

### *What is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?*

- A. *St. Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians Chapter 5 verse 18 says, “Be filled with the Holy Spirit!” “By our baptism we do in fact already have the Holy Spirit. But Paul now exhorts us to be filled with the Spirit. This can only mean that we should allow the Holy Spirit to be fully active in our lives.” (1) The fact is that many do not allow this and that we all need to be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit. There are so many who simply have a baptismal certificate and maybe a confirmation certificate but have never surrendered to the Lord Jesus and have never fully allowed His Spirit to reign in them. The Renewal believes that if one sincerely seeks in prayer and repentance this surrender to the Holy Spirit, they will be filled anew! The term “be filled” actually is used in the sense of a verb, an action term.*
- B. *On the day of Pentecost as described in the Acts of the Apostles tongues of fire appeared which is a theophany, a manifestation of the Spirit’s presence. Fire is a dynamic symbol which is seen in the sealing of the covenant when fire comes down and passes through the sacrifice, in the theophany at Mount Sinai, in the “column of fire “ which directed God’s people through the desert and in the fire which purified Isaiah’s lips. Fire by its very nature tends to flame out and constantly grows into new fire and so it with this symbol of the Holy Spirit. The second epistle of St. Paul to Timothy Chapter 1 verse 6 states, “For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God bestowed when my hands were laid on you. The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit but rather one that makes us strong, loving and wise”.*
- C. *Hence, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a powerful expression of the stirring of the Fire of the Holy Spirit and since the Father is always about making us a new creation in Christ and about renewing His church, it should be no surprise that we would be called to be constantly open to the “new fire of the Holy Spirit”. This is simply a way of saying that the Holy Spirit is always active in the freedom that is God’s alone and we need to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and whatever the Spirit is about as the Holy Spirit continues to renew all things in Christ!*
- D. *On Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>. 1967 thirty students and professors from Duquesne University in Pennsylvania went on a spiritual retreat which reflected on the power of the Holy Spirit in the early Church. They experienced the Holy Spirit becoming more active within their lives as they began to experience the charisms, the gifts of the Spirit, which are described in 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14 and the Acts of the Apostles !*

*E. As a result they began to group together in prayer meetings and prayer groups and share their experience with others. This experience has been called the “Release of the Spirit”. Today more than 120 million Catholics have claimed to have been touched by the Holy Spirit in this way and have discovered a deeper prayer life, a deeper appreciation of the sacraments of the church and scripture reading has become more alive in their lives. They have also discovered a new zeal for their faith and a desire to serve the Lord Jesus especially in His Church and in the community! The Catholic Church has embraced and offered its guidance to this movement. The Popes from Pope Paul VI to Pope John Paul II have offered encouragement to this Renewal Movement with John Paul II calling it “an eloquent manifestation of the always young vitality of the Church”*

*F. Catholic Bishops of the U.S. issued a very positive pastoral statement on the Charismatic renewal in March of 1984 in which the Bishops state, “The charismatic renewal is a movement which seeks to be completely open to the Holy Spirit as it contributes to the ongoing effort to renew the whole Church.” (2)*

*G. Most Bishops in their dioceses have appointed moderators or liaisons to encourage and help guide the renewal.*

*H. Those involved in the Renewal share this experience by offering 7 week “Life-in-the Spirit Seminars” which helps one to make a renewed commitment to the Lord and to pray for this release of the Spirit. On the 5<sup>th</sup>. night participants are “prayed over” through the “laying on of hands for the renewal of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The Renewal also offers retreat days, retreats, and days of renewal so that all may allow the Holy Spirit to be more fully active within them. When people had been baptized as infants or had received confirmation at a young age, they did not have the opportunity to seek the gift of the Spirit in a mature way and these seminars provide them with the opportunity to be more fully open to the Holy Spirit which they have already received in baptism and confirmation.*

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*(1.) Swain, Lionel Ephesians Michael Glazier, Inc. Wilmington, Delaware 1980 p.92*

*(2.) A Pastoral Statement on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Bishop’s Liaison Committee with Catholic Charismatic Renewal March 1984 p.6*

