

# STIRRINGS of the Spirit

A Quarterly Provincial Newsletter of the  
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services of Ontario (CCRSO)

Vol.5, No. 4

July 2002

*Our mission is to promote and participate in the ongoing renewal of the Catholic Church, witnessing to the reality of Jesus Christ and the love of the Father, under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, exercising the charisms received through release of the Holy Spirit*

## From our President - 2001 CCRSO Annual Report

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ:



On January 6, 2001 at a ceremony to close the Great Jubilee year, Pope John Paul II released his Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. In it he shares his vision for the Church entering into the Third Millennium. He makes it clear that 35 years after Vatican II, its documents are still a sure compass from which the Church must take her direction (see §57). Ultimately that direction is to take up her evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm (§2). And so

John Paul II draws our attention to Luke 5.

*After speaking to the crowds from Simon's boat, he invited the apostle to "put out into the deep" for a catch "Duc in altum" (Lk 5:4). Peter and his first companions trusted Christ's words and cast the nets. "When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish" (Lk 5:6) (§1).*

And so it is against this backdrop that I present the **2001 Annual Report** and use this perspective to interpret the Word He has spoken in our midst and the work that has been accomplished. If I were asked to state the dominant theme for this year's report, I would have no difficulty in saying it is change. From the change that the Lord is working in our hearts to the change He is working in CCRSO, its leadership and activities, comes new energy, new life, new directions. We have been blessed.

### The Word Spoken

In reviewing the Word spoken at our biannual meetings,

I will cover it more-or-less chronologically as it came to us. There were more prophetic words than I could cover in this report, but I will attempt to give the essence of what was shared.

The Lord's invitation to "launch out into the deep" did not immediately become evident. Instead, He prepared our hearts to receive the invitation. In doing so He called us first to **repentance**.

*There was an image of a person on a journey and wandering. As they were walking along, they were leaving a trail of "pieces"; and the word came: "Since you have been baptized in My Spirit and received the fullness of My Spirit, throughout your journey you have given your inheritance away, piece by piece, to the enemy in little ways that were not challenging or confronting. Nonetheless, you have given it away bit by bit. And now the years have gone by and you are just a shell of what I've given you. And I ask you tonight, come before Me, reclaim your inheritance, receive once again the fullness of My Spirit and walk in My strength and in My power."*

There was a strong sense of a need to repent for allowing the tremendous gifts He has given us to be thrown away. Spontaneously the membership began public and private repentance. And when we were finished the Lord explained why we needed to repent.

*When I give to you this time, I desire that the gifts be held in transparent buckets. The only way the gifts will be of use to My people is if they see the gifts as coming from Me and not from you.*

We were showered with the Lord's mercy that evening and the next morning the call to be transformed continued. It began with a reading from Hebrews 12:1,5-6.

*... throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started.... My son, when the Lord corrects you, do not treat it lightly; but do not get discouraged when he reprimands you. For the Lord trains the ones that he loves and he punishes all those that he acknowledges as his sons*

And with that the Lord prepared our hearts to receive this next word.

*I have created you to be spiritual beings, and yet you choose to walk in the natural. I have presented before you a banquet, and yet you settle for crumbs. I invite you to come to a higher life, to seek the spiritual life, a life where wisdom, knowledge and understanding is available to you. And yet, you seek the world's wisdom and the world's way. Does the world lead you to greater things? I think not. I, the God who created you, have a greater desire for you, for your life, but you need to have a greater desire for Me and the things that are in My world. I have provided for everything. You have to turn away, to shed the ideas of the past, to let go of your allusions, to let go of your desires, to come up to the higher life, to be filled full, fresh with My Spirit, for I created you to be spiritual beings. Shed the natural – seek the higher gifts. Seek My gifts for I provide the way.*

We get drawn into the kingdom of this world so easily by not disciplining ourselves to use our eyes of faith to see the Kingdom of God and the potential we have in the Spirit to make a difference. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). We have seen it but get drawn back because of our sin and lack of commitment. We need to experience the fullness of His redemption (Ps 130:7) as we strain ahead and keep running steadily the race we began. After communion the Word came:

*I am indeed the Lamb that was slain for you. I am indeed the One who has shed His blood that you might have life. I call you to bathe in that blood. Bathe your hearts in that blood, so that you may be transformed and filled. Carry out the work I have called you to.*

The Lord truly desired this transformation of our hearts so we could do the work He has called us to. This transformation happens as we surrender to His love in the depths of our beings. And so, step two on this journey involved **regaining our inheritance through surrender and abandonment.**

*I am not a God of convenience and I expect you to give your all. I am gifting you with a new love for Me. Surrender to that, My children. Surrender in the very depths of your being. Let Me relight that fire in you that you once knew. Go forth carrying the flame which will set others aflame. Give away what you have received and watch it return to you a hundred fold.*

In these last two prophecies we begin to see the call to our mission, now that His work of transformation is taking root in our hearts. And these next three prophecies make it very clear there is work for us to do.

*-- You have been refreshed and replenished. Your kit bags are packed for the journey.*

*-- Make haste, do not lose what you have been given. Move forward now in the power of My Holy Spirit. Look ahead and see the path I set before you. Choose wisely; follow in My footsteps.*

*-- Launch out into the deep and cast your nets for a catch.*

This last word echoes the Pope's call from his Apostolic Letter. It was a confirmation from the Lord of a new work

that He was calling CCRSO to, which I will speak about later in this report. It is clear that before calling us to that work, the Lord first needed to do a mighty work in our hearts, moving us through repentance to surrender and abandonment so we could reclaim the inheritance that is rightfully ours. Having done so

we were prepared to move ahead in the work we are called to, witnessing to the truth of “the Kingdom of God in our midst” (Lk 17:21).

In the months that followed this meeting much time and effort was devoted to setting up the ground work for the new ministry the Lord called us to launch.

Our second biannual meeting in the Fall of 2001 opened with these prophetic words: *“This is My weekend; surrender yourselves to My perfect will.”* And shortly after that came a vision of a transparent sheet and the Lord saying: *“You must become transparent if you are to serve Me.”* Only five months earlier, we had heard these words and embraced them. Had we lost sight of the Kingdom of God again? A vision came of a person seeing themselves as a cracked pot and the Holy Spirit was leaking through, and then the words: *“The fire of the Spirit will repair your cracked pots.”*

And so the Lord began to work in us again. Throughout the weekend He called us to surrender more and more fully

We are so easily enticed by the spirit of the world, when we do not discipline ourselves to use our eyes of faith to see the Kingdom of God

to Him. How patient He is with us in our weakness and our inability to stay rooted in His Kingdom!

There were two other prevalent themes that echoed throughout the weekend. The first had to do with the gift of zealotry. It began with this sharing:

*I feel prompted tonight to ask for a gift for this body – the gift of zeal. Not the zealotry that can be misguided or misdirected like that of Judas, but the zealotry of St. Paul that would have us cry out: “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.” I’ve been having this conversation with the Lord about zealotry. He asked me, “Do you know the route to zealotry?” I hadn’t really considered it before. I thought of it as a gift the Lord gives. What came to me was that the path to zealotry is through intimacy. It comes by allowing ourselves to take the opportunity to fall in love with Jesus more deeply, more intimately. Then Jesus asked me, “Do you know the cost? The cost of being zealous is permitting Me to transform you, being willing to endure. Come what may, I am with you. There will never be too much to endure.*

And although we desire to be transformed, this next prophecy captures the heart of the struggle.

*You hunger and thirst but remain unsatisfied because you lack the depth of commitment and discipline that I require from My chosen. Begin to walk in holy boldness, proclaiming My lordship in every minute aspect of your life. I come to separate and sweep away all that is not of Me in your life. Take hold of My hand and let Me begin a work in you.*

The first work we are called to is a work in our own hearts proclaiming boldly His lordship in our lives, in all its aspects, our strengths and weakness and in this way become transparent. In order to “do for the Lord” more effectively, we need to “be in the Lord” more fully. This doesn’t mean we are released from serving the Lord as we work on our own lives. In fact, the other prevalent theme of the weekend was this call to work in His Kingdom. As difficult as it was to pick the right words that express the essence of the message, I have chosen the following:

*I have a new song for you to sing. I want it to come from the depth of your being. I will give you the lyrics. I will give you the melody; listen, just listen.*

Accomplishing the work of the Kingdom means listening to what the King wants done. We don’t want to be doing for the sake of doing. We want to recognize the new thing and

move forward in it.

*I have brought you here for a mountain-top experience; to teach you; to enable you to experience My love in a deeper way. But our work is to be done in the valley. I will guide you every step of the way. If you stumble and fall, I will pick you up. Do not be afraid of the valley. Our great work is to be done in the valley.*

And so in this past year we have journeyed through repentance to surrender and abandonment. The Lord has invested time in our formation, teaching us to sing the song He puts in our hearts, calling us to surrender and cultivating an intimate relationship with us. We are, to be sure, works in progress and yet given the awesome privilege of working in the vineyard proclaiming His Kingdom has come. He will complete this work He has begun in us as we continue to listen to what the Spirit is saying, and continue to be obedient to His voice and trusting in His plan. And it will bear its fruit, thirty, sixty, one hundred fold.

### **A New Ministry: The CCRSO Resource Team**

In his apostolic letter, “*Novo Millennio Ineunte – The New Millennium*,” Pope John Paul II encouraged the Church to “gain new impetus in Christian living.” He states, “Conscious of the Risen Lord’s presence among us, we ask ourselves today the same question

put to Peter in Jerusalem immediately after his Pentecost speech: “What must we do?” (§29).

In response to this challenge, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services of Ontario (CCRSO) has initiated a **Resource Team** whose purpose will be to tangibly support the efforts of the Diocesan Liaisons in “renewing” the Church, within the various Dioceses in Ontario. The Team’s focus is to work for the “new evangelization” by empowering “Life in the Spirit.”

Much time was spent preparing the documents necessary to set up such a ministry. Late in the Fall of 2001, they were presented to the Ontario Catholic Conference of Bishops (OCCB) who subsequently gave their approval to the formation of such a ministry. By the end of the year, a team had been chosen and we were ready to start the real work of “launching out into the deep.”

### **A New Bishop’s Liaison**

The resignation of Fr. Peter Coughlin, who was called back to the diocese by his bishop to become the pastor at St. Andrews Parish in Oakville, was the most difficult change to accept. Fr. Peter had always been the driving force behind CCRSO and his vision has guided it since its inception. His leaving, as difficult as it was, was a sign that we were coming

In order to “do for the Lord” more effectively, we need to “be in the Lord” more fully

of age, faithful and stable enough to continue fulfilling and developing his dream of setting the Church on fire with the Holy Spirit. We are grateful for the time and the energy he invested in our formation, and for his ability to challenge us and stretch us, to help us see beyond the natural and set our sights on what really counts – establishing the Kingdom of God.

The job of Bishops' Liaison was left vacant by Fr. Peter's resignation. The silver lining in this otherwise bleak news was the appointment of Bishop John Sherlock as our new Bishops' Liaison. Bishop Sherlock had expressed to the OCCB the need to fill such a position, and his willingness to accept the job testified to his sincerity. We are immensely grateful for his support and enthusiasm.

In his capacity as Bishops' Liaison, it was he who presented the CCRSO Resource Team documents to the OCCB and received their approval for its establishment. As Bishop Sherlock takes a more active role in the Charismatic Renewal, we look forward to the guidance and wisdom he can bring to CCRSO.

### A New Director of Service

Fr. Peter's resignation also left vacant the position of Director of Service. But the Lord doesn't close one door without opening another and that opening came in the person of Fr. Bill Comerford. Just as Fr. Peter was being called back to active parish ministry, Fr. Bill was being asked to give up his parish to become House Father at one of the Redemptorist facilities in Toronto. This was only a half-time position and his superior invited him to become involved in another ministry that he would find fulfilling. Director of Service for CCRSO was a perfect fit since Fr. Bill had been associated with CCRSO for a number of years as the archbishop's liaison in Toronto. He assumed the duties of the Director of Service at the end of June. We are fortunate to have Fr. Bill as part of our team.

Fr. Bill's main focus has been working with the Crusade committee (now called the *Holy Spirit Conference* committee) preparing for the summer conference. As one of his duties, Fr. Bill is going to focus some of his energies on developing a plan to support the work that the liaisons do. He is also intent on meeting, informing and instructing the clergy on the value of the Charismatic Renewal. Fr. Bill is also a key member of the Resource Team and as it launches out, he will be traveling across the province carrying on the work of the new evangelization.

### The Catholic Crusade

The annual Catholic Crusade focused on the theme "*fanning into flame ...*" (2 Tim 1:6) with Bishop Sam Jacobs as the main speaker and Fr. Peter Coughlin, Sylvia Castellano and Patti Matheson also speaking. Fr. John Van Hees led the youth track. The talks, the ministry time, the dancing, the generous responses of the people were what we have come to expect at this conference. We are grateful to the Crusade Committee for their dedication and hard work. We are particularly indebted to Robin Ferguson who, despite dealing with the grave illness of his wife, was able to pull this crusade together.

A sense of newness has also come to our provincial crusade as well. The appointment of Rex Pereira as Crusade Chairman for 2002 has been a blessing for CCRSO. At our request he has initiated a number of changes in an attempt to make this provincial conference even better. The Catholic Crusade will now be called the *Holy Spirit Conference* and will be held at the *Hamilton Place Theatre*, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton. For this year, it will continue to be a two-day

conference, though a one-day conference is being considered for the future. The other significant change is the focus on promotion. We have encouraged the committee to examine ways that this could be improved and invited them to make it a higher budget priority. CCRSO is indebted to the *Holy Spirit Conference* committee for their willingness to face the

risks that change inevitably brings.

### New Goals for CCRSO's Five Standing Committees

CCRSO has in its constitution five general objectives that govern the nature of the work that it does. Five standing committees are set up, each responsible for working on one objective. This year, since almost all of the goals set in each objective had been reached, each committee established three new goals with a one or two year time frame. Many of their projects have been started.

### The Board of Directors: A New Initiative

The CCRSO Board of Directors felt called to provide some leadership training to prayer group leaders. We conducted a Leadership Retreat in the Fall with the theme "*Empowered by the Spirit.*" One hundred people attended and many who tried to register could not because the facility was not large enough for the demand. It was a powerful weekend focusing on calling forth the gifts, modeling

The annual Catholic Crusade will henceforth be known as the *Holy Spirit Conference* and will take place this year at the Hamilton Place Theatre, 1 Summers Lane in Hamilton

ministry, and the importance of the work of the Charismatic Renewal to the Church. Almost every member of the Board was involved in this endeavor presenting talks, leading ministry, or coordinating activities. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Board members to rub shoulders with the people we so desire to serve. My hope is that this will not be the last leadership retreat.

Two Board members resigned during their term this year – both for pressing personal reasons. The Board is indebted for the contributions made by Sandi Debesys and Robin Ferguson.

The Board would also like to acknowledge the passing of two supporters of CCRSO. Mary Ferguson, wife of Robin, passed away after struggling with her health for about a year. Dennis Handy, Bishop's liaison for the Diocese of Peterborough, died as a result of cancer. We are grateful for the opportunity to have broken bread with them. Both will be sadly missed.

### **Financially Speaking**

Our financial situation is changing too. It keeps getting better. CCRSO remains on solid ground thanks to the generosity of prayer groups, the Bread of Life Renewal Center, and the success of the Catholic Crusade. We are in a very good position to launch the CCRSO Resource Team and support the work they are called to. We are also able to support Liaisons who required some financial assistance to carry out the work they have accepted to do for CCRSO. We continue to support the International office for the Charismatic Renewal (ICCRS) based in Rome with a substantial annual donation. The Bread of Life Renewal

Center continues to provide excellent service to CCRSO for which we pay a set fee.

### **In Conclusion**

We have been abundantly blessed by the Lord. Clearly this year has seen a lot of changes for CCRSO: some difficult, some risky and all challenging. This has been what a coach would call a "building year" for CCRSO. The Lord has brought in new and gifted people, He has taken the time to do a work in our hearts purifying us so that the gifts He gives us give Him glory, and He has inspired us to move in new directions of service. In the midst of all the change and newness, this word reminds us that He has a plan.

*And so, My little ones, as we embark on the journey I ask one thing, that you trust. Remember, I have the plan. What you know, you know only in part, but I have the whole plan. If I were to reveal it to you, you could not comprehend it. ... So I ask that you trust.*

I will close with a quote from the Pope's Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. In his closing remarks he reminds us:

*We need to imitate the zeal of St. Paul: "Straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14).*

CCRSO 2002 Annual Report

Brian Sullivan, President

CCRSO †

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- ✓ Did you know that CCRSO has its own *newly revamped* website?
  - ✓ Did you know that you can read and download the current issue or back issues of **STIRRINGS** from the website? You can also submit your e-mail address and be notified electronically when each issue of **STIRRINGS** is published on our Site for viewing / downloading.
  - ✓ Did you know that you can learn about upcoming events, resources and so much more by visiting

[www.ccrso.com](http://www.ccrso.com)

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# THE CALL TO EVANGELIZE

by Bishop Adam Exner, Archbishop of Vancouver

Following is an excerpt from a talk given by Bishop Exner to a "Missions to the Nations" Conference held in Vancouver this past year. It was originally published in the newsletter of *Renewal Ministries* and is used here with their permission.

## How does the Spirit speak to us?

We must be attentive to three particular ways that the Spirit speaks to us. First, he speaks to us through the written word of God. One sentence that I believe summarizes the entire message of the bible is John 3:16: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.*" The greatest challenge that the Holy Spirit addresses to us, follows as a consequence of God's gift of salvation: "*Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations*" (Mt 28:0). The very mission that the Father gave to Jesus, He passes on to His disciples, "*As the Father has sent me, so I now send you.*" Jesus wasn't just talking to the early disciples, or to popes, bishops, priests, and religious, but to every baptized member of the body of Christ.

The Spirit also speaks to us forcefully through the voice of the Church, from the past and the present. In recent years, He has been giving us one overriding message. He is calling us to a new evangelization, one that is new in ardor, method, and expression. This dominant message is given particularly in recent encyclicals of the Holy Father: *The Mission of the Redeemer* (1990); in *Tertio Millennio Adventiente* (1994); in *The Gospel of Life* (1995); and in the post-synod exhortations held in preparation for the Jubilee Year. In an unmistakably clear way, through the voice of the Church, the Spirit is calling us to a new evangelization and a new missionary thrust. This is confirmed and reinforced in the most recent apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, which declares a time of launching out into the deep, of listening to the Spirit and following Him for the future of the Church.

## Signs of the times

The third way the Spirit speaks to us significantly is through the signs of the times. Some of these events, trends, and phenomena in the world today are negative and distressing, while others are positive and give reason for new hope. One sign is the number of lapsed Catholics, particularly in Europe and North America. While it is true that the Church has grown significantly, there are still many who do not practice their faith. The Spirit is saying, "Bring them back, reach out to them." We must be like the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 and goes in search of the lost one.

Another sign is that the number of people who have not heard of Christ or do not believe in Him has doubled since Vatican Council II. The message is obvious: we must become a missionary Church that reaches out to non-believers.

This era is also marked by a culture that has become godless; one the Holy Father calls a "culture of death." There is an obvious effort by our society to "quarantine" religion and the Church from public life. Our pervading "post-modern" culture can be characterized by seven main traits.

## Traits of our culture

- (1) We are living in a culture that has lost the sense of God and of the Holy and the sacred, a culture in which God has become irrelevant.
- (2) Because our culture has lost the sense of God, it has lost the sense of sin, and therefore the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- (3) It is a culture that has lost the sense of the sacredness of human life. Human life is no longer seen as made in the image of God, but rather is relegated to the level of animal and plant life.
- (4) Our culture has lost the sense of the sacredness of marriage. Consequently, over 50% of marriages end in divorce.
- (5) The loss of the sense of the sacredness of the family. The breakdown of the family and the erosion of the very concept of family are a disorder for both the Church and society.
- (6) Our culture has also lost the sense of moral right and wrong. Many no longer believe there are moral absolutes or boundaries – everything is negotiable. Personal opinion is seen as the only absolute and those who disagree with another's personal moral opinion are labeled intolerant and bigoted.
- (7) Our culture is losing the sense of true and false. Being "politically correct" is often seen as more important than telling the truth.

## What is the Spirit saying to us?

The Holy Spirit is directing us to evangelize our culture, and to restore what has been lost in our society. When we look at these enormous challenges, we can feel overwhelmed, but there is no reason for pessimism, discouragement, or despair. The early Church can be our model and teach us how to change our world. The first disciples were few in number, ordinary people with no status and little money and resources. Their leader was crucified and the society was hostile to them. Yet, this handful of fishermen changed their culture through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is where our hope lies; the same Holy Spirit is alive and active today. We have the power to change the future and to build that new springtime of faith and Christian living. †

## HEALING RETREAT

Sponsored by *Holy Rosary Prayer Group*

Retreat Director:

**Deacon Armand Danis**

Friday - Sunday, Sept. 20-22, 2002

**Marylake Retreat House**

13760 Keele St., King City

Weekend will consist of teaching on prayer, healing and deliverance.

Cost \$135/person. Registration on receipt. Mail cheque or money order payable to: Annette King, 47 Gloucester Grove, Toronto M6C 2A2. For more information call Hilda (416) 781-0733 after 6 p.m.

## Spirit Fed and Spirit Led

3-day conference conducted by

**Fr. Robert DeGrandis, SSJ**

Friday, July 5, 2002, 7 - 9 p.m.

Saturday, July 6, 2002, 9 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 7, 2002, 9 a.m. - noon.

at Maison Mere de la Congregation de Notre-Dame  
4873 Westmount Ave., Montreal

Admission: \$40.00

Meal tickets may be purchased in advance for \$10 per meal. Cafeteria can serve only 200 people, so tickets will be sold on a first-come-first-served basis. There are restaurants in the vicinity.

Limited on-site accommodation available at \$65 per person per night including meals.

To purchase tickets in advance, please make cheque payable to *Faith Experience Ministries, 15 Kirkland Blvd., #108, Kirkland, Quebec H9J 1N2.*

For additional info call (514) 695-7172

P.S.

A FIRE RALLY will be held in Montreal on Saturday, October 19, 2002. Look for more information in next issue of *STIRRINGS*, or call the above phone number.

Holy Rosary Prayer Group is sponsoring

## YOUTH SPREADING THE FIRE

with *John Paul Bible School* participants

on Saturday, July 20, 2002, 10 - 4

at Consolata Missionary Centre

2671 Islington Ave., Etobicoke

The day will feature testimonies, talks, skits & drama, praise & worship, & prayer ministry

A love offering will be taken

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### A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Summer is here and although it is a time when many activities close down for the season, this year will be an exception because of *WORLD YOUTH DAYS*. How blessed we are to have Pope John Paul II come to Toronto for this great event! Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will touch each participant and light in them a flame of God's love, so that they will be a light to others.

Another event which will be taking place is the *2002 HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE*, August 17-18 at Hamilton Place Theatre, Hamilton. Have you marked the date on your calendar? Hope to see you there!

The next issue of *STIRRINGS* will be the October edition. Deadline for submissions will be September 16<sup>th</sup>. What is your prayer group planning? Prayer group leaders, please write, e-mail or fax your news to me:

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