



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

THE FLAME



December 2018

Unlock Forgiveness 2019

By Maria Muratore

Forgiveness unlocks so many of God's blessings. When we reach out and reconcile ourselves with God we begin a new, fresh life page for Him to write on. God doesn't just erase our sins where an imprint can still be seen: He totally starts fresh remembering our sins no more. He expects us to do the same for our neighbor, spouse, child, parent, brother and sister. Just as God gives us pardon, we are expected to pardon those who have committed any offense towards us. The bigger the pardon, the bigger the healing in our own life. Unforgiveness takes up a lot of room poisoning our hearts and minds and creates distance from our Creator. Jesus said to love God and love our neighbor. If you do not love your neighbor whom you *can* see, how can you love the God whom you *can't* see?

Put aside grudges, resentments, recounting past hurts, and reliving dark times. Let's freely give that new, fresh life page that God gives to us to someone else. Give that person a pardon as a gift *to God*. We *all* fall short and hurt each other in our humanity. We are *all* guilty of something. How blessed we are to have such a merciful Father.

Let's pray now to be able (and willing) to extend the same mercy to the people in our lives. Let's make God joyful by loving each other. Some people in our lives may be easier to love than others but be persistent in your efforts. Rise up to the challenge. Let's love the way Jesus loves not the way the world loves. With God's Grace ALL things are possible. Once that old bitterness is gone, God's love will shine through and forgiveness gets easier. Let's give the

best gift this year by letting go. Stop hoarding past hurts. We don't have enough room for that. Rather, *prepare ye the way of the Lord!* The Holy Spirit needs a clear, open vessel. Man is a vessel (Rom. 9:21, 23). Not many people have paid adequate attention to the fact that we are vessels of God. We talk about men and women being God's creatures or becoming God's people. Some even say that man can be a child of God. But in Romans 9 we are told that man is a vessel of God. A vessel is a container. It is different from a utensil or an instrument. A vessel is not used to do something but to **contain** something.

We are not expected to do *something* for God. The focus shouldn't just be on your *doing*. We are destined to *contain* God. We were made to be containers of God. The human view is that we have to do something for God. Many teachers tell people again and again that they need to *do* something for God, to *work* for God. This is not necessarily wrong but it does not touch God's central thought and intention. We have to realize that we are vessels unto God. God does not need us to do something for Him although God does need and seek containers like us. According to Romans 9, God desires that we be vessels unto honor, vessels unto glory, and vessels of mercy to contain Him. You have to realize that you are vessels unto God!

Again, *prepare ye the way of the Lord!* Prepare a throne in your heart for Him to abide in. Clear out all that is not befitting a residence for our mighty King. A great first start is to use a small key to unlock a vast door to the infinite Graces of God. That key is forgiveness. So, unlock forgiveness for 2019 and share the blessings.



Not Yet Pentecost: The Holy Spirit and Christmas

This article was taken from Seedbed.com

By Rebecca Rutherford

Copyright December 11, 2016

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:30-38

Pentecost takes the heat for being the primary way the church talks about the Holy Spirit, and rightly so! It is the birthday of the church, the day the Holy Spirit descended in greater fullness. There was fire and wind and the understanding of other languages! The manifest presence of God came in a powerful way. However, the Holy Spirit did not begin His work here.

When we take a broader look at the work of the Holy Spirit outside of that event in Acts, we discover an actor who is present when words are spoken. The third person of the Trinity was present at creation. Genesis 1:2 records that “...

out of chaos came order. A silent moment broken only by God speaking creation into being. Sound travels a long way over water. There was another silent moment interrupted by the spoken word of God. The first few verses of the Gospel of John report, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.” God spoke the Word and the Word became flesh. The incarnation of Christ is covered in the work of the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters of a young woman’s womb.

The world was changed by the coming of Christ, which was only made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit and the willingness of Mary. The words spoken by Mary may hold as much significance as does God speaking life, the Word, into existence. Hear her words again, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” She could have said no. Though she must have been terrified, as would anyone in her position, she allowed the hidden work of the Spirit to be made unhidden by her choice—by her very words.

This conception is not so unlike what happens to us as we encounter the Holy Spirit and His work begets new life in us. The hidden work of the Spirit also incarnates the Word of God in the church. We, like Mary, have been gifted with the sacred work of being Christ-bearers to the world. This is only made possible by our receptivity and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God invites and sometimes requires our cooperation for his complete creative will to become unhidden.

The hidden work of the Holy Spirit in Mary before and during her pregnancy and the unhidden work at the moment of Christ’s birth embodies what was happening over the waters at creation and what was yet to come at Pentecost. The action of the Holy Spirit at Christmas seems to be a foreshadowing of what is to come as the baby emerges from the dark and what was invisible becomes visible—what was inaudibly being created now finds breath and interrupts the silent night.

The word for Spirit in Hebrew is *ruach*. It literally means breath. Interestingly enough, *ruach*, that which you cannot see or touch, is a noun. It is a noun that has action. It moves. It breathes. It creates. To say the word even sounds like wind. It was this *Ruach* that spoke creation into existence and breathed life into Adam’s lungs. It was this *Ruach* that visited Mary and again breathed life for the Second Adam. And it was this *Ruach* that descended at Pentecost and made the sound of a mighty wind blowing.

The work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to hushed whispers or to violent winds. He operates in both hidden and unhidden ways. From Creation to the Annunciation to Pentecost, all are filled with the manifest presence of God. Refreshing our understanding of how the same Holy Spirit at Creation was present when Mary conceived allows us to reflect on the ways in which the Spirit has been at work in us—creating and recreating. It also gives us a better vocabulary for Pentecost as we say with Mary, “let it be with me according to your word.” As we enter into these days of Advent, I pray you will have profound *Ruach*-filled moments, where in the silence God still speaks, where the hidden and unhidden work of the Spirit re-creates in you again.

Prayer for Advent provided by Donna Schroyer



I come before you right now with all of my flaws my failings, my sin and I bring them to the foot of your cross for you to do with them as you please and I ask you to come into my heart and wipe away all that is hindrance to you. Take away all the cobwebs and dust of this stressful season. I give you all my imperfections, my fault, my sinfulness. I pray that your blood will permeate my body and wash me clean to prepare my heart for my King this advent season. I want to be perfect in only your eyes Lord. Not perfect as the world sees perfection, but as you see. Fill my heart with your love and your grace so as to make it your perfect home. So that when you come into my heart, I will feel that at the very least I have prepared the best I can for my Savior to enter. I love you and I trust you Lord to be with me every step of this journey. You are always here with me loving, protecting and reaching out your hand, filling your child with love and peace and joy. Today, I give you my heart with all it's imperfections, it's bumps and bruises. You are my king of glory. You bring wholeness and healing. You are gentle and loving and treat me with tenderness and love. I place my life in your hands Lord and will walk this journey till my last breath. I will love you and follow you. Continue to teach me your ways and help me to grow and learn from all experience this life brings and those you bring into my life. All is gift from you. In return, I will share my heart, my love and journey with those you place in my path. In Jesus name.....Amen.

Upcoming Events...

December 15th, 2018

Save the Date! 2018 Regional Prayer Group Pot Luck Christmas Party

7pm-9pm St. Andrew Catholic Church, Fellowship Hall, Apex NC

February 17th-18th, 2019

Save the Date! Guest Speaker Fr. Dave Pivonka

St. Michael the Archangel Church, Cary NC

***For more information about these events please visit
our website at www.ccsraleigh.weebly.com***

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us serving the The Diocese of Raleigh
Catholic Charismatic Renewal!***

***"The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious
to you! The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Numbers 6:24-26)***