

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EAST ANGLIA SPRING 2022

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Newsletter For the Diocese of East Anglia

Onwards and Upwards

As the New Year started I began thinking of new starts, and prayed what the Lord wanted me to renew in my Christian walk. I first thought about being more faithful to my daily reading of the bible. Then, as I cast my mind back to my faith coming alive in the power of the Holy Spirit in the 1970s, I remembered saying to the Lord ‘I believe you are risen from the dead, you are alive and active in our lives, in our world, but how can I find you and where do I go from here’.

As I prayed more and more deeply into this prayer at that time, I sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to me with new directness, especially through scripture, and the words of Jesus coming alive as if they were addressed directly to me. I have realised in the years since that Jesus and his Spirit work so closely together, the Spirit all the while revealing who Jesus is and deepening my own personal relationship with him.

It has become very important to me to recognise the Holy Spirit living within me, and that when Jesus promised “Behold I am with you always, to the very end of time,” he is principally referring to the Spirit he sent at Pentecost who makes our relationship with Jesus (and the Father) come alive. While I am happy to think and pray to God who is with me and walking alongside me, the principal focus of my relationship is with Jesus who dwells *within me*, by his own desire and will, as he said, recorded in John 15:4.

**COME TO AN ONLINE EVENING OF PRAYER
AND RENEWAL IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The theme for the event

**"Developing a personal relationship
with God as a Catholic"**

Led by

Fr Alvan Ibeh

The evening will include

**PRAYER AND PRAISE
TALK
PRAYER MINISTRY**

Date: Wednesday, 23rd Feb 2022

Time: 7.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Online on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82697323621?pwd=VUpUR3dhaE01OTIxREhEOEthSDBhdz09>

Meeting ID: 826 9732 3621

Passcode: CDSCEA

For further information contact Philip on 07910157584

www.renewaleastanglia.org/future-events

On the Charis Team we have a heart for enabling people to begin or to develop their personal relationship with Jesus and we have found that being Baptised in the Spirit is a great way of discovering more of the potential of the gift of the Spirit we received at our own Baptism*. We believe we can take the words of Jesus literally when he said, “How much more will your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:13)

One tested way we as a Charis Team know of encouraging this openness to the Holy Spirit is to take part in, or run, the Life in the Spirit Seminars. This is good, sound teaching and an opportunity to hear proclaimed again what God has done for us in Jesus and how that affects who we are, our deepest personality and how we are enabled to live our lives. A mature look at what the Lord’s invitation and promise to us is.

If you in your parish or prayer group would love to have this opportunity of updating your faith or listening again to God’s basic invitation made clear to you, contact a member of our Team and we will find with you your preferred way of accessing the seminars, whether as an individual, small group or parish – whether online or in person. If you want, a member of our Team can come and help you set up a course of seminars, or we can help by taking part with you. (Team details are at www.renewaleastanglia.org or contact Philip on 07910157584)

* On 8th June 2019 Pope Francis encouraged everyone in Charismatic renewal “to share baptism in the Holy Spirit with everyone in the Church.”

Later in the year, when hopefully this Covid peak has diminished, we intend to run a Day of Renewal everyone can attend in person.

I hope you enjoy the following contributions from members of the Charis Team, starting with a thought-provoking article by a member who is a prison chaplain.

Philip Walters

The Holy Spirit and the Love of God is Transforming Lives in Prison

Having been in Renewal since its beginning, and after a lifetime trying to navigate the messiness of life with my God, I thought I had a good idea of the sort of Christian I was. The image I had was of someone who, if asked by God to do anything, would answer, yes. Retiring to Norfolk I was approached regarding working in prison ministry (initially as a volunteer but later this became as a Lay Chaplain). It was then I realised I had a list of places I didn't want to go for God. A Prison and one with any sex offenders was top of my list. After a lot of soul searching, (that's prayer but not wanting to hear the answer) I did eventually apply. I got the job. We have a lot of prisons in East Anglia and a lot of Catholic men are in them. Prison Chaplaincy is there for all, including staff. So many people invisibly serve, Clergy and Lay, as chaplains or assisting in various ways, from pen pals to prison visitors, from supplying Rosaries, books, pamphlets, etc., to helping them on release. I am just one of the many.

Prisoners are amongst the lowest rung of our society and within prison the lowest are considered to be the sex offenders. The reasons why people are in prison are not just about the offences they have committed. What they get convicted of is one thing but why they did it matters when trying to stop it happening again. The reasons why they made the choices they did are many and varied. If I had the life, the hurts, and the temptations they had I may have not coped as well. Having been privileged to hear so many life stories I am ashamed to admit I once judged them, seeing only the offence and not them. If, however, we truly believe nobody is beyond reach of the Love of God then it was to such as these that it my privilege to reach out to. I say reach out, because not everyone wants to be reached, many use their freedom to not respond. Others may have travelled so far in the wrong direction they don't know the way home. Others may have made a mistake and repented but feel they would not be welcome. Some have never known God but are searching for something. Others are clinging onto some faith with both hands, as it's all they have left. If these people are ever going to find their way back, they need some signposts. That's what the Chaplaincy is there

to provide, not just by pointing the way, but sometimes by becoming the signpost, as we first accept and love them as they are, where they are.

In so many little ways the Holy Spirit and Love of God is transforming and reforming lives. It loves the areas within them other things fail to reach. In the good old days “BC” (Before Covid) many non-Catholics would also come to the RC liturgy. Coming up to Easter I put on ‘The Gift’ DVD series. One non-Catholic man who knew the word of God like a well-studied map asked for more of the Holy Spirit in his life. After prayer he said he felt nothing and went away disappointed. As he left, I asked him to read one of the Easter readings and he agreed. The following week on the exercise yard he came over and I asked what had happened to him. Since being prayed with he couldn’t pick up his bible and read it without crying. He had been given the gift of not just knowing the word but now he understood God loved him that much too. Another man, a Catholic, soon to be released, earnestly stated, “every day of my fourteen years in jail has been worth it as I now know that God loves me”. How many in church would do a fourteen-year RCIA? Unfortunately, on release he was not welcomed and is now part of a non-Catholic Christian community telling his story to all who will hear about the love of God.

Those who come to Chaplaincy are from a wide range of backgrounds, history and understanding of church. As with all prisoners they can sense a lack of sincerity from a mile away; just like the thief on the cross, all have been tried, convicted and sentenced. Perhaps the greatest work of the Spirit that we see is when they come for their Communion. In the room is a reverence and silence as one by one they come forward and like ‘Oliver’ hold open their hands to receive the Love of God.

Quotations that I return to...

Submitted by members of the Charis Team

'Worship the Lord with the beauty of holy lives'

Psalm 96:9 (Living Bible Edition). This quote was very special to my husband, Ian. He used to have it on a small sticker on the side of his computer screen. It's now on his grave stone! Alleluia!

'The joy of the Lord is your strength'

Nehemiah 8:10 (Living Bible Edition). I asked the Lord for a word to help me through my treatment for breast cancer and this word came both audibly and immediately! I found these words wonderfully blessed, helpful and strengthening when going through chemo and radiotherapy.

“Listen to what God is saying. Jump into the life-giving water, given to you by Jesus, Let yourself be swept along by it, reaching the goal where the Holy Spirit needs you to be”

“Awaken your Spirit to adventure; Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk; Soon you will be home in a new rhythm, for your soul senses the world that awaits you”.

Taken from a poem by John O'Donohue

‘ O Lord you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar,
you mark when I walk or lie down.
All my ways lie open to you.

For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.

O search me God, and know my heart.
O test me and know my thoughts.
See that I follow not the wrong path
and lead me in the path of eternal life.'

From Psalm 138/139. I have this on a small prayer card tucked into my 'God Calling' book, which I read every morning and think about many times during the day. It reminds me that God is with me, I am not alone; none of us are alone! To know me so well must be from overwhelming love!

"Our gift of faith is like being given a gold sovereign that has 2 sides. On the one side is our faith in and membership of the Church and on the other side is our own personal relationship with God."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

"I pray that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:17-19

Jesus looked at them and said 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible'.

Mark10.49

And from two Popes of our time

"You, Charismatic Renewal, have received a great gift from the Lord. You were born of the will of the Spirit as a current of grace in the Church and for the Church"

Pope Francis' Comments and Address at Charismatic Renewal
Convention June 2014

“At this moment in the Church's history, the Charismatic Renewal can play a significant role in promoting the much-needed defence of Christian life in societies where secularism and materialism have weakened many people's ability to respond to the Spirit and to discern God's loving call. Your contribution to the re-evangelization of society will be made in the first place by personal witness to the indwelling Spirit and by showing forth His presence through works of holiness and solidarity”

Address of Pope St John Paul II to the ICCRO Council: March 12, 1992

"The institutional and charismatic aspects are co-essential as it were to the Church's constitution. They contribute, although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God's People. It is from this providential rediscovery of the Church's charismatic dimension that, before and after the Council, a remarkable pattern of growth has been established for ecclesial movements and new communities."

Pope St John Paul II Speech for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities 1998

Future Events

Littleway Healing Ministries Evening of Healing 3rd Feb 2022 7pm
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/98503370245>
Meeting ID: 985 0337 0245 Password: 643344
For more info see www.littlewayhealingministries.com

Clare Priory “By His Wounds we are Healed” a preached charismatic retreat led by Fr Gladson Dabre. March 4-6, 29 Mar-1 Apr, plus other dates later.

For more info see www.clarepriory.org.uk/events

Living Stones Prayer Group are holding a Day of Prayer at Clare Priory on Sat 5th Feb 10:30-16:30 led by Fr Stefan Park and Fr Gladson Dabre. The Priory will provide tea and coffee but please bring your lunch. There is no charge but the Priory would appreciate a donation. All are welcome