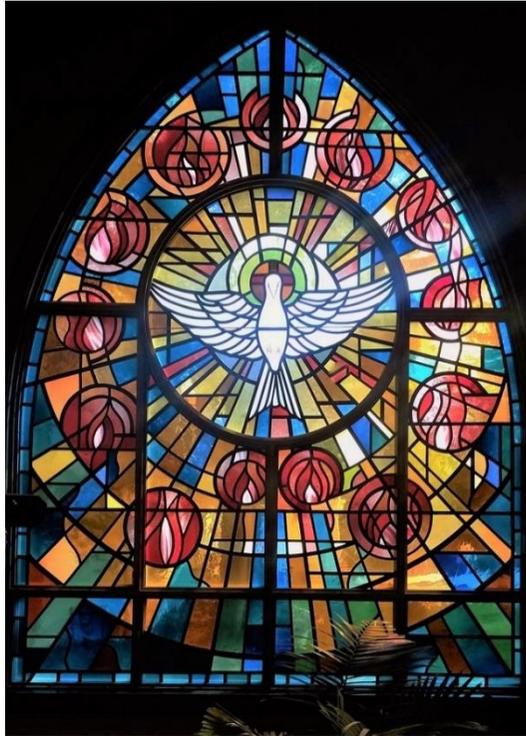


# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EAST ANGLIA



**SPRING 2019**

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Newsletter  
For the Diocese of East Anglia

**COME TO A DAY OF PRAYER  
AND RENEWAL IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The theme for the day is**  
**INSPIRATIONAL  
LIVES**

**“based around the extraordinary lives of Fr Walter  
Ciszek, Fr Gereon Goldman, ETTY Hillesum and Heidi  
Baker”**

**Led by**  
**Fr Stefan Park OSA**

Fr Stefan is the prior of Clare Priory. He began studies with the Augustinians in 1992 and was ordained in 2001. He has been a vocations director, parish priest, a university, hospital and prison chaplain and retreat giver.

**The day includes**  
**PRAYER AND PRAISE**  
**HOLY MASS**  
**ADORATION**  
**RECONCILIATION**  
**PRAYER MINISTRY**

**Date: Saturday, 9th March 2019**

**Time: 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

**Place: Bowthorpe Church Centre**

**Bowthorpe Hall Road, Bowthorpe, Norwich, NR5 9AA**

*Tea and coffee provided. Please bring a packed lunch*  
For further information contact Philip on 07910157584

**[www.renewaleastanglia.org](http://www.renewaleastanglia.org)**

# Onwards and Upwards

I was delighted with an explanation by Cardinal Vincent Nichols of God's gift of faith to us. He said that our gift of faith from the Father is like a gold sovereign that has two sides. On the one side is our membership of the church and on the other is our own personal relationship with God. As a cradle catholic I had developed my relationship to the church even as far as testing my vocation, but my relationship with the Lord lagged behind this and did not come fully alive until I discovered the charismatic renewal and had the full unconditional love and purposes of God preached to me and was encouraged to invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life by the power of his Holy Spirit.

The awakening of God's Spirit within me (that I had received in Baptism) made all the difference. I had a new love for the Lord as my personal Saviour and what was also good was I looked on the practices of the Church with new light. So one side of this gold sovereign of faith was continually feeding and balancing the other!

As a member of our parish Proclaim group that was formed after studying Sherry Weddell's book *Forming Intentional Disciples* - a study of the life of faith of people within the Western Church. One thing I fully identified with as I read was that many Catholics had a stronger relationship with the Church than with Jesus. In the book a number of Catholics admitted they did not have a personal relationship with God at all.

So I am very thankful to Vincent Nicholls for helping me understand the issues and feel that we in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have a lot to offer members of the Church to help them renew or sometimes find that vital one to one relationship that the Lord is calling us all to.

With this in mind we are very pleased with the way our last Day of Renewal went. Held in the south of the diocese to make it possible for people in that area to be ministered to. It was great to see new faces and many smiling faces when they left! Our blessings included two wonderful talks in which Gemma Wildsmith shared from her own walk with the Lord. If you would like to listen to her talks you will find them on our new website, [www.renewaleastanglia.org](http://www.renewaleastanglia.org).

Philip Walters

# Reading the Bible in a Year

In late 2017 members of the Cathedral Prayer Group in Norwich were discussing reading the Bible and how essential this is for Christians. During this discussion someone mentioned hearing it in the readings at Mass. This led me to question how much of the Bible do we hear when we attend Mass? I researched this on the internet and a website informed me that if the 3 Sunday cycles and 2 daily cycles of readings at Mass are included then approximately 15% of the Bible is read. Further investigation revealed the interesting comment that ‘if you read the Bible for 30 minutes a day you will read the Bible through three times in a year’. My mathematical mind thought therefore I only need to read for 10 minutes a day to read the Bible once in a year! This did not seem like too much to ask. However, I did not wish to just start reading 10 minutes a day and then towards the end of the year discover that I was a slow reader and needed to read more than 10 minutes a day – so how to divide the Bible up into daily reading amounts of equal size?

Further research on the internet gave me the total number of verses in the Bible (35498 NRSVCE) so I divided this by 365 to know how many verses to read each day, which comes out as 97-98. So far fairly straightforward, but where does each days 98 verses end? So, I created a spreadsheet with a tab for each of the 73 books of the Bible and for each book a line for each chapter of that book, i.e. 28 chapters in Mathew, 16 in Mark and so on. Next I went through my Bible and entered the number of verses in each chapter of each book. This enabled me to work out where each days 98 verses would finish. But the drawback was that the finishing points would not be very ‘logical’ in that they could be half way through a story or 2 verses before the end of a paragraph and so on. So, I went through the entire Bible again to see where each days 98 verses ended and adjusted them backwards or forwards to a better stopping point.

Now let me backtrack a little to 2003. In December 2003 my wife and I realised that we were going to move to the USA for work for at least 2 years. This meant we were going to pack our house up. So, we did not need of a lot of Christmas presents that were only going to be left behind. Now I had read through the Bible twice already prior to this but neither Bible had been a Catholic version. My present was the New Jerusalem

Bible Catholic Edition. Initially I read the deuterocanonical books, that is the seven books that are in the Catholic Bible but not in the Protestant Bible. Then I decided to read the New Testament and once I had finished that I read the Old Testament. I had no schedule of what I read each day, I just prayerfully read anywhere between 1 to maybe 20 verses and let them impact me. Reading the Bible this way one does not progress through it very quickly. Hence in late 2017 I was nearing the end of the Old Testament and thus close to finishing. It was at this time that the prayer group discussion arose about reading the Bible that I mentioned at the start. I felt inspired to produce the schedule for reading through in a year and felt called to do this in 2018, so I set the schedule to start on 1 January and started with the New Testament rather than the Old Testament as I had just finished the Old. To me this felt like a genuine move of the Holy Spirit and I shared my experience with various people including the Cathedral Prayer Group and Costessey Prayer Group, which I also attend. Consequently, several people also took up the challenge and all were given a printed copy of the schedule.

So how did it go? - I did not get off to a good start as I failed to read at all on 1 January. However, the next day I caught up and managed to keep on schedule for a few days before again missing a day, then catching up again subsequently. Each day I read the Bible I would write my finishing verse on my schedule which neatly fits on 2 sides of A4. I maintained this pattern through January and February, missing the occasional day and then catching up again. I never read ahead of schedule but would catch up when I needed. But after early March I managed to read daily with greater frequency and only missed reading the Word on 4 days til the end of the year, when on 31 December I finished the Bible again. As did 5 people from Costessey Prayer Group also. Praise God.

So what did I learn and what good did it do me? - An issue was the apparent lack of prayerful reading this approach seemed to have. However, in spite of reading a 'fixed amount' each day I was still able to read, mostly, with a prayerful approach. As I am sure you are aware there is a great variation in the stories in the Bible and the Old Testament has its fair share of death and carnage, and also its (in)famous lengthy passages of intricate and seemingly insignificant details, not to mention the genealogies! And then there is Leviticus!! In fact, although starting with the New Testament may seem illogical, I think it helped in that you are

nearly 4 months in before you read Leviticus, which is a very common stumbling block for people starting at Genesis. At one point in the year the Lord spoke to me one night as I was lying in bed about how I was reading the Bible. He reprimanded me for an incorrect attitude when I was reading, as I was prone to adopting an attitude of ‘this part is boring I will just read through it’. From this I realised that I needed a Double Daily Discipline

Double Daily Discipline - Not only did I need the daily discipline to actually make the time to read the Bible, but I also had to have the discipline to make sure I expected God to speak to me through it each day.

2019 - As you may have gathered, I am a data-driven person and I was intrigued as to how my schedule lived up to the aim of dividing the Bible into daily equal reading amounts. So, I actually timed how long I read for each day. And, of course, I recorded this in my spreadsheet. This enabled me to see that some days the reading was too short and some it was too long and I adjusted the schedule accordingly. Then, towards the end of 2018 the topic of reading the Bible in a year came up again in the Cathedral Prayer Group and several people were interested in doing it. So as 2018 ended I adjusted my schedule as best I could and gave out new copies to people and we have started 2019 with the challenge of reading the whole Bible in a year (again). Please pray for us. And if my methodical approach has appealed to you, I am happy to email/post you the schedule I have developed.

Rob Smith

## **“Go with greater strength” Regional CCR Gathering**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> Jan the East Anglia diocese met with Nottingham, Northampton and Birmingham dioceses. Maria Heath, the chairperson of the organisers, the NSC, explained that the theme arose from Pope Francis’ address to the worldwide CCR in Rome at the Golden Jubilee where he told the CCR to “go with greater strength”. Maria linked this with Isaiah 54:2 (NIV) “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes”. What our “our stakes” in the CCR, what do we need to strengthen? She proposed 7 areas of strength within the CCR.

1) Praise and Worship 2) Use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit  
3) Use of scripture 4) Recognising individuals giftedness and utilising/encouraging their gifts 5) Unity, with other Christians and intergenerational 6) Living in hope 7) Having expectant faith

A group from East Anglia had a fruitful discussion in the small time allotted and we suggest that we could all benefit from this exercise. Perhaps you could do it individually, in your families, in your prayer groups, etc. Which areas are you strong in and which need more effort? Rob Smith

## A Ministry of Encouragement

January for me is always a time when I have a good long think about who I'd like to be now that the New Year has arrived, and with it being my birthday month as well, I have double impetus to have a talk with, and listen to Father God, about how He'd like to help me change and grow in the coming twelve months.

This year I felt very strongly that 2019 was to be a time of building up the ministry of encouragement that God called me to many years ago. I love this ministry, because it is such an 'everyday' one, not limited by time or place. I can encourage *anyone* whom Father God puts in front of me, or calls to mind.

If you have not yet thought of how you'd like to 'grow' in your relationship with the Lord, and His Kingdom work this New Year, can I encourage you, as one of the things you do, to increase the encouragement you give to others?

Paul, in his letter, gives us this advice: "So encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are already doing." (*1 Thess. 5:11*) He knows the power of encouragement, and sees it happening in the church in Thessalonica – and still he wants to encourage them further, to keep it going!

Paul wrote - "God has given us the ability to do certain things well...If it is to encourage, then give encouragement." (*Romans 12:8*)

So how do we do it? Listening is one of the great ways – to totally affirm a person the right to feel as they do, struggle as they do; to give them the dignity of hearing their ‘story’, without that terrible scenario of beating it with one that I know of that is worse. Once we have listened, then if we feel it is right, we can gently offer some loving thoughts on the issue – to give hope that ‘This too will pass’, that they are not alone, that their God weeps with them.

A telephone call, especially when the Lord has put a person into your mind, is a wonderful way of bringing the gift of encouragement into someone’s life when you can’t get to visit them.

Words that encourage always build a person up, showing them their strengths, reminding them of how much they have already been, and done; how very much they are loved, by the people near them, and by Jesus.

Prayer is a powerful encouragement, humbly offered, never forced on a person. Praying for them is lovely; praying **with** them even more lovely! Prayer is the way of bringing the full power of the salvation won at Calvary into that person’s life and situation, asking for a share of the wisdom of God for them, a share of the courage of Jesus, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and putting them into Father God’s Heart, where they can be cocooned.

Rosemary Walters

## Celebrate East Anglia

Be strong and courageous! For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (*Joshua 1:9 NLT*)

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019, St Benedict’s School Bury St Edmunds

“a fun, faith-filled conference for all the family”

[www.celebrateconference.org/east-anglia](http://www.celebrateconference.org/east-anglia)