

# NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

ADVENT 2011



The Annunciation, Holy Rosary Parish, Dillingham, Alaska.

## **Pope to Youth: Build on your Faith, Share it with the World!**

At the recent World Youth Day, Pope Benedict had challenging words for the almost 2 million young people who attended. Hundreds of thousands attended a vigil the evening before, enduring tough weather conditions, and spending the night on the open field, praying, singing and perhaps trying to snatch a few hours' sleep.

The next day, at the final Mass he challenged the Catholic pilgrims to take that faith, make it grow and share it with the world. In his homily at the Mass, **Pope Benedict said faith is not about understanding a bunch of facts, "it is an ability to grasp the mystery of Christ's person in all its depth.**

Even if it feels like a struggle at times, faith is not primarily about people working out their thoughts about God; it starts with the gift of God's love and God's reaching out to each person, he said. **Faith entails "a personal relationship with Christ, a surrender of our whole person, with all our understanding, will and feelings,"** he said.

But the pope went even further, telling the young that **a personal relationship with Jesus always must be transformed into action, service and love for others.** In addition, it must be lived within the church, the community of believers to whom Jesus entrusted his message and his mission of salvation.

Christ asks each person, "Who do you say that I am?" the pope said. "Respond to him with generosity and courage, as befits young hearts like your own," he told the youth. "Let me urge you to strengthen this life of faith which has been handed down from the time of the apostles," he said. **"Make Christ, the Son of God, the center of your life."**

Pope Benedict told the young people, who had been texting, tweeting and posting Facebook updates about their adventures, that whenever we really "like" anything, we share it, and that must hold true for faith as well. "You, too, have been given the extraordinary task of being disciples and missionaries of Christ in other lands and countries filled with young people who are looking for something greater," the pope said.

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## **NEW DOCUMENT ON BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

ICCRS is working on a new document on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the result of a colloquium on this topic by a number of major leaders of the Renewal. The document has four parts which cover the following key areas.

### **Part I: Characteristics and Fruits**

This looks at the visible, concrete fruits of baptism in the Spirit as it is experienced today, and how this grace has changed the lives of individuals and the Church. It also looks at the many encouraging statements on the Renewal published by bishops' conferences around the world, which are remarkably consistent in their description of baptism in the Spirit and its effects.

The section begins defines the baptism in the Spirit: **Baptism in the Spirit is a life-transforming experience of the love of God the Father poured into one's heart by the Holy Spirit, and received through a total surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. This grace brings alive sacramental baptism and confirmation, deepens communion with God and with fellow Christians, enkindles evangelistic fervor and equips a person with charisms for service and mission.**

## **Part II: Biblical and Patristic Foundations**

One of the most important tasks of the Renewal is to help others in the Church recognize that baptism in the Spirit is a 'coming to life' of what is already at the heart of Christian life as presented in Scripture and Tradition, but which, over time, has sometimes become obscured and forgotten. This part presents the biblical and patristic foundations of baptism in the Spirit.

The biblical section explains the background and meaning of the term "baptism in the Spirit," the significance of the Pentecost event as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, and St Paul's teaching on the Christian life, as life in the Spirit. The patristic section shows the ways in which baptism in the Spirit today corresponds to the experience of the early Church, especially in connection with the sacraments of initiation.

## **Part III: Theological Reflection**

This looks at explaining the baptism in the Spirit. Is light a wave or is it a particle? As physicists know, the answer is . . . yes! It is both! We cannot reduce light to either a wave or a particle, because otherwise we leave some of its behavior unexplained. Part of the richness of our faith is the Catholic 'both-and'. Is Jesus God or man? Is our faith based on Scripture or Tradition? Is the Bible the word of God, or the words of men? Is the kingdom of heaven now or not yet? Both!

We can apply this principle fruitfully to baptism in the Spirit and the Renewal. For example, some theologians describe baptism in the Spirit as a revitalization of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation; others describe it as a new sending of the Spirit into one's life. Both express something important. Similarly, some see the Charismatic Renewal as a current of grace meant for the whole Church; others see it as a movement among other movements. Again, these views are complementary and each contributes something important.

## **Part IV: Pastoral Issues**

This looks at some basic pastoral principles that can be adapted by various groups according to their own local needs. The pastoral oversight of the Renewal is not without its challenges, for example, the danger of turning baptism in the Spirit into a kind of quasi-sacrament and of making the preparations quasi-liturgical. To over-institutionalize the work of the Spirit, to subtly place it under our control, would be to betray the grace we have been given. Yet the charismatic must to a certain degree also have stable forms and structures if it is to remain and bear fruit over time.

We must have a strong emphasis on formation. Some of the problems in the Renewal, for instance, people leaving the Church, immature people establishing ministries of healing and deliverance, misplaced emphasis on resting in the Spirit and other phenomena, can be minimized by good formation. **One of the outstanding features of the Renewal is the capacity to provide a solid and deep formation in which the Christian faith is not a veneer placed over an essentially secular interior life, but a transformation of the deepest core of the personality, impacting all a person's choices and behavior.**

There is a great need for charismatic saints, people who live the grace of baptism in the Spirit fully and allow it to mature into heroic holiness. We should pray that God would raise up such saints in our midst to model for us what Charismatic Renewal holiness looks like. These saints will be men and women who love both the charismatic and institutional aspects of the Church, who experience, understand, and communicate to all the grace of God found in baptism in the Holy Spirit.

*For further details, see the ICCRS website at <http://www.iccrs.org> and go to the current edition of the newsletter.*

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## Praying and Meditating the Scriptures

Knowledge of the Lord is the gateway to love. We cannot love someone who we do not know. God loves us because he created us and knows us better than anyone can ever know us but how do we come to know him? Scripture opens the door. Many of us have become familiar with scripture, particularly the New Testament, but it may still seem flat and lifeless. One way to dig a little deeper into scripture is set aside some time to meditate on a particular passage. The aim of the meditation is know Jesus more intimately and thereby to grow in love for him.

It's really quite simple to do:

**Select a passage.** Take a passage from the New Testament that provides a nearly complete story; for example, the story of Jesus walking on the water (Matt 14:22-36). In Matthew, this passage is preceded immediately by the first miracle of the loaves and fishes, which is another passage that is easy to use for this.

**Read it carefully.** Read the story through two or three times. Take your time, reflect on it and notice things. Note the setting and the characters well. Read the preceding passage that leads up to the selected story.

**Use your imagination.** Imagine the scene. Place yourself in it. Think through what it looked like, what it may have felt like, what it might have smelled like, or sounded like. Engage your senses in the scene. Think then about each of the characters. What were they thinking? How did they feel? What did it mean to them to be there?

**Ask for insight.** When you've spent a little time meditating on the passage, ask the Lord to speak to you about it. Tell him what you're thinking and expect him to let you know what he's thinking.

Often, the way our hearts are moved or the ideas and thoughts that come to us when doing this are from the Lord.

God wants us to know and to love him, so he will speak to us. We can count on it.

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## NOVEMBER DAY OF RENEWAL

On Saturday November 12 approximately 50 people gathered for our fall day of renewal. The main speaker was Fr. Charles Wood, pastor of St. Clare parish. Fr. Charles has been active in the Catholic charismatic renewal since he was 16.



*Fr. Charles Wood*

Fr. Charles spoke on living the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives in the two morning sessions. He shared a number of stories and examples from his own life to illustrate the points he was making. He challenged us to use the gifts in everyday life and not just at prayer meetings and other charismatic events. One powerful example he gave was his own discernment about whether to continue in the ROTC program at when he was a student at the University of Notre Dame.





The music was provided by Clint Bentz and the ICPE team. Everyone was greatly blessed by them. In the afternoon we began with a prayer meeting which continued for some time and involved much singing, praying in the Spirit, and listening to the Lord. A number of people commented on how spiritually refreshing this was for them.

In the second part of the afternoon Clint and members of the ICPE (Institute for World Evangelism) team gave a presentation on their work. They shared several stories of their ministry in a local Catholic high school and how the Lord was touching the lives of students and opening their hearts to Christ and the gospel. They are also beginning to do youth ministry in several Catholic parishes in the area.

To find out more about them check their website at <http://icpeusa.org/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **John Michael Talbot**



### **In Concert**

Sunday, February 19, 2012 starting at 3.00pm

Jacoby Auditorium

Umpqua Community College

Tickets \$8.00

### **Prayer & Praise Gathering**

Monday, February 20, 2012 starting at 7.00pm

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Roseburg, Oregon

For further information contact Greg Johnson at 541-430-4734 or  
541- 672-1616, or email him at [greg@gstiles.com](mailto:greg@gstiles.com).