

'Charismatic' Catholics gather in Back Mt.

by Tom Mooney

Every Thursday evening some 75 to 100 Back Mountain-area "charismatic" Catholics meet for prayer at the auditorium of Gate of Heaven Church in Dallas.

Calling their group "The Light of Christ," they are participants in a movement that many have described as a wave of spiritual renewal within the Catholic Church but that some others look upon with suspicion or hostility.

For the average Catholic, an encounter with charismatics can be somewhat of a shock. Their talk is evangelical, heavy with references to one's personal bond with Jesus Christ.

Worshippers frequently carry Bibles and discuss the excitement of reading them. The strong and sure old hymns are sung—not sedately, as is generally the case in Catholic churches, but with gusto.

"Praise the Lord" is a standard greeting and expression of approval. Charismatic worshippers pray as they feel moved, not necessarily in unison or according to form. Sometimes they join hands.

Individuals are known to rise and "speak in tongues," incomprehensibly to most people. Some are said to give "prophecy." There is a strong belief in the power of faith to heal the sick and suffering, and often there are group prayers for members present or absent.

But the charismatic movement runs deeper than mere matters of style. Basically it is an attempt to experience more deeply and directly the "gifts of the Holy Spirit"—the word of God informing and acting upon the person.

So it is that instead of the standard low-key Catholic worship and church behavior, one sees something more like the expressive, expansive ways of Pentecostal Christians.

Charismatic worshippers are eager to explore their new avenue of communication with the Lord, eager to learn what God wants and expects. Instead of sitting quietly and following out the well-established routines of traditional Catholicism, they participate very emotionally and externally in their Masses or prayer sessions.

They want more than anything else for the Holy Spirit to fill them with grace and fervor as was the case with the Apostles at Pentecost (a central Christian event for the charismatics).

"I believe that this is one of the ways God is restoring His Church," says Sister Anne Paye, RSM, a coordinator for The Light of Christ and a persuasive exponent of the charismatic ideal.

Sr. Anne portrays charismatic worship as "a return to radical Christianity." She continues, "Today we don't know what the Gospel is really all about. We're encumbered by tradition."

She portrays the great saints such as St. Francis and St. Theresa as charismatics, using the Greek word "metanoia," or "total change," to describe the experience of contact with God she is talking about.

Sr. Anne, who is director of public relations for the Scranton Province of the Sisters of Mercy, headquartered in Dallas, traces the beginning of the Catholic charismatic movement to the late Pope John XXIII's call for "a new Pentecost" and his invocation of

the Holy Spirit.

Generally cited as the first Catholic charismatic group is one that began meeting at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1967.

A few years later the Jesuit Father George Maloney arrived in Wyoming Valley to address the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship in Wilkes-Barre. His visit at that time to the Mercy Center on the campus of College Misericordia in Dallas gave rise to a series of regular meetings that eventually took the name "The Dallas Prayer Group" and has since become The Light of Christ.

Since then other charismatic groups have arisen in the area, the largest one being "The Fellowship of Christ the King," a large and very ecumenical organization meeting Thursday evenings at King's College.

The Light of Christ has remained smaller and has retained a specifically Catholic character, although non-Catholics have been involved with it from the beginning.

Generally the Back Mountain charismatics say that the meetings have genuinely opened them up to the word of the Lord and have shown them dramatic new perspectives on life.

"It teaches me as a person to gain strength," says Irene Hozempa, whose husband, Dr. Stanley Hozempa, helps provide music for the meetings.

Mrs. Hozempa cites "a feeling of love and fellowship" deriving from charismatic worship and influencing her life.

Donald and May Hosey affirm that

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VIGIL CANDLES—Members of the Dallas Fire and Ambulance Auxiliary loaded their cars with Christmas Vigil candles last Sunday and took them to the mobile home parks in the area to distribute to residents who wished to purchase the candles. Loading one of the cars are, left to right, Emily Burns, Betty Brokenshire, Blodwen Shaffer, Sandy Sheehan, and their daughters, Lori Brokenshire, Danielle Burns and Megan Sheehan. (Photo by Charlot M. Denmon)

Jackson Twp. issues snow, ice reminder

Fred Fielding, chairman, Jackson Township Board of Supervisors this week reminded all residents of the township's "Snow and Ice Ordinance" which prohibits the parking of motor vehicles that would in anyway interfere with snow or ice removal and also prohibits the throwing or shoveling of any snow or ice on roads in the township.

Vehicles parked in violation of the ordinance are subject to removal at the owners expense and fines of not less than \$25 may be imposed upon conviction for a violation of any of the ordinances provisions.

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Truckville Auxiliary plans party

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Truckville Volunteer Fire Company will hold their Christmas party, Dec. 11, at Truckville United Methodist Church Educational building.

Auxiliary members, husbands, firemen and their wives are invited.

The party is by reservations only and all reservations must be made by calling 696-2101 or 675-1425 no later than Dec. 5.

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Students visit Courthouse

On Nov. 14, American Education Week, the third grade classes from the Westmoreland Elementary School participated in an educational field trip sponsored by the P.T.O. Members of the faculty, Mrs. Dorothy Banks, Mrs. Suzanne Young, and Miss May Claire McCarthy, and parent volunteers chaperoned the field trip. The chaperones were Mrs. Frederick Buss, Mrs. William Belles, Mrs. Kerry Freeman, Mrs. Bernard Lukzic, Mrs. Harry Davenport, Mrs. Myron Pitcavage, Mrs. Scott Burnside, and Mrs. Charles Marshall.

In the morning the children boarded the buses and were transported to the Luzerne County Courthouse. The children were given a complete tour of the courthouse facilities. Upon arrival the group was met by the attorneys, E. Paula Quinn and Kimberly Borland, who served as guides on the tour.

The first area visited was the Civil Defense Area which involved a short lecture describing emergency procedures. Two other areas which were examined were the map room and the deed room. The highlight of this portion of the tour was the first deed book, including the first deed transactions in the county and bearing the signature of Benjamin Franklin.

Another exciting stop for the children was at the sheriff's office where they were instructed in the duties and responsibilities of that office. Each child had the opportunity to use handcuffs.

The courthouse tour was approximately two hours and at 12:30 the children had lunch at the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA. Following lunch the children watched slides of YMCA activities and were conducted on a tour of the facility. The slides were presented by Bernie Hargadon and the tour was given by Damon Young, health and physical director.

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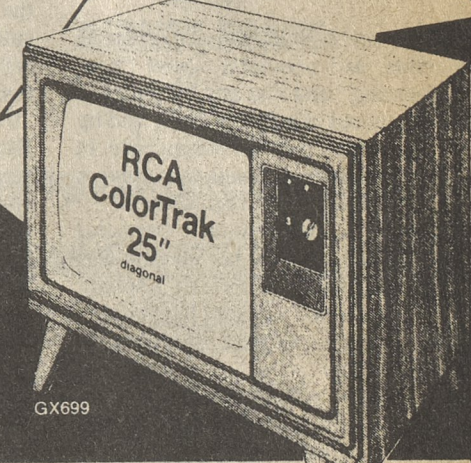


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