



International Catholic
Charismatic Renewal

Services

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in the Catholic Church

LEADERSHIP FORMATION

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Look again!

Hail Mary, full of grace

by Fr Renato Tisot



TEACHING OUTLINE

Introduction

Mary the highest
human model

Mary and the "Baptism
in the Holy Spirit"

I was asked to write on the theme "Mary, the first charismatic". It is a fascinating theme. When we go back two thousand years, we are filled with amazement to find such a powerful and unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a humble maiden from a small unimportant village. She touches the heartstrings of charismatics everywhere. She becomes the Maiden of the Bible representing renewed humanity and then, at the foot of the cross, in the most dramatic moment of the human story, she is given to us as our Mother. She is therefore concerned with the path we take personally and as a community.

However, I am aware that my dear friend Reinaldo Beserra dos Reis has already written brilliantly on the same theme with the same title and I don't want to be repetitive. So, I have changed the title and I am going to concentrate on the remarkable angelic greeting which has become the beginning of the most celebrated of Marian prayers: "Full of Grace".

The Greeks have a significant word: Charis, which translates as Divine Charity. It is like the merciful love of God which redeems us, transforms us and makes us temples of the Holy Spirit endowed with spiritual gifts or charisms. At the same time, this Charis expands the charisms into gifts of loving service towards our brothers and sisters in the troubled story of humanity on the path to eternity

Mary has become the highest human model of charismatic humility sacrificially experienced in symbiosis with the Son of God made man, who was crucified, died, rose again and who sent the Holy Spirit. From that time, the age of "Pentecost" began. It will continue to the end of time and bathe us in the eternal ocean of merciful love where Our Lady will also appear robed with the sun and powerfully involved in the final victory over the red dragon (Rev 12).

The great apostle Paul mentions this historical woman only once, seeing her jointly involved in the fulness of the human story, that is, in the hour when the times will finally be filled with the renewal of Divine Mercy (Eph 2) and thus with the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit: "But when the completion of the time came God sent his son, born of a WOMAN ... that we might receive adoption as sons. As you are

sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal 4: 4-6).

This unique plan in the human story, of full presence and divine action, was fulfilled in Mary right from the moment of her conception. The archangel Gabriel declared that she was already full of grace and entirely in communion with the Lord. Now all that was needed was a human "yes" - and then a collaboration of love still greater than her origins would follow.

And Mary's "yes" was necessary. The charism of "yes" became the door to all possible Life in the Spirit, through the example and help of this Mother.

I have often meditated on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit initiated by this unique Woman, and also on her as the only human creature completely "formed" in the total design of God's salvation. Look at the sequence of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon Mary: the moment of the immaculate conception through a baptism of personal sanctity, and then, following this, through her trials in the face of all humanity until the end of time: the Annunciation, the ninth hour at Calvary, while the Church was being born from the pierced heart of Jesus, with the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit (the young Pentecost), and the clear declaration of Mary as the Mother on the Church, in the person of the uniquely faithful John (a motherhood which, from that moment of redemption, extended to all generations of humanity); and then the Great Pentecost in the upper room in Jerusalem, clearly meant to inaugurate the continual eruptions of the Spirit recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This all culminates in the final and unique marian event: her Assumption, body, soul

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“...We thank God for the gift of Mary within the CCR, praying always to be at the forefront and in the welcoming joy of her ministry. We need to keep a warm and thoughtful relationship with this mother, to imitate her virtue and to call upon her help, including her help in making the best use of the charisms and of our ministries, in keeping with the clear will of Jesus. Above all we need to say “yes” even when our lives must lead us to Calvary...”

and spirit, into heaven. This refers to the one and only body glorified in heaven by the Holy Spirit together with the Son of God who became incarnate in her womb.

No other human creature, no other saint in heaven has enjoyed this final charismatic action of the Spirit. She will be there for all at the end of time when we shall have the resurrection of the body, as we proclaim in the Creed. The ever present and active charismatic ministry of Mary, of meditation and intercession for every grace, will always be there, within the scope of the Divine.

We thank God for the gift of Mary within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, praying always to be at the forefront and in the welcoming joy of her ministry. We need to keep a warm and thoughtful relationship with this mother, to imitate her virtue and to call upon her help, including her help in making the best use of the charisms and of our ministries, in keeping with the clear will of Jesus. Above all we need to say “yes” even when our lives must lead us to Calvary. She has always been present and has heroically accepted her life's directive even at the most dramatic moment when the archangel said “Do not be afraid Mary”.

It was ever so with examples of heroism. The highest, deepest, most charismatic words of Mary, even set against other more indecipherable and dramatic events of life remain: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to his word” (Lk 1: 38).

This “Behold” makes us understand the cost of Pentecost. She will be there at the foot of the cross with the few remaining faithful (more women than men it must be said at this most dramatic and crucial point in human history): to see the blood of Christ, poured out to the last drop, obtain for us the Water of the Spirit, and understand what many charismatics today find hard to grasp, that the most powerful charism for eternal salvation remains still the offering up of sufferings.

Simeon was charismatic in the temple on the day of Jesus' circumcision. “Prompted by the Spirit he said: he is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed, for the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your soul too” (Lk 2: 33-35).

Shall we draw together a practical conclusion for our personal lives and our community? Well, some essential aspects of the charismatic experience of Mary suggest themselves to me. Her life in the fullness of the Spirit led her to put into action these fundamental experiences:

1. An experience of divine communion which came to be lived fully with a God who was not “up there” but within, in her own body. This was a 24 hour a day intimacy which was unique during the period of gestation, but also continued through the rest of her


life. Mary is truly the first Christian because she was constantly in Christ, with Christ and for Christ, in communion with him. And for this reason she is called the “Eucharistic Woman”. And also because she must, from the beginning of the Church, have enjoyed community life nourished constantly by the Word and by the “Portion of Bread”.

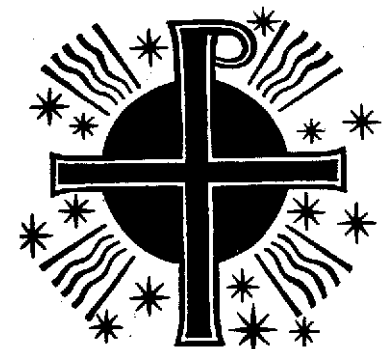
2. The experience of prayer which was born of this divine intimacy was not expressed in petitions but in praise, with recognition of the power and action of God, and with the exaltation of his Mercy: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour The Almighty has done great things in me and holy is his name”.

3. There is the ability to read the signs of the times and to discern the human story with the eyes and the heart of God, always defining the whole human adventure as the “Story of Divine Mercy”. It is the story of the poor and humble who will see the high and mighty fall for ever (Lk 1: 46 et seq).

4. The experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit generates a flow of generosity and giving towards those who are in need. We may interpret the rapid though difficult decision to travel across Palestine to offer humble but most precious help to her cousin Elizabeth as deriving from this grace.

5. When we move with the “feet of suffering” (a great expression of Saint Catherine of Siena) we witness new outpourings of the Spirit, on the baby in the crib, on the mother Elizabeth and on the father Zechariah. It is the sacred and miraculous ministry of Mary, the itinerant Charismatic of the New Times, which still continues today, for we believe in her prophetic and admonitory interventions in her many apparitions.

And here also we include the great charism of the discernment of Holy Mother Church and the constant presence of the spiritual antennae of the mystics who, by common consent, are always Mary's great loved ones. 



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Do we agree about the perennial role of Mary, as mother and mistress, the loved one of God from generation to generation - the one who is the true model of Christian life and action and helper of all: *auxilium christianorum*?
- 2 The Bible explains itself, through the Bible, in a process which is not only theoretical but linked to the concrete existence of human life. Well, have we ever made a journey from Genesis to Revelation to understand and assimilate the historic role of Mary in the story of salvation which is still in process?
- 3 Have you felt that we often compare Mary and Peter, that there is almost a preference in the Church for a charismatic attachment to the hierarchical figure of Peter? How might we resolve the problem?

Testimonies from the continents:

CENTRAL AMERICA

MEXICO, GUATEMALA, SALVADOR, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA
AND THE CARRIBEAN ISLANDS, CUBA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND PUERTO RICO

by *María Eugenia de Góngora*

This part of Latin America is made up of towns full of love and fervour for Our Lord Jesus Christ and for the great intercessor Mary our mother. It consists of a multicoloured fan of different cultures and of a rich religiosity which has played a very important part in the evangelisation of our towns. The Church is a mixture of great social differences, especially economic differences, and is bathed in the blood of hundreds of martyrs, men and women who have been ready to give their lives for Jesus Christ and his holy gospel. It is precisely here that its greatness and its wealth may be found. It is a Church which walks with loving trust in God in the midst of great challenges. There are many ways in which we celebrate our religion thus expressing faith and hope in Jesus Christ crucified, who walks with his people and carries them together with himself to the true and definitive Resurrection.

In the middle of this Latin American diversity and even with its great strengths, we fall down in a human way at times of monotony and stagnation when life is just routine. Thinking the best only in certain moments is not enough. That is like putting up barriers or parameters according to human reckoning, even falling into the trap of mediocrity and not presenting nor living our Christianity authentically. Our God who is always following us and re-creating, making all things new, intervenes and sends his help at the most opportune moment. At the end of 1967 the Blessed Renewal came to these lands, restoring a new enthusiasm, celebration, gladness, and, most importantly, a new love of Our Lord Jesus Christ and his Holy Church. This was a marvellous gift, the greatest event in the life of human beings, a personal encounter with Christ, an event which changes lives, and one which the Holy Father Benedict XVI expressed in an extraordinary way in the introduction to his first Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

With the number of Life in the Spirit Retreats or CCR Initiation Retreats, the CCR has come to many thousands of people who had been tired, indifferent or cold. With the experience of this marvellous encounter they have been awash with power from on high, as at Pentecost, the gift promised by Our Lord Jesus Christ: Baptism in the Life of the Spirit, faithfully fulfilling the promise - "They shall receive power and be my witnesses". Like new buds which, little by little, come to flower and spread everywhere, let us go declaring that we will turn and live and feel as it was in the first communities when, as in the Acts of the Apostles, they

grew in numbers day by day. Truly, the face of the Church has changed with the coming of the CCR. With much gratitude we can confirm that we no longer hold celebrations which are at times routine and too sketchy and have changed to something new, something renewed - to a spontaneity which only the Spirit can give. Through the grace of God, we are recapturing what we have been losing across the years. We are turning back to the natural state of the first disciples of the Lord, full of ardour and passion for Jesus Christ our Lord, and to the Gospel, building truly, in a way that leads at times to silence, but effectively, the culture of Pentecost. We are experiencing, like true witnesses, that where there is the Spirit of God, there is freedom, as we are told by Saint Paul.

In all these countries we come across marvellous testimonies which significantly and unendingly mention the CCR. This is truly the response of the Holy Spirit in our time. There is a shortage of premises and locations for use as retreat houses or not enough are offered. There are years long waiting lists. While platforms had been abandoned through low use in the past, now, the largest and most famous stadiums are packed full for CCR events. This was unthinkable before. Now it is normal. We are eating breakfasts, having evangelical suppers, celebrating all night prayer vigils in bad weather, on working days, Evangelisation in the streets for whole weeks, activities which make the Holy Eucharist the centre in the Mass of Adoration. There are many testimonies from priests who have said: like the simple laity they have themselves been motivated to live life in the Spirit and have had fraternal hands laid on them and received a new Pentecost. Thus they too have been renewed in the love of their sacred ministry. It is worth emphasising the great wealth coming from the participation of young people, a common factor in all our countries. The population of the continent is more than 50 per cent young people between the ages of 15 and 25. The Lord's response for our youth in these times has been the CCR.

Previously, in many countries, the Vigil of Pentecost was not celebrated, but now, thanks to God, the CCR has brought the feast back to life and it is celebrated with gratitude to the Lord - for the prodigious gift of Pentecost, for the birth of our Holy Church and, above all, as we must implore each day: that the glories of Pentecost may be manifest in this land of God.

continue on the right

continued from "Listening the continents..."

The charisms with which the Lord has enriched our communities are put to work in different ministries for the good of our Holy Catholic Church. It is a wake up call and a prick to the conscience of the laity to work as true "Missionary Disciples of Jesus Christ so that our lands may have life" - as was prayed at the 5th Latin American Bishops Conference celebrated recently in our continent in the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Apparitions in Brazil. It has left us with a beautiful rich document: the Document of the Apparition, it sends us on the Continental Mission, with the bishops hoping and asking for a new Pentecost. And with great pleasure and decisiveness, since the resurgence, the new awakening, is already 40 years old, the CCR declares that now we are ready to follow the culture of Pentecost working with the power of the Holy Spirit. Glory be to Jesus. 



Become a Partner in the ICCRS HOPE SACK PROJECT

ICCRS is presently undergoing a serious financial crisis, as donations from the worldwide Renewal have been steadily diminishing against the sharp increase in operating costs.

In order to raise the much-needed funds on an ongoing basis, it has launched the ICCRS HOPE SACK PROJECT to help ICCRS maintain its important initiatives for the Renewal. This project is an appeal to the members of the Renewal worldwide to commit their generous contribution of any amount the Lord lays on their heart for the initiatives of ICCRS. The contribution could be paid annually, half yearly, quarterly or monthly with several payment options. Become a partner of ICCRS by committing to contribute regularly to the ICCRS HOPE SACK PROJECT, helping ICCRS establish a more stable income. The ICCRS Office in Rome will in turn pray for the intentions of its benefactors.

Your support is critically necessary for ICCRS! "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Lk 6:38). Along with the constant prayer support that is needed, I appeal to you as partners in the Spirit, to help raise financial assistance for the immediate needs of ICCRS.

COME AND BE A PARTNER OF ICCRS! Every contribution, however big or small it may be, will go a long way in helping the efforts of ICCRS for the renewal of the Church and spreading God's Word. The ICCRS Council would like to thank you in anticipation for your generous and sacrificial love offering and pray that "you will be enriched in every way for your great generosity" (2 Cor 9:11).

CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please complete the form below:

Surname, First Name Birth date (MM/DD)

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City State

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E-mail 1 E-mail 2

I wish to support the important service that ICCRS gives in favour of the CCR worldwide and since I feel part of this mission of the Church, I have decided to commit myself more concretely with my finances so that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the charismatic life can develop more within the Church.

I commit to contribute the amount of Currency type

(Please write in the month of the first payment and the months when a payment is planned)

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PAYMENT by cheque: Payable to ICCRS. Payment in dollars with an American bank cheque.

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Beneficiary: Istituto Per Le Opere Di Religioni (I.O.R.) Swift: IOPRVAVX
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