

Monasticism and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

by Reginald Alva

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of all genuine renewal activities within the Church. After the firm establishment of Christendom in Europe, women and men chose monasticism as a way to seek sanctity and grow in love of Jesus Christ. It would not be an exaggeration to note that nuns and monks pioneered the work of renewal and reformation within the Church.¹ The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) was born much later, in 1967. It too seeks spiritual renewal through its distinct Charismatic spirituality.² As both Christian monasticism and the CCRM aim at spiritual renewal, this article seeks to examine their features to understand their contribution in enriching the spiritual tradition of the Catholic Church. Further, this article will also examine the contributions of these movements in enriching the spiritual lives of contemporary people. The primary sources of our study are Church documents, literature on monasticism, documents on the CCRM, and opinions of experts in these fields.

Brief History of the Beginnings of Monasticism and the CCRM

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It is not an easy task to trace the beginnings of monasticism. There are various opinions among scholars, which suggests that there could be more than a single reason for the birth of Christian monasticism.³ One of the reasons proposed by scholars is the decline of spiritual fervor among Christians after the establishment of Christendom in Europe. The early Christians faced many persecutions. However, as Christians grew in temporal power, they faced fewer difficulties and lesser challenges in following their faith. The absence of persecutions led to the loss of interest in spiritual matters. Therefore, as a response to this situation, some Christians opted for a solitary life of prayer and meditation.⁴ Other scholars suggest that as persecutions and martyrdom declined, some Christians longed to embrace the value of martyrdom by renouncing all the pleasures of the world and accepting an ascetic

life. This form of martyrdom is also known as *white martyrdom*.⁵ Further, some scholars maintain that the prevailing monasticism in other faiths influenced Christians to embrace a Christianized form of monasticism. Prominent

1 James Ponzetti, "Renewal in Catholic Community Life and New Monasticism: The Way of a Contemporary Religious Communal Movement," *The Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society*, 4, no. 2 (2014): 35-50.

2 Hereafter I will refer to Christian monasticism as monasticism.

3 Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 1-2.

4 Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 1-2.

5 Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom*, vol. 1 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 122-123.

theologian Gregory Smith noted, “[T]he origin of the monastic life is to be found partly in the traditions of the East, partly in the teaching of the schools of Alexandria, partly in the social state of the world external to Christianity.”⁶ Thus, as noted above, there could be multiple reasons for the beginning of monasticism among Christians.

Monasticism began as eremitic monasticism, in which an individual goes to the desert to separate herself/himself from worldly affairs to concentrate on spiritual matters.⁷ Cenobitic monasticism evolved when monks and nuns formed communities to live a communal life with like-minded people.⁸ As time passed, monastic communities underwent reform according to the needs of the times. They continue to undergo renewal and reform to adapt to contemporary conditions.

In contrast to monasticism, the CCRM is a comparatively new movement within the Catholic Church. In 1967, a few students and faculty members of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh gathered for a weekend of prayer. During the course of the prayer meeting, they experienced the phenomenon of baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁹ This was the beginning of the CCRM in the Church. Even though only a few people had this experience, they shared their newfound spiritual joy with others. Their life-transforming testimonies had a great impact on other Catholics in the U.S.¹⁰ Youth in particular became involved in the various programs of the movement. Due to their efforts, the CCRM spread rapidly to all continents of the world and experienced phenomenal growth.¹¹ Statistics on the global expansion of Pentecostals and Charismatics show that around 120 million Catholics in over 236 countries claim to have some association with the CCRM.¹² Thus, both monasticism and the CCRM have their unique histories of origin.

Main Features of Monasticism and the CCRM

Monasticism originally started as a lay movement.¹³ Later, priests also became monks. Similarly, the CCRM is also a lay-centered movement. The Second Vatican Council Fathers encouraged the laity to take a proactive role in the various activities and programs of the Church.¹⁴ The CCRM, which was born two years after the end of the Second Vatican Council, implemented the vision of the Council Fathers. Both monasticism and the CCRM seek Spirit-driven renewal and active participation of all Christians in the mission of the Church. In the following sections, we shall examine these features and their contributions in helping contemporary people enrich their spiritual lives and rediscover the beauty of the Christian faith.

1. Spirit- Driven Renewal & Change of Heart

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem had a tremendous experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Peter, who had this experience, stood up before the people and with the power of the Holy Spirit boldly proclaimed the Lord’s message. Those who listened to him “were cut to the heart” and asked Peter, “Brothers, what should we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized

6 Gregory Smith, *Christian Monasticism* (London: Aeterna Press, 2015), 2. Originally published by A. D. Innes & Co, London, 1892.

7 Ralph Keen, *The Christian Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 103-115. Eremitic is a derivative of the Greek word *eremos*, which means desert.

8 Keen, *The Christian Tradition*, 103-115. Cenobitic is a derivative of the Greek word *koinos bios*, meaning communal life.

9 Susan Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm: A History of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1967-2000* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 1-2.

10 Reginald Alva, *The Spirituality of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprint, 2014), 1-3.

11 David Barrett and Todd Johnson, “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1959-2025,” in *Then Peter Stood Up* (Rome: ICCRS, 2000), 122-123.

12 David Barrett, George Kurian, and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20.

13 Robert Baker and John Landers, *A Summary of Christian History*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 88. See Natalia Teteriatnikov, “Architecture: Eastern Christian Monasteries,” in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, ed. William Johnston, vol.1 (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 66.

14 Reginald Alva, “The Catholic Charismatic Movement & the Laity,” *New Theology Review* 28, no. 1 (2015): 39-45.

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). This event shows that an individual undergoes a radical change of heart with the infilling of the Holy Spirit. After the death of Jesus, Peter and his companions feared for their lives and locked themselves up. However, after the coming of the Holy Spirit they boldly came out and proclaimed Jesus as Lord. The coming of the Holy Spirit changed them. Similarly, the Holy Spirit led the three thousand Jews in Jerusalem to repent and accept the lordship of Jesus (Acts 2: 41).

Both monasticism and the CCRM started with individuals who opened themselves to the Holy Spirit to seek genuine conversion of heart. The early nuns and monks longed to have a close relationship with the person of Jesus. This led them to go out to deserts and solitary places to detach themselves from worldly pursuits and dedicate themselves to a life of prayer and renunciation. Their life experiences show that conversion is a life-long process and not a one-time achievement. Nuns and monks faced the continuous onslaught of temptations. The desert experiences gave them ample time to wrestle with their internal weaknesses such as pride and ego and face external troubles like extreme temperatures, lack of food, and the danger of robbers and beatings. It was through these struggles that they purged themselves from the evil that had blocked their spiritual growth. In his book *Demons and the Making of the Monk*, Brakke notes:

The monk was not simply a man at prayer and not simply someone who through ascetic performances constructed a virtuous self as an alternative to the deadening conventions of society. At the heart of his identity was struggle, resistance, and combat with the forces of evil that surrounded the ancient person.¹⁵

Charismatics also stress the need for internal transformation and change of heart. Even though there is a difference between monks and Charismatics in their approach to seeking a change of heart, both consider it to be a very important factor to growth in the spiritual life. Charismatics emphasize the phenomenon of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Sullivan notes that baptism in the Holy Spirit is “a religious experience which initiates a decisively new sense of the powerful presence and working of God in one’s life, which working usually involves one or more charismatic gifts.”¹⁶ There is no fixed format to experience baptism in the Holy Spirit. Charismatic prayer groups and communities usually organize programs to preach about baptism in the Holy Spirit. Generally, even though it is not a norm, Charismatics focus on the topic of repentance before preaching about baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ They encourage people to seek the sacrament of reconciliation to experience God’s forgiving love in their lives. Some Charismatics also organize inner healing (healing of memories and relationships) sessions to give people an opportunity to pray for healing in the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious realms of their lives.¹⁸ Charismatics urge people to go through the process of seeking forgiveness and forgiving others in order to remove the spiritual blocks that hinder their growth in Jesus. After praying for healing and forgiveness, Charismatics lay their hands on the person and pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As noted above, there are no fixed formats or rules to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit. An individual may receive baptism in the Holy Spirit in an unexpected time or form. Repentance is indispensable to prepare a person to seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Thus, both monasticism and Charismatics preach repentance and change of heart as an essential prerequisite to progress in the spiritual life.

15 David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in the Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 240-241.

16 Francis Sullivan, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Catholic Interpretation of the Pentecostal Experience,” *Gregorianum* 55, no. 1 (1974): 49-68.

17 “The Word of God,” in *The Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1979), 129-137.

18 See Thomas Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 40-45.

In his 1946 radio message to the United States National Catechetical Congress, Pope Pius XII noted that, “Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin.”¹⁹ Pope Francis echoed the words of Pope Pius XII in a homily referring to David’s sins of adultery with Bathsheba and consequently Uriah’s murder (2 Sam 11:1-17). Pope Francis noted, “The most serious problem in this passage is not the temptation or sin against the ninth commandment but rather the way David acts.”²⁰ According to Pope Francis, David does not recognize his sins but tries to deal with his sins as one would resolve a problem. Pope Francis noted, “The same thing can happen to us when we lose the sense of the kingdom of God and as a consequence also lose the sense of sin ... we can do anything, we will resolve everything. The power of man substituted for the glory of God.”²¹ There is a growing trend in the contemporary world that seeks independence from God and absolute relativism. Some contemporary people consider sin, repentance, and forgiveness as irrelevant. Some regard religion as burdensome as it curtails their freedom. Hedonism, consumerism, and utilitarianism are becoming the norm of the present culture. This not only affects human interpersonal relationships, it also affects human relationships with the environment.²² Thus, there is a great need for people today to recognize the harmful consequences of their personal sins as well as the corporate sins present in society. However, it is a great challenge for people to go against popular culture, which promotes unrestrained relativism under the garb of freedom. Hence, there is an immense need of role models to teach people the importance of seeking genuine conversion. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics can serve as these role models because their spirituality emphasizes the need for internal transformation and repentance of sins. They can greatly contribute to the awakening of conscience in people today to accept the seriousness of sin and seek genuine conversion of heart.

2. Discipleship

To grow as a disciple of Jesus is at the heart of both monasticism and the CCRM. Women and men embraced the monastic way of life to follow closely the life of Jesus Christ and imitate him. Nuns and monks aim to grow in sanctity by living an authentic Christian life. They do not consider themselves superhuman but instead strive to grow as matured disciples of Jesus Christ. To become a disciple of Jesus, one needs to follow a path that is less trodden and full of struggles. To imitate Christ, nuns and monks renounce everything that could block their growth in spiritual lives. They opt to live a simple life and devote themselves to prayer and work (*ora et labora*).

Nuns and monks usually spend long hours in prayer and meditation. Apart from reciting prayers from the Daily Office, some also keep all night prayer vigils on special occasions.²³ As nuns and monks seek to follow St. Paul’s dictum to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17), they practice a form of prayer in which a person repeats continuously the name of Jesus or a short scripture verse. This form of repetitive prayer helps a person to focus on Jesus and ward off distractions.²⁴ Initially, a person needs to repeat consciously the set phrase for a number of times. Gradually, as time passes, a person begins to pray by repeating the set phrase, even without being aware of it. Thus, this repetition of the set phrase helps a person to be in constant prayer, even if the person is engaged in other work.

19 Pius XII, “Radio Message to the Participants of the National Catechetical Congress of the United States, 1946,” https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/speeches/1946/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19461026_congresso-catechistico-naz.html.

20 Francis, “Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 31 January 2014,” http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140131_martyrs-sins.html (accessed on 2 June 2016).

21 Francis, “Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 31 January 2014.”

22 Benedict XVI, *Cartias in Veritate*, no. 51, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 101 (2009): 687-688. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html#ednref122.

23 Frank Flinn, ed. *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 524-525.

24 James Payton, *Light from the Christian East: An Introduction to the Orthodox Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 206-215.

Nuns and monks also give importance to the reading, memorizing, and meditation of biblical verses. The practice of Christian *lectio divina* (divine reading) has its roots in monasticism.²⁵ Nuns and monks used the practice of *lectio divina* as a means to read the word of God and assimilate it in their inner being.²⁶ They meditate on scripture verses to seek God's presence continually, which is the center of their lives.

Silence has an indispensable role in a nun's or monk's spiritual life. Interior silence helps a person to be introspective and face one's inner self.²⁷ This experience can be both joyful and terrifying. Silence may be joyful because it allows a person to seek God's presence in one's life. Silence may be terrifying because solitude brings a person face to face with one's real self. Inner silence plays an important role in the spiritual formation of a person. It is for this reason that nuns and monks spend quality time in silence, to grow in their spiritual lives, and encounter their real selves.

The Charismatic tradition also emphasizes discipleship. The purpose of seeking spiritual renewal is not self-edification but to be a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ. Like monasticism, the CCRM links obedience to the teachings of Jesus with discipleship. The CCRM emphasizes receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit in order to grow in a personal relationship with the person of Jesus. Jesus promised His disciples, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). Raymond Brown, an expert in Johannine theology, noted the Holy Spirit (*Paraclete*) is the alter ego of Jesus.²⁸ He maintains that the Holy Spirit served as the spiritual presence of Jesus in the community of disciples.

The CCRM emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in helping Christians to become matured disciples of Jesus Christ. Charismatics urge people to spend time both in personal and communitarian prayer. They give importance to praise, which forms the backbone of Christian prayer. Even though there is no fixed format for Charismatic prayer meetings, Charismatics usually spend a considerable time in praise and thanksgiving. Sometimes they use scripture verses or extemporaneous words of praise. In addition, they make use of lively music and hymns as a form of praise and worship.

The liturgical celebrations of the Catholic Church do not have the flexibility of Charismatic prayer sessions as they have a fixed structure. However, Charismatics consider liturgical celebrations and the celebration of sacraments as indispensable for spiritual growth. Even though it is not possible for parishes to incorporate all the features of Charismatic praise and worship in liturgical celebrations, Charismatics participate actively in the various celebrations and bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ.²⁹

Charismatic prayer groups and communities give importance to study of the Bible. Some prayer groups and communities make an effort to organize programs to give an opportunity to lay people to study the Bible. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, lay Catholics generally did not take a keen interest in reading or studying the scriptures.³⁰ However, at the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers urged all Catholics to read the Bible and use it for their prayers. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* noted, "The sacred synod also ear

25 Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina-The Sacred Art: Transforming Words and Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2011), 4-5. See also Augustine Roberts, *Centered on Christ: A Guide to Monastic Reflection* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 265-267.

26 Alessandro Barban, "Lectio Divina and Monastic Theology in Camaldolese Life," in *The Privilege of Love: Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality*, ed. Peter-Damian Belisle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 47-60.

27 Peter-Damian Belisle, *The Language of Silence: The Changing Face of Monastic Solitude* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 15-20. See also David Keller, *Oasis of Wisdom: The Worlds of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 78-90.

28 Raymond E. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1967): 113-32.

29 See International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Vatican: ICCRS, 2012), 19-21.

30 Frederick Bliss, *Catholic & Ecumenical: History & Hope: Why the Catholic Church is Ecumenical & What She is Doing About It* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 39-40.

nestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the 'excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8)."³¹ Charismatics have greatly contributed to making the scriptures alive among Catholics, according to the vision of the Second Vatican Council.³² The CCRM has also employed widely the age-old tradition of *lectio divina* to have a deeper understanding of the Word of God.³³

Silence is golden in monasticism. However, there is a perception that Charismatic prayer meetings have less space for silent worship. It may be true to a certain extent that some Charismatics place greater emphasis on loud praise and lively music. Nevertheless, this is not a norm. Charismatics do recognize the importance of silence for contemplative worship. They do keep time for silent worship during the prayer sessions. However, the time they spend in silence is considerably less as compared to nuns and monks. For this reason, they need to learn from the monastic tradition about the richness of contemplation in silence.³⁴

Even though Charismatics usually do not keep silence for long periods, they have introduced creativity in the way a person worships.³⁵ They encourage the use of bodily gestures like clapping, raising hands, and dancing, which appeal to the affective realm of a person. Thus, they have brought freshness in the way of worship, which is enriching the spiritual lives of people.

Contemporary people often are in the constant pursuit of happiness, which seems to be like a mirage. Wealth, scientific gadgets, positions, etc., cannot satisfy the inner needs of a person. The ancient wisdom of monastic practices and the modern spirituality of Charismatic worship can help people to rediscover the richness and depth of Christian faith and spirituality.

3. Community Life

Faith in the Trinity is the foundation of Christian spirituality. Trinitarian spirituality implies fellowship between the three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) of the Trinity. The communion and fellowship that the three persons of the Trinity share serve as an exemplary model to all faith-seeking people to engage in fellowship with others. Monasticism in its early form consisted of individuals living in isolation to dedicate themselves to prayer and sacrifice. However, as time passed, nuns and monks realized the need for fellowship. Hence, they came together to form communities of like-minded people.³⁶

Some contemporary people may consider monasticism as a way to escape from the humdrum routine of life. However, monasticism's goal is diametrically opposed to any escapism. It aims to embrace life in its fullness, which Jesus promised to His disciples (Jn 10:10). This fullness of life is not for self-satisfaction but for sharing with others the joy that comes from God. Thus, for nuns and monks, community life is a place to love and be loved.³⁷ Further, the community life that nuns and monks live is not restricted to the members of their community.³⁸ It encompasses the whole of humanity. As members of the same human family, nuns and monks extend their love and care to all. Thus, monasteries have greatly promoted the cause of building a just and harmonious world.

31 Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, no. 25, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

32 Peter Hocken, *Pentecost & Parousia: Charismatic Renewal, Christian Unity & the Coming Glory* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 4-5.

33 Carl Arico, *A Taste of Silence: Centering Prayer & the Contemplative Journey* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 103-121.

34 Andy Lord, *Transforming Renewal: Charismatic Renewal Meets Thomas Merton* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 137-138.

35 Reginald Alva, "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement: Tradition versus Creativity," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 78, no. 12 (2014): 885-897.

36 Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 25-41.

37 Mayeul de Dreuille, *Seeking Absolute Love: The Founders of Christian Monasticism* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1999), 31-32. Here de Dreuille refers to the life and teachings of Pachomius, a prominent monk belonging to the period of early monasticism.

38 Laurence Freeman, ed. *Monastery Without Walls: The Spiritual Letters of John Main, O.S.B.* (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2006), 3-31.

Nuns and monks profess religious vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These vows are a means to follow Christ faithfully and serve all people more generously. Even though nuns and monks pronounce these solemn vows, this does not mean that they have already attained perfection and are eligible to live a consecrated life. The declaration of vows rather means that they are imploring divine grace to live a life completely dedicated to God. Thus, the profession of vows is not a completion of a process (perfection) but the beginning of a process (seeking to grow in holiness) in life.³⁹ Nuns and monks accept that they are imperfect humans, who are seekers of the path of holiness, which comes from God. The contemporary world sometimes looks down on religious values. Popular culture often considers people who seek to grow in holiness to be naive. However, the decadence of moral values is taking its toll in human society, and contemporary society is in great need of role models who can awaken the conscience of the people. Pope Francis noted in his apostolic letter to all consecrated people, “I am counting on you ‘to wake up the world.’”⁴⁰ Nuns and monks need to be witnesses of the presence of God’s reign in this world.

The CCRM also emphasizes fellowship, and its prayer groups and communities welcome people to join them in fellowship.⁴¹ Usually, Charismatics are very supportive to all those who join their prayer services. The members of prayer groups and communities reach out to those who are weak or in need of help. The practice of praying for healing and sharing resources bonds the members to the group. Each member feels she or he belongs to the group. This strong feeling of belonging and acceptance motivates the members to share their talents and resources with others for the good of the group or community.⁴² Further, the members share this joy with people who may not be members of the group.

In the contemporary world, despite the advances in communication technologies, some people find it difficult to relate to or communicate with others. Excessive individualism and self-centeredness is antagonizing people. The breakdown of healthy interpersonal relationships in families, at workplaces, and in society at large is creating a void in people’s inner being. The atmosphere of unhealthy and cutthroat competition at all levels of education is breeding anxiety and stress in children and youth. To release stress, some people take recourse Internet-based chat and conversation. Sometimes they get addicted to cyber relationships, which do not demand real interpersonal interaction.⁴³ Pope Francis emphasizes building real relationships among people rather than taking shelter in cyber relationships. He noted the dangers of cyber relationship as follows:

[W]hen media and the digital world become omnipresent, their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. In this context, the great sages of the past run the risk of going unheard amid the noise and distractions of an information overload. Efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches. True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution. Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature. Today’s media do enable us to

39 Jose Parappully, “Journeying Together, Seeking God, ‘Waking Up the World!’” *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 79, no. 8 (2015): 614-638.

40 Francis, Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People, no. 2, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20141121_lettera-consacraati.html.

41 CCRM prayer groups usually function under the jurisdiction of a local parish. Group members come together for prayer sessions or group activities. On the other hand, covenant communities, which are sometimes ecumenical, consist of people who agree to live together and follow certain programs to work for Christian unity and renewal.

42 Reginald Alva, “The Role of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Reigniting the Flame of Spirituality in Contemporary Christians,” *Pneuma* 38, no. 1-2 (2016): 77-92.

43 Danah Boyd, *It’s Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 77-99.

communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.⁴⁴

Thus, there is great need to foster true fellowship in society. Contemporary people are longing to be part of a group or community that is caring and supportive. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics can welcome these people to their groups to experience true Christian fellowship. CCRM prayer groups, communities, and monasteries can serve as places for promoting healthy interpersonal relationships, which is an essential element for enriching one's spiritual life.

Contemporary people are seeking spirituality, which can give meaning to their lives.⁴⁵ Nuns, monks, and Charismatics have a rich spirituality, which can serve as a role model to all people who are seeking genuine spirituality. In order to attract people to Christian spirituality, their life needs to bear witness to Christ. Contemporary people use monasticism as a symbol of a spiritual and ethical life. The simple and serene life of nuns and monks attracts people, who are tired withof the consumerist culture of the modern world.⁴⁶ Similarly, Charismatics, too, also attract people because of their spiritual zeal and selfless service to the community. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics need to radiate the joy of the Holy Spirit in the society. They need to be the *ambassadors* of Christ, spreading Hhis *aroma* to attract people to seek true peace in the Lord (see 2 Cor 2:15; 5:20).

Conclusion

Monasticism and the CCRM are two different spiritual streams within the Catholic Church. Both have distinct, characteristic features that make them unique schools of spirituality. These schools of spirituality share the common purpose of their existence, which is spiritual renewal. Both of these schools spirituality emphasize the importance of a change of heart in becoming mature disciples of Jesus and sharing fellowship with others. Despite all the developments in science and technology, contemporary people are seeking true joy and peace. There is no gadget in the world that can automatically create happiness. Thus, people need role models to cultivate and nurture virtues of joy, peace, happiness, and love. Monasticism and the CCRM have great potential to help people nurture a genuine experience of God in their lives and grow as mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

44 Francis, *Laudato Si' – On the Care for Our Common Home*, no. 47, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

45 John Coates, "Introduction," in *Spirituality & Social Work: Selected Canadian Readings*, eds. John Coates et. al. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2007), 1-15.

46 Anthony Grimley & Jonathan Wooding, *Living the Hours* (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2010), 1-26.