



Reflections

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Word Of Life
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center

May 2017

TIME FOR A FILL-UP By Cindy Palewicz

The sign at the exit ahead said, "Fuel Up." Driving my little car home from Ohio, I flew past. Then I looked at the gas gauge--pretty near empty. Then I looked at the next sign, "Next Exit 20 miles" as I drove past it. My little car is great on gas, I thought. I can make it. No problem. At 10 miles to go, the low-fuel light came on. I clenched the wheel and started praying, Dear God, please help me make it. With 5 miles to go, the fuel light started to blink. I had just entered a work zone where speed was reduced. I started the Jesus prayer, the one I have always used in desperate moments. *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.* The end of the story is that I made it to the exit and got my fuel with just a little gas left in the tank. I'd like to think that God heard my mercy prayer and decided I truly needed it!

How often do we think we can get through a day, a situation or an unexpected event when we're low on spiritual fuel? Just as I prepare for any road trip by filling my gas tank, I need to fill my spiritual tank so I will be

prepared to travel the road trip of life.

Psalm 119:105 says:
"Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path."

If we keep in mind what the psalmist is saying, we would have a clearer picture of the road ahead. We wouldn't be distracted by anything that happens in our day because God would be in the driver's seat.

Our lives are filled with the busyness of just living. We have families, jobs, and elderly relatives. A car breaks down. An appliance fails. These all take so much of our time. But what if we took just a few minutes a day to listen to what God feels is important. Burying the Word of God in my heart sustains me for the hard times, the trying times, and is a reminder of God's love for me.

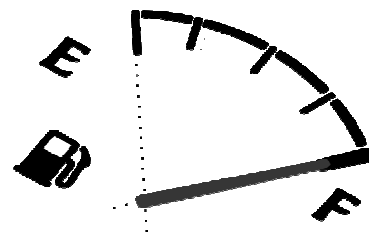
In Psalm 119:11 we read:
"I have stood by Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."

We can rely on God's Word to strengthen, encourage and help us overcome any evil that Satan throws our way. If we hide

God's word in our hearts, we will have the right Scripture for whatever we have to deal with in our lives. Our hearts then become a treasure chest of hope. One of the greatest blessings of being a believer in Jesus Christ is the peace we have in any situation.

Colossians 3:1 tells us:
"Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

If we take the time to fill up our spiritual tanks we'll never run low in any situation on the road trip of life.



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MORE THAN CHOCOLATE

by Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD

Ed. note: this is excerpted from a talk given in Erie in March 2016. This centers on Lent, but this teaching on fasting can be useful any time during the year.

prayer & fasting

During a recent Lenten fast I decided to give up more than chocolate. I decided that I wanted to participate in Jesus' suffering in order to be closer to Him. I did it out of love for Him. I was close to God and I was devout, as most of you are.

I was living in Houston, TX. It took me an hour and a half to get to work every morning and I had to be in the hospital by 7:30 am. But I would get up at 4:30 so that I could get into Houston for Mass and adoration at 6:15. I would pray the rosary on the way. I led the music at my parish. I read the Bible and spiritual books. I tried to be a loving, giving person. I thought I was doing everything in my power to walk as closely with God as I could. As far as I knew, I had no "spiritual clouds" covering me or blocking my ability to hear Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

During the same Lent, I found myself in the spiritual and physical battle of my life. My new marriage fell apart and that, in itself, felt like it would kill me. In addition to this, I developed an illness where I was getting sicker and sicker, to

the point where I was pretty sure that I was going to die before they figured out what was wrong with me. But I didn't know these things at the time I decided to fast. They were not reasons I decided to fast. But I'm not sure I would have gotten through them without the spiritual strength I gained from fasting that Lent.

Fasting (and praying; always with praying) with all my heart that Lent changed my spiritual walk in the same way that being baptized in the Holy Spirit had done 25 years earlier. It took me to a different level of closeness with the Lord, and gave me the ability overcome faults that I struggled a long time with. It made me more available to others. Like I said, that Lent I decided to give up more than chocolate or sweets (and I had a little Welch's fruit-gummy-bear addiction going on. I'm not going to lie!). So I gave up the things that I knew would be hardest and cause me the most pain, but that I also knew weren't the best things for my spiritual life -- things that drew me into the world instead of out of it. So I fasted like I have never fasted before. *Ever*.

I'll be honest. I wasn't sure I could do it. I gave up TV 100% -- cold turkey (in the middle of series of my favorite shows). I had a friend who fasted with me, and all we could think about before we gave up TV was how quickly we could get on the Internet on Easter Monday to

watch the final episodes! But by Easter we had no desire whatsoever to watch, and we never did. We walked with rocks in our shoes, rocks that came from the Garden of Gethsemane. I gave up all sweets. We fasted on bread on Wednesdays and Fridays. We both gave up ALL make-up. I fasted from buying anything except necessities. We went to daily Mass. I decided to fast from negative thoughts. We slept on the floor. I replaced watching TV with prayer and reading books about the saints. I became very close to Padre Pio and Saint Philomena that Lent.

We began our journey of fasting only wanting to be closer to Jesus, not ever being able to anticipate all the graces that would result from it. I was just doing it because I knew I longed to be close to Jesus in His suffering that Lent. But in truth, I really, *really* questioned whether I could do it or not.



This will be continued next month, when we learn what the author experienced as she continued her fast. She says this is not because she is boasting about what she did. She just wants to encourage others to experience the power of prayer with fasting. This month we just want to wet your appetite.

MERCY IN DISGUISE

By Amy Mosbacher

*“Cause what if your blessings
come through rain drops,
What if Your healing comes
through tears...
What if trials of this life are
Your mercies in disguise”
~Laura Story~*

A few weeks ago in church we heard the story of the tower of Babel, which can always have a variety of interpretations. A variation came to me this time that I hadn't considered before in relation to the theme of mercy.

According to the footnotes in the Bible, after the flood people were once more heading in wicked ways and developing an urban culture with no place for God in it. The city's crowning glory would be a tower that reached to the heavens, thus creating a name for the people. By being known for their creation they would be exalting themselves and not God. When the Lord saw that, He confused their language so they couldn't

understand one another and had to stop their progress, otherwise later on *“nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”* (Gen 11:6) Some might say this makes God look like a vengeful God who doesn't want people to better themselves and make progress, or that He doesn't want anyone to be greater than He is.

The image that comes to mind is a reprimanded child stomping her foot in anger, crossing her arms and shouting, “That's not fair!” How often do we say that to God? But what if God can see things we can't? What if God knew that if we continued on our course we'd only get worse and grow further away from Him? What if He knew that the only way to save us from our current destruction was to stop us where we were? So God's confusing the languages and keeping us from falling deeper into sin was actually a kindness towards us. What seems like tragedy was actually God's mercy.

God didn't create us to torment us. Our Father wants only what is best for us. How often as parents do we tell our children to “just trust us, we know what's best.” We can understand things children don't. Our Father is God, and He knows everything. *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Is 55:8-9)

So the next time something happens we don't understand and seems unfair, let's stop and ask God to help us see things from His point of view. If we can't manage that, at least ask our Father to help us trust Him. God will get us through it, as long as we don't let go of Him. Blessed be God forever!

*Dear God, give me a desire to grow spiritually. I want to
honor You with my life and experience the joy of the
Spirit's work inside of me.*

Spiritual growth is a process.

HEALING MASS

Our Lady of Peace Church
2401 W. 38th St. 7:30 PM
First Wednesday of the month

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

When I found out I had cancer,
I didn't know what to pray for. I didn't know if I
should pray for healing or life or death.
Then I found peace in praying for "God's perfect
will." As it evolved, my prayer has become, "Lord,
let me live until I die." By that I mean I want to live,
love, and serve fully until death comes. If that prayer
is answered...how long really doesn't matter.

Sr. Thea Bowman

Understanding is the reward given by faith.
Do not try to understand in order to believe, but
believe in order to understand.

St. Augustine of Hippo

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

† 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

† THURSDAY:

Wildfire Prayer Meeting

2nd 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

† 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

† WEDNESDAY:

St. Mark's Prayer Group

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

† 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/>

LEARNING THE JESUS CODE By Agnes D. Helsley

My husband and I live at Parkside, a senior living apartment building. Shortly after moving in we began meeting with a small group to share the Word. We sort of resemble a Renew group, although not everyone is Catholic. So far we have shared the Gospel of Mark, the book of Proverbs, the compilation of the Acts of the Apostles, and the book of Job. Job was the hardest, dealing with Job's so-called friends hurling accusations at him plus his wife's advice: "*Curse God and die!*" Job's misery was felt by all---not a good time; but then we read the end of the book. We all rejoiced when God began speaking. Lessons to be learned---good summary by Job himself, "*Shall we accept good from God and not trouble.*"

Next we will be doing O.S. Hawkins' book "52 Questions Every Christian Should Answer." The book is also known as "The Jesus Code." By no means are these 52 questions the only ones asked in Scripture, but they are conducive to gaining an excellent overview of the Bible. When I first received a copy of the book I set it aside on a shelf, but after a month or so I needed a book to read. I was really surprised how interesting and instructive it is. The monetary profit obtained from book sales are donated to *Mission: Dignity* which helps

elderly retired ministers of the Word. Those ministers usually serve at low wages and have no long-term investment in real estate to aid in retirement. Good to see that the author is investing in the welfare of God's servants. The reader is blessed and ministers with limited funds are blessed.

The book begins with the snake in the garden of Eden asking Eve "*Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?*" (*Gen. 3:1*) The whole point to Satan's deception was to cause Eve to doubt God. Well, we know how that lie worked. She was deceived and began to doubt God's love. Hawkins uses the analogy of being a hotel manager. The manager cannot stop people from entering the lobby but he does not have to assign a room to the visitor. Thus it is with our minds. We can't stop every thought from entering our minds but we don't have to allow them to take up residence. Once the seed of doubt was given a room by Eve, things happened. Eve enjoyed the sight. She saw that the tree's fruit was good for food...pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise. Next she took it and ate. She shared it with her husband. Everything changed; they tried to hide, and we know the rest! Her steps to her downfall are: she saw, she took, she consumed. A selfish desire allowed to plant itself in

a heart brings a sinful decision. A sinful decision brings sure defeat, and thus it is with sin patterns. If Satan can get us to doubt God, and to believe his lies instead, the consequences are dire. Then it takes a loving, but just, God to deliver us. Thank you, Jesus, for the deliverance You provided at such great cost! The moral of the story---doubt our doubts and believe the Word of our God.

Let us look forward to growing in faith and trust in our God who loves us with an everlasting love!

PLEASE NOTE

The weekly meeting time for the Light of World Community prayer group has been changed.

The prayer meetings will now be held every Friday at 1:00PM.

For more information, please contact
T.A. Walkiewicz
833-9717

DO WE REALLY KNOW MARY MAGDALENE? By Kathy Wilcox

Mary Magdalene's fame as a repentant prostitute transformed by Jesus is legendary. As a sinner she ranks up there with Judas in church lore, but when Judas realized his sin he hung himself, but Mary turned to Jesus and so was redeemed. People love a good story; this one has been repeated for centuries.

As I searched for Mary in the Bible, I discovered that Mary Magdalene was often with our Blessed Mother. I found her at the Crucifixion when, fearing arrest, all the male apostles except John were absent. *"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25)"*

I found her risking arrest to travel with other women to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. *"When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. (Mark 16:1)"*

Mary Magdalene was the first to see the Risen Jesus at the tomb. *"At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?' Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!'" (which means Teacher). (John 20:14-16)"*

The only reference to Mary Magdalene's past is that she had seven demons cast out by Jesus. We have to remember that at the time many illnesses were believed to be caused by demons. The demons are not named, so it is up to conjecture what was really going on in her life before she met Jesus.

What seems to be really important is that Mary was an active apostle, following Jesus during His ministry, and continuing after the crucifixion and resurrection. This has been sidelined by the sensational story for which there is little or no proof.

The lesson here is how quick we are to believe and retell scandalous stories about others. Even if this were true about Mary Magdalene that should not be the story we tell. What we do know for sure is documented in Scripture. Her relationship, her courage and loyalty to Him, and how she was the first to see Him in His glorified risen state are the real story. He did not choose to reveal Himself to her because she was a former prostitute, or because she was a woman; it was because she was there.

It is not who we were or who we are that determines our relationship with Jesus. If we want to be an active disciple, we have to become like Mary Magdalene and leave our old ways, our old priorities, and our old life. We have to follow Jesus through days of persecutions as well as miracles. We must just *be there*. Then we too will see Him in His Glorified state.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RENEWAL IN THE ERIE DIOCESE

By Jack Heintzel

In 1967 the Catholic Charismatic Renewal had its beginning with what is now known as the Duquesne Weekend in Pittsburgh, PA. This year we are celebrating the 50-year anniversary of this Renewal; it is being observed nationally with celebrations and articles in Charismatic publications. How does this affect us in our diocese?

The Erie Charismatic Renewal began in 1969 with a married couple, Paul and Mary Ann Gray, who moved here from Pittsburgh. They had been part of the 1967 Duquesne Weekend, being students at Duquesne University. Paul then took a job teaching theology at Gannon College. They began a two-person prayer meeting in their apartment, and invited people to come.

(Continued on page 7)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RENEWAL IN THE ERIE DIOCESE *continued from page 6*

The group grew fairly rapidly and called themselves the Erie Charismatic Community. Growth became more rapid, and about 1972 the group changed its name to Light of the World Community. There were a lot of teachers in the community by 1973 (most from Pittsburgh area) and the leaders decided to start a Charismatic school. The school operated at different locations until 1979, when financial problems made it necessary to close the school.

But the Light of the World group continued, and still exists today. Other prayer groups began to function locally, some as “spin-offs” from Light of the World. Prayer groups popped up throughout the Diocese over the years, some in the eastern regions of the Diocese. It is still difficult to serve Charismatic Catholics in this large diocese which covers 13 counties, and hard for members to get together when needed. When we had more people active in the Renewal, and

today’s leaders were younger and healthier, we sometimes traveled to Bradford, St. Marys, and Meadville on a weekly basis to participate in Life in the Spirit seminars.

At some point in the late 1970s the Bishop of Erie appointed his first liaison to the Charismatic Renewal. His name was Msgr. James Caldwell. He was succeeded in turn by Fr. Ted Carter, Joe Martone, Mike Vehec, and now Fr. David Poulson, the current liaison.

I don’t remember all the details about the beginnings of the Word of Life Center. As I recall, it was started about 1987 to provide central administration for the diocesan Renewal. Sr. Gerry Olon was the first head of the WOL Center and served for about 25 years. Liz Geary replaced Sr. Gerry and served for about 3 years. All diocesan administrative responsibility is now provided by a board of directors formed by the liaison.

The current board members are as follows:

Fr. David Poulson, Chair and Liaison.....	St. Anthony, Cambridge Springs
Theresa Ann Walkiewicz, Vice Chair.....	St. Joseph/BOL, Erie (Light of the World Community PG)
Patty Montefiori, Corporate Secretary,,,,,,,,,,,,,	Holy Rosary, Erie (Son of God PG)
Mary Beth Whitman, Treasurer.....	Our Lady of Peace, Erie (Bible study program coordinator)
Jack Heintzel.....	St. Julia, Erie (Acts II Community PG)
Shirley Ireland.....	Inactive
Joe Kirsch.....	Holy Rosary, Erie (Son of God PG)
Amy Mosbacher.....	St. Brigid, Meadville (River of Life PG)
Jaci Phillips-Sabol.....	St. Joseph/BOL, Erie (Son of God PG)
Fr. David Renne.....	Our Lady of Peace, Erie
Fr. Johnathan Schmolt.....	St. Brigid, Meadville
Kathy Wilcox.....	St. Boniface, Erie (Cambridge Spgs. Prison PG, leader)
Jim Witsch.....	Holy Rosary, Erie (Son of God PG)
Dan Zuba.....	St. James, Erie (Albion Prison PG, leader)

Other diocesan prayer groups are as follows:

Shalom in Jesus, DuBois.....	Chosen Prayer Group, Shinglehouse
Disciples of the Holy Spirit, St. Marys.....	St. Mark Prayer Group, Emporium
St. Andrew Chapel, Erie.....	Wildfire Prayer Meeting, Erie
St. Boniface Prayer Group, Erie	

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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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