



The beans are burning!

by Sr. Martha Jean McGarry, IHM

Where I live beans are a staple of life. A pot of beans cooking on the stove warms my heart with both contentment and anticipation. However, I need to watch over those beans as they cook and stir them periodically if I plan on enjoying a tasty meal later on. If I fail to tend to the beans as they cook, more likely than not they will burn, and soon the burnt taste will permeate the whole pot. No one wants to eat burnt beans. Something really good is wasted because I did not tend to it.

St. Paul tells us in Hebrews 2 that we need to tend to what we have been given lest we be carried away and reject the gift of salvation we have received. So, too, we need to tend to the gift God has given us in the Charismatic Renewal. Recall also 2 Tim. 1:6, where Paul tells us: "I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have received through the imposition of my hands." Brothers and sisters, it is time to do some stirring and attend to the treasure we have received.

Consider for a moment what God has done for us! Jesus took a bunch of fish (and some of us were probably pretty smelly) and changed us into fishermen and women. What a miracle we are! We were swimming around in the darkness and he drew us up in his net into his glorious light and has given us the privilege of joining in his mission!

I think it is time in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that we get real. What has God called us to? What is the mission he has given us? How are we responding to his call? It seems to be a great time to "stir the beans" so that we might witness anew the mighty hand of God at work in our groups, families and church. I would like to challenge all of us as leaders to make a special effort this year to tend to and to stir up the awesome

gift God has given us in Charismatic Renewal. Shall such a great gift be wasted and discarded because we fail to tend to it?

May I suggest we begin our stirring by doing the following:

Pray. Ask for wisdom and a humble spirit. Desire a heart committed to the stirrings of the Spirit. Seek the grace and the courage to go out into the deep with Jesus.

Examine our mission. Just who are we anyway and what are we about? The Charismatic Renewal by its very nature is evangelistic. Jesus has called us to get in the boat and go fishing with him. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we seek to restore the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and to restore the use of the charismatic gifts to the heart of our daily life.

Examine our prayer meeting / prayer group. Having participated in prayer meetings for some thirty-four years, I have found that they require of me a deep love of God, a commitment to his mission of salvation, a hunger for holiness, and a zeal for souls.

As I have experienced it, there are four facets of a charismatic prayer meeting. I propose these as possible avenues of reflection for us as we assess our own group or community. If we study each of these areas surely we will be following Paul's exhortation to 'stir into flame' the gift that the Holy Spirit has been so gracious to bestow on us.

● The prayer meeting is a **temple of praise** where God's people gather to glorify the Lord in worship, exaltation, and humble openness to his awesome presence and word. How would you describe or rate the praise and worship of God in your meetings?

● It is a classroom or **training ground of the Holy Spirit** where we learn God's word through the Scripture readings. We grow in the use of the gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy, tongues, knowledge, discernment and service. We are trained in holiness by growth teachings on the gifts, sacraments, virtues and Spirit-filled living. Are the gifts of the Spirit operative in our meetings? Do we listen to God's word and respond to it? Can we give testimony to the changes in our lives because we have sat at the feet of Wisdom?

Intercessory Prayer

For the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the church we pray:

Holy Spirit,
sent to us by the Father
in the name of Jesus,
you help the church by
your presence
and you guide it infallibly.
Renew your wonders
in this our day
as for a new Pentecost.
Grant the church,
united in prayer,
insistent and perseverant,
with Mary the mother of Jesus,
that the reign of the divine
Savior might spread—
a reign of truth and justice,
a reign of love and peace.
Amen.

Prayer of Pope John XXIII

● It is a **community of God's love** where we learn to grow together as members of one body giving glory to God by our acceptance and love of one another, our support of each other in need, our encouragement of one another to be fully alive in Jesus Christ and to be living witnesses of God's love for all people. Our sense of community is broadened as we encompass the needs of others in our prayer, our outreaches of kindness, and above all in the Holy Spirit Seminars we provide regularly. When was the last time you offered a Life in the Spirit Seminar? Does love make your group grow, spiritually and numerically?

● I also experience the prayer meeting as a **spa of healing** where we can experience the

whirlpool and warmth of God's mercy and tender healing in body, soul and spirit. This often occurs as we praise and worship God, reflect on his word, or are ministered to through the prayers of our brothers and sisters. How is healing experienced in your group? Do you provide time to minister to those in need? What is today's miracle in your group?

Surrender our excuses. To all of us who are too old, too young, too busy, too tired, ungifted, blessed with a non-supportive pastor, whose group is too small, and the myriad other reasons why we choose to remain blissfully stagnant, I exhort you to lay your excuses at the feet of Jesus. Rise up as the chosen, gifted, glorious, empowered people you are and let the Holy Spirit use

you to set hearts afire with Jesus. Be faithful servants of the one who filled you with his Spirit. I believe God loves to send forth his Spirit through us.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful! Enkindle in us the fire of your love! Send forth your Spirit! Renew the face of the earth! ♦



A former member of the National Service Committee, Sr. Martha Jean McGarry now serves on the NSC Council. She is the Director of the Catholic Charismatic Center, the renewal center of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Hispanic Conference from p. 6

mor of God). She reflected on our weaknesses and the influence of the devil, making a point of the crisis that our church has gone through. She encouraged us not to focus much on the priests who have fallen; but

instead on the good priests who serve in truth and in love. "The heart must cry and not judge," she firmly advised.

In her other talk, "Be my witness," she made us aware that we are responsible for the welfare and salvation of our brothers and sisters. She quoted 1 Jn. 9: "Whoever says he is in the light, yet hates his brother, is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother remains in the light."

Saturday night all the attendees gathered again. In great joy and as one body we praised, sang and danced. That night we did not have to use the radios for translation because the speaker was Fr. Mario Castañeda, and the Master of Ceremonies was Demetrio Ortega, the coordinator of the Hispanic National Committee. Msgr. Joseph Malagracia did the translation for Fr. Castañeda.

We closed on Sunday with a multicultural celebration. Through praise, readings, songs and dance we proclaimed our unity. Hand in hand we recited the Our Father recognizing our brotherhood and our sisterhood, regardless of who we are or where we are from. We went back home ready to "go forth in the Spirit." ♦

Teresa Rosero is a member of the Comité Nacional de Servicio Hispano.

Filipino Conference from p. 6

A Festival of Praise participated in by various Filipino music ministries provided an avenue for those who came to use their gift of music. Some people commented that they received healings of depression, headaches and heaviness of heart during the Festival of Praise. Others claimed that they received the gift of joy and laughter from the Holy Spirit.

The Filipino Conference concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist. Fr. Perry Kenaston from Juneau, Alaska, was the presider. The Mass was followed by a healing service conducted by this writer. Physical, spiritual and emotional healings were claimed.

Patti Isaac, a Regional Coordinator of the AFCCPC, East Atlantic Region, had this to say: "I was indeed touched by the spirit of love and unity that was clearly displayed by the various prayer groups in attendance. The conference was very anointed and powerful, and many people have been touched. The Lord Jesus has undoubtedly been glorified." ♦

Bob Canton is National Coordinator of the Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities.



Please pray for the following initiatives, activities and concerns of the National Service Committee:

- ◆ For the Gathering of National Leadership Groups in January 2003 in Augusta.
- ◆ For the preparations for the 2003 National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference in San Antonio, May 31-June 2, for God's guidance in each step of the planning and for an abundance of pre-registrations.
- ◆ For upcoming Regional Leaders Gatherings in New Jersey, Michigan and Iowa.
- ◆ For all those in the nation who are presenting or participating in Holy Spirit Seminars.
- ◆ For the NSC, as they welcome and orient new members during this first quarter of 2003.

Please join the NSC and other national leadership groups in a Day of Prayer and Fasting on February 28 (the Friday before Ash Wednesday).