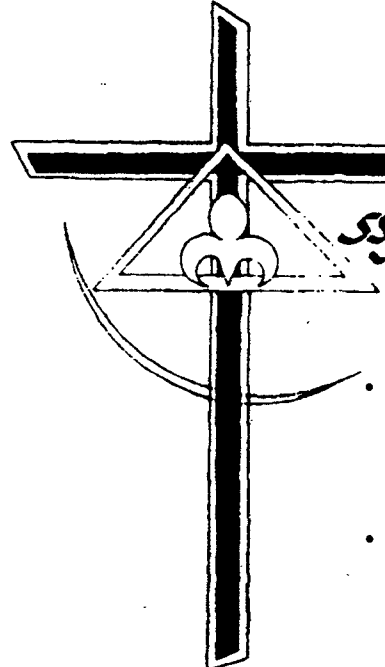


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Charismatics encouraged to bring faith to parishes

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Catholic charismatic renewal is alive and well throughout the world, even if the number of people regularly attending charismatic prayer meetings has remained somewhat static.

While some leaders of the renewal worry about the "revolving door" through which Catholic charismatics pass from active involvement to a less obvious participation within an average of two or three years, one international leader sees that as the way it should be.

In fact, that's more or less what's happening to him.

Father Ken Metz, administrator of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office since 1987, left Rome in late February to return to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as pastor of St. Mark's Parish in Kenosha, Wis.

"I've spoken to huge crowds in different places, at conferences all over the world," the 55-year-old priest said. "But at that parish, I'm going to have a few thousand people to be with every week, to walk with."

"It's nice to have a charismatic renewal because it gets people excited about living their faith, but what good is that if it never gets into the parish so the parish is alive?" he asked before flying home.

Father Metz's successor, Sister of Charity Nancy Kellar, was the U.S. representative to the international council and had served for 10 years on the U.S. National Service Committee of the renewal.

The renewal itself is not recognized as a movement, because it isn't one, at least

not in the sense of having founders, by laws and a clearly defined, formal membership, he said.

Father Metz said he has no idea how many Catholic charismatics there are in the world, nor even where the majority of them are located, but he has met them in 55 countries as part of his job.

One statistician has estimated that between 60 million and 70 million Catholics throughout the world have had some experience of the renewal.

The renewal began in the late 1960s and focuses on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its expression in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which include speaking in tongues, healing and prophecy.

Father Metz said the most important gift the renewal has brought to the church is a direct experience of what the church has taught about baptism and Christian initiation throughout its history.

He also credited the renewal with helping Catholics take seriously the obligation to evangelize others and for helping Catholics learn to appreciate the Bible and its place in their prayer life.


The major challenges facing the renewal, he said, are to keep "fanning the flame" so people remain open and grow in their relationship with God, to integrate their experience into the life of the church through their parishes and to be prophetic in order to help the whole church be renewed.

Being prophetic, Father Metz said, "is speaking the truth to the church and the world: God loves us; Jesus died for us; Jesus continues to heal today; Jesus calls us all to follow him."

What it boils down to, the priest said, is "living our faith to the hilt."

"In every age God stirred devotions to combat corruption. However, if at times the enemies of the Church have waged war on one dogma or another, now religion itself is under fire and all that it stands for, including... the Crucifix. We must, therefore, re-present the concept of the cross and of our crucified redeemer... Now is the time to let people know at what price their souls were bought... We must remind them that this Blood is offered every day on the altar, and must be adored and blessed in reparation for all the sacrileges and blasphemies of our time".
(St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood)

Nature and Scope
The Union of the Blood of Christ (USC) is the spiritual family fostered by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood (founded by St. Gaspar) and other Precious Blood religious congregations. It was established by Fr. Francesco Albertini to promote devotion to the Blood of Christ and now exists worldwide. The members - as individuals (laity, priests and religious) or as groups (Religious Congregations, Associations, Confraternities) - commit themselves to live and promote the spirituality of the Precious Blood. This spirituality provides one way to perfect our baptismal consecration and to stimulate the continued growth of the laity in the life of the Spirit as well as the mission of the Church.



Rule of Life
The "rule of life" gives its members a program of spirituality solidly based on the traditions of the Catholic Church. Compelled by the love of Christ, who died for us, rather than by any moral obligation, members practice a rule of life inspired by Christ's unselfish love. Conversion and Reconciliation are ongoing processes fostered by an appreciation for the Word of God, nurtured by the Eucharist and wrapped in a life of prayer. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Retreats and Spiritual Exercises are recommended for groups and as individual practices.

To Enroll in the USC
Any practicing Catholic may become a member of the Union upon completion of a period of formation.

Need for Information?
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