
In this issue : *ICCRS presidents address in the European Meeting of national representatives, Germany, November 2011*

The Way Forward

We began by recalling previous presidential addresses, in Warsaw 2007; the theme was *'Europe stand up'*. The background to this address was the document *Ecclesia in Europa*, especially the closing exhortation (nr.121): *Do not be afraid! The Gospel is not against you, but for you. Be confident! In the Gospel, which is Jesus, you will find the sure and lasting hope to which you aspire. Be certain! The Gospel of hope does not disappoint! **

As 2007 was the 40th anniversary of Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) we used the biblical template of the Israelites who after being formed in the desert for 40 years found themselves on the banks of the Jordan River. The prophetic call to CCR in 2007 was; 'it is time to cross the Jordan River and take the land'.

Then in 2009 Budapest - we heard in contrast to the 2007 call for Europe to stand up the call for Europe to 'go down on your knees'. The contrast was not a contradiction but rather a suggested method. When Joshua was given the task to take the land he was not a strong military power. Therefore the invitation for Europe to stand up was not a call to militancy but a *call to humility* which manifests itself in our ability to trust in and depend upon the strength that comes from the Lord. Joshua had to know that the Lord was with him and to move in that anointing. Humanly speaking Joshua was weak. We should not be afraid of our weakness; it pushes us into the arms of the Lord. (2 Cor 12:9). Even mature Christians need to allow the Lord to keep building their character. This comes from profound moments of personal prayer. We also need to stand upon the Word of God. The scriptures speak hope and truth into our lives Phil 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'.

Overall vision of CCR

We have not always been so focused on taking the land because we have allowed ourselves to get sidetracked or diverted. Also we have sometimes focused too much on the secondary things. Over these days, here in Germany, we have highlighted that in some areas of CCR

there has been a loss or lack of identity. Thankfully we have been able to address some of the issues in around this. Now is the time to be clear about our identity and calling and to re-navigate so that we can move forward with vision and focus. It is important in this season of the Spirit that as leaders when we leave this place, we should return back to our realities with a deeper clarity about the overall vision of CCR and a sense of some goals and direction for our particular situations.

Ready for the unexpected

This is the time to be strategic in the Spirit but we know this is not easy. As Fr Peter Hocken said; 'the Spirit is un-predictable and uncontrollable we have to be ready for the unexpected'. Therefore we approach strategy in a particular way seeking to be provisional and being ready to change as the Spirit leads.

Fire

Last year at the ICCRS Council meeting we were led to focus on 3 broad areas of vision, which we are offering to the world-wide CCR for discernment and reflection. Each vision area draws upon a familiar image of the Holy Spirit that of fire.

1) **Fire starters**- Lk 3:16 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' We need to keep introducing new people to the experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit through Life in the Spirit Seminars. Sometimes we see the same people doing the seminars for the second or third time. This recycling of people weakens CCR because it is an indication of a lack of maturity. Those who go through the Seminars should be

used in some kind of leadership and service in the future. We should not encourage passivity. We need to grow the CCR through *spreading the opportunities for people to be Baptised in the Holy Spirit*. We also need to pass on the fire to young people

2) ***Fanning the Flame***- 2 Tim 1:6 this calls for us to grow in ecclesial maturity. We need to have good programmes of formation and leadership training. We need to go deeper in our understanding and use of the charisms. Through Fanning our prayer and worship into a flame we go deeper and learn to *surrender more and more to the Lordship of Jesus Christ*. Also, just as the disciples in the Upper Room were all joined together in continuous prayer we need to engage more strongly in the ministry of intercession.

3) ***Spreading the Fire***- at Pentecost there were three moves of the Spirit. First the personal Pentecost as the tongues of fire rested on the head of each of them. Then the communal experience which enabled the disciples to become a community of deep koinonia fellowship. Then the missionary impetus as they moved out into the surrounding environment in the power of the Holy Spirit. CCR needs to model this by *continuing to move outwards* in evangelisation.

QUESTIONS

Three questions that can help you to be practical. First: spend some time carefully reading the first six chapters of the book of Joshua.

1) What do you think it means for Charismatic Renewal to take or enter the land? What does this mean for you personally?

2) In your experience, what are the things that prevent Charismatic Renewal from taking the land?

3) Reflecting on the future; from your experience how is Charismatic Renewal responding to the threefold call to be fire starters, to fan things into a flame and to spread the fire? What more needs to be done?

* http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa_en.html

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This Info-letter started in 1999 and is issued by the European sub-committee of ICCRS,

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European web-site, including old ISSUES and some Spanish translations of Eucril: www2.iccrs.org/europe

Transformation of society

In 2004 Pope John Paul II encouraged CCR to grow in the spirituality of Pentecost through a new thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation. Pope Benedict XVI developed this further by calling us to 'spread the culture of Pentecost'. Here there is a clear call for us to become a people who engage in bringing about the transformation of society. However, we know this is only truly possible in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit involves

At World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI described Baptism in the Holy Spirit as involving four things:

- 1) Being set on fire with the love of God.
- 2) Drinking of the Spirit through being refreshed by the beauty of the Lord's plan for us and for the world, and through this, in turn, becoming a source of refreshment for others.
- 3) Being sealed with the Spirit which means not being afraid to stand up for Christ.
- 4) Letting the truth of the Gospel permeate the way we see, think and act, as we work for the triumph of the civilisation of love.

Michelle Moran,

Heiligenbrunn Germany November 2011.