

Ignite

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THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL: A Prophecy for the Church of the Third Millennium

by Michelle Moran

I always find the story of Paul visiting the Christians in Ephesus very enlightening and somewhat amusing. He asks them a simple question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They answered, "No, we were never even told that there was such a thing as the Holy Spirit." (Acts 19:2-3).

When I look at some parish congregations and some of the things that happen in the Church, I too, am left wondering whether some of the faithful have heard of the Holy Spirit! However, as we have moved into this new millennium I think that we have begun to see some changes. The build-up to the Jubilee was a time of great grace. We were encouraged to contemplate the Trinitarian nature of our faith with a year being dedicated to each person of the Blessed Trinity. I think that one of the fruits of this process was that many people encountered or rediscovered the person and the charisms of the Holy Spirit. Just like the Christians in Ephesus many people began to see that the Holy Spirit is central to our faith and not just an added extra for those, such as the Charismatics, who like that sort of thing.

The Call to Hope

At the start of this millennium the Holy Father called us "to a renewed appreciation of the theological virtue of hope" (TMA, 460. Sometimes when we look at the Church and see some of the enormous challenges posed by an increasingly secular age and we see human mistakes and scandals, it is easy to become despondent.

However, the exposure of some of the human frailty in the Church can also remind us that the Church isn't of human origin.



The future of the Church is rather dependent upon our willingness to be more and more open to the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, one of the main thrusts in Charismatic Renewal has been this recognition that we need to continually surrender to the one who can do more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20).

In CCR we should not therefore lose hope but be confident that we have much to offer and share with the whole Church. Today I think

800 Leaders Meet in Nashville

It was the first NSC-sponsored Leaders' Conference since 1979 and renewal leaders came from all over the U.S. to gather in Nashville, Tennessee.

Fr. Tom Forrest, CSSR, was the keynote speaker on Friday night, stirring the participants with his message of fidelity. Music was provided for conference sessions by the Alleluia Community, from Atlanta, Georgia.

A full day of workshops on Saturday addressed topics like: prayer group leadership, healing and prayer room ministry, praise and worship, charisms, theological foundations, the prophetic call of the church to CCR, and practicums, tools for moving forward. Among the workshop speakers were familiar teachers: David Thorp, Sr. Nancy Kellar, Ron Ryan, Therese Boucher, Linda Schubert, Walter Matthews, Fr. John Gordon, Josephine Cachia.

A Saturday evening concert by John Michael Talbot was a highlight; after his concert, many went on to the Grand Ole Opry in downtown Nashville.

Aggie Neck, the Chairperson of the NSC, gave the closing talk: "Unending Life in the Holy Spirit: God's Wildest Dreams for Us," followed by a joyful Liturgy celebrated by the Bishop of Nashville, Bishop Edward Kmiec.

there seems to be a greater openness to the things of the Holy Spirit. It is vital that we in the renewal stay faithful to our basic call to promote and live the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We must model the charism as gifts of service for the whole Church and be careful not to become exclusive or elitist.

The call to Service

Here in England at the end of the 1990's our NSC made a deliberate decision not just to serve the Charismatic Renewal but to serve the whole Church. A new organization was launched called Catholic Evangelization Services (CES). This was under the umbrella of Charismatic Renewal but we specifically avoided any reference to CCR so that people would not be prejudiced. Today CES provides many resources for evangelization and has been endorsed by the majority of Bishops in England and Wales. We have had the great privilege of introducing to the whole Church some of the great renewal speakers and themes. All this has helped to create a more open climate for renewal. Our Cardinal, Cormac Murphy-O'Connor often speaks about the new movements with great warmth and enthusiasm. In fact this year, he accepted an invitation to speak at the Celebrate Conference, which is one of our largest renewal gatherings. Kristina Cooper, the editor of GoodNews renewal magazine is now frequently writing in Catholic journals that in the past would have spurned anything Charismatic. In our context, we have had to respond to the Lord's call to think wider than the Renewal. This has involved taking risks and at times being misunderstood. The resulting fruits are that CCR is now being

more widely accepted by the Church in general.

The call to be Prophetic

In Renewal we must truly exercise our prophetic gifting and read carefully the signs of the times. We need to be obedient to what the Spirit is saying at our local level but also as nations and at the international, global level. One way in which we have been sensing this in Europe is to respond to the call to repentance. At the European conference in Poland last year, we reflected on Pope John Paul's gospel exhortation to "put out into the deep" (Lk. 5:4). during our days together we went on a pilgrimage of reparation and repentance to Auschwitz, one of the most notorious concentration camps and also to the shrine of Divine Mercy recently opened by the Pope in Krakow. The day was profoundly moving as individuals were healed and reconciled. We as nations were then more closely united as we recognized our collective sinfulness and the need for repentance and reconciliation.

The call to Mission

As we move into this third millennium I think the challenge is for Renewal to impact the heart of the Church and not just to occur on the fringes or the sidelines. For this to happen we need to be a sacramental people because this is where we gain our unity and strength. We also need to be a people rooted deeply in god's word. From this flows the grace for mission and service to the Church and indeed to the whole of humanity.

Michelle Moran is England's representative on the ICCRS Council.

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- ◆ Thanks to the generosity of our donors and a modest subsidy from the Archdiocese, our office was able to replace an aging computer. The transition has its own problems, and as a result, a yearly donor report for tax purposes may be delayed. Please contact the office if you need a letter validating your donations for your tax return.
 - ◆ Our website continues to flourish, due to the volunteer services of many. Be sure to visit it and send your prayer group events and prayer requests to be posted.
 - ◆ Congratulations to the Rockland Cluster, which hosted the West Point Cadet Gospel Choir on Dec. 1. Wish I had been there.
 - ◆ Leaders - you may be interested in the January 31 Saturday Seminar at the House of Prayer. See box on p. 3.
 - ◆ Tapes of the talks and workshops from the Nashville Leaders' Conference are available from Resurrection Tapes, 2721 E. 42 St. #B, Minneapolis, MN, 55406, 612-721-7933, e-mail: colin@resurrection.com
- SPC

Of Special Interest to Leaders!!

**Saturday Seminar
January 31, 2004
9 AM - 4 PM**

**From her book:
"There's Always More: Expecting New
Fire"**

**Sr. Nancy Kellar, SC
will speak on the topic:**

"More Wisdom Through Vision"

Suggested Offering: \$25 - includes lunch

Call 914-723-0533 for reservations

Save the Date!!

**June 25-27, 2004
National Catholic
Charismatic Renewal
conference**

**We will meet in
Lowell, Massachusetts
for three days of praise and worship,
empowerment and mission**

Sponsored by the NSC

Call 1-800-338-2445

Pioneers in the Charismatic Renewal: Wilfried Brieven

All I care for is to know Christ (Ph. 3:10)

These are the words of Scripture that have guided me since I discovered the Charismatic Renewal. I was ordained as a priest in 1955, at the age of 24. At first, after studies at the University of Leuven, I became a teacher and later principal in a Catholic high school in Brussels. In 1963, Cardinal L.J. Suenens asked me to become his private secretary and it was a blessing for me to serve him in his important task of implementing the second Vatican Council in the Church. The appointment gave me a great love for the Church. The Cardinal taught me to see the guidance of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church.

In 1972 the Cardinal heard about a new movement, the Charismatic Renewal. Always faithful to his motto, "In the Holy Spirit", he looked closely and got involved. In March 1973 he went to the U.S. for a series of ecumenical lectures and he decided to take the opportunity to see the Renewal at work. I accompanied

him on this journey. At first, I was rather skeptical about the Renewal but the contacts I made in Convent Station, near New York, moved me deeply. I was especially struck by a word in Scripture sharing session: "We asked God to fill you with the knowledge of his will so that your manner of life may be worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:9). It was a word for me! Even though I was faithful to my vocation, at times, I was not looking for the will of God, and so I needed conversion. At the end of our stay, whilst in Ann Arbor, I asked to be baptized in the spirit. It was a decision that changed my life. I want to stress that the Cardinal didn't in any way try to influence my decision.

I then became personally involved with the early beginnings of the Charismatic Renewal in Belgium by starting a prayer group in Leuven, at the request of the Cardinal. There was also a profound change in my life. I was listening more carefully to the will of the Lord through Scripture, which became much more alive. I

rediscovered in my own life the healing power of the sacrament of reconciliation and received the grace to minister it to many others. Today, I still receive the caring love and discernment in guiding people, which the Lord sends to me as I continue on my way. Through the ministry of Cardinal Suenens, I have also been able to have close contacts with the Renewal in many parts of Europe and North America. When Cardinal G. Danneels succeeded Cardinal Suenens, he asked me to continue my work as his private secretary and he too gave me the possibility of continuing my service to the Renewal.

I thank the Lord for the grace I have received in my life as a priest in the service of the Church

Fr. Wilfrid Brieven

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Newsletter, Nov.-Dec. 2002**

Ed. Note: Sr. Nancy and Sr. Pauline were privileged to be serving at the House of Prayer at Convent

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)

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., St. Mary Church, Mt. Vernon, 914-664-5855

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

...Dec. 13, Sat. Brunch, 9 AM - 12:30 PM, "Journeying in Prayer: Highway to Love", Sr. Bernadette Brennan

...Dec. 31, 8 PM - 1 AM, Welcome the New Year, Prayer, Intercession, Liturgy, Fr. John Gordon

...Jan. 31, Sat. Seminar, 9 AM - 4 PM, "More Wisdom Through Vision", Sr. Nancy Kellar

...Mar. 6, Sat. Brunch, 9 AM - 12:30 PM, "Empowering the Laity for Today's Church". Sr. Pauline Cinquini

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

...Jan. 29, 2004, Cluster at St. Patrick's Parish Center, Yorktown Hts.

...March 25, 2004, Mass at St. Patrick's, Yorktown Hts., 8 PM, Fr. Reinbold

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

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

...Jan. 19, St. Joseph Church, Kingston, Fr. Ginel

...Feb. 16, St. Joseph Church, Kingston, Fr. Barnabas Keck

...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