

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal

An Experience of the Holy Spirit



**“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you;
then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
throughout Judea and Samaria,
yes, even to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)**

“Renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.”

The Mission of the Peoria Diocese Catholic Charismatic Renewal Board is to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost within and beyond the Church, to evangelize, and to broaden and deepen the understanding that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the Christian inheritance of all, and to strengthen the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a movement that brings people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as risen Lord and living Savior. In an ongoing extension of Pentecost, Jesus continues to send His Holy Spirit with His gifts and graces (“charisms” in Greek) on the earth to renew the Church and the lives of individual Christians.

As Cardinal Suenens has stated, “Since every genuine renewal depends on the Holy Spirit, all spiritual movements in the Church can rightly be called ‘charismatic’ (meaning grace), and all Christians are ‘charismatic’ by virtue of baptism.”

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in the United States in 1967 when a group of students and faculty from Duquesne University gathered for a weekend of prayer and reflection on the Acts of the Apostles. They prayed that the Holy Spirit would be alive in them as He was alive in the first Christians following Pentecost. The Holy Spirit did come upon them in power, imparting to them an over-whelming sense of the presence of God, giving them the gifts of praying in tongues and prophecy and a thirst for Scripture, touching them so that their lives would never again be the same. This Renewal in the Holy Spirit soon spread to other campuses and parishes and eventually throughout America and the world.

Today, millions of Catholics in more than 115 countries are involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. What accounts for this dramatic growth? Those involved in the Renewal say that God has touched them in some profound way, releasing the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in the wake of Vatican II because both belonged together. Pope John XXIII, in convening the Council, prayed for a new Pentecost in the whole Church. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is one answer to this prayer.

The goal of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is to serve the mission of the Church by enabling people to live a renewed and Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is called to be charismatic--that is, to be equipped with gifts of service for the good of the Church. (1Cor.12)

In the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Catholics speak of being “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” This statement does not change the Catholic teaching about the Sacrament of Baptism. It simply means that the power of the Spirit received in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation often awaits a fuller “release” in the lives of many Christians.

Theologian Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., states: “Baptism in the Holy Spirit manifests itself in adults when they say yes to what objectively took place during the rites of initiation (baptism and confirmation).”

Some effects and fruits of being baptized in the Holy Spirit are: A more personal relationship with Jesus, a greater love for private prayer, a desire to join with others in praise of God, a deep sense of peace, a greater love for Scripture and for the Eucharist, increasing love for the Father and the Spirit and Mary, a greater love for the priesthood and for the Church, and love manifested in action by service to the poor.

Is being “baptized in the Holy Spirit” Scriptural? Jesus used this term when He told His disciples: “Wait for the fulfillment of my Father’s promise of which you have heard me speak. John baptized with water, but within a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit....You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, yes, even to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:4-5,8). In all four Gospels, John the Baptist states it is Jesus who will baptize in the Holy Spirit.

Many people are baptized in the Holy Spirit during Life in the Spirit Seminars (Catholic Faith in Action), a program that explains what it means to be baptized in the Spirit and provides an opportunity for shared prayer, fellowship, and sound teaching. Many prayer groups offer these seminars. All that is required is that we be open to the work of the Spirit and that we turn our lives over to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will honor a simple prayer in which we recommit our lives to Jesus Christ and ask that the power of the Holy Spirit be released in us.

While being baptized in the Holy Spirit is an initial experience of a fuller working of the Spirit in one’s life, emphasis is not on the initial experience but on the renewed life in the Spirit that should follow it. Our own personal holiness will be our greatest strength in helping to build the Church. We need to persevere every day in prayer, Scripture study, and righteous living. We need to obey God and draw close to Him, and intercede for the needs of the Church.

Hundreds of thousands of Catholics in the United States attend weekly charismatic prayer meetings. What distinguishes these groups is their praise of Jesus Christ as Lord and the use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit including healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and spontaneous prayer.

Ongoing growth and teaching in the Renewal are made available through Growth in the Spirit Seminars, days of renewal, retreats, annual conferences, and healing ministry. In the Peoria Diocese, these are arranged through the Advisory Board of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal which is under the direct authority of the Bishop of the Diocese. A monthly newsletter is also available through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office. It provides a calendar of coming events.

The grace of Pentecost has been given to us in this generation as to the first Christians. It is a gift for the whole Church. It is a power intended to renew the face of the earth!

Pope John Paul II spoke in March 2002: “Yes! The Renewal in the Spirit can be considered a special gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church in our time. Born in the Church and for the Church, your movement is one in which, following the light of the Gospel, the members experience the living encounter with Jesus, fidelity to God in personal and community prayer, confident listening to His Word and a vital rediscovery of the Sacraments, not to mention courage in trials and hope in hardship.”

**Come, Lord Jesus!
Reign in our hearts!**

Catholic Charismatic Renewal
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