

The Flame

May 2020

Transformation through Prayer Ministry

“My child, get up” (Lk 8:40-56).

These words pierced my heart as I read about Jesus raising the synagogue leader’s daughter from the dead even though everyone laughed at him, saying it was too late for him to heal her. It can be tempting to believe we are beyond hope or that even Jesus is too late to heal us, but Jesus continues to invite you and me to be transformed and healed in ways that are miraculous. Prayer Ministry invites us to this transformation and healing as we: firstly, make an act of humility and faith like the synagogue leader who falls at Jesus’ feet and pleads for him to touch and heal his daughter and secondly, receive and respond to Jesus’ healing words and touch and get up like the girl who was raised from the dead.

An Act of Humility and Faith

Having the courage to go to a prayer team with a specific need is in itself an act of humility, but is Jesus calling us to a greater depth of humility and faith that he will touch and heal and transform in ways that are astounding? I believe he is. For six years I struggled with severe chronic pain and though I asked for prayer many times, it was not until my posture changed from fear and despair to humility and faith that I received the fullness of the answers to all of my and others’ prayers. What moved me to deeper humility and faith was God speaking to my heart through Isaiah 59 and 60, especially these verses:

By Alicia Hartle

“No, the hand of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear” (Is 59:1).

“We grope along the wall like blind men...we stumble at mid-day as in the twilight” (Is 59:10).

“Arise, shine for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you” (Is 60:1).

Though I had witnessed many miracles, with this particular need I had been approaching God and Prayer Ministry as though I was beyond hope. I had been closing my eyes to the reality that Jesus won the victory over sin and death and suffering-including my own. As I read Isaiah 60:1, I knew I was being asked to walk in this victorious reality even if I never saw physical healing. By God’s amazing grace in the seventh year, which was the Year of Mercy, I was completely healed of the physical pain. This lesson is for each person participating in Prayer Ministry, whether receiving prayer or as a member of the prayer team-will we stop to examine our current posture and choose an ever-deeper posture of humility and faith? When we face the darkest and most hopeless of situations, will we choose not to fear? Will we believe?

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Dear Readers of the Flame,

Very few people saw this coming. A disease that would shut the world down? It sounded like a Hollywood movie plot. Yet, here we are: sheltering in place, keeping social distance, a workforce divided into essential and non-essential, pre-kindergarten through graduate school taking place online, wearing face masks and frequently washing our hands. This is the reality of our day.

COVID-19 has made everyone feel vulnerable. Since the virus had never been seen before, no one was immune to it. All people are susceptible to COVID-19. Yet, we know that to do when we are powerless. We turn to the Lord Jesus who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:20)

Prayer would be a good use of the extra free time that the COVID-19 outbreak has afforded us. Prayer is what will keep us free and sane. **I have encouraged people to pray for the same length of time that they watch/read/listen to the news reports about COVID-19.**

We need to petition the Lord on behalf of the individuals we know who have contracted the disease. We need to intercede on behalf of the world that this virus be will eradicated. We need to pray for civil leaders that they would work with health officials in making policies. We ask the Lord to guide researchers as they develop a vaccine for COVID-19. We need to especially pray for health care workers and all who supply supportive services for hospitals and nursing homes. We need to pray.

We also need to live our faith. This is the antidote to the anxiety and fear that paralyze us.

Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of *death*, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Jesus Christ is the Son of God who, by his own death and glorious resurrection, destroyed the power of death. We do not have to live in fear of death. **Yes, we still act in a prudent manner in the face of COVID-19. However, we belong to Jesus Christ, who shares with us His victory over death.**

In the light of Christ we have a hope that is beyond this world. St. Paul reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven. (Philippians 3:20). St. Peter calls us *sojourners* (I Peter 1:1, 17, 2:11) and reminds us that our time on earth is a pilgrimage to an *inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven* (I Peter 1:4).

We also need to be mindful of practicing charity. We may know people who feel especially isolated during this time. We can call them and remind them that they are not forgotten. We are spending more time with those we live



with. This too can be a challenge. Again, all of us need to make a special effort to respect and serve each other.

Shortly after sending the students home from Franciscan University of Steubenville, **Fr. Dave Pivonka TOR was praying in the friary chapel one evening. He sensed the Lord say, "I have not changed."** God is still God. He is still on the throne. God still rules. We need to remember this. Pope Francis, when leading a Holy Hour at an empty St. Peter's on Friday, March 27 read Mark 4:35-41, the passage that tells us that Jesus was asleep in the storm tossed boat with the disciples. The Lord Jesus did calm the wind and the waves and called the disciples to faith amid the trials. And the Lord will eradicate this virus.

If I could encourage you in some other ways: stay connected to your parishes. Though you are not attending events there, most parishes have their Masses online (we use Facebook Live) and even have other online offerings. At St. Peter's we have an online Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Bible Study, Prayer course and other offerings. **And support your parish financially.** People at my parish have signed up for online giving, mailed in their envelopes, walked them into the office or had their bank send us checks.

At this point, CRM has scheduled a number of Charismatic Masses in June and into the fall. We also have our 2020 Cleveland Charismatic Conference scheduled for July 17-18. **These events will take place only if they are permitted and deemed prudent to have the events.** Please refer to the CRM website (www.crmweb.org) for up to date information or phone us at 440-944-9445.

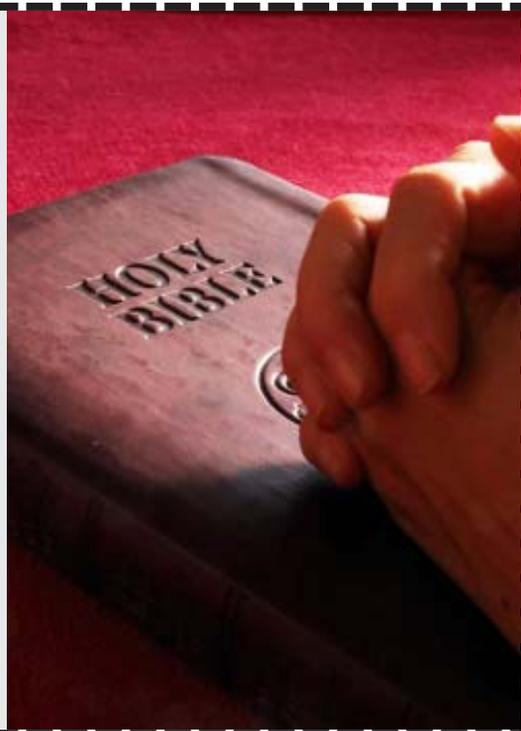
In Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

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CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES
P.O. BOX 360546
STRONGSVILLE, OHIO 44136
crmweb.org / (440)944-9445

Heavenly Father,
 You are God. You love us. You gave Your Son for us.
 You have the hairs of our heads numbered.
 Hear us during this COVID-19 worldwide pandemic.
 Heal the sick.
 Protect nurses, doctors, caregivers and all who provide
 supportive services in the medical field.
 Guide policy makers and leaders.
 Enlighten researchers.
 Provide for the unemployed, underemployed and
 the needy.
 Encourage the homebound.
 Comfort the grieving.
 Receive the deceased into Your glory.
 Strengthen us all to do Your will and trust You always.
 We pray through Jesus Christ, our Healer, Hope,
 Peace and Mercy. Amen.



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While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore." Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed" (Lk. 8:49-50).

Receive and Respond to Jesus' Healing Touch

Since the day of Pentecost, Jesus has animated the Body of Christ to continue his healing and life-giving ministry through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus continues to touch the deepest wounds and completely heal through Prayer Ministry at conferences, prayer groups, Unbound sessions, and in less formal settings with family friends and strangers. The fire of God's Love dynamically melts and molds hearts, minds, souls, and even bodies. May we receive and respond in ways that are shockingly miraculous to the world around us when Jesus takes us by the hand and says: "My child, get up" (Lk 8:54).

Alicia Hartle works with the Oakland Prayer Group, Unbound Pittsburgh-Greensburg and in Marketing for a Christian medical device company, HTK (Honor the King) Enterprises. She is a member of the NSC Council.

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CRM Website Posts Updates on Events

For information on Traveling Charismatic Masses and other events, please refer to the CRM website (crmweb.org). All Charismatic Masses and events are subject to change due to the Coronavirus policies of the State of Ohio and the Diocese of Cleveland. We will try our best to keep the CRM website updated. If you are unsure that a Mass or event will take place, please call the appropriate contact number. Thank you.

The Conference Committee is now gathering information to decide whether the 2020 Cleveland Charismatic Conference will take place. We will let you know shortly what is happening in this regard. Again, please check the CRM website for updates. We will mail a conference brochure to everyone, if the conference will go forward.

Please continue to pray for recovery for everyone with the virus, all of our health care workers, and the researchers working on medications and vaccines. Also, please remember those who have been financially impacted by this situation, and pray for wisdom for all of our government officials as they guide us through this unprecedented difficult time. Know, as always, you are in the prayers of the CRM service committee and ministries.



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