
In this issue: *A report on our open European Catholic charismatic conference in Warsaw by Christof Hemberger, chairman of the European subcommittee of ICCRS.*

I have come to bring fire to the earth! (Lk 12,49)

European CCR-Conference in Warsaw, 1-4th October 2015

500 participants from more than 35 nations came to Warsaw, Poland, in order to take part in the first European CCR-conference since 2002, organized by ESCI (European Subcommittee of ICCRS). During the preparation we felt that the CCR on our continent needs encouragement - and truly this event was an inspiration for everyone participating!

“People call Europe a weak and old Lady, and often we feel like that, also in the CCR. But: What do people walking in the dessert need most?!” I asked during the opening session. „When you are in the dessert, you must not forget that there is Promised Land ahead! I think it is time to regain our Promised Land as CCR in Europe! It is time to focus again on the Lord instead of our problems and poverty. It is time to live in the power of the Holy Spirit again!“

The weekend in Warsaw was truly about focusing on our identity and calling as CCR. Dr. Mary Healy (Michigan, USA), chair of the doctrinal commission of ICCRS, spoke about living in the power of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit is the only answer for the problems of today! The Lord is calling us to live in this current of grace. There are so many people around us who do not know God! The new evangelisation can only be done/lived in the power of the Holy Spirit!”

Mary Healy encouraged the audience not to neglect the baptism in and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. She clearly stated: “The supernatural must be NORMAL for us Christians!”

The following day, Dr. Johannes Hartl (Augsburg, Germany), founder of the “House of Prayer in Augsburg”, spoke about the situation of Europe today (refugees, situation of society, church and CCR) and stated that Christians always have a choice between two options: Option 1 (“strengthened by God”) is always better than option 2 (“fearful”). He asked: “What is better: a crisis in Europe or fearful Christians? Fear and anxieties lead us into slavery. It is much better to live in the freedom of the sons and daughters of the Lord! Only then can we face the problems of today and to see a victory as David experienced facing the giant Goliath!” Johannes continued: “The world is changing, but let us not make the mistake of trying to live a comfortable life – the gospel is always challenging us! In the end of his talk Johannes mentioned three areas he thinks the CCR needs to focus on during the next years: (1) clear, biblical and practical teaching, (2) encouragement to live a deep prayer life and (3) courageous and gift-orientated leadership.

Of course the participants had the chance to go deeper into these and other topics during the workshops that were held in the afternoons.

Encouraging testimonies from Malta (Life in the Spirit seminars for priests) and Slovakia (reconciliation in society and unity among Christians) underlined the teachings of Mary Healy and Johannes Hartl.

Eucharistic celebrations were led by Polish bishops who came to meet us (because they are friends of the Polish CCR) and by two bishops who participated in the conference: Bishop Bronislav Dembowski (Poland) and Archbishop Kevin McDonald (England).

The evening sessions always started with some input from “outside”: On Friday we had Monsignore Miguel Delgado (Pontifical Council of Laity, Vatican) with us, who reminded us of the true identity of the CCR in the church by presenting the most important statements of Pope Francis about the CCR

and its nature and calling. On Saturday we had a representative of the World-Youth-Day-Office in Krakow (Poland) with us who invited the whole CCR to send youth to the WYD in Krakow 2016. Both evenings ended into a time of praise and worship, ministry and prayer.

Praise and worship was led by “Jacobs Ladder”, a lively and enthusiastic group of young charismatics from the Netherlands who helped us to enter into the presence of the Lord in a powerful way.

At the end of the conference, Michelle Moran (England, president of ICCRS), again encouraged all those present to go and to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. “Of course in Europe we live in difficult times today! But we only can learn from our sisters and brothers from other continents: Where there is persecution, faith is rising! Yes, Europe is a weak and sometimes difficult continent – but God has not forgotten Europe! Those who only focus on their problems will only see their problems! Who is not looking ahead lacks vision! God wants us to live in the freedom of the sons and daughters of God and in the power of His Spirit! Let us go home now, strengthened by this hope he gave to us during these last days!”

We have received a lot of feedback telling us that the participants were encouraged and blessed in many ways during the conference.

“Thank you” to those who came to be with us, “thank you” to those who prayed for us, “thank you” to those who helped to make this conference a blessing to many!

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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

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