

Fall 2015

The Catholic Charismatic Movement

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Recommended Citation

Mansfield, P. G. (2015). The Catholic Charismatic Movement. *Spiritan Horizons*, 10 (10). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-horizons/vol10/iss10/10>

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IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES LIFE



Patti Gallagher Mansfield

Patti Gallagher (Duquesne, 1968: BS Education, French) was a participant in the 1967 “Duquesne Weekend” that marked the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Her works include *As By a New Pentecost. The Dramatic Beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Franciscan University Press, 1992); *Proclaim the Joy of the Gospel* (Amor Deus, 2nd ed. 2014). Through teaching, writing, television and pastoral ministry she has been a pioneer in the New Evangelization, traveling extensively to bear witness to the grace of being baptized in the Spirit. Patti and her husband have four children and nine grandchildren. Together they serve in the Charismatic Renewal in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Mansfields were awarded the papal medal, *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, by Pope Saint John Paul II.

...Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit is known throughout the world as the birthplace of the largest ecclesial movement, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which has touched the lives of at least 120 million Catholics in every country of the world since February 1967. The event which marked the beginning of this movement has become known as “The Duquesne Weekend” and I was there. I’m delighted to tell the story for the first time in an official Duquesne publication because I have shared it on all five continents for almost five decades. In fact, in June, 2015, I took part in the Worldwide Priests Retreat held at St. John Lateran in Rome which was attended by 1000 priests from 89 countries. I had the privilege to tell these priests about the Duquesne Weekend and to pray with them for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The retreat was blessed by the presence of Pope Francis who enthusiastically encouraged the Charismatic Renewal to share with the whole Church the principal grace of the Renewal - the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. I hope in this article to do just that.

The Duquesne Weekend

The story of the Duquesne Weekend is a remarkable story of God’s gracious and extraordinary response to the prayer of some very ordinary people. In Luke 11:9, 13 we read these words of Jesus, “Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you....If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Here is an unfailing principle: from the first Pentecost on, the Holy Spirit has always come in response to fervent prayer, prayer that is hungry and thirsty for more of God, prayer that asks, seeks, and knocks.

In the Spring of 1966, two Duquesne University professors were asking, seeking, and knocking. They had pledged themselves to pray daily for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives using the beautiful Sequence Hymn of Pentecost, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come, Holy Spirit). In the midst of this time of prayer, some friends gave them two books: *The Cross and the Switchblade*¹ (the dramatic story of a small town minister led by the Spirit to work with drug addicts in the streets of New York City) and *They Speak With Other Tongues*.² Both books describe the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The men from Duquesne realized that this Baptism in the Spirit was precisely what they desired.

In January 1967, these two professors and one of their wives, along with another instructor from Duquesne, attended their

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first interdenominational charismatic home prayer meeting. Interestingly enough, a few months before the visit of the Catholics, the Lord directed the leader to read Isaiah 48 where he announces that he is about to do “a new thing.”

Indeed, God was about to do a new thing among Catholics as a result of that prayer meeting. The people from Duquesne were impressed with what they witnessed there. On January 20, two of the men returned. They received prayer to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to experience charismatic gifts. They returned home to pray with the other two who had not attended that night.

At this time I was a member of the *Chi Rho* group that met weekly at Duquesne. We prayed a short form of the Divine Office and studied the Scriptures. Two of these professors served as moderators of *Chi Rho*, and although they did not tell us about their charismatic experience, they radiated a new joy. The professors suggested a new theme for our February 1967 retreat: “The Holy Spirit.” In preparation for the retreat, they told us to pray with expectant faith, to read the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles and to read *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

As I did the required reading, I found myself thinking, “I’ve been baptized and confirmed. I have the Holy Spirit. Why don’t I experience Pentecost in my life?” I knelt in my room and prayed, “*Lord, as a Catholic, I believe I’ve already received your Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation. But if it’s possible for your Spirit to be more at work in my life than he’s been up until now, I want it!*” Although I felt nothing special at the moment of that prayer, in reality, I was asking for a “Personal Pentecost.” I was asking to be baptized in the Spirit without using the terminology. The dramatic answer to my prayer was soon to come.

On February 17, 1967 about 25 of us left for The Ark and The Dove Retreat house in Gibsonia, PA (now Providence Villa). As we gathered for each session in the upper room chapel, we sang the ancient hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come Creator Spirit). On Friday night, there was a meditation on Mary followed by a communal penance service. In John 16, we read that when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin. That’s what happened among us as the retreat began. There was the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The next morning there was a talk on Acts 2 by a woman from that interdenominational prayer group. Although her presentation was very simple, it was filled with spiritual power. She spoke about surrendering to Jesus as Lord and Savior. She

described the Holy Spirit as a Person who empowered her daily. Here was someone who really seemed to know Jesus intimately and personally! She knew the power of the Holy Spirit like the Apostles did. I was intrigued and impressed. In my notes I wrote, “Jesus, be real for me.”

In the discussion following her talk, David Mangan, a graduate of Duquesne, made a bold proposal. He recalled that every Easter, we Catholics renew our baptismal promises. Therefore, he proposed that we close our retreat by renewing our Confirmation, that we, as young adults, say our personal “yes” to the Holy Spirit. There wasn’t too much enthusiasm in the group for this proposal, but I thought it was brilliant. David and I went to one of the professors and said, “Even if no one else wants to renew their Confirmation, we do.” In fact, my expectation was so high that I tore out a sheet of paper and wrote, “I want a miracle!” posting it on the bulletin board. Little did I know that the miracle would be the beginning of an ecclesial movement which would spread throughout the universal Church.

Saturday night a birthday party was planned for a few of our members, but there was a listlessness in the group. I wandered into the upstairs chapel, not to pray, but to tell any students there to come down to the party. Yet, when I entered and knelt in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I began to tremble. By faith, I had always believed that Jesus is really present in the tabernacle. But that night I experienced his majesty. I remember thinking, “God is truly here. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The One through whom all things came into being. He is holy and I’m not holy. I’d better get out of this chapel right away before something happens to me.” I felt very much afraid, but overriding my fear of surrendering unconditionally to God was my need to surrender.

In the depth of my heart I prayed, “*Father, I give my life to you. Whatever you ask of me, I accept. And if it means suffering, I accept that too. Just teach me to follow Jesus and to love the way Jesus loves.*” In the next moment, I found myself prostrate, flat on my face, and immersed in the love of God, a love that is totally undeserved, yet lavishly given. Yes, it’s true what St. Paul writes, “The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us” (Rom 5:5). My shoes came off in the process. I was indeed on holy ground. I felt as if I wanted to die right there and be with God. The prayer of St. Augustine captures my experience: “O Lord, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”³ As much as I wanted to remain and bask in his presence, I knew that if I, who am no one

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special, could experience the love of God in this way, that anyone across the face of the earth could do so.

I ran down to tell our chaplain, Fr. Joe Healy, C.S.Sp., and he said that David Mangan had been in the chapel before me and had encountered God's presence in exactly the same way. "Whom should I tell?" I asked Fr. Joe and his answer has rung in my heart for almost 50 years now: "The Lord will show you." Immediately two girls from La Roche College approached me and said that my face was glowing. I led these two students into the chapel, knelt down and began to pray, "Lord, whatever you just did for me, do it for them!" I had no theological language; I just knew I had received an unmerited gift, available to everyone.

What is the Bishop going to say...

Within the next hour, God sovereignly drew many of the students into the chapel. Some were laughing, others crying, others (like me) felt a burning sensation coursing through them. One of the professors walked in and exclaimed, "What is the Bishop going to say when he hears that all these kids have been baptized in the Holy Spirit!" (Cardinal Wright was Bishop of Pittsburgh at the time). I heard the term, "*baptized in the Spirit*," but I still had no idea what it meant. Indeed, there *was* a birthday party that Saturday night. God had it planned in an upper room chapel. It was the birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal!

When we returned to campus, we created quite a stir. One friend told me, "Patti, if I didn't know you better, I would say you were drunk!" Like the Apostles after Pentecost, we couldn't help but speak of the things we had seen and heard. We literally stumbled into charismatic gifts like prophecy, discernment of spirits, and healing. I prayed with our dorm mother who was in Mercy Hospital with phlebitis and she was healed the next day! One of our professors witnessed to his friends at Notre Dame and Michigan State University in these words: "*I no longer have to believe in Pentecost; I have seen it!*"

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One of the first things I did after the retreat was to take the Documents of Vatican II and look up references to "Holy Spirit" and "charismatic gifts." I thought, "No matter how powerful my personal experience has been, if the Church were to tell me that this is not authentic, I would sooner deny my personal experience than ever leave the Church."

To my joy, I discovered passages such as this one in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12:

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches

it with virtues, but, 'allotting his gifts to everyone according as he wills,' he distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank... These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.

I was relieved to know that I could be fully a daughter of the Church, open to welcome the surprises of the Holy Spirit.

In our enthusiasm, we did not always witness to our experience in the most prudent way. Right after the Duquesne Weekend, I remember going into the theology class with Fr. Anton Morgenroth, C.S.Sp. I took his hand and exclaimed, "Father, I believe in the Holy Spirit!" His response? "Congratulations!" I must ask forgiveness from those we offended during the early days on the Duquesne campus. As the psalmist says, "we were like men in a dream" (Ps 126:1-3). Before long, the *Chi Rho* group disintegrated since not everyone had experienced the Baptism in the Spirit and there was considerable tension. Our fledgling charismatic prayer group was requested to find another meeting place away from the Duquesne campus. At first we met in private homes and then we were welcomed into St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Monastery.

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The Aftermath

I consider it a miracle that this powerful grace of Baptism in the Spirit survived those critical early months and years after the Duquesne Weekend when we had so little guidance. But there were some outstanding people who rose to leadership within the Renewal. For example, there was Dorothy Garrity Ranaghan⁴ who, along with her husband, Deacon Kevin Ranaghan, wrote one of the earliest books on the Renewal entitled, *Catholic Pentecostals*.⁵ There was also Dr. Bert Ghezzi⁶ who was one of the first editors of *New Covenant* magazine, a powerful vehicle for spreading the Renewal around the world. Dorothy and Bert had both gone on to graduate studies at Notre Dame University, Indiana. There were others connected to Notre Dame like Ralph Martin, Steve Clark and Fr. Ed O'Connor, CSC, who contributed by writing articles and books, organizing conferences, founding communities and creating organizations to communicate the grace of Baptism in the Spirit. Ralph wrote the original *Life in the Spirit Seminar*, a seven week course which presents the basic gospel message, and was designed to help Catholics make an adult commitment to Christ and pray for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in their lives. Millions have used it.

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The University of Notre Dame became the site of many of the first Catholic Charismatic Conferences. There were 50 of us at the first conference I attended at Notre Dame in 1967. By May, 1973, there were 35,000 in Notre Dame's football stadium! How did such a thing happen without the aid of telecommunications? How did the news of this New Pentecost spread from a handful of students on the Duquesne Weekend to millions of Catholics around the world? It was surely the grace of God who has determined to send forth his Spirit to renew the face of the earth!

Cardinal Suenens, archbishop of Mechelen-Brussel, Belgium from 1961 to 1979 and one of the four moderators of Vatican II, became involved in the Charismatic Renewal in the early seventies and was its protector. He described the Renewal as *a current of grace* in his book *Spiritual Journey*.⁷ He wrote:

To interpret the Renewal as a 'movement' among other movements is to misunderstand its nature: it is a movement of the Spirit offered to the entire Church, and destined to rejuvenate every facet of the Church's life. The soul of Renewal, 'Baptism in the Spirit,' is a grace of Pentecostal refreshment offered to all Christians...It is not a question of a 'Gulf Stream' which, here and there, reheats the coastlines, but of a powerful current destined to penetrate to the country's very heart.

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Pope Francis has recently taken up this terminology of *current of grace* to describe the Charismatic Renewal in its various manifestations.

Baptism in the Spirit

What is meant by the term, "Baptism in the Spirit" This is not a phrase invented by the Charismatic Renewal. All four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:4-5) refer to being baptized in the Spirit. John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16-17).

A landmark study about the Baptism in the Spirit was done by two theologians in 1991, Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB, and Fr. George Montague, SM. It is entitled *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*.⁸ They illustrate that what millions are experiencing today in the Charismatic Renewal was common in the early Church. Baptism in the Spirit is not the property of the Renewal, but is part of the heritage of every Christian.

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There are at least three ways to understand what this Baptism in the Spirit is. First, it can be understood as *a release* of the graces of Baptism and Confirmation which often lie dormant because of our lack of faith and expectation. This is the most common explanation. Second, it can be understood as *a new coming* of the Spirit to help equip us for a new mission. Fr. Francis Sullivan, SJ, called attention to those passages in St. Thomas Aquinas where he refers to this “new coming.” Pope Saint John Paul II also spoke of a new coming of the Holy Spirit upon Mary in the Cenacle to correspond to her new mission of universal motherhood given to her by her Son on the Cross. The third explanation about Baptism in the Spirit is that it is *a special ecumenical grace* being poured forth on Christians of all denominations to unite us, to help us preach the Gospel with power.

A Jesuit who taught in the Gregorian University in Rome answered the question, “What is Baptism in the Spirit?” this way. “It’s a big grace!” A few years ago my husband and I prayed with another Jesuit from that same university to be baptized in the Spirit. One year later when we met him he told us, “Everything in my life and priesthood is new!” And he looked like a new man!

What does the Baptism in the Spirit accomplish in a person’s life? It is through the Holy Spirit that we cry out “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). People come to discover the tenderness of a loving Father who cares about them. No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3). Centering one’s life on Jesus Christ and not on oneself, one’s spouse, or work or ministry is life-changing. Many Catholics have said that although they went through twelve years of Catholic education, they did not have a personal relationship with Jesus until they were baptized in the Spirit. They did not read the word of God nor witness to their faith. After being baptized in the Spirit, their faith came alive, they began to love God’s word, to return to the sacraments, to look for ways to grow in holiness and service.

It is the Spirit who Gives Life

I have personal knowledge of magnificent communities and ministries that have grown out of the Renewal in less than five decades. To mention a few I have visited recently.

The Emmanuel Community in France numbers 8000 members in 57 countries with 233 priests, 100 seminarians, 4 bishops, and nearly 200 consecrated brothers and sisters. They evangelize 30,000 people through summer conferences in Paray-le-Monial, a site which has been entrusted to their care.

Our Lady’s Youth Center in El Paso, Texas, where food has been miraculously multiplied more than once to feed the poor

after the director, Fr. Rick Thomas, SJ, was baptized in the Spirit (see *Miracles in El Paso? The Amazing Story of God's Work among the Poor of El Paso-Juarez?*).

Kottongnae, South Korea, the largest social service agency in that country, which was founded by Fr. John Oh after he was baptized in the Spirit.

Canção Nova community in Cachoeira Paulista, Brazil. Fr. Jonas Abib was baptized in the Spirit 40 years ago and began with 12 young people. There is now a huge community that does 24/7 Catholic television evangelization. They have built the largest covered stadium in Latin America and hold youth rallies that draw 40,000 teens, teaching them how to live chaste lives.

Emmaus Center in Kampala, Uganda. Fr. Ernest Sievers, M.Afr. was baptized in the Spirit and founded this evangelizing community which has saved many priestly vocations. At their invitation, I spoke on the grounds of Namugongo, the Shrine of the Ugandan martyrs, to 10,000 who sat and slept outside in the “10,000 star hotel!”

Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, an institution in decline until the former President, Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR, was baptized in the Spirit and brought that grace to campus. They are now a thriving university that evangelizes more than 52,000 people annually at summer conferences. And I could go on.

Charismatic Gifts

The charismatic gifts are given as tools for evangelization. Sr. Briege McKenna, OSC¹⁰ was baptized in the Spirit, miraculously healed of rheumatoid arthritis as a young nun and sent into the world to exercise a healing ministry. She had been a first grade teacher but now gives retreats to priests and bishops around the world. That's what charismatic gifts can do!

The most perplexing of the charismatic gifts is the gift of tongues. As a French major, I was offended to think that a person could pray in a language they didn't take the trouble to learn. Then I sat next to David Mangan at one of our early meetings and David was praying in perfect French. He had only studied Latin and German. That got my attention!

The gift of tongues is scriptural and a gift of prayer and praise. St. Paul discusses this gift in I Corinthians, chapters 12—14. He says, “I want you all to speak in tongues” (I Cor. 14:5); and, “I speak in tongues more than any of you” (I Cor. 14:18). St. Teresa of Avila wrote in the *Interior Castle*,¹¹ 6:

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Amongst these favors, at once painful and pleasant, Our Lord sometimes causes in the soul a certain jubilation and a strange and mysterious kind of prayer. If he bestows this grace on you, praise him fervently for it; I describe it so that you may know that it is something real. This may sound like gibberish but it really happens. So excessive is its jubilee that the soul will not enjoy it alone but speaks of it to all around so that they may help it to praise God, which is its one desire.

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Personally, I find praying in tongues a tremendous way to open myself up to the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. In ministry, if I begin by praying in tongues or “in the Spirit” as it is sometimes called, I am more open to receiving a prophetic word or inspiration for the person I am trying to help. As a mother and grandmother, there have been countless instances when “I know not how to pray as I ought, and the Holy Spirit comes to my assistance” in the gift of tongues (cf. Rom. 8:26).

In 1998, Saint John Paul II said: “I want to cry out...Open yourselves with docility to the gifts of the Holy Spirit! Receive with gratitude and obedience the charisms that the Spirit does not cease to offer!” Pope Benedict XVI said in 2008: “Let us rediscover, dear brothers and sisters, the beauty of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.” Pope Francis said in 2014: “Share with the whole church the grace of the Baptism in the Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit and Mary

Mary and the Holy Spirit belong together. This was my experience from the very beginning. It is no wonder that the community founded by Claude-François Poullart des Places *The Congregation of the Holy Spirit* (1703) was later (1848) joined by Francis Libermann’s *Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*; both communities were always consecrated to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Heart of Mary! In his foreword to my book, *As By a New Pentecost*,¹² Cardinal Suenens wrote that “Jesus Christ continues to be born mystically of the Holy Spirit and of Mary,” and that we should never separate what God has joined together. Within hours of my Baptism in the Spirit, I opened the Bible and my eyes fell on these words: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness. Henceforth, all generations will call me blessed. God who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name” (Luke 1:46-49).

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Twenty years after the Duquesne Weekend, I returned to campus and discovered in the Duquesne chapel a beautiful

statue of Our Lady. Over her heart she cradles the Holy Spirit and under her feet is the simple word “Magnificat!”

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Dreaming Dreams

I graduated from Duquesne on Pentecost Sunday, 1968. Now, almost 50 years later I recall the words of Acts 2:17, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Today, I am “dreaming dreams” and “seeing visions” for our beloved University. I pray for a New Pentecost for all the administrators and faculty and students of Duquesne! I pray that there would be a new hunger and thirst to be immersed, yes, baptized in the Holy Spirit on our campus and throughout the Spiritan Congregation! In 1967 when the Spirit of the Living God visited this earth “as by a New Pentecost,” the Spirit did not come to Georgetown or Catholic University or Notre Dame. *The Holy Spirit came to Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit, a small and humble university on the Bluff.* The Duquesne motto, “It is the Spirit who gives life,” must become more of a reality for everyone associated with Duquesne. How can this happen?

1. *Pray daily to the Holy Spirit.* I’d suggest using the Sequence Hymn of Pentecost and the *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM, Cap, Preacher to the Papal Household and active participant in the Charismatic Renewal, has written a marvelous book entitled *Come Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator*,¹³ a rich commentary on the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.
2. Seek the Baptism in the Spirit. Make a Life in the Spirit Seminar. Renewal Ministries has produced the Life in the Spirit Seminar on DVD with teachings given by pioneers in the Renewal. It is entitled “As By a New Pentecost” and David Mangan and I lead prayer for the Baptism in the Spirit (available through www.renewalministries.net).
3. Raise your expectations! Open yourself to the mysterious and powerful work of the Holy Spirit calling you to greater holiness and bolder evangelization.
4. *Embrace the history!* The birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Duquesne University and the Holy Spirit Fathers (Spiritans) were put together by God’s design. The Charismatic Renewal has carried the name of Duquesne University around the world. May this be a cause of joy for you.

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There can be no New Evangelization without a New Pentecost; the Baptism in the Spirit is an expression of this New Pentecost. I close with these words of Pope Francis:

How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A Spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel....I implore him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 261).

Amen! Let it be!

*Patti Gallagher Mansfield
Covington, Louisiana*

Endnotes

¹1962, republished 1986 by Jove. By David Wilkerson, John and Elizabeth Sherrill.

²McGraw Hill, 1964. By John Sherrill.

³*Confessions*, Book 1, 1-2.

⁴Duquesne, 1964: BA Philosophy and English.

⁵Paulist Press, 1969.

⁶Duquesne, 1963: BA History and Classics

⁷Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *Spiritual Journey*, (Ertvelde, Belgium: F.I.A. T. Publications, 1990), pp. 39, 41.

⁸Michael Glazier Books.

⁹By Fr. René Laurentin. Servant Books, 1982.

¹⁰*Miracles Do Happen: God can do the Impossible* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002); *The Power of the Sacraments* (St Anthony Messenger Press, 2010).

¹¹Published in Spanish, 1588. One English edition is Image Books, 1972.

¹²Franciscan University Press, 1992.

¹³Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.