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THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL :

How good it is for brothers to live together

by Cathy Brenti



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Every year in January, the Church invites us to participate in "the week of prayer for Christian unity". How many among us in the heart of the Charismatic Renewal are sensitive to this search for unity? Why and how to live it?

Pope John Paul II recently reminded us that the Lord founded the Church "one and unique". It is what we profess in the Creed: "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church". And yet, the Vatican II Council reminds us that many Christian communities represent themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus-Christ.

A gift and a treasure for evangelization

Never forget that unity is a special gift, a gift "that we carry in fragile clay vases" that may break.

During the Last Supper, Jesus prays for his disciples "...so that all may be one, as you, Father are in me and I am in you" (Jn 17: 20-21). Unity is also the "treasure" that He gave them. A treasure that has two characteristics: On the one hand, unity expresses faithfulness to the gospel; on the other hand, as the Lord Himself indicated, it is a condition so that all may believe He is sent by the Father.

The necessary virtues for ecumenism

Saint Paul invites us to vigilance, perseverance and confidence, The Pope underlines all of the necessary virtues to ecumenism.

"Hope cannot but be raised from ecumenical encounters. At each encounter, the distance seems to reduce. Mutual confidence grows, a preliminary condition for understanding, coexistence and communion".

A duty and an "urgency"

The search for unity is equally a duty for each one of us: "Aspiration to

unity should not be missing in the daily life of churches and of ecclesial communities as well as in the life of each faithful", says JP II, adding that "it is even a duty to praise the Lord for the path already travelled, as much for the quality of fraternal relationships between the diverse communities, as for the results (the fruits) produced by theological dialogues".

The prayer of Christ reminds us that it is necessary to welcome this "gift" and develop it deeper and deeper. The invocation "Ut unum sint" is at the same time an "imperative that compels us, a force that supports us, a salutary reproach facing our laziness and our narrowness of heart. Our confidence depends on Jesus' prayer and not on our own abilities, to attain the full and visible communion of all Christians".

We are "held", according to each one's vocation, to recreate the full communion, this precious treasure left to us by Christ. We should not try to escape.

"Unatis redintegratio" talks to us about the heart conversion (no true ecumenism without personal conversion), holiness of life, common prayer, and mutual fraternal knowledge, as being many elements to consider and in which we should place our efforts.

In "Novo Millennio Ineunte", the Pope talks about the "urgency" to promote communion in the delicate domain of ecumenism. He himself, after the year 2000 Jubilee, considers that there have been several "prophetic and emotional signs, but there is still a long way to go".

The means: prayer and dialogue

"In front of such a task, what can we do? Give up? No, because

what is uniting us is stronger than what is dividing", says the Holy Father in May 2003. Then again on St Peter & St Paul's day the same year: "Looking to advance in the dialogue of truth and charity, let us not be discouraged by the difficulties we may encounter. We must continue our efforts, fortify our desire for unity and not neglect any occasion to grow, aiming towards full communion and cooperation, and always presenting our needs to the Lord as well as our hopes and our failures, so that He can heal us in His great mercifulness".

"We must strive to clear each obstacle by continuous prayer, by perseverant dialogue. Even if the road towards unity is steep and strewn with obstacles and difficulties. Even if at times we doubt the power of Jesus' word let them be one". The good Pope John XXIII said: "I believe in dialogue, always, even when I can impose my will being the Pope". Believe in it too!

Cardinal Etchegaray, the Pope's regular messenger for peace, recently declared: "Dialogue is the basis of everything. Two persons cannot meet without dialogue. Dialogue is difficult, because in trying to understand the other one, we must make an effort and must respect each other". With the help and grace of God, each one of us is capable of this effort and respect.

Let us pray with the Holy Father: "Lord, restore our knowledge of this glory that shines on Christ's face, so that through our actions, our commitment and all our life, we may proclaim to the world that He is alive and that He is at work among us. Amen"

Christmas is...



... THE GLORY OF GOD REFLECTED!

"God... made His light shine
in our hearts to give us the
light of the knowledge of the
glory of God in the face
of Christ"

cf II CORINTHIANS 4:6



ICCRS and ecumenical friendship

by Charles Whitehead

"In May 1995, Pope John Paul II introduced his teaching encyclical on Christian Unity, Ut Unum Sint. One of the encouraging signs of the times is that Christians everywhere are recognizing that a basic unity in Christ already exists between us"

The call for Christian unity made by the Second Vatican Council with such impassioned commitment is finding an ever greater echo in the hearts of believers".

With these words in May 1995, Pope John Paul II introduced his teaching encyclical on Christian Unity, **Ut Unum Sint**. One of the encouraging signs of the times is that Christians everywhere are recognizing that a basic unity in Christ already exists between us. Those who share a common baptism are truly brothers and sisters in Christ. In **Ut Unum Sint**, the Pope also makes it clear he understands that the Church's irrevocable commitment to the ecumenical journey (3) presents a deep challenge to the Catholic faithful (82). He exhorts us to enter into a dialogue before God in which each individual recognizes his own faults, confesses his sins, and places himself in the hands of Jesus Christ. For many of us this will be the important starting point for our ecumenical journey, but the Pope also encourages us to pray with other Christians (21-27), **to enter into dialogue** (28-38), and **to engage in practical co-operation** at all levels (40).

For many years ICCRS has committed itself to these principles, and has established good ecumenical relationships with other Christians. For some of us, ecumenical friendships were very much part of our early experience in the Charismatic Renewal. So how can all of us in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal ensure that this work continues, and play our own part in helping to meet the ecumenical

challenges placed before us by Pope John Paul II?

The ecumenical contributions at the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal are well documented. The Church has always appreciated that because of our shared experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and our commitment to the Word of God, we in the Charismatic Renewal are in a special position when it comes to understanding and building relationships with other Christians. Many Catholic groups were helped in their early days by Christians from other traditions, whilst they in turn were challenged to re-examine their attitudes to the Catholic Church when they saw the Holy Spirit so clearly at work among us. Ecumenical prayer groups are still common in many countries, and a number of communities have remained committed to their ecumenical roots. We all recognize that important convictions still divide us, but we know that deeper truths unite us. As we get to know each other we realize that we belong together, and this often leads us to look for ways to show our unity, confident that the Holy Spirit is leading us and that he will never ask us to do the impossible.

Against this background ICCRS continues to develop ecumenical friendships with Christians from other churches and ecclesial communities - Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal, and Non-Denominational. We do this by inviting them as guests to our conferences and events, by attending and contributing to ecumenical meetings, and by maintaining close contact with the Pontifical

Council for Christian Unity. Most of us will never be involved in the official ecumenical dialogues which address the vital questions of doctrine and authority, and so I believe that the most important contribution we can make as individuals is to build strong friendships based on mutual love and respect. Here are my personal suggestions for some principles on which our work for unity can be built.

1. Accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Be faithful to who we are and what we believe as Catholics.
3. Recognise our part in the divisions, and seek reconciliation
4. Build and protect personal friendships
5. Love and listen to one another, pray together, and co-operate as much as possible.
6. When difficulties come, remember that Jesus wants unity, and it's a work of the Holy Spirit in which we are all called to co-operate.

So let's increase our commitment to building ecumenical friendships. Let's pray as if it all depends on God, and work as if it all depends on us. Why? Not only because unity is an important commitment of the Catholic Church, but also because we want a new flame of evangelistic zeal and unselfish co-operation to sweep through **all** our churches and ecclesial communities, thereby releasing the power of Christ's prophetic words "that the world may believe it is you who sent me" (Jn 17:21). 

"So how can all of us in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal ensure that this work continues, and play our own part in helping to meet the ecumenical challenges placed before us by Pope John Paul II?"

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Administration and events: Mr. Claude Lopez, Australia

Interim ICCRS Council Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2003

by Oreste Pesare

In The ICCRS Council held an interim meeting during the International event.

Council Elections

- Cathy Brenti (France) was elected for a third term representing ICCRS to Communities.

- Cathy Brenti was also elected as new Vice-President to replace Matteo Calisi (Italy) from March 2004.

- Jean Pliya (Benin) was elected for a second term as representative to French speaking Africa.

- Walter Zimmermann (Chile) was elected to replace Chiquito Villalba (Argentina) as representative to Spanish speaking Latin America.

- Fr. Emmanuel Tusiime (Uganda) was elected to replace Mark Nimo (Ghana) as delegate to Anglophone Africa from March 2004

- A new Executive Committee to take office from March 2004 was elected: Allan Panozza (President), Cathy Brenti (Vice-President), Reinaldo Beserra, Oreste Pesare (Director).

- Charles Whitehead (England) completed a three year term as Financial Advisor. Our grateful thanks

go to Charles for his valuable service during 14 years with ICCRS.

Revision of Statutes

A Sub-committee was formed to prepare a proposal to submit to the Executive Committee of ICCRS for consideration and action.

Advisory Group to ICCRS in the areas of Theology and Pastoral matters

Bishop Joe Grech (Australia) leads a sub committee of theologians which is preparing the draft of a Document on healing to be discussed in March 2004, and again in September 2004. The Document will finally be sent for approval to the Pontifical Council for the Laity before publication.

Events

ARS 2005 Charismatic Retreat for Priests.- The next ICCRS event, a joint initiative of the Beatitudes Community and ICCRS, will be a Retreat for bishops and priests to be held in Ars (France), 2-8 October 2005. 3,500 participants are expected to attend, and the Retreat will be guided by Sr. Briege McKenna and Fr. Kevin Scallon.

The Retreat Sub-committee of ICCRS and Beatitudes members will be chaired by Cathy Brenti.

Possible joint event in USA.- ICCRS and the USA National Service Committee (English speaking) are looking into the possibility of a joint event for leaders to be held in United States probably during 2005

ICCRS House of Formation in Rome

Allan presented the vision of ICCRS for this project to the delegates from 73 countries, during the Mass celebrated by Cardinal Stafford at the "12 days of Blessings". The initiative remains an ongoing project for ICCRS.

Future Council meeting

The next full Council meeting will be held in Rome from Monday 8 to Sunday 14 March 2004.

Council members feel that this is a special time of grace for ICCRS to extend its service to Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and we earnestly invite the prayers and financial support of the worldwide Renewal to assist ICCRS to achieve these goals. 

"In May 1995, Pope John Paul II introduced his teaching encyclical on Christian Unity, Ut Unum Sint. One of the encouraging signs of the times is that Christians everywhere are recognizing that a basic unity in Christ already exists between us"

Members of the Council: Peter Thompson

Peter was born in Engand just prior to the second world war. As a young boy he desired to serve God as a missionary to Africa. After testing his vocation with the Holy Ghost Fathers he realized that his vocation was not to the ordained priesthood. He is married to Madeleine and they have three adult children and a growing number of grandchildren. He and his family emigrated to Canada in 1967 where he continued his career in visual merchandising.

In 1974 during a crisis in faith and in their marriage they were introduced to the CCR and recommitted their lives to Jesus through the Life in the Spirit seminars. Since then Peter has served extensively in the CCR in leadership, teaching and

on various local and national committees. In 1990 responding to Pope John Paul II call for a decade of evangelization, Peter went on a pilgrimage to discern God's will for this time. He travelled to Medjugorje, Rome and Assisi asking The Blessed Mother Mary, St. Peter and St. Francis to intercede for him. Returning home via England he and his wife visited Sion Catholic community for evangelization to see how they operated in their missions. They were invited to serve with the community full time in the parish mission team doing street evangelization and door-to-door visitation. Through this experience Peter grew in his love for Catholic apologetics, answering the many questions that arose from this apostolate.

Returning to Canada in 1993 he has continued to serve the Lord giving parish missions and teaching. Peter supports his ministry through his art as a landscape artist which has freed him to travel wherever the Lord leads and this has taken him in recent years to many parts of Africa.

He lives in Calgary Alberta Canada and has recently been appointed to serve with ICCRS as one of two representatives to North America with special responsibility for Canada and parts of the West Indies.

May the Lord continue to accompany him with the power of the Holy Spirit in serving CCR and the Catholic Church throughout the world. 

"In 1974 during a crisis in faith and in their marriage they were introduced to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and recommitted their lives to Jesus through the Life in the Spirit seminars. Since then Peter has served extensively in the CCR"



Fr Tom Forrest honoured by Holy Father Pope John Paul II

On 22nd June 2003 Fr Tom Forrest CSSR, received the following award from His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

"The Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II has chosen Rev. Fr Thomas Forrest for the decoration of the August Cross, Pro Ecclesia et Pontificia. The above decoration is bestowed primarily on those distinguished for their special activities and excellent works for the Church and the Pontiff".

This Papal cross and parchment from his Holiness was presented to Fr. Tom for his dedicated ministry in promoting the New Evangelization. The cross and parchment were presented by Bp. Anthony Gbuji in the presence of Sr. Mary O'Duffy SMG and Fr. Jim Bermingham SPS during a mass celebrated in Rome. It was a very joyful occasion for all the members of the Board of Directors of Evangelization 2000 around the world.

Matteo Calisi, from Italy, has been reconfirmed as International President of the Catholic Fraternity

The election of the International President of the Catholic Fraternity one of the major CCR organisation took place in Rome on the 31st October, during the Executive Council yearly meeting.

Dr Matteo Calisi has been confirmed in his 3-year mandate. He succeeds to the first president and founder, Brian Smith from Australia, who passed away last March.

The international meeting was held on the occasion of the XIII anniversary of the canonical definition of the Catholic Fraternity from the Holy See. The Catholic Fraternity, an International association of The Christian faithful of Pontifical Right, is the first charismatic institution recognized by Pope John Paul II. It gathers about fifty communities from all continents.

We congratulate once again Matteo and praise the Lord for His dedication to serve the Charismatic Renewal worldwide.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD



Happy Anniversary ICCRS!

"On Sunday 14 September 2003, the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, Bishop Joe grech celebrated Mass in the ICCRS Chapel for the President, the Director and all of the Staff.

This special occasion marked the tenth anniversary of ICCRS having received its Statutes from the Vatican.
We thank you Lord!"

Brasil



From July 14th till July Matteo Calisi held Meetings and conferences under the aegis of Canção Nova Community (San Paolo) and Obra de Maria Community in Recife. Both communities are presently experiencing a tremendous growth, also at international level.

During the CCR Conference held in a São Paulo, Calisi met leaders of New Brazilian Communities Fraternity and also Card. Claude Hummes, Archbp. of São Paulo, the Ecclesiastic Assistant of the CCR in Brazil Bp. Alberto Taveira of Palmas, and Archbp. Marcelo Carvalheiro of João Pessoa, Vice-President of the Brazilian Episcopal Conference. The Brazilian Communities have many differences among them, but all of them show a great charismatic liveliness: music outreach, conferences, radio and TV broad-castings, human promotion and social commitment. Canção Nova Community had to build a village and provide hotel accommodations to the big quantities of people attending their evangelistic meetings, and now are building a 60,000 seats open-air auditorium.

In the latest twenty years, about 500 new communities linked to CCR were created in Brazil, and Charismatic Catholics are presently estimated in the amount of 15 million people. This is a real explosion of charismatic life.

India



The National Service Team of the CCR in India organized the XII National Convention in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh State from 2nd to 5th October, 2003. The Theme was: 'He died for Me'. The main speakers were: Most Rev. Valerian D'Souza, Fr Robert Faricy SJ, Fr Thamburaj SJ, Fr Dheeraj Sabu IMS, among others. Most Rev. Prakash Mallavarapu, Bp. of Vijayawada was the Patron of the Convention. The planning and organization of the Convention was done under the guidance of Mr Cyril John, Chairman of the National Service Team. Despite rains, 14,000 laypeople from 18 States

in India, 1,000 nuns, 150 priests and 8 bishops participated in the four-day Convention.

Italy



The 1st. Meeting of the Catholic Fraternity was held in Fiuggi from 31st May to 2nd June '03. More than 700 people attended this event, representing 8 Italian Covenant and/or life communities and another 10, who are now settled in Italy but originally were from other countries of Europe and America. The reflection was on "Mission and Communion in the Catholic Church", presented with mastery and enlightenment by Card. James F. Stafford and Prof. Guzman Carriquiry, President and Sub-secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, respectively; and also by Mons. Vincenzo Paglia, Bp. of Terni-Marni-Amelia (Italy), and also the President of CFCCCF, Matteo Calisi. It was underlined that formation and mission are essential aspects of the life of the communities which make it possible for them to realise their great potential contribution to the Church in arriving at fundamental goals for her action: These being evangelization, ecumenism and social commitment.

Words of love and encouragement arrived from the Holy See at the end of this exceptional week-end. Alleluia!

Rwanda



Recently two important events were held. A National gathering on the Saturday following Pentecost in Kigali, and the National Session from August 4th to 8th at Kabgayi at the "Cité de Nazareth" youth center of MBARE. These two gatherings took place in a spirit of payer, peace and brotherhood. The Eucharist of the National gathering was presided by Msgr the Archbp. Thadée Ntihinyurwa, the Catholic Bp. Conference President. Each of the participants who attended retain a very vivid memory of it. Three subjects were deeply studied: the strengthening of

our faith, the place of the Virgin Mary in the Church and more specifically in the Church of Rwanda, and Charismatic prayer. This session was a great success, Praise the Lord.

Uganda



Jubilation, dancing and singing songs of praise and worship and ululation filled the air and environment of Uganda Martyrs Shrine Namugongo. Six thousand catholic faithful gathered to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the CCR in Uganda.

During the same week, 30th June - 6th July 2003, another very special event was held. 358 priests out of about 1,500 priests countrywide attended this Retreat including Card. Emmanuel Wamala and Bp. Christopher Kakooza, the Episcopal Advisor to the CCR in Uganda. The Retreat Preacher was Bp. Sam Jacobs, Bp. of the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana, USA. The retreat theme was "Put out into the deep" Lk.5:4. On Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th July, 2003, the Priests joined the lay people at the conference at Namugongo.

United States



Following the call of the Holy Father, the young men and women of Youth to Youth Catholic Evangelization at Mt Zion Catholic Pastoral Center in Montrose, MI along with YtY Coordinators, Frs., Dennis Howard, Joseph Krupp and Geoff Rose held "Duc in Altum" training in the New Evangelization, which drew participants from all over Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.

From July 28 August 3, 2003, representatives from 30 parishes encompassing 14 dioceses attended the training, with a total of 82 participants which included 22 YtY members.

The training was accompanied by group and individual prayer, including daily Mass and the availability to go to Confession. These times of prayer were geared toward spiritually preparing the participants to return to their parishes and begin the process of Evangelization by forming teams, or as individuals to present retreats.