



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC  
CHARISMATIC RENEWAL SERVICES

SERVING THE  
CHARISMATIC RENEWAL IN THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH SINCE 1972

# ICCRS LEADERSHIP BULLETIN

Formation for current and new leaders in CCR

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 1

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

Guided by the Spirit:

## Who is the Holy Spirit?

■ Ann Brereton



*The Catechism of the Catholic Church states say: "The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also of the same nature. Yet He is not called the Spirit of the Father alone, but the Spirit of both the Father and the Son".*

The Creed of the Church from the Council of Constantinople confesses: "With the Father and the Son, He is worshipped and glorified."

The Holy Spirit is a PERSON of the Trinity not some ghostlike figure. He is ALIVE and active today. Love is His personality as He is the divine lover, the personification of the love that exists between the Father and the Son.

At the sequence during the Mass of Pentecost He is the "souls delightful guest". "...Infinite Love is not a passing visitor who pays us a call and then goes away. He establishes in us his permanent dwelling and lies in intimate union with our souls as their eternal Guest." He dwells within us, not as a separate being in one part of our nature but as our very life.

He is known as the 'breath of God' and should He stop breathing, we would cease to exist.

It is impossible to fully answer the question "Who is the Holy Spirit". 'Mr Google' gives an option of over 20 million books of authors attempting this challenge. As God, the Holy Spirit is mystery and therefore impossible to fully understand or

explain. We are invited to enter into a relationship with Him and it's through this relationship that He is revealed to us; we experience His presence and 'know' Him.

Also the Holy Scriptures give us a glimpse into His Person, His ministry and work to assist us to identify Him in our own lives.

**The coming of the Holy Spirit is a Promise of the Father**

Jesus said: "Wait for what the Father has promised". It is what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water, but not many days from now, you are going to be baptised with the Holy Spirit". There is nothing we can do to 'get' the Holy



Spirit. He is purely a gift of love from the Father. We can't earn Him by sticking to formulas, keeping laws, reciting certain prayers. We simply ask and have faith that God will keep His Promise. St John tells us that God will not ration His Gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:34). The Promise you have received is the Holy Spirit without measure.

**The Holy Spirit is the source of Life and the Presence of God within us**

St Paul tells us: "Do you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16). We live and move and have our being in God alone. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit is constant in our lives. He is always present.

The Holy Spirit isn't about feeling good or being on a constant high. He is about hunger to know God, and to grow deeper in God's love. He knows that major sin in our lives will separate us from the love of God and therefore He convicts us of our sin, brings us to genuine repentance and gives us the grace to overcome the sin patterns in our lives. No sin is greater than the mercy of God; however the Holy Spirit is also a "gentleman" and will not push His way in where He is not wanted.

Psalms 51 tells us that the Holy Spirit has the power to sweep us clean. You can hear in this psalm, attributed to King David, the agony he is experiencing as a result of his sinfulness. In verses 10-12 he cries out "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit away from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain within me a willing spirit".

We are all sinners and the Holy Spirit is within us to reveal to us our sin, if we give Him permission. He will do this in love, never with condemnation

“  
**The coming of  
the Holy Spirit is  
a Promise of the  
Father.**

”



and He will always lead us deeper into the presence and love of God.

The Holy Spirit brings empowerment with His gifts

At the beginning of His public ministry Luke tells us that “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1).

It was through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit Jesus preached, taught, and proclaimed the Kingdom of God. It was through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit He healed and set free. It was through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit He revealed the face of God to humanity. It was through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that He was able to embrace the Cross and His destiny. And before ascending into Heaven He commissioned us “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:7-8). It is through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit we have been commissioned to continue to build the Kingdom of God.

Empowerment is the ability to operate in the power of the Spirit, and to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit, remembering that the greatest gift is love (1 Cor 13:8). As Charismatics we are well aware of the gifts listed in 2 Corinthians 12 and we can eagerly go through them and choose those that God has given to us. A temptation is to 'rate' the gifts in area of importance and feel a bit special if we've got one of the more obvious power gifts. This temptation will lead us on the path of self glory. When the Holy Spirit works through us we should take the time to reflect and ask ourselves did the Praise and Glory go to God or did we give ourselves (even secretly) a pat on the back for a job well done? Paul admonishes: “I say to everyone among you, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think...”

We must remember they are God's gifts, He works through us and all gifts are given to meet the needs of others and to reveal the unconditional love of God.

### His presence brings transformation

The Holy Spirit came as transformer in the forms of tongues of fire at the first Pentecost. He is the one who changes people lives. Any task no matter how big or small when performed through the Holy Spirit is transformed into an occasion to reveal the glory of God. Administration becomes opportunity; chance encounters become Divine appointments; a simple prayer can become a miracle; a smile the occasion to show the love of God. The Holy Spirit is within us now to transform us. Plead with Him to stretch you. To transform you. Don't ever assume you know how He'll move. (Romans 11:33-34)

We should constantly be in awe and surprised by the Holy Spirit. Recently the Holy Father said “Listen up. If the Church is alive, it must always surprise. A church that doesn't have the capacity to surprise is a weak, sickened and dying church. It should be taken to the recovery room at once”.

In Old Testament times the Spirit dwelt in the Ark of the Covenant (the Temple). Now Almighty God through His Spirit dwells in us. Wherever we go we carry His Name. Wherever we go we carry the Presence of God. Wherever we go we carry His Testimony, His love for His people. Talking on the phone, driving the car, eating, watching TV we are witnesses to the Spirit of God in us. We must be careful not to drag the Lords reputation into the mud by what we say, what we do, where we go etc.

### Conclusion:

The movement of the Holy Spirit is constant and he is moving powerfully through the world today. “God's purpose for the Church and the world is the full role of the Holy Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is speaking through the moral issues facing the Church/World today.

He's speaking through the unrest in the Middle East, the Ebola crisis facing Western Africa. Our invitation is to 'hear' what He is saying to us through these circumstances. To hear with a pure heart and not through our filter of judgement or opinions. As with Elijah His voice may not be in the hail, the thunder or the earthquake but be that still small voice. We are invited to open wide the windows and doors of our listening and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We could be very surprised to hear what He is saying - but what joy, hope and courage will gladden our hearts.

There's no need to fear the future. The Holy Spirit knows every inch of the road ahead, every curve, every pothole. We fear if we attempt to walk it on our own. He yearns to participate in every part of our lives. Talk to Him... Listen to... Develop a relationship with Him.

The Holy Spirit is real! He is Alive! Our journey with the Holy Spirit, “the souls delightful guest”, will be different for each of us. It is a mystery we are invited to live – Love's most intimate relationship.

I'll finish with the words of Archbishop Luis Martinez in his classic book *The Sanctifier*: “The Holy spirit must be given His proper place. The place that rightfully belongs to Him in Christian life and Christian perfection. Devotion to the Holy Spirit must become... something not superficial and intermittent, but constant and profound, filling the depths of souls and impregnating lives with the sweet unction of infinite love”.

*Come Holy Spirit!* 🏠

## ICCRS

**International Catholic  
Charismatic Renewal Services**

Postal address: Palazzo San Calisto, 00120 Vatican City – Europe  
Telephone: +39 06 69 88 71 26/27  
Fax: +39 06 69 88 72 24  
Website: www.iccrs.org  
E-mail: newsletter@iccrs.org

Please contact the ICCRS office for permission to reprint.

The *ICCRS Newsletter* is e-mailed freely. It can be posted to you for € 10 per year.

In addition, the *ICCRS Leadership Bulletin* can be e-mailed for an annual subscription of € 15.

The *ICCRS Leadership Bulletin* is published along with the *ICCRS Newsletter*. Its purpose is to publicise formation on decisive topics in CCR.

The Spirit blows where he wills:

# The dangers of excessive organisation

■ Charles Whitehead



*The Church is both hierarchical and charismatic, as Pope Saint John Paul II reminded us on the eve of Pentecost 1997. This is her nature and is essential for her life and mission. If the Church was only hierarchical there would be no supernatural life in her, but if she was only charismatic there would be a lack of teaching and structure resulting in holy chaos.*

Both the hierarchical and charismatic dimensions are co-essential for a balanced Church. It may help us to think of the Church as a sailing boat. Without a sail, such a boat will go nowhere because it will not be able to catch the wind and will simply drift. But unless it also has a heavy keel below the waterline, it will not be able to stay upright when the wind blows and will capsize. As Christians, we desperately need to catch the wind of the Holy Spirit, to be blown along and guided by Him, but we also need the stability of the teaching authority of the Church if we are not to capsize. The problems arise when there is a lack of balance between the hierarchical and charismatic dimensions and we suffer either a slow loss of all our energy and enthusiasm, or a fruitless experience of charismatic chaos. In order to avoid the risk of chaos, we can be tempted to impose all kinds of rules and regulations which result in an oppressive legalism and a loss of freedom in the Spirit. This occurs because there is something deep within us that wants to control what is happening, and it goes against our natural inclinations to step aside and give the Holy Spirit complete freedom to work.

This is why we must always be on our guard against the creeping tendency to over-organise our meetings, thereby limiting the free working of the Holy Spirit. Excessive organisation often comes in when we set up planning teams and begin to listen more to everyone's opinions about what should happen than to the gentle promptings of the Spirit. We often have good ideas – but are they Spirit inspired? We usually know what outcome we want from a meeting – but is this what the Holy Spirit wants? Over a period of time we become very experienced in organising both big and small events – but are we allowing the Spirit to fulfil His agenda? We must beware of over-organising everything.

When the Council of ICCRS invited chosen leaders to the Prophetic Consultation in Bethlehem in November 2013, we were dramatically reminded of our weakness and dependency at our first morning session when we suffered a complete power failure in our hotel. This left us with no lights, no microphones, no amplification, and no translation possibilities. The prophetic spiritual message that came through was that we can do very little without the power of the Holy Spirit. I immediately knew what this meant. In my leadership in the Renewal I had begun to think I knew how to do things, so I was often tempted to take over instead of waiting on the Holy Spirit.

When Pope Francis addressed the large Convocation of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on June 1st 2014, he spoke of the six things he expects from the Renewal. But earlier in his address he also highlighted

another area he sees as very important:

“You, people of God, people of the Charismatic Renewal, be careful not to lose the freedom that the Holy Spirit has given you. The danger for the Renewal, as our dear Father Raniero Cantalamessa often says, is that of excessive organisation; the danger of excessive organisation. Yes, you need organisation, but do not lose the grace of letting God be God! There is no greater freedom than that of letting oneself be carried by the Spirit, refusing to calculate and control everything, allowing Him to illuminate you, lead you, guide you and push you where He wishes. He knows well what the need is in every age and moment.”

Following the decision of Vatican II to promote the charismatic gifts (Lumen Gentium 12), these supernatural expressions of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church needed to be experienced by as many normal Catholics as possible. The experience began at the Duquesne Weekend in February 1967, when the charismatic gifts exploded into the life of the Church in the USA, and then spread rapidly to the rest of the world. The number of people who became involved in what was soon described as the Charismatic Renewal, grew so rapidly that there was a clear need for leadership and some organisation to provide good stewardship of this gift. For the most part this worked well, and the Lord anointed and gifted those He called to be the early leaders. But of course there were also some people who saw an opportunity to exercise control over others and to make themselves important. This resulted in poor and dominant leadership which often suppressed the free activity of the Holy Spirit and replaced it with rules, regulations and structured ways of doing everything. When this happens, the Spirit can no longer move in freedom, and is once again suppressed.

In his address to the Third Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities on November 22nd 2014, Pope Francis warned against “caging in the Holy Spirit”:

“It is necessary to preserve the freshness of your charism, never lose that freshness, always renewing the “first love” (Rev.2:4). As time goes by there is a greater temptation to become comfortable, to become hardened in set ways of doing things, which, while reassuring, are nonetheless sterile. There is a temptation to cage in the Holy Spirit! If forms and methods become ends in themselves, they become idealogical, removed from reality which is constantly developing. Closed to the newness of the Spirit, such rigid forms and methods will eventually stifle the very charism which gave them life.”

We must be constantly on our guard against the dangers of excessive control and over-organisation of our charism of Renewal in the Spirit, and must speak out whenever we see signs that this is happening. Good stewardship of this amazing gift of the Charismatic Renewal, given for the benefit of the whole Church, is important, so we must NEVER cage in the Holy Spirit and “lose the grace of letting God be God” (Evan-gelii Gaudium 280). 🏡



QUESTIONS TO THE ICCRS DOCTRINAL COMMISSION

The ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, currently headed by Dr. Mary Healy, is in consultation with theologians and experts from around the world.

If you have a question about the CCR, please send it to [newsletter@iccrs.org](mailto:newsletter@iccrs.org)

# Can I pray for healing while I am sick?

When we are sick, it is easy to become frustrated by our limitations. We do not have our usual energy, we may be physically restricted, and our emotional and mental resources can be depleted. One thing sickness cannot limit, however, is our ability to pray.

St. Therese of Lisieux described prayer this way: “For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” St. John Damascene wrote, “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”

The essence of prayer comes from what is in the heart. In the Gospels, people brought their requests to Jesus in a variety of ways. He never stopped them and told them to kneel first or to use the “proper” words. Instead, he heard the cries of their hearts and answered them.

There is no sickness that can prevent us from lifting our hearts to the Lord. He sees into the depths of our hearts, and he knows our desires and intentions even if we are unable to communicate them clearly. In fact, illness can dispose us to pray for healing even more effectively. It can open our eyes to the pain and difficulties that others suffer. We gain a greater sense of their needs and can pray with greater fervor.

**Can I pray for healing for myself?**

The Gospels recount many instances of sick, disabled, or afflicted people coming to Jesus to ask for healing. In every case, the Lord welcomed their requests with compassion and healing. The Gospels contain not a hint of reproach for these petitions. So we too should not hesitate to ask the Lord for healing. He loves to answer prayers prayed with great faith!

If we are not healed immediately, however, we can lovingly embrace our suffering, trusting that the Lord will use it for his glory and our good. This may seem to be in contradiction to asking for healing, but it is not. It is a stance of active surrender: bringing our request to Jesus, but trusting him to answer it in his perfect timing and his perfect way.

**Can I pray for healing for others?**

Sickness may necessitate some common sense decisions. If you have a flu or other contagious illness, for instance, it is obviously not prudent to attend a prayer meeting or lay hands on people. It is more loving to pray at home and avoid the risk

of spreading illness. Even if you are not physically present to those you are praying for, Jesus is not limited in his power to hear and respond.

If your illness is not contagious and you are taking the appropriate medical steps toward healing, there is no reason not to pray over others. You do not need to worry about passing on a spirit of sickness. When you pray for healing, you are asking the Holy Spirit to come and minister to the person in need, and he will always respond to your prayer.

If you sense that you are being harassed or oppressed by evil spirits, however, you should receive deliverance prayer yourself before praying over someone else. The Lord wants you to be free and to be led by the Spirit without hindrance.



When we are not sure how to pray for a sick person, praying in tongues is a good way to start. Often as we pray in tongues, the Spirit will give us further insight as to how to pray. “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:26-27).

**Redemptive suffering**

There is a special gift hidden in sickness: the gift of uniting our sufferings to Christ’s. When we are afflicted, we share in his passion in a very tangible way. He gives us the privilege of offering our sufferings in union with his, participating in his redemption. St. Paul wrote, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Col 1:24).

When we are healthy, we do not have this gift to offer. But when we are sick and choose to offer our sufferings as St. Paul did, they become a powerful prayer for the sake of others. We participate in the triumph of his cross! What a profound honor. “As we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer” (2 Cor 1:5-6). 🕯️

.....  
 ICCRS receives many questions about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and we do our best to answer them with the help of the Doctrinal Commission. Its members kindly take time to check their references and credit their sources. Some of the questions and their answers are published in this section of the *ICCRS Leadership Bulletin*. They are selected for their relevancy and helpfulness overall for those involved in the CCR.