



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

THE FLAME

March/April 2022



Lent Is Not A Four-Letter Word

By *Debbie Rony*

Ok, *technically* it is. This year, however, I have to admit that I was approaching Lent like something to be avoided; my heart had hardened somewhat which is always a bad sign. I started out, at the very onset, with the wrong attitude and I soon found myself a few weeks into Lent worse off than when I started! Thanks be to God and His Mercy because as I strayed Jesus went after the “one” and that “one” was me. I was able to get back on track and in the process, I learned a couple of valuable lessons.

When I say I started out in the wrong way I mean that I started out with a bad attitude that soon led me to bad behavior. Right before Lent began, I told the Lord, “You know what Lord? I really don’t feel like doing Lent this year.” This was because the last 3 years of my life has been full of trials and tribulations and I didn’t think I could do anything more than I had already done or grow any more than I already had. **That was my first mistake.** I tried to justify myself by saying, “poor me”.

For three years, my family has been in the “fire”. We had moved my husbands’ parents here from Virginia (which in itself was quite an achievement if you knew how much stuff they had accumulated in 50 years!). Then things took a turn for the worse as soon as they moved into their new house and we had to suddenly be caregivers to both of them as they suffered multiple serious health complications at the same time. My father-in-law ended up dying suddenly only a year after they moved. My mother-in-law suffered through two aortic aneurism surgeries and became an invalid for a while. After she recovered somewhat, we moved her **again** to the house next to us and she died 10 days later after she fell and hit her head. My daughter went through a crisis and then my sister-in-law died of Covid tragically 4 weeks after contracting it. Even as I say it, I can remember all the drama, all the grief and all the effort it took for me to get through those 3 years. As I looked at Lent this year, I just felt like I didn’t have anything left to give the Lord. So, I decided to skip Lent. I excused myself by saying to the Lord, “I’ve already done my weeping and mourning. I’ve had to die to myself more in the last 3 years than the last 20 years combined. I’ve prayed, I’ve fasted, I’ve gone to daily

mass, and I’ve given more of myself in service than I thought I even could. So, Lord I’m done. I’ll pass this year.”

Unfortunately, I made a conscious decision to forgo Lent and the Lord allowed me to suffer the consequences. On the very first day, Ash Wednesday, I decided not to fast. That led me to about a 2-week stint of compulsive eating. I just didn’t care and my not caring led me to feeling out of control. I started to feel a rebellion rise up in me that continued to manifest in various ways until at last I had lost every ounce of peace that I had. I was angry a lot. I complained a lot. I argued a lot. Therefore, I ate a lot. The downward spiral continued until I had a moment of grace: I knew that I had to **run** to the Lord to receive His Grace in The Sacrament of Reconciliation. I wrote everything down that I had been feeling as well as the various sins I had accumulated in such a short period of time and off I went with my list to confess all that was in my heart.

I am blessed that I have a wonderful priest as my Confessor who knows me well and he was patient and kind. In the middle of my confession, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and I heard Him say, “Start over”. I asked the priest if I could just start my Lent over and he said, very lovingly to me, “Of course.” He said to me that the readings for the next day for Sunday Mass was fitting for what I had just been through. I had no idea until he told me that it was the story of the Prodigal Son. As I continued with my confession, I felt the Lord lifting me up out of the pig pen of my rebellion as I “came to myself” and I left the Confessional with a sense of peace and love that has propelled me to embrace this Lenten season with a strong sense of purpose to go deeper with the Lord.

The stubbornness about entering into Lent led me to rebel in my heart and mind. The conflict between what I thought the Lord wanted me to do and what I chose not to do led to emotional upheaval. Don’t get me wrong. I was happy in my rebellion for a time. I ate what I wanted, I did what I wanted, and I didn’t do what everyone else was doing. What I thought of as freedom was actually rebellion in my heart and it led me to emotional eating which lasted for a few weeks. My “free will” had led me astray and it became my Master.

Lent continued.....

Consequently, everything we do with the Lord and for the Lord is a choice and it is either an act of the will or an act of the emotion. The will is the great "Decider". It has the power to choose and should not be driven by emotion but by adherence to God's Word and His Spirit. Emotion, on the other hand, is the great "Deceiver" because our emotions are fickle and can be swayed by every wind of circumstance. How I feel really makes no difference when it comes to being obedient to the Lord. The devil also has the power to influence our emotions so our emotions are not a reliable source of what is a good choice and what isn't. Instead, it is a choice of our will and how we choose determines **who we serve**.

Romans 6:16 says, **"Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?"**

Inside every one of us there is a civil war being waged. Our emotions rage against our will and the flesh wages war against the soul. St. Paul laments about this in the famous passage in Romans 7:18-23

"For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

The victor of this civil war, therefore, determines our spiritual journey. For example, we grow spiritually when we rule over our emotions and they don't rule over us. The Church defines this as ruling over our "lower faculties." Our emotions are part of the carnal nature that still resides in us that is in opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The other lesson I learned was that we grow, little by little, into righteousness with every act of obedience, no matter how small. In the same way, when we choose something that pulls us away from God's will, otherwise known as disobedience, we drift further and further away until we suddenly realize we can't see the shoreline. ***What surprised me was how far I drifted in such a short period of time.*** I thought I was pretty strong in my faith, in my convictions, and in my obedience. The Lord humbled me.

"Therefore, let any one who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12

The even greater surprise (and joy) was recognizing how quickly the Lord brought me back into His fold through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I felt healed, restored, and set back on my feet onto the "narrow path". I have never felt such a strong sense of God's forgiveness and healing love as I did with this confession (and I have confessed what I thought were far greater sins!) . I felt the joy of the Prodigal Son returning to his Father Who put a ring on his finger and robe around him without the slightest hint of anger or condemnation. In Reconciliation, my Abba simply said to me, "I love you. Let's begin again." This is why the Church offers Penance services during this season because the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a grace, a gift to us, and above all a healing sacrament. It is Restoration.

I now know that Lent teaches us to do small acts of obedience in prayer, almsgiving, and fasting because of the cumulative effect it has on our spiritual growth. Lent is not supposed to be like a New Year's resolution when we start asking everyone, "So what did you give up for Lent?" It's a slow, focused, diligent, and sometimes arduous journey towards the Cross of Our Lord and we are being crucified **a little at a time**. We love God and we love our neighbor and in doing so we are being perfected in love: LOVE is another four-letter word. So, I put them together and tell myself one thing: "Love Lent!" And now I do.

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

By Art Klaum

What do people think about when they hear “Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit?” I have to admit that there was a time when I wouldn’t know what to think or had some image of some heavenly beings or “holy rollers” that were out of touch with the world. Even when I was exposed to some form of evangelical gathering – mostly on TV – I would be skeptical about the people I was watching and allowing that skepticism to drift into doubt about who they were and what their motives were.

Depending on whom you ask, I’m sure we will get different answers. It reminds me of Jesus’ questions to his disciples. In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 9 verses 18-20 we read, “Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, ‘One of the ancient prophets has arisen.’” Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said in reply, “The Messiah of God.”*

There comes a point in all of our lives where we come to a decision point. This is true in many areas. Depending on where we are, our answers may change. What’s important in our lives as young single people may be different than when we are further along in our life’s journey. This was certainly true for me. For lack of time and space, I won’t go into all of it here, but I suspect that my life story is not unlike many – or even those reading this. I will share a little bit about myself and how living in the power of the Holy Spirit became a priority for me. Please know, though, that I’ll be the first to say – or maybe second to my wife, Geraldine, that I am far from perfect and still a work in progress.

I have to start by sharing that it can be difficult for me to do this type of reflection. While I know that I need to be ready to give the reason for my hope (1 Peter 3: 15), I want whoever I am speaking to or writing for to know that whatever accomplishments or successes I appear to achieve, it is not me but God acting through me. Everything I have is a gift from him. To him be all honor and glory. I may have been asked – or rather called – to

write this article or other articles or participate in facilitating a *Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit* workshop, but I pray that it is not me but Christ working through me. For “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives within me.” (Galatians 2: 20)

So, who am I? Like many, I can rattle off a number of things about me and my family, areas I’ve been, jobs I’ve had, and / or degrees and certifications I hold. Since this is not a job interview where I need to give an elevator pitch, I declare that I am a beloved son of the Most High God, brother of Jesus, and conduit of the Holy Spirit. In today’s parlance, people may ask you how you identify yourself, in many respects, disregarding who we are in God’s design. I challenge myself (and you!) to be prepared to respond as I just did in that declaration.

OK, so in worldly terms, I will provide the following background: I am a Cradle Catholic, am the 7th out of 8 kids, and have had 16 years of parochial, Catholic education. My wife Geraldine and I have known each other for almost 42 years and have been married for 38 years. We have been blessed with 4 “mostly” raised adult children – 2 sons, 2 married daughters, 2 sons-in law, and 3+ grandchildren (4th due 5/20).

As I look back on the early days of my faith journey, school and most religious activities were obligatory or just what we did. Formation or religion classes were like other classes like math, science, history, etc. I would learn the material and take an exam. It was mostly in my head with occasional glimpses of a relationship with God. I would say (and I hope my friends and family would agree) that I wasn’t an especially bad person. However, my motivations and choices weren’t especially based on living a faithful life. God was always a part of my life but I was not aware or inclined toward a personal relationship with him that I eventually became introduced to.

In my late 20’s, early 30’s I started to realize and/or desire a more purpose driven life. I was not satisfied or interested in the weekend and happy-hour focused lifestyle that I had known and participated in in my early life. As we were having and raising our kids, we wanted a more family oriented and back to basics life. I was introduced to service projects in Knights of Columbus. We disconnected from our partying friends as that life was not appealing anymore. Finding couples who had similar desires and priorities directed us back to church.

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit continued...

God started getting my attention – or I finally started listening – via Marriage Encounter, sponsoring a friend in RCIA, volunteering at a soup kitchen, and attending Christians in Commerce (now WorkLight) – an ecumenical group of men who teach and encourage Christians to live their faith in the workplace. Through this group, I learned, understood, and accepted my call to bring Christ's presence into my job. I was invited to take on leadership roles including teaching and demonstrating practical aspects of living the Gospel in work and all spheres of influence.

Knowing it or not, I started living in the power of the Holy Spirit. We all have unique relationships with God and faith journeys. Through Christian in Commerce, attending RCIA as an adult, and a small faith sharing group, God's teachings and purpose started drifting from my head to my heart. I learned, realized, and accepted that God wants a personal relationship with each and every one of us. There are a lot of "religious things" we can do but what is God specifically calling or assigning us to?

In Protestant denominations or communities, you may hear people say that at a certain date and time, "they were saved." It is a point at which they say they accepted Christ as their personal Lord and savior. As Catholics, we have similar opportunities, not the least of which are around the sacraments. Even so, many of us have points in our lives where we feel close to God and distant. My "conversion" experience happened over time. Again, I don't think I was a particularly bad person, but looking back at some of the choices I made, I shake my head and say "really?" Even now, I continue to make some bad choices.

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OK, so that is way more than enough about me. What is the *Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit* workshop? The workshop contains a series of 4 talks that helps us understand God's desire for a relationship with us, the tools he gives us, and an approach for how we go forth, renewed in his Spirit. The talks are titled: *A Love Story*, *Responding to God's Love*, *Experiencing the Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, and *Setting Things Right*. After each talk, there is time for personal reflection followed by small group sharing.

There will be an experienced leader in each group to facilitate the conversation. You will be in the same group for each sharing – with the exception that after the second talk, there will be an opportunity for a personal Examination of Conscience (for the things that separate you from God) and Reconciliation. The format of the workshop is flexible in that it can be presented in a single day or broken up as the group desires. The challenge in the latter is if people jump in late, they would miss the way the talks build off each other. The day long format starts with a continental breakfast and introduction with lunch between talks 2 and 3. The workshop ends with the opportunity to attend Mass, if conducted on a Saturday.

For more information, please free to contact me at artklaum61@gmail.com and may the Lord continue to bless you!

Ignited By Truth Conference

To all those who assisted with me at the IBT table: Debra Rony, Cecilia Soprowska, Nicole Jungclas, Mary Trombetta, Donna Schroyer, Dee Craine, Andy and Win Wallace.

I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation to them for generously using their time and gifts ministering at the IBT table.

They did an amazing job as representatives and ambassadors of Christ!

Please accept my heartfelt "thank you" with God's blessings always.

It was great seeing so many Catholics from all over our diocese coming together in fellowship and faith. It was great hearing the amazing teachings. I really enjoyed my conversation with Monsignor Rossetti. Please Remember to add his Catholic exorcism app, created by the St. Michael Center for Spiritual Renewal. This app was created to continue the Center's spiritual renewal, healing, and deliverance ministry, including assisting priests and those in deliverance ministry with the best practices and resources.

The app includes:

- Prayers for Priest Exorcists*
- Prayers and Resources for all those assisting in deliverance ministry, healing, and spiritual renewal*
- Ask an Exorcist: contact the Catholic exorcists from the St. Michael Center*
- Diary of an Exorcist: The weekly blog of the exorcists at the St. Michael Center in Washington, DC.*

It was an awesome day and I truly enjoyed meeting so many wonderful people from our charismatic community. Thank you to everyone who participated and used their gifts.

It was also very exciting to be interviewed on air with Divine Mercy Radio. My daughter, Nicole Jungclas, is an on air personality with the Meet the Priests Episode Series. She has been interviewing local priests, visiting authors and Catholic speakers on her show.

We've all been blessed by opportunities like these to come together and share our faith. I'm looking forward to our new upcoming events. Please visit our website for announcements and registration information for all events.

*Peace and God's blessings,
Maria Muratore*

Ignited By Truth Conference



"I found him to be very genuine, dynamic and absolutely on fire about spreading the faith. It's no wonder he has gained as many views as he has on his "Explaining the Faith" series on YouTube and now with a program on EWTN."
Win Wallace



The FLAME– March/April 2022



"It was so edifying to see so many Catholics enjoying the day together. The speakers were wonderful, the crowd was wonderful and also wonderful meeting people at our table!"

"What a blessing it was to meet so many new people and connect with old friends! The Holy Spirit was clearly at work bringing his people together!" Mary T.



**Mother/Daughter Moment with Divine Mercy Radio
Maria Muratore and Nicole Jungclas**

Upcoming Events

Registration Now Open!

May 14, 2022:

Magnificat Meal Mother Mary Morning Star Chapter of Magnificat, a Ministry to

Catholic Women cordially invites you to a Magnificat Meal on Saturday, May 14, 2022, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Apex. Please save the date to join us for fellowship, an afternoon tea, and praise and worship led by our Music Ministry. Prayer Teams will be available for personal prayer. Invite your daughters, sisters, moms, aunts, cousins, and girlfriends! More information will be coming soon! If you have any questions, please email us at MagnificatClaytonNC@gmail.com.

Living In The Power Of The Holy Spirit Workshop

St. Mary Magdalene Church

May 21, 2022

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Want to bring a spark to your Christian faith? Want to have scripture leap off the page with new meaning? Want to experience a new intimacy in your relationship with JESUS?

Registration Open: *See our registration page for more details...*

Registration Link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0c4baaaf23a64-living>

Coming Soon!

September 2nd and 3rd, 2022

Catholic Charismatic Services Annual Fall Conference

Guest Speaker Fr. Jim Blount

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

About 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 very gifted spiritual director and confessor, Fr. Blount is a powerful instrument of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by so many stories of miracles, healings, and conversions. 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. His humble boldness and untiring drive to minister to the lost and ill are particularly noteworthy.