

Exercising Prophetic Leadership:

Prophetic Shepherds

■ Fr Emmanuel Tusiime



Prophetic Shepherds have the clearest vision and the longest view, and detect dangers before they approach. Symbolically, the term "shepherd" is used for God, especially in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Psalm 23). Also for Jesus, who said I am the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:10-14). Again, in the New Testament the Angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds.



The importance of Prophet Shepherds in different Societies.

In many societies, shepherds were an important part of the economy. Unlike farmers, shepherds were often wage earners, being paid to watch the sheep of others. Shepherds also lived apart from society, being largely nomadic. It was mainly a job of solitary males without children, and new shepherds thus needed to be recruited externally. Shepherds were most often the younger sons of farming peasants who did not inherit any land. In other societies, each family would have a family member to shepherd its flock, often a child, youth or an elder who couldn't help much with harder work; these shepherds were fully integrated in society; this also implied that a shepherd had more time to be alone, reflect, meditate and contemplate.

Shepherds would normally work in groups either looking after one large flock, or each bringing their own and merging their responsibilities. They would live in small cabins, often shared with their sheep, and would buy food from local communities. Less often, shepherds lived in covered wagons that traveled with their flocks.

A Shepherd holds full responsibility and accountability over the flock. The shepherd protects the herd. Sheep are always subject to danger and must always be under the watchful eye of the shepherd as they graze. The shepherd spends long lonely hours each day, patiently enduring dangers for the welfare of the flock. Some of the famous biblical characters were shepherds; Abel, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Rachel, Laban, Jacob's twelve sons, Prophet Moses, King David, Mesha - King of Moab (Jordan), Doeg, Prophet Amos, the shepherds who came to honour Yeshua (Jesus).

Prophetic Shepherds in the Old Testament.

The "prophet" has the main role of receiving and delivering the message of God on any subject. The Bible says that during the Old Testament period, God's revelation to humanity came through a group of people known as the prophets. The Bible describes the biblical prophets in a number of ways. They include the following: The prophet is called a man of God (1 Sam 2:27) the prophet is a servant and messenger of the Lord (Isaiah 42:19). The prophet was called a seer (Isaiah 30:10). The prophet was a man of the Spirit or an "inspired man" (Hosea 9:7). The prophet was a watchman for the people (Ezekiel 3:17).

The biblical prophet was one who spoke forth the word of God. They spoke to the people on behalf of God. Before attaining the position of a prophet; the prophets used to spend a part of their lives as shepherds and most of the time they were in the wilderness vulnerable to various seen and unseen dangers, such as wolves, and other beasts. The shepherd must make sure that the flock are safe.

The Bible says that God's way of designating prophets was through visions and dreams. From this experience of being a shepherd, a Prophetic Shepherd is alert to give a clear and quick warning as directed by God to the flock. At times, they may appear harsh in the words spoken but for the sake of the future of humanity, they still go ahead and deliver the message. The biblical prophets unanimously testified that the words they spoke were not their own but were ultimately derived from the Lord. While every prophet spoke forth God's Word not everyone spoke of the future.

The Lord said to Moses, "What they have said is well said. From their own brothers I shall raise up a prophet like yourself; I shall put my words into his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him. Anyone who refuses to listen to my words, spoken by him in my name will have to render an account to me" (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

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Moses, who is an exemplary prophet of the Old Covenant (Numbers 12:6-8)... not only received information from the Council and passed its decisions onto the people... he also actively argued before the Council when he felt it necessary, even on occasion, 'changing God's mind' (Exodus 32:7-14, 30-35) (Numbers 14:13-19,20). In this way, Christ is exercising His prophetic office when he intercedes for us. Similarly, ordinary Christians are exercising a prophetic office when they plead with God on the behalf of others in prayer.

A shepherd from the south, Amos preached briefly with fine rural imaginary in the rich northern kingdom, against the corruptions of wealth, luxury, perversion of justice and external religion. "No indeed, Lord Yahweh does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. The lion roars: who is not afraid? Lord Yahweh has spoken: who will not prophesy?" (Amos 3:7-8). He said to them, 'Stay the night here, and I will answer as Yahweh directs me.' So the chiefs of Moab stayed with Balaam. (Numbers 22:8).

Do we have unqualified or false prophets and shepherds in our present time? Ezekiel the prophet of hope explains in chapter 13 the destiny of false prophets.

Some prophets wrote down certain prophecies as directed by God. The writings of the prophets were to be preserved. They were placed in the tabernacle and then later in the temple. They were to be preserved for future generations. In the Catholic Church, we have continually received prophetic Church letters through the Holy Fathers as our Shepherds which are sent worldwide.

Daniel wrote down a dream that God had given him: In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his head as he lay in bed. He wrote down the dream (Daniel 7:1). We also find the prophet Habakkuk commanded to write: Then Yahweh answered me and said: Write the visions down, inscribe it on tablets, to be easily read (Habakkuk 2:2).

The Old Testament prophets continued until John the Baptist – he was the last prophet of the old era. Jesus Christ brought in a new era of prophetic truth. As there were prophets during the Old Testament period there were also prophets during the time of the New Testament.

Jesus the Good Shepherd

New Testament prophets were similar to their Old Testament counterparts. They were to speak forth the Word of God to the people.

Jesus Christ is the symbolic shepherd of all of God's children. His birth was revealed to Shepherds, "Now it happened that the Angels had gone forth into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this event, which the Lord has made known to us' (Luke 2:15). And the shepherds

went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told" (Luke 2:20).

Jesus said that "I am the good shepherd" the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep (John 10:11). In proclaiming that He is the Good Shepherd, Jesus speaks of "laying down" His life for His sheep. As shepherd of the sheep, He is the one who protects, guides, and nurtures His flock. Prophetic Shepherd should bare the characteristic of Jesus Christ. Going back to his last night with his disciples, Jesus told them that the shepherd would be struck and the sheep scattered in fulfillment of prophecy. He did not escape from the suffering.

Prophetic Shepherd of our Generation.

Can prophetic shepherds of our generation remain and watch the flock in times of persecution as a result of prophetic messages? Does the flock regard the prophecies as truth? Do we believe in the messages proclaimed to us by our Shepherds? In the first letter of Paul to the Church at Corinth "Now Christ's body is ourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole. And those whom God has appointed in the Church are first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers..." (1 Cor 12:27-28).

Among the fascinating mysteries of modern Catholicism are the "miracles" and "secrets" imparted by the Virgin Mary at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917. The apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Fatima occurred at a time of trouble. After the fall of the Portuguese monarchy in 1910, there came a wave of anti-clerical sentiment and persecution, followed by various revolutionary conflicts and Portugal's involvement in World War I.

On May 13, 1917, three shepherd children were tending their flock about two miles west of Fatima in a town near Ourém. The children were Lucia Santos, age ten, and her two cousins, nine-year-old Francisco Marto and his seven-year-old sister, Jacinta. A sudden flash of lightning sent the children fleeing down a slope, whereupon the two girls beheld the dazzling apparition of a beautiful lady, radiant in white light, standing among the holly-like leaves of a small holm oak.

In the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, by Pope John Paul II. He gave to the Church a profound and inspiring teaching on Our Lady. In his teaching he always sees Mary as inseparably linked to Christ and as intimately associated with the life and mission of the Church.

In our times a number of CCR Leaders have been inspired by the Holy Spirit and written many spiritual books that are worth reading. I fully recommend to CCR leaders ICCRS publication of what I call a "Prophetic Shepherds' Voice" a collection of the Popes addresses to the CCR in a single book "Then Peter Stood Up" compiled by ICCRS Director Mr. Oreste Pesare. Please also access from the ICCRS website the recent prophetic speech of Pope Francis to the CCR on June, 2nd 2014 in Rome. 🏰

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Not by might *Zac 4:6*

■ Ann Brereton



Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty (Zech 4:6). Zechariah, a name which means “Yahweh remembers”, was a prophet of Judah, and a contemporary of Haggai. He was known as a prophet who “had understanding in the visions of God” (2Chron 26:5) and he spoke with fearlessness as he condemned both the king and the people for their rebellion against God (2 Chron 24:20).

Haggai and Zechariah rebuked the Jewish people for living in 'panelled houses' while God's house lay in ruins. Haggai had preached to stir the people from their slumber so that they would begin again to rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem which had been laying in ruin for 16 years. There had been a change in government policy and these two prophets roused the people from their lethargy and induced them to take advantage of the favourable opportunity that had arisen from this change. Zechariah complemented Haggai's ministry. He sought to persuade the people to continue in the work of rebuilding which they had begun and to stir up hope in their hearts and minds.

There are similarities in the culture in which Zechariah and Haggai lived and CCR culture today. Although a span of nearly 3,000 years separates us, today the Holy Spirit is again rousing His people. Prophetically the Lord is calling the Renewal to shake off our lethargy and rise up again in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now is the time to move again in the Power of the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther King famously spoke about the urgency of the moment. “We have come to this hallowed spot to be reminded of the fierce urgency of now” he said. “This is not the time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilising drug of gradualism... Now is the time to make real the promise... Now is the time to rise from the dark...”

God sees what is happening in the world today. He has equipped us with His Spirit to bring forth love, peace, freedom – this is why we live in this moment in history. He has planted us for now.

The Holy Father recently told the Renewal “there is no greater freedom than that of letting oneself be carried by the Spirit, refusing to calculate and to control everything, and allow 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...” (Evangelii Gaudium)

The need in this age is for us to rise up in the power of the Holy Spirit and witness to the world the love and power of God. It's time to show that we live in Hope and we trust in the One who is mightier and more powerful than any situation happening in the world today. It's time to get excited about our present and our future.

During the CCR Prophetic Consultation in Bethlehem 2013 the Lord showed those present in a powerful and symbolic way that without Him we can do nothing. Prophetically he said: “As you acknowledge my Lordship and bow down on your knees in worship I will give power to you”. We were invited to take off our shoes: being in the presence of holiness. “My people, you have taken off your shoes in my holy presence. One shoe is the shoe

of pride. The other is fear and insecurity. There is no place for pride, because all that you do is totally dependent on me. And there is no place for fear and insecurity, because all that you do is totally dependent on me. When you go forth, you will go forth in power. You will not need to be afraid, because it is my power.”

The Lord is powerfully grabbing our attention to remind us that without Him we can do nothing.

Very soon we will be celebrating 50 years of meeting together as charismatic prayer groups or community gatherings... In the beginning of the Renewal we were amazed to see the Holy Spirit at work. Lives were radically changed and transformed, sometimes within an instant. We rejoiced. We lived the joy filled experience of Jesus Christ Alive! Alive in our lives! Alive in the world! He was no longer an absent God but always present within us through the Holy Spirit. We witnessed the Holy Spirit moving in power, personally and corporately.

With time and for varying reasons, the fabric of the prayer meetings changed and the Holy Spirit had to fit into “our” program. We became comfortable, a sure sign that the Holy Spirit is being contained within our own boundaries. Now many are throwing their hands in the air and wailing “The Renewal is dying, the Holy Spirit has left us...” Such a statement is absolutely untrue! In fact at the same Bethlehem Consultation we were present in the Upper room and the Lord prophetically told us “I have poured out my Spirit abundantly, and I will continue to pour it out. I will pour out my Spirit generously, lavishly, continuously until even the hardened hearts are softened and the wasteland becomes fertile. This I promise, that I shall pour out my Spirit continuously until I bring about through my Spirit the renewal that I intend.

Now is the time to turn our attention to Him and to what He is telling us:

- “Without Me you can do nothing”
- “All you do is totally dependent on Me”
- “Go forth in the power of My Holy Spirit”

The Spirit who hovered over the water at the beginning of creation; The Spirit who spoke through the Prophets; The Spirit who came upon the Virgin Mary and conceived Jesus; The Spirit who filled Jesus in the Jordan; This is the same Spirit who lives in you now.

The Spirit does not come in half measures. He does not come in bits and pieces. He comes in His Complete Fullness. Take a moment and allow this truth to deepen in you “the fullness of the Holy Spirit is within you now”.

He is moving powerfully and in new ways. He is stirring us to “wake up”, to surrender to Him, to move now. Pope Francis tells us in Evangelii Gaudium that we must be a missionary church.

He exhorts us to “Move from conversation to mission with joyful proclamation... we must be permanently in a state of mission”.

We are missionaries of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. What we carry is not the “Renewal”. Who we carry is the Holy Spirit.

I pray as you read this article you will be filled anew and go forth not by might, nor by power but by the Holy Spirit to continue the work begun with hope forever in your hearts. 🏠



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

Is it possible to do a life in the Spirit seminar or retreat in one single day?

In the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the spiritual preparation that leads to the prayer for an outpouring or baptism in the Holy Spirit is called “Life in the Spirit Seminars” or “Seven weeks Seminar”, referring as such to the seven weeks of prayer and expectancy Jesus’ apostles and women - among whom Mary, lived from the Ascension until Pentecost.

On the fiftieth day, the Holy Spirit fell on them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves. (Ac 2, 4)

The baptism in the Holy Spirit opens to the fullness of the Spirit, charisma and practice of those charisma, all given to serve the Body of Christ and work out the mission to evangelize as true and faithful witnesses of the redeemed Christ.

At the end of the Second Vatican Council, the twenty-five students and teachers who took part on mid-February in a retreat at the Duquesne University in the USA, had prepared themselves by praying daily to the Holy Spirit as well as studying the four last chapters of the Acts of Apostles. At the end of this week-end, they experienced in a tremendous way a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit as an answer to their deep prayer to God to deepen the grace of their baptism and their confirmation. There was the official birth of the CCR. Life in the Spirit Seminars lead all those who have been baptized but not evangelized to a personal encounter with Christ and to a new openness to the Holy Spirit. It is not only a matter of listening and receiving talks, but of living a deep conversion path, breaking with a sinner’s life, obtaining inner healing or liberation.

Obviously the baptism in the Holy Spirit, such as it is being experienced at the end of one of these Seminars, may be given by God in his all powerfulness without one having explicitly followed a Life in the Spirit Seminar, for example on the occasion of a renewing of vows of consecrated life or even on the

occasion of the Sacrament of Confirmation if its preparation stressed on the same themes as the Seminars. “The coming of the Holy Spirit does not depend on us. God pours out his Spirit when he wills.”

The seven week Seminars develop the following themes:

1. God our Father is Love and he loves personally;
2. Jesus is your Savior;
3. Jesus is your Lord;
4. Become a disciple of Jesus, healed by his forgiveness, freed from all links and evil possession;
5. You will receive the Holy Spirit and you will be witnesses of the redeemed Christ.

We have to discover anew the Father’s love, Jesus’ salvation and Lordship; to get ready to become Jesus disciple and witness in the Christian Community.

It is only after this formation and conversion experience that comes the prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We cannot do all that in one single day.

Nevertheless, it is possible, and we have experienced it many times in our prayer groups, to do the whole formation in only two weeks. In this case, after a personal interview with each participant and an introduction to the Seminars (2 days), the talks could take place over ten days and be concluded with the prayer for an outpouring and a sending out to mission (3 days).

The 4th Seminar on the 6th day is vital because it speaks of forgiveness steps to take, inner healing and liberation.

A true retreat to get ready for the baptism in the Holy Spirit cannot happen in only one day. If this outpouring is not well prepared, often times we see outpourings which will not bear the expected fruit, fruit of holiness, of a change in life, nor shall it bring authentic charisma to serve the Body of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. 🕊

CONGRATULATIONS DR. MARY HEALY!

We praise the Lord for Dr. Mary Healy, USA, Chairwoman of the Doctrinal Commission of ICCRS, who has been appointed by the Holy Father as member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Congratulations Mary. May the Lord bless your new service!

Mary has been also invited by the Pontifical Council for the Laity to be one of the speakers at the Congress of Ecclesial Movements that will be held in Rome from 19-22 November 2014.