

# IGNITE<sup>®</sup>

in us the fire of your love

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Jan/Feb/March 2011

## Renewal of the grace & Culture of Pentecost

By Walter Matthews

The grace of Pentecost is a life transforming experience of God's love, presence and power. It is a call to discipleship and mission. As a new Pentecost in our day, Pope Paul VI called it, "a new outpouring of the gift of God." the grace of Pentecost is an unveiling of the real behind the shadows and distortions of life lived on the surface. It is the culmination of God's plan to restore humanity to himself. On the day of Pentecost, "the Holy Trinity is fully revealed. Since that day, the Kingdom announced by Christ has been open to those who believe in him; in the humility of the flesh and in faith, they already share in the communion of the Holy Trinity. By his coming, which never ceases, the Holy Spirit causes the world to enter into the 'last days,' the time of the church, the Kingdom already inherited though not yet consummated" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 732). When we proclaim the Gospel in all its fullness—the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the Person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit—there is for those already baptized, who hear and respond, a renewal of the grace of Pentecost for the individual, for the Church, and through the Church for society. For those who have never heard the gospel proclaimed and for the unbaptized such proclamation is a call to faith, to baptism, and to receipt of the gift of the Holy Spirit: "Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn" (CCC, 1287). The Church teaches that "Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Holy Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us" (CCC, 2003).

The coupling of grace with Pentecost in the phrase "grace of Pentecost" underscores and highlights that the Pentecostal experience is a gratuitous gift, that we cannot earn it. It is an action of God to pour out his Holy Spirit to all who ask him, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Lk. 11:13). The phrase is a corrective to a narrow understanding of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, as if the latter only means going through a Holy Spirit Seminar and praying in tongues.

The full effects of the grace of Pentecost are multiple and varied. Let me highlight three of the effects.



First, although we do not "see it" in the Pentecost account in Acts 2 we have the witness of Paul who wrote, "the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5) (see 1 Jn 4:7). This experience of the love of God, of course, takes many forms: a healing, a word of consolation in a time of need, an answered prayer. It can be profound: "a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of reducing the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved, vibrating at the Spirit's touch, resting filially with the Father's heart" (Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 33),

Often accompanying this experience of love is the experience of joy. St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote in the 4th century, "We who have been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy (maximum gaudium)

## Charismatic Renewal loses a gifted teacher and evangelist

The Renewal and the Church have lost a gifted teacher, speaker and evangelist in the sudden death of David Thorp



on January 9, 2011. David had been our featured speaker at the last two general conferences at St. Helena's in the Bronx. Just last November he galvanized participants on our theme: "Moving in the Spirit...into the Heart of the Church."

David had served on National and International Committees for Catholic Charismatic Renewal and spoken around the world. His ministry in the Boston Archdiocese had included director of the Marian Center, and most recently director of the "Catholics Come Home" project in Boston.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, three adult children, two grandchildren and two brothers.

Those who attended the Nov. 13 conference last year may remember his leaving his daily intercession notebook for anyone to add names for whom he would pray.

That book was buried with him after the Mass of Resurrection celebrated by his bishop, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, five bishops, thirty priests and several hundred mourners. Sr. Nancy Kellar and I were privileged to share in praying for and honoring David.

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Cont. from p. 1

when we feel within us the first stirring of the Holy Spirit" (*Fanning the Flame*, pp 16-17).

A second effect of the grace of Pentecost is an awareness of the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit. Before our "personal Pentecost" (Pope Paul VI) the Holy Spirit was a dove or a dogma to be believed in. Afterwards we came to know the Holy Spirit in the Spirit's uniqueness as third person of the Blessed Trinity. "I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world can never accept since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him because he is with you, he is in you" (Jn 14:16-17).

The third effect is an experience of the power of the Holy Spirit. "We know, brothers loved by God, that you have been chosen, because our gospel comes to you not only in words, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with great effect" (1 Thes 1:4-5). Charisms of all kinds (prophecy, healing, mercy, leadership, and administration, to name a few) are all manifestations of the Holy Spirit given to individuals for the building up of the Church and for our mission in the world.

Pentecost, and the grace of Pentecost, is more than a onetime religious experience or an emotion. It is a way of life: living Pentecost. It releases in us an awareness and experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit: union with God; inner transformation; ministry empowered by charisms for evangelization and service; and the building of communities that witness to renewed Catholic life.

The grace of Pentecost is a call. As Pope John Paul II said, "Pentecost was not only a moment of intense emotion; it was the start of a dynamism of supernatural origin, which developed through the Church's history. As on the day of Pentecost, so in our times the Holy Spirit continues inwardly to inspire missionary enthusiasm and to give hierarchical and charismatic gifts..." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, April 1995). We are to be witnesses and we are to be in mission.

Thus the grace of Pentecost leads to the enlivening of the Church and the transformation of society. In 2002 Pope John Paul

II said to the Italian Renewal and to us: "In our time that is so longing for hope make the Holy Spirit known and loved. Help bring to life that 'culture of Pentecost' that alone can make fruitful the civilization of love and friendly co-existence among peoples. With fervent insistence never tire of praying, Come Holy Spirit! Come! Come!" Pope Benedict XVI has taken up this call, "I hope the Holy Spirit will be evermore welcome in the hearts of believers and that the 'culture of Pentecost,' which is so necessary in our day, might continue to spread" (General Audience, September 28, 2005). For Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI "culture" is certainly more than prayer meetings or even other religious activities. It embraces all that the Church is! Pentecost is to be a living, experienced reality within the Church and through the Church in our society, in our economics, politics, international relations, and, of course, our "culture" in the sense of the arts, music, film and so on.

This is a mission of global proportions. It moves us from our daily lives of witness to lives that, to quote the bumper sticker, think globally and act locally. This mission needs to become part of our very souls. We are called and challenged to move beyond our comfort zones.

"We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). This zeal for souls is stirred up by the grace and fire of Pentecost.

This zeal for souls, as it flows out in our witness and in our daily lives, must be accompanied with a passion for a "culture of life" to replace the current and growing "culture of death"; with an uncompromising commitment to the human dignity of all persons; and a passion that true justice, with mercy and love, be available to all.

Having experienced it ourselves, we are called to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the Person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit—the full Gospel—so that others may experience a renewal of the grace and culture of Pentecost personally and collectively, that the Church will once again be on fire acting to transform our society.

As Pope Benedict XVI boldly proclaimed in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York in

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## **NEWS NOTES**



✘The insert enclosed with this issue of Ignite was chosen because it correlated well with the lead article by Walter Matthews. Both articles remind us of the wonderful graces we have received through the Gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on the church for the last 46 years. Let us continue to proclaim this grace of Pentecost!

✘The magazine of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, *Pentecost Today*, is available by subscription, and is also posted on the Chariscenter website: [www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org).

✘An updated N.Y. Prayer Group directory is available from this office for \$2 plus S&H.

2008, "Let us implore from God the grace of a new Pentecost for the Church in America. May tongues of fire, combining love of God and neighbor with zeal for the spread of Christ's Kingdom, descend on all present." And on us!

*Reprinted with permission from Pentecost Today, October/ November/ December 2010*

The Church knows this. She has a vivid awareness of the fact that the Savior's words, "I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God," apply in all truth to herself. She willingly adds with St. Paul: "Not that I boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty that has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it" Pope Paul VI, "On Evangelization in the Modern World."

"Must," duty laid on me," I should be punished." Hard words to hear? But these are the words we need to hear. They are the truth we are called to bear as disciples of Jesus Christ. We can speak of a charism of evangelization bestowed on some in the Body of Christ. We all know such anointed people and see the great effect God produces as they exercise this gift. But, all who have been baptized into Christ are called to bear witness, to testify to Christ, to be bearers of the Good News, to be evangelizers.

In particular ways, because of God's goodness to people who have been baptized in the Spirit, participants in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal are called to embrace the call to evangelize. For most of us, our prayer groups and our ongoing life as Catholics are in parishes. What a great field of service, what a great field of mission! Prayer group members can be challenged to use the grace of God in two ways.

Be a team in a particular area of parish life.

Volunteer to become the RCIA team for your parish,. Receive training to accompany those whom God is leading to baptism or full communion with the Catholic Church. God is converting hearts and your prayer group could assist through your prayer, witness, teaching, walking with others.

Go to your parish's Director of Religious Education and volunteer to

teach every class of children preparing for First Communion. Also make this service an opportunity to reach out to their parents. My experience in parish religious education ministry, confirmed by every leader of parish religious education, is that many children come to class but are not at worship with the parish at Sunday Mass.

If your parish has a St. Vincent de Paul group caring for the material needs of people, join this. Combine the outreach of mercy with an evangelical outreach. Bring to every home visit a crucifix, a rosary, a Bible. Pray with people. Tell those whom you are serving about the one who is the hope in your life, who has sustained you through every trial you have faced.



Be the parish Evangelization Team

As a prayer group you could become the Parish Evangelization Team. A Parish Evangelization Team needs to have basically friendly people with these characteristics: an interest in parish renewal and growth; a personal conviction about the gospel message (you cannot share what you do not have); a conviction that they have

something of great value to share with others; a desire to share faith; a conviction that life in Christ will enrich and bless others; a concern about inactive or alienated Catholics and the unchurched. Doesn't this already sound like most members of your prayer group?

One way to draw attention to this essential ministry is through the parish bulletin. A number of brief pamphlets that describe evangelization can be used as inserts. Another way is to plant seeds in people's mind through a brief column in the weekly bulletin, something like "Sharing Your Faith" or "Reaching Out to Those Around You."

A Parish Team works with other groups to help awaken them to the evangelical potential of all that they are doing. Greeters can be encouraged to grow in the charism of hospitality. Visitors who bring communion to the homebound can be exhorted to grow in the charism of healing. Lectors can be encouraged to deepen their relationship with Jesus, the Living Word, so that their proclamation of the Scriptures comes alive. On and on it could go, touching every aspect of parish life.

In the Catholic Charismatic Renewal we have received much: the greatest News there is. Let us become messengers of this Great Good News, right in our parishes.

**Reprinted with permission from Pentecost Today, Jan/Feb/Mar.2011**

*This issue arrived in many of our mailboxes just after the news of David's death.*

# MINI-CALENDAR

Staten Island Conference, varied events, call 718-987-8175 for all, except where another number is given

...Healing Mass, 3rd Tues., 8 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 40 Poplar Ave., Call Nanie, 718-948-2049

...Healing Mass, 3rd Tues., 8 p.m., O.L. Star of Sea, 5371 Amboy Rd., Call Marge, 718-984-0593

...Healing Mass, 3rd Sat., 8 p.m. O.L. of Mt. Carmel/St. Benedicta, 1235 Castleton Ave. Call Victor 718-494-1860

...Healing Mass, 4th Wed., 8 p.m., Holy Child Church, call Sr. Jean, 718-356-5890

...Weekly Mass - Wednesdays -Lamb of God, Mt. Manresa, 9 P.M. (following 8 P.M. prayer meeting)

S.I. website: <http://siconf.tripod.com>

...St. John the Baptist P.G., 210 W. 31 St., Healing Mass, third Tuesday, other events, call 212-686-1016

Life in the Spirit Seminar, April 28-June 23

...O.L. of Peace Prayer Community, 237 E. 62 St., NYC, 212-838-3189...call for current events

Hope Healing Ministry, 12:30 P.M., 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, St. Mary Church, Mt. Vernon, 914-664-5855

...St. Mary's Prayer Group, 8 pm, Wednesdays

St. Paul the Apostle, 77 Lee Ave., Yonkers, call Sr. Eileen, 914-969-3480

...Charismatic Holy Hour, 1st Tues., Prayer Meeting, 2nd Tues., Healing Mass, 3rd Tues.,

...Prayer Meeting, 4th Tues., Prayer Meeting & Bible Teaching, Fr. James Villa, 5th Tues.

...Life in the Spirit seminar, Tuesdays of Lent, Mar 15 to April 26th, 7:45 pm-9:30 pm, call 914-965-9333

St. Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer, Scarsdale, 914-723-0533 for reservations

...Thursday of prayer, begins with IHM parish Mass 9 AM (or Noon Mass) to 1 PM with lunch - call to confirm

...Mar. 12- Seminar Day: "Discipleship" Sr. Pauline; "Moving in the Spirit, Sr. Nancy, 9 am to 3 p.m.

...April 9, - Sat. Brunch, "Prayer-Pathway to the Heart of god", Sr. Mary Tommasino, 9 am to 12:30 pm

...April 21, Holy Thursday, Tenebrae in IHM, prayer, talk on Holy Week themes, Lunch, Scripture Sharing, 9 am—2 pm

Northern Westchester/Putnam Vicariate Cluster - Mary Jane -914-737-4286 for general info\*

...Cluster Prayer Meeting, Thursday, Apr. 28, 2011, 7:45 p.m., St. Patrick's Parish Center\*

...Healing Mass, Thurs., Mar. 17., 7:30 pm, call Anne for info, 914-769-4067

...Life in the Spirit Seminar, Sat., May 14, 8:30 am—4:00 pm, call JoAnn, 914-572-0177

Ulster Healing Masses, Fridays, Music at 7 pm, Mass at 7:30 pm, Call 845-246-9581

..1st Sunday of month, Prayer Meeting, 1:30 p.m., St. John the Evangelist Church, call 845-246-9581

*See the "Out & About" column of Catholic New York for more current information on events.*

*or log onto the NY Charismatic Renewal website: [catholiccharismaticny.org](http://catholiccharismaticny.org)*

**SAVE THE DATE...!!**  
**NOVEMBER 12, 2011**  
**FOR THE FIFTH ANNUAL**  
**NY CONFERENCE**  
**ST. HELENA'S, BRONX**  
**DETAILS IN FUTURE IGNITES**

**SAVE THE DATES !**  
For the Tri-Diocesan...  
**Leaders' Day —March 26, 2011**  
Speaker —Fr. Anthony Ozele  
**General Conference -June 18, 2011**  
Speaker—Michelle Moran  
Call 718-377-4101 for info