

Charismatic Gifts of the Spirit Notes from Presentation One (Fr. Henry Gautreau)

This gathering is a result of the Second Vatican Council which took place from 1962-1965. I was in graduate school in the early 1960's, and I had a Baptist classmate that I spoke with concerning the changes that we anticipated in the Church. Pope John XXIII spoke of a new Pentecost... opening the windows wide to let in fresh air, so that the Church could breathe and be renewed.

The Charismatic Renewal really began at Pentecost. Jesus met with his disciples, and he was instructing them in the ways of salvation, and He told them to remain in Jerusalem. The Jews had waited for the promise of the Father for centuries. But he also promised the Holy Spirit. It is offered to all those who are baptized.

As a movement, the CCR is new and unique. Professors from Duquesne University were gathered together in 1967 and decided that they wanted to offer a special experience to a group of students. The university has as its patron the Holy Spirit. They were interested in getting some of their students together for a retreat in the Pittsburgh area. The goal was for the students to get more in touch with their Confirmation promises. So with intense prayer, a number of the students received the gifts of the Holy Spirit: speaking in tongues and other powerful gifts.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) does not have a human author, such as St. Benedict founded the Benedictines, or St. Ignatius founded the Jesuit order. The students were seeking something more, and didn't know what would happen and how it would happen. Those students had friends in other universities, so networking happened. These original students spread the word and the gifts with other friends. In the year 2000, there was a survey taken, and at that time, 120 million Catholics had experienced the **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**. Also, people in 235 countries had been touched by this movement of the Spirit.

We have to see this movement in a special way. When movements are started by human beings, it can be suppressed. Or movements can die away because it fulfills its purpose. But God started the CCR movement, so who or how can it be suppressed? God is the author of it, and He will bring about new movements when the time arises. It has been referred to as **“a flow of grace in which the Catholic becomes greater associated with the person, power, and grace of Jesus Christ.”** This movement is not a devotion like the Rosary, or the Divine Mercy chaplet. Even though it involves prayer, it is a process to opening up to what God wants to do in our lives. It involves an act of surrender.

Two essential aspects:

1. Praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, openness in our relationship to God.
2. Praise and worship.

People think of a charismatic prayer group as being loud and rowdy. People may not be completely comfortable with it. But once we focus on prayer, it brings us to a new level or experience. Sometimes, tongues may be uttered, and sometimes a prophecy may be uttered. Then things may die down, and silence emerges, and it becomes a time of contemplative prayer, where the group enjoys just being present to God for a moment, for it feels that the door to His grace has been fully opened. The silent time is a time to receive grace.

So to reach this point, we must let go of control and allow God to work. It is a time of release and abandonment. We must trust that our God is one of love; and He desires to be in communion. Regardless of whether we allow it or not, the reality is that God is still always in control.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God through the ministry and the sacraments. Special gifts are given besides (1 Corinthians 12:7), allotting them to each one as he wills. They are varied gifts.

Every member of the church is given some charism. It is their right and their duty to use these gifts. The Second Vatican Council taught the Church that the laity's role is more than the mentality of “pray, pay, and

obey.” The Holy Spirit gives power! It goes back to the responsibility that comes with Baptism—the laity exercises a particular call: evangelization.

One of the great debates during the Second Vatican Council was centered on the nature of the Church—how the structure was understood. So in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church clearly states that the Church is hierarchical, but the gifts can be hierarchical also, as St. Paul speaks about in his letters to the Corinthians, especially in 1 Corinthians 12:11. Every level of the church will receive special gifts of the Spirit.

When we get out of our comfort zone when the pastor asks us to do something, the Spirit supplies where the human ability may be lacking. If people make a faithful response, they get closer to God and also receive a joy-filled reward. Mary is the greatest human example of this, when she asked how she could conceive, without knowing man. Gabriel promised that the Holy Spirit would be the one to make it possible. We shouldn't be frightened that the Holy Spirit works this way, but realize that the Holy Spirit is God, and therefore, it is God's will that it happen this way.

The Duquesne Weekend was held in February 1967... 45 years ago. It spread first among university students. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, two laymen in St. Aloysius Parish were asked to be CCD teachers. They didn't know how to be teachers, but the pastor told them to attend a religious education conference. The conference was not a good one (a presenter downed St. Thomas Aquinas), so they left early. Come to find out, the conference was really a promotion to buy religious education textbooks, and not about how to teach. As they were leaving, they found a sign outside another room that said “Catholic Charismatic Renewal”. They stayed for the whole conference and that is where the movement began in Baton Rouge.

In the early Church, the charismatic gifts were taken for granted. St. Hilary spoke about this in the 4th century when writing about baptism: to experience joy, prophesy, gifts of healing, and have the demonic fall subject to their authority was COMMON. Keep in mind that things were historically different at that time: the Church was persecuted, and people sought entrance to the Church in secret. It was not something that you decided to do lightly. It was something that you were convinced of in your heart. RCIA as a year-long process comes from this early church history. To understand the Scriptures in a way that you never understood it before, to prophesy, to humble oneself before the Lord was common back then. Now, we are a people who turn to God only when something scary in our lives or in the world happens. Speaking with wisdom is important, especially for teachers.

When it comes to the demonic in our midst, and being masters over the demonic, this is where the gifts come to the aid to the Church today. Today we are beginning to rediscover the need for exorcists in our Diocese. Only in rare cases do we need the aid of an exorcist, but the devil is alive and well. Animals that are wounded are the best victims for lions. So praying for inner deliverance, for personal healing is a sure way of protecting ourselves against the devil.

Prayer Group Leadership Development

The success of the CCR largely depends on the quality of its leadership: informed, balanced, mature, and doctrinally sound (true to Catholic teachings and tradition).

Levels of Leadership (always see themselves as servants):

Pastoral Team

Core groups

Ministries

Distinguish between the prayer group or community and the prayer meeting.

Great question for the prayer group (at all times): “God, help us to know what you want us to do.”

The mission of the Church:

1. Evangelization

2. Sanctification

3. Restoring or Renewal of the Temporal Order

Benefits of CCR: more people entering the Church, greater holiness in life, developing the Church, growing the Church as a community (a place of fellowship, showing concern to fellow parishioners), developing a social justice ministry, such as St. Vincent de Paul.

The CCR and other renewal movements seek to help the Catholic Church to fulfill its three-fold mission. Some key aspects of the CCR relative to the mission of the Church:

--The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is often experienced as an actualization of sacramental baptism: the sacraments of initiation become more effective in the person's life. This is like good dynamite in a typical church parish. A church parish with few "do-ers" has a lot of worthless members—this is the Church's sentiment. The Church is handicapped by non-participating members that lack a ministry. Sometimes, you open yourself up to being called a fool for loving Jesus and opening yourself up to the Holy Spirit. Trust to say, "I want more of God in my life." And God will not disappoint. This goes in stark contrast to a hedonistic lifestyle, while claiming to a Christian. Because usually, it is garbage in, and garbage out.

A sacrament brings about a profound level of grace when celebrated properly and according to the Church, but also, the person receiving the sacrament must bring an appropriate amount of faith to receive the maximum benefit. Many times, the Catholics of today are not truly open to receiving the greater amount of gifts. So Confirmation today can be given, but bond and tied.

--A deeper personal relationship with God—He is not only a God of the law, but a God of love.

--Relationship with God also experienced as a dynamic relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

--Christian faith moves beyond a focus on a set of doctrines and practices and becomes more the enjoyment of loving relationships with the Trinity and the members of the Body of Christ.

--More openness to sharing in the three-fold work of evangelization, sanctification, and renewal of the temporal order (stewardship living).

--Opening Catholics to the use of charisms for the upbuilding and renewal of the Church.

1. Experiencing the authentic and mature use of the charisms enables the individual to learn to be open to the Spirit's work in other ways and increasingly rely on God's power.

2. thereby supernatural power** is restored to the members of the Body of Christ, enabling the Church to more effectively achieve its mission in the world. (**Example of Mary)

A unique aspect of the CCR is its experiential nature, touching the individual Catholic is a deeply effective way. We do not believe as Catholics that speaking in tongues is the definitive way to show that one was baptized by the Holy Spirit. This is only one of the gifts. Some pray in tongues, some would feel more peace in thinking about God and their relationship, someone will desire to learn more Scripture, to forgive easier, to gain greater patience, and finally, to begin a hunger for ministry in the community or in the greater diocesan church.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

--is the primary means to accomplish the goal or purpose of the CCR.

--the Baptism of the Holy Spirit holds a key place within the prayer, teaching and spirituality of an authentic CCR prayer meeting. The baptism is not a one-time experience. We are limited receivers at some moments. In our human condition, we are like tin pales pulling water out of a vast ocean. As we become more open to God's grace, He wants us to reach more from Him. Today, people turn themselves off to receiving from God. They would rather get peanuts from God than to drink from the depth of His giving nature. God gave so much to the apostles at Pentecost—a powerful, flame-inspiring event.

Fr. Cohen says that the Baptism of the Spirit is like making chocolate milk. When you pour in the syrup (at Confirmation), you have to stir it up in order to get the desired product.

--The experience of a new movement of the Spirit within the individual. It is a new experience of the Holy Spirit moving the person into a renewal of their life and into using their charisms to serve.

--The individuals at some point becomes aware a new action of the Spirit in their life.

--The result is a “foundational assurance” of faith—a deeper conviction and trust in God—faith as heart knowledge rather than head knowledge, experiential knowledge. Cardinal Newman contrasted a “rational” and “real” assent to faith.

Examples:

Charismatic gifts (9 of them)	1 Corinthians 12:1-10
The fruits of the Holy Spirit	Galatians 5:22-24

What are the most dependable signs of a person’s having received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? The answer to this question can be found in Matthew 7:21-23.

Pastoral Concerns

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time experience. It should be renewed. Leaders are to take responsibility for promoting experiences of Baptism of the Holy Spirit and teaching its importance (how do we bring this gift to the whole Church?).

- Evaluation of prayer group experiences. A leadership team meets and discerns.
- Provide teachings
- Provide prayer opportunities
- Initiation seminars
- Assist by follow-up so that individuals grow in the experiences and its expression.
- Related emphasis on the charismatic gifts.
- Growth seminars for teaching on the gifts.
- When it appears a person prayed for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and did not yield to the Spirit, gently and lovingly help them to discern and deal with the obstacles that may be blocking the Spirit’s power.

Two Cautions

1. Do not use the phrase “Spirit-filled” to mean that someone has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. What does that say about people who receive sacraments or grace without the Baptism of the Spirit? The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the in-filling but the *outpouring* of the Spirit.
2. Do not ask a person, “How much of the Holy Spirit do you have?” The real question is, “How fully have you yielded yourself to the power of the Holy Spirit?” God loves us infinitely—not by degrees; but we must remove the sin obstacles to receiving His love and grace.

As we yield, the Holy Spirit works in us. The Holy Spirit helps with: personal relationship with Christ, prayer, growth in holiness, community, service within community, service to larger community, and proclamation of the Gospel. The primary role of the prayer group is to serve the local church through prayer.

Three emphases of serving in a CCR prayer group:

1. Baptism of the Holy Spirit available, understood and appreciated.
2. Praise and Worship
3. Charism, especially the Pauline gifts (1 Corinthians 12)

Do not allow any other purpose or devotion to pull the prayer group away from its proper mission. **The charismatic group must keep its focus!**

A CCR meeting will incorporate appropriate teachings, faith witnessing (focused conversion story—how did God become a priority in my life, when did I surrender, and what was the difference?), prayer for healing, and intercessions.

Goals and Directives

A goal is a general aim—what you hope to achieve.

An objective is a specific step which can be taken to help accomplish the goal.