

# ANNUNCIATION: JOINING TOGETHER THE 2017 JUBILEES OF THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL AND OUR LADY OF FATIMA

In the providence of God, 2017 is marked by two major anniversaries in the Church: the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima. The first time that Mary and the Holy Spirit came together, Jesus came into the world! I believe that the coming together of these two jubilees is also a grace-filled opportunity for us to bring Jesus more fully into the world.

## From the Beginning

Patti Gallagher Mansfield, a participant in the Duquesne weekend, shared at the “50 Years of Amazing Grace” conference last month that Mary was present at the start of the Renewal. The very first activity of the weekend was for the students to gather in the chapel, where one of the professors gave a meditation on the Blessed Mother. When reflecting about the Duquesne Weekend, Patti wrote:

If we in the Renewal want to proclaim Jesus to the world, we need the Holy Spirit and we need Mary, the Mother. Just as Mary was in the Upper Room at Pentecost, she is with us whenever we return to the Upper Room. If only we would welcome her as Mother as did the beloved disciple John, she will teach us: how to surrender to the Father’s will, how to be faithful to Jesus unto the Cross, how to pray with a humble, pure and docile heart for more of the Holy Spirit, how to be one family. She is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and she knows better than anyone else how to yield to Him. (Patti Gallagher Mansfield, “The Duquesne Weekend”)

## A Champion in the Hierarchy

Although the Charismatic Renewal spread like wildfire through the Catholic Church, not everyone in the Church looked on it favorably. A number of priests and bishops viewed it with suspicion. As Ralph Martin shared at the Amazing Grace conference, at one point there was even a move in the Roman Curia to condemn the Life in the Spirit Seminar.

The Lord raised up for the fledgling renewal a champion from among the most respected members of the hierarchy: Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens of Belgium. When Cardinal Suenens was made a bishop in 1945, he chose as his episcopal motto *In Spiritu Sancto* (“In the Holy Spirit”). As one of the four moderators of the Second Vatican Council, he played a key role in keeping the charismatic gifts, or “extraordinary charisms,” in the Council documents as phenomena that still operate in modern times.

Less known among Charismatics is the Cardinal’s deep devotion to the Blessed Mother. Born in 1904 on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, he was a strong supporter of the Legion of Mary and authored two books about the Legion: *Theology of the Apostolate of the Legion of Mary* and a biography of Venerable Edel Quinn, a missionary of the Legion to East Africa.

From the time he first gave the Charismatic Renewal his support, Cardinal Suenens spoke and wrote of the importance of bringing together Mary and the Holy Spirit. In his book *A New Pentecost?*, published in 1974, he devoted an entire chapter to “The Holy Spirit and Mary.” Among his insights are these:

I am convinced that Marian Devotion will come to life in the proportion that it is linked to the Holy Spirit and lived under his guidance. Mary will then appear as the one upon whom the Spirit showered his graces, as the first Christian, the first charismatic. (*A New Pentecost?*, p. 197)

To be receptive to the spiritual motherhood of Mary, is an unfailing sign of our openness to the Holy Spirit. (*ibid*, p. 206)

I think that a living perception and recognition of the role of Mary is particularly important in a movement such as the Charismatic Renewal. In the midst of all the extraordinary outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit, it is necessary to maintain a healthy balance and penetrating discernment. (*ibid*. p. 210)

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## Papal Recognition

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Cardinal Suenens, the Renewal held its World Congress in Rome during the Holy Year on Pentecost, May 18, 1975. In his address to the participants, Blessed Pope Paul VI warmly welcomed the Renewal as “beneficial for the Church and for the world.” (Pope Paul VI, “Addresses to the International Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in the Church”)

Less than one week earlier, Cardinal Suenens was in Rome for a different event: the International Marian Congress, of which he was president. Pope Paul addressed a letter to Cardinal Suenens for that occasion in which he stressed the importance of joining devotion to the Virgin Mary with devotion to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Father wrote:

At the present time, so critical for the Church and the destiny of mankind, when the interior renewal of Christians and their reconciliation with God and each other are an absolute necessity if the Church is to “exist in Christ as a sacrament or sign and an instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”( *Lumen Gentium*, no. 1), the faithful must cultivate an outstanding devotion to the Spirit as the supreme source of love, unity, and peace. At the same time, however, and in harmony with this first devotion which draws ever new strength from the fire of the Divine Love, the faithful should also be deeply devoted to the great Mother of God who is Mother of the Church and incomparable model of love for God and our brothers. (Pope Paul VI, letter to H.E. Cardinal Suenens, May 13, 1975)

## A False Dichotomy

All too often over the years, those in the Charismatic Renewal and in the Marian movements have been distant from and even at times suspicious of each other. In his letter to Cardinal Suenens, Pope Paul made it clear that this is a false dichotomy:

We must therefore keep in mind that the activity of the Mother of the Church in behalf of the redeemed neither substitutes for nor rivals the omnipotent, universal action of the Spirit. Mary's role is rather to impetrate and prepare for the action of the Holy Spirit, not only through intercessory prayer that accords with the divine plan she contemplates in the beatific vision but also through the direct influence of her example, including the supremely important example of her docility to the inspirations of the divine Spirit. (*Lumen Gentium*, 63-65) Thus it is always in dependence on the Holy Spirit that Mary leads souls to Jesus, forms them in his image, inspires them with good counsel, and acts as a living bond of love between Jesus and the faithful. (*ibid.*)

In his foreword to the first edition of Patti Mansfield's book *As By a New Pentecost*, Cardinal Suenens wrote that “Jesus Christ continues to be born mystically ‘of the Holy Spirit and of Mary,’” and that “we should never separate what God has joined together.” (*As By a New Pentecost*, Golden Jubilee Edition, p. 1)

## The End: To Give Jesus to the World!

So how do we bring Mary and the Holy Spirit together in our lives? In *A New Pentecost?*, Cardinal Suenens wrote:

To experience communion with the Holy Spirit in union with Mary, we must begin by performing some acts which explicitly direct our attention to her. Then there will come a moment when our gaze will be fixed entirely on the Spirit who is forming Christ in us. ... All these things go together in an easy harmony. A living union with Mary is like that. We breathe in Mary and breathe out the Spirit. The end in view is always the same: to give Jesus to the world. (*A New Pentecost?*, p.207)

Let's lean into all the graces that the Lord has for us in this Double Jubilee! Come, Holy Spirit in union with Mary, form Jesus in us that we may give Him to the world!

