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On Friday July 3rd, 2015 at Saint Peter’s Square, Pope Francis had this to say to the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR): *“At the Mass on Pentecost Monday in 1975, Pope Paul VI thanked him with these words: “In the name of the Lord I thank you for having brought the Charismatic Renewal into the heart of the Church”. It is not a novelty of some years ago; the Charismatic Renewal has a long history, and in the homily of that very Mass, the Cardinal said: “May the Charismatic Renewal disappear as such and be transformed into a Pentecostal grace for the whole Church: to be faithful to its origin, the river must lose itself in the ocean”. The river must be lost in the ocean. Yes, if the river comes to a halt the water becomes stagnant; should the Renewal, this current of grace, not end in the ocean of God, in the love of God, it would work for itself and this is not of Jesus Christ, this is of the Evil One, of the father of lies. The Renewal continues, it comes from God and goes to God.*

Based on the Holy Father’s strong endorsement, speaking of the pastoral implications of the Charismatic Renewal as a current of grace suggests that it is not to be taken as a movement among many others of Catholic action, but of course, as a grace received from the Holy Spirit in the wake of the dynamic renewal of Vatican II.

To that end, it is useful to recall the words of Blessed Paul VI to the participants of the Third International Congress of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal on Friday May 19th, 1975. *“We see the Holy Spirit stirring today, in such diverse regions and circles. Its manifestations are varied: deep communion of hearts and close contact with God in faithfulness to the commitments undertaken at Baptism, and in prayer that is often in groups, in which each one expresses himself freely, thus helping, supporting and nourishing the prayer of others. At the basis of everything, there is a personal conviction which has its source not only in instruction received by faith but also in a kind of personal experience of the fact that, without God, man can do nothing, whereas with him, everything becomes possible. Hence this need to praise him, thank him, celebrate the marvels that he works around us and in us everywhere. Human existence finds again its relationship with God, its so-called —vertical dimension]], without which man is irremediably mutilated. How then is the “spiritual renewal” not an “opportunity” for the Church and for the world? And how, in this case, would we not do everything we can for it to remain?”*

To better understand how the CCR can transform itself into a Pentecostal grace for the entire Church, we must return to the essential mission of the Church and, later, to see how the CRR can contribute to the mission of the Church at the dawn of this new millennium.



Preface II of apostles show us in the most succinct way, as only the *lexorandi* could, the essential mission of the Church. After the usual introduction, it states: *“For you have built your Church to stand firm on apostolic foundations, to be a lasting sign of your holiness on earth and offer all humanity your heavenly teaching”*

The Church is therefore founded, following Christ, to first be the visible image of the invisible God and concomitantly, that it be mission. She brings the world first the presence and sign of God, propagated through service and witness.

Intrinsically, in its intimate nature, the Church is communion and mission. In fact, “being Christian” is, at its core, “being united” to Jesus, as a branch to a tree, and to bear fruit, for without him, we can do nothing.

The CCR will only be an opportunity for the Church, will only bear lasting fruit, if it can clearly place itself in this double dimension.

From Jesus, the visible image of the loving Father, members of the CCR receive the grace of being sons of God as well as witness to his love. These two pillars are united, there is circularity between the two, but primarily it leads back to communion. It is important to know it and to live it within the framework of the CCR. We know that without communion, the mission is empty of meaning. And without the mission, communion can seem an illusion. Communion and mission are co-essential to the very being of the Church.

In chapter 3, Saint Mark recounts the call of the disciples as Jesus appoints the Twelve as his apostles, first so that they can be with him, be his companions, and then to send them out. *“He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, **to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons.**”* Mark 3, 13-15

As pointed out Father Raniero Cantalamessa during the third global retreat for the clergy here in Rome from June 10-15 2015, we find the same nature in the Charismatic Renewal. He said that , in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is revealed in two different ways: The first called “charismatic” that is to say that the “Holy Spirit grants particular gifts”, not for “spiritual progress,” or as a “reward for the personal sanctity” of the recipient, but to “edify the community.” The Spirit can also act in another way called “transformative or sanctifying.” That is to say that it is based on the transformation of the person in such a way that it creates in him or her a regeneration, clothed in a “new life.” This transformative action of the Spirit is an experience and not an idea of the grace. For him, these two actions of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, on the day of Pentecost and until today manifest themselves strikingly in the Charismatic Renewal.

We cannot forget that the primary mission of the Holy Spirit that we receive in baptism and that moves us as members of the CCR is that we become like Jesus, to make of us heirs to God, to make us divine, to sanctify us, as states the fourth Eucharistic prayer. *“And that we might*



live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and rose again for us, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as the first fruits for those who believe, so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world, he might sanctify creation to the full.”

Thus, the Spirit is given to us so that our lives might no longer be our own, but Christ’s, as teaches Saint Paul, *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* This is our primary objective, not to be for ourselves, but to be in Jesus. Not to live for ourselves, but to live for Christ, in the words of Sainte Thérèse of Lisieux, *“That I may live in one Act of perfect Love, I offer myself as a victim of holocaust to thy merciful love, imploring Thee to consume me without ceasing, and to let the tide of infinite tenderness pent up in Thee, overflow into my soul, that so I may become a very martyr of Thy Love.”*

Before evangelizing acts and specific pastorals, the CRR *ends in the ocean of God, in the love of God, ceases to work for itself and continues, comes from, and goes to God* and answers powerfully to the universal call to sanctity proclaimed by the Vatican Council. This is the first sign of the *aggiornamento*, the action of the Spirit blowing in the Church. It will thus be a true current, a manifestation of the living water flowing from the breast of those who believe in Christ.

But beyond the mystical dimension, to an extent, the CRR can also be a concrete framework that allows the faithful to live the experience of the divine and of testimony. Or to borrow the words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the CRR, in order to fulfill its mission, ought to help the faithful, in whatever location or state they may be, to renew their personal encounter with Jesus Christ, to make the decision to be encountered by him, to tirelessly seek him each day so that the joy of the Gospel can fill their hearts and their lives.

With CRR, how can the faithful allow themselves to be saved by Jesus and freed from sin, from sadness, from emptiness, from isolation? Can the Renewal help those thousands of sad, despondent, and indifferent faithful to make the beautiful discovery that *“With Jesus Christ, joy is born and reborn forever.”* (*Evangelii Gaudium* #1)

Thanks to the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives, which is the fundamental basis of the CRR, thousands of people testify that their human existence has found its relationship with God. Their life was transformed in a joyful encounter with Jesus, as stated by Father Raniero Cantalamessa: *“At the basis of our experience in the Charismatic Renewal is a joyful experience of God’s grace that leads the Christian to draw from the richness of Christianity, not out of duty, or by constraint, but because he feels drawn to it.”*

Bishop Guy Gaucher, auxiliary bishop emeritus of Bayeux-Lisieux adds: *“The Renewal’s great gift will be that it has rediscovered the grace of Baptism and reminded the various vocations that they cannot be separated one from the other. By fostering an intimate personal relationship with Christ, the Charismatic Renewal emphasizes the relationship between heart and reason, the seeking of holiness, and fraternal life.”*



The greatest challenge of the Renewal lies also in the popularization of the experience of the encounter with Jesus through the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or the Baptism in the Spirit, as Pope Francis himself points out: *“I expect you to share with all in the Church the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.”* (June 1st 2014 and October 30th 2015)

It follows, in my opinion that the work of the faithful members of the Renewal is, on the one hand to remain faithful to this initial and fundamental grace by clarifying it theologically as well as pastorally, and to spread widely this current of grace beyond the groups and the communities.

A major question needs to be addressed at the pastoral level: How do we get there? What to do to ensure that the majority of the baptized benefit from this marvelous grace of God, this Outpouring that lives in the Renewal? How to ensure that the priests and consecrated religious, the faithful laity, go forth from Christ, living a personal experience with the Christ as has been lived in the CRR for the past fifty years?

Let's specify quickly that such an experience lived in the Catholic Church is not only found in the CRR. Many people live such encounters with Jesus after spiritual exercises, retreats, and other journeys prompted by the Holy Spirit.

The novelty and specificity of the Renewal is its popularity and constancy in diverse regions and environment, calling people of all status and ways of life. It is this dimension that makes it an opportunity for the Church. What measures must be put in place at the pastoral level to ensure that the flowers of the CRR bear fruit, lasting fruits, as a current of grace?

I think we must take a holistic approach, as much *Fides* as *Ratio*, as much *Professed Faith* as *Celebrated Faith*.

From a theological standpoint, the work and publications of the doctrinal commission of the ICCRS and the Catholic Fraternity do marvelous work. This theological and apologetic dimension is very important, as it answers a number of ambiguous and complex questions. I won't address this issue because other conferences will.

From my standpoint, I am first going to emphasize on what the CRR can bring to the entire Church, beginning with the celebration of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In our Church, more than four out of five baptisms are administered to infants. Confirmation, structured as it is in pastoral life, was supposed to make up for the shortcoming, but is often without noticeable fruit. Even in adult baptism, there are no big changes, even with steps in the rite of adult baptism, beginning at the start of Lent and culminating at the Easter Vigil. Other similar celebrations in the Church often take place with no great effect, such as rites of ordination or religious profession. As the ancients would say, what to do to ensure that *opus operatum* and *opus operantis* go hand in hand?



A tentative analysis of the events taking place prior to the Outpouring of the Spirit reveals a complex convergence of several elements near and far of the experience itself, an outpouring from which flows a transforming experience and real dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

The experience of God is never immediate, even if felt and presented suddenly. The divine pedagogy in the history of salvation is that of a patient dialogue with man. So it is with outpouring: there is a distant preparation that solidifies itself in the context of the journey within the group, then the immediate preparation that provide seminars in the life of the Spirit. Each of those two levels has a tremendous importance in the acceptance of the gift of God.

The grace of God works with human nature. The marvels of the Holy Spirit within the context of the Renewal of the church certainly highlight the goodness of God, but also constitute a body of evidence that opens man to the active power of the Spirit of God, Spirit whose action within man requires a human substrate.

Certain elements emerge as instruments to make the outpouring of the Spirit more accessible.

I have been the bishop of the Diocese of Obala in Cameroon for seven years, and Delegate of the Bishops to the CRR. I experienced the outpouring of the Spirit in 1983, while still a junior in high school. My vocation was born from this experience. Life in the Spirit has allowed me, for better and for worse, to remain faithful to my priestly vocation.

As bishop, life in the Spirit helps me in my pastoral duties and I try as much as possible to share my experience and to bring my priests and my faith communities to experience an encounter with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

First, I encourage the members of the CRR to be faithful to their vocation and especially to deepen it by living a life of authentic Catholic charismatic doctrine.

I am rather insistent on the call to live in communion and intimacy with God within the context of the search for the marvelous. And this is not obvious. It is something that I do at the national and the diocesan level. For instance, during an international gathering in Yaoundé in 2011, I started to pray in tongues at the microphone, something that had been forbidden for years.

At the diocesan level, inspired by the Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, we are committed to a journey of 6 years with the objective of leading us to become missionary disciples, in imitation of the apostles. For example, in reading the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, specifically Acts 2:42, we are presented with what we call **"the four apostolic works, or the four acts of apostolic faithfulness."** All of this is explained in a pastoral letter entitled **"A new Pentecost for the New Evangelization."**

Coming from the charismatic experience, I stress those things that foster growth in intimacy with God, that foster a personal encounter with Jesus in order to be filled with the joy of



the Gospel. Particularly, it deals with a deeper quality of prayer, a deeper participation in the celebration of sacraments, especially Eucharist, and the dissemination of Eucharistic Adoration and Lectio Divina. The CRR can bring a lot to the Church in all three areas.

Lord, teach us to pray

Charismatic prayer assemblies can teach us to deepen the quality of the prayers of our faithful. I was born in a Christian family, but the CRR taught me how to pray better.

A charismatic prayers assembly is a gathering of prayer that is joyous, enthusiastic, spontaneous, hinging on praise and receiving the word of God. Sometimes, there is a manifestation of charisms. Pope Paul VI refers to it as *“prayer that is often in groups, in which each one expresses himself freely, thus helping, supporting and nourishing the prayer of others.”*

The communal aspect, the joy, the spontaneity, the praise are freeing and lead us out of our egocentric stupor. Thanks to the renewal, the Catholic faithful can learn to vary his prayer, to expand it, to make it alive and joyous. This is important for our faithful. These kinds of encounters produce a considerable transformative effect. The person is open to God’s welcome.

Other elements in a charismatic prayer gathering is rapid, continuous, sometimes interrupted speech, the absent of conflicted relationship, witness, or the sharing of experiences.

Charismatic prayer gathering is comprised of many acts of public speaking, short prayers, messages, prophecies, songs, testimonies, glossolalia, etc. All of this is meant to build the Body of Christ and encourage the readiness and responsiveness towards the Holy Spirit, each person engaged and actively participating.

The absence of conflicted relations and debates (such as those related to politics) promotes good group dynamics and, according to psychologist A. Godin, creates a climate of welcoming unanimity, of internal spirituality, and jubilant expression in the restoration of unity.

As far as testimonies are concerned, they refer to the gratitude for the presence of God in our lives, and the witness of signs of the times. This interpretation helps us to see the presence of providence once again and creates the atmosphere of God’s immediate presence. If this interpretation is taken to the extreme, it becomes ridiculous, but its worth is in bringing God into the human sphere.

The CRR also allows us to realize that the faithful are thirsty for the Word of God and want to encounter Jesus present in the Eucharist. Whether the moment of praise is very loud, like the thunder of Pentecost, or quiet like the still small voice in which the Lord manifested himself to the prophet Elijah, we live it in the CRR. It is a way to experience the different forms of Christian prayers described in the Catholic Catechism.

Among the other important elements offered by the CRR that allow people to be more attentive to the God’s call to holiness through retreats, sessions, prayer vigils, testimonies. All of this human



work brings about in the Christian a different way of life, a journey, a commitment, and, from within, a new outlook on the world, a religious certainty, and the willingness to learn.

Seminars in the life of the Spirit confirm and highlight this approach.

Seminars in the life of the Spirit

Seminars in the life of the Spirit are the mode of direct preparation for the Outpouring of the Spirit. There are three essential elements to that end. First, that a kerygmatic doctrinal foundation is obtained, second, an atmosphere permeated with conviction, prayer, and testimony is created, and finally, the participation of sharing groups that are both dynamic and educational in their approach.

We have attempted twice to offer this model of participatory and festive retreat to priests, and it still needs to be improved and developed further. More importantly, it needs to be done for Confirmation candidates.

The celebration of the Effusion of the Spirit

Many portions of the ceremonies in which Outpouring is present can naturally bring about a devotional state, a complete abandon into the hands of God. Songs, sung together by the congregants during moments of praise, release the faithful from the weight of daily life.

The prayer request, request made by the candidates themselves brings to consciousness what is desired and enhances participation and a freely-given personal commitment.

The imposition of hands, a traditional liturgical gesture, expresses benediction, intercession, solidarity, and compassion. By touching someone on the head, or on the shoulders for an extended period of time, a solidarity is established between two people. A solidarity that will engender more openness, a solidarity that reassures, that releases from anxiety. Intercession for the benediction of the Lord is that much stronger. Arms and hands, as stated by S. Dupuis, represent strength and power from within the body. God uses this image to demonstrate his tenderness, his protection, his grace, his desire to renew us.

Usually, this imposition of the hands is performed by several people, who have themselves experienced the outpouring of the Spirit. This also plays into the perception and the communal participation. It is not surprising then that a prayer request addressed to the Lord Jesus in this unanimity is granted, as he has promised (Mt 18:19-20)

We started a ritual *ad experimentum* for the Sacrament of Confirmation that integrates the prayer of the confirmed asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit. During Chrismation, the remainder of the assembly prays, sings, intercedes.

The great challenge with regards to Confirmation continues to be sacramental preparation and, as a corollary, the formation of catechists that continues to be a monolithic approach. This



permits us to broach an important element in the implications of the CR as a current of grace in the life of the Church. It has to do with the commitment of members of the CRR in the life of their living ecclesial communities, within the different councils and commissions, and at the parish and diocesan levels.

The participation of members of the CRR in the ordinary life of the Church

In the Saint Luke's gospel account of the disciples at Emmaus, it is important to note the attitude of Jesus' two companions after the transformative encounter that they experiences. *"When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread."* Luke 24:30-35

There is no pastoral implication for Renewal without implication from the members of the groups, community associations and covenants who have lived, like the disciples at Emmaus, the experience of an encounter with the Lord. If we are not present in our Church, the CRR will not disappear in order to be transformed into *"a Pentecostal grace for the entire Church"* as Pope Francis desires, it will simply disappear.

At the beginning of the CRR, we complained about the lack of social commitment from Charismatics, now we have the opposite, Praise be to God. But there are still things that need to be done in terms of the involvement of Charismatics in the ordinary life of the Church, as yeast is to dough, for an internal transformation.

Let us leave the comfortable cocoons of our testimonials and community retreats in order to engage more fully in the ordinary life of the Church. Then, the CRR will remain an opportunity for the Church being *"living sign of the holiness of God, powerfully announcing to all mankind the Gospel of the kingdom of Heaven."* That will be the best way for the CRR to *"disappear as such and be transformed into a Pentecostal grace for the whole Church."*