



B.C. Renewal

(formerly B.C. Charismatic)

Serving the Catholic charismatic renewal in British Columbia

Spring 2026

The nets are breaking!

By **RICHARD DUNSTAN**

You probably remember the story. Jesus takes a stroll by the Sea of Galilee and meets some fishermen who are coming to the end of a bad night's work, with not a single fish in the net. He tells them to get back in their boats and head out into deep water, for one more try. Sceptically, they comply, and "they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break." "Do not be afraid," says Jesus; "from now on you will be catching people." (Lk 5:1-11)

It's happening again, Catholic evangelists from across Canada heard last month. Seventy faith leaders,

Inside this issue:

Gathering in the Spirit	2
Revival in Vancouver	3
Holy Spirit checkup	4

most of them Catholic, from Halifax to Victoria gathered in Ottawa March 22 and 23 as Friends In the New Evangelization—from youth ministries to publishers, men's groups and parish renewal programs to Marian and Eucharistic organizations, mostly laypeople but including nuns, priests, deacons, and half a dozen bishops. And they heard good

news about the spread of the Good News.

Shaila Visser, national director of Alpha Canada, told the crowd Gen Z (early teens to late 20s) is coming to faith in huge numbers. Last year 105,000 Alpha courses were given in the world, and the greatest growth is among Catholics, with 1,000 Catholic Alphas going on at present in Canada alone.

"The fish are breaking the net," she said. "Parents and grandparents have prayed for the day we now see. We are not post-Christian—we are post-secular!"

(continued on page 8)

Praisefest, conference set in Vancouver

Vancouver will welcome the Holy Spirit with a Pentecost Praisefest May 23—Saturday of Pentecost weekend.

The event will take place 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Bernadette parish in Surrey, with Mass followed by pancake breakfast, praise and worship, and a talk by Father Mark Schwab, spiritual director of ARC (Archdiocesan Renewal Committee) and archbishop's liaison to the charismatic renewal.

"We hope the praise and worship session will allow attendees to experience what it was like for the disciples in the Upper Room," said Danny Guerrero, chair of ARC.

Fr. Schwab will speak on the theme for the event: "Come Holy Spirit! United in worship, release Your power to work in us and through us."

Tickets are \$10. To register, send an e-transfer to van.ccrs@gmail.com and include your name under "message." For more information, email info@vccrs.com. Deadline is May 10.

Meanwhile, ARC is planning a fall conference Oct. 9 and 10, a Friday evening and Saturday. Speakers will be Father Isaac Longworth of Halifax, a member of the Companions of the Cross, and Melvin De Paz, executive director for the Catholic charismatic renewal in Manitoba. De Paz was also featured speaker at last fall's charismatic conference in Vancouver (see Page 3).

Location is still to be determined as of publication date. Information will be announced on the ARC website, vccrs.ca, and the provincial website, bccharismatic.ca, when available.

Gathering moves to September

John Connelly headlines Kelowna event

This year's Gathering in the Spirit in Kelowna will feature a familiar speaker and a new date.

Catholic evangelist John Connelly will headline the event, to be held Sept. 16-19 at Seton House retreat centre. Theme is Draw Near to My Sanctuary—Abundant Life and True Love Await. The Gathering is sponsored by Nelson Diocesan Catholic Renewal Services and endorsed by Catholic Renewal Services of B.C.

Since its foundation in 2009, the Gathering has always taken place in mid-August. This year it will be combined with the NDCCRS leaders' retreat, held annually in September.

The Gathering will run Wednesday through Saturday.

Connelly has been a popular speaker at charismatic events in B.C. for 25 years, including four previous appearances at the Gathering in the Spirit, plus the Nelson diocesan conferences in 2025 and 2019.

On the Wednesday and Thursday he will speak on Sinking Deeper into the Spirit and explore in a workshop style the charisms, fruits, and call of the Spirit in our time.

"Together we will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal more of who He is in us, and how he can deepen all aspects our lives," he said.

On the Friday and Saturday he will explore Divine Renewal Today. "Together we will share in how God is renewing his Bride, the Church, today, and how we can enter in right now to greater personal transformation in our lives, families, parishes, and world.

"Prepare to explore with Jesus, go deeper in the Spirit, and see God act within you in new and powerful ways. A Divine Renewal is unfolding in this hour and we are all called to grow deeper with Jesus."

The sessions are designed to work together in harmony, but the Friday-Saturday session can also stand alone.

Connelly is a Catholic speaker, evangelist and musician who is active in doing parish missions, conferences and retreats. He gives highly interactive sessions that lead people from theory into practice. He speaks on going deeper in our relationship with Jesus, the charismatic gifts, and growing in our personal mission.

He is currently involved with the NOVUM charismatic ministry team which works with Bishop Gary Franken in the Diocese of St. Paul, AB. His wife, Tracy, is an active spiritual director and they often do marriage ministry conferences and retreats together.

Loree Renwick, NDCCRS chair and co-ordinator for the Gathering, said the new format is intended as "an opportunity for people to grow."

"We feel we need to take a step back and minister to our group," she said. "We'll see what the fruits are. It's not written in stone that it's changed forever."

The Gathering will continue to welcome participants from everywhere in B.C. and beyond.

Planning was incomplete as of publication deadline. Further information will be posted on the diocesan charismatic website, holyspiritbaptizer.com, and on the provincial charismatic website, bccharismatic.ca, as it becomes available.

Contact for information and registration is ndccrs2020@gmail.com.

Vancouver renewal is back...

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal was reborn in Vancouver in September—not once but twice.

A conference, the first in the Lower Mainland since 2022, drew almost 200 to St. Mary's parish hall in Vancouver Sept. 26 and 27. Theme was Take Courage and Rebuild, and the conference itself wasn't the only sign of rebuilding.

The even opened with an announcement: as of two weeks earlier, ARC—Archdiocesan Renewal Committee, the charismatic service team for Vancouver—is meeting once again after a long period of inactivity.

Danny Guerrero of St. Bernadette parish in Surrey, a long-time leader in music ministry and other charismatic activities, is chair of the 11-member committee. Father Mark Schwab of St. Stephen's Parish in North Vancouver is Archbishop Richard Smith's delegate and spiritual director.

"The charismatic renewal in Vancouver is alive and well," Guerrero told the audience.

He said the committee plans to set up strong communications, not only among prayer groups but also with the provincial and national service committees, and to reach out beyond prayer groups to parishes as a whole.

Its first job will be tracking down exactly how many prayer groups there are in the archdiocese, and getting contact information for all of them. The existing contact list is out of date, and an email about the conference to the 52 contacts on that list got only five replies, but it was obvious that many more groups than that were represented at the conference.

"We said 'yes' [to joining ARC], but we didn't know what to do," Guerrero said. "We said 'yes' because the Holy Spirit will always be our guide."

The renewal looked plenty lively on the weekend. The crowd filled most of the chairs in the church hall, rising to their feet again and again, lifting their arms in prayer to loud praise music and gentle worship tunes. They burst into tongues of praise, prayed aloud, or stood in intense silent worship as speakers and prayer leaders invoked the Holy Spirit on them. The conference ended with a prayer session for a new outpouring of the Spirit, on those present and throughout the archdiocese.

The conference was sponsored by Catholic Renewal Services of Canada, the national charismatic service committee, and organized

(continued on Page 6)

...and so are the people

Vancouver's reborn charismatic service committee planned its first public event with low expectations. Then the Holy Spirit showed up—along with triple the expected crowd.

Back in operation since last fall after a three-year gap (**SEE ARTICLE ABOVE**), the committee, called ARC (Archdiocesan Renewal Committee), decided to kick off the year with a Mass/breakfast/fellowship event at St. Francis de Sales parish in Burnaby Feb. 7. Theme of the morning was The Spirit is Alive!!

ARC chair Danny Guerrero told the gathering the committee had only about 40 expressions of interest and expected maybe 50 people altogether to attend, but "we took a leap of faith" and asked the parish Knights of Columbus to fix breakfast for 80, with a maximum of 100.

More than 130 turned up, lining up in a light rain outside the parish hall door until

organizers gave up on registration and invited everybody in. The Knights, who charged ARC only for the food they had to purchase, spent over an hour dishing out pancakes to a lineup that stretched across the front of the hall and all the way along the far side. Providentially, the hall was available long enough for the party to last an hour longer than scheduled.

"We thought charismatic prayer groups were floundering," Guerrero chuckled in his talk.

Featured speaker was Father Mark Schwab, spiritual director for ARC. He promised that the Holy Spirit will speak tangibly to us, if only we know how to hear Him. "God speaks to us," he said, "but many times we don't listen."

What's missing, he said, is humility—a lesson he learned the hard way 30 years ago.

(continued on Page 7)

A CHARISMATIC EXAMINATION

IN JANUARY, Al Mansfield, a pioneer in the Catholic charismatic renewal since 1970, published this examination of conscience for the new year. We reprint it here with his permission. Al was director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans office for many years. He is married to Patti Gallagher Mansfield, who was present at the first Catholic outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Duquesne University in 1967.

By AL MANSFIELD

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, St. Paul says "examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith." Following upon that exhortation, I prepared a list of ten questions for us in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to use as we "examine ourselves" at the beginning of this New Year.

1. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit changed your life?

Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit made a decisive difference in your life? Is there a definite "before and after" in your life?

Cardinal Cantalamessa, preacher to the popes for 44 years, has said that he had two lives - one before Baptism in the Spirit, and one after.

Is that true for you? Can you honestly say that the Baptism in the Spirit has made a clear difference in your life?

2. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you a personal relationship with the Father and the Son?

Romans 5:5 says "The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." That is the best definition of what it means to be baptized in the Spirit - to experience the love of God poured into our hearts.

Since being baptized in the Spirit, do you know that you are a beloved child of God the Father and can call Him "Abba, Father?" (cf. Romans 8:15) Abba is the name used for "Father" within the family.

Do you know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? (cf. 1 Cor.12:3) Is Jesus truly your Friend and Brother?

Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit brought you into an intimate, personal relationship with God?

3. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit changed your prayer life?

Do you have a real, definite, regular prayer life? Do you make time to pray every day? How much time do you actually pray?

Does your prayer include adoration and praise, thanksgiving, contrition, and petition?

Are you open to experiencing charismatic gifts in your prayer, for example, tongues, prophecy, revelation, etc.?

4. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you a love for the Word of God in Holy Scripture?

Do you have an irresistible attraction to the Word of God since being baptized in the Spirit? (One of the first effects of the Baptism in the Spirit.)

Do you want to "eat and drink" the Word of God like Ezekiel in the Old Testament (cf. Ezekiel 3:1-3) or like John in the Book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 10: 8-11)?

Do you have that kind of love and attraction to Scripture, so that you look forward to reading it and can't put it down?

5. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you the power and desire to bear witness?

Do you look for opportunities to witness to Jesus?

Jesus specifically connected bearing witness to the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8 and John 15:26-27.

Since being baptized in the Spirit, do you have a desire to share the gospel and look for ways to do that?

6. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you a desire to meet together with other Catholic Charismatics for fellowship and support?

Scripture says, "Do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some" (Hebrews 10:25).

If you pull logs apart, the fire goes out. Likewise, if Catholic Charismatics stop meeting together, groups die and then the whole renewal movement grows very weak.

Do you have some kind of regular meeting with a group for prayer, fellowship and support as a Catholic Charismatic?

7. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you an exercise of spiritual gifts, charismatic gifts?

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see a mysterious link between the coming of the

FOR YOUR CONSCIENCE

(Continued from page 4)

Holy Spirit and the outbreak of charismatic gifts and activity.

See the various accounts of the First Pentecost in Acts 2; the Samaritan Pentecost in Acts 8; the Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10; the Ephesian Pentecost in Acts 19...all relate comings of the Holy Spirit to groups of people, connected with charismatic activity.

St. Paul says that the gifts of the Spirit are given for the common good (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7). There are 27 different charismatic gifts in the New Testament. Several are listed in 1 Cor. 12:8; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Are you aware of receiving charismatic gifts and do you use them to build up the Body of Christ?

8. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit helped you make a change in your moral life...in your attitudes and behavior?

Have you made a real break with serious sin or is serious sin—especially sexual sin—still a regular occurrence in your life?

Are you still attached to some "favourite sin" - that is, an affection for some area of wrongdoing that you are attached to and reluctant to give up? (For example, misuse of the tongue, cf. James 3: 2-12).

Is the Holy Spirit helping you to die to self and to overcome self-love and self-centeredness?

9. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit helped you to experience a change in your approach to the sacraments?

Do you receive the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation regularly (preferably monthly)?

Has your experience of the Mass changed, so that you attend to actively join your offering with the priest and not merely as a passive spectator?

Is your reception of the Eucharist a time of blessed communion with the Lord and not a mere formality or routine?

10. Has the Baptism in the Holy Spirit given you a conversion of your mind?

Do you have a desire and motivation to learn what the Church teaches?

Are you familiar with the teachings of the Catholic Catechism? Do you read good spiritual books, such as Lives of the Saints?

Do you follow good Catholic speakers and writers?

St. Paul tells us to "put on the mind of Christ" (cf. Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16).

So, how did you do? Did you get a passing grade? No matter how we may have scored on this exam, the good news is that as long we desire to go forward with the Lord, He is committed to help us by the grace of His Holy Spirit. Let us praise and thank Him, now and forever! Have a blessed New Year.

DONATIONS TO CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

All donations promote the work of the provincial service committee: conferences, leadership meetings and workshops, and B.C. Renewal newsletter. CCRS of B.C. is a registered non-profit organization, and issues receipts for income tax purposes. Indicate below if you wish a receipt (\$20 or more only) and print your name and address plainly.

Please make cheques payable to **CCRS of BC** and mail to **CCRS of BC, 12358 65 Ave., Surrey BC V3W 5Y5**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Donation: \$ _____ Receipt? _____

Your prayers and financial support are appreciated.

VANCOUVER CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 3)

by the national committee; Catholic Renewal Service of B.C., the provincial service committee; and local prayer group members, especially Mission Ablaze, the St. Mary's prayer group.

Also speaking were Melvin De Paz, executive director of the renewal in Manitoba; CRSC chair Brian Sullivan, of Ontario; and Richard Dunstan, chair of the B.C. provincial service committee. Father Gabriel de Chadarevian OP, assistant pastor at St. Mary's, was originally planned to be the headline speaker, but he had to step back due to health problems.

De Paz, born in Guatemala, was exposed to gang violence, pornography, and the occult in childhood. He came to Canada at age 15 in 1996, lived in group homes and foster care, and led a life of addiction to drugs, alcohol, sexual activity and gambling; he once had a shotgun pointed at him for an imagined insult to a local hoodlum.

His conversion began when his mother pushed him to go to confession during a trip home to Guatemala in 2000, and continued when he fell in love with his wife, Maria, already a devout Catholic. They now have seven children and are in full-time ministry.

"The Lord rescued me, not because I deserved it, but because He is good. He loves me," De Paz said.

Like Guerrero, Sullivan had new developments to announce for the charismatic renewal.

A major reorientation is under way worldwide. Called CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service), it was decreed by the late Pope Francis in 2019, and is still being put together on the ground. Sullivan is Canadian co-ordinator for CHARIS in addition to his CRSC role.

On the official level, CHARIS brings two changes. First, the new structure will reach out to every ministry that bases its work on the power of the Holy Spirit, not just prayer groups. This includes youth ministries, schools of evangelization, religious communities, outreaches to the poor, ecumenical projects, and many more.

Secondly, CHARIS has changed the renewal, in Vatican language, from a "private

pontifical association" to a "public juridic personality." That sounds technical, but Sullivan said it is "a small change in the institutional Church that is meant to have a huge impact on the whole Church."

It means that the renewal is now an official arm of the Church, in service of the Pope. And although Pope Francis didn't necessarily intend every Catholic to join a charismatic prayer group, Sullivan said, he did intend for every Catholic to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Pope Leo has invited CHARIS leaders to their first meeting with him at the Vatican on May 30.

The renewal, Sullivan said, is "a current of grace in and for the whole Church, not in and for the prayer group. The gifts are given to serve the community. If I'm given the gift of healing, it's not for me. It's for the parish and the community."

Sullivan said Guerrero was exactly right to plan on reaching out to the parishes as well as to groups already involved in the renewal. Prayer groups will continue to exist, and to exercise the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, but their distinctiveness will fade as the Spirit fills the Church more and more. "We won't be different from anybody else sitting in the pews: alive in the Holy Spirit."

Dunstan said the charismatic renewal hasn't lived up to its original promise, but rebuilding it is not mainly a question of more human effort. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can give us strength to do the job. God will send us the Holy Spirit, not because we have enough faith, but because He has promised, and all we need is faith enough to ask. "We try to have a lot of faith in a little God, but that's wrong," he said. "We just need to have a little faith in a big God."

De Paz and Cory Yakimovich, Alberta representative for the national committee, led the prayer for a new outpouring of the Spirit. De Paz said there are four steps to receiving the Spirit: thirst for it (recognize our need); be open to it (renounce barriers such as unforgiveness and sin); ask with confidence (remember, God *wants* to give you the Spirit); and receive freely (remember, you don't have to earn it—it's a gift.)

—Richard Dunstan

PRAYER BREAKFAST: Rules for humility and listening

[Continued from Page 3]

In his year of parish internship before ordination as deacon and then priest, he was ordered by his pastor to attend a Life in the Spirit seminar “so we [the parish priests] won’t have to.” He walked in as a total skeptic, but to his shock, he found himself knocked down by the Spirit for two hours, listening—he thought—to one of the leaders reciting every sin of his life for everybody to hear. Later he was relieved to find out that she had been praying in tongues and only he could interpret what she said.

Father Schwab gave seven rules for exercising humility and listening to God:

Put God first—“not your wife, not your husband, not your bank account, and certainly not yourself.” Tell God every day, “I am here to do Your will.”

Spend time with Jesus in adoration. Come early to Mass, and stay late. “Prayer leaders should be examples to the rest of the parish.”

Take your Bible, and read it. He noted that only a handful of people at the breakfast had Bibles with them; at a Protestant event, there would only be a handful *without* Bibles. “But it’s not just the Protestants that are called to read the Bible,” he said. “Catholics are, too.” We should spend at least as much time reading Scripture as we spend texting.

Silence the noise. Cut back not only on texting but on all the other distractions that compete with God for our attention. He said we wouldn’t choose the corner of Cambie and Georgia streets in downtown Vancouver for an important conversation with a friend or family member, and we shouldn’t do what amounts to the same thing with God.

Get to know the Holy Spirit. Invite the Spirit into your life constantly. Have a desire for all the Spirit’s gifts and fruits.

Get to know charismatic saints. Some of them may not come to mind right away, but saints like St. John Bosco, St. John Vianney, St. Philip Neri, Padre Pio (St. Pius of Pietrelcina), and the newly-canonized St. Carlo Acutis were

guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit in numerous ways.

Keep educating yourself about the Catholic faith. You’ll never run out of things to learn.

Richard Dunstan, chair of Catholic Renewal Service of BC, told the audience the revival of ARC is the most joyful news the provincial service committee has heard in a long time. He said the charismatic renewal is active in all five BC dioceses. Meanwhile, the national service committee is visiting a different province every year to hold ministry events: several Newfoundland communities in 2023, Calgary in 2024, Vancouver last September (**SEE PAGE 3**), and Toronto in September of this year.

Guerrero said ARC’s goal will be for prayer groups to support each other and take an active role within their parishes. “The prayer group is not supposed to be a silo,” he said. “It’s supposed to be a vehicle to reach out and spread the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

He said ARC is currently collecting information on prayer groups in the archdiocese and will be publishing an up-to-date list on its website, catching up with changes since the disruption of the covid pandemic. (**FOR OTHER ARC PLANS, SEE PAGE 1**)

—Richard Dunstan

Catholic Renewal Services of B.C.

Nitz Baylon, Vancouver, 604-202-2998

Richard Dunstan, Victoria (chair),
250-477-4700

Cheryl Groves, Prince George,
250-632-1664

David MacIntyre, Victoria, 250-383-9955

Loree Renwick, Nelson, 250-354-7223

Janet Tng, Vancouver, 778-998-8098

Frans van der Woning, Kamloops,
250-851-5751

Lynne Williams, Nelson, 250-489-1702

GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS

(Continued from page 1)

It isn't just Alpha, and it isn't just here. Father Antoine Laviale, a former intern in Divine Renovation parish renewal in Halifax, returned home to ultra-secular France to find himself under siege by new Christians in his parish in Toulouse. RCIA classes which used to number 20 people are now up to 300, and there's a new Alpha course every three weeks. Organizers will have to raise up new leaders before everybody burns out.

And it's all God's work, Father Laviale told the FINE meeting via video. The Catholic Church, rocked by abuse scandals, short of funds and discouraged by secularization, has lost all influence in France. "We are nothing," he said. "I think the Lord now has a free hand to do what He wants. He can act in the hearts of people. A generation is coming back to church. They come to church for identity, and meet the Lord."

FINE exists to keep the good news coming, and the Good News too. Don't look for the FINE website on Google—it's not really an organization. It's literally a bunch of friends, representatives of more than two dozen ministries and groups who began getting together in November of 2023, barely 20 people at that time, and started inviting other friends doing similar work for the same Lord. The March meeting in Ottawa was the group's fourth, each one larger than the one before.

A key figure is Jeff Lockert, president of Catholic Christian Outreach student evangelization ministry. Lockert said FINE exists for three purposes: to build friendship and offer mutual support among leaders; to share a common vision for evangelization across the highly varied ministries; and to foster collaboration as the Christian world looks forward to the 2,000th anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus in 2033.

"Bringing together leaders from across the country around these aims was deeply enriching, inspiring, and filled with hope," Lockert said.

Speakers, besides Visser and Father Laviale, included Tim Glemkowski, former CEO for the National Eucharistic Conference in Indianapolis in 2024, and Dennis Girard,

director of PAC27 (Pan American Confraternity Forum), a major pre-2033 event planned for September 2027 in Ottawa.

In addition, extensive time was devoted to fellowship, including a "speed dating" session the opening night when participants were asked to introduce themselves to eight strangers in three minutes each, and small group prayer for one another's needs near the end of the meeting. Archbishop Marcel Dampousse of Ottawa hosted the meeting at the Basilica of Notre Dame in downtown Ottawa; he was principle concelebrant with more than a dozen priests and bishops at Mass, opened the basilica's downstairs Café des Tours for all the meeting sessions, and hosted a social gathering in his home adjoining the church.

Participants also spent an hour in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, seeking prophetic words from the Lord and sharing them with the group in the café afterwards.

Lockert said afterwards that FINE is entering into a period of discernment of its next steps. He said the PAC27 session next year will be "a meaningful moment for the Church in Canada to gather leaders, pray together, and begin to strategize more intentionally for mission across the country." Beyond that, FINE participants are planning to participate in Global 2033, a Catholic-led effort to spread the Gospel to everyone in time for the 2033 anniversary.

B.C. Renewal

published spring and fall

editor Richard Dunstan
308-225 Belleville St.
Victoria BC V8V 4T9

email: rccharismaticbc@gmail.com

website: bccharismatic.ca