
THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL MOVEMENT IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CEBU IN THE LIGHT OF THE 4TH DIOCESAN SYNOD OF CEBU AND PCP II: PROFILE, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

LEO S. VILLAHERMOSA

ABSTRACT

This study determined the profile and problems of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Archdiocese of Cebu with the end in view of providing suggestions to enhance the members' spiritual life. The study was conducted in three parishes within Metro Cebu, namely: Saint Joseph the Patriarch Parish, Mabolo, Cebu City, Lord of the Agony Parish, Casuntingan, Mandaue City, and San Narciso Parish, Consolacion, Cebu. The findings showed the following: 1) most of the respondents were members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement while only a few belonged to the El Shaddai and Couples for Christ groups, 2) there was a lack of coordination between the parish priests and the members of the renewal movement, 3) the members of the renewal movement lacked an in-depth understanding of their practices since they tended to focus on the charismatic gifts rather than on the sacramental grace, 4) there was an overlapping of duties among the officers and members of the renewal movement, 5) the members of the renewal movement were deficient in social advocacy and 6) the members of the renewal movement needed to be updated on the latest trends with regard to the magisterial pronouncements of the Church. Through these findings, the researcher came up with the following conclusions: 1) There is a need to enhance the relationship between the parish priests and the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. 2) The members of the renewal movement lack an in-depth understanding of their practices and that they tend to focus more on the sacramentals rather than on the sacraments. 3) The members do not have a specific idea as to the roles and functions of each. 4) Most of the members are indifferent to the problems facing society today. 5) The members of the Renewal Movement are not abreast with the latest developments in the teachings of the church.

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were drawn: 1) The parish priest must be constantly in touch with the activities of the Renewal Movement to strengthen the bond between him and those of the members. 2) The members should undergo basic seminars related to sacraments in order to better underscore their importance and relevance to contemporary man. 3) The leaders of the movement should meet as a collegial body and clearly define the functions of each in order to avoid overlapping of duties. 4) The members should develop social awareness and should get involved with whatever programs that would enhance such awareness. 5) The members of the Renewal Movement should continuously search for fresh directions in order to make their spiritual exercises more attuned with the call of the times.

KEYWORDS: *Catholic, Cebu, Charismatic, Sacramental, Synod*

INTRODUCTION

Faith thoroughly reflected in the science of formal and systematic philosophy is the aura of reflecting scientifically the profile, problems, and prospects of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) of the Archdiocese of Cebu particularly the parishes of Saint Joseph the Patriarch of Mabolo; Lord of the Agony of Mandaue City, and San Narciso of Consolacion. CCRM, El Shaddai or the Couples and Singles for Christ are traced from.

“Charismatic renewal” to Catholic Pentecostalism which according to the Walsh’s *A Key to Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church* is related to certain elements of the Christian life associated with the feast of Pentecost and Christ’s gifts of the spirit”¹ whence Pentecostalism is manifested with: 1) prayer experience, 2) gift of praying in tongues and 3) charismatic ministries.

The debate of either the CCRM's foundation on Pentecostalism affects the loyalty and affiliations of the charismatic member – parishioners from their ministerial origin is compounded by the fellowships of charismatic practitioners with other Cebu-based Christian Charismatic Movements. These peculiar characteristics of charismatic movement emphasizing sacramentals, is intrinsic in expressing one's religiosity or "charism". The problem, however, is the tendency to overemphasize – that is, putting more importance on – the sacramentals over and above the sacraments. This is due to the fact that some of them lack the basic understanding with regard to the proper way of expressing their religiosity. Based on a recent study, there is a certain "charismatic religiosity" that is distinguishable from other types of religiosity which is characterized by an active practice of religion combined with typical Charismatic and Pentecostal experiences and beliefs.² Such practices include frequent prayer, Bible reading, attending services, etc. with Charismatic experiences like speaking in tongues or being slain in the Spirit and with the perception of oneself as a very religious "renewed" or "reborn" person.³ Peculiar to the magisterial and the teachings of the Church, these charismatic renewal activities, among other variables and factors considered, however, is also seemingly viewed to cause a) intrusion in the use of the Church's facilities, b) attendance on conflicting assemblies in lieu of regular order and system of parish activities, and to some extent c) by-passing the pastoral authority of the priests.

The basic distinction between the term "sacrament" such as in the Sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist, etc. and "sacramental" such as in the speaking in tongues, prayer meetings, baptism of the Spirit, charismatic worship, Life in the Spirit Seminar etc., is needed. The former is commonly understood as "a sensible sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace."⁴ The latter, refers to "objects, actions, practices, places, and the like, that help us become aware of Christ's grace-filled presence around us or liberate from the presence of the Evil One (exorcism)."⁵ In charismatic focus, they tend to exaggerate their faith expression to the extent that this could in fact lead to a more serious problem which is misunderstanding the proper connection between the concepts of sanctifying grace that is received in the sacrament of baptism as against the charismatic gifts.

Thus, it is safe to hypothesize upon this mutual integration of faith, the need to pursue critically the Church's interpretation of spiritual renewal which point out towards a total change of heart or *metanoia* in Greek. A state of reform from one's sinful ways through praying for God's grace by emptying oneself from all worldly attachments by the help of the Holy Spirit can personally effect some change in their lives. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (January 20 – February 17, 1991) shared the same view in its definition of "renewed catechesis" when it said: "Unless a person turns away from sin and turns to God, undergoes a change of mind and heart, and decides to follow Christ, no evangelization will bear fruit." The book *Charism and Sacrament* by Donald L. Gelpi, S.J. presents a theology of Christian conversion through the reception of the so-called "gifts of the Holy Spirit" and by "putting on the mind of Christ" after a *kenosis* or "salvific self-emptying, by serving God and one's brethren in Jesus' indefectibly holy. Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as "uniquely holy," loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her. He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God's glory. Therefore, in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification". However, this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others; in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called "evangelical." This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness."⁶

Instead, the following objectives are therefore set by the Archdiocese of Cebu as part of its mandated practices of the Church: 1) Conversion and liberation from the bondage of sin, vices, selfish attitudes and habits detrimental to Christian growth and maturity; 2) The religious renewal of the individual, the family and the community through the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit; 3) Vital and awakened interest in and sharing of the Word of God as a self-disclosure of God's mystery and a pattern and guide for Christian living; 4) Faith experience of and personal encounter with the Person of Christ through His Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist; 5) More profound experience of and commitment to regular personal prayer as well as communal worship, especially

through the prayer of praise in the weekly prayer meeting; and 6) The Lordship of Jesus Christ over every facet of personal and communitarian life along with Christo-centric devotion to Mary as Mother of the Church and model of Christian perfection.⁷

As such the 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu considers these five areas of concern under its declarations and statutes serving as the focal point of every members' spirituality: 1) *parish relations* which refers to "community of disciples" who are expected to partake of Christ's life "not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but as a people who acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness."⁸ recognizing themselves as members of one community of parishioners who, together with other church organizations, are under one spiritual leader, the parish priest; 2) *peculiar practices* which emphasizes the specific role that lay organizations, such as the catholic charismatic renewal movement, have in the promotion of faith. "The particular spirituality of lay groups should deepen the spirituality common to all Christians. Their common responsibility for the one mission of the Church should guide the efforts of these lay associations. Their special charisms as gifts of the Holy Spirit should be put to use in the service of the entire Church."⁹; 3) *organizational development*, where members of the movement envisioned programs of the Archdiocese of Cebu seeking, among others, "the Total Human Development approach or the consideration of the human, spiritual, doctrinal, and apostolic dimensions."¹⁰; incorporated in the movement's vision-mission, plans and specific programs 4) *social advocacy*, which recognizes the important role and workings of the Holy Spirit in facing the current problems of society without purely limiting human realities alone as Christian. It has to be sensitive to the movements and the guidance of the Holy Spirit along life complexities.¹¹ Thus, extending familiarity with gift of tongue and of how the Holy Spirit leads a person to pray in an unfamiliar language to the pastoral cycle in addressing concrete social issues discerning how the Holy Spirit works in the world to liberate the poor and oppressed people; and 5) *on-going formation*, which realizes the importance of being updated on the latest church pronouncements in order to avoid confusion. "Doctrinal Formation enables the Christian who is confronted with the Christian message to react and to respond to what he experiences, discerning what can be expected from what must be rejected."¹² As such the Doctrinal Formation underlines the need to live the Christian life in one's concrete situation where doctrinal input is indispensable as it serve as an effective tool of interpreting one's experiences, or of discerning if one has been acting and reacting within the orientation set out by the Church accepting the Church's social teachings as Spirit-inspired teachings. Thus, there is a need to realign the teachings of the CCRM with those of the Catholic Church specifically in the following areas of concern: a) the relationship of prayer meetings with the Eucharist; b) the link of sacraments and sacramentals; and c) the interrelation of the members' mentality of being trans-parochial in connection with the ecclesiology of the local church.

An uninformed conscience will most likely commit errors in matters of faith and morals if it fails to interact with others in order to know and be taught about the latest developments in ongoing communal reflection or issues related to Christian life. As Habermas would put it, "No one possesses exclusive rights over the common medium of the communicative practices we must inter-subjectively share."¹³ In this light, the study aims to define in its formal approach problems of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, determine its level of seriousness and in its systematic approach aims at presenting solutions to these problems. Thus, the following problems are carried:

- 1) What is the profile of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) in the Archdiocese of Cebu in terms of organization and management; popular religiosity and spirituality; and apostolate and ministry?
- 2) What problems that are develop in the Charismatic groups if in the course of study: a) they are not properly interrelated to the parish; b) their peculiar practices are not fully attuned to the common spirituality of all baptized; c) they are not properly organized; d) they lack social advocacy; and e) they lack or have no on-going formation?
- 3) Considering through the systematic way and common viewpoint, what recommendable solutions of the respondents to enhance spiritual growth among members of the renewal movement?

METHODOLOGY

Best suited to approach the problems of the CCRM, its seriousness, and prospective solutions in a formal and systematic manner; the two types of methods are employed - descriptive and the pastoral-theological. The

second method refers “parameters of parish integration” principles engulf in the mandates and statutes issued for various movements and organizations of the 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu which are: 1) parish relations, 2) peculiar practices, 3) organizational development, 4) social advocacy, and 5) on-going formation. Thus, referring directly to the elements of faith rightly understood and effectively lived.

Aside from relevant documents in quest for profiling; a researcher – made questionnaire mainly consistent of checklist of possible problems encountered and recommendations of the respondents and an interview guide is used for descriptive survey. Bona fide members of identified religious groups such as CCRM, El Shaddai, and Couples for Christ Movement for more than a year are purposively identified as respondents. The first group belongs to the active members of CCRM who regularly participate in prayer meetings. The second and third groups pertain to those who belong to other lay organizations within the church. This research was conducted in three different parishes within the Archdiocese of Cebu like Mabolo Parish (Cebu City) which is the boundary between Mandaue City and Cebu City, Gethsemane Parish which is located in Mandaue City, and Consolacion Parish. These parishes were chosen on account of their active charismatic involvement as can be seen in their different religious activities aside from convenience of accessibility on the part of the researcher.

Below is the table that represents the Distribution of Respondents as purposively sampled in this study.

Table 1 . Distribution of Respondents

Name of Parish	Total No. of Respondents (N)	Sample Size (f)	Percentage (%)
Saint Joseph the Patriarch Parish	40	40	100%
The Lord in Agony Parish	40	40	100%
San Narciso Parish	40	40	100%
TOTAL	120	120	100%

Within the bound of formal and systematic approaches, simple frequencies and the weighted mean are used to treat counts, severity of seriousness and even weight of inclinations to further derived bases of facts on the corresponding problems being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were three types of movements included in this study: the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM), El Shaddai, and Couples for Christ.

As to profile of the CCRM in the Archdiocese of Cebu, healing attributed to work of miracles in the Philippines are traced from known Jesuit priests Fr. Herbert Snyder, head of the New Testament Department of the Ateneo De Manila University, and pastor teacher of the Catholic Renewal; and Rev. Emmanuel Cannistrace.²⁰ In Cebu, the Catholic Charismatic Communities is on its 39th year of existence as of January 2015 with Msgr. Frederick B. Kriekenbeek, as its spiritual director and Sto. Rosario Parish as its center of the Charismatic Movement in Cebu City.²¹ They provide services for Christians to help them grow in the love and power of Jesus Christ by conducting formations, encourage going to mass every Sabbath day, read the scriptures, adoration and other suggested activities for Christian growth that lead to spirit-filled life.²² Their practices such as prayer meetings, faith healing, and glossolalia cannot be classified under popular religiosity as the Congregation for Divine Worship and The Discipline of the Sacraments has never mentioned these practices as expressions of popular piety.²³

El Shaddai Movement, which is the biggest Catholic Charismatic Renewal group in the Philippines, is currently headed by Brother Mike Velarde, its Servant Leader and founder of the station DWXI-PPFI. Manila Auxiliary Bishop Teodoro Bacani of the Roman Catholic Church serves as its Spiritual Director²⁴ It is a unique indigenous movement, characterized by its effective use of mass media and its huge, emotion-filled outdoor rallies characterize typical prosperity gospel-driven Pentecostal televangelists promising God's financial and physical blessings to all provided that they remain faithful in attendance to gatherings, giving their tithes and offerings, and obedience.

The Couples for Christ (CFC), is one of the many international associations affiliated with the Vatican recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Led by an International Council under the the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is made up of family ministries, social arms, and a pro-life ministry.²⁵

As to the problems that may come across based on the five areas as focus of concern. With the problems that could develop in the Charismatic groups if they are not properly interrelated to the parish is serious if not very serious for the Parishes of Mabolo, Gethsemane and Consolacion. There is evident lack of coordination between the parish priest and the members of the renewal movement. Secondly, in terms of the severity of the problems if their peculiar practices are not fully attuned to the common spirituality of all baptized is evaluated as very serious of all the parishes concerned. Members of the renewal movement lack an in-depth understanding of their practices and that they tend to focus more on the sacramentals rather than on the sacraments. Evidently 85% of the respondents in Gethsemane parish point out the need to regulate or supervise the practice of delivering testimonies during prayer meetings so as to avoid overboard or exaggeration. There are some members who tend to overdo intrinsic gesture practices to the extent that they lose their essence and genuineness. Thirdly, anent with the proper organizational development *per se*, the problem is considered serious to very serious tracing members of the renewal movement with overlapping of duties among the officers and members. With much concern of its immediate intervention is look upon by parties involved.

In the light of social advocacy, there is an established inclined serious to very serious problem undergoing among the concerned parishes. This hints us that charismatic members are unaware of the different problems facing the society today and would tend to focus on their individual religious practices have not they use their religious engagement to avoid the realms of society. Lastly, in the side of on-going formation, there still co-exist serious to very serious level of problem in updating with the latest developments in the magisterial pronouncements of the church. Apparently, the members are incapable of explaining in-depth the healing sessions of the Renewal Movement with 90% respondents from Mabolo parish foreseen to foster daily meditation on the gospel for the day with that 37.50 % respondents of Consolacion parish protesting the daily recitation of the divine office is not so important in their spiritual lives.

Upon reflecting systematically based on the problems defined under level of such seriousness, the profile of the respondents in terms of organization and management, in support to the profile we have gathered shows the lack of coordination between the officers and members of the renewal movement based on the fact that there exists an overlapping of duties among them.

In which case, under the aspect of popular religiosity and spirituality, the members of the movement have a narrow notion of what religiosity means due to their lack of an in-depth understanding of the religious practices and that they tend to focus more on the sacramentals rather than on the sacraments. In terms of apostolate and ministry, the members of the renewal movement are unaware of the different problems facing the society today and would tend to focus on their religious practices.

In consideration of the above-mentioned relevant actuations and through the systematic approach analysis the following recommendable solutions are arrived at:

- 1) The parish priest must be constantly in touch with the activities of the Renewal Movement to strengthen the bond between him and those of the members. It is recommended that he meet with the leaders of the movement regularly to make a follow up on their activities. Aside from the proper linkage of the charismatic groups with the parish priest, the charismatic groups would as well be properly interrelated with the other movements and organization within the parish.
- 2) The members should undergo basic seminars related to the proper relationship between the sacramental grace and charismatic gifts in order to better underscore its importance and relevance to contemporary man. Likewise, it is recommended that they do not overemphasize their practices which highlight more the sacramentals. They must likewise be taught about the five pastoral and theological principles of parish organization found in the 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu.
- 3) The leaders of the movement should meet as a collegial body and clearly define the functions of each in order to avoid overlapping of duties. A chart showing the organization and functions of the leaders and those of its members should be conspicuously displayed outside the office in order to remind each one of them.

-
- 4) The members should develop social awareness by learning the social teaching of the church and should get involved with whatever programs that would enhance such awareness. They must establish linkages with both private and public entities that are active in the promotion of social justice and world peace.
 - 5) The members of the Renewal Movement should continuously search for fresh directions in order to make their spiritual exercises more attuned with the call of the times. In line with this goal, the leaders and conveners of each group should put their acts together and be updated with the latest papal encyclicals or teachings of the *magisterium*.

REFERENCES

Rev. Vincent M. Walsh, *A Key to Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church*, Indiana: Abbey Press, (1975), p. 3.

Christl Kessler, and Jurgen Rulan, *Give Jesus a Hand! Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press (2008), P.98

Give Jesus a Hand! Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines, p. 98.

CBCP, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education, Manila, (2008), p. 373.

CBCP, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, (2008), p. 376.

Donald L. Gelpi, S.J. *Charism and Sacrament*, New Jersey: Paulist Press, (1976), p. 29.

Francis Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal*, Michigan: Servant Books (1982), p.10.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Synodus: Disciples on the Road Together *Pronouncements on Renewal* (1986), par. no.4.1

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Synodus: Disciples on the Road Together *Pronouncements on Renewal* (1986), par. no. 4.8

Julio R. Cardinal Rosales, *Guidelines of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Archdiocese of Cebu*. Chancery Office,

Caritas Building, Cebu City, (1982), p.3.

Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations, edited by: Austin Flannery, O.P., (New York: Costello Publishing Company, Inc. 1996).

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964), Chapter V, par. 39.

Julio R. Cardinal Rosales, *Guidelines of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Archdiocese of Cebu*. Chancery Office, Caritas Building, Cebu City, (1982), pp.3-4.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Pastoral Administration Declarations (1986), sec. 6, par. 2.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Christian Formation Declarations (1986), sec. 2, par. 36.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Christian Formation Statutes (1986), sec. 2, par. 62a.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Christian Formation Declarations (1986), sec. 2, par. 10.

The 4th Diocesan Synod of Cebu, Christian Formation Declarations (1986), sec. 2, par. 13.

Jurgen. Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature*. Cambridge: Polity Press, (2003), p. 10.

<http://www.reformedreflections.ca/missions/philippines-rc-charismatics.pdf>
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1370&dat=19880401&id=EpkVAAAAIBAJ&sjid=SQsEAAAAI>
BAJ&pg=4503,1887641 [http://www.philstar.com/cebu-news/416716/cebu-hosts-catholic-charismatic-](http://www.philstar.com/cebu-news/416716/cebu-hosts-catholic-charismatic-congress)
[congress](http://www.philstar.com/cebu-news/416716/cebu-hosts-catholic-charismatic-congress)

Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. Manila: Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (1992), cf. 172, p.64. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Charismatic_Renewal
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Couples_for_Christ
