

who gathered round Mother Teresa in Calcutta to care for the most destitute, sick and abandoned of all. It has produced farming communes and draft-resisters and dedicated squatters and people like the Petits Frères who live and worship in tenement flats and work in factories. It has also produced, significantly, a small but useful crop of hermits.

This isn't a religious revival, which can be useful but can equally be quite spurious. This is the old routine of building the kingdom. The difference is that the kingdom of this world, after a period of looking like an impressive option for humanity, has once more turned out to be literally dust and ashes. But the other kingdom is not made with hands, or not just hands. The kingdom of heaven is within you, which means, for most of us, that we need cracking open.

## Catholics and Pentecostals

### by Simon Tugwell, O.P.

Since 1967 considerable impetus has been given to group prayer in the Catholic Church, by the Catholic Pentecostal Movement in North America. This movement began as largely a lay movement of spiritual renewal in Catholic university circles in the U.S.A. It has connexions with the Spanish-born *cursillo* movement, whose aim is to bring Catholics to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus (the evangelical terminology is deliberate), but it actually derives from the encounter with interdenominational Pentecostalism. It received massive and sensational publicity, and grew with amazing rapidity, spreading throughout the States, and penetrating into Canada. In 1969 it was cautiously approved by the U.S. hierarchy, and has also been enthusiastically recommended by one or two individual bishops.

Although it is a very variegated phenomenon, running right through it is the insistence that all Christians can and should claim 'the promise of the Father' in what they, with other Pentecostals, call 'baptism in the Spirit'. That is to say, people who are already believers in Christ call down upon themselves or upon each other an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, 'just as it was in the beginning' at Pentecost. The usual procedure is for someone who has already had the experience to lay hands on one who is seeking it, with prayer; it is believed that this will result in a sudden or gradual unfolding of the person's life in Christ into the charismatic manifestations, usually beginning with tongues, followed in due course by prophecy, interpretation, healing, or some such supernatural endowment or ministry. It is claimed that a great many people, some on the point of

leaving the Church altogether, have found their Christian lives amazingly invigorated and renewed; they have entered a new freedom in prayer and witness and action, a new joy in the Lord, a new love for God and man; in many cases also an increased devotion to the sacraments, and to our Lady, and, of course, very close fellowship with Christians of other denominations who have also shared in the Pentecostal experience.

Now the question 'What's happened to the Holy Spirit?' is not a new one. Leo XIII, in an encyclical of 1897, lamented that many Catholics seemed hardly even to know of his existence. One of the great controversies of the earlier part of the century was whether the mystical and charismatic way was, in principle, proper for all Christians; the Dominican Garrigou-Lagrange and the Jesuit de la Taille argued strongly that it was, the other side being represented most weightily by the Jesuit Poulain, whose *Graces of Mystical Prayer* remains an outstanding monument of the purely phenomenological approach to the subject. The Benedictine Anselm Stolz, exhorting us to return to a more ancient Patristic theology, showed that the question should never even have arisen. Then, in more popular vein, Bede Jarrett and Gerald Vann both drew our attention back to the Holy Spirit, to the reality and efficacy of his presence in us. Arinterro (1860-1928, perhaps the greatest spiritual director and writer of the period) especially warned against the tendency to fight shy of the charismatic gifts. More recently Karl Rahner has laboriously reminded us of the patent intention of St Ignatius in his *Exercises* to lead people to a direct experience of divine guidance, and of the spiritual and theological importance of this. Then, to crown it all, Pope John had us all praying to the Spirit, to renew his wonders in this our age 'as by a new Pentecost'.

But, for all the preaching and teaching, the discussion remained largely academic. The question what to *do* about it remained unanswered, perhaps inevitably, in view of the prevalent belief that mystical prayer must not be actively sought but would simply 'come' in God's good time. There was some excellent and practical teaching on prayer—the simplicity of Vincent McNabb's *The Craft of Prayer*, for instance, is highly commendable—but it all served to make contemplation seem even more remote and unlikely. A great gulf, both theoretical and practical, seemed to be set between 'ordinary' prayer and 'mystical' prayer; there seemed no way through for the ordinary everyday Christian.

It might appear that the Catholic Pentecostal Movement is the providential answer to this situation; and, in many ways, I don't think one would be far wrong in supposing it. It offers an easy and practical access, to all and sundry, into spiritual prayer, and contributes to the restoration of Christian unity, which is inseparable, as the Vatican Council insists, from the growth of the Church into full possession of her own wholeness and integrity of life.

However, the picture is not quite as simple as this. For all its admirers, the Movement has also antagonized many sincere and deep believers, both Catholic and Protestant. Most interesting of all, I have even heard of Pentecostals being scandalized by it—not because it is Catholic, but because it is not Catholic enough; it is suspected of superficiality, of a too-facile appropriation of Pentecostalism. Whatever the rights and wrongs, it can do no harm to take a very serious look at the whole matter, to attempt to situate it in a broader theological and spiritual context, and so to become aware of the possible danger and, perhaps, of unsuspected assets.

In the documents of the early Church, Christianity is frequently presented in terms of a great conflict with the spirits of evil. At baptism a man publicly deserts the ranks of the devil, and is enrolled in the forces of Christ. A great deal of the polemic against evil consists of an attack on oracles and idolatry; these are the typical products of the devil. Perhaps we—and the devil—are more sophisticated today; but the basic pattern of the conflict has not changed much. Oracles give a too-ready answer, idols give a too-facile comfort; they make us feel at home in the world, but their terms are the terms of ‘the Prince of this world’, and what have he and Christ in common? In Christ it pleased all the fullness to dwell, and in his Church he has planted a ‘seed of unity’, through which all things are called into the wholeness in which all are recapitulated in himself. Against this, it is the devil’s constant endeavour to introduce fragmentation and disunity. Every divine initiative towards us is dogged by this counterattack, and we must be well aware of its tactic.

Christianity is a religion of incarnation. The fullness towards which we aspire is found in its perfection in the human flesh of Jesus. Every move towards the realization in us of that fullness in Christ involves an element of embodiment. The sacraments, religious practices, the scriptures, all these embody in different ways our union with Christ. To say that they are means is not intended to disparage them; they mediate the wholeness of the Christ who is larger than they. But, precisely because of this, no single one of them can ever be indispensable. St Thomas goes as far as any Greek in insisting that all these things are only *props*, leading to and flowing from the transcendent reality of the living grace of the Holy Spirit. They are intended as ikons. The devil tries to turn them into idols, so that we become so satisfied with the means that we forget the end. The ikon embodies for us a reality far greater than itself; in so far as it is such an embodiment, we treasure and revere it. But we do not get hung up on it; Christ is larger than his media of communication, and so we too must be free with regard to them. If we do get hung up on them, they become idols, which claim to contain their own reality. They opt out of transcendence. And then they can serve the devil in either direction: if we keep them, he has us bound. If we reject them, we are easily duped into spiritualizing our religion so that it

ceases to have any bodily reality at all, and then becomes irrelevant and ineffective in our actual lives. We implicitly deny that Christ has come in the flesh.

We can see the whole process clearly in the first Christian centuries. At first it was martyrdom: earnest lovers of our Lord yearned for this full bodily identification with him in his passion. But then it got short-circuited. People who were not spiritually ready for it volunteered themselves for martyrdom, and then had not the strength to see it through, giving great scandal to all. The Church had to be very precise, insisting that martyrdom was not something *more* than being a Christian, it was a very direct embodiment of being a Christian, a mirror held up to the face of each believer. But nevertheless, it was not co-extensive with the idea of being a Christian.

Then it was asceticism. As martyrdom became less likely, earnest souls undertook voluntary hardships out of their desire for simpler, closer union with Christ. Asceticism was their way of giving body to their devotion. It was not a way of being Christian *plus*, it was their way of being Christian. But again, it got short-circuited. Asceticism became an end in itself, the ikon became an idol. Much of our early monastic writing is concerned to put asceticism in its place.

Perhaps the most interesting case is, in fact, monasticism. In face of a Church going cold and respectable, people like Anthony simply dropped out into the desert, in response to the simplicity and directness of the gospel challenge. Their move of utter faith was embodied in a total renunciation of worldly concern and security; and it was rewarded by a living awareness of the Holy Spirit, and a life open to the charismatic and the miraculous. 'What is better than having the Holy Spirit?' as abba Theodore remarked. 'We believe that all things are possible to God: well then, believe it in your own life, that God can work miracles in you too' (abba Euprepus). They did not think that they were being anything other than straightforward Christians—to such an extent, in fact, that they were inclined to talk as if they had only become Christians at the time of their dropping-out, their 'renunciation' (a word with baptismal connotations). For them of course, this was, in a sense, true: their renunciation gave body and reality to their baptismal faith.

But the devil wasn't going to leave it at that. Their move of gospel faith became institutionalized as a *special* way, as Christianity *plus*. Where Cassian teaches that monastic renunciation leads into the freedom of the new law, the law of love, the Holy Spirit, Caesarius of Arles turns it hideously upside down, offering a theology of the laity in terms precisely of the old law! The Church has still not recovered from this.

Exactly the same thing happened with contemplation. The early writers never dreamed that they were concerned with anything other than the living reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In evolving techniques and practices of spirituality, they were aiming to give

body to the Christian faith. But once again, somehow, mysticism came to be a highly esoteric matter, reserved, at least in practice, for a small élite. It proved quite in vain, as we have seen, to assert, from within an already esoteric mystical theology, that it was not meant to be esoteric. It had already lost contact both with the rest of theology (sacramental, moral, scriptural), and with most believers.

In each case it is the same ploy: a move of the Spirit to lead men into the full experience of the redemption in Christ, in all its simplicity, gets trapped, and turned into an idol. It becomes esoteric, and therefore does not reach nearly as many people as it might, and, in fact, becomes divisive; and it tends to lull its adepts into a false sense of security: going through certain motions is felt as a sort of guarantee. According to St Thomas, there is no such guarantee. Even where the motions in question are certainly supernatural (as with the sacraments, and the same must be said of phenomena 'in the Spirit'), all is not necessarily in order.

Now our age is, paradoxically, characterized both by a great drive towards wholeness (oecumenism and *ressourcement* both tend this way), and by a great proliferation of diverse and divisive renewal movement. These latter, having chucked the old idols of the conservatives, seem particularly prone to set up new idols. Now one idol may be better than another, a new idolatry may be a step forward in the direction of a genuine liberation. But not if it gets stuck there. The first move often seems to be that we get turned on by something not integrally Christian or Catholic (Zen Catholicism, Catholic Marxism, Transcendental Meditation, birth control. . .). In at least some cases, this can prove to be a genuine means of contact with the living Christ. After all, monasticism, dying for one's convictions, and mysticism are not peculiarly or intrinsically Christian. But they only serve the ultimate wholeness and freedom in so far as they become transparent to the reality of Jesus Christ, and this is what, all too often, does not seem to happen. The Catholic Marxist continues to be a Marxist who happens to patronise an R.C. church; and similarly with the Catholic Pentecostal, I'm afraid. The new ism can so easily pull away from the wholeness and simplicity.

In fact, one can see this particularly clearly in the case of Pentecostalism. What the whole thing is about, essentially, is one way of reclaiming the original gospel experience of the Holy Spirit, 'just as it was in the beginning'. In this, the inspiration is exactly that of the Desert Fathers, and of the mendicants in the thirteenth century. Like them, it offers both a vision of evangelical simplicity and wholeness and a particular way of giving body to this vision.

Pentecostalism, as a Church, is clearly not obliged to distinguish between the experience of the Spirit as such, and its own particular experience of the Spirit. In its own way, like the early Church, it does not have to cope with a multiplicity of paths.

But this is far from true of us poor Catholics! Our simplicity cannot

be so easily won, our synthesis must be more comprehensive, more ambitious. Our tradition carries within it both a pledge of and a commitment to universality, both universality of human experience and universality of appeal to men of all nations and all times. If we are to be true, both to our own heritage and to the real challenge of Pentecostalism, we must resist the temptation simply to annex Pentecostalism on to the end of an otherwise unaffected fragmented Catholicism. In view of the fragmentation we have been afflicted with, and especially the isolation of mystical theology, this is a very real temptation, and it is not, perhaps, easy, in all the excitement of the Pentecostal encounter, to discern that it *is* in fact a temptation.

What we can learn from the Pentecostals, it seems to me, is a mass of experience of life in the Spirit—their case law, so to speak, is as exciting and profitable as that of the Desert Fathers or the Russian *startzi*; and we can learn from them a practical approach to the fullness of the Christian life. But we do less than justice to their wholeness, their integrity, if we do not assimilate this deeply into our own tradition, seeking to experience and to express it in a way that will demonstrate its unity with the liturgical and scriptural and theological renewal that is also going on in the Church. In thus being more Catholic, we shall find, paradoxically, that we are also free to be more Pentecostal. By taking the theological weight off the central experience of Pentecostalism, what they call the ‘baptism in the Spirit’, we can accept their spiritual practice with considerably less reserve. Neopentecostals have tended to play down the Pentecostal insistence on tongues, while keeping to their doctrine of ‘baptism in the Spirit’. It seems to me preferable to keep their insistence on tongues, but to take the theological weight off. As they present it, tongues becomes the criterion of reception of the Spirit, a position clearly untenable in Catholic or Protestant circles. But if we see it as one way of giving body to our Christian desire to surrender ourselves completely to the power of Christ, then the problem disappears. As it has always been understood in the Catholic tradition the objective guarantor of reception of the Spirit is baptism. What still remains is the subjective realization and appropriation of baptism, and this can take place in many different ways. We shall be considering some of them in the next article. Frequently some decisive gesture is required, which will give body to our faith. In our spiritual growth, we may reach a point where we are ripe for a profound breakthrough of grace into our lives, a point where we are ready to perform a genuinely supernatural act. But how can this actually take place? This is the question that all schools of spirituality undertake to answer. We can learn from the Pentecostals one such answer, a good, simple, scriptural answer. But let us be careful to situate it within our Catholic wholeness, lest we antagonize others unnecessarily, confuse ourselves as to what is going on, and make it harder for us to integrate our Catholic inheritance deeply into our lives.



We are *not* part of an interdenominational Pentecostalism; we are part of that wholeness given in trust to the Catholic Church, and which the Lord is leading into ever fuller manifestation, in the reintegration of the fragments of our own Catholicism, and in the growing together of all Christians, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal. Let us not short-circuit, seduced by a more immediate synthesis, a reunion based only on partial experience instead of a deep fidelity to the whole of our own tradition. Let us not preach a 'movement', so emphasizing our own peculiar insights (whether inspired by Pentecostalism or Marxism or whatever) as to endanger the common heritage of all believers; let us rather proclaim Jesus Christ, straight and entire. And may the Lord hasten the day on which we shall all be truly one, one in the simplicity of our own lives, one in the unity of all believers.

## **What is the Point of Being a Roman Catholic?**

### **Reflections on a visit to Holland**

by Brian Wicker and Ian Gregor

'A clean, well-lighted place'—the phrase occurs readily enough to anyone visiting Holland today and it has its own modulation when thought of in connection with contemporary Dutch Catholicism. Here, if anywhere, we can see translated into coherent and consistent practice much of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and it is hardly necessary to say that the notion of a Church as a whole seriously attempting to embody that spirit and not just paying lip-service to it cannot be other than impressive. A visit to Holland provides an opportunity to see some of the 'progressive' theological thinking in the Church 'in action', as it were—thinking which made us conscious certainly of 'the well-lighted place', but also, and more unexpectedly, of the shadows which fell across it.

Two propositions central to modern theological thinking are the importance of establishing a view of faith as a personal commitment and recognition of the pluriform cultures in which we live. And so it is not surprising to find these assumptions shaping contemporary Dutch Catholicism.

With regard to the first, in almost every conversation we had, words like 'authenticity', 'maturity', and 'personal commitment' occurred with unflinching regularity. Celibacy, to take the most obvious and topical issue, was felt to be significant only if it was a