

The Flame

January February 2013 Publication of The Charismatic Renewal Cleveland, Ohio

What is baptism in the Holy Spirit? by Dr. Mary Healy

Vatican Council II tells us that our responsibility as Catholics is to “read the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the gospel.” What are the major currents of thought that influence people in our time? What signs are there of God’s grace at work, but also of darkness and error? What is the Holy Spirit saying to the Church? This is the best context for seeking to understand the grace of baptism in the Spirit that God has poured out on so many millions of Catholics since 1967.

Baptism in the Spirit can be described as an experience of the love of God the Father poured into our hearts, leading to a transformed life in the lordship of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. This grace brings alive sacramental baptism and confirmation, enkindling evangelistic fervor and equipping a person with charisms for service and mission. Let us look at the biblical foundations of baptism in the Spirit and then consider why it is so important for us to foster this dynamic grace in the Church today.

The Love of the Father

In Acts 1:4-5 Jesus tells his disciples, “wait for the promise of the Father about which you

have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” The word “baptize” was an ordinary Greek term, meaning to plunge in water, immerse, or drench. By using this image, Jesus was saying that John’s baptism, in which people were plunged into the Jordan River, was only a foreshadowing and preparation for something far greater. God is going to immerse you into the mystery of his own divine life! He is

going to fill you with the eternal love that unites the Persons of the most holy Trinity.

This is exactly what occurred ten days later at Pentecost, when tongues as of fire descended on the disciples and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They could say like Paul, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us” (Rom 5:5). For the first time, they knew “Abba,” the Father of whom Jesus had so often spoken, in a totally personal and experiential way. Knowing that divine love made their fears of persecution, their sense of unworthiness as Galilean peasants, their shame over abandoning Jesus in his passion, all melt

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January & February, 2013

Dear Readers of the Flame,

The older I get the more I appreciate the sacraments, in particular baptism. It is the sacrament that inserts us into the life of Jesus Christ. In baptism we die and rise with Jesus. We receive forgiveness of sins. We are made temples of the Holy Spirit. We become part of a really big family, the Church, spanning the globe, bridging time and eternity.

I believe all these things. However, I also know that I do not always live in the fullness of the sacraments. I desire to grow the fruit of the Holy Spirit. However, the weeds of my sinfulness crop up and stifle the fruit of the Spirit. I earnestly seek to think with the Church. However, my mind is easily distracted by worldly cares.

What's a Christian to do??? Here are two steps to help us bear more fruit for the Lord.

Step one is to make frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance. When we confess our sins, earnestly resolve not to commit them again and receive absolution, we are as clean in the Lord as the day we were baptized! What a wonderful gift! And if one is hesitant about making this step, **I encourage you to take advantage of Wednesday, February 20. Every parish in the Diocese of Cleveland will be hearing confessions from 5:00 to 8:00 PM at the same time.** What a wonderful thing to do as individuals and as a local Church—to come before the Lord in humility seeking His mercy!

The second step is this: "...deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23b) **The way to conquer sinful habits is to die.** Dead people no longer sin. (see Romans 7:4-6) Baptism is an insertion into the death and resurrection of Jesus so that we might live a new life. However, we need to **day by day embrace the cross** and die to sin. This is not merely a negative thing. **Dead to sin, we present the members of our body to God to become instruments of righteousness.** Each aspect of our humanity has been created by the Father, redeemed by Son and is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Each part of our person has purpose and a mission. Having died to sin, St. Paul urges us in this manner:

Therefore, sin must not reign over your mortal bodies so that you obey their desires. And do not present your bodies to sin as weapons of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as raised from the dead to life and the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for right-



eousness. For sin is not to have any power over you, since you are not under the law but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14)

Avoiding sin is not our main goal. Our goal is to do the will of God in such a complete manner that we manifest the holiness of Jesus Christ and evangelize the world! Holy Spirit, help us!!!

This year there is a short turn around between the seasons of Christmas and Lent. The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 13) and Ash Wednesday (February 13) are just one month apart. However, the thread that connects them is the living out of **our baptism**. I pray that we never give up confessing our sins, dying to ourselves and presenting ourselves to God as weapons of righteousness.

Finally, I want to encourage you to participate in **A Day of Renewal and Spiritual Freedom** on Saturday, February 2 at Sts. Cosmas and Damian Parish. **Our main presenter is Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR**, an acclaimed preacher who has ministered at many conferences at Franciscan University of Steubenville and throughout the USA. It is a great privilege to have him ministering our diocese. I believe his ministry will help us truly live in the purpose-filled freedom Christ has gained for us.

Let us live in the graces of our baptism and grow the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is always in season.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

PS Hold Saturday, April 13th. CRM will host a Day of Renewal entitled, **Facets of Faith**. This day will be a day of teaching, worship and healing. More info will be in the next edition of **The Flame** and www.crmweb.org

CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES PRESENTS



A Day of Renewal & Spiritual Freedom

GUEST SPEAKER:

Fr. Dave Pivonka

Come for a day of teaching,
praise and worship,
and empowerment session.

LOCATION:

Sts. Cosmas & Damian Church
10419 Ravenna Rd, Twinsburg, OH 44087
at Twinhaven Hall

DETAILS:

Saturday, February 2nd

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.,
event runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Adults \$20 and Teens \$10

CONTACT:

Jerry and Grace Wrobel
330-425-2678

Fr. Dave Pivonka

Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, is a well-known conference speaker around the United States. Fr. Dave also leads pilgrimages around the world to some of the holiest and most important sites in our Christian faith. He spends much of his time helping others come to know God's love for them through his preaching, writings, CDs, and other spiritual outreaches. Father Dave has held several ministry positions at Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH, and he was also the Director of Seminary Formation for his Franciscan Community in Washington, D.C. Fr. Dave is presently the Director of Franciscan Pathways an evangelistic/preaching outreach of his Franciscan Community.

Renewal Ministries Events

The 2012 Catholic Charismatic Conference
Distilled Prophetic Word:

*“My Children surrender to the
Fire and Power of My Holy Spirit. Blaze
forth with My Love into the world.”*

Catholic Renewal Ministries will host **Charismatic Masses** on **Friday, January 4th, at 7:00 p.m.**, at **St. Peter Parish**, 35777 Center Ridge Rd., North Ridgeville 44039 and **February 1st, at 7:00 p.m.** at **St. Matthias Parish** at 1200 W. Sprague Rd. in Parma, 44134. Fr. Bob Franco will be the celebrant. Praise and worship will begin at 7:00 and the liturgy will start at 7:30. Healing prayer teams will be available after mass for individual prayer. For more information, please contact Fr. Franco at 440-327-2201 or CRM at 440-944-9445. Come and bring a friend! All are welcome!

Are you looking to deepen your relationship with Jesus? **“Families in Christ Jesus”** is sponsoring a **“Life in Christ Series”**. This series is designed to deepen your relationship with Jesus and help develop a better understanding of God’s call in your life. The program is open to all couples, widows, widowers, divorced and singles. The “Series” will consist of talks, group discussions and fellowship. It is diocesan approved and there is no cost involved. The program will be held in the Harvest Room at the Church of St. Clare, located at 5659 Mayfield Rd., Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124. The program begins **Thursday, January 10 at 8:00 p.m.** For more information or to register call Ross or Susan Federico – 440-646-2556.

The Catholic Renewal Ministries Intercessory Prayer Team invites you to an Evening of Intercessory Prayer. These evenings will be held at Presentation House located in the Issenman Building on the grounds of the Center for Pastoral Leadership, 28706 Euclid Ave., Wickliffe 44092. We will come together for prayer on Thursdays, January 17th and February 21st, at 7:00 p.m. We will pray for the many intentions of the church, our country, personal needs and the ministry of Catholic Renewal Ministries. For more information, please contact Marge Zampino at 216-990-0919.

Catholic Renewal Ministries invites you to a Day of Renewal & Spiritual Freedom presented by Fr. Dave Pivonka on Sat., February 2nd. Fr. Dave is a well-known conference speaker throughout the U.S. He has served in a number of ministry positions at Franciscan University of Steubenville and is a popular speaker at the University’s summer conferences. Currently, he is Director of Franciscan Pathways, an evangelistic/preaching outreach of his Franciscan Community. The Day of Renewal will be held at Sts. Cosmas & Damian Parish, Twinhaven Hall, 10419 Ravenna Rd., Twinsburg 44087. The day will include teachings by Fr. Dave, praise & worship, a closing empowerment session. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. and the day will run from 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. The registration fee is \$20 for adults; \$10 teens. Lunch is on your own. There are many nearby restaurants. For more information call Jerry & Grace Wrobel at 330-425-2678.

40 Days for Life — the beginning of the end of abortion. We’ve just set the dates for the first 40 Days for Life campaign of 2013 for February 13 – March 24. 40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that draws attention to the evil of abortion through the use of a three-point program: Prayer and fasting; Peaceful vigil ; Community outreach. Check out the web: www.40daysforlife.com

Sacred Heart Church at 410 West Lorain Street in Oberlin will host a Life in the Spirit Seminar on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. The sessions will run from April 16 through May 28, 2013. Prayer for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit will be at the Pentecost Mass, May 19, at St. Michael’s Church in Independence. For further information, please contact Eric Carpenter at 440-775-2546 or Eric.Carpenter@oberlin.edu.

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FR. ROBERT J. FRANCO DIOCESAN LIAISON

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WICKLIFFE, OH 44092 440-944-9445

Traveling Charismatic Mass

Friday, January 4, 2013 7 p.m.

St. Peter

35777 Center Ridge Road
North Ridgeville, OH 44039

Friday, February 1, 2013 7 p.m.

St. Matthias

1200 Sprague Rd.
Parma, OH 44134

Life In The Holy Spirit Seminars

Families in Christ Jesus

Sacred Heart Church

Life in Christ Series

Life in the Spirit Seminar

Begins Thursday January 10th at 8 p.m.

Begins Tuesday, April 16th at 7 p.m.

Church of St. Clare, Lyndhurst, OH

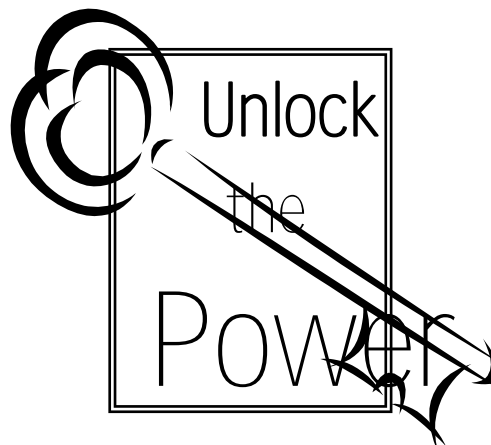
Sacred Heart Church, Oberlin, OH

Ross or Susan Federico 440-646-2556

Eric Carpenter 440-775-2546

On February 10th the Power

Respond to the call
to prayer from all the
National Leadership Groups
of the **Catholic**
Charismatic Renewal in
the U.S.
See
[www.nsc-
chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)
Plan for February 8th!



This annual concerted day
of prayer and fasting is on
Friday before
Ash Wednesday.
On this date we pray for the
Lord to
“unlock the power”
of the **Holy Spirit** for the
transformation of the
Church and the World.

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away. From that moment their hearts were burning to tell the whole world about this infinitely loving Father.

We do not have to look far to see how greatly needed this grace is today, at the beginning of the third millennium. Today we live in a culture of the “walking wounded.” Many have grown up without knowing the love of a faithful, committed father. Others have been scarred by divorce or by the impersonalism of a hedonistic and consumeristic culture. Many young people wander in confusion, hungry for meaning in life and seeking it in all kinds of pseudo-spirituality. Even deeper than these wounds is the wound of original sin, which leads us to think that God is somehow opposed to our happiness and that we have to grasp for life and security for ourselves.

To know the love of the Father, through the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of the healing of all these wounds. It brings the serenity and joy that comes from discovering our true identity as a son or daughter beloved by God, and becoming who we really are.

The Lordship of Jesus

Paul tells us that “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). When the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, the disciples came to know the lordship of Jesus not merely as a doctrine but as an experienced reality. They told the crowd gathered before them that Jesus of Nazareth, a man who had suffered a criminal execution only seven weeks before, had been raised up by God and made the Lord of the universe! Peter boldly proclaimed, “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).

The disciples knew with unshakable conviction that Jesus had defeated sin, death, and all the powers of hell, and that he is the King of Kings who has all authority in heaven and earth. This meant that absolutely nothing could happen to them without his permission. They immediately acted on that knowledge by proclaiming the gospel in the face of threats, imprisonment and even martyrdom, and by commanding sickness and demons to flee by the power of his Name.

Today we live in a culture where individualism is exalted and authority is often viewed as oppressive and corrupt. The prevailing view is that each person is “lord”—each person can decide for himself what life is about and how to pursue pleasure, “as long as you don’t hurt anybody.” But instead of fulfillment, this unrestrained “freedom” has led to slavery—addictions, uncommitted relationships, isolation, loneliness and depression.

In such a situation, baptism in the Spirit enables us to ring out anew the Church’s proclamation that “Jesus is Lord.” We can bear witness that living under his lordship brings not oppression but true freedom—freedom to love unconditionally, to live our vocation joyfully, and to develop our fullest potential as human beings.

The Power of the Holy Spirit

At Pentecost the disciples began to experience the Holy Spirit’s power, especially his power to conform them more and more closely to Christ. Jesus’ mandate, “Be perfect as your heavenly

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Father is perfect,” was no longer an impossibly tall order. It was a work the Holy Spirit was doing within them, that they had only to cooperate with. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this power when he said, “we all... are being changed into his likeness from glory to glory; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18).

Christians need this power more than ever today. If it was hard to live the Christian life in former generations, when society respected religious faith and upheld the dignity of human life and the family, how much more so is it now, in a post-Christian society where faith is mocked and godless lifestyles are glamorized. For people to live as committed Catholics, something more than orthodox doctrine is needed. That something more is the power of the Holy Spirit who makes Christ’s redemption an efficacious power in our lives, enabling us to die to self and lay down our lives for God and others.

Evangelistic Fervor and Charisms for Service and Mission

At Pentecost the disciples proclaimed the good news with such bold conviction that three thousand were converted that day, followed by many more as the early Church grew by leaps and bounds. Part of the dynamism of this burst of evangelization was the charisms distributed by the Holy Spirit—tongues, prophecy, healings and miracles to name a few. These supernatural gifts impressively confirmed the truth of the gospel message: that God loves all people, that he has compassion for the suffering, and that

Jesus has truly conquered sin and all its consequences.

Today we live in an age in which the world is regarded as a closed system, completely self-explanatory in terms of physical, chemical and biological processes. Many assume that if there is a God, he is remote and does not actually intervene in the world. Even Christians are influenced by this

mentality, fulfilling their religious obligations but having no expectation for God to speak to them or act in their lives.

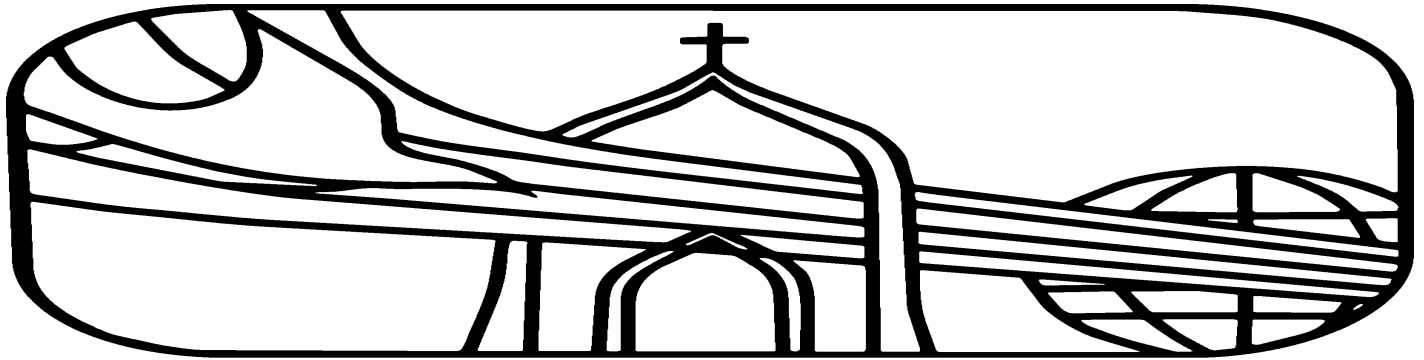
Those who are baptized in the Spirit can say with John, “What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon and touched with our hands... this we proclaim also to you” (1 John 1:1-3). We bear wit-

ness to a lost world that God is real and powerfully at work in the world. By exercising the Spirit’s charisms, we enable people to encounter his life-giving word and his healing love. How crucial it is that we treasure and foster this gift God has given us and share it with as many people as possible.

Dr. Mary Healy teaches Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. She is a member of the Doctrinal Commission of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services.

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