

# The Flame

November/December 2024

## A World Turned Upside Down New Ways to Share Christ's Life

*By Deacon Greg Kendra*

During the pandemic, the world seemed to have stopped, and nothing was quite what it had been. I worked from home, doing what I could from my laptop. The streets were deserted. The sidewalks, empty.

And then there was the church itself, standing strangely unused. Yet the bells still tolled for the Angelus, reminding us of a time before—before the lights were dimmed and the doors were locked. So much had changed.

But in the midst of all that, we were reminded that being church is larger than being in church. Faith endures.

It was there every morning when I clicked on my computer and beheld an astonishing world of prayer, resilience, and hope. I scrolled through social media and was amazed. There was a priest offering Confession in a parking lot in Maryland; another priest was offering Eucharistic Adoration from the window of his church in Massachusetts; there were people creating prayer groups, Rosary societies, online perpetual Adoration. Parents shared ideas for homeschooling, catechesis, ways of watching Mass together through FaceTime or Skype. So much had changed.

But I realized too that much had not. In spite of all the change, we are still the body of Christ. We are doing our level best to support one another, pray with one another, encourage one another, and worship the God we love.

In my life as a deacon—a deacon who is, not insignificantly, engaged in a ministry of communications—that means sharing as many of these stories as possible on my blog, connecting readers to the larger Church, and helping all of us realize we are not alone.

We aren't. Really. Grace is everywhere, streaming to us across Twitter and Facebook and YouTube, if only we take the time to look for it.

We need to look. The Covid pandemic forced most of us to watch the world through a screen and over a keyboard. What did we see?

There was the professional concert pianist who was unable to attend a conference out of town, so he set up a portable piano outside to play for his neighbors.

There was the group of high school students who found their spring concert canceled, so they recorded a rendition of "Over the Rainbow" via Skype, and the whole thing went viral, uplifting and charming thousands around the world.

Thoughtful, prayerful, enterprising people connected through wires and antennae—these people gave us hope. And we needed that. And out of this too we can find a way to live a life that is, truly, extraordinary.

And I told people often during those weeks of shutdowns: this is a great time to turn more to prayer. Seek out sacred readings, study the lives of the saints—they have much to teach us right now about persistence, resilience, and faith. And, significantly, focus on the domestic church of the family. You want to love your neighbor? Start with the one who sits across from you at the kitchen table. True during the pandemic, similarly true as we celebrate Christmas.

In his beautiful exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis wrote, "Each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called

(Continued on page 7)

Dear Readers of *The Flame*,

**Advent means coming.** As we approach the end of the Church's liturgical year and re-begin Advent, our readings focus on the coming of the Lord—both his return in glory and his birth on earth. The Church does this to remind us to be perpetually ready for his coming and even longing for it.

**Not surprisingly, the final chapter of the Bible speaks of the coming of Jesus.** *"Behold, I am coming soon. I bring with me the recompense I will give to each according to his deeds..."* (Revelation 22:12) and *The One who gives this testimony says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!* (Revelation 22:20) These verses highlight the promise of the Lord's return and the eagerness of the Church, longing for His coming.

**Of course, the word "soon" is somewhat relative.** St. John, in his first letter, makes this point with even stronger language: *My children, it is the last hour...* (1 John 2:18a) From our time bound perspective, many hours, days, months, years and generations have passed since these statements were made. However, from the eternal perspectives, those large swaths of time are as a blink of an eye.

**That the final chapter of the final book of the Bible speaks of the second coming of the Lord, tells us of the vibrant faith and loving longing that the early Church had for the return of Jesus Christ.** And through the centuries the Church has proclaimed the return of the Lord in glory and power on the Last Day. Unfortunately, many Christians in our day have become quite comfortable with this world. Longing for Christ's return has waned. Desire for a comfortable life has dampened our longing for the coming of the Lord in glory. **What's the cure for this spiritual lethargy?**

**In that same chapter of the Bible, a different coming is described.**

*The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the hearer say, "Come." Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water.*  
(Revelation 22:17)

This verse was part of an explanatory brochure I received when I made a Life in the Spirit Seminar weekend retreat in April of 1975. It describes the invitation issued by the *bride* (the Church animated by the Holy Spirit) to non-believers, **inviting them to come and find life in the person of the Holy Spirit, the river of life-giving water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the street.** (Revelation 22:1-2a)

**So yes, the early Church desired the coming of the Lord. However, God's people also issued forth an invitation to unbelievers and the lukewarm. Anyone, moved by grace, could come to Jesus Christ.** By Baptism and faith, they could drink of that life-giving stream and quench their thirst for purpose, forgiveness, love, God!

**Curing the spiritual lethargy of our time means offering a compelling presentation of the gospel to our distracted and spiritually benumbed world.** Here are three aspects that can make our invitation to come to the Lord more compelling.

**Compelling manner of life:** I read a booklet called *True Discipleship* shortly after my conversion. I found one line particularly striking and challenging. *If Christ is worth anything, He is worth everything.* Faith in Jesus Christ is not merely one more layer of insulation to make us comfortable on our earthly journey. The Holy Spirit inspires a manner of life that is happily sacrificial and radical. Imbibing in the Spirit transforms us into being self-forgetful disciples, unashamed of our faith, joyfully serving others.

**Compelling message:** Many people do not know why they exist. They are aimless and have no real hope. We believe that life has purpose and how we live our lives has temporal and eternal consequences. Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, is good news that demands a response. Responding to the gospel moves people out of the realm of eternal death into the Kingdom of light. This was the message of Peter on the day of Pentecost. After preaching the gospel, Peter continued to exhort his hearers: *"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."* (Acts 2:40) Only Jesus Christ delivers us from sin and death. The Church needs to make this clear.

**Compelling manifestations of God:** One of the surprises of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the widespread reappearance of the charisms of the Spirit. Gifts of power (miracles and healing) and revelation (prophecy and words of knowledge) back up the gospel message. They demonstrate God's compassion and make the gospel message more compelling. Signs and wonders can move people out of their lethargy and into a more vibrant response to Christ.

**As we approach Advent,** let us remember that this season is not merely a time to prepare us for an elaborate gift exchange on Christmas Day. It is the season to prepare us for the coming of the Lord. **It is also a time for us to invite people to come to the Lord.** *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come."* Jesus came to save us and gather us to himself. All people need to respond. Ultimately, this is a season of hope.

**We must not yield to discouragement.** A trite and somewhat faded adage reads, *You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.* The same goes for the drinking of the water of life. Yet, as the Bride of Christ, we must keep crying out with the Spirit, *Come!* If we do so, there will be those who come. **And because we continue to offer the invitation, we will be ready when He comes!**

In Christ,  
Fr. Bob Franco



**PS: I encourage you to participate in the upcoming CRM events.** More information is found in this issue of *The Flame* as well as the CRM website: [www.crmweb.org](http://www.crmweb.org).





CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES PRESENTS:

# Advent Love

HOW LOVE SHAPES OUR BRAINS  
with Dr. Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD



JOIN US  
SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 14  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

PRAISE & WORSHIP  
TEACHING  
HEALING PRAYER

Holy Family Church  
3179 Kent Rd., Stow  
Lower Church Hall

Registration 9:30 AM  
RSVP: 330-687-8843



# Catholic Renewal Ministries Traveling Healing Mass

## Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> 2024

### St. Francis of Assisi Parish

#### Fr. Bob Franco Celebrant

Praise & worship begins at 7:00

Liturgy begins at 7:30 p.m.

### St. Francis of Assisi Parish

6850 Mayfield Rd.,

Gates Mills, OH 44040

#### *All are Welcome!*

Healing prayer teams will be available after mass for individual prayer, and there will also be a social after mass.

Come, Sing and Praise God with Joy!

**Contact CRM: 440-944-9445**



*Healing Prayer teams will be available after Mass for individual prayer.*

**crmweb.org**



# Prayer Group Information

**SS. Cosmas and Damian Charismatic Prayer Group** meets the **1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday** of each month at **7:00 p.m.** in the church gathering area under the Holy Spirit Dove. The prayer meeting is also streamed live on SS. Cosmas and Damian Facebook page. Come and experience vibrant praise and worship, intercessory and healing prayer, and scripture sharing.

Do you want to know Jesus in a deeper way? Are you looking to go deeper in your faith? Come and check out our church community of believers. To contact us or be on the prayer group email list call 330-310-2595 or email [dennycarleton@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dennycarleton@sbcglobal.net). We play music highlights, prophecies, and teachings from the prayer group on <https://arkandoasis.net/>.

The **Community of Praise Prayer Group** meets at St. Paul Catholic Church, 241 South Main St., North Canton, OH 44720. Their prayer meetings start at **6:30 pm** on the **second Monday** of each month. Upcoming dates are: December 11, 2023 and January 8, 2024. They meet inside the main church in the area of the "old Sanctuary". Parking is behind the Church, and there is an elevator to the upper level where the Main Church is located. For more information contact Don and Rosemary Pfiffner at 330-499-9371 or email: [pfiffner67@gmail.com](mailto:pfiffner67@gmail.com).

The **Living Word Healing Prayer Ministry** at St. Ambrose Parish in Brunswick meets face to face on the **first and third Tuesdays** of every month from **7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** in our Chapel.

We allow the Winds of the Spirit to flow over us as we praise the Lord through music, sharing, and group reflection. We allow time for God to open our hearts and minds as we listen to His Word both through Scripture and Word of Knowledge. Every meeting ends with healing prayer as we ask Jesus to come to us in a special way to heal our brokenness and touch us with His Love.

All are invited to join us as we praise and worship the Living God!

**Our Lady of Angels Prayer Group** meets on **Tuesday Evenings from 7:30 – 9:00pm** in the Primary Building of Our Lady of Angles School (behind Linus Hall) 3644 Rocky River Dr., Cleveland 44111. We recently offered the Life in the Spirit Seminar and brought it to completion with much praise and thanks to God.

Now we continue to meet every Tuesday evening. Praise and worship, silence and Word gifts, a teaching or witness, with our prayers for personal intentions round out our time together these evenings. Afterwards, we enjoy Fellowship

and offer healing prayer. Everyone is most welcome. Please phone Tom Stamper at 216-536-6495 with any questions.

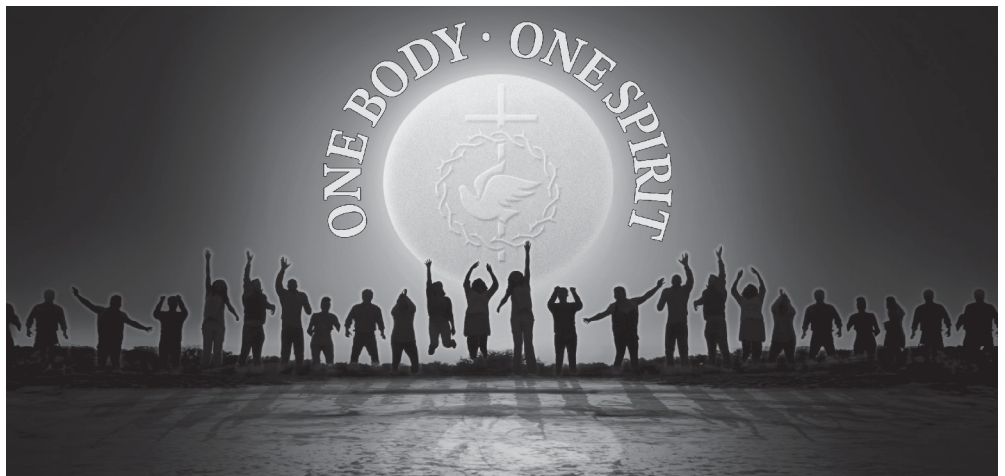
The **Bukas Loob sa Diyos** (BLD) or in English - **Open in Spirit to God** (OSG), is a Filipino Catholic Charismatic Covenant Community. While the majority of BLD members are from the Philippines, it also includes other brothers and sisters of many nationalities and heritage backgrounds. We meet every **Thursday, at 7:00 pm** at the Mary Queen of Peace Chapel, 4423 Pearl Rd, Cleveland, OH 44109. We hold weekly praise and worship service in-person. Also, on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m., we celebrate a mass followed by a healing service.

We are a communion of families and a community of persons called together as one people through the moment of encounter and a process of renewal to a relationship of faith, hope, and love with God. We conduct marriage encounter programs, solo person encounters, single encounters, family encounters and life in the spirit seminars.

For more information on **Bukas Loob sa Diyos**, please contact Rudy and Fe Fontilla at (440) 403-5719 or email: [rudyfontilla1975@yahoo.com](mailto:rudyfontilla1975@yahoo.com).

The **Holy Spirit Prayer Group** of St. Mary Church in Hudson is a Charismatic Holy Spirit led prayer group that meets the **first and third Saturdays** of each month year around. We meet from **10am to 11:30 am** in the chapel. The main focus of our meeting is to praise and worship the living God. We ask the Holy Spirit to minister to us and take us to the heart of the Father. We not only offer praise and worship but also periods of silent prayer to seek and hear God's words and His messages to us. We share words of God, share stories, and offer intercessory prayers for hurting and suffering brothers and sisters.

Our prayer group offers a monthly healing prayer service also. For further information, please contact us at [HealingPrayers@stmaryhudson.cc](mailto:HealingPrayers@stmaryhudson.cc).



## Order a Thumbdrive of 2024 Conference Talks

*All talks are included on thumbdrive in mp4 video and mp3 audio formats*

\_\_\_\_ YES! I would like to purchase thumbdrive of talks for **\$15**  
OR You can order directly on our website: [crmweb.org](http://crmweb.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Send check/money order to:*

*C.R.M. PO Box #360546, Strongsville, OH 44136  
440-944-9445 | [crmcleland@gmail.com](mailto:crmcleland@gmail.com)*

# CRM and Prayer Group Events

## FIRST SUNDAYS

The **Holy Spirit Prayer Group** of St. Mary Church hosts an in-person **Healing Prayer Service** on the **first Sunday** of each month. The service will be held in the chapel from **12:30-1:30 pm**.

We encourage you to submit your prayer requests to [healingprayers@stmaryhudson.cc](mailto:healingprayers@stmaryhudson.cc). St. Mary Church is located at 340 N. Main St., Hudson 44236, Tel: 330-653-8118.

Our prayer teams will be available to pray for the healings of your body and spirit. Fr. Larry will, depending on his availability, offer an anointing for those seriously ill, preparing for surgery, or weak with aging.

## SECOND WEEKEND OF THE MONTH

**Holy Family Healing Prayer Group (Stow)** offers **Healing Prayer** after all masses the second weekend of the month (**Saturday 5:00 PM, Sunday 7:30, 9:00 and 11:30 AM masses**) and after **Tuesday and Friday 8:00 AM daily masses**. Prayer teams will meet you in the back of the church. If you are unable to attend one of the masses, we offer home-bound private prayer. Private prayer for physical, inner healing and Unbound can be scheduled by calling 330-686-0017. Jesus is Alive! Come experience His healing power.

## THIRD SATURDAYS

The **Living Word Healing Prayer Ministry** at St. Ambrose Parish in Brunswick offers a monthly **Healing Prayer** event which takes place in the Church **after the 4:30 p.m. Mass** on the **third Saturday** of every month. Healing prayer ministers are available to offer prayer for spiritual, emotional, or physical healing. Please join us so that the Spirit of God can touch you with healing love!

## MONDAYS, SEPT 9TH - MAY 19TH

**Holy Family Healing Prayer Ministry - Classes Starting.** When someone approached Jesus for healing, He only asked, "What do you want Me to do for you" (Mk 10:51)? If He can calm the sea and make a path, He can heal you. You are His beloved child with a plan just for you! Learn more about your Identity as a child of God, praying for Healing and Inner Healing, Prophecy and developing an Intimate Relationship with God. Classes for the 2024-2025 year are starting soon - no charge/no free will offering. Join us **Mondays, Sept 9th - May 19th, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM or 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM** at Holy Family Catholic Church, 3179 Kent Rd., Stow, 330-687-8843.

## NOVEMBER 15TH

Catholic Renewal Ministries' **Traveling Healing Mass** for November will be held at St. Francis of Assisi Parish on **Friday, November 15th, 7:00 pm**. 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, and there will also be a social after mass. The church is located at 6850 Mayfield Rd., Gates Mills 44040. For more information, please contact CRM at 440-944-9445. All are Welcome. Come, Sing and Praise God with Joy!

## NOVEMBER 23

**MAGNIFICAT OF STARK COUNTY** invites all women to a **Breakfast** at **9:00am** on **Saturday, November 23**, at the Holiday Inn Canton, 4520 Everhard Road NW, Canton. Doors open at 8:30am.

Our guest speaker, Joan Spieth, of St. Paul Parish in North Canton, will share about what God has done in her life as she testifies to love.

Cost: \$25 Mail-in/\$26 Online. For more information about our speaker and to make your reservation visit [magnificatstark.weebly.com](http://magnificatstark.weebly.com) or call Sally Kohring at 330-484-1623. Reservation deadline is November 17th.

## DECEMBER 14TH

Catholic Renewal Ministries will host **Dr. Jacqueline Sabol, PhD** on **Saturday, December 14th**, at Holy Family Church, 3179 Kent Rd., Stow. Dr. Sabol, a devoted Catholic, is a successful neuropsychologist, trained to diagnose brain disorders, including dementia, psychiatric conditions, epilepsy and is former Administrative Director of the Neurocognitive Disorders Center at the University of Texas at Houston and previous Director of the Division of Neuropsychology. Her teaching title is "Advent Love, How Love Shapes Our Brains".

Dr. Sabol is a worship leader, prayer group leader and dynamic speaker in the charismatic renewal for over 20 years. Using her deep faith and medical and scientific background, she explains how early experiences shape us, the impact of emotional wounds, and how love shapes and heals the brain.

Join us **Saturday, December 14th**. Doors open for registration at **9:30 AM**, followed by Praise and Worship, and her Teaching. An opportunity for Healing Prayer will follow the presentation. Free Will donations are appreciated. For more information, please call 330-687-8843.

## NOVEMBER 7 & JANUARY 3

**Families in Christ Jesus** invites all to their upcoming events.

On **November 7 at 7:30 p.m.**, Mass will be celebrated at St John of the Cross Church, 140 Richmond Rd, Euclid, OH 44143. Fr Thom Kowatch will be the celebrant and the subject of his homily will be "Thanksgiving and All the Wonderful Things God Has Done for Us in 2024".

On **January 3 at 7:30 p.m.**, Fr Alex Clark will give a talk on his trip to France this past Summer. This event also will be at St John of the Cross Church.

For more information contact Ross Federico at 216-312-4733 or [federir@ccf.org](mailto:federir@ccf.org)



(Continued from page 1)

to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives.”

We do it here and now. With patience. With prayer. With attention.

We do it with generosity.

We do it with love.

So often, we take those around us for granted. Well, I think this is a time to see them anew. They are more than siblings or spouses or kids doing classes and concerts and gatherings on Zoom. They are our church—our domestic church.

We need to cherish that. And find ways in that church “to communicate Jesus.” Give generously. Forgive tenderly. Share selflessly. Pray together in solidarity and hope. We all need that.

Not long after the crisis began, I texted a friend, “Maybe we are being given this time to realize that being Catholic Christian isn’t just about what we receive; it’s also about what we give.” Maybe, I explained, this is a moment for us to pause and consider other ways of being Catholic.

Even in times of quarantine and solitude, we have much to give the world. I think of our cloistered brothers and sisters around the world who unite their prayers with ours, and I wonder if this is a moment for us to be more intimately connected with them—and, by extension, with others who are isolated or imprisoned, held captive by weakness, illness, or persecution.

Take up the challenge, with whatever means you have. Appreciate the wonder of this holy season for the miracle that it is—and give thanks to the One who has made it possible. It is an invitation and a promise. Something awaits us. We shouldn’t waste a moment we are given. Accept the invitation: Love God. Love neighbor.

This is an excerpt from *The Busy Person’s Guide to an Extraordinary Life* by Deacon Greg Kandra (*The Word Among Us Press* 2020), available from [www.wau.org/books](http://www.wau.org/books). This portion of Deacon Kandra’s book appeared as in article format on the Word Among Us website in December of 2024.

THE FLAME IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CATHOLIC  
RENEWAL MINISTRIES FOR THE DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND  
FR. ROBERT FRANCO LIASON TO CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES.  
FR. ROBERT FRANCO PUBLISHER AND GARY CIRINO EDITOR.

CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES  
P.O. Box 360546  
STRONGSVILLE, OHIO 44136  
[crmweb.org](http://crmweb.org) / (440) 944-9445

Visit us online for other Prayer Group Information and CRM Events [www.crmweb.org](http://www.crmweb.org)



## Life/Growth in the Spirit Seminars\*

Catholic Renewal Ministries would like to help bring new life to your prayer group by offering the Life in the Spirit Seminar and Growth in the Spirit Seminars.

They will help us continue to grow in the gifts and mature spiritually.

NASB -

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware*

**\*If you are interested in hosting the Life in the Spirit Seminar or a Growth in the Spirit Seminar for members of your parish or prayer group who have gone through the Life in the Spirit Seminars, please call Catholic Renewal Ministries 440-944-9445 or Tom Jansen 440-539-0318.**





# *The Flame*

**CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES**

**P.O. Box 360546**

**Strongsville, Ohio 44136**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**

**U.S. Postage**

**PAID**

**Cleveland, OH**

**Permit No. 1918**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**(Please Print)**

**The FLAME SUBSCRIPTION IS \$5 ANNUALLY**

**Name:**

☐ **New** ☐ **Renew**

**Address:**

**City:**

**State:**

**Zip:**

**Email:**

**SEND CHECKS PAYABLE TO: CATHOLIC RENEWAL MINISTRIES  
P.O. BOX 360546, STRONGSVILLE, OH 44136**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Catholic Renewal Ministries is the officially designated office for charismatic renewal activity in the Diocese of Cleveland that unites all prayer groups under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and his appointed delegate to the renewal. Catholic Renewal Ministries, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the power of Pentecost, fulfills the command of Jesus to evangelize all people, to make disciples of everyone, to accept the challenge of the gospel and to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives.