Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal

What has the Magisterium said about it?

By David A. Peterman Ph.D.

Provides summary and easy access to authoritative sources in English of the official position of the Catholic Church regarding the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal and its Covenant Communities by tracing the historic development of this position over the past century through the official statements of the Popes and authorized bishops as the Renewal was birthed and has matured, especially in the past 20 years.
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INTRODUCTION

This hyperlinked text is my attempt to provide an authoritative source in English of the official position of the Catholic Church regarding the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal and its covenant communities. It will do so by tracing the historic development of this position over the past century as the Renewal was birthed and has matured, especially in the past 20 years.

The approach is to present what the Catholic Magisterium has said, principally the popes and those bishops specifically authorized by them to relate to the Charismatic Renewal and its covenant communities. The text lists the events by date and provides easy hyperlink access to the available ecclesial publications, documents, speeches, addresses and talks given by our recent popes and the relevant bishops who have addressed this question.¹

Many of these ecclesial statements were published in 2000 by the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) with the title: “Then Peter stood up…” (Cf. Acts 2:14). Compiled by ICCRS Director Oreste Pesare, it provided a printed collection of the papal addresses to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal from its origin in 1967 up to the beginning of 2000.² This text both expands and extends these events to include the “New Communities” realities as referred to by the recent documents.

To facilitate the reader’s direct access to these documents on the Internet, electronic versions of this text provide both an updated hypertext summary of each document and embedded hyperlinks to access the documents on-line. It was created by the author in cooperation with ICCRS and the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Most of these listed Papal documents are now available on the Vatican website (or from other online sources). Documents we have obtained that are not available elsewhere in English are posted on the Christian Community of God’s Delight (CCGD) website to allow easy access.³

To trace the development of these ecclesial statements, this text provides a simple listing of the documents by year/month/day with author and title followed by brief quotations to highlight their contents. Brief explanatory comments also are provided to help the reader follow their development. It is hoped that this will encourage direct access to the full content of each document by using the hyperlinks to the websites or by footnotes identifying alternate sources.

The following pages trace the Church’s position from: 1) historical official documents related to the pope’s call for a Pentecostal renewal of the Church, 2) to early encouragement of “movements” in the Church, 3) then specific mention of Charismatic Renewal as a movement, 4) recognition of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships (CFCCCF) and ICCRS as recognized “instruments” for ecclesial renewal and 5) finally extensive encouragements of the “Movements and New Communities” that have emerged from the early Pentecostal renewal.

¹ This text is intended to become “a ‘cloud’ of witnesses” as additional information and links are added.
² ICCRS is planning an updated version of “Then Peter stood up…” sometime later in 2010.
³ Please make us aware of any corrections or other appropriate ecclesial documents that should be added. If a hyperlink to the GodsDelight.org website does not work, the location or name may have changed. You can try to find them by searching for GodsDelight.org.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

PART I – the 20th Century of Holy Spirit – Prior to Duquesne Weekend

A New Pentecost brings Charismatic Renewal

To provide an appropriate context for the historical statements of the Roman Catholic Church, we need to look back to the beginning of the past century. A worldwide “New Pentecost” or “Charismatic Renewal” of the Church (manifested by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit) developed throughout the 20th Century. It can be traced back to just before the beginning of the 20th Century when a prophetic Papal petition near the close of the 19th Century is answered by God (in His own way) at the very beginning of the 20th Century. These two events are summarized in the following two documents.

1897/09/05 – Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus* – on the Holy Spirit

In this encyclical (official letter to the Church), Pope Leo XIII called for a new openness of the whole Church to faith in the “indwelling and miraculous power of the Holy Ghost” (Holy Spirit in today’s expression). He prayed:

“We earnestly desire that, as a result (of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit), faith may be aroused in your minds concerning the mystery of the adorable Trinity, and especially that piety may increase and be inflamed towards the Holy Ghost…all preachers and those having care of souls should remember that it is their duty to instruct their people more diligently and more fully about the Holy Ghost…”

Also, in #13 of *Divinum Illud Munus*, Pope Leo XIII called for the regular practice of a Novena to the Holy Spirit during the nine days between the feast of the Ascension and the feast of Pentecost. This is the same nine days the disciples and Mary prayed in the upper room awaiting the first Pentecost. This became a popular devotion in the Church to this day.

1901/01/01 – Pope Leo XIII prayed to the Holy Spirit and sang the Veni Creator Spiritus by the Holy Spirit window in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome

This openness let to the Pope’s call to all the Church’s bishops to welcome the new 20th Century by offering a special prayer to the Holy Spirit. On January 1, 1901, the first day of the 20th century, the Pope himself did this by singing the traditional prayer Veni Creator Spiritus by the Holy Spirit window in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. A few hours later that same day, in Topeka, Kansas, at the Bethel College and Bible School, the Holy Spirit was outpoured afresh to a group of Protestants who had been led to pray to receive the Holy Spirit as the early Church did in Acts chapter two. Soon afterwards a major Pentecostal revival broke out in 1906 on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California.

During the ensuing century, a broad revival occurred within Protestant holiness circles\(^4\) that led to several new Pentecostal churches and what is described as the establishment of Pentecostalism as a third stream of Christianity running parallel with that of Catholicism and Protestantism. Then in 1960 powerful Pentecostal outbreaks began again within mainstream Protestantism. However, they were not generally accepted by the mainline churches, but were usually experienced in home-based prayer meetings or independent congregations.

Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

Meanwhile a theological, philosophical and biblical renewal was simultaneously taking place within the Catholic stream leading to the **Second Vatican Council** (Vatican II). The Roman Catholic expression of this movement broke out soon afterwards in 1967 at Duquesne University. Significantly Vatican II had opened the door (or window) for Catholics to an acceptance of charisms as legitimate and to be welcomed. These three Pentecostal streams or movements resulted in a worldwide Charismatic Renewal of unprecedented proportions.

In retrospective hindsight we can see Leo XIII's encyclical and prayers as a suitable starting point for our Catholic Charismatic Renewal journey, since the Church’s prayers were answered progressively throughout the century – starting with the broad outbreak of Pentecostal manifestations and appreciation of the Charismatic actions of the Holy Spirit in the non-Catholic Christian world at the beginning of the 20th century and culminated with the spectacular Catholic Jubilee Year events on Pentecost of 1998 in Rome.

The details of the early development up to the Charismatic outbreak in the Catholic Church in 1967 are beyond the scope of this summary, but they can be glimpsed in the following official Church documents and statements that had prepared the way for Vatican II Council and its subsequent impact.

**1920/09/15 – Pope Benedict XV's Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* – on Holy Spirit’s inspiration of Scripture**

“One stream flows out from the throne of God, and that is the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and that grace of the Holy Spirit is in the Holy Scriptures, that is, in the stream of the Scriptures.”

This was the first extensive reference to the Holy Spirit within the context of St. Jerome’s approach to Scripture, opening the door for Catholic scripture scholars and theologians to explore the importance of approaching the original biblical texts in an authentic way and thus inspiring a “new theology” based on the role of Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation and in the faith life of the Church.

**1943/06/29 – Pope Pius XII’s Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* – on the Mystical Body of Christ**

“Thus, urged by the Holy Spirit, men are moved, and as it were, impelled to seek the kingdom of God with greater diligence…For just as He Himself when He began to preach was made known by His Eternal Father through the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on Him in the form of a dove, so likewise, as the Apostles were about to enter upon their ministry of preaching, Christ our Lord sent the Holy Spirit down from Heaven, to touch them with tongues of fire and to point out, as by the finger of God, the supernatural mission and office of the Church…There can, then, be no real opposition or conflict between the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the juridical commission of Ruler and Teacher received from Christ…No one, of course, can deny that the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ is the one source of whatever supernatural powers enters into the Church and its members.”

This encyclical contained Pope Pius XII’s profound ecclesiological treatise on the Church as the efficacious Body of Christ and instrument of the Holy Spirit. It contained 23 references to the activity of the Holy Spirit as the Soul of the Body of Christ. This important document illumined and affirmed the many Catholic theologians and bishops who were preparing the Church “behind the scenes” for Vatican II and the fullness of a New Pentecost.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

1943/09/30 – Pope Pius XII’s Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* – on promoting Biblical Studies

“What is more sublime than to scrutinize, explain, propose to the faithful and defend from unbelievers the very word of God, communicated to men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?”

This document took the understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role even further and corrected some limitations and encouraged Catholic scripture scholars and theologians to a renewed study of scripture following the Patristic sources (early Church Fathers). This in turn led to a growing understanding of biblical interpretation including both use of latest exegetical tools and a renewed appreciation for the allegorical or spiritual meaning of scripture, thus laying a solid foundation for Vatican II and its most profound teaching documents (see below). It also led to a change from discouragement to encouragement of lay men and women reading the bible.

1961/12/25 – Pope John XXIII’s Bull *Humanae Salutis* (convoking Vatican Council II)

“Renew Thy wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost. Grant to Thy Holy Church that, being of one mind and steadfast in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and following the lead of blessed Peter, it may advance the reign of our Divine Savior, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Amen.” (Cf. Abbot translation)

Another prayer and petition by John XXIII is a suitable follow-up to that of Leo XI’s and was answered by the phenomenal outpouring that was the Second Vatican Council and its Documents. Following the Council’s acceptance of extraordinary charisms, study of the Documents of Vatican II quickly led to a realization by Catholic students and professors that what was being observed and experienced at Protestant prayer meetings were authentic actions of the Holy Spirit. For the Church of the 1960’s this was a very startling ecumenical breakthrough.

Although a great many quotes from the Council documents could be cited, this broader task is left to the serious student (see charisms link above); many show up repeatedly within the documents listed below. However, one particular quote will suffice to indicate the freeing impact that the documents had on Catholics who had been observing Protestant Pentecostal prayer meetings. The Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* states the Church’s openness to such charisms very clearly in No. 12:

“These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.”

These observations and their confirmation quickly led to an openness to praying for the Holy Spirit to manifest his graces in and through the lives of ordinary Catholic lay men and women. This soon impacted a group of Duquesne University students and faculty gathered in 1967 for a weekend retreat. Their prayers were answered with a remarkable outbreak of charismatic manifestations that was the beginning of the Pentecostal or Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church.

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5 Not available in English (but is available in other languages at www.vatican.va). Also quoted in many publications such as Walter M. Abbot’s *The Documents of Vatican II*, America Press, 1966; and Catholic Pentecostals by Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, Paulist Press, 1969 (both out of print but some used copies may be available from sources like Amazon.com).
This new Pentecostal outbreak among Catholics spread rapidly over the next few years to surrounding university campuses and then throughout the world. The rapidity and breath of this movement was unprecedented in the Church’s history. The international dimension soon led to a historic meeting of Renewal leaders in Rome that included an informal meeting with Pope Paul VI in 1973.

1973/10/10 – Pope Paul VI’s Address to 1st International Catholic Charismatic Leaders Conference at Grottaferrata (near Castel Gandolfo outside Rome)⁶

“We rejoice with you, dear friends, at the renewal of spiritual life that is being manifested in the Church today, under different forms and in various situations. Certain common notes appear in this renewal: the taste for deep prayer, personal and in groups; a return to contemplation; an emphasis on the praise of God; the desire to surrender oneself completely to Christ; a great availability (openness) to the calls of the Spirit; more assiduous reading of scripture; generous concern for one’s brothers; willingness to give active support to the works of the Church. In all this, we can recognize the mysterious, gentle work of the Spirit, who is the soul of the Church.”

In this simple statement we have the first official discernment that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement is the “work of the Holy Spirit.” It is significant that this came so soon after the beginning of the Renewal in the United States in 1967. This recognition also led to serious dialogue and support for the movement at the highest levels of the Magisterium.

1974/05/21-26 – Dialogue of Leon Cardinal Suenens (with Joseph Ratzinger and others) summarized as: “Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal” – Malines, Belgium

“In sacramental terms, the charismatic renewal is based on a renewal of that which makes one belong to the Church, that is, a renewal of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). The Spirit given in initiation is more fully appropriated at the personal and social level so that there is a continual metanoia throughout the life of the Christian...In this statement, charism is understood to be a gift or aptitude which is liberated and empowered by the Spirit of God and is taken into the ministry of building up the body of Christ which is the Church.”

This document provided an extremely important theological and pastoral foundation that supported the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement at an early date. It produced much fruit in the lives of its participants and an increased understanding and affirmation of Baptism in the Holy Spirit by the laity and clergy throughout the Church. Although not yet impacting many local bishops, it was nonetheless the beginning of a growing consensus by the Church’s teaching office concerning the fullness of truth that the movement represented.⁷ ⁸

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⁷ Note early involvement of Joseph Ratzinger who became Pope Benedict XVI.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

1975/05/19 – **Pope Paul VI’s Address to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal** on the occasion of the 3rd International Leaders Conference, Rome

“Une chance pour l'Eglise et pour le monde” (“A chance for the Church and for the world”)...“Rien n’est plus nécessaire à un tel monde, de plus en plus sécularisé, que le témoignage de ce ‘renouveau spirituel’, que Nous voyons le Saint-Esprit susciter aujourd’hui dans les régions et les milieux les plus divers.” (“Nothing is more necessary in such a world, more and more secularized, than the evidence of this ‘spiritual revival’ that we see the Holy Spirit inspire today in the most diverse regions and communities.”)

"Dear sons and daughters, you are striving in union with the whole Church renewal, spiritual renewal, authentic renewal, Catholic renewal, renewal in the Holy Spirit. We are pleased to see signs of this renewal - a taste for prayer, contemplation, praising God, attentiveness to the grace of the Holy Spirit. We know likewise that you wish to open your hearts to reconciliation with God. This is likewise a challenge of opening your hearts in your present need. There are no limits to the challenge. Yes, dear sons and daughters, this is a day of joy, but also a day of resolve and determination to open yourself to the Holy Spirit, and to proclaim your Christian authenticity of your daily lives that Jesus is Lord!”

“The Church and the world need more than ever that ‘the miracle of Pentecost should continue in history’... How could this ‘spiritual renewal’ not be ‘good fortune’ for the Church and the world?”

Pope Paul’s expression “a chance for the Church” became a familiar theme for subsequent popes. Note also his mention of “the miracle of Pentecost” implying recognition of the occurring signs and wonders as the visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s worldwide work of “spiritual renewal” of the “Church and the world.”

1976/05/26 – **Address of Paul VI to members of Pentecostal Churches and Pentecostal movements**

“We believe this (common participation in outpouring of Holy Spirit’s charisms) is a reality which establishes itself among the faithful as a visible communion…”

Here we have a significant recognition that the common experiences of Pentecostal renewal is a ‘reality’ that encompasses all three streams of the Holy Spirit’s work and expresses their communion (common union) with the Father through Christ the Son in the Holy Spirit.

1979/12/11 – **Private audience of Pope John Paul II with the ICCRO Council**, Vatican

“It is a revolution of the living expression of faith...I am convinced that this movement is a very important component in the total renewal of the church.”

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9 Pope Paul VI spoke on multiple occasions during this event and in several languages. The first two quotes are from French text on vatican.va link (followed by shorter Spanish and English texts). Complete English translations were obtained primarily from the book *Pope Paul and the Spirit*, by Fr. Edward O’Conner, 1978 Ave Maria Press, pages 227-235. They were also reprinted in the *L'Osservatore Romano* (May 19-20 (Ital.) & 29 (Engl.), 1975). They are documented on the CCGD website.

10 This quote was transcribed from CCGD’s video library and is included in ICCRS’ video A NEW PENTECOST – The Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

11 As quoted by [NSC Website](http://www.catholic-charismatic-ref.com). Quote is from earlier address published in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 17 Oct. 1974.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

This statement acknowledges the charismatic renewal movement as within the overall work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the whole church. (ICCRO was the predecessor of ICCRS.)

1981/05/07 Address of Pope John Paul II at the 4th International Leaders' Conference, Rome

“Your choice of Rome as the site of this Conference is a special sign of your understanding of the importance of being rooted in that Catholic unity of faith and charity which finds its visible centre in the See of Peter. Your reputation goes before you…The Church has seen the fruits of your devotion to prayer in a deepened commitment to holiness of life and love for the word of God. We have noted with particular joy the way in which leaders of the renewal have more and more developed a broadened ecclesial vision…”

As the decade of the 1980s unfolds, the renewal is seeing itself and is being seen by the Magisterium as an increasingly Catholic ‘ecclesial’ identity within the overall Charismatic Renewal heretofore experienced more as a broad non-denominationalism. The resulting tension is expressed increasingly through authentic Catholic ecumenical relationships.

1984/04/30 – Address of Pope John Paul II at the 5th International Leaders' Conference, Rome

“Cry aloud to the world with me: Open the doors to the Redeemer.”

In this simple statement John Paul II urged Catholic leaders of the Charismatic Renewal to continue to announce Christ to the nations.

1984/08/13 – A Pastoral Statement on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal by U.S. Bishop’s Liaison Committee with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

“…it witnesses to elements of the Good News which are central, not optional: the covenant love of the Father, the Lordship of Jesus, the power of the Spirit, sacramental and community life, prayer, charisms and the necessity of evangelization…Insofar as the renewal makes its own what is central to the enduring reality of the Gospel, it cannot be dismissed as peripheral to the life of the Church.”

As the cradle of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the United States bishops officially acknowledged its authenticity and centrality to the Christian life. This position was supported by the many studies and publications by many Catholic authors over prior two decades.

1986/11/15 – Address of Pope John Paul II to the participants in the National Congress of the Italian "Renewal in the Spirit" (Full text available only in Italian)

“Un rinnovamento che la Chiesa vi incoraggia a perseguire” – “A renewal that the Church encourages you to follow…”

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12 Video available from CCGD through Catholic Media International site or from ICCRS as excerpt in their video titled “A New Pentecost”.
13 Partial Text at: http://www.iccrs.org/about_ccr/Popes/johnpaul_ii.htm (not found on Vatican website)
14 Published in English only by United States Catholic Conference, Inc. (I have a copy but could not find it on UCCB’s web site. It is probably out of print.)
15 A fairly significant teaching but not available in English. Please provide a translation or source if available.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

1987/03/02 – **John Paul II message to Ecclesial Movements gathered on the occasion of the Second International Colloquium, Rome**

“The great flowering of these Movements and their characteristic manifestations of energy and ecclesial vitality are certainly to be considered one of the finest fruits of the vast and deep spiritual renewal promoted by the last Council.”

1987/05/15 – **Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Participants of the 6th International Assembly of the Charismatic Renewal**

“I wish to assure you that your love for Christ and your openness to the Spirit of Truth are a most valuable witness in the Church’s mission in the world…The vigor and fruitfulness of the Renewal certainly attests to the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church in these years after the Second Vatican Council. Of course, the Spirit has guided the Church in every age, producing a great variety of gifts among the faithful. Because of the Spirit, the Church preserves a continual youthful vitality. And the Charismatic Renewal is an eloquent manifestation of this vitality today, a bold statement of what ‘the Spirit is saying to the churches’ (Rev. 2:7) as we approach the close of the Second Millennium…your love for Christ and your openness to the Spirit of Truth are a most valuable witness in the Church’s mission in the world.”

The Pope’s words speak for themselves of his increasing boldness and clarity in proclaiming the authenticity and witness of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a work of the Holy Spirit.

PART II

- **20th Century of Holy Spirit – Recognition of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships**

A major change took place during the last half of the decade of the 1980’s. Besides the increasing recognition of the worldwide renewal of individual Catholics, there was a clear recognition and acceptance of Catholic Charismatic covenant communities that had formed within and served the Renewal from its earliest days. At the request and assistance of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, an association of these communities was officially recognized as "a private association of the Christian faithful" of pontifical right with juridic personality by having their statutes approved ad experimentum in late 1990 (see official Decree below). Full approval was subsequently granted in 1995. Thus the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships was officially recognized as an instrument of the Church to “increase the spiritual fruit of the charismatic movement”.

1990/11/30 – **Pontifical Council for the Laity’s official DECREE recognizing the Catholic Fraternity**

“…the Pontifical Council for the Laity, considering the need to consolidate and promote the Catholic expression of the charismatic movement, decrees the recognition of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships as a private association of the Christian faithful, of pontifical right and endowed with juridic personality, in accordance with the norms of canons 298-300, 304-311 and 321-329… This same Pontifical Council encourages all members of the communities belonging to the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships to

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16 Full text on Vatican site only available in Italian at this time. (A fairly significant document – need an English translation and link when available.)
commit themselves to giving renewed vigor to the Catholic expression of the renewal in the Spirit.”

This recognition was a deep desire and project of John Paul II. It was directly expressed by his inviting the Fraternity’s founding leaders to a private mass and audience in this residence (see photos on CFCCCF website). It was also expressed officially in his encyclical on the mission of Christ the Redeemer (see following document), issued just a week later. Comparing the words of this recognition decree with the almost simultaneous encyclical, we see a clear connection and recognition of the Charismatic Renewal (CR) movement and its covenant communities as a fulfillment of a desired expansion of this common ‘mission' by the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The CFCCCF’s founding communities were recognized by the Council for the Laity in a related document. Final official recognition at the end of the five year mandatory ad experimentum period was received in 1995.

1990/12/07 – John Paul II’s Encyclical **REDEMPTORIS MISSIO** – On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate - #72

“Within the Church, there are various types of services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting the Christian life. I call to mind, as a new development occurring in many churches in recent times, the rapid growth of "ecclesial movements" filled with missionary dynamism. When these movements humbly seek to become part of the life of local churches and are welcomed by bishops and priests within diocesan and parish structures, they represent a true gift of God both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called. I therefore recommend that they be spread, and that they be used to give fresh energy, especially among young people, to the Christian life and to evangelization, within a pluralistic view of the ways in which Christians can associate and express themselves.”

The Pope is clearly referring here to the movements, like the Charismatic Renewal and its communities, as providing "services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting the Christian life". But there is also a clear condition attached that authenticates and actualizes such a movement. It must humbly seek “to become part of the life of local churches” and “are (then) welcomed by bishops and priests”. These requirements create a sort of tension between the movements, especially the charismatic covenant communities, and the ordinary parish life of the local church. This requires the local communities to work closely with their bishops and priests to find ‘inspiration’ on ways that the communities can maintain their own ‘charism’ while fulfilling their identity and role within the local church.

1991/12/07 – **Address of Pope John Paul II to the Leaders of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships at its 2nd International Conference in Rome**

“I greet you and encourage you in your endeavors to set up a Church-wide structure for the Charismatic Renewal, which has grown extensively in the Catholic Church in recent years and which maintains close contacts with similar movements in other Christian communities… The Holy Spirit is at work in groups such as yours, drawing you to prayer and filling you with joy in adoring and praising the Lord…Continue to communicate this zeal for the Gospel…I pray that you will receive support and guidance from the communities to which you belong.”
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

Following their inaugural meeting in 1990, the Fraternity leaders came to Rome again in 1991 and were blessed with a second audience with John Paul II. Here he spoke very directly about the expectations that he had for their role in support of the Charismatic Renewal. He again reminded them of the imperative to spread the Gospel with the support and guidance from their communities.

1992/03/14 – Audience of Pope John Paul II with the ICCRO Council, Rome

“The emergence of the Renewal following the Second Vatican Council was a particular gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. It was a sign of a desire on the part of many Catholics to live more fully their Baptismal dignity and vocation as adopted sons and daughters of the Father, to know the redeeming power of Christ our Savior in a more intense experience of individual and group prayer, and to follow the teaching of the Scriptures by reading them in the light of the same Spirit who inspired their writing…At this moment in the Church’s history, the Charismatic Renewal can play a significant role in promoting the much-needed defense of Christian life in societies where secularism and materialism have weakened many people’s ability to respond to the Spirit and to discern God’s loving call. Your contribution to the re-evangelization of society will be made in the first place by personal witness to the indwelling Spirit and by showing forth his presence through works of holiness and solidarity.”

The following year, meeting with the ICCR Office Council, the Pope again spoke of the direct link between Vatican II and the “gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church” that was evident in the experience of individuals and prayer groups involved in the Charismatic Renewal. He also encouraged continuation of their grounding in Scripture according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, quoting indirectly from Vatican II’s document Dei Verbum.

1992/05/14 – Address of John Paul II to Council for the Laity and representatives attending the “Movements of the Church” symposium for leaders of lay associations and movements at Rocca di Papa near Castel Gandolpho near Rome.

“You bear witness to the wealth of gifts that the Holy spirit pours out among the faithful, the “charisms” which are the source of every true experience of association. For you it is a matter of serving unity in the faith through the many ways of expressing the faith and living it….Your activities elicits from the baptized many forms of responsible participation in the building up of the Church…"

1992/06/07 – The Call to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Church Universal – Address of Bishop (now Cardinal) Paul Josef Cordes to the 25th (Silver) Anniversary Conference in Pittsburgh, PA

“The fruits of the renewal have been mani fest and manifold – on the personal level, in prayer groups and surely in Covenant Communities too: a greater fervor and enthusiasm in the whole Christian life; worship, prayer, a greater appreciation in the family for life that comes from Christ, attentively reading the Sacred Scriptures, gathering together with others for support and service, an renewed respect for the ordained ministries of the Church…So, I would like to state today firmly that the overwhelming results of the renewal have been a great grace for the Church.”

17 Published by L’Osservatore Romano N.21 21-27 May 1992, p. 4 (Weekly English Edition). (did not find on vatican.va site)
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

1993/09/18 – Address of Pope John Paul II to Catholic Charismatic Renewal Leaders after ICCRS' Assisi retreat, Castel Gandolfo

“Today it is a fact of the Church’s life that many vocations arise and blossom in the heart of the various Movements and Associations. I wish to encourage you to give close attention within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to this particular mode of God’s love for his People…The Church today has great need of your prayer and commitment.”

The Pope went on to speak of the ‘seed’ of faith that the associations and movements were called to nurture in an increasingly secular world by authentic witness and proclamation of the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

1994/03/09 – Pope John Paul II's General Audience on Charisms

“We cannot but admire the great wealth of gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit on lay people as members of the Church in our age as well. Each of them has the necessary ability to carry out the tasks to which he is called for the welfare of the Christian people, and the work's salvation, if he is open, docile, and faithful to the Holy Spirit’s action.”

This message was at a General Audience rather than to a special group or meeting. This illustrates the universality of the Pope’s statements that charisms are meant to be a normal part of the Christian life. This also confirms the work of scholars like Kilian McDonnell and George Montague whose extensive studies demonstrated this same point.

1994/11/14 – Message of Pope John Paul II to participants during the 3rd International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships in Rome

“The recognition in 1990 of your Fraternity as a Private Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Right was a sign that charismatic covenant communities have acted as a force for the renewal of the Church in fidelity to the word of God, in holiness of life and commitment to the task of evangelization. The ecclesial communion which your Fraternity strives to promote with the Bishops and the See of Peter, as well as between individual communities, is in fact a mark of your true Catholic identity.”

John Paul II goes on to quote from his recent encyclicals, first Christifideles Laici (n. 32) concerning the relationship between the Church’s mission and the communion of the Fraternity communities with the Church and each other. And then, from Veritatis Splendor (n. 107), the connection between evangelization and authentic faith, which is verified and empowered by its being lived out in the Splendor of Truth.

1996/11/09 – Message of Pope John Paul II to participants at the Seventh International meeting of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships in Rome

“How can we fail to praise God for the abundant fruit which in recent decades the Renewal has brought about in the lives of individuals and in communities? Countless

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18 Available on vatican.va site only in Italian and Spanish.
people have appreciate the importance of Sacred Scripture for Christian living; they have acquired a new sense of the value of prayer and a profound yearning for holiness; many have returned to the sacraments; and a great number of men and women have achieved a deeper understanding of their baptismal call, and have committed themselves to the Church's mission with admirable dedication."

This message indicates a clear affirmation of the authenticity of Catholic Charismatic covenant communities based on the fruit of the Spirit evident in the lives of their participants. A theme running through all the Pope’s messages is an appreciation for the missionary or evangelical dimension and service of those who embrace the fullness of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1998/04/04 – **Audience of Pope John Paul II with the National Service Committee of the Italian “Renewal in the Spirit”, Rome**

“The Catholic charismatic movement is one of the many fruits of the Second Vatican Council, which, like a new Pentecost, led to an extraordinary flourishing in the Church’s life of groups and movements particularly sensitive to the action of the Spirit... How can we not give thanks for the precious spirituals fruits that the Renewal has produced in the life of the Church and in the lives of so many people?”

Here again the Pope affirms the “precious spiritual fruits” they see in the lives of those involved in the charismatic movement and the renewal itself being a “fruit” of Vatican II. We see no longer just “a chance” for the Church, but now clearly visible “fruit.” This connection between Vatican II and the Charismatic Renewal is very important and depends therefore on those involved in the Renewal maintaining a constant awareness of the teachings of Vatican II.

PART IV – 20th Century of Holy Spirit – Climax of Century with extraordinary affirmation and appeal for Charismatic Renewal to fulfill its Mission to Renew the Church

The century of the Holy Spirit initiated by Leo XIII’s prayer came to a close at least for the Roman Catholic Church with an unprecedented series of events resulting from John Paul II’s call for all the movements to come together with him in Rome to celebrate the Year of the Holy Spirit in 1998, anticipating the Jubilee Year celebration to end the 20th Century. These events also marked a clear transition from a general encouragement of the renewal to its full embracement as a vital source of grace for the Church. We can note a marked change and expansion of support from this point going forward within the Holy See and among bishops worldwide, as a new phase that might be considered as a ‘mandate’ for the movements, including the Charismatic Renewal and its New Communities, to assume a more normative role in the ongoing life of the Body of Christ.

The first of these events was a World Congress of Ecclesial Movements called by the Council for the Laity and encouraged by the following “signed” message from the Holy Father.

1998/05/27 – **Signed Message of Pope John Paul II to the (1st) World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements**

“From the beginning of my Pontificate I have given special importance to the progress of the ecclesial movements, and I have had the opportunity to appreciate the results of their widespread and growing presence during my pastoral visits to parishes and my apostolic journeys... They represent one of the most significant fruits of that springtime
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

in the Church which was foretold by the Second Vatican Council...these movements are marked by a common awareness of the 'newness' which baptismal grace brings to life...Your very existence is a hymn to the unity in diversity desired by the Spirit and gives witness to it...there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension, of which the Movements are a significant expression...Together they aim to renew, each in its own way, the self-awareness of the Church, which in a certain sense may be called a movement.”

We should note in the official messages a new term “ecclesial” as a modifier of both “movement” and “community.” This term was clear in the above message and is a central theme of the following address that opened the World Congress. Also note the reference to a “newness” of our baptismal grace that implies that this grace is to be continually renewing us by our cooperation with the Holy Spirit that we were given in our initiation sacraments.

1998/05/27 – Address of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI) to the 1st World Congress of the Ecclesia Movements titled “The Ecclesial Movements: A Theological Reflection on Their Place in the Church”20

“(St.) Basil, like today’s movements, was obliged to admit that the movement to follow Christ in an uncompromising fashion cannot be totally merged with the local Church...The monastic community that Basil founded is likened by Gribomont (Cf. H. U. von Balthasar) to a kind of leaven: a ‘small group’ for the vitalization of the whole...the history of the Church is also traversed by the successive waves of movements that renew the universalistic aspects of her apostolic mission...Ministries and missions that are not tied to the local Church alone, but serve universal mission and the spreading of the Gospel, must always exist in the Church...apostolic movements appear in ever new forms in history – necessarily so, because they are the Holy Spirit’s answer to the ever changing situations in which the Church lives...the Holy Spirit is quite plainly at work in the Church and is lavishing new gifts on her in our time.”

This quote from Cardinal Ratzinger’s opening address gives only a glimpse of the fullness of the content of his message. A profound theologian, head of the Church’s doctrinal office and future Pope, he had been involved with the theology of the movements since his early work with Cardinal Suenens (summarized in the Malines document cited above). Now he gives a clear summary of his insights into the theological validity and essential role of the charismatic dimension of the Church’s life as just another example of a fundamental principle of the Church’s dynamic life. Movements provide evidence that a body is not lifeless.

1998/05/30 – Message of Pope John Paul II at the meeting with over 500,000 participants from the ecclesial movements and new communities in St. Peter’s Square, Rome

“The institutional and charismatic aspects are co-essential as it were to the Church’s constitution. They contribute, although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God’s People. It is from this providential rediscovery of the Church's charismatic dimension that, before and after the Council, a remarkable pattern of growth has been established for ecclesial movements and new communities...In our world, often

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Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

dominated by a secularized culture which encourages and promotes models of life without God, the faith of many is sorely tested, and is frequently stifled and dies. Thus we see an urgent need for powerful proclamation and solid, in-depth Christian formation. There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium. You are this providential response...You have learned in the movements and new communities that faith is not abstract talk, nor vague religious sentiment, but new life in Christ instilled by the Holy Spirit...Today a new stage is unfolding before you: that of ecclesial maturity. This does not mean that all problems have been solved. Rather, it is a challenge. A road to take. The Church expects from you the 'mature' fruits of communion and commitment."

Following the Congress of the leaders of the movements, close to a half million members from the various movements came together with the Pope in St. Peter’s square (and down all connecting streets as far as could be seen). This address by the Holy Father was a profound message of acceptance and empowerment of the movements to move forward boldly to renew the Church in the third millennium. He spoke very clearly about the complementarity of the institutional and charismatic aspects of the Church and the significance of the rediscovered charismatic aspect for the Church's renewal. For the first time the oft-lauded 'movements' are seen as directly linked and parallel to the 'new communities' that have emerged from them in our day. He points out the necessity of strong mature Christian “personalities” and says that the movements and new communities are a providential response of God to the urgent need for new evangelization. Then he proclaims them at a new stage of development, that of "ecclesial maturity," that challenges them as they go forward with the expectation of their fruits of communion and commitment to the Church. This is indeed both a major recognition and a major challenge to move beyond the exuberant adolescent stage towards a fuller maturity as an integral reality in the Church. This was indeed a most significant gathering of all movements and new communities in praise, worship, and song that made an unprecedented impression on all who attended. Based on subsequent changes in official attitudes it had an especially important impact on the Holy See’s officials and staff.

1998/05/31 – Homily of John Paul II at Eucharistic Celebration for Solemnity of Pentecost

"The movements and new communities, providential expressions of the new springtime brought forth by the Spirit with the Second Vatican Council, announce the power of God’s love which in overcoming divisions and barriers of every kind, renews the face of the earth to build the civilization of love.”

The weekend gathering of movements and new communities culminated in a mass at which the Holy Father gave another moving message in his homily. In this brief quote he summarizes their connection to a “new springtime” in the Church brought about by the Holy Spirit through the phenomenal graces of the Second Vatican Council. He also connects these phenomena to their source in the ever powerful love of God for all his people.

1998/06/01 – Address of Pope John Paul II to the participants at the Eighth International meeting of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships

"From the very beginning of my ministry as the Successor of Peter, I have considered the movements as a great spiritual resource for the Church and for humanity, a gift of
the Holy Spirit for our time, a sign of hope for all people...Within the Charismatic Renewal, the Catholic Fraternity has a specific mission, recognized by the Holy See.
One of the objectives stated in your statutes is to safeguard the Catholic identity of the charismatic communities and to encourage them always to maintain a close link with the Bishops and the Roman Pontiff...You belong to an ecclesial movement. The word “ecclesial” here is more than merely decorative. It implies a precise task of Christian formation, and involves a deep convergence of faith and life.”

The “new” communities of the Charismatic Renewal movement, as officially recognized in the Catholic Fraternity, were directly addressed by the Holy Father at their international meeting in Rome that immediately following the above general movements gatherings over the prior weekend. His message to the Catholic Fraternity was even more explicit and directive. He clearly states his support for the movements from the beginning of his papacy. Then the Catholic Fraternity was encouraged in their specific mission (Cf. above quote and CFCCCF Statutes) with emphasis placed on the specific objective of protecting the Catholicity of those involved in charismatic communities by serving the communion of the charismatic communities to the Magisterium. He reminded us that we had reached a new stage of “ecclesial maturity” that had consequences for all of us. To this he adds additional necessary dimensions: ecclesial authenticity, the necessity of ongoing Christian formation and a convergence of faith and life in the lives of each Catholic member. Thus it is not enough just to be a member of such an authentic ecclesial community; we must each be formed in our faith and live out that faith in our everyday lives. This is the greatest way of evangelization, as he had remarked earlier. The world desperately needs a clear witness of authentic Christian community and individual lives lived in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1998/Fall – Paper by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger “The Theological Locus of Ecclesial Movements” 21

“Only when the person is struck and opened up by Christ in his inmost depth can the other also be inwardly touched, can there be reconciliation in the Holy Spirit, can true community grow.”

In this important paper, our deep thinking future Pope Benedict XVI opens up a clear understanding of the path from the necessity of a personal encounter with Christ to bringing about a true conversion of heart (metanoia) that alone provides the opening for communion (koinonia) with God and brothers and sisters on which “true community can grow.” In this thorough treatment of the theological outline of ecclesial movements in general he provides a clear understanding of how the movements have been at the heart of every authentic renewal.

1998/10/30 – Audience of Pope John Paul II with the participants at the Ninth Leaders’ Conference, Fiuggi

“The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has helped many Christians to rediscover the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, in the life of the Church and in the world; and this rediscovery has awakened in them a faith in Christ filled with joy, a great love of the Church and a generous dedication to her evangelizing mission.”

John Paul II persistently reminds charismatics of the implicit consequences that should be evident in their lives as a result of the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

1999/06/16 – Address of Bishop Stanislaw Rylko to Bishops – at a Seminar on the theme of “The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops”  

“Anyone who was able to be present at the Pope’s Meeting with the Ecclesial Movements and the New Communities on the vigil of Pentecost 1998 will have immediately grasped that he or she was witnessing an event of extraordinary importance… the Meeting of the Pope with the Ecclesial Movements and the New Communities on 30 May 1998… was an unprecedented event, because it was the first time that John Paul II had met the movements all together. It was an extremely important ecclesial event, because it was a true epiphany of the Church in the wealth of the gifts and charisms lavished on her by the Holy Spirit… John Paul chose the significant moment of the vigil of Pentecost to reaffirm the salient points of his magisterium on the movements and to reconfirm the trust and expectations he places in them… As time passes, the more the providential nature of that event becomes clear… The movements are a gift of the Spirit for the whole Church. And a gift always implies a task: it challenges the responsibility of the person who has received it. For a response needs to be made to the gift; it needs to be made to bear fruit. The gift that the movements represent for the Church thus implies a special responsibility for the bishops; they are challenged at the heart of their concern as Pastors.”

As a follow-up to the 1998 watershed events, the Pontifical Council for the Laity sponsored a special meeting with bishops connected to the movements and new communities. It began with a major address by the Pontifical Council’s President Archbishop (now Cardinal) Rylko. He began his address by recalling the events of 1998 and their significance in the life of the Church. He called it an unprecedented event and an important ecclesial event, the showing forth to the whole Church “the wealth of the gifts and charisms.” He went on to engage the bishops on many important aspects of what had been happening in the Charismatic Renewal and New Communities. Throughout the next ten pages of his remarks he provided in-depth teachings on: The Nature of the Ecclesial Movements, The Original Charism (of each movement), The Person of the Founder(s), The Community, The Petrine Ministry (of responsibility to support international movements), Towards a Theology of the Ecclesial Movements, Newness that Becomes a Challenge and a Task, “You will know them by their fruits” (Mt 7:16), Christian Formation and Mission. It is highly instructive to listen to the Cardinal’s words to our bishops and ask if we understand these topics well enough to dialogue with them on our actual experiences with them and our need to understand them better as we move into ecclesial maturity.

1999/06/17 – Dialogue of Cardinal Ratzinger with Bishops – at a Seminar on the theme of “The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops”  

In a very complementary way Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) then engaged the bishops in an extensive dialogue. It is very instructive to listen in on this very interesting

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22 See proceedings of seminar held in Rome from 16 to 18 June 1999, promoted by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in collaboration with the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on the theme: ‘Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops,’ published in 2000 by Pontifical Council for the Laity (Vatican City). Hyperlink is to personal copy on Gods Delight website.

23 Also available in abridged form in: Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, New Outpourings of the Spirit. Ignatius Press, 2007, which also contains Cardinal Ratzinger’s address in 1998 to the leaders of the Movements (see note 12 above).
dialogue. If you obtain the published dialogue in the published book that begins with Cardinal Ratzinger’s powerful theological paper, don’t let its profundity put you off and fail to read the second part that contains his dialogue with the bishops. It is very informative and easy to understand. Space is not available here to do justice to both these outstanding treatises.

1999/06/18 – Address of John Paul II to the Participants at close of the Seminar on Ecclesial Movements and New Communities

“Among today's most urgent pastoral tasks, I would first like to point out the need to care for communities in which there is a deeper awareness of the grace connected with the sacraments of Christian initiation, which give rise to the vocation to be Gospel witnesses in all areas of life...If on 30 May 1998 I spoke in St Peter's Square of "a new Pentecost", referring to the growth of charisms and movements which has occurred in the Church since the Second Vatican Council, with this expression I wished to acknowledge the development of the movements and new communities as a source of hope for the Church's missionary action...it is the task of movements to share their charismatic riches with humility and generosity within the communion and mission of the local Churches...Your first duty, in fact, is to open the eyes of heart and mind to recognize the many forms of the Spirit's presence in the Church, to examine them closely and to lead them all to unity in truth and charity.”

Here we have Pope John Paul II himself joining his two key Cardinals and pointing out to the same assembly of bishops the basic relationship between the graces of the Charismatic Renewal and the Church’s initiation sacraments. He clearly states how only by encouraging the full maturity of the graces of the Initiation Sacraments do they then bear the desired fruit of authentic evangelization and “Gospel witness in all areas of life.” This leads him to another important connection and catch phrase: he says that the movements therefore are “a source of hope for the Church’s missionary action.” The Pope also challenges the bishops to recognize their duty to embrace and shepherd these graces while taking responsibility for closely discerning them.

2000/04/24 – Address of Pope John Paul II to the participants in the National Congress of the Italian "Renewal in the Spirit", Rimini

“Thanks to this (sharing of experiences and reflections among Catholic charismatic communities), the wealth present in each community is for the benefit of everybody and all the communities can more easily perceive the bond of communion which binds them to each other and to the whole Church...The Church looks with gratitude at the flourishing of lively communities in which the faith is passed on and lived. In this flourishing she recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit, who has always provided the Church with the necessary graces to face new and sometimes difficult situations...Within your communities, in different circumstances, a journey that leads to an ever greater knowledge and love of Christ has begun for each of you...Joyfully welcome the occasions that are offered to you to deepen your Christian formation.”

The Pope applauds the sharing of individual gifts between charismatic communities as illustrating the bond of communion with each other and with the whole Church. He goes on to acknowledge the authenticity of their work and urges them to welcome opportunities for ongoing formation leading to "greater knowledge and love of Christ."
2001/03/10 – “Movements in the Church: towards ecclesial maturity” – a talk given by Bishop (now Cardinal) Stanislaw Rylko to the participants at the Regional Conference of the Catholic Fraternity (CFCCCF) at Phoenix

“The main task of the Catholic Fraternity, and of all the Communities that form part of it, is in fact to give particular attention to the clear and coherent Catholic identity of the Renewal in the Spirit in the Church, both at the community and individual levels. The surest guarantee of this identity lies in a filial relationship with the Bishop of the local Church and in particular with the Pope…The charism of a movement has a universal character that was given for the benefit of the entire Church…Ecclesiastical recognition is not only a guarantee of the authenticity of the charism and the way it is practiced, but it also enables the charism of that movement to become part of the spiritual patrimony of the whole Church.”

Following up on the 1998 messages to covenant communities and the 1999 meeting with bishops, Bishop Rylko came to the North American Regional Conference of the Catholic Fraternity in Phoenix in 2001 and gave not one but two important addresses on key subjects first highlighted by Pope John Paul II in his 1998 addresses to the Catholic Fraternity. The first dealt with the subject of ecclesial maturity. Having applied the term ‘ecclesial’ to the movements and especially the new communities and announcing entry into a stage of its maturity, the next step is to help them recognize the necessity of maturing by recognizing their identity with the Church, individually and as communities. Bishop Rylko points to their relationship with their bishop and local Church as well as with the Pope as sure “signs” that such an identity is in fact a reality. He also points out the complementarity of the charismatic with the institutional by reminding the participants of the importance paid to them by their ecclesiical recognition by their bishop. By this mutual communion in truth, the charism of a movement or community becomes an integral part of the treasure of the whole Church.

2001/03/11 – “Formation of a deep Christian Identity: a great challenge for the Church of today” – a talk given by Bishop (now Cardinal) Stanislaw Rylko to the participants at a Regional Conference of the Catholic Fraternity (CFCCCF) at Phoenix

“We live in a secularized world that is trying to dilute or neutralize our Christian being and our Christian presence in society…The gap between faith and life is increasing more and more…Against this background you can see in a very clear way the basic task the Church confronts…formation of the lay faithful…It is the first priority of the pastoral care of the Church and consequently of ecclesial movements…Christian identity is of a sacramental character because it originates from Baptism…The ‘Baptism in the Spirit’ in the Catholic charismatic communities, when it is correctly understood, constitutes a special form of rediscovering the sacrament of Baptism with all the consequences in Christian life…The large parishes, especially in big cities, are often anonymous, so the small communities from the movements help the lay faithful to experience the fraternal communion.

Bishop Rylko’s second talk addresses the issue of Catholic identity in an increasingly secular society. He points out the clear necessity for strengthening the Church’s efforts to provide solid formation of the lay faithful who are on the front lines of this battle between the faith and the increasing godlessness of our societies. He offers this a challenge and call to the communities of the Catholic Fraternity, to form its members to be ‘bulwarks’ against this tide. But to do this

24 Published in Laudes Deo, Vol. 3, No 1, June 2001. (Link is to PDF version on CCGD website)
without destroying the communion and solidarity of the Church of Jesus Christ which subsists in the Roman Catholic Church, it must also form its members in their Catholic identity and especially the efficacy of their Initiation Sacraments. He also points out how their small faith communities provide a valuable antidote to the anonymity difficulties faced by large urban parishes. Such communities offer the opportunity for their members to experience the fullness of fraternal communion that is the heart of Christian community and the Church.

2001/04/28 – Address of Pope John Paul II to the participants in the National Congress of the Italian "Renewal in the Spirit", Rimini

“...it is necessary to tend with all our might towards holiness...The movements and new ecclesial Communities, as a special gift of the Holy Spirit to the Churches in this time of ours, must know how to respond faithfully to this call of the Lord...may the groups and Communities of the Renewal (in the Spirit) be significant places and models of brotherhood and love, of patience and reciprocal welcoming.”

John Paul II here continues his encouragement of Charismatic Renewal communities in Italy where it is referred to as Renewal in the Spirit, a preferred term in some Church circles. He calls them places and models of brotherhood, love, patience and hospitality.

2001/06/22 – Message of Pope John Paul II dated 22 June 2001 and read by Cardinal Rylko to members of the Executive and Council of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships (CFCCCF) gathered in Rome

“...you have chosen the sure path of communion with the successor of Peter and with the Pastors of your local Churches...we must put out into the deep...The time has come to plan for the future, so that the new evangelization to which the Church is now summoned will draw still greater energy from the grace of your calling...Let your communities, therefore, be more and more genuine ‘schools’ of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly ‘falls in Love’ (NMI, 33).”

At the Catholic Fraternity Council’s special election meeting the Pope sent a special message read by Cardinal Rylko. He affirms the direction and faithfulness of the CFCCCF and encouraged them to plan for the future to add their energy to the Church’s mission of evangelization. He proposes that this include increased schooling in prayer that includes thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation and listening leading to a growing communion in the Love of the Triune God. More and more expected of those who God has gifted and sent.

2002/03/14 – Address of Pope John Paul II to the participants in the National Congress of the Italian "Renewal in the Spirit", Rimini

“The Renewal in the Spirit can be considered a special gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church in our time. Born in the Church and for the Church, your movement is one in which, following the light of the Gospel, the members experience the living encounter with Jesus, fidelity to God in personal and community prayer, confident listening to his

25 Full text included as loose pages in “When Peter stood up...” book. Partial Text available at: http://www.iccrs.org/about_ccr/Popes/johnpaul_ii.htm (not found on Vatican website)
26 Full text also included as loose pages in “When Peter stood up...” book and in historical area of Catholic Fraternity website (see Hyperlinks given above).
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

Word and a vital rediscovery of the Sacraments, not to mention courage in trials and hope in hardship. Love for the Church and submission to her Magisterium, in the process of maturing in the Church supported by a solid permanent formation are relevant signs of your intention to avoid the risk of favouring, unwittingly, a purely emotional experience of the divine, an excessive pursuit of the "extraordinary" and a private withdrawal that may shrink from apostolic outreach.

The Pope again affirms and encourages those involved in the Italian Renewal in the Spirit movement and communities. He gently urges them to move beyond a focus on extraordinary emotional experiences by embracing a solid permanent formation that is guided by the teachings of the Church’s Magisterium.

2002/11/07 – Signed message from John Paul II to the participants at the 10th International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity (CFCCCF), Rome

“Your contribution to the life of the Church, through your faithful witness to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit has helped many people to rediscover in their own lives the beauty of the grace given to them at Baptism, the gateway to life in the Spirit (Cf. CCC 1212)...I encourage you to make your communities living signs of hope, beacons of Christ’s Good News for the men and women of our time.”

Again pointing out the importance of seeing the action of the Holy Spirit as a rediscovery of the grace of Baptism, the Pope encourages the CFCCF to be living witnesses or “signs” to the light of the Good News in our world today.

2003/06/07 – “Lay Movements in the Church” – a talk given by Bishop (now Cardinal) Stanislaw Rylko (President of Pontifical Council for the Laity) at the Franciscan University at Steubenville Priest, Deacon and Seminarian Conference

“Nowadays it is impossible to speak of the new evangelization without referring to ecclesial movements...According to the Pope, ecclesial movements – one of the most precious fruits of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council – have grown enough in the life of the Church, have got over their ‘adolescent phase’, and are ready to enter the phase of ‘ecclesial maturity’. The task of evangelization within ecclesial movements is directed primarily to Christian formation of mature personalities. It is a formation that has its starting point in a deep conversion of the heart. At the beginning there is always a personal encounter with the person of Christ, who enters one’s life and changes it radically...It is a formation conducted in small communities...It is integral formation involving all the dimensions of life.”

In this major address Bishop Rylko summarizes the situation of the Church and its lay movements like the Charismatic Renewal as we enter the Third Millennium. He begins with the positive and negative dimensions of the challenges we face and reminds the participants of several significant guideposts like Vatican II and various Papal Encyclicals that provide a solid basis for dealing with these challenges. His primary emphasis is on the special need and call to a ‘new evangelization’ in a time when the world is becoming increasingly godless. The Renewal looked to and described by the Popes as a “chance” or “hope” for the Church must step into this breach and utilize the grace they have received from the Holy Spirit for that purpose. He also the need for ongoing formation being conducted in small faith communities that include all dimensions of a Christian’s life. This highlights a key difference in formation in covenant communities than the typical doctrinal emphasis of parish based programs.
Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

2004/05/29 – Homily of John Paul II at Celebration of First Vespers of Pentecost Saturday, 29 May 2004

“Thanks to the Charismatic Movement, a multitude of Christians, men and women, young people and adults have rediscovered Pentecost as a living reality in their daily lives. I hope that the spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the Church as a renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation…This evening's celebration reminds me of the memorable encounter with the ecclesial movements and new communities on the eve of Pentecost six years ago. It was an extraordinary epiphany of the Church's unity in the riches and variety of charisms that the Holy Spirit abundantly lavishes upon her. I forcefully repeat what I remarked on that occasion: the ecclesial movements and new communities are a ‘providential response’, ‘given by the Holy Spirit’ to today's demand for the new evangelization."

These warm words from John Paul II near the end of his pontificate echo his continued support and growing encouragement of the Charismatic Renewal movement and its New Communities. He clearly declares them as “given by the Holy Spirit” to meet the challenges of the “new evangelization.”

2006/03/09 – “On Ecclesial Movements and New Communities”, an address given by Archbishop (now Cardinal) Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity – which opened the First Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in Latin America, held in Bogota, Colombia

The greatest challenge facing the Church at the beginning of the new millennium is the task which has always been entrusted to her: evangelization… The expanding process of secularization and an authentic “dictatorship of relativism” (Benedict XVI) have produced a tremendous absence of values in many of our contemporaries, which is accompanied by a joyless nihilism that ends in an alarming erosion of faith, a type of “silent apostasy” (John Paul II) and a “strange forgetfulness of God” (Benedict XVI)… Thanks to the ecclesiology and the theology of the laity developed by the Council, many groups referred to today as “ecclesial movements” or “new communities” have appeared alongside the traditional associations… The ecclesial movements and new communities contain a precious evangelizing potential urgently needed by the Church today. Yet their richness has not yet been fully recognized or valued… The first and greatest priority is, therefore, Christian formation. Here we touch on a central point, since today the very foundations of the educational process of the person are being weakened… the ecclesial movements appear as places for a Christian formation that is both solid and deep. The movements and new communities are characterized by a wide variety of methods and educational approaches of extraordinary effectiveness… Formation is the privileged environment in which the various movements and communities express their charisms… The movements and new communities respond to a second urgent need of great importance, which is the need for “strong testimony.”… the ecclesial movements and new communities are a truly “providential gift” of God to the Church, a gift that should be received with a living sense of gratitude and responsibility so that the opportunity they represent is not squandered. This gift is both a task and a challenge for the lay faithful and the Church’s Pastors.”

The complete text is an excellent summary of all that the Pope’s have said about and to the movements and new communities. It continues the emphasis of acclaim and challenge to fulfill the will of God and His call to renew the Church.
2006/05/22 – **Message of Benedict XVI to Participants of the Second Congress on Ecclesial Movements and New Communities**

“Today, the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are a luminous sign of the beauty of Christ and of the Church, his Bride. You belong to the living structure of the Church…I therefore say to you, dear friends of the Movements: act so as to ensure that they are always schools of communion, groups journeying on in which one learns to live in the truth and love that Christ revealed and communicated to us through the witness of the Apostles, in the heart of the great family of his disciples.”

In his first official message to the movements and new communities, Pope Benedict XVI reaffirms all that he and his predecessors have said about their importance and need to be effective instruments of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Church.

2006/05/31 – **Address of Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko at the Second Congress on Ecclesial Movements and New Communities**

“To grasp the full significance of this Second Congress, we need to recur in memory to its predecessor in May 1998. It was an event that left a profound mark on the life of the movements: it gave solid theological foundations to their identity and opened new and fascinating horizons to their mission in the Church…To the ecclesial movements gathered in St. Peter’s Square on 30 May 1998 John Paul II gave a challenging task: the pursuit of ecclesial maturity…The sure compass to guide our journey to this goal, which remains to be pursued, continues to be, for the movements and new communities, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council…The first eloquent sign of the ecclesial maturity of the movements, as John Paul II said, is the sense of communion: an ever-closer communion with the Pope and with the Pastors, within which to share their charismatic riches, and a communion in brotherhood between the various movements, called to get to know each other ever-more deeply and to work together in joint projects…The charisms from which these groups were born generate a learning process, itineraries of Christian initiation of extraordinary persuasive force and courses of Christian education that lead those who undergo them to live their faith with evangelical zeal and missionary commitment fuelled by a solid and profound spirituality.”

After a series of reminders of the words of past popes to the movements, including the words above, Archbishop Rylko went on to speak of the necessity for leadership transition and formation. He also brought to light the importance of the theme of beauty, the appreciation of creation and the joy of being a Christian. He likened the movements to signs of contradiction (light to darkness) like stars shining in the splendor of creation’s beauty. His address looked back to the first movements gathering in 1998 and explained Pope Benedict’s immediate desire upon succession to renew it in this conference. He also reemphasized the importance of charisms and the necessary learning process that they lead to in Christian education to explain the fullness of the gospel message and consequences for a Christian’s life in the Spirit. This is the only valid basis for the desired zeal and mission dedication that comes from an authentic spirituality.

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Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

2006/06/03 – Homily of Pope Benedict XVI at Prayer Vigil of the Solemnity of Pentecost

“Pentecost is not only the origin of the Church and thus in a special way her feast; Pentecost is also a feast of creation. The world does not exist by itself” it is brought into being by the creative Spirit of God, by the creative Word of God…The pasture where the sources of life flow is the Word of God as we find it in Scripture, in the faith of the Church. The pasture is God himself, whom we learn to recognize in the communion of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. Dear Friends, the movements were born precisely of the thirst for true life; they are Movements of life in every sense.”

The Holy Father continues his support of the movements with a direct connection to Pentecost. He also mentions that from the study of the Word of God those involved in the movements received a thirst for the true life in the Spirit that animates and strengthens them in living out the grace of Pentecost receive in Baptism and Confirmation.

2006/11/18 – Address of Pope Benedict XVI to a group of German Bishops during ad limina visit

“After the Council, the Holy Spirit endowed us with the ”movements”. They sometimes appear to be rather strange to the parish priest or Bishop but are places of faith where young people and adults try out a model of life in faith as an opportunity for life today. I therefore ask you to approach movements very lovingly. Here and there, they must be corrected or integrated into the overall context of the parish or Diocese. Yet, we must respect the specific character of their charism and rejoice in the birth of communitarian forms of faith in which the Word of God becomes life.”

Pope Benedict XVI repeats a common admonition for priests and bishops to care for the movements in trust and respect for their charism and life of faith.

2008/05/17 Address of Pope Benedict XVI to Bishops and Representatives of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities

“The Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are one of the most important innovations inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Church for the implementation of the Second Vatican Council…Paul VI and John Paul II were able to welcome and discern, to encourage and promote the unexpected explosion of the new lay realities which in various and surprising forms have restored vitality, faith and hope to the whole Church…To meet the needs of the Movements and New Communities very lovingly, impels us to know their situation well, without superficial impressions or belittling judgments. It also helps us to understand that the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are not an additional problem or risk that comes to top our already difficult task. No! They are a gift of the Lord, a valuable resource for enriching the entire Christian Community with their charisms. Consequently, trusting acceptance that makes room for them and appreciates their contributions to the life of the local Churches must not be absent…The authenticity of new charisms is guaranteed by their readiness to submit to the discernment of the Ecclesiastical Authority. Already numerous Ecclesial Movements and New Communities have been recognized by the

Catholic Church and Charismatic Renewal (cont.)

Holy See and therefore should certainly be considered a gift of God for the whole Church.”

Pope Benedict XVI repeats the welcome and encouragement of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities as “inspired by the Holy Spirit” to serve the Church in implementing Vatican II, especially its call for a fullness of lay Christian life and service in the Church. He also repeats John Paul II’s conviction that their authenticity is validated by their enthusiastic submission to the discernment of their charisms by the Magisterium. He sees them as a gift of God for the whole Church,” not just limited parts.

2008/10/31 – Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to participants in the XIII International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships – Hall of Blessings, Vatican

“…the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities which blossomed after he Second Vatican Council, constitute a unique gift of the Lord and a precious resource for the life of the Church. They should be accepted with trust and valued for the various contributions they place at the service of the common benefit in an ordered and fruitful way…one of the positive elements and aspects of the Community of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely their emphasis on the charisms or gifts of the Holy Spirit and their merit lies in having recalled their topicality in the Church…The Movements and New Communities are like an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in contemporary society…I sincerely hope that dialogue between Pastors and Ecclesial Movements intensifies at all levels…your Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships…carries out a specific mission in the heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal…to safeguard the Catholic identity of Charismatic Communities.”

In his first address to the Catholic Fraternity and the bishops meeting with them for the XIII International CFCCF conference, the Holy Father laid out a clear path of continued progress and support. He again expresses the importance of a dialogue between the leaders of the movements and their embracing the responsibility to care for Catholic identity of both their communities and their Catholic members.

2009/12/22 – Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to Cardinal Paul Josef Cordes on occasion of his 75th Birthday

“Especially characteristic of your pastoral involvement is and remains your commitment to the ‘movements’: the charismatic movement, Communion and Liberation and the Neocatecumenal Way…you immediately sensed the life that burst forth from them -- the power of the Holy Spirit that gives new paths and in unpredictable ways keeps the Church young. You recognized the pentecostal character of these movements…they brought new and unforeseen elements that could not always be integrated easily into the existing organizational structures…they…are gifts to be grateful for. It is no longer possible to think of the life of the Church of our time without including these gifts of God within it.”

A fitting close for our current summary is the letter Pope Benedict XVI wrote to his dear friend and collaborator Paul Josef Cardinal Cordes. The was no one who did more in the difficult 1980s to bring a clear focus on the importance of and to provide guidance to the “gift of God”, the Movements, than this wonderful German “servant of God” who we all love.
OTHER IMPORTANT MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS will be added in the future as available. Any suggestions for additions or corrections should be sent to the author at dapsr@att.net.