

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Special Events**
 - **1999 CCR Conference at Concordia University in St. Paul**
Friday-Saturday, March 19-20
Speakers: Archbishop Flynn, Babsie Bleasdel, Rudy Pruden, and Fr. Bob Bedard (with Bob Bennett in concert)
Contact: Barb at the CRO (721-2543)
- **Healing Masses**
 - **St. Therese Church in St. Paul**
Monday, January 18, 1999 at 7:30 p.m.
Presider: Fr. Leon Klimczyk
Contact: Sr. Mary Anne Letendre (690-1501)

Charismatic??? by Larry Nawrocki

What does the word "charismatic" mean? To whom does the term "charismatic" apply? Is there a litmus test that can be applied to use of the word correctly? If these questions were asked to 100 people, we'd probably get as many different answers.

What difference does it make anyway? Is it really that big of a deal? I believe that the answers to these questions are important. They must be important to me; I use the expression "charismatic spirituality" frequently in my conversations, and, without even thinking about it on the occasions when I do, looking back on those occasions, I experience a sense of great value in my charismatic spirituality. I really have to stop, therefore, take a step back and ask myself what I mean when I use the expression.

Attempts have been made to define "charismatic" in terms of conduct in which those involved in the Charismatic Renewal movement engage. For example, OUR

"Charismatic" means that God is personal to me, that the Spirit of God who inhabits me compels me to

SUNDAY VISITOR'S CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, in discussing the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, refers to charismatics as meeting in groups "...to pray, sing, share the Spirit and testify about personal faith moments." It seems to me that this specific definition in terms of conduct alone just doesn't quite do it. I know many people who don't attend weekly or monthly prayer meetings but who, in my opinion, should certainly be considered "charismatic".

Other attempts have been made to define the term. On occasion, the word has been viewed exclusively within the context of the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12. In accordance with this definition, one would be "charismatic" if he or she manifested one or more of the nine gifts enumerated there on a regular basis. While this type of spiritual involvement is an aspect of charismatic spirituality, I don't believe that it is the definitive test.

Maybe what is important is not that we can come up with a definition that satisfies everyone, but, rather, that we've personally come to grips with the word and know what it means to us. I think I know what "charismatic" means to me. It doesn't mean mere attendance at a prayer meeting, and it doesn't even mean only participation in a significant movement within Christianity. To me "charismatic" is a way of life. It means life change resulting through the action of the Holy Spirit; it means life change because of being baptized in the Spirit. It means that God is real, that the Jesus of the gospels lived and performed the miracles that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us about.

"Charismatic" means that God is alive today. It means that God does today what He did two thousand years ago. It means that He still heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, and feeds the hungry... and it means that He still does these things in a supernatural way.

follow in the footsteps of Jesus. It means that I seek to live the kind of life God would choose for me, the kind of life that Jesus showed

through His example. It means that I am a good steward and that I feed the hungry and clothe the naked using my resources. It also means, however, that I accept God's gifts to allow Jesus to continue to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the sick in a supernatural way ...using me as an instrument. It means that I make myself open to all of God's gifts.

"Charismatic" means that I reflect the Spirit of God living in me by manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It means that my life is peaceful and full of joy. It means that I am growing in patience and endurance. It means that I am concerned for others and that I seek to do good in all my actions. It means that I want to be faithful to God in all that I do, and it means that my life is governed by love.

It does not mean that I am perfect; I am a sinner. Being a sinner doesn't mean, however, that I don't try -- I still try, but I don't try on my own. "Charismatic" means that I seek to be perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect, knowing that when I fall I am forgiven. "Charismatic" means that I have the assurance that the God who is real, alive and personal to me is always with me and helping me.

It also is important to me what the word "charismatic" means to you, the reader. In this publication, we have sought to be faithful, for the most part, in writing about topics dealing with charismatic spirituality.

To enable us to do so, we must know what your concept of the word "charismatic" is. To this end then, we would ask that you write to the CRO letting us know how you define the word. Please send your input addressed to:

CRO: "CHARISMATIC"

3927 E. Lake Street

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We will publish representative definitions in a future issue of the NEWSLETTER. Thank you in advance for your help.

Focus on:

**Glory of God Prayer Community
Winona, Minnesota**

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in 1967. By the end of the 60's God had found even Winona, Minnesota. A number of Catholics had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and were meeting with an ecumenical group.

The associate pastor of St. Mary's parish at the time, Fr. Jim Kunz, suggested that there should be a Catholic group, so those who were Catholic started a prayer group in March of 1974. Later it was named Glory of God Prayer Group. The prayer group has been meeting ever since on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Once a month we have a charismatic mass celebrated by one of the priests of the surrounding area.

We are like many other prayer groups. We had very significant growth and large numbers of people attending in the late 70's.

In the early 80's, numbers dropped off. In the mid 80's, we again had a growth spurt with meeting attendance typically being 35-45. We again dropped in numbers, but attendance is still anywhere from 18-25 at a meeting. It was in the mid 80's that we changed our name from Glory of God Prayer Group to Glory of God Prayer Community. The group included many young families and wanted to focus on the community formation aspect.

In the early 1980's we were trying to discern our mission. God let us know we were called to be a praise and worship prayer group. This became our focus: praising God. God has also blessed us with the manifestation of all the charisms over these past 24 years. He has let us experience the "full gospel" message at different times and in different ways.

In addition to praise, we have focused on other aspects as well. These include ministry to the poor, and, periodically, we have had fund raisers pursuant to that ministry. On one occasion about ten years ago, we were sponsoring an omelet breakfast after masses one Sunday.

We had previously undertaken about four of these and raised anywhere from \$500 to \$1,200.

On this particular Sunday we were having a terrible response, and I knew we would take in

maybe only \$200 to \$300. I was grumbling to God saying, "Here are all these good people working so hard to raise money for your poor, and we are getting such a poor response to our efforts."

About two minutes after my complaining, a young man walked up to me and handed me a cashier's check for \$1,000. Well, I guess God knows how to humble us and let us know who is in charge. It was another example of how, if we want to do something for God, we should do the very best we can and let God take care of the rest! We have to stop thinking everything is on our shoulders. It's God's world, and we just serve Him the very best we can.

As with all prayer groups, we can share many stories of healings, miracles and reformed lives. God is the same with all of us. We have tried to remain faithful and true to the blessings He has given Glory of God Prayer Community. I recently heard a quote summing up so much of our efforts in the Charismatic Renewal. "Evangelization is an echo of God's love." In response to our being filled with the Spirit of God to save, heal and redeem, we can mirror this love of God by sharing the full gospel with those around us.

Dick Bergeson

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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In worship we become preoccupied with the Lord. We don't watch something happen, we participate in it.

It's coming to a place in our life, either alone, with a few or with many, where we "connect" with the living God. It is almost as though we could reach out and touch Him.

- ...that 1999 is the year dedicated to The Father?

Did you know? The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) enumerates the fruits of the Holy Spirit? This issue of the Newsletter includes what the Catechism has to say on this topic of interest.

CCC: The Fruits of the Spirit

Printed below is a very limited excerpt from the CCC addressing "the fruits".

1832 The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."

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