

GOOD NEWS

"I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God"

NOVEMBER
2022

THE FIRE FELL!

BY LENYCE WILLASON

Do you recall how our lives were profoundly changed when we were first baptized in the Holy Spirit. Remember that initial fire we felt in our hearts? As we embraced God's will and how passionately we wanted to spread that news so that others might also know the love of God?

A wonderful weekend was held in Melbourne early September, to stir up and renew that first fire of the Holy Spirit after such a long lock down period. Joe and Julie Chircop (Founders of SOJ) and Johnny, Michael, Joel, Emma and Angela, some of the young adults from the Servants of Jesus in Sydney ministered the fire of the Holy Spirit to the prayer groups of Melbourne with many people stepping forward in faith for the first time to pray over others. The fire certainly fell – and a new spark was experienced; and as often occurs when the presence of God is so tangible, no one wanted to go home. It was humbling and inspirational to be served by these generous loving people.

Julie spoke of having a heart of gratitude; being thankful and grateful that God wants to share the gifts of the Holy Spirit with us so that we can build up the Church and

evangelise those with whom we come into contact. An attitude of Thanksgiving and Praise are needed when we approach our loving Lord. Julie challenged those who had not prayed with others before to step out in faith, come forward and have the faith to pray for brothers and sisters in need.

Joe focused in on the Spirit of God living within each one of us. Each one, by our very Baptism, have been called by God and been given the gifts of the Holy Spirit not for ourselves but to help others come to know the love of God.

Johnny, Michael, Joel, Emma and Angela shared their testimony. Everyone was amazed at these young adults who do not attend "schoolies", but rather go on a mission trip to Africa or the Philippines once year 12 is completed. It is these trips that have formed the heart of Jesus within them and touched them deeply.

In fact, they spent any free time they had ministering to the homeless on the Melbourne streets.

There was a great joy experienced by all in being able to meet again and although it is significant for us to be together praising God the more crucial area in being "Supercharged with the Holy Spirit" is the encounter with the living God. Many new people came along, some for the first time ever, and they were overawed and deeply touched by the presence of God they experienced.

When we consider the fruits of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, as over 160 million Catholics have been baptised in the Holy Spirit over the last 55 years, we know it has been through the power of the Holy Spirit operating through God's people. Praise God this will continue to grow through the same Holy Spirit. We look forward to the fruit that will come from the spark that fell from heaven.



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The deadline for the next Good News
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ACROSS MY DESK



BY LENYCE WILLASON

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10

The recent death of Queen Elizabeth II gave us all a deep insight into a word that has gone out of fashion these days, and that is “service”. She was someone who understood what it meant to make a commitment to serve, even at a cost to herself, and she went on to hold steadfastly to her duty and her faith for 70 years.

That sense of duty she held reminds us of the steadfastness and selfless sacrifice of the one person she looked up to – Jesus Christ Himself. She was a woman with an unwavering faith in God. In her last Christmas speech, she said it was the simplicity that held the attraction. *Simple happenings that formed the starting point of the life of Jesus—the Man whose teachings have been handed down from generation to generation and have been the bedrock of my faith* (Christmas message 2021).

In today’s world we more than likely find people who think in terms of what the world owes them rather than what they owe the world. And living in the global economy, they do not have any time for local ties and obligations.

We witness that same spirit of serving one another in our prayer groups. Those who hold leadership know well the steadfast, selfless sacrifice required to serve not only those in their groups, but to all they meet in society. It is one the ways a follower of Jesus shows his command to love one another, and it is the grace that the Lord pours upon them that enables them to be faithful and to continue to say ‘yes.’

St Peter says that we must see whatever we have as a gift from God. Secondly, St Peter says we should see whatever we have been given as an opportunity to serve others. In other words, we should not see anything as being off limits for use in serving others. Every part is important; each has its job to do.

A man was rebuilding the engine to his lawn mower, and when he finished, he had one small part left over, and he could not remember where it went. He started the engine, and it ran great, so he figured that the part was useless – until he tried to stop the lawn mower, and it would not stop! Even the smallest, least important part of the body of Christ is important.

Every action performed out of kindness, powered by the understanding of Jesus and His love, is a gift from God. Service changes people. It refines, purifies, gives a finer perspective, and brings out the best in each one of us. It gets us looking outward instead of inward. It prompts us to consider others’ needs ahead of our own. Service that rises from a response to the love God pours into our hearts rather than a sense of duty is the expression of true charity, such as the Saviour showed.

As we serve one another, we do it with the strength God provides, the ability which God supplies – so that to Him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.

May we always be reminded that we are serving our King (Colossians 3:23) and may that spur us on to live a life that is poured out for others.

Thank you to all our Prayer Groups and the loving service you provide to the people of God. May God bless you, refresh you and provide all that you need as you serve him.

BE SUPERCHARGED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Comments from those in attendance:

The Supercharges weekend was truly Supercharged... people are still talking about it in prayer groups telling their friends and work colleagues about their experiences.

I feel like the Holy Spirit has taught me so much and the one thing that has stayed with me is... to honour the presence of Christ in others. Praise God for the Servants of Jesus. God bless them all. It was so encouraging to be prayed over by young adults.

Dominic Hankins



People praying for the first time over others

The supercharged event was powerful and prophetic, and I came away with many learnings and inspirations.

It was incredibly inspiring to see the witness and fruits of the Servants of Jesus community. It made me reflect on the necessity for all believers to be part of genuine, relational prayer community, where disciples are made, mentored and multiplied.

Joe spoke about intentionally meditating on God living in us. Truly being aware of, and confidently praying into this reality, gives us God's spiritual authority and power.

Julie spoke of the need to exult God and forget ourselves. Our testimonies of healing and conversion, our Words of Knowledge and divine inspirations, are for building others up and for evangelisation. We glorify God, and love our neighbours, when we proclaim God's goodness.

A big thank you to the Servants of Jesus members for their giving their time generously, and for the coordinators of this event, and THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT for showering Your gifts and goodness upon us.

Gudrun Philipps



Young people giving testimonies



Praying for Fr Bernard

Be Supercharged was perhaps the closest event in recent times where guest speakers followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit instead of sticking rigidly to the agenda. Although talks were scheduled the Holy Spirit had other ideas and I'm glad the speakers listened to those promptings. God knew people were needing something more, i.e., a touch of the Holy Spirit to bring healing to people who were hungry for His love. He certainly came in power. I, for one, was not disappointed.

Miriam Markis

PRAISING GOD IN HELL

BY FR. PAT COLLINS

THE PRAISE OF JESUS
IN THE THROES OF
PAIN AND ANGUISH
CAN BRING US HOPE,
SAYS FR. PAT COLLINS.
PRAISE CAN BRING
LIBERATION FROM
DESPAIR, HOPELESSNESS
AND INNER DESOLATION.

I recently found myself reflecting in a prayerful way on the line in the Apostle's Creed which says that Jesus descended into hell. Rather than referring to the place of the damned, the word hell refers to *sheol* in Hebrew, or *hades* in Greek, which Jews believed was the place of the dead in a twilight zone, where all their activities had ceased. It struck me that *sheol* could be understood in two interrelated senses.

Firstly, one can enter into a living psychological and spiritual *sheol*, e.g., as a result of desolation of spirit, or the dark night of the soul when a person feels alienated from God. Jesus experienced this.

Scripture says that Jesus acted as our scapegoat by taking our sins on himself. In Isaiah 53:12 we read: "He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many" and in 2 Cor 5:21 Paul wrote, "For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin." One of sin's effects is that it tends to eclipse the sense of God's presence.

A Separation From God

The evangelists, Matthew and Mark, tell us that, when he was dying on the cross on Good Friday, Jesus experienced the kind of separation from God that is typical of unrepentant sinners.

In his anguish, he quoted the first line from Psalm 22 when he cried out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" They are the words of someone who has descended into a psycho-spiritual hell.

Commenting on them, Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa has observed: "On the cross Jesus experienced the ultimate consequence of sin, which is the loss of God. He had become the godless one, the atheist. The word *atheist* can have either an active or a passive connotation. It can indicate someone who *refuses* God, but also someone who is *refused* by God. It is in the second sense that the word applied to Jesus on the cross."

Descending To Hell As Saviour

Secondly, there is a more radical and literal descent into *sheol* at the time of death. When Jesus expired, his body was taken from the cross and placed in the tomb. Meanwhile his spirit joined the departed from previous generations in *sheol*.

However, as par 632 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, "Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there."

Although it is a bit fanciful, I imagine what Jesus might have said to the souls in *sheol* who had died while faithfully awaiting the coming of the Messiah. He would have told them that he was the one they had been waiting for. Then he could have quoted the words he had proclaimed in the synagogue in Nazareth, at the beginning of his public ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has anointed me... He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives... to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk 4:18-19).

'I Will Declare Your Name To My People'

He would have assured them that he was certain that

his Father would vindicate him by raising him body and soul from the dead, and that those who believed in him, and his message, would be liberated with him.

I imagined that, having declared this, that he went on to quote some more of the words of Psalm 22, whose first line he had already quoted on the cross. "I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him. Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one."

Then I imagine that, in sheol, Jesus started to proclaim the praise of God in anticipation of the resurrection. As he did so, more and more of the souls in that dark place joined him in praise, not because they felt any consolation, but because they believed in who he was and the words of promise he had spoken.

Then I imagine that as he did this, Jesus was raised body and soul from the dead into the unimaginable glory of God's presence. But that is not all. Those who were praising in union with him were also raised. In Matthew 27:52 we are told that, "tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead," and Paul said in Ephesians 4:7, "When he ascended on high, he took many captives."

Many people have to endure the torments of hell while they are still alive. Firstly, there are saintly people who are led by God's providence to share in the *sheol* experience of Jesus. Let me cite two examples.

In her *Autobiography*, St Therese of Lisieux said that, during her time of inner darkness, near the end of her life, she seemed to hear a mocking inner voice which said, "It is all a dream, this talk of a heavenly country, bathed in light, scented with delicious perfumes, and of a God who made it all, who is to be our possession in eternity!... All right, all right, go on longing for death! But death will make nonsense of your hopes; it will only mean a darker night than ever, the night of mere non-existence and annihilation."

When St Teresa of Calcutta died in 1997, it came as a surprise to learn that in spite of her cheerful personality, her beautiful and reassuring words and loving actions, she herself had endured inner desolation of spirit for many years. She wrote in a letter to her spiritual director, *"they say people in hell suffer eternal pain because of the loss of God... In my soul I feel this terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, of God not really existing."*

'Be sober-minded; Be Watchful'

There is evidence that both of these saintly women, like many people before and since, felt that the devil

was attacking them in their vulnerability as they suffered desolation of spirit.

They had to take heed of the words of 1 Pt. 5:8-9: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith."

The blood sisters and companions of St Therese of Lisieux prayed that she would be delivered from the attacks of the evil one. Cardinal Henry D'Souza of Calcutta revealed that, a year before she died, he had asked a priest to perform a minor exorcism on Mother Teresa, to free her from the attack of the father of lies.

Join Jesus The Lord Of Sheol In Praise

In the course of my pastoral work, I have found that many, many people have to endure a psycho-spiritual type of hell when they feel overwhelmed by tribulation and separated from God and devoid of hope as a result of such things as bereavement, depression, addiction, sickness, pain, isolation, failure, guilt, hopelessness, a sense of meaninglessness, unbelief or spiritual oppression.

I thought in particular of those who have to endure the dangers and horrors of wars in countries such as Ukraine, Ethiopia and Yemen. What I sensed was that the members of the army of praise should join with Jesus as the Lord of sheol in praising and thanking God in anticipation of being led forth from captivity into the freedom of the children of God

There are intimations of that kind of liberation in the story of Jonah praising God in the belly of the whale, the three young men praising God in the fiery furnace, and Paul and Silas praising God in the depths of a Philippian gaol. In each case, praise anticipated their liberation, like Jesus, by God the Father.

So it will for us when, in union with all those in hell, we praise our faithful God.

His Power At Work In Us Is Great

As we do so, the truth of Paul's words in Eph 1:18-20 will kick in: "How very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength which God the Father used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world."

I must say, I was deeply moved by the thought of those in the darkness and forlornness of Hell praising God in union with Jesus in anticipation of liberation. I was reminded of some words of St Patrick in his Confessions. He revealed that, although he had to endure a lot of trials of a hellish nature, he was, nevertheless, committed to thanking and the praising God, his deliverer.

He wrote: "I give unceasing thanks to my God, who he kept me faithful in the day of my testing... that I might constantly rejoice and glorify your name wherever I may be, both in prosperity and in adversity. You did it so that, whatever happened to me, I might accept good and evil equally, always giving thanks to God. God showed me how to have faith in him forever, as one who is never to be doubted."

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TRY A LITTLE KINDNESS



BY MARY CRAWFORD

Something happened to me just recently that really shook me up. I have been supporting someone whose 26 year old son has been diagnosed with a rare form of leukaemia at the beginning of this year. The mother was heartbroken and frightened that her much loved son has to suffer so much brutal chemotherapy to survive.

I was chatting with a mutual friend and she mentioned that this mother absolutely thought the world of me because of my kindness to her. To our shock and surprise, I started to cry. I felt incredibly sad that my natural kindness and empathy meant so much. A thought immediately struck my mind: *Kindness may not cost you anything but may mean the world to someone else.*

On Facebook, during the pandemic, multiple kindness groups popped up as locals pooled their resources to help one another and those in need. Being stuck at home and probably bored, this initiative really took off and connected neighbours in ways never experienced before. It really gave off strong community vibes. However, the majority of those groups have now evaporated as normalcy has returned, but kindness is still keenly needed.

Our prayers groups are meant to be hubs of kindness and encouragement. Most of us can remember our early days in Renewal when we were 'babies' in the spirit. It was in our prayer groups that we 'cut our teeth' in practising our spiritual gifts. It was kind and generous people who allowed us to exercise our fledgling gifts as we dipped our toes into spiritual waters. These wise people didn't feel threatened by our emerging gifts and helped us to nurture them and allowed us to flourish. *'Encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing'* (1Thess 5:11).

Imagine if they had shut each one of us down? Imagine if they had viewed us as a rival and pushed us aside? Imagine if we were told that we were no good and the Lord wouldn't use someone like us? We don't want

to dampen the enthusiasm of less experienced people and a kind and generous mentor can make an immense difference to their growth.

We live in a highly competitive world. People manipulate, neutralize and push aside others to gain power, control, money, status etc. These are hollow goals to aim for.

We Charismatics have our eyes set on higher things not of this world and yet we can descend into a rugby scrum fighting for spiritual gifts and ministries. There are more than enough spiritual gifts and graces for all of us.

Absolute control is a sure-fire way to destroy a prayer group or ministry. When there is mutual love and respect in a prayer group or ministry, it runs like a well-oiled machine. When dissent or competition occurs, resentment arises and the group limps along. When a prayer group is welcoming and inclusive, it attracts people, and they feel loved and accepted. Kindness is a magnet to hurting people. *Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see* (Mark Twain).

Kindness and patience are essential tools for the healing ministry as we deal with many broken people. We nurture them with our prayers and reinforce their self-worth in the eyes of God. Our gentle guidance coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit transforms them from being slumped over from hopelessness to people confidently facing the world with their spiritual armour on. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you (Eph 4:32).

Kindness is a decision. You decide to embrace the wellbeing of another before your own plans, needs and desires. It is a motion of the spirit drawing you closer to the agape love the Father has for us all. Kindness mirrors what is in your heart. As followers of Christ, acts of kindness should be like the air we breathe.

Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly and most underrated agent of human change -

Bob Kerry. In these harsh economic times, kindness will be even more essential for struggling families.

So today, who can you bring the light of Christ to and lift them up from the miry clay? Kindness is free. Sprinkle it everywhere generously.

AN APPEAL TO HELP THE HOLY SPIRIT OF FREEDOM COMMUNITY TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS

It is a difficult time for everyone currently, not the least the HSFC.

We are asking for you to begin collecting the items that are needed every week, mainly cans tuna, baked beans (ring pull cans please), bottled water, juice boxes, breakfast bars, instant noodles, and fresh fruit.

Could we also provide a special treat for the Christmas packs? Perhaps some gingerbread or chocolate bar.

Goods can be left at the CCR Centre, 101 Holden St, North Fitzroy by 9 December.

Thank you for your continued generous participation in this important work of service.



PRAYER GROUP PROFILE



BY BAN WEE

SACRE COEUR PRAYER COMMUNITY

Origin

The origin of Sacre Coeur Prayer Community can be traced to one of the earliest weekly Melbourne Catholic Charismatic prayer meetings held in September 1972. The meetings were held in the parlour of the Redemptorist Monastery in Kew when Fr Ed Nixon and Fr Humphrey O'Leary were the leaders.

By early 1973 the numbers had outgrown the parlour and the meeting was moved into the chapel. The prayer meeting continued to grow. At this time Tony Conway, a seminarian, was the leader and other seminarians joined the group.

Then the first 'Life in the Spirit' seminar was conducted and many more people joined the group which had increased to about 200.

By September 1973 the chapel could no longer accommodate the numbers arriving each Friday night, so the meeting was moved to Mary's Mount in Balwyn.

In September 1974 it became necessary to leave Mary's Mount for the larger school Hall at Sacre Coeur in Glen Iris. It was at this school that the group called themselves Sacre Coeur Prayer Community. Around this time those leaders formed by the group began prayer meetings in their own parishes.

Changing Locations and Leaders

In 1975 Claude Lopez was chosen by the Prayer Community as its leader. When Claude went to Rome



Joint Sacre Coeur & St Joan of Arc Retreat at Pallotti, led by Fr Bernard Morawski (September 2019)

to serve at the International Office for the Charismatic Renewal in January 1985, Dr Paul O'Hanlon then took on the leadership until 1994. The Prayer Community, at the invitation of Fr Maurice Sullivan CM, moved into the parish of St Joseph's, Malvern, where Margaret West became the leader from 1994 to 2001.

Norma Keyt then took on the leadership. To avoid the disruption caused by the renovation at the St Joseph's Hall, she organised the move of the Prayer Community to St Kevin's in Ormond on October 2005. Subsequently the Prayer Community moved its meetings to St Patrick's in Murrumbidgee on December 2014.

Barbara Curran became its leader until February 2017. Sue Baxter took over the leadership and had to move the prayer meeting to its current location in St Anthony's, Glen Huntly on April 2018. Unfortunately, whenever the location of the prayer meetings changed fewer people attended the prayer

meetings due to changing personal circumstances.

Activities

As it is almost 50 years since the first prayer meeting of the Prayer Community, the Prayer Community had a long history of outreach ministry, prayer ministry, healing ministry, conducting seminars, especially 'Life in the Spirit' seminars, promoting Catholic Charismatic spirituality as well as organising social activities.

Regular healing Masses were organised on the first Friday of the month in line with the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Recently this was suspended until more priests are available to celebrate the Healing Masses at night.

Before the Covid lockdown, the Prayer Community organised annual retreats usually held at Pallotti College in Millgrove. Nearby prayer groups were usually invited to join in the retreat.

Looking Forward

Though the current numbers are less than a dozen including one joining via Zoom, the Prayer Community is putting its trust in the promise that God will do a new thing for the Renewal.

When the Revival comes, the Community will rise to the occasion by implementing new versions of the evangelisation and formation programmes.



Christmas party at St Anthony's Glen Huntly (December 2018)

ARE YOU HIGHLY FAVOURED?



BY DINA MANANQUIL-DELFINO

Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favour with God.

(Luke 1:30)

I have three visions I will never forget. One was that of my tiny self, standing in the middle of very imposing, gigantic, lush and verdant mountains. I was so awed by this landscape that I could seem to touch and breathe through them, and in tears, I was overwhelmed by their grandeur. This vision came a few days after I was baptised in the Holy Spirit, following a renewal experience.

The second was that of two tall male figures, dressed in white robes, wearing gold sandals and holding a writing pad and a pen. They seem to be scribbling some notes onto the pad. They were standing on the second level of a brilliant three level glass platform, so translucent that one could see what was above and what was below. This vision came when I was about to have a break from serving from my ministries as I was suffering burn out.

The third vision was that of the Blessed Mother, but I only saw her feet descending from a cloud and all I could see was the image of a snake crushed by her feet. She was wearing blue and white, much like the statue of our Lady of Lourdes. This vision came when I was quite ill and I was wondering if I could get better. This vision was heralded by a sound of heavenly music, like some angels were singing to me. My health was restored soon after.

It took me many years to appreciate the prophetic value of these revelations. I tried to ignore them, or at best attributed them to my spirit that enjoys the supernatural. Now that I am more open to their messages, I am grateful for what they remind me of.

I know that the first vision had to do with my ministry and how I serve the Lord. God seems to tell me that I stand in the presence of a majestic God and if I abide in Him in all that I do, He will bless my work abundantly and will help bring new

life not only to myself but also to others.

The second vision I found out only about recently. I was mystified by these commanding figures. I am not sure if they are, according to religious texts, angels that sometimes write the histories of human attitudes and behaviours or they have been sent to encourage me in my writings. I notice that when I write an article, after a prayer, the words just flow. On certain seasons, I could even see the words that I need to write in my mind so clearly. I am truly grateful for their assistance as it is not easy to put thoughts into paper. As an organiser, I seem to see the event before it is even accomplished, including some finer details!

The third vision relating to the Blessed Mother is equally remarkable to me. During that time, some of my Catholic friends and family started to seek other faith denominations. They told me stories that as part of their initiation, or show of conversion or loyalty to their new found faith, they were asked to smash a statue of Mother Mary. This truly saddened me. As a devotee of the Blessed Mother, I have been a recipient of her intercessions, miraculous protection, favours and guidance. I am praying that it is not out of ignorance that they dislike our fervour to Mary. But here is a reflection shared from "Catholic Moment" website for those who need more clarification.

"First of all, Catholics do not worship Mary. We honor her because she is the mother of Jesus. God himself honored Mary, by finding her worthy to be the mother of His Only Son. God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary to tell her: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God.

God chose her out of all the women in the world to bear his Son. Mary said yes to God and gave birth to baby Jesus, but she could have said no. Mary knew that she could have been stoned to death for being

an unwed mother while she was engaged to Joseph. That is why we look up to her as our church's spiritual hero. God trusted Mary to love his Son and take care of him and she did, all the way to the foot of the cross. Most people have photographs of their parents, grandparents and other ancestors, but we do not have any way of visually remembering Mary. That is why we have statues of Mary; they are like photographs of her.

Catholics do not pray to Mary instead of Jesus. Our prayers are always directed to Jesus. But, sometimes we ask Mary to speak to Jesus on our behalf. Jesus loves his mother very much and we hope that Mary will be able to influence Jesus to hear our prayers, in much the same way that she mentioned to Jesus that 'they have no wine' at the wedding at Cana. Jesus listened to his mother when she asked this and although he had no intention of turning the water into wine for the wedding guests, he did so because his mother asked Him to. We hope that Jesus will grant our requests too, if his mother asks him to."

7 October is the Feast of the Rosary. Many great popes, saints and our church leaders encourage us to pray the rosary, as it can change our life, strengthen the family, bring peace to the world, convert entire nations, prevent wars, and win the salvation of souls. Many average persons may not experience the rosary this way, saying it is repetitive, monotonous, a boring recitation, distracting us from Jesus.

I pray it to pause from a hectic day, to alleviate my fears and worries, to ask for restful sleep, to protect me when I can sense evil and an impending danger, when the devil attacks me with an affliction, when I am concerned about my family, when I seek peace for the world, or lift the dead to eternal rest.

A blog in "Word of a Rebel" has this interesting insight. "Being 'blessed and highly favored' has absolutely NOTHING to do with material possessions. It has ZERO to do with

physical comforts or affluence. It has everything to do with leading a virtuous life of compassion. It even means you were chosen for a difficult task” or to live as an example to others.

Mary did not have much material possessions. She only desired to do God’s will, was willing to pay the price, and she endured until the end. That is why she is full of grace, highly favored.

FILM REVIEW 'REDEEMING LOVE'

BY KRISTINA COOPER

'Redeeming Love' is a film which is faithful to the book from which it is adapted, and brings to life the story found in the book of Hosea, says Kristina Cooper.

'Redeeming Love' is the film of Francine Rivers' best selling book of the same name. A writer of steamy, romantic, historical fiction, Rivers had a conversion to Christ in the late 1980s. This changed her life and outlook. She was so embarrassed by her previous work that she bought the rights so they could no longer be published.

After three years of not writing anything, through attending a bible study, however, she heard the story of Hosea which greatly touched her. As a result she was inspired to write 'Redeeming Love', which went on to sell 3 million copies. In it, the biblical story of the prophet who is told by God to marry an unfaithful prostitute is transposed to gold rush California in the 1850s. It tells of beautiful young prostitute, Angel, hardened by her life, who is saved by the unconditional love of a Christ-like young farmer called Michael Hosea, who marries her. She is rather a reluctant bride, however, and keeps running away, first because she is bored, and then because she feels shame.

Rivers puts flesh on the bones of the biblical story

In the biblical story, it is a bit difficult to identify with or feel compassion for Hosea’s unfaithful wife, but Rivers puts flesh on her bones.

In 'Redeeming Love' you can empathise with Angel, knowing the horrific life she has had, trafficked as an 8 year and sold for sex. You can understand why she might hate and distrust men and keep running away, even from the man who loves her and wants to help her.

Whereas I really enjoyed the book, I had mixed feelings about the film.

With a desire to reach both Christian audiences and a wider market, the film falls a bit between two stools. This is epitomised by the poster, which shows two backlit young lovers in the sugary pose of a contemporary Hallmark movie. This gives no indication of the historical context or grittiness of the story.

The film itself pulls no punches in portraying the harshness, brutality and madness of the gold rush era; the muddy streets and drunken miners who bid huge sums to have a night with the beautiful Angel.

Although we do see Michael (English actor Tom Lewis) praying for a wife in the church, more could have been made of the tension between who Angel is and God’s call to Michael to marry her. It is clear that Michael falls in love with Angel (Abigail Cowen) on first sight, but it is just her beauty or something more? Angel herself is not impressed with his proposal: “I have had five marriage proposals this week,” she says.

The power of unconditional love

The film is very faithful to the book, helped by having Rivers herself as one of the main script writers. Whereas the whore houses and saloons with their violence and drinking are portrayed in all their grittiness, life on the farm comes

across as just that little bit too idyllic. This is underlined by the rosy, golden colour palate of the cinematography of the rural scenes. Life on the farm could be harsh too, however, which was why so many youth left the family farm to seek their fortunes in the big cities.

Rivers is a great story teller, however, and 'Redeeming Love' does bring alive in an evocative way the Hosea story. It shows the power of unconditional love, but also how the journey to redemption is a hard one for all concerned and there is much pain and sacrifice along the way.

Used with permission CCR UK.

Many years ago, I first read this adaption of Psalm 23 and it has become a faithful go-to in many situations. I share it with you in the hope it might become sustainable energy for your journey with the Lord.
Editor.

Psalm 23 for busy people

The Lord is my pace setter, I shall not rush.
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals,
He provides me with images of stillness,
which restore my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency through
Calmness of mind,
And His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things
To accomplish each day,
I will not fret for His presence is here,
His timelessness, His all importance, will
keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in
the midst of my activity,
by anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity.
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be
The fruits of my hours,
For I shall walk, in the pace of my Lord
And dwell in His house forever.
Amen.



HAVE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS BEEN LEFT SITTING ON THE BACK BURNER? DISCOVER HOW TO AWAKEN THE ANOINTING IN YOUR LIFE THIS CHRISTMAS!

BY KENNETH COPELAND MINISTRIES



Have your spiritual gifts been left sitting on the back burner? Discover how to awaken the anointing in your life this Christmas! Sometimes a lack of understanding can keep Christians from operating in their gifts and enjoying the fullness of a relationship with God and His Anointing. What about you? Have you fully received and operated in your spiritual gifts? If you aren't sure, here's where to start.

1. **Know that spiritual gifts are still in operation**

In the New Testament we have record of the Lord's sending His angel to lead and guide: The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and told him to go to Gaza (Acts 8:26). Every avenue of receiving guidance is subject to God's Word. If any guidance comes to you that is not in line with the Word, disregard it.

2. **Do some research**

First Corinthians 12:1 says, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant" (NKJV).

That means God wants us to develop an understanding! "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord" (verses 4-5). Spend some time reading through this entire chapter. Within, you will find spiritual gifts listed, including the following:

- Word of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Healing
- Faith
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

3. **Determine to fulfill God's will for you**

Seek the Lord and pray, and God will see to it that you know His guidance. If you're accustomed to yielding to your spirit; walking in the spirit; walking and yielding to the fruits of kindness, joy and love; then when the Spirit of God rises upon you for the delivery of a spiritual gift, it'll just be that much easier for you to yield to Him.

Spiritual gifts are not automatic. They have to be sought and desired. **To have the power of God manifested in your life is a quest.** That's the reason the Scripture says to "covet spiritual gifts." Desire. That doesn't mean just that you wish you had them. That means that you desire them and you lay hold of them.

This Christmas, seek to find out what your spiritual gifts are and how to operate in them the way God intended. Don't let timidity, fear or criticism stop you!

This is a word of the Lord as delivered by Kenneth Copeland for you:

"Be strong! Be anointed! The Anointing of God is released on you now. Every spiritual gift, every spiritual endowment of the Spirit of God, every spiritual gift you need to carry out what God has called you to do is imparted into you now. Receive it. Take it. You will not fail! You will not come short! You will not want. You'll not be in lack. You'll not be diminished. You will finish your course. It will be unto you exactly like God said it would."

As we approach the new year, make it your goal to begin operating in your spiritual gifts. It will take you to a new level in your walk with God, strengthen your faith, and impact the Kingdom!

And remember, none of these gifts will work without love—so focus on your love walk and receive your spiritual gifts this Christmas!





Happy & Holy Christmas

A BUNCH OF FLOWERS OR A GLAMOROUS DRESS OR A GIFT OF GOLD ISN'T THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS, BUT A DAY FULL OF UNFORGETTABLE LOVE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS IS THE TRUE DEFINITION OF CHRISTMAS. IT'S OUR WISH THAT YOU MIGHT FIND THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS THIS SEASON.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATORS OF CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUPS

May the Holy Spirit, who overshadowed Mother Mary and guided St Joseph in dreams, fill your hearts, homes and prayer groups with all His Spiritual gifts this Christmas and bring about a revival and renewal in your prayer groups and parishes. Wishing you all a Spirit filled Christmas.

Dominic

O Sweet Child of Bethlehem, who became the Son of God through the work of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, fill your homes this Christmas with joy, your heart with love, your life with the Holy Spirit's Gifts and your Prayer Group with kindness to welcome, serve and love everyone. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year 2023.

Gundwahn

My prayer for you this Christmas is that you will become more and more aware of Jesus living within you. May your intimacy with him grow stronger as he fills you with his peace and brings forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit for you to share. A Happy and Holy Christmas.

Lengce

I pray that this Christmas Season and New Year be filled with God's love, joy and peace for all your prayer group members and their families. May we all be open to receive every good gift God has for us and to use them in wisdom, for His Glory. God bless you all.

Christine

In these turbulent and uncertain times, may the child Jesus, who is our peace, reign in your hearts this Christmas and bestow His peace and joy to you and your families and may His love fill you and surround you always.

Miriam

May the peace of the Lord unite us and our families bringing love, and joy to our hearts. May everything that was lost be restored in our relationships so that we can shine and reflect Gods love. Have a blessed Christmas.

Vera

May the light of Christ flowing from his presence this Christmas reveal to you all the mighty gifts that he has given you to glorify his name.

Brah

OPENING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS

COMPILED BY LENYCE WILLASON



They are, in fact, the best gifts.

We're commanded in scripture, "Seek ye earnestly the best gifts". Whatever else you hope to open Christmas morning, try and imagine a few of the "best gifts" waiting for you as well. They're already "wrapped" and ready to bless you and those around you.

More than a passing thought in the bustle of the holiday season, Jesus Christ is the gift we celebrate at Christmas, made flesh by our God, who sent Him to live among us. This does not come to us in shiny gift-wrap, in the anticipation of being surprised by what is inside and receiving something new. It is a gift we know yet are called constantly to rediscover. Let us receive the Lord in our hearts anew in this holy season and throughout the coming year.

Indeed, Christmas is a time of joy and light-heartedness. Our gift giving and receiving is a way to express that. At the same time, let us leave some time to consider the eternal gift that God gave us in the birth of His Son. It is the best one we will ever receive.

May God bless you and your loved ones at this sacred time and let us continue to pray for one another throughout 2023.

The idea of 'gift' is central to our celebration of Christmas, both in our Church and society in general.

We give and receive gifts, big and small. Our children make their gift lists, we have "secret Santa" and other kinds of gift exchanges with colleagues, and we might go all out to find that perfect gift for our significant other. Truly, the pursuit of gifts at Christmas occupies a lot of our time and energy. Our intentions in this are noble. On the other hand, we might do well to slow down and consider the deeper meaning of gift in our lives. What better time to do that than at Christmas?

In our Catholic faith we also celebrate seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. How valuable these are to us as we walk the path God has laid for us, amid the noise and struggle and busyness of our lives.

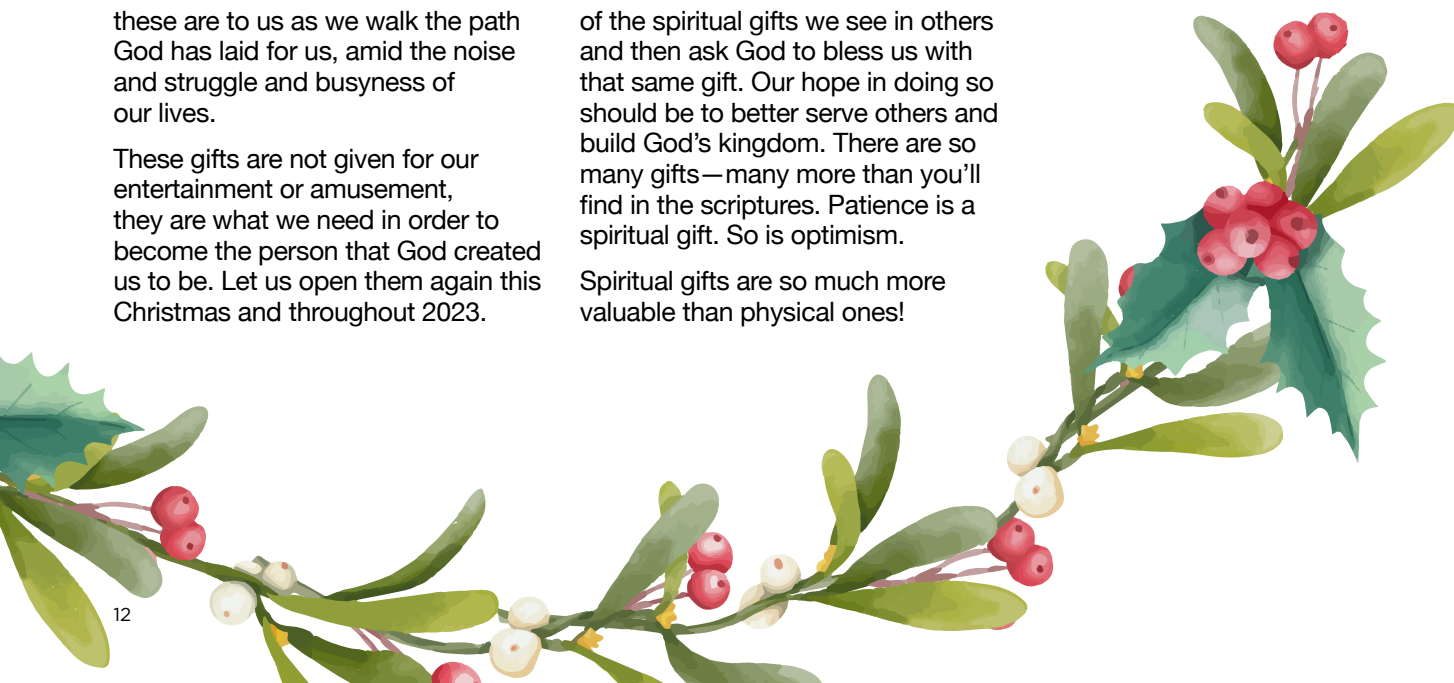
These gifts are not given for our entertainment or amusement, they are what we need in order to become the person that God created us to be. Let us open them again this Christmas and throughout 2023.

We will need them as we navigate a year in a world threatened with conflicts and wars. These gifts call us to listen, to reflect and to question; they call us to prayer and to dialogue; they call us to accompaniment and forgiveness of those in our lives; they call us to encounter the Lord in those we don't know, who may be different from us in some way.

The Apostle Paul taught the Corinthians about some of the many different spiritual gifts available, such as faith or healing (see 1 Corinthians 12:5–11). And then he instructed them to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

It might be hard to wrap your brain around the idea that coveting can be a good thing, but in this case it can be. We're instructed to look at some of the spiritual gifts we see in others and then ask God to bless us with that same gift. Our hope in doing so should be to better serve others and build God's kingdom. There are so many gifts—many more than you'll find in the scriptures. Patience is a spiritual gift. So is optimism.

Spiritual gifts are so much more valuable than physical ones!



NORTHERN REGION RENEWAL DAY

A cold, wet, windy Saturday in September had no effect on those who attended the Northern Region Renewal Day, Epping, because in St Peter's Church the warm wind of the Holy Spirit was blowing.

We were led in a warm up action song by the youngest members of St Peter's Prayer Group. They were excellent in their praise of God.

A big 'thank you' to Kyle Correya and his dad, Hildegard and their wonderful group for exceptional music to praise God with.

The talk for the day focused on fanning into flame the gift of the Holy Spirit, namely the word of knowledge followed by an activation where everyone prayed for one another listening for the Word of Knowledge.

Several healings came from this activation and many people were released to realise they can be an instrument of the Holy Spirit to serve their brothers and sisters.

The hospitality of St Peter's extended to the provision of a wonderful lunch, after which we shared Eucharist together celebrated by Fr Cassius Correya, SVD assisted by an old friend, Fr Jude Ezeme.



*The meaning
of life is to
find your gift.
The purpose
of life is to
give it away.*

—
WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

NEW COORDINATOR ANNOUNCED

Giovanna de Mattia has been elected to the position of Coordinator. Giovanna is currently the leader of the prayer group at Pascoe Vale.

Please pray for her as she takes up this new position.

FACING FEAR OF THE FUTURE

BY KRISTINA COOPER



As energy prices increase and tension rises throughout the nation, let's not forget to keep our eyes on Christ our rock, says Kristina Cooper.

I awoke to the impassioned tones of Martin Lewis, the money expert, speaking on Radio 4 where he predicted that energy costs were set to rise over 300% over the coming year unless the government stepped in and did something.

His panic and fear were evident. Martin Lewis is clearly a nice man. His advice has helped millions over the last decade to save money and juggle their finances.

My brother is a keen follower. When he heard that I had signed up for a fixed rate with my energy suppliers last winter that was £600 a year more than last year, he counselled me to withdraw this. He told me that Martin Lewis was advising people to wait to and see before doing anything.

I did as I was told, only to see energy predictions soaring to eye watering amounts over the last six months.

'Martin Lewis is not God'

Martin Lewis has done his best. He is clever, but he is not God. He can't save us from what lies ahead. One of the down sides of our secular society is that we tend to put our trust in experts, whether they are politicians or scientists or doctors, thinking that they will save us from suffering and death.

Sometimes their actions can mitigate things, but even this is a grace of God, as it is God himself who is the first cause of everything. They are simply God's instruments, which is

why we are told in the Bible to pray for our rulers.

As autumn approaches, the mood of the country is going to get more fearful, more angry and more hysterical, fanned by the media's love of drama and bad news.

Many people's way of life is certainly going to be threatened by the soaring inflation and its terrifying consequences. Everyone seems to be threatening strike action - even the nurses.

There is talk of people taking to the streets, reminding me of a prophetic picture that a friend of mine shared that one day there would be tanks on the streets in Britain.

Living with injustice and powerlessness

In such a charged climate, it is important we keep our eyes on Christ our rock, and turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Yet we can be in denial about the extent to which our primal emotions govern our behaviour rather than our faith. Walking home the other day, I found myself becoming more and more annoyed at the driver of a red sports car who, despite being in a traffic jam, was constantly revving his engine as if he was at the start of a Grand Prix.

I got even more cross when I realised this juvenile behaviour was attracting a host of admiring young males taking photos of the car. I found myself literally screaming at the young men to stop this. They looked puzzled, as I was myself at my outburst.

Let's remember God's promises in His Word

When I reflected later, I realised it wasn't my emotions that were out of place, but my behaviour. Anger is often triggered by a combination of injustice and powerlessness. My shouting achieved nothing and it stopped me from turning to prayer.

In that moment, I had forgotten about God. So this autumn when fear and anger no doubt will be swirling around us, let's not be dragged in, but remember what God says in his Word.

Jesus told us: *"Do not worry, saying 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matthew 6:31-33).

So let's try to be people of peace and prayer, trusting in God whatever the pundits on Radio 4 say.

*Used with permission of CCR UK.
Picture: Flickr*

A PRAYER TO ENDS ALL CONFLICTS

The mighty Lord of Angel Armies is on our side.

The God of Jacob fights for us!

Everyone look!

Come and see the breathtaking wonders of our God.

For he brings both ruin and revival.

He's the one who makes conflicts end

throughout the earth, breaking and burning every weapon of war.

TESTIMONIES TO GOD'S HEALING LOVE

A heartfelt 'Thank you' to everyone who prayed for Robert. I asked for prayers from several friends from different prayer groups, our dear Lord has answered our prayers with a miraculous healing.

This is Robert's journey.

On the 14th May 2022, Robert, a 41 year old, married man who had recently become a father of a little girl (then 5 weeks old) was rushed to RMH with a bleed on the brain (AVM arteriovenous malformation). The doctors took a piece of skull out and had a tube draining from his brain to drain fluid. He was in a coma for several weeks.

Doctors said he would likely have brain damage, and to consider removing life support because he wasn't responding, and to consider end of life or 24 hour permanent care if he did wake up.

The family refused the removal of breathing apparatus. They all had faith that it was God who was going to make that final call not the doctors. After a few weeks Robert woke up, but he couldn't move or speak.

As days went by he started moving his fingers on his right hand, and as each day progressed he could move parts of his body, started with putting his thumb up to say "I can hear you." He then was able to move his toe on command.

A few more days down the track he began moving his lips and spoke softly. His family were by his side constantly taking shifts to sit with him and being an encouragement to him that God would help him through this.

He still had fluid in his lungs, and this made it difficult for him to even breathe and to walk.

Robert was in intensive care for 2 and a half months. He then went to Rehabilitation for 2 months. He is now at home; he is walking and speaking as normal and getting stronger every day, attending outpatients care as well.

If all continues to go as well as it has, Doctors said in a couple of months he could start driving and resume his career gradually. My husband saw Robert recently, and the first thing he said was "Thank you for all your prayers I know quite a few people were praying for me." I am crying with joy just writing this because I know how great our God is, and he is always listening to our prayers.

May our faith grow more and more each day. We love you, Lord. Thank you for all the miracles because I know this was one of them.

Blessings to all.

MM

Healing Testimony - Renewal Day Epping

We gathered at St. Peter's Epping for our Northern Region Renewal Day. The day was cold and windy, but inside the church candles were glowing at the foot of statues, stained glass was radiating light and people were warmed by smiles of recognition.

Praise and Worship truly primed us for the theme of the day - 'Words of Knowledge'. Our speaker encouraged us to open our minds and hearts to receive, claim and share 'Words of Knowledge'. Soon participation was church-wide.

Personally, I was slow to respond. I sat out the first altar call for anxiety but went forward for the second call for depression.

By late morning I became aware of stronger than usual tension in my left arm. I am left-handed in all I do, including writing. However, I have made myself write with my right hand because I could not put pen to paper sometimes.

'Words of Knowledge' can be received in non-verbal ways. So I accepted that my tension may have been activated by the Holy Spirit.

Late in the day there was a 'word of knowledge' for hurt that occurred

around the time of birth. This 'word' convicted me so strongly. Shortly after my arm was moving freely. I so wanted to claim that 'word' that I went forward and testified.

I have been praying for some time for healing in my arm. I am still not completely free. I believe that the Holy Spirit spoke strongly to me that day a word of encouragement to persevere with my prayer for healing in my arm. I did receive relief that day and I believe more is to come.

Thank you, Father, that you are using my small concern for a bigger purpose that you will reveal to me in your time.

Gerald Mullen

Praise the Lord!!

My name is Jennifer Harbour and I am in the St Peter's Prayer Group. Over the past few months, I could feel a revival in our prayer group and many new members started joining us. A brand new speaker to our prayer group was Dominic and I could feel the Holy Spirit flowing through him to us!

It was at the 'Super Charged with the Holy' workshop by Joe and Julie and Niall that I felt the Spirit beautifully!! On the 9th September, when two lay people laid their hands over me and prayed, I could feel the hand on my right hand and my right leg! I am a stroke patient and had not felt anything on the right side for eight years!! This was a first and I thank God.

On the 10th of September, at the end of that day, Dominic prayed over my right leg, feeling my leg cold as it usually was, as he prayed he said that he felt the fire burning up and down my leg just as I felt a moving sensation up and down my leg!

Praise and thank you God!! Dominic asked a young person called Michael from the Servants of Jesus group to help and as prayed I got deliverance!! It was a beautiful day and was charged with the Holy Spirit!!

MARK YOUR DIARIES

UPCOMING EVENTS

RENEWAL DAY

An opportunity for fellowship with others and growth through teachings. This year Renewal Days will be held in each region. This will allow more people to attend who currently have difficulty in travelling.

Saturday 19 November 2022

Venue to be advised

2023 dates: 21 January,
18 March, 16 September,
18 November.

HEALING MASS

4 December 2022

3pm Praise and Worship,
4pm Mass followed by Prayers
for Healing.

Our Lady Help of Christians
Church, 49 Nicholson Street,
East Brunswick.
Celebrant is Fr Wahid Riad.

SAVE THE DATE - 5-7 JULY 2023

**National Leaders Conference
to be held in Brisbane.**

Excellent teaching, ministry,
powerful praise. There is a
personal invitation extended
to every prayer group.

HEALING MASSES

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Each Sunday | 7pm, followed by Ministry. Holy Family, Doveton. |
| First Saturday | 2.30pm–5pm Adoration, followed by Healing Mass. St Peter's, 38 Guinane Ave, Hoppers Crossing. |
| First Sunday | 2.30pm. St Peter Chanel, Deer Park. 3pm Praise & Worship, 3.30pm Mass. St Christopher's Parish, 5 Doon Ave, Glen Waverley. <i>Suspended until further notice</i> 5.30pm Praise, Worship, Adoration 6pm Mass, followed by Prayer Ministry. St Marks, Fawkner. |
| First Monday | 7pm Praise, 7.30pm Mass. St Joseph's, Springvale. |
| First Friday | 8pm. St Anthony's Glenhuntly, Cnr Neerim Rd & Grange Rd, Glenhuntly. <i>Suspended until further notice</i> 7pm – 8pm Rosary, Reconciliation, Mass. St Peter's Church, 13 Davisson St, Epping. Choir – St Peter's Youth. |
| Third Wednesday | 7.30pm. St Mary's, Castlemaine. |
| Third Thursday | 7.30pm Praise & Worship, 8pm Mass. St Thomas the Apostle, 251 Diamond Creek Rd, Greensborough North. |
| Third Friday | 7pm Mass, Adoration & Devotions to the Holy Cross. 707 Holy Cross Parish, Caulfield South. <i>Suspended until further notice</i> |
| Third Sunday | 5.30pm. St Francis Xavier, Frankston. 5.30pm Praise, 6pm Mass. Good Samaritan Chapel, 1-29 Southern Cross Drive, Roxburgh Park. |
| Fourth Tuesday | 10am Healing Service. St Joseph's, Chelsea. 12.30pm Charismatic Mass. St Benedict's Catholic Church, Burwood: Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community. 2022 dates - 6 November and 4 December. |