

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

LENT 2013



POPE PAUL VI ON CONVERSION IN CHRIST

Paul VI saw the need for evangelization, particularly in the context of the social upheavals that began in the 1960's. These social changes often involved a discarding of faith and the embrace of a secularist

worldview and lifestyle. He also made very clear that the heart of evangelization was the personal relationship with Christ.

In his first encyclical, “*Ecclesiam Suam*” in 1964, outlining the program of his pontificate, he encourages people to make an explicit act of faith in Jesus Christ that we might experience Christ in us:

“And thus we invite all men to make a living, profound and conscious act of faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . Why do we have the boldness to invite you to this act of ecclesiastical awareness? To this explicit, though interior act of faith? . . . The Church needs to feel the throb of her own life. . . . She needs to experience Christ in herself, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: “May Christ find a dwelling place through faith in your hearts” nn. 23, 24, 25. And further: “The Holy Spirit is still ready, if we implore him and listen to him to fulfill without fail the promise of Christ: ‘The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you’” (n. 26).

In his later exhortation, “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*” in 1975, Paul teaches the need of evangelization with both a witness of life and explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord:

“Nevertheless this witness always remains insufficient in the long run if it is not explained, justified – what Peter called always having “your answer ready for people who ask you for the reason for the hope you all have: and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The good news proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son on God are not proclaimed” (n. 22).

In all this there are some key points:

- 1) Salvation in Jesus Christ is total, including body, soul, spirit, society and all creation.
- 2) Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.
- 3) The good news of Jesus Christ is proclaimed by the witness of our individual and communal life.

4) The community of faith, hope and love is the living Body of Christ that needs to be experienced in order to be preached effectively.

5) That all the people of God and especially the leaders need explicit conversion, charisms and community.

These all need to be clearly seen and renewed continually. There is no foundation on which we can build other than the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of his Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:11).

LENTEN REFLECTION: THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

One of the things we are encouraged to do during Lent is something of a spring cleaning of our lives, especially our spiritual lives. As we reflect on Jesus, one of things that stood out to the crowds following him, and to his enemies, was that he acted and taught with authority. This is also seen in his healings, miracles, and deliverances.

Ralph Martin of Renewal Ministries offers the following thoughts on the power and authority of Jesus:

“One of the things that most struck people about Jesus was, precisely, his authority. The New Testament gives numerous accounts where the authority of his person, his words and his deeds are noted with amazement.

Whether it is the response of his disciples, in leaving all to follow him, or the response of a dead person, in coming to life again, the authority of Jesus stands out clearly. As Mark reports:

“When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (Mk 7:28-29)

The authority of his person was expressed not just in word but also in deed. Jesus' mission involved not just teaching and preaching, not just training leadership, but a great deal of authoritative and visible overcoming of evil in the lives of the afflicted. A lot of the "work" that Jesus did was the work of healing the sick and freeing the demonically afflicted. He was not only a teacher and prophetic preacher but also a healer and exorcist.

After Jesus delivered the man in the synagogue who cried out with a loud voice, impelled by the "spirit of an unclean demon" the crowd was amazed.

"Then the demon threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him any harm. They were all amazed and said to one another, 'What is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.' And news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region."
(Lk 4:35-37)

In the preaching of Peter recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter proclaims Jesus as the one, anointed "with the Holy Spirit and power" who "went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." (Acts 10: 38)

One of the most striking signs of his authority was in the forgiveness of sins. The Jewish leaders were shocked that Jesus would claim to be able to forgive sins, since only God could forgive sins. As a response, specifically to validate his claim to be able to forgive sins, Jesus healed the paralytic. (Mt. 9: 1-8)

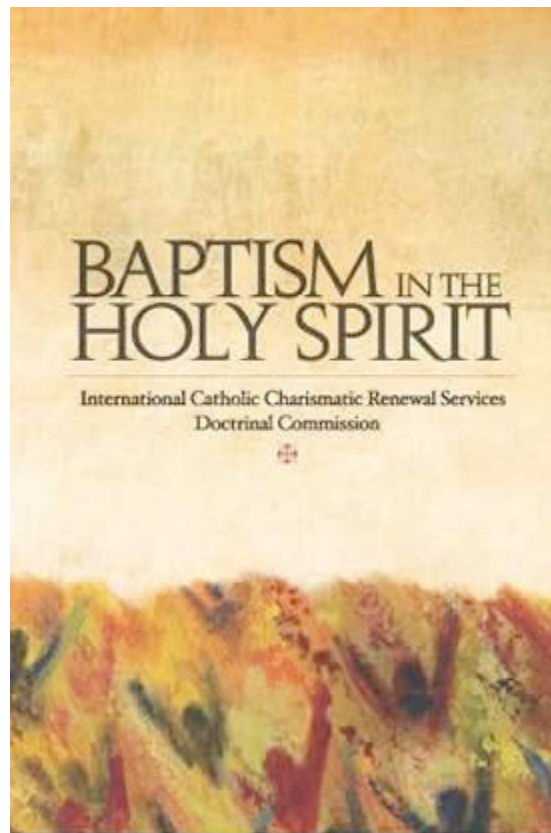
The response of the people was again, amazement at the authority manifested in Jesus.

"When the crowds saw this they were struck with awe and glorified God who had given such authority to human beings." (Mt. 9: 8)

Jesus' authority also was manifested in his fulfillment of prophecy, whether it be the rich fabric of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah, or the immediately preparative prophecy of John the

Baptist, which pointed to Jesus as simultaneously, lamb of God, judge, and baptizer in the Spirit, or the prophecy of Jesus himself concerning, the destruction of the temple, his death, his resurrection and sending of the Spirit.

NEW BOOK ON BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT



A fresh look at this important grace. The document, developed by the Theological Commission of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) offers both theological reflections on the meaning of baptism in the Spirit and pastoral guidelines for overseeing the reception and living out of this grace among the faithful, both as individuals and in groups.

You can preview the book on the ICCRS website at http://iccrs.org/index.php/blog/comments/book_bhs

The book can be purchased at www.renewed-life.com for \$7.96 plus shipping.

HEALING OF A BLIND EYE

This story comes from the new monthly E-newsletter put out by the National Service committee (NSC) and has a local connection to it.

“Hi, my name is Tanya Michelle Avendaño, I was born blind on my left eye. Last Fall I attended the healing workshop at St. James Church in McMinnville, Oregon and I was healed by the Lord. On Friday, October 5th, when Bob Canton was praying for healing over me, I started to see from my left eye after his prayers. I thought I was imagining things then he asked if there was anyone here who had experienced healing. I raised my hand and praised the Lord for the miracle of giving me my vision on my left eye. This is a miracle that God did for me as I was completely blind on my left eye, all I can say is that miracles do exist. During the Parish Mass on Sunday morning, Oct. 7th, Deacon Raul Rodriguez, during his homily, asked those who were healed during the healing workshop to please stand up. Many stood up including me. I was seated back by the entrance of the Church. From the altar, he asked me to cover my right eye with my hand and to follow his hand movements to test my vision. I was able to follow everything that he did. The world looks different for me now that I can see with my both eyes!!! Praise the Lord! My healing proved that Jesus is truly a loving and healing God.”

You can find the NSC E-newsletter at the following link: www.nsc-chariscenter.org/enewsletter.asp Take a look at it and if you like it you can also subscribe to receive it by email by going to this link and asking for it: chariscenter@nsc-chariscenter.org.