

Catholic charismatic renewal in the Nordic countries

- Composed by Bengt Malmgren, Sweden -

Sweden:

Population: 10.000.000

Roman-catholics: 150.000

Roman Catholic parishes: 44

Diocese of Stockholm covers the whole of Sweden.

Bishop: Cardinal Anders Arborelius, who happens to be the first swedish-born catholic bishop since the Reformation. The bishop of Sweden together with the bishops of the other nordic countries form the [Nordic Bishops Conference](#).

Religious freedom was established in 1951 and the [Stockholm Catholic Diocese](#) was founded 1953. The number of catholics in Sweden has increased through immigration, and some of the immigrant groups have their own missions. There are also several oriental catholic churches represented in the country. The majority of catholics are of foreign nationalities, representing about 100 countries, only 20% are native swedes.

Charismatic renewal

Number of people Involved in CCR since 1971: about 1.000

Number of people actively involved now: about 300

Number of Prayer groups: 8

Number of Communities: 1. Koinoinia John the Baptist in Täby, north of Stockholm.

History:

The CCR in Sweden started with a prayer group in Täby north of Stockholm in 1973. In Stockholm there was an english speaking international prayer group from about 1975. [In the Cathedral parish in Stockholm there is a group that was started in 1977](#). In 1984 the National Service Committee of Sweden (called AKKS, later KKS) was started, 1985 AKKS in cooperation with people from Denmark and Norway arranged the [first Nordic charismatic conference in Stockholm](#). Thereafter many national conferences, courses and Life in the Spirit-seminars have been arranged, catholic or ecumenical in collaboration with Protestant Charismatics. Many people have taken part in these events and got their spiritual life revitalized, but few are active in prayer-groups within the Renewal. This is mainly because Catholics in our country are spread over vast areas. For this reason many Catholics are members of Protestant prayer groups.

Other details:

- Good contact with the bishop who supports the Renewal, as well as with some priests.
- Very good Ecumenical relations. Many charismatic conferences have been held in cooperation with protestant groups, and with invited international speakers like Charles Whitehead, Raniero Cantalamessa, Michelle Moran, sr Brieger McKenna. Protestant groups, Oas-movement (Charismatic renewal in the Swedish lutheran church) and Livets Ord (World of Life, evangelical charismatic) in Uppsala, have on their own invited catholic charismatic speakers like Raniero Cantalamessa and Peter Hocken to their conferences. There have been some conversions to the Catholic church. Especially when Ulf Ekman, the leader of Livets Ord converted to the Catholic church, it attracted a lot of attention.

-Nordic cooperation. The Swedish national Service committee has hosted 2 nordic charismatic conferences: 1985 and 2010 in Stockholm.

The last 5 years have witnessed a decline in cooperation on a national level, no national conferences have been held, but groups in different parishes have been doing things on their own. Sometimes priests with charismatic missions from other countries like India have been invited to lead retreats. There are at least 8 different prayer groups in the middle and south of Sweden, and the community Koinonia John the Baptist is in Täby.

Bengt Malmgren, a former member of the NSC on his own initiative continues to manage the [website for Charismatic renewal in Sweden](#) and to edit an information letter that is distributed via e-mail to about 250 persons as per the mailing-list. The information letter is appreciated. We strongly feel that there is the need to organize bigger charismatic events on national level.

Denmark

Denmark has had a Catholic Charismatic Renewal, at least in the cities of Copenhagen and Esbjerg. Lars Messerschmidt, the Vicar general of the Diocese of Copenhagen was active in the organization of the Nordic Charismatic conference in Stockholm 1985, and he was also one of the speakers there. According to the informed we got from our contact person in Denmark Tomas Urbutis there has been very little charismatic activity the recent years.

Finland

A few Catholics are involved in Charismatic Renewal in Finland. Our contact person Lina Joannou-Jyränki writes:

"The Catholic Church in Finland started again in the beginning of 1900, as the reformation had taken over to Protestantism (Lutheran).

1 Diocese with 1 Bishop for the whole country. Since 2019 the country has no Bishop as Bishop Teemu Sippo retired. We have actually an Administrator. 28 Priests for about 15500 members. Finland population is 5 500 000.

The CCR started in 2006 with few participants. We had a prayer group with a priest as guide. The priest moved since 2019 back to Poland. During the years since the start of CCR many visitors came to strengthen us as Oreste Pesare, Fr. Wilfried Brieven, Michelle Moran, Charles Whitehead, Fr. Rufus Pereira, Bob Canton...

In 2018 some Indian Priests from the 'Encounter with Christ' from UK came to give retreats and evangelise. This stopped after the Covid-19 restrictions. Now we started last year to join Jeevan Yoti Ashram in Delhi for Prophetic Intercession, starting with a course.

Finland is a mission country with a life in diaspora, a life in a desert. The Lutheran culture is very strong. One needs much faith to stand. Keeping our eyes on Jesus is our only strength. Amen"

Iceland

There has been Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Iceland. They made a new start in 2004, and a few persons took part in the second Nordic charismatic conference in Stockholm 2010. After that there have been some contact between Iceland and Norway. The last years we have had no contact with Iceland.

Norway

The population in Norway is 5.300.000 and the number of registered Roman Catholics is 161.000 but many are unregistered. The Catholic Church in Norway has been a church characterized by immigrants ever since its establishment in 1843. The number of Catholics increases slowly year by year. There is 3 dioceses: Oslo (in the south), Trondheim (middle), Tromsø (in the north). and 36 parishes.

Charismatic Renewal:

International charismatic prayergroup Lumen meets twice a month in S:t Olav parish Oslo. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Charismatic Renewal Community* is a vibrant Filipino charismatic mission in S:t Olav parish. The community is also established in Stavanger (?).

History:

In 1981 and 1983 there were Nordic meetings – in Norway – which led to starting a cooperation at the Nordic level. A group in Norway with John Golding and Florian Winter was a strong driving force behind [the Nordic charismatic conference in Stockholm 1985](#). The prayergroup Lumen was founded in 1984 in Oslo by a sister of St. Joseph Ingrid Marie Nilsson. During a vacation in Connecticut, USA in 1974, she was introduced to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The Filipino charismatic group in Norway has its own story. [The Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Charismatic Renewal Community](#) started in Oslo. Rose Mary Erta, a representative for the group says:

"In 1995, Fr. Marianito Dondoyano a Filipino priest was sent to Oslo to form the Filipino Chaplaincy. As we have our own chaplain, and the Sacred Heart Filipino Chaplaincy was formed, we informed the El Shaddai Manila to discontinue our affiliation. And since then our group is known as the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Charismatic Renewal Community (SHJCCRC) under the guidance of our Filipino chaplain. Fr. Dondoyano helped the group with its Vision and Mission."

From then on it has developed with prayer meetings, workshops, spiritual seminars and social activity in the S:t Olav parish in Oslo.

As a fruit of the Nordic charismatic conference in Stockholm 2010 where people from the Filipino community took part there was also established a prayer group in Stavanger. There was also some contacts with Iceland after the conference.

[\[More about charismatic renewal in Norway\]](#)

Nordic cooperation

In 1981 and 1983 there was Nordic meetings in Norway at [Mariaholm, a catholic conference-center](#). Participants came from Denmark, Norway and Sweden. A nordic group was formed with Lars Messerschmidt, the Vicar general of the Diocese of Copenhagen as chairman, Lillemor Hallin from Sweden as secretary and John Golding and Florian Winter from Norway as members, with the aim to organize the work on a Nordic level. The first fruit of this was the [first Nordic Charismatic conference in Stockholm 1985](#).

After that, there was no organized cooperation, but there was spontaneous bilateral contacts with Denmark, and later Finland with some joint retreats. 2010 the NSC of Sweden took initiative for a [second Nordic charismatic conference in Stockholm](#). There was about 50 participants, and all the nordic countries including Iceland were represented.- After that we have lost the contact with all nordic countries except Finland where vi have contact with Lina Joannou-Jyranki,

After the introduction of the new CHARIS organization, we have made efforts to take contact with the other nordic countries and found Tomas Urbutis in Denmark and re-established the contact with Norway through Rose Mary Erta from the Filipino group in Oslo. We have had nordic consultations via Zoom and telephone and found that there is a great support for the idea to make one single CNSC for all the nordic countries covered by the Nordic bishops conference.

/Stockholm Sept 14 2021

Bengt Malmgren