

**Guidelines for
Parish Prayer Groups
Of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal**

Archdiocese of Los Angeles, CA (USA)

Veni Creator Spiritus

Los Angeles, September 1, 2015

**Transcription of the
Letter of Approval of these Guidelines,
On behalf of Archbishop Jose Gomez**

Los Angeles, June 30, 2015

To all priests and members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

For almost fifty years, the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* has been present in the Church as a flow of grace from the Holy Spirit, together with other ecclesial truths. Grateful for this, many people have had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ – within the Catholic Church – and have transformed their lives, making themselves new men and women. Our Archdiocese of Los Angeles has also been enriched by this gift of the Holy Spirit.

During these years, we have seen a multiplication of *Catholic Charismatic Renewal Prayer Groups* in parishes of our archdiocese, at the level of Latino Ministry. At the same time, this growth in numbers has coincided with a process of maturity for the *Renewal* in general, as it has for the particular *Groups* and their members.

As part of this maturing process, I am happy to communicate to you that I have approved for our Archdiocese these *Guidelines for Parish Prayer Groups of the of Charismatic Renewal*.

These *Guidelines* are in keeping with the ones that existed up to now, and do not attempt to be something new. However, they have been well thought out in consultation with pastors, the directives by the *Renewal* at all levels, and the people of God. The goal is that adjustments be more to present needs and challenges, and better serve the Archdiocese and every parish.

I trust in God that these *Guidelines* will be a help to always journey in step with the Church and to mutually maintain unity.

I assure each and every one of you and your loved ones of my prayers, and I ask that you keep me in your prayers as well.

May the Lord Jesus, through the intercession of most holy Mary, grant you peace and joy.

+Jose Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles

FOREWORD

These are the Guidelines for the Parish Prayer Groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Los Angeles. These are the fruits of almost 50 years of experience, and also of the wisdom and counsel of many pastors, servers and the people of God. They are in keeping with previous Guidelines and, at the same time, bring change and newness. The desire is that these will help to respond in a more transparent way to the Holy Spirit.

The Guidelines are directed to all:

- To pastors, so that they can know more about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, its personality, ideals, action, organization, etc. In this way, they can help and orient the Prayer Groups in their parishes.
- To leaders and servers, so that they find here a clear and objective guide in their labors, and experience a way through which to move forward. In this way, they can offer a more gospel-centered service to the Group and to the parish community.
- To the people of God, so that they can discover the ideals that the Lord has about the Renewal and the Prayer Group, and to always desire the Spirit more and more. In this way, they will grow in maturity in the Christian life and in their love for our Lord God and his Church.

These Guidelines are not in any way fixed and perpetual. The pastor of each Prayer Group can make necessary adaptations, dealing with the times, places and circumstances. In the same way, necessary changes and revisions can be made, but not in way that is arbitrary and one-directional. The Holy Spirit also surprises us with his vitality and dynamism. Certainly, in a few years we will have been enriched with more experience and we will have matured in our journey, within the Church. Then, the time will arrive for new Guidelines.

On June 1, 2014, Pope Francis met in the Olympic Stadium in Rome with 500,000 faithful to celebrate the 37th National Assembly of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He said:

“The danger for the renewal...is that of getting too organized: the danger of excessive planning. Yes, you need organization, but never lose the grace of letting God be God! [...] Do not put the Holy Spirit in cage!”

The Guidelines do not want to take away the prominence of the Holy Spirit and of the Lord Jesus; they do not attempt to stifle the freedom of the Spirit that Christ came to bring us; nor do they try to enclose everything in organization and structures. On the contrary, they want to help us to open doors, tear down walls, topple useless structures, to give wings to the Spirit... but always within the directives of our pastors and guides.

Pope Francis, in this same encounter of June 1, 2014, animated the leaders to help and collaborate so that the Prayer Groups would be renewed communities, and not go aging or remaining at the stage of spiritual and Christian adolescence. He said:

Another danger is that of becoming arbiters of God's grace. Many times, leaders (I prefer the name "servers", who serve) – and this temptation for servers comes from the devil: the temptation to believe oneself as indispensable, no matter what be the task. The devil will take you to desire be one who gives orders, those who are at the center of everything. And that is how, step by step, they fall into authoritarianism, in personalization and do not allow the communities renewed in the Spirit to live. This temptation makes the position an eternity in that they consider themselves indispensable, a position that always has some or another form of power or of being over others. [...] You are dispensers of God's grace, not its arbiters! Don't act like a tollhouse for the Holy Spirit!

A Renewal that does not renew itself leaves behind being a Renewal and loses its capacity to renew others. Therefore, it is important that positions, structures, the way to presenting the message, and, above all, the hearts of everyone be renewed! The Catholic Charismatic Renewal always young and always new!

"The basis of the Renewal is to adore God." The Renewal – and every Prayer Group – receives from adoration and praise of God their strength and all their power. The more the fervor, the more sincere and intense is their adoration, the greater capacity to renew the Church, the parishes, the groups and the hearts of the people. Because all this the flow of renewing grace comes from God and not mere human strength.

What is hoped for all Renewal Prayer Groups?

- The first thing is conversion to the love of Jesus that changes one's life and makes of the Christian a witness of the Love of God.
- That we share with everyone, in the Church, the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- A new evangelization, with the Word of God, that announces that Jesus is alive and loves all people. To go out to the streets to evangelize, announcing the Gospel: The Church was born "going out" on that Pentecost morning.
- That we give testimony of spiritual ecumenism with those brothers and sisters of other Christian communities that believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- To draw close to those who are poor and to those with needs, to touch in their flesh the flesh of Jesus.
- That we remain united in love. Always seeking unity, because unity comes from the Holy Spirit and is born from the unity of the Trinity. Division comes from the devil: avoid internal struggles.
- Mature and deepening knowledge in one's personal faith, perseverance and coherence in the Christian life.

May the Lord Jesus bless and increase all the enthusiasm there is in our hearts and all the good desires to serve the Church; that our deviations be corrected, our vices be ripped away and our all shortcomings be made up; that our hearts be set ablaze with love for God and for all men and women, especially for those most in need. We place ourselves at God's service – and at the service of our pastors – and we aspire to give the best to everyone, for the glory of God.

God willing, may these Guidelines be an useful instrument for God's glory and praise, and for the spreading of God's Reign of love among people.

Father Roberto Rueda
Spiritual and Theological Consultant

*O, Holy Spirit,
Sweet guest and comfort of my soul.
Enlighten my understanding
For knowing the divine will for me.
Set my heart ablaze
To love God with passion.
And strengthen my will
To always do what is good.
Amen.*

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INTRODUCTION

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Art. 1 – The Catholic Charismatic Renewal

1. The *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* is a spiritual flow of grace that is born of the impulse of the Holy Spirit. It surges from the expectation of a present-day Pentecost, as a response – among many – to the action of the Holy Spirit to renew the Church of Christ. The *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* does not consider having any founder or group of founders and is not in itself a movement in the Church. Rather, it is the Church on the journey. In some places, ecclesiastical authority has asked for it to be recognized as a personal association of the laity, whether at the national or diocesan level.
2. The *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* is integrated in the church and is subject to the shepherding and discernment of the Catholic Church. It is distinguished by the docile listening to the Holy Spirit and its obedience to Church authority.
3. The charismatic spirituality is identified with a profound and interior listening to the Holy Spirit and a personal experience of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is manifested in a joyful and communal response to the Christian life.

Art. 2 – Parish *Prayer Groups*

4. The *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* develops an ample range of varied ministries and apostolates. One of these ministries – perhaps the most popular in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles – is the *Prayer Groups*.
5. *Prayer Groups* of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* is a group of the faithful that gather to praise God and to give thanks for all God's blessings. The *Prayer Group* wants to form part of the parish and offers itself as a resource for prayer, not just for the participants, but for the whole parish community. It offers, above all, the pastors a group of Catholics that support with prayer the people, projects and parish activities.
6. The *Prayer Group* supports and serves the parish in all that is possible, participating directly in the pastoral care of the parish, as it is hoped that the majority of the members of the *Prayer Group* would collaborate in the various ministries of the parish. In the end, the *Prayer Group* only has meaning in the parish, for the parish, and to partake in the mission of the parish.

7. Collaboration with the pastor must be fortified by means of constant communication about the life and activities of the *Prayer Group* through regularly scheduled meetings and the presentation of oral and written reports.
8. Leaders and members of the *Prayer Group* desire the wisdom and guidance of their pastor, they feel animated with his support, and seek his accompaniment, hope to be embraced as part of the parish and to receive his pastoral orientations with joy and humility. Likewise, they seek the freedom to respond to the call of the Spirit to pray and to adore with joy.
9. The coordinators of the *Prayer Group* make efforts to implement just and necessary changes suggested by their pastors. This docility towards the pastor wishes to be a concrete expression of the docility of the High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Art. 3 – The “Guidelines for Prayer Groups”

10. These “Guidelines” want to be a help for unity and charity in all *Parish Prayer Groups* of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (both adult as well as youth prayer groups). Likewise, the “Guidelines” desire to be help for pastors to better know the realities that are within their parishes.
11. The “Guidelines for *Prayer Groups*” are not meant to be obligatorily imposed, but are to be an element for orientation that link unity and concord both within the *Prayer Groups*, as with their relationship with the parish, with the archdiocese and with the entire *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* on the regional, national, and international levels. At the same time, they are not meant to become a burden for the members of the *Prayer Group*, but are suggestions for service to be more easily carried out.

Chapter 1 – NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PRAYER GROUPS

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Art. 1 – The Nature of *Prayer Groups*

12. *Prayer Groups* are parish groups with the spirit of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* or, stated in another way, one of the activities of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, in the inner life of a parish. The *Prayer Groups* in a parish do not claim to be “charismatic”, rather it’s the parishioners who live charismatic spirituality.
13. *Prayer Groups* are composed of people called together by the power of the Holy Spirit and the call of the Lord Jesus, who meet to live their faith in a communal dimension.
14. The *Prayer Group* is a prayer school that takes the participants to an experience of ongoing conversion. Each assembly offers the opportunity to teach, model and invite the participants to develop their relationship with our God by way of personal, communal and liturgical prayer.

Art. 2 – The purpose of *Prayer Groups*

15. The goal of the *Prayer Group* is to offer the participants a space in which to praise God. Moreover, it's a help for the ongoing encounter with Jesus Christ and for permanent conversion. These are *Prayer Groups* whose purpose is spontaneous prayer in common and mutual enlightenment.
16. The *Prayer Group* also wants to provide Christian formation components at the spiritual, moral and doctrinal levels, as well as to offer a wide field for apostolates and the ministry.
17. The prayer environment (cf. 15), like formation and apostolates (cf. 16), also offers to all the members of the parish who desire the benefit from them. In this sense, the goal of the *Prayer Group* is to help with the needs of the parish, and to unconditionally collaborate with the parish and parishioners: The *Prayer Group* is at the service of the parish.

Chapter II – LIFE IN THE PRAYER GROUPS

Art. 1 – Parish Prayer Groups

18. *Prayer Groups* surface and develop in parishes, through the initiative of parishioners who wish to live the spirituality of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*. Even though, according to the Code of Canon Law (canon 299), the faithful have the right to freely gather, it is the pastor who permits the establishment of a *Prayer Group* of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in his parish and recognizes it as a Catholic group of the Archdiocese. Likewise, for grave and just reasons, and in dialogue with the archdiocesan director of the *Renewal*, the pastor can suppress the *Prayer Group* of his parish.
19. The *Prayer Group* maintains a close and cordial dependence with the pastor, especially with reference to the teachings and morals of the Catholic faith, the various practices and carrying out internal and external activities.
20. On the other hand, the *Prayer Group* enjoys needed and proper autonomy in what is ordinarily referred to as internal order and operations. In this sense, it adjusts to the writings in these Guidelines, to their own statutes and to the customs and traditions approved and blessed by the Church.
21. Certain tensions and conflicts may surface – ordinary and extraordinary – with regards to the dependence and autonomy of the *Prayer Group* to the parish. In dialogue of understanding, always seek to resolve these in a climate of harmony and charity. With regards to essential questions, unity and obedience should be sought; in those in which opinion varies, Christian freedom; charity in all things.
22. Even though dependence and ongoing communication with the pastor is important, the leaders and members of the *Prayer Group* cannot require the pastor to attend gatherings, meetings or appointments. Each pastor organizes and directs the parish as he sees fit, and he is the one who should mark the regularity of these gatherings and the regularity of the reports to be given to him by the group.

Art. 2 – Admission to a *Prayer Groups*

23. Any Catholic can participate in the *Prayer Group* especially if he is experiencing a call from God for this, that the person have a desire for conversion and sanctification, and that there be a disposition to live – in the best way possible – Christian commitments and commitments of the *Prayer Groups* of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*.
24. People who participate in the *Prayer Groups* spontaneously and without special commitment are given the name *the People*. People who want to be regular and committed members are called *Servers*.
25. A member of the *Prayer Group* has the right to change groups for just reasons. However, those responsible for the group to where the member wants to enter also have the right to inform themselves of the reasons for the desired change.
26. To be admitted to the *Prayer Group* does not require any kind of special ritual or ceremony, nor registration or a fee. However, a registry of the *server* members is allowed.

Art. 3 – Formation in the *Prayer Groups*

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27. *Prayer Groups* also offer formation and development to its members. This formation covers four areas: spiritual formation, doctrinal formation, human formation and pastoral formation. *Prayer Groups* try to harmoniously and integrally form its members in these four areas, so that they do not perpetually remain stuck in an initial phase or in a state of adolescent enthusiasm, but rather that they grow and mature to reach a measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
28. Spiritual formation is, essentially, life in Christ and life in the Holy Spirit. Through the new and renewed life, the redemptive power of Jesus Christ surfaces. The *Prayer Group* should create an adequate environment for this spiritual formation and should be able to provide the following essential elements:
 - a. A living and personal encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of all Christian life (and, through Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit). This experience of Christ is, above all, a grace from God that one must ask for unceasingly; but also implies knowing, loving and imitating the Lord Jesus, and should grow and mature through the sacramental life, prayer and closeness to the Sacred Scripture.
 - b. The first consequence of this encounter with Christ, and the foundation of all spiritual life, is the life of grace or sanctifying grace, which is participation in God's life in our souls. To be filled with grace, like the Most Blessed Mary, implies opposing and radically renouncing sin: mortal sin first, and then venial sin and all deliberate faults.

- c. Finally, spiritual formation seeks to develop in the soul the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity.
29. Doctrinal formation is identified with knowing our Catholic faith, which capacitates us to give reasons for our hope. The *Prayer Group* should make the effort to capacitate its member with conscientious doctrinal formation and, through it, program and well organize the Teachings, Courses and Seminars, in a way that the members are able to completely capture all Catholic doctrine, and can deepen their knowledge in every way. Some elements of doctrinal formation are:
- a. Fundamental knowledge of the Catholic faith or basic catechesis. The members should obtain a good knowledge and familiarity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
 - b. A more profound theological knowledge of the faith, especially for those who serve in teaching ministries and evangelization, and for those who have been in the *Prayer Group* for numerous years.
 - c. Biblical knowledge: serious and academic study of the Word of God, as a medium for better comprehension of our faith.
 - d. Continuously updating the life of the Church in the world and the archdiocese itself: knowledge of ecclesial events and announcements, knowledge of documents that emanate from the various Roman dicasteries, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops or the Archdiocese, knowledge of present day problems – national or international – that impact the faith, and the response that the Church gives to them.
30. Human formation is the foundation upon which the Holy Spirit forms the new man and woman; it is the good soil on which the seed of the of the Kingdom gives abundant fruit; it is the earthen vessel in which God places the marvelous treasure of grace. We respond as men and women to the divine call of grace and, for that reason, human formation is so important. Normally, God does not produce miracles (that, by definition, are extraordinary), but ordinarily acts through humans: the better we dispose our humanity for the Lord, the more space we leave for God’s grace to take over. The *Prayer Group*, principally, desires to help with these elements of human formation:
- a. Growth in the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.
 - b. The development of human virtues: friendship, obedience, sincerity, respect, honesty, responsibility, generosity, simplicity, loyalty, optimism, etc. Within these human virtues, social justice plays an important role.
 - c. The cultivation the social virtues: punctuality, formality, courtesy, speaking well, good taste, cleanliness, etc.
31. Pastoral formation is also called apostolic formation or missionary zeal, and the desire to communicate and share with others the experience one has had with God; to make God known and the beauty of one’s own faith; it is the desire of the heart that all men and women come to know and love Christ. The *Prayer Group* should be a help to channel all this enthusiasm and be able to offer its members effective tools for evangelization. Some of the areas of evangelization and pastoral work are the following:

- a. The first field of evangelization in which every member should work is with one's own family: spouse, children, parents and siblings. One's own family cannot be neglected – in the spiritual and human sense – to attend the *Prayer Group*. On the contrary: the more genuine our experience of God and our faith, the better our families are attended to and the more we are able to evangelize.
- b. The *Prayer Group* should have an apostolic effect on their own parish that is translated through collaboration with parish plans and to help in all things that the pastor needs. Concretely, the *Prayer Group* should provide liturgical ministers, catechists and parochial servers for the parish.
- c. It is hoped that the mature *Prayer Group* becomes one that raises stable external and parish level apostolates and ministries (for example, in the field of social communication media, education, culture, faith, values). Also, to create certain significant events for the evangelization of the people of God.

Art. 4 – Some means for perseverance and spiritual growth.

32. Some of the general methods recommended to the members of *Prayer Groups* for their perseverance and spiritual growth, are the following:
 - a. Active and fervent participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and the reception of the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, center and summit of all Christian life. Daily participation would produce more abundant fruits.
 - b. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, solemnly exposed, and Eucharistic visits.
 - c. The fruitful reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), preparing with an examination of conscience, having the spirit of repentance and a purpose of amendment. Frequent reception of this Sacrament, more than purifying the soul from all sin, promotes the necessary conversion of the heart and the love of the Father of mercies.
 - d. Personal daily prayer or meditation, during a space of convenient time.
 - e. Spiritual reading, especially the Sacred Scripture, but also spiritual books written by authors solid in their teachings and in communion with the Magisterium of the Church.
 - f. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and praying the holy rosary in her honor.
 - g. Participation in retreats and spiritual exercises.
 - h. Spiritual direction with a priest or other competent person, who is distinguished by fervor, prudence, and righteousness.
33. Some particular methods, belonging to the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, for perseverance and spiritual growth:
 - a. Participation in the weekly *Prayer Assemblies*.
 - b. Participation in the *Retreat of Christian Initiation* or the *Life in the Spirit Seminars*, one time, at the beginning of the journey.
 - c. Weekly attendance at the *Seminars of Spiritual Growth*, during a two-year period of time (normally on separate days from the *Prayer Assemblies*).
 - d. Attendance at monthly *Deanery Meetings*.

- e. Monthly attendance at the *Regional Convocations*, in which formation and information is received and fellowship is shared. Attendance at these *Convocations* (as well as the *Deanery Meetings*) is obligatory and only *servers* can absent themselves for just causes.
- f. Participation in *Courses* that are offered at the regional or diocesan levels. Attendance at these courses is highly recommended (and in some cases, is essential).

Art. 5 – Leaving and resigning from the *Prayer Groups*

- 34. Any member of the *Prayer Group* can freely abandon the *Prayer Group* and the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*. Also, for just and reasonable causes, one may abandon their own *Prayer Group* and incorporate into another *Prayer Group* in the same parish or in another.
- 35. The Board of Directors has the right to consider that a member of the *Prayer Group* be dismissed, or attendance interrupted or ended, for just and reasonable causes. It is appropriate that before a decision to dismiss someone is made, that a sincere and fraternal conversation take place between the all parties, always leaving space for defense or the eventual retraction, or conversion. It is always appropriate for consideration of input from the pastor, the region and deanery.
- 36. Some reasons for dismissal could be:
 - a. Public apostacy from the Catholic Faith.
 - b. Public scandal and obstinate immorality in substance and behavior.
 - c. Attempt to gravely disrupt the unity and harmony of the *Prayer Group* by means of scheming, calumny, and gossip.

Chapter III – PRAYER ASSEMBLIES

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Art. 1 – Types of prayers

- 37. Christian prayer basically consists in raising the soul to God and dialoguing with him. Some types of prayer are praise, adoration, thanksgiving, petitionary, repentance, etc. Types are prayer are many and diverse, and should adapt according to the type of persons, circumstances, times and places.
- 38. The more common style of prayer in the *Prayer Assemblies* – and, in general in the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* – is communal praise. This communal praise usually takes on a festive and enthusiastic expression, filled with simplicity and confidence in the Lord. The *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* understands that this is not the only kind of prayer, and because of this, invites the *Prayer Assemblies* to alternate with other forms of prayer that can enormously enrich the people. It also understands that this form of prayer can give way to excesses or defects and, for this reason, asks the coordinators to be watchful for strict custom.

39. Another peculiar element of the *Prayer Assemblies* is intercessory prayer. As members of the Mystical Body of Christ, we can intercede for our brothers and sisters (present or absent). When the prayer is made for people who are present, it is appropriate to consider these criteria:
- a. The grace for which we are praying comes only from God, in his mysterious plans, he known when, why and to whom to grant the grace.
 - b. The effectiveness of our prayer is not measured by the intensity of our voice, nor through the words that we say, nor by the gestures that we make, nor by the emotions that we experience: it is God's grace that holds our faith and our perseverance.
 - c. The people who make intercession and pray may raise their arms over the person for whom the prayer is made, as the external sign and direction of our prayers.
 - d. They can also place their hands over the person for whom the prayer is made. It is advised that the hands not be placed on the head of the person, to not lend to confusion about the imposition of hands being reserved for ordained ministers. It is preferable to place the hand on the shoulder, as a sign of solidarity and communion, or simply, not touch the person. Whichever form, be mindful of the criteria of modesty, proper behavior and respect: never do an imposition of hands directly on private areas and never without being in plain view of others, never over areas of the body that presumably are damaged or ill.
40. It is recommended, and is often experienced, adoration prayer, thanksgiving prayer and petitionary prayer. It is important that the prayer helps initiates learn to pray and help the rest to grow in depth and fervor, and make their prayer genuine and sincere, without repeating stereotypes or empty patterns of devotion. Through this, it is fundamental and necessary that whoever is leading the prayer be a person deep in the interior life, with a proven and solid life of piety, not superficial or overemotional.
41. Do not overlook in the *Prayer Assemblies*, – as with other charismatic gatherings – silent and contemplative prayer: in the silence of an open and attentive heart where God speaks, and where the soul can better hear and respond to the Lord.
42. One element that appears in some *Prayer Assemblies* – and other charismatic gatherings – is prayer in tongues. There is provision for this same practice in the Sacred Scriptures and in the first Christian communities. It is evident that the Holy Spirit, in wise freedom and providence, can continue inspiring and granting prayer in tongues also in our day.
- a. Normally, this is known as the *gift of tongues* or *glossolalia* which is speaking in real languages unknown to the person who is speaking: it is rare and infrequent.
 - b. Though glossolalia it is usually understood to speak in an apparently real language, but has never existed: is equally rare and infrequent.
 - c. The more common is to listen to people repeat syllables or sounds frequently and rhythmically. If it is truly genuine, it represents a state of joy and of the desire to praise the Lord that are expressed with words, like when we whistle or hum a song.

We accept with joy all of God's gifts and are content to sing to the Lord a new canticle, but we understand that prayer in tongues is not an essential element for the Christian life, nor does it make us better disciples of Christ. We know that it can carry with it a presumption, trickery, or exaggerations and we seek that, through it, it always be authentic and genuine, leaving artificiality and falsehood aside.

Art. 2 – Description of the *Prayer Assemblies*

43. *Prayer Assemblies* are meetings in which the faithful are gathered to praise God, intercede for one another, build up one another with life testimonies and to grow in their Christian formation.
44. *Prayer Assemblies* are held weekly, with a duration that varies between ninety minutes to two hours. Here is a proposed general structure for the *Prayer Assemblies* and the distributions of times. Keep in mind, however, that this distribution of times is descriptive, for orientation, and is flexible.
 - a. Welcome (10 minutes). This is the moment to embrace the community and to create a climate of welcome, favorable for prayer.
 - b. Praise (30 minutes). It begins with an initial prayer, led by the presider of the *Assembly*. The *praise* includes hymns and prayers of praise, adoration and liveliness, carried out by the choir and the people. A period of silence can also be included for personal prayer.
 - c. Teaching (30 minutes). The teaching is input by means of a lecture and explanation of a biblical text, by means of a presentation on a theme, or through a testimony on the Christian life.
 - d. Final prayer (20 minutes). This is the moment that a prayer of thanksgiving for benefits received during the *Assembly*; it is also a good moment for direct intercessory prayer for people present or absent. These prayers of thanksgiving and intercession – as are the prayers of praise – can be carried out in tongues, but always in a genuine, honest and sincere form, without artificiality or sensationalism.
 - e. Sending (10 minutes). The *Prayer Assemblies* conclude with a final prayer, which can be a brief call and motivation to the Christian and evangelizing commitment: what has been received in the *Assembly*, now to be taken out to one's own life and share it with others. At the end, announcements can be made.
45. Every *Region* and *Prayer Group* will adjust the general structure, described in #44, to their own needs and particular circumstances. In this sense, it is very important that there be a good program for the Teaching, with clearly defined objectives: that will avoid improvising, informality and lack of gravitas.

Art. 3 – The Charismatic Gifts

46. The members of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* believe in the supreme action of the Holy Spirit and are open, with great expectation, to a whole range of ministerial and personal charisms, ordinary and extraordinary, as are described in the Sacred Scriptures (cf. Rom. 12: 6-8; 1Cor. 12; Eph. 4: 11). However, subject to be tested with earnest skill, to the authority of the Church and to the ministerial charism of this authority.
47. In the *Prayer Assemblies*, as in other gatherings of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* or the faithful in general, it is possible that infrequent manifestations of the Holy Spirit may exist, such as prophecy, glossolalia, or being slayed in the Spirit. Without getting into details about the acts or over the possible causes of these, a climate of order and decorum should reign over the *Prayer Assemblies*, far from exaggerations, theatrics, or hysteria. Those responsible for the *Prayer Groups* are to have great prudence and discernment, and special attention about this matter.

Chapter IV – ORGANIZATION IN THE PRAYER GROUPS

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Art. 1 – The direction at the international and national level

48. At the international level or the Church universal, the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* counts on the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS)*.
49. The national committee of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* and the national committee of *Hispanic Service*. There also exists an organizing structure of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* for the southwestern United States of America, to which we belong: Region 8.

Art. 2 – The diocesan Archbishop and auxiliary bishops

50. The Archbishop of Los Angeles, has supreme authority over the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in the archdiocese. He has the faculty of governance.
51. Together with the Archbishop, the auxiliary bishops of each region, have jurisdiction over their own regions.

Art. 3 – The Archdiocesan Office for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

52. The Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in Los Angeles is in charge directly of all the ordinary elements. This is headed by the director who acts as a link and connection between the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* and the Archbishop.
53. The Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in Los Angeles seeks to support a basic organization and structure, coordinates and facilitates the *Prayer Groups*, offers formation, courses and materials, and is the link between the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in the archdiocese itself.

54. The director of the Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in Los Angeles, is proposed by the regional and deanery coordinators, for a period of six years. The Archbishop also may choose to make a direct, personal appointment.
55. The director of the Archdiocesan Office can count with a priest to be the theological and spiritual facilitator of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. This facilitator is to oversee the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of the *Renewal* in general, and over the various groups of the same, for the spiritual growth of its members, especially the coordinators. He is approved by the Archbishop, for a period of six years (alternating terms with the Archdiocesan Director).
56. The Board of Directors of the Archdiocesan Office is directed by the archdiocesan director and made up of the five regional directors. The priest facilitator is a member of the Board of Directors with voice only on the board: in line with the principle, he cannot be elected as the archdiocesan director nor a regional director.
57. Whoever is to be designated as the director of the Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in Los Angeles should be, in the measure possible, a person who:
- a. Has deep personal faith and prayer life, capable of listening and being docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Is filled with the gifts of prudence, governance, fortitude, and charity.
 - c. Is filled with God's wisdom to always seek the interest of Jesus Christ and the souls, over his/her own.
 - d. Has profound knowledge of the Catholic faith.
 - e. Knows and loves the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, its spirit, methodology, and practices.
 - f. Is of great fortitude of spirit to handle its major endeavors and persevere in them, work tirelessly and be committed to its mission.
 - g. Is of psychological and natural equilibrium, is impartial, cautious, unbiased, mild mannered, and peaceful.
 - h. Is an example of Christian life, especially in the life of the family.
 - i. Is one who known how to harmonize souls, sow peace, understanding and charity. Be one who is well mannered and respectful.

Art. 4 – The regional and deanery coordinators

58. In addition, there are regional coordinators for each region of the Archdiocese. Their functions are analogous – within their region – to those of the director of the Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, with whom they must work in close collaboration. The desired qualities are the same as those noted in #57.
59. The regional coordinators are approved by the regional bishop, as proposed by the director of the Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in Los Angeles, as proposed by the deanery coordinators, for a six-year term.

60. There are then the deanery coordinators, one for each of the 20 deaneries of the Archdiocese. Their functions are analogous – within their own deanery – to those of the Director of the Archdiocesan Office for the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, and the regional coordinators, with whom they must work in close collaboration. The desired qualities are the same as those noted in #57.
61. The deanery coordinators are approved by the coordinators, as proposed by the coordinators of the *Prayer Groups*, for a six-year term.

Art. 5 – The Pastoral Team (Board of Directors) of the *Prayer Groups*

62. Each *Prayer Group* is directed by a Board of Directors, that is composed of the following:
- a. Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* (or Leader).
 - b. Assistant-Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* (or Assistant Leader).
 - c. Coordinator of the Teaching Ministry.
 - d. Coordinator of the Ministry of Prayer and Intercession.
 - e. Coordinator of the Ministry of Evangelization.
 - f. Coordinator of the Music Ministry.
 - g. Coordinator of the Ministry of Hospitality.
 - h. Treasurer.
 - i. Secretary.
63. The Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* (or Leader) coordinates and guides the *Group* in the praise, worship and prayer. S/he is responsible for supervising activities and gatherings, and is the representative and link of unity between the *Prayer Group* and the parish and deanery.
64. The Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* is approved by the pastor, as proposed by the servers, for a three-year term (with the possibility of reelection for another three-year term). The Assistant Coordinator and the other ministries coordinators are voted on by the team of servers and approved by the Coordinator of the *Group*, also for a three-year term (with the possibility of reelection for another three-year term).
65. The Assistant Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* (or Assistant Leader) helps the Coordinator to coordinate and guide the *Prayer Group*, and covers the Coordinator's duties when the Coordinator is absent.
66. The Coordinator of the Teaching Ministry is charged directly with the doctrinal formation of the *Prayer Group*, in accord with the Coordinator of the *Group* and the Board of Directors. Some of the responsibilities of the Coordinator of the Teaching Ministry are:
- a. Give teachings in the gatherings of the *Prayer Group*.
 - b. Invite teachers and preachers to give teachings to the *Prayer Group*, such teachers and preachers should be Catholic, well-formed and in communion with the Church, recognized in ministries of the Church, with letters of

recommendation from the pastor and demonstrate their necessary qualifications.

- c. Promote and give opportunity for preaching and teaching to members of the *Prayer Group* who are in formation with the *Pastoral Institute*, in the *Pastoral Office* or in the *Regional School of Formation of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*. These institutions work officially for the formation of the charismatics and should be widely promoted.
- d. Supervise the *Life in the Spirit Seminars*, retreats and conferences.
- e. Make known the various activities of the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* in the Archdiocese.
- f. Oversee the formation and integrated growth of all *Prayer Groups*, especially in the areas of catechesis, liturgy and morality. This Coordinator should be attending to the formation and integrated growth of the servers and prepare and announce the convocations of the servers.
- g. Form a select group of people who can help with the formation of the rest of the *Prayer Group*.
- h. Develop a formation program on doctrine for the *Prayer Group*.

67. The Coordinator of the Prayer Ministry (or Intercession) facilitates the work of the prayer and intercession ministers, in accord with the Coordinator of the *Group* and the Board of Directors. Some of the functions are as follows:
 - a. To coordinate the members of the intercession ministry so that they gather in intercessory prayer before and after the gatherings of the *Prayer Groups*.
 - b. To coordinate the prayer for those who ask for prayer. However, the people who are experiencing special difficulties should be directed to the pastoral team or the spiritual director or the pastor, according the nature of the difficulty.
68. The Coordinator of the Evangelization Ministry is charged with the pastoral formation of the *Prayer Group* and of its apostolic projection, in accord with the Coordinator of the *Group* and the Board of Directors. Some functions are:
 - a. To help people who have desires to collaborate by forming them so that they can serve the *Prayer Group*. To motivate those who are less enthusiastic so that they will want to serve with enthusiasm.
 - b. To be in contact with the pastor to know the service and ministerial needs of the parish. To promote the people from the *Prayer Group* to serve in the parish.
 - c. To propose, organize and carry out evangelization events at the parish level or outside the parish. To create evangelization and mission ministries.
69. The Coordinator of the Music Ministry helps the Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* to direct the people in adoration and praising the Lord. This person should be of deep prayer and attentive to the Holy Spirit. S/he should actively participate in the *Prayer Assemblies*, in formation and in the convocations. Some of the functions are:
 - a. To have a repertoire of hymns that animate the people to vigorous and lively praise, gratitude, silent adoration and contemplation, to an eager faith, conscious of the presence of God.

- b. To be attentive to the spiritual pulse of the *Prayer Group* during the *Prayer Assembly* for the timely proposal of various hymns and praises.
 - c. To help the people familiarize themselves and learn new hymns that are introduced, so that the assembly can sing them and feel the meaning of the praise.
70. The Coordinator of the Ministry of Hospitality directs this ministry so that the participants of the various activities of the *Prayer Group* feel welcomed and experience a true spirit of family and Christian charity. Concretely stated, they welcome the participants to the gatherings. They are also charged with external elements of welcome like setting up chairs, the room temperature comfort level, the order and décor of the gathering space (before and after the event). At the same time, they can anticipate what is needed for the care of small children as well.
71. The Treasurer is charged with monitoring the finances of the *Prayer Group*. Among the responsibilities are the following:
- a. To coordinate the offering collection of the *Prayer Group* (if the pastor has granted permission).
 - b. To present a report on the finances and the financial activities of the *Prayer Group* to the pastor, and to make this information available to the Board of Directors as well.
 - c. To open a bank account for the *Prayer Group* (if the pastor permits it). This is to avoid funds being kept in cash in a private house.
 - d. To send, according to possibilities of the *Prayer Group*, a monthly offering to the corresponding regional body.
72. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes and documents on the activities of the *Prayer Group*, especially the meetings. Some of the responsibilities are:
- a. To keep record and maintain and archive with all the minutes of the official meetings. For a meeting to be official, it is necessary that at least half of the Board of Directors be present.
 - b. To present the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and help assure that the meetings flows smoothly and follows the established schedule/agenda.
73. The servers are those who help the coordinators of the various ministries, with the functions. Even though the servers do not belong to the Board of Directors, they, nonetheless, collaborate with the in a direct and irreplaceable way. The participation in the group of servers is available to everyone, according the level of maturity that is required for each ministry. All servers are to participate in the classes of VIRTUS.

Chapter V – ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCES IN THE *PRAYER GROUPS*

Art 1 – General Criteria

74. The administration and finances of the *Prayer Groups* should be regulated by criteria of honesty, justice, clarity, and transparency. There should also be sought that it be an adequate and efficient administration.

Art. 2 – Concrete orientations

75. As is stated in #71. c., the *Prayer Group* should have a bank account (as permitted by the pastor).
76. The collection offering in the *Prayer Group*, must be permitted by the pastor. A percentage of what is collected should be committed for the parish to help with the general costs and as a collaboration in the mission of the Church; another percentage can be sent to the corresponding Regional Coordination.
77. All conference speakers have the right to just compensation for their work. The pastor should be informed of the fees and stipends for the conference speakers. As a guiding measure, a conference or teaching would be about \$100 - \$200. If a person is invited to give a weekend of teaching, \$500 would be appropriate. However, it is left to the judgement of the coordinators and the pastor to change these figures.

Some conference speakers often have their own materials or by others for sale. It is up to the Coordinator of the *Prayer Group* – personally or through the Coordinator of the Teaching Ministry – to be certain that all the material is clearly Catholic content, with no deviations or confusions that can harm the people. Likewise, the approval of the pastor for these sales is appropriate (in particular or in general). In any case, there must be the avoidance of simply conducting business, motivated for profit or ambition.

78. It is not appropriate that conference speakers or invited parties conduct their own collection for any reason that serves their own purposes. All collections should be given to and conducted for the *Prayer Group*, with the pastor's permission.