



Reflections

Word of Life
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center

February 2016

Is There Anything Wrong With “Selfies?”

By Kathy Wilcox

It is hard to imagine that there is anyone who has not heard of “selfies.” This recent activity has become the thing to do. It seems that everywhere people go what they do is recorded with a “self-portrait” – with others and in different settings. Then they post these pictures on various social media sites.

So is this just another “cultural trend” or is it a symptom of something more serious, this focus on “self”? Rather than focusing on the act, it might help to examine the fruits of the action. Whatever we do has consequences. So what are the results of this self-focus? Many experts now say that social media sites that encourage this focus on self, are creating a generation of youngsters who are totally narcissistic, displaying vanity, conceit and arrogance.

Pride is one of the seven capital sins. A short definition is “preoccupation with self.” Noted writer C.S. Lewis speaks for many Christian moralists when he calls pride “the essential vice, the utmost evil.” He asserts that pride “is the complete anti-God state of mind.” Lewis finds the key element: when we think more highly of ourselves

than we do of God, we have committed the sin of pride. We need to be reminded of the first commandment; we should put nothing before God, in our hearts or lives.

So there is nothing actually wrong in taking pictures of ourselves, and posting them on social media. I personally love seeing pictures of my grandchildren and friends and family members. Social media can be used for reaching out for good causes as well. I have a friend who uses social media to encourage others to get involved with “operation Christmas Child” to send shoe boxes of gifts to children in third world countries. The problem is in character development. When families teach and promote the love of God and love of others, their youngsters will have a balanced perspective, and have healthy self-esteem that results from their relationship with God and their family.

The test of any action is the outcomes it produces. If we find ourselves or children becoming too self-focused, we need to step back and examine what is going on. Confession is

a great leveler, and will keep our priorities in balance.

In Matthew 22:36-39 a Pharisee asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

So Jesus gave us the order of those whom we should love: God first, others second and ourselves last. He did not say we should NOT love ourselves; we just need humility to keep the right order. So remember: to be happy, practice JOY -- Jesus first, others second and yourself last.



Ash Wednesday

Prophecy: Strengthening the Prophetic Dimension

By Ralph Martin

In many ways the charismatic renewal movement has been remarkably well received in the Catholic church. From the very first episcopal statement by the Bishop of Lansing, MI to the repeated affirmations by three popes, the church on the highest levels has discerned in this renewal "the finger of God" bringing help to a church in need of "more of God." And the fact that more than 100 million Catholics have experienced the touch of God through the renewal is certainly an indicator that on the grass roots level of the church there has been wide receptivity as well.

On the other hand, even though episcopal and papal support has been strong, and great numbers of individuals have been touched by the Lord in significant ways, there is perception that those statements of approbation and those multitudes of individual blessings – as wonderful as they are – have not yet changed the culture of the church into a "culture of Pentecost" – to use the memorable phrase of John Paul II. Consider the structures of the church, that for most Catholics are their only contact with the church apart from whatever private fidelity and witness they are able to maintain in their daily lives. This culture is still too often characterized by ambiguous or uninspired preaching and teaching, worship that is often correctly characterized as

"lukewarm," and leadership that seeks to just keep the "ship afloat" and "not rock the boat." Good people, touched by the Spirit, often experience their relationship with the Lord being relegated to the private sphere so that they are not able to influence significantly the ordinary culture of the church structures in which they participate.

But I believe that there is more the Lord wants to do, and that those of us touched by the renewal can continue make an important contribution if we are willing to go on with God ourselves. I remember back in the early seventies when I first met Kathryn Kuhlman, the great healing evangelist. She told me she was following with great interest what was happening "among the Catholics," and she gave me a book of hers with the inscription: "There's more. There's so much more."

When I think of the "prophetic element" of the renewal I think not simply of specific "prophecies" or certain "signs and wonders," but of the "breaking in of God." This makes real his presence by specific prophecy but also, and as just as importantly, by "anointed" preaching and teaching, words of wisdom and knowledge, loving service, tender mercies, wise counsel, obedience to inspirations, the presence of holiness, the reality of God made present, containing within it the call to deeper conversion, to worship, to adoration, to proclamation, to self-denial.

I think a key to strengthening the prophetic dimension of the

renewal -- the "making God present dimension" -- is to broaden and deepen our understanding of the culture of Pentecost. When we think of fostering the "culture of Pentecost" within the church we may think first of all of spreading the acceptance of baptism in the Spirit and the charismatic gifts as well as joyful singing and testimony. But I would submit that we would do well to understand the culture of Pentecost as being both contemplative and charismatic.

Too often the "contemplatives" write off the "charismatics" as superficial, noisy, and not serious about the spiritual life in all its depth, instead arrogantly fixated on reproducing self-gratifying, "entry level" experiences. But "charismatics" sometimes write off "contemplatives as too inward-looking, too un-dynamic, too morose, too closed and fearful of the "breaking in" of God, etc. Unfortunately there can be elements of truth in both characterizations. We need to embrace both the contemplative and charismatic dimensions of the Catholic charismatic renewal.

When the Holy Spirit fell upon Mary and the disciples at Pentecost he gave them "power to witness" that was rooted in a profound revelation of, and encounter with, the risen Lord and the glory of the Father. This let them see, believe, and understand with overwhelming conviction that "Jesus is Lord!"

(Continued on page 3)

Manifestations of God's Presence

By Agnes Helsley

My husband and I have made it for a year at our new residence - - not an easy adjustment from a single home dwelling to a multi-dwelling senior citizen housing. The people are wonderful. We made some good friends, but you know it is hard to teach old dogs new tricks! At the time we moved it seemed that the move was definitely going to be short term. We very much believed the Lord's return was on the horizon. Apparently we were a little off on the timing. He is coming, but not on our timetable. We are still in the birth-pang stage of the delivery! We have more people to witness to, more tears to help dry and more weak knees to steady (including mine). More life to experience!

Our assistant pastor at Our Lady of Peace Church, Fr. David Renne, had a great homily for the feast of Epiphany. He pointed out the meaning of Epiphany: a manifestation. He addressed the three Epiphany moments of Christ's ministry. The first, the Magi bringing gifts. Actually that was the manifestation to the Gentiles of the birth of the King. This King did not come just for the Jewish people but for all men. Led by a star, these travelers discovered the Baby who would change the world.

He went on to address the second Epiphany moment of Christ's ministry - the Baptism of Jesus when the Father parted the heavens and came down in the form of a dove (the Holy Spirit) and announced "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. (Mt. 3:17)" The affirmation of the Father's approval of His Son's mission.

The third Epiphany moment was the wedding at Cana, Jesus' first miracle. Jesus was breaking through the natural order to bless a celebration that was in need of a miracle -- water being changed into wine.

Father challenged us to look for Epiphany moments in our lives, such as a sunset that takes our breath away and we praise our God for its beauty. Also the joy of a welcoming smile from a friend, or the opportunity to seek forgiveness for an offense. Random acts of kindness are ways the Father moves on the hearts of people to show kindness and love.

We experienced an Epiphany at this Mass of God's love present not only in the Eucharist but also the Baptism of a tiny baby girl named Lauren Elizabeth. She looked like a beautiful doll in her lovely Baptismal outfit. I have been to many, many Baptisms but none as unusual as this. That tiny baby was intently listening to Fr. David's prayers. She even smiled -- and more than once. My husband and I were in the very first pew completely caught up in watching the administration of the sacrament. Not a peep of distress at the pouring of water on the tiny head. Complete peace! Everyone nearby also seemed to be struck by this little baby. One can only wonder who she will grow to be.

Be watchful! It is God's intent to break through the everyday events of life with grace-filled manifestations of love and beauty. Observe! Don't forget to share those blessed moments with the weary travelers you meet on this journey.

A Thought on Faith

Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.

Augustine

(From Prophecy, Page 2)

Not only were the disciples after Pentecost no longer afraid to witness, but they were no longer afraid to live a life of complete consecration, heroic self-denial, single-hearted devotion, and continual prayer. The Holy Spirit brought the disciples after Pentecost into an intimate experience of union with the risen Lord himself, enabling them to share in the fervor of Jesus' love for his Father and his love for the human race.

We see this union of holiness and the power of prophetic witness clearly revealed in the lives of the saints. Holiness and evangelization go together. Contemplation and charismatic witness go together. This is seen, for example, in the lives of Bernard of Clairvaux, Catherine of Siena, and Therese of Lisieux.

How do we strengthen the prophetic dimension of the renewal? We need more of God, much more of God; and the Lord has sent us saints and doctors such as Therese, Bernard, and Catherine to teach, heal and instruct us on our journey to God.

(Ed. note: Ralph Martin has been a prominent leader in the renewal since the early 1970s. He is based in the Detroit Archdiocese. The above edited article is somewhat condensed from his article in Pentecost Today, April-June 2007)

Healing Mass

Our Lady of Peace Church

2401 W. 38th St. 7:30 PM

First Wednesday of the month

Contemporary Mass

St. Joseph Church

Bread of Life Community

11:00 AM every Sunday

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Perpetual Adoration

Bread of Life Chapel

St. Joseph Community Center

Chaplet of Mercy

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

St. Joseph Novena

St. Joseph Church/Bread of Life

Community

Every Wednesday 7:00 PM

Memorials

In memory of

Requested by

NO MEMORIAL DONATIONS THIS MONTH

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.

“Listen to the Savior: I regenerated you, I set you free, I healed you, I redeemed you. I will give you life that is unending, eternal, supernatural. I will show you the face of God.”

St. Clement of Alexandria

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 6:30 PM

Rick Kenawell (814) 375-0328

DuBois, PA

Acts II Community

St. Julia Church 6:30 PM

West Lake Rd. & Powell Ave.

Jack Heintzel 838-1325

† 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)

1116 West 7th St.

Mary Lou Peterson 866-5678

Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Rosary

At 3:15 PM (before Mass)

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 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

2nd Thursday of month 4:30 PM

5031 W. Ridge Rd..

S.S.J. Living Center

Sr. Gerry Olon 836-4165

St. Boniface PG

7615 Wattsburg Rd. 7:00 PM

John Griebel 825-3588

† Friday:

Light of the World Community

In Home Prayer Meeting – Call for

Location 7:30 PM

T.A. Walkiewicz 833-9717



Three Types of Blessing

By Jack Heintzel

In a book entitled *Moved by the Spirit*, Kevin Perrotta writes about three ways of blessing mentioned in the Scriptures. I had never encountered this distinction before. Initially, we see Simeon blessing Mary and Joseph (Lk. 2:33) after prophesying that their child would be God's salvation for mankind. Perrotta says that *bless*, in this passage, is a word whose biblical meanings face in two opposite directions.

In the *first* sense, *bless* means to give life, fertility, success – everything that is needed for abundant living. Thus, God “blessed” our first human parents. In this sense Simeon, as God's agent, passes on God's blessing to Mary and Joseph.

In the *second* sense, *bless* means to acknowledge God as the source of blessings. Simeon blessed God (Lk. 2:28) by acknowledging that He has now given man His supreme blessing, the Messiah. In the Mass we pray this: “Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation, through your goodness we have this bread to offer.”

But then Scripture gives us a *third* sense of blessing. In our previous reading Elizabeth said to Mary, “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord (Lk. 1:45). Here, to declare blessed means to congratulate someone for the happiness that lies ahead of them. In this sense, we bless the newly married

couple at their wedding: “I just know you're going to be so happy together!” Similarly, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declares, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3). Jesus is saying, in effect, “You poor in spirit, rejoice, because God has great happiness in store for you!”

Perhaps we can all be thinking of good ways of blessing people as we go through our days. How can we express good wishes to others, contribute to their happiness, or promote their welfare? We can pray about this and ask God to help us.

Saved by God's Grace

David Seamands ends his book *Healing Grace* with this story:

For more than six hundred years the Hapsburgs exercised political power in Europe. When Emperor Franz-Joseph I of Austria died in 1916, his was the last of the extravagant imperial funerals.

A procession of dignitaries and elegantly dressed court personages escorted the coffin, draped in the black-and-gold imperial colors. To the accompaniment of the military band's somber dirges and by the light of torches, the cortege descended the stairs of the Capuchin Monastery in Vienna. At the bottom was a great iron door leading to the Hapsburg family crypt. Behind the door was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna.

The officer in charge followed the prescribed ceremony, established centuries before. “Open!” he cried.

“Who goes there?” responded the Cardinal.

“We bear the remains of his Imperial and Apostolic Majesty, Franz-Josef I, by the grace of God Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Defender of the faith, Price of Bohemia-Moravia, Grand Duke of Lombardy,.....” The officer continued to list the Emperor's thirty-seven titles.

“We know him not,” replied the Cardinal. “Who goes there?”

The officer spoke again, this time using a much-abbreviated and less-ostentatious title reserved for times for expediency.

“We know him not,” Cardinal said again. “Who goes there?”

The officer tried a third time, stripping the emperor of all but the humblest of titles: “We bear the body of Franz-Josef, our brother, a sinner like us all!”

At that, the doors swung open, and Franz-Josef was admitted.

In death, all are reduced the same level. Neither wealth nor fame can open the way to salvation, but only God's grace, given to those who will humbly acknowledge their need.

Alan J. White



Origins of Various Religions

By Jack Heintzel

This is excerpted from an Erie Times column by Ann Landers in November 11, 1996. I don't know why I saved it for so long, but here it is. I can't vouch for the accuracy, but it seems OK. I have done a little editing based on my studies.

Ann Landers started her column this way:

Do you have any idea when your religion was founded and by whom? If you are not interested in the subject, you can skip today's column. But I found the following fascinating:

- If you are a member of the Jewish faith, your religion was founded by Abraham about 4,000 years ago.
- If you are Hindu, your religion developed in India around 1, 500 B.C.
- If you are a Buddhist, your religion split from Hinduism, and was founded by Buddha, Prince Siddhartha Gautama of India, about 500 B.C.
- If you are Roman Catholic, Jesus Christ began your religion in the year 33.
- If you are Islamic, Mohammed started your religion in what is now Saudi Arabia around 600 A.D.
- If you are Eastern Orthodox, your sect separated from Roman Catholicism around the year 1000.
- If you are a Lutheran, your religion was founded by Martin Luther, an ex-monk in the Catholic Church, in 1517.
- If you belong to the Church of England (Anglican), your religion was founded by King Henry VIII in the year 1534 because the pope would not grant him a divorce with the right to remarry.
- If you are a Presbyterian, your religion was founded when John Knox brought the teachings of John Calvin to Scotland in the year 1560.
- If you are Unitarian, your religious group developed in Europe in the 1500s.
- If you are Congregationalist, your religion branched off from Puritanism in the 1600s in England.
- If you are a Baptist, you owe the tenets of your religion to John Smyth, who launched it in Amsterdam in 1607.
- If you are Methodist, your religion was founded by John and Charles Wesley in England in 1744.

- If you are an Episcopalian, your religion (branched from Anglicanism) was brought over from England to the American colonies, and then formed into a separate religion founded by Samuel Seabury in 1789.

- If you are a Mormon (Latter-Day Saints), Joseph Smith started your church in Palmyra, NY, not Salt Lake City. The year was 1830.

- If you belong to the Salvation Army, your sect began with William Booth in London in 1865.

- If you are a Christian Scientist, you look to 1879 as the year your religion was founded by Mary Baker Eddy.

- If you are a Jehovah's Witness, your religion was founded by Charles Taze Russell in Pennsylvania in the 1870s.

- If you are a Pentecostal, your religion was started in the United States in 1901 (in Los Angeles in what was called the Azusa Street Revival).

- If you are an agnostic, you profess an uncertainty or skepticism about the existence of God or a Higher Being.

- If you are an atheist, you do not believe in the existence of God or any other higher power. This country's best-known atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, has not been seen or heard from in more than a year. According to her son, she has disappeared without a trace.

(Ed. note: O'Hair made a lot of headlines about the time of Landers' column, and I have not heard about her for many years. I hope she has found peace in her heart through the grace of salvation.)

PRAYER BRUNCH

We want to let you know about plans for a Charismatic Prayer Brunch to be held on

Saturday, March 12, 2016

At St. Joseph / BOL Church

Time: 9:30 AM to Noon

Cost: \$8.50 (to accompany reservation)

Speaker to be announced

(See next issue of Reflections)

Please have reservations in by March 7th.

For reservations and more information
call T.A. Walkiewicz at 814-833-9717

IRAQ: Biblical Facts

Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But do you know which nation is second? It is Iraq.

However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible. The names used in the Bible are Babylon, Land of Shinar (SHIGH nahr), and Mesopotamia.

The word “Mesopotamia” means “between two rivers,” more exactly, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This is considered the cradle of civilization.

The name Iraq means “country with deep roots.” Indeed, Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible. Here’s why:

- Eden was in Iraq (Gen. 2:10-14)
- Adam and Eve were created in Iraq (Gen. 2:7-8)
- Satan made his first recorded appearance in Iraq (Gen. 3:1-6)
- Nimrod established Babylon and built the Tower of Babel (BAY buhl) in Iraq (Gen. 10:8-9 and 11:1-4)
- The confusion of the languages took place in Iraq (Gen. 11:5-11)
- Abraham came from a city in Iraq (Ur of the Chaldees) (Gen. 11:31 and Acts 7:2-4)
- Isaac’s bride came from Iraq (Gen. 24:3-4, 10)
- Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq (Gen. 27:42-45 and 31-38)
- The first world empire was in Iraq (Dan. 1:1-2 and 2:36-38)
- The greatest revival in history was in a city in Iraq (Esther)
- Nahum prophesied against a city of Iraq (Nahum)
- The book of Revelation has prophecies against Babylon (Rev. 17 and 18)

No nation except Israel has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq.

Source: Unknown

Editor’s notes: here is some information from my Old Testament research from Eerdmans’ Handbook to the Bible and some other references. It’s related to the above information. You are invited to do your own research into Biblical themes. It can be very interesting; you can share your information with me. We have to keep in mind that the geography of the area has changed much, but a lot is still recognizable, such as bodies of water.

Noah’s three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From Shem came the Semite people from the Middle East. From Ham came the Africans, Canaanites and Southwest Asians. From Japheth came the Indo-European peoples (and probably northern Asians). A descendent of Shem was Aram, father of the Arameans. Note that Jesus’ native language was Aramean. Luke 3:36 states that Jesus was a descendent of Shem through Eber and then through Abraham.

The Hamites’ territory spread from Canaan (on the Mediterranean Sea) to Mesopotamia in the East (Shinar, near the Persian Gulf) to Cush in North Africa. All were descended from Ham. Ur of the Chaldees was located near the Persian Gulf. It was the home of Abraham, father of the Israelites, who settled among the Canaanites after hearing a call from God to travel far north to Haran and then southwest to Canaan (present day Israel).

The tower of Babel was built in Shinar in the kingdom of Nimrod the hunter (Gen. 11). God looked on this tower as man’s attempt to make himself like God, and thus the beginning of rebellion. So he divided men by language barriers and scattered them abroad. The great tower was never finished.

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