

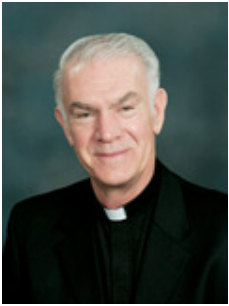


Light of the World News

May, 2011

Bringing the Light of Christ into the world through a comprehensive Parish Evangelization Process

A Message From Monsignor Dan Hermes



My Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Easter greetings in the risen Lord! Christ is risen! Truly He is risen! I pray His joy and peace, and the Hope that His resurrection gives us, fills your life in this holy season and always.

The Scriptures for holy Mass during the Easter season are so rich--I love them. The Acts of the Apostles is filled with the explosive, expulsive power of the Holy Spirit. He can't be contained! The circle of believers keeps getting larger and larger as the Holy Spirit uses the disciples to invite more and more people to follow Jesus. Is that not our Call, the definition of our life as well? To be Catholic is to be, as the word connotes, "universal." There is no one outside the circle of our God's love, no one whom Jesus does not want us to reach out to, to invite to our Lord.

I was remembering a conversation I had some years ago with a friend who is a Protestant pastor at a church in a nearby city. He was telling me every year they go through the parish list, and if a parishioner has not contributed over the last 12 months, they take them off their parishioner list. I was thinking how opposite to our Catholic approach that is. For us, they are still "our people," our brothers and sisters. We desire their return to the life-giving sacraments of Jesus Christ with all our heart. We reach out to them, love them, invite them back every way we can. And we do the same to all who are struggling through life without God, with no faith, who are as the song says "Looking for love in all the wrong places."

There's only one place to find the love we all long for--in the arms of our Blessed Lord. And so like the early Church we continue through our evangelizing to enlarge the circle, to invite and include more and more brothers and sisters in the arms of our beloved holy Mother Church. To whom does our Lord wish you to be His instrument? Who is God asking you to invite back to Him?

God bless you always. May His great love continue to grow in your heart, to such greatness that you can't help but be His outreach of love and invitation to all you meet.

Sincerely, in our Risen Lord,

Msr. Dan Hermes

Thank You LOTWEM from Pat Darby of St. Columbkille, Dubuque, IA

Skeptics may debate the validity of Scripture or argue against the existence of God, but no one can deny your personal experiences. With that said, I hope to convey what a beautiful and peaceful experience I had on the LOTW Retreat – the first (of hopefully many more) in our Archdiocese. I was blessed, transformed, lifted, encouraged, broken and healed. God move through me, like the wind, removing all of my worries, anxieties and anger. All of it disappeared as I entered into a new more personal relationship with Jesus.

As Jesus was carried in the monstrance to each of us by Fr. Gabriel during Adoration, the words "reach out and touch" took on a new meaning. As I touched the monstrance, I found myself at the Cross with Him. Even then He was pouring out His love to me, without regard to His own pain. I felt completely at peace as His love surrounded me. Right before me was Jesus in all His Divinity. Breathless and in awe, tears flowed from me as Jesus took all my pain upon Himself. Later, during the prayer for an infilling of the Spirit, I literally felt the Holy Spirit descend into my heart. He moved through my mind and body, revealing the things that I needed to let go of and give to Him.

Another experience that was so very special to me was the opportunity to renew my Baptism with my son Blake who also attended the retreat. I felt the Blessed Virgin Mary there with me, as our Mother. I felt her reach her hands out to us both, lovingly wrapping her protective Mantle around us. I felt Jesus watching over Mary and both of us, so tenderly and so loving. The moving experiences, moments of closeness, and the friendship and trust fostered in such a short time, were so uplifting that Blake asked me, "Mom, do you think the Light of the World people would stay here in Dubuque?"

Now that we are in our Small Faith Community, I have stepped completely out of my comfort zone. I have a new-found peace and love for sharing God's blessings in my life with others. I find myself as Small Faith Community Coordinator - a leadership position that would have previously terrified me. *God is good . . . All the time!*

Thanks to the LOTWEM Team and to Mike & Lori. And, thank YOU for letting me share what God has placed upon my heart!

New Parish Outreach Program

Question: What takes the power of the Holy Spirit, 350 volunteers, 3 hours and 4000 doors? Answer: the city wide outreach of Batavia, Illinois (population 25,000) by Holy Cross Catholic parishioners on Saturday, June 11th.

This will be the conclusion of a pilot outreach program called “Emissaries-Open Doors, Open Hearts.” Holy Cross launched this program last fall and visited half of the Batavia residences on a rainy Saturday in November. The emissaries conducted their visits in approximately three hours, visiting an average of 30 homes. They shared a welcome packet with an inspirational CD, Bible timeline chart, and an invitation to a Welcome Night at the parish.

This new outreach program is a collaborative effort between Holy Cross Parish, Lighthouse Catholic Media, Inc. and LOTWEM. Monsignor Deutsch, pastor of Holy Cross, sought to initiate a neighbor-friendly



outreach program to encourage the community to learn more about the Holy Cross Parish and the Roman Catholic Church. Mark Middendorf, President of Lighthouse Catholic Media, Inc. was interested in developing an effective outreach program that can be instituted by any parish anywhere. Teaming up with LOTWEM Board Member Paul Augustine and parish Light of the World leaders to organize and direct the preparations was a perfect fit.

The feedback from the emissaries was very positive. They shared many wonderful stories about friendly greetings from the residents, words of encouragement, and were often thanked for their efforts. In addition to the benefits of meeting new people or reconnecting with others, several residents were identified as home-bound and needing communion brought to their home. LOTWEM hopes that this might become a viable Parish Outreach Program for LOTW parishes everywhere.



Your great task in evangelization is therefore to propose a personal relationship with Christ as key to complete fulfillment.
-Benedict XVI to the Philippine Bishops (2/18/11)



Retreat Testimonies

“LOTWEM has made a positive impact on my Catholic Faith & everyday life. The retreat was challenging but also liberating as God and the Faith became real. The honest and intimate sharing of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the speakers touched my heart. The ongoing meetings give me an opportunity to grow personally in my Christian Faith through the encouragement and companionship of my LOTWEM friends. I am so happy to be a member of LOTWEM.”

“The retreat was very empowering and the presence of the Holy Spirit was evident throughout the weekend. I now have a heart filled with love and a renewed hope for the future.”

“As a youth participant on the LOTWEM retreat, I found it to be an enlightening and inspiring experience. Throughout the weekend, I felt my faith renew and my awareness to the responsibility of evangelization deepen. The retreat highlighted fundamental aspects of Catholic teaching; namely sin, God’s unconditional Love, examination of Conscience, etc. I felt that these topics were relevant to my daily life because as a young person, temptations are constantly being placed in front of me. The retreat not only allowed a separation from the ‘outside world’ and the need for God in my life but more importantly, God’s desire to be a part of my life.”



From the Directors: Mike & Lori Pacer

Dear Friends,

Monsignor began this newsletter with the traditional Easter greeting and response: “Christ is risen! Truly he has risen!” This also the exultant cry of the *Kerygmatic* Proclamation contained in the LOTW Retreat. Christ has risen and is alive! He has saved us from the power of sin, restored us to the love of the Father, and has sent us the Holy Spirit.

It has been more than a month since Easter. For most of you it has been far longer since you attended your first (or last) LOTW Retreat. Does this joyful exclamation still burn in your heart? Is it on your lips? Does your life bear witness to the glory of the resurrection?

The Acts of the Apostles, read during the Easter season, recounts to us not only the joy experienced by the Apostles in encountering the risen Christ, but also the joyful, Spirit-filled, announcement to others of what God had accomplished (i.e. the *Kerygmatic* Proclamation). These stories are beautiful, but also convicting. We are all called to evangelize. It is the deepest identity of the Church. The last line of our Consecration at the end of the LOTW Retreat is, “Make me a witness of Jesus.” . . . Are you living as a joyful witness to our risen Lord?

Your servants in Christ,

Mike & Lori

Christ is risen! Alleluia! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

For information regarding Light of the World Evangelization Ministries, please check out our website: lotwem.org or contact Mike Pacer mpacer@lotwem.org or Lori Pacer lpacer@lotwem.org. LOTWEM General Newsletters are published tri-annually.