

IGNITE

Volume 19, Number 4

Spring 2004

The Power Behind Us

by Charles Whitehead

"The task ahead of me is never as great as the power behind me."

Yes, I thought as I read this simple statement early one morning a few weeks ago - that's true. But I don't just believe it, I know it's true because I've experienced this power helping me countless times since I was baptized in the Holy Spirit over 29 years ago. I know what Jesus meant when he spoke about being "clothed with the power from on high." (Lk. 24:49) For some people this "clothing" has been the discovery of a new faith, for others an igniting of something that was already there. Talking of his own particular experience, the late Cardinal Suenens once said: "I did not discover the Holy Spirit through the Renewal. The Spirit had long been at the center of my faith. But the Renewal gave new life to my faith in the Spirit." His encounter with the Charismatic Renewal released him into a greater experience and understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, and helped him to see the beginnings of the Church in a new light. I often find myself turning to the Acts of the Apostles, and what I read there never fails to encourage and excite me all over again. I'm reminded that the coming of the promised power from on high was to equip those early disciples for the task that lay ahead - the evangelization of the world. No small challenge for a rather ordinary group of men and women, but their success was extraordinary. So what was it about those early Christians that the Cardinal saw in a new light, and what do they have to teach us?

Filling must precede effective ministry

As we look at the Book of Acts it is fascinating to see how often the words *filled* or *full* occur to describe the action of the Spirit in the lives of the first disciples. The first time we see this, of course, is on the day of Pentecost, when "*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*" (Acts 2:4) Then in Acts 4:8 Peter and John are arrested and appear before the Sanhedrin.



As Peter begins to address them he is described as "*filled with the Holy Spirit.*" The result of Peter's eloquent and Spirit-filled explanation of what lay behind the healing of the crippled man, is that the elders and scribes are astonished at his assurance - after all, he is only an uneducated layman. Being filled with the Spirit produces remarkable results! Peter and John are then released with the caution that they are never again to speak in the name of Jesus. Undeterred by this threat, all the disciples pray for boldness, are again filled with the Holy Spirit, and begin to proclaim the word of God boldly (v.31) As I read on in the Book of Acts and came to Chapter 6, I found that the criteria for choosing seven men to care of the distribution of food was that they be "*of good reputation, filled with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom.*" (6:3) One of those selected was Stephen, "*a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit*", who in v. 8 begins to work miracles

More About the Council of Ecclesial Movements

In addition to the dozen pre- and post-Vatican II movement and new communities who have been meeting for the past five years, the Council has welcomed two new entities.

Rosemary Pace is representing Pax Christi, Metro New York. Pax Christi's focus on issues of peace is a welcome addition.

Coming from France, several members of Heart's Home, a ministry of Christian presence, are living in the Bronx, offering comfort and compassion to those in deprived areas. Young people give a year of volunteer service to the poor.

In an effort to make the work of these spiritual movements more known in the Archdiocese, C.E.M. will attend the 5:30 Mass on March 28, at Holy Family Church on Staten Island, offering information about each group. Other such events are being planned in the various vicariates in order to make parishioners more aware of these different expressions of the Holy Spirit's action.

and great signs among the people because he is “filled with grace and power.” As he faces death by stoning (7:55), he is again described as “filled with the Holy Spirit.” In Acts 9:17 Ananias prays for Saul to recover his sight and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. For Ananias both things are vitally important, and six days later we find Saul “preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.” (9:20) Then in Chapter 11:24 we meet Barnabas, “a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith.” The result of his ministry in Antioch is that “a large number of people were won over to the Lord.” These few examples make it quite clear to me that there is a definite link between effective ministry and being filled with the Holy Spirit. We find ourselves face to face with an evangelizing Church, presenting a clear message of faith in Jesus Christ - a Church living a community life and to which the Lord was adding people day by day (Acts 2:42-47.) In the course of a few months the numbers grow from a handful to several thousand. Yet these are the same men and women who followed Jesus for three years without showing any signs that they had the ability to turn the world upside down. So what happened? Quite simply, they were transformed by their experience on Pentecost Day - “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”

An important message

The distinguishing characteristic of the Charismatic Renewal is its identification with that first Pentecost, and the conviction that the role and power of the Holy Spirit has not changed since that day. This has helped us to experience the same power, to receive the same gifts, and to see wonderful things happening around us. Once those first Christians has been filled with the Holy Spirit, we find that the Holy Spirit begins to speak to them and act in their lives day by day. In Acts 8:29, the Spirit speaks to Philip and tells him to go and meet the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch. Immediately after the eunuch has accepted Jesus and been baptized, Philip is taken away by the Spirit of the Lord. In a similar way the spirit speaks to Peter in Acts 10:20 and

11:12, to Paul and Timothy in Acts 16:6, and again to Paul in Acts 20:23. The lesson is clear - once they have been filled with the Holy Spirit, their ears are open, they can hear his voice and respond to his direction.

So it is with you and me, and this is not something exceptional, only available to a few special people - this is the way it's supposed to be for every Christian. This is why Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, is such an important day in our liturgical year, and why the message of the Charismatic Renewal is so important for the Church.

What must we do?

We need to learn from the commitment and faith of the early Christians if we are again to see an evangelizing and growing Church in our country. Improved catechetical courses, programs of renewal, and an more enthusiastic laity are all well and good, but without the power of the Spirit, there will be no lasting fruit. So, let's ask to be filled again with the love and power of the Holy Spirit, and let's commit ourselves to listening to his voice and doing what he asks. There's a special challenge here for those of us who know that our lives have been changed by our experience of the power of the Holy Spirit. We know the difference it makes - the “before” and the “after” - and we know we have been equipped for the tasks that lie ahead. So let's commit ourselves to praying for a new outpouring of the power from on high, but in all this let's take comfort from the knowledge that the task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us - what a challenge, and what an opportunity!

“Come, Holy Spirit, renew your wonders in this our day as by a new Pentecost! (Pope John XXIII.)

Originally published in the English Newsletter GoodNews.

IGNITE

Volume 19, No.1

IGNITE is published quarterly by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Archdiocese of New York, 194 Gaylor Road, Scarsdale, 10583. It is distributed to those who support the New York Leadership Team through their donations, service and prayer, and is sent to all who request it. Information for this newsletter may be submitted in writing to this address or by phone (914) 725-1773 or fax (914) 725-5227.

E-Mail: CharismNY@juno.com

Website: catholiccharismaticny.org

Editing, layout and computer work:

Sr. Pauline Cinquini, S.C.

NEWS NOTES

- ✦ You may know some of this year's speakers at the National Conference: Fr. Ho Lung has been featured at two of the Spirituality Center Conferences; Fr. Bruce Nieli is from L.I. and was stationed in our area for some years and served at many of our Conferences.
- ✦ A revised 2004 Prayer Group Directory will be available in the next few weeks. Copies are available from this office for \$2, plus \$1 shipping and handling.
- ✦ The Diocesan Service Team planned three regional events in February and March, featuring Sr. Nancy Kellar, speaking on her new Growth Seminar. Audio tapes of all the talks will be available about mid-March. Cost for the complete set of talks, plus a special one on preparation for teachers will be \$40 including shipping, handling and a free album. Call or write the House of Prayer, 194 Gaylor Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583; 914-723-0533.
- ✦ Please pray for our friend Bredhe Stallard, long-time leader of St. Barnabas Prayer Group in the Bronx. After successful heart surgery, Bredhe has relocated to Durham, North Carolina. We will miss her energy and enthusiasm and pray she enjoys her retirement in the South.

SPC

PLAN TO ATTEND!! June 25-27, 2004

National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference
Paul E. Tsongas Arena Lowell, Massachusetts
Theme: "Lord, We Long to See Your Face"

Speakers include:

Kim Kollins (Germany)
Fr. Richard Ho Lung (Jamaica)
Barbara Schlemmon Ryan
Jim Murphy
Fr. Bruce Nieli

Join with participants from across the U.S.
for three days of praise and worship, empowerment and mission

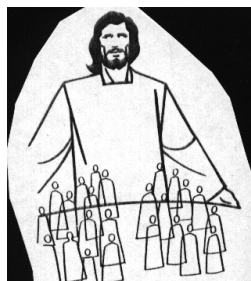


WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE

Sponsored by the NSC

Call 1-800-338-2445

www.nsc-chariscenter.org



SAVE THIS DATE!!

Tri-Diocesan General Conference
Saturday, October 23, 2004 9AM - 6 PM
at Christ the King H.S. Queens, New York

Theme: "I am the vine, You are the Branches" (John 15:5)

- ✦ Featured Speaker: *Mark Nimo from Ghana, W. Africa*
Former member of the ICCRS Council & Youth Minister
- ✦ Healing Service - *Linda Schubert*, author and has
National and International Ministry of Healing
- ✦ Music and Workshops in English, Spanish and French (+Youth Workshop)
- ✦ Tri-Lingual Closing Mass - *Msrgr. Joseph Malagrega*

Pre-Registration - \$15; at-the-door - \$20 - Lunch - \$5 (Pre-Reg. Only)

Call 914-725-1773

LENTEN LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR

An opportunity for you to "step away" and discover a new
and deeper relationship with God...

St. Paul the Apostle Church
602 McLean Ave., Yonkers
(enter at 77 Lee Ave. into schoolyard)
Tuesday Nights at 8 P.M.
March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13

Call 914-965-9333 for registration form or
directions

To register in person, arrive by 7:30 PM on

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE YET?



Log onto - catholiccharismaticny.org
to find coming events, to post prayer
requests,
read current articles and the CRO Newsletter,
Ignite and more...

We have links to the Archdiocesan website,
Staten Island site, National and International sites,
plus our Directory of Prayer Groups, Daily
Meditations, and even free clip-art.

Join the 200+ daily visitors and see what's there.

MINI-CALENDAR

Staten Island Conference, varied events, call 718-987-8175...

...Healing Mass, 3rd Tues., 8 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 40 Poplar Ave., Call Nanie, 948-2049
...Healing Mass, 2nd Tues., 8 p.m., O.L. Star of Sea, 5371 Amboy Rd., Call Rita, 984-4144
...Healing Mass, 3rd Sat., 8 p.m., O.L. of Mt. Carmel/St. Benedicta, 1235 Castleton Ave., Call Victor 494-1860
...Weekly Mass - Wednesdays -Lamb of God, Mt. Manresa, 9 P.M. (following 8 P.M. prayer meeting)
...March 20, S.I. Conference Annual Mass/Communion Brunch, Blessed Sacrament Hall, 8:30 AM.
S.I. website: <http://siconf.tripod.com>

St. John the Baptist P.G., 210 W. 31 St., Healing Mass, third Tuesday, other events, call 212-213-9150

Manhattan...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. Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer, Scarsdale, 914-723-0533...

...Mar. 6, Sat. Brunch, 9 AM - 12:30 PM, "Empowering the Laity for Today's Church". Sr. Pauline Cinquini
...April 8-9-10, Holy Week Days of Prayer, 9 AM to 2:30 PM
...May 1, Sat. Brunch, 9 AM Mass to 12:30 PM, Sr. Gloria: "Trusting in Jesus, the Bread of Life,"

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

...Mass, First Thursday of month, 7:30 PM, Graymoor, Garrison, 6th Fl. chapel, Fr. Walter Gagne, 845-424-3671
...March 8, Mass at Holy Rosary, Hawthorne, 7:45 PM, call Anne, 914-769-4067
...March 18, Mass at St. James the Apostle, Carmel, 8 PM, call Laura, 845-225-2531
...March 25, Mass at St. Patrick's, Yorktown Hts., 8 PM, Fr. Reinbold
...April 15, Mass at St. John the Evangelist, Mahopac, 8 PM, Fr. Steve Norton
...April 29, Cluster Prayer Meeting, 7:45 PM, St. Patrick's Center, Fr. Peter Taran, SA, "Emmaus, Our Journey"
...May 13, Mass at St. Patrick's Yorktown Hts., 8 PM
(additional healing Masses Aug. 9, Nov. 8)

Rockland Cluster meets first Monday of the month, 8:15 p.m. Call 914-623-6503 for location

...March 10, Healing Mass, St. Paul's, Congers, Fr. Steve Norton

Ulster Healing Masses, Music at 7 pm, Mass at 7:30 pm, Call 914-626-7477

...Mar. 15, St. Joseph, Kingston, Fr. Damas

See the "Out & About" column of [Catholic New York](#) for more current information on events.

or log onto the new NY Charismatic Renewal website: catholiccharismaticny.org