

THE FLAME

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The Graces of Baptism, Renewed by Baptism in the Holy Spirit

By Jim Beckman

A friend of mine recently observed that I am “always” recommending a new book. He seemed annoyed, but it was a somewhat humorous jibe... and true. I am typically reading two or three books at a time, often struggling to remember where I was in each of them. And on the other side of a good read, I do find myself wanting to share what I have read with others. It’s kind of like evangelization, how could we help but share the great gift that we have received! (I Cor. 9:16).

One book I have been reading the past year or so has been remarkable, *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission* (University of Mary, Bismarck, ND). I’ve given away a lot of books in my life, but never a couple thousand copies like I have with this book. I have found the articulation of our current reality to be profoundly accurate and insightful. The state of the world, of the Church, and even the condition of the individual person. The premise of the book is that we are at a major turn in history from an era of Christendom to an era of apostolic times. We have seen this shifting happening for years, but the full decline is gaining momentum rapidly these days. We are finding our modern culture to be one almost completely devoid of the Christian roots that used to be taken for granted. A Christian today is going to find themselves in an environment of increasing hostility toward the faith, similar to the times of the early Church, which was another era of history that could be labeled an “apostolic time”.

That would all be a topic for another time. What is relevant to our topic today, however, is the incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit that typically marks apostolic times. The New Testament is rife with stories of such power. If we are indeed moving into a new era of apostolic times, this is one of the things we should be expecting. Apostolic times call for a great shift from maintenance to mission, and the primary driving force of that mission is the Holy Spirit: unique gifts and charisms for evangelization, signs of power and healing, powerful conversions and forgiveness of sins, etc. In a world that is growing increasingly darker, these are exactly the kinds of things that are needed. This gets me to the main point of this article, how the Holy Spirit, in particular baptism in the Holy Spirit, renews the graces of the sacrament of Baptism. The Catechism tells us that, “The sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the foundations of every Christian life. ‘The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal

life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity” (CCC, 1212).

This “foundation” for the Christian life is the necessary building block for evangelization. The Catechism goes on to say that “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word’” (CCC, 1213).

In order to fully grasp the impact of this, we need to understand the “effects” of the sacrament. Again, referencing the Catechism, “The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit” (CCC, 1262). “By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God” (CCC, 1263). “Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte ‘a new creature,’ an adopted son of God, who has become a ‘partaker of the divine nature,’ member of Christ and coheir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit” (CCC, 1265).

Yet these “effects” seem to be diminishing in our modern times. How can it be that these powerful effects, done by God and the work of grace are not more evident in the world today? Father Raniero Cantalamessa wrestles with this exact question and comes to the conclusion that the Sacraments of Initiation can become “tied” in a person when living in an environment that does not support the work of grace that is operating in them. “Catholic theology recognizes the concept of a valid but “tied” sacrament. A sacrament is called tied if the fruit that should accompany it remains bound because of certain blocks that prevent its effectiveness”. Grace builds on nature as Aquinas says.

Cantalamessa goes on to explain, “The opus operatum of baptism, namely, God’s part or grace, has several aspects — forgiveness of sins, the gift of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity (these, however, only as a seed), and divine

Dear Readers of *The Flame*,

The letters **PTA** remind most people of a school organization that brings parents and faculty together to help with the mission and morale at a school. However, for me **PTA** is a set of letters that offer a **pathway of discipleship**: Pray, Think, Act. Following Jesus Christ first means that we have a personal relationship with Him. This means prayer. It also means learning to think the way He thinks and act in the way He acts. **PTA-Prayer, Think and Act.**

St. Paul captures this manner of life in a few short verses in his letter to the Philippians. He says:

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by **prayer** and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, **think** about these things. Keep on doing [act] what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9)

This is a beautiful exhortation - the PTA manner of discipleship.

The words of Jesus in the gospels repeatedly exhort us to pray:

- Ask...seek...knock...(Matthew 7)
- He told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary (Luke 18:1).
- Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete (John 16:24).

Saints have reflected on the just how important prayer really is. St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) said, "Those who pray are certainly saved. Those who do not pray are certainly damned." (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2744)

St. Paul's exhortation about prayer also describes how we ought to pray. We are to pray about everything, with gratitude and without anxiety.

Many people find the "without anxiety" part the most difficult. Perhaps it is because many of us digest large amounts of bad news from a variety of media sources. Perhaps our fast-paced lives make us anxious. And sometimes we just plain forget who we talk to when we pray: God, who made all that is visible and invisible, who loved us completely through His Son Jesus Christ, who promised to be with us always! Whatever our root cause for anxiety is, we need bathe it in the streams of living water flowing from the heart of Jesus our Savior.

Gratitude also helps with anxiety. When we are grateful, we are expressing to God that He has been trustworthy in the past. We are saying that we know that He will be with us in the present. **As Blessed Solanus Casey instructed, "Thank God ahead of time."**

The bottom line is simple: if we are going to be a disciple, we are going to need to make time to pray.

The next thing St. Paul addressed was our thought life. He instructed us to think about things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and worthy of praise. The more these things occupy our thought life:

- the less anxiety can seep into our hearts
- the more gratitude will grow in our hearts
- the more we will be inspired to do good works

Lou, a 93 year old parishioner, recently shared a few thoughts with me. They touch on how a Christian should think. Lou said, "Enjoy what you have and not what you could have had...Keep a sense of



humor...Laugh." Lou jokingly said that his prayer at this stage of the game is that he and his wife do not get sick at the same time. His thinking is simple. When only one is ailing, the healthier one can care for the other one.

Part of being a disciple of Jesus is thinking along the lines of faith, having hope and anticipating how to act with charity.

Finally, St. Paul encourages us to act. "Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me." Though he was well aware of his sins and faults, he was even more aware of God's grace and mercy. And because of this awareness, St. Paul was not timid about putting himself out there as an example.

Perhaps an outline of how St. Paul was encouraging the Philippians to act is best illustrated by his own words in Romans 12. After encouraging the Church in Rome to live free of the world (vs. 1-2) and acknowledging that each member of Christ's body had different gifts (vs. 3-8), St. Paul told those in Rome to live in a virtuous manner:

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (Romans 12:9-11)

He went on to encourage hospitality, humility, forgiveness and love of enemies. These are powerful ways of acting that demonstrate fruits of Christian prayer and thinking.

As we approach the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, I encourage you to follow the PTA manner of discipleship. Prayer, good thoughts and loving actions will help us from yielding to anxiety and fear. With St. Padre Pio let us, "Pray, hope and don't worry!" This we can do because we know that Jesus Christ is Lord!

In Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

PS: Let me express my gratitude for your prayerful support over this past year. May our combined efforts in prayer and sacrifice further a deeper Life in the Spirit in our diocese.

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Catholic Renewal Ministries Traveling Healing Mass

Friday, November 10th, 2023

St. Columbkille Parish

All are Welcome!

Fr. Jamie Mazanec Celebrant

Liturgy begins at 7:00 p.m.

St. Columbkille

6740 Broadview Rd.

Parma, OH 44134

Healing prayer teams will be available after mass for individual prayer. After the liturgy, there will also be a social.

Contact CRM: 440-944-9445



Healing Prayer teams will be available after Mass for individual prayer.

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Catholic Renewal Ministries Events



WANTED - GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Catholic Renewal Ministries is looking for a few new members for the General Service Committee. We meet once a month, usually the third Monday of the month, to discuss plans and events for the Renewal. Members are encouraged to provide ideas for the growth of the Renewal in the Cleveland Diocese, and to provide help as needed. Current committees are: Conference, Prayer Groups, Healing, Hispanic, Program, Music and Word Gifts. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Ken Posavad at 440.319.9646 or kposa@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Group Information

Our Lady of Angels Prayer Group is praising God at the completion of our eight week, Life in the Spirit Seminar. There were nearly forty participants who attended this Seminar drawing them closer to our Lord, and baptizing them in the Holy Spirit for a release of those gifts already received in Baptism and Confirmation.

We will now resume our regular weekly **Tuesday** evening prayer meetings from **7:30 - 9:00 pm** in the Primary Building of Our Lady of Angels school (behind Linus Hall), 3600 Rocky River Dr., Cleveland 44111. All are welcome as we praise God in song, move in the charisms of the Holy Spirit, learn from teachings presented, and pray for both healing and intercessions of many needs. For more information contact Tom Stamper at 216.536.6495.

SS. Cosmas and Damian Charismatic Prayer Group meets every **Sunday at 7:00 p.m.** in the church gathering area under the Holy Spirit Dove. The prayer meeting is also streamed live on SS. Cosmas and Damian Facebook page. Come and experience vibrant praise and worship, intercessory and healing prayer, and scripture sharing.

Do you want to know Jesus in a deeper way? Are you looking to go deeper in your faith? Come and check out our church community of believers. To contact us or be on the prayer group email list call 330-310-2595 or email dennycarleton@sbcglobal.net

Holy Spirit Prayer Group meets in the Fairlawn and Akron area. For information about dates, times and locations, please call Jim McGuire at 330-612-5969.

The **Holy Spirit Prayer Group** of St. Mary Church in Hudson is a Charismatic Holy Spirit led prayer group that meets the **first and third Saturdays** of each month year around. We meet from **10am to 11:30 am** in the chapel. The main focus of our meeting is to praise and worship the living God. We ask the Holy Spirit to minister to us and take us to the heart of the Father. We not only offer praise and worship but also periods of silent prayer to seek and hear God's words and His messages to us. We share words of God, share stories, and offer intercessory prayers for hurting and suffering brothers and sisters.

Our prayer group offers a monthly healing prayer service also. For further information, please contact us at HealingPrayers@stmaryhudson.cc.

The **Living Word Healing Prayer Ministry** at St. Ambrose Parish in Brunswick meets face to face on the **first and third Tuesdays** of every month from **7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** in our Chapel.

We allow the Winds of the Spirit to flow over us as we praise the Lord through music, sharing, and group reflection. We allow time for God to open our hearts and minds as we listen to His Word both through Scripture and Word of Knowledge. Every meeting ends with healing prayer as we ask Jesus to come to us in a special way to heal our brokenness and touch us with His Love.

All are invited to join us as we praise and worship the Living God!

Catholic Renewal Ministries Events

Prayer Group Information

The **Bukas Loob sa Diyos** (BLD) or in English - **Open in Spirit to God** (OSG), is a Filipino Catholic Charismatic Covenant Community. While the majority of BLD members are from the Philippines, it also includes other brothers and sisters of many nationalities and heritage backgrounds. We meet every **Thursday**, at **6:30 pm** at the Mary Queen of Peace Chapel, 4423 Pearl Rd, Cleveland, OH 44109. We hold weekly praise and worship service in-person. Also, on the first Thursday of each month, we celebrate a mass followed by a healing service. We are a communion of families and a community of persons called together as one people through the moment of encounter and a process of renewal to a relationship of faith, hope, and love with God. We conduct marriage encounter programs, solo person encounters, single encounters, family encounters and life in the spirit seminars. For more information, please contact Rudy and Fe Fontilla at (440) 403-5719 or email: rudyfontilla1975@yahoo.com.

The **Community of Praise Prayer Group** meets at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel at Walsh University, 2020 East Maple Street, North Canton, OH 44720. Their prayer meetings start at **6:30 pm** on the **second Monday** of each month. Upcoming dates are: November 13, and December 11, 2023. For more information contact Don and Rosemary Pfiffner at 330-499-9371 or email: pfiffner67@gmail.com.

Merry Christmas!



(Continued from page 1)

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sonship—all of which are operated through the effective action of the Holy Spirit. But what does the opus operantis in baptism, namely, man's part, consist of? It consists of faith! Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mk 16:16). At the side of baptism, therefore, there is another element: the faith of man".

What a dilemma! All these powerful effects of the sacrament, but those graces "tied up" and not bearing the full intended fruit. "[This] is the significance of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is God's answer to this malfunctioning that has grown up in the Christian life in the Sacrament of Baptism...it seems that God was concerned about this situation even before the Church was, and raised up here and there in the Church movements aimed at renewing Christian initiation in adults. The Charismatic Renewal is one of these movements and in it the principal grace is, without doubt, linked to the Baptism of the Spirit and to what comes before it". "It's effectiveness in reactivating baptism consists in this: finally man contributes his part—namely, he makes a choice of faith, prepared in repentance that allows the work of God to set itself free and to emanate all its strength. It is as if the plug is pulled and the light is switched on. The gift of God is finally 'untied' and the Spirit is allowed to flow like a fragrance in the Christian life".

I resonate with Father Cantalamessa's description of this action and have found it to be the case in much of the ministry I have done over the years. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the great awakening! It helps facilitate conversion of heart, an authentic encounter with the person of Jesus and the person of the Holy Spirit, and facilitates a deep experience of the forgiveness of sins and an awakening to new life IN Christ. This is a "renewal," a "coming alive again" of the graces one received in their baptism. Many theologians make the same connections we have made here to the Sacrament of Baptism, with the other Sacraments of Initiation. You can draw similarly powerful connections with all three. And "in such a time as this" (Es 4:14), these apostolic times, these are the kinds of graces that are desperately needed!

(Editor's Note: The four quotes on page 5 are from an article by Father [now Cardinal] Cantalamessa on "Baptism of the Holy Spirit".)

Jim Beckman is the Executive Director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. He is a member of the Pentecost Today USA Board.

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Save the Date:
Saturday,
April 6, 2024

UNBOUND
HEART OF THE FATHER

Catholic Renewal Ministries invites you to join us in

UNBOUND... A Day of Healing Prayer with Matt Lozano from Heart of the Father.

Learn how to claim and experience the freedom that Jesus Christ promised.

Catholic Renewal Ministries Events

CRM and Prayer Group Events

The Holy Spirit Prayer Group of St. Mary Church hosts an in-person **Healing Prayer Service** on the **first Sunday** of each month, except in July and September of this year. For those months the service will be held on the second Sundays. The service will be held in the chapel from **12:30-1:30 pm**. Our prayer teams will be available to pray for the healings of your body, body and spirit. Fr. Larry will, depending on his availability, offer an anointing for those seriously ill, preparing for surgery, or weak with aging. We encourage you to submit your prayer requests to healingprayers@stmaryhudson.cc. St. Mary Church is located at 340 N. Main St., Hudson 44236, Tel: 330-653-8118.

The **Living Word Healing Prayer Ministry** at St. Ambrose Parish in Brunswick offers a monthly **Healing Prayer** event which takes place in the Church **after the 4:30 p.m. Mass** on the **third Saturday** of every month. Healing prayer ministers are available to offer prayer for spiritual, emotional, or physical healing. Please join us so that the Spirit of God can touch you with healing love!

Holy Family Healing Prayer Group (Stow) offers **Healing Prayer** after masses the second weekend of the month (**Saturday 5:00 PM, Sunday 7:30 and 9:00 AM masses**) and after **Tuesday and Friday 8:00 AM daily masses**. Prayer teams will meet you in the back of the church. If you are unable to attend one of the masses, we offer homebound private prayer. Private prayer for physical, inner healing and Unbound can be scheduled by calling 330-686-0017. Jesus is Alive! Come experience His healing power. **Holy Family Healing Prayer Group (Stow) Classes** are in session and are FREE. We meet weekly on **Mondays, 10:00 -12:00 and 6:30 - 8:30 PM**, in the prayer room in the back of Holy Family Church, 3179 Kent Rd, Stow. Learn your Identity as a Child of God, Hearing God's Voice and total Healing of the Body, Mind and Spirit. Come, join us and learn about the transforming love of God. For information, please call Mary at 330-686-0017 or email cusack435@gmail.com.

Sing and Praise God With Joy! Catholic Renewal Ministries will host a **Healing Mass** at St. Columbkille Parish on **Friday, November 10th, 2023, at 7:00 PM**. The church is located at 6740 Broadview Rd., Parma 44134. Fr. Jamie Mazanec will be the celebrant. Healing prayer teams will be available after mass for individual prayer. After the liturgy, there will also be a social. For more information, please contact Fr. Bob Franco at 440-327-2201 or CRM at 440-944-9445.

Magnificat of Stark County, a ministry to Catholic women, invites you to a **Breakfast on Saturday, December 2**, at Walsh University Barrette Center, 2020 East Maple Street, North Canton, Ohio. Please join us for a special time of fellowship and sharing. Sr. Marie Fidelis of The Ark and Dove will be our guest speaker and will give her testimony. Come hear her tell her story of "selling all she had" and deciding to follow Jesus and share her great joy and fulfillment in living as a Bride of Christ. Cost: \$25 Mail-in/\$26 Online. Visit magnificatstark.weebly.com for more information about our speaker and to make your reservation. For information about reservations or meal requirements, call Sally Kohring at 330-484-1623. Reservations cannot be accepted after November 26. Open seating. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. with Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. There will be an optional Mass at 8:00 a.m. in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel at Walsh University.

PARTNERS in the RENEWAL

PARTNERS in the RENEWAL unites us in supporting Catholic Renewal Ministries with prayers, financial help, and time and talent. If you send us your prayer requests, we will pray for them.

_____ YES! I would like to unite with the efforts of CRM and be a member of Partners in the Renewal. I will pray for this work.

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