



| | |
|--|--|
| <u>Circo Massimo June 2nd – CM2.2</u> | <u>SPEAKER : PATTI GALLAGHER MANSFIELD – CCR Pioneer</u> |
| <u>TITLE : Testimony : <i>My Soul Magnifies the Lord</i></u> | |
| <u>LANGUAGE : ENGLISH – Video (En)</u> | <u>COUNTRY : USA</u> |

On the night I was baptized in the Spirit I returned to my room too excited to sleep and I opened the Bible at random. My eyes fell on this passage from Luke: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded his handmaiden in her nothingness. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for God who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name” (Luke 1:46-50).

In 1967 I was in my third year at Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After a few courses in theology, I realized something very important. It’s not enough to know ABOUT God. I was hungry and thirsty to actually KNOW God, to experience God. I began attending daily mass and joined a Scripture Study group that met weekly.

This Scripture Study group was planning its annual retreat on the theme of “**The Holy Spirit**”. David told you about our assignment to read the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles and the book The Cross and the Switchblade which is the story of a Pentecostal minister who was dramatically led by the Holy Spirit into the streets of New York City to work with gangs. I was deeply moved and I remember thinking, “But I’m a Catholic. I’ve received the Holy Spirit. I’ve been baptized and confirmed. Why aren’t these dramatic and wonderful things happening in my life?” I concluded that this kind of intimate knowledge of God was probably only for “special people” - priests, nuns, ministers. All I wanted was to get married and have a family. And yet, after my reading, I was alone in my dormitory room and in the depths of my heart, there was a little mustard seed of faith that led to me get on my knees and to pray this prayer.

I prayed, “Lord, as a Catholic, I believe I’ve already received your Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation. **But if it’s possible for your Spirit to do more in my life than He’s done until now, I WANT IT!**” When I said, “**I want it!**” I was expecting to feel or see something. In fact, I felt nothing and I concluded that I was too ordinary a person to expect God to reveal himself to me the way he did to the apostles at Pentecost. I thought, “I’ll never tell anyone I prayed this way since nothing seemed to happen.” But, brothers and sisters, what I was praying for that night alone in my bedroom, even before the Duquesne Weekend began, was the grace to be baptized in the Spirit and the dramatic answer to my prayer was soon to come.

On February 17, 1967, we went to The Ark and the Dove retreat house on the outskirts of Pittsburgh. The group met in the upper room chapel where Jesus was present in the Blessed Sacrament. Before each session, we sang as a prayer the ancient hymn, Veni Creator Spiritus. Come Creator Spirit. I didn’t know at the time that this hymn is **THE** hymn to the Holy Spirit in the Catholic church...sung at all important church functions. The first talk was about Mary who was a woman filled with the Holy Spirit, humble and docile to His action. Then there was a communal Penance Service where we prayed spontaneously, confessing our sins and failings. In John 16, Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes He will convict the world of sin. That’s what happened



among us as we repented, and many of us went to confession and received absolution from our priest.

Saturday morning a woman came to speak on Acts 2. All we were told was that she was a Protestant friend of our professors. We didn't know at the time that she was baptized in the Spirit. Although her presentation was simple, it was filled with spiritual power. She spoke about surrendering to Jesus as Lord and Master. She described the Holy Spirit as a Person who empowered her daily. I missed any references to charismatic gifts; what attracted me was that she really seemed to know Jesus intimately and personally! She knew the power of the Holy Spirit like the Apostles did. I thought, "Whatever this woman has, I don't have and I want it!" Each of us had a notebook (here's mine) and I wrote in my notes, "Jesus, be real for me."

The rest of the students weren't open to David's proposal that we close our retreat by renewing our Confirmation. I thought it was a brilliant idea. I linked my arm through his and we agreed: "Even if no one else wants to renew Confirmation, we do." I felt so expectant that I tore a sheet of paper out of this notebook and wrote, "**I want a miracle!**", and posted it on the bulletin board. Never could I have imagined that the miracle would be the birth of this current of grace in the Catholic Church!

Saturday night a birthday party was planned but there was a listlessness in the group. I wandered into the upstairs chapel...not to pray, but to tell any students there to come down to the party. Yet, when I entered the chapel that night and knelt in the presence of Jesus, I literally trembled with a sense of awe before His majesty. I had always believed in the "Real Presence" of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, but that night I knew it in my flesh. I remember thinking. "God is here. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and he is HOLY. I'm not holy. If I stay here in the presence of this holy God, something is going to happen to me. I'd better get out of here quick. But overriding my fear of surrender, was my NEED to surrender myself unconditionally to God.

On my knees in the quiet of my heart I prayed, "**Father, I give my life to you. Whatever you ask of me, I accept it. And if it means suffering, I accept that too. Just teach me to follow Jesus and to love the way Jesus loves.**" In the next moment, I found myself prostrate, flat on my face, and flooded with an experience of the love of God, the tenderness of God...a love that is totally undeserved, yet lavishly given. I felt as if I wanted to die and just be with God. As the psalmist says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." The prayer of St. Augustine captures my experience: "O Lord, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." My shoes came off in the process. I was indeed on holy ground. Yes, it's true what St. Paul writes, "The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit." As much as I wanted to remain there and bask in His presence, I knew that if I, who am no one special, could experience the love of God in this way, that anyone across the face of the earth could do so.

I ran down and poured out my story to our priest and he told me that David had been in the chapel before me and had encountered God's presence in the same way. Two girls came to tell me my face was glowing and wanted to know what had happened. I led these two girls into the chapel and began to pray, "**Lord, whatever you just did for me, do it for them!**" That was probably the shortest Life in the Spirit Seminar on record!



Within the next hour God sovereignly drew many, but not all, of the students into the chapel. Some were laughing, others crying. Some had their hands lifted in prayer. Some, like me, felt a burning sensation in their bodies. One of the professors walked in and exclaimed, **“What is the Bishop going to say when he hears that all these kids have been baptized in the Holy Spirit!”** Yes, there was a birthday party that night, God had planned it in the Upper Room Chapel. It was the birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal!

When we returned to campus, we created quite a stir. One friend told me, “Patti, if I didn’t know you better, I would say you were drunk!” Like the Apostles after Pentecost, we couldn’t help but speak of the things we had seen and heard. We literally stumbled into charismatic gifts like prophecy, discernment of spirits, and healing. One of our professors witnessed to his friends: **“I no longer have to believe in Pentecost; I have seen it!”**

Shortly after the Duquesne Weekend I took the Documents of Vatican II and looked up references to the Holy Spirit and Charismatic gifts, because I said to myself, “As powerful as my experience was, if the Church were to tell me that it is not authentic, I would sooner deny my experience than ever to leave the Church.” To my joy, I found passages in Lumen Gentium 12 about the charismatic gifts that convinced me that I could remain a daughter of the Church, welcoming the surprises of the Holy Spirit.

In my new book, As By A New Pentecost: Golden Jubilee Edition, prepared especially for this celebration, you may read the full story. Cardinal Rylko wrote in his presentation that it is at the source that the water flows most pure and clear. What does the story of the Duquesne Weekend teach? It teaches that God is God. He is sovereign. It was **His idea, not ours** to pour out his Spirit as by a new Pentecost. David and I are not founders. We are simply witnesses. In the past 50 years, the grace of this new Pentecost has spread from a handful of students on the Duquesne Weekend to millions of Catholics around the world. Why? Because God is holy and he is determined to send forth His Spirit to renew the face of the earth!

In his foreword to the first edition of my book, Cardinal Suenens wrote that **“Jesus Christ continues to be born mystically of the Holy Spirit and of Mary,” and that we should never separate what God has joined together.** Over these 50 years I have often been asked what it feels like to have been there in the beginning and to have witnessed this current of grace moving across the face of the earth. My answer? In some mysterious yet very real way, I feel caught up in the mystery of Mary. She said “YES” to the visitation of the Holy Spirit and the history of the world changed. And so, it is my joy to conclude with her song, “God who is mighty has done great things for me; God who is mighty has done great things **FOR US** and holy is his name! (Luke 1:49). Amen!

© Patti Gallagher Mansfield, 2017