

B.C. Renewal

Serving the Catholic charismatic renewal in British Columbia

Fall 2025

Use God's power, bring His kingdom

We already have the gifts, speaker tells Gathering in the Spirit

Are you a thermometer, or a thermostat? Think carefully. There's a right and a wrong answer.

A thermometer is passive. If you have a fever, it will show a high temperature in your body. If your furnace isn't working in the winter, it will show a low temperature in your house. It reflects its environment, and that's all it does.

For a Christian, that's the wrong answer. We aren't supposed to be reflecting our environment, Pauline Dumas McGrath told the annual Gathering in the Spirit in Kelowna Aug. 12-16. "Do not be conformed to this world," St. Paul warns us, "but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2).

A thermostat, Dumas McGrath said, is *active*. If your house is too cold, you can turn up the thermostat, and bingo! Up goes the temperature. A thermostat determines its environment, not the other way around. That's what Christians are supposed to do.

"We align ourselves with God's will, and allow ourselves to become His thermostats. We allow our minds to be transformed; then we can be like Jesus and create a kingdom atmosphere." It's right there in the Our Father: "hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." "Once we bow before God, our job is to bring His kingdom on earth," Dumas McGrath said.

The 17th Gathering in the Spirit brought 32 people to St. Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer for weekday sessions, and about 60 attended weekend sessions at St. Pius X parish. The Gathering is organized by Nelson Diocese

Catholic Renewal Services. Theme was Jesus, Hope of the World.

Dumas McGrath was featured speaker at the Gathering for the third consecutive year. A resident of Ottawa, she works in her parish of St.

Maurice as co-team lead for discipleship, evangelization and outreach. She is a graduate of Encounter School of Ministry and volunteers at Encounter's Ottawa campus.

As she did last year, she sent those attending the weekday sessions out into the streets and malls of Kelowna for an afternoon to offer to pray for passersby.

Bringing God's kingdom to earth sounds like it might be above our pay grade, but it isn't, Dumas McGrath said. As baptized Christians, we "are not lacking in any spiritual gift" (1 Corinthians 1:7) because God "has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12 RSV). "You've already got your qualifications," she said. "Now you're ready to get to work."

The Saturday session focused on the source of our qualifications: the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Dumas McGrath noted that the Spirit is imparted in the sacrament of confirmation (as also at baptism). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1302) says the effect of confirmation is the same as the experience of the apostles at Pentecost, but most recipients don't feel anything in particular during the sacrament, and aren't taught to exercise the gifts. "I wasn't taught to expect that," she said.

What's more, she said, any teaching about the gifts of the Spirit in preparation for confirmation is usually limited to the seven gifts mentioned in Isaiah 11: wisdom, understanding,

(continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

Say "yes, Jesus!" page 2

CHARIS conference page 3

Call on St. Carlo page 8

Jesus: Keep that name on your lips

The Christian life can be boiled down to two words, says John Connelly.

“Yes, Jesus!”

“Jesus,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2666), is “the one name that contains everything...God and man and the whole economy of salvation.” And all we need to do is receive Him, Connelly says.

“Yes, Jesus, heal me. Yes, Jesus, breathe Your Spirit into me,” he told the annual Nelson Diocesan Catholic Renewal Service conference this spring. “Every saint has that in common. Those two words, in whatever language, were close to their lips and their hearts at all time.”

Connelly is director of St. Timothy Ministry Centre in St. Paul, Alberta. Theme of the conference was Gaze on Me, Arise in Glory, Find Courage. About 75 attended the event, held at Cathedral of Mary Immaculate in the city of Nelson.

As St. Paul tells us, all the promises of God find their “yes” in Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 1:20). “Jesus’ ‘yes’ looked like the cross,” Connelly said, “but His ‘yes’ was just the start.” We need to respond with our “yes” to everything He calls us to. And if that sounds difficult, it’s Jesus Himself who will make it happen.

“The Lord grows our ‘yes’ as we give Him our little yeses,” Connelly said. “With the teeniest little ‘yes,’ He moves in.”

That might sound like a small beginning, but the goal is anything but small. If we keep saying yes to Jesus, we will be transformed into tabernacles of the Lord Himself.

In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15, the apostles meet to discuss extending the Gospel to the Gentiles. James, head of the Church in Jerusalem and chair of the meeting, quotes the prophet Amos: “I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up so that all other peoples may seek the Lord.” (Acts 15:16; see Amos 9:11).

The “dwelling of David” is the tabernacle, Connelly said: the tent housing the Ark of the Covenant and the divine presence in the wilderness before David’s son Solomon built

the permanent brick-and-mortar temple in Jerusalem. David’s tabernacle is significant for us in at least two ways:

First, David is an especially anointed figure—anointed as God’s chosen one even while another king, Saul, was still on the throne (1 Samuel 16:13). David was far from

faultless, but he was nevertheless “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22), one who desired to make God’s heart his own. “Our purpose is to be men and women after God’s own heart,” Connelly said. “That is exactly what God wants for the Church today.”

Secondly, the tabernacle was a tent made of skin. Sound like anybody you know? “You are made of skin, just like the tent of David,” Connelly said. We can pray to God, with St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the humblest of saints, “Remain in me as in a tabernacle”—indeed, as in a tabernacle for the Eucharist. As St. Paul says, we can be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).

“You don’t have to earn it,” Connelly said. “You don’t have to get worked up about it. You just have to receive it.”

Quoting Pope St. John Paul II, Connelly said we are facing the final confrontation between good and evil, but we can be prepared for it, no matter how bad things get in the world or how much we’re persecuted. “We are going to be living tabernacles, even if they take away the Mass.”

In the meantime, as we carry Jesus in ourselves, we can be the source of living water to those around us (see John 7:38). The presence of the Holy Spirit in us should make a difference to other people whenever we walk into a room. Connelly said whatever is in our hearts, positive or negative, radiates 25 feet from us, and what radiates should be the Lord.

“Christ is not a spirituality,” he said. “He is the spirituality of the Church.”

—Richard Dunstan

[John Connelly is coming back next year as featured speaker for the annual Gathering in the Spirit in Kelowna. See page 4.]

Nelson
conference

Filling the Church with the Spirit

By RICHARD DUNSTAN

The Catholic charismatic renewal is about to climb out of the basement – and transform the entire Church with the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's the whole point of CHARIS, national co-ordinator Brian Sullivan told the group's first-ever Canadian conference in Moncton, NB, earlier this year.

CHARIS, an initiative of the late Pope Francis and more than a decade in the making, is intended to bring together a wide variety of Spirit-filled ministries to share baptism in the Holy Spirit with the entire Church, preach the Gospel, serve the poor, and reach out to our fellow Christians in other churches.

Sullivan was one of four speakers at the conference, held at Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral in Moncton June 20-21. He told the audience of 90 that the Pope's plan was as much a surprise to charismatic leaders as it will be to everybody else. Charismatic leaders hadn't requested it or foreseen it. But what looks like a small change at the institutional level is intended to have a huge impact on the whole Church.

"The work of the Catholic charismatic renewal as a distinct group will be done," Sullivan said. While not everybody is going to use the C-word, the whole Church is intended to be "charismatic" in the sense of being driven and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

"We are living in an apostolic age," Sullivan said, "and the Church needs to awaken to her baptismal calls to holiness and mission and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live them out effectively. This transformation is what CHARIS has been set up to enable."

CHARIS—the letters stand for Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service—was formed following meetings between Pope Francis and charismatic leaders, beginning in 2014. It was formally decreed in 2019, and has been organized since then at the international, continental and national levels, with regional services of communion—the smallest level of

organization—currently being set up in Canada.

Previous Church-wide charismatic associations were composed of prayer groups and covenant communities, but there are countless other Catholic groups—youth ministries, Bible colleges, schools of evangelization, publishing houses, religious communities, ethnic organizations, ministries to the poor, interchurch outreaches—who owe their origin to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that has taken place among Catholics over the past six decades. All of these, including prayer groups and covenant communities, will carry on with their current ministries, but they are also being invited and urged to work together in the overall mission of the Church.

Unlike previous Catholic charismatic bodies, CHARIS is an official arm of the Church, in the service of the Pope. It is not a governing body, and will not be giving anybody orders; involvement is voluntary. But it will offer service, communication, fellowship and support for the whole work of the Church.

Sullivan said Pope Francis, who died in April, has done all he can on earth; "it's up to you to unfold it....get out of the basement. Join the leadership team of your parish. Work with your pastor to build trust. You have to look for opportunities to live the spirit of communion. The charismatic renewal was created to renew the whole Church and not just part of it."

"**Hope does not disappoint**," theme of the current Jubilee Year decreed by Pope Francis, was also the topic of speaker Christine Simard, president of Service Canadien de Communion du Renouveau Charismatique, the CHARIS regional service of communion for French-speaking Canada.

Hope doesn't disappoint, Simard said, because it's different from optimism: Optimism is a worldly attitude, based on human opinion, but hope is a theological virtue, based on the promise of God.

"Hope is the certainty, rooted in love and faith, that God will never leave us alone, and
(continued on page 5)

**CHARIS
national
conference**

GATHERING IN THE SPIRIT

(continued from page 1)

counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. These are real and important, Dumas McGrath said, but they aren't the whole story.

The Isaiah gifts are for our own holiness and edification, she said. But holiness and mission are two sides of the same coin. Jesus promises that the disciples will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes, and will be His witnesses "to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8). "The power of the Holy Spirit is for mission," she said. And for mission, we need the gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12: prophecy, discernment of spirits, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, extraordinary faith, healing and miracles. These are gifts, not for our own benefit, but for our ministry to other people.

We have all these gifts by our baptism, but we need to ask the Holy Spirit to activate them in us. And ask again tomorrow, and every day after that. Then, we need to use them, to minister to other people.

Dumas McGrath's idea of ministering to other people isn't limited to those who come to us, or whom we meet in our prayer groups or even in church. Friday's hour of prayer with strangers in Kelowna was a pale shadow of what she does most days in her own life, but she says we can do the same. If we meet a person or see a situation that calls for prayer, we should be offering to pray. Not only that—we should be *actively looking* for prayer needs, as a routine part of our lives as Christians. "Scan the environment. Look for people," she said. God will "highlight" those who need prayer, by bringing them to our attention, through circumstances or through a sense in our spirits.

God will often give us a prophetic word about the person, spontaneously or when we ask for it. What comes instantly is more likely to be from God than what we take time to figure out for ourselves. If what we see or hear isn't clear, we can "press in" by asking God for more detail.

And yes, we can *all* do this, Dumas McGrath said. "Every baptised Christian is a prophet."

We need to be careful in sharing our prophetic words. "We don't always hear God

100 per cent, so we need to ask the person if any of what we said resonated with them." We should tell people "I sense God saying..." rather than "God says...." We should not prophesy births, deaths, dates, or vocations. And most of us are called only to prophesy words that are uplifting, encouraging, or consoling. It's a specific vocation to call people on their sins or tell them their duties, and most of us don't have that vocation.

But though we must be careful, we must also be bold. It isn't easy for most of us to speak about spiritual matters to strangers. As human beings, "your first go-to is to be afraid," Dumas McGrath said. But the angel Gabriel's first words to the Virgin Mary were "do not be afraid," and that's the message for us too, found many places throughout the Bible. God can make that happen. "Courage is fear that has said its prayers," Dumas McGrath said

In the first verse of the Acts of the Apostles, the author, Luke, describes the gospel he had already written as "all that Jesus *began* to do and teach." (RSV). Acts is about the continuation of that ministry through the apostles, and Dumas McGrath said that process stretches down to the present day. "You are Spirit-filled and Spirit-led," she said. "Go out and continue Jesus' work of advancing God's Kingdom wherever you are!"

—Richard Dunstan

[See also prophetic words received at this year's gathering, pages 6 and 7.]

Connelly set for 2026 Gathering

Speaker at next year's Gathering in the Spirit will be John Connelly, director of St. Timothy Ministry Centre in St. Paul, Alberta. The Gathering will be held in Kelowna in August, with further details to be announced later.

Connelly, a popular Catholic speaker, evangelist, retreat leader and musician, was featured at the Nelson diocesan conference in April of this year (see page 2), and has spoken at the Gathering on several occasions, most recently in 2021.

St. Timothy Ministry Centre is due to open in January 2026. Connelly said the centre, which works closely with Bishop Gary Franken of St. Paul, will "help people find 'the fire within'" and discern their "mission within."

CHARIS CONFERENCE

that He will keep His promise: 'If I cross the valley of death, I will fear no evil, because You are with me' (Psalm 23)," she said. "Christian hope is not a denial of suffering and death. It is a celebration of the love of the risen Christ who is always with us, even when He seems far away."

It is when we lose our usual assurances (like the disciples who ran away when Jesus was arrested), or stumble in our practice of the faith, and can only go to God with empty hand, that all things become possible through Him, she said. And as we embrace God's promise, it is as if we rise above clouds covering the sky to see that the sun is still shining.

"Hope is not naïveté but courage," she said. "It becomes a path of love, of trust, of abandonment to a promise.... Hope does not depend on our circumstance. It is never too dark for hope."

Simard replaced Denise Bergeron, the scheduled speaker, who had a family emergency. The talk as delivered combined material contributed by both speakers and arranged by Simard. She spoke in French, with simultaneous translation into English, while the other three speakers spoke in English and were translated into French for the mixed-language audience

"The Holy Spirit: Agent of Renewal, Agent of Hope" was the topic of the third speaker, Jim Anderson, director of missionary discipleship formation for the Diocese of Saint John, NB, and a member of the CHARIS national service of communion. He said the Holy Spirit gives us "the eyes to see" the spiritual realities we know by faith are present, but might not truly appreciate.

In confirmation, the youngsters receiving the sacrament may not seem to notice, but the reality is as if "the pilot light of baptism has gasoline poured on it." People may venerate a relic of the True Cross but not grasp the full significance of the Eucharist: "If they had eyes to see, they would know that they were carrying within them the Creator of the universe." And at the recent conclave that elected Pope Leo XIV, observers were watching for white smoke from the chimney—"fixated on a rusty stovepipe but unaware of the mystery beneath...the

(continued from page 3)

mystery of grace and glory in the Holy Spirit stirring within the Church."

"The ability to spiritually see and to reveal what is spiritually seen is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the human person."

This, Anderson said, is the basis for the late Pope Francis's decision to create CHARIS as a central part of the mission of the Church. "Pope Francis encourages CHARIS to promote baptism in the Holy Spirit, ordered toward ecumenism and service of the poor, so that we might both see and reveal the spiritual realities of God in our Church and world."

"It is time to get out of the cenacle and into the marketplace. The Holy Spirit is among us. We must not leave Him here."

In the fourth talk, Bishop Christian Riesbeck of Saint John, NB, said the time is ripe for **going out in the power of the Spirit**.

There has been a "tsunami of secularism," especially in the West, he said. "Christendom" is dead, and Christian values no longer shape culture. "We've lost sight of God, and the world suffers daily because of it." Yet the tide has begun to turn.

The number of "nones" (the statistical category for people of no religion), which had been a fast-growing proportion of the population, has stagnated over the past five years. There has been a great increase in spiritual curiosity, especially among young people yearning for authenticity. In some places, registration for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults has skyrocketed. "This is an incredible opportunity," the bishop said. We need to bring Jesus to the world, in evangelization, discipleship, and mission, and "to be in touch with Christ, we must first be touched by the Holy Spirit."

Our path is clear. First repent: turn toward God. Then, surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. Bishop Riesbeck, a member of the Companions of the Cross, quoted the group's founder, the late Father Bob Bedard: "God's will is the only thing worth doing."

"It doesn't depend on how hard we work, but on how surrendered we are," the bishop said.

Finally, ask for the Holy Spirit. "The Father never refuses the Spirit to those who ask," the bishop said.

PROPHETIC WORDS FROM THIS YEAR'S

[Selected from the words recorded by the Nelson diocesan word gift ministry during this year's Gathering in the Spirit]

I created you pure and holy! To be pure and holy! Seek within yourself Holiness. Seek Me within yourself. Seek and be toward Jesus a soul set apart. You are My holy people.

My people, you have just been singing to Me, "I need You." Never forget that I created you because I need you. Never forget My need for you and your need for Me. I'm going to ask you a favour: before you go to bed at night, just say, I love you, Lord. Just say it. Let it be on your tongue, the last thing you say before you go to sleep. I love you, Lord.

I saw the heavenly host above this place as we were singing. And from Our Lady, I think it was, it was hard to tell because there was so many people there or so many angels, there came such grace, is the only word that I can think of. It was just tons of it, like more than we think we need, but there's no end to what we need. And this song came to me: Praise the Lord, how good it is to sing praises to our God, for He is gracious and a song of praise is fitting. He heals the broken hearted, He binds up their wounds, great is our Lord, and abundant in power, His understanding, is beyond all measure.

I was so captivated by the spirit during that worship set, and I was just speaking with somebody before we started about their daughter in Vancouver, and as we were singing, it was like we were in the streets with them, bringing Jesus, bringing freedom, bringing love. And then as I was watching everybody, I know that everybody has somebody that they love and they're contending for their freedom. And as we are singing, it was like, those people that are attached to us here, we're at war for them, literally, breaking them into the kingdom. So, I'm standing for my family, I'm standing for my mother, I'm standing for my father, I'm standing for your daughters and sons, your nieces, your nephews, your neighbours, the ones that you love, the ones that God loves. And as we're seeing, it's not just here, it's not just for us. It's for everybody that's attached to our heart. We're singing over them, and we're bringing freedom.

We sang the song that said, Speak the name of Jesus from the mountain and into the streets, not just Kelowna, but all the streets, and not just speaking His name, but speaking the Gospel and speaking His heart. As you've been learning to hear His voice, to speak His heart, he wants us to speak that as well.

The world in which we live is pretty much godless, people looking for love in all the

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GATHERING IN THE SPIRIT

wrong places. But this is what the Lord would say to us: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly, I tell you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

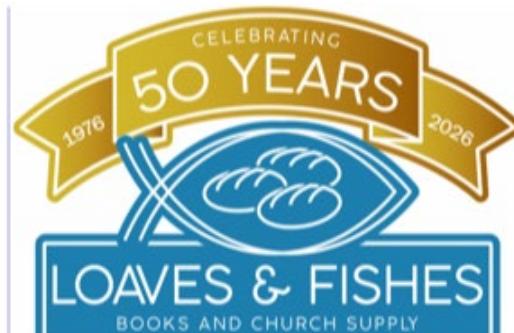
*We heard a prophetic word a while ago from Kristen about all those members of our family that are out there. And when I was listening to that song about the chains are gone, I saw an image of many, many of our family members dragging chains behind them. And I asked the Lord, what are those chains? What are they? And He said, unbelief. Disappointment. I think there's others. Do you know, do you know what's holding our children in bonds? Our families, our loved ones? Fear. Addiction. Anger. Indifference. I think there is certainly the lies of the enemy that are holding them in bondage and making them think that Jesus is not the answer. So today, Jesus has told us that we have power in the name of Jesus. We have power to break those chains, especially the chains of unbelief and the lies of the enemy and the lies of this world. So we're just gonna speak the name of Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

As we were singing, I saw an image of when doctors are pumping a heart, and they're working on getting revival in the person when they're in the hospital where they're pumping and they're doing compression. Well, every single person here, I could see Jesus working on the heart and reviving each one of you and He was pressing hard as He was moving. I could see Him knocking on all of your hearts, and He was literally pumping the blood through every single one of you. And not all of it was easy. He was moving in such a way that it was like it was the heartbeat of the whole world. And so whatever you have that was a block or

something that wasn't moving, well, it's gonna move, and it's moving now.

Hope!!! So hope, it's for home. God is our home, and oh for obedience. And then He talked about perseverance and endurance. So it's a good reminder, it's a great reminder. It's a decision we make, it's a conscious decision we make each and every day, that God is our home. We need to be obedient, no matter what, no matter how painful, no matter how joyful we need to persevere and endure, because that's the way we follow God.

The Lord chose you. He gifted you, and you are the only one that can do the ministry or whatever it is that He's called you to do. If you refuse the Lord whatever purpose or whatever, that will never get done because it's your special calling. Be vigilant, listen to the Lord, because He might have something to say.



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more years to come.*

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Call on Carlo! Our newest saint will help

By MARIA McMANUS

I became acquainted with St. Carlo Acutis when the book *Eucharistic Miracles of the World* became available for purchase. The book was produced from the Eucharistic Miracles of the World website which Carlo Acutis began when he was 11 years old, in 2002. I have been using this book of Eucharistic miracles in my catechism classes.

As I learned more about Carlo Acutis, who was canonized September 7, I was fascinated at his incredible knowledge of computers, programs, etc. Though I first used a computer at UBC in the early 1970s (the computer was the size of a warehouse and punch cards were used to make "programs"), I manage to encounter all sorts of technical difficulties which usually baffle me. However, in the last five years, I have been calling on Carlo Acutis to be my "IT" assistant.

I have called on him for assistance at prayer group when a glitch in uploading, or a lost document, or I don't understand why I have a black screen! I have called upon his assistance when I encounter difficulties on my desktop.

I have also called upon him to assist our parish office manager when she has had difficulties accessing e-mail, or documents or programs. The magnificent thing is, he does come to my assistance, and to those I have asked him to assist. It may simply be the idea to just shut everything down and restart. Or it may just be to close a window, program, or document and reopen it. Or it may be without doing anything; suddenly everything is functioning as usual.

If you have regularly called upon the intercession of St. Anthony of Padua for lost objects, then when you are having technical difficulties, especially with your laptop, iPhone, iPad, or desktop, call on Carlo. He will assist you, of this I am certain.

St. Carlo Acutis, pray for us!

A Thousand Angels

By ANN SINE

The breath of a thousand angels pushes past
Gives me flight when I'm in a fight
'Tis but the truth
The wonderful wizardry of time
No reason no rhyme
The music of a thousand harps sings out to earth
Giving it its rebirth
I'm safe among the feathered wings
They give me love, such marvelous things
The breath of a thousand angels pushes past
It's meant to last
And calm our senses when aghast
The breath of a thousand angels gives me hope and flight
Their wings so very vast
The breath of a thousand angels pushes past.

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