

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

**Catholic Charismatic Renewal
serving the Church**

Good News



**The newsletter of the
Catholic Charismatic Renewal.
Melbourne, Australia.**

www.ccr.org.au

Towards Jerusalem Council II

By JOSEPH CHIRCOP,
SENIOR LEADER, SERVANTS OF JESUS COMMUNITY



Back (from left to right): Archdeacon Johannes Fichtenbauer, Lenyce Willason, Rabbi Marty Waldman, John Newie.
Front: Joe Chircop, Julie Chircop, John Dawson, Elizabeth Armitage, Jeff Armitage, Ps Robyn Peebles, Jane NZ.

Recently Lenyce, Julie and I were invited to a conference called Towards Jerusalem Council II. The purpose of this meeting was to connect as Gentile Christians with Messianic Jews and to work towards the fulfillment of the one new man concept of *Ephesians 2*.

As Christians we are called to be ministers of reconciliation. As *St Paul* says:

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Cor 5:18, 19

In the Holy Spirit, we endeavour to bring this reconciliation to marriages, families, between people, amongst all Christian denominations, and between Jews and Christians.

Towards Jerusalem Council II is about starting the process of reconciliation between Messianic Jews and Christians. The vision of TJCII states *"consistent with the principle established in the original Jerusalem Council of Acts*

Chapter 15 regarding respect for diversity in the Body of Christ concerning Jewish and Gentile identity... finally, we affirm that as Jewish and Gentile expressions of life in Jesus grow organically side by side with distinct identities that God will be glorified; that the Kingdom of Heaven will be advanced and that the vision of "the one new man" in Ephesians 2 will unfold as part of the original Abrahamic blessing to the nations." This was taken directly from their website. If you wish to read more please go to their website: tjcii.org.

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For enquiries about Catholic Charismatic Renewal, its events or prayer groups visit the:

CCR CENTRE
101 Holden Street
North Fitzroy
VIC 3068
(Car park entry in Dean Street)
Telephone: (03) 9486 6544
Fax: (03) 9486 6566
Email: centre@ccr.org.au

The Centre is open 10.00am - 4.00pm,
Monday - Friday, except Public Holidays.

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Editor: Lenyce Willason
Email: goodnews@ccr.org.au

Assistant Editor: Andrea Baxter

Editorial Assistant: Mary Crawford

Distribution: CCR Centre Team

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The deadline for the next issue of *Good News* is
Friday 10 January 2020.



**...watch over them so that they will be united as one,
even as we are one.** *John 17:11 Passion translation*

One of the most intriguing communications to come
across my desk in recent times was the invitation to
attend the Towards Jerusalem Council II Consultation in
Singapore. I did not know very much about this work of the

Holy Spirit and was thrilled to find 27 Nations represented from across
the world, and especially from the Pacific and Torres Strait Islands, our
neighbours. I found the discussions very enlightening and discovered
just how much I needed to learn about this work of unity in which the Holy
Spirit is drawing us to participate. TJCII is an initiative of repentance and
reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the church.
God is putting people into place – not to evangelise necessarily but to
disciple when the harvest comes.

Speaking personally, I found these days bringing me an excitement
about the way the Holy Spirit is drawing us all back to a place of unity.
Praising God and praying together was a powerful time and brought
again the awareness of the holiness of God when there is a common
purpose to honour God. It reminds me of the word at the beginning of
the prayer Jesus taught us: 'our'. Beginning the prayer of Jesus with
the word 'our' shifts the emphasis from individuals onto the Father of
all, and to our brothers and sisters that form God's family. Being in unity
brings a blessing from the Lord according to the Psalmist.

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.*

Psalm 133

What a blessing and unifying factor is prayer. When we pray together we
are focusing on the God who loves all his children and his love encircles
each person to rest comfortably in his will. It is hard to enter God's plan
unless we are prepared to sacrifice self-interest and embrace the 'our'.

It is unfortunate that many see this in a fearful way as if it is directing us
to be all the same. It is not about being the same but about respecting
each other as the beloved children of God and working together to bring
God's kingdom to our earth. This is accomplished more by obedience to
the words of Jesus – 'love one another' than it ever will be by theological
arguments.

As St Paul reminded the Corinthians:

*Just as the human body is one, though it has many parts that together
form one body, so too is Christ. For by one Spirit we all were immersed
and mingled into one single body. And no matter our status—whether
we are Jews or non-Jews, oppressed or free—we are all privileged to
drink deeply of the same Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 12: 12-27) Passion trans.*

As we move into the season of Advent and the beautiful Christmas
liturgy celebrating the birth of Jesus we ought to remember to pray
for his whole body (which includes our family and friends) and pray as
Jesus did: watch over them so that they will be united as one, even as
we are one.



Continued from page 1

This has already been acknowledged and encouraged in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which states:

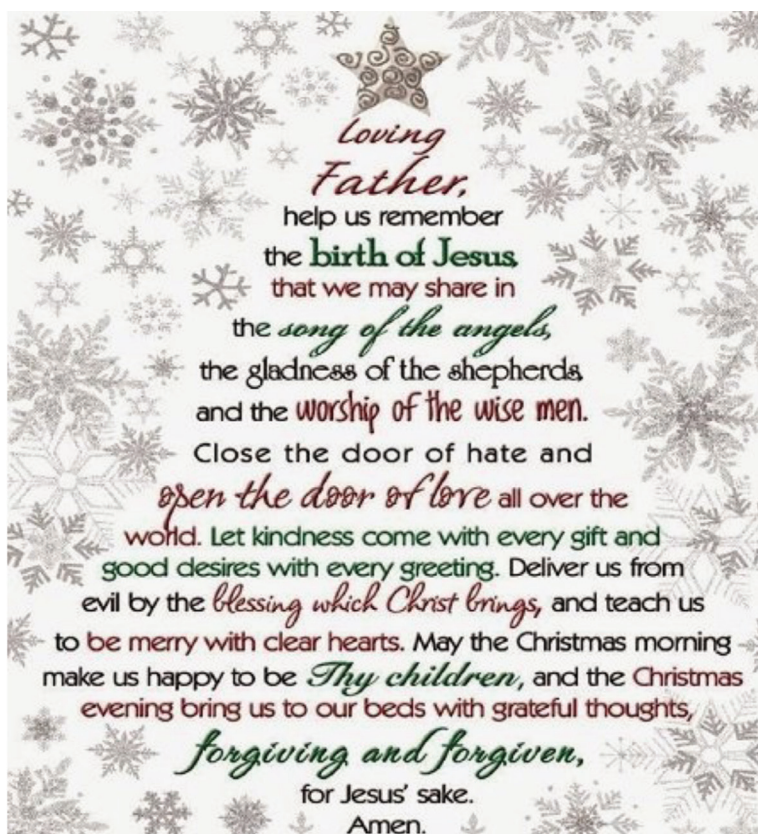
"The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by "all Israel", for "a hardening has come upon part of Israel" in their "unbelief" toward Jesus. St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old." St. Paul echoes him: "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" The "full inclusion" of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of "the full number of the Gentiles", will enable the People of God to achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", in which "God may be all in all." (CCC674).

This was also a desire of Pope John XXIII. He issued a document - *Nostra Aetate* – towards the end of Vatican Council II. This document, which he suggested to be read in the light of the other 15 documents of Vatican II, especially *Lumen Gentium*, teaches that "the church is, like a sacrament, or as a sign and instrument... of the unity of the whole human race", with whom we share the pilgrim journey of life." It includes an account of the spiritual ties between Christians and Jews, which reproves indiscriminate accusations of Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus; affirms the ongoing validity of the Covenant between God and the people of Israel; and repudiates hatred, persecution and anti-Semitism as contrary to God's universal love. Pope John XXIII's legacy has been continued through subsequent popes up till our present Pope Francis. This is in keeping with the prayer of Jesus, just before he was arrested:

"Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth. As you have sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world... ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one." (John 17:17, 20-21).

The key word in Towards Jerusalem Council II is TOWARDS. We are beginning a process of reconciliation which may take time to be fully realised. Hopefully this sharing may help us on our journey of reconciliation.

Editor's note: There is a day event on 30 November 2019 at Newhope Baptist Church, 3 Springfield Rd, Blackburn North, "Making Israel Jealous" that is an excellent way to be informed. From 9am to 5pm. Adults \$65 full day, Children \$35, Infants free.



The Co-ordinators of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Melbourne wish you a very happy and holy Christmas.



**The Centre will
close Friday
13 December 2019
and re-open Tuesday
28 January 2020**

*"we are
called to
use our
spiritual
giftedness
in
accordance
with our
abilities"*



Dan Hewitt,
Chairman, CCR Perth

"Seek eagerly the gifts"

By DAN HEWITT

In May of this year I attended the National Service Committee meeting in Brisbane, along with the other state representatives of Charismatic Renewal in Australia.

Now I'm your typical 'bloke' when it comes to fashion – I packed my bag by throwing in a couple of pairs of trouser, enough socks and undies to last the weekend, and the next 5 shirts off the pile!

We started our meeting on the Friday night with a long praise time, (as you might expect when Charismatics come together). During the praise time a prophetic word came forth and it went something like this: *"I see someone packing their suitcase for this meeting and they have packed all red shirts, and the red is symbolic of the blood that I shed for you on the cross; ... and I am giving to this person a deeper love for me and a deeper awareness of My passion which was expressed in the shedding of my blood for you."*

To be honest I didn't associate myself with this prophetic vision because I knew that I hadn't packed my shirts with any consideration as to their colour, style or what they might signify! The praise continued and we had a great night of prayerful preparation for the weekend meeting that lay ahead of us.

The following morning, showered and ready to dress, I went to my bag to grab out a shirt – and behold, the look on my face when I noticed that all the shirts I had packed were red or burgundy in colour! My heart started to race as I immediately recalled last night's prophetic word – could Jesus really have been speaking about me?! The prophecy was so specific that I had no hesitation in accepting that this was truly a word from the Lord, it truly was intended for me and I needed to be 'open' to the fulfillment of this word in my life!

Back in Perth and 5 months on, I have seen this prophetic word unfolding. My love for Him has grown as the 'busyness' of the year continues to make demands on my time, talents and treasures, and through my response to those demands my love for the Lord grows deeper!

This brings me to the point of my article, the importance of the prophetic gifts! Now let me say from the start that all the spiritual gifts are important, but St Paul draws special attention to the gift of Prophecy in *1 Cor 14 : 1*, "Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy" (RNAB).

The 'Prophetic Word' gift is especially important to me because it was through this gift that I was drawn to God, 40 years ago! As a young man I was working temporarily out of Perth, in the mining town of Kalgoorlie, and staying with family for the duration. While there, a Charismatic Prayer meeting was held in the house and I was warned that, "a prayer meeting was going to be held this evening and I was welcome to join in or watch TV in the lounge while the meeting took place in another room" - I chose the TV! When the meeting started, I couldn't help but notice that it seemed 'awfully loud for a prayer meeting!' I asked about it the following day and the charismatic nature of the prayer meeting was explained to me which totally surprised me because, although I had heard of spiritual gifts from the bible I was shocked to hear that such gifts were still in use today!

I returned to Perth at the end of my stint in Kal and a couple of months later moved into a new house in Gosnells. I approached the parish priest, Fr Tom Prendiville, to ask him if he knew anything of these 'charismatic prayer meetings' to which he replied, "yes, we have one in this parish!". I vowed to attend and, full of courage (or ignorance!) I went along to the meeting.



It took less than 5 minutes before I asked myself, “what am I doing among these crazy people!?... they were praying aloud with fervour, calling out ‘phrases of devotion and love’ which surely should be kept in the privacy of one’s own mind!... talking to Jesus as if He was really there! (more than once I looked over my shoulder just to make sure He wasn’t! Honestly, I couldn’t wait to escape, and I surely would have if I wasn’t so timid and the door wasn’t so far away! As the evening drew to a close the leader of the group asked “who needs prayer?” ...and well-intended members immediately pushed me into the centre of the group proclaiming, “Dan does!”

If everything before had terrified me, it was nothing compared to the shock of being ‘man-handled’ into the centre where all these weird people started praying over me and calling on God to “touch my life with blessings!” (or something like that!)... but that’s when the Spirit showed up for me! The leader spoke out a prophetic vision claiming it was “God’s word to me, right now!” I didn’t know this man; I had never met him before, but the words he spoke touched on my life story and moved me in a way that I knew God had spoken! It couldn’t be just this man because he didn’t know those intimate details of my life! I left the meeting that night perplexed at what had happened, but not intrigued enough to want to return!

Next week, something happened to ‘push’ me into going to the meeting again, and again I felt totally uncomfortable among these weirdos, but again they prayed over me and again the prophetic word cut me to the heart!

In short, I continued to attend, each week being pushed by some irresistible force, and it took many months before I could say I was comfortable with the charismatic spirituality. God used the prophetic word gift to draw me to Him and, had I not experienced Him through prophecy, I would never have returned for a second night!

Sadly, many people never return for a second night. God is often unsuccessful in ‘wooing’ His beloved to come to Him. We are created in diversity and thus God speaks to us in ways that suit our uniqueness, and for me God spoke, and continues to speak, through the gift of prophecy. I know He speaks through many avenues including prayer, scripture, church, friends etc, but I often hear Him most clearly through the prophetic word.

Having led a prayer meeting for many years, I know the struggles that exist concerning the use of the spiritual gifts. It’s challenging for people to step out in faith and use the gift; it’s frustrating for leaders trying to encourage people to step out; it’s burdensome for members trying to discern if the gift is authentic or coming from our humanity! ... and then there are those who use the gift once or twice and then stop using it, perhaps because they succumb to fear, perhaps because of someone’s negative comment and occasionally because they feel they’ve ‘done their bit’ and they can relax and let someone else have a go!

Individually, we witness our faith (either deliberately or accidentally) to those around us, and that includes our

fellow prayer group members. Therefore, it is so important that we persevere in using our giftedness for the uplifting of the body and be not distracted from this calling by our enemy, Satan, who finds many opportunities to dissuade us in serving the Lord (*Heb 12:1*). Our excuses for not using the gifts can make perfect sense to our humanity, but it is God Himself who gave us these gifts with the expressed desire that we should use them!

Many charismatic groups have faded away because they stopped using the gifts! There can be many excuses put forward but, so often, it’s really just that people have not persevered in exercising their faith in the assembly - I wonder how many people have not heard God’s word for them because you or I didn’t use the giftedness we’ve been given; how many have not grown in their giftedness because you or I refused to persevere in using our own gifts!? It’s easier to take a ‘back seat’ role and let the experts ‘handle it’!... it’s more comfortable to just listen than to speak up!... then there’s the nagging drone in your ears telling you, “you don’t really have any gifts; ...what if you’re mistaken;... why would God choose you, amongst all these ‘holier people?’” I wonder where those thoughts come from??

We are the “Catholic Charismatic Renewal”! Our name directly refers to the charismatic gifts which were made evident on that fateful weekend at Duquesne in February 1967. If we are called to this ministry, we are called to use our spiritual giftedness in accordance with our abilities, and in obedience to the appointed leadership of the Renewal. We don’t have to wonder whether we should be using spiritual gifts – it’s automatically a part of the calling that God has placed on the Renewal, and on you and me personally. And why is it so important to use these gifts?... because Jesus, Himself, preached the Gospel with miracles accompanying His word! He didn’t expect people to believe Him because he spoke, but to believe because he proved that He was sent from God through the miracles that He worked! (*see Jn 14 : 10, 11*). Neither will you and I win souls to the kingdom through our ‘clever conversation’! It will be through the manifestation of the Spirit, the ‘signs and wonders’ that accompany our words and example – these will bear the fruit that brings people to Jesus.

I strongly urge all members of the Renewal to persevere in using your own gifts, in encouraging others to use their gifts and to be aware that through our perseverance we give good witness to others. Who knows?? Maybe your example will inspire the next young man to give his life to Christ through the priesthood and become a future Pope of the Church!

There are many stages in our spiritual journey and one clear stage for me was the night someone dared to speak a prophetic word over me! It changed my life and I’ve never looked back! If he had not had the courage to speak out, I may never have been here today sharing with you the privilege and joy of knowing Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.



“Fifty years is a good moment in life to stop and reflect. It is the moment for reflection: halfway through life. It is the moment to go ahead with greater strength, leaving behind the dust of time that we have allowed to accumulate, being thankful for what we have received and facing the new with trust in the action of the Holy Spirit!”

-Pope Francis, Pentecost 2017, CCR Jubilee, Rome.

The Co-ordinators for Catholic Charismatic Renewal Melbourne meet regularly to pray together and to seek the Father's heart for what he desires – bringing all our 'doings' to him and seeking guidance on where we are going. Lately I am asked 'what is the future for CCR now that we have CHARIS - as if there was no future!

One of the Scriptures that has been placed on our hearts time and again is “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left.” (Isaiah 54:2-3)

Like Pope Francis' words, this scripture invites us to shout out, think big, don't hold back, secure your foundations and go deeper. It suggests there will be tension – but recognise where it will come from and develop trust in the Lord to deal with it. Expand your vision, look at the big picture, be bold and full of courage. Now is the time to strengthen our stakes to be part of the mission of the Holy Spirit. Our Church needs us to be faithful to our specific calling: to faithfully share the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit and use the gifts we have been given to benefit the Church and the world. This has been reinforced many times by Pope Francis when speaking to the Renewal, and the launch of CHARIS reinforces this mission as mandate. God's Word invites us to 'strengthen our stakes' – to widen them to include new people and new ways of doing things.

These are CCR's important 'stakes' which need strengthening if we are to move forward with greater strength; they are spoken of prophetically at every Conference I have attended in the past twenty years and have been printed in nearly every publication over the same period. I believe it is time for us all to take this prophetic word to heart and put it into action.

1. A return to praise – Praise is a gift of our heart to God's heart. It is a gift that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon CCR in a particular way. When we are faithful, it is our gift to the whole Church. It is our duty and privilege to spend time in praise, individually, and in our groups and communities. Wholehearted praise is a celebration of God and his goodness.

2. Use of the gifts – we need to create space to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in praise and worship, especially the gifts of tongues and prophecy. It was the signs and wonders that accompanied Jesus in his ministry.

3. Scripture – Pope Francis has called charismatics to return to our first love of the Word and to carry the Word with us wherever we go. We must be formed, first and

foremost, by the Word of God, which has the power to transform us and our world. The year 2020 has been declared the year of the Word of God and Pope Francis has nominated the Third Sunday in January as the Sunday on which to celebrate and proclaim the Word of God in greater zeal.

4. Recognising giftedness in others and being willing to bring our gift. If we are used to letting others get on with it, it's time to bring our gift. If we are used to doing everything, it's time to encourage others to bring their gifts.

5. Unity – The Lord is calling us to a new depth of unity with each other- within CCR, intergenerationally and with other churches. Sometimes there has been unhealthy competition or rivalry between groups, ministries or communities in CCR. We need to be humble and seek healing and unity, working together for our mission. Intergenerationally, we need to see the gifts each generation brings and be open to new ways of doing things.

Of course, the very heart of CCR is ecumenical; the grace of baptism in the Spirit is a current of grace we share with many other churches. This needs to be reflected in our relationships and mission.

6. Reclaiming our hope – It is easy to become disillusioned and lose hope in God's promises. Some of us need to receive healing from God in order to walk again in the hope, love and power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Expectant faith – Again, it is easy to believe the miracles and wonders of CCR's early days no longer happen. I really believe, as we use our gifts for mission, we will see God act in amazing ways in the coming years. People will come to faith, and lives will be transformed. We need to be expectant that He will act.

Pope Francis wants us to impact the whole church

I invite you to reflect on these 'stakes' as we move through the season of Advent. I believe we will see a new level of fruitfulness in CCR, which will impact the whole Church.

As we strengthen our stakes - our key commitments and priorities – and as we stretch out our tent, we will see God move and many people come to know Him.

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.

An evening with Bruce Yocum

.....
Wednesday 27 November
at 7.30pm.

The CCR Centre,
101 Holden St, North Fitzroy.



REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARIS CONFERENCE



Shayne Bennett

Moderator for Oceania, CHARIS

While the launch of Charis at Pentecost 2019 is only a few months old, I have continued to be inspired by the desire of Pope Francis for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to be renewed in its self-understanding and in its mission. Too often, this current of grace has been diminished by our failure to see the bigger picture. Our focus can be limited to our own group and what God may be doing in and through my group. Pope Francis calls us to see something more; to see how the Holy Spirit is renewing the Church and to value all that God is doing. Our vision for Catholic Charismatic Renewal is too small, too local and too contained. The vision of Charis calls us to unity in heart, mind and vision. It challenges us to embrace one another and to see the Spirit of God at work throughout the Renewal and to use the gifts that God has given so that we might be effective missionary disciples. I believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to put aside fear and with open hearts ask the Holy Spirit to guide us more powerfully into the mission that lies before us.

Anne Marie Gatenby

Intercession Co-ordinator



It was an historical moment in the life of the Renewal as CHARIS was launched. It felt like we were stepping on the cusp of something new into an unknown unfolding and what was needed was to take a step of faith together in this new adventure with God. Pope Francis said that, by the Will of God, we are beginning a new stage of the CCR's development. He acknowledged that change can be destabilising but assured us that this new thing flows from the God's heart. The temptation of "We are fine the way we are, why change?" is the kind of thinking that does not come from the Holy Spirit, for God says "Behold I make all things new". Pope Francis expects CHARIS to share Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the whole church and serve together in unity through our diversity and serve the poor. He told us to enlarge the tent pegs and I could see CHARIS as a new wine skin to bring the Renewal to the next stage. If our Holy Father wants this, then we have to make a decision to get behind it a 100% and daily cry out "Come Holy Spirit we need you".



Christopher Noone

Moderator, Bread of Life Fellowship

What struck me most profoundly about the CHARIS Conference was the renewed emphasis on the Ecumenical aspect of the Charismatic Renewal. In his address Cardinal Farrell made the following statement, "...Pope Francis identified Catholic Charismatic Renewal as an instrument of choice for the Church's ecumenical effort. It is a sign of providence that the Pentecost experience has emerged in all churches and Ecclesial Communities. There is therefore a shared spiritual experience across Charismatic Renewal for Christians of all denominations." A significant part of the CHARIS mandate is Ecumenism. The Pope had previously given the Renewal a mandate to take the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the whole church, but this was for me a refreshing new mandate for CHARIS. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on every denomination regardless of theological correctness. A personal Pentecost is available to anyone who is thirsty without reference to their theological persuasion. Only the Holy Spirit could break down denominational walls and barriers in such an extraordinary and creative way.

Ann Brereton

former NSC Chairperson



It was a privilege to sit in the magnificent JP II Hall and participate with Charismatics from around the world in the birth of CHARIS while witnessing friends from the Charismatic family meeting up again and view new friendships being formed. As I sat for the final time with my fellow ICCRS brothers and sisters I also found time to reflect on our final ICCRS Council meeting, with one particular occasion speaking loudly to me. Oreste Pesare, Director of the ICCRS office had his employment contract terminated early and was not included in the new CHARIS administration. He held no animosity which led me to clearly see how the grace of God, when we surrender to His Spirit, transforms us in very challenging circumstances. With a servant's heart and great integrity Oreste (with the office staff) produced an astounding hand over package for the new team. I was truly amazed at the details contained within this document and felt assured that CHARIS was handed a significant Gift to assist them in the future. With the launch of CHARIS many CCR Realities worldwide are experiencing tensions with the 'finishes' needed for transition and Oreste's witness shows that it is possible to participate in this journey with selfless love and humility.

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

SHOOK

THE GROUND-BREAKING MINISTRY OF JESUS

14-17 JAN
2020

GUEST SPEAKERS

LAWRENCE HIRSCH
MARK NIMO
MICHELLE MORAN

LOCATION

ST MARY'S COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE,
871 SWANSTON ST, PARKVILLE

REGISTRATION FORM

One form per person. *Please print clearly.*

Title: ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Rev ☐ Br ☐ Sr

First Name:

Surname:

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Postcode:

Phone:

Email:

REGISTRATION: Full Conference registration \$200 OR \$180 early bird by 15/11/2019

Deposit only enclosed \$100

Donation to Charis \$

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$

Balance \$payable by 19/12/2019

Daily attendance \$60.00 per day

LIVE IN: *Please indicate your requirements*

Bed and Breakfast: \$75.00 per night

☐ Mon ☐ Tues ☐ Wed ☐ Thurs ☐ Fri

Bed and all meals: \$105.00 per night

☐ Mon ☐ Tues ☐ Wed ☐ Thurs ☐ Fri

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WHERE IS YOUR SOUL AT CHRISTMAS?

By DINA MANANQUIL-DELFINO



"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree." Roy Smith

I took a train to the city recently to attend a seminar. As the train stopped at Parliament Station, I could not help reminisce the 27 years of train trips everyday as part of my work routine. It must have been only by the grace of God that I was able to sustain such regimen and I am glad I no longer need to do it at my age.

To some of us who have gone through many years of Christmas, the season likewise brings many reflective moments, and we wonder how we survive each Christmas time. The demands to make it merry is always there. Presents, gift-giving, meal preparations, holidays, trips, vacations, reunions can make it exciting but also stressful. Our days are marked by hurried days, appointments, bookings, schedules, scramble for parking spots, fear of getting into further debt. And for those of us getting older, spending the days in front of the stove and cleaning up a pile of dishes no longer seem to be an attractive thought.

So how do we get into the spirit when we don't feel it anymore?

An article in the Franciscan media shares: *"Christmas is a holy time that invites you to reflect on the most important issues in life, especially escaping the darkness of ignorance and arriving at the light of new understanding and possibility. It ritualizes the birth of your soul. Remember that ritual is an ordinary action carried out with special attention to its poetics that has far greater significance than would appear. If you take Christmas to heart and get past the anxieties in arranging for gifts and parties, you will rediscover yourself every year at this time and experience a birth in yourself, just like the one so beautifully described in the Gospel stories. It will be a celebration of both the birth of Jesus and the birth of your own soul."*

As the spirit of Christmas is in giving, not getting, we reach out in love to those who need it most. It does not have to be a material gift, although for some members of our community a present can sparkle their life. Spending time with a lonely friend, relative or family member and sometimes even a stranger, is a treasured offering. Reconciling and forgiving, the heart softening is a blessed act. Remembering the birth of Christ puts us into a position of humility and obedience. Attending church services connects us to people of faith and hope

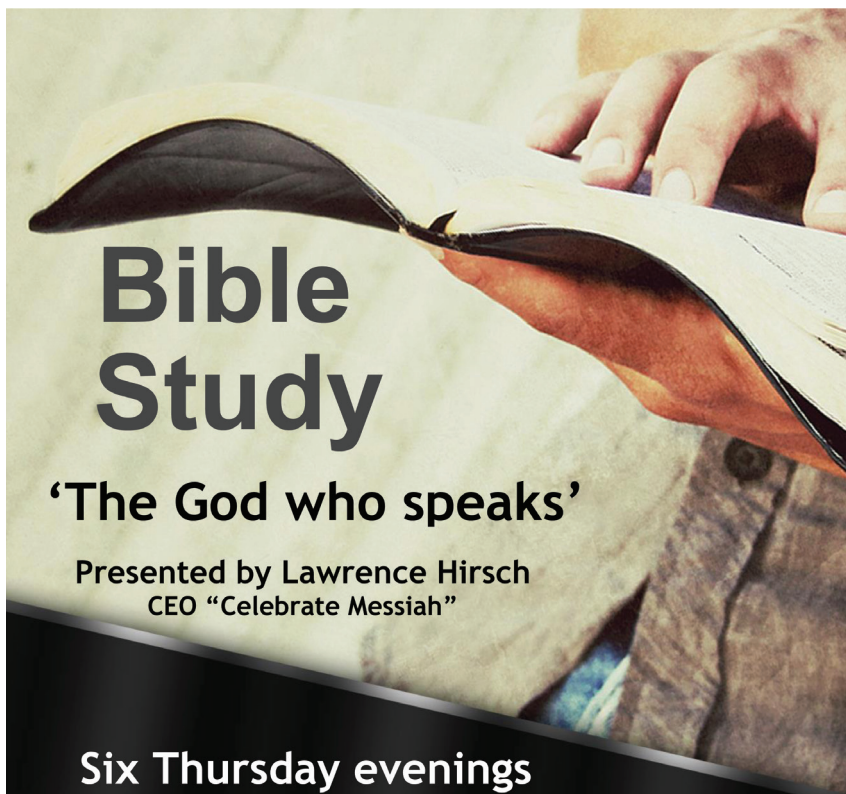
and we can sing together of the night being holy and calm. Honouring deceased loved ones we have lost during the season will help us overcome the grief and sadness for missing them on such a special time.

One spiritual writer said that what you bring to Christmas is the window of your soul. It is a great time to examine if your Christmas illuminates your soul or darkens it.

Jesus is the true spirit of Christmas. Without Him, there is only materialism, self-absorption, greed and tokenism. But with Him at the centre, there is a world of joy, peace, hope, love, compassion, friendship, service. It is hard to give of one's full self like Jesus did, but it is not impossible to share some wonderful part of ourselves.

If we can look at Christmas as a spiritual journey to Bethlehem, the days we will travel towards it will take on new meaning and might stir our soul to rejoice again.

May the joy and love of Jesus be your present at Christmas and His peace and hope your treasure for the New Year. God bless you!



Bible Study

'The God who speaks'

Presented by Lawrence Hirsch
CEO "Celebrate Messiah"

**Six Thursday evenings
February 20 - March 26 | 7:00pm**

**at CCR Centre
101 Holden St Nth Fitzroy**

Course cost: \$60 Enquiries 9486 6544.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

By MAUREEN CLARKE

Maureen Clarke shares her experience of helping primary school children find faith in Jesus through Life in the Spirit seminars.

I ask all of you that... you organise Life in the Spirit seminars in your parishes and schools to share Baptism in the Spirit. (Pope Francis, 2015)

Perhaps, as the new school year starts, you would like to consider giving your children the opportunity to open wide their hearts to the life-changing power and love of the Holy Spirit. We tend to think that "Life in the Spirit Seminars" are for adults, but many children have so far experienced the transformative power through the 'Life in the Spirit Seminars' written specially for them.

Faith comes alive in Inner-City Manchester

At an inner-city school in Manchester where I taught for many years, children from Key Stage 2 came together last thing on a Friday afternoon to praise and worship the Lord through lively singing and dancing. Readings adapted to the children's age-range and a period of silent meditation were also used.

Our school chaplain, Fr. Pat Deegan, regularly came into school to praise the Lord with us. Fr. Pat then asked me to write "Life in the Spirit Seminars" for the children. Fr. Pat was delighted with the content and delivery of the Seminars, along with the children's response to the five-week course.

He then suggested it should be filmed, so that it could be shared with other schools and churches. The film includes the five talks, the children praising the Lord in song and contributing to the delivery of the talks. It is all child friendly.

The talks lead up to the children being prayed with for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on week 4. Without fail, every time the Seminars have been delivered, week 4 has been so very moving.

The Holy Spirit takes over

Each time I have delivered the Seminars, I have been aware of the power of the Holy Spirit taking over and working in our children. Even children with a few problems seem to become calm and engrossed in the sessions.

The seminars can be delivered to up to 100 children, or to an individual class/group.

To deliver these Seminars, everything you need is on the DVD. A song sheet is provided so your children can join with

the children on the DVD in praising the Lord. Week 4 demonstrates how to organise praying with the children and their parents, if they so wish.

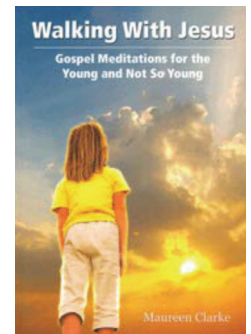
"Walking With Jesus" is a child friendly book of Gospel stories, I wrote it to enable children to enter more fully into the Gospels, to feel part of them and experience Jesus more deeply through the Gospel stories.

If you would like a copy of the DVD or a book, please email Maureen: mclarke2010@live.co.uk

- DVD: £7.00 including P&P.
- Book: "Walking With Jesus" (cover shown) £10.00 including P&P

No need for payment until you receive the goods.

Used with permission CCR UK.



"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
2 Corinthians 12:10

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

**2020
MELBOURNE**

VENUE
400 City Rd, Southbank VIC 3006
(Planetshakers Centre)

**Saturday 15th February
9AM - 6:30PM**

Join us for a day of Prayer and Renewal as we come together to experiencing the Love, Grace and Strength of our God!

Inspiring talks | Healing Adoration | Holy Mass

Live praise and worship by the Community of the Risen Lord worship ministry and One Spirit

FREE registration at www.strengthenweakness.com.au
For more details please contact info@strengthenweakness.com.au or 0411 468 571

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A WORD... FROM MIRIAM

By MIRIAM MARKIS



We read in scripture that many who heard Jesus speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, left Him. *John 6:54-55* "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food, and My blood is real drink'" (NIV). For those who remained with Christ, the gradual revelation of the Lord's challenging words followed by His actions at the Last Supper, were to become pivotal players in transmitting the faith in Jesus and His extraordinarily great gift to us. This is a mystery talked and written about for over 2,000 years but which still captivates Christian Theology.

Of late I have been thinking a lot about the way I receive the Lord in Communion. Surely, it's the prompting of the Holy Spirit! I consume Him and ask Him to consume me so that my every thought and action is gradually conformed not only to His Will but also to His image and likeness. Although I feel as if there's nothing happening, and I haven't changed as much as I'd like to. The old man that St Paul talks about and which, I'm assured by faith, was buried in baptism sometimes, resurfaces. I then consciously recall what St Paul also says that "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2Cor :17). Hardly instantaneous

but, a lifelong journey.

Whilst recollecting my thoughts and bringing them captive to the Lord I can receive Him in a manner which is much more worthy. I imagine His flesh becoming part of my flesh. His blood mixing with my blood. I envisage Him healing me. Then the Holy Spirit quietens my spirit so that I can remain focused on this wonderful mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ living in me and calming me.

Advent will shortly be upon us. A time of preparation for the coming of the Child Jesus into our hearts. But Jesus comes to us each time we receive Him in Communion. As we focus our thoughts on Him then He is that Infant Child that comes at Christmas. He's the 12 year old preaching in the Temple. The Jesus crowned with thorns, scourged at the pillar or the Crucified One. Then He is the Resurrected One. Thus, we share in His life's story and join ours to His.

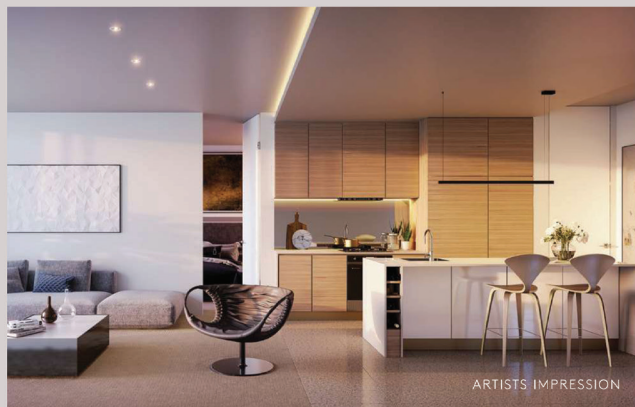
May the Infant Jesus bless you and your families this Christmas with the fullness of His being and His love. For Jesus said in *John 14:23* "Anyone, who loves me will obey my teaching (including the teaching of eating His flesh and drinking His blood). My Father will love them, and we (Father and Son) will come to them and make our home in them." So, it makes sense to let Jesus be the Centre of our lives and our Christmas celebrations through frequent reception of Holy Communion!

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MARK YOUR DIARIES...

Renewal Day

An opportunity for fellowship with others and growth through teachings.

Dates for 2020: 16 May, 15 August and 21 November.

No February Renewal Day – see notice about CRL Conference.

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

NO PARKING IN SCHOOL GROUNDS. Public transport: train to Parliament station, then tram no.96 along Nicholson St to stop no.22.

Annual Conference

14 – 17 January 2020

'SHOOK: the ground- breaking ministry of Jesus'

St Mary's College, the University of Melbourne, 871 Swanston St, Parkville.

See page 8 for the Registration Form.

The Community of the Risen Lord National Conference

Saturday 15 February 2020

"...for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10) is the theme for the National CRL Conference.

400 City Road, Southbank (Planetshakers Centre). 9am to 6.30pm.

Celebrate the Year of the Word of God

20 February – 26 March 2020

To celebrate the Year of the Word of God there are Bible Study courses that will be held throughout the year. The first of these, entitled *"The God who Speaks"*, presented by Lawrence Hirsch, will happen over six weeks commencing Thursday 20 February. See flyer on page 9.

To register please contact the CCR Centre on 9486 6544. Course cost: \$60

Can't make it to a Healing Prayer Centre during the week? You are welcome to come to the Open House Healing Ministry Day - Saturday 29 February 2020. 9.30am - 2pm at the CCR Centre.

| 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 |
| 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 | St Thomas the Apostle, 251 Diamond Creek Rd, Greensborough North |
| 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