



# Reflections

Word of Life  
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center

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December 2013

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“Go into the world and tell the Good News to all creation.” Mark 16:15

## Another little village

By Kathy Wilcox

Over 2000 years ago, a young woman was filled with the Holy Spirit, the first human on earth to experience this profound intimacy with God. She visited the little village of Bethlehem, and while there gave birth. Mary's child was the Son of the living God.

Over 500 years ago, in the dark ages of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the people in a little village in Czechoslovakia were starving. Severe cold weather had destroyed the crops; there was very little food left. Then a beautiful lady appeared on the mountain and taught the villagers to invoke the Holy Spirit. They prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit; they manifested the Pentecostal gifts, including praying in tongues, healing, and prophecy. The bread they baked was miraculously multiplied and lasted all winter!

Years passed, with each generation passing on the teachings. The charisms were manifested daily, and God's presence was so powerful that the village did not need a jail or a hospital. When someone was sick, the whole village came together in prayer and the person was healed.

Early in the 1930s a prophecy foretold a severe testing that would come to the village and

empty it. In 1938, Nazi soldiers entered the town. Throughout the horrific execution not one person renounced their faith. Very few were still alive at the end of the day. A young woman, Anna Maria Schmidt, survived the massacre and suffered internment in both a Nazi and a Russian concentration camp. It was through Anna's testimony that we learned of this totally charismatic community. She did not name the town, and it cannot be located on a map. Since that day in 1938, it no longer exists.

The most amazing part of her story, however, is that when Anna Maria was a child, a bishop, Angelo Roncalli, visited the village often. She remembers sitting at his feet and listening to his teachings about Jesus. He was a witness to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic community. Years later, Angelo Roncalli became Pope John XXIII. When he called the Second Vatican Council, he asked the church to say a special prayer which began, “Renew Your wonders in this our day, as by a New Pentecost.” In 1967, the Catholic Pentecostal Renewal began in Pittsburgh, PA.

As I heard this account, my heart rejoiced. God is in charge!

He came to Mary, and through her gave us His Son, Who sends us His Spirit. Mary, our fully human mother and the first person filled with the Holy Spirit, is actively encouraging all to seek the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Mary visited the little village of Anna Maria, teaching them to invoke the Holy Spirit. Satan, using the Nazis, thought he wiped out the village. How wrong he was! God had already set up the next step, bringing Catholic Charismatic Renewal to us all through Pope John XXIII. According to Acts 2:17-18, in the last days God will pour out His Spirit on all people. How blessed we are to live in these times and see Him act! Praise God!!



Are any among  
you suffering?  
They should pray.

Are any cheerful?  
They should sing  
songs of praise.

James 5:13, NRSV

## Centering in

By Liz Geary

### • New diocesan liaison

Bishop Persico has announced that Fr. David Poulson has been appointed as the liaison to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for the Diocese of Erie effective November 29, 2013, for a term of five years. Many of you know Fr. Poulson as the former moderator for the Bread of Life Community and the current spiritual director for the Charismatic Renewal in the Erie Diocese. He was also the speaker for the 2013 Erie Charismatic Conference in September. Please help me in welcoming Fr. Poulson to this position. This announcement comes on the heels of the retirement of long-time liaison Micheal Vehec on October 1, 2013. I thank Mike for his 20 years of leadership and wish him well in his retirement.

### • Pledge appeal

With this December issue of *Reflections*, you received your opportunity to begin or continue your financial support of the Word of Life Renewal Center through the use of the annual appeal. For 2014, I would urge you to consider using this pledge drive as a method of planned giving to benefit the Center. Certainly

any and all financial donations are appreciated, but choosing to use the pledge form for planned giving allows the Center to better budget income and expenditures. The Center is tentatively budgeting \$20,000 from the annual appeal for the 2014 budget. I would ask you to please pray about planned giving to the Word of Life Renewal Center, and to ask the Lord to be in control of your personal finances as well as the finances of the Center.

Your generous response to this appeal is vitally important to the financial stability of the Center. Whatever you can give will be greatly appreciated. Thank you. I pray that God will richly bless you for all that you do for the ministry of the Word of Life Renewal Center.

### • Newsletter support

It's not too late to send in your support for the 2014 newsletter. You will find a request for the *Reflections* subscription support at the bottom of this page. Please return it with a contribution in support of this ministry.

### • Fall prayer brunch

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the final prayer brunch for 2013. A special "thank you" to all who helped out Friday with set-up and Saturday with clean up.

I am in your debt and know that the brunches would not be a success without your assistance. If anyone is interested in being part of the planning or set-up committees for the brunches, please contact the Center so that we can get you involved! Also, if anyone is called to be involved in prison ministry after hearing Dan Zuba's talk, please contact the Center to get contact information for the prison ministry leaders. The next prayer brunch is scheduled to be held in the spring. Hope to see you there!

### • "All things new"

I would like to thank everyone who contributed financially, brought a food donation for the snack table, and/or spent time in the adoration chapel praying for the intention of the retreat weekend for college student held November 1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> at St. Joseph/BOL Community Center. Your help and devotion to introducing young people to the charismatic renewal and to a greater relationship with their Lord and Savior is greatly appreciated. Bonnie Pratt, Campus Ministry Coordinator for Penn State Behrend, asked to extend her thanks to you as well.

#### Newsletter Support for 2014

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Send to Word of Life Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504-0397

## Who's your daddy?

By Amy Mosbacher

"She walks like you. She talks like you. She even acts like you. She's freakin' me out!" That was the reaction I got from a friend when she saw my daughter this summer. She wasn't the only one to say that, but I loved the way she expressed it. I was glad to hear such glowing reports about my girls' behavior and the good impression they make; it makes me think I'm on the right track.

It made me wonder if a similar conversation would ever take place in Heaven between God and His angels or saints. Would any of them ever look at me (or any of us) and then casually remark to the Father, "She talks like You. She acts like You," and God would be proud to call me His daughter? I'd hope so. I know some kids are embarrassed by their parents, but I want people to recognize my heavenly Father in me. I want Him to see what I do and smile, saying "That's my girl!" We're giving honor to our parents when others see in us our parents' mannerisms, traditions, and values. So when our actions reflect what God has taught us, then we're giving Him glory. In our prayer meetings we might say the right words, "I praise You, I glorify You, I thank you, Father." But do we glorify Him in our daily life? Actions count for more than words. In order to know God's mannerisms and how He acts, we need to spend time with

Him. That means prayer. More than attending Sunday Mass, we need to read the scriptures, pray, and listen. If we say we don't have time to pray, then already we're giving more importance to the world and letting the devil in.

The evil one loves it when we don't have time to spend with God or even think of Him. The more he can get us attached to our things, hobbies, food, our way of doing things, then the less room we have to be attached to God. If God's not in us then we start thinking the way the world thinks, a world permeated by the prince of darkness. Our culture of death prides itself on advocating abortion, euthanasia, and legalizing homosexual unions. Recently Pope Francis, in his June 5<sup>th</sup> general audience, commented on our "throwaway" society, marginalizing the poor and elderly as well as wasting resources, time, and talents. Do we want to buy in to the philosophy of rationalism and the "feel-good" society? Whom do we want to imitate, the Father of Light and Truth or the father of lies? Every little thing we do shows where our allegiance is. Decide for good. Decide for God.

So let's celebrate Our Father's love for us this Christmas season, when we remember how He sent His beloved Son to earth to redeem us. And let's spend some good prayer time with Him.

## Summary of 2013 Charismatic Conference

By Jack Heintzel

On September 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> we were treated to an excellent Charismatic Conference led by Fr. David Poulson. The conference was held at St. Mark Catholic Center and was sponsored by the Word of Life Renewal Center. The theme was *Rekindling the Flame: Building Up Ourselves and the Church*.

Fr. Poulson's teaching was aimed at yielding to and manifesting the charismatic gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us. This will be continually important as we look toward a New Pentecost and the New Evangelization the Catholic Church wants for us. We need a "spiritual jolt" as we head toward the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal begun in 1967 in Pittsburgh. Fr. Poulson led us in practical spiritual exercises drawn from the experiences of great Catholic saints. He encouraged us to increase our use of gifts such as prophecy and healing. We should live a life of continual praise, often using our prayer language. The teaching was strongly charismatic and Catholic. Here are some highlights:

- It is Catholic doctrine that all graces to us come through Mary. She is the mediatrix of all graces, through her intercession. She was the original "charismatic."

- Prophecy is a very important gift for building up the Church; we should pay more attention to this gift. Knowing God's Word thoroughly will help us prophesy. Prophetic revelations can prevent diminution of the North American Church.

*Cont. on page 5*

### Healing Mass

Our Lady of Peace  
2401 W. 38<sup>th</sup> St. 7:30PM  
Wednesday December 4

### Contemporary Mass

St. Joseph Church  
Bread of Life Community  
11:00AM every Sunday  
Children's Liturgy of the Word

### Perpetual Adoration

Bread of Life Chapel  
St. Joseph Community Center

### Chaplet of Mercy

Every day at 3:00pm in Bread of Life Chapel

### St. Joseph Novena

St. Joseph Church Bread of Life Community  
Every Wednesday 7:00PM

### Memorials

#### In memory of

Jacki Fontecchio

#### Requested by

Mike Vehec  
Carol Mando

Contributions have been made for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.  
Prayers will be offered for the comfort and support of the families.

**He who shall introduce into public affairs**

**the principles of primitive Christianity,**

**will revolutionize the world.**

**– Benjamin Franklin**

All Scripture quotes in this newsletter are from the New International Version unless noted otherwise

### PRAYER GROUPS



#### † Sunday

##### **Shalom in Jesus Prayer Group**

In home 6:30PM  
Rick Kenawell (814) 375-0328  
DuBois, PA  
Dec. 1,8,15,22,29

#### **Acts II Community**

St. Julia Church 6:30 PM  
West 8<sup>th</sup> & Powell Ave.  
Jack Heintzel 838-1325  
Dec. 1,8,15,22,29 (Call first)

#### † Monday:

##### **Disciples of the Holy Spirit**

St. Mary's Church Annex 6:00PM  
139 Church St., St. Marys, PA  
Mary Ellen Frank (814) 781-3904  
Dec. 2,9,16,23,30

#### **Leopold Center**

1017 West 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
Mary Lou Peterson 866-5678  
Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Rosary  
At 3:00PM (before Mass)  
Dec. 2,9,16,23,30  
(Except major holidays)

#### **River of Life PG**

2nd & 4th Monday evenings  
7:00PM  
St. Bridget Ch., Rm. 4, Meadville, PA  
Amy Mosbacher (814) 724-6104  
Dec. 9,23

#### † Tuesday:

##### **Son of God Prayer Group**

Holy Rosary Church  
2701 East Ave. 7:00PM  
Pat Montefiori 823-3968  
Dec. 3,10,17

#### **Chosen Prayer Group**

St. Theresa Church,  
Shinglehouse, PA 10AM - 12Noon  
Mary Kuhn (814) 697-7519  
Dec. 3,10,17

#### † Wednesday:

##### **St. Mark's Prayer Group**

St. Mark Church 7:00PM  
Religious Education Center  
Emporium, PA  
Dec. 4,11,18

#### † Thursday:

##### **St. Joseph Church Bread of Life Prayer Meeting**

7:00PM  
139 W. 24<sup>th</sup> St. – Upstairs in Center  
Regi Connolly (814) 866-0505  
Dec. 5,12,19,26 (Call first)

#### **St. Boniface PG**

7615 Wattsburg Rd. 7:00PM  
John Griebel 825-3588  
Dec. 5,12,19,26

#### **Wildfire Prayer Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month 7:00 PM  
5031 W. Ridge Rd..  
S.S.J. Living Center  
Sr. Gerry Olon 836-4165  
Dec. 12

#### † Friday:

##### **Light of the World Community**

In Home Prayer Meeting – Call for  
Location 7:30PM  
Bob Zimmer 868-5344  
Dec. 6,13,20,27

**Just be yourself**  
By Jack Heintzel

*"...the Spirit Himself intercedes for us..." Rom. 8:26*

Sometimes praying is hard for us. Maybe we don't know what to pray for; and sometimes we just don't know how to pray because we are in a difficult situation. Other times we might be trying to be someone we are not, or trying a way to pray that is not suitable for us. I found help from two articles I read in *Living With Christ*.

Pat Livingston tells of a time she received good advice from a friend. Livingston was trying to pray in a very traditional way, at set times of the day, using set prayers. Her friend gave her a suggestion: "You're not a monk! Stop trying to pray the way monks do! Find a way to pray that is suitable for you." Livingston said this was very freeing for her. When she began to pay attention to types of prayer she was really drawn to, she could better connect with God. She found a closer relationship to the Lord this way.

But how about difficult situations? She said the best advice she had was from Jesus' farewell discourse in John 15:9. Jesus was facing an unbelievably hard night before His death. And He was also thinking of His disciples and the great troubles they would face for the rest of their lives. Livingston said the advice Jesus gave has made all the difference to her prayer life. Jesus said, "Remain in my love." In the hard times, she does her best to remain in that love.

In another article, Sr. Margaret Palliser, OP relates the story of the Polish rabbi Zusha who died

in 1800. When he was near death, some students visited him and saw him trembling with fear. They asked him if he was afraid of death. They said, "In your life, have you not been as righteous as Moses himself? Zusha said, "When I stand before the throne of judgment, I will not be asked, 'Zusha, why were you not Moses?' No, I will be asked, 'Reb Zusha, why were you not Zusha?'"

In the same way you will not be asked why you are not like someone else – such as Mother Teresa or some great saint. Instead, God is likely to ask why you were not truly (insert your name here)? He might say to me, "Jack, why didn't you embrace the full reality of your life? Why were you not the carrier of love, grace, and mercy that only you could be?" We have to realize that each of us is unique, absolutely different than anyone else ever created. Each of us faces unique circumstances as members of Christ's body. God has a special life plan and mission for each of us. We shouldn't try to be someone else. Let us be the miracle of God's love we are intended to be. So let's pray that we become the saints that only we can be, and be fully faithful to our mission. And when we find it difficult to pray, let's allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us (Rom. 8:26). We can't go wrong that way.

Certainly we are free to pray like monks if we are drawn to that style. But let's turn to the Lord for guidance as to how we should pray.

**Cont.** from page 3

• Pope John 23<sup>rd</sup> had a great vision for the Church: a new Pentecost. This is why the Lord moved him to convene the Second Vatican Council.

• Fr. Poulson talked about a recent article by Ralph Martin which discussed the crisis in the Catholic Church. Fewer Catholics are baptized now, and those who are baptized often don't participate in the other six sacraments. Institutional collapse is evident in the Church. There is widespread ignorance and disregard for Catholic teaching.

• We should prepare properly for the Eucharist. If done properly once, this would make saints of us.

• The Liturgy of the Hours is a good way to pray the Scriptures throughout the day.

• *Lectio Divina* ("divine reading" of Scripture) is another good way to pray. It has four basic steps: read, meditate, pray, contemplate.

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**The three trees**

According to legend, three trees grew near Jesus' manger: an olive tree, a palm tree and a fir tree. The olive offered its fruit to the newborn King, and the palm tree gave its dates.

The poor fir, having nothing to give but worship, raised its boughs in adoration, and the



angels hung stars on its branches. So the fir became the first Christmas tree.

## A Christmas story

By Agnes Helsley

The first World War started in August of 1914, and the opposing forces promptly settled into a system of trench warfare. The war lasted for four tumultuous years, but there was one outstanding day to remember, and that day was December 25, 1914.

An anonymous soldier poked his head out of his trench and looked across the expanse between the two enemy forces and decided not to toss a grenade. Instead a couple of tins of corned beef were lobbed across the barbed wire littered field. The truth that both armies were short on supplies was well known. A return volley turned out to be a packet of coffee and some sweet treats.

Men began to climb out of their opposing trenches, and thus began a day of cessation of war and a day of actual camaraderie happened. Stories were translated from German into English and vice versa. Food was shared for a Christmas dinner, card games were played on improvised tables. Then an actual game of soccer happened amid shouts of friendly rivalry. At the end of the day the two sides warring in this World War were shaking hands, smiling and even praying for each other.

On December 26 the war resumed. The commanding officers on both sides forbade such goings on under penalty of death. Once again they were killing each other, and most of the soldiers who experienced "peace on earth, good will toward men" for a short time would be dead within a year.

What a remarkable story of the goodness and goodwill that rise within the average person wanting to share the joy of the birth of Jesus. How does the event line up with the modern observance of the holiday? Too many times we lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas as we struggle to have the perfect gift to give, when we need to simply look into the manger for the perfect gift given for our deliverance from the power of sin. Jesus was born for the sole purpose of dying for us.

In the words of Bill Crowder: "Long before His birth, Christ had been set aside to rescue us from our fallenness – which means that we can never fully appreciate the manger unless we see it in the shadow of the cross. Christmas is completely about Christ's love, seen most clearly in His sacrifice for us."



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*Silent Night,  
Holy Night*

## Hopes and fears



Sacred  
Christmas

carols are a cherished tradition. But during sorrow and struggle, some lyrics may seem hard to swallow. "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant." Where is the joy when my loved one has just died? Where is the triumph if I've lost my job? "Silent night, holy night, all is calm..."? Not in my house; I'm exhausted from the fighting.

Yet ... listen:

And you beneath life's  
crushing load,  
Whose forms are bending low  
Oh, rest beside the weary road  
And hear the angels sing.  
"It Came Upon the Midnight  
Clear"

Truly, God reaches out to the happy and hurting alike. "The hopes and fears of all the years are met" – and gathered up – in the Babe of Bethlehem, who shares our joys and troubles. There are Christmas carols for us all.



## Honoring Msgr. Peterson

By Liz Geary

The Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center, under the guidance of Spiritual Advisor, Fr. David Poulson, is working to honor the life of Msgr. James Peterson. Fr. Pete was a true gift and blessing to everyone he met, and we at the Center were among those who were blessed to know Father. We are working under the guidance of Fr. Poulson to honor him.



Two items require some assistance from those of us who knew Fr. Pete. Fr. Poulson has asked the Word of Life Center to help coordinate the submission of memories, stories, and experiences with Fr. Pete. You can send memories and stories to the Center. They can be anonymous if necessary. All submissions will remain in a file until such time as they may be needed by the Vatican for the process of sainthood. Another item would be that you please consider requesting Masses at your home parishes to be said for the repose of Fr. Pete's soul. Please contact the Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center with questions or submissions at [wolccrc@eriercd.org](mailto:wolccrc@eriercd.org), or by mail at: Word of Life Renewal Center, St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504. Thank you for honoring Fr. Pete in such a special way. He was, and continues to be, a blessing to all.

## The missing piece

It's frustrating trying to complete a picture puzzle and realizing a piece is missing. The same is true when we try to make sense of our lives and discover something's missing.

Each of us has an emptiness that only God's Spirit can fill. Philosophers speak of a "God-shaped hole," and Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you." Until we rest in God, inner

peace and "completeness" will evade us. Drugs, drunkenness, riches, travel, sexual escapades and social activities won't suffice.

That's why the psalmist wrote, "Come, my heart says, seek His face! Your face, Lord, do I seek." (Psalm 27:8, NRSV) Being filled with God is the only way to fill in the missing piece and have a truly fulfilled life.

## A Christmas message

Christmas holds the mystery  
Of how God touched the earth  
By giving us the Christ child  
In a newborn baby's birth.

Great awe was in young Mary's heart,  
And in the shepherds' pace  
As they ran quickly to the town  
And found that special place.

These humble shepherds knelt  
before this tiny newborn king;  
And as they did so, they could hear  
The lovely angels sing:

"Fear not, for unto you this day,  
The Prince of Peace has come  
To share God's love throughout  
the world.  
Rejoice now, everyone!"

— Peggy Ferrell

## Holy paradox

God became a man. Divinity arrived. Heaven opened herself and placed her most precious one in a human womb. The omnipotent, in one instant, became flesh and blood. The one who was larger than the universe became a microscopic embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl. God had come near.

—Max Lucado,  
*God Came Near*

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The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide teaching, news and calendar of events, which help to foster Catholic charismatic renewal throughout the diocese of Erie.

Editor: Jack Heintzel  
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