



# Voice of the Spirit

NSW CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL NEWSLETTER



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Christmas Issue

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## Jesus is ALIVE in the Middle East

Bahrain 23 - 25 September 2015

Coming from the coldest Tasmanian winter for 60 years to the heat of Bahrain (39-42degrees) was a welcome change for me. The land is beautiful though flat, colourless with a mixture of concrete and sand. There are some stunning buildings of beautiful architecture, otherwise the landscape is filled with neutral coloured buildings. Palm trees struggle to stay alive even with a drip feed water system. The streets and traffic were busy as it was a four day feast celebration for Muslims and therefore a public holiday, a time of travel and leisure. Although there were many people about it was rare to see women on the streets. However, this was not the case in the shopping malls where the percentage of women was higher than that of men.

I was in Bahrain to attend the 3rd International Conference for ISAO (ICCRS International Subcommittee of Asia Oceania). This event was scheduled to be held in another Middle Eastern Country, however full government approval was withdrawn at the late stages of organisation and Bahrain stepped in and offered to host the event. Within a short period of ten months they managed to acquire government approval, co-ordinate the many overseas Catholic Charismatics attending the event, along with organising the registrations, feeding and transport needs of over 920 participants from 16 countries.

Bahrain is the poorest of the Middle Eastern countries and it is known as one of the most tolerant of other religions. According to Wikipedia, foreign



Sacred Heart Church, Manama, Bahrain

citizens from all over the world who live and work in Bahrain make up the majority of Christians. They belong to various Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches. The grandfather of the present King of Bahrain gave permission for the first Catholic Church to be built 75 years ago. The 'Mother Church', as it is known, is housed within the Sacred Heart Church complex in Manama where the ISAO Conference

was held. The present King of Bahrain has recently given land and his approval for the first Catholic Cathedral to be built in the country. The Catholics of Bahrain were thrilled to hear this news and are now in the process of raising the funds to build their first Cathedral.

The Countries of the Middle East are divided into two Dioceses. The Most Rev. Camilio Ballin, Bishop of Northern Arabia and the Most Rev. Paul Hinder,



Bishop Camilio Ballin

Bishop of Southern Arabia are the Shepherds over this vast flock of Catholics. Both are men of humility and strength, and each of them took time out of their busy schedules to spend the entire 3 days at the Conference.

Principal speakers at the event were Michelle Moran (ICCRS President) and Mark Nimmo (USA), with the talks focusing on

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## Voice of the Spirit

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When considering the editorial for this issue of Voice of the Spirit it was the scriptural event of the Annunciation which Luke describes in the first chapter of his Gospel (Luke 1:26-38), which came to mind.

Using a text borrowed from the Scripture and quoting from Thomas Cahill's book *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*, it could read something like this: *"An angel arrives sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He came to her and said, Greetings to the Graceful One! The Lord himself is with you. She was decidedly put off by these words and asked herself what kind of hello this was supposed to be. But the angel had more to say, 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Look, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, whom you are to name, Jesus. ....' Mary said to the angel, 'This doesn't make any sense. I haven't had sex yet.'"*



The angel then reassured Mary that all would be well, for the Holy Spirit would come upon her and, as with Elizabeth who in her old age would conceive a son, nothing is impossible with God.

There is much we can glean from this extraordinary chapter in the history of salvation, but what really strikes me is how much power there is in communication. I mean, let's face it: God is God... 'He holds the whole world in the palm of his hands...' Yet he went to the trouble of speaking to this young unknown Jewish woman who, you might say, being human, argued with God; and God smiled upon her.

We could, and indeed do, translate this amazing event into a very pious story; but it's about an angel whose name was Gabriel, God's messenger, coming to Mary on a most important mission. He spoke and she listened, pondered and responded. Upon this response much hung in the balance.

In these times of 'instant' everything I have wondered how long Mary took to ponder Gabriel's words as she sought within her heart the will of God. Mary was taken to that deeper level of communicating with God - to the level of prayer. Yes, Mary prayed, maybe even challenging God in order to discern her response. And so, with her "Yes", under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

The whole concept of communicating is something we need to explore in our own

## Editorial

what is the quality of our relationships?

Communicating, like so much else in our modern society, has become part of that 'instant syndrome' helped along in no small measure by the explosion of technological science. One such 'instant' object has become so refined it can fit into your pocket with room to spare! Who would dare embark on their day without a mobile phone?!

Communicating is not only about speaking and listening, it's about being present to the other. There are times when the non-verbal ... that facial expression through a smile or a frown; the body language in a genial or awkward gesture ... can speak so much more loudly than words. Not even 'Skype' (the machinations of which are a mystery to me) can compare with personal interaction.

Pope Francis speaks much about being 'hands on' people. In all he says and does, he emulates the person of Jesus and his love. When people approached Jesus he responded; he reached out; he looked at the other; he touched the other; he dialogued. And the fruit was good. When Pope Francis is among people have you noticed how invariably he reaches out - he communicates with - particularly with the young and the handicapped? Mind you, he does use modern technology but rather than it being a substitute for personal interaction, it is a means of extending and enriching opportunities to do as Jesus would do.

But to return to where I started... it was through listening to, pondering upon, praying about, responding to, and the Word becoming flesh, that Jesus, the Son of God entered our world... no blast of trumpets or the latest 'breaking news' on TV, but in a poor stable. And he was nurtured within an unknown family in a little despised Galilean village called Nazareth.

"God sent his Son into a family," Pope Francis said, *"and he could do this with a truly open heart... families have a citizenship that is divine. The identity card they have is given to them by God, so that, within the heart of the family, truth, beauty and goodness can grow... Division of hearts cannot overcome a difficulty; only love can overcome..."* A love that is to be tangible, real and present.. and it is all gift.

Perhaps a gift we could offer to another this coming Christmas is being present through that kind word, that listening ear, that outstretched hand through which the gift of a restored loving and healed relationship in all its truth, beauty and goodness" may be mutually experienced.

And may it all be wrapped in the warmth of a smile. ■■



## Message from the Chairperson

As the year draws to a close it is a good time to reflect on where we are going in our faith mission with the Lord. The Church needs spirit-filled evangelisers. Are we feeling burnt out or pessimistic about the future of our Church? We may need to renew ourselves in the Holy Spirit and immerse ourselves in God's Love and Mercy. There have been many opportunities that the CCR has provided to be renewed within through Life in the Spirit Seminars and the Catholic School Evangelisation courses. We now have an opportunity for small or large groups to run the program provided by the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services called "The Gift". Details of this course, which can be run at any time, are set out on page 10 of this publication.



There is a wonderful opportunity for renewal in the upcoming Retreat with Jim Murphy. I have no doubt that you will be renewed in a powerful way at this Retreat. Not only will you be renewed but your presence will help us all at the Retreat to be renewed. The CCR Centre also needs this Retreat to be successful in a financial way to recover losses of the last financial year and of the months in this year. Our donations are dropping and we desperately need your support not only in prayer, but also financially to keep going. Supporting our activities is one way of doing this.

In his encyclical "*Evangelii Gaudium*", otherwise known as the "*Joy of the Gospel*", Pope Francis devotes a whole chapter to "**Spirit-Filled Evangelisers**". What he means by this term he states in paragraph 259: "*Spirit-filled evangelisers means evangelisers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit*" which is a similar way to the way the apostles were at the first Pentecost. Pope Francis went on to say in paragraph 261 "*.....no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A Spirit filled evangeliser is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel.*" I recommend a deeper reading of this section. This message is to Bishops, priests, religious and the laity. We should work within our Parishes in unity with the Parish Priest and the appointed Parish team to enable *Evangelii Gaudium* come to life. ■■

I wish you a Spirit filled Christmas and New Year.

Michael Lulan

Chairperson, NSW Service Team  
Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Thank you to all who minister in prayer at the CCR Centre; to those who serve as volunteers in a variety of ways; to you our readers; to all who have supported us through donations and in so many other ways... we pray you will be blessed with the love, joy and peace of Jesus this Christmas and throughout 2016.....

*Jesus is alive in the Middle East..... Continued from Page 1*



Bishop Paul  
Hinder

the theme: "*I will pour out my Spirit continually, generously, liberally and in abundance.*" Music teams from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait led the participants in vibrant times of Praise and Worship. I have been to Conferences and entered into many joy-filled times of Worship such as this, but found I needed to remind myself of where I was. Unlike other conferences, most of my brothers and sisters attending lived with the real threat of persecution and death because of their faith.

Someone was sharing with me that only a few months ago, the Christians in his country were threatened by a rogue radical group and, as a consequence, the government built an enclosure around all the Christian Churches, which no one can enter without first going through tight security.

It is normal for a weekday Mass to draw over 500 people. Some places have 35,000-40,000 people attend Sunday Masses. The Renewal is strong and growing in the Middle East with the people alive, rejoicing in a personal

relationship with Jesus Christ and living in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit Seminars can draw up to more than 600 people at a time. There are training programs, intercession groups, regional events and conferences.

This Conference in Bahrain was unique in that it brought together Charismatics from many Middle Eastern nations and gave all the attendees the opportunity to not only experience the wider Church, but also to draw strength in knowing they are not in isolation.

A young man, after attending a workshop, shared with me: "*I'm from Saudi Arabia. It is very difficult living there as a Christian, but now I know I walk in the footsteps of the Holy Spirit who is always moving. My hands and feet are the hands and feet of Jesus my Lord and it's he walking, talking, working in the streets of Saudi Arabia through me. I'm taking this message back to my groups.*"

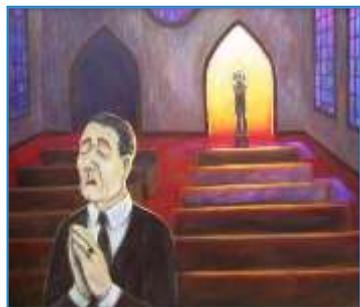
The Lord is alive in the Middle East! Please pray for our brothers and sisters who live there, that they will continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and experience the love and mercy of our mighty and awesome God. ■■

Anne Brereton, Chairperson National Service Committee,  
CCR Australia and Oceania Representative for ICCRS

## Rushing to Judgement

We are frequently quick to make sweeping and unfair judgements. For instance, we might think about the current terrorist crisis and conclude that all Muslims are terrorists. This conclusion conveniently ignores the fact that the vast majority of Muslims are both peace-loving and law abiding. It makes us completely insensitive to the struggle that good Muslims have with the twin cancers of murderous radicalism within Islam and the considerable hostility and bigotry of the wider society towards Islam. It makes us incapable of compassion for those Muslim parents who may have risked everything, including their lives, to bring their children from a turbulent Middle East to a peaceful and stable life in Australia - only to find to their horror that these same children have been radicalised by Internet hate-mongers.

It is little wonder that Jesus cautioned us against judging others: ***“Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned.”*** (Luke 6: 37 NRSV) Judgement is also the theme of his parable ***“The Pharisee and the Tax Collector”*** (Luke 18:9-14). A Pharisee and a Tax Collector go to the Temple to pray, the parable tells us. The Pharisee is a scrupulous keeper of the law of Israel; the Tax Collector collects taxes from his own people on behalf of the hated Roman occupiers of Israel; he is a traitor to his people. The Pharisee trumpets his virtue and good deeds and expresses his **contempt for the ‘low life’ Tax Collector who, on the other hand, can only cry out, over and over, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner”.**



Jesus tells us that the Tax Collector went away justified (that is, he was in right standing with God).

However, what Jesus does not tell us is the Tax Collector's motivation. Has he gone to the Temple to pray because he had a *metanoia*, a change of heart, and has resolved to

give up his disreputable profession and turn his life around? Or does he feel hopelessly trapped in a profession he despises but, there being no other occupation available to him and having a family to support, he must of necessity continue to work in it? Is this not much like a woman trapped in a life of prostitution she hates because it is the only way she can support her infant child?

In his despair, the Tax Collector, can only cry out to God for his mercy for living a sinful lifestyle he is powerless to change.

The tenor of the parable - **total reliance on God's grace and mercy rather than on our own merit and good deeds - suggests that the Tax Collector's motivation was the latter.** The implications are staggering: even those caught in an immoral lifestyle can seek and find **God's mercy.**

Regrettably, we do not always extend the same mercy to each other in our worshipping communities. There

could be some who at times view the Church through the lens of the Pharisee in the parable and see it as a rigid **institution of ‘respectable’ people who earn ‘brownie points’ from God by keeping the rules and ‘doing the right thing’.** The **‘disreputable’ do not really belong.** However, this is a woefully distorted view of the meaning of **‘Church’.**



Second Vatican Council

The Council Fathers at the Second Vatican

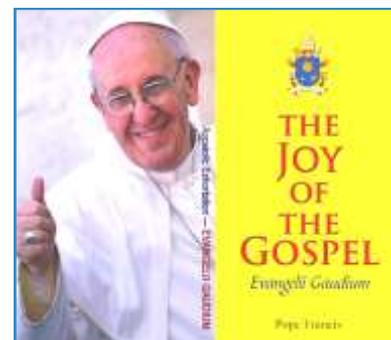
Council invited us to take a very different view. In the document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG), the **Church is described as a ‘sacrament’** - the visible presence among us of the no longer visible Jesus. (LG1). The Fathers then went on to provide us with many images to help us to understand the mystery of how the love of Jesus is present to us through the Church. Two of the most powerful of these images are that the Church is **“our mother”** (LG7) who **“clutches sinners to her bosom”** (LG8).

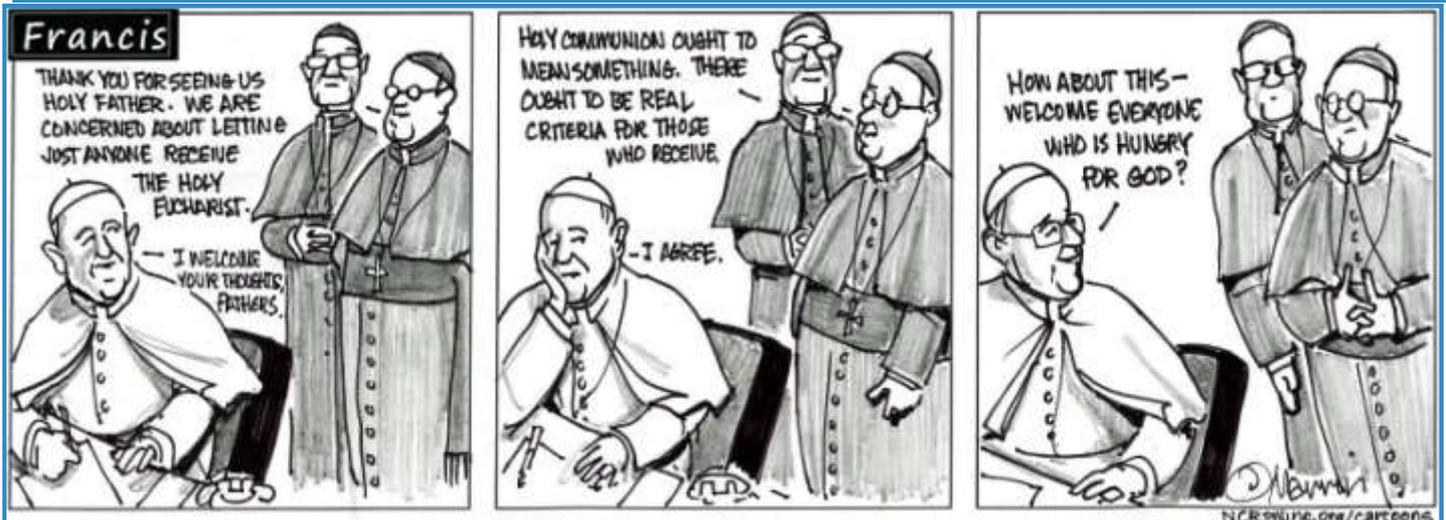
Pope Francis elaborates on this view of Church in his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), better known to us under its English title, ***“The Joy of the Gospel”***. Because God has loved us first, we as Church **“can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast”.** (EG24) In response to the God of love who saves us, we can **“see God in others and go forth from ourselves to see the good in others”** (EG39).

The Eucharist, our central act of worship as a Church and communion with our God and each other, **“is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak”** (EG47). The Church is **“the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems”** (EG47). Francis would prefer to see a Church **“which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets; rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security”** (EG49).

Unfortunately, we often fail to live up to this vision of Church given to us by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council and by Pope Francis.

My concern is that we as Church are sometimes failing to live up to this vision in our approach to our brothers and sisters in faith who participate in lifestyles and behaviour which the Church views as sinful. While we might not approve of certain lifestyles and behaviour,





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we are required to show love, compassion and caring for those who may be involved in them. This is not just a pious sentiment; this is the essence of our faith. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* tells us simply and starkly that, if we do not act with love, then *“the edifice of the Church’s moral teaching risks becoming a house of cards”*. (EG39).

Pope Francis’ views reflect St. Paul’s great exhortation: *“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing.”* (1Corinthians13:1-3 NRSV)

As we know it is one thing for the Church to teach that certain lifestyles and behaviours are wrong (supported by Scripture and tradition), but quite another thing for her to provide pastoral care for those who may be caught up in them. The ‘official’ Church does provide substantial pastoral outreach albeit from pastors who are just as fallible, frail and suffer just as much from human weakness as the rest of humanity. This is a practical demonstration of ‘hating the sin but loving the sinner’ and of leaving the judging to God who alone knows the human heart.

Indeed, following the recent Synod of the Family in Rome, Pope Francis exhorted pastors to accompany the faithful and be the bearers of God’s mercy. He also warned against rigid adherence to doctrine while the vulnerable suffer.

This positive approach is not just for pastors - it is a challenge to all of us. We need to ask ourselves: *‘What is my attitude to people whose lifestyle and behaviour is different from mine and of which I do not approve? Do I feel they do not really belong in the life of the Church?... That they should not be sharing in the Eucharist?’* So often we play the Pharisee through our righteous attitudes and fail to give the required love that St. Paul and Pope Francis have exhorted us to in the name of Jesus.

The Church should be a safe place, a place of nurturing where the lost and hurting can find healing and wholeness. So many of those caught in ‘unacceptable’ life styles have already been bruised by their families, by the wider society and by life itself. As they try to work

through their personal issues they will hardly be in a position to encounter the Risen Lord in an atmosphere of exclusion and antipathy. Nor are they the only victims. Parents, families and friends who are sympathetic to their loved ones who are so ostracised and wish to see them find a place and support in the Church, are themselves hurt by such judgemental attitudes.

The antidote to this destructive judgementalism is an honest appraisal of ourselves. Each one of us is wounded, sinful, flawed and we sometimes do appalling evil to one another. Yet, for all this, we are beloved children of the Most High God, in constant need of His love, grace and mercy, which is always there.

Perhaps we could ask ourselves, *‘Who am I in the parable - the self-righteous, insensitive, judgemental Pharisee? Or do I hear myself, along with the Tax Collector and the whole community, crying out: Lord, have mercy on us all; for we are sinners?’*

My favourite modern ‘take’ on this Parable is the short story, *‘Revelation’* written by the great American Catholic writer Flannery O’Connor.....

The main character is Mrs. Turpin, a self-righteous woman, proud of her good deeds and sense of decency. She disdains lesser beings. Then, one day, she has a vision that shakes her to the core. In the vision a brilliant fiery bridge is raised from earth to heaven. A vast horde of ‘low-lifers’, aglow and clean for the first time in their lives, scramble in complete disorder up the bridge. You see, they don’t pretend to have any merit of their own and, knowing they are entirely dependent on the grace and mercy of God, they enthusiastically acknowledge and accept it. They go straight to heaven.

Lagging far behind them on the bridge are the ‘respectable’ folk like Mrs. Turpin. They are marching in neat ranks with great dignity and in good order. However, they are moving very slowly and very painfully - they are having their self-righteousness burnt off them before they can enter heaven.

Let us make sure that, when the bridge is finally raised, we aren’t among the tailenders! ■■

Kerry Guerin  
Member of Service Team  
CCR NSW



# CCR NATIONAL LEADERS' RETREAT

## A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

21-23 August, 2015

While writing this article the ABC is running an old Compass program entitled *"Whatever happened to the Charismatics?"* I could answer that, in part, for at least sixty of them met together in the beautiful country garden setting of Pallotti College in Central Victoria for a National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Retreat weekend in August. I could also answer that although there were more grey hairs showing and bodies were not moving quite as easily as in the past, each in attendance still had a passion and desire to proclaim that Jesus is Alive!

The National Service Committee organised this Retreat as an opportunity for leaders to *"Come aside and reconnect with God and each other. ... A time to rest and be renewed through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit."*

Fr. Ken Barker, the Retreat Director, led us prayerfully through the weekend. On the first night he spoke of the sensate world in which we live and how we are bombarded with choices causing us to miss the God within. Fr. Ken spoke of holiness which we see to be a ladder of perfection needing to be climbed. However, when we fall, (which inevitably we will when we try to earn our way to God through our own efforts), we become depressed.

**In being reminded that the bedrock of the Spiritual life is God's love, we were encouraged to sleep that first night without fear, in the loving arms of our Father.....**



The Theme for Day 2 was PRAYER seeing it as (1) *Desire*; (2) *Relationship*; (3) *Reality*.

**"Desire"** arises in us because God desires us. He thirsts for us.... our souls... and our thirst is awakened by him. We were invited to ponder the question, *"How much do you want God?"* and acknowledged that if we are honest in answering this question, we will recognise our resistance to this prayer connection. Romans 8 speaks of *"The whole of creation is groaning....."* At times our prayer can be nothing more than a groaning within.

**"Relationship"** of intimacy and friendship. St. Theresa says to *"go aside with your best friend....."* We were reminded of the story of Martha and Mary that, in being so 'busy' working for God, we don't take the opportunities to go into solitude - to go aside with our best friend.

**"Reality"** ...Prayer is not a pretence. We come with our struggles, weaknesses, brokenness and sinfulness. Each is invited to *"Come as you are."* St. Theresa is quoted as putting it this way: *"I come knowing who I am, knowing who God is and turning towards him....."*

We may have distractions in prayer and these very distractions can show us what it is that has a hold on our hearts. We were encouraged to remain faithful and generous to our prayer time. The Lord wants us to want him for his sake. Being drawn to deeper places, means we have to go through weaning from consultations in prayer to co-operating with his grace, remembering there is **"pain in change"**. **In the Renewal we are good 'sprinters' but not so good 'marathon runners'**. **The Lord invites us to go the distance.**



On Saturday evening, we were given the opportunity to reflect on what it is that keeps us 'bound' particularly in the area of unforgiveness. We spent time before the Blessed Sacrament surrendering to his Presence working deep within our hearts and lives.

On Sunday, we were encouraged to be joyful witnesses of Christ as we are fighting for humanity. We are to take the prophetic position and witness to the world by our daily lives. The Church is becoming more and more counter-cultural and we are living in the age of martyrs. We are called to take risks in the power of the Holy Spirit, to preach the Kerygma - Jesus crucified - and show others the way to heaven. We are to build communities of life and love - to help build a new civilisation.

This is only a short reflection on the weekend. To be together to share Eucharist, pray before the Blessed Sacrament, have quiet reflective time and fellowship with each other was a gift from the Lord. The Retreat united and empowered us to go forward in his Name. I thank the Lord for the new friendships formed and the opportunity to be reconnected with the family of the Renewal.

During the past years I have witnessed the movement of the Holy Spirit drawing us back to deep and true worship, to repentance, encouraging us to listen to the Prophetic and opening the doors wide to the power of intercession. I believe he is now inviting us into the deeper journey of personal holiness. This is a new springtime and the more we **surrender to his transforming grace, the greater the impact his Presence will have on the world around us. ■■**

## *“Merciful Like the Father”*

You may remember reading a few years ago in the Voice of the Spirit an encouraging Prophetic word regarding the Catholic Charismatic Renewal from Katherine Ruonala, Pastor of Glory City Church in Brisbane. Upon receiving this word, I contacted Katherine and discovered that as well as pastoring a vibrant Church, she is also the co-ordinator of the Australian Prophetic Council. (APC) This group consists of prominent and recognised National Evangelical Prophets and Pastors, many of whom have International Ministries. Since that original encounter with Katherine myself and Anne Marie Gatenby were invited to the private roundtable gathering of the APC. This event was then followed by a three day open Conference where the focus was on what the Lord is saying prophetically to the nations.

During this private gathering all were given an opportunity to share what they heard the Lord speaking prophetically for themselves personally, their Church, the Nation etc. This year I shared the prophetic voice of Pope Francis bringing in the Year of Mercy. I presented a very short story to illustrate the meaning of Mercy and then **apologised for any hurt caused by the Church to them and their families, and asked them to 'have mercy on us'**. The response was quite profound. There was a definite shift in the room as the Spirit moved powerfully, with healing and reconciliation taking place. Spontaneously they then asked our forgiveness.

I repeated the process the following day at the larger Conference gathering assisted by both Anne Marie and Jenny Mc Cormack, NSC representative for Queensland. Again the response was profound. I invited people who felt they needed to share their story with us to do so. many came, not only to share their story, but also to express their thanks, often with tears. One lady said she felt a generational healing for her family who had been so hurt by the Church. During the Conference presentations, one of the guest speakers commented that he never thought he would attend an **Evangelical event and hear the “prophetic voice of the Pope proclaimed”**.

I share this with you now as I sense there could be many such opportunities presented to us during the Year of mercy. ■■



Anne Brereton

### *Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Mercy*

*Lord Jesus Christ,*

*you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and told us that whoever sees you sees Him.*

*Show us your face and we will be saved.*

*Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;  
made Peter weep after his betrayal  
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.*

*Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:  
“If you knew the gift of God!”*

*You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy;  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.*

*You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved and forgiven by God.*

*Send your Holy Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.*

*We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,*

*You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen*

## News from Around and About.....

### Ashfield Prayer Group Retreat ..... "Keep the Spirit Alive"



The Ashfield Charismatic (Evening) Prayer Group held its first Retreat for its members on the weekend of 28-29 August at the CCR Centre, Rozelle. The sessions took place in the Meeting Room

where our very much loved Parish Priest, Fr. John Halloran CM celebrated his last Mass in 2012. (RIP)

The Retreat was a blessing to us all providing a deepening of our relationship with God; it was intimate and very special. Each day we celebrated the Eucharist in St. Joseph's Church, Rozelle and spent time in Praise and Worship and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We also prayed the Stations of the Cross. The teachings by Bishop Joe Grech were from "Keep the Spirit Alive" which he presented at the 2009 NSW CCR Retreat.

Bishop Joe pointed out that we are called to be holy, set apart for God and, in being called to be saints, there is no room for fear; indeed, we are the best of his creation! We were reminded that God is alive in us and with him nothing is impossible. "We can do everything with Jesus' strength...." (Philippians 4:13) We are to keep our eyes fixed on him and dream Big Dreams.

In knowing the Church exists to evangelise we are to exercise the Charisms and bring our gifts to life. In having been indelibly marked, sealed with the Spirit, we need to know those gifts so we can imitate Jesus in bringing his healing and forgiveness to others. We need to

be passionate in how we do bring Jesus, for whom our hearts are burning, to those who are seeking him and searching for meaning in their lives. The way we present Jesus has to be real - new in its zeal and new in its expression.

We were reminded of our **need to change... the world** needs the Holy Spirit to enable it to change. And so we need the Power of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit touches us and we receive his grace and his gifts, we can never be the same again!

But we are to keep the Spirit alive which means we must daily seek the empowerment of the Spirit of Jesus. There will be difficult times but in them let us glorify and praise the Lord, knowing him to be faithful.

There were images received in prayer indicating the presence, power and direction of the Holy Spirit. We also spent some time in reverence and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament with each praying for a special intention. The Stations of the Cross were quite profoundly moving as we re-lived the passion of Jesus and reflected on the atrocities Jesus went through for us. Each took a turn to lead at a particular Station.

Going back to the very beginning of Bishop Joe's talk on Saturday, he mentioned that some of us would be in love with Jesus at the conclusion of the weekend. Well, that prophecy did come true for me. I know that by the time I left on Sunday afternoon, I had fallen in love with Jesus. ■■



Majo Mitchell

### From Darwin.....

Well, it has taken me a couple of days to reflect on the amazing time Dan (Hewitt, W.A. Representative, NSC) spent in Darwin during a recent weekend. I feel really connected to that wonderful community. Their humility, their love, the way they included us as family is almost hard to explain. I came away feeling I want to go back!

We attended a Charismatic Mass celebrated by Fr. Dan MGL. It is clear he is greatly loved by everyone there, as are all the other MGL Priests. They are doing wonderful work. The Mass itself was a blessing and I would say everyone came forward for prayer afterwards. Prophecy and other gifts of the Holy Spirit were experienced. After the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the entire night until 8am the next morning with some people staying all night.

On another occasion we were invited to the Sabbath Meal with the Disciples of Jesus Community; another unique and wonderful experience! This event also gave us the opportunity to speak with and get to know the larger body of the Renewal. On Sunday, we celebrated the traditional Indigenous Mass; what an incredible experience this was! The people enjoyed it so much. That night after watching a brilliant sunset, we were taken to a farewell dinner.

They do feel so isolated and appreciate any support we can give. They would like us to return and the invitation is open to all. I believe we can support them in many ways the most obvious being to keep them in our prayers. Should we consider a return visit maybe a group could give talks/ workshops etc. as the Lord guides us.

As a whole I found the Community very Spirit filled. Their love for the Lord is evident as they work and share together. I sensed a real spirituality in our indigenous sisters and brothers something which is a natural gift with them. We extend our gratitude to Fr. Joseph, to Mafi for her generosity and to their whole group.

May Jesus continue in all of us "The plans he has established ... plans to prosper us, to give us hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11) ■■

Cathy Green S.A. CCR Chairperson

(Do you hear an invitation in this report? Surely it would be a wonderful opportunity to be on mission - right here in the Great South land of the Holy Spirit - reaching out and, at the same time, being reached out to. If the Holy Spirit should move you may like to contact Cathy Green through the NSW CCR Centre. The Editor)

## .....More News from Around and About.....

### **School for Evangelisation.... Philip - New Life Course: A Personal Reflection**

I would like to share with you my experience of the “*Philip - New Life*” Course conducted by the Catholic School of Evangelisation in St. Joseph’s Parish Hall, Rozelle on Saturday and Sunday, 31 October-1 November. The pamphlet advertising the Course told me that “*It is not so much a lecture but more an experience of the reality of God’s love providing a personal encounter with the Risen Jesus, and to receive a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit*”. The Course certainly lived up to this!



Betty Koh presenting a session

It is named after Philip, a deacon in the early Church in Jerusalem, and an evangelist. The most dramatic incident in his work as an evangelist was probably his encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch whom he converted to Jesus. (Acts 8:26-40) The Ethiopian was obviously already a man of faith and a good man; he was also rich, respected and had a good job. Yet there was ‘something missing’ from his life. Philip finds him reading the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, searching for answers. Philip tells him that Isaiah is referring to Jesus; he then leads the Ethiopian to both Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. The void within him is filled.

The two days of the Course challenged the participants to examine their faith lives to see if there was ‘something missing’ and provided help to fill their void. The starting point was a consideration of God’s love for us. We need to allow ourselves to be loved by him and to know and feel that love. God loves us because he is love. But has this

really been our experience?

Perhaps there is a blockage created by sin which blocks out God’s love and distorts our faith vision. In a moving ritual we were invited to bring our sins to the Cross .... to Jesus our Saviour. Salvation is ours by faith and becomes effective when we do believe in Jesus for our salvation. Conversion - turning to Jesus - demands a new way of looking at things - a change of heart. It is a journey from darkness into light.

The next part of the Course involved teaching and extensive prayer in order to receive the empowerment and gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. A particular emphasis was placed on the gift of Healing with the reminder that this embraces all areas of healing including physical, emotional and psychological together with the healing of the effects of abuse and trauma. Finally, we were reminded that we do not live our lives in isolation - we are all bound together in a community called ‘**Church**’. The Church is not a building - it is a unity of hearts and a place of mutual support and outreach to others.

Experiencing the Course is certainly of assistance in our overcoming the ‘roadblocks’ on our faith journey. Perhaps, God’s love, once so vibrant in our lives, has faded. Perhaps, our relationship with Jesus, once so exciting, has become routine. Perhaps, it seems the empowerment of the Holy Spirit has lost its vigour. Perhaps, there has been ‘something missing’ on our faith journey to date which needs to be identified and back-filled’. Perhaps, the *Philip Course* will provide the answer.. ...

*Come and see!* ■■

Kerry Guerin



Group participating in the “*Philip...New Life*”

### **Greystanes Prayer Group Retreat ..... “Encountering God’s Mercy”**

Sr. M. Julie, a Schoenstatt Sister of Mary from Mulgoa led our Retreat on 17 September. Sister shared with us that **Mercy is a Divine attribute and part of God’s essence; “it is a spring that never runs dry”**. (Pope Francis) Drawing from the Scriptures she explained the God is not vengeful, never passing judgement; he does not pursue the guilty and his mercy exceeds his justice.

Mercy is the bridge connecting God and man; we are called to imitate God’s mercy which requires we must first experience it particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To receive mercy is to receive and foster life. The pre-requisite is that we joyfully acknowledge our weakness, our brokenness, our miserableness.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, we



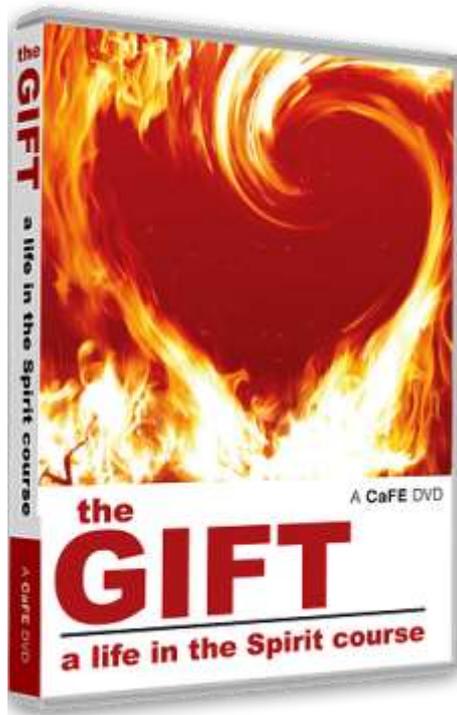
see how the father embraced his son after he had admitted his sin; the father not only forgave his son but also restored his dignity. .. We were asked, “**Do we live and act with dignity?**” We are royal children of the eternal King, a dignity we received through Baptism ...**God allows crosses - we cannot escape them...**The only way to Resurrection is through the Cross and suffering.

Sr. Julie was clearly in touch with modern life and family challenges. She spoke of the wounds in families particularly those due to fatherlessness **which can inhibit one’s ability to experience God’s mercy thus tainting the image of God the Father.**

We were blessed to have Fr. Suresh celebrate the Eucharist with us to conclude the day. ■■

Susanna D’Cruz

## Oh, What a Wonderful Gift !!



Called “*A Life in the Spirit*” Course, “*The Gift*” comprises of six sessions, each lasting for approximately half an hour. The topics chosen for each session are similar to those we are familiar with through the LISS. It is a professional production with very good presenters, including Michelle Moran and Charles Whitehead.

The Course is a DVD presentation of talks that can easily be integrated with Praise and Worship and small groups in a similar format to the LISS.

**This resource enables a group to organise a ‘course’ without having to search for a suitable speaker if none are readily available, or if one is unsure of the content that needs to be included. The presenters in “*The Gift*” also keep to the core subjects of “*Life in the Spirit*” using everyday language with affirming references to Church teaching on the subject, and Pope Francis’ encouragement and endorsement of the *value* of participating in this spiritual experience. ■■**

Vince Fitzwilliam  
Coordinator  
Wollongong Diocese CCR

More details of this Course are on line where you can view a trailer and purchase in DVD form or on computer download a form which is a little cheaper. Website is: <[www.giftofthespirit.org](http://www.giftofthespirit.org)> Can also be purchased from Melbourne CCR 03 9486 6544

## Hot off the Press!

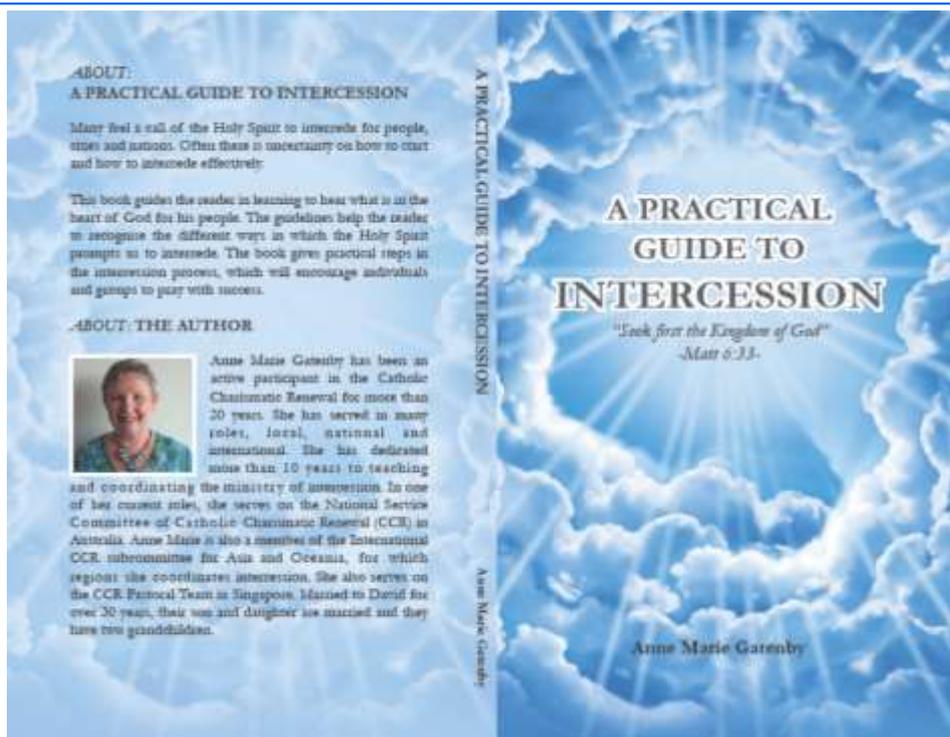
We have been waiting for this book for some time.

As many of you know whilst Anne Marie Gattenby was living in Sydney, she was a very active member of the CCR Service Team in NSW. She has given many teachings on “*Intercession*” in NSW and, in fact, throughout Australia and overseas, and is very gifted in this area. We are fortunate that she has been in a position to spend time in documenting her teachings for us.

The cost of the book has been kept to a minimum and is available from the CCR Centre for \$8.80 (incl. GST) plus \$2 for postage.

You may order by phone, email or fax. Contact details are on the front of this issue of VOS.

The books will also be available for sale at the upcoming Retreat, “*His Name is Mercy*”. ■■



## The Pope invites us to Rome.....



On Sunday, 1 June, Pope Francis met with more than 50,000 Catholic Charismatics in Rome’s Olympic Stadium....

In their midst, he knelt on stage as they prayed over him by singing in tongues.... In underlining the fact that that the movement was begun by the Holy Spirit “*as a current of grace in the Church and for the Church*”, he urged Charismatic Groups not to try to organise everything or create a bureaucracy that attempts to tame the Holy Spirit.... “*Be dispensers of God’s grace, not controllers. Don’t be the Holy Spirit’s custom agents.*” He encouraged the people to go back to their roots in their love for Scripture; Charismatics were known for their love of and familiarity with the Scriptures. “*Return to this first love; always have the word of God in your pocket or purse.*”

**“I expect all of you Charismatics from around the world, to celebrate your great with the pope at Pentecost, 2017, in St. Peter’s Square”, he said. ■■**

## Sydney Healing Masses

1st. Friday Each month 8.00pm	<b>HEALING MASS St. Joseph's Catholic Church</b> , 126 Liverpool Road, Enfield 7.00pm Rosary/Reconciliation; 7.30pm Prayer and Praise; 8.00pm Mass For information, contact Rose: 9642 2359 / 0412 115; email: rosetwyman@optus.com.au
3rd Sunday Each month 2pm (Except Jan.)	<b>CHARISMATIC HEALING MASS Our Lady of the Rosary Church</b> Cnr Mamre Road & Swanson Street, St. Marys Costandi & Barbara (02) 4754 4625 / 0410 475 723 or Christine 0427 327 471 Email: dojobm@bigpond.com
1st&3rd Tues. Each month 1030am	<b>YARRA BAY EUCHARISTIC PRAYER COMMUNITY-HEALING MASSES</b> <b>St. Mary's Church</b> , 23 Swanson Street, Erskineville For more information, ring Marika on 9556 2118; Email: marikagubacsi@bigpond.com
1st Friday 7pm & Last Saturday 8.30am Each month	<b>HEALING MASS (with anointing of the sick)</b> <b>Our Lady of the Rosary Church</b> 18 Vine Street, Fairfield Friday Mass preceded by Holy Hour (in Vietnamese) For more information, phone Parish Office: 9724 5997
1st Friday Each Month March, June, Sept., Dec. at 6.00pm	<b>HEALING MASS St. Michael's Church</b> Croydon Road, Hurstville For information, contact the Parish Office: 9587 2166
1st Friday Each month 7.30pm	<b>HEALING MASS St. Patrick's Church</b> 294 The River Road, Revesby Heights (Reconciliation at 6.30pm) For information, Contact Terry Fernando 9708 1095
3rd Thursday Each month 8pm	<b>HEALING MASS - Holy Spirit Church</b> 191 Cox's road, North Ryde..... Prayer Ministry available after Healing Mass For information, contact the Parish Office: 9888 2569
Each Sunday 9.15am	<b>CHARISMATIC MASS - BREAD OF LIFE CATHOLIC FELLOWSHIP</b> <b>Servants of Jesus Centre</b> ..... 15 Park Road, Seven Hills For information, contact the Office: 9624 3322

## NSW - Upcoming Events

Friday 22 January - Sunday 24 January 2016	<b>NSW CCR RETREAT WEEKEND St. Joseph's Spirituality Centre</b> 64 Mackillop Drive, Baulkham Hills, Sydney. Features - Live-in with the option of day attendance. SPEAKERS: Jim Murphy and Fr. Hugh Thomas CSSR See back page for registration Please contact the CCR Centre 02 9810 2499 if further details needed.
Friday-Sunday 11-13 March & Sat. - Sunday 19-20 March 2016	<b>ELIJAH HOUSE PRAYER MINISTRY SCHOOL (A)</b> St. Joseph's Parish Hall. Gordon Street, Rozelle For information and bookings, contact the CCR Centre 9810 2499



### **LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS 2016 .....**

**Attention all NSW Prayer Groups... Should you be planning to conduct a *Life in the Spirit Seminar*** (including **"The Gift"**) in your Parish during 2016, could you please advise the CCR Centre of the details by email: [email@ccrnsw.org.au](mailto:email@ccrnsw.org.au) in order for us to advertise it on our website and in our Newsletter. There **just could be others who would like to participate.** ... *Do let us know!*

# His Name is Mercy

## CHARISMATIC RETREAT

with Jim Murphy and Fr Hugh Thomas CSsR

Friday 22nd January to Sunday 24th January 2016

At St Joseph's Spirituality Centre, 64 Mackillop Drive,  
Baulkham Hills, NSW

### REGISTRATION DETAILS

Registrations close Thursday January 14, 2016

Applications to CCR Centre—contact details on front page

Live-in cost: *(includes all meals, except Friday night)*

**Title** ..... **Surname** .....

Single room with ensuite: \$390 per person

**First Name** .....

Single room with shared facilities: \$350 per person

**Name of spouse if attending** .....

Double bed or twin share with en-suite: \$340 per person

**Address** .....

Triple (double + single bed) with en-suite: \$300 per person

*(extra bed may be added to triple)*

**City / Suburb** .....

Live-out cost: \$ 190 *(includes all meals including*

*breakfast. No meal Friday night)*

**State** ..... **Postcode** .....

Payment Detail:

**Home Phone** ..... **Work Phone** .....

Cash  Visa  MasterCard  Direct Debit

**Mobile** .....

Cheque / Money Order *(Made payable to CCR)*

**Email** .....

Card No: \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**Emergency contact during conference other than yourself**

Expiry date ..... Amount .....

**Name** .....

Name on card .....

**Phone** .....

Signature .....

**Special dietary needs**

Direct Debit *(Send payment confirmation with your booking)*

.....

BSB: 062 - 784 Account number: 26515200

**Disabilities**

Account name: CCR Centre NSW