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"I must
proclaim
the
good news
of the
kingdom
of God"

Good News

Catholic Charismatic Renewal
serving the Church



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The Catholic Charismatic Renewal: A Current of Grace for the whole Church

By FR. RANIERO CANTALAMESSA, OFMCAP



I begin with the conviction shared by all of us and often repeated by Pope Francis that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) is "a current of grace for the whole Church." If the CCR is a current of grace for the whole Church, we have a duty to ourselves and to the Church to explain what this current of grace consists of and why it is intended for and necessary for the whole Church. In brief, we need to explain who we are and what we offer – or better, what God offers—to the Church through this current of grace.

Until now we have not been – not could we have been – able to say clearly what the Charismatic Renewal is. It is necessary in fact to experience a way of life before being able to define it. This has always happened in the past whenever new forms of Christian life appeared. It is unfortunate when movements and religious orders begin with many rules and a detailed constitution established up front as a protocol to follow. Life, as it progresses, acquires features and makes its own rule, like a river that carves out its own bed as it moves forward.

We have to admit that until now we have given the Church ideas and portrayals of the Charismatic Renewal that have been different and at times contradictory.

We only need to make brief enquiries of the people who live outside of it for us to become aware of the current confusion with regard to the identity of the Charismatic Renewal. For some people it is movement of "enthusiasts," no different than the "enthusiastic and enlightened" movements in the past, the Alleluia people with their hands raised who pray or sing in an incomprehensible language: in brief, an emotional and superficial phenomenon. I can say this with full knowledge of these facts because for quite a while I was among those who thought this way.

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ACROSS MY DESK

By LENYCE WILLASON

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"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:12-13

What is love? It is a question the world in which we live poses in many differing ways. It is also a word that seems to have lost much of its meaning as it is bandied about describing everything but what it was intended for – being concerned enough about another person to actually care what happens to them.

On a recent trip to Rome I was gathered at meal time with a very diverse group of people. As it does, the conversation came around to the areas of concern in the countries from which we had come. One topic I listened to with a mixture of ignorance and interest was about scammers, particularly romance fraud and the rapid growth this form of scamming was having in many countries. Being ignorant of what happens in Australia I set about research praying that our country would be relatively free from this affliction.

To my dismay I discovered that the total amount scooped up by scammers in 2019 alone has been \$46,343,043 – millions of dollars obtained fraudulently. Of that figure romance fraud was touching ten million dollars, meaning many people had lost all they had and in many cases their homes – this has added to the rise in homelessness among the older age group. The most affected age group is, equally between male and female, 55-64 years of age with the next highest being over 65 years of age. The psychological tricks used by these fraudsters are very similar to domestic violence perpetrators.

The most common comment heard from those who had the courage to speak out is: "I just wanted to be loved". What ache is in the heart; what loneliness of spirit is there that a human being turns to Instagram or emails seeking to be loved. Yet this is a fact in our society right now. Loneliness and a need to be loved gains new companions of embarrassment, foolishness and despair when they have discovered they have been defrauded of all they have, leading often to suicide or homelessness.

It seems that the greatest gift God has for us is the one we have the most trouble receiving. How blessed are we who have come to know our God and his love for us, that our past pain and troubles can receive healing and transformation by allowing God to love us and welcome us just as we are – no matter what we have done or been.

How much do we share this love with others? Even make it known that Jesus loves us and is just waiting for those he already loves to turn to him. Surely this is the basis of evangelization - **love**; for God, for self and for others. We can only share this love with others when we ourselves know how much we are loved. We are only able to "love one another" when God's love has filled us so completely that we can put down our judgments and prejudices of others and accept them as they are: another human who is loved by God.

Look around you. Are there people who are living alone in isolation from family or from loneliness being experienced by unemployment or age? Is there someone you can reach out to and let them know how much God loves them. Help them to receive love from the Source that is able to heal all wounds and cause the heart to dance.

Lord, the greatest work in the world is introducing others to you. Someone shared him with each of us: may we be used to share him and his great love with others. Amen.

FATHERHOOD: ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT JOBS



New Dad Jack Regan is tired, broke, and has sleepless nights-but he feels incredibly grateful about life with his wife and son.

The birth of our son wasn't like most births. There was no mad dash to the hospital and no midwife shouting puuuuush! If anything, it was all rather calm.

Not long after his due date, we discovered that he was 'breech' – the wrong way up, basically – and the medics recommended we have a C-Section. A few days later, we were taken into a very peaceful, clean operating theatre. Gilly, my wife, was given an anaesthetic injection and a friendly Indian surgeon got to work.

Expectant fathers are almost always allowed to stay in the room for C-Sections. I was told I could stand wherever I liked, just as long as I didn't get in the way. Not really wanting to see my wife cut open, I opted for the head end!

Parenthood is a Complete Hand Grenade

We were half way through the sixth decade of the rosary when a midwife appeared holding a very slimy crying baby. "Here you go," she said. And there he was. Little Timothy. My son. My beautiful little boy. My Dizzle. There are several other nicknames.

My life changed so much in that moment. My days are so different from what they were a year ago, and almost unrecognisable from when I was single back in 2014.

Make no mistake, parenthood is a complete hand grenade. I'm usually tired, I'm very short of money, and there's not one single thing that comes out of that little boy that I haven't got on my clothes and my hands!

Yet, for all the difficulties, my life is beautiful, and I wouldn't change any of it. When I look at my son, I get a small, imperfect glimpse of the love that God the Father has for me, and that's worth all the poo and sleeplessness.

To Love and Be Loved

Catholic theology tells us that we are 'essentially' rather than 'contingently' social. In other words, we enter into

relationships and communities because it's a natural part of who we are.

Nowhere is this seen more vividly than in the way babies are born into families. Timothy just simply would not be alive if we did not take the time to look after him, and we would be greatly diminished, too.

One of the greatest gifts God has given us is the ability to love and to be loved. Every day, I try to carve out an hour with my Son. Just me and him – tickling, playing, and letting him know that his daddy loves him. If twenty years as a youth worker has taught me anything, it's that quality family time matters! As a father, it's one of my main tasks each day.

Key to that quality time is prayer. Every day, we make time to pray as a family, and I'm sure we always will.

A Commitment To Evangelisation

Since Timothy came along, I've been far more sensitive to anything that harms children, especially abortion.

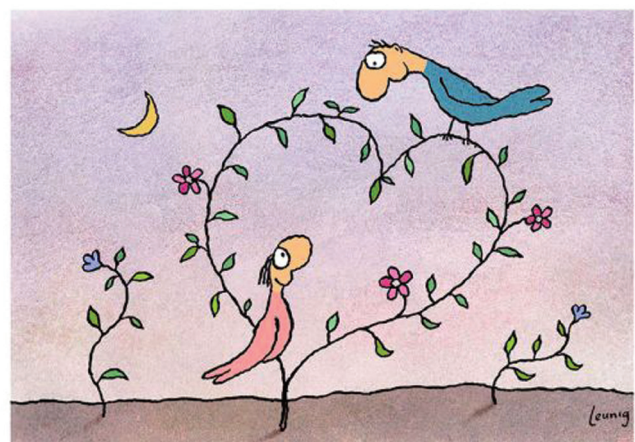
I've always been pro-life but I've never been much of a campaigner. Consider this though: Timothy was born at exactly 10.42am. If he were in New York, China, or a bunch of other places, it would have been perfectly legal at 10.41am to kill him!

I cannot even begin to get my head round that. It's made me all the more determined to commit myself to evangelisation – the only pro-life strategy that really works.

Life needs defending and cherishing because life is beautiful. Life is an awesome gift from the Father which infuses an image of the life of the Trinity into us.

So, Happy Fathers' Day to all the dads out there. May God strengthen us all in one of the most important jobs there is!

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Love one another and you will be happy.
It's as simple and difficult as that.
There is no other way.

For some people, the movement is identified with people who do healing prayer or exorcisms; for still others, it is a Protestant and Pentecostal “infiltration” into the Catholic Church. At best, the Charismatic Renewal is seen as a movement whose members can be relied on to do many things in the parish but with which it is best not to get too deeply involved. As someone once said, people like the fruit of the renewal but not the tree.

After fifty years of existence and experience, and on the occasion of the inauguration of the new service organization CHARIS, perhaps the moment has come to attempt a reinterpretation of this movement and to define it, even if any definition cannot be definitive since its path is far from over. I believe that the essence of this current of grace is providentially enclosed in its name, “Charismatic Renewal,” provided one understands the true significance of both these words. What I propose to do is to dedicate the first part of my speech to the noun “Renewal” and the second part to the adjective “Charismatic.”

PART ONE: “RENEWAL”

It is necessary to make some preliminary remarks for us to understand the relationship between the noun “Renewal” and the adjective “Charismatic” and what each represents.

In the Bible we clearly see two modes in which the Spirit of God operates. There is the first mode that is called charismatic. This occurs when the Spirit of God comes upon some people in particular circumstances and confers on them gifts and an ability beyond a human capacity to accomplish the task God is expecting of them. ¹The characteristic of this mode of operation by the Spirit of God is that it is given to a person but not for that person’s sake—to make him or her more pleasing to God—but rather for the good of the community, for service. Some of the people who received these gifts in the Old Testament ended up leading lives that were anything but conformed to God’s will.

Only later, essentially after the exile, does the Bible begin to speak about a different mode of operation by the Spirit of God, a mode that will later be called the sanctifying action of the Spirit (see 2 Thess 2:13). The Spirit is defined as “holy” for the first time in *Psalms* 51: “Take not your holy Spirit from me” (v. 11). The clearest testimony of this is the prophecy in *Ezekiel* 36:26-27: *A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.*

The innovation of this mode of acting by the Spirit is that it comes upon people and remains there, transforming them from within, giving them a new heart and a new ability to observe the law. Later, theology will call the first mode of the Spirit’s action “*gratia gratis data*,” a free gift, and call the second, “*gratia gratum faciens*,” grace that makes one pleasing to God.

As we move from the Old to the New Testament, this dual kind of action of the Spirit becomes even clearer.

We only need to read chapter 12 of the First Letter to the Corinthians that speaks of all types of charisms and then go on to the next chapter, chapter 13, that speaks of a unique gift, equal and necessary for all, which is love. This love is “God’s love... poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5), the love, as defined by St. Thomas Aquinas, “with which God loves us and which makes us capable of loving him and the brethren.”²

The relationship between the sanctifying action of the Spirit and his charismatic action is seen by Paul as similar to the relationship between being and acting and to the relationship between unity and diversity in the Church. Sanctifying action concerns the Christian’s *being*, the charisms concern *acting* because they are for service (see 1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10); the first establishes the *unity* of the Church while the second establishes the *variety* of its functions. We can read *Ephesians* 4:4-13 on this point. There the apostle explains first what constitutes the being of a Christian and the unity of all believers: one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith; he goes on to say, “grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (v. 7): apostles, evangelists, teachers, etc.

The apostle does not stop at highlighting the two modes of operation by the Spirit but affirms the absolute priority of the sanctifying action over the charismatic action. Acting depends on being (*agere sequitur esse*), not the reverse. Paul reviews the majority of charisms – speaking in tongues, having the gift of prophecy, understanding all mysteries, distributing everything to the poor – and concludes that without love a charism is worthless for the one who exercises it, even if it benefits the people who receive it.

It is true that a charism is not given because of, or in view of, a person’s holiness, but it is also true that a charism does not stay healthy and can actually become corrupt and end up causing harm if it is not grounded in personal holiness. To recall the priority of the Spirit’s sanctifying action over his charismatic action is the specific contribution the Catholic Charismatic Renewal can bring to the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements, which had themselves among their roots the so-called “Holiness Movement.”

All that I have said about the renewing and sanctifying action of the Spirit is enclosed in the noun “Renewal.” Why precisely this word? The idea of newness goes along with the revelation of the Spirit’s sanctifying action from beginning to end. Ezekiel had previously spoken about a “new spirit.” John speaks about being “born of water and the Spirit” (Jn 3:5). But above all St. Paul is the one who sees in this “newness” what it is that characterizes the whole “new covenant” (2 Cor 3:6). He defines the believer as “a new man” (Eph 2:15; 4:24) and the baptism as “the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). The thing to make clear right away is that this new life is the life brought by Christ. He is the one, in rising from the dead, who has given us the possibility, thanks to our baptism, of “walking in newness of life” (see Rom 6:4). It is thus a gift before being a duty, “something

done” before being “something to do.” On this point we need a Copernican revolution in the common mindset of believing Catholics (not a revolution in the official doctrine of the Church!), and this is one of the most important contributions the Charismatic Renewal can make – and has made in part – to the life of the Church. For centuries the emphasis was so much on morality, on duty, on what to do to gain eternal life, that it inverted the relationship and put duty before gift, making grace the effect instead of the cause of our good works.

The Charismatic Renewal, concretely the baptism in the Spirit, brought about in me this Copernican revolution that I was speaking about, and because of that I am deeply convinced that it can bring about that revolution in the whole Church. And it is the revolution on which the possibility of re-evangelizing the post-Christian world depends. Faith blossoms in the context of the *kerygma* not in the context of the *didaché*, that is, not in the context of theology, apologetics, and morality. These things are necessary for the “formation” of faith and bring it to the perfection of charity, but they are not able to generate faith. Christianity, unlike every other religion, does not begin by telling people what they need to do to save themselves; it begins by telling them what God has done in Christ to save them. It is the religion of grace.

There is no danger that one can fall into “quietism” this way and forget the duty of acquiring virtue. Scripture and experience leave no way out on this point: the surest sign of the presence of the Spirit of Christ is not charisms but the “fruit of the Spirit.” The Charismatic Renewal needs instead to be on guard against another danger, the one for which St. Paul reproached the Galatians: “Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (*Gal 3:3*) – the return to the old legalism and moralism that would be the exact antithesis of what “renewal” refers to. There exists, of course, also the opposite danger of using “your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh” (*Gal 5:15*), but that is more easily recognizable.

What the New Life in the Spirit Consists in

But it is time to get more concrete and see what the new life in the Spirit consists in, how it is manifested, and thus what genuine “renewal” is. We rely on St. Paul, and more precisely on his Letter to the Romans, because it is there that he sets forth its constitutive elements almost systematically.

A Life Lived according to the Law of the Spirit

The new life is first of all a life lived “by the law of the Spirit.”

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. (*Rom 8:1-2*)

We cannot understand what the phrase “law of the Spirit” means if we do not begin with the event of Pentecost. In the Old Testament, there were two basic interpretations for the feast of Pentecost. At the beginning, Pentecost was the feast of harvest (the feast of weeks) (see *Num 28:26ff*)

when people offered God their first fruits (see *Ex 23:16; Deut 16:9ff*). But later, and certainly by Jesus’ time, the feast had been enriched with a new meaning. It was the feast that recalled the giving of the law on Mount Sinai and the covenant established by God with his people – the feast, in a word, that commemorated the events described in *Exodus 19-20*. A text from the current Hebrew liturgy for Pentecost (*Shavuot*) says, “This day of the feast of weeks is the time of the giving of our Torah.”

It seems that St. Luke deliberately described the descent of the Holy Spirit with the signs that characterized the theophany at Sinai; he uses images, in fact, that recall the earthquake and the fire. The liturgy of the Church confirms this interpretation since it includes *Exodus 19* in the readings for the Vigil of Pentecost.

What does this parallel approach tell us about our Pentecost? In other words, what does it mean that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church on the very day in which Israel recalls the giving of the law and the covenant? St. Augustine already asked this question and gave the following answer. Fifty days after the sacrifice of the lamb in Egypt, the finger of God inscribed the laws of God on Mount Sinai on stone tablets, and here fifty days after the sacrifice of Christ, the true Lamb of God, again the finger of God, the Holy Spirit, wrote his law. But this time it was not on stone tablets but on the tablets of flesh of people’s hearts.³

This interpretation is itself based on Paul’s affirmation that defines the community of the new covenant as “a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (*2 Cor 3:3*). The prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel about the new covenant are suddenly illuminated. “This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts” (*Jer 31:33*). It is no longer on tablets of stone but on hearts; it is no longer an external law but an interior law.

How does this new law that is the Spirit function concretely, and in what sense can it be called a “law”? It functions through love! The new law is what Jesus calls “the new commandment” (*Jn 13:34*). The Spirit has written the new law on our hearts, infusing love into them: “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (*Rom 5:5*). This love, as St. Thomas explained to us, is the love with which God loves us and, at the same time, makes us able to love him in return and to love our neighbor. It is a new ability to love.

There are two ways a person can be induced to do, or not to do, a certain thing: by compulsion or by attraction.

The external law induces a person the first way, by compulsion and with the threat of punishment. Love induces him in the second way, by attraction. People are in fact attracted by what they love without having to be

Continued page 6

subjected to any external constraint. Christian life is lived by attraction, not by compulsion, by love, not by fear.

A Life of the Sons and Daughters of God

Secondly, the new life in the Spirit is the life of the sons and daughters of God. The apostle goes on to say, *All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* (Rom 8:14-16)

This is a central idea in the message of Jesus and the whole New Testament. Thanks to baptism that has grafted us onto Christ, we have become children in the Son. What new thing, then, can the Charismatic Renewal bring to this? Something very important, and that is the discovery and existential awareness of the fatherhood of God that has made more than one person melt into tears at the moment of the baptism of the Spirit. *Legally*, we are his children through baptism, but *experientially* we become his children thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit that is ongoing in our lives.

A filial sentiment is born. From being a *master*, God becomes a *father*. That is the moment in which a person wholeheartedly exclaims for the first time, "Abba, my Father!" This is one of the most frequent effects of the baptism of the Spirit. I remember an elderly lady from Milan, in receiving the baptism of the Spirit, who went around saying to everyone in her group, "I feel like a baby, I feel like a baby! I have discovered that God is my papa!" Experiencing God's fatherhood means experiencing his infinite love and mercy.

A Life under the Lordship of Christ

Finally, the new life is a life under the Lordship of Christ. In Romans the apostle writes, *If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* (Rom 10:9)

And again soon after in the same letter he says, *None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* (Rom 14:7-9)

This special awareness of Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit!" (1 Cor 12:3). The most evident gift I received on the occasion of my baptism in the Spirit was the discovery of the Lordship of Christ. Up to that point, I was a scholar of Christology; I taught courses and wrote books on ancient Christological doctrines. The Spirit converted me from Christology to Christ. What emotion I had when I heard, in the stadium at Kansas City in July 1977, 40,000 believers from various denominations singing, "He is Lord, He is Lord. He is risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is

Lord." For me, who was still an outside observer of the Charismatic Renewal, this song had cosmic resonances since it brought into play what is in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Why not repeat this experience, on an occasion like this, and proclaim the Lordship of Christ together in song. Let those who know it sing it in English...

What is special in the proclamation of Jesus as Lord that makes it so distinctive and decisive? It is that by proclaiming it one not only makes a profession of faith but also makes a *personal decision*. Whoever proclaims it is deciding the meaning of his or her life. It is like saying, "You are my Lord; I submit to you, and I freely recognize you as my savior, my head, my master, the one who has complete rights over me. I joyfully yield the reins of my life to you."

This luminous rediscovery of Jesus as Lord is perhaps the most wonderful grace in our time that God has granted to his Church through the Renewal. In the beginning, the proclamation of Jesus as Lord (*Kyrios*) was, for evangelization, what the ploughshare is to the plow, the blade that first breaks up the ground and allows the plow to make a furrow in the soil. Unfortunately, a change occurred concerning this word when we move from the Jewish sphere to the Hellenistic sphere. In the Jewish world the title *Adonai*, Lord, was enough in itself to proclaim Jesus' divinity. And in fact it is with that title that Peter proclaims Jesus Christ to the world on the day of Pentecost: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

When it came to preaching to the pagans, however, this title was no longer adequate. Starting with the Roman emperor, so many called themselves "Lord." The apostle notes it somberly: "Although there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' yet for us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ" (see 1 Cor 8:5-6). Already by the third century the title "Lord" was no longer understood in its kerygmatic sense: it was considered the proper title used by anyone still at the stage of being a "servant" and of fear, and it was inferior to the title of Master that was appropriate to be used by a "disciple" and friend⁴. People continued to speak of Jesus as "Lord," of course, but it became just like any other title, and even more often it was one of the parts of the full name of Christ: "Our Lord Jesus Christ." But it is one thing to say, "Our Lord Jesus Christ" and another to say, "Jesus Christ is our Lord!" (with an exclamation point).

What in all of this is the qualitative leap that the Holy Spirit makes us take in our understanding of Christ? It is in the fact that the proclamation of Jesus as Lord is the door that leads to knowing the risen and living Christ! Not the personage of Christ, but the person of Christ. He is no longer just a set of theses and dogmas (with their corresponding heresies), no longer just an object of worship and of remembrance but a living reality in the Spirit. The difference between this living Jesus and the Jesus of books and scholarly discussions about him is the difference between the real sky and a sky sketched out

on paper. If we want the new evangelization not to remain wishful thinking, we need to put the ploughshare before the plow again, the kerygma before the parenthesis.

The shared experience of the Lordship of Christ is also what most prompts the unity among Christians, just as we see happening among us here. One of the top priorities of CHARIS, according to the directives of the Holy Father, is precisely that of promoting this unity among all the believers in Christ through every means possible, in reciprocal respect for each one's identity.

A Current of Grace for the Whole Church

I believe at this point it is clear why we say that the Charismatic Renewal is a current of grace for the whole Church. All that the word of God has revealed to us about the new life in Christ—a life lived according to the law of the Spirit, a life as sons and daughters of God, and a life under the Lordship of Christ—is nothing but the substance of Christian life and holiness. It is our baptismal life actualized in fullness, that is, not only thought and believed but lived and presented, and not only to a few privileged souls but to all the holy people of God. For millions of believers of different Christian Churches the baptism in the Spirit has been the door to such splendors of the Christian life. One of the sayings dear to the Pope Francis is that “realities are greater than ideas,”⁵ and thus that living the Christian life is greater than thinking about it. I believe the Charismatic Renewal can be (and in part has been) a great help in making the great truths of faith go from being thought to being lived, in making the Holy Spirit move from books of theology to the experience of believers.

St. John XXIII conceived of the Second Vatican Council as a “new Pentecost” for the Church. The Lord answered this pope's prayer beyond all expectations. But what does “a new Pentecost” mean? It cannot consist only in a new flowering of charisms, ministries, and signs and wonders as a breath of fresh air on the face of the Church. These things are just the reflection and the sign of something more profound. A new Pentecost, to be truly such, must take place in the very depth that the apostle revealed to us: it must renew the heart of the Bride, not just her dress.

For the Charismatic Renewal to be the current of grace we have described, it needs to be renewed itself, and the institution of CHARIS is meant to contribute to this. Origen wrote in the third century, “You must not imagine that the renewing of the life, which is said to have been done once, suffices. On the contrary,... this newness... must be renewed”: “*Ipsa novita innovanda est.*”⁶ We should not be amazed at this. This is what happens in every project of God from the moment it is put into the hands of human beings.

Immediately after I joined the Renewal, I was struck one day in prayer by certain thoughts. I seemed to be sensing the new thing the Lord was doing in the Church; I took a piece of paper and a pen and wrote down some thoughts that even surprised me because they were hardly the fruit of my reflection. They are in my book *The Sober*

Intoxication of the Spirit Part Two, but let me share them again with you because it seems to me that it is the point from which we must start again.

The Father wants to glorify the Son, Jesus Christ, on the earth in a new way, through a new intervention. The Holy Spirit is appointed to carry out this glorification because it is written, “He will glorify me and take that which is mine.” A Christian life entirely consecrated to God, without a founder, without a rule, and without new congregations. The Founder: Jesus! The Rule: the gospel interpreted by the Holy Spirit! The Congregation: the Church! Do not worry about tomorrow, do not try to make something that will remain, and do not set in motion recognized organizations that can be perpetuated by successors... Jesus is a Founder who never dies, so there is no need for successors. We always need to let him do new things, even tomorrow. The Holy Spirit will remain in the Church, even tomorrow.⁷

PART TWO: “CHARISMATIC”

Now we move to the second part of my talk, which will be much briefer, about what the adjective “Charismatic” adds to the name “Renewal.” First and foremost it is important to say that “Charismatic” needs to remain an adjective and never be a noun. In other words, we must absolutely avoid the use of the term “charismatics” to describe people who have experienced the Renewal. If anything, we should use the words “renewed Christians,” not “charismatics.” The use of this term rightly arouses resentment because it creates discrimination among the members of the body of Christ, as if some people are gifted with charisms and some are not.

I do not want to give a teaching here on charisms about which there are so many opportunities to speak. My intent is to demonstrate how the Renewal, insofar as it is also charismatic, is a current of grace meant for the whole Church. To illustrate this affirmation we need to glance quickly at the history of charisms in the Church.

The Rediscovery of Charisms by Vatican II

What really happened to the charisms after their tumultuous appearance at the beginning of the Church? The charisms did not disappear so much from the *life* of the Church as they did from its *theology*. If we retrace the history of the Church, keeping in mind the various lists of charisms in the New Testament, we have to conclude that – perhaps with the exception of “speaking in tongues” and “the interpretation of tongues” – none of the charisms was ever completely lost.

The history of the Church is full of charismatic evangelizers, gifts of wisdom and knowledge (we only need to think of the Doctors of the Church), miraculous healings, people gifted with the spirit of prophecy or discernment of spirits, not to mention gifts such as visions, raptures, ecstasies, and illuminations that are also listed among the charisms.

So then, what is new that allows us to speak of a reawakening of charisms in our time? What was absent
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before? From their proper role of serving the common good and the “organization of the Church,” the charisms were progressively confined to the private and personal sphere. They no longer had a role in the constitution of the Church.

In the life of the early Christian community, the charisms were not exercised privately; together with apostolic authority, they delineated the features of the community. Apostles and prophets were the two forces that together guided the community. Very soon the balance between the two aspects – that of the office and that of the charism – broke down in favour of the office. A decisive element was the rise of false doctrines, especially those of the Gnostics. This fact increasingly tipped the balance toward the office holders, the pastors. Another fact was the crisis of the prophetic movement spread by Montanus in Asia Minor in the second century that further served to discredit a certain kind of collective charismatic enthusiasm.

All the negative consequences for charisms derive from these historical circumstances. Charisms became relegated to the margins of the Church’s life. There were still reports for a while of some charisms persisting here and there. St. Irenaeus, for example, says that in his time there were “many brethren in the Church who possess prophetic gifts, who speak all kinds of languages, who disclose the secrets of men for their benefit and explain the mysteries of God.”¹ But it was a phenomenon that was in decline. In particular the charisms that had worship and the life of the community as the arena of their exercise disappeared: inspired speech and glossolalia, the so-called Pentecostal charisms. Prophecy was reduced to the magisterium’s charism to interpret revelation authentically and infallibly. (That was the definition of prophecy in the treatises of ecclesiology that were studied in my day.)

People tried to justify this situation theologically as well. According to one theory by St. John Chrysostom, which was often repeated right up until the eve of Vatican II, certain charisms would have been reserved for the Church in its “nascent state” but would have later “ceased” since they were no longer necessary to the general economy of the Church.²

Another inevitable consequence was the clericalization of the charisms. Linked to personal holiness, they ended up being almost always associated with the usual representatives of this holiness: pastors, monks, and religious. The charisms passed from the sphere of *ecclesiology* to that of *hagiography*, that is, to the study of the lives of the saints. The place of the charisms was taken over by the “Seven Gifts of the Spirit” (in *Isaiah 11*) that, at the beginning and up to Scholasticism, were considered a particular category of charisms promised to the messianic king and later to those who had the task of pastoral governance.

This was the situation Vatican II wished to remedy. In one of the most important documents of the Council we read this well-known text: *It is not only through the sacraments*

*and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, “allotting his gifts to everyone according as He wills” [see 1 Cor 12:11], He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit” (1 Cor 12:7). These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.*³

This text is not a marginal note within Vatican II’s ecclesiology but rather its crowning achievement. It is the clearest and most explicit way of affirming that, alongside the hierarchical and institutional dimension, the Church has a pneumatic dimension, and the hierarchical dimension is in function of and in service to the other. It is not the Spirit who is in service to the institution, but the institution that is in service to the Spirit. It is not true, as the great ecclesiologist of the nineteenth century Johannes Adam Mohler polemically noted, that “God has created the hierarchy and has thereby provided more than enough for the needs of the Church until the end of the world.”⁴ Jesus entrusted his Church to Peter and the other apostles, but even before that he entrusted it to the Holy Spirit: “He will teach you, he will guide you into all truth, he will take what is mine and declare it to you...” (see *Jn 16:4-15*).

At this point, with the conclusion of the Council and its decrees collected in a book, the danger of marginalizing the charisms reappeared under a different form. But one that was no less dangerous: that of the text remaining a nice document scholars would never tire of studying and preachers would never tire of citing. The Lord himself overcame this risk by having a man see them with his own eyes—the man who had intensely desired this text on the charisms so that they could be restored not only to theology but to the life of God’s people. When Cardinal Suenens, for the first time in 1973, heard talk about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that was appearing in the United States, he was writing a book called *The Holy Spirit: The Source of All Our Hopes*. He recounts the following in his memoirs: *I gave up writing the book; I thought it was a matter of the most basic courtesy to pay attention to the possible action of the Holy Spirit, however surprising it might be. I was especially interested in the talk of the awakening of charisms; at the Council, I had pleaded the cause of such an awakening.*

And this is what he wrote after seeing with his own eyes what was happening in the Church: *Suddenly, St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles seemed to come alive and become part of the present; what was authentically true in the past seems to be happening once again before our very eyes. It is a discovery of the true action of the Holy Spirit, who is always at work, as Jesus himself promised. He kept and keeps his “word.” It is once more an explosion*

*of the Spirit of Pentecost, a jubilation that had become foreign to the Church.*⁵

Now it is clear, I believe, why I say that the Renewal, also as a charismatic reality, is a current of grace intended and necessary for the whole Church. The Church itself is the one that determined this in the Council. The only thing that remains is to move from that determination to implementation, from documents to life. And this is the service that CHARIS, in total continuity with the Charismatic Renewal in the past, is called to render to the Church.

This is not just a question of faithfulness to the Council but also of faithfulness to the very mission of the Church. The charisms we read about in the Council text are “perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.” (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say “necessary” instead of “useful.”) Faith today, as in the time of Paul and the apostles, is transmitted “not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor 2:4; see 1 Thess 1:5). If at one time in a world that had become “Christian” – at least officially – one could think there was no longer any need for the charisms and signs and wonders that existed at the Church’s beginning, that is not the case today. We are back to being closer now to the time of the apostles than to the time of St. John Chrysostom. They had to proclaim the gospel to a pre-Christian world; we, at least in the West, have to proclaim it to a post-Christian world.

I have said up to this point that the Charismatic Renewal is a current of grace that is necessary for the whole Catholic Church. I have to add that this is doubly the case for some national churches that for some time have been witnessing a painful haemorrhage of the faithful to other charismatic entities. It is well known that one of the most common reasons for such an exodus is the need for an expression of faith more in keeping with people’s own culture and has more room given to spontaneity, to joy, and to the body – a life of faith in which popular piety is an added value and not a substitute for the Lordship of Christ.

Pastoral and sociological analyses of this phenomenon are being done, and solutions are being suggested, but it is difficult for people to realize that the Holy Spirit himself has already provided for this need in a magnificent way. We can no longer continue to see the Charismatic Renewal as part of the problem in the exodus of Catholics instead of as the solution to the problem. For this remedy to be truly effective, however, it is not enough that pastors approve and encourage the Renewal, remaining carefully outside of it. This current of grace needs to be received into their own lives. This is what the example of the Pastor of the universal Church, and the institution of CHARIS as well, is calling us to do. I will mention some attitudes or virtues that most directly contribute to keeping a charism healthy and making it function “for the common good.” The first virtue is *obedience*. We are speaking in this case of obedience to the institution above all, to those who exercise the service of authority. True prophets and charismatics in the history

of the Catholic Church, and even recently, are those who have accepted dying to what they consider certainties, obeying and keeping silent before seeing their proposals and criticisms received by the institution. Charisms without the institution are headed for chaos; the institution without the charisms is headed for stagnation.

The institution does not suppress charisms but assures them a future... and also a past. That is, it keeps them from ceasing to be a flash in the pan and puts at their disposal all the Church’s experience of the Spirit from preceding generations. It is a blessing from God that the charismatic awakening in the Catholic Church was born with a strong impulse toward communion with the hierarchy and that the pontifical magisterium recognized in it “a chance for the Church”⁶ and “the first signs of a great springtime for Christianity”⁷. This obedience should be so much easier and appropriate for us today now that the supreme authority of the Church does not just praise and encourage this current of grace in the Charismatic Renewal but has clearly embraced its cause and proposes it persistently to the whole Church.

Another vital virtue for the constructive use of charisms is *humility*. The charisms are operations of the Holy Spirit, sparks of God’s own fire entrusted to human beings. How do we avoid burning our hands with that fire? This is the task of humility. It allows this grace of God to go forth and circulate within the Church and humanity without being dispersed or contaminated.

The image of “a current of grace” that is dispersed into a mass is clearly inspired by the world of electricity. But the technology of insulation parallels the technology of electricity. The higher the tension and the power of an electric current that passes through a wire, the more resistant the insulation must be to prevent short circuits. Humility, for the Charismatic Renewal and for spiritual life in general, is the great insulator that allows the divine current of grace to go through a person without dissipating or, worse, causing sparks of pride or of rivalry. Jesus introduced the Spirit to the world, humbling himself and making himself obedient unto death; we can contribute to promoting the spread of the Holy Spirit in the Church in the same way by remaining humble and obedient unto death, the death of our “I” and of the “old man” that is in us.

As an ecclesiastical advisor, I have tried to offer my contribution in this teaching to an accurate vision of the Charismatic Renewal within the history and current situation of the Church. However, it will be the moderator and the members of the international committee who will need to bear the major weight of this new beginning. I express to all of them my fraternal friendship and my unconditional collaboration as long as the Lord gives me the strength to do it. The Letter to the Hebrews recommended to the early Christians, “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God” (Heb 13:7). We should do the same, recalling with affection and gratitude those who first experienced and promoted the new Pentecost:

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TESTIMONY

By ANGIE COOPER



**A passage to walk on eternity feet
To meet my dear God when all is complete.
I long for this day but all in good time
to live in his kingdom for he is divine.**

I had a mind blowing awakening to keep singing when I had a setback in my faith. My son was deceived by a priest, who was revealed as a false teacher. My son left the church as the priest made it clear, that Jesus and God were all make believe. I nearly left too after only 2 years of going again after 17 years absence. I held the bible at St Paul and closed it and my bookmark was flung from my fingers by a gust of wind and landed on my bedroom floor. Daniel yelled out, 'Mum what are you doing?' because my bedroom door had flung open. My husband Grant lay asleep and sat up in shock. I had finished reading and the words on the bookmark were bold and clear. "Fan the flame! Surround yourself with good people and prayer". The words hit my heart. A day or so later I received a call and was asked if I would play my guitar and sing for the parish of Castlemaine in adoration once a month for the youth and all parishioners. How could I refuse! We call our adoration "Wellsprings of Mercy". I felt angels were present and that they entered a portal through the monstrosity.

At CCR 50th year at Royal Parade in Melbourne, a year later, was when I was touched by Jesus. I attended a healing mass and I saw people falling down (in the spirit) and wanted to be baptised. And I was by my spiritual mum and three other women. All of whom had in common my hardships and battles in life. I had never met these 3 women apart from my friend. One suffered depression, one was a mother of two psychiatrist sons and her partner was a doctor, one was a lady whose three sisters had rejected her but later reconciled. All I remember saying was, 'I love your son Father, Jesus I love your Father'. I kept saying this, but I did not get the gift of tongues. In the hall a song was sung 'As the Deer Panteth for the water'. It hit my heartstrings. I went into a deep sadness and cried uncontrollably, and Jesus said to me in a loud voice, "she will never go back in there again". He reached in and pulled me out of a deep cell with many hands reaching out and I was taken out by a rusty gate which slammed behind me! I felt a hot burning sensation in my chest as if all the scars of brokenness were being burnt away. A lady holding my arm and speaking in tongues said, 'Jesus will meet you at the waterfall'. I cried uncontrollably and was shaking. I was remembering all my past and rejection. I had convulsions and my parents placed me in an ice bath instructed by the doctors of that era, and the lady holding my arm proceeded to tell me, 'Jesus said to tell you that the water will be warm!'

I told the CCR gathering I was not Charismatic, and they clapped me. I stood testifying in front of Michelle Moran, a Swedish speaker and his wife and speaking about my experience. This was my first ever charismatic introduction. Since then I joined a Ballarat Charismatic Prayer Group and they are the closest friends I have ever encountered in all my faith. I am comforted and learning so much and have a relationship with Jesus and now the heavenly Father. I asked Mary to be my Mum and I picked up a book

I purchased at the CCR called, 'Take some time to be still' on adoration and I opened up the page to read that Mary had accepted me as her daughter. I was so overwhelmed.

Two weeks later I came across the medal of St Dymphna that I had misplaced. It was in the pocket of a jacket that I had forgotten about. It was when I was crying and scared. My husband witnessed this as I was to take a leap of faith and stop my medication for depression after 35 years. He had me fall to my knees and I reached into my jacket and found a medal I could not read as it was old and worn..I looked at the medal closer and made out the name, Dymphna so I googled her name. Grant and I had no idea she was the Patron Saint of Mental Illness. I also looked up a prayer the next day to seriously pray to her and discovered her name meant, Little Fawn. It was overwhelming the confirmation that I had received intercession from a most beautiful saint.

My major operation a month prior was a hysterectomy and going into theatre on the bed I looked to my right and a statue of a Christmas white deer was the last thing I saw. It was the 3rd of January so was a Christmas decoration but how appropriate for me! While having the operation a discovery of an undiagnosed disease shocked the surgeon. An hour operation turned into 5 hours to remove endometriosis. A woman's painful disease and my condition was horrendous. For 25 years my major organs had been attacked, eating into my bowel, bladder and left ovary and covering my bladder, liver and womb. The surgeon removed 98%, but a small piece was left on my ovary and bowel without needing them removed or having a bag for life. But this discovery led me to having a complete transformation. A body, mind and soul cleansing. My health dramatically improved. My blood tests were normal after being anaemic. My blood cells were unblocked, and oxygen levels improved, and my BP dropped from having been high for 10 years. The chemical replacement for my brain was no longer required as the chemicals of dopamine, serotonin and blood carrying food and oxygen was being distributed naturally. I was tapered off medication for depression 5 weeks after my operation and it's been 5 months and I have made a complete recovery. I have a strong faith in Jesus and a thirst to know more and wish to share these experiences to offer hope and to never give up.

I am eternally grateful for my husband and good friends who have stayed by my side through the good and bad times, my family disapprove of me wanting to share my story through my book, to help the people who are lost and lonely, Jesus I believe, has led me out of this living hell.

I pray one day that they will open their hearts to the truth and see me for who I really am.

Just to know and accept that this is what I must do for Jesus' glory. I have to keep learning how to bless them, leave them, and love them from a distance and to release myself from within the hurt of my own life so I can live and grow in everlasting peace.

If you would like to read Angie's book please go to www.josiereleasedfromwithin.com and follow the prompts.

A WORD... FROM MIRIAM

By MIRIAM MARKIS



As I look at a magnet stuck to my computer hard-ware I note that it has an image of an electrical wire plugged into a socket. Still, even though it's plugged in to emit power the switch needs to be flicked on. It's an ideal image, I thought, of how we as Charismatics need to be 'plugged into the Holy Spirit' who is the source of our power. Still, there's more. The power switch in us needs to be flicked on as well. So how is this done in our lives? Well, simply by remaining plugged into the Holy Spirit and ensuring that we are always switched on by frequent reception of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, daily prayers and reading and contemplation of God's Word, spiritual readings. This will fortify and strengthen our faith.

We should not forget or underestimate the importance of community. We've probably all heard the term 'lapsed Catholics'. Over the last few years, however, the term has also come to apply to Charismatics. So, what's happened to these so called 'lapsed Charismatics'? I believe, even though many still practise their faith and may be quite ardent and serving the Lord or the Church, that many have forgotten that to maintain the 'fire' they need to be 'plugged in to community'. Many people speak nostalgically of the 'good old days' when the fire was evident. It was probably because praising and worshipping together in community was something that people looked forward to because they were 'switched on' to the power source. Have we forgotten the power source?

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost fell on a community of praying believers. "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place." (Acts 2:1-13 NIV) So too, when we come together in our communities and prayer groups, the Holy Spirit comes in power. In an atmosphere of mutual giving, receiving and sharing with those around us we grow more fervent and, hopefully, more compassionate and loving. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is then, in power, that we can go out to reach others also.

Recently I read an article about loneliness becoming more and more rife today as people become more dependent on technology as a means of communication. As a result, there have been staggering increases in the number of people diagnosed with depression and other loneliness related issues. This begs the question of how welcoming our prayer groups are to newcomers! Are we inviting people to come along and experience the joy of knowing Jesus as Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit? We know the Lord can act sovereignly but he chooses to use us as His instruments if we allow Him to do so.

Let's choose to remain 'plugged in' and 'switched on' in the power of the Holy Spirit as we move forward from the celebrations of this last Pentecost! Holy Spirit Come in your power!

Pursued

"Go forward, believe in the future and don't look back – in fact run with all that is within you: God will be running with you". This was the message, given to the ladies attending our recent Ladies Day by Dani Cherie (Winepress Church) as she shared her story of the discovery that God is real and personal. Her beginning was difficult and there are still challenges today, but Dani is a fighter, an overcomer and a conqueror of insurmountable odds.

Those in attendance were encouraged to the core of their being as they witnessed God's grace and goodness in Dani. She allowed God to take a girl from a very difficult background and turn her into a voice of encouragement for those who are broken and struggling. She challenged all with the question: "whose story are you telling – God's or yours?" Her transparency in telling God's story of her life brings freedom to others.

If you would like to read Dani's inspiring book, "*Pursued*" it is available from the CCR Centre.

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Patti Mansfield, Ralph Martin, Steve Clark, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, and all the others who later served the Charismatic Renewal in the ICCRS, the Catholic Fraternity, and in other service organizations.

I conclude with a prophetic word that I proclaimed the first time I preached in the presence of St. John Paul II. It is the word that the prophet Haggai addressed to the leaders and the people of Israel at the time when they were about to rebuild the temple: *Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts.* (Hag 2:4) Take courage Jean-Luc and members of the committee, take courage all you people in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal: take courage you brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations: work, for I am with you, says the Lord!

¹Cf. Ex 31,3; Jg 14,6; 1 Sam 10,6; Is 61, 1. ²See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, 5, 1, no. 392. ³See St. Augustine, *On The Spirit and the Letter*, chapter 28 [XVI], ed. Philip Schaff (No p.: CreateSpace Publishing, 2015), p.53; *Sermo Mai* 158, 4 (PLS 2 525). ⁴Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, 1, 31 (Pinkerinton, OH: Beloved Publishing, 2014), pp. 31-32; (Sch 120, p.158). ⁵Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, no. 231. ⁶Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5, 13, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 103 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), p.359; (PG 14, p.1042). ⁷Raniero Cantalamessa, *The Sober Intoxication of the Spirit. Part Two* (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2012), p.31.

Can't make it to a Healing Prayer Centre during the week?

Saturdays 28 September & 30 November 2019

You are welcome to come to the Open House Healing Ministry Day. **9.30am - 2pm** at the CCR Centre.

MARK YOUR DIARIES...

Renewal Day

An opportunity for fellowship with others and growth through teachings.

Saturday 16 November

Our Lady Help of Christians Hall, 49 Nicholson St, East Brunswick.

NO PARKING IN SCHOOL GROUNDS. *Public Transport:* train to Parliament Station, tram no.96 along Nicholson St to stop no.22.

Annual Conference

14 – 17 January 2020

CLAIM THE DATE

Join us for a time of refreshment and reignition.

Guest speakers: Mark Nimmo and Peter and Michelle Moran.

Venue: TBC

Live-in accommodation will be available.

CHARISMATIC MASSES	TIME	VENUE
Third Sunday	12 Noon	St Benedict's, Burwood
HEALING MASSES	TIME	VENUE
Each Sunday	7.00pm	Holy Family, Doveton (Ministry after)
First Saturday	2.30pm – 5.00pm Adoration followed by Healing Mass	St Peter's, 38 Guinane Ave, Hoppers Crossing
First Sunday	2.30pm	St Peter Chanel, Deer Park
	3.00pm Praise & Worship, 3.30pm Mass	St Christopher's Parish, 5 Doon Ave, Glen Waverley
	5.00pm	St Benedicts, Burwood. Prayer Ministry after Mass, Praise Rally at 7.00pm
	5.30pm Praise, Worship, Adoration 6.00pm Mass, followed by Prayer Ministry	St Marks, Fawkner
First Monday	7.00pm Praise, 7.30pm Mass	St Joseph's, Springvale Phone 9547 9557
First Friday	8.00pm	St Anthony's, Glenhuntly Cnr Neerim Road & Grange Road, Glenhuntly
	8.15pm	St Peter's, Clayton
Third Wednesday	7.30pm	St Mary's, Castlemaine
Third Thursday	7.30pm	Our Lady Help of Christians, Henry St, Eltham
Third Friday	7.00pm	707 Holy Cross Parish, Caulfield South. Mass, Adoration and devotions to the Holy Cross
Third Sunday	5.30pm	St Francis Xavier, Frankston
	5.30pm Praise, 6.00pm Mass	Good Samaritan Chapel, 1-29 Southern Cross Drive, Roxburgh Park
Fourth Tuesday	10.00am	St Joseph's, Chelsea

St Peter's, East Bentleigh - Healing Mass: Monday 18 November at 8.00pm. Celebrant will be Fr. Wahid