

# ICCRS LEADERSHIP BULLETIN

Formation for current and new leaders in CCR

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 4

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015

Guided by the Spirit:

## Be dispensers of the Grace of the Holy Spirit no controllers

■ Marcos Volcan



Pope Francis addressing the Catholic Charismatic Renewal earlier this year, asked its members “to be dispensers and not controllers of the grace of the Spirit”. What did the Holy Father mean by these words?

Those were words of encouragement coming from somebody who represents the power of the institution and, as such, they mean a lot to us. The Pope, so it seems, wants to tell us that both – institution and charism – do not oppose to each other and that we must act with more freedom in order for the grace of Pentecost to be multiplied and dispensed to all those who desire it and that, having received it, they can also, in their turn, freely share it with others. Unfortunately, in many occasions, we do not see this happen.

This is not to simplify things, but in its beginnings the Renewal spread as a great current of grace because we were not able to exert control over it.

Of course, we cannot and should not encourage inadequate charismatic practices, nor should we support attitudes not taken with responsibility. What we should do instead is to offer adequate training to all those who come to know the new Pentecost of our time.

On the other hand, balance takes place when The Charismatic Renewal, as a grace, is passed on to those who have received it with the same trust and confidence the Lord had in those who first received it in the early Church, so that it can be promoted with the necessary freedom to develop in its fullness.

I think that a specific Reading from the Gospel, a Parable, can better illustrate this point.

The parable of the talents (Mathew 25: 14-30) can be used

to enlighten our reflexion in relation to what the Pope has asked from us. At first sight we may not notice such relation, but it exists.

The parable tells us the story of a man about to go abroad who summons three of his servants and

gives to each one of them different talents, each in proportion to his ability. After entrusting his property to them, he sets out to his journey.

Here we can see a basic principle we can use when reflecting upon our calling and when leading our Christian life. What I mean is that when the Lord gives us a mission He provides the means, the “talents”, according to our abilities in order for us to be able to successfully carry it out.

With such understanding, we become more confident and realize that the Gospel invites us to be entrepreneurial people. It is, of course, a kind of entrepreneurship that, if compared to business management models, must be amplified to the perspective of the Kingdom.

What we need to understand is that our Christian service has to be carried out in such a way that it multiplies the gifts that we receive and thus produces new talents.

This is a well-known teaching regarding Christian discipleship. Let us go a little further in understanding what the Lord wants to tell us in this parable.

A condition required by entrepreneurs nowadays is that the tasks be performed with freedom of action. This is also something that coaches require when training sports teams and company directors want from their managers.

This principle is in tune with the attitude of the man described in the parable. He gives freedom to his servants and allows them to work as they wish to show that he trusts them.

This is exactly the key point I want to highlight. It is the personality of the man who gives the talents. He gives his servants freedom because he knows that once he sets out on his journey he will not have control over his property. Therefore, he allows them to choose their own course of action.

If we understand that the talents received are graces bestowed by the Lord, it becomes clear that such graces must be multiplied.

Obviously, God’s graces are not multiplied in the same way as money. They do not follow the same pattern in obtaining results.

Then, how should we multiply them? By allowing

Guided by the Spirit:

### Be dispensers of the Grace of the Holy Spirit not controllers

Marcos Volcan

The Spirit blows where he wills:

### Unity within the Renewal

Fr Wojciech Nowacki

Questions to the ICCRS  
Doctrinal Commission:

### Can we be guided step-by-step by the Holy Spirit?

“  
**God’s graces are not multiplied in the same way as money. They do not follow the same pattern in obtaining results.**



each one of us to act according to our abilities, that is, by using our own natural gifts and using them in the freedom that grace itself requires in order to be a grace. The lord of the three servants in the parable did not act as a controller.

The problem is that freedom demands responsibility and this was not the attitude of one of the servants, the one who received a single talent. He decided to bury the talent he received. By looking at what he did, it seems that he misinterpreted his lord.

The first two servants were able to multiply the talents and, because of that, they were praised by their lord and invited to take part in everything that he possessed.

The other one, however, when going through his accounts with his lord, tried to excuse himself by explaining why he had buried his talent.

This is what we do many times. We receive God's graces and put them away or, even worse, we bury them. We might question ourselves how many treasures we have we lost by doing so.

The servant in the parable excused himself because he was afraid of his lord.

Fear is one of the biggest problems of human beings. In Christian life fear takes place because our memory is short; we often forget what the Lord has done for us, in the same way as the people wandering in the wilderness did. When we forget, our faith is weakened and we also become weak as a consequence. We feel incapable and cannot see our capabilities and talents. Without faith our understanding becomes blurred, our perspective is reduced and we paralyse.

The servant in the parable excused himself because his lord was a hard man.

It is interesting to note that with the other two servants the lord was not hard. He calls the third servant wicked and lazy. This is where the problem lies. The servant was totally wrong. He missed the opportunity he had been given, threw away his chances and, on top of that, blamed his lord.

Burying talents is one of the worst attitudes we can have. We run the risk of not finding anymore what has been hidden. Besides that, as the man in the parable stated, the talent does not earn any interest.

The parable, as a story, can help us understand that graces can and should be multiplied and that multiplication takes place when graces are shared. This is exactly the multiplying principle of divine graces. They cannot be kept or buried! In this time

of the new Pentecost we should not fear, but should understand that it is better to run the risk of dispensing the grace and generously share it than to lose it.

Obviously, the Holy Spirit does not depend on us to give Himself as He wills and to whom he wills; however, the Lord wants to use us to reach people and make them have a personal encounter with his unconditional love, poured out in the Cross and renewed in the perennial act of his Spirit. Let us not look at the number of gifts received. On the contrary, maybe what we need is the ability to handle just a single or a few talents. Maybe those who take care of small things are more skilful than those who make big things. Have you ever noticed that it is exactly the small things that make a big difference in our lives?


Maybe the bad servant, when looking at the others, thought that as he had received only a single talent he was incapable and decided not to do anything. What we should consider is that it takes a greater ability to multiply the little. Also, knowing the servant, his lord knew he was able to do that.

God knows what we are capable of doing, he knows us from within and enables us to multiply the little we have, even the smallest things. The Charismatic Renewal has to multiply as a grace in each of its members, who represent its individual, unique talents. You and I can be dispensers of this grace, no matter where we are, with the freedom that the Holy Spirit gives us.

Something worth mentioning is that this parable does not suggest that we should have a negligent attitude such as that of the bad servant. On the contrary, it warns us not to be like that, not to make the same mistake.

There is no magic formula, there is no manual. We do not know exactly what each of the three servants did; what we know is that they had their abilities, they were given talents and that their lord gave them freedom to act. It is, therefore, just a matter of allowing God's grace to act on our abilities. In other words, to let ourselves to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, immerse in His grace and dispense it to the others.

We should feel encouraged by the Pope's words, stimulated to have our breath and rhythm renewed and strengthened. We should do as those runners who leave the best of their energies to the end and, as such, follow this stretch of our journey at a quick pace, being trustworthy in the little things in order to have our share in blessings in store for us.

May the Lord direct us! 

## 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](http://www.iccrs.org)  
 E-mail: [newsletter@iccrs.org](mailto: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:

# Unity within the Renewal

■ Fr Wojciech Nowacki

In Christ we become partakers of the life of the Trinity. Conformed by the power of the Holy Spirit to the begotten Son of God, we are sons in the Son and in the Spirit of the adopted children we could call Abba, Father. We are called God's children - which is what we are! (cf. 1John 3,1n). In the face of tears, with which the sin marked the human heart and the human community, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone's faults against them" (2 Cor 5,19). He, lifted up from the earth, shall draw all people to himself (cf. Jn 12,31) and gathers together into one the scattered children of God (Jn 11, 52). But it was not until Pentecost that the community of Christ's disciples was transformed, becoming "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4,32). Thanks to the Holy Spirit Church began to exist not as a human organization, but as a supernatural community.

The Holy Spirit has equipped the Church with everything that is needed to be able to preach the Gospel and lead all men to the unity of faith. The variety of charisms and hierarchical ministries are the gifts of the Spirit for the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12,4-7). The Holy Spirit multiplies the good of the Church's community, by those who serve the gift of wisdom, faith, healing, prophecy, tongues (cf. 1 Cor 12,8-11) and through the ministry of the apostles, teachers, community managers, undertakers of the works of mercy (cf. 1 Cor 12,28-29). The gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ and given to the disciples, brings a new experience of community. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the profound spiritual experience of unity combined with the most practical consequences (cf. Acts 4,32).

The grace of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the opening up for the stream of love that unites the Father and the Son. This love overflows from the depths of the Trinity and fills the hearts of believers. This unity is no longer a pure result of human aspirations, but a gift and challenge. The liturgy calls it "communion in the Holy Spirit". We experience the unifying God's love, which enables us to build unity based on a deep, personal encounter with God. This love is the source of charisms. Receiving and ministering the charisms forms the attitude of humility and service for the good of the community. The Spirit who unites the Father and the Son in the bosom of the Blessed Trinity, is giving himself to us as the Spirit of unity and communion. No wonder that from the beginning the charismatics, just like the first Christians, have gathered into prayer groups and different kinds of communities from the desire of their hearts. However, the Holy Spirit does not entirely remove human weaknesses and differences between us and internal tears caused by original sin, but gives us the spiritual power to overcome them. His gift is very demanding and requires our commitment and collaboration. He works to create harmony in the diversity of the charisms, according to the image of a living organism, using by St. Paul (1 Cor. 12, 12-30). Therefore for the unity within the Renewal it is necessary for each person to properly discover their own identity and the gifts granted for him. Obedience to the Holy Spirit and the service of true unity require humble putting of the good of the community over our own good, interests, ambitions, striving for power and empha-

sizing our importance. We have to remember that there is only one Lord in the Renewal. Pope Francis during the meeting at the Roman Olympic stadium invited all of the participants to the common chant answering the question: Who's the boss of the Renewal?, Who is the only Lord? Everybody shouted: "Jesus! Jesus is the Lord". The right answer on this question arise in our hearts only by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12, 3). This confession expresses more by the life than by the words. We reaffirm them just when for the sake of unity, we are ready to die for the love of the brethren, for our ambitions and beliefs. We serve the unity when we submit humbly all the gifts we received under the discernment of the community and its responsible, and to the judgment and decision of the pastors of the Church.

The leaders of the Renewal have a special responsibility to care for the unity in their communities and between different Charismatic realities. This requires, above all, cultivating a personal relationship with Christ and shaping the sensibility to the actions of the Holy Spirit. The leaders should be expected to have the ability to cross the borders of their own groups and communities in the spirit of genuine service to the Kingdom of God. The involvement of various charismatic groups in jointly undertaken work of intercession or new evangelization, is a great test of our real concern for the true unity in diversity. Whenever we submit to the Holy Spirit, allowing him to lead us in unity, we experience the blessings and joy according to the words of the Psalm: "How good, how delightful it is to live as brothers all together!" (Ps 133,1). But if we succumb to the spirit of rivalry and focus on ourselves, we are destroying ourselves, our communities and the Church. St. Paul warns us against this danger with powerful words: "If you go snapping at one another and tearing one another to pieces, take care: you will be eaten up by one another" (Ga 5,15). Our unity in the Holy Spirit gives power and credibility to our ministry. Whenever there is true unity, this shout full of admiration and fascination, expressed by the ancient christian author Tertullian: "See how they love one another". The spirit of unity attracts like a magnet and contributes to the growth of the community.

In our country some dioceses have a very valuable experience. There the bishops invited the responsible for ecclesial movements, experienced in the field of new evangelization, to the common ministry in kerygmatic retreats in all the parishes of their dioceses. In this way, tasks undertaken in every particular environment have been integrated into the life of local church, and the charisms of each group joined in the common proclamation of the word of God. The search for the unity within the Renewal also requires a commitment to overcome disputes and conflicts and look for the things of God. We should remember that the unity of the Renewal, as the unity among all the Christ's disciples, is the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of our cooperation with Him. Jesus constantly prays to God the Father that his disciples be one, so that the world may believe. He constantly sends us his Spirit so that our unity may be a clear sign of the unity of the Holy Trinity, in whose life we participate. 🙏



## 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 we be guided step-by-step by the Holy Spirit?

We often lead our Christian life as if we had to carry it out on our own. We turn to God for strength and charisms, and when we are really lost we ask for his guidance. But often we imagine him only at the beginning and the end of our day, giving us instructions and waiting for us to come back “mission accomplished.” The question is: should we seek to be led step-by-step, decision after decision, by the Holy Spirit? Can we let the Spirit to be our constant source of guidance? The Gospels present Jesus as being led by the Spirit from the start of his public ministry: he is “led up” and even “driven” by the Spirit to the desert (Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12), and afterwards to Galilee (Lk 4:14). Luke insists that Jesus does this “full of the Holy Spirit,” who has just descended on him in the Jordan (Lk 4:1).

In the same way, the old man Simeon “goes in the Spirit” to the Temple when Jesus is presented on his eighth day (Lk 2:27). Philip is led to encounter the Ethiopian eunuch, a minister to the queen: the Spirit drives Philip to talk to him, to explain the Scriptures and baptize him, and then whisks him away (Ac 8:26.29.39). Peter also is guided by the Spirit to go visit pagans (cf. Ac 11:12), as Paul and Silas are prevented by the Spirit from going to Asia or Bithynia (Ac 16:6-7).

The Church Fathers and theologians have developed this dimension of life in the Spirit under the heading “gifts of the Spirit.” The traditional list, inspired by Isaiah 11:2, includes wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that while faith, hope and charity attract us to God and transform us, we still need extra help to very concretely choose the right path and make the right decisions for living out this transformation. Being a Christian means not only doing good in general or living a life in conformity with the Gospel; it means obeying the Lord in the details of our life. For Aquinas the gifts of the Spirit assist us in doing just that, because they dispose us to be led by the Spirit: “The gifts of the Holy Spirit... help us to follow the impulse communicated to us by the Spirit.” Saint Thomas also develops the beautiful idea of the “instinct of the Holy Spirit.” Rather than being given a kind of knowledge we could use as if it were

our own, we are made more attentive and obedient “instruments” in God’s hands.

These gifts are part of normal Christian life, but they still need to be asked for and nurtured. A striking witness to this was Pastor David du Plessis, a key leader in the Pentecostal movement. His first thought on waking up in the morning was to greet the Holy Spirit: “Hello Holy Spirit, I love you.” He would then proceed to say: “Holy Spirit, please lead me step by step today: I will follow the first impulse that comes to my mind for every decision I make.” It was a way of “daring” the Spirit into assisting and inspiring him. Du Plessis had plans and appointments, but he would feel free to change these if the impulse oriented him in another direction.



Of course, if we try to follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance in such an immediate way we need to constantly discern if it really is his voice we are listening to. The terms “instinct” and “impulse” indicate that the first access we have to this guidance is a type of “feeling.” Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who developed a profound and precise teaching

on discernment, agrees: the “medium” of discernment, through which the Spirit guides us, are our emotions. Peace and joy may show us the way we are to go, disquiet and revulsion what we should turn away from. However, emotions are just the medium, they are not the voice of the Spirit himself. It is necessary to apply our mind to understand what the emotion is reacting to, to ask others for advice—since the Spirit works through the fellowship of the Church—and to keep our eyes open for the consequences, since only the fruit of our decisions can offer a full and final confirmation.

We also need to learn to recognize the voice of the Spirit, to let it become ever more familiar, through regular prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, through which the Spirit speaks in the clearest form.

So, in the end, yes, we should be led step-by-step by the Holy Spirit, because that is how he wishes to guide us—and we can, because we can nurture the “gifts of the Spirit” and grow in discernment. 🍷