender my life and all I owned and loved to the Lordship of Jesus. In doing this, he gave me a hunger to read and understand his word, the ability to thank, praise and worship him at all times and in all circumstances and to live my life in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit.

It is no wonder that the scripture I love the most is Matthew 3:11. John the Baptist was explaining to the Pharisees and Sadducees that he came to baptize with water for repentance, but the one (Jesus) whose sandals he was unfit to loosen would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. It all stems from Jesus giving his Holy Spirit. It is from the Spirit we receive our ability to live and share the gospel message and to be made holy in the refining fire. Without the Holy Spirit we can never know the more—the love of our Heavenly Father in sending us his son, Jesus. ♦

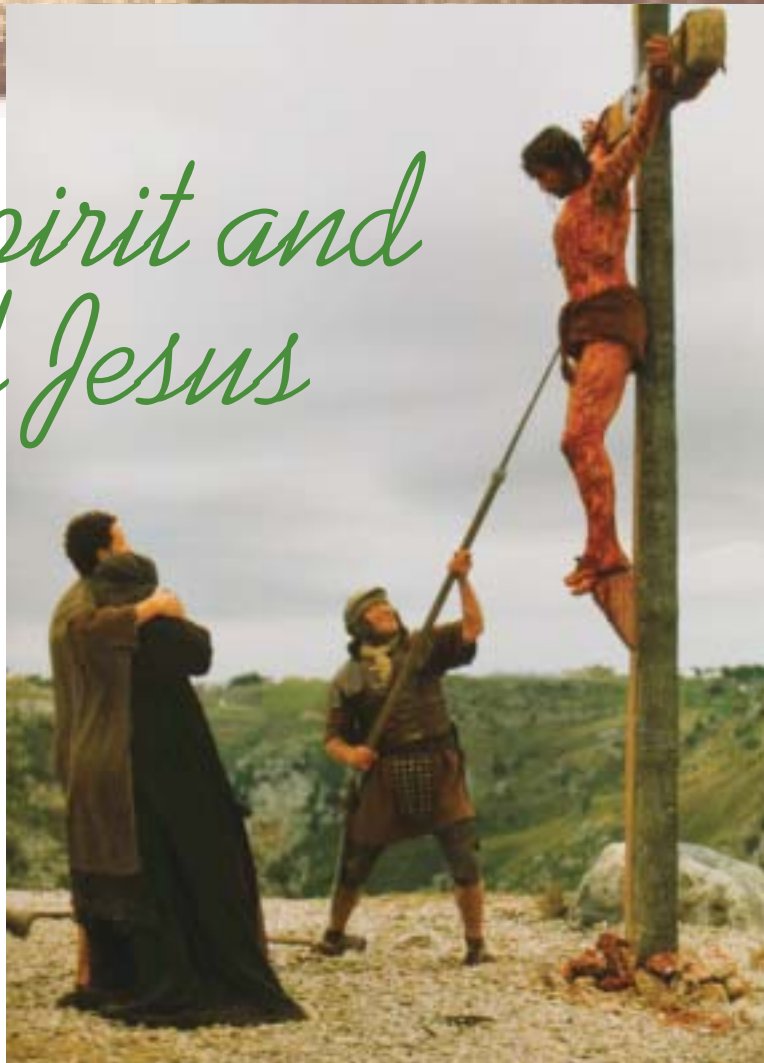


*Mary Ellen Rossman serves on the Archdiocesan Service Committee in San Antonio, TX. Her new book *There's So Much More* has just been published.*

The Holy Spirit and the person of Jesus

"On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, 'Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture says: Rivers of living water will flow from within him.' He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified."

by Fr. Bruce Nieli, CSP



Jesus (Jim Caviezel) in the crucifixion scene from *The Passion of the Christ*, a film by Mel Gibson. © 2003 Icon Distribution Inc. All Rights Reserved. A Newmarket Films release. Photo credit: Philippe Antonello.

Who can forget the powerful scene in the movie "The Passion of the Christ," where the centurion throws the spear into the side of Jesus, only to fall on his knees under the outpouring of the water and the blood gushing forth from the Savior's pierced heart! This outpouring is the "living water" promised to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:10). These are the "rivers of living water" poured out to every thirsting soul. This is the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who brings us face to face with Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit, the "Divine Matchmaker," who draws us to fall in love with Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who, as St. Paul says, is the "love of God poured out into our hearts." (Romans 5:5). He is the love that makes all love possible, because he is the Love who brings us to Love Incarnate.

There are, in fact, four "rivers of living water." These are the rivers that lead us to fall in love with Jesus. The names of these rivers I borrow from a community of 19th century American seekers known as the Transcendentalists. They included such famous movers and shakers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott, and they explored the thirst of every human soul for the Absolute. They sought a spirituality without a religion. Living among them was a famous convert to the Catholic faith, Isaac Thomas Hecker (1819-1888), the founder of the Paulist Fathers, America's first Catholic religious congregation of men. He was led to fall in love with Jesus and the Catholic Church by jumping into these four rivers. Through the Holy Spirit he connected his love for Jesus and his love for the Catholic Church with his already passionate love for America.

River of unity

The first of these rivers is the river of “unity.” I like to call this one the river of intimate love. Isaac Hecker felt a lifelong conflict with loneliness, and his solution was devotion to the Holy Spirit, the only one capable of completely filling the loneliness void. This devotion brought him to a mystical union with Jesus Christ, exemplified by the following quotation:

“O dear Christ! Oh sweet Christ! Oh loving Christ! O more than brother - friend! Oh more than any other being can be!...Oh draw me nearer to thee. Let me feel more of thy love, more of thy purity. Oh baptize me with thy Spirit and loosen my tongue that I may speak of thy Love to man...”

River of truth

The second river is the river of “truth.” This is the river of endless love. As Jesus says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35) and “Consecrate them in truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Jesus will be with us always, “until the end of time” (Matthew 28:20). Isaac Hecker, came to see that all the great religious leaders of the world “are included in Jesus Christ” and that the Catholic Church “unites, coordinates, and binds together” all philosophies and religious systems into a coherent synthesis which will not pass away. Jesus is the fullness of truth; the church is the fullness of Jesus; the Catholic Church is the fullness of Church.

River of goodness

The third river is the river of “goodness,” which I like to call sacrificial love. Jesus is the “Good Shepherd” who “lays down his life for His sheep” (John 10:15). Isaac Hecker, a would be New York politician who sought to correct the evils of slavery and oppressive labor practices, came to believe that Jesus was the true liberator and that the religious orders of the Catholic Church were

the true utopian communities capable of bringing about the common good —liberty and justice for all. After all, I would ask, isn’t it true that the author of “Utopia” was St. Thomas More, a man who died for his Catholicism? Isn’t it true that a Catholic Cardinal and Archbishop, Stephen Langton of Canterbury, was the author of the Magna Carta, the document that gave birth to democracy in the western world? The monks and nuns of the religious orders of the Catholic Church were, according to Father Hecker, the ones who founded the universities, the hospitals, and the social reform movements giving birth to “modern civilization.”

River of beauty

The fourth river is the river of “beauty”, the river of universal love. St. Francis of Assisi, in his thirst for beauty, composed the “Canticle of the Creatures - All Creatures of Our God and King,” the first major poem written in the Italian language. Father Hecker loved the beauty of music, art, poetry, and like his Transcendentalist friend Thoreau, nature. What can be more beautiful than the beauty of Jesus in the transfiguration, unless, of course, his beauty in the crucifixion? “By his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). It was this beauty that led Hecker to the sacramental beauty of Catholicism.

May we all plunge into the four rivers of living water, the paths of the Holy Spirit, and be led, like the centurion at the cross, to bend our knees to the person of Jesus. ♦



Fr. Bruce Nieli, a Paulist priest, is the former Director of Evangelization for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Based in Memphis, TN, Fr. Bruce preaches missions and retreats throughout the United States.

Prayer group self-assessment

A tool for revitalization

by Sister Martha Jean McGarry

Have you been looking for a tool to help rejuvenate the Renewal in your area, to strengthen your prayer groups and leadership?

What are the ages of those involved in the Renewal?

Are our groups really vibrant?

We found an instrument developed for the National Service Committee to be an excellent resource to assist us in our efforts to strengthen the Renewal in our diocese. This Prayer Group Self-Assessment tool became part of our process to bring new life into our ministry as Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Are our groups really vibrant? What are their prayer meetings like? Are the charisms being used? What are the ages of those involved in the Renewal? These were some of the questions we looked at with the leadership of each prayer group. The process as we used it has been three-fold:

Are the charisms being used?

What are their prayer meetings like?

Prayer—seeking his face—receiving his power. This was done through prayer, retreat days, and working with the Self-Assessment tool as a Diocesan Pastoral Team.

Administering the Self-Assessment tool to prayer group leadership by meeting with each group's leadership.

Follow-up process—using what we learned to generate a stronger Renewal.

There is a growing willingness and new energy to work together to accomplish the mission God has given us.

Such a process takes a commitment of time and enthusiasm for the mission that is ours. Our Diocesan leadership team of nine took six months to complete use of the self-assessment instrument with our 52 prayer groups. We are still involved in step 3 of this ongoing process that includes:

Calling forth anointed leadership discovered in the groups to assist in the broader renewal.

Following through with individual group requests for specific help or materials.

Reporting back to the Prayer Group leadership a summary of our findings.

Although the desired fruits of our efforts are far from being realized at this early date, we have **already been blessed** in the following areas:

Planning initiatives for the coming year that will meet the needs of prayer groups, specifically in areas of vision, praise and worship, charisms, teachings, and Life in the Spirit Seminars.

■ We all have been challenged to refocus on our primary mission.



Welcome back Sister Martha Jean

The Editorial Board of *Pentecost Today*, on behalf of the National Service Committee, welcomes Sr. Martha Jean McGarry as the Editor of *Pentecost Today*.

Sr. Martha Jean is the Director of the Catholic Charismatic Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico and the associate Liaison for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. She has been a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary since 1955.

Sr. Martha Jean was a member of the National Service Committee from 1990–2001 and served on the Editorial Board from its inception in 1991, chairing the board from 1994 until her NSC membership ended.

Sr. Martha Jean is a well traveled conference speaker and teacher, and has edited the local newsletter of the Renewal “New Pentecost in New Mexico” for years.

May the Holy Spirit guide her in this new work.



Prayer Card



God our Father
Complete the work
you have begun and
keep the gifts of
your Holy Spirit active
in the hearts of
your people.

Make us ready to
live the gospel and
eager to do God’s will.

May we never
be ashamed
to proclaim
to all the world
Christ crucified
for us and risen.
Amen.

*Prayer Over the People
Adapted from
Rite of Confirmation*

■ The relationship between prayer groups and diocesan leadership has been clarified, strengthened, and re-vitalized.

■ Leadership has a clearer understanding of the needs of the groups so as to help them become more vibrant and re-establish their focus. The types of programs, teachings etc. that are needed are more apparent.

■ The Lord has placed some really gifted and anointed people in the prayer groups whose potential has not yet been tapped for building up the body. We know we need to look into how we can further develop these treasures with which God has gifted us.

■ There is a growing willingness and new energy to work together to accomplish the mission God has given us.

■ Together we have come to grasp the strengths and weaknesses of the Renewal in our area.

■ God is working in new ways among us and we have come to see the graces being manifested both in our diversity and our common vision.

This Prayer Group Self-Assessment tool is available for your use and can be downloaded from the Chariscenter website www.nsc-chariscenter.org. ♦

Sister Martha Jean McGarry is Director of the Catholic Charismatic Center in Albuquerque, NM.

The Lord has placed some really gifted and anointed people in the prayer groups whose potential has not yet been tapped.

Prayer card

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

- ◆ For the NSC Pastoral Planning Meeting in September
- ◆ For the preparations for the 2005 Prayer Summit
- ◆ For the people to respond to the words of Pope John Paul II at Pentecost, especially for inspiration for liaisons, prayer group leaders and priests in assisting that response
- ◆ For the financial needs of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal at the local, national, and international levels
- ◆ For the upcoming Regional Leaders Gatherings



2004 National Catholic

by Mary Anne Schaezler, SSND

“Lord, we long to see your face.” This was the theme of the 2004 National Catholic Charismatic Conference in Lowell, Massachusetts, June 25–27.

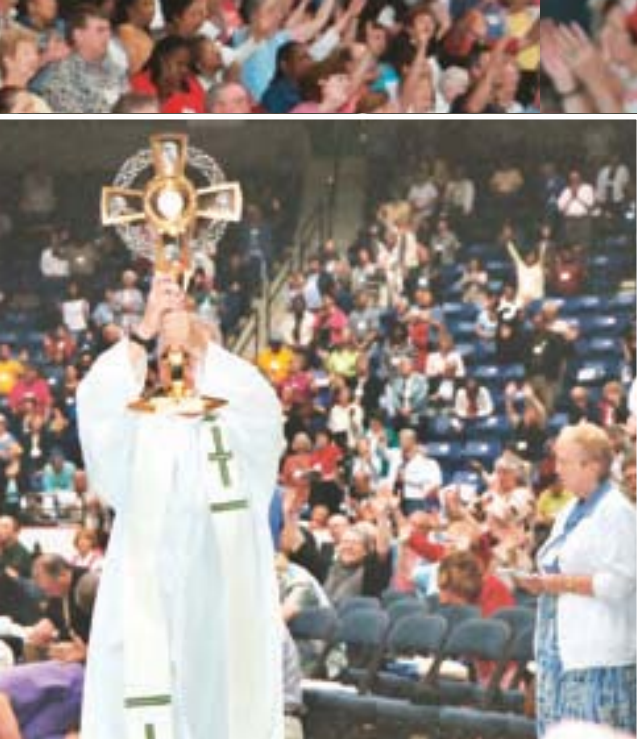
On Friday evening **Fr. Bruce Nieli, CSP**, engaged our imaginations around the theme of the conference as he painted a verbal image of four rivers of living water. They are the rivers of unity or intimate love, of truth or endless love, of goodness or sacrificial love, and of beauty or universal love. Fr. Bruce has a unique way of drawing on the history of our country and the lives of people who challenged the status quo in areas of justice.

On Saturday we were invited to see the face of the Lord in the poor with examples shared by **Fr. Richard Ho Lung, M.O.P.** of Jamaica. We were exhorted to see the Lord’s face through intercession by **Kim Kollins** of Germany who shared her vision of the burning bush and prayer for Christian Unity and through the witness of **Elizabeth Hundley**. Seeing and proclaiming the kingdom of God was the theme of the evening session with **Jim Murphy** and **Barbara Ryan**. Jim exhorted all those present to get into the presence of God, to become holy, to “pray in” the kingdom of God, to make a practical difference in the world, to be zealous, bold and focused until all are safe at home in the kingdom of God. At this session and through prayer room ministry during the lunch and dinner breaks there were many opportunities to seek the face of God for healing on many levels. Witnesses, such as **Fr. Richard Loch** sharing his escape from fire, encouraged listeners to be in touch with their own human experience of God’s compassion as the face of God shines upon us.

On Sunday morning we heard **Virginia King** witness to how God broke into her heart and shared a deep love for one whom she found difficult to love.



Photos: ShannonMarraffino, Mike Marraffino



Charismatic Conference

Her prayer was that the Lord would give her his love with which to love. And God did. Barbara Ryan then elaborated on the power of God which raised Christ from the dead and which dwells in us.

In his homily at the Sunday morning mass, **Fr. Marc Montminy** spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Lord and Giver of Life. Without the Holy Spirit God is far away. We need the Holy Spirit. A parish cannot be transformed without the Holy Spirit. In his parish there are ministries that directly touch the poor. **He shared that if we don't see God's face we won't see the face of the poor, the aged, and the sick.**

On the wall above the altar area in the Lowell Auditorium were the words, "Liberty to all." It was interesting to me, as I noticed the words from an era in our country when we were seeking political freedom, to hear in Sunday's second reading from Galatians 5 the words, "For freedom God set us free."

As always, music was wrapped around and embedded in the weekend experience. God was enthroned on the praises of the people. There was much joy and worship. There was freedom in dance. As we began on Friday evening we had heard the word to, "Let your joy be bountiful because I am here."

Fr Bruce, on Friday evening, proclaimed that we are on the eve of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the United States. Let us ready ourselves through prayer asking that we might be ready and willing to be instruments through whom the Holy Spirit can spread the aroma of this great anointing upon our earth and its people who are suffering and who long (whether or not they know it) to see the face of the Lord. **"Lord, we long to see your face."** ♦



What is the nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?



Charles Whitehead

Extra! Extra! Read All About It

There is an exciting new pamphlet by Charles Whitehead! Addressing leaders of the Renewal in September of 2003 at an international gathering held at Castelgandolfo in Italy, Charles invited leaders to look again at the nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and how we are living out our mission in the Church and in the world. *What is the Nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?* by Charles Whitehead has been published in pamphlet form and is available from *Chariscenter USA* for \$2.00.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit this booklet has the capacity to stir afresh the power of Pentecost within us and our prayer groups and communities. It is a great resource to help us clear our vision and to re-establish our true focus in the Renewal. It is a real “stir into flame” document! Below are some quotes taken from his address.

- Baptism in the Spirit is a personal experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who brings alive in new ways the graces of our baptism. The Holy Spirit not only sets on fire all that we have already
- received, but comes again in power to equip us with his gifts for service and mission.
- Our most important gift to the Church is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. As Cardinal Suenens wrote in 1996: “The soul of the Renewal—Baptism in the Spirit—is a grace of Pentecostal refreshment offered to all Christians. The grace will lead us into a personal, living relationship with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and will help us to seek holiness.”
- We know very well that our special calling is to teach and minister the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is our primary gift to the Church—it is the particular grace given to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.
- Cardinal Suenens reminded us that charismatic Christianity is normal Christianity, because the Church herself is charismatic, and we were never supposed to live the Christian life without the full presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- Renewal is firstly about me and God – I make a conscious decision to accept what he offers to me. The result? My faith
- comes alive. It has nothing to do with my plans, my ideas, or my merits. It has everything to do with the love, the mercy, and the power of God. The gift is God himself – given to us in a fuller and more wonderful way. We enter into a living relationship with Jesus, and we place this relationship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The Lord uses conferences, courses, and programs, but no one is “renewed” except by a sovereign act of God, who touches our lives by the power of his Holy Spirit and changes us.
- Renewal is not man-made and humanly ordered. It comes directly and sovereignly from God.
- The nature of leadership in the Renewal is to offer service, not to demand obedience and conformity. ♦

Charles Whitehead is the Chairman of the English National Service Committee and was President of ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) for 10 years. He has been involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for almost 30 years.

Eve of Pentecost, 2004

On Friday, May 21 a formal and public message from Pope John Paul II was delivered to the headquarters of the Italian Charismatic Renewal that set in motion events that have been felt throughout the world. In his message, the Pope wrote:

Next Saturday, on the eve of the Solemn Feast day of Pentecost, at 6 pm, I will preside over the solemn celebration of Vespers. I invite all the faithful, and particularly the members of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit, to participate in this prayer vigil, to invoke upon ourselves and upon the entire Church, an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As it happened, May 21 was the first day of a scheduled Pentecost Novena organized by the Italian Renewal, which was to be completed on the following Saturday, the eve of Pentecost!

Each year, the Holy Father sends a letter of encouragement to the Renewal in Italy, explicitly acknowledging the role of Charismatic Renewal in the Church, and he has met with them privately, but this event was planned to draw public attention to the Renewal and to the Burning Bush project that they have been developing. The Pope would not be speaking to them privately, but from the Chair of Peter to the Universal Church!

As planning progressed, word came from the Vatican that Ves-

pers were to be moved from the Basilica to St. Peter's Square, allowing for more flexibility in prayer and music. Members of the Renewal were to serve as deacons, clergy and lectors. In addition, the Renewal was invited to lead charismatic prayer for 45 minutes prior to the official start of the Vigil!

Rather than speaking *to* them, the Pope was offering to stand *with* them. On May 29 15,000 Catholic Charismatics and many others heard him say:

...I greet in a special way the members of Renewal in the Spirit, one of the expressions of the great family of the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Thanks to the Charismatic Movement, many Christians, men and women, youths and adults, have rediscovered Pentecost as a living and present reality in their daily life. I desire that the spirituality of Pentecost be spread in the church, as a renewed thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation.

In this connection, I encourage the initiative called 'Burning Bush,' promoted by Renewal in the Spirit. It is about incessant adoration, day and night, before the Most Holy Sacrament, an invitation to the faithful "to return to the Cenacle" so that, united in the contemplation of the Eucharistic mystery, they intercede for the full unity of Christians and the conversion of sinners. I sincerely desire that this initia-

NSC/NSC Council Meet

The National Service Committee and the NSC Council met for two days of prayer and discussion prior to the 2004 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference. About 50 members and guests were present.

The meeting focused on evaluating how we, individually and as a Renewal, are living or not living the vision articulated by the Gathering of National Leadership Groups at its meeting in January (see report on page 11 of the last issue of *Pentecost Today*).

The members then met in various Working Groups to move forward initiatives in intercession, praise and worship, strengthening prayer groups, etc. There was also time to reflect and minister to one another in the area of holiness and to share about what is the Spirit saying/doing today. All seemed to find the meeting helpful and hopeful.

The NSC later met after the Conference to move forward its planning of A Prayer Summit for next Pentecost (see page 12), work on its By-Laws, and approve exploration of a number of projects that will be announced at a later date. ♦

tive lead many to rediscover the gifts of the Spirit, which have their source in Pentecost.

Dear brothers and sisters! This afternoon's celebration reminds me of the memorable meeting with the ecclesial movements and the new communities on the vigil of Pentecost six years ago. It was an extraordinary manifestation of the unity of the Church, in the richness and variety of charisms, which the Holy Spirit infuses in abundance. I energetically repeat what I said on that occasion: The ecclesial movements and the new communities are a "providential answer," "inspired by the Holy Spirit" given the present need of new evangelization, for which "mature Christian

personalities" and "strong Christian communities" are needed.

For this reason, I also say to you: "Open yourselves with docility to the gifts of the Holy Spirit! Receive with gratitude and obedience the charisms that the Spirit does not cease to offer! Do not forget that all charisms are given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church!"

This is a powerful endorsement of the work of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. It reinforces our mission and challenges us to even greater commitment to "renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church." ♦

A Prayer Summit for America

40 Hours of Prayer for Pentecost

Following the example of Pope John Paul II, who recently called the Renewal in the Spirit (the Italian Catholic Charismatic Renewal) to join him at the eve of Pentecost Vespers to “invoke upon ourselves and upon the entire Church, an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit” the National Service Committee, in collaboration with *Renovación Carismática Católica Hispana* of Miami and the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services will convene A Prayer Summit for America in Miami, Florida Pentecost weekend, May 13-15, 2005.

The weekend will not be a typical conference but “40 Hours of Prayer” for Pentecost. We will begin Friday, May 13 at 7 PM and conclude the 40 Hours at 11AM on Sunday with a grand celebration of Pentecost. It will be, in the words of our Holy Father, a kind of return to the Cenacle. Pentecost for America!

When we announced the Summit at the pre-Conference NSC-NSC Council Meeting in Massachusetts, Kim Kollins (a leader in the Renewal in Germany) who was present as an international guest in anticipation of her speaking at the conference, came forward excitedly to say that this Summit was an expression of the Burning Bush Initiative she and others had been involved in and that the Holy Father on the eve of Pentecost had endorsed.

Our excitement grew.

Representatives of the NSC, *Renovación Carismática Católica Hispana*, and the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services had met in San Antonio in June 2003 after the NSC’s National Conference to discuss how to work together to bring an International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services sponsored event to the US in 2004. For various reasons these efforts did not reach fruition for 2004.

After additional conversations with ICCRS, and more recently with representatives of *Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano* (US) and CONCLAT (the umbrella leadership group for Latin America), an Ad Hoc Planning Committee has been formed of NSC, ICCRS and *Renovación* representatives.

An Advisory Committee of ethnic committees in the United States, the Association of Diocesan Liaisons, as well as representatives of Canada and the Caribbean, is being formed to assist in the planning.

For the Summit we will use as the basis of our reflections our Holy Father’s pastoral reflection *Ecclesia in America*. Invitations will be extended widely: to North, Central and South America and to the Caribbean so that together we might hear the Lord for the Renewal in the Western Hemisphere.

May 13 is the feast of Our Lady of Fatima and we have placed the Summit under Mary’s protection as Mother of America under her title as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Miami was chosen as the site for the Summit for its accessibility to Central and South America, and the Caribbean, as well as for the fact that it is already a multi-cultural hub.

The Summit will be conducted multi-lingually (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Korean etc.) as needed. ♦

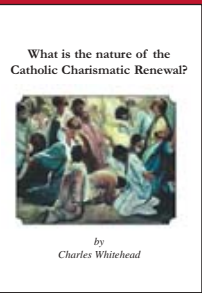
Attention All Priests, Deacons and Seminarians

In 2005 there will be two international priests retreats. The first will be held in Guadalajara, Mexico July 25–28. The speaker will be the Archbishop of Loretto, Italy who gave the Advent Retreat to the Pope last year. More information will be made available on our website.

The second opportunity will be held in Ars, France, September 25-October 1. Speakers will be Sr. Briege McKenna and Fr. Kevin Scallon. This retreat is organized by ICCRS, the Community of Beatitudes in France and the Jean-Marie Vianney Society. For more information visit their website at: <http://retraite.ars2005.beatitudes.org>.

Note to Diocesan Renewal Centers and Service Committees and Prayer Groups:

The National Service Committee strongly encourages you to reach out to the priests new to the Renewal or not involved, especially young ones, and offer to pay for their attendance at one of these retreats, or the Annual Priests Conference in Steubenville, June 13–17, 2005. Visit: www.franciscanconferences.com. ♦



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From the
Director
.....
by Walter Matthews

Going Forward

Toward the end of his Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Pope John Paul II exhorts us, "Let us go forward in hope!" (58). Earlier he wrote, "What we have done this year [the Jubilee] cannot justify a sense of complacency, and still less should it lead us to relax our commitment. On the contrary, the experience we have had should *inspire in us new energy*, and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives the enthusiasm which we have felt" (15).

It is with this resolve, inspiration, energy and hope that the National Service Committee has decided to go forward with A Prayer Summit for the Americas next Pentecost in Miami (see announcement, p. 12). Even though our resources are thin (see *Friends of the NSC* column, next page), we move ahead with the planning of this and other initiatives to strengthen the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In the recent words of our Holy Father, we desire to spread "the spirituality of Pentecost... in the Church, as a renewed thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation."

Some of these initiatives we are working on include: an expanded website with more information/links/resources; the development of a searchable database for the web so that Renewal prayer groups, ministries, liaisons, conferences, etc. can be located; praise and worship workshops; tools to strengthen prayer groups; outreach to youth and youth ministers who serve them.

There is no question that the Renewal in the US is struggling in many places: prayer groups are dwindling and participants are

getting older; conferences are less well attended; prophetic charisms are less in evidence and so the list goes on.

But the Lord isn't done with us yet—if we take our Holy Father's words as prophetic inspiration and encouragement.

In the National Conference in Lowell, Fr. Bruce Nieli declared that in his opinion we are "on the eve of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Church in the US." Kim Kollins, so instrumental in the development of the *Burning Bush Initiative* led us in prayer that whatever had been blocking the Holy Spirit in the US would be broken and declared that "something significant happened here." The *Burning Bush Initiative* is a call back to the Cenacle for prayer, intercession, and adoration, calling for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and, indeed, upon the whole Body of Christ for unity.

Some have written to us concerned about the low numbers at the Conference while others have written about how encouraged and energized they were. Is the glass half full or half empty? Is the Renewal almost over or have we only just begun?

Barbara Ryan, speaking personally on "the same power working in us that raised Jesus from the dead" encouraged us to read the histories of the Church when discouraged: the Holy Spirit has gotten us through. "Instead of allowing the difficulties to affect us, ask the Lord how to change the way we respond."

There are many hopeful signs: 300 people at a recent Life in the Spirit Seminar in Portland, OR; nearly 50 parishes in San



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Antonio using the Life in the Spirit Seminars as preparation for Confirmation; and continued growth in numbers among our ethnic brothers and sisters. If your situation is not so encouraging, you don't have to look too far away to see signs of hope. Again, our Holy Father has words to keep us looking beyond difficult circumstances: "Despite all the losses the church has suffered, it does not cease to look toward the future with hope. Such hope is a sign of the power of the Spirit." The NSC is committed to going forward with hope. We are full of excitement about what the Lord is doing and full of expectant faith. We pray for each of you that you, too, will decide to go forward with great hope!

"The Holy Father fervently prays that your assembly and its well-chosen theme... will renew in you a deeper consciousness of your dignity as baptized and confirmed Catholics and of your mission to work unceasingly... for the spread of the Gospel and for the building up of the Church in a communion of faith, hope and charity." (Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, Apostolic Nuncio, to the National Conference Participants).

The Renewal over?! We have only just begun! ♦

Friends of the NSC

As of June 30 The National Service Committee's income from donations was \$20,000 below budget and 7% below 2003.

This, along with the National Conference in Lowell, Massachusetts not doing as well financially as we had hoped and budgeted, has left the Service Committee short financially.

We do need your help.

We especially need the help of the over 5,000 recipients of *Pentecost Today*—prayer group leaders etc.—who are not active donors. If you would send a small offering of \$15 or more, we could cover the National Service Committee's deficit and dramatically expand the scope and work of the National Service Committee.

Another suggestion—perhaps each prayer group could take up a special collection before the end of 2004 to assist the Service Committee in its financial need.

To those "Friends of the NSC" and "Fanning the Flame Partners" we say thank you for your support.

Donations can be sent to: Chariscenter USA, PO Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508.

As I write this column it is the feast of Martha, Disciple of the Lord. Martha, as a model of hospitality, illuminates an aspect of our lives. We are all invited to welcome Jesus into our lives. We do this in various ways. We welcome Jesus during our times of prayer, as modeled by Martha's sister, Mary. We also welcome Jesus in all of the people whom we meet in the course of a day, as modeled by Martha.

Most of us participate in parish life. There is a challenge in allowing Christ living in us to reach out to Christ coming to us in others. It is easier to think in the single dimension of Christ, present in me, reaching out to others or of serving Christ in others.

No one of us can do it all. In serving on a large parish staff south of the Twin Cities in Minnesota, one realizes that one is part of the Body of Christ, which serves in a variety of ways with a variety of gifts. This past year I had the privilege of serving seven people who felt called to become members of the Catholic Church through RCIA. We moved from few people knowing each other to a fresh sense of community. At the Easter Vigil they made their profession of faith. Other adults joined them in receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. We celebrated First Eucharist, including the daughter of one of the candidates. The infant child of another was baptized. By now three couples have been married. This was a wonderful experience of the Spirit at work in the Sacramental life of the Church. As the *Fanning the Flame* booklet says, "RCIA...is a most apt vehicle for evangelizing both catechumens and the whole parish, bringing them to a full life in the Spirit. A key to this is the promotion of expectant faith..." (p. 24).

Following the Vigil Service on Holy Saturday one man from the congregation commented to me that the faces of the

Ministry Update

by Sr. Mary Anne
Schaenzer



thirteen people who had been confirmed were so radiant as they returned to their pews that he had tears coming down his face. The Spirit is at work in the Sacramental life of the Church. This was only one parish. Multiply this over and over in our country and then throughout the world. It is a tremendous sign of hope at a time of crisis in the Catholic Church.

We are all called to serve one another. We are all called to provide, and at times to receive, hospitality in the name of Christ. Let us follow the example of both Martha and Mary—that we serve Jesus in outreach and that we serve Jesus as we sit at his feet in prayer. ♦

Why include the NSC in your will?

The National Service Committee relies almost entirely on gifts from individuals to continue its mission. A bequest will help our ongoing work of renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church.

Please consider a gift to the National Service Committee when you make your will or update it. Making a gift to the NSC can be as simple as adding a codicil to your existing will or estate plan.

You may use this or a similar statement: "I/we bequeath \$_____ (or % of my residual estate) to the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc., P.O. Box 628, Locust Grove, VA 22508-0628."

Please contact us for other ways to give. And please let us know if you have included us in your will so that we can properly thank you.

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On Friday, May 13, we will begin "40 Hours of Prayer" for Pentecost—a kind of return to the Cenacle—concluding with a grand celebration on Pentecost Sunday.

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