

CELEBRATE

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL SERVING THE CHURCH



DISCOVER
HOW THOUSANDS
OF CATHOLICS ACROSS THE UK AND BEYOND HAVE FOUND NEW
INSPIRATION IN THEIR FAITH THROUGH THE **CELEBRATE CONFERENCES** £1.00



"I very much enjoyed Celebrate once again. It ticked all the boxes for me, and it was relaxing, spiritually refreshing and an opportunity to make new friends and to renew old friendships. It made the Risen Lord present to so many people. Celebrate is something all Catholics would enjoy and feel spiritually and physically re-created!"

BISHOP MALCOLM MCMAHON

Since 1994 I have had the pleasure of attending the Celebrate Gathering. During that time it has become a part of my celebration of Easter. This stems, very much, from the good spirit which seems to enable formation of community and from the context of the Resurrection of the Lord. It has been a particular joy to see the large number of families who come to enjoy this event.

One feature of the gathering that has always impressed me is the availability of speakers encouraging us to reflect seriously over the meaning of our faith. This is not an abstract exercise but one rooted in the experience of the participants. May that always continue.

BISHOP CHRISTOPHER BUDD

"Since 1994, the annual Celebrate Family Conference, which I visited in 2003, has been a great encouragement to adults, young people, and children of all ages, with its emphasis on good, practical Christian teaching, celebration, services and fun. I am delighted that the new Celebrate Weekends will make the celebrate experience available to many more people in the local parishes, and I join with you in praying for their success"

CARDINAL CORMAC MURPHY-O'CONNOR

"Within two minutes of my arriving at Celebrate and parking my car a family came and helped to carry all my things up to my apartment. This was typical of the thoughtfulness and generosity of everyone there. The week passed all too quickly; it was such a joy to be with so many families, young and older people all intent on celebrating and growing in their faith to the full".

BISHOP AMBROSE GRIFFITHS



WELCOME TO CELEBRATE...

How did it all start?



In the 1970s the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was growing rapidly in England, and a number of regional conferences were established. Among them was The Southampton Conference held at La Sainte Union College, and organised by members of local prayer groups. I attended my first conference there in 1978, and in 1980 found myself invited to be a member of the organising group, and then chairman. It was a very successful conference catering for up to 400 people aged 16 and above, but by the end of the 1980s we began to sense that we should really be offering something for the whole family, including the younger children. We were encouraged in this by a prophetic word brought to us by one of our conference speakers, David Matthews, and so took the decision to call others to a weekend of discernment about the way ahead. As a result, the search began for a new family-friendly venue.

At first we thought we might be able to link up with the Easter Spring Harvest Conferences, but this proved

too complicated, so I wrote to every holiday camp in England to ask if there was a possibility of taking over a site for Easter Week. We only had about £400 in the kitty, but felt sure that we were in God's will and everything would work out. Letters arrived in reply to my question, but the only positive one came from the manager of the John Fowler Holiday Park in Ilfracombe, Devon. He began his letter with these words: "The Lord has been prompting me for some time to offer our Holiday Park for a Christian conference..." A few days later we were in Ilfracombe to visit the John Fowler site. The manager, Clive Nottage, a Reader in the local Anglican church, had already checked out Ilfracombe Arts College 400 yards down the road, to see if we could hire it for our meetings, and he had of course worked out what renting his whole Holiday Park would cost us. It was an excellent venue for us, self-catering holiday chalets, a shop, take-aways, a restaurant, a bar area with a dance-floor, and very friendly staff. And the price for the site? Well, we could always sell our house if we didn't attract enough people to cover the costs!

So CELEBRATE 94 was launched, and almost 900 people arrived on Easter Sunday afternoon in pouring rain and sleet. It was very cold and most of the

chalets lost their electricity during the first evening, but we survived. The Conference was a great success, and financially we were in the black, having based our budget on 750 participants. There were streams for the children, special programmes for the young people and the adults, worship groups, mime artists, dancers, guest speakers, a bookshop, the evening "fringe", and the local bishop, Christopher Budd, celebrating our opening Eucharist. The Arts College allowed us the use of part of their premises, including a large gym, which could seat everyone. Our God-given vision was fulfilled, and since then we have improved and developed the Conference year after year. Today we can accept 1,500 participants, and each year almost half of them are 22 years old and younger. The children's streams and the accommodation on-site are booked up within a few weeks of sending out the brochures and registration forms, and we hope that from this magazine you will get a feeling for the wide range of spiritual activities we offer today. Each year we assemble teams of gifted people to challenge and inspire us with the Good News, and to entertain us with their wit, wisdom, and God-given artistic talents. It certainly isn't boring to be a Christian today!

As we look back, we just thank the Lord for the vision he gave 20 years ago, and for the commitment of so many people, year after year, to making it all happen. Of course it hasn't always been plain sailing - there have been challenges along the way, but CELEBRATE is HIS not ours, and we willingly give Him all the glory.

Charles Whitehead,
Conference Chairman



INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE...

- 07 **FIRST TIME FAMILY** - What might a family attending Celebrate for the first time expect to find?
- 08 **A LIVELY WAY TO EVANGELISE** - Lord Alton reflects on his Celebrate experience
- 14 **GENERATION: CELEBRATE** - how the conference has affected the lives of three young adults
- 16 **BEING A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN** - prayer and spirituality at the heart of Celebrate
- 19 **CELEBRATE SPREADS** - how people have participated in Celebrate locally
- 24 **TAKING IT HOME** - how Celebrate has helped equip people in their local parishes
- 26 **WHAT IS CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?** - a look at the spirituality behind Celebrate

FAMILY MATTERS

WHY DO FAMILIES ENJOY CELEBRATE SO MUCH?
JENNY BAKER EXPLORES WHAT'S ON OFFER AND
SHARES SOME OF HER OWN EXPERIENCES



KEEPING EVERYBODY HAPPY

Have you ever been in the situation of having to book a holiday that will accommodate babies, your elderly Mum and Dad and your teenagers? Trying to keep everyone happy for a whole week in a chalet in Devon, you could imagine, would be impossible, especially when it's a Christian family holiday! Well, at the Celebrate conference the impossible is made possible and amazingly you will not hear that familiar cry 'I'm bored, there's nothing to do'. There is always something going on for every age group. In fact, most of us that have attended Celebrate are amazed at the excitement and enthusiasm for God that is sparked off in our children and we are incredulous when at the end of the week our teenager says, "That has been the best week ever!"

Organising such a large family event like Celebrate, both the main conference and the weekends, is like a military operation. Although we know God is in charge, catering for every age group takes prayer and planning!

STREAMS FOR DIFFERENT AGES

The children's streams start with the crèche where parents can take their babies and are still able to listen to the talks. Then, a number of different teams that come from all over the country give up their time to run the other seven streams leading activities for ages 3 – 22 years.

I remember the first time I booked in to Celebrate, my children were just five years old and we did not know what to expect. A few weeks before the conference they each received a personal letter telling them what to bring, what they would be doing and how much the team leaders were looking forward to meeting them. You can imagine the expectation it created in my two young daughters – they were not disappointed.

At Celebrate the children have a ball. So much to do, songs to sing, arts and crafts, games and activities all based around faith in Jesus; pitched at their age group and presented in a relevant and fun way.



The teams that run the 13years+ streams are well aware of the needs and 'concentration span' of a teenager and so the day is split into a well balanced mix of teaching, music, prayer and physical activity and doesn't feel like school in any shape or form. For a number of years now the older teenagers have run a football tournament and of course the day off means the beach!

So what about us adults? How does a conference that is so geared for the young accommodate our needs? Well it does. By organising speakers with national and international ministries, worship lead by excellent musicians, a wide variety of workshops and seminars all surrounded by prayer and praise, it truly is a family experience.



THE WEAVER FAMILY

THREE GENERATIONS

Some come year after year such as Anne and Steve Weaver and they regard themselves as really fortunate to have three generations of their family to share in this special week.

'Anne and I relax because it is a lovely atmosphere for the children to play in and they have made really good friends who they look forward to seeing. It's lovely to see the grandparents enjoying their grandchildren and sharing together in their growth in faith.'

'You hear a lot about spending "quality time together" as a family, but you do really get the chance to switch off from things and talk properly. We have also attended the Celebrate weekends and

they too are a really good experience for families, the same quality speakers and children's ministry but shorter and really affordable.'

Thomas aged 9 years says, "Some people go to Celebrate on their own but we are lucky we have lots of family with us." And big brother Joe aged 11 - "We get to see our grandparents a lot and talk to them about what we are doing at Celebrate and they give you money to buy sweets from the shop!"

Another large family are the Reillys and the Blacks. They have been going to Celebrate for about 10 years as a group of approximately 12 people (grandparents, parents and 5/6 children.)

Belinda (Mum) says, 'It is wonderful to be able to celebrate our faith at Easter together. The children benefit from seeing members of their family, including aunts and uncles, immerse themselves in the celebration and they have learned a lot over the years by seeing their grandparents selflessly giving up their time whilst minding them in the crèche or walking them up and down the corridor to get them to sleep when babies! (True Christian serving!)

Barbara and Martin say 'As grandparents we find the experience of being with our extended family at Celebrate spiritually strengthening, particularly seeing our grandchildren profiting from such a special spiritual experience. We see that the children, particularly the teenagers really profit from activities outside their Parish that are well run, fun-filled and informative, this helps to keep them involved and enthused in their faith.'

Of course not everyone has the benefit of coming in a big crowd. The first time I went to Celebrate I went on my own with my twin girls, (my husband was yet to be persuaded!) I knew few people when I arrived, but found over the week I got to know many through the chat that surrounded the talks, workshops and Eucharistic celebrations; oh and of course, in the bar (an integral part of Celebrate).

So this family holiday is not Disneyland...but when it comes to giving your family an unforgettable holiday, Devon's Celebrate is it! Gods amazing grace touches the hearts and minds of all ages and imprints on them a family experience they will always remember.



SEAN O'GORMAN SHARES HIS STORY AS A SINGLE DAD

I love the gospel passage where some friends bring a paralytic to Jesus and, being unable to get near him, they nip up the outside stairs, peel back the roof and lower the stretcher at the feet of Jesus (Mk 2:3ff). Why I like it is because they "dumped" the poor guy at Jesus' feet and then as much as said: "the rest is up to you."

I'm a single Dad who is blessed with the gift of two teenage daughters. They live with their Mum and I meet with them every other week. Ever since they were tiny tots, I have wondered how I could hand on to them a relationship with Jesus akin to the one that I am fortunate to have. Aware that we often try to catechise kids when they have yet to be evangelised, I try to gently awaken them to the spiritual life that is within them.

Some six years ago, a couple introduced me to Celebrate. I well remember the first Sunday evening when we stood in the packed hall for the opening session and, amidst the singing, clapping and hand-waving, like the guys in the above passage, I prayed: "it's over to you, Lord". Since then we haven't looked back, thank God. Each year we have been blessed to have a place at Celebrate and it has become a fixture in our calendar.

In 2008 I booked the three of us into two of the Celebrate weekends. While we didn't have the same extended experience the weekends act as a fillip in rekindling the flame within all of us.

The beauty of the weekends, is that they come about six months after the Celebrate week and act as a gentle reminder of what we are being called to. For me, the weekends have become another vital step in introducing my daughters into a living relationship with Jesus and with His Spirit.

PIPPA BAKER HAD A DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE: BARBADOS VS CELEBRATE

Being offered the chance to go to Barbados with a school friend seems like an offer a 14 year old girl wouldn't be able to refuse. But when I was faced with the choice between this luxury 5 star trip and a week in Ilfracombe, Devon at the Celebrate conference, I found myself having to think long and hard.

Although to most girls of that age, the choice would be obvious, I had been going to Celebrate since I was five and it had become the highlight of my year. I realised that Celebrate not only provided me with a fantastic group of dedicated Christian friends but gave me the much needed time to renew my faith which sadly got jaded with the pressures of growing up. It had always been a family holiday, a time in which both my sister and I, along with our parents and grandparents could spend time together, although in truth, we spent more time having fun with our friends!

These friendship groups have been the core to keeping my faith alive all these years. As we got older we used to meet up on occasional weekends; those times would be full of shared experiences of living our faith, the struggles that we were having and supporting each other through them. The Celebrate conference has been the backbone to my understanding of how a young person can truly live faith whilst being a 'normal' teenager.

So, don't get me wrong, it's not that I don't want to go to Barbados or any other Caribbean island; I'd go in a flash, BUT NOT if it clashes with Celebrate!

CLARE HEALY DESCRIBES HER FAMILY'S FIRST EXPERIENCES OF CELEBRATE IN APRIL 2009

FIRST TIME FAMILY



Our first introduction to Celebrate came in the playground of our daughters' Catholic primary school, on the first day of the summer term.

"How was your Easter Holiday?" I asked a fellow parent. "It was fabulous - we went to "Celebrate" - it's a Christian conference," came the answer.

Well, that really wasn't what I was expecting to hear! A Catholic conference being fun - you actually took children with you, they enjoyed it too **and** you call it a holiday! What was the world coming to?

NOT FOR US?

Joking apart - I have to honestly say that my initial reaction was that this was not for me, it must be something that only certain "special" people went to - certainly not us!

Well, we were already privileged to be friends with some of these "special" people and over the next two years we became more and more curious about what went on at Celebrate.

Suffice to say, on Easter Saturday 2009, we found ourselves arriving with slight trepidation - and two slightly reluctant children - at the John Fowler Holiday

Park. We had no real idea of what to expect, and with free time until Sunday evening, the children went exploring and we trawled through the brochure trying to work out which of the numerous and varied events to attend and how we were actually going to fit everything in!

CHARGED WITH FAITH

After a day to ourselves, we were excited and a little nervous by the time Sunday evening's 'Welcome' started. With the hall bursting with people of all ages, the worship was awesome and the atmosphere charged with faith. As newcomers, we had planned our days to include every event, so that we could have the full "Celebrate experience"! After a non-stop Monday, we realised that we may need some time off to reflect on what we had learnt. We were grateful for Radio Celebrate which was a fantastic way of listening to the teachings in the comfort of your chalet.

The afternoon workshops were really varied and personally, these were the times that I enjoyed most - discussing faith with a small group of people. As a new Catholic, these afternoons were invaluable to my limited knowledge of the Bible and what it means to

our everyday life. These varied and interactive sessions were often filled with laughter and tears and lead to interesting debates, conversations and personal experiences that continued long after the workshop had finished.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

The children settled in very easily, particularly once they started their streams. Although many children have been coming to Celebrate for as long as they can remember, the friendships never seem to wane and they seem equally welcoming to newcomers. By the end of the week, we only saw ours at mealtimes and they invariably came back from their streams buzzing with excitement about what they had done/made/discussed that day!

Celebrate was a wonderful experience for our family and gave us a chance to reflect on what God wants for each of us. With the power of our renewed faith, we came away with the strength to tackle the challenges of everyday life. We all grew in our trust in God and each other and have since become more involved in parish activities. We bought books and CDs to continue that growth and drove home filled to the brim with the Holy Spirit!

CELEBRATE FM ON 87.7

Celebrate FM, the conference's very own radio station, launched in 2007, broadcasts on 87.7 MHz (just below Radio 2!) 24 hours a day during the week of the conference. It serves the conference and broadcasts to an area of a few miles radius around Ilfracombe. It carries conference events and talks, Christian music, interviews and news, involving anybody and everybody able to tune in from their chalet, B&B, home or car! Staffed by Celebrators young and old, supported by experienced technical and communications teams it adds an extra dimension to Celebrate's 'teaching and reaching' ministry!



DAVID ALTON WAS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FOR 18 YEARS AND TODAY IS A LIFE PEER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS. HE AND HIS FAMILY REGULARLY ATTEND THE CELEBRATE CONFERENCE

The following is taken from his article that first appeared in 'The Universe' in 2009.

A LIVELY WAY TO EVANGELISE AND TO CELEBRATE OUR FAITH

CELEBRATE 2009

The 15th Celebrate Conference was held at Ilfracombe, in Devon, during Easter week. The conference was opened by Charles Whitehead who said the over-arching theme this year was an exploration of the words from Deuteronomy (Chapter 30:14-16) that each of us is presented with fundamental choices in our lives – “blessing or a curse, life or death” – and learning how to discern and make the right choices would be at the heart of the conference talks. Learning to listen to God and learning to obey him. Do this and “the Lord your God will bless you and the Land you are about to enter and occupy.”

Some of the speakers who addressed those themes included Fr Richard McKay who has been a priest for 37 years with over 30 those years in impoverished Outer Estate and Inner City parishes. For more than a decade he has been prison chaplain at Bristol. He drew on his extensive experience of the underprivileged to reflect on how we make the right choices for the poor.

A VARIETY OF SPEAKERS

Fr Pat Collins looked at the universal call to evangelise – and talked about some of the practical ways this could be done. Ann Widdecombe MP spoke about the choices and challenges that face a Catholic entering public life.

David Matthews, a Presbyterian from Northern Ireland, gave an inspirational talk entitled Ready to Fight Giants? And asked delegates whether they were ready to reach out beyond the safety of their comfort zones and do this. He urged people to ‘go back to the beginning’ and to be conscious of the danger of being diverted away from the original impulses of Christian renewal.

Abbot Christopher Jamison, Abbot of Worth, (pictured right) proved to be one of the most popular speakers, leading a session in the main hall entitled Now Listen and a seminar, How To Hear the Call of Christ.

Some of his reflections on the impact of The Monastery television programme were a reminder of how much each of us needs to foster a quiet

place. Abbot Christopher said it was indicative that there was now a Government and Opposition Spokesman on Noise – and that the Department for the Environment has published a noise map. We each need, he said, places away from the noise where we could be quiet and listen for the word of God.



ABBOT CHRISTOPHER JAMISON

FOSTERING A QUIET PLACE

Touching on the current economic crisis, Abbot Christopher insisted that 'You cannot re-invent the moral universe by saying that greed is good.' He said that modernity and self-centredness are often on a collision course with traditional Christian values.

Worth Abbey, he said, keeps its abbey church open 24 hours a day. Every parish should aim to re-open church buildings enabling people to find quietude and solace. Maybe then we would be better able to follow St Benedict's advice to listen to the advice of our teacher.

He also emphasised the importance of regular examination of conscience – "a practice that began with the ancient Greeks, not, as suggested by the Church's critics with the guilt-ridden Roman Catholic Church." Regular examination of conscience is the only way to stay close to God's choices rather than our own.

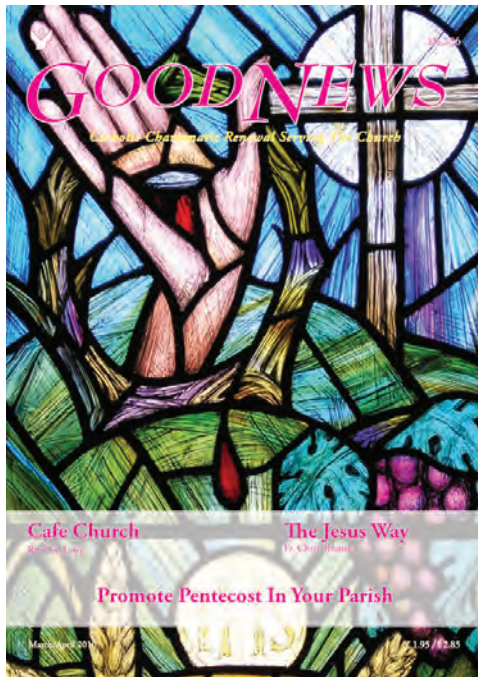
In one of his seminars, the abbot also urged parishes and deaneries to create vocation discernment groups because although 10 per cent of our young people have felt called to religious life, but 70 per cent of those believe that there is no one to discuss it with.

A young Dominican novice said that it was only after he went to Google that he found the pointers that had led him into religious life: "There is a crisis of vocations because there is an absence of credible guides" remarked Abbot Christopher.

Abbot Christopher joked during his remarks that the reason why some teenagers have difficulty in believing in the Resurrection is that it took place early in the morning – and that teenagers don't do early morning. Perhaps the real reason why so many have so much difficulty in believing is that there aren't enough events like Celebrate to bring our faith to life.

Keep in touch with Goodnews - a Catholic Charismatic magazine.

- helpful teaching articles
- inspiring stories
- 5 pages of coming events - retreats, conferences etc



Bimonthly. Only
£13.95 a year.

Contact
Goodnews
020 7352 5298
www.ccr.org.uk
ccruk@onetel.com

Which speaker will you take home from Celebrate this year?

You could listen to some talks again and again.
Agape Ministries thank God for giving them
the opportunity to record the wisdom of
so many world-class teachers.



58 Marshide Road, Southport, PR9 9TH
01704 224 286 // archie@agapeministries.co.uk
www.agapeministries.co.uk

I first went to a Celebrate conference in 2001 and felt at home almost from day one. This vibrant Catholic conference feeds me spiritually, sacramentally, and socially. As a priest I spend a lot of my time helping others. At Celebrate I'm the one who is ministered to by great inspirational national and international speakers and fantastic liturgies. I come away refreshed and recharged.

Canon Bernard Massey

The Celebrate Conference is full of the hope of the risen Lord. So many people, young and old, come together to not only share and learn about their faith but also to seek new ways of spreading it. It is an uplifting experience as a priest to participate in this joyful and worshipful event.

Mgr Keith Bartrop

I started attending Celebrate nine years ago. After Holy Week in the parish, it was great to be ministered too! I came to see it as my yearly fix! The standard of the Liturgies, speakers and workshop leaders is always of the highest quality. The family nature of the Conference leads to a relaxed and fun format, while having an inspiring and fulfilling message. It is a week I look forward to every year.

Fr Brendan Rice

I have attended Celebrate virtually every year since its inception and would say that for everyone who attends, young and old alike, it is an extremely spiritually uplifting experience and a place where you can receive good grounded and practical Catholic teaching, enabling you to live the Christian life more fully and effectively.

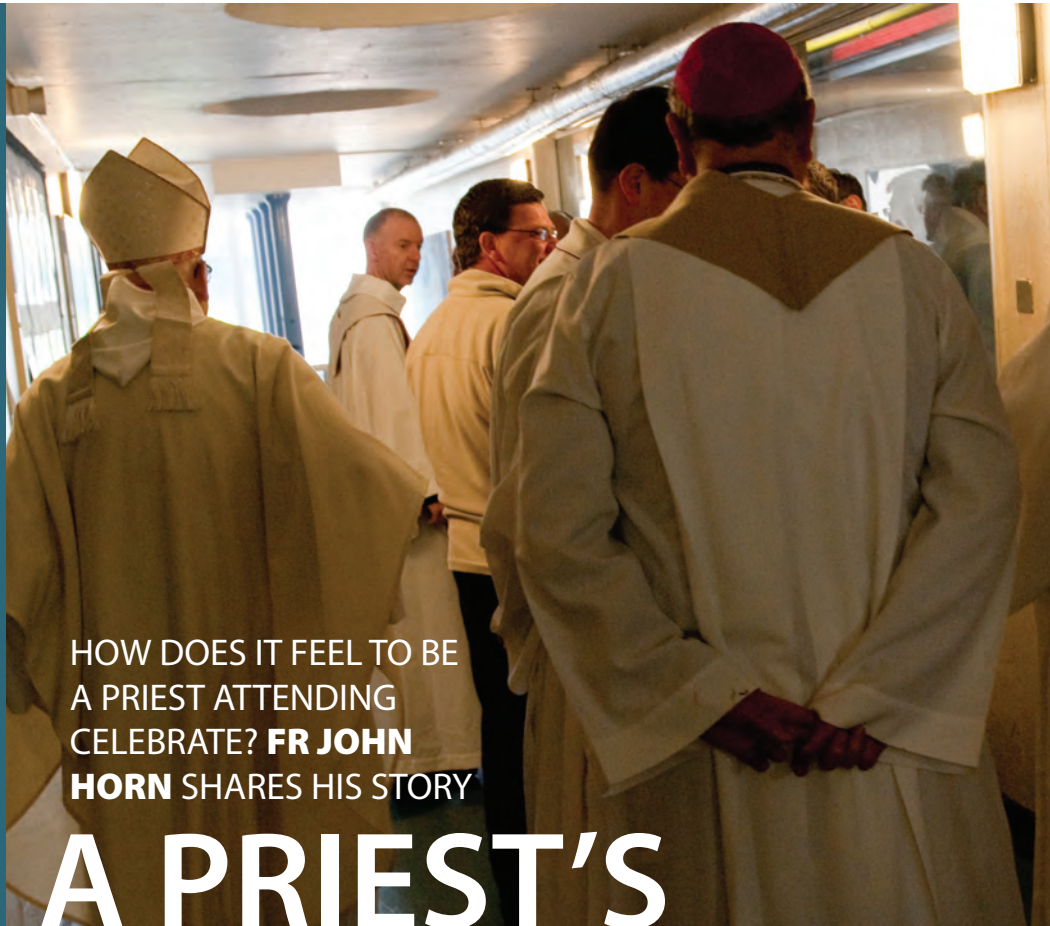
Fr Simon Penhalagan

It is a priest's dream, at least for this priest. There can be few better ways of having a good family holiday in the wider sense, while enjoying multiple aspects of our Catholic faith and life.

Fr Mike Gwinnell

The whole dynamic and life giving experience of Celebrate is what I dream of for every parish community in Britain - especially my own parish! My experience on the youth streams and latterly as a priest chaplain fills me full of hope for the Kingdom of God in this country

Fr Jonathan Cotton



HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE
A PRIEST ATTENDING
CELEBRATE? **FR JOHN
HORN** SHARES HIS STORY

A PRIEST'S PERSPECTIVE

MY FIRST EXPERIENCES

I attended my first Celebrate conference at the age of 59, in 2001, before I had any reasonable expectation that I would be a priest one day. I was encouraged to go by a friend, and really wasn't sure what to expect. I remember being particularly struck by the quality of the speakers and organisation— especially of the way all generations of children and young people were catered for.

I had been feeling strong stirrings of being called to the priesthood and towards the end of the week there was a talk on the ordained priesthood, after which all those who were priests, or seminarians were invited to go for prayer. I was not sure whether I qualified, but nevertheless I bravely went up to a couple I did not know, asked them to pray for me. (Five and a half years later, the couple attended my ordination.)

The following year I returned as a seminarian, and I have returned for each succeeding conference.

A CLOUD OF GRACE

By 2007 I was a priest and I expected my experience of the conference to largely continue in the same way, but my perspective was changed. Firstly I became aware of how I was surrounded

with people of faith, who regarded me, a priest, as a critical player in the practice of their Catholic faith. Then, there is just a cloud of grace covering the Conference. It is present wherever you go. The quality of the confessions is very special (I heard this mentioned too by a non charismatic priest when he attended Celebrate for the first time). This quality comes not just because those attending the conference are committed Catholics, but because of that grace which seems to abound everywhere. I'm sure it's fuelled by all the prayer that begins well before, and continues throughout the Conference, that the Lord's work will be done.

A HOLY COCOON

Essentially Celebrate is a week away from the world in a holy cocoon – a week in a world much closer to how it should be. Although visits for provisions are still needed to the nearby Tesco's, one is reminded of the picture painted of early Christians in the New Testament. Just being in this small world for a week reminds us that it is normal to be a believing Christian, journeying through life, and rejoicing in life, with all its ups and downs - all in the company of others facing similar challenges. It is, of course, an enormous privilege to be a priest at any time. To be a priest at Celebrate is a really special experience.



HIGH DRAMA

Celebrate is not Celebrate without drama! Over the years we have enjoyed having Scripture broken open visually by one of the many performers that have been with us. From Eagles Wings, Monica McArdle (pictured right) to Steve Murray the amazing mime artist (pictured below), they have made us reflect, laugh and cry through their beautiful adaptations of biblical stories and parables. The drama and dance bring another dimension, they create real impact. In 5 minutes, they encapsulate a message that could have taken an hour to explain. There is something in 'seeing' the Word of God come alive.



In 2007, Celebrate debuted its first homegrown Christian drama group. On that day a new venture was birthed and since then they have continued to extend their tent pegs! Below, **Charley Pinfold** describes RISEtheatre's journey.

It all started with Celebrate, when we were asked to gather a group of young people to perform at the conference. Since our teens, Celebrate had been a massive part of our lives, so Helen Martin and I leapt at the opportunity to get involved. We found three more members, and the team was formed. We then slogged away, devising, reading scripture, writing, improvising ideas, and rehearsing for the conference. As the first night approached, I remember being filled with fear. Would the dramas make any sense? Would they 'get it'? We had to trust that God had not taken us this far just to let us fall flat on our faces, so we performed with everything we had, heart and soul, and the response was amazing. We received such positive feedback from everyone, and even started to get offers to perform at other Christian events. By the end of the week, God made it clear that this was not just a one off performance, but was only the beginning!



And so RISEtheatre was born. It was mind blowing the speed it all took off. We saw that there was a real thirst for creative expression in the Catholic Church, and realized that we could communicate a message in ways that perhaps a talk could not.

Each year since we have felt God challenging us to push the parameters of what we do. For 2010, we felt God asking us to take a risk and find new ways to reach out. So it was decided to take RISE overseas. It started with a crazy idea of taking theatre from the 'stage' and onto the streets, to bring the message of hope, and the reality of Christ to people from all walks of life. So far, the journey has taken me to India and as of 3 days ago the Philippines! I have led a series of theatre workshops with all kinds of children, students, even boys training to be priests!

RISEtheatre is about creating drama that provokes a response- drama that empowers people to RISE up. We are looking to launch RISEyouth to work with teams of young people to nurture raw talent, and encourage them to use their giftings and to follow God with determination and passion.

www.risetheatre.co.uk



FOR **SEAN ROSE**
 CELEBRATE HAS BEEN
 INSTRUMENTAL IN
 LEADING HIM INTO A
 MULTI-FAITH SOCIAL
 ACTION PROJECT



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A COMPLETELY NEW EXPERIENCE

My first experience of Celebrate was six or seven years ago. It was the first time I had been to an event like it. And I was terrified. The songs, the site and, most of all, the people were completely new to me. And so I did what anyone would surely do in that situation, and threw myself 110% into the week. If there was an optional workshop, I'd be there; when guided prayer or 'prayer ministry' was offered after a session, I was ready; and I would always interpret a 9am start to mean 8:45.

Looking back it's almost comical to think of my over-eager approach. But through really offering all of myself that week – or trying to at least – I was deeply blessed and received more than I could have asked for. In a humble, inconspicuous way, Celebrate was the beginning of my personal faith journey.

A cradle Catholic, my faith had always been the lens through which I saw the world, but my experiences at Celebrate and with the wider Charismatic movement started to mould my faith into something to really live by, and through.

A few months later I attended a summer event run by Sion Community and once more experienced a depth of

prayer, a passion for Eucharistic Adoration, and a genuine desire to praise God which shaped, and continues to shape, how I attempt to live my faith.

Last year I joined Sion as an Associate Member to become more involved in their outreach and mission work, particularly their youth ministry. I still go to Celebrate; in fact, for the past couple of years I've been part of the planning team for the 16-22 year olds' stream, Joel's Bar.

FAITHS ACT

Since I graduated in 2009 I've been working for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation on a multi-faith social action project called 'Faiths Act'. My work is an effort to foster understanding and co-operation between those from different cultural and religious backgrounds, not through shared beliefs but through acting on our common values of service, justice and compassionate love. Much of the confidence I have in sharing my faith so openly comes from the fellowship and friendship I have found in people I know through Celebrate.

The job is challenging and exciting, sometimes exhausting, but always fulfilling. It's a wonderful opportunity to witness to my faith and be a visible sign to a sceptical and secular world that people of faith like you and I can put our values into practice and speak out for the oppressed and marginalised.



CaFE
 Catholic Faith Exploration

CaFE (Catholic Faith Exploration) - Equipping you to reach others!
Check out www.faithcafe.org to find a wide range of easy to run DVDs, music CDs and books to help your faith grow and to resource you to spread the Word.

GENERATION:CELEBRATE

"LET NO ONE DISREGARD YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUNG!" 1 TIM 4:12
Rachel Rose has been coming to Celebrate for over ten years. Below, she shares some of her experiences about what Celebrate means for young Catholics growing up.



FORMING THE CHURCH OF TODAY

While many would have us believe that young people are the 'Church of the future,' a message 'Celebrate' has instilled is that although this is true, we are also the Church of today, and are therefore required to act with that mentality rather than waiting for our time to come.

Teenagehood in the twenty-first century can be a pressurised and confusing time, and the friends young people have around them during this very important stage of life are highly influential. I, like a large number of young Catholics who have been involved in the Charismatic Renewal, count myself as someone who has been formed as a Christian by 'Celebrate,' and the experiences I have been privileged with year after year at this annual conference have been a source of great blessing, and have impacted significantly on the direction my life has taken.

Everyone has a different story and so trying to sum up the 'fruits of Celebrate' or even the conference's purpose can be difficult. Essentially, Celebrate exists to help Catholics to deepen their relationship with the Lord and increase the desire within them to share God's love and serve Him in some way. This 'service' takes many forms; for some it means playing an active part in parish life or working in the area of faith in some way.

BECOMING PARTICIPATORS

'Celebrate' encourages young people to become participatory members of the Church, and it has led many young people to dedicate a year or more to active ministry and spend time praying, receiving formation and involvement in missionary activity, by being part of various gap year programmes or Discipleship Training Schools.

'Celebrate' offers a space in which God's gifts and blessings can be received in order for people to leave renewed and energised, equipped to serve and encouraged. It is an excellent place to meet others who are aspiring to lead Christ-centred lives. Hearing testimonies in which young people speak from the heart about God's impact upon their lives are inspiring and a reminder of the diverse ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work.

BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

The friendships which are formed at Celebrate are deeply rooted in a shared Eucharistic experience and the community which is formed during that week each Easter has lasting effects. Long-lasting, supportive relationships are formed with many 'younger Celebrators' receiving encouragement, clear guidance and mentoring from those more experienced.

Celebrate shows young people that God is real and that Church is relevant. It is forming a generation who are deeply convicted of the truths the Catholic Church teaches and encouraging young people to be prophetic voices for in our schools, colleges, universities and work-places.

Nana-Adwoa Adjaye shares how Celebrate has helped shape her vocation



I was 12 years old when I went to my first Celebrate Conference and it has played a huge part in my life. At Celebrate I made some of my best friends, I have great memories; I also met God there. With sessions catered for your age group, the teaching is always relevant, the activities appropriate and the times of prayer, amazing.

Growing up with Celebrate has helped me to grow in my relationship with God. No one can force you to have a relationship if you don't want one, but through hearing the teaching, testimonies and times of prayer you are really encouraged in your faith. It

helped me to decide that I wanted to involve God in all aspects of my life. I knew that it is a lot easier said than done, but it was the only way I would truly be happy. One year whilst at Celebrate, I found an advertisement for a Discipleship Training School (DTS) with Kerygma teams that I could do during my gap year. DTS is a course, where you live in community, you receive teaching about the Christian faith and you are involved in evangelisation.

However, in order to attend the DTS, I had to raise a lot of money. Thankfully, with the help of sponsors, including



Growing up at Celebrate has led **Thomas Bonard** into new experiences of worship

My knees were knocking. I think I was smiling, but it probably looked more like a nervous grimace. I am sure somebody was speaking over the P.A. system, but the sea of hands smacking together cancelled out any chance of hearing what was being said. It sounded positive, though. It felt like an eternity standing on the big steps, but it must have been at least twenty seconds. Then I went to sit down again... The reason for all the noise and nervousness was the gathered congregation's appreciation for my first song. I was nine.

the organisers of Celebrate, I was able to find the funds. Working with Kerygma Teams gave me my first taster of working in radio, as the DTS was also dedicated to teaching us valuable media skills. I got involved with Spirit FM, which was a Christian youth radio station in Ireland and I worked with a team to win a national broadcasting license.

Spending time at Kerygma Teams really helped me to cement my faith. By the time I got to university God was part of my daily life and I was more than happy to share Him with people. My three years at Uni were so much fun

and during this time I still attended the Celebrate Conference. It gave me a week to relax, reflect and rejoice.

Having worked with Spirit FM, I decided I wanted to further a career in radio. The media is very competitive but I was willing to work hard, so I continued with work experience, leading me to co-present a show on the BBC and now I am starting an internship with Premier Christian Radio. Since dreaming of working on radio, I've always wished it would be a station/show that would allow me to speak openly about my faith and views. Thank God, the BBC allowed me to do this and now working

on a Christian radio station, again I will be able to achieve this.

Through going to Celebrate and other similar retreats and conferences, I have learnt more about Christianity and grown tremendously in my faith. I would recommend them to people from all walks of life. Even if you leave there unsure about whether or not you have been touched spiritually, I assure you that you will leave feeling that more peaceful and enlightened than when you arrived.

I hope that even if I hadn't been to such an event I would have still found my way to God, but I know for sure, Celebrate has helped.

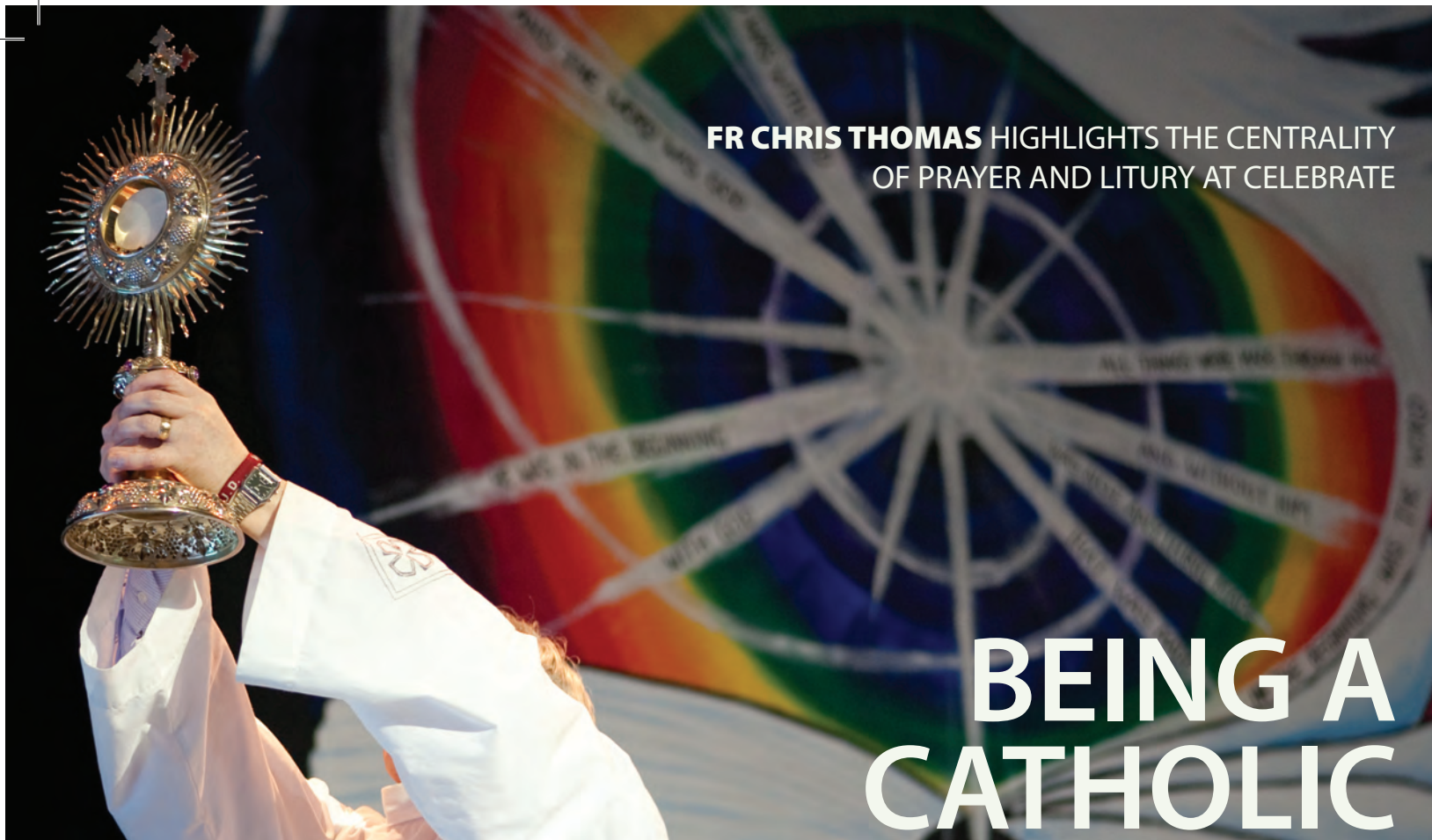
This is my first significant recollection of Celebrate. The worship team, led by Eamonn Pugh and Dominic Watts, had graciously accepted my hand written poem (in my very best handwriting) and transformed it into a song which they had just played for what seemed to be (at least to a nine-year-old boy), the millions of people gathered at what was the first or second Celebrate conference.

Although I do not remember very much more about those first few years at Celebrate, I could sense that it was something different; something that would lead to deep, lasting friendships; that would form my faith significantly; and that has played a huge part in shaping who I am and the direction my life has taken.

In the intervening years, I have been involved in various worship teams and the conference has been very supportive of Crossbeam, the band I have now been a part of with some amazing friends for nearly ten years.

It is through Celebrate that I came to meet Christian communities who live their faith and share it with young people all over the country and I ended up joining the SPEC team, Westminster diocese youth ministry. I then became involved in a similar project in the Plymouth diocese and spent a year as a chaplain in a Catholic boys' secondary school.

All this has not been easy, and where I am now – engaged to be married to Emma, training to be a primary school teacher – is the next step in God's plan for my life. In some ways, I believe these significant events of my life are founded in the seeds that God began to sow way back, in the humble offering of my first song.



FR CHRIS THOMAS HIGHLIGHTS THE CENTRALITY OF PRAYER AND LITURGY AT CELEBRATE

BEING A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN



FOUR CORNERSTONES

One of my favourite books is by the Canadian author Ronald Rolheiser.

It's called 'Seeking Spirituality.' In it he says that there are four cornerstones, which are essential for a healthy spiritual life. Firstly we are to be people of prayer. Secondly we are to be people of justice. Thirdly we are to have a grateful heart and fourthly we are to have a real awareness of community. In many senses what Rolheiser invites us to reflect on is traditional Catholic teaching.

The Celebrate conference has all of those cornerstones at its very heart and is traditionally Catholic.

The conference also maintains that openness to other traditions which is also essentially Catholic. To be ecumenical is at the heart of the Catholic faith. That creates a beautiful welcoming non-threatening atmosphere for everyone.

A VIBRANT FAITH

Well over half of the delegates at the conference are twenty-five or under. So this lends for a lively enthusiastic environment with families enjoying their faith together. It's very moving to watch

young people praying together and participating in Liturgy with vibrancy and life. The Church is certainly alive and active.

Prayer is the foundation stone for becoming people of justice and gratitude and for having that wider vision of community. Without prayer and its transformative effect in our lives it's hard to deepen those core values of justice and gratitude and difficult to see the need for community.

So at the Celebrate conference prayer is at its very centre. At the core of each day is the celebration of the Eucharist, the source and summit of what we are as a community. People gather together, break open the word of God and receive the bread of life. Wonderful music and effective preaching make these celebrations very moving and also very challenging at times.

SPACE FOR PRAYER

There is a chapel where exposition takes place during large parts of the day. If you need space to be quiet and to reflect you can always find it in the Chapel. The traditional prayer of the Church is prayed each day for those who like the order and stability that brings and also to re-enforce the communal nature of what we do as we

join with all those who pray that same prayer across the world.

There are workshops that explore the wide variety of ways of praying that are present in the Church. Benedictine Bishops teach on contemplation. Others teach on Lectio Divina, the traditional way to pray the Scriptures. There are different ways offered to help people explore and understand the Bible. There are also practical workshops where people learn how to pray for example with icons. So Celebrate is very traditionally Catholic.

OPENNESS TO GOD'S SPIRIT

You might well ask the question where does this conference come from? Its roots lie in Catholic Charismatic Renewal and so too right at its heart is that openness to the Holy Spirit, which is the core of the Charismatic Renewal. Charismatic Prayer has always been part of the Church's tradition but in its current manifestation it burst on the Catholic Church in the 1960's almost as God's response to Pope John 23rd's prayer for the windows of the Church to be opened.

It's not a movement or an organisation. It can't be quantified or tied up. In John's Gospel we read that the "spirit blows where it will" It's a moving of

the Spirit upon the Church to enable those in the Church to be what God has called them to be. There are lots of ways in which the Spirit is doing this and Charismatic Renewal is one of them. It's characterised by an openness to the gifts of the Spirit and in particular the Baptism in the Spirit.

When God's spirit is at work, his gifts will be manifested. That's always been true. The great saints of the Church allowed the gifts of the spirit to be present. They exercised gifts of wisdom, and fortitude but they also at times exercised the charismatic gifts of prophecy and tongues.

CHARISMATIC PRAYER

In these days God has blessed the Church with a mighty outpouring of the Spirit and Charismatic Renewal is that part of the Church which reminds the rest that these charismatic gifts are still a reality. So other forms of prayer take place at Celebrate too. The prayer of praise has always been part of the Church's tradition. You only have to look at the Scriptures to see that. When Francis of Assisi was canonised in 1228 Thomas of Celano an eye witness tells us that the Pope and the Cardinals sang a Te Deum and then burst into a song of praise.

Many participants use the gifts of the spirit during prayer. You'll find lists of them in the Scriptures and approval of their use right throughout Church documents up to the present day with Pope

Benedict the Sixteenth fully endorsing the Catholic Charismatic renewal.

Healing prayer is essential to Celebrate. We all need healing of one sort or another and God is always the healer so at Celebrate there is space and time given for God to work. So many people have experienced deep freedom because of these ministry times.

TRANSFORMATIVE PRAYER

Without prayer we die within and Celebrate is a great place to participate in and explore prayer in a variety of ways. Prayer is always about being transformed and becoming what God wants us to be. It's never about doing a Religious thing that makes us feel good but doesn't enable us to have an impact on the world. We need to pray so that we can become people who are empowered to make a difference in the world through what we are, what we say and what we do. This is the prayer Celebrate encourages which enables people to grow and to change.

The Conference is a fantastic experience and in order to make that experience more accessible there are local groups around the country facilitating 'Celebrate weekends' which have all the core elements of the conference at Ilfracombe but take place over a weekend. So if you've never been to Celebrate at Ilfracombe it would be worth seeing where your nearest Celebrate weekend is and just dip your toe in. You won't be disappointed.

JO BOYCE FROM THE POPULAR CATHOLIC GROUP 'CJM MUSIC' SHARES HER EXPERIENCE OF LIVING LITURGY EACH YEAR



For the past ten years or more the Celebrate conference has been one of the highlights – if not the highlight – of our annual music ministry calendar. At the

heart of our mission and vision as CJM Music is the desire to see a church alive with vibrant, living liturgy for our time. At Celebrate we have the privilege to serve a worshipping community where that dream is a reality at every liturgy.

As a team we try to creatively combine,

old and new - Church tradition and contemporary culture side by side. It's a difficult balancing act, but it is worth the effort to see all ages - grandparents to toddlers – at home in the assembly, finding a way to participate fully at their own level through music, movement, drama, spoken word, silent prayer or full-throated song.

I have often looked out beyond my microphone and cast my eyes across the congregation and been moved to tears. They are there not because they ought to be, but because they want to be. There to touch the awesome mystery of God's love made present in the Eucharist. It is truly a taste of heaven.

THE CELEBRATE VISION

Celebrate seeks to:

- provide an atmosphere of friendship and close fellowship, thereby promoting a real sense of community for formation and mission.
- Celebrate the Liturgy in the best possible way for the people present.
- Offer the best available teaching, based on the Scriptures and the teaching documents of the Catholic Church.
- Include among those invited as speakers men and women from Protestant, Pentecostal and Non-Denominational charismatic churches and fellowships, so that we benefit from their gifts and thereby promote unity among Christians.
- Hold to the central truths of the Catholic faith without emphasizing those devotions which are a matter of personal choice.
- Provide spirituality for children, teenagers and young adults in streams or groups according to age or academic year.
- Show our young people in particular that it's exciting, fun and challenging to be a Christian today.
- Encourage on-going friendship among those who attend Celebrate events.
- Give everyone the freedom to be fully charismatic, while remaining sensitive to those not coming from this faith experience.
- Offer Baptism in the Holy Spirit & Life in the Spirit Seminars.
- Encourage creative activities and use drama, mime, art and music to emphasise the Gospel message.
- Invite everyone to participate in lively praise and worship, and include the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Offer personal prayer by trained prayer teams.
- Use money raised in the Celebrate Offering to sponsor training and development for individuals, communities, groups and special ministries.
- Promote and support an awareness of social, moral, ethical and justice issues, and provide funds from the Offering for Christian work in disaster areas.
- Support financially and practically Christian organisations which share a similar vision, and work for renewal in the church.

THE CELEBRATE WEEKENDS

Charles and Sue Whitehead explain how Celebrate has developed a series of regional weekend conferences



The annual CELEBRATE Family Conference, has proved to be very popular and is fully booked

every year. But the organising group has always been aware that not everyone can afford the time or money for a week-long Christian event at Easter. Some may never have attended anything of this sort, and a week filled with spiritual activities may seem daunting, to say the least! Or perhaps the long journey down to Devon, is simply too much to contemplate on Easter Sunday. But for many people the most challenging question is probably will the children like it, and what about our teenagers - how will they cope with a whole week of spiritual stuff, it's as much as we can do to get them to Sunday Mass? Perhaps it's how will my husband or wife feel, he or she doesn't even come to church? In addition to these very understandable questions, however, we felt strongly that there was

a real need for some local family events which carried the CELEBRATE values and vision.

After a lot of thought, discussion, and prayer, we decided to organise CELEBRATE Weekends in different parts of the country. From the beginning we were very clear that they would have to be true to the vision, and include all the major elements of the Conference. In 2008, due to changes in the school holidays the College in Ilfracombe was not available in Easter Week. So we took the plunge, and invited some regular Celebrators to bring together teams of people to look into running local Weekends. The teams were full of enthusiasm - it was going to work!

At the beginning of 2008, a programme of seven CELEBRATE Weekends and a Joel's Bar Weekend were launched- Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Guildford, Manchester, Southampton, St. Albans, and Worth - and people were invited to book in with their local teams. We were both delighted and relieved when every Weekend was well attended and successful, with many people coming who had never been to the Ilfracombe Conference. A total of 3,500 adults, young people and children came to the Weekends, and what each one received was really true



to CELEBRATE'S vision and values. The CELEBRATE experience would now be available to many more people, as we continued to run Weekends in addition to the main Conference.

May we encourage anyone who has not been to CELEBRATE and is perhaps unsure about the time and commitment involved in a full week, to come to a CELEBRATE Weekend to find out for themselves what's on offer? Amazing as it may seem, our experience is that the vast majority of children, teenagers, and even reluctant husbands or wives, who come to a CELEBRATE Weekend actually enjoy it and want to come again. So why not give it a try? And if you're a regular Celebrator, invite your friends and fellow parishioners to join you at a Weekend - you know they won't be disappointed!



In 2010 Celebrate Weekends will be taking place in four venues.

BRIGHTON 26/27 June
Cardinal Newman School, Hove.
Contact - Helen Wells
brighton@celebrateconference.org

SOUTHAMPTON 9/10 Oct
St Mary's College, Bitterne
Contact - Peter Szymanski
southampton@celebrateconference.org

SOUTH WEST 23/24 Oct
St Bede's College, Lawrence Weston
Contact - Tony Wadley
bristol@celebrateconference.org

ST ALBANS 30/31 Oct
Nicholas Breakspear School, St Albans
Contact - Vincent Turner
stalbans@celebrateconference.org

In future years for details of locations and dates please refer to www.celebrateconference.org



CELEBRATE SPREADS

Peter Rockhill takes a look at how people have gained from the growth of the Celebrate weekend conferences



CELEBRATE HAS SPREAD: NATIONWIDE AND YEAR-ROUND

The Celebrate Weekend Conferences are an ideal opportunity for those who've never been to a Celebrate before to give it a try.

Pam Dysart, who belongs to a charismatic prayer group in Redhill, Surrey, had her first brush with Celebrate at the Guildford weekend, where she was delighted to find herself among people *'on the same wavelength.'* Since she loves to sing, the praise and worship was a highlight of the weekend. As well as an experience of joy, Pam has spoken of a new, ongoing empowerment for the difficult times in day-to-day life. The spiritual encounters she had at Celebrate *'affirmed and strengthened'* her faith, helping her in particular to overcome recent ill-health

A weekend conference is a great idea for church groups too. The Guildford event played host to a group of Confir-

mation candidates and their catechists. It was an innovative way to engage young people in faith exploration, while rooting them firmly within the sacramental programme.

And what about families who are considering whether a Celebrate weekend is for them? The McCloones were one of these families and they attended the St Albans weekend. Friends had told them how Celebrate had made such a difference to their lives and the lives of their children, and they were curious to try it for themselves. They were struck by the lively but sincere worship, and teachings that *'spoke to each one of us. We realised that God was not some distant figure, but a very personal God.'*



Though they'd heard about the charismatic gifts, this was their first practical encounter with them: *'To experience them at first hand helped us to realise how Jesus is alive and active in our lives.'*

It's an ideal environment for children to build their faith too. *'The children had tremendous fun in their streams. They made lots of new friends. Our eldest son was delighted to receive a Christmas card from friends he had met at Celebrate.'*

For the McCloones, the Celebrate weekends are and continue to be some much-needed time out for the Lord amid hectic schedules, and have helped make their faith central to family life in a new way, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Their advice to other families? *'Take the plunge and book a Celebrate weekend ... You will make new friends, but most of all you will discover that God is a friend for life and beyond.'*

THE MCCLOONE CHILDREN
ENJOYING ST ALBANS CELEBRATE

MAKING IT HAPPEN

What does it take to get a Celebrate weekend off the ground ?

The North-West weekend took place at St Bedes at Alexandra Park, Manchester, allowing the event to witness to the inner city area of Moss Side. With a core team including two priests, they also had keen support from the local parish priest and diocesan team. Bishop Brain of Salford welcomed the conference in a letter.

It was important to the team that they catered for young people, and four excellent community teams stepped in to lead the youth streams.

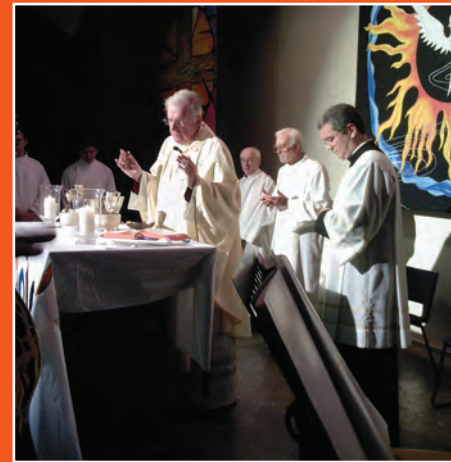
Around half of the 350 people attending had never experienced Celebrate before, and there was great feedback from them. Many were inspired to see so many young people participating so enthusiastically in the Eucharist.

In May 2008, Tim Stevens from St Albans teamed up with other parishioners to recreate the Celebrate experience as a weekend. He was particularly keen to help families overcome some of the roadblocks to attending a week-long Celebrate, not least the fear of the unknown. "Let's be honest," said Tim, "it takes a leap of faith to commit your family to a whole week at a conference if you have never been before."

As with the Manchester weekend, support from priests was central to the weekend. The first mass was celebrated by Archbishop Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor where he strongly affirmed the idea of family within the Church.

The event was successful and of the total attendees, 76% said they would like to attend a Celebrate weekend again, and would try to bring someone new with them. There was much to be thankful for.

Celebrate is always about more than just new spiritual experiences. It's about transformation that touches every area of our lives. Or put another way, Celebrate is for life, not just for the weekend.



CARDINAL CORMAC MURPHY O'CONNOR CELEBRATING MASS AT THE 2008 ST ALBANS WEEKEND



For **Teresa Theile**, a Celebrate weekend led to a longer journey of discovery

A WEEKEND THAT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE!

I attended a Celebrate weekend. I was very nervous and concerned I would be the odd one out; surely it would be full of very holy people who spent all their time praying. I was the type of person who spent all week spinning plates and only relaxed on a Friday night with a bottle of Pinot Grigio! Attending Mass on a Sunday with my husband and two teenagers was as close as I got to a spiritual life. I was also concerned that the singing and clapping was a bit "over the top" for me. Never the less I still decided to have prayer ministry (which is when people pray with you and for you). I was very anxious; in fact when I went up, one of the ladies whispered in my ear "just relax everything's ok". No way, I was so tense I wasn't letting go!

However, Celebrate got me thinking, and the following year I put my name down for a parish course, 'Sons & daughters of the Living God'. This time over the course of the weeks I realised I was with people who were just like me, struggling through life with the usual concerns for family, friends, loved ones but somehow they seemed to have found a special support unit. After listening to some inspirational speakers and going to confession for the first time in years (a wonderful experience) I felt ready to give in and ask the Holy Spirit to come into my life and help me. This time when I went to be prayed over, I did so with an open mind and heart. It was a wonderful experience, which has changed my life forever. Yes, I still have my Pinot Grigio and the spinning plates, but now I have a whole team helping me with them – God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit – a great team!

Goodnews Books

Christian Books Online

Sale or Return books for events

Publishers for Catholic Charismatic Renewal

"What's Your Story?" Complete Self-publishing Service

Contact

Goodnews Books, 15 Barking Close,

Luton, Beds, LU4 9HG

01582 571011

orders@goodnewsbooks.net

www.goodnewsbooks.net



SARAH GOLDSMITH, WHO IS ONE OF THE LEADERS AT 'JOEL'S BAR' LETS US IN TO THE SECRETS OF WHAT HAPPENED WHEN 100 YOUNG CELEBRATORS MET AT **WORTH ABBEY**

JOEL'S BAR / WORTH'S BAR!



AN INVITATION

Easter 2008 could have been a sad sad time for many of our Joel's Bar-barians (the sixteen to mid-twentyish lot who inhabit the stream of Joel's Bar), as the change in school holidays meant that Ilfracombe College was not available, so many were feeling the pangs of spiritual withdrawal without their yearly 'Celebrate' fix. Instead, as so often happens with God-stuff, our fortunes were completely turned on their heads through the generous invitation extended by Abbot Christopher Jamison of Worth Abbey to decant our stream into the home of the Benedictine monks.

Out of the much beloved old bar into the beautiful and vast abbey church and the aged Malory Towers-esque boarding school, all of which was generously set up for our disposal. We even got a bar (just so we felt fully at home).

A SURPRISING CHALLENGE

We had a fantastic week. Location aside, we experienced rich teaching, a chance to go in-depth into areas of

our choice, and some truly powerful moments of experiencing God move. It was in some ways a surprising challenge. We were coming into the home and lives of the extremely well established Benedictine order, whose way of life and worship has been handed down for centuries since circa 529 (yes, thank you wikipedia). Our own timetable had to work around a set-in-stone schedule of monastic prayer. They had a whole beautiful and ancient set up, complete with Abbey Churches and grounds, all dedicated to worshipping God.

To be invited to Worth with open arms and to be welcomed from the community there was a wonderful experience and a challenge that does not happen often enough to the young in Charismatic renewal.

CONTEMPLATION AND PRAISE

We expected, and had, a few nail biting moments and a fair sprinkling of misunderstandings. Yet no one was more surprised than us to find that in so many ways the merging of Benedictine contemplation and Charismatic praise worked only to glorify God further and to plunge us deeper into our relationship with him. Abbot Christopher Jamison, after being

mistakenly introduced as Christopher Rabbit (awkward moment, there), led us in silent contemplation. We experienced the vocalising of our praise to be all the more alive for the profound length of time in which 100 young people sat in utter silence and listened to God. We had Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the vast, circular Abbey Church, welcoming him in with drums that echoed off its heights.

EMBRACING THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

I think, for me, the Abbot summed it up well enough over lunch. 'If you were to take the Charismatic Renewal and the Benedictine spirituality and put them on the sound spectrum, they are eons apart', he said, holding his arms wide. 'Yet when it comes to embracing the power of the Holy Spirit, that line turns into a circle and here we meet.' After all, while the Benedictine Order is over 1,500 years old, the Holy Spirit has been there since year dot and before. Essentially, that week that was all that came to matter.

When 2009 came around, we were back in our snug 'little' bar yet something of the incredible blessing and merging of spiritual expressions of that week remained. Long may it continue.

RELUCTANT HUSBANDS

PAUL BAKER FINDS HE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WITH HESITATIONS ABOUT COMING TO CELEBRATE

'What, you want me to come with you? No thanks, you go and enjoy yourself' I said, thinking this would give me a week of take-away curries and a free pass to the pub!

I knew I was in for a long period of nagging if I didn't agree. The previous year she had gone to Celebrate with our two children and they had come back raving about how good it was. The children were so animated and excited about going back that I must admit I was intrigued to see how any 'churchy' event could possibly capture their interest so much.... I gave in.

Easter Sunday I was off to Devon, just until the Wednesday, (I was an Anglican who went to the Catholic church since the children were baptised, and certainly wasn't ready to commit to a whole week of spiritual stuff!). It was a strange experience being greeted by hundreds of happy people, especially when you are more used to hundreds of bored looking commuters travelling back and forth to London each day. It's quite unnerving to see smiling faces en masse and people genuinely pleased to meet you.

I must admit my first time at Celebrate, I was nervous. This was all new to me and I wasn't sure whether I really fitted in, but there was something very special about being in the midst of a believing

community whose faith was high priority. I was taken aback at the amount of young people who attended.

I was not alone in my reservations and am certainly not the only reluctant husband. Alan Pullin came for the first time in 2003:

'When we got there I went along to a few of the talks but I decided it wasn't really for me. I was very suspicious with all these happy people around. Mind you, I had no objection to going along to the bar in the evening!'

The following year he agreed to go again but spent most of his time relaxing and reading (a spiritual book!) in his chalet. This is one of the great things about Celebrate, you can partake in as little or as much as you like.

Over the next year he continued to read and investigate faith, and found this time he was quite ready to go to Celebrate and was willing to listen.

'One of the talks, by Jim Murphy, an American speaker, impacted me directly; it was as if he was speaking to me personally. That evening I went up to be prayed with and I haven't looked back since. When we came back I arranged to go on an RCIA course, and was confirmed a Catholic at Easter 2007.'

Max Ali, a Catholic born and bred, didn't know what to expect when his wife asked him to go to Celebrate with the family.

'I thought I might end up in the middle of a room with "holy people" asking me questions about faith. I really did not think I was ready for it.'

In fact, I found it was totally different. I chose the talks carefully; generally I like the ones that related to everyday life. Worship for me was a new approach to prayer; I found it was one of the highlights.'

For us it is a holiday and I approach it exactly like that, with the inevitable 1 or 2 hours per day checking my work e-mails. The kids have a great time learning new things and making friends, discovering that religion can be fun. We have got to know some really nice, normal people that, believe it or not, share the same common mundane problems that we all have with life and faith.'

We have also attended the Celebrate weekend which is obviously more condensed and with not as many people, but still great.'

Celebrate has given me the chance to go back to basics, a time to reflect and I have discovered a much deeper way in talking to God which I did not think was possible, at least for me.'

Since I first attended Celebrate I have slowly, very slowly, got more involved and more interested. I recognise that the Holy Spirit works at a different pace and in a different way for each one of us. The most important thing is to be open enough to allow Him to work. So from one 'post reluctant husband' I would recommend you try it!



CELEBRATE ON THE WEB

The Celebrate Website has a welcome for all, those who've been before and also to newcomers - the website showcases the next CELEBRATE and the forthcoming CELEBRATE weekends. Brochures and booking forms are available for download too.

There are photos, enabling us to relive wonderful moments from previous events and samples of some of the talks we've heard, jogging our memories and taking us back to those times of nourishment. We're relaunching the prayer board, acknowledging the power of prayer, and allowing Celebrators to share intentions with each other. There's a news page too, promoting other activities of interest, and a mailing list to which Celebrators can subscribe, with news updates being e-mailed from time to time.

It's everyone's website. We invite you to contribute ... to share your prayers and intercessions, your testimonies, photos and even videos, plus any news which you might want to share. And finally, your thoughts and ideas for improvements to the online content - it's your CELEBRATE website!

website: www.celebrateconference.org

e-mail: info@celebrateconference.org

CELEBRATE ABROAD

Over the last few years CELEBRATE has become an international event with conferences starting in both the Netherlands and Austria.

For the past five years Holland has run a Celebrate Catholic family conference at a holiday camp. All ages have attended and it has attracted over 1000 people each year to come and share the joy and excitement of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 2002 Hans Peter and Verena Lang launched Austria's first CELEBRATE they tell us how it all began.

"FREI-ZEIT MIT JESUS" – THE AUSTRIAN CELEBRATE

In 1999 Charles and Sue Whitehead invited us to CELEBRATE at Ilfracombe. Charles knew us as chairpersons of the NSC of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Austria and as people eager to find new forms of evangelisation.

We had agreed to Charles' proposal to be workshop speakers. The workshop went better than we had thought, in spite of our little practice to give talks in English. We were also invited to be part of the prayer team after the evening sessions. This was basically not new to us, but the form and organisation for so

many participants made a great impression on us.

The whole programme of sessions, talks and workshops, music programmes, performances of Christian artists and the idea of an extra youth programme for every age group seemed to be an enormous challenge. And then the ecumenical openness to have excellent speakers from Free Churches...! Would that be accepted in Austria with a dominant Catholic Church?

Back at home we gave a quick report to our team and instantly we asked the secretary of the Renewal Office to look out for an adequate venue for an "Austrian" CELEBRATE. At the next NSC-meeting this idea was one of the main topics. After prayer, the German name of the event was born: It was "Frei-Zeit mit Jesus". "Freizeit" means to have a time for leisure between work, school etc., and "Frei-Zeit" means more, that you are free to have a time with Jesus. The place most suitable for this new summer conference was Schladming in the middle of Austria, a ski resort with



little summer tourist traffic. Was it a hint from the Lord that this town is one of the very few places in Austria where there is no Catholic majority but a strong Lutheran Church?

We started with the first "Frei-Zeit mit Jesus" in 2002, then followed others in 2004, in 2006 and 2009. Charles and Sue came as midwives to the first two conferences. We dared to invite non-catholic speakers at all conferences. Following Sues proposal, since 2006 we have had one day when there is not a Catholic but a Lutheran service in the morning where the Catholics - the big majority - receive blessings and only the Protestants get bread and wine. There were many tears in Catholic eyes when they felt how it is to be excluded... The conference at Schladming became a meeting place not only for people involved in the Renewal but also a valuable chance for reconciliation in the Body of Christ.



TAKING IT HOME

'AND THE SEED THAT FELL ON GOOD SOIL CAME UP, GREW AND PRODUCED A CROP, MULTIPLYING THIRTY, SIXTY, OR EVEN **A HUNDRED TIMES.' MARK 4:7-9**

Every year, at each of the conferences you find people who have been challenged to dig deeper in faith and then take back the fruit of what they have heard to their parishes at home.

At Celebrate a wide variety of seminars/workshops are offered by allsorts of people, ministries and communities. You can find topics available such as;

youth ministry, prayer, intercession, Lectio Divina, as well as more practical subjects on how to cope with the loss of a loved one through separation, divorce or death, stewarding your finance, seeking your vocation, or even mime and movement!

There is such a wide breadth of experience and knowledge on offer to those who want to come and hear.

The newly formed 20-30's sessions, led by Liam Lynch, aim at connecting those who are dealing with similar challenges. He explains,

'Our 'philosophy' is that there are four 'ships' in the 20s&30s fleet that need to be explored:

RelationSHIPS -; marriage; kids; singleness; colleagues. StewardSHIP - We're either flat broke, mortgaged to the eyeballs or even earning more than we know what to do with.

LeaderSHIP - Whether it be at Uni, the work place, at home or in our Church communities.

DiscipleSHIP - The spoon-feeding is over, it's now time to take responsibility for our own formation and find what it truly means to be an all out follower of Jesus Christ in a hectic secular culture.'

There is something on offer at all ages and at all levels, and for many the challenge lies in what to do with what you have heard.

PETE, THE NEW YOUTH WORKER WITH SOME OF HIS GROUP AT SACRED HEART

Terry Theile attended the North West Celebrate weekend in Manchester and went along to a Cafod workshop. He heard about their work, which he found inspirational. He explains that this moved him to join his parish's Justice & Peace group.

'I am able to use my work skills as a graphic designer to help with our latest project, which is to raise funds for people in East Africa. I am delighted that the Celebrate workshop has given me the opportunity to get involved'

Other people have found that the seminars and workshops have stirred up an interest to take on further study. Maureen Goldsmith shares her experience,

'In my first few years I was too busy with young children to think too hard about the talks, but I used to buy the recorded CD's, which I listened to when I got back home. I also found a wealth of exciting



spiritual material through the incredible range of books sold by Good News Books at Celebrate.'

'This gave me a spiritual hunger for more knowledge and I realised it would be helpful to start a formal course of study so I started the CCRS course (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies). I then went on to do the degree course in Religious Studies and I loved learning about Spirituality and Spiritual development. The knowledge that I have gained has, I believe, been helpful to the parish, as I have been able to support parish catechesis and be involved in running CaFE courses.'

Ros Burton who had an interest in needlework and crafts was inspired by the Banner Making workshop. She has now made banners for her parish of St Josephs for many of the liturgical seasons including Advent, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

'Members of the congregation often compliment us on the banners, saying they bring an extra focus particularly when they first arrive for Mass.'

Federica Ali went to Celebrate for the first time in 2008 with her husband and

young family and was really impacted.

'Coming home to my parish I felt the urge to tell others about what I had discovered at Celebrate, and wanted others to experience it. Having seen the effect that the fun, faith filled activities had on my young children, I was keen to continue this for them and all the parish children (of which there are many). So I made a proposal, which sounded absurd and 'undoable' at the time, of recruiting a Youth Worker. Well, a year later, through God's grace and unending discussions, teamwork, research and financial appeals, we finally got an amazing Parish Youth Worker.'

'A number of youth clubs are now running every day of the week, providing for the needs of all age groups from 8 to 18; Masses are being celebrated with lively and inspiring modern music and the new choir which has grown up now numbers 16!'

Many seeds are sown at Celebrate. It is amazing to hear how God has worked in the lives of those who have attended the conferences and how He uses Celebrate as a springboard for the growth of so many things.



ONE OF ROS'S BANNERS HANGING IN ST JOSEPH'S

WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

Many people have heard something about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), and without really understanding what it is may have decided it's not for them. That's a great pity - it's a gift of God and has something very important to contribute to the Church. So I will try to explain what's at the heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and why it has an important role in the life of the Church. I'll begin by looking at the key words "charismatic" and "renewal" in this context.

A charism is a special gift of the Holy Spirit. Its root is in the Greek word "charis" meaning "grace". Every charism is a special gift of grace because it's supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit to equip a person to undertake particular tasks or services for the benefit of the Church. So the word "charismatic" is here used to describe something which has its origins *in*, is inspired *by*, and contains the power *of* the Holy Spirit. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "renewal" in these words: "*among charismatic Christians, the state or process of being renewed in the Holy Spirit*". So renewal is a process, usually beginning when the Holy Spirit responds to someone's request to renew their spiritual life. Every Christian needs this on-going spiritual renewal, and we are reminded that it's an activity of the Holy Spirit.

If we draw all this together, we can say that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) is in essence both the action and the result of a sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which brings a new or renewed experience of God's life and power into the lives of his people.

It is a *sovereign* work of the Holy Spirit because it is not something we own or control. Through it we are invited to hand our lives over to God, to give the control back to him. We allow God to *be* God, and to work in us through his Holy Spirit. This renewal is freely offered to anyone who asks - we just need to be willing to invite the Holy Spirit to release his power in us to bring alive the graces of our baptism. But the Spirit not only brings alive all that we have *already* received

through the sacraments of our Christian initiation, he comes *again* in power to equip us with new gifts for service and mission.

WHEN AND WHERE DID THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL BEGIN?

The twentieth century is often called "the century of the Holy Spirit". As it began, Pope Leo XIII prayed that the Holy Spirit would come again in power, and rather surprisingly the first signs of this were experiences of the presence of the Spirit among Presbyterians in Wales (1904) and Methodists in Kansas (1905). These were followed in 1906 by the beginnings of Pentecostalism, when the Holy Spirit came in power upon the congregation in a small, run-down mission church in Azusa Street, Los Angeles. Then as the century unfolded, a variety of traditional Protestant churches also experienced the power of the Spirit, but what about the Catholic Church?

At the beginning of the 1960s, Pope John XXIII called a major international conference of the Catholic Church, named the Second Vatican Council. A key part of his motivation was a desire to see the Holy Spirit bring new direction and power into the life of the worldwide Church. So he invited every Catholic to join him in praying for an opening of the windows of the Church to the wind of the Spirit - for a new Pentecost in our own time. God answered the prayers of his people, and among the many fruits of the Council was a greater appreciation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, and





a blossoming of new movements and communities. Among these we find the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), so how did it all begin?

In 1967 a group of American students from Duquesne University were attending a weekend retreat, at which they experienced an amazing new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Some of the leaders had already seen their own spiritual lives transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit at a Protestant prayer meeting, and as they and the students read from the book of Acts, the question they were asking was: why did their own experience of God lack the power and results they were reading about among the first disciples of Jesus?

As they prayed in the chapel at the retreat house, their faith came alive and the Holy Spirit began to reveal his presence to them in a variety of new ways. This experience is called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and usually results in a closer relationship with Jesus and the Father, a new love for Scripture and the Sacraments, a desire to pray, an openness to the supernatural gifts or charisms of the Spirit, and a willingness to witness and evangelise. Ten years later more than one hundred million Catholics could testify to similar experiences, and what had become known as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal could be found in more than 100 countries. No grass-roots spiritual movement has ever spread as far and as fast as the CCR. In many places the beginning of CCR groups was encouraged by similar Protestant or Pentecostal groups in remarkable demonstrations of unity in the Spirit.

WHAT FORMS DOES THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL TAKE?

It is not a single unified worldwide movement, and it does not have a human founder or formal courses of initiation and membership lists. Neither is it a special devotion to the Holy Spirit, a strange new spirituality only suitable for some particular people, or just a network of prayer groups and communities. The CCR is a highly diverse collection of individuals, groups, ministries and activities, often quite independent of one another, in different stages and modes of development, and with different emphases. One of the characteristics of the CCR is the enormous variety of its expressions and ministries, all inspired by the Holy Spirit and carried out

in his power, which have a home under its umbrella. Everyone shares the same fundamental experience of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, but the emphasis is on relationships and networks rather than on structures. These patterns of informal relationships are to be found at local, diocesan, national and international levels, and are characterised by free association, dialogue, and collaboration. Many groups feel they are part of a big charismatic family - by their very nature they are related to each other and they do not see any need to be integrated into an ordered charismatic structure locally or nationally. They know they are already fully part of the Church, and that's what is important. The CCR does not exist to create more and larger groups or to build up a big organisation - the simple desire of those involved is that as many others as possible should also have their Christian lives renewed by the Holy Spirit. Some organisation may be necessary to facilitate this, but it should be kept to a minimum.

SO WHAT DOES THE CHURCH HIERARCHY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

From the very beginning the Church has welcomed the CCR. Pope Paul VI received the early leaders in Rome in 1973 and again in 1975, when he described the CCR as "a chance for the Church and the world". On numerous public occasions, Pope John Paul II expressed his personal support, and similarly Pope Benedict has been unfailing in his commitment and encouragement both before and since his election as Supreme Pontiff. In September 1993, the International Council (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) was given official recognition and granted formal Church Statutes as a body to promote the CCR. So it is not some strange fringe organisation, but an accepted, approved, and fruitful current of life at the very heart of the Catholic Church, bringing new spiritual power to millions of ordinary people.

I hope these few lines have helped your understanding of this remarkable gift from God which we have called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. If you would like to know more please talk to someone who is involved, and elsewhere in this magazine you will find web-sites and other useful addresses. My prayer is that you will open your heart to the Holy Spirit, so that he may bless, encourage, and help you to live your Christian life more effectively in his love and power.

© **Charles Whitehead**
Celebrate Chairman

For more information about Catholic Charismatic Renewal, visit www.iccrs.org

CREDITS/ THANKS

Editor - **Jenny Baker**, Celebrate Core Team
Design by **Matthew van Duyvenbode**, 36twenty six matthew@36twenty six.com
Cover Illustration by **Lindsay Hubbard**
Printing by **Mike Goldsmith**, Transform Management Ltd sales@1025transform.co.uk
Celebrate Photographs by **Michael Woodward**, Shot With Spirit mike@shotwithspirit.com

Our thanks to all contributors and to those we didn't have room for.

All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part, in any written, electronic or other format is prohibited without prior permission of the editor.



he's just heard...

Premier's gone National

on DAB Digital Radio

Inspiring, uplifting, rejoicing, radio. With music, news, debate, prayer, testimony and the best in Christian programming, we're a station like no other.

Tune in today on DAB Digital Radio across the nation.

Premier
CHRISTIAN RADIO

www.premier.org.uk/dab