

# CHARISMATIC RENEWAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Why you should attend the Annual Regional Catholic Charismatic Conference on May 12-13, 2000:**

**- Inspiring Speakers:**

- Bishop Paul Dudley - former bishop of the Sioux Falls Diocese
- Fr. Art Cooney - a member of the National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal
- Marilyn Kramar - bilingual evangelist, speaker, author
- Curt and Pat Melcher - itinerant evangelists who weave drama into their outreach

- Experience unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit
- Be affirmed and strengthened in manifestation of the charisms
- In a spirit of evangelism, invite someone to accompany you (There is a Spanish track on Saturday.)

- ▶ The Twin Cities Alpha Conference is coming July 17 and 18. It will be held at North Heights Lutheran Church in Arden Hills. During this Jubilee year we can answer the call to begin to become more effective in evangelization. One way is through Alpha, an evangelization program developed in London as a basic introduction to the Christian faith. Archbishop Flynn is inviting all parishes to come and receive the training in order to start an Alpha course in your local parish. For more information, call (651) 415-0349.
- ▶ The CCRO plans to charter a bus for anybody needing transportation to St. Louis for the *CELEBRATE JESUS 2000* Conference on June 22-25, 2000. The bus will leave Minneapolis at about midnight on Wednesday, June 21 and arrive in St. Louis at about noon on Thursday, June 22. Returning, the bus will depart St. Louis on Sunday, June 25 at about noon after the closing Mass. It will arrive back in Minneapolis

at about midnight. The round trip cost is \$75.00 which covers transportation only.

## An Interview with Fr. Art Cooney

*Editor's Note: Rev. Art Cooney is a Capuchin Franciscan Priest. Bilingual, he travels extensively in North and Central America. He ministers inner healing at retreats, missions and prayer groups. He is a member of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and he will be one of the featured speakers at the annual regional Catholic Charismatic Conference on May 12-13, 2000.*

**LARRY:** Fr. Art, I'd like to ask you, first, about your personal ministry... where it's been taking you, what you've been doing, what you discern God is saying to you.

**FR. ART:** I am involved in full-time preaching ministry. I am assigned to do preaching through my order. During Lent I will do a number of parish missions.

**LARRY:** Do you minister primarily near Saginaw, Michigan?

**FR. ART:** There are a couple missions in the Saginaw area. There's one that's bilingual--Spanish and English--in New Mexico. There's one in another part of Michigan. They have been throughout the United States and beyond. I spoke at a national conference a couple of years ago in New Jersey. I have spoken at some of the leadership days for the national conferences. I have spoken at conference masses having given homilies on those occasions. I have spoken at many other conferences around the country. El Paso, San Antonio, Chicago and other locations.

**LARRY:** I think when we first spoke when I called you a month or two ago, you had just gotten back from international travel. Was that for a conference?

**FR. ART:** That's right. I was a keynote speaker at the National Conference in India. It was right between Christmas and New Years in Goa, India. And then after that, during the first week in January, there was a national priest retreat in India. I spoke at both of them.

**LARRY:** Before those two conferences had you had much experience ministering in India?

**FR. ART:** No. It was my first time in India actually.

**LARRY:** Were these charismatic conferences?

**FR. ART:** That's right. This was the national charismatic conference of India. They stopped registration at 18,000, because that was all the tents could accommodate. I was quite impressed by the faith and devotion among the people.

**LARRY:** How would you characterize the state of the charismatic renewal in India as compared to the United States, for example?

**FR. ART:** Well, that's a good question. I think there are some similarities. The renewal is very diverse in India. They have many different languages.

**LARRY:** Did language present any problem for you?

**FR. ART:** Well, no major problem. There were times during the conference we had a translator. When I or anybody else spoke in English, there was somebody translating into the local language also.

**LARRY:** Was there a pretty wide understanding of English?

**FR. ART:** Many people have some basic understanding of English. The more educated people were that much more fluent in it.

**LARRY:** With this being guess the year of Jubilee, one recommendation being made is that we attempt to make a pilgrimage. Have you had an opportunity to make a pilgrimage yourself other than your ministering?

**FR. ART:** I have accompanied various pilgrimages as Chaplain.

**LARRY:** Where were those pilgrimages to?

**FR. ART:** I've accompanied pilgrimages a number of times to the Holy Land, a number of times to Our Lady Guadalupe in Mexico, and once to Lourdes.

**LARRY:** On any of those, did you have any particularly uplifting experiences that you would comment on?

**FR. ART:** Well, I was touched by something that happened this last November in Jerusalem at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Our group was there, and I had the opportunity to meet a fellow whose family has been the caretakers of the church for the last 800 years. After our group had left, we were outside in the patio area, and he came looking for me. He said, "I have something to give you." And he called me back inside and gave me this oil and

rosewater that were from the church there. He said, "I want you to have these." I was very touched by the symbolism of the keeper of the keys -- the gatekeeper or doorkeeper -- and the Jubilee year opening up the doors. To receive this gift from the person in charge of the doors of the Holy Sepulchre was symbolic of the doors of grace that are opening for people during the Holy Year. And, in my own personal life too, I believe that God is opening doors of opportunity.

**LARRY:** Had he given you the oil and rosewater as the spiritual director of the tour or as an internationally known speaker?

**FR. ART:** I don't think he knew any of my background. He didn't really say. I don't know; he didn't really explain. He just said, "I want you to have this."

**LARRY:** Have you seen fruits of that since?

**FR. ART:** Well, yes. I have certainly seen God opening up doors in my personal life, especially the ministry among the priests in India. But I have also noticed doors opened in my own diocese here in terms of renewal. I get most invitations from other parts of the country, but lately there have been local parishes that have been asking for healing masses or Life in the Spirit Seminars. So I see God opening up doors also in our parish.

**LARRY:** You're referring to parishes which have not necessarily been open to charismatic spirituality?

**FR. ART:** Yes. We had a healing mass at a very traditional parish. We had a good group of people, most of whom had never been to a prayer meeting. Many of them, by the end of the mass, were praying in tongues and were coming up for prayer. Others had their hands up and were just very open to the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**LARRY:** That sure does sound like an opening of doors.

**FR. ART:** Yes. I think that the symbol of the door being opened is very profound. The Holy Father's referred to that in so many ways. The first address to the people after being made Pope focused upon opening wide the doors to Jesus Christ. A couple years ago he wrote the book Crossing the Threshold of Hope. And again there is the image of a doorway and a door of opportunity. I definitely see more of an opening up among pastors and parishes. By means of events, people who haven't gone to prayer meetings or may not have been introduced to the gifts of the Holy Spirit are experiencing another dimension in their lives.

**LARRY:** What do you feel God is saying to you personally?

**FR. ART:** I'm trying to just be attentive to the Lord and be prepared, be alert, and see which door the Lord opens. In my personal life, I see more opportunities coming to minister to priests. Hopefully by influencing some of them, opening the doors for other people can occur too.

**LARRY:** You are active in Hispanic ministry. You're fluent in Spanish. How did you acquire that fluency?

**FR. ART:** I spent five years as a missionary in Central America in Nicaragua. I was there during the civil war and difficult times.

**LARRY:** Well, tell me about your present involvement in Hispanic ministry.

**FR. ART:** Today it's on a couple levels. In my local parish I sometimes fill in and help. My local parish is a bilingual parish, and we have mass every Sunday in Spanish. Also, I do different parish missions and retreats that are bilingual or in Spanish. In terms of renewal, I have spoken at conferences and retreats in Mexico, and I've done healing services in missions in Central America, especially Panama. And I do speak at bilingual and Spanish conferences from time to time.

**LARRY:** How about differences between ministry to Hispanics and non-Hispanics? Do you find any more acceptance of the charisms and openness to charismatic renewal either way?

**FR. ART:** I think charismatic renewal is a very natural fit in the Hispanic culture. People are expressive. People love to sing, love to share their faith. Hispanics take to it easier I think.

**LARRY:** Why don't we move on to the National Service Committee. How long have you been a member?

**FR. ART:** I think it's four years now. I was an advisory member for some time before that.

**LARRY:** What can you tell us about what's going on at the national level in charismatic renewal?

**FR. ART:** There are a couple of initiatives that are relatively recent. One of the more exciting things right now is the new Catholic edition of the Life in the Spirit Seminar Manual. We're seeing a very good response to the Manual in terms of people ordering, and we're hoping that that also will be used by the Lord to open doors in the parishes. I think when pastors and educators see this edition and how it is integrated with Catholic teaching and the Catechism, I think that will give them more assurance in promoting it or having a seminar in their parish.

**LARRY:** You mentioned a couple initiatives. Anything else you want to mention?

**FR. ART:** Yes. I'm on the Newsletter committee editorial board, and we're coming out with a new format. I think the format--the color and everything are just great. In this millennial year, the new format symbolizes renewed hope, renewed expectations, renewed excitement about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and experiencing Pentecost.

**LARRY:** Is Ron Ryan still the editor?

**FR. ART:** That's right. He's the editor of the newsletter in the new format.

**LARRY:** The last thing about which I have a question is with regard to formal charismatic renewal and where it's going in your opinion. I don't know if our communities are doing as well as they have in the past. Prayer groups seem to be diminishing in numbers for the most part. There are some that are alive and growing. What's your take on this issue?

**FR. ART:** I certainly see that happening in this country. I think in this country, at least right at the moment, the most activity seems to be among ethnic groups. There are some very hopeful things among youth... not only the various conferences and things, but the different youth movements.

I see our task in the renewal as bringing Baptism in the Spirit and the gifts of the spirit into the life of the church. Right now there seems to be doors opening through music, through youth, through events like healing services, retreats, through the Life in the Spirit Seminars which are being given in many places.

I think that it's important for people to gather in some way. Whether that will be the traditional prayer meeting or whether small cell groups or sharing groups are going to be formed. It's going to be important for people to gather to pray together, to receive ministry, to pray with one another in some way.

I think that we have to recognize, at least in this country, that in getting into this, it's probably not so much exclusively through prayer groups. Prayer groups I think are going to be more cell groups more for our own support and encouragement. It's through events and seminars, healing services that people are being exposed to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I think we must recognize where the doors are opening and go with that.

**LARRY:** When you're offering a parish mission or a healing mass or something of that nature and there are people who have not had any exposure--or maybe minimal exposure--to charismatic spirituality, what would you say the receptiveness of those people is to charismatic gifts?

**FR. ART:** Things should be done well. The music must be done well and the preaching must touch hearts. If things are explained and done in a gentle way, in a worshipful way, in a reverent way, and things are explained as to how they are related to tradition, I think that in those cases people have been quite open and quite receptive.

For example, in teaching on the gift of tongues I will oftentimes compare it to the rosary in a sense. I tell people it's a prayer rhythm, and, like you get into the rhythm of the rosary, you don't have to think of what you're going to say. It's kind of automatic; your mind is free to focus on the mystery. That's why you can be driving a car or washing dishes when praying the rosary. And it's like that

in tongues, too. You get into the rhythm of it, and you don't have to think of what you're going to say. Your mind is free to focus on the Lord. I try to make comparisons with things of which people are aware such as traditional things.

**FR. ART:** Just this: I experienced Baptism in the Spirit in 1969. I was 20 years old, and I was in the seminary. I would have never made it through the seminary and I would have never made it to ordination without that experience. It gave me a living experience of Jesus Christ and a desire to serve. That experience was something to which I could go back in difficult times, because I knew that, no matter what sacrifices were called for, Jesus was real and that Jesus was worth the sacrifice.

### Upcoming Events

#### *Annual Conference*

**May 12-13** - Annual Spring Conference - *MANY GIFTS, ONE BODY IN CHRIST*, Totino-Grace High School, Fridley. Speakers: Bishop Dudley, Marilyn Kramar, Fr. Art Cooney, Curt and Pat Melcher. Saturday evening Mass and Healing Service with Bishop Dudley

#### *Healing Masses*

**April 17** - Monday - Healing Mass, St. Therese Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. in their lower chapel

**LARRY:** Do you have anything in closing that's on your heart?

(below the Church). Contact: Sr. Mary Anne (651) 690-1501.

**May 2** - Tuesday - Healing Mass, St. Peter's, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Bob O'Connor (651) 777-4406.

#### *Other Events*

**April 22** - "Heart of the City" ecumenical worship gathering - 6:30 p.m. - Bethel College.

**April 28-30** - *Love Retreat for the Bride of Christ* - Sister Francis Clare - Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo, Minnesota. Contact: Carrie (612) 441-5197.

**May 5-7** - *Discernment 2000 Conference* - Minneapolis Convention Center. Speakers: Fr. John Hampsch, Fr. Matt Linn, Rev. Larry Christenson, Rev. Peter Lord, Jon Trott, Sherry Weddell, Colin LaVergne

**May 20** - "Heart of the City" ecumenical worship gathering - 6:30 p.m., First Covenant Church, Minneapolis (near Dome).

**June 22-25** - *Celebrate Jesus 2000* - National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. A charter bus from Minneapolis is available--make your reservation as soon as possible! Contact: Jolene at CCRO (612) 721-2543 for more information.