

In this issue: *'Pope Francis will be a strong supporter of the charismatic renewal and he understands the ecumenical inter-church character of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our days', says mgr. dr. Peter Hocken, member of the Doctrinal Commission of ICCRS. He tells what happened right before Cardinal Bergoglio went to the conclave.*

BEFORE CARDINAL BERGOGLIO WENT TO THE CONCLAVE

Peter Hocken, Austria

A week or more after the election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as bishop of Rome, many stories and impressions are appearing in the press and on the web. Very little has been reported so far about the relations of Pope Francis with the Renewal.

In fact, Cardinal Bergoglio was strongly supportive of the Renewal in Argentina. He has had for many years frequent contact with Julia Torres, leader of the Comunità di Gesù in Buenos Aires, that is a foundation of the Comunità di Gesù in Bari, Italy, led by Matteo Calisi. He is accustomed to praying with people and is always asking people to pray for him.

A unique feature of Cardinal Bergoglio's ministry in Buenos Aires was his strong relationship with Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders. I was in Buenos Aires in February this year, and was able to have meetings both with Cardinal Bergoglio and with a leading Pentecostal pastor and theologian, Norberto Saracco. Because of the openness and warmth of Cardinal Bergoglio, relations between evangelicals and Catholics are much better in Argentina than in other Latin American nations. The magazine *Christianity Today* in the USA has reported:

"His election has been an answer to our prayers," said Norberto Saracco, a leading Pentecostal pastor and theologian, the founder and rector of FIET seminary in Buenos Aires and co-leader of the city's Council of Pastors. "Bergoglio is a man of God. He is passionate

for the unity of the Church—but not just at the institutional level. His priority is unity at the level of the people."

Bergoglio encouraged from its beginnings in 2003 – 04 the movement known as CRECES (literally, Renewed or Restored Communion of Catholics and Evangelicals in the Holy Spirit). (In Latin America, the one word Evangelicos is used for both Evangelicals and Pentecostals, with most being Pentecostals.) At their 2007 conference, when Fr Raniero Cantalamessa was one of the speakers, Cardinal Bergoglio knelt down and was prayed over by Fr Raniero and a group of the city's pastors. The Cardinal has strongly supported the Bible Society of Argentina.

With a Messianic Jewish pastor

When I visited Cardinal Bergoglio, I was with a Messianic Jewish pastor and at the end we prayed for his journey to Rome and for the conclave. I understand that the Pentecostal pastors from CRECES were going to visit the Cardinal too to pray for him before his departure. We can be confident that Pope Francis will be a strong supporter of the Renewal and that he understands the ecumenical inter-church character of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our days.

This Info-Letter Eucril is free to all interested persons. Submit requests to kees@stucom.nl with the subject "Eucril" and this message: "Yes, put me on the mailing-list of Eucril-English or/and Eucril-Français."

This Info-letter started in 1999 and is issued by the European sub-committee of ICCRS (the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services). Chairperson: Christof Hemberger

Editor: Kees Slijkerman, e-mail: kees@stucom.nl
European web-site, including old ISSUES and some Spanish and Croatian translations of Eucril: www.isidor.se/ccreurope