

## A Papal Shout-Out!

### Patti Gallagher Mansfield

“The Pope is talking about Mom!” my daughter exclaimed to my husband as they sat in Rome’s Olympic Stadium in the midst of 52,000 people at an international conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal on June 1. She had a headset for translation from Italian into English which was working. My husband and I did not. At that moment we were not seated together because I was a speaker at the event, and those on the program were placed in the front row in order to greet the Pope.

As Pope Francis began his address I thought I heard my name, but I could scarcely believe my ears. I turned to the Argentinian woman next to me who understood Italian and asked her, “Did the Pope just mention my name?” She excitedly confirmed, “Yes!” Not until I returned home a week later did I see the full translation of his text in which he said, “I am grateful also for the presence of the first who had an intense experience of the power of the Holy Spirit; I believe that it was Patti who is here....”

Quite beyond the personal joy of hearing my name on the lips of Pope Francis, was the joy of discovering that he knows the Charismatic Renewal “from the inside.” He knows our history (the Renewal began at a retreat in 1967 at which I was present). He knows our mission (to bring the grace of a personal Pentecost to the whole Church.) He told us he felt “at home” as he joined us in singing his favorite Charismatic Renewal song, “Vive Jesus el Senor” with his hands lifted in a charismatic gesture of prayer. And, so characteristic of this humble man, he knelt while the assembly prayed for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him, in song, in Italian, and then in the gift of tongues. It was a truly moving and inspiring experience!

In the Pope’s address, he affirmed the Renewal in unequivocal terms, “You were born of the will of the Spirit as ‘a current of grace’ in the Church and for the Church...I expect from you that you share with all, in the Church, the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit (expression that is read in the Acts of the Apostles).” Hearing this I was emboldened to give him my letter (which you will see under my arm in the photo).

When he stood in front of me and took my hand I said, “I’m Patti” and he replied, “Oh, one of the first,” and he pulled me to his chest to embrace me. Then I said, “Holy Father,” and he leaned closer to hear me. “I have an idea to bring this grace of baptism in the Spirit to the whole Church”. I’m not sure he understood my English and he replied to me in Italian, which I didn’t understand. But I handed my letter to the Archbishop behind him who handed it to a security guard. Perhaps Pope Francis will read it one day.

In the letter I explain that the grace of baptism in the Spirit was released in the lives of millions of Catholics when a college student on retreat with me in 1967 suggested that we “renew our sacrament of Confirmation.” **I am asking Pope Francis to call the whole Church, every Pentecost, to “renew our sacrament of Confirmation,” in much the same way we renew our baptismal promises every Easter. We need a New Pentecost for a New Evangelization!**

The Holy Father surprised us all by inviting the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal (which encompasses 120 million people worldwide) to celebrate our 50 Year Jubilee with him in Rome on Pentecost, 2017! What a celebration it will be!