



B.C. Renewal

(formerly B.C. Charismatic)

Serving the Catholic charismatic renewal in British Columbia

Fall 2026

'A great gift to the Church'

Pope Leo welcomes world charismatic leaders

Pope Leo XIV held his first meeting with leaders of the Catholic charismatic renewal May 30 at Paul VI audience hall in the Vatican. About 4,000 attended, from all over the world, including Canada. This is the text of his address:

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome! Buenos dias!

I am pleased to have my first meeting with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and to greet all of you present, as well as the communities, groups and schools of prayer and of evangelization that you represent. God has indeed blessed your communities with so many gifts, including spiritual vitality. I also greet the leaders of the national and international Services of Communion of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service (CHARIS), who have organized this gathering.

For the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the years following the Second Vatican Council were a time of great expansion and growth, and of integration into the life of the Church, as well as for consolidating your structures of service.

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My venerable Predecessors recognized this development as a great gift to the Church. Indeed, Saint Paul VI affirmed that nothing is more necessary for such an increasingly secularized world than the witness of this spiritual renewal, which the Holy Spirit is inspiring in the most diverse regions and communities (Cf. *Address to the Third International Congress of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, Pentecost, 19 May 1975).

In emphasizing your characteristic focus on evangelization, Saint John Paul II said: "It is the Spirit Himself who impels you to bear witness." He likewise remarked: "How can anyone who has tasted the goodness of Christ remain silent and inactive?... Christ is our Savior... How can we fail to evangelize? Continue to communicate this zeal for the Gospel to those around you!" (*Address to the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic*

Communities, 7 December 1991).

For his part, Benedict XVI referred to the specific contribution you make to the Church. He said: "One of the positive elements and aspects of the Community of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely their emphasis on the charisms or gifts of the Holy Spirit and their merit lies in having recalled their topicality in the Church" (*Address to the 13th International Conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowship*, 31 October 2008).

Like Cardinal Suenens in the early days of the movement, Pope Francis frequently spoke of you as a "flood of grace," which is "for the whole Church, not just for some" (*Prayer Vigil on the Occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, 3 June 2017). In summary, he outlined your path as "evangelization, spiritual ecumenism, caring for the poor and needy, and welcoming the marginalized," and added, "all of it is based on worship! The foundation of

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Don't let the Church disappear!

By **RICHARD DUNSTAN**

The Fourth Century has come back. In fact, it's right outside the door of your parish church.

That's the century when the Roman Empire stopped throwing Christians to the lions and started letting them worship freely. So off they went, telling the Good News to people who had never heard of Jesus.

That needs to happen again, says Father Jack Michalchuk. Before it's too late.

Father Michalchuk was featured speaker at the Nelson diocesan Catholic renewal conference, held in Osoyoos in April. Theme for the conference was a single word—*Come*—that covered three realities.

Jesus comes to us. He invites us to come to Him. Then He sends us out to invite other people to come to Him. And that third step is getting more urgent by the day.

Mass attendance is looking fairly good right now, but a lot of that is due to all the new Canadians in the pews, Father Michalchuk said. The rest of the congregation is getting old and dying off. "Don't be fooled by the immigration bump. It's going to fall off a cliff." Meanwhile, Anglican statistician Neil Elliot has said his own church is on track to disappear altogether in about 2040.

Outside the doors, the culture is no longer even superficially Christian. "The new generation knows nothing about Jesus or the Church," Father Michalchuk said. "But they're wide open. We need to evangelize like it's the Fourth Century, not the Twentieth." We need the *old* evangelization (seeking the lost) as well as the New Evangelization (low-commitment or lapsed Catholics).

There are many signs of hope. For example, France. It's the most secularized formerly Catholic country in the world, and most people have no religious knowledge and no baggage. Conversions are triple what they were 10 years ago. "The culture has failed them, and that's good news, because we have something that won't fail them."

But we need to get on with it. Here are a few principles:

Nelson conference

Get better equipped in our own faith. Too many church workers have no lived experience of God in their own lives. Only about five per cent of the world's 1.422 billion nominal Catholics are intentional in their own religious lives. That would mean there are only 71 million disciplined Catholics (less than twice the population of Canada) on the face of the earth.

Be holy missionaries—
"the more holy you are, the more open people will be."

Invoke the Holy Spirit, at the beginning and end of each day, and rely on the gifts of the Spirit in our evangelism; without those gifts our work will bear far less fruit.

Don't change Church teaching. The Anglicans tried that. The culture applauded, but that didn't bring people back to church. But always **speak the truth in love**; truth without love can be a weapon, but love without truth can walk people to the gates of hell.

Aim at adults. Focusing on youngsters doesn't work because the results won't be sustainable if their parents aren't alive in their own faith.

Offer "shallow entry points," easily accessible and not intimidating—for example, The Search, Alpha, or Catholic Christian Outreach faith studies. "Invite people, but not *here*" (conferences like this one), he told the audience of longtime charismatic Catholics.

Send labourers to the harvest, as prayer groups and individuals. "At least offer to your priest," he said.

Father Michalchuk, a native of Calgary, is pastor of St. Joseph Church in Smithers and was formerly co-director of evangelization and catechesis for the Diocese of Prince George. He has worked closely with John Connelly, now of St. Paul, Alberta, a frequent speaker at events in the Nelson diocese and elsewhere in B.C.

The conference was sponsored by Nelson Diocesan Catholic Renewal Services.

It's time to get close to the Spirit

We need to walk with the Holy Spirit every day, says Father Mark Schwab. We'll end up in the right place.

"The anointing of the Holy Spirit leads us to heaven," he told an audience of 150 at Vancouver's Pentecost vigil celebration.

Father Schwab, spiritual director for ARC (Archdiocesan Renewal Committee), was featured speaker at Pentecost 2026 Praisefest, a prayer breakfast held May 23 at St. Bernadette's parish in Surrey.

"The Holy Spirit is the source of holiness," he told the crowd, "so every one of us, whoever we were, whatever we were, can receive that life."

Father Schwab said he was raised in a faithful Catholic family, but the Holy Spirit wasn't a conscious factor in his life, and even when he entered seminary to study for the priesthood, his faith was more formal than real—a lot like the faith of the apostles when Jesus ascended into heaven, before the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost.

"I didn't understand what that faith was," he said. "I was just a functionary. I knew that faith wasn't alive in me."

Then he was baptized in the Holy Spirit at a Life in the Spirit Seminar he had not even wanted to attend. Totally skeptical when he arrived, he was overcome by the power of the Spirit, his life and priesthood have never been the same. Now, he was like the apostles after Pentecost—"they're walking out with this arsenal!"

St. Basil tells us that the Spirit is given to each of us in proportion to our faith. And St. Paul tells us (1 Corinthians 12:11) that the Spirit apportions His gifts to us individually, as the Spirit chooses and as each of us needs.

We need to pray for those gifts as we need them, he said, and we need to expect manifestations of the Spirit in our lives. "If you've looked in the mirror and said 'I don't have any of these gifts,' you're lying to yourself." Don't be shy or fearful. "Are we afraid to pray for that fervor? Are we afraid people will make fun of us?" Forget about that—"if your neighbour can't hear you, pray louder."

Father Schwab closed with four pieces of advice for living in the Holy Spirit.

1. **Shift your source of trust**—"from here (pointing at his chest) to here (pointing upward toward God). God is building boldly in each of us, even with all our faults and struggles."

2. **Anchor yourself in the Word of God.**

"Bible" stands for Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth, he said. As we read, our doubts and fears go away.

3. **Draw near to God in prayer.** "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in need." (Hebrews 4:16). See God even in the mirror.

4. **Focus on the present.** "God doesn't remember confessed sins, so why are you dragging it around?" Leave your sins at the foot of the crucifix every night and every morning. "We have no control of our past, and God is in control of our future."

—**Richard Dunstan**

Pentecost Praisefest

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St. Thomas Aquinas on charisms:

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), an Italian Dominican friar, is widely considered the most influential theologian and philosopher in the history of the Catholic Church. His best-known work is the *Summa Theologiae*. Fr. Gabriel de Chadarevian is a longtime leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal in BC. He has taught theology at Dominican University in Ottawa and at Redeemer Pacific College in Langley, and is currently assistant pastor at St. Mary's Parish in Vancouver.

AQUINAS AND HIS THEOLOGY OF CHARISMS:

Guidelines for the Present-Day Catholic Charismatic Renewal

By GABRIEL de CHADAREVIAN O.P.

1. Introduction

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), now more than five decades old, has sought to integrate the experience of the Holy Spirit's gifts with the fullness of Catholic doctrine and ecclesial life. Among the Church's theological resources, the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas remains uniquely valuable. Although Aquinas lived centuries before modern charismatic movements, his theology of *gratia gratis data* ("grace freely given") provides a rigorous, ecclesially grounded framework for understanding charisms, their purpose, their discernment, and their relationship to sanctifying grace.

This article surveys Aquinas' treatment of charisms across his major works — the *Summa Theologiae*, his commentaries on Paul's letters, and his Gospel commentaries — and concludes with guidelines for the CCR today.

2. Aquinas' Foundational Distinction: Sanctifying Grace and Charisms

Aquinas' theology begins with a crucial distinction between sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) and charisms (*gratiae gratis datae*). In *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q.111, a.1, he writes that one kind of grace "makes a person pleasing to God," while another is given "for the purpose of helping another." This distinction structures his entire theology of charisms.

- Sanctifying grace transforms the person interiorly.
- Charisms are ordered to the good of the Church, not to the sanctity of the one who receives them.

Thus, a person may possess extraordinary gifts and yet lack holiness. Conversely, the holiest Christians may not receive spectacular charisms. This principle protects the CCR from confusing spiritual power with spiritual maturity.

3. The Purpose of Charisms: Building Up the Body of Christ

Aquinas consistently interprets charisms through 1 Corinthians 12–14, which he comments on extensively.

3.1. Charisms exist for ecclesial edification

In *Super I ad Corinthios* 12, Aquinas states that the Spirit distributes gifts "for the building up of the Church," not for the personal advantage of the one who receives them, and that they are given "for the common good."

This is his most repeated claim about charisms. Their value is measured by how they serve the Body, not by their impressiveness.

3.2. Diversity and unity of gifts

Commenting on 1 Cor 12:4–6, Aquinas notes that the diversity of gifts does not imply division, because "the same Spirit works all these things."

Charisms are signs of the Spirit's richness, not of spiritual inequality.

4. Aquinas' Classification of Charisms

Aquinas follows Paul's list in 1 Cor 12:8–10 and interprets each gift with precision in *ST* II-II, qq.171–178 and in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.

4.1. Gifts of knowledge

Aquinas distinguishes between the *sermo sapientiae* ("word of wisdom") and the *sermo scientiae* ("word of knowledge"), treating wisdom as a gift that orders the mind to divine things in a way that directs the whole of life toward God.

- **Word of wisdom:** deep insight into divine mysteries.
- **Word of knowledge:** the ability to explain the faith clearly.

indispensable for our work today

4.2. Gifts of power

Aquinas explains that the charismatic gift of faith (*fides miraculorum*) is a divinely infused certitude by which a person becomes an instrument of God's power, enabling effects beyond natural capacity.

- **Faith** (miracle-working faith): a certitude divinely infused.
- **Gifts of healing**: restoring bodily health by divine power.

4.3. Gifts of speech

Aquinas teaches that prophecy is a divinely given knowledge of things beyond human understanding, granted for the building up of the Church. He further explains that discernment of spirits is the ability to judge whether a revelation or inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit, the human mind, or a demonic source.

Aquinas also insists that the gift of tongues must be ordered to intelligibility and ecclesial edification, which is why he places such emphasis on the interpretation of tongues in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 14.

- **Prophecy**: divinely inspired knowledge of things beyond human understanding.
- **Discernment of spirits**: judging whether a revelation is from the Holy Spirit.
- **Tongues and interpretation**: ordered to the manifestation of faith.

Aquinas emphasizes that prophecy is the most important charismatic gift because it most directly builds up the Church.

5. Charisms in Aquinas' Gospel Commentaries

Aquinas' biblical commentaries reveal a pastoral sensitivity often overlooked.

5.1. Charisms as signs of the Kingdom

Commenting on Christ's miracles in John 9, Aquinas writes that Christ's works "produce faith in the things that He says."

Thus, charismatic gifts in the Church continue Christ's mission of manifesting the Kingdom.

5.2. The Spirit's sovereign freedom

On John 3:8 ("The Spirit blows where He wills"), Aquinas comments that the Holy Spirit

is given "according to His own will," not human measure.

This supports the CCR's insistence that the Spirit cannot be controlled, manipulated, or reduced to technique.

6. Charisms in Aquinas' Commentary on Romans

In *Super ad Romanos* 12, Aquinas interprets Paul's list of gifts (prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, mercy):

"Men are filled with diverse graces, as though with diverse liquids."

This reinforces:

- humility in exercising gifts,
- obedience to ecclesial order,
- discernment of one's vocation.

7. Discernment of Charisms

Aquinas offers criteria still essential today.

7.1. Conformity to faith

"No revelation contrary to faith can be from the Holy Spirit." (ST II-II q.172 a.6).

7.2. Fruits of charity

"The end of all the gifts is charity." (ST II-II q.171 a.4).

7.3. Ecclesial submission

"Prophets must submit their revelations to the judgment of the Church." (ST II-II q.172 a.2 ad 2).

These principles safeguard the CCR from individualism and doctrinal drift.

8. Aquinas' Theology of Charisms and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Today

Aquinas provides a theological framework that is remarkably aligned with the CCR's best instincts.

8.1. Charisms are normal, not exceptional

Aquinas never treats charisms as rare. They are part of the Church's ordinary life.

8.2. Charisms serve mission

They exist for evangelization, teaching, healing, and strengthening the Body — precisely the CCR's aims.

8.3. Charisms require discernment

Aquinas' criteria help the CCR avoid emotionalism, doctrinal confusion, or spiritual pride.

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POPE MEETS CHARISMATIC LEADERS

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the renewal is worshipping God!" (Address at the 37th National Convocation of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit, 1 June 2014).

I, too, wish to foster the relationship of mutual respect, closeness and support between the See of Peter and the great family of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In this regard, I would like to reflect on the following key aspects of your spiritual experience: baptism in the Spirit; prayer of praise; the word of God; communion; and charity.

First, *baptism in the Spirit*. Your shared journey of faith has its source in the personal experience of the Holy Spirit, which has enabled the grace of Baptism to become effective within each of you, leading you to a clear awareness of God's love. This is the first powerful experience of grace that Saint Augustine himself had after his conversion and which he described in these heartfelt words: "O Christ Jesus, 'my helper and redeemer'; suddenly it had become sweet to me to be without the sweets of folly. What I once feared to lose was now a delight to dismiss. You turned them out and entered to take their place, pleasanter than any pleasure" (*Confessions*, IX, 1, 1).

The Holy Spirit has likewise allowed you to taste the sweetness of Christ. For you, too, life has changed since that moment. God ceased to be a mere idea and became the real and ultimate expression of fatherhood. His Spirit has brought inner reconciliation, peace and freedom from worldly attachments and the oppression of sin. He has also made possible a new outlook characterized by openness and hope towards others and the future, in the certainty that nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ (cf. *Rom* 8:38–39). From this experience of the Holy Spirit comes the inner desire to be witnesses and heralds of His love, bringing His consolation to people oppressed by a sense of emptiness and loneliness.

Prayer of praise. It was precisely from this captivating experience of the Holy Spirit that a new life of prayer began, taking the form of a new capacity for spontaneous and sincere dialogue with God, and a new openness to praise, worship and offering thanksgiving to Him. Worship and praise, which are so characteristic of your gatherings, are essential aspects of Christian prayer, and you have helped them to

be rediscovered and brought them back to the forefront in recent years.

The word of God. The renewed outpouring of the Spirit has also led you to a living encounter with Sacred Scripture. The Holy Spirit inspired the revealed word of God and is also the One who keeps it ever alive and active in the Church, causing it to resonate in the hearts of believers, especially in the Liturgy. Scripture has therefore become for you a wonderful source of spiritual nourishment that enlightens and comforts. It is similarly a source of discernment for guiding your daily choices, and gives substance to communal prayer, enabling you to address the Lord with words inspired by God Himself.

Communion. The Holy Spirit is the wellspring of communion. In various documents, Pope Leo XIII encouraged Catholics to pray a novena to the Holy Spirit each year between the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, especially for the intention of Christian unity. You clearly appreciate the significance of this invitation, for you have seen that unity in the Church is the fruit of the Spirit, because, as Saint Augustine affirms, the Holy Spirit "is a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son" (*De Trinitate*, V, 11, 12). It is the Spirit who creates harmony among the various charisms and components of the Charismatic Renewal, as well as with our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations.

And finally, *charity*. Saint Augustine wrote that the Holy Spirit "who is Himself love, has been given to man and inflames him to the love of God and neighbor. For man can have no love for God unless he be given it from God" (*De Trinitate*, XV, 17, 31). This is what you, too, have experienced. The renewed presence of the Spirit has awakened in you a new capacity to love, inspired by divine charity itself. This love is directed toward God and toward your brothers and sisters, and inspires closeness and compassion, especially for those who are suffering. Many works of charity for those in need, both in spirit and in body, have sprung from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I invite you, then, to keep alive this love for the poor, which reveals the true face of God.

Dear friends, I thank you for your commitment and encourage you to continue your mission. Put yourselves at the service of the dioceses and of

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ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ON CHARISMS IN THE CHURCH

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8.4. Charisms flourish within ecclesial order

Aquinas insists that gifts must be exercised in communion with pastors and the magisterium — a principle the CCR has increasingly embraced.

8.5. Charisms deepen, not replace, sanctifying grace

Aquinas' distinction between sanctifying grace and charisms helps the CCR maintain balance: charisms are signs of God's action, but holiness is the true measure of the Spirit's work.

9. Conclusion: The Value of Aquinas for the CCR

Aquinas offers the CCR a theological vision that is:

- biblically grounded,
- ecclesially faithful,
- spiritually balanced,
- open to the full range of the Spirit's gifts.

His insistence that charisms are for the building up of the Church, his careful distinctions between types of gifts, and his criteria for discernment provide a stable foundation for charismatic life today.

In a time when the CCR seeks deeper integration into the Church's pastoral

mission, Aquinas stands as a trustworthy guide. His theology affirms the legitimacy and beauty of charismatic gifts while grounding them in charity, humility, and ecclesial communion. For these reasons, Aquinas' theology of charisms is not merely historically interesting — it is pastorally indispensable for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the present day.

POPE'S TALK TO LEADERS

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parishes, offering your experience and methods of evangelization. Faithfully follow the guidance of your priests; and, in your communal discernment, listen to the voices of wise people, even if they do not belong to your groups. Cultivate harmony and cooperation among the communities to which you belong, taking care never to give way to the desire for self-promotion, or the pursuit of power or personal prestige. May the Holy Spirit always be a light and a source of strength on your personal and communal journey, and may the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, protect you. And now, with these heartfelt sentiments, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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Your prayers and financial support are appreciated.

Vancouver conference set for Oct. 9-10

Restore the Joy of Your Salvation will be the theme of the 2026 Vancouver Catholic charismatic conference, to be held Oct. 9 and 10 at Immaculate Conception parish in Delta.

The conference is sponsored by ARC (Archdiocesan Renewal Committee), its first since the fall of 2022.

Featured speakers will be Father Isaac Longworth of Halifax, a member of the Companions of the Cross, and Melvin De Paz of Winnipeg, executive director of the Catholic charismatic renewal for Manitoba. De Paz was featured speaker at a conference at St. Mary's parish in Vancouver last fall, sponsored by Catholic Renewal Services of Canada.

The conference will run from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Friday Oct. 9, and 8:45 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. Saturday Oct. 10, in the school gym at the parish.

The conference will include two talks by each speaker, praise and worship, Eucharistic adoration, prayer room ministry, confession, and a healing service and altar call. It will end in time for the parish 4 p.m. Mass.

"In these times of turbulence, division, fear and doubts, we turn to our only recourse for true joy and cry out to Him, 'Save us, Lord!'," says Danny Guerrero, chair of ARC. "We draw on the power of Jesus' Holy Spirit by coming together, and find healing, forgiveness and hope, to then become witnesses of true joy."

"Come be refreshed with vibrant prayers enlightening talks for our Spirit-led growth in our love of God and fellowship with others, drawing us to be as one body in Christ. As Psalm 35 reminds us, '*But my soul shall rejoice in the Lord and shall be delighted in His salvation.*'"

Early registration is encouraged. Email info.vccrs@gmail.com or scan the QR code in the conference poster. Registration cost is \$30.

ARC was reconstituted last fall after a period of inactivity, with Guerrero as chair and Father Mark Schwab, Archbishop Richard Smith's delegate to the charismatic renewal, as spiritual director. Since then, the committee has sponsored a prayer breakfast and a Pentecost Praisefest.(see Page 3).

CHARIS prayer intentions for September

For the Church

We pray with the Holy Father for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

We pray for the preparations happening across the world toward World Youth Day 2027 in South Korea.

For CHARIS

We pray for abundant fruit of CHARIS Continental meetings that are currently happening or in preparation as well as for all CHARIS projects which at all levels aim to bring forward our mission for spreading the current of Grace, build up Christian unity and serve the peripheries.

We pray for the preparations for the upcoming CHARIS Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Assisi from 13 to 18 May 2027 and those at continental and national levels. May the Lord guide the organizers and provide all needed resources to have fruitful celebrations.

For the World

We keep storming heavens claiming peace in the world. May the Holy Spirit touch the hearts of key leaders whose selfish or ambitious motives are blocking the road to peace in several areas of the world.

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