In this issue: *The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) in France includes many groups, communities and initiatives; and a strong connection with the episcopate. An update by coordinator René Mendiburu.*

Charismatic Catholic Renewal in France

Prayer groups usually meet weekly ;
A national alliance called Fraternité Pentecôte, *Fraternity Pentecost,* includes 1200 prayer groups. Those groups elect their diocesan coordination teams, as well as regional and national coordination teams.
Current shepherd of the Fraternity: Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon.
Website: http://www.fraternite-pentecote.cef.fr/ (with videos).

Communities and fellowships are of very different sizes (from a few dozen members to several thousands) and include or not, priests (sometimes up to dozens), deacons and consecrated lay members. They may have a national or international extent.

Relationship with the episcopate have an institutional character:

1) **The diocesan delegates**, in the dioceses, the bishop appoints a priest delegated , deacon or layperson to accompany the CCR in his name.
Bishops have direct relationships with the communities with canonical status within their jurisdiction.

2) **L'Instance de communion du RCC** is the forum of communion of the French Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This is the French version of a National Service Committee of CCR.
This body consists of four delegates of prayer groups, four delegates of communities and two diocesan delegates. These members are elected by the annual general meeting of representatives of the CCR (in French: RCC).
'Instance de communion du RCC' meets four times a year *with non- elected members,* appointed by the Council for Laity of the French bishops conference: two bishops, a secretary of the episcopate and a theologian.
This is the representative place of the CCR towards the Conference of Bishops .
Current coordinator is René Mendiburu .

The four non-elected members, two bishops, the secretary and the theologian, may invite 'experts' in various fields in order to make studies and prepare reports to the episcopate on interdisciplinary themes. They are currently investigating the anthropological, theological backgrounds and pastoral challenges of the various proposals for healing.

Ecclesial insertion
It is not easy to assess the ecclesial insertion of the French CCR. On one hand the communities have attained a national or local recognition and are welcomed in their specific charisms. On the other hand the diocesan emphasis is nowadays on the parishes whose number has been considerably reduced (by a factor of ten in most cases) due to the lack of priests. Most of the local prayer group or CCR members are involved in parochial or diocesan services and some parishes have been attributed to communitarian teams and priests. But the charismatic dimension of the CCR is rarely fully understood, because of the dominant mentality of trying to solve the problem mostly by our own efforts. However the need for communion between all Catholics and the need for evangelisation are becoming obvious in many areas. Today 10 to 15% of the dioceses are focusing on it and are progressively discovering that this aim cannot be achieved without giving priority to the grace of Pentecost. We are all heading to a time of deep conversion.

Activities
The communities are organizing numerous sessions and weekends throughout the year for couples, young people, world health, ethics, ecumenism (Chemin Neuf). Prominent among these are the conventions of l'Emmanuel at Paray le Monial, of Chemin Neuf at Hautecombe and of the Beatitudes at Lourdes. Thousands of people are attending those sessions.
Fraternity Pentecost offers summer meetings open to all prayer groups, with speakers of different denominations or training sessions for shepherds and their associates. It also organizes training in prayer for healing with the community of Alliance Quebec. And various meetings are organized during the year at the regional level.

Independent associations
In the recent years new groups are born without direct affiliation with the communities or *Fraternity Pentecost* with great emphasis on: worship, evangelising and healing. Group members have also started independent associations whose aim is to organize events often with international leaders and leaders of other denominations.
The 'Instance de communion of CCR' has for several years invited leaders of these new groups at the General Assembly of the RCC. In November 2013, ten responded and came.

Charismatic interdenominational relationships exist around dedicated people or communities. Mostly for the common organization of some events around charismatic speakers (e.g. Day of Christ in Paris in June 2013, or a monthly meeting for healing in Lyon) or also in small prayer circles. Connection with the official ecumenical relationships - mostly centered on the annual prayer for Christian Unity, and on social work or ethics - is poor, but exists in Strasbourg and Metz (e.g. the 24 hours of prayer event once a year). The ecumenical use of the Pentecostal grace and gifts for communion and evangelisation is far from being understood.

Original freshness of the Gospel
Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always 'new'.

René Mendiburu,
Pierre Chieux
and Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon