

Mission to Zimbabwe

By Nancy Greenhaw

We were invited back to Zimbabwe by Bishop Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa to conduct a retreat for the priests and religious of his diocese. Fr. Scott McCaig from the Companions of the Cross accompanied us and was a great help as we ministered there. The retreat was held at Emmaus Center in Rusape, an offshoot of the original Emmaus Center in Katikamu, Uganda. This center began with very meager resources as a group of 8 to 10 eager young Catholics, filled with the Holy Spirit, resolved to make a difference in their community.

We began the retreat on Monday morning and the weather was very dry. There were fewer mosquitoes for us, but the people were looking for the rain which would come in about three weeks. Fr. Scott began the week by teaching about the importance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Most of these religious were familiar with that term, but there were some that were brand new. Many of them came hoping to receive solid Catholic information on the Charismatic Movement as some of the bishops were still very reticent and shy about putting a stamp of approval on Charismatic groups. In the afternoon I taught on *Unbound* prayer and deliverance and everyone was very interested. All week long Fr. Scott taught on the power and use of the gifts of the Spirit. He provided wonderful, practical information and they loved it.



One of the evenings we showed some videos of the Charismatic Catholics at the Ugandan Martyrs Shrine. They loved it so much they wanted to see it twice. Also, Fr. Maximilian had been to ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) in Italy and brought back the video of Popes John Paul II and Paul IV welcoming the Charismatic Renewal. The videos were a huge hit.

We were able to teach Monday to Thursday and everyone seemed very grateful to be in an atmosphere of love and teaching and the exchange of ideas. The Bishop was there every moment. One of the nights we had a healing service and someone was sure that they were healed of sugar diabetes, but we won't know for a while. One of the nights we prayed for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We had quite a few testimonies of renewal in the Holy Spirit from many of the priests and nuns.

One sister said, "I was wounded. I discounted some of the things that happened to me in the past. I



realized that these things were holding me in the past. I was tired and I couldn't speak, but some of these things have been broken in me. Today when I received Eucharist it tasted so sweet." A seminarian said, "I only came today, the very last day. I had heard about the renewal but I thought, I will never join these people. They claim that they pray more and better than others. Yesterday on the way to Mutare I got a message, 'please come to the Emmaus center.' I received prayer and now I am going to tell everyone I want to join you."

These are the people at work day and night for the Church. Most of them went away with the conviction that the Church needs the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We gave away rosaries, and books on prayer, deliverance and Apologetics.

Friday evening the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference began with Mass in a large tent in the middle of a huge field. These people love to dance, so there was lots of dancing and movement before, during, and after this Mass which set the tone for the entire weekend. After Mass Lloyd spoke and challenged the people. He told them if they really loved the Eucharist and if they really wanted to do the will of the Father, they would give up going to the witch doctor. He said you cannot be a Christian on Sunday and go to the witch doctor on Monday. The Bishop and the priests were encouraged to also challenge the people and have them bring any witchcraft paraphernalia in their possession or from their homes, and bring them forward at the next Mass so they could be burned.

On Saturday morning Fr. Regis spoke. We were so delighted to hear one of the indigenous priests really ministering to his people. Before he spoke he prayed over several people who were on crutches. During his talk there were three sets of crutches leaning against the stage. As he talked he promised to bring up the people to whom these crutches belonged. The crowd was riveted, and soon he called out to people who bounded up the stairs and claimed their crutches, renounced their sicknesses, and threw the crutches down on the ground, to the great delight of the people. Many people then walked up and got prayed for and received their miracles. Some we could see, and some we could not. It was an amazing talk and an amazing display of God's power and love for his people. Then there was singing and dancing for almost an hour as the people expressed their joy and thanks to God.

In the afternoon Fr. Scott gave a wonderful talk on Mary and I gave a talk on unwillingness to forgive as a block to healing and freedom. By this time there were about 2000 people present. After dark the priests prepared for Mass, but they were waiting for the Bishop who was standing in the dark next to a small fire in a hole. Some people had responded to Lloyd's call to bring witchcraft talisman to burn. The Bishop then invited the crowd to come to him and he began to pray from an official church prayer book as a woman threw in some witchcraft paraphernalia that had been in her home since her husband died. Another man slipped in next to the fire and threw other items into the fiery hole. After the occult items were burned the hole was filled in, and Mass began and ended at almost 1 am.

The next morning was a very early Mass so that the participants could begin the long journey home. As soon as Mass was over people began to line up in front of us to be prayed over. We prayed for about an hour; people began to head home and our mission was over. As usual God did much more than we could hope or imagine. There are wonderful signs of recovery in Zimbabwe, and we hope a new beginning will come after all the problems. There is still a lot of poverty, hopelessness and fear of the future. But we know Who holds the future of Zimbabwe; "'For surely I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope'" (Jeremiah 29:11).

