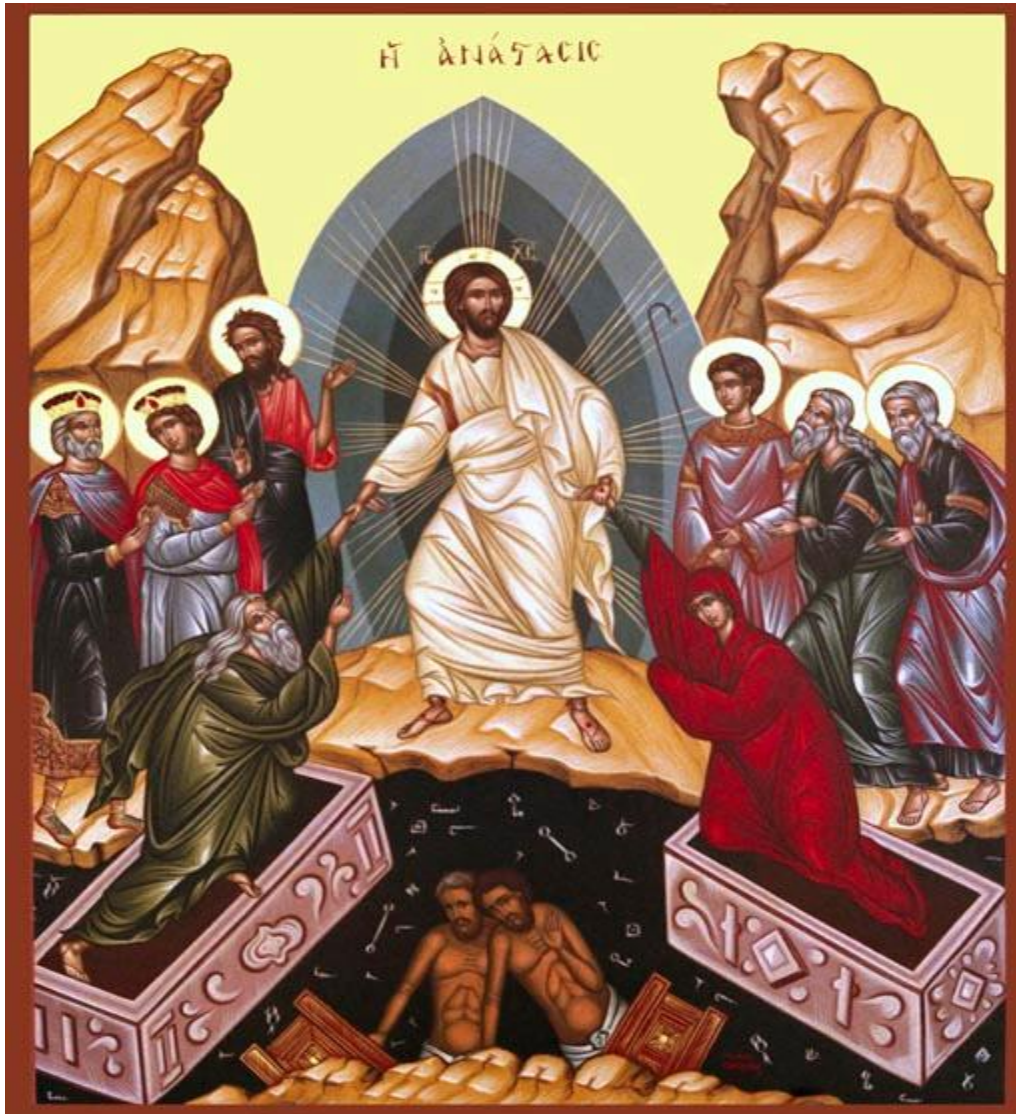


NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

EASTER 2011



Pope: Preach a Personal Relationship With Christ

Speaking recently to Philippino bishops, Pope Benedict encouraged them to preach a personal relationship with Christ.

"The path to rediscovering humanity's true destiny can only be found in the re-establishment of the priority of God in the heart and mind of every person," he affirmed.

Keeping God at the center of people's lives requires preaching that is "personal in focus," the Pope said, "so that each Catholic will grasp in his or her innermost depths the life-transforming fact that God exists, that he loves us, and that in Christ he answers the deepest questions of our lives."

"Your great task in evangelization is therefore to propose a personal relationship with Christ as key to complete fulfillment," the Pope told the prelates.

"In order to confront the questions of our times, the laity needs to hear the Gospel message in its fullness, to understand its implications for their personal lives and for society in general, and thus be constantly converted to the Lord," he added.

Area Wide Prayer Meeting in Vancouver



The meeting was held at St Joseph parish in Vancouver on Friday 18 March. About 75 people showed up with about a third being young adults. The rest were charismatics from all over SW Washington and Portland. There was even a couple from Stayton. The music and worship was provided by Thirsting, a local music group. They led praise and worship to begin the meeting. Fr. Cal Christiansen of the Archdiocese of Seattle then gave a talk on the Holy Spirit. One of his favorite one liners was "Jesus is the Word, the Holy Spirit is the verb". Many of the young adults seemed moved by his presentation and sought prayer at the end of the meeting. The lines of folks seeking prayer were long and the prayer teams were busy for over an hour. There are tentative plans for another prayer meeting in June and one in August. The organizers would like to eventually have a monthly meeting for folks in the area.

Love for Scripture is a Key for Evangelization

Pope Benedict recently offered some reflections on St Lawrence and his love for scripture. He held this up as a model for the new evangelization, saying that today the Church needs “well-prepared, zealous and courageous apostles, so that the light and beauty of the Gospel will prevail over the cultural orientations of ethical relativism and religious indifference, and transform various ways of thinking and of acting into a genuine Christian humanism”.

The Pope noted Lawrence’s description of the Word of God as “light for the intellect and fire for the will, so that man can know and love God”. He observed that St Lawrence encouraged everyone “to cultivate the life of prayer because through it we speak to God and God speaks to us”. He concluded his reflection by emphasizing that “all Lawrence's activity was inspired in **his great love for sacred Scripture**, which he knew in great part by heart, and by the conviction that **the listening and acceptance of the Word of God produces an interior transformation that leads us to holiness**”.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Scripture

The following is an excerpt from an article by Fr. Peter Hocken, a well known author and historian in the Catholic Charismatic renewal. It is part of a reflection on Pope Benedict’s recent document “Verbum Domini: The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church”. The full article can be found in *Good News* magazine at www.ccr.org.uk/archive/gn1103/g02.htm

This appreciation of Pope Benedict's new document is in fact a way of leading into some reflections on Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is a constant witness in the Renewal that with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit awakens in us a deep love for Sacred Scripture and that we start to hear the Lord regularly in a new way. This is in fact a major consequence of baptism in the Spirit. Of course the "Baptism" is also associated with the power of the Spirit and opening us up to receive the spiritual gifts or charisms listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. But the Spirit's opening up of the Word of God is truly foundational: as St Paul wrote: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God." (1 Cor. 2:12). The Holy Spirit enables us to live as the sheep that recognize the voice of the good shepherd: "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." (John 10:4).

This hearing of the Lord through the Holy Spirit accentuates the fundamental character of the gift of faith. For by the gift of faith, we are raised up to a new level, the heavenly level, so that we can share in God's perception and understanding of the Godhead, of Jesus his Son, of the Church and of the world. So the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "The grace of faith opens 'the eyes of your hearts' to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery." (CCC. 158).

As we know "faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Biblical faith has a past dimension, for we believe in what God has said to his people and what he has done for us in the past, particularly in and through his Son. Faith has a present dimension, for it accepts what God is saying to us today and to the Church in our day. Lastly, faith always has a future dimension, because by faith we accept and live by the promises God has given to us and to his people. The Bible as Word of God attests to these three dimensions. The liturgy of the Church as the foremost place for the Word of God to be proclaimed and received embodies these three dimensions. This is particularly true of the Eucharist.

"The Beatitudes: God's Plan for Happiness"



At the 2009 SCRC Convention Sr. Nancy Kellar gave an inspiring talk on the Beatitudes. The first part of her talk covering the first beatitude is available at the Youtube link below:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7vWoJppIEk&feature=related

ICCRS Leadership Conference at Steubenville

International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) held its first Leadership Training Course in North America at Franciscan University of Steubenville, last September. People came from Peru, Ghana, Zambia, the Philippines, and Australia, as well as the USA, immersing themselves in praise and worship and the teachings and history of the Church. ICCRS represents the Catholic charismatic renewal in all its manifestations—including prayer meetings, covenant communities, and service committees—to the Vatican, and serves as the Vatican's representative to the international renewal.

The one-week traveling course is designed to form leaders of the Catholic charismatic renewal in sound theology and best practices of ministry. Presentations focused on topics including the life of a leader, Catholic ecclesiology, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and elements of a prayer meeting from members of the ICCRS and Franciscan University theology professor Dr. Alan Schreck, author of *Your Life in the Holy Spirit*. Participants attended daily Mass with the University community, had daily Eucharistic adoration, and enjoyed frequent opportunities for praise and worship.

Steubenville Bishop Daniel Conlon challenged participants to take the fire of the Spirit with them to the wider Church and to the world. "So many members of the Church are dormant or asleep." Everyone in the Church is blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many just don't

know it or don't let them work. I like to think that as a member of the college of bishops, with the permission of the head, the pope, I can send you forth."

The next Steubenville Catholic Charismatic Conference will occur June 10-12, 2011. For more information, contact the Franciscan University Christian Outreach Office at (740) 283-6314 or 1-800-437-8368, or visit www.franciscanconferences.com.
