

GOODNEWS

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

MAY 2022

WHY CELEBRATE PENTECOST?

BY LENYCE WILLASON

If you were asked for your impression upon reading the events that describe Pentecost in Acts 2 you probably would answer "power". Why? Because on nearly every page of the Acts of the Apostles we read of the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in people's lives. The disciples were a discouraged group of people, assembled together in prayer, when the sound of a great wind surrounded them, and tongues of fire appeared above their heads.

The word "power" comes from the Latin *potere*, which means "to be able". But people, and things with 'power' are much more than able – they are able to exert a lot of force. The power the disciples received on that first Pentecost turned the world upside down – it caused them "to be able" to explode with a force of witness to the Gospel that was too huge to ignore. When a fearful Peter can stand to preach the truth about Jesus, and many heard the Gospel in their own language, then you understand that something of great power was at work. Pentecost was where it began.

That same power is available to

each of us today, and we experience the presence of the Holy Spirit with us, enabling us to exercise his gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. The words that press in on me when reading Acts 2 is they were all assembled together. It is a description of our prayer groups. We gather together to praise and worship God under the power of the Holy Spirit, and, as St Paul tells us in Romans 1:12 – there is something spiritually powerful that is released when we gather together.

We do not know what period of time elapsed between Jesus' Ascension and Pentecost. The Holy Spirit arrived and his arrival was a shock to the disciples despite being told by Jesus that he would send the Advocate. And we see that his mission was to empower them to fulfill Christ's command. What is that command? To make disciples of all nations, and to teach them all things! What a tall order that is!

Only the Holy Spirit could help them. Only the Holy Spirit could give them the power and ability to obey, and it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can proclaim

Jesus is Lord! When we celebrate Pentecost, we need to realise the magnificent responsibility we have been given in the Great Commission.

Pentecost gives us a wonderful opportunity to look with fresh eyes at the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, and experience the hope that He delights to give. There is hope – Holy Spirit hope. Hope for our families, our church, our prayer groups, hope for our world because of the Holy Spirit freely given by God to each of us enabling us to speak of that hope to everyone we meet.

Let us not take the Holy Spirit for granted. Instead let us yearn for his power and humility in the face of His majesty and holiness. Let us read again the Book of Acts, thanking Jesus for his Holy Spirit and the joy, hope and encouragement he brings to us.



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The deadline for the next Good News
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ACROSS MY DESK



BY LENYCE WILLASON

I read recently about a team who were in Kolkata, India, to film a DVD *The Impossible Dream*, a film about the work of charities amongst the poorest communities. On packing up to leave, the team asked the director how they could pray for them. This is his response: "Please pray that life doesn't become too comfortable. When we are persecuted and harassed for our faith, we pray more, we read our Bibles more, we want fellowship more, we leave the petty differences behind and seek God more".

I found these very challenging words to read. If we all cast our minds back to the exciting beginning of our journey with the Lord, we would not have dreamed of coming to a prayer group without our Bibles, and the fellowship and prayer we enjoyed together gave us a real sense of belonging. What is it we have lost when fear of catching something keeps us in our homes and isolated? Is an encounter with our living God not to be desired as perhaps it once was?

Our relatively secure country, Australia, is becoming increasingly anti-Christian, in fact, religious discrimination is becoming almost a daily experience for people of faith. Is daily reading of the Bible and engaging in prayer or religious services only an action we turn to when life becomes difficult? How sad to think this might be true, and how blessed are we that we have not had to face persecution for our faith.

Reading is a great relaxation for me – and there are some authors that I absolutely "love" over others. When you "fall in love" with the author you just want to voraciously read everything they write!

The lock down period of the Pandemic provided me with the time to search out everything written by two particular authors and catch up on the titles I had missed. It is no different with the Bible. If you love the author then you want to read what he has to say. We "fall in love" through prayer. Very simply put, prayer is speaking to God and as we develop a habit of prayer, thanking God for who he is and the love he has for us, we get to know him. What we then discover is that God is keener for us to know him than we may have thought. Perhaps we in the western countries need to "fall in love" again with Jesus so that we will devour God's Word; decide to read something each day; and allow it to change us from within and talk to him about it in prayer.

The Bible is literally "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). In other words, it is God's very words to us. He speaks loudly through his word; there are so many beautiful promises he makes to us if we would listen to him. It is for us to choose the life that God's Word gives to us. When we come together to praise him, he is there in our very midst!

I must admit that I would not be able to pray for persecution. Life for the poor seems to hold enough challenges of its own. Pope Frances has keen insight when he tells us that the poor have much to teach us. Perhaps we can learn from this community not to get too comfortable when it comes to the things of God.

*Loving Father, do not let me become too comfortable that I lose sight of you and begin doing things in my own strength. Help me to fall in love once more with Jesus so that the fire of his love spurs me on to daily encounters with him.
Amen.*

THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT IS BLOWING



Wonderful praise and worship was experienced by those who attended the first two renewal days for 2022. A decision had been made to “go out” and to take the renewal days to the regions, and in this way enable those who find it difficult to get into the city to be able to attend.

WESTERN REGION

The first of these was in February held at Hoppers Crossing for the Western Region at the tail end of the latest Covid outbreak. Attendance was more than expected considering we were in the midst of a Covid threat again. A big thanks to those brave souls who had a yearning to



gather to praise God. They were blessed by a wonderful presence of God among them. A ‘coming’ home full of joy. Praise and worship was provided by the young adult group and they were amazing as they led the people into worship.

EASTERN REGION

The eastern region renewal day was held in March at St Scholastica’s Church, Bennettswood. Once again a wonderful attendance. The hunger in people’s hearts for gathering together was expressed and experienced - a great joy was very tangible. Not being able to gather had left a void in the heart.



This was greatly helped by amazing praise and worship led by the prayer group and Henry’s very gifted music to lead the singers. There was much rejoicing as reconnections were made and new ones begun. So why, you may ask, is it so long until the next one? Feedback from various leaders worried about the winter period bringing new outbreaks of Covid have caused the coordinators to listen and move the dates. During this time we will hold other events and trust in the absolute goodness of God to keep us all well and healthy. Even viruses must bow to the Lordship of Jesus!

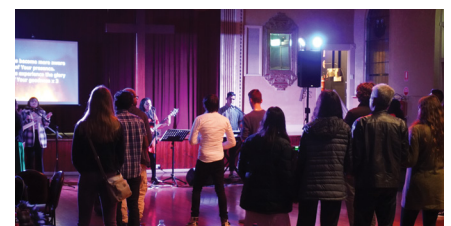
A FINE MEAL INDEED!

BY GUDRUN PHILIPS



Praise the Lord! Regeneration’s recent event *Be Filled* was an intimate and powerful night of God’s love. Young people gathered from Parishes across the South, North, East and West to participate in this collective outpouring of the Father’s heart. MC Angela facilitated the night with prayerful poise, beautifully inviting the Holy Spirit into the space and opening hearts. The evening began with dinner provided by the CCR prayer groups, which provided a meaningful opportunity for young people to mingle. The music was anointed with young musicians

Kyle Correya and Rhea D’Souza leading their teams in an epic time of Praise and Worship throughout the night. A fresh and fierce talk by Catholic creative Josh Angrisano inspired the crowd, speaking of the joy of finding God’s love in the daily struggles. This was followed with an impromptu rap which electrified the room and left those listening with chills. After some more heavenly Praise and Worship by Kyle and team, Gudrun Philips finished the evening with a personal testimony on being filled with the love of the Lord. Feeling refreshed and stirred by God’s love, many participants stayed behind for personal prayer, and it was soon clear that floodgates had been opened. God had pressed on hearts all evening and He was prompting people to seek healing and restoration in prayer. The Regeneration Team



are grateful to those behind the scenes for their tireless efforts supporting with audio and visuals, particularly Miraj and Navin, and the elders at CCR for their ongoing support and encouragement of this ministry. We ask for your continued prayers as they navigate the way forward, guided by the Spirit, to bring more young people to Christ.

Editors note: Regeneration is the young adult arm of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Pray for their growth and grace to reach other young adults. Congratulations to Rhea D’Souza and Lodson Almeida who announced their engagement that day. We pray for God’s blessings on their future.



WHERE IS GOD IN THIS DARKNESS?

BY DAN HEWITT



WRITTEN DURING THE 5TH WEEK OF
THE RUSSO - UKRAINE CONFLICT OF 2022

Introduction

So much suffering in the Ukraine! With every report we become even more incredulous that such as this could be actually happening in our world today. How can this happen in the 21st century? Many Christians ask, "Why isn't God doing something?"...while other people see it as proof that God doesn't exist! ...after all, bad things should only happen to bad people! ...right!?

What is really happening here?

People usually see things from a worldly perspective – that is, observing everything with our human senses and judging according to our human wisdom and logic. It seems obvious. Innocent civilians are being attacked by an 'Evil Empire', led by a 'dictatorial Megalomaniac'! Given the bias and deception of 'fake news', world politics and background economic goals, it's so easy to believe that we of the West are the good guys, and those 'Russkies' are the baddies!

Hebrews 11 encourages us to see with eyes of faith, rather than believing for our future based on what we experience in the 'tangible' world.

From a worldly perspective, the Ukraine situation is just a physical, military battle but seeing through eyes of faith tells us that the real enemy is Satan, not Putin!

Observe Eph 6: 12 - "For we are NOT fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against ...evil spirits in the heavenly places"

The real battlefield is in the hearts and minds of all people, rather than in the cities of Ukraine. ...and the war exists because Christians fail to live the Gospel, pagans refuse to accept the gospel and many others are victims of their spiritual ignorance. If all Christians embraced the Cross and lived the gospel, non-Christians would be encouraged to receive Christ and Satan would flee (Jam 4: 7) but, alas, the tables are turned and Christianity is on the run! When Satan is allowed to prosper, the kingdom of Darkness is strengthened and the consequence for the world is always disastrous!

Man's Rejection of God

Human beings have a history of rejecting God, starting with Adam, and such rejection always ends badly for mankind (...God's salvation notwithstanding!).

Around 600BC the Israelites rejected God, turned to sin and worshipped idols and foreign gods. God sent them prophets (Deut 28; Mic 4: 10) to warn them that they must repent or suffer His wrath! They didn't



repent and over the period 600 - 587BC, God allowed His people to be taken captive by the Babylonians. The people had long since lost sight of Yahweh and His ways; they were ignorant of the Law, and false prophets among them told them that God would come to their rescue (Jer 29: 8, 9). Having rejected God they could no longer see through eyes of faith, and they could only understand with human wisdom. They didn't know any better so they believed the false prophets who promised God's rescue.

God's true prophet, Jeremiah, prophesied that they were to accept captivity, intermarry and prosper in their new land, and pray for its inhabitants. They remained in Babylon for 70 years. (Jer 29: 4-7) Those who tried to escape the exile were struck down by famine, war, disease, etc.

Tower of Siloam

Again, at the time of Jesus, many people were ignorant of God, and even the priests and leaders had lost their way. The false assumption that "bad things should only happen to bad people" was presented to Jesus, as we see in Luke 13:

¹ At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. ² He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? ³ By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! ⁴ Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? ⁵ By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!" ⁶ And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, ⁷ he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' ⁸ He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; ⁹ it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"

In verses 1 – 5 above, Jesus clarifies that all are guilty in some way and that bad things can happen anywhere to anyone! We are to live repentant lives so that, no matter what happens, we are ready for our eternal reward. Verses 6 – 9 show that God does all He can without violating our free will. It's up to us to make the necessary changes in our lives.

The Day of the Lord

In Old Testament times, when the Chosen People (Israel) observed disaster befalling them, they referred to it as

"the day of the Lord". In fact, it was not just one day but a period of time for the Lord to chastise His people for their sin and disobedience. The Babylonian Exile mentioned earlier was just such a period. Numerous prophecies throughout history warned the Israelites to "repent, for the day of the Lord is near!" (Isa 13: 6; Joel 2: 1; Zeph 1:7; etc)

Today, some yearn for such a day of the Lord to come, that the Russians would be punished for their evil and the innocent Ukrainians be liberated. American bombers should be employed to kill the Russians and save the Ukrainians. Again, this is seeing through worldly eyes – as if we are righteous and holy, and the Russians are evil! But scripture tells us, "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him." (Amos 5: 18, 19). The man fleeing a lion then attacked by a bear, or the man refuting in his house only to be bitten inside by a snake – these refer to people believing they are safe in their innocence, only to find they suffer along with others. Do not call upon God to strike down anyone!... EVER!

Conclusions

The thought that we of the West are right, good and innocent, and that Russia should be destroyed for their violent aggression, is an ignorant, worldly view which fails to know God and His Word and fails to see that we are all guilty of sin. Our entire world needs the cleansing, healing hand of God and, sadly, that can be a painful process. Such pain may touch everyone, even those who think they don't deserve to suffer.

A better attitude to the Ukrainian conflict would include:

- Look through eyes of faith. Understand what is happening around you as scripture teaches us, not as the world would guide us. Though God may seem absent from the worldly viewpoint, He is very much present, permitting what He will to cleanse our world and lead us back to Him (see Jer 29: 10).
- Personal reflection and repentance – Where do I need to change? "Lord, reveal to me my hidden faults" (Ps 19: 12-14).
- Pray for all people – innocents and aggressors.
- If God is cleansing His world, be ready to humbly accept all He asks you to endure (Covid, job loss, restrictions, etc).
- Lead others to Jesus – after all, this is God's primary goal in cleansing His world. Be Christ to others by your word and example and be ready to share your faith with any who show interest in your faith (1 Pet 3: 15).

Dan Hewitt is the director of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Western Australia.



NEW RELEASE CD - THE ADORATION PROJECT

The Adoration Project is a beautifully crafted resource for either private or group meditation or adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

Features scripture reading followed by song by "Lifted" supported by Fr Rob Galea and Sir Augie.

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WHY I AM INVOLVED IN CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

BY FRANKA WATERS

I love Catholic Charismatic Renewal! I love Jesus! Jesus is alive within Catholic Charismatic Renewal. His Spirit moves amongst its members and within its members - which of course is how it ought to be, as Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a movement of the Holy Spirit. He is its origin and He is its life.

This is what attracted me to Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), and this is what continues to attract me, and I am sure ever will. I am involved because Jesus calls me to be involved with Him and His interests — to share a personal and intimate relationship with Him, and to know Him as God who is personally and intimately involved with me and my interests.

He gently assures and reassures me of His inexhaustible love, His acceptance, His mercy and forgiveness and draws me to a peaceful confidence in my Heavenly Father's care. He invites me to live my life in the power of His Spirit, not in self-dependence, but in full dependence upon Him, the Source of life.

All this, CCR has allowed me to experience, and to grow through nurturing life in the Spirit in fellowship with loving brothers and sisters who likewise respond to Jesus call. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

In responding to God's love, we recognise His complete commitment to us in Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer. We are drawn irresistibly to commit ourselves to God and

His will through continual surrender, knowing that "all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Unmerited Grace and Unconditional Love

CCR provides a safe, loving and faith-filled environment in prayer groups, communities and fellowships where returning 'prodigals' can feel accepted and free to respond to God's love. Those who begin to respond and yet feel estranged are not condemned, but are encouraged and supported through prayer and faith to pursue the necessary means of reconciliation, trusting in God's goodness.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Each member knows that he or she is the returning 'prodigal' who receives God's unmerited grace and unconditional love.

Such understanding stimulates members to share with others their experience of God's unmerited grace and unconditional love in Jesus. All have real faith-building and life giving testimonies of God's personal love.

All become evangelists in their own situation of life. Like the

Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), we want to share our experience of Jesus with others. We rejoice with them when they can say, "We no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42).

Forgiveness and Restoration

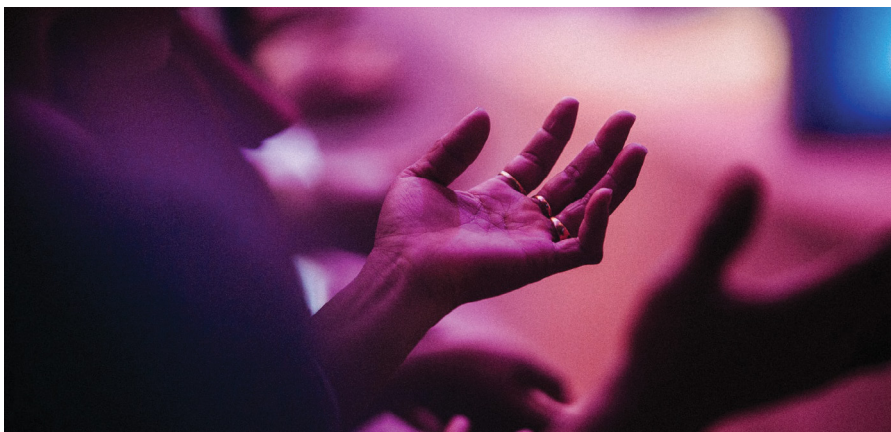
I am involved in CCR because I am the returning 'prodigal' who, out of my severe need, came back to my Father's house through the door of CCR only to find that He was eagerly seeking me, and longing to restore me and give me life in all its fullness. This is life in his Spirit through His Only Begotten Son, Jesus. He gives me the power to unashamedly praise and worship Him. He gives me the power of his charismatic gifts for the edification of faith — my own and that of my brothers and sisters. He empowers me through the cross to be compassionate and to empathise with others in their need. He gives me the power to put to death the acts of the sinful nature.

So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is contrary to the sinful nature (Galatians 5:16).

His grace and empowering produce in my life the fruit of His Spirit that is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in proportion to my dependence on Him.

Life in the Spirit

Life in the Spirit brings a deepening awareness that "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life, that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Such awareness incites desire to be right with God, to experience His Presence in His Sacraments, in His Word, and in the members of His Body. CCR nurtures this life in the Spirit causing us to deeply love the Church, for Jesus



“is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). The Sacraments of the Church become for us essential means of grace and thus strong appreciation of our priests and bishops inspires a special love and devotion in prayer for them.

CCR was birthed through prayer, and prayer is its particular charism. Every CCR prayer meeting spontaneously includes charismatic prayer that manifests variously in praise and worship, the gift of prayer tongues, anointed silence, intercession and prayer ministry with laying on of hands for healing of spirit, soul and body.

“The Spirit intercedes with the saints in accordance with God’s will” (Romans 8:27). St Paul exhorted the Thessalonian Church to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

CCR has helped me to realise through faith, the continual presence of the Holy Spirit within and to be attuned to Jesus who said, “Surely I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Desire for Jesus Presence draws me to the Holy Eucharist, and I hunger for “the living bread that came down

from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever” (John 6:51).

I am also drawn to Eucharistic Adoration, whereupon, fixing my eyes on Jesus “the author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), I am enveloped in His loving, healing Presence.

Many CCR meetings include times of exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and sometimes before or after special ‘Healing’ Masses. CCR has intensified my desire for the Scriptures, and Jesus opens my mind to understand His Word with a little more insight, each time I seek Him there.

Every meeting will have Scripture readings as prompted by the Holy Spirit, which speaks to the corporate gathering and simultaneously to many individuals in their personal situations. We can agree with Simon Peter when he said to Jesus, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Unity in the Spirit

Another wonderful reason why I am involved in CCR is that here I find brothers and sisters who love Jesus

passionately. They are committed to Him and to each other, and to everyone He places in their lives.

Luke writes of the new Church born at Pentecost: “The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32).

I have found this to be true of Catholic Charismatic Renewal wherever it may be. Life in the Spirit maintains unity of the Spirit. Life in the Spirit overcomes the barriers of ecclesial and ecumenical differences and seeks unity in diversity. “Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27). I feel a real bond and connection with those who experience life in God’s Spirit. They are my family in God. I love this family of God. I love Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I love Jesus. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

Are you seeking this life? Seek Jesus. Then come visit one of the CCR prayer meetings, events or the CCR Centre. You are always welcome.

LISTENING EARS

BY FR BEN HO, SSS



One of my favourite quotes is “You were born with two ears and one mouth for a reason”. It originated around 55AD from Epictetus, the Greek Sage and stoic Philosopher. In case you don’t remember what is on the other side of the comma...” so that we can listen twice as much as we speak”. There are many other variations to this floating out there.

I sat through different presenters at a Conference recently. At each Q & A section, I could not help but noticing the same few people kept on giving answers and provided commentary at every opportunity, as if answering questions was going out of fashion. They had to be heard and they knew better than anyone else. In our world today, we are encouraged to speak up and speak out or we will be left behind.

But all too often we react too quickly, we have our opinion and jump to conclusion without first observing and listening to all sides of the story. It is only natural to want to correct things and actions according to our own needs and desires. But do we have to do it instantly without hearing and seeing all the options? I’m sure we’ve all the saying, “better to remain silent if we don’t have anything good to say.”

Jesus, in the Gospels is offering us some food for thought, to encourage us to look within ourselves. What is being stirred within us? What is blocking us from being authentic, more accepting, and less pushy? We humans react differently; some analyse things too harshly in our heads; some get too emotional in our hearts; others act rashly with

our gut – our three primal instincts. Perhaps it is a good time to sit with ourselves to weigh up all the options before we respond. When we consider all things, then we will be full; Jesus says, “from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks”.

The effects of the pandemic, and now the war, affects all of us in different ways. It is a challenging time for the whole world and what lies ahead. We will all have different ways of both responding to and making sense of it. Let us be mindful of each other.

May we all hold each other in our thoughts and prayers, and may we listen to what the Spirit is saying to us before we speak.

HOLY SPIRIT TESTIMONY

BY GUDRUN PHILIPS



When asked to give a testimony about the Holy Spirit's impact on my life, it was difficult to know what to speak about. While we all know our Lord miraculously heals and empowers, I believed my personal encounter was too ordinary to speak about publicly.

While praying through this blockage, the Holy Spirit dug in; revealing that actually a miracle has taken place in my life, particularly over the past few years of my Christian walk, and that is the miracle of being renewed by a transformed mind.

We know that in Romans it says that we all ought to be transformed in this way, and when we consider how deeply ingrained and destructive some of our beliefs, habits, and wounds are, it is incredible that the Holy Spirit can seep into those places where the world's best therapists and psychologists cannot enter. We know where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, and thanks be to God He is now freeing me from these poisonous lies I once clung to as I slowly learn to take baby steps in the Spirit.

I cannot say exactly how the Holy Spirit works. All I know is that a few years ago I was anxious, insecure, people-pleasing, critical, shame-filled, and miserable. And now, for the most part, these things have been obliterated in God's consuming fire of love.

By His indescribable mercy, He called me back to faith about 10 years ago. Like many, raised in Catholic mediocrity and lured by Western hedonism, I soon went the way of the world, and after years of sin and following new age ideas, Jesus knocked on my door at 28, whispering, "Remember me?" I accepted the Gospel anew, quit the obvious mortal sins, and came back to Church. But instead of that powerful born-again experience others seemed to enjoy; my reversion was mostly only intellectual. It was like I invited Jesus in, but stopped Him and said 'only so far, and no further'. I had great zeal but it was based largely on

fear and duty, rather than love and fire. In truth, I struggled to accept myself as forgiven and loved by God, which manifested in scrupulosity, despair and lack of Christian joy. Hearing others talk about the tenderness of God's love and their intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, I sensed something was missing in my faith. I admired their passion and badly wanted it but had no clue on how to receive it.

Something shifted after an encounter with the Holy Spirit at an Alpha retreat in 2019. The door of my heart, now ajar, permitted the light to trickle in. For about a week after, I received a welcome grace of fervent prayer and longing, and from then on my prayer life gently matured. The Holy Spirit began to reveal that it was these lies I believed about myself that were obstacles to enjoying a full relationship with God.

The first lie that the Holy Spirit wanted to extinguish was that I was unlovable and unforgivable.

It is a basic Christian truth to know that God loves and forgives us. But how stifled the soul is, when unable to perceive this great reality! I understood little of God's nature, and not knowing who God was, I didn't realise He lived in me, and loathing myself, I struggled to see Christ in other people.

The Lord wanted to take the scales off my eyes. Once at a Pentecost activity, our group each pulled out of a hat a fruit and a gift of the Holy Spirit, which was prayerfully believed to be areas in which our Lord wanted us to grow. I selected 'understanding' and love of neighbour'. It was uncomfortable to consider; given that us Christians ought to be beacons of God's love, but then came the lightbulb moment. In God's goodness, He had revealed a major blind spot, and with fresh eyes I could now pray specifically into this blockage.

Ephesians talks about us needing the power to grasp the love of God. When I knew I had to ask for that grace to understand His love, the Holy Spirit responded generously.

Many affirmations followed. God placed numerous devout Christians in my path who disciplined me into clarity and truth. The 2019 Charis retreat in New Zealand was my first real exposure to charismatic circles, and amidst the consoling Words of Knowledge received, as well as practising the spiritual gifts, I dared to feel a new hope. Perhaps there was room in God's heart for me after all, and I could truly be His beloved along with all His little ones who love and profess His holy name.

The second lie "I'm not good enough and I can't".

This crippling lie, for me, meant never trying, being constantly intimidated by others, believing others are holier, more capable and more worthy of receiving all the spiritual gifts. Truly thinking that God prefers to use others, but surely not me.

Now the Holy Spirit has made it clear is that indeed it is true; I on my own cannot do anything, but God surely can. We can do all things in Christ who strengthens us.

Over the past few seasons, the Holy Spirit gave me the resolve to say YES to everything that came up in ministry. I treated every invitation and request as though it were coming from the Lord's own mouth. Whether I felt capable, willing, or neither, I resigned to just do it, and let God take care of it from there, since it's all His business anyway.

I'm not sure if that's always the way to discern, but at that time, it felt necessary to get out and stop hiding. The Lord responded by opening a floodgate of opportunities to serve Him in new ways. My timidity was immediately confronted when suddenly asked to speak publicly, lead groups, emerge from the shadows and be thrust into the spotlight. This constant practice of being vulnerable made me swing from being absolutely terrified of the judgements of others, to "give it a go and get out of the way". Every single opportunity challenged me immensely, but when I said

"I can't", the Lord said "I'm here, and I can".

I've always had this notion that I can't speak spontaneously. Forgetful, frazzled and anxious, I generally over prepare when asked to speak, and script everything. As different events have come and gone, the Holy Spirit is growing my confidence and assures me that He will arrive at the right time and be my Song. When the supernatural shows up, the inner dialogue is silenced. I know now that God DOES want to use me. The same as He wants to use you.

To be discouraged, thinking we are somehow useless for the Kingdom, is a lie straight from the enemy. We all see the world dying around us; a spiritual wasteland. Now I remind myself "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few". God will take anyone who is willing to cooperate with Him to save souls.

Spirit-filled Christians have taught me to be intentional about praying for daily opportunities to witness, love and evangelise. Glory be to God, I now have eyes to see the many daily ways God is working, using every little moment to create some incredibly obvious openings to bring His name to others.

The third lie - Man is to be feared more than God.

One of the greatest prisons I built around myself was being enslaved by other's opinions. The Holy Spirit has showed me that deep down, this is the fear of rejection. But God never rejects us and I now know I am safe in His love, even if the world thinks otherwise.

Sigmund Freud is quoted as saying "How bold one gets, when one is sure of being loved!" This is indeed true. I now draw great strength from God's promise that He "did not give us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound mind".

The Holy Spirit is lifting great boulders from me and it's delightfully liberating. As my identity in Christ solidifies, the Holy Spirit builds my courage, not just in ministry, but also in the workplace, in relationships, and the world. The Lord is urging me to stand confident in His Word and be comfortable in my skin, His skin, to be unashamed

and authentic even in the face of looking foolish, or being despised, humiliated, or scorned.

A question posed to me recently touched my heart. What would serving the Lord look like if we had no fear? How free would we be to love people if we had no fear?

When I think about what that really means, the repercussions are huge. Not thinking about ourselves, which means losing the fear of what a particular consequence may mean for us, allows us to just get on with the business of loving people and letting God do the rest.

Of course, in our fallen nature, fear still taunts us sometimes. The body feels anxiety even if our intellect can reasonably assert otherwise - but as Father Rob Galea preaches "Do it scared" - we can do it anyway! This feels like the real victory. While there are still times fear sits stubbornly in my stomach, the Holy Spirit gives me the power to say "But I'm still going to choose you Lord!"

The final lie - God alone cannot fulfil.

The Holy Spirit has absolutely taught me that The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Lockdowns in Victoria were difficult for many of us, but regardless, it was another momentous turning point in my Christian walk. In the silence, God drew close, and this beautiful, overflow of joy filled my heart. It was like a long, lovely holiday with the Lord. Blessed by countless online ministries and prayer groups, I was introduced to new worlds of faith, new ways of praying, praising, and adoring our beautiful King.

Nearing 40 and being single and childless can occasionally elicit pity from outsiders - with well-meaning people assuming this state of life must come with loneliness and sadness. Perhaps, some years ago, this might have been true. But in recent years, I have felt the intimacy of our great Comforter the Holy Spirit, the deep love of the Father and the friendship of the son, saying "I will always be with you until the end of the age", and I'm filled with more joy now than ever. It's been a blessing to learn more about the Charismatic Renewal because I've learnt to seek a more

personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Whilst still a traditional Catholic, it's been refreshing to discover prayer that is centred around praise and thanksgiving. This spontaneous dynamic prayer, so alive in faith and power, has truly inspired and awakened me.

So, while it began with illumination, the healing of the mind and heart continues daily. As He reveals it, He redeems it. The constant, active resistance of these lies forms part of the daily warfare, but the difference is that now, the old wounds and beliefs rarely find their way into reality. And what a blessed release it is to publicly declare these battles, as we know that when darkness is placed into the light, it loses all its power.

Hopefully my story helps you, dear reader, to let the Holy Spirit touch all those secret places within that want to rob you of life. The lies, once exposed, will have nowhere to run, once they are placed boldly at His throne.

This great renewal of the mind is the beautiful miracle that continues to bless me, and I thank the Holy Spirit, in all His power and abundance, for turning the swamp in my heart into rivers of living water.

IS ANYONE SAD?

LET THE NAME
OF JESUS ENTER
THEIR HEART.

THE LIGHT
THAT RADIATES

FROM THAT
LUMINOUS NAME

WILL SCATTER
EVERY CLOUD

AND RESTORE
TRANQUILITY.

THERE IS NOTHING
SO EFFICACIOUS
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OF "JESUS"

ST BERNARD
OF CLAIRVAUX

TO OBEY OR NOT TO OBEY: THAT IS A QUESTION

BY JOHN DUIKER



In a recent article on a Christian response to Covid, and specifically to vaccination requirements, it was posited that we must look to the Word of God for guidance. Using an interpretation of the Word, it also stated that we must be obedient to all authorities over us to the extent that through our leaders, religious and non religious alike, "God himself is saying get vaccinated". Is this really the case?

There are well meaning people out there that use scripture to justify acceptance of everything that the government hands down to us in terms of the response to the virus. If that is true however; if that is absolute truth, then it is a principle that should be able to be applied in every situation. If that is the case, then should we accept the governments rulings on other issues such as abortion, on same sex marriage, on gender fluidity, on euthanasia etc.? But that is not the case as we know. Why? Because the government legislation is wrong. Its party politics is wrong. It's world view of society is wrong. And so we rally against such things and rightly so. It is wrong to blindly accept State initiated legislation. To say then in the case of this pandemic that we must accept on face value what the government mandates is clearly wrong. Why would you trust governments that rule in favor of killing the unborn at anytime anyway? Those that deal in the culture of death must repent and be removed from office.

Another thing to consider: can you imagine for a second what the world would be like if someone like William Wilberforce had not rallied against the government legislation of the day with regard to slavery across the British empire? Slavery was legal at the time and encouraged by the government yet Wilberforce, following his deep seated Christian convictions, rallied against the law of the day which led to its overturning after many years of persisting. Even Jesus stood up against the religious

leaders of the day, reinterpreting their statements on the law, calling them a brood of vipers and overturning tables in the temple while driving out the perpetrators with a whip. We are called to follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth and life, and be like him. There will come a time when we will need to overturn metaphorical tables and drive out any perpetrators.

In relation to the so called pandemic measures, and using scripture to justify acceptance of it, you would do that if the majority of what the government was proposing was true.

But I have heard, read and listened to many and varying responses to the Covid pandemic and generally speaking, what is left is confusion, division, disunity and fear. This seems to be not only my experience but the experience of many. There doesn't seem to be much room for truth. Take for example the use of lockdowns, legislation and police powers to manage and enforce such measures.

Over the past few years many people were protesting against these measures and many were saying that they don't work, yet the government continued to assure us this was for our own safety. What has resulted from it however is nothing but pain, suffering, isolation, mental health deterioration, failed business, divided churches, divided families and in the end, increased infection rates.

A recently published article by the John Hopkins Institute concluded that 'lockdowns have had little to no public health effects, they have imposed enormous economic and social costs where they have been adopted'. Where is the concern for our safety? These measures just did not work, yet there were many saying in accordance with scripture we must do what the government says. And just in case you think that you follow the science on these things, try and

Google these questions: does Ivermectin work? Google: no! Can men get pregnant? Google: yes! The truth in these matters is being twisted and manipulated, often to fit a narrative that is not in line with the gospel.

So my point is this: when the state does what God has authorised it to do, the believer should obey it, when it does what it is not authorised to do, the believer need not obey it. So the authority the state possesses is a limited authority, not an overarching and absolute authority that everyone must follow, which by the way, is in keeping with a dictatorship.

So, in this world of misinformation, lies and deception, we need to ensure that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We need to be immersed in his Word and we need authentic Christian and small faith communities.

We need to tune more into this than we do to social and main stream media. Let the Lord be your focus. Call on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit each and every day who 'will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you' (John 14:26).

Many years ago, when church pipe organs were pumped manually, a little boy who did the pumping was heard to say, 'We played well today'.

The organist overheard him and asked, 'What do you mean "we"? I played well today'.

The following Sunday the organist sat down to play, pressed the keys, but nothing happened.

As the organist sat there nonplussed, a voice from behind the curtains said, 'Is it "we" or "I"?'

A WORD... FROM MIRIAM

BY MIRIAM MARKIS



We encounter Christ in the silence of our hearts. John 14:23 says 'If a man has any love for me, he will be true to my word; and we will come to him and make our abode with him.' John, the Beloved Disciple, you will recall, rested his head on the chest of Jesus, listening to his heartbeat so that his own heart and will would be in tune with the Lord's heart and will, which is only and always the will of the Father.

To know God is to meet Him in the silence. Elijah, escaped into the desert, after threats from Jezebel and hid in the cave. He who had experienced the power of God suddenly gave in to fear and fled. That might happen to each of us.

We experience the healing power of God and his works in our life but at the same time we then give in to fear at the smallest sign of a challenge or difficulty in life. So, even though God had worked such a mighty miracle before the eyes of the people and before the false prophets of Baal, Elijah still crumbled at the first

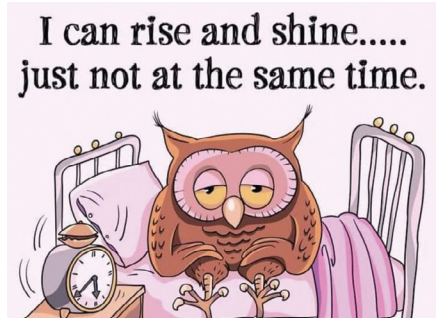
sign of a threat from Jezebel.

What makes us give in so easily to the lies of the enemy? After all, the enemy has no power over us unless we allow him to have that power. Remember the Apostle Peter, in the 1 Peter 5:8 says "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." How easily do we take our eyes off God and grapple with the things of this world.

So too Elijah, took his eyes of the Lord and fled to a lonely place. But the Lord sought him in that place and as He passed by the entrance of the cave there was the strong wind, then the earthquake, then the fire. But the Lord was not in any one of those manifestations. Elijah encountered God in the still small voice of his heart. So too it is with us. If we look for God in the busyness, the noise, and the dramas then we may be disappointed. Although it certainly can be said that God is present

everywhere, we need to seek Him in the silence of our hearts. Mary Our Mother knew how to contemplate in the silence of her heart the silence of God at the foot of the Cross. Yet, because she was so immersed in God, she was able to bear all things with quiet fortitude and great hope despite what seemed to be the great catastrophe of the crucifixion.

Mary can help us to draw close to Her Son and the Father in the SILENCE of our hearts. Then we too, like Mary and the Beloved Disciple, can rest in the Father's love and overcome all obstacles.



HOLY SPIRIT OF FREEDOM COMMUNITY

In our service to the poor we assist the Holy Spirit of Freedom Community with the supply of food and goods that they use in their work on the streets with the homeless. For Easter we asked for your help to provide some treats. Your generosity was overwhelming. Not only did we fill the 100 bags but in true miracle of the loaves and fishes we received an excess in some food to keep the supply lines filled for a few weeks. A big 'thank you' for your kindness and thoughts for others. May we be able to continue to supply for their needs through your goodness. Please feel free to donate what you can, when you can. These bags were distributed on Good Friday, late afternoon.



MARK YOUR DIARIES

UPCOMING EVENTS

RENEWAL DAYS

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.

SEPTEMBER

Northern Region

Venue and date to be confirmed.

BE ELECTRIFIED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

9 and 10 September - Friday night and Saturday.

Learn about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their supernatural effect on our lives. Then practice using them. Excellent speakers from the Servants of Jesus in Sydney.

Cost is \$10 per person per day, refreshments provided. Register at the CCR Centre 03 9486 6544.

SAVE THE DATE - 11-13 AUGUST 2022

Surrender to the Fire of the Holy Spirit

National Leaders Conference, Sydney. It is time for the family to gather together again.

Excellent teaching, ministry, powerful praise. Opening Mass celebrated by Archbishop Julian Porteous. Personal invitation being 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 - 13 July, 31 July, 4 September, 2 October, 6 November, 4 December.