



EU-CHARIS-INFO-LETTER NO 6

EUROPEAN CHARIS CONTINENTAL SERVICE OF COMMUNION

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In this issue: Inspiring testimonies and words from the Dicastery of the Laity, Family and Life during the European Continental service of Communion of CHARIS Rome.

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CHARIS IN THE HEART OF ROME

The meeting was in the house of Chemin Neuf, in the heart of Rome. The central theme was: how to share the baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell presided in the first Eucharistic celebration. A few days before he had told Pope Francis he was going to speak to “the people of CHARIS Europe who are serving all expressions of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.” In his response, the Pope emphasized the importance of young people in this Renewal. The cardinal is president of the *Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life*. He called CHARIS particularly important at this time in the Church, partly because there has never been so much resistance in the world to the Word of God as now. He thanked all of us for the work we had already done as CHARIS.



After this Eucharistic celebration, Rev. P. Alexandre Awi Mello – Secretary of the *Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life* spoke. He read his now published text, but spontaneously added several times remarks and a personal testimony, including that he himself in Brazil received his call to the priesthood in a retreat of the Charismatic Renewal

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?



IN SHORT FR. ALEXANDRE SAID: "THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARIS IS A COMPLEX PROCESS AND MEETS RESISTANCE."

"This is normal: it takes time for mentalities to change. ... There are different people and groups who immediately grasp the spirit of change and collaborate in its implementation. (...) The National Services of Communion can be a tool to promote, foster and strengthen communion and unity among all the realities of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) of one's country from a perspective of service and not of government. (...) We know 'who we are'... But it is equally important to ask ourselves "what should we do", how we should carry out our mission." To the same question, posed to Peter after his sermon in Acts 2, Peter replied: Repentance, being baptized, receiving the Holy Spirit.



THREEFOLD MANDATE

“Communion is part of ‘how’ to fulfil the threefold mandate (*share the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, promote the ecumenical dimension, serve the needy*). So: How, for example, to share Baptism in the Holy Spirit with everyone in the Church? In unity, in communion with all the realities of the current of grace. Seeing how the other expressions do it, listening, asking, talking, creating synergy, collaborating, walking together... synodally.”

In the continuation of his lecture he placed great emphasis on synodality in our groups. “Communion is precisely what the ‘synodal journey’ we are doing as a Church indicates to us. Walking together, listening, talking, discerning together, and all this in the light of the Holy Spirit. It promotes synodality.”

EACH HAS SOMETHING TO TEACH AND SOMETHING TO LEARN

“The outpouring of this Spirit is what we desire for the whole Church, starting from the experience of the CCR. Synodality and baptism in the Holy Spirit belong together.” The Brazilian secretary of the *Dicastery* recalled no. 15 of the preparatory document of the Synod on synodality, quoting Pope Francis: “The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the ‘Spirit of truth’ (Jn 14:17), in order to know what He ‘says to the Churches’ (Rev 2:7).”

“Let us think of the different charismatic realities present in your countries: each reality has something to teach and something to learn. ... We must meet, we must listen to each other, dialogue, discern the journey in the light of the Spirit. All listening to the Holy Spirit.”



VARIETY OF GIFTS, CHARISMS, AND MINISTRIES

“In this *journeying together*, we ask the Spirit to help us discover how communion, which brings together in unity the variety of gifts, charisms, and ministries, is for the mission: a synodal Church is a Church ‘going forth,’ a missionary Church ... This includes the call to deepen relationships with other Churches and Christian communities, with which we are united by the one Baptism... and embraces all humankind...”

Fr. Alexandre Awi Mello concluded: “You can offer formation for synodality.”

Read his whole text in English on www.stucom.nl, document **0483uk**.



TESTIMONIES ON SHARING THE BAPTISM IN HOLY SPIRIT

During the weekend, a number of testimonies were shared to illustrate how we can share the baptism in the Holy Spirit with many. In Croatia, this summer, stadiums were filled with praise, organized by three agencies: the Service Organization of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal; another group that does not identify itself as ‘charismatic’ but is made up of people who live in the Spirit; and the main organizer, *Laudato TV*, a Catholic broadcaster that does also not identify itself as ‘charismatic’ but is founded and run from the baptism-in-the-Holy-Spirit-experience.

The participants in those great praise concerts are all given a folder with contact details of communities where they can experience life in the Spirit. “The keys to baptism in the Holy Spirit are witness and love.”

There was also a long testimony of Comunità Gesù Risorto (Risen Jesus Community) in Italy, offering the formation to life in the Spirit in parishes, with in the first meetings full churches, ending up with persons who really want to live their lives with the Lord. [Read his full text here.](#)

THERE WAS ALSO A TESTIMONY FROM MARCELLA RENI, A MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER WHO CARES FOR INMATES AND THE VICTIMS OF THE CRIMES COMMITTED BY THOSE INMATES.



From the international interdenominational *Prison Fellowship*, she has founded an Italian section of it with others, and in the process, she has also become a Roman Catholic herself and a member of the RnS-team that supports renewal among all Italian speaking people. They share with the prisoners the entire Gospel of Mark and then the formation to life in the Spirit that ends with the prayer for baptism in the Spirit. About 60% of the participants actually surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. “We have already trained the first 100 volunteers, but we need a thousand more. Because we want to reach as many prison inmates as possible. ... Our vision is to break the cycle of crime, and only the Holy Spirit can do this.” ([More of this testimony](#))

In this growing work for inmates and their victims, the three CHARIS goals come together: sharing the baptism in the Spirit, ecumenical cooperation, and service to the poor.



CHARIS



SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Out of listening to each other and discerning together what the spirit is saying, a number of suggestions and comments came from sharing in the small subgroups:

- As a national CHARIS, ask your bishops for a blessing.
- Explain the baptism in the Holy Spirit without linking it to the Charismatic Renewal as an organized movement.
- There is a group of bishops for whom the baptism in the Spirit is the last thing they want. Show those bishops the fruits of good evangelism, through which people begin to read the Bible and become disciples of Jesus. That is exactly what the bishops want, even if they say they do not want the charismatic renewal.
- Ask each prayer group and community to pray in each meeting that more people will open to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- The formation to life in the Spirit should be longer with more themes, adapted to new contexts.
- Form new groups, but also take care of those new groups, guide and help them.
- Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a third way between conservatives and liberals.

ELECTIONS

During these days we also elected candidates for several positions in the *International Service of Communion*, which must be elected by the worldwide CHARIS General Assembly, 2023, in the end of October.

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***Baptism in the Holy Spirit =**

"... an outpouring of spiritual gifts called baptism in the Holy Spirit, involving a personal encounter with Jesus Christ as Saviour, an openness to the Word of God, to exercising the charisms and to evangelization in faithful service of the Church." From article 1, statutes of Charis.

"Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a life-transforming experience of the love of God the Father poured into one's heart by the Holy Spirit, received through a surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. It brings alive sacramental baptism and confirmation, deepens communion with God and with fellow Christians, enkindles evangelistic fervour and equips a person with charisms for service and mission"

Source: Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Jubilee Anniversary Edition, Doctrinal Commission of ICCRS, part I p.15. (> www.charis.international/en/bookstore). This definition was published in **CHARIS-Magazine, March 2020** page 18-19 and in the first *Guidelines for the Creation of a National Service of Communion*, also on [StuCom0464](#).

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