

Sion Community, Brentwood

May 25, 2013

Talk 2: Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

New ICCRS booklet on BHS (Mary Healy and PH). What is important or useful about it?

1. “Baptism in the Spirit is a life-transforming experience of the love of God the Father poured into one’s heart by the Holy Spirit, received through a surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.” (I, p. 13). A trinitarian description: language of “surrender” to the “Lordship of Jesus”. Language of “sovereign” (gift of God, I, 1, p. 14)
2. “The charisms that characterize the Charismatic Renewal flow from the surrender to Jesus that is at the heart of baptism in the Spirit. The charisms are manifestations of the sovereignty of the risen Lord that are meant to be received gratefully, fostered, and used generously.”
3. The description in 1 gets beyond the McDonnell and Sullivan theories; accepts what is true in both. But neither adequate on their own. Both new move of God from outside (role of Word, role of ministry) and surging up of life already within.
4. We note that some speak of Baptism, some of Effusion, some other terms. “Each of the terminological traditions has *its own legitimacy and its own limitations, linked to different cultural and ecclesial contexts*. The fact that different terms continue to be used is an indication of the richness of the reality, which cannot be fully captured in any single phrase.” (III, 1, p. 64). My view is that Baptism language presents the full challenge, because of its link to Pentecost.
5. Takes up John Paul II distinction between institutional and charismatic dimensions of the Church. Say BHS belongs to charismatic dimension. This is not further developed in the document, but it has major implications.

Let's look more closely at some of these key points. Sovereignty of Jesus: it is risen and ascended Lord who sovereignly pours out the Holy Spirit. BHS is our surrender/yielding to this sovereignty: fully believing it (Jesus risen from the dead, clothed with power from on high, the one who is always breathing out/giving His Spirit) and thus being open to constant leading, guidance and empowerment by the Spirit.

In this context, the pneumatic charisms (spiritual gifts) are ways in which we take hold of the Lord's gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. They are part of a lifestyle – of the yielded disciple filled with the Spirit.

This requires a presentation and teaching on baptism in the Spirit in fully Trinitarian terms: the action of the Father who sends His Son and who pours out His Spirit. The movement from the Father through the Spirit to the Son (giving everything) and then from the Son again through the Spirit to us, the Christian believers in the fellowship of the Church. We have to think Trinitarian, speak Trinitarian, live Trinitarian. It is not enough to speak of more grace, more power, more love.

How does this relate to the priorities of Pope Francis? Baptism in the Spirit is about the greatness of Jesus, the extraordinary self-giving love of Jesus. Jesus is the one who baptizes with Holy Spirit. Can we go out to the extremities and the peripheries without the power of the risen Lord? Is the New Evangelization really possible without the power of the Holy Spirit? This will be the theme of the third talk.

So baptism in the Spirit is not about spiritual privilege. It is about knowing Jesus, about depending on Jesus, about communicating Jesus.