

A New Ardor, New Methods and a New Expression for a New Evangelization

By Father Rufus Pereira

Every Gospel begins with the invitation 'Come?', and ends with the command 'Go!' (Mk 3:13,14;16:16). Jesus first bids Peter, 'Come, Follow me' and then commands him, 'Go, Feed my sheep' (Jn 21:19,17). He first leads the three apostles up to the mountain top to pray with him and then brings them down to the plains to pray for the oppressed (Lk 9:28,37). He first calls on them to be evangelized and then sends them out to evangelize the nations (Mt 4:19,28:19). He first summons them to wait in the upper room to pray, behind closed doors, for the promise of the Father, and then sends them forth with the power of the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4,5,8).

New Evangelization:

Vatican Council II: It is precisely in line with the teaching and practice of Jesus that the Church of today first prayed for a New Pentecost, when Pope John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council on 25th January 1959 in Rome: "O Holy Spirit ... Renew Thy wonders in this our day as by a New Pentecost;" and then called for a New Evangelization, when Pope John Paul II addressed the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America on 9th March 1983 in

Haiti: "Look to the future with commitment to a New Evangelization, one that is new in its ardor, new in its methods, and new in its expression". A year later, on 30th April 1984, the Pope also threw this New Challenge to the participants of the Fifth International Charismatic Leaders' Conference, in Rome: "I ask you, and all the members of the Charismatic Renewal, to continue to cry aloud to the world with me, 'Open the doors to the Redeemer' ... for the Church's mission is to proclaim Christ to the world."

Redemptoris Missio: Finally on 7th December 1990, the Pope exhorted the entire Church, in his encyclical, 'The Mission of the Redeemer', to "renew her missionary commitment" (RM 2), and to "commit all of her energies to a New Evangelization" (RM 3). For, he declared, we are "on the threshold of a new missionary age" (RM2) and we should therefore look forward with glorious expectation to the New Millennium becoming "a great springtime for Christianity" (RM 86). In response to the Pope's exhortation, the Charismatic Renewal has indeed moved with the Church from the New Pentecost prayed for by Pope John XXIII, through the New Ecclesial Movement welcomed by

Pope Paul VI, to the New Evangelization called for by Pope John Paul II, - for it is this New Pentecost that has ushered in and will bring about this New Evangelization, just as there cannot be a New Evangelization without a New Pentecost.

New Ardor:

The First Pentecost: Before his ascension into heaven, our Lord had entrusted to his disciples the mission of themselves making disciples of all the nations (Mt 28:19). But first they would have to await the coming of the Holy Spirit, in order to receive the power to proclaim God's Word with all boldness, to perform the same works as Jesus did and even greater ones, and to be his witnesses even to the ends of the earth (Acts 4:29; Jn 14:12; Acts 1:8). Having already received his Word that was burning in their hearts like fire (Lk 24:32), and now being filled with his Spirit that was ablaze in them again like fire, the disciples went forth to proclaim the Gospel, facing persecution and martyrdom with joy. The Pentecostal fire, that Our Lord had said he had come to bring on the earth, was now blazing in them and would in turn kindle the whole world (Lk 12:49; 3:16).

A New Pentecost: Today we too need to make our prayer the hymn, 'Holy Spirit, come down with your fire! Let your fire fall, to first purify our hearts and then set our hearts on fire to evangelize'. It was

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Please send all articles, comments and photos to the editor, Fr. Bill Cosgrove via e-mail at frbill@optonline.com or fax to 845-227-3951.

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted!

During the “interregnum”—the time between the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI—there was some discussion about the importance of the next pope addressing the serious shortage of priests in Europe, Canada and the United States. There is no doubt that such a shortage is very real here in the states and Europe, and yet in other parts of the world there is an abundance of clergy. We are living in a time where countries are even encouraging their priests to consider spending some time in America for further education and assistance to the American church.

Truly the priesthood in America is in crisis, both spiritually and numerically. Yet the very nature of the word “crisis” reminds us that we are also at a turning point in America where we can either rebound or, continue to lose more priests through death or lack of seminarians preparing for ordination.

When Pope John XXIII was elected and called for the Second Vatican Council, he reminded the church and the world that we were called to be church “semper reformanda” —always reforming itself”. The renewal of the priesthood today is being experienced as priests throughout the world continue to re-root their priesthood in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Many years ago the Fraternity of Priests proclaimed that the heart of priesthood is not ministry first. Relationship comes first, and from that relationship with Christ the Great High Priest flows our ministry. Like the Holy Trinity there must be RELATIO Before MISSIO.

During this Year of the Eucharist we are filled with joy as the church marks the centenary of the beatification of St. John Vianney, patron of diocesan priests. In this Eucharist Year there will be an international catholic charismatic retreat for priests in Ars, France at the end of September. Priests from around the world will gather to be refreshed and renewed by the

vision of John Vianney. Gathering with Sr. Brieg McKenna and Fr. Kevin Scallon, thousands of priests will seek to have their priestly lives and ministry renewed.

We would ask that in the next three months you “storm heaven” with prayer for the renewal of the priesthood. Nothing is more important for the future of the Church. You have been faithful to us throughout the year, and for that we are most grateful. We ask you now, more than ever, to bring your pastors and priests to the Eucharistic Lord in adoration and intercession. Your prayers make a difference. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Fraternally in Christ,

Father Bill Cosgrove
Editor



Fraternity Financial Report

One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget:	\$6,300.00
Actual Donations:	\$6,794.00
Budget Surplus (shortage)	\$ 494.00

Current as of April 30, 2005.

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the Pope himself who, at the beginning of the new millennium, exhorted the whole Church to rekindle the fire of the first Pentecost and be filled with the ardor of the first apostolic preaching which followed that Pentecost, making our own the burning passion of Paul who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1Cor 9:16; NMI n. 40). We need to remind ourselves, as St. Paul reminded Timothy, to fan into flame the gift of God, for God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power, of love and of discipline, and so like Timothy we should not be ashamed to testify about our Lord and to speak for Him" (2Tim 1:6-8).

New Methods:

New Situation: Such a new ardor is needed in the Church today in order to deal with today's unprecedented world situation of secularization and religious indifference, moral and religious relativism, consumerism and sexuality immorality, terrorism and violence, and unethical power and scientific progress. These in their turn necessitate a new evangelizing attitude and action of the Church, more intensified and courageous efforts on the part of all evangelizers to find new and more effective ways of proclaiming the gospel, which are more consonant with today's culture and more respondent to the spiritual demands of contemporary man. In the new evangelization, marriage and the family, women and the youth must be subject to intense pastoral attention through adult catechesis and spiritual and emotional counseling.

New Approaches: For this purpose the Church must find new ways to integrate social communications and mass media, as the TV and the Internet, into her evangelistic and pastoral planning and activity, in order to safeguard human rights and promote truth and justice in public life, to reach out in solidarity to the weaker sectors of society, to address the social evils of alcoholism, drug addiction and sexual child abuse, and to infuse cultures with the values of the Kingdom. But more than social communications, we need the communications and workings of the Holy Spirit, called charisms, which are a manifestation of his comforting presence and a demonstration of his life changing power and, as the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states, "are useful for the renewal and expansion of the Church," by giving guidance and effectiveness to the double ministry of preaching and of healing in live-in retreats and in outreach missions.

New Expressions:

New Movements: The most important and prominent expression or sign of the new evangelization is a rich flowering of renewal movements and ecclesial communities, which the Pope has constantly looked upon as "a special Gift of the Spirit to our age and a reason for hope for the Church and for mankind" (Address at Pentecost 1996). At the unforgettable meeting of the ecclesial movements with the Holy Father on May 30, 1998, the Pope acknowledged them to be "the Holy Spirit response to this critical challenge of Evangelization at the end of the millennium" (n. 7), giving to the life of the Church energies of

spiritual renewal of extraordinary intensity and potentials for effective evangelizing activity. The Parish needs the power and fellowship of these renewal movements within a micro-structure of smaller ecclesial communities, called Basic Christian Communities, where Christians are born and grow in maturity, living their vocation and mission in depth.

Lay Witnesses: The new evangelization will also depend very much on the lay faithful being fully aware of their baptismal vocation and of their responsibility for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Today it is often the laity who must be in the forefront in seeking to apply the Church's teaching to the ethical, moral and social questions, which arise in their communities or at the national level. The specific mission of laymen and women is the evangelization of the family, of culture, and of social and political life. The prime movers of this new springtime are becoming the young people to whom the Pope never tires of telling: "You are the hope of the Church, you are my hope!" The task then of the Church today, and of its pastors, is to ensure that laity are formed as evangelisers, able to face the challenges of the contemporary world not just with worldly wisdom and efficiency but with hearts renewed and strengthened by the truth of Christ. For contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, or if he listens to teachers, he does so because they are witnesses.

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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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