

# CHARISMATIC RENEWAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

2721 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Minneapolis MN 55406  
jolenecarpenter@juno.com

(612) 721-2543

E-mail:

Colin LaVergne, Chairman of the Board  
Jolene Carpenter, Administrator  
Larry Nawrocki, Editor

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### Mission Statement:



*Our mission is to help people respond to the call to conversion to the lordship of Jesus Christ, transformation through Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and to assist in the spiritual renewal of people and parishes.*

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Fire in January!** The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office recently sponsored a three-part seminar for priests called "FIRE IN JANUARY!". All priests in our archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis were invited, as well as were priests from nearby dioceses.

The first session was held on Monday, January 8. In his talk, "***The Holy Spirit--Transforming the Life of the Priest***", Fr. Tim Nolan addressed the 21 priests in attendance, and spoke from personal experience of the difference in his life between "head knowledge" and "heart knowledge", of the love of God, and of how his life was changed through the power of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Joseph Keefe from Winona gave a short witness about the difference it makes when the unconditional and personal love of God is realized.

The second session, held on Tuesday, January 16, was entitled "***The Holy Spirit--Transforming the Ministry of the Priest***" and was led by Fr. Dennis Dempsey. Fr. Dempsey shared experiences from his current parish and from his time in

Venezuela with our diocesan mission. It was from the diocesan mission that Catholic Charismatic Renewal was introduced in Venezuela! To this day, the people are very open to the charisms of the Holy Spirit, and the parish which resulted from the mission is vibrant and flourishing. Fr. Jim Livingston gave a witness talk during which he related several instances when the Holy Spirit directly and powerfully moved and intervened either in his life or in the life of one of his parishioners. Approximately 17 priests attended the second session.

On Tuesday, January 23, the third and final part of the seminar, "***The Charisms of the Holy Spirit***", was lead by Fr. David Smith. He explained and illustrated ways the Holy Spirit uses the charisms to meet the needs of God's people. He also offered many examples from his personal experience and encouraged all to be open to the ways in which the Lord might work through them.

There was time for sharing and praying with each other. Glory and praise to God for the work He is doing and

continues to do through His priests. Please keep them in your prayers.

**Music Workshop** A follow-up to our November workshop on "Leading Charismatic Worship" is planned for musicians. Randy Lehnen and Ed Gross from the Community of Christ the Redeemer will again facilitate the workshop. This session is tentatively scheduled for a Saturday morning in late February or early March and is expected to be held at the NET Center (110 Crusader Avenue in West St. Paul). The focus will be learning new music and being aware of additional resources available. Randy has written a couple of songs himself which he will be sharing. Call the Renewal Office at (612) 721-2543, for more information and to register.

Tears by Larry Nawrocki

What do we think of when we hear the expression "the charismatic gifts"? The gifts of Chapter 12 of Paul's letter to the Romans may come to mind: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, almsgiving, administration and mercy giving. Many may think of the gifts listed in Ephesians 4: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The gifts of I Corinthians 12 will probably occur to most: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. Virtually every commentary exposition of charismatic gifts, however, is quick to add, after discussing these specifically enumerated graces, that there are a whole host of gifts that are not expressly listed in scripture.

It has been my experience that one of the more frequent, and frequently ignored, charismatic manifestations is the "gift of tears". I can vividly recall the first Life in the Spirit Seminar offered by the prayer group in which I am involved. There were somewhere between 65 and 70 candidates attending the seminar, and quite a large percentage of them were blessed with the gift.

Over the years, I have known many individuals to experience the gift of tears, and I have been one of them. My wife recently shared

with me how she, our daughters and my wife's sister and her daughters were discussing when they had observed their respective husband and father shed tears. I guess I'm not perceived as being particularly emotional, and, at last initially, no one could remember having seen me cry. After giving the matter some thought, however, one of my daughters related how she had observed tear streaks down my cheeks when one of her sisters had the role of the Virgin Mary in a seventh grade Christmas pageant and sang a very moving song; I remember that occasion. Frankly, I remember many other times when God has caused me to confront a moving experience and I have wept. In each such instance, I had been overcome by some strong emotion: a sense of pride and joy in my daughter's performance, sadness, etc.

On other occasions, however, I have experienced tears where there was no apparent reason for me to be crying. Typically, these occasions have been when I was caught up in praise. I can recall numerous times when, during a period of praise and worship at a prayer meeting, I began to shed tears. The occasion that remains most firmly in my memory, however, is the Notre Dame Conference in 1982. It was the Saturday morning session, and the liturgy was being celebrated just before breaking for lunch. As I was waiting at my seat until it was time for my row to go forward for the eucharist, the Holy Spirit came upon me. For no apparent reason, I felt tears welling up within me. It's not that I thought it important to resist the urge, but I didn't want to do anything that was not fully sincere. As a result, I didn't immediately surrender to the gift I was being given. I became flooded, however, with a sensation of standing in the surf and being pounded by wave after wave. Each wave had more power than the previous one, and, as successive waves hit me, I felt myself being touched more deeply by the power of the Spirit. Eventually, that power was

overwhelming, and I ended sobbing uncontrollably.

It's always good to measure our experiences by a scriptural standard. We do know that "Jesus wept." John 11:35 Jesus was powerfully affected by being brought to the burial place of his friend Lazarus, and He was moved to tears by the experience.

On another occasion, Jesus was overcome by sadness when Jerusalem loomed into sight as He approached the city. He was given a vision of Jerusalem's destruction and the razing of the temple at the hands of the Roman armies. Jesus loved the city, and to know its fate, especially in view of its having failed to recognize its time of special visitation, was disconcerting to Him. And He wept over the holy city. Luke 19:41+

Commentaries on the Bible often attribute materiality to the fact that a particular issue is dealt with many times between Genesis and Revelation. I suppose the theory is that, if it's worth mentioning something important, it's worth mentioning something very important many times. I think it is also true, however, that a dearth of references to an issue can reflect significance. The superimposing of the two isolated references to Jesus weeping over a backdrop devoid of other references tends to highlight the importance of the gift. Irrespective of how we view the question, though, we do know that Jesus experienced tears. It's nice to know that, when we are blessed with this gift, we're in good company.

Clearly the gift of tears is a special grace. Its absence can reflect the presence of one or both of two maladies: a desert experience and a hardness of heart. We speak of "dry" periods in our lives when we feel uninspired and lacking a closeness to God. I can't remember ever undergoing a dry time in my life during which I was able to cry. The same can be said of times when I've allowed my heart to become hard. While I have almost longed to shed tears, they just don't seem to be able to come.

It is a corollary to the tenet that desert experiences and periods of hardness of heart are typically devoid of tears, that the gift is a cure – or at least medicine – for the maladies. The grace almost seems to be mutually exclusive to both infirmities. The release of tears tends to end spiritual aridity just as a cloudburst ends a period

of drought; the shedding of tears tends to moisten and soften one's heart.

In conclusion, while many may consider tears to derive from, and be a manifestation of, sadness, those who have experienced tears as a gift know the blessing and release they can be. God often bestows the gift upon us as a cleansing experience. May He water our spirits and our hearts to foster growth in us.

### Have you heard...?

- A church in Zurich, Switzerland has grown from 100 to over 2,000 in the last four years by featuring Sunday services for non-believers using high-energy, show business, non-worship type events. Video, drama, smoke and lights, and dancing to live music are used to present the Gospel. The youth-oriented church meets on Monday evenings for worship and uses cell groups for formation.
- Over 5 million Nigerians attended Reinhard Bonnke's six-day crusade in November. Hundreds of thousands were converted to Christ and baptized in the Spirit. Many were physically healed also. You may recall that Bonnke was one of the featured speakers at the CRO-sponsored "Arming for Action" Conference in 1987.
- The most watched TV movies of the last two years are "Life of Jesus Christ" and "Noah's Ark."

### Upcoming Events

#### *Life in the Spirit Seminars*

**February 17** - A special Life in the Spirit Seminar for anyone who already is familiar with Charismatic Renewal and the charisms of the Holy Spirit...and "can't wait!" to be prayed with! A one-day seminar – Saturday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – St. Timothy's Church, Maple Lake. For information and registration, call Mary Hagar at (320) 543-3782.

**Starting March 1** – St. Peter's in Forest Lake – 7:30 p.m. – six weeks. For more information

and to register, call Ben Henrichs at (651) 426-3013.

***Healing Masses***

**February 19** - Monday - St. Therese Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. in the lower chapel (below the Church). Contact: Sr. Mary Anne at (651) 690-1501.

**March 6** – Tuesday – St. Peter’s, North St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Bob O’Connor at (651) 777-4406 for more information.

**March 8** – Thursday – Holy Name Church, Wayzata. Rosary at 7:10 p.m., Mass at 7:30 p.m. Contact Teresa Walker at (763) 553-1343.

**March 19** – Monday – St. Therese Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. in their lower chapel (below the Church). Contact: Sr. Mary Anne at (651) 690-1501.

***Other Events***

**Every Monday evening** – “Burn Service” – An ecumenical praise and worship service for teens

(primarily high school age, but junior high are welcome also), Elk River High School (Door H), 8:00 p.m. Contact Rachel at (763) 263-3139.

**April 26-29** - “Wisdom 2001” – Minneapolis Convention Center – An extraordinary gathering of Charismatic leaders from the early days of the Renewal (including Fr. Bob DeGrandis, Fr. Mike Scanlan, Francis McNutt, Fr. John Bertolucci and Bishop Sam Jacobs, among many others) – Sponsored by Resurrection Events. Pre-Registration \$99.

**June 8-10** – National Catholic Renewal Conference in Houston, Texas – “The New Springtime: Do You Not Perceive It?” Registration \$69. Call for more information: (800) 338-2445.

**July 27-29** - “God – There is No Other!” – Steubenville Youth Conference – University of St. Thomas – Adult volunteers needed. Call the CCRO at (612) 721-2543.