

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
CHARISMATIC RENEWAL SERVICES

SERVING THE
CHARISMATIC RENEWAL IN THE
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ICCRS NEWSLETTER

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Fanning the flame:

Keeping and spreading the fire through a personal life of prayer and service

■ **Christof Hembeger**



When I was young I used to attend a summer camp. In the evenings, we regularly had bonfires. One of the team placed wood in an elaborate tower. When it was lit, the dry sticks burnt until high flames ignited the thicker logs which would burn way into the night. A bit of wood was added regularly to feed the fire so that it would burn for a long time.

These bonfire evenings came back to mind when reflecting on our motto towards our jubilee: After “Fire Starters” (2012-13) and “Fanning the Flame” (2014-15) we now begin the year 2016 with “Spreading the Fire”.

It is relatively easy to start a fire or to be ignited by a fire. To keep a fire burning for a long time, through all of life’s tempests and adversities, is a rather difficult task. It takes stamina and perseverance.

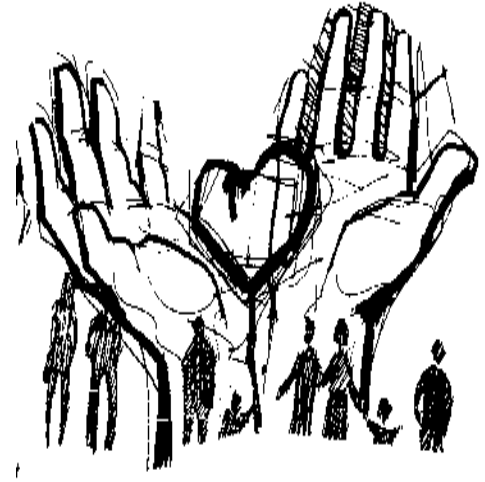
I think the fire that was entrusted to us as a Charismatic Renewal resembles the bonfires of my youth: a fire was entrusted to us: the experience of the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives, in our Church, in our time. This fire should now burn in us, should become big and strong. There are three questions we need to ask ourselves:

How can we let this fire take hold of us (anew)? Over the last few years, we have really focused on this question. It is about experiencing the action of the Holy Spirit afresh every day. It is about living in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and using the charisms both in our daily lives and in special situations are the foundation. These experiences resemble the lighting up of the fire: Enthusiasm springs forth, flames spread in no time, the fire burns brightly and can be seen from afar.

How can we keep the fire burning for a long time? A fire needs to be fed; you constantly need to add logs or the fire will die down. The same is true for our relationship

to God. It is not enough to know about baptism in the Holy Spirit or to have experienced it way back. We constantly need to focus on God, seeking his presence. We need to let him fill us

and take hold of us over and again. This is the only way to safeguard that the fire is not just a flash in the pan. This is how our personal life can withstand the tempests and adversities of life and we do not remain in the initial excitement or even lose it but grow in depth and maturity. A continuous encounter with the Lord, constantly



being filled with the Holy Spirit and an intimate prayer life is what it takes to not only ignite the fire but keep it burning for a long time.

Finally, the third and last question: For whom is this fire supposed to burn? Has God entrusted us with the fire so that we feel good, enjoying a cosy life in our prayer groups? Of course not! Sure, the Spirit of God should take hold of our personal lives penetrating us with his power, joy and peace day by day. But this is not the end of the task, but the beginning! We are called to share and pass on this fire! We share in the mission of Jesus to set captives free, to open the eyes of the blind, to let the oppressed go free and bring the Good News to the poor of this world (see Lk 4:18-19). We live in a world that cries out for God’s love. To pass on the good news is truly necessary. But how can it be done concretely and above all effectively?

I think we first need to answer the question: Have we started to keep the fire to ourselves? If this is the case, we need to repent and refocus. Then it is important to serve and above all live where God has placed us. This is where we are to be living testimonies to the world. Many have gotten used to withdrawing to a pious corner and renounce the world. I believe this is not what God wants. He has called us into this world to live there as his witnesses. There we can pass on what we have received through relationships and by serving our neighbour.

At the start of this new phase towards our jubilee 2017 I want to encourage you today to keep the fire burning that God has placed in your life. This is best done by a regular prayer life and a deep relationship to the Lord. Only then will we succeed on the long to keep the fire burning that God has placed in us. And only then will we succeed in passing on this fire to others. 🙏



He has called us into this world to live there as his witnesses.



Report:

Diakonía: Meaning and Mission

■ María José Cantos



Diakonía comes from the Greek word diakonos, which means servant. Diakonía developed in the Greek and Roman worlds as referring to those who served in a physical, material and corporal manner.

The same thing happened in the Jewish culture of Jesus' times, where Diakonía was considered the menial work performed by slaves, servants and maids.

Within this cultural context, Jesus refers to himself as "he who has come to serve, not to be served" (Mt. 20:28) and during the Last Supper, after washing the feet of his disciples, he shows them the way they should also follow: "If I, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (Jn. 13:14). Saint Paul, on his account, tells us that Jesus, "though he was in the form of God... emptied himself taking on the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:6-7)

However, among the first Christians, Diakonía was not only considered the manual, menial work, but it included the area of spiritual service. In Acts 6:1-6 seven deacons were chosen to serve at table (Acts 6:3), but one of them, Steven, died a martyr for preaching the Kerygma (Acts 7:1-60) and Philip, another one among those seven, announces the Good News to a eunuch and baptizes him (Acts 8:26-39).

The first Christians called deacons those who discharged any office in the church and who should be exemplary in their lives (1Tim 3:8-13). For them a deacon was a servant like Christ. This office in the church is thus a service.

Saint Paul as he travels towards Jerusalem says that he goes there "for the service of the saints" (Rom. 15:25)

Saint Peter, addressing the Christians living as foreigners in Galatia, Asia and other places, exhorts them to serve placing "the grace that each one has received at the service of the saints" (1Pt 4:10)

The mission of Diakonía among Christians is the prolongation of the mission of Christ, who, while being the Lord and Master, came to



serve to the point of giving up his own life. The Church is the Body of Christ and like him should serve mankind. As the body, which is one, has many members, and all serve the same body (1Cor. 12:12) so also the Church. And as the Second Vatican Council declared "in the building up of Christ's Body various members and functions have their part to play" (LG n. 7).

In the body of Christ, which is the Church, each baptized person fulfills a function. Like St. Paul says, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" (1Cor. 12:29) There are a variety of ministries, of functions, but to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1Cor. 12:7)

Jesus Christ is the light of the peoples and the Church, who is his body, fulfills the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15) by serving, because that was the way that Jesus followed. The Church must be a community of servants in every level and every office, from the Pope, to the most humble servant. Following Christ each Christian should serve to the point of giving his own life if necessary, as the first martyrs in the primitive Church did and the modern-day Christians in Syria and the East, who are even at this time giving up their lives for their service of proclaiming the Gospel.

In the CCR we could say that ICCRS exists to serve the wider body of the CCR in the whole world and how the Renewal serves the Body of Christ which is the Church. How to serve? In the same way as Jesus did, with a heart full of love and mercy, loving others "because he has loved us first" (1Jn. 4:19) and has given his life for us.

Diakonía is touching the mind and heart of people around us with the loving hands of God who understands, consoles, sets free, and restores. 🙏



Andres Arango & Jude Muscat

ANDRES ARANGO



I was born and raised in Medellin, Colombia. In that beautiful city, I had the blessing of knowing the Charismatic Renewal. After four years of a painful illness in the life of my dad, a priest prayed over him and God healed him. The priest recommended us, in gratitude for what God did, to attend a charismatic prayer group.

It was an extraordinary experience to see the Holy Spirit moving in the group and manifesting many extraordinary gifts. I began to attend the prayer group in November of 1994. But it was not until June 3, 1995, during the vigil of the feast of Pentecost, that I received for the first time the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We were together as a community in the home of one of the members of the prayer group. We were singing, praying and reflecting the Sacred Scripture. It was around 2 am when we started to lay hands praying one for another. In that moment, I began to speak in tongues and experienced, in an inexplicable way, the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Since then, I have experienced a constant desire to serve to our Lord Jesus Christ for the rest of my life. Currently, I serve as the Bishop's Delegate for Hispanic Ministry and Director of Evangelization in the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey. Presently, I am the Chairman of the National Hispanic Catholic Charismatic Renewal Executive Committee in the United States of America and Canada, and Vice-president of CONCCLAT (Latin-American Catholic Charismatic Council). I also serve as a consultant to the Subcommittee on Hispanics Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

God also blesses me with the opportunity to teach and preach at events in national and international levels.

A question that I receive very often is: "Andres, what book do you recommend for evangelization?" I always respond: "The Joy of the Gospel". This Apostolic Exhortation of our beloved Pope Francis is an excellent book to constantly read and meditate. It describes beautifully the process of evangelization. First, it invites us to have a constant personal encounter with Jesus. Second, it introduces us to a wonderful journey of discipleship. Finally, it encourages us to be missionaries of the love of God.

Pope Francis empathizes that we have to be missionary-disciples. We cannot be just disciples or just missionaries. We need to be both. This concept challenges me to pray every day for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit to really fulfill the call to be a faithful evangelizer, as Pope Francis describes: "Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit" (Evangelii Gaudium 259).

I dream everyday about the future of the Renewal. We are in a joyful journey to our 50th anniversary. I see the Renewal, in the upcoming years, celebrating the wonderful deeds that God has been doing in the life of so many people. But at the same time, preparing for what God has for us in the future.

I dream with the Renewal fulfilling its call to be a current of grace in the church and in the world. I dream with the Renewal forming new generations of missionary-disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, bringing the culture of Pentecost through the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit around the world. 🏡

JUDE MUSCAT



Jude Muscat was born in Malta on 17 June 1956. Brought up in an extremely devout Catholic family, he opted out of religion and church at a young age. For some years he was simply hooked on music and invested most his youthful energy in it. In 1976 the Lord called him back home through a tremendous personal experience. For many months he lived in a confused reality trying to make sense of what happened and how to move back to God. By God's grace he encountered the Charismatic Renewal and was baptized in the Holy Spirit in May of 1977.

For many months he shelved his music and instruments to allow God to heal his obsession with it. In due time he served the CCR in Malta through Praise and Worship and helped form and lead many courses and teaching seminars for those who wanted to serve God's people in the area of Praise and Worship.

After his school days he graduated in Business Management and for some years worked in a managerial position with a local manufacturing company. During these days he set his mind on electronics and computing and obtained a diploma in Electronic Engineering but eventually ended up working as a customs officer for 15 years. Keeping in mind the ministry he was called to, he obtained a degree in Theology and Human Studies.

In 1994 he entered into full-time ministry dedicating his time to serve God's people in Malta and beyond, especially through teaching and healing. He has served both the Parish and the Diocese in a variety of key positions, wrote various articles for many journals of

spirituality and theology. He served the CCR in Malta as National Coordinator for 14 years and is presently serving as Director of the Communications office and Coordinator of various ministries set up by the Maltese NSC. He also coordinates a small community made up mainly of married couples and young people. For the time being he is serving the south of Europe as a councillor on ICCRS.

Jude is married to Doris since 1979 and happily witnesses that she has been a great companion and help in his ministry throughout all these years. They are the proud parents of 4 boys, Matthew, Nathanael, Andrew and James.

His main hobbies are studying, DIY, indoor plants and swimming. He has little time for hobbies but studying is a sine qua non and reserves a lot of time to reading and studying. Most of his reading comprises of scholarly books and articles, especially in the area of theology, scriptures and philosophy. Two books he recommends are: Pentecost and Parousia by Fr. Peter Hocken and The Well-spring of Worship by Fr. Jean Carbon.

For Jude the CCR has been a current of grace not only within the Church but also within the wider global cultural reality. God's plans for the world are plans of welfare and not for harm, to give us all a future with hope (Cf. Jer 29:11). God's heart is set upon all peoples and that is why He set His Church on fire through the Holy Spirit. The CCR of tomorrow will keep on fanning the flame and supporting the whole structure with columns of Praise and Worship, intercession and healing within a strong Ecumenical make-up. 🏡

Please send news from your group, community or NSC to newsletter@iccrs.org.



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

500 participants from more than 35 nations came to Warsaw, Poland for the European CCR-conference, organized by ESCI (European Subcommittee of ICCRS). Truly this event was an inspiration for everyone participating!

Dr. Mary Healy (Michigan, USA), chair of the doctrinal commission of ICCRS, spoke about living in the power of the Holy Spirit: "The new evangelisation can only be done/lived in the power of the Holy Spirit! The supernatural must be NORMAL for us Christians!" Dr. Johannes Hartl (Augsburg, Germany) spoke about the situation of Europe today. 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! 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 evenings each day we had times of praise and worship, ministry and prayer. Praise and worship was led by "Jacobs Ladder" 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! 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!" 🙏

ICCRS FORMATION Visit www.iccrs.org or e-mail formation@iccrs.org for more information about our training programmes.



LFI • Rome, Italy

- 28 Aug - 17 Sept 2016
- Contact: ICCRS Formation → formation@iccrs.org

ICCRS offers its VI Leadership Formation Institute programme. Students will be offered practical teaching and workshops on various aspects of the ministry within CCR. In addition, the students will go on several field trips in the eternal city of Rome. The school will be held primarily in English, but other languages will be made available depending on the number of requests.

Online registration is open on www.iccrs.org.



LTC • Indonesia

- 22 Feb. - 1 March 2016
- Contact: Helena Rahayu → helenarahayu@yahoo.com

LTC • Seattle - USA

- 10 - 17 April 2016
- Contact: Tammie Stevens → LTC2016@wwccr.org

LTC • Poland

- 06 - 13 Aug 2016
- Contact: Fr.Wojciech Nowacki → wnowacki@odnowa.orgau

LTC • Guadeloupe

- 22 - 30 Oct 2016
- Contact: Huguette BOQUE-OLANOR → o.boque@only.fr

The ICCRS Leadership Training Course, in partnership with local Charismatic realities, provides this week-long programme that will call and empower new leaders as well as strengthen and encourage current ones. The programme includes daily Mass, Eucharist Adoration and a time of Charismatic Praise and Worship, and teachings. There is also time for reflection, sharing and ministry.



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