

March 2009

Dear Charismatic Leaders

This is by way of an introduction. I have got to know some of the folks involved with WOCCR, and have met some of the SOCCR folks briefly at Fr Tom Bill's farewell party. I also met some of you at the Linda Schubert event at Church of the Resurrection recently.

I am currently the pastor of St Rose of Lima parish and Archbishop Howard grade school in northeast Portland. I also serve on the Tribunal for the archdiocese. I am part of a new community in the Church called the Brotherhood of the People of Praise. I live in a house in north Portland with four other community members, three of whom are priests serving in parishes. As you can see I have a rather busy life which will be a challenge in following the high standard set by Fr Bill. You are probably wondering why the Archbishop assigned me as liaison and what my qualifications for doing this are.

I was born and raised in South Africa and got involved in the Catholic Charismatic renewal in my sophomore year in college back in South Africa. It very quickly consumed all my free time after my studies. For the next few years I was very heavily involved, attending weekly prayer meetings and bible studies, monthly days of renewal, fairly regular Life in the Spirit Seminars, and attending various conferences. I was also heavily involved in charismatic groups on the college campus where I was a student.

Towards the end of my studies I attended a national leaders conference for the CCR and met two Americans who come to give the main talks. One of them was Kevin Ranaghan, of *Catholic Pentecostals* fame. He and his wife Dorothy were leaders of a charismatic covenant community in South Bend, Indiana, called the People of Praise. To make a long story short, Kevin invited me to visit them, and at the Lord's prompting I did so on completion of my studies.

I stayed with the Ranaghans for almost a year after arriving and then joined a group of celibate men within the People of Praise, known as the Brotherhood. I soon discerned that this was where God was calling and so began the process of staying long term. I spent several years in South Bend working in the community's campus outreach at Notre Dame. We had weekly prayer meetings, evangelistic weekend retreats about every eight weeks, and a variety of other activities. I also was blessed to work on the national conferences for the charismatic renewal held annually at Notre Dame during those years. I still remember those wonderful conference with 12,000 people worshipping God and praying in the Spirit in the basketball arena.

After a few years my community moved me to Minneapolis where I was involved in Christians in Commerce, an outreach to business people, and another evangelistic outreach of our community, the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This involved a lot more prayer meetings, prayer breakfasts, retreat weekends and conferences. I also discovered what heavy snow and cold were while in Minnesota.

In 1996 I moved to Portland with several other men from our Brotherhood to begin seminary studies at Mt Angel seminary. Archbishop George agreed to formally establish us as a new religious association so that we could have some men ordained and still be able to live

community life. Archbishop Vlazny continued that arrangement. I spent the next five years studying at Mt Angel and was ordained in June 2001.

Thereafter I was assigned as associate pastor at Our Lady of the Lake parish in Lake Oswego. I served there for the next three years. On completion of that assignment, I was sent to Catholic University in Washington, DC to study canon law. I spent the next two years completing those studies. I returned to Portland in August 2006 and was assigned as pastor at St Rose parish. While in DC, I was involved with a Fellowship of Priests group, a ministry run out of Steubenville.

Currently, I am involved in several ecumenical dialogues as a result of my involvement with People of Praise community and with Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan. The Charismatic Leaders Fellowship meets annually in Jacksonville and is a gathering of many of the older and more well known leaders in the renewal. It facilitated by Francis MacNutt, author of several books on healing, and who runs Christian Healing Ministries. Fr Rick Thomas was involved in this group up till his death.

I am also involved with the Gathering in the Holy Spirit seminar. It is a meeting of Catholics and Non-denominational charismatics, sponsored by the *Centro Pro Unione* in Rome, seeking to establish a formal dialogue between Vatican and the Non-Denoms. Sr. Kim-Marie Collins, a leader in the European renewal heads this.

Finally, I am involved in the International Charismatic Consultation (ICC), a group focused on encouraging worldwide evangelization. This group involves charismatics from many Christian churches. It was started by an Anglican, Rev Michael Harper, but is currently led by Charles Whitehead, former leader of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the UK, and former head of ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) in Rome.

I share all this as a way of assuring you that I am supportive of ,and sensitive to the needs and concerns of the Catholic charismatic renewal in western Oregon. In fact, if I had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, I would not be a priest today.

You can reach me here through the link provided on the homepage of this website. You can also reach me at St Rose of Lima Parish, 2727 NE 54TH Ave, Portland, OR 97213, by snail mail, or by phone at 503-281-5318.

I look forward to working with you all and serving you as best I can. As you see from my responsibilities, I have a rather full life, and so there may be times when I can't respond as quickly as Fr Bill. For this I ask your forbearance.

And as regards baptizing people in the Holy Spirit, may our prayer and fervent hope be, "more Lord, much more."

God bless you all

Fr Peter Smith