

Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Almost three years ago, Dr Mary Healy and I were asked by Bishop Joe Grech from Australia to prepare a document on baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS) directed to pastoral leaders in the Catholic charismatic renewal (CCR), which is now well advanced in preparation. Work on this document required attention to many issues that I want to address in this talk.

What ought an adequate theological reflection on this theme to provide? I would express the theological task for Catholics in this way:

1. to reflect theologically on all aspects of this phenomenon, first identifying its distinguishing features and characteristics;
2. to relate this grace-event to the whole Catholic heritage within the ongoing flow of Catholic tradition.

The first point assumes that Christian experience today is itself a *locus theologicus*. Christian experience means primarily our entire life-experience, our awareness of God, of ourselves, of society and of others. It means much more than our emotions, than what we feel. In some way, we are dealing with the acts of the Holy Spirit today. This empirical starting-point comes naturally to someone formed in the English-speaking world. The inclusion of the actual life of the Church today as a theological datum is one of the contributions to Catholic theology from Blessed John Henry Newman. But this approach must be more than an examination of individual experience. CCR is a corporate phenomenon in the life of the post-conciliar church and has a distinctive character as an identifiable current that has spread throughout the world. Any theological account that does not do justice to its overall character and its distinctiveness is inadequate.

The second point would relate the renewal to the whole Catholic heritage, doing justice to the unique foundational role of the Sacred Scriptures, to its transmission through the centuries, and the witness of the Fathers of the Church, and the teaching office of the magisterium. Theological reflection belongs to the whole body of the faithful, but is a particular responsibility of theologians; it is intrinsically related to a spiritual discernment, which is a particular responsibility of the bishops, led by the Holy Father. All Catholic theological reflection is a service to the Church and is offered to the magisterium for discernment, for an official response and a possible influence on official Church teaching.

Key Characteristics of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

I would see the following as hallmarks of this Renewal that have to be included in an adequate theological reflection:

- the character of baptism in the Holy Spirit as an identifiable spiritual event in the lives of participants, described as baptism in the Spirit or by equivalent terms; it can be summarized as an interior revelation of the love of God and the active lordship of the risen Jesus, leading to a transformed life in the power of the Holy Spirit;

- its central role in CCR, so that one can say in effect: without BHS, no CCR;
- the sovereign element in BHS, that manifests the sovereignty of this work of grace, its gratuitous character that manifests to the believer and to the Church a certain “directness” of divine relationship and communication; I say a “certain directness” because it is not a denial of the mediation of human consciousness, of human language and of the ecclesial character of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that one theologian could say it is a “mediated immediacy”¹;
- the “revelatory” character of BHS, producing a facility to hear and receive the Word of God;
- the transforming impact of BHS on many dimensions of Christian life (personal prayer, praise and worship, evangelization, formation, family life, priestly ministry, service to society);
- the relationship between BHS and the charisms, particularly the *charismata pneumatika* of 1 Cor. 12;
- an apparent link between BHS and the gift of speaking in tongues, while rejecting the widespread Pentecostal teaching on tongues as the necessary “initial evidence” of BHS;
- the creative character of CCR, illustrated by the rise of new forms of community life and new patterns of evangelization;
- the ecumenical dimension of BHS and charismatic renewal, as the charismatic movement began among other Christians and the Catholic origins were influenced by these earlier sources in a variety of ways;²
- the correlation between the Second Vatican Council and the beginnings of CCR (Pope John XXIII’s prayer for “a new Pentecost”³ and the Council’s teaching, for example, on charisms, on the call and the role of the laity, on the Scriptures being accessible to all, on ecumenism).

The Issue of Terminology

This central experiential reality in CCR was known at the outset as *baptism in the Spirit*. In fact, BHS was the common designation from the beginning whereas CCR was only accepted as a regular name for the whole movement several years later. BHS has remained the normal usage in English-speaking nations. In some other nations and languages, a different terminology has developed; for example, *effusion de l’Esprit* in French or the equivalent, though less exclusively, *effusione dello Spirito* in Italian, *efusion del Espiritu* in Spanish, and *Geistausgiessung* (Spirit-outpouring) or *Tauferneuerung* (baptismal renewal) in German.

The major reason for seeking alternative phrases to BHS was the pastoral concern that there should be no confusion between this grace-event and the sacrament of baptism. The Catholic tradition is clear that there is only one baptism (see Eph. 4: 5) that cannot be repeated. Any teaching of two distinct and unrelated baptisms, one in water and one in the Spirit, found among most Pentecostals and many

¹ Fr Piet Schoonenberg, sj in the 1970s.

² In this paper I use the term “ecumenical” to describe all inter-confessional and inter-denominational aspects of the charismatic movement. This does not mean that all participants have an ecumenical vision or an ecumenical motivation.

³ The prayer of John XXIII composed for the period of preparation and meeting of the Council began with the words: “Renew, O Lord, Thy wonders in our day as on the day of Pentecost.”

charismatic Evangelicals is not acceptable.

Why then has the terminology of BHS remained in the English-speaking world? Is it merely due to lesser theological rigour and objectivity? My personal view is that it is not. The underlying reason seems to be the close association in Scripture between the language of BHS and the event of Pentecost, an association that is not as clearly present with the other terms. In the New Testament, although the noun or substantive form BHS is never found, the verb form is used by John the Baptist to describe the goal of Jesus' mission ("He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" [Matt. 4: 11]⁴). In John's Gospel, Jesus is simply the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1: 33)⁵. Pope Benedict has seen in this testimony of John the Baptist a description of the entire ministry of Jesus: "Jesus was revealed as the One who came to baptize humanity in the Holy Spirit: he came to give men and women life in abundance (cf. John 10:10)."⁶ Very significantly, there are only two events indicated as occasions when this prophecy of the Baptist was fulfilled: the day of Pentecost ("in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" Acts 1: 5, which follows the promise in Luke 24: 49) and the "Gentile Pentecost" in the home of Cornelius, which St Peter saw as a fulfilment of this prophecy (Acts 11: 16), saying: "if God gave them the same gift as he gave us" (Acts 11; 17), a reference back to the day of Pentecost.

From the beginnings of CCR, as in the overall charismatic movement, BHS was understood in relation to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church on the day of Pentecost. The implications of this conviction need to be explored for an adequate understanding of BHS. Briefly, this connection with Pentecost indicates the corporate character of this outpouring ("it is for the Church"), its foundational character, and even a certain uniqueness (it is not just one among many graces). This raises important questions concerning the CCR, to which we will need to return. It points to the inadequacy of trying to define BHS as a distinctive spirituality.

BHS and the Church

The ICCRS document on baptism in the Spirit addresses the question: Is BHS for everyone or only for some in the Church? This is closely related to other questions: Is CCR in some way for the whole Church or is it simply one renewal movement among many in the contemporary Church? Can BHS and CCR be fitted into existing categories? I want to suggest a nuanced answer that says both Yes and No to these questions. In fact, Cardinal Suenens addressed these questions in his book *Une nouvelle Pentecôte?* in 1974.⁷ The Cardinal was clear: CCR is for the whole Church; it is not one renewal movement among many. In fact, he wrote: "To grasp the meaning of the Charismatic Renewal and its true bearing on our lives, we have to avoid two tendencies. First, we should not apply to it ready made

⁴ Similarly in Luke 3: 16.

⁵ See also Mark 1: 8.

⁶ Benedict XVI, Angelus message on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 13, 2008. The Holy Father's Angelus message on the feast of Pentecost in 2008 made the same point. On this second occasion, the Pope said, very significantly: "In this baptism of the Holy Spirit the personal and communal dimensions -- the "I" of the disciple and the "we" of the Church -- are inseparable."

⁷ English translation, 1975.

categories. Secondly, we should not see in this Renewal just one more movement to be set alongside many others in the Church today, or, worse still, as in competition with them. Rather than a movement, Charismatic Renewal is a moving of the Holy Spirit which can reach all Christians, lay or cleric. It is comparable to a high voltage current of grace that is coursing through the Church.”⁸ From my recollections of the mid-1970s, the Cardinal was articulating the gut instinct of Catholics deeply impacted through BHS. This position has been repeated on several occasions by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, ofm cap, who has said of BHS: “The Baptism in the Spirit is PENTECOST. For the apostles it was the First Pentecost; for us it is a New Pentecost.”⁹

In the first Catholic reflections on the significance of CCR for the Church, several made a comparison with the liturgical movement. Stephen Clark argued that just as the liturgical movement was a movement in the Church that was destined to disappear into a Church that was thoroughly renewed liturgically, so the charismatic renewal is a movement destined to disappear into a Church totally renewed charismatically.¹⁰ So if CCR is primarily a current of grace should we describe it as a movement? Like the liturgical movement, the charismatic movement is not first an organized movement: it is a worldwide current of shared experience, of shared convictions, and inchoately of a common vision.¹¹ But, as an unexpected and unplanned outpouring of divine grace, CCR had to take shape in the life of the Church and develop structures for its promotion, for formation, for coordination and for a constructive relationship to church authority: very simple structures for prayer meetings and more developed forms for covenant communities and for national service committees (NSCs). Communities in particular require patterns of membership, procedures for admitting new members and choosing leaders, followed later by canonical statutes recognized by the Church. As this process develops, CCR takes on some but not all the characteristics of the organized movements. So with the rise and the encouragement of the “new ecclesial movements”(NEMs), which in practice means organized forms of spiritual renewal, CCR is classified as a NEM under the responsibility of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.¹²

On the other hand, as a work of the Holy Spirit by which a Christian deeply experiences the reality of being a son or daughter of the Father, of being redeemed by Jesus Christ to live under his lordship and

⁸ L. J. Cardinal Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 110. “Pour saisir la signification du nouveau charismatique et sa véritable portée, il faut se garder d’y appliquer des catégories toutes faites et en particulier d’y voir un mouvement à juxtaposer à d’autres mouvements ou pis encore en concurrence avec ceux-ci. Il ne s’agit vraiment pas de cela, mais bien d’une motion de l’Esprit à l’usage de tout chrétien, qu’il soit clerc ou laïc, d’un courant de grâce qui passe et qui porte à une plus haute tension consciente la dimension charismatique inhérente à l’Eglise. Car tous les chrétiens sont charismatiques par définition; ce qui les distingue, c’est la conscience plus ou moins vive qu’ils ont de cette réalité fondamentale nécessairement commune. Il ne s’agit donc pas d’un mouvement particulier si on entend par là une organisation structurée et des membres affiliés avec quelque obligation définie. Pour se rattacher à ce courant, il n’est même pas requis d’être associé à un groupe constitué de prière.” (French original: *Une Nouvelle Pentecôte?* (Desclee de Brouwer, 1974), p. 133 – 34).

⁹ From talk on “Why the Charismatic Renewal?”, *Good News* 181 (Jan. – Feb. 2006), p. 22.

¹⁰ Stephen B. Clark, art. on “Charismatic Renewal in the Church” in Kevin & Dorothy Ranaghan (eds.) *As the Spirit Leads Us* (Paramus, NJ: The Paulist Press, 1971), pp. 17 – 37 (see esp. pp. 25 – 28).

¹¹ There may be a secular comparison with the civil rights movement.

¹² The NEMs have received more prominent with a higher recognition of their importance for the future of the Church since the Rome convocation of all the NEMs by Pope John Paul II at Pentecost 1998.

part of the living body of Christ by the love, life and power of the Holy Spirit, CCR is not an organized movement. This work of the Spirit can happen without joining any group or community. In this sense, BHS is available to every Christian. Determining how many people are involved in CCR is notoriously difficult as there is no official membership in many, maybe most, prayer groups and NSCs are typically service bodies, not entities to which prayer groups belong or are affiliated.

Thus in regard to CCR as an ecclesial movement, we need to distinguish between CCR as a current of grace that is wider than all the structured movements, and organized movements with membership, defined leadership and official statutes. CCR itself does not have the structured forms of commitment through which Catholics join organized movements of spiritual renewal. What is fully comparable are the forms of commitment made by new members when they join charismatic communities, such as those belonging to this Fraternity. These structured forms cannot be said to be for everyone in the Church, as they express particular ways of living out the grace of BHS within the Catholic Church. Thus distinctive styles of prayer and prayer-ministry that have arisen within CCR as fruits of BHS cannot be normative.

Even with this distinction between what in BHS is intended for all and what cannot be expected of all, some may feel that this understanding retains an elitist element, implying a superiority of CCR and all who have opened themselves to BHS over the rest of the Church. Here we come back to the dilemma: how do we do justice to the particular character of BHS and the charismatic renewal in a way that recognizes the character of the whole Church as formed by the Lord through the Holy Spirit without making exaggerated and elitist claims. Maybe it will help to offer a short description of the difference between initially unplanned movements such as CCR and organized NEMs with identifiable founders. The characteristics of BHS suggest that it is a grace of huge potential stemming from its sovereign and “direct” character, but it does not bring instant maturity. The organized NEMs shaped by founders or foundresses with a clear vision, often nurtured over years of preparation and purification, are more mature than much of CCR, because CCR has no membership as such, no obligatory periods of formation and no framework of necessary spiritual formation.¹³ So the claim that CCR has a special character flowing from the distinctiveness of BHS in no way implies a spiritual superiority on the part of Catholic participants.

These questions are of great importance for all bishops in the exercise of their/your pastoral responsibilities. By the nature of their office, bishops have a responsibility for all the faithful entrusted to them and cannot be promoters of one group or renewal movement in preference to all others. In the light of this distinction between what in BHS is for all and what is for some, there is a difference between seeing the wider movement of the Holy Spirit and encouraging the particular forms expressed within the framework of organized CCR. From the nature of CCR and BHS, it seems to me that it can never be a legitimate requirement that all Catholic charismatic groups join a particular structure. What is essential is the Catholic spirit of *koinonia*.¹⁴

The Ecumenical Dimension

¹³ Life in the Spirit seminars, where they exist, are very short and merely initiatory.

¹⁴ See John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, para. 30.

Much Catholic literature presents CCR as a Catholic movement without any reference to Pentecostal and Protestant precedents and influences. As one whose doctoral dissertation was on the origins of the charismatic movement, examining in detail the origins in four countries (USA, UK, Canada and France) and gathering information from many others, I can say that the idea that CCR is a totally distinct Catholic movement without Protestant antecedents was a later formulation that you do not find in the writings of the first years. The evidence is clear: baptism in the Spirit as experienced in this 20th-century current of grace did not begin in the Catholic Church. In fact, in its present form, it began among the Pentecostals and spread much later to the mainline Protestant communions. This background necessitated for Catholics a distinction between the basic charismatic experience and grace on the one hand and the accompanying theological explanations on the other hand. However, my research also showed that there were several unique features about the way this renewal began within the Catholic Church that were quite different from its beginnings among Protestants. These included: the strong ecclesial commitment of the Catholics first impacted, which produced a strong desire for this grace to be recognized by the Church; their sense that this grace was for the renewal of the whole Church; the renewal context created by the Second Vatican Council; the university context, which meant that CCR never had the anti-intellectual overtones found among many Pentecostals and some Evangelicals.¹⁵

I want to offer a few comments on the importance of the ecumenical dimension.¹⁶ The way unplanned movements of the Spirit begin tells us something important about God's purpose within such movements. The charismatic renewal represents the first time in the history of the Church that a movement (in the wider sense) that began among other Christians spread to and was received within the Catholic Church. Such a reception was clearly made possible by the Second Vatican Council. This was a huge surprise to many Pentecostals and charismatic Protestants. They expected the Church to reject this movement¹⁷ or maybe to tolerate it in an attenuated form, but in fact the Catholic Church responded positively to CCR at the highest level faster than any Protestant denomination. All this confirms the great potential for unity of the whole charismatic movement.

Several commentators have noted that two of the most distinctive movements of the Holy Spirit in the twentieth century, the Pentecostal-charismatic movement(s) and the ecumenical movement, had their origins at the start of the twentieth century: 1901 and 1906 for the Pentecostal movement and 1910 for the ecumenical movement. Today we can see that both movements have had a transforming effect on world Christianity: the Pentecostal and charismatic movements have had an astonishing impact worldwide so that a scholarly observer of the world scene like Philip Jenkins can confidently predict

¹⁵ The term "Evangelicals" includes those Christians within mainline Protestant churches, who identify with the central Evangelical faith-convictions, and those, more numerous in recent decades, without in newer groupings or outworks independent of the mainline denominations. Both categories are active in Evangelical agencies worldwide.

¹⁶ "The pioneers of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal recognized from the beginning that one of the particular blessings inherent in this amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a special grace for unity in the body of Christ." (Charles Whitehead, "An Ecumenical Grace", *Good News* 190 (July/August 2007), p. 24.

¹⁷ One leading Pentecostal at the time prophesied that the Catholic Church would reject CCR.

that the Christianity of the 21st century will be overwhelmingly Pentecostal or charismatic.¹⁸ Similarly the ecumenical movement has had far more wide-reaching effects than we usually realize when we consider the present state of inter-church relationships and compare it with that of a century ago.¹⁹

What difference does the ecumenical dimension make to our understanding of BHS? First, it places BHS and CCR in a truly global context. BHS is then seen as a key element in a huge work of renewal involving the whole body of Christ throughout the world. The ecumenical dimension requires that we look carefully at what has been happening in recent decades, and above all in Africa, Asia and Latin America.²⁰ In this context, there has been a massive explosion of Pentecostal-charismatic forms of Christian faith, much of it not friendly to the Catholic Church. If we look at this objectively, as a number of serious scholars are beginning to do, it points to BHS as the foundational reality of this whole phenomenon. This perspective also reminds us that what faith communities do with BHS, how they understand it theologically, how they teach it and build on it, has major effects on corporate faith life – positive in regard to what is truly led and shaped by the Holy Spirit, negative in regard to what comes from quite a different spirit. This approach requires a nuanced and discerning evaluation and pastoral stance that seeks to recognize and to welcome all that is positive and seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate the negative developments.

The ecumenical dimension of CCR increases the Catholic responsibility; or, more accurately, it provides a providential instrument for the exercise of this existing responsibility. The faith conviction that “the sole Church of Christ ... subsists in the Catholic Church ... governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him”²¹ has the implication that the first responsibility for the unity of all Christians belongs to the Catholic Church. This has been spelled out in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* in relation to the Petrine primacy, for example when he writes: “he [the Bishop of Rome] is the first servant of unity” and “whatever relates to the unity of all Christian communities clearly forms part of the concerns of the primacy.”²² The antagonism of many Pentecostal and Evangelicals to the Catholic Church, and maybe especially to the papacy, does not remove this responsibility. It merely makes it more difficult. Here it is important to recognize the great potential of the experience of BHS to overcome the barriers and to build bridges of friendship and collaboration.

The Different Catholic Interpretations of BHS

¹⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (2001, rev. 2007).

¹⁹ See Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (New York & London: Continuum, 2009).

²⁰ There are some creative features in the Evangelical-charismatic world that bear the signs of being significant works of the Holy Spirit: e.g. a massive increase in the prayer of intercession and initiatives promoting a repentance for the sins of the past.

²¹ *Lumen Gentium*, para. 8.

²² *Ut Unum Sint*, paras. 94 & 95.

In an important article on BHS, Ralph Martin identifies three Catholic theological accounts of BHS.²³ Of these, much the most widespread is the one, associated particularly with the writings of Fr Kilian McDonnell, OSB and Fr George Montague, SM, that it is a “stirring up” or “renewal,” a “releasing” or “actualization” of the gift of the Spirit given in the sacraments of Christian initiation, primarily of baptism and confirmation.²⁴ Here the dominant concern is to explain how BHS relates to the sacraments of initiation in a way that respects fully the teaching of the magisterium. This is a question that Catholics advocating the importance of BHS have to address.

First, there is the language of what “actually received” means whenever the sacraments of baptism and confirmation are validly conferred. During the whole process of liturgical renewal and of sacramental theology in the last century there has been a move away from an excessively objectified thinking treating the sacraments somewhat like measurable objects out there to a more personalist and relational understanding. In this renewed perspective, the sacraments of initiation are the way in which people are incorporated into the Son’s communion with the Father in the Spirit through incorporation into the communion of the Church, the body of Christ. This perspective does fuller justice to the role of symbolic actions in the liturgy, as symbols from their nature express more than can be objectively defined and immediately realized. In this perspective the question “What is actually received?” is not a good question; it is too bottom line, too consumerist. The real question concerns the full meaning of the act of baptism in the Church.

I see baptism as a programmatic act of Christ in the Church. That is to say, the symbolism of baptism expresses and founds the whole program of the Christian life from beginning to end in a particular way (the Eucharist also symbolizes the total Christian life process after the regeneration of baptism). Baptism expresses the death-resurrection model for all Christian life that is enacted in the sacrament through an efficacious symbolic action but that is then to be lived more and more deeply until it reaches its completion in our own resurrection on the last day. Baptism is both door and programme. The undoubted cleansing dimension of baptism is the foundation for a life of death to sin and to the old self-life. Being made sons and daughters of the Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit is our initiation into this filial relationship that is to grow throughout our lives until the day of resurrection.²⁵ With the baptism of infants, a seed is sown, a new orientation is planted, new capacities are conferred.

I was never satisfied with the “release or actualization” explanation, although obviously as a Catholic I believed firmly in the foundational character of the sacraments of initiation. For many years I asked myself why this lack of enthusiasm. I have tried here to articulate this dissatisfaction. First, it says nothing about what occasions this grace. A major factor has to be the anticipation aroused by preaching and testimonies heard by the Catholic people. The more widespread the proclamation of the Word in

²³ Ralph Martin, “A New Pentecost? Catholic Theology and ‘Baptism in the Spirit’” (article accepted for publication).

²⁴ Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991).

²⁵ The paragraph in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* about the seal or character imparted in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders may be helpful here: “it remains for ever in the Christian as a positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of divine protection, and as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church” (para. 1121).

greater fidelity to the full riches of the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church the more spiritual fruit there will be. There is a strong correlation between what is preached and what is experienced and lived. It can add a powerful existential thrust to the renewal of the theology of baptism already taking place in biblical, liturgical and theological studies and which has found consistent expression in recent documents of the magisterium. I suggest that in BHS there is a coming together of an element of release, of emergence into consciousness of the Holy Spirit within the Christian, and of a coming of the Holy Spirit from without, in the Word and new workings of the Spirit.²⁶

A second explanation came from Fr Francis Sullivan, SJ, who suggested that BHS may be better understood as a distinct sending of the Spirit, apart from Christian initiation, to equip the recipient for a special service, or for a significant step forward in their spiritual life.²⁷ This position appeals to the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas on the invisible missions of the Holy Spirit. As Ralph Martin points out, this explanation does not see BHS in any way “as normative and essentially connected to the fullness of Christian initiation, but rather something more limited, unpredictable, and personal. It also lends itself to looking at baptism in the Holy Spirit as a particular spirituality, a charismatic spirituality, one among many.”²⁸ This theory appears to treat BHS as an individual grace, even though on a widespread scale, and in my view does not do justice to the reality of a worldwide phenomenon and certainly not to the ecumenical dimension.

Why Now?

Neither of the first two interpretations addresses the question as to why this worldwide phenomenon has been happening at this point in history. If we say that BHS is an actualization of the graces conferred at baptism and confirmation, then why was this not happening in this way throughout the history of the Church? I see the fundamental theological issue here as **restoration**: to what extent is the Lord restoring elements that have always belonged to the fullness of the apostolic heritage but which have been neglected or even forgotten?²⁹ In terms of BHS, this means: what in the phenomenon of BHS represents a distinctive new work of God in our day and what is a recurrence in a different mode of patterns of grace experienced in the Church throughout the centuries. This question is similar to other questions such as: Why has the ecumenical movement arisen in the last century, since Jesus has

²⁶ In this way, the concerns of the McDonnell-Montague position and that of Fr Sullivan can be brought together.

²⁷ This later became the distinctive position of the German biblical scholar, Fr Norbert Baumert, SJ, who had a lengthy exchange of letters and ideas on this subject with the German dogmatic theologian Fr Heribert Mühlen. Fr Sullivan’s position is found in an article on BHS in *Gregorianum* (1974) and in his book *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal* (1982), especially Ch. 5, pp. 59 - 75. Fr Sullivan raises an important question as to whether BHS is another instance of a sending of the Spirit subsequent to baptism and confirmation that has been happening throughout the history of the Church (his opinion, pp. 72 - 73) or whether it is different in some way to such previous post-baptismal sendings of the Spirit (my opinion).

²⁸ *Art. cit.*, p. 23 (in pre-publication copy).

²⁹ Restoration is a fundamental concept for many charismatic free church leaders: see Terry Virgo, *Restoration in the Church* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway Publications, 1985), Bill Hamon *The Eternal Church* (Shippensburg, Pa: Destiny Image publishers, rev. edn. 2003). A Catholic contribution is seriously needed in this debate as there are sharp differences between the free charismatic views of restoration and any possible Catholic understanding. For the former, restoration is understood as God restoring today elements found in the Scriptures to form the Church afresh without any place for tradition or the renewal of the ancient churches. But we should recognize that the charismatic free church interest in the nature of the church represents a significant change from classical Evangelical neglect.

always prayed for unity? Why has the Catholic laity entered into new active roles in our day? One approach to such questions is to see this renewal as an element in God's answer to particular historical crises: the challenges of atheistic secularism and the falling away of Western Europe from Christian faith. Others see it like the ecumenical movement as part of God's answer to Christian division. While all such answers can contain an element of truth, they are not very satisfying. The deepest reason why these explanations of "Why now?" are inadequate is that God can never be reduced to a problem-solver. Movements of the Holy Spirit in history are always more than an answer to current crises and needs. The Holy Spirit is always working to advance God's salvific purpose, and God has always had one goal: the glory of his Son and the coming of His Kingdom.

This is why I have myself argued for an eschatological understanding of BHS and CCR.³⁰ First, the New Testament usage of "baptizing" or "being baptized" in Holy Spirit has an eschatological character. This does not mean that the second coming of the Lord is imminent in human terms, but that all the work of the Holy Spirit is directed towards God's final goal, summed up by the apostle Paul in these words: "to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph. 1: 10). Emphasizing the eschatological context of BHS cannot be simply an alternative to the "release of the graces of baptism" position, which contains an element of truth.³¹ But in the light of the renewal of the theology of baptism, it is a rediscovery of the eschatological significance of baptism (and indeed of all the sacraments). This is fully in line with the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, particularly on the liturgy: for example, "Since the apostolic age the liturgy has been drawn toward its goal by the Spirit's groaning in the Church: *Marana tha!* In the sacraments of Christ the Church already receives the guarantee of her inheritance" (CCC, para. 1130). This question of "Why today?" fits easily into an eschatological context. As John Paul II wrote: "Christ, true God and true man, the Lord of the cosmos, is also the Lord of history, of which he is 'the Alpha and the Omega' (Rev. 1: 8; 21: 6), 'the beginning and the end' (Rev. 21: 6)." (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, para. 6).

I offer these thoughts to you as an attempt to address the full phenomenon of BHS in its global context from within the Catholic tradition in all its richness.³²

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Austria, October 2010

³⁰ This is Ralph Martin's third Catholic interpretation.

³¹ This position is interpretation no. 3 in the article of Ralph Martin, who makes the point that the eschatological interpretation cannot be a total alternative to the other interpretations.

³² This text has been amended from that circulated before the Assisi conference to bring it more into line with what was presented in Assisi, but retaining some parts in the final section which were not said at the conference due to lack of time.