



International Catholic  
Charismatic Renewal

Services

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# ICCRS NEWSLETTER

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*The wise steward:*

## Mary, the first charismatic

by Reinaldo Beserra dos Reis

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According to the ancient patristic theology, one of the hindrances to the full and unceasing dwelling of the Spirit in us was our own nature marked by sin... And what would we say of someone who, from her conception, had the privilege of being preserved not only from original sin, but also from each and every stain of moral sin? If Mary, in accepting Christ, as her Son to be, had been previously redeemed by God, can we not think of her as the first to be favored with the permanent fullness of the promised Spirit?

The only thing left to those marked by the separation that pride and disobedience generated, was to wait for the glorification of Jesus that would bring the forgiveness of sins. After all, the Holy Spirit is spirit and we are flesh. To this difficulty we will add the fact that He is Holy and we, until then, were irremediably "slaves of sin".

But nothing would prevent her, who was chosen to be the Immaculate Conception, from receiving the Spirit, not in an immanent or diffuse way, as it was for the rest of mankind, but in a personal, absolute and permanent way. After all, Jesus would be created in her womb by the Spirit Himself and by His power: "she was found with child through the holy Spirit" (Mt 1,18-20; Lk 1,35).

In Luke 1,28, the Angel (even before her "yes") had already found Mary "gratia plena", full of grace. The Spirit, when He worked the miracle of the Immaculate Conception in her, had surely made His own nest in the heart of Mary, so as to become acquainted with the human heart. -His next dwelling- "humanized" in the flesh of the would-be mother of the Redeemer...

As the Scriptures in the Old Testament had announced, the messianic times -when Yahweh's salvation would be manifested in fullness- would be marked by three main and great events: the Incarnation of the Word, assuming our nature and overcoming the abyss that distanced us from the Father; Jesus' Passion and

Death, through which man's offense to God would be redeemed and eternal death would be defeated by the victory of the Lord's resurrection; the sending -and the coming- of the Holy Spirit, that would be given to us as "the first installment of our inheritance" (Eph 1,14), so that we could understand and accept, through faith, the testimony of the Son of God, and attain salvation...

These great promises to the messianic times (the coming of the Savior, His death and resurrection, and the outpouring of the Spirit) are mingled, interdependent, and combined, and they confirm the beginning of the era of grace, the manifestation of salvation, God's kingdom among men... And to only one person was given the grace of living through those events, not only as a viewer, but as a participant all through the process: **Mary!** There she is, unique and necessary, in the Incarnation of the Word, offering herself as a field for the dwelling of the Spirit, where He, because of His own dynamic presence, enables the coming of the Messiah... There she is again, by the cross, letting herself be pierced by the prophetic sword of suffering (Lk 2, 35a) and accepting the Motherhood of Christ in His new Mystical Body, the Church... There she is once more -the mother who is to be assumed into heaven- with the rising Church, at Pentecost, waiting for the fullness that, remarkably and exclusively, she had already received ahead of anyone else... On account of that we have good reason to call her "Mother of Christ" and "Mother of the Church", the unique partner of the Trinity...

The second Vatican Council says that "before the day of Pentecost... we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation" (LG 59). We, that have already received the gift of the Spirit on the occasion of our sacramental baptism, can now, united to the intercession of Mary, wait, at Pentecost, for a renewed outpouring



of the Living Water, which was promised to "anyone who thirsts" (Jn 7,37). For even before offering the glorified Christ as a gift from the Father (Acts 2,23), that would be given to those who believe, the Spirit had given Himself to Mary -the first charismatic!- so that through her motherhood, she could offer Christ Himself to us. And He gives us the Spirit...

How could we not love Mary? How could we not admire this "most beloved daughter of the Father, chaste spouse of the Spirit and loving mother of the Son?" How could we not seek her maternal company waiting (and searching) for the gift of the Spirit? Let's look at the Mother: she is, above all, a sign of the Spirit; and as the second Vatican Council says, she is a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (LG 53). Therefore, trusting in her maternal intercession, we can join John Paul II in prayer and say: "You who were gathered in prayer with the Apostles in the Cenacle, awaiting the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, implore his renewed outpouring on all the faithful, men and women alike, so that they might more fully respond to their vocation and mission, as branches grafted onto the true vine, called to bear much fruit for the life of the world". (Christifideles Laici, closing prayer).

With Mary, the presence of the Spirit is assured, the outpouring is always renewed and the blessing is certain. Alleluia!

*"How could we not love Mary? How could we not admire this "most beloved daughter of the Father, chaste spouse of the Spirit and loving mother of the Son?" How could we not seek her maternal company waiting (and searching) for the gift of the Spirit? Let's look at the Mother: she is, above all, a sign of the Spirit"*



# 13th day of blessing : Joy

by Matteo Calisi

*"The first christians had the experience of joyfulness which was present in their worship: "Burst out together in songs of joy, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has consoled his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem" (Is 52: 9)"*

**W**hen people participate in a praise and charismatic adoration meeting for the first time, one aspect which takes them by surprise is the expression of joy which is evident amongst the participants. This might appear to be unusual for those who are accustomed to rather more sedate religious services without much external expression. For others though, it is an attractive reason to be come involved. What is it that drives charismatics to demonstrate such joyful experiences?

**Joy in the Traditions of the Bible.** In his apostolic letters, Saint Paul refers to our joy as the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Gal 5:22). When believers allow their lives to be guided and moulded by the Holy Spirit instead of by the desires of the flesh, it is only natural that such joy would be the fruit.

For this reason Saint Paul urges the christians who have had the experience of faith to rejoice: "Rejoice in the Lord always; I say to you again, rejoice" (Phil 4:4)

The first christians had the experience of joyfulness which was present in their worship: "Burst out together in songs of joy, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has consoled his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem" (Is 52:9).

And again: "These I shall lead to my holy mountain and fill them with joy in my house of prayer" (Is 56:7). "The Lord is king; let earth rejoice, the many islands be glad (...) Rejoice in the Lord, you who are upright, and praise his holy name! (Ps 97,1; 12) Shout for joy you who are honest of heart! (Ps 32:11).

The visible expressions were: The shout of joy, the dance, the song, the use of various musical

instruments, the clapping of hands or lifting them up towards heaven, exultation, praying in tongues, etc... in the style of psalm 150: 3-5.

**Joy in the Traditions of the Early Church.** The Holy Fathers of the Church remind us how such visible expressions were a fundamental part of the ancient liturgy. Saint Augustine of Hippo was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit whilst listening to the praises composed by Saint Ambrose of Milan. Such was the effect this had on him that it gave rise to his conversion.

During his episcopal ministry, Augustine described the song of joy of the Easter Liturgy like this: "Sing with rejoicing. What does it mean to rejoice? It means singing with the heart, without being able to explain in words what is sung (...) And to whom is this rejoicing raised up if not to the ineffable God? Ineffable is in fact what cannot be said: and if you can't say it but even so cannot be silent either, what remains if not to rejoice in a way which opens up the heart with a wordless joy, a joy that spreads out widely beyond the limits of words? Very well, sing to him with rejoicing" (Commentary on psalm 32).

**Joy in the lives of the Saints.** In the middle ages Thomas of Celano, the well known hagiographer and author of the "Fioretti" describes the experience of joy in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi thus:

"At times he was like this. When the sweetest melody of the spirit aroused fervour in his breast, this fervour would appear externally as french words". (FF §711).

But, paradoxically, joy can also be the fruit of persecution and suffering for the Gospel. Jesus declares in Saint Matthew's Gospel:

"Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you, and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Mt 5: 11-12).

**Joy in the Church Today.** The Gospel holds the true secret of true joy which Jesus has revealed: Do not be glad because evil spirits submit to you; be glad rather that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20).

Today, expressions of rejoicing, be they part of the formal liturgy or of other forms of worship such as the charismatic, remain topical covering song and music. Music is often the ideal vehicle through which joy may be expressed. Its characteristically impenetrable nature, helps the soul to get in touch with the divine and the supernatural. In this way the CCR today recaptures some sources of joy from the traditional liturgy, in the hope that, with its humble contribution, all the faithful of the contemporary Church may hold out and lift up their spirits when they participate in the Celebration of the Eucharist, the most important expression of the Church.

"Because the Church is deeply concerned that the faithful should not be as strangers or mute spectators at this mystery of the faith, but that having a good understanding of its rites and prayers, should participate in the sacred action consciously, piously, and actively" (Constitution on the Divine Liturgy 48, Vatican II Ecumenical Council).

Today too we sense an extreme need to see the fruit of pascal joy ripen in our communities so that the present generation and those to come might be surprised and amazed by the pascal joy of those, His Church, who have met the Living, Risen Christ Jesus. Amen!

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## ICCRS

International Catholic  
Charismatic Renewal Services

Postal Address:

Palazzo della Cancelleria  
00120 Vatican City, Europe  
Tel.: +39 06 69 88 75 38 / 65

Fax: +39 06 69 88 75 30

E-mail: info@iccrs.org

newsletter@iccrs.org

Web site: <http://www.iccrs.org>

Fax prayer line: +39 06 69 88 75 74

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# Worldwide priests retreat



2 - 8 October

# Ars 2005

preached by **Sr Briega McKenna**  
**Fr Kevin Scallon**

Please, widely promote this retreat, forward us names and addresses to send personal invitations!

Organised by ICCRS\*, in conjunction with the Beatitudes Community and the "John-Mary Vianney" Society

Further information and registrations  
Retraite ARS 2005 F-81170 CORDES - FRANCE  
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\* International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services

## Mons. Stanislaw RYLKO

Titular Archbishop of Novica - President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity

**B**orn in Poland in 1945 and ordained priest in Crakow in 1969, Mons. Stanislaw Rylko later attended the Gregorian Pontifical University (1972-78).

From 1978 to 1987 he lectured in pastoral theology at the Pontifical Theological Academy at Crakow. Then, in 1987, he was recalled to Rome where the Pope put him in charge of the Johannine Section of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL) an office of the Roman Curia. Subsequently, he became an Officer of the Vatican State Secretariat (1993-95).

Elected bishop, in 1995, he was appointed Secretary of the PCL and then, in 2003, he was further promoted to Archbishop and became President of the PCL. As President, advises the Pope on all questions concerning the contribution of the

laity to the life and mission of the Church.

The PCL "promotes the co-operation of the laity in catechesis, in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, and in works of compassion, of charity and of social reform" and "follows and directs international conventions and other initiatives concerning the apostleship of the laity" (John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution Good Shepherd 1988). The Constitution further specifies: "within the framework of its assigned authority, the Council deals with everything concerning associations of the lay faithful; sets up those which are of an international nature and approves ... their statutes ...". (art. 134).

The CCR is one of the international movements which the PCL must oversee. To enable this, the

PCL has set up two organisations under its authority. These are the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships (1990) and ICCRS (1993).

The many initiatives taken by the PCL include: World Youth Days, The World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and of New Communities (1998), The Congress of the Catholic Laity (2000) and the Congress of the Laity in the Countries of Eastern Europe (2003).

A presidential committee of cardinals and bishops meets periodically to discuss important questions. The 31 members of the Council include bishops, priests and lay people from every part of the world who meet biennially to deal with themes concerning the lives and mission of the laity. The Council is based in Rome. 

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# NEWS FROM THE WORLD



**Lent**  
time of fast  
and  
conversion

"...and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God".

2Co 5:20b-21

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by Sr. Nancy Kellar, S.C.



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## Europe



The European Sub-Committee of ICCRS (ESCI) has organized the first "European Charismatic Youth Consultation". This was held in Hohenthann, Germany from 30th January to 1st February. They were 44 people from 19 countries/22 groups. There was a good balance between the East and the West.

The central objectives were to bring together a consultation group of young people who are experienced and involved in CCR in their countries, to meet for fellowships and sharing, to explore further the needs of young charismatic leaders, to share and review what already exists for charismatic youth in Europe, to explore ways in which they can build up Youth involvement in CCR in their own countries and to elect a Youth representative onto the European sub-committee among others.

Christof Hemberger from Germany was elected to ESCI and Eva Sido from Romania was also chosen to act as an assistant.

It was a time of deep spiritual unity and reflection under two main themes: "Re-assurance that the Lord is with us" and "The sense that young people have a job to do, to lead others to the Lord".

## Ghana



The National Service Team of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Ghana organized a week-end retreat for all the Diocesan Service Teams at Adm Fie, the Formation and Service Centre - headquarters of the

Renewal in Kumasi from the 17th to 20th July, 2003.

About 80 leaders attended the session, which was aimed at addressing the personal prayer lives of the participants as well as to provide a unifying force for the Renewal throughout the country. The retreat, which was characterized by talks and discussing groups, was facilitated by a team of five leaders led by Messrs Francis Ahiekpor and Anthony Osei-Assibey, National President and Director respectively.

## Peru



Thanks to our participation in the "12 days of blessings", we have received a message from the Lord that, this year, we should deepen our charismatic spirituality and formation. As a result, from 26th - 30th January, two important retreats were held in the city of Lima. The first was the Tenth National Retreat for Priests which has as its motto "He who believes

in me will also do the deeds I do". It was directed by the Colombian priest Fr. Fidel Onoro c.j.m. and seventy two priests from almost all dioceses of the country participated. The second was the Second National Retreat for Religious with the motto "Let it be done to me according to His word." Forty six religious participated and it was directed by Fr. Leonardo Arboleda c.j.m. from Colombia. And then, on Sunday 1st February, both priests preached at a "General Day" for more than 6000 people. They were also accompanied by Elena Curutchet (Argentina). More than 20 priests concelebrated the Eucharist.

Let us give thanks to the Lord not only for allowing them to minister to us, but also for the joy of being able to serve them and to share with them.

In the month of August, we shall hold the fifth National meeting of the service committee. Let us trust to the Lord that this will be a great blessing for all the members of the CCR in Peru.

## Ecclesial Movements

On Saturday 8th November, hosted by the Saint Egidio Community at Rome, the leaders of the International Ecclesial Movement held a meeting with the theme "Movements and New Communities 5 years after Pentecost 1998: an update, current problems and prospects for the future." Attending the meeting were Matteo Calisi for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Chiara Lubich for the Focolare, Andrea Riccardi for the Saint Egidio Community and others as well. The next meeting is planned to take place in Stuttgart (Germany) on the occasion of European Ecumenical Congress "Together for Europe" which will take place from 6th to 8th March 2004. This congress at which around 10,000 people will be present, is organised by more than 100 Christian Community Movements in order to contribute to Europe becoming a family of united people.

## IMITATION OF MARY THE FIRST CHARISMATIC

BY JAMT

WE HAVE TO LEARN OF THE WOMAN, WHO WAS CHOSEN AND CONCEIVED WITHOUT STAIN CENTURIES AGO. SHE SAID YES. SHE WAS HUMBLE AND SHE ENGENERED GOD'S SON.



THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME OVER YOU AND THE GOD'S POWER WILL COVER YOU WITH ITS SHADE (Lk 1:35)

SHE TEACHES US TO BEAR WITNESS, TO PRAISE, AND TO LEAD THE PEOPLE TO JESUS. WHEN SHE VISITED HER COUSIN ELIZABETH SHE SAID:



"MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD MY SAVIOUR"



SHE HOLDS UP THE CROSS OF HER SON JESUS TEACHING US TO FACE UP OUR TRIALS. AND THE LORD GAVE HER TO US AS OUR MOTHER, AS A BELOVED DISCIPLES. "AND FROM THAT HOUR THE DISCIPLE TOOK HER INTO HIS OWN HOME" JN 19:27

SHE IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE FIRST CHARISMATIC, SHE WHO TEACHES US TO PERSEVERE IN PRAYER IN THE CENACLE TO RECEIVE A PERSONAL PENTECOST FROM THE SAME SPIRIT AND TO FACE UP TO OUR MISSION.



JESUS CHRIST CONTINUES MYSTICALLY TO BE BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND OF MARY AND WE MUST NEVER SEPARATE WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER" CARDENAL SUENENS