

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Easter 2010



Jesus Christ is risen in glory! Alleluiah! Alleluiah!

“All the ‘astounding things’ God has done find their fulfillment and more than fulfillment in this astounding thing: the resurrection of Christ. The Risen One entered the upper room ‘when the doors were locked’; today too he passes through locked doors. Through the locked doors of hearts, through the locked doors of cultures that deny his resurrection, through the locked doors of power that refuses to acknowledge him and that fight against him. Nothing can stop the Church repeating ‘We proclaim your death, O Lord, we proclaim your resurrection, until you come in glory’”

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFM, preacher to the papal household.

Citywide Prayer Meeting Scheduled

The WOCCR team is sponsoring a citywide prayer meeting open to anyone in the Portland Vancouver metro area. People from elsewhere are welcome too. The details are as follows:

When: 21 May, 2010

Where: St. Michael's Catholic Church

Location: In downtown Portland

Actual Address: 424 Southwest Mill Street, Portland, Oregon 97201

Time: 7.00-8.30pm

The music will be provided by *Thirsting*, the group that did the music for the fall day of renewal in Tualatin. There will be a teaching. There will also be an opportunity to receive prayer after the meeting from the prayer teams.

Come and join us in praise and worship, listening to the Lord, using the spiritual gifts, receiving prayer, and renewing and strengthening relationships in the Lord.

See you there!



Personal Prayer Focus: Part 2

Last newsletter we looked at Ralph Martin's text *Hungry for God* and some of his wisdom on prayer. We looked at the encounter with Jesus, Jesus showing us the Father, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This month we go on from there and look at some of the practical aspects of personal prayer, of hanging out with the Lord.

The Call to Personal Prayer

God calls to us in our hearts to go on with him, deeper into the relationship he has for us. This going-on requires prayer, which is simply conversation with God, consciously being with him and paying attention to him. The Holy Spirit makes us able to know God's presence.

"Prayer is...the communication, wordless or in words, of our deepest selves with God himself, which happens in and through the Spirit, who literally dwells within our bodies, in the center of our personalities." When God's Spirit is released and we yield to it, prayer becomes a life-giving possibility.

Finding a Time and a Place: The decision to pray needs to be made concrete as to place and time. If we don't place a priority on daily prayer and find a time and place for it, we are not likely to pray. Any uninterrupted block of time, long or short, in a place that allows for freedom to sit, stand, walk, sing, and pray out loud is well worth the effort it may take to schedule it.

How to Pray: Many methods of prayer exist. One very ancient method involves slowly reading a passage of Scripture, pausing to pray as one feels led, then returning to Scripture, alternating reading and prayer throughout the time allotted for prayer. Other ways of combining prayer and spiritual reading can be suggested. However, it is important not to allow spiritual reading to crowd out prayer.

Elements of Prayer: The Holy Spirit, who moves all prayer, produces in our prayer such elements as praise, silent adoration, conviction, intercession, revelation, and rejoicing. We should recognize these movements of the Spirit and welcome them; they reflect the richness of God's work in us.

Pray and Do Not Lose Heart

Prayer can be difficult. It is helpful, when trying to grow in prayer, to consider some common problems.

Dryness: "Dryness consists in not experiencing the presence of God or the desire to pray." God seems far away and prayer is boring or burdensome. Periods of dryness can actually be seasons of grace. God uses such times to purify our desire for him. If we love God only for how he makes us feel, then our feelings, not God, become the reason we pray.

Trials and Suffering: Scripture tells us that trials will come to us. God sometimes allows troubles in order to build solidity of character in us. Humble submission to God in our prayer helps us gather the spiritual good fruit hidden in times of suffering.

Regularity of Prayer Time: Missing prayer times often or letting prayer get moved out of our schedule puts a wall between us and God. However, the prayer time we have chosen may not be working because it is too short or too long. If too long, it becomes a burden, and if too short, it leaves too little room for the Holy Spirit's action. For a person just starting to pray, 10-15 minutes a day, including Scripture reading, may be right. As prayer matures, longer times may be possible.

Lack of Peace, Restlessness, Preoccupation:. These obstacles to prayer can be caused by unconfessed sin or unresolved relationship problems.

Busyness: Preoccupation with too many things can cause chaos in our life of prayer. Reducing the overload can produce the tranquility that nurtures prayer.

Distractions: Distractions can be handled several ways. They can be included in our prayer as prayer intentions. They can be eliminated by direct action, such as turning off our cell phone. They can be resisted, such as resisting daydreaming. God wants us to pray; therefore, we can expect from him all the grace and help we need.

Upcoming Life in the Spirit Seminar

The prayer group at St Thomas Aquinas parish in Camas, WA is putting on a Life in the Spirit Seminar starting on April 27. The seminar will run for seven weeks and meet on consecutive Tuesday evenings in the Fireside Room. The sessions will go from 7.00-8.30pm. People should gather by 6.50pm as the sessions will start promptly at 7.00pm. There will an opportunity for prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the fifth session. The Seminar will conclude on June 8.

For further information and to pre-register, call 360-834-2126 ext 263.

The address is St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 324 N.E. Oak Street, Camas, WA 98607-1499.

Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.

Pope John Paul II

Testimonies: Even Commercials can be used by Christ

James relates how the Lord challenged him through a commercial.

“Some time ago an automobile commercial caught my attention. In the scene a couple is driving leisurely along with the kids in the back. They are obviously headed somewhere for vacation. The wife turns to the husband and asks what he thinks about the qualities of their new SUV. "How about the back seat DVD player?" she asks. "It's great!" he exclaims. She proceeds to rattle through a long list of features and the husband responds to each item with another superlative. "And how about that Hemi-powered V8?" she asks. "Can't live without it!" he declares. "Then why don't you use that new GPS navigational system?!" she blurts out. "Because I'm NOT LOST!" he insists. Just then the picture changes and you see them towing a large boat across the desert and hear the husband say, "This is starting to look familiar!"

James observes, “I can relate to that. I know something about losing my way, being lost, giving the impression that I'm not, and trying to find my own way back on course. The fact is we all need direction, guidance, correction and help. And that comes from the Spirit, which is God in us; from scripture, which is the word of peace and life; and from the fellowship, which is our brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ.
