

Newsletter for Website

by Sue Kelly-Cochrane

“Revelations” a Recap of a Year of Study, Fellowship and Blessings at WCF 2007-08

Our year began with a revisit of a challenging study, the Book of Revelation and a blessing; “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show His servants what must soon take place, and He made it known by sending His servant John, who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. BLESSED IS HE WHO READS ALOUD THE PROPHECY, AND BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HEAR AND WHO KEEP WHAT IS WRITTEN THEREIN; FOR THE TIME IS NEAR.” Rev. 1:1-3

The blessings of the year continued as we met each week in our small groups to digest and share what the Holy Spirit had personally revealed to each individual as she tackled the perplexities and complexities of this prophetic book. Each small group was shepherded by a leader who met with our teaching leader, Angie Lake the day prior to prepare and pray for the group at large.

Our meetings fulfill many of the yearnings of women seeking a deeper personal relationship with Jesus. To many, the hymns of praise we sing move us to joy, tears or personal revelation. The operating of the special charismatic gifts of prophecy, Word of Knowledge, healing, praying in tongues and instruction to name a few, is a new awakening of the power of the Holy Spirit released in a prayer-filled group which many Catholics, who have only worshiped in traditional Catholic forums, have never experienced before.

We began in September with our registration day and fellowship over coffee and doughnuts. There is always a thorough orientation of our meetings, how to do the study and how to look up scriptures in the Bible, so anyone who has never attended a Bible study before, is well-prepared.

November brought our Spiritual Advisor, Father Mike Barry, SS.CC. to us for a healing Mass. We have seen many miracles result from the special intentions offered at these Masses. One such memorable intention fulfilled by Jesus in years past was the pregnancy and birth of a previously infertile woman, who whispered her request to have a child to guest celebrant Father Barham., who laid hands on the woman. Nine months TO THE DAY of that Healing Mass, she gave birth to a healthy baby girl and added four more children to that first miracle. Father Mike blesses us with his Word of Knowledge relating truths to women that could only be revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. Our Healing Masses are an open invitation to both men and women.

December gives us a joyous reason to celebrate, the birth of Our Savior, which we do in grand fashion with our annual Christmas Luncheon. Held at the San Marcos Country Club and featuring guest speaker Sister Linda Koontz, Founder of Spirit of the Lord International Mission. Father Mike Barry gave an encouraging word and collected shoeboxes filled with health and hygiene items that had been prepared by our membership for the poor that Father's Mary's Mercy Center administers to. The luncheon is an opportunity to praise God by singing our cherished Christmas carols, receive gifts and be uplifted by our speakers.

January was full of prayerful discernment for the theme and agenda for our retreat. The small group leaders assist in the preparation of the printed materials, gifts, food and decorations that enhance the retreatants' weekend.

Usually the first weekend in February, 165 women ascend the hills of Ramona to the Oakbridge Retreat Center for three Holy Spirit-filled days. The unique gifts of teaching, healing, discernment, prophetic word and Word of Knowledge of our featured guest speaker, our Spiritual Director Father Mike Barry and two other charismatic priests are released to inspire, instruct and heal the women. Lectures, daily Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, silent meditation and a workshop on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are always part of the agenda. Women seeking prayer with the laying on of hands for healing with specially-anointed prayer teams fill the days as the holy weekend flies by. All of the women (and priests too) enjoy the fellowship during mealtimes when delicious food is served to us by enthusiastic Young Life teenagers. Lives are changed, faith is rebuilt, friendships are forged and healing and answers to prayers are just a few of the miraculous fruits of our annual retreat.

February brought father Mike back to us on Valentine's Day. His topic was "Hope and Healing" which we all received from his talk!

Easter was early this year, March 23. WCF takes three breaks at Christmas, Easter and for the summer. We have a lesson to prepare and discuss within our small groups almost every week, so the breaks enable us to prepare lovely and holy celebrations for our families.

In April, we celebrated a "Healing of the Family Tree" Mass with Father Mike Barry. All participants were invited to list all their relatives and family patterns of disease, dysfunction and despair on a family tree paper, which is kept confidential and offered up for prayer and healing during this special Mass. Father Mike gives an enlightening teaching/sermon and usually prays aloud while laying hands on each row of women and men who attend. When Angie asks each week "Were there any answers to prayer?," we get to have our faith and hope edified by all the answers to prayer that the women share aloud. We then hear answers for our "basket cases," a humorous way to refer to all the petitions placed and prayed for in

our confidential prayer basket and from these Healing Masses. We've heard of tumors that have disappeared with proof shown on before-and-after mammograms, addictions cured, jobs found, marriages healed and the joyous return of family members to church as well as new souls being saved by the grace and mercy of God.

We conclude our study and our meetings in May at our end-of-year luncheon, held this year at The Hilton Garden Inn in Carlsbad. Jackie Kendall, president of Power to Grow Ministries, our featured guest speaker, shared her personal testimony of rising above sexual abuse with the help of the Lord. It moved not only the women present but our brother Men's Bible Study, which is under the anointed teaching of Ken Lake. The men meet every other Saturday at St. Elizabeth Seton Paris Center from 9:00-11:00. Father Mike sent us off with a word of encouragement for the summer.

Many can't wait for our annual Summer Potluck Luncheon, mid July, with guest speaker, Angela Baraquio Grey, Miss America 2001 who will share her personal journey. WCF members will fellowship over shared dishes. This oasis helps to combat the summer's spiritual dryness as we miss each other and the weekly uplifting from our study.

If you'd like to share an answer to prayer that you experienced as a result of intercessory prayer at WCF please send a short synopsis to info@womenschristianfellowship.org