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What we call “burn-out” is a state of mental, physical, and spiritual exhaustion that can arise from the stress of extended periods of Christian ministry. Burn-out can lead to depression or illness. How can a Catholic charismatic leader avoid burn-out?

For a leader committed to serving the Lord, it is necessary to have a specific goal, to put down markers, and to keep one’s eyes fixed upon the essential: To what is Jesus calling me today? Have I really understood what my mission is? To whom and to what am I committed? These are some questions that can help me remain docile to the Holy Spirit’s inspirations and open to spiritual discernment. Many factors can foster the Christian charismatic leader’s commitment, like the desire to build, to see a better world arising, and to fulfill oneself by putting one’s talents and gifts at the service of God and others.

First, we must become aware of the following: within the human heart, there is this desire to fulfill oneself. What appears to me as essential is to discern well what the goal is and to determine how to reach it. The parable of the man who builds his house on the rock teaches us a way of doing things that is full of wisdom. Jesus speaks of anchoring oneself to Him by taking the time to sit down and to reflect. “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Mt 7:24). Isn’t that an invitation to pray, to draw from the Source, and to attach oneself to his Word to allow a change to really take place inside? Then, we are ready to receive the anointing for the mission to be accomplished. Jesus speaks to us of laying foundations that are well anchored into the rock, to go through the storms and challenges while remaining “standing.”

Some advice to avoid exhaustion:

- Learn to be surrounded by good people and learn to delegate;
- Be disciplined and structured during the time allowed for meeting someone or for a specific activity;
- Learn to say “no” with discernment while remembering that the grace of God is there to help us when we feel poor as we face what

is requested of us. Remember that God can enable those He has called, but, behold! Let’s give to Jesus the rudder of our life.

- Keep a balanced way of living among the following activities: prayer, rest, commitment, leisure, and family. The Word of God tells us, “There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing” (Ecc 3:5).

- Recognize our own limits while accepting that we cannot have all the gifts.

- To give, we need a favourable environment. Developing benevolence in relationships allows each person to feel loved and responsible.

- To accept to be loved is one thing, but to practice being grateful towards others will help keep unity and joy in daily work.

Attitudes to develop to live out more serenely one’s own ministry:

- Develop self-confidence, as well as confidence in others. When we delegate, this means that we accept to trust the other and that we believe in him or her. This way, we are never alone, but we are together as a united body.

- “Letting go”: people and situations do not belong to us. Therefore, let’s avoid keeping other people’s burdens on our own shoulders. Let’s learn to totally submit them to God who knows how to take care of them, because, “He provides for all our needs.” Letting go will allow us to enter into the grace of abandonment.

- Humility: Let’s avoid the trap of “performance” by recognizing that we do not know how to do everything. To accept one’s own limits is an everyday challenge. It is so difficult for the human being to leave the whole space to God. The humble person is aware that Jesus alone can free, heal, and save. Therefore, he leaves the entire space to Jesus and, in one word, does not take himself for God.

Participating in Jesus’ mission while developing these attitudes of abandonment, of trust in oneself as well as in others, of letting-go, all these will allow us to grow in love, unity, and to bear abundant fruit. Let’s remain united to Jesus. He is the One who works things through us. Our hands become the extension of His hands; our eyes become His own eyes. As the Word of God teaches us, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zc 4:6). 🕯

Contending for the faith in times like these

■ Jane Guenther



The Christian faith and values are being challenged and denigrated daily all over the world. Having just returned from the Jubilee in Rome I would say, “What’s new?” St. Paul contended with it as we hear in 1 Co 1:25–29, “For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your call, brethren, not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise...” As we celebrated the Pentecost Vigil in the Circus Maximus, it became vividly clear that we have always had to fight for the faith and we will always have to fight for the faith because it is countercultural by nature. This was where Christians were persecuted and Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa expressed that this land is sacred, for what was shed for the faith was the blood of these martyrs. We stood on the soil where that blood ran.

In our modern age, the hedonistic nature of self-absorption in social media is one of the biggest challenges. The tendency to write your own story or post on social media how you want others to perceive reality poses a threat to the truth. Once, on a plane, two young girls never spoke one word but shot images of themselves with different filters on their computer together and separate for the full one-and-a-half-hour flight. These stories can be likened to those of the false prophets in Scripture, perversions of truth. We have seen Living in a Post Truth World on the cover of Time magazine this past year. Only the “truth that sets us free” can conquer the post truth world. Fr. Jacques Philippe says about freedom in his book, *Fire & Light* on p. 53, “This is the great lie of modern atheism: to restore mankind to its freedom, it is necessary to do away with the idea of God. In reality, just the reverse is true; God is source and Redeemer of our freedom. The more attached we are to God, the more free we become. The further we are from him, the more at risk is our freedom...”

The eye and ear noise of our modern world challenges our Christian life with images that destroy human dignity and words that do not build the kingdom. The

entitlement to voice opinions not founded on truth but on the self-centred ego, “I want to do it my way,” is destructive. Robert Cardinal Sarah writes in his book, *The Power of Silence*, “For some years now there has been a constant onslaught of images, lights, and colors that blind man. His interior dwelling is violated by the unhealthy, provocative images of pornography, bestial violence, and all sorts of worldly obscenities that assault purity of heart and infiltrate through the door of sight.” He goes on to say about what we hear, “Today in a highly technological busy world how can we find silence? Noise wearies us, and we get the feeling that silence has become an unreachable oasis. How many people are obliged to work in a chaos that distresses and dehumanizes them? Cities have become noisy furnaces in which even nights are not spared the assault of noise. Without noise, postmodern man falls into a dull, insistent uneasiness. He is accustomed to permanent background noise, which sickens yet reassures him. Without noise, man is feverish, lost. Noise gives him security, like a drug on which he has become dependent. With its festive appearance, noise is a whirlwind that avoids facing itself. Agitation becomes a tranquilizer, a sedative, a morphine pump, a sort of reverie, an incoherent dream world. But this noise is a dangerous, deceptive medicine, a diabolic lie that helps man avoid confronting himself in his interior emptiness. The awakening will necessarily be brutal”.

One final important point is Larry Christiansen’s teaching on empathetic repentance. When we are so convinced of others’ wrongdoing and failings, it is important to enter into repenting for how we have contributed in the very same way with the very same shortcomings. Don’t seek to remove the speck in your brother’s eye while there is a plank in your own.

If we are going to be contenders in this war against faith, we must speak truth, embrace silence, and repent of our sinfulness as a way to encounter our God. Doing such will form you into a person who lives out of joy, pure joy. As Bl. Columba Marmion said, “Joy is the echo of God’s life within us.” May your soul sing with joy! 🙌

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Growing in faith

■ Jean Christophe Sakiti



“He replied, ‘Come and see’; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.” John 1:39

The two disciples, James and John, sought to know Jesus better after their encounter with Him. We have all encountered Jesus and experienced baptism in the water and in the Spirit. This is our first encounter. We must grow in our faith as Saint Peter asked.

“Like new-born babies all your longing should be for milk—the unadulterated spiritual milk—which will help you to grow up to salvation.” 1 Peter 2:2

What is growth in faith?

Jesus spent three years training His apostles. The Holy Spirit came to confirm in them the teaching of Jesus. Their ministry consisted of training those whom they had evangelized to bring them to the maturity of the adult man.

To grow in faith is to know the love of God, the Father manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a matter of realizing that God, my Father, loves me and watches over me. I must believe that God wants to make me a son in Jesus Christ, that He wants me to abide in Him and share in His glory, just as Jesus said.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see my glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:24

Growing in faith is the certainty that Jesus gave His life for my salvation. It is knowing that in Him alone are the solutions to all my problems and to the problems of those close to me. In all things, we turn to Jesus to listen to Him and accept His will. It is possible, therefore, for us to be like the apostles and no longer fear men, but be able to proclaim our faith in times good and bad.

Growing in faith means learning to listen to the Holy Spirit and letting ourselves be guided by the voice that speaks in our heart. We learn, little by little, not to let the world influence us with its easy solutions that lead to the death of the spiritual man.

How to grow in faith

The Word of God: It leads us to discover God, to know His project of love and salvation for man. Through the Word of God, we understand how He walked with man from the beginning right up to His manifestation in Jesus Christ. The Word of God reveals to us that Jesus is alive, present, and active in our lives today. Take time to read and meditate on the Word of God!

Prayer

The Word of God helps us to know God. Prayer is the means by which we enter into God. Jesus prayed and taught us how to enter into this heart to heart connection with God. In this place, God takes us into Himself, transforms us, and makes us like Him. From this place where we resemble Him, we become capable of living like Him and acting like Him. Let us spend time with God in deep prayer!

The sacraments

Through communion with the Body of Christ, Jesus comes into us and takes us into Himself. The person who prepares well in sacramental confession and receives the Eucharist with dignity and faith becomes the abode of God and dwells in God. He becomes the friend with whom Jesus walks unflinchingly. May we tend faithfully to these treasures of the Church that give us strength on the way to holiness!

The testimony of the saints

Reading the lives of the saints gives us a desire to follow Jesus as they did. We find the strength to fight evil and to testify to Jesus. I could start by reading the life of my patron saint.

Saint Paul is our example in our continuous effort to attain holiness. To the Philippians, he wrote, “Not that I have secured it already, nor yet reached my goal, but I am still pursuing it in the attempt to take hold of the prize for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” Philippians 3:12.

Let us each day grasp to grow in the knowledge of Christ and reach maturity so we can say with St. Paul, “It is no longer I, but Christ living in me. The life that I am now living, subject to the limitation of human nature, I am living in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:20. 📖

THE CROSS OF THE RENEWAL



With great joy we announce the resumption of the Cross of the Renewal production and distribution. The project, conceived and implemented in Canada by our brother René Brimo, now in heaven, to give a symbol of belonging and witness to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal’s stream of grace and for the continued support of ICCRS in its worldwide service mission.



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

Can lay people be involved in deliverance and exorcism?

*Note: This column provides only a brief answer to this question. For more complete information, please see the new book *Deliverance Ministry by the ICCRS Doctrinal Commission*.*

Many people today are rediscovering a truth that has always been part of Catholic tradition: that our life on earth is not only a pilgrimage of faith but also a constant battle against evil and against Satan, the prince of darkness, who seeks to draw us away from Christ and make us captive to sin, confusion, bitterness, cynicism, and despair. But Christ has won the victory! In Him, we are liberated from the dominion of Satan and empowered to resist the ongoing influence of evil spirits. The rediscovery of this reality has led to a marked increase in the ministries of exorcism and deliverance in the Church today.

Both exorcism and deliverance involve the casting out of evil spirits, but there is a very important distinction between them. Exorcism is a liturgical rite of the Church for liberating a person who is demon-possessed. Demon-possession is an extreme, but relatively rare, form of demonic bondage in which the demon(s) is (are) able at times to take control over a person's body and to control his or her words and actions. Exorcism may be done only by a bishop or by a priest with the permission of the bishop (CCC, 1673). Deliverance, on the other hand, is the ministry of liberating people from lesser forms of demonic influence. It does not involve any set form of prayer or liturgical rite of the Church and may be carried out by any of the faithful.

Although only a bishop or priest can perform the rite of exorcism, lay people may be involved in exorcisms in a supporting role. There are many exorcists who work with lay collaborators in the ministry, especially lay people who have the charism of discernment of spirits. They can help the exorcist determine what spirits are at work and how to deal with them.

Deliverance ministry is widely practiced by lay people as well as priests throughout the world. For instance, many bishops have invited lay people who are trained in the Unbound model of deliverance to provide this ministry in their dioceses. The need for this ministry is vast because of the enormous numbers of people who suffer from various forms of demonic oppression. Demonic oppression can result from involvement in the occult or from serious sin, but it can also result from traumas and wounds that make people vulnerable to spiritual deception and open

an entryway to the influence of evil spirits. Deliverance ministry helps people receive healing in Christ, so that the entryways are closed and evil spirits no longer have the power to deceive and ensnare them.

Some people have heard that it is not permissible for lay people to give direct commands to demons. However, there is no basis for this view in Scripture or in Church teaching. Jesus named the casting out of demons as one of the signs that would accompany Christians in their evangelizing mission: "these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons..." (Mk 16:17). In the early Church, the casting out of demons by lay people was an important part of the work of evangelization. Although the Church in recent centuries has restricted the rite of exorcism to priests for pastoral reasons, it has not restricted the practice of deliverance.

The Church does, however, stipulate that lay people (or anyone other than a designated exorcist) should not question demons or dialogue with them. The only appropriate way for lay people to relate to evil spirits is by command—commanding them in the name of Jesus to leave or to cease oppressing a person.

The fact that it is permissible for lay people to do deliverance does not mean that any layperson can be involved in this ministry. Not all are called to it, and not all have the necessary gifts and training. There are varying levels of involvement in deliverance, and there is a need for pastoral wisdom and discernment in determining who should be involved.

A good rule of thumb is the following threefold distinction. First, all Christians can do self-deliverance, that is, can take steps to break free of demonic oppression through prayer and by taking authority over evil spirits in the name of Jesus. Second, anyone who is living a mature Christian life can do deliverance on an occasional basis for family members, friends, members of their prayer group, or others such as a person they are evangelizing. Finally, some people are called to practice deliverance as a ministry, regularly and for people whom they do not know personally. Those involved in this ministry should be persons of Christian maturity, psychological health, holiness of life, and humility, and the ministry should be accountable to church authority (usually either the local bishop or his delegate). 🏠