



CHRISTLIFE™

CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION

Summer 2008

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let me share with you a couple of reflections on the Scripture passage below .

First, there had been a three-year drought in Israel. No rain. It is a time of desperation that brings the people of God, who had gone after false gods, to their senses (remember the prodigal son who had gone looking for life in all the wrong places and then came to his senses? Luke 15). In a season of drought, of severe need and hopelessness, the prophet gathered the people on Mt. Carmel to reveal the true God! You may remember that they then witnessed the vain attempts of the false prophets to call down fire for the sacrifice from their god. When Elijah prays, the Lord's fire not only consumed the water soaked sacrifice, but all the wood and stones of the altar! To which the people wake from the forgetfulness of sin and cry out, "The LORD, he alone is God!" A conversion has occurred among God's people. What a gracious God! The same God and Father who Jesus reveals to us the parable of the prodigal son!

I can tell you sincerely, that during several years where drought conditions existed in my soul due to personal circumstances, failure, sin (AND the Lord's purposes), I had come to the point where I actually questioned if I wanted to be consumed by the fire of God as a living sacrifice of praise or just sit by the side of the road, lick my wounds and, trust in the grace and mercy of God to carry me across the finish line. I can now answer with gratitude, "let the fire of the Holy Spirit fall afresh on me!" I want to be in the game. I want to continue in the adventure of following the Lord Jesus as a member of the Catholic Church! How about you? The Father is the One who waits in mercy to show compassion to each of us! See Luke 15:20ff. He doesn't want us to settle for living lukewarm or just getting by, but wants us fully engaged as his servants who love him whole heartedly and want to obediently carry his Lordship wherever we are (his righteousness, peace and joy in us for the sake of others)!

Second, notice that the prophet hears in the Spirit the sound that everyone longs for, rain! He then begins to intercede in response to what he has heard from the Lord. With confidence he sends his servant to watch for the tell tale signs of rain while he continues in prayer. After many times watching for some sign the servant reports what appears to be something very small, a little cloud. That little cloud was all Elijah needed to know that his prayers - in response to what the Lord had revealed (the sound of heavy rain)- were answered and it was time to Go!

Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of heavy rain." So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again seven times." And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising out of the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. 1 Kings 18:41-46

continued

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR.....continued

Here in our offices we too hear the sound of heavy rain! We are being renewed during our prayer times as we gather in our chapel before the Blessed Sacrament experiencing Him drawing us closer to him, opening us to His presence and his word in Scripture and through the gifts of the Spirit. We are personally hungry for Jesus and his Lordship and praying to see the rain of His mercy coming as a great outpouring to the Church and the nations. We believe He is doing new things and we want to participate in what He is doing. Don't you?! Come Lord Jesus rule and reign in our lives! Come Holy Spirit renew your people and convert the nations in the love of the Father!

We always pray for each of you giving thanks to God for our partnership in the good news of our Lord Jesus. Thanks for your ongoing financial support. We want to accomplish the mission He has given us to do!

Love in Christ our Savior,



Dave Nodar, Director



ChristLife's Director, Dave Nodar

DISCOVERING CHRIST IN COMMUNITY

by Fr. Erik Arnold

A year ago I had the privilege of working with the team from ChristLife on the pilot run of *Discovering Christ*, a seven-week course developed by ChristLife to equip dioceses, parishes, and Catholic communities with the means to practically respond to the Church's call to a new evangelization. This past Easter I had the opportunity to bring *Discovering Christ* into my new parish family, *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*.



Fr. Arnold teaching at "Discovering Christ" at OLPH

Having seen *Discovering Christ* in action, I already knew some of the great fruits that would come from it: personal conversion for the participants, deepened commitments to the Lord on the part of the team, and renewed life in other parish ministries and activi-

ties. These fruits were evident again this year in wonderful ways, but an unexpected gift and fruit this year was the deep sense of unity fostered among those parishioners who formed the team. From the small group leaders, to the set-up crew, to the kitchen team that provided the meals, there was a deep sense of unity in what we were hoping to accomplish and why the work of evangelization is so important. The image St. Paul uses of the *body* to describe the life of the Church became evident and tangible over the course of the seven weeks. While there was a great deal of time and energy invested in running *Discovering Christ*, the sense of oneness among the team made the work easier and even more joyful, knowing that it was being accomplished as a team, a body.

As our parish looks ahead to continuing the work of evangelization it is a joy to know that the Lord stands ready to bless our efforts with His supernatural gifts that make all things possible. Individually the task of evangelizing can seem daunting at times, but with others, united in the Lord, it not only becomes possible but fruitful in ways we could never have imagined.

Fr. Erik Arnold is the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He also serves on ChristLife's Board of Directors as liaison to the Archbishop and local priests.

A TESTIMONY OF DEEPER CONVERSION

The following testimony is by Jo Ann, a parishioner at OLPH.

I have always been a “Sunday Catholic”. I feel I have led a moral life, considerate and helpful to others, but I have felt there was always something missing in my spiritual life.

When my neighbor asked me to join her to attend “Discovering Christ”, I believe that the Holy Spirit was working through her to get me to take part in this wonderful event.

This came at a very stressful time in my life and I think the Lord knew I needed to attend and to hear and feel what I have so lacked in my life. I thoroughly enjoyed the weekly talks and the small group discussions during which I made new friends and shared with them things I needed to share.

The retreat was the “turning point” and I truly believe, with the help of Dave and another man who prayed with me, that the Holy Spirit started to stir within me. I prayed for strength and peace. I feel that as a result I am slowly able to deal with whatever God has in store for me and my family.

I want to thank all the people at Christ Life who worked so hard to make this a truly spiritual awakening for me. Also,



Shea and Jo Ann (r-l) at the OLPH Holy Spirit retreat day

I need to thank Father Arnold for bringing “Discovering Christ” to us and all the parishioners who helped make it all so successful.

YOUNG ADULTS SHARE JESUS!

by Christy Soboleski

“No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church, can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples”. – John Paul the Great

Our former Pope, John Paul the Great, challenges us to step outside of ourselves and to reach out to everyone we meet with the love of Christ. He doesn't say that this duty is one of priests or religious alone, but of all believers in Christ! This has really challenged me in my faith to be more open to those opportunities in normal daily life to tell someone about Jesus.



Young adults at Sharing Christ:
Clint, Pete & Mike (l-r)

Over the summer ChristLife and the UMBC Newman club co-sponsored *Sharing Christ* (an audio/video-based course) for young adults. This course is designed to train Catholics to evangelize, which is so needed in our Church today.

Every Thursday evening from June 12 – July 24, 10-15 young adults came to UMBC's Interfaith Center for worship, fellowship, small group discussions and teaching on evangelization.

Ejiofor, the UMBC Newman club president, commented on how the course impacted his life: “The biggest difference for me is just gaining the daily awareness that I need to actively live out the message of Jesus in everything I do and in all that I am. Before the course I never thought of evangelization as a personal mission - but now that aspect of my faith is very real to me.”

Personally, this course really opened my eyes to how hungry people are for truth and how necessary it is to share the freedom I have in Christ with the people around me. Not that I'm preaching from the rooftops (although I could), but simply telling people as my friends what the Lord has done for me and that He can do it for them too.

To grow in your own personal ability to share the Gospel or to learn how to run “Sharing Christ” in your community, visit <http://www.christlife.org/sharefaith/SharingChrist.html>

DISCOVERING CHRIST COURSE DEVELOPMENTS

by Dave Nodar

Our goal is to finish development of *Discovering Christ* by the end of 2008, with the aim of rolling out the course at a Winter/Spring 2009 training conference.

In preparation for making this resource widely available, we are working hard this summer developing leadership materials so that others can present the course themselves. The resources will include expanded teacher outlines, transcripts of the teachings that Fr. Erik Arnold and I present during the course and, the audio files of the talks on CD. We are also working on an administrator's handbook to prepare for all that goes on behind the scenes to successfully pull off the course.



John Messina volunteering to edit Discovering Christ transcripts

Please pray the Holy Spirit inspires our efforts and makes *Discovering Christ* fruitful!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

UPON THIS ROCK

Archdiocese of Baltimore Evangelization Conference

Saturday, August 23, 2008, 8:30am-1:15pm

Church of the Resurrection, Ellicott City, MD

Register at: www.archbalt.org/evangelization-catechesis/conference/index.cfm

BUILDING EVANGELIZING EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Dave Nodar presents a full day seminar inviting Catholics to participate fully in the Mission of the Redeemer!

Saturday, September 27, 2008

St. Michael's Parish, Exeter, NH

More info: 410-531-7701 or info@christlife.org

CHRISTLIFE is a tax exempt ministry dedicated to equipping Catholics for the work of evangelization. To continue in this work, we depend entirely on the donations of fellow Christians like you. Please send donations to: CHRISTLIFE: 12280 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042 USA, *We appreciate your support!*

For more information on our mission and activities visit our web site: www.christlife.org

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