

# NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Advent 2009

## Fall Prayer Group Leaders Day of Renewal



About 60 people showed up in total for our fall day of renewal at Church of the Resurrection in Tualatin. It turned out to be a good time together. Our praise and worship was led by a group of three young men who call their group *Thirsting*. They are associated with the prayer group in Richfield, WA, which must be a great blessing for those folks. It was inspirational and refreshing to sing, to worship the Lord, to pray in the Spirit, and to listen to the Lord during that time.

The morning session consisted of presentation by Fr Peter on the various formats that can be used for prayer meetings. It was an expansion of an article published previously in the newsletter. The additions were primarily due to the input and feedback received from prayer group leaders and attendees to the original article. The article has been further modified with the feedback from the

day of renewal. It was also a time for lots of discussion about prayer meetings with the folks who were present. There were a lot of very good questions and observations. We were able to learn a lot from each other and from the collected wisdom of the group.

After lunch together, the afternoon session was more of a listening session. The WOCCR team gave a brief presentation about assisting prayer groups with Life in the Spirit Seminars. Thereafter, we had people share about successes and needs for prayer groups. Part of this was to provide an opportunity for people to help each other and make those connections, as well as for the WOCCR team to get a better sense of how they can be of greater assistance to prayer groups.

At the end of the scheduled program there was an opportunity for those who wanted prayer to receive it. All in all, it was a successful and blessed time together.

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## **Important Bits and Pieces!**

### **Prayer Group Directory Updates**

As a result of the fall day of renewal we have been able to expand and update the list of prayer meetings on the website. We have added a number of extra groups to the Oregon listing. We have also set up another listing for prayer groups across the river in the Vancouver, WA and surrounding areas. For those in Portland, it is a quick trip across the river to some of these meetings. We are continuing to update and expand the lists.

If you know of, or are part of any prayer group not on the lists, please contact us and we will include you. It is very helpful to have as accurate and up to date a listing as possible. The WOCCR team and Archdiocesan Liaison get regular phone calls or emails from folks seeking prayer groups in their areas. If we know of your group, then we can send them there if it is close by to those inquiring. So help us to help you. You can find the lists at [www.archdpx.org/ccr/prayer\\_groups.html](http://www.archdpx.org/ccr/prayer_groups.html)

### **Website Expansion**

In addition to expanding the prayer group lists, we are planning to put the latest updated version of the prayer meeting formats article up on the website. It should be under a listing for prayer group resources. As of writing it is not yet up, but our resourceful and intrepid webmaster is working on it. We plan to attach other resources to that link to help prayer group leaders.

### **Please keep us informed!**

A few days ago, we found out that a parish in the Portland area had just completed a Life in the Spirit seminar (LISS). None of us knew about it. If we had, we could have publicized it, and sent folks over there to participate. We get quite a few inquiries from people looking for a LISS, and if we know where and when they are being held we can point folks in that direction. Once again, please keep us informed so that we can help you where we can.

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## *Love of Neighbor*

*Perhaps we do not know what love is: it would not surprise me a great deal to learn this, for love consists, not in the extent of our happiness, but in the firmness of our determination to try to please God in everything and to endeavor, in all possible ways, not to offend Him, and to pray Him ever to advance the honor and glory of His Son*

*StTeresa of Avila, Interior Castle*

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## **Jesus Speaking of the Holy Spirit**

When Jesus spoke about the Spirit, he indicated the Spirit would make a profound difference in the disciples' lives.

He said they would know they have the Holy Spirit within themselves: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you" (Jn. 14:16-17).

They would experience the Holy Spirit's power: "The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these" (Jn. 14:12). "I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now....and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Ac. 1:5,8)

The Holy Spirit would teach them: "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (Jn. 14:25).

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came on the disciples and made a visible change in their lives.

"Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Ac. 2:2-4).

From then on we see the Holy Spirit acting in the disciples lives in numerous ways.

They healed people and worked miracles, e.g., Peter healed a lame man in front of the Temple (Ac. 3:6-8); they experienced God's guidance, e.g., the Spirit directed Paul to go to Macedonia to preach the gospel (Ac. 16:9); they received courage to announce the gospel, e.g., Stephen preached to the council even in the face of death (Ac. 7).

They called God "Father" and prayed to him with confidence (Gal. 4:6); they understood Scripture, e.g., Philip explained a passage from Isaiah to the Ethiopian (Ac. 8:30-35); they were filled with love, joy, peace, patience, goodness and other fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

When we are baptized in the Spirit, we experience the Spirit doing things in us he has not done before. We will find a new confidence to call God "Father," know his personal love for us in a new way and experience him guiding us and speaking to us through Scripture.

We will have a new relationship with Jesus, a new ability to recognize the work of the devil, resist him more consistently (1 Cor. 12:10), fight temptation and sin, and a new power to love one another better.

We will also receive new gifts or charisms to build the kingdom of God. We will have a new zeal for the Lord and our work will have effects surpassing our efforts.

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### **God in the Supermarket**

A lot of folks who heard me tell the story of Chad in the Supermarket at the recent day of renewal have asked for the Youtube videoclip of it. Well, here it is.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv2MeTzuD94&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv2MeTzuD94&feature=player_embedded)

While the young man involved, Chad, is not Catholic, it is nonetheless a remarkable account of being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and of a boldness in acting on it. Chad was not thinking of healing anyone, he simply wanted doughnuts. Yet, when the Lord prompted him, he responded.

May we be as open to the Lord and as willing to act when He prompts us.

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### ***What is a Christian?***

*"A Christian is not just a good man; he is a believer. he is not just a man with a special philosophy or theory on life; he is a follower of Christ. The Christian message is not just a message of love; it is the message of God's love for man, a love which could only succeed through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from the dead"*

*Fr. Charles Harris, CSC, [Antioch Weekend Leaders' Manual](#).*

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### **Testimonies: Faithfulness in Prayer Helps Save a Marriage**

Doug and John have known each other for 25 years as friends and coworkers in business. They enjoyed working together and had a very good and successful working relationship. John was very committed to his family, especially his four children, active in his church, and a lay minister supporting Catholic families. One day John shared that there were problems in his marriage. Both he and his wife had come from difficult family backgrounds. John wasn't sure if the marriage would survive but was committed to doing whatever it took. They had decided to start marriage counseling. He wanted Doug to be aware and pray for them.

Doug was baptized in the Holy Spirit and a member of a prayer and faith sharing group of business people. One day John told Doug that he had decided to get a divorce. His children were still at home and he was committed to them, but he felt the marriage was over. Doug was crestfallen. After offering to pray for them, Doug walked to his car. As he opened the door, he heard God say to him, "This is why I brought you together."

Over the next few days, Doug prayed that God would bring new understanding that would create a breakthrough. He had frequent conversations with John. John had actually become convinced that the divorce was something that God wanted. In spite of this, Doug continued with his prayer. John would share how he felt God was showing him that divorce would be healthier for both he and his wife. For his part, John felt that he had tried to change to meet his wife's needs, but every time it turned out to be a dead end.

On the morning that John and his wife were to meet with the counselor one last time, Doug received a voicemail from John: "Thanks for being Christ to me. I'm more convinced than ever that getting a divorce is what I need to do. Your prayers have really helped." Doug's eyes filled with tears. "God, this is not being Christ! It's not what I'm asking for. I want you to open their eyes and get them back together. I'm asking that their marriage be restored!"

After their counseling session, Doug had to pick John up to go to a meeting. As he drove up, John jumped in the car and said, "Well, our marriage is back on track."

Doug asked, "What happened?"

John said, "I don't know. For the first time our eyes were opened and we saw some of the underlying problems in our marriage, and we both took ownership for our part and what we needed to do."

God had clearly poured out his grace and answered Doug's prayer for John and his wife. Since that time, the two of them have continued to make great strides in their relationship.

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