

# Children Of God Charismatic Prayer Group

May 2006

## Charismatic movement background

To explain the Children of God prayer group, it is necessary to understand something of the Charismatic movement in the Roman Catholic Church and how our group fits into it.

The Charismatic movement is scriptural. Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and manifestation of the Spirit's charisms were the norm in the early church. Manifestation of Charismatic gifts fluctuated over the centuries although they always remained active in various Christian communities (including Protestant ones).

In the 1960's a renewal of the charisms was experienced in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. As a result, prayer groups like the Children of God sprang up throughout the country. Support of the hierarchy followed with encouragement from Rome, the bishops and parish pastors, including our former pastor, Fr. Joe Majewski. Ref: Catechism of the Catholic Church, sections 799 – 801.

The diocese of Charleston South Carolina Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (SCCCRS) coordinates charismatic activities for the bishop among prayer groups throughout the state. In addition to publishing a newsletter, they sponsor annual conferences, workshops and retreats.

The Children of God, St. Francis' prayer group, was formed about 15 years ago. Its mission statement is enclosed for reference. A service team of four members coordinates the group. Membership has fluctuated over the years reaching a high of about 60 and is currently about 20. In 2001 Children of God members from St. Gregory's parish decided to form their own group and now meets at St. Andrew's chapel. Joint events are sometimes held among the two groups.

The following quote is excerpted from a general audience given by Pope John Paul II on March 9, 1994: "The Holy Spirit...does not work only through the sacraments. He...pours out into the People of God a great wealth of graces...they are charisms: lay people receive them too.... The Second Vatican Council stated this in connection with St. Paul: 'The Holy Spirit also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written (1 Cor 12:7): the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the good of all.' Charisms are often thought of as extraordinary gifts, which primarily marked the beginning of the life of the Church. Vatican Council II called attention to the charisms...as belonging to the ordinary life of the church...."

Therefore it is clear that exercise of the charisms should be the norm for all Catholics today.

## **Purpose and activities**

Weekly prayer meetings are held on Tuesday nights at 7:30. Meeting location and format varies, as led by the Holy Spirit, and typically includes prayers of praise, thanksgiving, worship and intercession. Meetings also include exercise of the members' spiritual gifts (charisms). We invite everyone who seeks to increase the use of their spiritual gifts to join us. Ref: 1 Cor 14: 26

Formation of new members is through participation in a Life in the Spirit seminar. This is a seven-week program that helps new members experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and to discover their spiritual gifts. Ref. John 3: 3 - 6

The Children of God prepares members for ministries. By equipping members to better serve the church, many have moved into ministries such as Hospice, Right to Life, RCIA, Community Bible Study, Eucharistic ministry, weekly mens' evangelical luncheons, Cursillo and others.

Special events are also supported or sponsored by the Children of God. Some of these include: Spiritual Emphasis Week featuring prominent speakers such as Fr. Henry Nowen and Fr. Vincent Youngberg, healing services, retreats, presentations of evangelistic groups such as the Celebrant Singers, and many more. Many of these events are ecumenical, giving witness to other Christians in our area of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our parish.

## **Service Team members**

Wanda Eastham  
Lois Scarpello  
Katie Strub  
Tom Strub