



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

THE FLAME

June/July 2022 issue



Blah, Blah, Blah

By Debbie Rony

It's tempting to give in to complaining these days. The world has gone crazy, what is evil is now spoken of as good, gas prices and groceries are through the roof, a global food shortage is on the horizon, lawlessness abounds, and people can be downright hateful. "But understand this, that in the last days there will come time of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it..." (2 Tim 3:1-3) Uh, yeah. We have arrived.

I can honestly say I never thought I would live to see the days that we are living in come upon us so quickly and so ferociously. All that being said, it is extremely important to give thanks to God for what we do have, what we hope for, and what awaits us. It is not only important it is **scriptural** and a **commandment**. "*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble...*" (Psalm 107:1-2 emphasis added)

Cultivating a thankful heart can be especially difficult when we are in some kind of trial, suffering, persecution or sickness. Complaining seems to come a lot easier. Several places in the New Testament make reference to this happening with the Hebrews in the wilderness and their

"murmuring and grumbling". It serves as a warning to us not to do the same thing when we encounter difficulties. "*These things happened as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things, as they did.*" (1 Cor 10:6) "*Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. These happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning for us, upon whom the end of ages has come. Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall. No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.*" (1 Cor 10:10-13)

"Murmuring and grumbling" is another way of saying "complaining" and "whining". A good definition of complaining is "**the repeated voicing to God, yourself, and others about the dissatisfaction over the situation God has placed you or others in.**" Why do we do this? Put simply, it is giving ourselves over to our fleshly nature. As new creatures in Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, gentleness, long suffering, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. On the other hand, complaining is a **fruit of the flesh**. In reference to this, I heard Fr. Mark Goring say in a YouTube video, "The flesh is the whiny child in each of us!" We are supposed to be like children in our faith not our flesh. The flesh says, "I want", "I need", and "I feel".

It's hard to believe but in the case of the Hebrews in the wilderness, their complaining started right after they were set free from slavery in Egypt and after the miraculous parting of the Red Sea! They had gone without food for a while. Exodus 16:1 says, *"And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and said to the, "would that we had died by the hand of the Lord and in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."* Then God gave them manna from heaven. They complained about having no water. Then God gave them water from a rock. Then they complained about the miraculous blessing of the manna from heaven because they got tired of having no variety. In the midst of mighty miracles, time after time, they murmured and grumbled because they weren't thinking of the things **God had already done for them**. They weren't focused on God's faithfulness at all and hoping in what He would do for them next. A good quote I heard is, "The greatest snare in the wilderness is murmuring over your present position before reaching the place God has for you." **Listen up...it took the Hebrews 40 years to make what could have been an 11-day journey.**

The bottom line is that complaining is a sin. Their complaining was an obstacle to what God had for them and so it can be for all of us. Not only that... complaining is what I will call a "starter sin". They started with something we ourselves may not take too seriously which is complaining. In fact, this consistent complaining led them into unbelief which led to idolatry and the making of the golden calf. This is consistent with a truth that the Church emphasizes which is that venial sin, if left unchecked and unconfessed, will lead to greater sin and even

mortal sin. **Complaining is a sin because it causes us to doubt God's goodness.** *"For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations."* (Psalm 100:5) *"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"* (Psalm 86:5) *"All things work for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28)

Our first resolution is always to repent (change our mind and our direction) and go to Confession if we are in the habit of complaining. Confession is a healing sacrament and Jesus can and will heal us when we come to Him with a contrite heart. All of us complain at some point but there are those who habitually complain. It could be the result of a suffering or even a negative mindset that has developed over time due to their childhood and other life experiences. We all know someone like this. I have tried to encourage many people and some of them find a way to turn it around to a complaint or even self-pity. Their response to encouragement always starts with "Yes, but...".

The way out of this is to be "renewed in the spirit of our minds" (Romans 12:2) and that requires 2 things. First, it is a **choice** to have a positive mindset. We **choose** what we watch, what we listen to, who we hang out with, and what we allow into our minds. Guard your mind at all costs because it comes under tremendous influence from the world. Jesus tells his disciples, "If your right hand offends you, cut it off!" Is there anything in your life you need to cut yourself off from in order to maintain a positive mindset? Even **one** thing could be the source of a lot of negativity that tempts you to complain. Cut it off! Friends, if someone gave you a glass of water with only one drop of arsenic, would you still drink it?

The next thing to do it to actively (and on purpose) seek to **cultivate** a thankful heart. Our heart is like a garden and whatever we plant and water there will grow. Here are 10 helpful tips that will help you to not complain and reset your mind and your heart:

1. Pray and ask for the ability to not complain. *“Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.”* (Psalm 14:13)
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to chastise you when you complain.
3. Spend the first 5 minutes of your prayer time thanking the Lord for everything you can think of. Make it a challenge and set a timer. My own experience has taught me that you will begin to go deeper into the types of things you thank Him for.
4. If you really want to be brave, ask your spouse, children and friends what you complain about the most. Be prepared to listen with an open heart.
5. If you find yourself complaining about your spouse, kids, and friends, even in your heart, make a list of all the positive things about them and keep it handy. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you.
6. Keep a gratitude journal or add a gratitude portion to your prayer journal.
7. Keep this commandment to thank God (and to not complain) deeply rooted in your heart.
8. If you are going through a difficult time and find it hard to come up with something on your own, go to the book of Psalms. It is full of praising God even for the simplest things like the moon, sun and stars. Read the Psalms of praise out loud to God. He never gets tired of hearing you but he does understand that we get stuck sometimes.
9. Make a Victory List. Write down all the times God has been faithful and all the miracles He has already done for you. Post it somewhere in your house and every time you see it thank Him for these things.
10. Make a habit of praise and worship. Nothing lifts our hearts higher to the Lord than this. It lifts the negativity off our hearts so we can then begin to thank Him.

“For all things are from Him, through Him and to Him. To Him be glory forever.” Romans 11:36

Happy Birthday!

By Maria Muratore

Pentecost is the birth of the church. Happy Birthday Church! Jesus said: *“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”* -John 16:7.

The details of Pentecost are found in the book of Acts. The Holy Spirit makes His entrance as the followers of Jesus are all waiting in the upper room together. The Holy Spirit shows up as a powerful wind blows through the house. Spirit Fire appears above them, dividing in tongues, and rests on each one of them. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues proclaiming the good news. They became bolder and went out into the streets and started evangelizing. Jesus’s followers are where He told them to be- waiting and praying. In His Time, the Holy Spirit descends, in power. Like the Father, the Spirit is not seen, except in the symbol of fire. Jesus reveals the unseen God to us, but the Holy Spirit’s power can also be felt.

I was fortunate enough to experience Pentecost Sunday at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. Fr. Dave Pivonka, Deacon Bob and his band, Peter Herbeck, Heather Khym and over 800 attendees and students filled the auditorium. It was awesome! My husband, Peter, and daughter, Michelle, attended with me. What a great opportunity to experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with family. It was at my daughter’s age, fresh out of college, when I first experienced Baptism in the Holy Spirit and I eventually met my husband shortly afterwards at church. This backstory is important to what happened at the conference.

At Steubenville, we prayed, we sang, we invited the Holy Spirit in. For some it was their first time, for others it was a renewal of God’s grace and purpose in our lives. The conference itself was themed ‘Power and Purpose’. The Lord brought me back to my very own first time as I gazed at young faces during the beautiful adoration service. We chose different workshops to attend. Peter Herbeck gave an inspiring talk on ‘The Power is in the Anointing of the Holy Spirit’. The Holy Spirit communicates to God’s people and manifests Himself in us. The Lord anoints goers and workers. We are being sent. Although gifts sometimes lie dormant for an entire lifetime-now can be YOUR time to receive and be fully aware of your anointing. We need to be reminded that we’re neither too young OR too old to do God’s work and use our gifts. These gifts are meant for use to edify ourselves and the church. We must ask God for the confidence to use the gifts we are given, especially prophetic, teaching and evangelization. The Holy Spirit’s mission is to help us hear the Lord and know Jesus. He escorts us into a deeper relationship with Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit will expose all lies spoken over us. We must renounce these lies and replace these lies with the truth the Spirit proclaims.

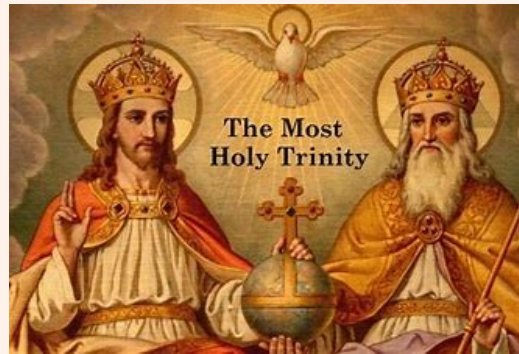
Another workshop I attended was with Heather Khym entitled ‘Battling the enemies lies’. Jesus already won the battle. All darkness bears bad fruit. We need to pay attention when our fruit is bad and how to identify these bad roots of our sin. We are reminded to come back to union with Christ during our daily life. Just like Adam and Eve, we’re all made from love. We’re made in God’s image. The enemy’s tactic is always to start with simple suggestions, posing needling questions to instill doubt. These are diabolically designed for us to distrust God and to question the very heart of God. Satan is the father of lies.

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The mind and the heart become a battlefield with repeating tactics and patterns. But the good news is that Jesus already conquered the world. Let's not live in fear and let's not give Satan any more power over us. Let's declare Jesus and allow His light to shine into every dark area of our lives. Let's trust in God!

I mentioned earlier in this article that during the conference, God repeatedly brought my memories back to my own early experiences with Holy Spirit. The Lord did better than just provide memories. I was so surprised to actually meet up with friends from Queens and Long Island that attended the Amazing Grace prayer group back when I did over thirty years ago. Finding each other was literally like finding a needle in a haystack with over 800 attendees. The fact that I was recognized still blows my mind. I also met up with a friend from High School and my husband with someone from elementary school. They flew into the conference from NY, and we drove nine hours from NC. Only God can do that! I also met many wonderful people from Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and all around the US. God showed His many blessings throughout the weekend, and we were so glad to be a part of it.





This month we experienced the Feast of the Holy Trinity. I'd like to share these prayers for your private reflection. It's a wonderful idea to honor the Holy Trinity by creating your own heartfelt personal prayers.

Dear Father God, my real dad, my creator, my everything. I beg pardon for my sinfulness. I am so sorry for having offended you whom I ought to show continuous reverence, honor and love. Thank you for forming me and creating me unique from every other soul. Please impart much needed wisdom and understanding to me about myself. I'm still discovering myself and why I am who I am. Let me understand and forgive myself when I fail. I get frustrated by all those things lacking in me and I don't know how to motivate myself or others sometimes. Teach me to be who you created me to be so that your name will be honored and adored by me. Teach me to love and forgive as you do. It's my wish that the world will fall in love with you just like I did. I'm sorry for all the times I've failed and messed up. God, please equip me for the work you've chosen me to do. Help me to be more focused, better at fasting, better at all the gifts you have bestowed on me. Let me assist others to grow in their gifts as well. I Love you, Father God, even if I don't act like it sometimes. Never let me stray far from you. Keep me in the palm of your hand. I love you, dear Father!

Dear Jesus, my true brother, my very best friend. The friend I had when I had no friends at all. My dear, sweet, kind companion and my true God. We are your bride. I can't wait to see you face to face. Please help prepare me for what is to come in this life and the life to come. You sacrificed so much for me, and I hardly remember to reflect on your greatness as I should daily. Help me, dearest love, and snap me back into spiritual shape. Help me navigate this world, this body, this mind, these emotions, this spirit and lead me ever closer to you. Help silence this world and give me attentive ears to your words only. Help my lack of faith, lack of confidence, lack of wisdom, and all that's lacking in this mind and body. Please fill in what's lacking in me to do the job you're calling me to do. Show me what you want me to do and give me the courage and strength to do it. I can do it all with you, Jesus. Let me always live within you. I love you, Lord Jesus!

Oh, Holy Spirit, lover of my soul. My dear, sweet life companion, my advocate, my aide, my comforter, my continuous helper. How I love you, how I need you now more than ever. I call out to you here, in the middle of my life's journey. In some ways wiser, in other ways with more experience coupled with some wear and tear. I've become slightly battle-scarred from the hardness of this world. It's draining trying to figure it all out. It's draining being disappointed and hurt by this world and those around us. Sometimes I feel disappointed in myself as well. I sometimes feel like I should be so far ahead but I'm still so far behind. Holy Spirit, when I need you most, I push you farthest away. It's all my fault. Take me back into your fold, under your warm tender wings, my beloved Holy Spirit. I need you now more than ever. Help me to start back again with you. Take me over, be in charge. Don't allow me to mess up but if I do carry me back. I love you, Holy Spirit!

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE!

September 2nd and 3rd, 2022

Catholic Charismatic Services Annual Fall Conference

Guest Speaker Fr. Jim Blount

**** Registration and details to be announced***



Fr. Jim Blount

Fr. James Blount is an internationally known Exorcist Priest of the Society of Our Lady of the Trinity (SOLT) – Georgia Mission. A gifted Spiritual Director and Confessor, Fr. Blount is a bold, charismatic preacher endowed and empowered with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He speaks of living a life in relationship with each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. His teachings depict his deep love for the Eucharist. His intimate relationship, love, and devotion to Jesus and Mary draws many souls to also fall in love with them. Father is a powerful instrument of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by so many stories of miracles, healings, and conversions. His talks increase awareness of the intense spiritual battle in our present world where evil has waged war against the Sacred thus aiming toward the destruction of holy family life. His humble boldness and untiring drive to minister to the lost and ill are particularly noteworthy.