

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

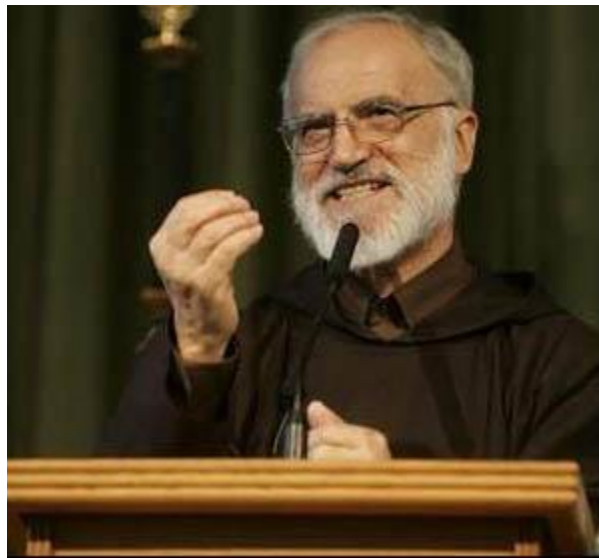
PENTECOST 2010



"Living in the Grace and Power of the Pentecost" Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa

This is a video clip of Fr Raniero Cantalamessa teaching on the grace and power of Pentecost. He is the preacher to the papal household and is baptized in the Spirit. He has authored many

books and speaks at many conferences. He is Italian and a Franciscan, and was a Church history teacher before he became involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.



The video clip can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFZ1N9gbSHY&feature=related

And as a bonus for us all, another clip entitled "Charismatic Renewal: An Authentic Expression of Catholic Faith" It can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-5tkirrXRQ&feature=related

Area Wide Prayer Meeting: St Michaels

On the evening of Friday, May 21st we celebrated our area wide prayer meeting at St Michael's Church in downtown Portland. Close to 100 people attended. Originally the meeting was to have occurred in the meeting room under the church, but due to a scheduling conflict, we used the church instead. St Michaels is a beautiful and picturesque church. We were blessed to be in the church on the eve of Pentecost, for which the vigil celebration began the next night.

The meeting was lead by Sheila Stewart. The music was provided by the music group Thirsting lead by Daniel Oberreuter. They play music for a prayer group in Richfield, WA, and Daniel is a leader of a young adults group at St Joseph's parish in Vancouver, WA. The meeting began with an extended time of praise and worship led by Thirsting. At the end of this Sheila shared some words from the lord she had received or had been given to her by others. Then we had a teaching by Fr Peter.

The teaching began by asking us to reflect on our lives and how we ended up where we are now. The answer is because we said yes to Christ! Since then we have been on a journey with the



St Michael the Archangel Church

Lord, one that is only sustained by faith. Then we looked at different levels of faith, based on our human experience of being a child, being an adolescent, and becoming an adult. When we are in the stage of the faith of a child, everything comes easily. Like children with an unquestioned trust, so we trust in the Lord, and his grace fills our lives. Then we move to the faith of an adolescent. This is when we begin to question, for example to ask why our prayers aren't answered the way we want, or why things don't always go so well for us. We find ourselves doubting, wondering, and unsure of all this. This is the key and decisive period where people may give up. When we get through this we come to the faith of an adult. We have endured! And we are here now. It is the Holy Spirit which has brought us here. We live by faith. We are conscious of our sins and limitations, yet we know that through it all Christ is with us.

We concluded with a reflection on all the "Here I am, Lord" statements in the scriptures. We looked at Hebrews 11, which is something of a hall of fame of those who were faithful and righteous. We saw how all those men and women endured in their faith, despite all their challenges. They could all have said no, but didn't. We then reflected on our own lives and God's call to each of us now. And we were invited to join with the heroes of our faith who had gone before us in the Spirit, and to respond ourselves in the Spirit, "Here I am Lord!"

The talk ended with this piece:

I invite you, once again, to say, "Yes!" "Yes" to living the life Christ called you to. "Yes," to the life of Christ. "Yes," to the power of the Holy Spirit. "Yes," to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. "Yes" to continuing the mission of Jesus in his Spirit. The way of faith in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit is the only way. Hold your faith in the Lord. Keep it there until you can declare confidently with St. Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who gave his life for me."



Some of the attendees at the prayer meeting.



Fr Peter giving his talk.

Personal Prayer Focus: Part 3

Last newsletter we looked at Ralph Martin's text *Hungry for God* and some of his wisdom on prayer. We looked at personal prayer and the challenges that accompany it. Now we conclude by looking at fellowship, answered prayer, and going on with God.

The Need for Others

Each Christian is called to...a flesh and blood commitment to a concrete group of people, a commitment expressed in frequent contact, common service, and multiple acts of love. Yet most congregations and parishes are far from being like this. A deep personal commitment to Christ is needed to awaken a desire for community. The Holy Spirit is moving to bring about renewed Christian community, through Bible study groups, prayer groups, and other gatherings of Christians.

Many Christians are growing in a new understanding of what the Body of Christ really is. Obstacles to Community. Some attitudes can block our involvement in Christian community. These are:

- expecting a group to be perfect, and its leaders and members to be without weaknesses.
- believing that we don't belong in community because "it's just not my style".
- awkwardness in relating to the other members, especially while praying together.
- feeling we simply don't need community.
- fearing the possible level of commitment involved.
- fearing the loss of our individuality.

The blessings of community are God's gifts, meant to bring us closer to him and to each other.

The Joy of Answered Prayer

Christ tells us that answered prayer is part of our inheritance as the Father's sons and daughters. Our prayer, especially our intercessory prayer, should be shaped by the teaching of Jesus.

Jesus used the figure of the vine and the branches to illustrate the oneness he desired with his disciples. He then linked this image to answered prayer.

There is no getting around it: effectiveness in intercessory prayer is directly related to our union with and conformity to the Person and teaching of Jesus. To ask in Jesus' name means more than adding the words "in the name of Jesus" to our prayers. It means to ask in union with the Lord's deepest purposes. Knowing these purposes requires union with Jesus, knowledge of him, and time spent with him. Asking out of union with him means asking for something that is in keeping with the purposes of God, what is in accordance with his will. We need to consider in prayer whether what we ask is according to his plan.

Much prayer is ineffective because we neglect to submit our own understanding of what's needed to God's direction.

Time after time in Scripture Jesus praises the faith of those who come to him for help. Their faith seems to release his power to bless and heal. They are not ashamed to let their need be known, in spite of the opposition of friends or bystanders. This kind of faith is direct, it is simple, it is hungry, and it is earnest. God wants his children to have faith and not be afraid to ask, frequently and persistently.

Going On with God

As we go on with God in prayer, the Holy Spirit brings us into communion with Christ's mind and heart. We begin to think as God thinks. Our emotions become those of Christ. Our love becomes more like God's and our wills are conformed to Christ's will. God confronts our self-will, and we are compelled to an ever-deeper decision to surrender. Our prayer becomes more the Spirit's prayer, who intercedes with groans too deep for speech. (Rom 8:26)

Common Fears.

Jesus' message is strong medicine. If it was toned down, however, the message would no longer be strong enough to deal with the sickness in our lives. Fear of giving our lives over to One who speaks this way is a common obstacle to prayer and to going on with God. Fear of not being worthy, or worth God's time, is another major obstacle. Satan tells us that we are damaged and incapable of loving God. The wonderful truth is that we are called and chosen for communion and intimacy with God. We need to stand against all contrary thoughts.

Prayer should never be a heavy load to carry, burdening the mind and depressing the heart. It should be a gift, refreshing our spirits and helping us hear the call of God. Prayerfully embracing the circumstances of our lives, whatever they may be, turns those circumstances into a door through which we enter into the intimacy with God our hearts hunger for. Enter through the door God provides, not the door you prefer. One leads to life; the other leads nowhere. Relate on God's terms, not your terms. Let him care for your life. He will.

The "real goal of evangelization" is that the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and makes Jesus present as Lord of our lives. This is what makes us "Christians" (Acts 11:26). He makes us other "christed" ones – doing the work of Jesus: proclaiming the Kingdom of God, by deed, word, and prayer.

Fr George Kosicki CSB
