

## **New Life in the Spirit Summer 2009**

### **A Vacation WITH the Lord, not FROM the Lord!**

Summer is here and with all the activities, events, and happenings that we have been looking forward to for several months. Summer is a great time as we can do a lot of outdoor activities, go on vacations, and generally just relax and take easier than during the rest of the year. At least that's the case for most of us.

But there is a catch with this wonderful blessing. During the rest of the year we usually live on a set schedule. And we may have daily personal prayer scheduled, perhaps scripture study, perhaps a faith sharing group, as well as our weekly prayer group. Well, with summer we tend to go on to a more relaxed schedule. And with that comes the danger that our prayer and spiritual lives also go on vacation.

AS we head into mid-summer, perhaps its time to do a quick check as to how we are doing spiritually during our summer. Have we been as faithful to our prayer, our relationship with God, as we perhaps should be, or have committed to be? Have we been as faithful in honoring the Lord's Day as we are asked to do by the Church? Have we read anything that is inspiring and encourages our faith yet?

If we are a little organized and disciplined we can also turn the relaxed schedule of our summers to our advantage and use it as a time of refreshment and strengthening spiritually rather than have it a time where we tread water or lose ground.

So, lets enjoy the blessing of our wonderful northwest summers, and lets keep the Lord as part of them.

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### **Message from the Western Oregon Catholic Charismatic Renewal (WOCCR) service team**

Dear Leaders of the Charismatic Renewal,

WOCCR has been talking about the real need to have more Life in the Spirit Seminars (LISS) in this Archdiocese every year. We know that there are many prayer groups too small to put one on by themselves. We know that there are times when two or three get together and pool talents and charisms. We also know that there are times when an LISS seems like a monumental task and yet that is the most important way to share and build the Charismatic Renewal in the World today. And isn't that what we are about. To share the Holy Spirit so that the Catholic Church will truly be Institutional and Charismatic in a way similar to the very beginning when 3000 people were converted in one afternoon just after the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and disciples with tongues of fire and power. In those first 300-400 years of the Church, charisms were expected and received by all who were baptized. It should be that way today. The Holy Spirit hasn't changed.

We are those disciples now and it is our job to spread the gospel by the way we live, by the ministries we are in and by inviting others to join us and share their gifts and charisms with us and the Church.

WOCCR's is putting together for your use, a resource package filled with The New Life in the Spirit Seminar Book, the Daily prayer book that goes with it as well as several trifold about the Charismatic Renewal. If you wish to get more of them, the ordering info is in the booklets. There is also a small list of Music ministers, if

you know of others, please email the WOCCR Service Team at [www.woccrs@gmail.com](mailto:www.woccrs@gmail.com). We can also help you if you need presenters. If you let us know about any LISSs you are planning, we will be happy to add them to the events list on your website at [www.archdpdx.org/ccr](http://www.archdpdx.org/ccr)

Please email WOCCR if you would like a resource envelope or any other help with your Seminars. The WOCCR's Service Team wants to help you and is willing to give you time and talent if you need it.

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"The charismatic movement is obviously God's answer to Pope John XXIII's prayer for a new Pentecost. Popes Paul VI and John Paul II both blessed it but said that it will fulfill its purpose only when, like the early liturgical movement, it ceases to have a separate identity of its own and is absorbed into the whole Church. In other words, every Catholic should be a charismatic, baptized in the Spirit, empowered like the apostles."

*Catholic apologist and philosopher Peter Kreeft (1988)*

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### **Scripture Studies for Prayer Groups**

In the previous newsletter I detailed several different formats that prayer meeting leaders could use to add a lot of variety to the basic prayer meeting format. One the options was to use something like a simple scripture study for folks. The first part of the meeting would follow the normal format with praise and worship, and spiritual gifts. Thereafter participants are divided into small groups with a facilitator and spend the rest of the meeting doing a basic scripture study. I mentioned I would attached a couple of examples for folks to have the general idea.

For those who are intimidated by this, there are plenty of basic materials available to help you do this. A word of caution on all this. There are a lot of scripture study materials that aren't Catholic, and while they are very helpful in many respects, they can also be very problematic when they take an approach that contradicts our faith. Having said that, there are more and more good, solid Catholic scripture study programs available.

Two newsletters ago I recommended the *Renewed Life* online media store as a great resource. Check out their scripture study section at [www.renewed-life.com/shop/index.cfm](http://www.renewed-life.com/shop/index.cfm) and click on the scripture study link in the left sidebar.

Another good resource for scripture study in *The Word Among Us* publishing group. If you go to their website at <http://bookstore.wau.org> you can click on the link on the left sidebar marked Bible Study Resources.

Another resource worth looking at is the publication God's Word Today. They can be accessed at [www.godswordtoday.com](http://www.godswordtoday.com)

Finally, for those of you who have been in the renewal for many years, you may remember the books written by Msgr. David Rosage. Many of them were scripture based prayer and reflection guides. They can also be easily adapted for use in a prayer meeting scripture study. Unfortunately they are almost all out of print, but if you can get hold of one, it could be helpful to you.

And now some examples of scripture studies we used. The first example is one on Evangelization, the second is on Intercession

## Evangelization

*Luke 10:1-9, 17, 20*

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.'

If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.

Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

*Mark 5:20*

So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.

*Mark 7:36 19*

Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

*Acts 4:13-14, 18-21*

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Evangelism literally means - "one who announces good news"

Discussion question starters:

- 1) People couldn't help but 'announce the good news' - the deeds that Jesus had done for them; could we, as evangelists, have the same attitude. What could we share with others? In what situation could we share it?
- 2) Peter and John are described as courageous, unschooled, and ordinary. So, you don't have to be learned or 'extraordinary'. Over what fears do you need to be courageous?

- 3) What kind of tone is present in Jesus's instruction to the seventy two disciples?
- 4) What does the evangelist look like from reading Luke's passage?
- 5) Do you have a 2-3 minute testimony you could share with others? What is it? If you don't, what would you have in it and why?

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### Intercession

#### *Acts 12:1-12*

About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them.

He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (It was the feast of Unleavened Bread.)

He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each.

He intended to bring him before the people after Passover.

Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison.

Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly." The chains fell from his wrists.

The angel said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me."

So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision.

They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city, which opened for them by itself. They emerged and made their way down an alley, and suddenly the angel left him.

Then Peter recovered his senses and said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting."

When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who is called Mark, where there were many people gathered in prayer.

Discussion question starters:

- 1) What strikes you from this story? How and why did God act? What do we learn from this? What part did the believing community play?
- 2) Can you think of any other stories of intercession in scripture? What happened in them and why?
- 3) Do you have any stories of intercession to share? What might you have prayed for that was answered? How did you pray?
- 4) What we can do to be more effective intercessors?

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As you can see, one can take a whole variety of scripture and use it as the basis for a brief scripture study for the

prayer group. Its helpful to have topics that connect to peoples' faith and their lived experience in the renewal. Some other scriptures you might want to think about could include:

1. Rom 1:18-32 - Humanity without God
2. Rom 12:1-21 - What love means
3. Gal 5:13-26 - Fruits of the flesh and the Spirit
4. IICor 5:14-6:2 - Reconciliation
5. Rom 6:1-14 - Buried with Christ
6. ICor 6:9-20 - Your body is not your own
7. ICor 11:23-31+Heb 10:25 - Worthy Communion
8. ITim 6:11-19+IICor 9:6-15- Generosity
9. Phil 2:1-18; 3:17-21 - Life in Christ

And there are many, many more that you could use.

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"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"

*(Lk. 11:9-13).*

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### **Testimonies: Baptized in the Holy Spirit at Notre Dame in 1967!**

"I no longer believe in Pentecost, I've seen it....I've been seeing all the things that happened at Pentecost--men speaking in new tongues, prophecy, healing, the gospel preached with conviction and power, and lives deeply changed by God. I've not only seen Pentecost in others, but I've seen it in myself....I suddenly saw, in a perfectly clear, lucid, and life-shattering way what the difference was that Christianity made: the difference was Christ. To be a Christian meant having a personal relationship with another person--Christ himself; and it meant living in union with other Christians with Christ; it meant introducing others to Christ....I was reassured beyond doubt of the power of the Holy Spirit. I suddenly found myself strongly drawn to the Scriptures. They seemed transparent to me. Prayer became a real joy--the sense of the presence and the love of God was so strong that I can remember sitting in the chapel for a half hour just laughing out of joy over the love of God....I have now begun to see more and more a vision of what life in the Spirit is like. It is truly a life of miracles, of waiting on God for his guidance and teaching, of relying on the power of the Spirit to radically change the lives of men, and of being filled over and over with the creative, life-giving love of the Spirit of God"

Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*, pp. 43-44.

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