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Fanning the flame:

Keeping and spreading the fire through transformation

■ Andres Arango



As we begin our journey towards the Golden Jubilee of the CCR, we had set up three stages to help us deepen on specific themes. The first stage, on the years 2012 and 2013, we focused on "Fire Starters", based on the letter of St. Paul to the Romans, "I appeal to you therefore, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may discern what is God's will—what is good, pleasing, and perfect." (Rom 12:1-2) The years 2016 and 2017 are focused on "Spreading the Fire." One of the best ways to make this current of grace of the CCR spread to many places is through our own transformation, which, as a living witness, could inspire many others to seek a personal encounter with the Risen Lord. In this article I want to reflect on how by keeping the flame of God's love in our lives we will be authentic missionaries in the transforming power of God.

First, it would seem that being an authentic follower of Christ is an impossible mission. The world promotes "ideals" that are contrary to the ways of Christ. So, if we want to be faithful disciples of Jesus, we must live against the current of the world. Vatican II, in Lumen Gentium chapter V, declares the universal call to holiness. We must highlight that holiness is not our work, but rather it is the gift of the Holy Spirit. All of us have been called to become saints, that is, to live as Jesus did. He himself tells us to "be holy as your heavenly Father is holy" (Matthew 5:48) and, being both God and man, showed us the way of holiness. To be a Renewed-Catholic-Charismatic person means to lead a particular lifestyle, it means living every instant of our lives in the same way Jesus did. His lifestyle was being filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit in every moment of his earthly life. Thus, to have a new life in Christ, we must be filled and guided by the Holy Spirit. We should never forget that his main mission is to make us holy.

Secondly, if the Holy Spirit is truly abiding in us, and we are obedient to his inspirations, we will lead a moral



life according to the will of God. Jesus makes an interesting prayer to his heavenly Father: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one." (Jn 17:15) A real Christian is neither afraid of, nor does he seek to hide from the world, on the contrary, he "lives in the world but is not of the world."

Moreover, he transforms it, by his words and deed, according to the will of God. One of the greatest virtues of those who are filled with the Holy Spirit is temperance, which "moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods." A person transformed by the Spirit, in spite of the world's adversities, keeps the flame burning in his heart, through a continual and intimate relationship with Jesus, and thus answers the call of the Apostle St. Paul to present his body "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

Finally, experiencing this transforming power of God, is manifested not only in an interior change, but also in our relationships with others. A true disciple of Jesus is a missionary of his mercy. So, keeping the flame burning in our hearts makes us spread it through our good works, which manifest the presence of Jesus in our souls. Pope Francis invites us to care for all of Creation, but above all we should love our brothers and sisters as God loves us, with concrete acts. If we could use a single word to define people filled with the Holy Spirit, it would be LOVE. The transformation into Jesus consists precisely in being open to receiving his love and bringing that love to all around us. 🌟

“We must highlight that holiness is not our work, but rather it is the gift of the Holy Spirit.”



The selfie stick phenomena – "What does my selfie stick say about me?"

■ Ann Brereton



Imagine an archaeological dig site in 1000 years time. A long aluminium stick with a claw on one end and button on the other is found. After much research it is discovered to be a 'selfie-stick' from the 21st Century. It is displayed in the National

Museum with the following inscription "Selfie Stick. A popular photographic tool used by our ancestors to capture a moment in time with the operator of the device being the main attraction."

Most of us have participated in a 'selfie' or possess our own 'selfie stick'. I remember being told by a professional photographer that where possible include a person/people in holiday scenery snaps, as this can help to recall where and when the photo was taken. However the scenery or event remained the subject of the photo, unlike today. The selfie-stick phenomena in which we are now living has shifted the attention to 'self' being at the centre and all else as incidental.

This is not a new trend. Reflecting back through the years to family snaps, our usual reaction when seeing them for the first time is to look for my self. If it's a good photo of me then I love the snap and may even put it on display, regardless of what everyone else looks like. If it's a bad photo of me although everyone else looks fantastic, the photo could be relegated to the bottom drawer.

So fundamentally little has changed when it comes to photography and our response to it. The basic human need to be acknowledged, or even adored, is a temptation faced by many. The current affair with the selfie stick feeds this egocentric desire and can easily become an inordinate attachment and sometimes addiction which feeds our need for recognition.

The voice of Social media today bombards us with the messages that we are of value and acceptable only if we are at our most glamorous and sometimes we are driven to post a selfie which proves this. Now of course, it's possible with body-slimming, skin smoothing and age-defying filters and apps, to change our appearance, to change from our true self to that which will be acceptable to others. The number of 'likes' we get will tell us if we've been successful in this task.



A recent quote I read said "People get obsessed with likes. It's an addictive drug. You get a taste of it, and then you want it more and more. People can tell you the precise moment they broke 100 likes." Alternately we can feel ostracised and depressed if we do not receive the desired response. This can cause a spiral into an abyss of depression, which can have terrible consequences.

We would do well to heed the words found in Samuel 16:7 "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

As Christians we are not called to 'throw away the selfie stick' however I believe we are challenged to look beyond the 'self.' A selfie can be a wonderful tool to enable us to look at the world a little differently. A photo is usually taken to seize a moment, an emotion, a scene or a place which holds importance to us. Look beyond self in the picture and 'see' what is happening in the background. Your photo may contain an act of kindness, of love or joy. If scenery, it's beauty could remind you of the Majesty of God. Look to the other people in the photo. Give thanks to God for them. Be Real and true to yourself. Give thanks for who you are created to be in God's Image, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14) Selfies do not have to be narcissistic, they can and should include the other.

Let us continue to Capture the moment! But also to see beyond ourselves. It is then that our world is enlarged, our lives are enriched and God is given Praise and Thanks. 🙌



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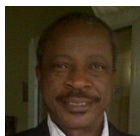
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Francis Edo Olotu & Jean Christof Sakiti

FRANCIS EDO OLOTU · COUNCIL MEMBER FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING AFRICA



My name is Francis Edo Olotu. My experience with the Renewal goes as far back as March 1981 when I took employment with the Catholic Diocese of Ondo as a Medical Officer in Medical Missionaries of Mary Hospital Ondo. A new prayer group was just starting in the hospital and I was invited to participate. My background had been conservative Catholicism with very little exposure to the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. I had been introduced to daily bible reading as part of my plan of spiritual life in 1976 by Opus Dei Priests at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos. My exposure to Baptist Missionaries in 1979 at Eku Baptist Hospital, Eku, Delta state of Nigeria impressed me deeply especially the tenderness with which they cared for the sick and the healthy respect they had for my Catholic Faith.

I participated in the life in the spirit seminar and one thing I longed for was to talk intimately with God in prayer. I had reservations about speaking in tongues at the beginning of the seminar however as it went on I yearned to experience it. I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in June 1981 and ever since, I have lived a life of purpose.

I had desired to do a post graduate training in Surgery in the United States and passed all the requisite examinations with a four year multiple entry Visa to the United States in 1983. Then I felt deeply in my heart that God wanted me to work in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Nigeria. I never desired to own a private hospital but I had the nudging to start one and I obeyed. It was after I started it that I saw God's hand in it; it gave me time to work in the Renewal. I served in different leadership positions culminating in 10 years as a member of our National Service Team.

Today I serve the Renewal as a speaker in Conferences at both local and International levels; I am an author of books on the family, parenting and Fatherhood and I am deeply involved in organizing Parish spiritual growth activities. I am a member of St John Bosco Catholic Church, Ondo, Nigeria-the parish is run by Salesians of Don Bosco. As African Subcommittee of ICCRS Vice President, my job entails looking into activities of the Renewal in English Speaking African Countries giving support where ever it is needed.

I read the recent ICCRS publications Baptism in the Holy Spirit as well as the book, Practicing the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence; they made good impact on me.

I see a very bright future for the Renewal as God is spreading the fire of Pentecost all over the world. 🙏

JEAN CHRISTOF SAKITI · COUNCIL MEMBER FOR FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA



I was baptised in the Holy Spirit in December 1984 when a monk who is also a priest prayed for me. At that time, I was a student. I attended a Life in the Spirit seminar eight months earlier. After the training, our leaders told me that I was not ready for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was true. I was more concerned about my studies than that seminar. In December, I went to a retreat and the priest asked me if I would like him to pray for my Baptism in the Holy Spirit. I accepted because I thought I was ready. When he prayed for me, I was filled with great peace and joy. I started singing in tongues with him. Starting from that time, my prayer became deeper.

Today I serve Renewal in two ways: I give formation to my brethren, leaders and all members everywhere there is a need and when they ask me. This is not only for Renewal but parish priests also ask me to come and give formation to their faithful. I also engage much in evangelisation in many dioceses in my country and in other countries. I represent French-speaking Africa as a Council Member of ICCRS.

Books I have read within 12 months: Et leurs yeux s'ouvrirent (The eyes of both were opened), Frédéric Marlière, Amour et responsabilité (Love and responsibility), Carol Wojtyla and Prayer for Healing, International Colloquium, November 2001.

The Renewal needs three things: we need a revival; we have lost the first love, the fire of the beginning has diminished; we need to wake up and move forward and go deeper in our love for God and for our brethren; and we need more commitment in the use of the charisms.

The Renewal must impact the Church more, starting from parishes. Our goal must be Baptism in the Holy Spirit for all Catholics. The Renewal must impact the World's life: our evangelisation must go into every part of human life. We are called to change the society and lead people to Jesus Christ. 🙏

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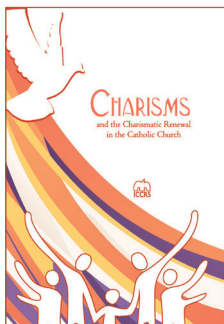
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Gathering of the CCR in Philadelphia

"The family is alive in the power of the Holy Spirit!"

That was the theme of the Gathering of the Renewal for the New Evangelization of the Family held on September 26, 2015, in collaboration with the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. For over 3000 participants, the power of the Holy Spirit was evident as we became a "family of families" worshipping together in English, Spanish, and French. Lasting only about 4 1/2 hours, the event was packed with prayer and preaching.

Msgr. Malagrecia presented "The family is alive", while Michelle Moran, President of ICCRS, focused on "The family in the power of the Spirit." Salvatore Martinez, shared the call of the Renewal to the work of the "Re-evangelization of the Christian family"; while Johnny and Leslie Bertucci, and Darling Previl shared their respective testimonies. The day ended with Mass celebrated by Peter Cardinal Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, with 11 priests concelebrating.

Many groups came together to sponsor this event: the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Catholic Charismatic Renewal, ICCRS and Catholic Fraternity, the United States' English-speaking NSC, among others. The Holy Spirit was present and regardless of our language or culture, we were one in the Lord! 🙌

ICCRS FORMATION

Visit www.iccrs.org or e-mail formation@iccrs.org for more information about our training programmes.



LFI • Rome, Italy

■ 28 Aug - 17 Sept 2016

■ Contact: ICCRS Formation → formation@iccrs.org

ICCRS offers its VI Leadership Formation Institute programme. Students will be offered practical teaching and workshops on various aspects of the ministry within CCR. In addition, the students will go on several field trips in the eternal city of Rome. The school will be held primarily in English, but other languages will be made available depending on the number of requests.

Online registration is open on www.iccrs.org.



LTC • Seattle - USA

■ 10 - 17 April 2016

■ Contact: Tammie Stevens → LTC2016@wwccr.org

LTC • Poland

■ 06 - 13 Aug 2016

■ Contact: Fr. Wojciech Nowacki → wnowacki@odnowa.orgau

LTC • Guadeloupe

■ 22 - 30 Oct 2016

■ Contact: Huguette BOQUE-OLANOR → o.boque@only.fr

The ICCRS Leadership Training Course, in partnership with local Charismatic realities, provides this week-long programme that will call and empower new leaders as well as strengthen and encourage current ones. The programme includes daily Mass, Eucharist Adoration and a time of Charismatic Praise and Worship, and teachings. There is also time for reflection, sharing and ministry.



ITC • Congo

■ 1 - 6 July 2016

■ Contact: Frère Eugène, LELO → renouveaurdcongo@hotmail.fr

New ICCRS programme of formation for the ministry of prophetic intercession.

ICCRS International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services

The ICCRS Newsletter is an international publication released bimonthly in English, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, German, Arabic and Romanian for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Its purpose is to provide information about the growth and development of CCR throughout the world, as well as the events organised by ICCRS.

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