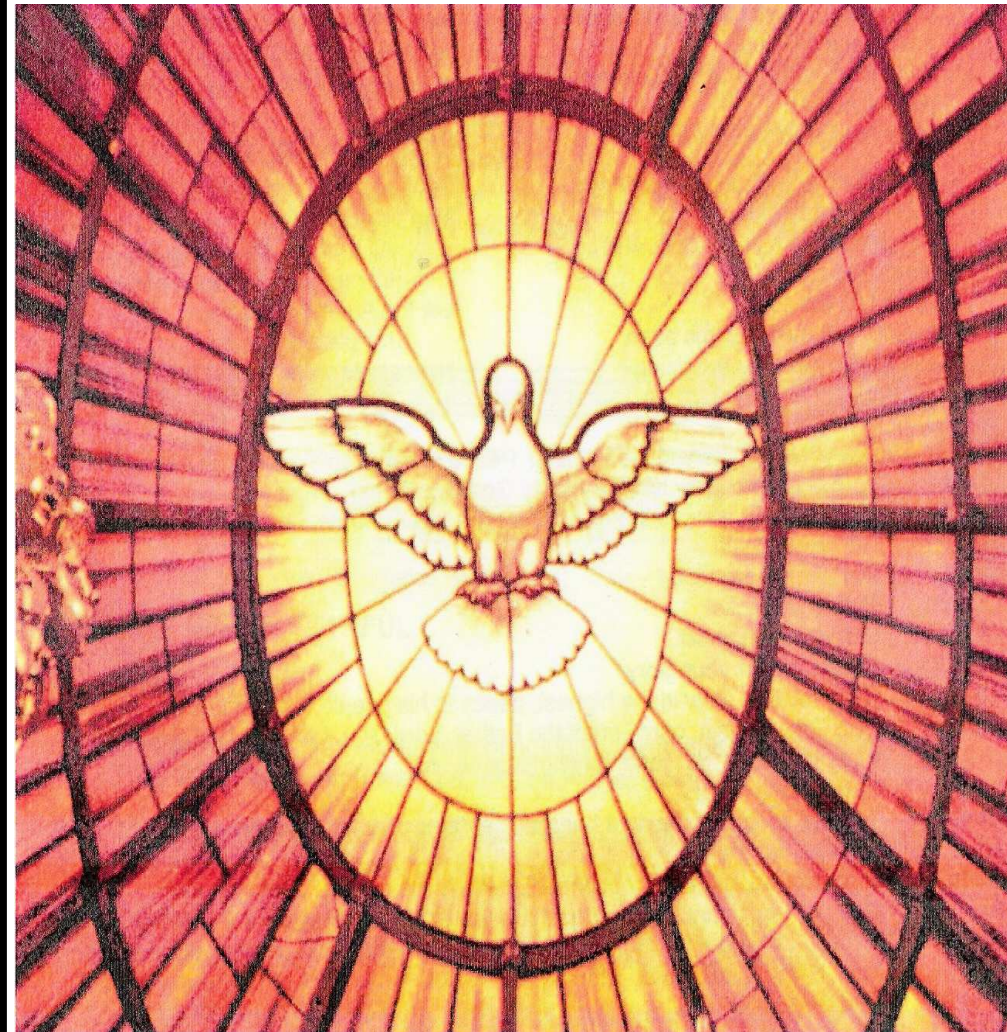


THE SPIRIT IN EAST ANGLIA



**CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL
NEWSLETTER No 3 - 2010
FOR THE DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA**

DAYS OF RENEWAL IN 2011

AT THE TIME OF
GOING TO PRESS
DETAILS FOR 2011
HAVE NOT YET BEEN
FINALISED

Keep checking our website

VISIT — www.ccr.eastanglia.org.uk

**A newsletter will be published
early next year**

WHY THE CATHEDRAL? --- WHY NOT?

For the last Renewal Day of the year we are changing the venue and stepping out of our comfort zone and meeting in the Mother Church of our Diocese for the first time.

We have to admit the Charismatic Renewal does not have a high profile in our Diocese, there are less than 20 prayer groups spread over the three counties covered and not all of them are really charismatic.

The majority of both clergy and laity have little interest in charismatic renewal, and even at times, speak against it.

On one occasion I was asked by a member of Opus Dei to prove to him that we are an official body within the church and authorised by the Vatican. One parish which does not display our posters said that the reason for that was "no one was interested". Fr Gordon at the planning meeting for a healing service mentioned laying on of hands and was told that "we don't want any of the nonsense here". When mentioning renewal I was told "Oh you're that strange group that does not even meet in a Catholic church". So you see what we are up against.

We really need to improve the image of renewal in our Diocese. We hope that this visit to the Cathedral may do this. Please support this day encourage people to come especially those who have not been before, showing all that renewal is needed throughout the church and that given the chance the Holy Spirit will move powerfully as at the first Pentecost.

Yours in the love of the Holy Spirit.

Frank

PS - We are not deserting Bowthorpe I am sure that we will be back there next year.

God works in very mysterious ways – A Testimony.

When I was in my seventeenth year my biggest problem was not so much boys as what to choose as a career. Should I be a vet, a radiographer, social worker, occupational therapist, go to university? The list went on. My father was not so keen on the idea of university - it was the early Sixties and I was only a girl! He suggested a secretarial course: "Secretarial skills are always useful and it will give you more time to think." The last thing I wanted to be was a mere secretary but I dutifully enrolled for the course and the thinking and worrying went on.

Nine months later, the day before I was due to take my first exam, disaster struck. I had a hospital appointment and was asked to bring a parent or guardian with me. Over the previous six months I had had regular appointments following a routine X-ray for Tuberculosis that had shown a slight shadow on my left lung. "Probably an old scar" said the Consultant "Sometimes we get a touch of TB and the body overcomes it naturally. We'd just like to keep a watch on it to be sure." Everybody said I looked rudely healthy. I did feel a bit tired occasionally but this was put down to teenage female hormones. But a chest infection had laid me low some months earlier which was why my GP had suggested I attend one of the mass X-ray clinics prevalent at the time. It never dawned on me, this particular day, that the Consultant would say the TB had become active.

After the initial shock my first thoughts were: "Whoopee! Convalescence in Switzerland!" No such luck. Complete bed-rest with the least movement possible was prescribed. I was not allowed to knit or sew, draw or paint – just watch TV and read, for six whole months, in isolation, at home. This latter was decided because I had five younger siblings and very mild TB so the risk to the family was less if my parents didn't have to visit me in a sanatorium.

For someone who was very active and loved sport this treatment seemed like torture at its most extreme. I didn't even feel ill. Normal life carried on outside the confines of my bedroom to tease me even further, and I was allowed no visitors. There were times when I ranted and raved (which probably did me more harm than if I had taken up knitting or sewing!) and God frequently bore the brunt of my anger. Then one day, in a fit of pique, and after much deep thinking, I was coming to the conclusion that there was the possibility that God did not exist. How could a God allow such a cruel thing to happen to someone so young, who had such energy, and who had only just begun to savour the Big Wide World after years in the confines of a convent boarding school? And this was the Sixties! No, I decided definitely I could no longer believe in God.....

Before the thought had taken a complete grip on my mind I had the most incredible experience of God's presence. It filled my being with such joy and closeness that I could never doubt the existence of God again. I was on 'Cloud Nine' with this new, deep relationship with this Supreme Being and remained so for many years after, fuelled by another amazing experience which I will refer to shortly. Was this what we now refer to as 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'? In my naïve state of faith as it was then, my knowledge was principally of God the Father and I was not familiar with the workings of the Holy Spirit. No one was praying over me (though I learnt after that many were praying for me), and I was completely alone when it happened.

Then another extraordinary thing happened. I had only one visitor during this time, my Parish Priest who was also the Diocesan Financial Administrator. By coincidence he had had a TB sanatorium under his ministry in a previous parish. He refused to take the advised precautions, visited me regularly with Holy Communion and brought me books and puzzles to keep me occupied. He never discussed religious matters much as I often wished he would, but I was too naïve or shy to ask. Then on one of his visits, when I was convalescing and easing back into normal life, he asked if I would be prepared to help out temporarily with the Bishop's secretarial work as the Bishop's secretary had given her notice. I was dumbstruck. I said I would think about it as I was just about to take a refresher course in order to complete my secretarial exams.

I could think of no more fulfilling career than being personal secretary to a Bishop, especially bearing in mind the current state of my relationship with God. My reply was that I would love to do it so long as it could be considered a permanent post. I was told the Bishop was ideally looking for someone more mature (I was by then 18) but my PP said he would discuss my proposal with the Bishop.

For nearly five years, until marriage moved me away, I had the most rewarding, fulfilling and unbelievable career – an answer to prayer that could not have been dreamed of. And this would never have come about but for the very negative experience of my illness. Moral: even in one's darkest moments never doubt God's plan for you. The words the Lord gave to Jeremiah spring to mind:

“ For I alone know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. “ (Jeremiah 29.11).

I had been the beneficiary of God's plans in double measure.

REPORT ON THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR AT OUR LADY & ENGLISH MARTYRS CAMBRIDGE MAY 2010

Life in the Spirit Seminar at OLEM has made a marked difference in the lives of a number of those who attended. One young man has found a deeper prayer life, so much so he finds a men's prayer group developing around him. A couple of ladies have found great solace within the prayer group and one has been given a confidence she has never had before, plus a deeper understanding and joyfulness in the Holy Spirit. Another gentleman has been glowing like a beacon and has found a new freedom he has been given in the Holy Spirit. Almost everyone has been given a greater peace and joy in their hearts. There has been a new understanding between those in tumultuous relationships and a calming of the waters

For myself, there has been a renewal of courage to step out and a new vision of where we need to go next which God will lead me to in His own time, but I can see where we are going. It is just a question of meeting with the others to pray, consult and discern.

There were about 40 of us who attended the seminars. We had the joy of Charles Whitehead who came to speak at one of the sessions, His presence is always a delight and always leaves us with a great enlightenment. Another wonderful occurrence was the attendance of three priests concelebrating together during a lovely Pentecostal Vigil Mass on Saturday 22 May. Thank you, Fr Rex (OLEM), Fr Michael (Haverhill) and Fr Nicholas Lombardo who has since left for Switzerland.

Since the Seminars our prayer group has grown and strengthened and a number of people have been affected by the Holy Spirit's working through it. A young lady whose elderly father was knocked over by a car and was told that his chances of survival were very slim, came back to us to say that after her visit to the prayer group and praying together, her father was bounding back to health against all the odds. Our link with Street Pastors (an Ecumenical Group here in Cambridge) is going ahead too and we are on the verge of starting a prayer line for our parish.

May God bless you and give all those who are thinking about holding a Life in the Spirit Seminar the courage to go ahead with it.

Sandy Hobson

A few recommendations from the inner healing and deliverance weekend run by Fr Sean Conaty, Fr Mike Gwinell, Miles Dempsy and Pat Kennedy in June 2010.

From the outset it was strongly stated that before involving ourselves in ministry for others we should make sure our own prayer life was in order. Knowing our own gifting was also important and this is where being part of a praying team was helpful because each can recognise and confirm the gifts of others and so pool common resources.

We should be wise when entering the battleground of ministry for inner healing and pray a prayer of protection before we start.

There was common agreement that a person may not to be cured after praying with them once, and there should be an understanding that a person may come back for further ministry. It was also fairly common that a person will present a problem that is not really their main problem, but that this has to be discerned.

Do not see demonic influence everywhere, but if, in prayer, as part of our discernment we sense the presence of a spirit, we should remember that in the name of Jesus we already have the victory and use his authority to tell the spirit to leave.

A question was asked the team: how do we know that deliverance is needed? Well different people manifest signs in different ways, but in general we will notice there is some resistance to prayer. At this stage a word of knowledge would be most helpful to know how to continue. With a picture or word we could then ask the person if this means anything to them, in order to open up any area of blockage that would suggest the need for deliverance.

A question often asked is what words should we use when we are praying. Rather than prayer formulas it was recommended to pray from the heart, trusting the Spirit is giving the words needed at this time. A short prayer to the point is as effective as a rambling but eloquent one.

If during ministry we have discerned a person needs deliverance we should normally not tell the person, but silently order the spirit to go to the foot of Jesus' cross to be dealt with.

We should understand our limitations when praying for inner healing and if we discern or suspect that an exorcism is called for we should go and consult the proper authority who is commissioned to do this.

The issues touched on here deserve full and detailed explanation, not possible in a short article. If anyone would like to hear the sound teaching from this weekend they are welcome to borrow the CDs. Simply email me your address I will put them in the post.

Philip Walters

FALLING UNDER THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

During a time of ministry when the Holy Spirit has been invited to come, it may happen that the person being prayed for falls to the ground under the power of the Holy Spirit. For those in the group who may not have experienced this before it can be quite alarming. Has the person fainted, we wonder, or is it something more serious? What should we do? Maybe we should place the person in the recovery position, or raise their legs, or even call an ambulance

I hope that this article will help to allay fears and to deepen understanding. Much of the information here has been gleaned from Chapter 18 of David Pytches book, "Come, Holy Spirit". I also found the book "Times of Refreshing" by Dr Mark Stibbe very helpful and I have quoted from it in this article.

Various terms have been used to describe the phenomena – some more helpful than others! 'Falling under the power of the Spirit' is one of the more usual ones as is 'Resting in the Spirit' (although at times it may be observed that not much resting takes place, as the person may be quietly sobbing or even laughing!) Being 'slain by the Spirit' or 'Zapped by the Spirit' or being 'Overcome by the Spirit' are also phrases one might hear. We do need to remember, of course, that 'falling' is only one of the phenomena which may be experienced during ministry. Shaking, laughing and crying are among others. Mark Stibbes describes these as 'physical, emotional and cultural reactions to the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit'.

Scriptural References

When the Spirit came upon the prophets, given them a particular burden or a message from God, the Bible sometimes tells us that they fell to the ground. For example, in Ezekiel 1 we read that the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. He saw 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord' and when he saw it he fell on his face (v28). As Daniel saw a vision and heard a voice speaking to him he 'fell into a trance' (Daniel 10:9). And in Revelation 1:17 John states that "when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead."

When the disciples, Peter, James and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus they 'fell to the ground'. When the boy with epilepsy had been delivered of a demon by command of Jesus we read that "...the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said "He is dead". But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up and he was able to stand (Mark 9 :26-27)

On his journey to Damascus, Saul saw a light from heaven flash around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'" (Acts 9:3-4)

The crowd in the garden of Gethsemane at the arrest of Jesus “stepped back and fell to the ground” when Jesus said “I am He” (John 18:6)

Throughout the Ages

In her book on prayer ‘Interior Castle’ during the sixteenth century St Teresa of Avila discussed ‘trances’. St John of the Cross writes about ecstasy experienced in high contemplation

*I was so whelmed,
So absorbed and withdrawn,
That my senses were left
Deprived of all their sensing,
And my spirit was given
An understanding while not understanding,
Transcending all knowledge*

During the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notable for manifestations of power, ‘prostrations’ were observed. John Wesley wrote of them in his journal, recording an occasion where “One and then another struck the earth. They dropped on every side as thunderstruck.” And this phenomenon was also common in many of the Welsh revivals between 1762 and 1905.

In the present day the ‘Toronto blessing’ has been well recorded and many articles written about Churches such as Holy Trinity, Brompton, in which spiritual phenomena are very much in evidence.

Mark Stibbes comments that; “God always operates in a guise which is appropriate to the culture.....since one of the deep needs of many people is the need for ecstasy, the Lord allows us to experience the uninhibited joy of knowing Jesus Christ in a number of varied, ecstatic ways – including some which look very strange.” And he warns, “To those who object to this, three things need to be said. First, we cannot dictate to God how he is to act in a particular situation. The Holy Spirit determines how he is to manifest himself in us (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Secondly, there is in any case something genuinely ecstatic about knowing Jesus Christ. Anyone who has experienced the heady delight of being indwelt by Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit knows that! Thirdly, there are historical precedents for what is happening now.”

What happens when people fall?

It would seem that nothing of a life-changing nature happened when the crowd around Saul fell on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:14) or when the .

same thing happened to the crowd in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:6). Possibly these manifestations were a result of a power encounter between light and darkness

However, for Saul himself it certainly was a life-changing experience. As too, no doubt, it was for the disciples on the Mount of the Transfiguration, and the prophets of old.

But what of today? David Pytches suggests that it might be “a kind of conversion experience, a revelation from God, an anointing for the believers to a ministry, an inner healing of some kind, or a form of spiritual deliverance.” He concludes that “after talking to hundreds who have experienced it, that falling to the ground after an encounter with God seems to be a perfectly wholesome experience.”

But Beware!

There are those ministers who, in wishing to draw attention to their ministry, will physically push people during the laying on of hands, encouraging them to fall, and there are those who are being ministered to, who believe that unless they have fallen they may not have been blessed.

Remember...

During ministry it is the Holy Spirit of God who is at work. Those who minister are channels of his blessing and his healing. We do not need to add to what God is doing, and we must take care not to hinder his work. We do need to take seriously the warning in the scripture not to ‘quench the Spirit’. (1 Thessalonians 5:19). However, God graciously invites us to co-operate with Him in prayer.

What is the protocol when someone falls? In order that the Spirit may continue to minister to others, a team member (preferably the same sex) who is nearest to the person who has fallen should sit or kneel beside the person. Make sure that dignity is preserved (e.g. if it is a lady that her skirt is in place) There is no need to do anything except to watch and pray, and bless what God is doing.

When the person is ready to sit up or get up, the team member should gently assist. Do not rush this! Please remember to smile encouragingly and speak encouragingly, but do not ply the person with questions. If further ministry is necessary the Lord will make it clear in His own way, and in His own time

And Finally... We must allow God to be God, and to do in us that which is pleasing to Him (Mark Stibbes)

Richard Cavanagh

A FOOTNOTE FROM FR: GORDON.

This may well be my final contribution of a 'Footnote' reflection'. They have been the 'back page' teaching for around 14 years! By the time this issue of 'The Spirit in East Anglia' reaches you we will have a Priest, new to our Diocese, who may take over the Priestly oversight of Renewal and bring some representation of a much younger age group than myself

Quite a large number of those who came to our last 'Renewal Day' have asked for the section from my homily of the witty statement and the 10 signs of real growth in the Spirit.

First the piece of wit:- "Going to Mass is no more likely to make a person into a real Christian than going to McDonald's will make you into a burger."

The ten signs of real growth in faith are:- 1 Constant prayer, 2 Respect for biblical authority, 3 Effective leadership, 4 Eventful worship. 5 Mobilised Members, 6 Continuous Evangelism, 7 Community Life, 8 Compassionate Service, 9 Openness to change, 10, Released resources.

As I have often stated in previous 'Footnotes' prayer is the foundation of faith both in the life of the individual & the church. To whom do we look for sound guidance? Jesus, of course, and His teaching is more radical, challenging and striking. Firstly we need to be confident that God hears our prayer and we need to have a very high degree of expectation hope and trust in God's goodness.

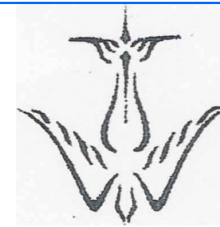
The prayer Jesus gave us, despite being so compact, contains all the petitions needed to boost our spiritual life. To me the amazing thing about the Pater Nostra is that it contains the qualities God is looking for from us when we pray, confidence, faith and love. This knowledge of God's love takes my breath away for when he gifts us with the full power of the Holy Spirit He gifts us with a new language. and we can sing his praises at a new exciting level. And as individuals we notice tremendous differences in the whole of life. In my own spirituality as I received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit I changed from knowing about God to knowing God from knowing about the Lord Jesus to really knowing Him and even more spectacular from knowing about the Holy Spirit to knowing Him which keeps this thought by St Thomas Aquinas to the forefront of my memory:- THE LORD'S PRAYER IS THE BEST OF ALL PRAYERS, It is confident ordered, suitable, devout and HUMBLE

Every blessing for the future

Fr GORDON
Monday August 2nd 2010.



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