



<u>Circo Massimo June 2<sup>nd</sup> – CM2.1</u>	<u>SPEAKER : DAVID MANGAN – CCR Pioneer</u>
<u>TITLE : Testimony</u>	
<u>LANGUAGE : ENGLISH – Video (En )</u>	<u>COUNTRY : USA</u>

## Like a Mighty Wind

50 years ago, in February of 1967, I was privileged to be on a retreat sponsored by Duquesne University, where events occurred that are often marked as the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I was baptized in the Holy Spirit when I didn't know what it was; I didn't know what it was for; I certainly didn't deserve it; and I was surely going to mess it up. But God gave it anyway. The Lord didn't visit us because we were worthy. He visited us because we were needy.

The theme of the retreat was the work and the power of the Holy Spirit. I was asked to give one of the talks but I said "no" because I felt that I didn't know enough about the Holy Spirit to give a talk about him. But I said I wanted to go on the retreat so I could learn.

In preparation for the retreat we were asked to read two things. One was the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The second was a small book called "The Cross and the Switchblade."

The plan was to study the first four chapters of the book of Acts through talks and discussion. Therefore, the first talk in this process was on Acts chapter 1. This was the talk I was asked to give. I have often thought that not giving that talk was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. The reason for this is that the talk was given by a friend of mine and he said some things that changed my life. He quoted Acts 1:8 which says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." And he mentioned that the word which is translated as "power" comes from the same Greek word where, in English, we get the word dynamite. I was deeply struck by this statement. I had to come to grips with the fact that my spiritual life would not be characterized by dynamite.

When the talk was over we went to our discussion group and as soon as I entered the group I posed the question, "Where's the dynamite?" My reasoning was this. I have been baptized and when you are baptized, you receive the Holy Spirit. So where's the dynamite? I am confirmed and when you are confirmed you receive the Holy Spirit. So where's the dynamite? We discussed it but we did not come up with any answers. Yet I did feel good for having posed the question and thought that I was on the trail of something significant

The second talk was on Acts chapter 2. At first I was disappointed in the speaker's talk because I was expecting to hear arguments and intellectual understandings of what had happened on the day of Pentecost. But, in her wisdom, she didn't even attempt that. She basically just read the story of the day of Pentecost. And then she said, "This still happens today." When she said that, I



wrote in my notebook, "I want to hear someone speak in tongues – me!" Then I wrote, and I don't know why, "Be a fool for the Lord!" Well I was about to do both very soon.

When the talk ended we went back into our small groups. I had quickly forgotten what I had just written in my notebook and I went back to the question, "Where's the dynamite?" At this point I thought I had a good idea. I suggested to the small group that we approach the chaplain and ask him if he could devise a prayer service where we could renew our Confirmation, if we wished. I proposed this because I was very young when I was confirmed. And I thought that I didn't do my part in the reception of the sacrament. When I proposed this, the leader of the discussion group said to me, "David, if you do this are you ready for what God will do?" I said, "No, but I want to do it anyway!" I answered this way because I knew that God would do me no harm, but only good.

After this discussion, all of the small groups gathered together to share what happened in our sessions. When our group shared, Patti Mansfield, who was our presenter, offered my suggestion about renewing our Confirmation. As the discussion around it developed, there seem to be very low interest in doing it. I found this very disappointing. After lunch, Patti and I took a walk around the beautiful grounds of the retreat center, which is called "Ark and the Dove." We shared with each other our disappointment in the fact that our suggestion was not adopted by the group. As we walked together, at one point I stopped and turned to Patti and I said, "I don't care if anyone else does this, I'm going to do it. I'm going to renew my confirmation. Patti turned to me and said, "Me too!"

At that point Patti continued walking outside and I returned to the retreat house. When I walked in I was told by one of the leaders of the retreat that we had a big problem. The water pump that brought the water into the retreat facility had broken. They had already called a repairman to come fix it, but he said he could not come until Monday morning – this was Saturday afternoon. It looked like the retreat would have to end. In my mind I screamed, "NO!" I knew I was on the trail of something and I did not want this retreat to end early. The leader suggested that we go up to the chapel and pray. About four or five of us did just that. I remember entering the chapel and kneeling in front of the Blessed Sacrament and pouring out my heart to the Lord asking that he would give us water. At one point I was so convinced that the Lord had answered my prayer that I prayed out loud, "Lord, thank you for giving us the water." Then I felt a little foolish for having said that out loud. What if the Lord didn't give us the water, I would feel like a fool. Well that seem to end the prayer so we got up and left. When we left the chapel I went straight to the kitchen to see if we had water. When I turned on the faucet, water came gushing out even stronger than before. Needless to say I was excited. So I went back to the chapel to give thanks to the Lord for answering our prayer.

When I opened the door and entered the chapel I then had the most amazing experience of the presence of God that I have ever had in my life. As I approached the Blessed Sacrament I was so overcome with the presence of the Lord that I could no longer stand. The next thing I knew I was face down on the floor, prostrate in worship. The presence of God was so strong and powerful



that any movement was very difficult. I knew I was in the presence of God I don't know how I knew it was the presence of God, but I knew. It felt like little explosions were going off in my body continuously. While this was going on, I must admit, that I had completely forgotten that I had been asking the question, "Where's the dynamite?" I eventually remembered that and realized that I was receiving what I asked for. The experience frightened me somewhat. And yet I knew I had nothing to fear. I didn't know what to call what was going on for I had not yet heard of the term "baptism in the Holy Spirit." I then remembered that my primary reason for going up to the chapel was to give thanks to the Lord for answering my prayer. So I opened my mouth to give thanks and when I did I started speaking a language that I did not know. Again, I had forgotten that I had written in my notebook, "I want to hear someone speak in tongues – me!" Yet, once again the Lord answered my prayer without my even realizing it. Isn't God amazing!

Eventually I left the chapel because I was afraid. I didn't think my body could handle the experience. When I left the chapel and went back downstairs as soon as I reached the bottom step I doubted the whole experience. So I went back up to the chapel to ask the Lord to help me. When I reentered the chapel I had the same experience all over again. At this point the best description I could give you, as to what was happening to me, is that I was "lost in Christ." That I was surrounded by His presence; I was enveloped in his love, and this dissipated all of my fears. For the rest of the retreat I spent most of my time in the chapel. I saw other people and I noticed them looking at me a little strangely. I got the impression that they knew something was going on with me that was unusual. But I didn't much care what anybody thought. I knew that I was lost in Christ. And if you're going to be lost that's where you want to be – lost in Christ. It's the safest place in the universe!

One of the biggest safeguards that I noticed while having this experience was that it was all happening as I was worshiping the Blessed Sacrament. I knew that God would do me no harm but only love me. There was much more that happened to me while I was on the retreat but time does not permit me to tell everything. When I left the retreat on Sunday evening I discovered that the experience of God's presence being with me did not end. And my experience of being "lost in Christ," remained with me for nine months to a year. I don't mean to claim that I had no problems or difficulties during that time. But I had an amazing assurance of God being with me. I believe what God did with me was this. In his infinite love he picked me up and moved me to a higher degree of spiritual development than I could ever have achieved. And he permitted me to stay there for nine months to a year. At the end of that time he put me back where I had been. And then he said to me, "That is where I want you to go. Keep moving toward that place." If anyone were to ask me today what spiritual level I have achieved I would have to say I don't know. And to be honest, I don't try to evaluate it. Because I know I am on the journey that Jesus has given me. And I never want to stop growing. And I never want to stop serving him. I don't think that the words that I have attempted to use here even come close to describing the experience he gave me. But I thank God every day and I ask him for the grace to continuously serve him till the day he calls me home. Come, Holy Spirit! Amen!