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RETREATS AND THE **CATHOLIC** **CHARISMATIC** RENEWAL

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RETREATS
AND THE
CATHOLIC CHARISMA: THE RENEWAL

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A close and reciprocal relationship exists between Retreats and the Catholic charismatic renewal.

Historically, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles did not take place until after they had spent ten days in the prayerful reflection of a retreat in the Cenacle. Jesus had thus instructed them: *Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.*

And then St. Luke adds: *They went to the Upper Room where they were staying All joined in countinuous prayer. (Acts 1,13)*

God does not force Himself upon His creatures. Hence, this retreat in the Upper Room was necessary to help the Apostles recognize their own inadequacy for their mission, to encourage them to pray earnestly for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, and to assist them in opening themselves more completely to the Holy Spirit.

Retreats and the Catholic charismatic renewal have the same objective: to lead a person through conversion to commitment and on into contemplation. Furthermore, there is also a great similarity in the methods and procedures which both employ to reach this same objective.

In these pages I will attempt to show how retreats and the Catholic charismatic renewal follow the same pattern. In doing so, I may treat the charismatic renewal a little more in detail, assuming that the reader is more familiar with the retreat apostolate, and thus allow him to draw his own inferences and conclusions.

NEW PENTECOST

Before the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics the world over prayed with Pope John XXIII:

Renew in our own days your wonders as of a New Pentecost; and grant that Holy Church may extend the kingdom of the divine Savior, a kingdom of truth, justice, love, and peace.

During the sessions of the Council, the Holy Spirit gave ample evidence that He was answering our prayer. The documents of the Council mention the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and among us in some form or other 234 separate times.

By way of example, in the DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY, the Council Fathers emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit (par 3):

On all Christians, therefore, is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men.

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (I Cor. 12,7), 'allotting them to everyone according as He wills.' (I Cor. 12,11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be 'good stewards of the manifold grace of God' (I Peter 4,10) to build the whole body in charity (Eph. 4,16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary,

there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who 'breathes where He wills' (John 3,8). This should be done by the laity with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts, not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold what is good. (I Thess. 5,12,19,21).

In the DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH (par. 12) the bishops emphasize what are called the less dramatic gifts, which implies that they also expect the more dramatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, the kind St. Paul speaks about in I Cor. 12:

The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office; it spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give praise to His name.

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but 'allotting His gifts to everyone as He wills,' He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church according to the words of the Apostle: 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit.' These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple

and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.

Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment on their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Following the Council there was considerable stress on liturgical changes with greater participation on the part of the laity, on the Word of God, on the priesthood of the faithful and on a host of other subjects. However, the real impact of the renewal was not in evidence. An awareness seemed to be lacking on the part of the Church as a whole of the presence of the Risen Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. We were not yet aware that the only real renewal is the interior renewal of the Spirit.

We concentrated on the liturgical changes. We shortened the time of prayer so that we could devote more time to the apostolate. We developed a greater concern for social action.

Yes, we needed much of this. But one thing seemed evident. In spite of our best efforts to renew and adapt, we were conscious of a certain emptiness, a lack of strength and dynamism in our prayer life and in our activity. A wellspring from which we could draw for sustained motivation seemed to be lacking.

Perhaps our situation was somewhat similar to that of the Apostles after the Resurrection

and before Pentecost. Jesus had taught them and they loved Him. They were informed, but not yet formed. After the Resurrection they began to understand more clearly many of the things He had taught them, but they were not yet prepared to accept the challenging commission He had given them. *Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28, 19), and You will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1, 8)*

It was only the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost that transformed this little band of frightened and unlettered disciples into a community of faith and love. It was only after they were *clothed with the power from on high*, that they could begin their mission of witnessing to the Good News. Only after they experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within them could they become the pillars upon which His kingdom could be built.

A similar phenomenon seems to be taking place among Christians today. The Spirit is breathing where He wills. Without a doubt, the prayer of Pope John and of millions of Catholics throughout the world is being answered in a very dramatic and moving way.

Some prefer to call this phenomenon PENTECOSTAL RENEWAL, while others label it a CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL or CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALISM.

The Catholic charismatic renewal is of recent origin. In their book CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALS, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan present an introductory history of the charismatic renewal. As the authors put it: *The story that we tell here is that from the embers of the Christian past we are witness now to the fire of a new Pentecost. (p5)*

BISHOPS' REPORT

Soon after its appearance the American bishops prudently ordered the investigation of the Catholic charismatic renewal. Bishop Alexander Zaleski, the chairman of the committee, released the report of the investigating committee on November 4, 1969.

The committee report warned 'traditional' Catholics against hasty and uninformed judgments about the phenomenon. It further warned against regarding the charismatic renewal as a movement in the strict sense, but rather to consider it *a renewal in the Spirit of the first Pentecost*.

Bishop Zaleski's report further stated: *It must be admitted that theologically the movement has legitimate reason for existence. It has a strong biblical basis. It would be difficult to inhibit the working of the Spirit which has manifested itself so abundantly in the early Church.*

WHAT IS IT?

Catholic charismatic renewal is not a movement, nor a doctrine, but a spirituality, an experience, a way of life, deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture.

It is a way of life by which a person strives to experience the presence and power of God within him, and to respond to that presence and power until he is able to translate the fruits of the Spirit into actuality in his daily living. These fruits as enumerated by St. Paul are, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5,22)*

In the charismatic renewal a person proceeds through several levels very similar to the steps along which he is led in a retreat. The desired objective of a retreat is to guide a person to an experience of God (illumination) quite similar to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

While making a retreat an individual first meditates on the malice of sin, to prepare himself for a complete conversion — a turning away from sin and turning to God. Next he reorientates his life so that he can make a total commitment to God and reach a level of contemplation.

This can be accomplished by a total submission and complete docility to the Holy Spirit sought in prayer. In fact, this must be the dominant prayer during the retreat, to be genuinely open to the Holy Spirit.

This same procedure is followed by a person in the charismatic renewal. He prays and strives for an openness to the Holy Spirit until he is more fully immersed in the Spirit. This immersion in the Holy Spirit is what our Lord meant when He said: *You, not many days from now, will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1, 5)*

Father Donald L. Gelpi, S. J. writing in AMERICA draws the same parallel.

An examination of the Exercises in the light of Catholic Pentecostal experience will reveal, I believe, that in them Ignatius was trying to lead the exercitant to something very close to 'Spirit-baptism'.

Once Ignatius found a subject apt for his Exercises, he sought to lead such a subject step by step, by prayer and penance, through a process of religious

transformation in the Spirit. The exercitant must first reach the point where he is willing to break definitively with sin. Then he must turn positively and completely to Christ. By growing in love for the Son of God and by an increasing dedication to His work and mission, the exercitant must grow in openness to the movements of grace until he reaches the 'third degree of humility,' which is total selfless docility to the impulses of the Spirit and a burning desire to imitate Christ in His atoning love for men. In other words, the structure of meditations in the Spiritual Exercises follows the classical pattern of 'Pentecostal' conversion.

*(UNDERSTANDING SPIRIT-BAPTISM
— Donald L. Gelpi, S. J. — AMERICA,
May 17, 1970, p. 520.)*

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ILLUMINATION

At the very heart of charismatic renewal is the personal awareness of the presence and power of God dwelling within a person. This special awareness is earnestly sought in humble, persevering prayer. A person arrives at this deeper realization of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit either through a slow developing process or it may be a sudden awakening. This awareness, called *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, in classical spirituality is termed *illumination*.

As the Bishops' committee discovered, the vocabulary associated with charismatic renewal alone fills some orthodox Catholics with fear

and suspicion, and these fears are apt to generate prejudiced and irrational reactions.

Yet, the terminology arises directly from Sacred Scripture:

He had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is,' He had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water, but you, not many days from now, will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 1, 4-5)

In Catholic circles we sometimes find other expressions used for the term *baptism in the Holy Spirit*, such as the *awakening of the Spirit* or *release of the Spirit*.

To understand the Catholic charismatic renewal, one must go beyond the public image, beyond the apprehensions and fears, in order to grasp the real meaning of *baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a new modality of the presence of God. No one, not even a classical Pentecostal, would teach that the Holy Spirit is not already present in the world and indwelling in every person who is sacramentally baptized.

He is there with His presence and power waiting for a response from that person. The Holy Spirit is a Person and does not work without an invitation. God does not force Himself upon us.

When we pray with and for a person to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are asking that He come to this personal experience of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so that he becomes conscious of being immersed in the love of the Holy Spirit.

However, even if one does not feel the Holy Spirit within him, the Spirit is still present. We cannot even speak about someone being without the Holy Spirit, even if he or she has never had any actual experience of His presence and power from within.

When a person prays for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he is praying for a more complete awareness of the Spirit's presence and for an openness to the gifts and graces of his Confirmation.

When a Catholic prays for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he is in effect asking that he might be aware of, and open to, the possibility of receiving whatever spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit may choose to give him and that the fruits of the Holy Spirit (*Gal. 5, 22*) may be apparent in his daily living.

This experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within us may come in the course of a retreat, during a cursillo, in private prayer, and frequently in prayer with others.

Is not this experience of God's presence the purpose and prayer of every retreat?

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONFIRMATION

God's grace is by no means limited to the Sacraments. Surely the sacramentals can be a source of grace for us. However, it must be admitted that the Sacraments do constitute a rich fountain of grace to those who receive them.

Few Catholics at the time of their reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation are fully aware of what is happening to them. This is unfortunate since the Sacraments are not magic

formulae which produce grace automatically. The effectiveness of the Sacraments does depend in part on our dispositions and our openness to God's grace.

However, since the graces of the Sacrament of Confirmation do endure for our lifetime, it is certainly conducive for us, as we mature in our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit within us, to become more and more open to His presence and power.

St. Paul encourages us to grow in our desire to receive the spiritual gifts. *Hope for the spiritual gifts as well Since you aspire to spiritual gifts, concentrate on those which will grow to benefit the community. (I Cor. 14, 1, 12)*

The Catholic charismatic renewal has made many Catholics suddenly aware of the fact that at the time of their Confirmation, they did not consider seriously the possibility of receiving any of the charismatic gifts.

Most of us Catholics knew that such gifts are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of St. Paul, but many of us simply concluded that these were restricted to the post-apostolic Church. On the other hand, the early Church did not need the charismata as much as we do, because the memory of Jesus was still very vivid for them.

The current charismatic renewal reminds us that the Holy Spirit *breathes where He will. (John 3, 8)*. Our role then is to be docile to His inspirations.

In the course of a retreat, or in the process of the charismatic renewal, we are reminded that the Spirit is dwelling within us.

Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received Him from God. (I Cor. 6, 19)

Reflecting on this truth we will be led to a better appreciation of the presence and the operation of the Holy Spirit in us, and we will also feel compelled to reaffirm in greater depth the commitment we made to Jesus, or should have made, at the time of our Confirmation.

This is not a religious experience that simply makes us resolve to lead a better life. It is a power-generating experience, a flowering to the maturity, power and dedication that should have been ours when we received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Thus we will become dynamic witnesses for Christ.

We will do the same things that we have always done, but everything will be different. This flowering is not something that we experience only once. It grows, and other experiences are added to help us put this new relationship into action: experiences of the charismatic gifts of healing, discernment, knowledge, wisdom and prophecy.

PRAYER

At the risk of being too exclusive, we can point to two objectives of the charismatic renewal: 1) to strengthen and deepen our faith 2) to intensify our prayer life. For the present let us deal briefly with the second, prayer.

Prayer is one of the primary characteristics of the charismatic renewal, so much so that the casual observer may be led to look upon the renewal as simply a prayer movement.

Those who have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit maintain that they have found a new depth to their prayer life. They find themselves praying at a deeper level and with a

wider dimension than they have ever prayed before. Furthermore, they find themselves drawn more and more to prayer.

They have discovered a great emphasis on the prayer of praise and thanksgiving. For many this is a new revelation. We have all recited the *Glory to God in the highest* in the Liturgy of the Word, but never really thought of praise and thanksgiving as the basic orientation of our prayer life.

It is this dominance of praise and thanksgiving which makes our prayer attitudes essentially those of joy and peace.

PRAYER MEETINGS

Those who participate in the charismatic renewal usually attend weekly prayer sessions to pray together and to invoke the Holy Spirit to dominate their lives.

The essence of these prayer meetings is freedom. There is no fixed form and each participant is encouraged to say to the group whatever he feels prompted to say.

Someone may testify to what the Lord has done for him. Another may offer spontaneous prayer or comment on what was said. Another may share some special Scriptural insights. Someone may have a prophecy or a message in tongues with an interpretation, depending on what gift God has bestowed upon each. These prayers are intermingled with hymn singing and periods of silence.

A lively faith is quite evident at these meetings. The Good News is considered as a message addressed personally to the group at the present moment. There is apparent a sense

of brotherhood and the presence of God, especially an acute awareness of Christ's resurrected presence. The meetings may be long, but they are full of gaiety and joy. In spite of their length, no one finds the sessions wearisome.

These prayer meetings are mutually stimulating to everyone. This is what St. Paul advised when he asked us to strengthen and build one another's faith.

Catholics find it quite natural to join in such prayer groups since they have joined together to enjoy the resurrected presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Prayer meetings are community contemplation in the strictest sense of the word. Each individual has a part to play in the great orchestra of prayer and praise.

St. Paul uses the analogy of the human body to exemplify this interrelation of all Christians and to assure us that each member has something to offer to the other members.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In one Spirit we were all baptized . . . and one Spirit was given us all to drink. (I Cor. 12, 12-13)

God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one . . . (I Cor. 12, 18-20)

Those who have been baptized in the Spirit feel led to pray frequently each day *in the Spirit*.

This method of praying privately and together reminds a person of his retreat commitment and helps him to persevere in it.

BY THEIR FRUITS

It is difficult, if not virtually impossible, to form an objective judgment of the Catholic charismatic renewal at this early date. However, let me quote an excerpt from the Report of the U.S. Bishops:

Perhaps our most prudent way to judge the validity of the claims of the Pentecostal Movement is to observe the effects on those who participate in the prayer meetings.

There are many indications that this participation leads to a better understanding of the role the Christian plays in the Church. Many have experienced progress in their spiritual life. They are attracted to the reading of the Scriptures and a deeper understanding of their faith. They seem to grow in their attachment to certain established devotional patterns such as devotion to the Real Presence and the Rosary. (Report, November 4, 1969)

Those involved in Pentecostal renewal do not regard prayer meetings as a substitute for the Liturgy. Nor do they consider the laying on of hands as a replacement of the sacraments.

The contrary is true. Many have testified that this experience of God has made the Liturgy come alive in a way they have never before known. Again, many who have long given up the rosary now begin it again, finding in it an enrichment they never suspected.

Another effect of the action of the Holy Spirit has been to renew in many the devotion to the Real Presence in the Eucharist. They find themselves relishing Visits and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

In general, those who are trying to live the life of the Spirit come to a better understanding and appreciation of the Church's authority, and a deeper loyalty to the hierarchy.

One of the most evident and frequent effects of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people who have had this experience has been a new and deeper appreciation of Sacred Scripture. They read it eagerly, and find in it strength, light and inspiration for their daily living.

This new dimension of prayer is effecting a genuine spiritual renewal in the lives of many, especially in their personal and social relationships. Many who found themselves bitter, hostile or timid, now find a new peace and joy in communicating with others. They find that they can no longer be indifferent to their neighbors. A new understanding of the love of neighbor as promulgated by Jesus translates itself more effectively in the activities of their daily routine. Others who had already been engaged in some apostolic work before their Pentecostal experience find a new depth and happiness in serving others as brothers in Christ.

A professor at the University of Notre Dame states it thus:

So nowadays when Catholics say they have received the 'baptism in the Spirit' they are saying that they have experienced God in a truly living way. This is usually accompanied by a great love for Holy Scripture, a deep appreciation of the fatherhood of God and sometimes of the motherhood of Our Lady, a love for the Eucharist and the Sacraments, an apostolic zeal, but one which is not immoderate in nature, and, above all, a great hunger for prayer.

(*THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE*, J. Massingberd Ford, Paulist Press, 1970)

All these dimensions are necessary if a spiritual renewal is to take place in our day.

COME APART

A retreat does play an integral role in the charismatic renewal, especially if it is slanted to those persons who are involved in the renewal.

There are three major stages in the charismatic renewal. As a person rises from one stage to another, he needs proper direction. The locale and atmosphere of a retreat furnish an ideal climate for this guidance.

First Stage

The first of these levels in the charismatic renewal is a person's entrance into the experience of the Holy Spirit, called *baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Some have referred to this stage as *Pentecostal Fury*. This is only the beginning. The first experience of the presence of God is not an end in itself. It is merely the opening of the door into a fuller, richer life in the Spirit.

When a person experiences the presence of God, this is not yet the stage of infused contemplation. God gives him only a taste of contemplative prayer. This taste should urge a person to be more generous, orderly, yet flexible, in his spiritual life under the guidance of an experienced counsellor, either a priest, a sister or lay person. A retreat can admirably fill this need.

Secondly, in this first stage, a person may receive one or more of the spiritual or charis-

matic gifts. The gifts are given so that he might bring forth the fruits of *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

In a retreat we are able to ascertain how productive have been the gifts and how abundant has been our harvest. The prayerful, reflective hours of a retreat will also help us find new avenues to use the spiritual gifts in such a manner that we may bear fruit abundantly.

Second Stage

The second stage may be called the *Teaching Level*. Before we can intelligently and successfully fulfill our Spirit-led mission in life, we must have a sense of direction, along with a certain amount of knowledge and understanding of the operations of the Holy Spirit. This requires continual teaching.

Without this knowledge, the charismatic renewal will not only lose its effectiveness, but could easily drift off on some tangent which could be detrimental not only to the renewal, but also to the person himself. A lack of proper teaching could be the weakest link in the chain of charismatic renewal.

A retreat centered around the Holy Spirit and the charismatic renewal can furnish this essential element and implement this growth process.

A retreat can help us grow in the Spirit in a number of specific ways:

a) St. Paul gives us some sound advice when he tells us to *walk in the Spirit. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. (Gal. 5, 25)*

We cannot *walk in the Spirit* unless we form the habit of reading the Word of God daily. Jesus speaks to us through Sacred Scripture. We meet Him personally in His Word. To keep ourselves ever aware of the value and necessity of this truth, and to remain open to His communicating with us, we must heed His invitation and *Come apart*.

In reading Sacred Scripture, Our Lord gave us the example:

He came to Nazara, where He had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath as He usually did. He stood up to read and they handed Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah . . . (Lk. 4, 16)

Jesus read the Scriptures out of habit . . . *as He usually did*.

b) To *walk in the Spirit* we must pray. Prayer is a communication with God. Communication is a two-way street. We speak to God, but God also speaks to us. Since what God has to say is far more important, we must learn to listen so that we can know His will.

Jesus gives us another example. He was accustomed to pray regularly:

Now it was about this time that He went into the hills to pray; and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. (Luke 6, 12)

Repeatedly the Evangelist tells us that Jesus prayed, and only after prayer did He perform a great work. He prayed before many of His miracles, before the selection of the Apostles, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

A retreat leads us into greater depths of prayer by guiding us in the listening process.

Third Stage

The third level of the charismatic renewal is the formation of a Christian Community — a prayerful, praising, joyous, loving community.

A community cannot be built on information only. There must also be a formation. This must be a formation of mind, heart and will. Only then, after we are attuned to the Spirit, are we prepared to build a community.

Jesus is the foundation upon which a Christian community is built. We, the bricks, must be cemented together by the Master of Love.

St. Paul gave us a vivid description which requires our serious reflection:

For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ. On this foundation, you can build in gold, silver, and jewels, or in wood, grass, and straw, but whatever the material, the work of each builder is going to be clearly revealed when the day comes. That day will begin with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If his structure stands up to it, he will get his wages; if it is burned down, he will be the loser, and though he is saved himself, it will be as one who has gone through fire.

Didn't you realize that you were God's temple and that the Spirit was living among you? If any should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple. (I Cor. 3, 11-17)

A solid community will be built only as the community itself openly bears witness to Christ

and His Holy Spirit. By their fruits you will know them. Was not this the example given us by Benedict, Francis, Ignatius and many other Spirit-led community-builders?

The role of the retreat to develop this third stage is quite apparent.

The words of Father Gelpi, S. J., summarize well the link between the charismatic renewal and the retreat:

Study of the Spiritual Exercises in the light of the Catholic Pentecostal experience and study of the Catholic Pentecostal experience in the light of the Spiritual Exercises could, then, have a number of reciprocal advantages. Pentecostal piety is capable of injecting far more life into a flagging retreat movement than Madison Avenue promotion techniques. And Catholic Pentecostals will, I believe, find in the Spiritual Exercises not only some useful norms for the discernment of spirits but also a successful manual, with a little updating, for the disposing of individuals for 'Spirit-baptism,' (UNDERSTANDING 'SPIRIT BAPTISM,' Donald L. Gelpi, S. J., AMERICA, May 6, 1970, pp 520-521)

The charismatic apostolate is only one of the ways in which the Holy Spirit works in the Church. Through this charismatic experience many Christians of different denominations are being drawn closer together in stronger bonds of love and greater understanding.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the world is twofold: the transformation and sanctification of each person and the unification of the family of mankind. Perhaps the prayer of the Eternal

Highpriest, as He faced His glorification, is now being realized:

May they all be one.

Father, may they be one in us,

as you are in me and I am in you,

*so that the world may believe it was you
who sent me.*

(John 17,21)

May the response of every Christian be so wholehearted that the Holy Spirit might renew the face of the earth. .

APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION STUDYING CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALISM TO THE AMERICAN BISHOPS, NOVEMBER, 1969.

Beginning in 1967, the so-called Pentecostal Movement has spread among our Catholic faithful. It has attracted especially college students. This report will restrict itself to the phenomenon among Catholics. It does not intend to treat classic Pentecostalism as it appears in certain Protestant ecclesial communities. In the Catholic Church the reaction to this movement seems to be one of caution and somewhat unhappy. Judgments are often based on superficial knowledge. It seems to be too soon to draw definitive conclusions regarding the phenomenon and more scholarly research is needed. For one reason or another the understanding of this movement is colored by emotionalism. For this there is some historical justification and we live with a suspicion of unusual religious experience. We are also face to face with socially somewhat unacceptable norms of religious behavior. It should be kept in mind that this phenomenon is not a movement in the full sense of the word. It has no national structure and each individual prayer meeting may differ from another.

Many would prefer to speak of it as a charismatic renewal. In calling it a Pentecostal Movement we must be careful to

disassociate it from classic Pentecostalism as it appears in Protestant denominations, such as the Assemblies of God, the United Pentecostal Church, and others. The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church is not the acceptance of the ideology or practices of any denomination, but likes to consider itself a renewal in the spirit of the first Pentecost. It would be an error to suppose that the emotional, demonstrative style of prayer characteristic of the Protestant denominations has been adopted by Catholic Pentecostals. The Catholic prayer groups tend to be quiet and somewhat reserved. It is true that in some cases it has attracted emotionally unstable people. Those who come with such a disposition usually do not continue. Participants in these prayer meetings can also exclude them. In this they are not always successful.

It must be admitted that theologically the movement has legitimate reasons for existence. It has a strong biblical basis. It would be difficult to inhibit the working of the Spirit which manifested itself so abundantly in the early Church. The participants in the Catholic Pentecostal Movement claim that they receive certain charismatic gifts. Admittedly, there have been abuses, but the cure is not a denial of their existence but their proper use. We still need further research on the matter of charismatic gifts. Certainly, the recent Vatican Council presumes that the Spirit is active continuously in the Church.

Perhaps our most prudent way to judge the validity of the claims of the Pentecostal Movement is to observe the effects on those who participate in the prayer meetings. There are many indications that this participation leads to a better understanding of the role the Christian plays in the Church. Many have experienced progress in their spiritual life. They are attracted to the reading of the Scriptures and a deeper understanding of their faith. They seem to grow in their attachment to certain established devotional patterns such as devotion to the Real Presence and the Rosary.

It is the conclusion of the Committee on Doctrine that the movement should at this point not be inhibited but allowed to develop. Certain cautions, however, must be expressed. Proper supervision can be effectively exercised only if the Bishops keep in mind their pastoral responsibility to oversee and guide this movement in the Church. We must be on guard that they avoid the mistakes of classic Pentecostalism. It must be recognized that in our culture there is a tendency to substitute religious experience for religious doctrine. In practice we recommend that Bishops involve prudent priests to be associated with this movement. Such involvement and guidance would be welcome by the Catholic Pentecostals.

Other Charisma Booklets

Baptized in the Spirit

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