

Charismatic Communities Jubilee

This is an edited transcription of parts of the jubilee celebration held in Rome on 1 June 2017 with members of covenant communities as part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal #ccrgoldenjubilee2017

This is the link for the video recording: <https://youtu.be/HWuIfaAW0pU>

This celebration brought together three networks of communities, the [Catholic Fraternity](#) of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, the [Sword of the Spirit](#), and the [European Network of Communities](#). Michelle Moran of ICCRS gave some words of welcome and explanation. Gilberto Barbosa of the Catholic Fraternity gave a speech in Portuguese (not translated audibly into English on the recording).

Jean Barbara of Sword of the Spirit:

Good afternoon brothers and sisters. We are here gathered three networks of communities. And if we were asked to describe ourselves we would say that we are communities of disciples on mission, charismatic and ecumenical. But if you read Pope Francis' exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium](#) he would say the same of the Church. That the Church is a community of missionary disciples who are charismatic, and the Church is ecumenical.

So what is the difference? And the question is – Why did God bring us out of existence from the charismatic renewal? Cardinal Ratzinger in '98 gave us the answer and he said 'We have a place in the Church because it is the same working of the Holy Spirit, giving us a certain charism'. And what makes us communities in the Church playing a role is that as communities we are committed by covenant to each other, brothers and sisters, we are committed in good times and at difficult times. As disciples we are radical in following the Lord, radical in following His commandments, radical even if it costs our own lives. I come from the Middle East where Christians are persecuted and unless you are radical you are not ready to face death.

As missionaries we are evangelists, we evangelise in the streets, we evangelise at home, we evangelise our neighbourhood, we evangelise in the work, at work, we bring people by the power of the Holy Spirit to the Lord, but to a new and better life by helping them become disciples in a community, and we do all that charismatically by being open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

But we are also ecumenical. We live ecumenism, we do not only discuss it, we do not dialogue about it, but we live it, we love each other across churches and we do that in a co-operative and relational manner.

In brief, we are committed, radical, evangelists. Unless we live by the power of the Holy Spirit and be ecumenical we will lose the why that God brought us into existence. So may the Holy Spirit renew us, in loving each other, in following Him to the Cross, in renewing our zeal to evangelise people around us, to renew us in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to make us in our ecumenism a sign that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Johannes Fichtenbauer of the European Network of Communities:

This is for sure. It was the Holy Spirit who called our communities into being. We are not the product of human thought and wish. We are the product, the fruit of God's creativity, meant to be a tool of the Holy Spirit preparing the Church for the second coming of the Lord.

The first communities appeared shortly after the enthusiastic beginnings of the charismatic renewal, already in the late '60s. It was an inspiring time, one Catholic, one ecumenical community after each other.

But brothers and sisters, then slowly something dramatic happens. Only 10 years after the good beginnings, instead of enjoying the variety of charismatic expression, communities began to look down on parish prayer groups and parish renewal. Instead of mutual appreciation of the diversity of each of our communities, serving in different ways the same Body of Christ, we began to count, to compare, to value and to de-value. Many of our communities developed a certain pride in relating to each other. We valued our own community network higher than others.

Catholic communities and ecumenical communities followed contradicting ideologies. We felt as an elite, being stronger, more dedicated, better equipped and more radical. We didn't want to be behind and being hindered by the slower ones. So better to run the race alone. Instead of being allies, we became rivals. Instead of complementary work we ended in a competition. Instead of serving together, we began fighting for our own victories, our own profile, promoting our own visions.

And in the early '80s many of our communities were already isolated and our community networks were separated from each other. Brothers and sisters, this separation was a sin: a sin against God, a sin against the intentions of the Holy Spirit, and a sin against each other.

With this separation we missed the meaning of our commission. And this is why we have to ask forgiveness today.

Father of mercy, here we stand and here today we confess, we did not serve in unity as we should have. We did not understand the formula 'unity in diversity' which you have offered to us as the principle of unity. Father, forgive. Father, forgive. Father of mercy today we recognise our unity and we want to protect it again. We understand that this afternoon is a moment of grace. Today we are uniting in humility again in our diversity. We want to embrace the other communities and networks, in their different style and gifting. Father, we commit ourselves to learn again to trust, to trust each other. We want to serve as allies. We want to serve together the Church and the kingdom with the best we have. And we understand that each of us is only a part, and not the whole. Father of mercy, today, commission us again, for this common purpose. Father of mercy today grant us a new beginning with one another. Amen.

Then there was an extended time of praise and worship, followed by slide presentations from each of the three networks. Before Dan Almeter from the Catholic Fraternity gave his presentation, he gave this word:

'The anointing is all over me. The Lord says to us. This is a new day for the communities. Because of your repentance and My love for you, I have bound the demons of disunity and you will experience a new springtime working together. Amen.'

Introduction: Bruce Yocum will speak on behalf of the three networks, the Catholic Fraternity, the European Network of Communities and the Sword of the Spirit. We decided on him because he is one of the first witnesses of the charismatic renewal and founder of the first covenant community. His book on [Prophecy](#) remains a reference book for all charismatics who want to know more. He is a celibate brother with the [Servants of the Word](#).

Bruce Yocum: Good afternoon brothers and sisters. This is a great moment. It's a great opportunity for us to take time together to thank God for a remarkable work of His Holy Spirit throughout the world. This is from Psalm 145:

'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise His works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.'

It is a tremendous blessing to be here and to be thankful first of all to 4 successive Popes who have supported and encouraged charismatic renewal.

First of all, Pope Paul VI, who in 1975 invited us to come to Rome for a celebration of charismatic renewal and to conclude it with the Mass together in St Peter's. He was a tremendous supporter for us. He gave us the opportunity.

Secondly Pope St John Paul II, who was also a great supporter of charismatic renewal. I can testify that St John Paul II supported charismatic renewal while he was still Cardinal of Krakow. He supported and encouraged charismatic renewal when he was bishop there.

Thirdly Pope Benedict XVI who in 1998 articulated in a very important way the relationship between what God does through movements like ours and the ongoing life of the Church.

And finally, of course, Pope Francis, who invited us here to celebrate this anniversary in Rome and who is going to be with us in person.

It's a remarkable sign of God's work in charismatic renewal. I also want to take the opportunity to thank those who worked in the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services ([ICCRS](http://www.iccrs.org/en/)) and in particular Michelle Moran the president and the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships <http://www.iccrs.org/en/> and its president Gilberto Barbosa because they are the ones who organized and made possible this celebration we are having today.

50 years. It is a great time to look back on what God has done. We've been here long enough to have a real history and we are young enough to have a great future. So I want to look back at what God has done, to look around at what God is doing, and then to look ahead at what God is going to do.

We have a duty to remember what God has done. We have a duty to look back at God's remarkable works and to remember them. As the Church tells us in the liturgy, 'It is right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God through Christ our Lord.'

We get to proclaim that. It is our duty and salvation to proclaim what God has done. Again in the Psalms, *'Give thanks to the Lord, call on His Name, make known His deeds among the peoples', or again, 'Remember the wonderful works that He has done. Remember them and call them to mind'.*

To proclaim the great acts of God is worship. To call to mind what God has done and to proclaim it is an act of worship, and therefore we can look upon the time we have, these days we have together in Rome as one great act of worship.

Where we are from all round the world can give glory and honour to God by recalling what He has done. But there's more than that. We have a duty to proclaim God's deeds to the generations to come. Now I am going to say something in a minute to the younger ones amongst us. In comparison to me almost everybody here is younger. But I want to say something right now to those of you who have greyed a bit. We're not, us older ones, are not going to be the ones who charge out of here and do great new things – at least most of us won't.

But we have a role, and one of our greatest roles, is to proclaim to the coming generations what God has done, to let them know. Again from the Psalms:

'We will not hide from their children but will tell to the coming generations the glorious deeds of the Lord and His might, and the wonders He has wrought, that the next generation might know them, that the children yet unborn might arise and tell them to their children, so that they should all set their hope on God and not forget His works.'

We are witnesses to what God has done. And what's the role and duty of a witness? It's to give testimony. So we older ones, we have a solemn duty to give testimony to what God has done amongst us.

And I want to thank Patti Mansfield Gallagher especially for her book, ['As by a new Pentecost'](#), the new edition of it. It's a tremendous witness to what God did at the beginning of the Renewal. Read it, please. If it isn't available in your language, get somebody to translate it. She's been a witness to what God did in the beginning and she witnesses in particular to the extraordinary ecumenical grace that took place at the beginning.

At the very beginning of the 20th century, Pope Leo XIII prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A few hours later, literally a few hours later, some young Pentecostal students in the United States were baptised in the Holy Spirit. Let us in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal not forget that we are debtors to those in the Pentecostal movement.

Now I'm not a witness from the very, very beginning. Somebody asked me yesterday how long I had been involved. It's not 50 years. I've been involved for 49 years and 4 months. But I was there early enough, I was there early enough to see how quickly this all began to happen. The first prayer meeting I attended there were maybe 10 people. 3 weeks later there were 90. And a little while after that, a couple of months after that, we had 300. It was remarkable how rapidly this all happened.

I used to take vacations, holidays, in the mountains, in the Appalachians in the United States and there in springtime you see these mountain rivers racing down, and they're powerful. The speed and power of these rivers is amazing. You can't step into them and stay on your feet, you're swept away. That's what happened to me, and happened to us at the very beginning of the Renewal. We were swept away by what God did.

But you know, when that happens you are just caught up in this stream that you stepped into, you can't see anything else, you are fending off rocks as you go racing down, and then you are self-absorbed as the river gets further downstream. At the beginning I was caught up in this racing river of what God was doing with us and I thought that what God was doing with us was what God was doing.

When the river gets further down it gets bigger and more powerful, but more peaceful. When that happens, you can get your head up and look around. Well we got our heads up and looked around, we realized that we weren't the only stream on the mountainside. There were many, many, many new rivers of God's grace in the Church.

I had the great privilege in 2007 of attending a meeting in Stuttgart in Germany of [Together for Europe](#). Over 250 new movements and communities, all of which began within the last 100 years. Extraordinary, what God was doing! So when I looked around, and saw all of this that was taking place I realized what God is doing in the Church is much greater, much broader, than what God is doing with us. We need to look around and view where of the rich diversity of gifts that God is pouring out through His Holy Spirit right now amongst us.

We've had a little bit of an opportunity to witness it today, a little bit, as we've heard from representatives of these different networks of communities. But let me tell you there is far more going on, far many more works of renewal in the Church than are even represented here this weekend.

So we need to look back at what God's done with us and be thankful for it, we need to give witness to it and pass it on, we need also to look around and recognise what God is doing in the Church. Recognise one another. We need to be not only grateful for what God has done with us, but we need to be respectful, reverent toward what God is doing among others. I'll say something more about that in just a minute.

What does the future hold? I don't know. I really don't know very much about what the future holds. I used to think I did. Back at the beginning of the Renewal I thought I could see a little bit of what God was trying to do in and through the Renewal. But I couldn't. I never would have foreseen what we see here today. That at the beginning of the Renewal, one of the things that we commonly said was that the future of the charismatic renewal is to disappear. Why? Because charismatic renewal isn't a movement like other movements in the Church, it is simply a stream of grace that God is pouring out upon people and we should disappear because what God does through charismatic renewal should just become normal in the life of the Church.

You know what? It's becoming pretty normal. When you have 4 successive Popes who speak about what God is doing in charismatic renewal. When you see seminaries full of young men baptised in the Holy Spirit. When you see many bishops who take for granted the reality and the exercise of the charismatic renewal, something's changing. This grace of the Renewal is becoming a normal part of the life of the Church. We spoke about that in a theoretical way, but I never would have recognised what we see here now. So I don't know.

I do know that we are going to experience more hard times and more days of darkness. I want to take a minute or two to tell you a little story. In 1975 we had that Conference in St Peter's in Rome and on the very last day we had a Mass together for charismatic renewal in St Peter's. And we had a group there, gathered together to be able to give prophetic words and sharings. After Communion when the time came for prophetic words, Ralph Martin came to me and said, 'I have a very strong sense of prophetic anointing'. At that very moment all of the microphones stopped working. All of them. They just stopped. As far as I could tell, the only microphone that worked was the one up on the main altar. So I said to Ralph, 'Well, Ralph, go up there'. I didn't know if I should do that or if I could do that. But I said, 'Ralph, go up there and give the prophecy'. And he did. And as a result of that, when Ralph prophesied it was in a very dramatic setting. And I think God was in that, because right after these prophecies, about darkness and hard times, the microphones came back on. There were other prophetic words but from down below the altar. But these words of darkness and hard times were given from that dramatic setting under the baldacchino near the main altar in St Peter's.

So I'm going to read from one of those prophecies that we received. I am sure many of you are familiar with it.

'A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for My Church. A time of glory is coming for My people. I will pour out anew all the gifts of My Spirit. I will prepare you for spiritual combat and I will prepare you for a time of evangelization the world has never seen.'

That's a remarkable word. Now I don't know what form or what forms days of darkness and hard times will take. Ask our brothers and sisters from Aleppo. Unbelievable what they've been through in the last couple of years. But that's not the only part of hard times. We, here in Europe, live in an era of deepening moral darkness. It's hard times, it's difficult times, we don't know what form that the hard times will take, but we do know that it's a time of glory coming for His Church. Gilberto Barbosa from the community in Lebanon

could testify to you the 17 years of war in Lebanon were terrible, but for the community there it was a time of tremendous spiritual fruitfulness. And we can expect the same if we enter into times that are difficult times of trial, yet God says, in those times I will make you fruitful. So yes we are coming into hard times, perhaps some of us are already experiencing them but we will also see great works of God, very great works of God.

We also know that God will continue to pour out His Spirit and I'm going to read out to you a prophetic word that I received years ago but time and time again in gatherings like this I hear the same word from God. So this is from many years ago, but it is a promise of God for us now.

'When I poured out My Holy Spirit on you, how did I pour it out? Did I give it to you in small measure? No! I poured it upon you as the beginning of a river which I intend to widen and deepen and to grow in strength, in current and in volume. I am zealous for My people's sake. I am zealous to save them and change them, to restore them. I will pour out My Holy Spirit upon you more and more until this is accomplished.'

We have not seen the end of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and I don't think we will see the end of it for quite a while. Count on that. Count on the promise of God that He will pour out His Spirit again and again and more and more.

And I want to say something to the younger ones amongst you. I don't know what the average age is, but there are a fair number of us grey haired ones here. We experienced back in the beginning of this Renewal times of tremendous exhilaration. We can tell you about them, but we can't help you experience that. You have to go out and evangelise. You have to go out and tell others of the gift of God through baptism in the Spirit, of the gifts of God through the power of the Holy Spirit active in your lives, then you will see the same kinds of miracles, you will see the same power of God, you will experience for yourselves not the story of exhilaration in the past but the reality of exhilaration right now in your lives and in your groups. So go out, and be witnesses.....

Just 3 points.

God has poured out His Spirit time and time again in the history of the Church for the work of renewal. Have faith and trust that what God is doing among us is not an isolated time but part of a great work of renewal. Trust in God for that. If you ask why God stood up, I mentioned 250 new movements and communities since the beginning of the 20th century. If you ask, 'Why so many?' It's because God wants to transform the Church. He doesn't want to do a small work here and there, He wants to transform the Church. So first of all, trust in the grace of God to continue, and live in it.

Secondly, stay clear and faithful to your call. It's been said several times today: we're not all the same. God didn't call us to be the same. It's unity in diversity. We're different from one another and we're different for a reason. Stay faithful to the call God gave you. That's where grace is for you. Don't look to someone else's call. Don't envy somebody else's call. Don't disparage someone else's call. Stay faithful to your call and live it out as well as you can. That's where grace is for you.

Finally, live out your call charismatically. We're charismatic renewal. We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe in the power of the experience of the Holy Spirit coming into people's lives. We believe in the reality of charismatic gifts of miracles, of healing, of prophecy, of revelation. We believe that. So live out your call, but live it out charismatically. Go back to the Lord and confess to the Lord your confidence, your trust, your belief that His Holy Spirit is active today and live it out. Then 50 years from now we'll have much more to thank God for than we do today. Amen.

Summary of the prophetic word collected from communities and networks prior to this celebration; delivered by **Shayne Bennett**.

Brothers and sisters of the charismatic communities, listen to the word of the Lord. Look around you, the Lord asks. Do you see what I see? Do you see the brothers and sisters whom I have called from towns and cities and nations. These are your brothers and sisters, and the people whom I have chosen to do a great work of renewal in the life of the Church, in the life of My Church. It is important that you see with My eyes, understand with My mind, and not be blinded by the divisions and fractured relationships of the past. This is a new time, a time of restoration, a time of moving forward in the power of the Spirit. The long winter is giving way to springtime. My Spirit is the Spirit of unity and your power is totally dependent on being united to Me, Jesus your Saviour and Lord. My Heart for you is that you seek a greater unity in worship and in mission. Distance will never separate you if you are united in Me. What will separate you and dissipate the work I have for you are hearts which are closed or hardened towards Me and to one another.

Today I would remind you of who you are and the purpose for which I have called you. You are truly My people whom I love. You are also a people I have chosen to reach out to My Church and to reach out to the world that has lost sight of Me. I have called you to be bulwarks, strong, fortified, and to be arks, places of rescue and safety. You cannot do and be these things without an intimate relationship with Me, without the power of My Spirit.

For those of you who are weary, weary in the journey, I desire to renew My vision within you. I want My people to dream dreams again. I want My people to experience overwhelming visions of My plans. I want you to be captivated and swept forward by the excitement that I have in renewing the world. I want you to have a new expectancy of victory and favour.

This is a time of moving outwards into the world that I love. Some of you have lived too long in the original containers and structures in which you were planted. This has led to fear and tepidity. You struggle to maintain what was previously planted but you must realize that it was only the beginning. There is much more that I desire to give you; more freedom, more capacity, a greater clarity of the mission I prepare for you.

Today I ask for a new response from you, a response which is founded in humility. Your character as individuals and communities must be a witness to a profound humility which claims nothing for yourselves. You are My people and I am the One who does great deeds among you and through you. You are not to claim My actions for yourself. You are not to place yourselves above each other or in opposition to the others I have called to fulfil My purpose on the earth. You are to honour and respect one another. You are to honour and respect My actions within each of your communities. You are to take your place and stand shoulder to shoulder with other brothers and sisters in My Church.

And yet even as I pour out My Spirit upon you and renew you for the journey ahead, I warn you of great struggle and suffering. The anointing of My Spirit does not rescue you from the struggle and suffering which is to come. My Spirit is poured out upon you so that you can shine My light in the midst of pain and suffering. You are My witnesses. I call you to speak My life into the pain and suffering of the world around you. Be encouraged by the testimony of those who gladly suffer for My Name and who sacrifice their lives for My Name. Where ever I have placed you in towns and cities and nations, I call you to sacrifice your lives for Me and for the Kingdom which I have come to bring upon this earth. I tell you these things today as a call to action. I am shaping and molding you, so that you may stand in the time of testing. I am anchoring you in My Truth. I am anchoring you in a wisdom which is beyond your understanding. I ask for obedience in your hearts and in moving forward.

I would speak a word to those who are leaders among you. Know that the evil one seeks your destruction. The evil one seeks to sow the seed of disunity and destroy the work I have planted. Guard your hearts. Guard your hearts against disunity. Work for unity. Seek unity in your own communities and among your communities and today My word of unity extends beyond the walls of your communities.

Today I desire that you carry the burden of unity for My whole Church. Allow your hearts to be converted. The grace which I poured out at Pentecost is a grace of unity, a unity which can only be found in Me. Seek unity with your Pentecostal brothers and sisters, seek unity with your Protestant brothers and sisters, seek unity across denominational boundaries. Allow me to give you a deep love for your brothers and sisters which will witness to My presence and action among you.

My people I call you to receive the fire of My love, the intensity of My love which comes to you in the power of My Spirit. My love will burn away what remains of the fleshly and wounded motivations, worldly thought patterns and broken histories out of which you still react and operate. My love will give you a fiery passion for the Church and for the world. I want to share with you My desire for all My children. My love will bring a massive increase in anointing and power to the ministries I have given to you, going beyond anything you have seen to this point. Will you drink the cup of My love? Will you drink the fire of My Spirit?

Following this summary was a time of pre-prepared intercessions as a **response**:

Loving Father, we thank You for pouring out afresh upon us the power of Your Holy Spirit. We ask You to give us humble and obedient hearts to joyfully receive the power of the Spirit.

We pray for the gift of unity. We ask that our hearts would be opened to one another and that we would be one, that we would love one another through the loving gaze of our heavenly Father.

Father, we remember our brothers and sisters who are suffering for the name of Jesus Your Son. We pray that You would reassure them of Your love and in their moments of trial that they would know that You are with them and have not abandoned them.

We pray for the work of ecumenism, and in a particular way for our Pentecostal brothers and sisters. Father help us to be open to finding new ways to express our unity and love for one another and for a world which is longing for Your love.

Father, we pray for ourselves and for our communities that we would remain faithful to You, and to Your call. Help us walk each day close to Jesus Your Son in the strength of Your Holy Spirit.

Father, we pray for those who do not know You. May they come to know the saving power of Jesus in the fullness of life which He freely offers.

Father, we pray for our leaders, leaders in our communities, leaders in our Church, and for leaders of nations, pour out Your grace upon them giving them wisdom, discernment and a thirst for justice and peace.

Father, may Your kingdom come upon earth and may we be witnesses to Your kingdom in our midst.

Our Father....

(This was followed by Mass at St John Lateran, for the memorial of St Justin Martyr, presided over by Cardinal Paul Cordes. He has been a great friend to the Renewal and to the communities. The homily, sadly, was given in Italian and without English translation on the audio recording.)