

**WCF Newsletter March 2009**  
*by Sue Kelly-Cochrane*

Our hearts turn to fresh beginnings with each New Year as we make self-improvement resolutions. No man-made resolution offers as much hope and joy as this word received from Our Lord by our Teaching Leader, Angie Lake for our Retreat 2009:

“Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of men, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.      1 Corinthians 2:9

*“My Beloved, you have come to the mountain to seek my presence. I will reveal Myself to you in many ways. Open your hearts to Me and trust that I am with you. I have prepared your heart to enter into the mysteries of My love for you. As you reflect on the journey of the weekend, I will reveal My love in personal ways which will only be known to you. Come to me with an open heart and I will show you a glimpse of My glory that awaits you. Put aside the hurts, the struggles, the pain - surrender them all to Me and I will bring healing to your heart and to your soul. You are My precious Beloved and I will transform your life by the power of My love made known to you through My Word and My presence. I love you My Beloved one....”*

Wow God! How that inspires us for the New Year, 2009! Reflecting on the many transformational journeys of that weekend retreat, entitled “The Crowns of the Kingdom,” we can see the Holy Spirit at work through his servants, Johnette Benkovic, our keynote speaker, Rev. Mike Barry, SS.CC. our spiritual director, Angie Lake, our teaching leader and guest speakers Rev. Msgr. Frederick Florek and Rev. Charlie Goraieb.

Johnette’s seminars on such topics as surrender, obedience, praise and Eucharist, to name a few, were tied in with Mary’s role as Our Mother and intercessor to Jesus. Many of us came away with a new sense of relationship with Mary and an appreciation for her modeling on how we could also surrender to her Beloved Son to deepen our relationships with Him.

Each talk was accompanied by an inspired look at all of the crowns the faithful believers can one day assume stemming from the most loving crown ever worn – the Crown of Thorns worn by Our Redeemer King Jesus. We strive to imitate Jesus and Mary and eventually wear these crowns: The Crown of the Servant, of the Bride, of Exultation, of Righteousness (through Jesus’ saving work) The Crown of Life, of the Beloved, of Glory and of Pure Gold. We had beautiful Holy-Spirit-inspired artwork of the Crown of Thorns Jesus endured by WCF member Linda Sacca which helped us meditate on the crown theme during the retreat.

Each retreat speaker left us with so many life-changing thoughts: Johnette said, “Have expectant faith – be a seeker, know that God is going to open up hearts to reveal a new way of looking at an issue with new thoughts.” Father Charlie told of how he was transformed by the Eucharist, prompted to be a priest and was overjoyed to be able to be used to administer the sacraments. Father Mike gave us a “Eucharist Quiz” which caused us to reflect on his question “Am I concentrating on Jesus before I receive Communion?” Monsignor Fred challenged us with this idea; “Obedience is a crown we all wear, our crown of thorns. Pick up your cross daily. Your theme song shouldn’t be ‘I Did It My Way’ but ‘I Did It Christ’s Way’”

We had a larger than ever number of women receiving the Baptism of The Holy Spirit at this retreat. Coupled with daily Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer teams and all of the other spiritual, meaningful events, many women again left the mountain refreshed and invigorated to recommit their lives to Jesus. If you would like more information about WCF’s amazing, life-changing annual retreats see the “Contact Us” information on this website and view our videos from past retreats.

Father Mike visited us Feb. 12 and delivered an edifying talk about Foundational Experiences. In essence, Father defined a Foundational Experience as “A spiritual, life-changing experience that changes us, moves us forward and centers us. It lays the foundation for a new walk with the Lord that we will learn from. It causes a witness to go forth. It may be a challenge to let go of a pattern of sin or of something that is not for us.”

Some examples of Foundational Experiences he cited were:

- 1) Baptism – When there came a time that we personally accepted ourselves as baptized in Christ
- 2) Marriage - when the Holy Spirit was invited in. Included are breakthroughs with a spouse or children.
- 3) Ridding oneself from an old pattern of sin or letting go of something not from the Lord. Example, leaving a job in a birth control pill factory.
- 4) Eucharist – truly experiencing His presence.

WCF provides an atmosphere for these Foundational Experiences to occur for oftentimes these experiences are fostered in community. We are called to observe what the Spirit is doing in our lives. Everything has purpose – if you listen and act you will receive more foundational experiences. Ignoring or paying scant attention to them will cause the occurrences to lessen. Our Foundational Experiences are tailor-made for us, unique and not to be compared with others'. The experience may not be what we want but what God wants for us.

Father Mike had us break into small groups so that we could share our own personal foundational Experiences with each other. Father Mike will again be visiting us April 2, 9:30-noon for a Lenten Healing Mass. All are invited to attend.