



# Reflections

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Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center

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## ADVENT: TIME TO DRAW CLOSER TO JESUS By Kathy Wilcox



My relationship with God is the most important thing in my life. Since it is a relationship, the more time I invest, the closer I can be to Him. My spiritual experiences have been both beautiful and difficult. How can this be? Imagine walking in a field covered with newly fallen snow on a bright sunny day. There is not a cloud or tree to block the sunshine. It is so bright that if you look in a mirror every tiny blemish, every wrinkle, is clearly seen. God is the sun; he lights the world. His light is so bright that nothing can be hidden from Him. When I pray, and enter into a deeper relationship with Him, I am learning that I cannot hide my sins, even those that I have ignored for years, and pretend that they were so small that they do not matter.

Recently I discovered how uncomfortable it is to see myself as God sees me. In just one act, doing something that I have always done and not considered a sin, I was overcome with shame. "It is just a bad habit," I have always told myself. Yet, suddenly, this time I was filled with shame. What have I done that is so bad?" I questioned? "Look in the mirror" God spoke gently. "You declare yourself a Christian; my namesake. When others see you doing what you are doing, how can they see Me?"

Psalms 139 explains David's revelation about God's perfect knowledge of man. Reading this Psalm reminds me that God has always seen this sin in me. I have only hidden it from myself. David cries, "*Oh Lord You have searched me and known me. Where can I go from your Spirit?*" (Psalm 139: 1 & 7). There is nothing I have done that God does not already know. When I get close to Him, His light shines on the sins I have been trying to hide. The shame I feel should not

make me run away. Satan will mock me, tell me that I am no good, that I am not worthy to be in God's presence. But Jesus does not condemn, he reveals. His revelations are meant to help me let go of these sins through the sacrament of reconciliation, to be covered with His blood. How can I confess what I am not aware of? Years of denial can cover many sins. David tells us to pray: "*Search me O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*" (Psalm 139: 23-24).

Only by drawing closer to Jesus through prayer will I become aware of my sins. Then I can confess them so I can continue drawing closer to Jesus, the light of the world.

 *Oh Lord,*  
YOU HAVE  
SEARCHED ME AND  
KNOWN ME  
*where can I go from  
your spirit?*

Psalms 139:1 & 7

# THE RICHES OF THE CHURCH

By Amy Mosbacher

I heard an interview on Catholic radio last week that really struck me. The host was speaking to someone in the midst of the RCIA process, and the woman was speaking about how she'd made fun of Catholics growing up and really just continued that and other demeaning behavior towards Catholicism her whole life. Then circumstances in her life eventually led to her developing a relationship with the Virgin Mary and an appreciation for the Eucharist. The enthusiasm in her voice for the Eucharist was almost palpable. Even though it was a radio interview, I could imagine her quivering as she spoke of her anticipation of receiving Jesus in Communion. And I thought, wow, how many of us Catholics look so forward to receiving Jesus that we quiver?

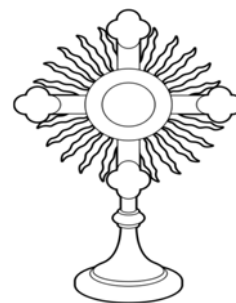
In Revelation 3:14-19, God accuses the church in Laodicea of being neither hot nor cold, and therefore He would "spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." (vs. 16 & 17) We have so much material wealth in this country

that it very easy to fall into that trap of being content. As Catholics we also have a lot of spiritual treasure: the Eucharist, priesthood, Sacraments, particular devotions, etc., and we can be spiritually rich if we take advantage of them. But do we? How often do we leave Mass and forget what the readings were? Or do we walk past someone without giving them a smile or a helping hand when needed? I pray that God will instill humility in us, that we can always be anxious to serve and love Him and recognize our need for mercy.

Prayer is probably one of the most basic practices that will keep us close to God. None of the other things we do will help us to know Him better than simply spending time with Him. We can do all sorts of work for Him, but that won't help us know God better. We'll only *want* God, *yearn* for God in us if we pray and pray and then find we can't get enough of Him. That's the passion that will keep lukewarmness at bay. We have so many things in our Catholic faith that would keep us on fire, or at least sure we're on the right track, if we'd just take advantage of

them. So many in the Church search for things that will bring them fulfillment---from material objects, to food, books, work, crystals, all the different "ologies" and "isms" or whatever suits them. We don't need to search that far. Fr. Benedict Groeschel made the astute observation, "*One thing that is not being tried in any particularly enthusiastic way by people who call themselves Catholic is Catholicism.*" The Church has such depth in her teachings, mysteries to be contemplated, sacraments to aid in living, mortifications, beauty and art, it could never be exhausted. And the Church is only betrothed, the Bride who is hungrily awaiting her Bridegroom! Jesus is still coming to claim His bride to Himself!

Jesus is coming to us at Christmas. Take this Advent to renew our commitment to Him. Ask God to build up that fire in our hearts again to appreciate what we have in our own Church. Holy Mother Mary, help us to ponder the richness of Christ as you pondered Him living within yourself.



**"ONE THING THAT IS NOT BEING TRIED IN ANY PARTICULARLY ENTHUSIASTIC WAY BY PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CATHOLIC IS CATHOLICISM."**

## RULING WITH CHRIST By Jack Heintzel

***“Do you not know  
that the saints will  
judge the world?”  
1 Cor. 6:2***

It is important that we understand the great calling of God for those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ. Not only are we called to love and serve Him, to have fellowship with Him, and to grow in knowledge of Him. We are also called to reign with Him in eternity. This is brought out in a book entitled *Behold His Love* by Basilea Schlink.

Jesus’ death on the cross freed us from bondage to sin and Satan. But His sacrifice also includes something even more marvelous. He won for us the right to be enthroned in His Father’s kingdom and to judge the world with Him. For this end Jesus endured every indictment, every accusation, with joy. Mother Basilea speculates that His Spirit probably rejoiced as He thought, “Now I shall be able to ransom souls from judgment. One day they will sit upon My throne and rule with Me.”

Our Lord allowed Himself to be judged so often and so harshly, so that one day He might raise us up to be judges of the world. He wants us to be companions in His love through all eternity, sharing His throne with Him.

At the end of the Lord’s Prayer we say, “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.” Only God is King of Kings – King of all creation. All power and glory can be ascribed to Him, for only He is Worthy. But in His great love He wants us to inherit glory and power also, even though we deserve to be condemned to hell for our sins. So we will share in His Kingship. This is almost unbelievable, but it is true. Who can understand such love?

But let us reflect further on this great gift, our call to rule with Christ. The Bible indicates that even in *this* life we reign. My Crudens Concordance pointed me to Romans 5:17, which says that those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness *reign in life* through Jesus. A note in the concordance reminds us that we partake of spiritual life through Christ, whereby we conquer sin, and obtain eternal life hereafter when we will reign in glory.

And in 1 Corinthians 4:8 Paul reminds us that we have become kings! Paul goes on to say in 2 Timothy 2:12 that if we endure we shall also reign with Christ. And in the book of Revelation we see again that believers will reign on earth (Rev. 5:10) and forever (Rev. 22:5).

Wow! It would be good for us to think prayerfully about this call of God to rule with Him. It can help us to see ourselves in a new light. We are really special in God’s eyes. He has elevated His disciples to unbelievable heights through His death on the cross.

We should be able to see more clearly that we have dominion over Satan. We have the victory in the Blood of Christ as we persevere through the trials of this life. And then we will reign with Him forever. Jesus Christ is Lord, and in Him is the victory!

HE REIGNS!



“IF WE  
ENDURE,  
WE WILL  
ALSO  
REIGN  
WITH HIM.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:12

### **CONTEMPORARY MASS**

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

### **PERPETUAL ADORATION**

Bread of Life Chapel  
St. Joseph Community Center

### **CHAPLET OF MERCY**

Every day 3:00 PM  
Bread of Life Chapel

### **ST. JOSEPH NOVENA**

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

## **Memorials**

### **In Memory of:**

Art Chimenti  
Art Chimenti

### **Requested by:**

T.A. Walkiewicz  
Jean and Jack Heintzel

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.

"The Redeemer has come into the world to do this wonderful work. He became one of us. More than this, He became one with us. For this is the marvelous thing about the human race, that we are all one. He came to be one mysterious body with us: He our head, we His members."

*St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*

"The Virgin Mary teaches us what it means to live in the Holy Spirit and what means to accept the news of God in our life. She conceived Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit, and every Christian, each one of us, is called to accept the Word of God, to accept Jesus inside of us and then to bring Him to everyone...May Mary help you to be attentive to what the Lord asks of you, and to live and walk forever with the Holy Spirit!

*Pope Francis*

## **PRAYER GROUPS**

### **† SUNDAY**

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

In home 6:30 PM  
Rick Kenawell (814) 375-0328  
DuBois, PA

#### **Acts II Community**

St. Julia Church 6:30 PM  
West Lake Rd. & Powell Ave.  
Jack Heintzel (814) 838-1325

#### **Holy Crown of Thorns Prayer Group**

In home 1:30 PM  
First Sunday of the month  
749 Bean Farm Rd  
Sheffield, PA  
Lil Herbstritt (814) 986-3206

### **MONDAY:**

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

St. Mary's Church Annex 6:00 PM  
139 Church St.,  
St. Marys, PA  
Mary Ellen Frank (814) 781-3904

#### **St. Andrew Chapel**

**(formerly Leopold Center group)**  
Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Rosary  
1116 West 7th St.  
3:15 pm (after Mass)  
Mary Lou Peterson (814) 866-5678

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

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

### **† TUESDAY:**

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

Holy Rosary Church  
2701 East Ave. 7:00 PM  
Pat Montefiori (814) 823-3968

#### **Chosen Prayer Group**

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

### **† WEDNESDAY:**

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

St. Mark Church 7:00 PM  
Religious Education Center  
Emporium, PA

### **† THURSDAY:**

#### **Wildfire Prayer Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month 4:30 PM  
5031 W. Ridge Rd..  
S.S.J. Living Center  
Sr. Gerry Olon (814) 836-4165

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

7615 Wattsburg Rd. 7:00 PM  
John Griebel (814) 825-3588

### **† FRIDAY:**

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

In Home Prayer Meeting  
Call for location 1:00 PM  
T.A. Walkiewicz (814) 833-9717



For information on  
National Catholic  
Charismatic Renewal visit:  
<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>

## WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS OF THE PAST

“Christ prays for us, prays in us, is prayed to by us. He prays for us as our Priest, prays in us as our Head, is prayed to us as our God. We recognize our voice in Him and His in us.”

*St. Augustine of Hippo*

“*Discipline*, the safeguard of hope, the bond of faith, the guide of the way of salvation, the stimulus and nourishment of good dispositions, the teacher of virtue, causes us to abide always in Christ, and to live continually for God, and to attain to the heavenly promises and to the divine rewards. To follow her is wholesome, and to turn away from her and neglect her is deadly.”

*Cyprian (c. 200-258), early Church father*

“Periods of staleness in the life are not inevitable but they are common. He is a rare Christian who has not experienced times of spiritual dullness. We can keep from going stale by getting proper rest, by practicing complete candor in prayer, by introducing variety into our lives, by heeding God’s call to move onward, and by exercising quiet faith always.”

*A. W. Tozer (1897-1963), pastor and author*

“To those who imagine they can attain to holiness by any wisdom or strength of their own will find themselves, after many labors and struggles and weary efforts, only the farther from possessing it, and this in proportion to their certainty that they have gained it by their *own* efforts.”

*John of Avila (1502-1569)*  
*Spanish priest/reformer*

“It is not enough for me that God has given me grace once, but He must give it always. I ask that I may receive; and when I have received, I ask again. I am covetous of receiving God’s bounty. He is never slow in giving, nor am I ever weary of receiving. The more I drink, the more thirsty I become.”

*St. Jerome*

“Christ, here and now, in that very room where are saying your prayers, is doing things to you, really coming and interfering with your very self: killing the old natural self in you and replacing it with the kind of self He has. At first, only for moments. Then for longer periods. Finally, if all goes well, turning you permanently into a different sort of thing; into a new little Christ, a being which, in its own small way, has the same kind of life as God; which shares in His power, joy, knowledge, and eternity.”

*C. S. Lewis (1898-1963),*  
*British lecturer and writer*

“However well you may run, however well you may wrestle, you still need Him who gives the crown.”

*Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-389)*  
*Catholic monk*

*May we heed this  
wisdom of our  
fathers in faith.*

“How great is your name, O Lord! When my strength fails, and darkness invades my soul, your name is the sun whose rays give light and warmth, and under their influence the soul becomes more radiant.”

*St. Faustina Kowalska*

## SOME BIBLICAL TERMS IN JOHN By Jack Heintzel

Here are some Scriptural terms we don't often use, but are important for a Christian to know. The first is **Gnosticism**, a heresy which argues that believers gain salvation through a special knowledge (Greek word *gnosis*) revealed through a spiritual Savior, presumably Jesus. Gnostic thinkers are dualists, viewing the world as composed of two mutually exclusive realms. The invisible world of spirit is pure and good, whereas the physical world is inherently evil, the inferior creation of a lesser god, whom *some* Gnostics identify with Yahweh. The divine redeemer who descends from heaven brings saving knowledge to a spiritual elite belonging entirely to the spirit realm. Hence some Gnostics argued that Jesus only *seemed* to be human. Docetists (a name taken from the Greek verb "to seem") concluded that Christ was wholly spiritual, uncontaminated by a material body. These people believe that at the crucifixion, he ascended to heaven, leaving behind *another's* corpse on the cross.

Although he uses some typically Gnostic terms, the writer of John's Gospel avoids Gnosticism's extremism by insisting on Jesus' physical humanity

(Jn. 1:14). Even after resurrection, Jesus displays fleshly wounds and consumes ordinary food (ch. 20-21). To show that Jesus was a mortal person who truly died, John eliminates from his Passion story the tradition that Simon of Cyrene carried Jesus' cross (lest the reader think that Simon might have substituted for Jesus at the crucifixion). John also introduces an incident in which a Roman soldier pierces Jesus' side, confirming physical death.

Another of John's implied goals is to picture Jesus as revealed through the **Paraclete**. A term only found in John's Gospel, the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit that Jesus bestows on His followers after His death. Various translated as *Advocate, Helper, Comforter, or Spirit of Truth*, the Paraclete functions as a substitute for Jesus' own presence, His surrogate among the disciples. In John's view, the Paraclete inspires His community to continue Jesus' miraculous works of healing; He answers their prayers for power and knowledge; He provides defenses against their opponents' hostile criticism; and---most important for the presentation of Jesus' life and teachings---He enables the "brotherhood" to explain and

interpret Jesus' full theological significance (Jn. 14:12-26). One of the Paraclete's main purposes is to unveil Jesus' true likeness, to portray the spiritual reality hidden during His human incarnation. Thus, John represents Jesus as saying that "he (the Paraclete) will glorify Me," revealing Jesus' cosmic splendor to John's followers (Jn. 16:12-15).

John's Gospel is markedly different than those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For example, he has Jesus giving long, metaphysical discourses---so different from the short, vivid pronouncements in Mark and Luke, for example. Most scholars find it difficult to detect the voice of the historical Jesus in the Johannine speeches. Rather than attempting to reconstruct Jesus' remembered words they are confessions of faith in His divine nature and cosmic stature. As the author of the article states, John's words are sublime tributes to Jesus' unique role in human redemption. Personally, I really like to read John's Gospel, from the soaring prologue all the way through Jesus' life. Try reading John all the way through

*Source: excerpt from publication called John's Unique Gospel (The Books of the New Testament)*



# PITTSBURGH: BETHLEHEM OF CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

By Tom Mangan

I marvel at ordinariness. It amazes me that God almost always uses the common and the flawed in which to do His best work. Lowly Bethlehem is designated to be the birthplace of the Savior. An obscure Upper Room becomes the Pentecost birthplace of the Church. Pittsburgh, of all places, long known for its successful sports teams, provides a home for the Holy Spirit to announce “a New Pentecost.”

In an outpost of sorts deep in the North Hills, outside of North Park, sits a house built in 1924 called The Ark and the Dove. It is here that about 25 students from Duquesne University gathered simply to strengthen their faith, but instead were miraculously visited by the Holy Spirit. These were not especially gifted religious people, but normal, everyday Catholics wanting to know more of God and their faith. As Providence would have it, they were not disappointed.

It was 50 years ago, in 1967, when some of those students were filled with God’s Spirit and experienced “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” From that seemingly inconspicuous place, a spiritual spark was

ignited that continues to this day. That singular event spawned the Catholic Charismatic Movement that spread like wildfire across the country and to the rest of the world. What started in this somewhat plain upper-room chapel with just a few seekers has grown to embrace millions of Catholics.

As a Pittsburgher, I find myself overwhelmed to be part of such a tremendous movement of God that had its beginnings here. To think that almost 50 years ago a guy like me could become so aware of the Lord’s personal presence in our midst—I am speechless. I ask myself what is so special about Pittsburgh. I can only guess that, in part at least, grace and mercy have been extended to our region in our lowliness. Like Mary, we possess a humility that pleases Him. We are a small city with a big heart. I have found our faith community in all of its diversity to be strong and vibrant. In my capacity as a national leader of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, I have found our people to be spiritually hungry. This makes us a perfect seedbed for robust spiritual growth. For those of

us who have experienced this baptism in the Holy Spirit, this current of grace that in essence is an actualization of our baptism and confirmation, have discovered that it affects our whole being. Latent talents come to the surface. Things we didn’t know about ourselves blossom. There are even new elements of our personality that emerge. In a word, our lives have been turned upside down.

The roots of the “New Pentecost” will always be Pittsburgh roots. The welcoming and inviting posture of those Duquesne students to the wind of the Holy Spirit is really reminiscent of the apostles when that mighty wind descended upon them in the first century. As then, it is now: the Father’s favor is not necessarily on the talented and gifted ones, but on those who simply make themselves available to His great grace.



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The office is generally open on  
Wednesday and/or Thursday only.

Please call before coming.

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.

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