

# Celebrating CELEBRATE

**Kristina Cooper reflects on the fruits of the CELEBRATE Catholic Family conference which this year celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has given many fruits to the Catholic Church in the UK and one of the most influential of these in recent years is surely CELEBRATE. This began twenty years ago as a Catholic Charismatic Family Conference based at a seaside holiday camp in Devon, but now incorporates not just an annual residential conference attracting 1400-1500 people but weekends all over the country and a youth training programme. Many new ministries have also been birthed through it such as RISE Theatre and Crossbeams, the Christian band, as well as many individuals and ministries receiving sponsorship from it over the years through the £750,000 given over this time in the conference offerings. Added to this are the unquantifiables of the many changed lives of those who have come and been evangelised through attending this “holiday” with a difference!

## Enlarge the space of your tent

But how did it all begin? The CELEBRATE story is very much an example of what can happen when people are prepared to step out in trust and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The roots of CELEBRATE lie in another Catholic Charismatic event – the Southampton Conference. This began in 1975 and regularly attracted 400 or so participants every year. It would have thus been easy for the organising team, led from 1980 by Charles Whitehead and his wife, Sue, to rest on their laurels, but the downside of the conference was that the venue would not accept under 16s and the limit on numbers was 400. This meant that families with children couldn't come and the team could see this was a growing need. In 1992 the core group received prophetic words calling them to step out and “enlarge the space of their tents” and make it a real family conference. A discernment weekend was held by the leadership team and others to pray about the way forward. The consensus was to go for it, even though this meant abandoning the existing very successful conference for something new and unknown.

The hunt was now on to find a suitable location. Charles and the team contacted dozens of holiday camps all over the country. But none were suitable or available. Then one day a positive reply came back from John Fowler Holiday Parc, in Ilfracombe in Devon. The manager wrote, “God has been challenging me for some time to offer our site for an Easter Christian conference...” This seemed the confirmation, particularly as nearby there was the Ilfracombe Arts College, which would be suitable for the input side of the event. All that was needed was a £40,000 guarantee of income for John Fowler! There was only £500 in the kitty, so the Whitehead family, in faith, put up their home as security and the site was booked.



## Excitement of first Celebrate

I remember the excitement of that first CELEBRATE. The team needed 750 people to come to cover their costs - over 900 booked in! The weather was awful, however – wind, rain, even snow. The stress on the power circuit of so many kettles and fires switched on at the same time was so great that it blew - resulting in half the camp having no power for 24 hours. But instead of this ruining the conference, this brought out the Dunkirk spirit in the participants and many other unforeseen blessings. These included some dads, who had come intending to play golf and go walking, because of the bad weather, deciding to attend the conference instead. This had such an effect on them that two years later, six of them ended up joining the Catholic Church.

Everyone who came just loved the mix of fun and spirituality and being together. It was exactly what many Catholic families were looking for. CELEBRATE was fortunate in being able to draw on the talents of many of the groups and communities which have emerged from the CCR – such as Cor et Lumen Christi, Sion Community, the Hexham and Newcastle mission team etc who ran the different children and youth streams or helped with the prayer ministry. The gifts and talents of others involved in the CCR have also been used to provide input for a wide selection of workshops which range from banner making to time management and spirituality.

There was something for children from 3 years old upwards to the young adults who gathered in Joel's Bar. Little wonder that parents were so happy to be there. In the evenings everyone gathered in the bar for the Fringe, where there was more fun to be had with an open mike and songs and jokes. Children too enjoyed the freedom of being able to stay up late in such a safe environment. Lord David Alton, the Catholic Parliamentarian, who has come to CELEBRATE for many years with his family has often mentioned how important CELEBRATE has been for him personally, as it is somewhere where he can get spiritual input (and give it, as he is a regular speaker) but also know that his children are being well looked after and getting faith formation appropriate to their age.

## Deep need for such a family based spiritual event

Word got round about CELEBRATE and soon there were so many people who wanted to come, that an overflow hall had to be set up, emphasising the deep need for such a family based spiritual event. The conference eventually became so oversubscribed that some very keen families would drive to the Whitehead's home to personally deliver their registration forms to ensure that they got a place. After 20 years things have calmed down slightly but those who want to go to CELEBRATE know they have to make sure they book early. The week has also had an effect on the John Fowler Camp staff who were struck by the positive behaviour of the Celebrators. Such warm relationships have been built up, that there is now a regular football match with the staff. The site handyman told me, “This is our favourite week of the year. Everyone gets on so well and

is having such a good time that it affects us all too.” In recent years, CELEBRATE has even set up a temporary FM radio station for the week, so that those who are looking after their children in the chalets won't miss the conference input. This is broadcast to the town too.

## CELEBRATE weekends

In 2008 the government changed the length of the school terms. This created a problem as it meant that that year the College would not be available for Easter week. If the team brought forward the dates this would clash with Holy Week and take participants out of their parishes which the team didn't want to do. They realised this was providential, however, as they had been thinking about launching non-residential CELEBRATE weekends for those who couldn't make it to Ilfracombe. This seemed to be the moment to try these. So in 2008 for the first time there was no CELEBRATE week in Ilfracombe. Instead committed Celebrators, backed by the CELEBRATE core team organised 5 weekends back in their own areas. These were so successful that they have continued ever since and spread round the country attended by approximately 4000 people. This year there are 11 weekends organised by local teams.

These weekends created a need for more leaders for the children's and youth ministry, so in 2010 CELEBRATE, began “RELEASE”, a year long training programme headed by Jenny Baker, for young leaders 18-25 years old. This has formed and equipped 50 young Catholic leaders. These young people not only to help out at CELEBRATE events, but also are starting to take their place in the world. Five participants have subsequently become head of their Catholic societies at university and other Celebrate “babies” are starting all kinds of initiatives.

## CELEBRATE has evolved beyond anything we had planned

Charles Whitehead, comments, “CELEBRATE has evolved beyond anything we had planned. We have just responded to what the Lord was doing. But we remain committed to the original call from the Lord to provide an event for all the family, young and old, every age-group, and the word “family” is taken in the widest sense to include Christians of other traditions, and we have always tried to have a strong ecumenical dimension both with attendees and speakers. We honestly believe that CELEBRATE is the Lord's. He has opened many doors for us, which we have walked through, allowing Him to do what He wants. He's enabled us to use the gifts he has given us and has also equipped us to take on things we've never done before. It has been and remains a blessing and a privilege to be part of it.”

**CELEBRATE have their own magazine, which has more information about the conference. For a copy of this and more details of the upcoming weekends this year, as there is no Ilfracombe week, see [www.celebrateconference.org](http://www.celebrateconference.org) or email [info@celebrateconference.org](mailto:info@celebrateconference.org)**



# Made to Worship

**Joe Wells, a young Catholic worship leader from Brighton, reflects on the call to worship in his life.**

For me, music and worship have been integral to my journey towards the Father and I would like to share the sense of excitement, encouragement and vision that being involved in worship has brought.

Once as a teenager in a worship session in Joel's Bar (the 16-25 youth stream at the Celebrate Family Conference), I could smell candles during one of the songs. It immediately reminded me of my church back home. I looked around but no one had lit any candles in the room. I felt the Lord say that He wanted to bring this style of worship to our parish churches and communities. This gave me hope - because I had been encountering the Lord through worship, and I wanted to share this with my church and friends at home.

Among my friends, the music in our parishes is often a hot topic of conversation, and many of them would love to have more modern songs and more freedom in which to openly express their love of God. I'm not suggesting that we should 'do away' with beautiful hymns and correct liturgical music but surely there must be a place for more sung praise and worship in our parishes too. I often ponder about how to introduce this in a loving, respectful and life-giving way. Throughout my time at university I, and many of my friends, did what we named 'doing the double'. This meant that as well as going to a Catholic Mass on a Sunday, we would also go to a local evangelical or charismatic church. One important reason for this was because of the great times of worship they had at the other churches.

## 24/7 call to prayer movement

Springing up in hundreds of churches around the world are so called '24-7' prayer and worship movements in which churches are setting aside space and time to have continuous prayer 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People sign up on a rota, or drop in, to spend time with the Lord and pray for the church, their town and the world. Last summer I went to an event in London called "Burn" which had 24-7 worship as the focus. As I walked in, the sense of peace was very

beautiful. Also, the room had been completely covered in people's prophetic painting and prayers for London that they had put up over the week of worship. The vision of "Burn" is to cover or 'canopy' a region in 24-7 worship and prayer for a length of time bringing churches and church ministries together in a spirit of unity and passion. For many centuries, the Catholic Church has drawn on the traditional wisdom of constant prayer, particularly in the religious and monastic orders, and it's wonderful to see the other churches picking up on that wisdom and vision and wanting to make it accessible for everyone. I think these prayer and worship movements can be a real opportunity for unity and I think that they are a move of the Spirit.

## Longing to see more investment in worship in the Catholic Church

A common factor in churches that are growing are those that have seriously invested in their worship ministries; some of the most well known are Holy Trinity Brompton (with links to Worship Central), Bethel (with Jesus Culture) and Hillsong (with Hillsong United). Many of these churches employ full time worship leaders!

My friends and I have longed to see more investment in worship in the Catholic Church and we often meet up to be in the Lord's presence through singing and worshipping together. I felt called to try and record our particular 'sound of worship'. I shared this vision with some friends of mine, Tom Pugh and Alex Stevens, who happened, independently, to be having some thoughts about

setting up a Christian record label. So during the past six months they have set up Arch Records, with a vision to promote and share new Christian music.

As a first project, we brought together about fifty of our friends in a hall in Brighton

As a first project, we brought together about fifty of our friends in a hall in Brighton and recorded over a weekend a 'live' album of worship songs that we had written. This was recorded by Steve Szymanski and Dan Burgess who do the sound at Celebrate. Our vision is to continue to bring people together in friendship and unity to worship God and be in His presence, and we have called this vision the 'One Hope Project'. We released our first album, 'Live with friends and Angels', on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014. I co-wrote one of the songs on the album with a friend who is involved in worship at Holy Trinity Brompton and he was with us during the recording weekend and sang the song we had written together. I pray that through the One Hope Project we can continue to grow in unity and help people to move forwards in an attitude of worship that encompasses their whole lives.

For further details of the record see [www.archrecords.co](http://www.archrecords.co)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANryF-MqNTA>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eauo3qWCUo>

## POPE FRANCIS TO SPEAK AT ITALIAN NATIONAL CCR CONFERENCE



Rinnovo nello Spirito (RNS), one of the national networks of CCR in Italy, has secured something of a coup for their annual conference, which this year will have Pope Francis as one of their speakers. The annual conference, which has taken place in the seaside town of Rimini for 36 years, is relocating to the Olympic stadium in Rome for the first time, and as the local

bishop, Pope Francis has accepted to address the gathering. Salvatore Martinez, the leader of RnS said, "We want to underline the will to support the Holy Father in his work of "ecclesial renewal" by placing our spiritual experience all the more at the heart of the Church and at the service of the world." The theme of the gathering which will start at 11am on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June and finish Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6.30pm is "Repent! Believe! Receive the Holy Spirit" (cf Acts 2.38-40). Among the other speakers will be several cardinals, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFM Cap, Sr Brige McKenna, Ralph Martin, Patti Gallagher Mansfield, Michelle Moran and Salvatore Martinez. **Contact +39 06 2323 9914 or email pass @ convocazonenazionale.it For hotel bookings (limited availability) +39 0541 305843/ 305845 / E: alberghi @ convocazonenazionale.it**

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## Fisher of Men



**Doug Duncan, who is the leader of the House of Bread prayer group in the Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, shares his faith journey and how the Lord has led him to reach out and become a chaplain with the Apostleship of the Sea.**

I was in the construction business during my working life. I was a member of the Church of Scotland but my wife, Denise, was a Catholic and we used to toy with each other on Sundays as to which church to go to that week. I always used to feel at home in the Catholic Church, however. I didn't realise how much until one day I was involved in a serious cycling accident and when I arrived in hospital and they asked me what religion I was, I found myself saying "Roman Catholic". It seemed like a sign when I found a religious sister by my bedside when I woke up after my operation. She gave me a prayer to the Holy Spirit, which I still use to this day, and which we say every Tuesday in our parish prayer group.

When I came out of hospital I started the RCIA, but at this stage I was still just popping in and out of church and not really being a disciple wanting to serve God. This changed when my wife persuaded me to do an Alpha course. The Holy Spirit day was the kick off. I knew for the first time that there was something there. I went on to do the Life in the Spirit seminars at the Cathedral prayer group in Aberdeen. Afterwards I found my eyes became opened and I wanted to read the bible more and I felt I could understand it in a way I had never done before.

Denise and I attended the Cathedral prayer group for a few months but then the local parish priest at the Bridge of Don, where we lived, suggested that we run an Alpha course in our own parish of St Columba's. We followed this up with the Life in the Spirit

seminars. Then as we felt we needed to do something afterwards for people, we started a prayer group, which we called the House of Bread. Our parish priest was charismatic himself and gave us a lot of support. The prayer group grew and now we regularly get between thirty and forty people attending. As time went on I got more and more involved in the catholic charismatic renewal and together with the Cathedral prayer group we organise monthly healing services.

**Our prayer group has helped a lot of people come alive in their faith**

Our parish priest moved on but we are fortunate that our new Parish Priest Fr Gabor, is very supportive too. In the beginning he was unfamiliar with the charismatic dimension but I invited him to come to New Dawn Scotland last year and he changed overnight, and he is now full of the joy of the Holy Spirit and very open to the charisms. Our prayer group has helped a lot of people come alive in their faith and this in turn has affected the atmosphere in the parish. The love and joy in the church is tangible. I think this is something that is often missing from some churches as we are there to celebrate the Mass and how Jesus is alive today.

Four years ago my wife Denise developed a brain tumour and passed away a year later. It was a very difficult time for both of us. Had I not had my faith I would have lost it. I could see how God had led us over the previous years strengthening our faith to prepare us for what was to come. Denise was very brave and never once complained or questioned why. Without the support and warmth of the community, however, I would never have got through.

Two years after Denise's passing I took early retirement and had intended to just put my feet up, but then I saw an advert for a

chaplain for the Apostleship of the Sea on a parish noticeboard and a parish priest suggested I have a look as the position was open to lay people as well as priests and deacons. So I prayed about it and thought why not, there's no harm in applying. If the Lord wants me to do this, the doors will open. And they did. I really enjoy the work supporting the seafarers as we get a lot of supply ships coming into Aberdeen and the North East coast. The ships that service the oil industry usually have good conditions but some of the commercial ships don't and the crew have a very hard life and are often away from home for months on end. In theory they have nine months on and three months off, but some can't afford to take that because they need the money.

**It feels as if I am bringing Christ on board**

When I visit ships, I try to care for the spiritual and social welfare of the seafarers I meet. Once the crew realise we are looking after their interests we are accepted as friends. Prior to boarding the ships, I cover myself in prayer and wherever possible I take the opportunity to hand over a seafarer's prayer book.

Many of the seafarers I meet are from the Philippines or Cape Verde and have a strong Catholic faith. In Peterhead one time I visited a ship where there were a number of Filipinos and following our meeting with the captain he asked all his men to meet in the galley. I met with the crew and we read the day's Gospel together and discussed what the reading meant to them. It was wonderful to feel and know that the Holy Spirit was with us. A couple of the seafarers welcomed prayer ministry and I knew that I was in the right place at the right time.

I remember one Filipino seafarer who, having lost his daughter to a heart condition only three years ago, discovered that his house had been severely damaged when Typhoon Haiyan tore through the Philippines last November. I supplied him with some practical tools, including free phone cards to call his family back home, as

he had been away at sea for four months. I also gave him a bible in Tagalog. We prayed together, inviting the Holy Spirit into his life."

**Sometimes you get the feeling that you are not welcome**

Sometimes you get the feeling that you are not welcome as you come up the gangway, as various people – health and safety, customs, the ship's agent - visit a ship when it arrives in port to make sure everything is in order and they are suspicious of why you are there. Sometimes you do get rejected, but it doesn't matter. The key is to be the presence of Christ among them, and I have never been disappointed, even though it can be difficult at the start.

One time when I was visiting a ship from the Ukraine my fellow ship visiting volunteer and I felt very unwelcome. But we persisted, making small talk on the deck. I then asked if the crew required any phone cards for their mobiles. This seemed to get through to them. We realised that the crew had not spoken to their loved ones back home for several weeks. On further investigation we realised that they were down on essentials, like toothpaste, deodorant and soap. So we arranged to come back when they had finished their shift and take them to the local store.

They were delighted and made good use of the boot of my vehicle. What had been very hard work communicating with each other when we first met became much easier, because of God's love and we left a more happy ship behind. Jesus said when you welcome strangers you welcome me. And as the Apostleship of the Sea Port Chaplain I feel at home welcoming strangers to our shores here in north-east Scotland. I know the Holy Spirit has been with me every step of the way."

[www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/)







# “Not by power or might but by My Spirit”

Fr Chris Thomas reflects on our drive to power even in Christian work.

Many years ago I took part in a seminar on team building. As part of the exercise we watched an episode of Dallas in which J.R. was moving in on a take over bid. As we watched it we were asked to note the ways in which J.R. handled the bid and then to compare it with ourselves, with the world and with the Church. It was a real wake up call for those of us who thought we had moved beyond the power needs of the world. We began to recognise that we were as much caught up with the need for power as everybody else. We just expressed that need in different ways.

Psychologists tell us that one of the main drives within the human psyche is for power. As individuals all of us at the seminar seemed to need power and control over others. We realised that the results of that need could be very damaging for the people around us. As nations our need to control other nations leads to catastrophic results. As a Church, burdened by the malaise of clericalism, we seem to be far more into power structures than into the empowering of people. I think it would be fair to say that with the advent of Pope Francis that seems to be beginning to change, thank goodness.

Power and manipulation are never the way of Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, James and John obviously completely misunderstood the Lord. Indeed

we're told in each of the synoptic Gospels that the disciples were intoxicated with power. It doesn't take Jesus long to tell them that the Kingdom is not about power but about simple trusting relationships in which we grow and fulfil our potential. For those who follow Jesus, power over others is never the way. We are to be people who love and serve, being open and inclusive and encouraging people to share their giftedness.

At another point in Luke's Gospel the disciples are arguing about power and who is the greatest. Jesus takes a little child to show them what a Kingdom person is like. In Jewish terms a child was outside the world of production, outside the power systems and in the eyes of society useless. Children were nothing that mattered. Children were simply not adults and all that pulls us into. It's a very

radical concept for them and for us because it means a letting go of the games that we play with one another. It means a letting go of the power that we think we have and that's true of the Church as well and becoming useless in the world's eyes.

What are the Gospels saying to us? I think it's this, that if we want to experience the kingdom we have to become like little children. We have to let go of our blindness which is caused by the pain and hurt that many of us go through. We have to let go of the walls of cynicism and bitterness that we build up to protect ourselves. It's an invitation to turn around and begin to see the world and people through five year old eyes, unclouded, full of joy at the experience of being alive, full of joy in the God who gives life.

It is an invitation to be present. Enter into that most simple level of presence without any need for power, without any need for status, or control. Once you become capable of presence at the simplest level like the presence of a child. Then you will become capable of true presence at every level. You become capable of presence to your Father in heaven and to your brothers and sisters. Learn how to be present. Learn how to give and receive love and then

you will experience the kingdom of God.

We as Church should show an alternative to the world's power system showing that fullness of life doesn't depend on controlling people or situations but on following the Jesus way of loving service. This involves letting go of our own need for power and control. So we need the Spirit, the only power that can transform us within and by which that process of letting go takes place.



**Fr. Chris Thomas heads up the Irenaeus Project. He is a member of the Emmaus Family of Prayer.**

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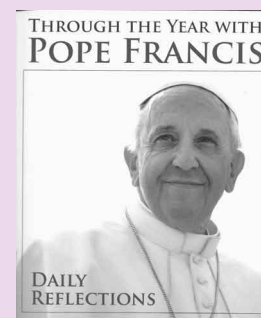


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# Tell us what you are up to!

## 40 years of Blessings



**Helen Smith looks back over the last 40 years of the prayer group that she and her husband Jamus started in Aberdeen in September 1973**

The prayer group started in 1973 after Anne Schnieder, an Australian lady and a teacher in Aberdeen, experienced Baptism in the Holy Spirit at the Gregorian University in Rome. She returned to Aberdeen and told Jamus and myself about it. We were baptised in the Holy Spirit as we heard her speak. At the time we were 38 years of age. Jamus had been a founder member of the Newman Association and I was in the Legion of Mary but this was something new. These last 40 years have been wonderful, with so many blessings, even though the Cross was always present too.

Oil came to Aberdeen in 1974 and it soon became the oil capital of Europe so the prayer group was international from the start with people coming and going from all over the world. It has been wonderful to see people's lives changing, like Jing, who arrived from Australia, a depressed and lost young engineer, who did Life in the Spirit seminars and whose life changed and is now contemplating becoming a priest. We cannot thank God and the intercession of Our Lady enough for all the joys and the healings both inner and physical, for all the conversions and the broken marriages healed and divorces averted.

What memories and what fun we have had over the years – wonderful days of renewal, residential Spirit filled weekends at Blairs College (a former junior seminary outside Aberdeen) with Sr Josephine Walsh DHG, prayer and painting weekends where Fr Laurence Brassill OSA and Fr Mike Gwinnell were two of the pupils!

We found that holding the Life in the Spirit seminars at least twice a year was absolutely essential to keeping a prayer group alive and as a prayer group we also led Life in the Spirit seminars in other places too. This included Inverurie, Nairn, Keith, Banchory and Peterhead, which all resulted in the setting up of prayer groups. The most recent prayer group to be set up was in 2012 when a prayer group was formed to meet during the day at the cathedral called "Our Lady of Aberdeen". I would always say to any young person, after Baptism in the Spirit, "Do not wait for experience, you will gain that along the way. There is so much the Lord wants you to do. Forget about yourself and concentrate on Him and worship Him. " *The harvest is rich but the labourers are few* (Matt 9.37)

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Over the years we have been blessed with the support of some very good priests including Bishop Mario Conti, who became a good friend, and Canon Duncan Stone, who had a big healing and went on to live into his nineties. He told us that as he was unable in old age to visit people, he spent the time praying in church and he said he felt the results were more powerful than all his visits. Fr Mark Dilworth OSB was baptised in the Spirit in Pecos, New Mexico in 1973. He told us that before he was baptized in the Spirit he always worked hard at his sermons, but afterward they came so easily. There were many others too – Fr Andrew McKillop OSB who learnt about the Baptism in the Spirit through reading a book by Rev Cameron Peddies who'd been touched by the spirit in the 1900s; Fr Charlie McGregor who danced in the streets with Jamus at the Dublin international conference in 1978, and Fr John Symon who used to come to the prayer group most weeks and hear confessions after the meeting. And more recently Fr Chris Brannan who helped us run very anointed healing evenings. Today we are so blessed that four out of the seven priests in our city are charismatic, including two in the Cathedral, Fr Keith Herrera and Fr Tomasz Klin.

Last September 2013 as part of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, not only did we have talks by Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB and Mgr Peter Hocken, but Derek Williams spent the last week of September leading the Life in the Spirit seminars for the whole parish. It was a such blessed month. We see all this as a sign of the way that Charismatic Renewal is accepted today in a way it never was before and we thank God for all His blessings and for allowing us to be part of His work. After 40 years, we pray for the new leader of our prayer group Paul Akagawu, that he would receive as much as we have in serving the Lord.



Paul Akagawu with his wife Rosemary and baby Uyo Teresa

## Committee of the Isles on the road

The Committee of the Isles is made up of the chairman and vice chairman of the NSCs for Catholic Charismatic Renewal of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It meets several times a year for prayer and discernment. Steve Lavery from Scotland writes.

"It soon became clear that the "work" of the Committee was not necessarily organising large events or meetings but simply to grow together. Although proud of our different nationalities, history and culture we were led to lay that all aside and be one.

### Promoting Life in the Spirit seminars

Our reflections have led us in recent years to take a good look at the Life in the Spirit seminars again. After sharing our different experiences of these we decided that we should once again encourage the running of these with the wider renewal in the four nations, and go on the road to promote this idea.

This began 18 months ago when we helped run a leaders' and core group day in Scotland, where we shared our vision for the seminars and attempted to "fan into a flame" a desire to run the seminars in a new and dynamic way. The NSC in Scotland has followed this up and recently Ros Powell was there with the leaders and core groups encouraging a new enthusiasm. After this we went to Wales where we spoke to leaders and others and expressed the importance of yielding to the Holy Spirit not just during the seminars but as teams leading up to them and then afterwards to experience real growth.



### Where has the ecumenical dimension gone?

Our last journey took us to Dublin in October 2013. Over 120 leaders, including service teams and members of communities, gathered to listen to the encouraging but challenging talks given by Marie Beirne, the former NSC chairperson of Ireland and Fr. Chris Thomas, the recently elected new Vice chairman of the English NSC. What are the fruits? Where are the fruits? Real hard questions about what we are and where we are at this time were addressed.

There was a great sense of a new thing being started while retaining a sense of where we had come from. During the afternoon session, one sharing, which we believe to be prophetic, struck a chord. In the beginning, the person said, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal had a very strong ecumenical element. Does this still exist today? This challenge has set the agenda for our next few meetings. It will be interesting to see what the Lord reveals to us.

## PARISH EVANGELISATION CELLS UPDATE

Holy Innocents' parish in Orpington is continuing with its process of introducing the PARISH EVANGELISATION CELLS SYSTEM into the parish. Last autumn they ran the leaders training programme for potential leaders as well as a KERGYMA weekend. KERGYMA is a retreat/bible study devised by Barbara Mason to help participants reflect and absorb the reality and power of the basic gospel message in a prayerful way. It includes a renewal of baptismal promises and a reconciliation service. KERGYMA was originally commissioned by the director of the department for Evangelisation in a diocese in the United States, who was frustrated that many of her catechists, although devout, did not seem to have had a personal conversion or have understood the basic gospel message in an experiential way. For details contact Kristina Cooper 0207 352 5298.



Those wishing to know more about the PARISH EVANGELISATION CELLS SYSTEM are invited to attend the International PARISH EVANGELISATION CELLS workshop at St Eustorgio's in Milan which takes place 2nd - 5th June 2014. Fr Victor Vella will be leading a group from Orpington (leaving 1st June) to attend. Those wishing to go with the group should contact him on 01689 817537 or email victorvella @ hotmail.com



## NEW MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

We are delighted to inform you that we now have four new members to the English National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

These are Eddie Drozdziak, who has been with us for a year, Helen Wells, Fr Matt Anscombe and Duncan Mitchell. Below Eddie and Helen tell us a bit more about themselves and in the next issue we will hear from Fr Matt and Duncan. Please pray for them and for the whole English National Service Committee as they seek to serve the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in England.

### Helen Wells



I am originally from Hoddesdon and born into a Catholic family. I came into Charismatic Renewal through my mum, Mary, and a Baptism in the Spirit experience at the age of 18. I moved to Brighton in 1980 to study for a degree in Art & Drama.

Having graduated in 1983, I was offered a short-term job in Brighton. I met Nick at this time and we married in June. Nick was not a Christian when we met and married, but after a conversion experience in Medjugorje, he was received into the Catholic Church in 1989. We have three children: Joseph (see his article on worship, page 24); Will who is in his final year at Bristol University and Bryony who is a first year student at Sheffield University.

During the late 80s and early 90s, we were part of the leadership team for a small charismatic community called the 'Family of God' in Brighton. Through this community and through networking with other similar communities we received much great teaching and discipleship.

All the family have been attending the Celebrate Conference in Ilfracombe every year since 1997 (so not quite from its beginnings!). Nick and I serve on the Prayer Ministry Team at Celebrate and Nick organises and runs Celebrate Radio for the conference. Nick and I are on the organising team for the Brighton Celebrate Weekend. We are also helping on the CCLFC (Catholic Charismatic Leaders Formation Course) currently running at the Sion Community house in Brentwood.

I have run local Alpha Courses and several Life in the Spirit Seminars and serve in my Parish of St. Joseph's on the Pastoral Team, the music group and in running Home Groups.

### Eddie Drozdziak



I was born in Dundee, Scotland, to a Polish Catholic father and a Scottish mother, a convert from Episcopalianism. I went to Catholic primary and secondary schools, and did all the Catholic things – learned the (penny) catechism, was an altar boy,

was a member of the Legion of Mary, attended retreats and missions. And I enjoyed all that. Ann, another cradle Catholic, and I were married in 1971 when we were both 20 and moved to England for work. Firstly we went to Carlisle where we participated in our first "folk masses". Then in 1978 went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne where Ann started going to the Longbenton prayer group led by Fr Sean Conaty. Here she was baptised in the Holy Spirit. Shortly after we moved to Manchester in 1984 and joined the charismatic parish of St John the Baptist, Timperley, where Fr Denis Herlihy was the parish priest.

With three young children, Ann moved heaven and earth to get us to a Life in the Spirit seminar run by Fr Denis in 1985. Here I was introduced to Jesus through Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was a real life-changing experience. Ten prayer groups came out of that first seminar. Ann and I still attend the Living Waters Prayer Group each Monday. These brothers and sisters, past and present, have been the bedrock of my journey with the Lord. As well as the parish and the prayer group, the New Dawn Conference at Walsingham has also had a big influence in my life. We went as a family for over ten years. Ann and I still go every year. Now our children are bringing their children to the conference – a real fruit of living our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. All of these things, centred around Charismatic Renewal, help me to try and live my life based on Gospel values, especially Jesus' command to love God and love neighbour. Thanks be to God I know I can only do this through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## TRAVELLERS RENEWAL

Among the ethnic groups that are bringing new life to the Catholic Church and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) are the Irish Travellers, who despite some bad publicity, have a deep if very traditional faith. In recent years, however, many have left the Catholic Church to join the "Born Again" movement which is spreading among the Travellers. Although this does have a good side, as it can bring people to a personal conversion to Jesus Christ, the down side, is that the Traveller Born Again movement is extremely anti-Catholic and often causes great pain and division within families, for whom the Catholic Faith is a bedrock for their culture as well as their spirituality.

In recent years some Catholic Travellers have had conversion experiences through the CCR and received a lot of inspiration from conferences like New Dawn and events run by Cor et Lumen Christi. This has led them to join local charismatic prayer groups. Travellers have their own culture and style of music, however, and are very Marian in their devotion and spirituality. Thus some years ago, Margaret and Paddy Doran, with the backing of fellow Traveller friends set up Travellers' Renewal, to go out and evangelise the Travellers' Community and share with them the blessings of Charismatic Renewal within their own culture. As well as visiting traveller sites and homes, now every Friday (between 6pm-8pm) Travellers' Renewal runs a prayer group at St Anselm's Church (Southall, West London). The Rosary is central to this, but the decades are interspersed with praise songs and intercessory prayer, and the flickering candles and statues of Mary help create a very atmospheric ambience. Afterwards there is prayer for healing and fellowship and endless cups of tea.

This January (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) with the support of some of their friends in the wider CCR, including several volunteers and staff from the CCR Centre, the healing teams from the Westminster Cathedral prayer group and the Kent Diocesan Service Team, the Travellers' Renewal ran their first mission weekend "Come Back to Me with all Your Heart", led by Fr Pat Collins CM and with the participation of Archbishop Kevin McDonald, the liaison bishop for the CCR in the UK. This was a real stepping out in faith, as they had no idea how many people would come. The event was a wonderful success, however, with about six hundred travellers, coming and going over the weekend. If the atmosphere at times was a little noisy and chaotic, it was made up for in warmth and joy. Confession was a major element with many young people going. The first evening, the two priests on duty heard confessions for four hours solid. It continued like this for the rest of the weekend, with visiting priests dropping in to help.

On the first evening the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal led their Eucharistic devotion – "Touching the Hem of Jesus' Garment", which involves people coming forward to reverence the humeral veil as if it was Jesus' robe and receiving a blessing from a priest holding up the Blessed Sacrament. Even the traveller men who often prefer to remain at the back of the church or the car park, came forward to participate in this. And the weekend as a whole was notable for the number of men who participated, as it is usually mainly traveller women who go to prayer groups.

Parish priest Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ, was delighted with the weekend, particularly because of the openness of the Travellers to his parishioners, 200 of whom attended the Saturday evening Mass concelebrated by Archbishop Kevin. Several parishioners who attended the weekend said it was the best thing they had attended for a long time, and as a result were keen to know more about the weekly Travellers' prayer group. One of the most powerful inputs of the weekend was Fr Pat's talk on forgiveness when he challenged those present if they wanted God to forgive them, that they must forgive others. This resulted in many participants contacting family members or those they had fallen out with and asking for forgiveness. The healing service was also very well attended, with about 500 people there and standing room only.



The sense of community and sharing, which is a particular gift of the travellers was evident in the buffet provided free by the organizers as was the whole weekend. As well as sandwiches and home made scones and hot dogs, this included Irish stew, and traditional bacon and cabbage,

provided by the Missionaries of Charity, who run a soup kitchen in the parish and were very much part of the team, running the children's ministry as well. The music ministry was led by Chris Stribbling and Margaret Doran herself. But there was also a lot of spontaneous input, such as the Patsy Cline classic "One Day at a Time Sweet Jesus", sung by a traveller known for her spectacular voice, who joined the music ministry for the rest of the weekend. A team of travellers policed the car park to ensure that there was no trouble and Patrick, a traveller who is also a parishioner of St Anselm's, stayed late each night to ensure that the church and car park were spotless for the next day.

Margaret comments "Thank God the mission was the greatest thing that could happen for us. I still feel like it was all a dream. Everyone among the travellers is talking about it." Ann Casey, another member of the core team said, "I am on a high and I haven't been able to sleep because I am so excited about how it's gone." As a fruit of the weekend there will now be a monthly Travellers' Mass, followed by food, at St Anselm's Church 2.30-4pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays. Although primarily geared to Travellers, all are welcome.



## MASS FOR THE FRIENDS OF CCR

Come and join us giving thanks to the Lord for the blessings of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and praying for the on-going ministry of our CCR Centre. The annual Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Kevin McDonald on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm at Our Lady of Dolours Church, 264 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL - our CCR Centre. Following the Mass light refreshments will be available **ALL WELCOME**

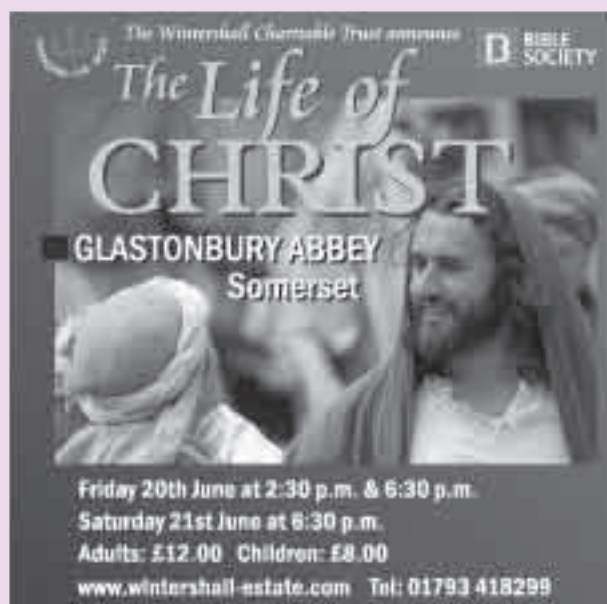


## ERRATUM

In our last issue the Birmingham Conference took out an advertisement telling readers of its relocation from the Parragon Hotel to the beautiful St John's Hotel, in Solihull for this summer's conference (11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> August). Unfortunately the contact telephone number given was wrong and it should have been 0121 603 3842. Please ring or log on to their web site for more details [www.Bccrc.org.uk](http://www.Bccrc.org.uk)

## SPIRIT in the CITY

Let's help bring our Pentecost fervour onto the streets by joining the annual Spirit in the City Festival in Central London. The three day festival culminates with a day long open air event (usually in Leicester Square) 1pm to 8pm. Information stalls including those of Goodnews and other Catholic movements and communities, live bands, a prayer tent, reconciliation, healing ministry - a great day out. **For further info contact 0207 440 2663 or email: info @ spiritinthecity.org**



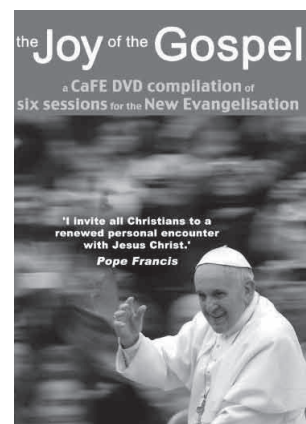
## RETREAT WEEKEND IN TUSCANY WITH FR PAT COLLINS

Prepare for Holy week with a retreat weekend (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> April) led by Fr Pat Collins CM at the beautiful Villa Bellaria, in Campagnatico (GR), Tuscany and arranged by former Goodnews volunteer Anna Querci. Theme "The Father Heart of God: Healing the Father Wound". Talks in English with translation into Italian. Price is E 170 (incl. accommodation, breakfast, lunches and dinners from Friday evening, till Sunday lunch time). Participants have to arrange their own travel. (Nearest airport Rome or Pisa) and then train & taxi or hire car from the airport. Conference accomodation E: [villabellaria @ libero.it](mailto:villabellaria@libero.it) ; For Conference details



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Last month's cover of Goodnews which many people have admired was a beautiful banner that Christian artist, Yvonne Bell, made for the Many Streams One River Day celebrating the contribution of the

Ecclesial Communities and Lay Movements to the Church. Yvonne has made many beautiful banners and vestments for many events and specializes in painting on silk. **For examples of her work go to [www.christian-art.vpweb.co.uk](http://www.christian-art.vpweb.co.uk) or email [yvonnehell @ yvonnebell.co.uk](mailto:yvonnehell@yvonnebell.co.uk) Tel 01908 623474.**

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## **THIS PROMISE IS FOR YOU – RE-RELEASED**

In response to the widely used 2004 DVD resource for Life in the Spirit seminars we are pleased to announce the re-release of a slightly abridged version of **This Promise is for You** at the special price of £29.95, plus P&P.

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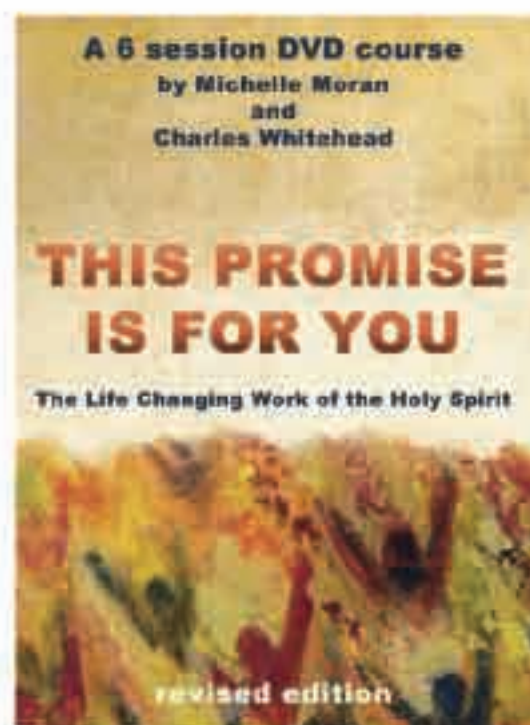
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