

INTERCESSION

IN THE

SPIRIT OF JESUS

*** * * * ***

“WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS”

AND

“HOW TO FORM AN

INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP”

by Sister Stephen

(This teaching was originally given to a group of intercessors
from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
in Philadelphia, PA. USA during October of 1983.)

OPENING PRAYER

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Almighty Father, we thank You that You have called us here together today. Thank you for the privilege to join together with Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to come before Your Very Throne and work with You in intercession for Your People.

Almighty Father, we dedicate this whole time to you as a special prayer of intercession for all the intentions we carry in our hearts ... and for all those you would like us to pray for in this time of intercession today. Reach out through us to touch everyone you would like to touch. Work Your mighty miracles in us and through us for the Glory of Your Holy Name ... the Mighty Name of Jesus.

Fill us more deeply with Your Holy Spirit. Open our hearts and minds and minister to us and through us, Father. Come, Holy Spirit, teach us how to pray. Form us and guide us with Your Holy Word that we might bring You great Glory. Praise You, Holy Spirit! Praise you, Lord Jesus, Praise you, Almighty Father! Alleluia!

And we promise to give you all the Glory, Almighty God, for all that You have done, all that You are doing, and all that You will do. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be ... world without end. Amen.

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INTERCESSION IN THE SPIRIT OF JESUS
TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPENING PRAYER	5
PROLOGUE	9
A GLIMPSE AT THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY	11
INTRODUCTION	16
<u>PART 1: WELCOME TO NEW COMERS?</u>	19
I. WELCOME	21
II JESUS CHRIST GREAT HIGH PRIEST.....	22
III. HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERCESSION	24
IV. HOW HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN INTERCESSION?	27
<u>PART 2: HOW TO FORM AN INTERCESSORY GROUP</u>	41
I. EVERY GROUP NEEDS	43
 * * * * * SPIRITUAL COVERING IN INTERCESSION * * * * *	
II. SUGGESTIONS FOR AN INTERCESSORY MEETING	53
III. WAYS TO GROW	64
 * * * * *	
APPENDIX A: SCRIPTURAL OUTLINE FOR PART 1	67
APPENDIX B: HOW TO FORM A GROUP	71
APPENDIX C: INTERCESSOR’S PRAYER	75
APPENDIX D: PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH	79
APPENDIX E: INTERCESSOR’S MIRACLE PRAYER	83

PROLOGUE

Some years ago, when Sister Stephen Culhane visited and talked to me about the work of the **Catholic Charismatic (Missionary) Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush**, I responded after listening to her carefully:

"Sister, the intercession is the essence itself of the the Church. The Church is Christ, and Christ is The Intercessor yesterday, today, and forever. We do not have another Christ that will reconcile us with the Father but the One Who lives interceding for us in His Own Glorious Existence and Who, from the Father, gives to us His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of New Life. Therefore, to speak of intercession in the Church, is to speak of what His Own Essence as Body of Christ is; even more, as the Christ that the Church is, and that makes Her Lord present in history and in the world." (2 Corinthians 5: 18-19; Romans 5: 10; Colossians 1: 20, 22).

I must confess that in that conversation, I understood more clearly that the intercession prayer is an essential condition, so that the Church will accomplish its mission of salvation of men and women of all nations and of all times.

The work of the **Catholic Charismatic (Missionary) Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** makes reference to this fact, recognized from the beginning in the Church, of the presence and action of the **charismas** that the Holy Spirit gives to the Church for its own edification so that it will fulfill its mission efficiently. The "Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush" make an effort to convert intercession to a permanent prayer, lived in community and in groups interrelated by the bonds of charity, within the unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The charisma of the intercession prayer takes place in the communion of a life of prayer nourished by the Fire of the Love of God.

In my opinion, the work of the **Catholic Charismatic (Missionary) Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** provides something new to the mystic experience of the Church. In our times, it is one more manifestation of the permanent Pentecost in which the Church is immersed. It is like a strength that renews, a wind, a fire, a shaking that seeks to renew the conscience of the missionary power and sanctifying power of the intercession prayer in the Church.

+ Francisco Maria Aguilera Gonzalez
Auxiliary Emeritus Bishop of Mexico
México, D.F., June 29, 2001

A GLIMPSE AT THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

One day, back in the early 1970's, I was thinking about how the Holy Spirit is working in the world today. At that time, if you looked around the world, you could find that the Holy Spirit was 'visiting' people everywhere, inside the Church, outside of the Church, and even outside of the Body of Christ. As the Holy Spirit moved throughout the world, a beautiful phenomenon was happening ... the same thing that happened at the First Pentecost. He was giving people everywhere the Grace of the First Pentecost again. At that time in 1970, it seemed like the Holy Spirit had touched almost every state of life and every kind of service possible in the Body of Christ someplace in the world with the renewal of the First Pentecost. So you could look around and someplace find charismatic families, charismatic religious orders, charismatic priests and bishops, charismatic right to life, charismatic ministry to the poor, charismatic schools, and many more.

Also, the same thing that happened in people's lives after the First Pentecost was happening again in our time to these people. The Holy Spirit began to bring God's People *together* in unity around Jesus as the Lord in many kinds of prayer groups and communities. In such groups, especially like those within the charismatic renewal, this coming together was the direct fruit of individuals receiving a "baptism in the Spirit"; that is, a deep experience of the First Pentecost in their own personal lives. They also received, as a gift from the Holy Spirit, the deep desire to join in prayer *together* with other brothers and sisters in the Lord to meet with the Lord, to listen to what He would say, and receive what He would give through the special charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. People began to actually experience different Divine Gifts of the Holy Spirit like the Blessed Mother and the first Disciples did on that First Pentecost ... Divine Gifts of healing and prophecy and different prayer languages. And they really had the deep desire to share the Lord Jesus and all that He means to them with others, and to experience His Power really working among us today.

Many of these renewed groups had been given a new name by the Lord in prayer, often one of the Names of the Lord Jesus; and some of them, a

title of the Blessed Mother in relation to the Lord Jesus ... truly a new creation of God working in our time!

As I pondered this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, I asked the Lord, what is the Holy Spirit really doing? Why is He moving like this all over the world today? Why is He giving all these people this grace of a new Pentecost?

As I continued praying, the Lord spoke to me in my heart so clearly, “The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus. Each of these new groups is made to reveal Jesus in a way that the people of today can understand.” And He showed me how often the new name of each of these groups or communities or ministries was a clue to the specific way He has given those people to reveal the Lord Jesus in the world today. Alleluia!

The Lord reminded me, for example, of one community that I had visited, called the Children of God’s Delight. Now who is God’s Delight? ... It’s His Son! When visiting this community, it was beautiful to find that the grace or charism you experienced there was *what it means to be a child of God ... to share in the “Sonship” of the Lord Jesus, as a son or daughter of God.* And the prophecies and programs of formation the Lord had given this community over the years all focused around that gift ... our share in the Sonship of the Lord Jesus. What a beautiful and meaningful place to experience this charism ... in this community of families. Alleluia! Glory to God!!!

During those years, I also visited other groups and communities who had other names of Jesus ... all new creations of the Holy Spirit. And you could actually experience the Lord Jesus in unique ways in each of those communities according to the name they carry ... Good Shepherd or Word of God or People of Joy or Word of God or Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the way that God wants you and the people in your family and your groups and communities to reveal Jesus today? Has the Lord given your family or group or community a new name? That is a clue to the

special way God has given you to live and serve in the Holy Spirit and thus reveal the Lord Jesus to others so they can understand Him today. If you have not been given a new name yet, ask the Lord for one. And ask Him to reveal to you more deeply His purpose for you and your people and your groups.

As I have visited and experienced these various new creations of the Holy Spirit in our time, I have also experienced the deep desire of the Holy Spirit to bring “all into one under Christ Jesus as the head.” (Ephesians 1: 9-10) That desire extends to individuals and also to whole groups and ministries. I believe that somehow God desires all the different old and new groups and ministries in Jesus Christ across the world to be united to work *together in the Lord*. As all learn to live and work *together* in God’s Family under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the full power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit can really reveal the WHOLE LORD JESUS CHRIST in the world today. (see Ephesians 4: 1-16 below.) This urgent need and desire of the Holy Spirit for full unity, or communion, in the whole Body of Christ even across denominations has also been a main focus of concern and work for Our Holy Father’s John Paul II and Benedict VI. This is the most urgent need of our times. And the Lord has planted this need of full communion in the Lord Jesus as a deep and urgent intercession in my heart, just as it was for the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper.

“Father, may they all be one as You are in Me and I am in You. May they be one in Us ... may they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that You sent Me, and that You loved them even as You loved Me.” (John 17: 21, 23)

* * * * *

“I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together.

There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

“Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. It was said that he would: When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners, he gave gifts to men. When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things is none other than the one who descended. And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ Himself.

“Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practicing deceit. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.” (Ephesians 4: 1-16)

“Now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in Himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God; In His Own

Person He killed the hostility. Later He came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through Him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.”

“So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the saints, and part of God's household. You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus Himself for its main cornerstone. As every structure is aligned on Him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in Him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:13-22)

Thus, the Holy Spirit has been revealing ‘Who Jesus is’ and also empowering people to ‘do what Jesus would do.’ As individuals and groups develop various methods of service that share in the Divine Ministries of the Lord Jesus...with His Mighty Power working in and through them ... they experience the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord Jesus that He would “*work with them and confirm the message by the signs that attended it.*” (Mark 16:20) One of these ministries, our main concern in this study, is the ministry the Lord Jesus carries out right now in heaven... the ministry of intercession.

INTRODUCTION

As I mentioned, the Lord is creating so many new and different kinds of groups and communities today, each with a different way to reveal the Lord Jesus through their life and service. For example, some of these groups might be formed specifically of leaders within a particular community or prayer group. They may come together with the purpose to pray for and seek God's will on how to shepherd the people they serve. Others may meet to prepare to serve as part of a worship ministry, or as part of a healing team, or evangelization ministry to serve others in the Body of Christ. Others might come together for the up-building and teaching of others. Others may join together especially for intercessory prayer ... which is the purpose of our group here today.

The Scriptures speak about these many different possible *ministries* or ways of service in the Body of Christ. For example, in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit gives us a list of different ministries. However, among those lists and other lists of ministries, there are two ministries that are usually *not* mentioned: worship and intercession. The main reason is that worship and intercession are ministries unto God first, whereas the other ministries, like healing, leadership, administration, and prophetic ministry, are unto God's people. And also, worship and intercession are the foundation of all other ministries.

During the last 20 or more years of the 20th century, within and outside of the Catholic and Protestant Pentecostal or Charismatic Renewals, many groups and even communities have been formed with the specific purpose of intercessory prayer. Their main purpose is to pray for the needs of others ... to "bridge the gap". Or as one person said so beautifully, "to join with the Lord Jesus in prayer to build a bridge so that my neighbor can come home to the Father." There are so many hundred's of these intercessory groups and intercessory networks of prayer around the world ... each with a different focus for intercession and a specific way to pray. Some are praying specifically for the needs of the community to which they belong, or for their prayer group, or for some specific ministries that serve others and their events, or for their priests, or parish, or city, or nation. Some, like the Blue Army of Fatima, the Medjugorje groups, and

the Cenacle groups, pray with the Rosary for Our Blessed Mother's intentions. Divine Mercy groups pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and follow special prayers from that devotion. New groups are being raised up all the time with new Saints in the Church, like the Padre Pio groups. Some are charismatic and seek to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and be open to using His Charismatic gifts in intercession.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of praying and sharing in many different kinds of intercessory prayer groups and prayer networks within the Catholic Church, within Renewal groups, and within the whole Body of Christ in different parts of the world. I have found some common basic elements in these groups that I'd like to share with you today as a preparation for our intercession meeting here ... and also as a suggestion for you in forming your own intercessory group. I would also like to recommend to you a way in which you can be more effective in your intercession. I call this way:

“Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus.”

Following are two short practical teachings on “Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus”: “A Welcome to Newcomers” and “Suggestions on How to Form an Intercessory Prayer Group.” Other teachings in this series on “Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus” form a basic Scriptural training course for those who would like to go deeper in the missionary service of intercession.

INTERCESSION
IN THE
SPIRIT OF JESUS

* * * * *

Part 1

“WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS”

1. WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS

1. WELCOME

Praise Jesus! Alleluia! He is the Lord! Amen! Alleluia!

I'd like to just really welcome you all today in the Holy Name of Jesus to our intercessory prayer group. Before we join together in prayer, maybe we could share a little about the meaning of this group and how the Lord has taught us to pray, so we can be more united and focused in our prayer today. Then we will go ahead into our regular intercessory prayer meeting.

All of us, I am sure, have prayed for others in various ways over the years. This special work of “praying for others” is what we call “intercession”. Intercession means to go "in between". When we pray for others that's exactly what we do. We go "in between" them and God.

I think there are probably as many ways of interceding or praying for others as there are people and situations to pray for. In the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit has taught us so many different and wonderful ways of praying. And there are so many different kinds of “prayer groups” springing up all over the world today ... each one with its own special purpose or focus for prayer and way of praying. Here in our intercession group we join together in a particular way that we call

"Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus".

What does this mean?

II. JESUS, GREAT HIGH PRIEST AND INTERCESSOR

A. JESUS INTERCEDING NOW

Let's begin with Romans chapter 8, verse 34. St. Paul says that

“Jesus not only died for us, He rose from the dead and there at God's right hand He stands and pleads for us.”

Ever since Jesus went back to the Father after His resurrection, He has been praying for us. ... over TWO THOUSAND YEARS of prayer and intercession going on! Do you ever get tired praying? Think of Jesus!!! Alleluia!!!

Because Jesus is true God and true man, He's the perfect go-between of God and Man ... THE PERFECT INTERCESSOR. He is called our “Great High Priest and Intercessor”.

Now the fact that Jesus as God and Man has been praying for us all these years says a number of things to us.

First of all it says to us is that intercession is a Divine Work! ... something that God Himself is doing right now. What an awesome privilege we have to be able to join with God in what He is doing right now! We are actually invited into a partnership to work with God in *His* intercession prayer. I hope we always treasure this most special privilege to be able to share in God's Own Divine Work with Him as we intercede for others. Glory to God!

Jesus has already been praying for us for over two thousand years! *Another thing* this says to us is that when we go to pray for someone else, we are not the first one on the scene. And we are not alone in our prayer. Jesus is already praying! So, as I already mentioned, we are actually invited to join with Him in a partnership in our prayer. Alleluia!!!

B. HOW DOES THE LORD JESUS PRAY?

One day the Disciples asked Jesus, “Lord teach us to pray. Do you remember what He said ... in Luke chapter 11? ... the “Our Father”. Let us pray ...

“Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.”

We say this prayer so often. But do we really catch what we pray in this prayer? For example, we say with Jesus,

*“Father ... Thy will be done on the earth **as** it is in heaven.”*

What does this mean?

God has plans and dreams for us. As He says in Ephesians, “We are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to walk into the good things He has prepared for us ahead of time.” (Ephesians 2: 10.) When God made each one of us, He created a whole life of good things for each of us that is stored up in heaven. Alleluia!!! How many people know this and realize they can ask for all these good things for themselves and for others? What Jesus teaches us here is to pray with him for these treasures of heaven to come into the earth.

What do we usually do when we pray? Are we not usually trying to get earth into heaven! ... lifting UP all our problems and needs to God in Heaven? And what is Jesus doing? Jesus is trying to get heaven into the earth. Did you ever try to swim upstream?

As we come into intercession today, let us ask Our Heavenly Father to show us what He has stored up in heaven for us and for our people. Let us ask Jesus what He is praying for and begin to enter into union with the Spirit of Jesus in our prayer. ... to pray with Jesus instead of against Him! So Our Father’s Will can be done on earth AS it is in heaven.

III. HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERCESSION

Now because the Lord Jesus is interceding and intercession is a Divine Work, we have a lot to learn about intercession. St. Paul speaks very clearly about this point,

"The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness, for when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit Himself expresses our pleas in a way that could never be put into words. And God, who knows everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what He means, that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind and the will of God".

(Romans 8: 26 - 27)

A. WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRAY!

Did you ever fell like that? Everyone in the whole world has this same problem ... nobody knows how to pray right. But God promises us, *"the Holy Spirit Himself comes to the help us in our weakness ... and He knows how to pray according to the mind and will of God."* It's really ok if we don't know how to pray. The Holy Spirit will come to help us. And He knows how to pray according to the mind and will of God.

As we enter into the intercession today, I'd really like to encourage us to be open to the Holy Spirit ... to ask Him to come and help us to pray ... to be open for what the Lord will teach us and how He will lead us in our intercession. Perhaps you could think of our intercession time as really an "in-service training" all the time. We are totally dependent on the Lord to teach us how to pray. So let us be open today to whatever He will show us. Let us ask Him to show us what the good things are that Our Father has in heaven for us and for our people and how we can pray with the Lord Jesus for heaven ... for God's Plans and dreams and His Holy Will ... to come and be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, AND HELP US!!!

B. ANOTHER ADVOCATE ... THE KEY

Jesus Himself lived and prayed and worked among us in total dependence on the Holy Spirit. You remember when Jesus began His preaching He quoted a Scripture from Isaiah 61,

"The Spirit of the Lord has been given to Me. He has sent me ..."

And over and over again in the Gospels, we find Jesus very close to and following the Holy Spirit in everything. For example, St. Luke says of Jesus in His Gospel,

"Led by the Spirit, He went into the desert" ... and "in the power of the Spirit He healed so and so" ... and "led by the Spirit, Jesus visited this town."

Then in St. John's Gospel, Jesus says,

"The Son can do nothing by Himself. He can only do what He sees the Father doing!" ...and "I only speak what I hear my Father speaking!" "I only do what I see My Father doing!"

In these Scriptures, we not only see Jesus very close to the Holy Spirit, but we can actually discover the *key* to the effectiveness of Jesus' ministry. In His life, Jesus experienced 100% answers to His prayer and 100% effectiveness and fruit in His ministry. The reason, the *KEY FOR JESUS*, was His relationship with the Holy Spirit.

JESUS OBEYED THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING.

This is so very important for us. And it is also very exciting ... because there is only one Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who was so close to Jesus has been given to us! Remember how Jesus spoke of this in St. John's Gospel,

"I will ask the Father to give you another Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will be in you." (John 14: 15-16)

One of the meanings for that word "Advocate" is Intercessor. The Holy Spirit, THE Intercessor, will dwell within us! What a wonderful promise and precious gift! Jesus has given to us such a most awesome gift in the Holy Spirit. He, Who is God, Who is also THE Intercessor, the One Who knows how to pray, will actually live in our hearts.

How many of you have the Holy Spirit living in your hearts today? If you are not sure, maybe you will be sure after praying with us today.

I believe that if we live close to the Holy Spirit as Jesus did and if we use the key of Jesus in our prayer and ministry, we will experience the same Holy Spirit fruits that Jesus did in His prayer and ministry. What is that key again?

This *key* for Jesus which is also the key He gives us is:

“OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING!”

Jesus never gave us a set formula or set method of some kind that we could use whenever we pray. What He has done is so much more. He has given us a Person, The Intercessor, to dwell within us. We don't have to know how to pray. We can go to the One who knows how to pray, the Holy Spirit. He will lead us and guide us in our prayer, so that we can do what Jesus did. And if we obey the Holy Spirit in everything as Jesus did, He will lead us into all God our Father has for us. Alleluia! What a precious gift and an awesome privilege! Do you see? What happens in our intercession is that we are joined in a partnership with Our Lord and God Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, who's already praying and also in a partnership with God the Holy Spirit!

C. AGREE WITH GOD

Do you remember how Jesus promised *“If two or three of you agree to ask anything in My Name, I will do it.”* (Matthew 18:19-20) think with me about this for a minute. Two or three ... well, Jesus is already praying ... and now we have the Holy Spirit praying in our hearts ... two or three of you agree ... Jesus, Holy Spirit and Me! Put your name in there. Think about what can happen if we agree with God when we pray!!! Alleluia!!!

IV. HOW HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN INTERCESSION?

As we mentioned earlier, there are so many different ways of praying possible, so many different kinds of prayer groups that the Holy Spirit is raising up today around the world ... especially in the Catholic Church. How can we pray with Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

I remember in retreat one day, a Sister said to us, “So often we go to God and tell Him how BIG our problems are ... over ... and over ... and over again. And then we tell Him all the answers!” She continued to say, “I think today it is time for us to go to our problems and tell them how BIG Jesus is!”

That little story catches an important point that has become essential in the way the Lord has taught us to pray in intercession:

A. PUT JESUS FIRST IN EVERY SITUATION.

How can we do this? How can we put Jesus first in our prayer today? How does the Holy Spirit come to help us do this?

Let us think for a moment about how the Holy Spirit works. What is the first gift the Holy Spirit gives when He comes into our hearts? For example, look at the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, and what happened on that first Pentecost. Remember the Blessed Mother and 120 disciples were gathered in prayer waiting for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit of God. What happened when the Holy Spirit came? What was the first gift He gave to each one? Remember Acts of the Apostles says,

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”(acts 2:4)

And what were they saying in tongues? What did the tongues mean? Can you find it in the Bible? The Scripture says that,

“Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, could hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” (Acts 2:11)

They were praising God! When the Holy Spirit came upon them they all began to praise God and worship Him for His mighty deeds, and they were doing it in other languages that the Holy Spirit gave them.

So here we find that the first gift that the Holy Spirit gave on Pentecost, which He gives in other times throughout Scripture, is the freedom to praise and worship the Lord! Those of you who have experienced the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Charismatic Renewal understand this deeply. We say "Alleluia" and "Praise the Lord" about everything"! We can't help it! It just flows out. It's a gift from God. People call us the "alleluias"! Sometimes others even say to us, "Don't keep saying Alleluia so much!" You know what I say in answer to that? "Oh, I am just practicing for the choir in heaven! ALLELUIA!!!"

The Holy Spirit has many reasons why He gives this gift of praise and worship first ... reasons that are important for us in our personal lives as well as in intercession. We can share about this more deeply in another moment of teaching. For now I want to point out that the main reason why this gift is so important is that praise and worship are the way God Himself has given us to put Jesus first.

In Psalm 100, verse 4, the Holy Spirit reveals to us that, *"I will enter His gates with thanksgiving, enter His courts with praise!"* Praise is the way God has given us to come into the courtyard of the King of Kings! Jesus himself has encouraged us ... *"make your home in Me as I make Mine in you."* (John 15:4) Through praise we can draw close to the Heart of God and be ready to join with Him in His intercession.

Then, the Holy Spirit promises,

"Lord, you are enthroned in the praises of your people." or "You make your home in the praises of your people."

(Psalm 22: 3)

When we praise the Lord, we are "building a throne" or "making a home" where we can welcome the Lord Jesus into our hearts more deeply and into the situations we are praying for. And when Jesus personally comes close to us and our people as He promised through praise and worship, He brings all the answers for everything with Him!

Alleluia!!! What this means for us is that we can praise God any time in any situation. We don't praise God for the things that are happening, for the evil that we see, or for the problems or accidents; but we praise God IN each situation. Through our praise we are making a place or building a throne in each situation where the Lord can come in and practically reign as the King right now. We are welcoming The Great I Am who is able to supply every need.

Finally, in Psalm 148 we find that God Himself in Jesus is the “praise of all the saints.” When we praise the Lord, we directly lift Him up in a situation. And Jesus Himself tells us,

"If I am lifted up I will draw all men to Myself." (John 12:34)

He is our Savior and if we lift Him up in praise, He Himself will work among us and our people.

We need to go beyond praise though. You remember I talked about how praise and thanksgiving is the way we enter into His courtyards. As we praise Him we need to break through what I call the praise barrier that's in each one of us and in every group until we really come into union with the Lord Himself. This means entering into a deeper spiritual level that we call worship. In real deep worship, we draw near, right up close to the Heart of Our Father God. At that point God Himself brings us into union with Himself and into a close working partnership with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Blessed Mother really sums up this gift of praise and worship in a beautiful way in the Gospel of St. Luke where she says,

"My whole soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My Spirit rejoices in God, my Savior!" (Luke 1: 46)

What she's saying about our spirit rejoicing in God our Savior can include our praying in the gift of tongues, the Prayer of the Holy Spirit Himself, that He gives us, which she also received. Now, if you have the Holy Spirit in your hearts and have not learned how to let Him pray through you in this special gift of Divine Praise and Worship in the gift of tongues, perhaps the Lord will help you pray this way today.

Come Holy Spirit!

I really want to encourage everyone today to enter deeply into praise and worship, even if this is new for you. The Scriptures and the Church teach us many ways we can do this - to sing and dance and even shout in praises ... to pray the rosary and so many anointed prayers that proclaim Jesus as Lord of everything. We can even make up our own litany of praises to Jesus speaking all His Names that have been given to Him in the Word of God. For some of us this praying and singing out loud might be new and even a bit traumatic! ... especially since as Catholics we were taught to pray quiet. However, in the Scriptures, the Lord Himself tells us that these different kinds of praises and worship are pleasing to Him. And God gives us many promises that, if we put Him first in this way, then He will work among us in many different ways according to different kinds of praises and worship.

Because praise and worship are so essential to our relationship with the Lord and because God gives us so many promises as the fruit of praise and worship, we normally consider praise and worship as the actual context or atmosphere in which we intercede. So we try to begin our meetings with the fullest praise and worship that we can and we try to continue in an attitude of praise and worship through out the meeting. As the Holy Spirit brings us into a deeper freedom of real worship, the communication lines are open between us and the Lord and He can guide us more clearly in our prayers. Then the Holy Spirit has greater freedom to begin to work in us and through us in the intercession. Many times just by praying in the prayer language of the Holy Spirit the river of God's Love can continue to flow through us.

Finally, at the end of particular intentions or also at the end of the whole meeting we enter again into a special time of praise and worship. We give God thanksgiving and glory for all that has happened, all that He has done and will do through the work of prayer.

B. HOW HOLY SPIRIT WORKS?

People use many different images or stories to try to explain how the Holy Spirit works. One of these analogies is the example of the doctor. Think of a doctor who wants to help a sick patient through surgery. Here is the patient with some different needs. And here is the doctor. Now the doctor has training in surgery. And when he comes to the surgery itself, he has different instruments or tools for the surgery on one hand and different possible methods of working in the surgery on the other hand. During the surgery, the doctor has to decide which methods and which tools to use to help the patient.

Now the same is true in working with the Holy Spirit. The intentions or needs of those we pray for are like the “sick patient.” We are like the assistant to Doctor Holy Spirit trying to help the “patient” by our intercession surgery. Now, the Holy Spirit has many different Divine Tools or Instruments that we can use in His Work, especially in intercession. He also has many different methods or strategies that He can follow as He does His Work. With His Guidance, we can discern which Divine Methods or Strategies and which Divine Tools or Instruments He wants us to use so as to really help the “patient” receive answers in prayer.

Another example of the process that the Holy Spirit often follows when we work with Him is that of the picture puzzle. Have you ever seen one of those big pictures that is made up of many little pieces? All those pieces need to be put together in a specific order so you can see the whole picture. Practically, this is an example of how the Holy Spirit might work in a prayer meeting, especially an intercession prayer meeting.

When we work with the Holy Spirit, we could think of the big picture puzzle as the overall plan or goal the Holy Spirit or some part of that plan that He has in mind for a specific situation or meeting. If we ask the Lord to speak to us when we pray, we open the door for Him to do so. Then as we praise and worship the Lord, the Holy Spirit begins to give individuals in the group different Divine Gifts or Revelations ...

like a Scripture passage, or a prophetic message, or a mental picture, or spiritual discernment about something. Each of these Divine Gifts is like one piece of the overall picture puzzle that the Lord is sharing with us. Then after we receive these revelations from the Lord, we need to ask two questions:

- 1.) *What* do these revelations or messages mean? And ...
- 2.) *How* are we supposed to pray with this information so God's will can be done on earth as it is in heaven?

These questions will open the way for the Holy Spirit to guide us in how to pray... in how to put together the pieces of the puzzle He has given us today and so complete that part of God's Plan entrusted to us in each particular prayer session.

C. WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY FOR?

God, Our Heavenly Father has so many wonderful dreams and plans for each of us. If we ask Him, He will tell what they are. And God can give us so many different kinds of Divine Gifts to use in intercession; and He can follow so many different Divine Strategies in prayer in order to bring those gifts to us and to all people. All we have to do is ask Him what He wants to do and how He wants us to pray. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are alive and They can talk and tell us what Our Heavenly Father desires and how to pray.

There is one set of Divine Gifts that He gives that is especially important for intercession. When we mentioned that the Lord gives us His Gifts of revelation during intercession, we were especially referring to the Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through these Divine Gifts, the Lord can show us very clearly how God thinks of our situations, who to pray for, what to pray for, how to pray, and even how long to pray. These special gifts from God are a very precious working of the Spirit of God through us to His People. And through these Gifts, He can communicate to us the Will of God for intercession. In First Corinthians, St. Paul mentions specifically the charismatic gifts. He says,

"Now there varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there

are varieties of service but the same Lord and us about there are varieties of workings but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit. To another, faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues (which we mentioned) to another the interpretation of tongues. And all these are inspired by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as He wills." (1 Corinthians: 12: 4 - 11)

And He goes on to say, *"Strive eagerly for the greatest Spiritual Gifts."* (1 Corinthians 12:31)

These Gifts are like Divine Equipment, Divine Tools, or Divine Weapons. And we need all of these to do God's Work in God's Ways for God's Glory. There are many things we could share about the Divine Equipment the Holy Spirit gives us for Divine Service in intercession and in every Divine Service. However, for now I just want to briefly mention something more about two Gifts.

First is the Gift of Tongues, or the Prayer language of the Holy Spirit. The Gift of Tongues can come in different ways as we pray. Sometimes as we pray with the Holy Spirit in this Gift, we are singing or praying in praise and worship of the Lord, a love song to the Lord. Sometimes they are a special message, a way that God chooses to speak to us. And then we pray for an interpretation. Sometimes the tongue sounds like a trumpet call or a battle cry. And often when that happens the Lord has given the image of calling forth the angels and sending them out in the spirit to work with us in bringing His victory and love into the lives of His people. God can work powerfully and in many ways as we pray in this special gift.

Another Gift from the Holy Spirit St. Paul speaks of in the context of

describing the Armor of God needed for spiritual warfare,

"Receive the Word of God from the Holy Spirit to use as a sword." (Ephesians 6: 17)

God often will bring Scriptures to our minds as a way to show us what and how to pray. And the Word of God is a very powerful weapon in intercession.

Think of how powerful our own words can be. This is something important that we need to think about. Can you remember what it's like when people come to you and explain their problems to you over and over and over? Pretty soon you get all tied up and down underneath the problem with them. Also, if someone comes to you and shares the joys and the blessings God has given them, you start to rejoice too. We tend to kind of pick up from one another what we're saying and what we're sharing for good or bad. There's a power in our words to bind or set others free.

Well, the same thing happens in prayer. There's a power in our words. In intercession we have the privilege of representing someone else before the Father and ALSO be a channel of the Father's blessings to them. It's like a two-way pipeline. However, very often when people come to the Lord in prayer, they start to speak the problems in people's lives and how they would like to see others change. It's a one-way conversation. We need to remember that the Lord Himself can already see the problem... and He not only sees it from His point of view, but He has plans on what to do in that situation. If we can learn to come to the Lord in praise and worship and allow Him to raise us above the mountain of problems to Himself, then with the Lord we will be able to see the situation with His eyes and find out how to pray WITH Him ... how to speak His Holy Will from heaven into the earth.

This is an important principle for those that are in intercession to remember. As the Lord said, *"What you plant is what you will reap."* (Galatians 6:7) Or we might translate this verse as, "what you say is what you will get!"

You see, when God looks at us He does not see problems. Did you ever

think about that? What does He see? God sees an opportunity for miracles!!! If we allow Him, the Lord can tell us what He wants to do in a situation. Through His Word especially He can give wonderful promises. When He does give us His Word in intercession, He is inviting us and trying to teach us to pray the Promises of God and not the problems. He desires us to receive in intercession those promises for others, to be a channel of God's grace and Eternal Life to someone else. We can pray the Word of God in prayer.

His Words are “Spirit and Life” as Jesus says. (John 6: 33)

And what God says, God will do. (Isaiah 55: 11)

The Scripture that we quoted in Ephesians is in the context of what St Paul was talking about the spiritual warfare that we are involved in. And the Word here is considered to be part of the armor. Sometimes God calls upon us to use the sword of His Word against the spiritual enemies that war on the people of God just like Jesus did in the desert. Remember how when He was tempted by Satan it was the Word of God that Jesus used as an answer to drive away the enemy. And we have the privilege to do that in the work of intercession prayer.

D. HOW CAN WE PRAY WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

First, I want to encourage each one to share what God does give you. When we come onto worship and the presence of the Lord is so much among us that we really experience being one with Him, we can be pretty sure that many of the things coming to our minds and hearts are from the Lord. And, after we discern them as well as we can, we need to step out in faith and be free to share them. Please *be free to share* with one another, and don't worry about making mistakes. We can discern together what the Holy Spirit means and what He wants us to do in intercession with the revelations He gives us.

The Lord may give us many different intentions and Revelations at the same time. And so we need to find out how He wants us to pray with that information. It's OK to go ahead and mention what the Lord brings to our hearts and minds in prayer. But this is not a time for discussion or a time to go into all the details of each case. Together we need to discern

IF Jesus wants us to zero in on one particular intention for a longer period of time, or if He wants us to pray for all of the intentions together at the same time in the Spirit with one prayer; and also *HOW* He wants us to pray.

Intercession group leaders are especially important in this discernment process. God gives them special grace to be able to discern and guide us in what to pray for and in what order. When I am leading in an intercession meeting, I usually write down everything everyone shares and then take it back to the Lord together with everyone else. Together we ask Him two questions:

- 1.) *WHAT DO THESE REVELATIONS MEAN?*
- 2.) *LORD, HOW DO YOU WANT US TO PRAY WITH YOU IN INTERCESSION WITH THIS INFORMATION NOW?*

It is amazing how clearly the Lord can lead step by step. And by the time the meeting is over, He has covered every need and showed us how to bring every revelation into intercession prayer for that day. We can really trust the Lord to lead us. He knows every need, and He will not neglect anything, even if we do not specifically mention our intentions in the meeting. God's economy is so different than ours. His Ways are not our ways, but His Ways do work! And I believe through the obedience to Holy Spirit in our intercession, the Lord can do a lot of things that ordinarily wouldn't happen.

The Holy Spirit may lead us to actually pray in many different ways. Sometimes He may desire us to continue in praise and worship and pray in tongues. Also, the Lord may lead us to pray other kinds of prayers like the rosary, part of it or all of it, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or maybe some special prayers like the novenas, or the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, or a profession of faith. Even as we pray, we continue to listen to God all the time so He can lead us. In between, we may keep praying quietly in the Spirit in tongues to keep the Holy Spirit's River of Love flowing among us. And it is not an interruption if someone receives more messages or revelations from the Lord and shares them as we are pray. And it is ok if the messages and revelations the Lord gives

us do NOT seem to “fit into what is happening in the moment.” He will help us sort everything out in His good order.

An important part of our intercession is to *speak out loud* what the Lord has said. St. Paul says in Romans,

"If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."
(Romans 10: 9-10.)

We already mentioned the power of the spoken word. As God’s Word is given to us, we need to *agree with the Lord and one another* according to that Word. St. Paul says about the Lord Jesus, that the “YES” to all the promises of God are in Him; and because He said “YES” first, we can now say our “yes” and receive all that God has promised. (2Corinthians 1: 19-20) Our prayer of “YES” to God and His promises is so powerful in intercession. We can pray “yes” by simply agreeing out loud as the gifts are shared by others saying, "Yes, Lord, I believe what you have said. Yes, Lord, I receive what you have said for my people or for those we are praying for. I receive that Scripture or prophecy for so and so." "I say, Yes Lord, do it!" I join with our Blessed Mother in Her FIAT and say, “Be it done unto us according to Your Word.”

We already mentioned how in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus speaks about the power of agreeing together, "If two or three of you agree on anything in my name, I will do it." (Matthew 18:19) Think about it again ... If the Lord is giving us Scriptures and Revelations on what He wants to do in prayer and we agree, we are actually agreeing with the Holy Spirit. And of course, we can be sure that Jesus is already praying with the Holy Spirit. So we are also “IN the Name of Jesus” as well. Remember Jesus said, “If two or three agree...” Well, Holy Spirit, Jesus, and Me!!!! Think about what will happen when we agree with God when we pray!!! Is anything too wonderful for the Lord! Alleluia!!!

Another important work that an intercessor does is to *remind God of His*

Promises. (Isaiah 62: 6-7) Remember I said that sometimes the Lord brings Scriptures to our mind to pray for people so that we can pray the promises of God and not the problems. But even though sometimes we experience a victory in praying for people in intercession, we may not see that victory show up immediately in their lives. So we need to continue to cover that person with God's prayer and promises until God's victory becomes visible on earth as it is in heaven. One way we do that is by reminding the Lord and repeating the promises that He gives. So I encourage you to write down the promises the Lord gives us today for His People and after we leave here, continue to pray His Promises during the week. And watch what He will do!

And what can we expect? I like to remember the words the Lord said to us one day in an intercessory prayer meeting. He said: "Why do you limit me with your prayers? Your prayers should be as the God you are asking." How big is our God? Then what can we expect?

I believe, that as we seriously begin to intercede for others, we will experience very soon our own poverty. We really do not know how to pray for ourselves, let alone pray for others. And we don't really know what we can even expect in prayer. But we have the awesome privilege that we can be in a partnership with Jesus, our Great High Priest and Intercessor before the Father. We share in this awesome privilege because of the Holy Spirit, The Intercessor, the One Who knows how to pray, has been given to us to dwell within us. And He brings us into union with the Lord and forms us as intercessors. As we seek to listen to Him and obey Him, the Holy Spirit can lead us to be effective prayer warriors because He knows how to pray according to the Will of God. (Romans 8: 26-27) So with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we can pray as big as God Is! Alleluia!

COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

Finally, as we pray today, let us promise and remember to give *God all the Glory* for this privilege to be able to serve Him and His people. Let us give Him all the Glory for all the wonderful blessings and victories He has done, He is doing right now, and He will do.

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+As we begin, let's take our prayer list, with all needs and intentions, and put it down at the Feet of the Father next to Jesus' list. Let's place our lives there too; all that the Father has given us, all good things as well as problems and sin. We lay all at His feet; give it all to Him.

+ Let's re-commit our lives to the Lord Jesus and express our desire to serve Him and His people today in His way.

+ Let's call upon the Holy Spirit to make Jesus the Lord of our lives and of our prayer today. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to come and to show us what the priority is that Jesus is praying for and how He is praying, so that we can come into union with Him.

+ Let's take time now to enter into the praise and worship of the Lord and intercession in the Spirit of Jesus and put Jesus first in every situation. Minister unto Jesus. We are here to bless the Lord and with Him serve His People, and not to just get a blessing for ourselves.

+Let's ask the Holy Spirit to lead us concerning whom and what we are to pray for, how to pray for them, and even how long. As we pray, let's try to be open and obedient to the Holy Spirit and His gifts, so He, the Great Intercessor, can lead us to victory in prayer with Jesus.

+Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with the Fire of Your Divine Love and all Your Gifts so that Our Father's River of Divine Mercy can flow out through us to the God's People and we can give God all the Glory.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

CONCLUDING PRAYER

In conclusion, let us join to pray and continue to pray in St. Paul's beautiful prayer:

***“Glory be to Him
whose Power is working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask for or imagine.
Glory be to Him
from generation to generation
in the Church and
in Christ Jesus,
forever and ever. Amen.”
Alleluia!!!
(Ephesians 3: 20-21)***

INTERCESSION
IN THE
SPIRIT OF JESUS

* * * * *

PART 2
HOW TO FORM
AN INTERCESSORY
PRAYER GROUP

PART 2: HOW TO FORM AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP

I. EVERY GROUP NEEDS

A. LEADER

Among those in the group there is usually one who is a leader. Every Body has only one head, and so it is with a group.

” As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:21-22)

“Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it ... If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.” (Ephesians 4: 7, 15-16)

A leader is someone who has been *chosen by the Lord* to help discern how the Holy Spirit wants to direct each meeting, who He wants us to pray for, and how He wants us to pray. God gives His leader the special anointing of leadership to carry out this service, so there can be unity and order in the prayer. That anointing for leadership includes a special gift of discernment and wisdom to recognize God’s Desires and Plans and often how they can be carried out during the meeting of that group.

Sometimes members of a group take turns to lead actual meetings, even though they may have one person designated as the main representative of the group. As each one serves in the leadership capacity and seeks to really obey the Lord for His Glory, they also experience the Lord’s anointing for that service. The anointing goes with the position of service.

However, it is important to seek the Lord on who is to lead groups, so we are more completely in His Holy Will in our service.

In the charismatic style of leadership, which we experience in our intercession groups, the leader is often like the conductor of an orchestra. As we worship the Lord, and each one receives some intentions or revelations from the Holy Spirit, it is the leader's responsibility to encourage each one to share what they have received from the Lord. When I am leading, I also usually write down all that the Lord gives people during the praise and worship time. Then, the leader presents all that has been shared back to the Lord and asks the Lord two questions:

- 1. What do these revelations and sharings mean?*
- 2. And how are we supposed to pray with this information?*

As all continue to listen to the Lord and try to follow His direction, the Lord may speak to others again or He most often will guide the leader on the meaning of what has been shared and what to pray for and even how to put everything together in prayer. The leader works like a conductor in an orchestra calling forth each one and joining all together toward the focus the Lord inspires. Thus all can really pray in unity and systematically cover all that the Lord desires for that meeting. If leaders do not do this or do not know how to do this, the group most probably will miss what the Lord really wants to do in their meeting.

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SPIRITUAL COVERING IN INTERCESSION

In the context of speaking about the leader of an actual meeting, I would like to mention about a very important concern for those in intercession: that is Spiritual Covering and Spiritual Protection. Spiritual Covering in regard to spiritual authority in prayer and protection are crucial since intercessors are usually in the front lines of the spiritual warfare for others. Through Spiritual Covering, intercessors receive Spiritual Authority, Special Anointing to share in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, Specific Discernment for that mission, and Protection in their service of intercession.

Our first source of spiritual authority and protection for intercession comes from God our Father and His Call; and is a fruit of our commitment to and obedience to His Holy Will. Next, and perhaps of equal importance is our on-going standing in the Life and Victory of the Lord Jesus. How are we connected to the Vine? (John 15: 1-16). How do we continue in union with the Vine in intercession? The Power of the Blood of Jesus and His Indestructible Life give us Divine Authority and Protection in the presence of God and in the spiritual warfare we face on the earth. Finally, God has chosen to confirm and commission and protect us through the power of the Holy Spirit. He can do this directly; and He also works through others in the Body of Christ, especially those He has raised up in spiritual authority and leadership in our lives and in the lives of those for whom we pray. Saint Paul encourages us on this point,

"Obey our leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your soul as men who will have to give an account. Let them do this joyfully and not sadly for that would be of no advantage to you." (Hebrews 13: 17)

For this reason, I believe it is very important that intercessors serve under the agreement and blessing of the person or spiritual leader who has spiritual authority from God over of the parish, community, or situation for whom they are praying. Of these God-appointed spiritual leaders, lay people hold a certain level of spiritual authority. However, the highest level of spiritual authority from God for service is given to the one who is ordained into the Ministerial Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That means a Priest or Bishop or Our Holy Father. Through the blessing of Priesthood, intercessors receive a special share in the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ and His authority for mission in the specific level of jurisdiction given to the priest. In God's economy, "when His power becomes active through His spiritual leaders, He is able to create order and health and unity in the whole Body." Thus the intercessor can more effectively represent the needs of those others that have been given to them from God for prayer. And they also have a special grace of God's protection in the spiritual warfare that we are engaged in for these others in our intercession.

So I encourage you, if you are in an intercession group or are forming a new group, simply go the pastor or chaplain of those you're going to be praying for and briefly share your desire to pray. Ask for their blessing in that service of intercession and their intentions. And if the person responsible in a situation is a lay person, their agreement with you for the work of intercession, plus the blessing of a pastor or chaplain with spiritual authority in that situation will open the way for God to work powerfully through your intercession. God will impart to you a special share in the anointing, of the Lord Jesus for that prayer mission, and give you the discernment and protection you need to be effective in the intercession, and enable you to survive the battle so you can give God Glory for the victory. Also ask them for their intentions ... as we come to serve them as well. If possible, it is very good to ask permission to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The powerful Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist will give an infinite protection and be the source of an Eternal Fountain of Heavenly Blessings in your intercession.

I remember when the Lord called me to intercession in the Fellowship of the Burning Bush; to pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole Catholic Church. I told the Lord ... that is really a BIG intention for intercession ... and I really need a lot of spiritual protection for that. And the only one I know who can grant the level of protection I need and who has the spiritual authority for the whole Catholic Church is our Holy Father. So I need His blessing. Would you make the way to receive his blessing? The Lord said yes that He would make the way.

In 1986, by a series of amazing miracles, the Lord kept His Promise. He provided for me to personally share about our missionary intercession apostolate with our Holy Father. In the meeting with our Holy Father, I officially submitted FBB to his spiritual authority. He put his hand on my head and prayed the most beautiful prayer in English. In that prayer, he gave me his personal blessing for all in FBB ... for God's anointing, protection and guidance in our service of intercession for the whole Catholic Church. As he prayed, I was so filled with the Holy Spirit and the power of God's Love, that I was literally "drunk in the Spirit" for days. I just couldn't get my bearings! I have seen the fruit of that prayer continuously over the years. As I go with the Lord to different countries, He gives me a spiritual protection and anointing for intercession for the

Church in each nation that I never had before. Also, the Lord often gives a discernment of the deeper spiritual conditions and needs of the Church in a nation, which have never been prayed for, so we can intercede very specifically and deeply to set the Church more free for God's purposes. Glory to Jesus! And anyone who joins in the FBB commitment will experience these same graces from the Holy Father's blessing in their intercession for the Church.

Hopefully our shepherds and spiritual leaders of communities and ministries and groups will begin to understand more deeply the essential place of intercession in the Body of Christ. Hopefully they will learn to work together with intercessors and even take the initiative themselves to call upon intercessors for prayer for their own needs, for their people, and for their service in the Body of Christ.

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B. SECRETARY

Next in the intercession group, we usually have a secretary who will write down what the Lord gives and what happens in prayer times. They keep charge of the prayer list, as they or others write down the intentions, and needs of people, and also the answers to prayer. They also record what the Lord gives to different people to share during the intercession prayer meeting ... prophecies, inspirations, intentions, and Bible verses. We'll talk more about that later.

This record is especially important in case we need to have some kind of follow up in prayer during the week. One of the things that an intercessor does is to remind God of His promises. Scriptures especially contain these promises of God. And we can carry them with us from the meeting and continue to pray for our people during the week with these promises of God instead of worrying over the problems. Also, if sometimes we experience a victory in praying for people in an intercession meeting, we may not see that victory show up immediately. So we will need to cover that person with our prayer until God's victory becomes visible in their lives. And one way we cover others in prayer is

by reminding the Lord of the promises and the victory that He gave us in the intercessory prayer meeting for those people. Also, over a period of time, this gives us a kind of ongoing spiritual history that we can look back to and refer to as needed to better understand what God desires and how to follow Jesus in intercession and in our lives.

When I lead or attend an intercessory prayer meeting, I usually write down everything myself that the Lord gives us in our prayer. This is especially helpful for understanding what the Lord wants to do in a meeting and can serve a guide for the intercession.

C. MEMBERS

Now let's look at who is in an intercessory prayer group.

Members of intercession groups usually are ordinary people who have the deep conviction that God has personally called them to be intercessors. And for some this calling to intercede is even as deep as a second vocation in their life.

Recognizing the call of God for specific service to Him and His People is essential because all Christian ministries share in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. And those He calls in some specific way of service, He also will anoint and empower and protect through the Holy Spirit for that service. Thus it is very important to find out where the Lord is calling us to serve, especially in regard to intercession. A person cannot be appointed by others to this ministry of intercession or any other ministry in Christ. They would never be able to persevere. God is the One who appoints. Each person needs seriously go to the Lord in deep praise and worship and simply ask Him what He is calling them to do for their service in the Lord. The Lord will not only show you what His Will is but He'll confirm it clearly too each one and also through others.

Once we know God's Will for us, *we need to respond* to the Father's Call with a definite commitment. We come with the same Heart and Attitude and Mind of the Lord Jesus when He says "YES, YES!" to the Father, "I come to do Your will, O God!" Our definite "Yes" to God's Will is

essential so we can come into closer union with the Lord Jesus and His Ministry, especially in His *NOW* ministry as our Great High Priest and Intercessor before the Father.

“The Son of God, the Christ Jesus that we proclaimed among you - I mean Silvanus and Timothy and I - was never Yes and No: with him it was always Yes, ... and however many the promises God made, the Yes to them all is in Him. That is why it is 'through him' that we answer Amen to the praise of God.

(2Corinthians 1:19-20)

Our ‘Yes’ to God’s Call will not only open the way for God to communicate with and work with us more directly, to anoint and guide and reveal to us His Holy Will in ministry, and grant us His promises; but it will also open the way for the Lord to reach out through more directly and touch others we serve. Our deep, committed union with the Lord will make our prayer more effective. St. Paul says in Romans chapter 5 verse 19,

"Whereas by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."

Besides our “yes” to God, the Lord may require of us some changes in our life, in our thinking, and in our service of others. We can call this the price of mature discipleship. If God calls us deeply to serve Him in a specific ministry like intercession, He prepares us to receive a very special share in His Own Anointing for that service. We need to guard that anointing. And we need to nurture that anointing so it can come to full fruition in our lives for the Glory of God. That means we may have to give up some things in our lives that even seem normal to others. For example, we may need to give up some of the ordinary socializing and fellowshiping in the Body of Christ to give more time in prayer and fellowship with our Spiritual Community of the Most Holy Trinity.

Also, we cannot be really committed in every or in many ministries and really come into spiritual maturity in our service of the Lord and His People. If we are “multi-purpose”, that means serving God and His people in every ministry possible in the Body of Christ, we may need to

give up some of those ministries to allow others to serve God. And then we can focus our time and energy on maturing in the specific call of God in our lives. The Lord will give us every grace we need to do this.

Because intercession is a ministry requiring discernment and commitment and some level of Christian maturity, it is not just another prayer meeting and not an open event for children to attend. We need to be sensitive to their spiritual protection in serious intercession.

Besides our union with the Lord Jesus, we need to be *united with others* in intercession. Remember Jesus said,

"If two or three of you agree on anything in My name ... I will do it." (Matthew 18:19-20)

It only takes two or three to start. Unity in commitment to the Lord and His Call overflows into a deep agreement in the work of intercession, which is essential for focused, and more powerful effective prayer ... what I like to call 'laser beam' prayer as compared with 'sunshine all over' prayer.

We also need to remember that God's economy in the Scriptures is so much different than ours. For example, in Deuteronomy chapter 32, verses 30 and 31 He says that in His economy, one can stand against a thousand, two can stand against ten thousand when He is behind them. In the work of intercession that is a powerful statement! We can come before the Lord, one representing a thousand people in prayer, two representing ten thousand!

Of course some groups may be larger than two or three ... even twenty or thirty or more people. From God's economy, we can see that the more people there are praying in a situation, the larger the situation they can cover and the more powerful is their prayer. So some of the big prayer initiatives today of thousands of people from all denominations praying together in all night vigils for their cities or countries is bringing tremendous results in opening the way for the Lord to work in those places ... even changing whole societies and cities. Alleluia!!!

As intercessors come faithfully to the Lord in prayer, He works within them to change them to be more like the Lord Jesus. They begin to have such a Heart of Mercy toward others, that is so full of God's Love for others, just like the Heart of our Father in Heaven. And they become especially sensitive to the burdens that God carries in His Heart. In fact He begins to share with them His concerns and burdens more and more, the closer they are to Him. Some of the Saints were so close to the Lord that God actually even gave them the wounds of Jesus physically as sharing in the deepest kind of intercession as victim with Him in His greatest work of intercession on earth ... on the cross. (Isaiah 53)

I also find that these faithful committed intercessors usually do not come to prayer just to get blessed or have their own needs met or even their prayers answered. They come with the singular and deep desire to really give God all the Glory in intercession. That perhaps is the chief characteristic of a true intercessor: their absolute desire to give God all the glory.

D. MEETING COMMITMENT

Because of their commitment to the Lord, those who are intercessors are really available to the Lord any time of the day or night to pray. He often wakes up people in the middle of the night or 3 in the morning to pray for the needs of others. Or He shares some burden for prayer calling His intercessors to pray during the day, regardless of what they are doing.

When intercessors meet in groups, most often they set aside a special time at least once a week to meet together and pray. However, as intercessors grow in the Lord, they may be called to spend more time in their intercession together with others ... 2 or 3 or more hours ... or even in all-day or all-night vigils where they can really pray more deeply. Jesus spoke about this persistence and perseverance in prayer in the Gospels.

"He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him." And the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now,

and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it you". I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

“So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:5- 13)

The regular committed persevering group intercession makes a lot of difference in the effectiveness of the prayer as the fruit of that type of prayer for groups and individuals comes forth into reality sooner.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER MEETING

A. BEFORE THE MEETING

For their meeting of intercession, intercessors usually try to find a place to meet where they are free to worship God and pray however the Spirit of God directs them, without being interrupted or offending others who may not understand the way they pray. I especially encourage intercessors to pray in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament if they can. Many of the meetings I have attended have lasted two hours or more as the Spirit of the Lord directs. Usually the intercessors come just to pray and then leave directly after the meeting. They do *not* include in their prayer sessions time for fellowship or coffee or lunch. They save these for other times ... often even fasting on that day as part of their intercession prayer.

After an opening prayer, intercessors may take a short time of singing praise to Jesus as they write down intentions and their prayer list or answers to prayer. Often intercessors place the intentions in a book or in a basket at the feet of Jesus ... and after the meeting carry them to Holy Mass. For those intentions in a basket once a week they usually burn the intentions. For those in a book, they can ask their priest permission to keep the book on the altar at Church during the Masses. When answers come, they record the date in the book and then offer thanksgiving to God in the Holy Mass for answered prayer. Because the Lord has taught us to put Jesus first, we don't usually talk about all the problems before the intercession meeting. The Lord can focus us in on any special problems during the intercession meeting if He wants to. Or He may just work through our praise and worship in His own Divine ways in all the situations we give to Him.

If there are newcomers in the meeting, sometimes one member of the group takes them into another room and gives them a short introduction. This welcome and introduction may take place as the main group continues in praise and worship. The main purpose of this introduction is to welcome people and give them the key points on how the Lord has

taught us to pray so they can feel at home and be more united with every one in the meeting.

The main purpose of the meeting is to pray. So the meeting time needs to be arranged so Jesus is first and there is a *minimum* of one hour for the prayer. As people grow in the intercession work with the Lord, they may need 2 or more hours to pray. That requires some flexibility and regular revision of schedules.

Also, people desire to grow in intercession and have much to share from the Lord. Sometimes groups may have a short time of teaching of some kind where people could have an opportunity to grow in the ministry of intercession ... maybe 15 minutes. The teaching might be a sharing by someone on one point about intercession, maybe as a prepared teaching from the Scriptures or from an article or a book or a tape or their own experience. It would be best if the sharing could be given at the end of the meeting. Since the main purpose of the meeting is intercession prayer, it might even be better to schedule study on another day, so people are free to simply pray with out pressure to get in some teaching.

B. DURING THE MEETING

1. PRAISE AND WORSHIP

During the actual period of prayer, which is at least an hour or more of that allotted time period, we begin with worship. We try to enter into the fullest praise and worship that's possible for us. During that time we include prayers of thanksgiving for answers we received through our intercession.

I think it's very important for us to realize the place of praise and worship in this intercession service of the Lord. In psalm 100 verse 4 the Holy Spirit tells us, "*I will enter His gates with thanksgiving, I will enter His courts with praise.*" Through praise of the Lord and thanksgiving we come into His courtyard. This is the way God gives us to come to Him. If we are going to intercede for God's people, we are invited into a partnership with the Lord Jesus, the great High Priest, who stands

interceding for us before the Father. (Romans 8:34) To be one with Him in His prayer, we need to come into the very Presence of God Himself. The way to do this is really a gift that is given to us from the Holy Spirit ... the gift of Praise and Worship.

We need to persevere in our praise until we really break through what I call the "**praise barrier**" into worship. It is not enough for us to enter the courtyard of the Lord. It is not enough to sing a few praises and feel the Love of the Lord present with us. We need to continue to minister to the Lord in deep praise and worship, past the good feelings of the Lord's presence, to the Lord Himself ... until the anointing of the Holy Spirit falls on us and the Lord lifts us up into His Actual Holy Presence, into His Throne room, into Union with the Lord Himself. The Blessed Mother sums this up the whole experience of this deep praise and worship beautifully in Luke Chapter 1 verse 46 when she says,

"My whole soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My Spirit rejoices in God My Savior!"

As we continue to minister unto the Lord, He Himself changes the direction of our prayer from deep praise and worship into intercession with Himself. He Himself begins to lead us and bring us into a Spirit-filled intercession prayer. That may mean into a Spirit-filled silence of listening or into many other forms of Spirit-filled prayer that the Holy Spirit leads.

During the meeting we continue in worship, praying in the Spirit, as St. Paul says,

"Never to get tired staying awake to pray for all the saints, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion, to pray without ceasing."
(Ephesians 6: 18)

Praying in the Spirit or other tongues from the Holy Spirit is especially powerful and important in order to keep that River of the Holy Spirit flowing through us. Then the communication lines between us and the Lord will remain open, and allow Him to speak to us and pray through us as He desires.

During the end of the meeting and also at the end of specific intentions we enter into a time of giving God Glory for what He has done. As it says in Revelations, "*Laying at His feet the crowns of the victories that have*

been won in prayer." (Revelations 4: 10 and 11) Therefore praise and worship is actually the spiritual atmosphere in which we intercede.

2. *LISTEN AND WATCH* *as you worship for the Holy Spirit to lead on what to pray for, and how, and how long to pray for it.*

When we started, we called this teaching a sharing on a intercessory prayer group “in the Spirit of Jesus”. We could also call it a Holy Spirit charismatic intercession prayer group. What does “charismatic” mean? If you remember what St. Paul says in Romans,

"The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness so when you can not choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit Himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words. And God, who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what He means. And the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God." (Romans 8: 26 – 27)

A common human problem is that really do not know how to pray. We do not know how to come to God. And so the Holy Spirit is given to us as a gift. And He knows how to pray. “Charismatic” simply means “gift”. And THE FIRST GIFT of God to us is the Holy Sprit. Alleluia!!! He Himself comes to help us pray in many ways according to the Will of God.

You remember we said that Jesus has been interceding for us ever since He went back to the Father? St. Paul confirms this says in Romans chapter 8. Part of our work in intercession is to come into union with Him in what He's praying for. As we worship the Holy Spirit can speak to us in many ways. He can bring to our hearts and minds who and what to pray for, and how to pray for them, and even how long to pray.

Also, remember how we mentioned that one way to describe how the Holy Spirit works among us is like in the parable of the “Picture Puzzle.” When we pray the Holy Spirit gives us, one by one, different pieces of the overall picture or plan that He has in His Mnd on what He wants to do among us at this time. These one-by-one pieces come to us through the different charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. These revelations for the Lord as like different pieces of His big “picture puzzle”. So we need to

continue to listen to Him until He shows us that we have enough information from heaven to move from listening to some other action in the Lord, like intercession.

3. ASK FOR AND SHARE any charismatic gifts or Scriptures the Holy Spirit wants to give as you pray. These are His Revelations on what to pray for and how to pray.
(Sometimes God calls us to repent to be better intercessors.)

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Luke 11: 9-10)

Jesus told us to ask, to seek, and to knock as a prerequisite to His moving in our midst. As we worship the Lord, if we ask, seek, and knock, this will open the communication lines so the Lord can speak to us. Even as we pray in tongues, with the intention to ask, seek, and knock, our minds are free and receptive, ready to receive revelation for the Lord. Thus this gift from the Holy Spirit is a tremendous help for us so we can intercede according to the Will of God.

And God can work in all kinds of different ways. Remember in First Corinthians 12 where St. Paul speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He says,

"There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; There are all sorts of service to be done (and intercession is one of those) but always to the same Lord; there are varieties of workings; but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the spirit, the utterance of wisdom. To another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit. To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one spirit. To another the working of miracles. To another prophecy. To another, the ability to distinguish between spirits; (Some translations say discernment of spirits) To another, various kinds of tongues. To another, interpretation of tongues. All these are

inspired by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as He wills." (1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 11).

St. Paul goes on later on in First Corinthians to encourage us to earnestly seek the spiritual gifts, to ask for them realizing that they come from God Himself, Who is Love, and He is greater than any one of the gifts we might receive from Him.

When the Lord speaks to us somehow, we need to be brave and share what He has said. St. John reminds us how everything needs to be discerned as to its sources. This is true. And we can share about discernment more deeply in another moment. However, I am finding in many people and groups that people have become so concerned about being right, or so concerned if some inspiration is from God, or the devil, or themselves, that they just don't say anything. They are afraid to make a mistake. And also, many times AFTER the meeting is over, people will come up to me and tell me what came to them in the meeting. I want to encourage you now with a few words here.

- a. It's OK to make mistakes in our group.
- b. When we praise and worship the Lord and He is so present with us, we can have some more confidence that what comes to us in prayer is really somehow from HIM.
- c. It is healthy to have some doubt that what we receive in prayer is from the Lord. God is so big and we are so small, we will never catch all He has in mind. And there is always going to be something of ourselves in whatever the Lord gives us in prayer. That is why we really need to ask Him to explain what He means and what He wants us to do with His inspirations.
- d. God may give different Revelations or points for prayer to different people all at the same time. And they may not look like they go together on the surface. However, the Lord will give us understanding how to put everything together, if we ask Him.
- e. The final discernment always rests outside of ourselves.
- f. So just go ahead and share what comes to you in our prayer sessions. We will take it back to the Lord together and He will guide.

4. DISCERN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

a. As the Holy Spirit gives His Revelations, ask Him for understanding of these Revelations

(“What do You mean by these charismatic gifts or Scriptures?”)

b. Also ask, “How can we pray with You, Holy Spirit, using the Revelations you are giving us?”

After we share what the Holy Spirit gives us in our worship, we are ready for Him to really guide us in our prayer. He has many possibilities of what He can do in intercession. Sometimes He may even call us to repent ourselves, to be better intercessors, besides leading us in our prayer for others. However, remember the “Key” to effective Intercession Prayer, which we already talked about, and which we have learned from Jesus Himself:

JESUS OBEYED THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING !!!

How do we do this?

After we enter in to praise and worship, and the Holy Spirit begins to speak with us, the first step we do is share what He brings to our hearts and minds. Then we lift back up to the Lord all He has revealed to us whether that be intentions, Scriptures, some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or some kind of prayers. Then we ask the Lord two questions:

1.) What do these revelations and sharings mean?

2.) And how are we supposed to pray with this information?

As we open the communication lines with the Lord in this way, He will speak more to us, giving us understanding and direction on what to think and how to pray. And we need to continue to share and seek the Holy Spirit asking Him to continue to show us what God means and how He wants us to pray with this information. Then, as we obey the Holy Spirit and do what He leads us to do in prayer, we will see the Lord work in marvelous ways in our lives and in the lives of our people. We will begin to see more and more the same kind of answers Jesus received.

**** PERSEVERE AS LONG AS THE LORD LEADS YOU TO PRAY. ****

We need to persevere in our worship and communication with the Lord and our obedience to Him until He tells us that He has done His work for

the day. Usually when the Lord is finished, everyone feels a Peace from God that they have completed the Work He wanted for that prayer session. If anyone does not feel that Peace, or it is time to stop the meeting, we lift everything back up to the Lord in a final prayer and leave it with Him. In this way, the Holy Spirit can guide us into real victories in prayer and keep us in Peace in our lives as well.

5. AGREE OUT LOUD with the gifts and Scriptures the Holy Spirit gives and the way He leads the people to pray.. Continue in worship (Mt.18:19; Rom.10:9).

Besides simply sharing the gifts and Scriptures the Holy Spirit gives us, there is something else we can do to be more effective in our intercession. Jesus said, "If two or three of you **agree** on anything in My Name, I will do it." If the Holy Spirit is going to lead us in prayer by giving us the charismatic gifts we need not only to receive them but we need to agree together with what He gives. And we need to agree out loud. We already spoke about this earlier. But I want to repeat again what we already mentioned, because it is so important.

"If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the Heart you are made righteous. By confessing with your lips you are saved." (Romans 10: 8, 10)

Somehow by agreeing out loud we are confessing with our lips an **active** faith and an **active** acceptance of what God is giving us in prayer. We can actually receive in proxy for others what God gives us, the promises from faith in His word, by simply agreeing out loud with what He says. There is a tremendous power in the **expression** of faith that we're saying "Yes! Yes! in the Name of Jesus!" to the Holy Spirit and His gifts. To agree together in that faith prepares the way to do exactly what He wants in the lives of His people.

As we pray in obedience to the Holy Spirit, God really does show us how to pray. And He even gives us grace to believe His promises in proxy for others during our intercession. What we need to learn how to do in intercession is to take our list and put it down next to Jesus' list and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in which intention has priority today and how to pray for it.

And I think we'll often find is that what the Holy Spirit shows us to pray is not the problem but His answer to the problem. You see, when God looks at us, He does NOT see problems. You know what He sees? He sees opportunities for miracles. So I encourage us to be aware of His ways and ...

PRAY THE PROMISES OF GOD AND NOT THE PROBLEMS.

Then I think we'll see a lot more Holy Spirit answers to our prayers.

Also, as we continue in worship, we keep open to the Holy Spirit, and God will be more free to work in our midst..

6. WRITE DOWN what the Lord gives you to pray for and all He shows through the gifts of the Spirit (e.g. prophecies, visions, discernment, words of knowledge) and through Scripture.

Another thing we do in the meeting is write down what the Lord gives us as we pray ... who He asks us to pray for and all the different gifts of the Spirit, the prophecies or mental pictures or discernment or words of knowledge or Scriptures that He gives for particular intentions.

If we continue in worship during all these times, I think as we continue to be more sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we'll know when it's time to stop praying for particular intentions when we have prayed through into the kind of victory the Lord asks of us in this particular meeting.

Also I think people should be aware that if members of the group are praying in the Spirit to keep that flow of the Holy Spirit moving as we listen to God, that it is NOT interrupting to speak up and share what the Holy Spirit is giving to them.

C. END THE MEETING

- 1. Gathering all mentioned intentions to God our Father with...
the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be.*

St. Raphael, pray for. (Tobit 12:12, 15)

At the end of the meeting many times we gather together all the intentions that had been mentioned and any other unmentioned needs for prayer whether they be in our own hearts or in the heart of Jesus or in the heart of Mary our mother as she joins us in the work of intercession. And we lift them all up to Our Father in Heaven, praying the Our Father and the Hail Mary. Then we finish by praying the “Glory Be to the Father” to really give God Glory right now for all that He has done, is doing, and all that He will do.

Also it's good in this prayer to ask St. Raphael to pray with us. In the book of Tobit, chapter 12, verses 12 to 15, we find that he is the Archangel whose special job is to take the prayers of the saints before the throne of God ... the “intercessor archangel”.

2. Sing in praise, thanksgiving and worship of the Lord, the Most Holy Trinity ... giving God all the glory.

Then we end the meeting with at least one song of glory - praise and thanksgiving and worship to the Lord, just rejoicing in His victory, but especially to give Him all the glory for what He has done, what He is doing right now, and what He will do. Alleluia!!!

D. AFTER THE MEETING

Another serious point I would like to mention especially for intercessors is this. I have often been at intercession meetings where the Lord gave us tremendous promises about a situation and we prayed deeply to the point of actually experiencing the victory of the Lord in that situation. But then as we walk out the door, people begin to talk again about all the details of the problem of that situation.

As intercessors, we need to understand that the Lord takes our words seriously. He has a Divine Law that He especially follows with intercessors ...

“What you sow, you will reap.”

Or in other words: “What you say, you will receive.”

I really pray we could catch this and live it. So often in our intercession meetings, we have planted tremendous Promises of God in the spirit in intercession only to walk out the door of the meeting and pull up all the new good plants and replant the weeds of problems again by what we say! Our work following a meeting is to remind God of His promises until we actually see them happen on earth as they are when sent from heaven.

We need to leave what happened in the meeting at the Feet of Jesus and not be talking about it outside the meeting for another reason too. If the Holy Spirit shows us things to pray for about people and situations, He is trusting us with confidential information. Also, as God often speaks to us in parables, we will not understand exactly what He means anyhow or what are the specifics are in the situation that He gives us for prayer. So to talk about these matters out of our own understanding, that is “in the flesh”, can actually do more harm than good ... and might even end up in sin of gossip, calumny or slander. So it is best to leave all at the Feet of the Lord and let Him bring forth the fruits of our intercession as He desires.

Glory be to Jesus!

III. WAYS TO GROW

Now there are ways that we can grow in relationship to this ministry of intercession.

A. Periodically review what the Lord has done and thank Him.

But it's also good to periodically review what the Lord has done. Go through the Scriptures and the written records of what has happened in the meetings and thank Him. I know one group that records what happens in the meetings on cassettes and then the person who records types up everything that was recorded and sends it out by mail to the members of the group to pray on during the week. And when they come back together again they share what comes from their prayer over what the Lord said.

That way they can keep in touch with specific things the Lord has asked them to do so that they can obey the Spirit in their own lives.

B. Take a copy of Scriptures and promises the Lord gives for specific intentions so you can "remind God of His promises" as you intercede during the week.

Many times what happens in intercession is that the Lord gives us specific things to pray for particular people and even answers to prayer. However, the answer doesn't show up in their lives right away.

In Isaiah, we hear this word from the Lord,

"On the wall of Jerusalem I set watchmen. Day or night they must never be silent. You who keep Yahweh mindful must take no rest nor let Him take rest because He has restored Jerusalem and made her the boast of the earth." (Isaiah 62: 6 - 7).

One of the jobs of the intercessors is to remind God of His promises until we see them happen. And if we have a copy of the promises of the Lord that were given to us during the meeting, when somebody comes back to our minds during the week then what we can do is take the promises He's

given us and say, "Lord, remember what you said you were going to do? Come on Lord, do this!." That way there can be a continuity in our lives with the work of prayer in the meetings and also what the Holy Spirit does the rest of the time.

You see, when God speaks His Word to us, it says in Isaiah 55 that

"That word does not come back to Him without accomplishing the purpose for which it is sent out." (Isaiah 55: 10-11)

But there are many times when we need to tell Him the work that the Lord wants to do until it happens with more prayer and more intercession, reminding Him, so to speak, of His promises.

I think sometimes we stop too soon in our prayer. We need to persevere as long as the Lord leads, not only in the meetings but in the rest of the time as well.

Then I think we'll see more fruit and we'll be able to grow too in our sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit anytime in our lives.

C. Make a time either together or on your own to regularly share some teaching on intercession so you can grow.

We already shared about making time for a short teaching in the meetings ... always remembering our main purpose and priority is to pray. It may be wise to have a different day for study, so we can be faithful to the prayer and not feel pressured to "get in some teaching".

D. Pray for other intercessors - for the Lord's protection and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit they need to serve Him.

One other thing I'd like to suggest for us is that we would pray for one another, pray for the other intercessors, pray for the Lord's protection for them. You know, we're in a spiritual warfare for others and we need to cover each other with our prayer as well.

And it's good to pray also that the Lord will give the gifts of His Spirit to His intercessors so they will have the equipment they need to be able to

serve Him more effectively, to be one with Jesus, not only through worship and prayer, but even in the way we pray by our obedience to the Holy Spirit.

As I said at the beginning, these are just suggestions from experiences that I've had in forming and working with charismatic intercessory prayer groups.

Basically what we need to remember is that we need to be called, committed and led by the Holy Spirit in the ministry of intercession. How all these things will work out will depend on what He wants us to do in our own circumstances. So we need to seek the Lord that we can know His will and do what will please Him and show His Real Glory in the ministry of intercession in the Spirit of Jesus.

AND FINALLY, ALWAYS, WHEN WE FINISH THE MEETING, AND WHEN WE FINISH THE DAY, WE NEED TO GIVE ALL THE GLORY BACK TO THE LORD AND LEAVE EVERYTHING AT HIS FEET.

* * * * *

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen*

APPENDIX A:

SCRIPTURE OUTLINE FOR

PART 1:

WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS

APPENDIX A:

SCRIPTURE OUTLINE ***FOR PART 1: WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS***

I. WELCOME

- A. Intercession: “in between God and man”
- B. Many ways of intercession
- C. Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus

II. JESUS CHRIST, GREAT HIGH PRIEST, INTERCESSOR

- A. Jesus interceding now - Romans 8:34
 - 1. Perfect Intercessor
 - 2. Intercession a Divine Work
 - 3. Jesus already praying for 2000 years

- B. How does the Lord Jesus pray?
 - 1. Luke 11 - Our Father
 - 2. Ephesians 2:10 - God has prepared a life of good things ahead of time for everyone
 - 3. Pray God’s Will: with God instead of against Him

III. HOLY SPIRIT, THE INTERCESSOR

- A. We don’t know how to pray
 - 1. Romans 8: 26-27 - Holy Spirit helps us
 - 2. Intercession is in-service all the time
- B. Another Advocate ... THE KEY
 - 1. Isaiah 61 - Jesus received the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Key for Jesus
 - 3. John 14: 15-16 – Another Advocate within us
- C. Agree with God
 - 1. Matthew 18:19-20 - agree with Jesus / the Holy Spirit

IV. HOW HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN INTERCESSION?

- A. Put Jesus first in every situation
 - 1. Acts 2: 4, 11 – Praise, the first gift of the Holy Spirit

2. Psalm 100:4 – the way to enter in - John 15:4
3. Psalm 22:3 – a throne for God
4. Psalm 148 – Jesus is Praise
5. John 12:34 – Promise of Jesus in Praise
6. Luke 1:46 – Blessed Mother

B. HOW HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN INTERCESSION?

1. Parables of intercession:
 - a. Doctor in surgery
 - b. Picture puzzle

C. WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY FOR?

1. Holy Spirit tells us
 - a. 1 Corinthians: 12: 4 – 11 – charismatic gifts
 - b. Gift of Tongues – God’s Prayer
 - c. Ephesians 6: 17 - Word of God (Galatians 6:7)
 - d. God sees opportunity for miracles
(John 6:33; Isaiah 55:11)

D. HOW CAN WE PRAY WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. Share what God gives
 - a. Discern WHAT God means
 - b. Discern HOW God wants us to pray
2. Many ways to pray
3. Romans 10: 9-10 – speak out loud
4. 2 Corinthians 1: 19-20; Matthew 18:19 - - agree
5. Isaiah 62 6-7 - Remind God of His Promises
6. Give God all the Glory - Ephesians 3: 20-21

APPENDIX B:

PART 2:

SUGGESTIONS ON

HOW TO FORM

AN INTERCESSORY

PRAYER GROUP

APPENDIX B:

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO FORM A CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC MISSIONARY INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP

I. EVERY GROUP NEEDS:

- A. A leader - chosen by the Lord.
- B. A secretary - to keep the prayer list and to record what the Lord gives to people during the prayer meeting.
- C. People (at least 2) who are:
 - 1. Called by God to be intercessors.
 - 2. Committed to worship and serve the Lord and pray for others in intercession (not just to get blessed or get "my" prayers answered.)
- D. A set time (about an hour once a week) and a place where you are free to worship and pray as the Spirit of God leads.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER MEETING:

A. BEFORE THE MEETING

Share briefly and write down intentions in the prayer list.
(Include prayer needs and answered prayers).

B. DURING THE MEETING

1. PRAISE AND WORSHIP

- a. Enter into the fullest praise and worship (include thanksgiving for answered prayer.)
- b. Continue in worship during the meeting - praying in the Spirit.
- c. End specific intentions and the whole meeting in worship of the Lord - giving Him all glory.

2. **LISTEN AND WATCH** as you worship for the Holy Spirit to lead on what to pray for, and how, and how long to pray for it.

3. **ASK FOR AND SHARE** any charismatic gifts or scriptures the Holy

Spirit wants to give as you pray. These are His Revelations on what to pray for and how to pray.

(Sometimes God calls us to repent to be better intercessors.)

4. DISCERN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT :

a. As the Holy Spirit gives His Revelations, ask Him for understanding of these Revelations.

(“What do You mean by these charismatic gifts or Scriptures?”)

b. Also ask, “How can we pray with You, Holy Spirit, using the Revelations you are giving us?”

5. AGREE OUT LOUD with the gifts and Scriptures the Holy Spirit gives and the way He leads the people to pray...

Continue in worship

(Mt.18:19; Rom.10:9).

6. WRITE DOWN what the Lord gives you to pray for and all He Shows through the gifts of the Spirit (e.g. prophecies, visions, discernment, words of knowledge) and through Scripture.

**** Persevere as long as the Lord leads you to pray. ****

C. END THE MEETING:

1. Gather all mentioned intentions to the Father with Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.
St. Raphael, pray for us. (Tobit 12:12, 15)
2. Sing in praise, thanksgiving and worship of the Lord, the Most Holy Trinity ... giving God all the glory.

III. WAYS TO GROW:

- A. Periodically review what the Lord has done and thank Him.
- B. Take a copy of Scriptures and promises the Lord gives for specific intentions so you can "remind God of His promises" as you intercede during the week.
- C. Make a time either together or on your own to regularly share some teaching on intercession so you can grow.
- D. Pray for other intercessors - for the Lord's protection and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit they need to serve Him.

APPENDIX C:
INTERCESSOR'S
PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

APPENDIX C:
INTERCESSOR'S PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS
(TO RELEASE OTHERS TO JESUS)

As the Holy Spirit leads, after a time of praise and worship, we pray with Jesus our Lord:

For those who have hurt us, for those who are not doing or have not done what we think they should have done, for those who are not doing what God wants: "Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." For those who are in sin: "Father, do not hold their sins against them." And I choose to forgive them and release them in the name of Jesus.

Father, forgive me for anything I said or thought or felt or did to others that could keep them in bondage, especially repeating the negative things even if they were true. I ask for the Mind and the Heart of Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, help us to see one another as You do. Help us to speak about one another as you do. Holy Spirit, show us how to pray for one another. Amen.

After praying this prayer, we lift the person or persons up to Jesus and place them in His Sacred Heart. Then we sing praising the Lord, calling on the Name of Jesus, and praying in the Holy Spirit until the Holy Spirit brings to our mind how to think and pray for them, or until the burden we feel for them lifts from our hearts and we experience God's Peace and Love toward them. We end with praise and thanksgiving to God for all He has done in our time of intercession.

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Nihil Obstat: Father Pelin D'Souza, Censor

Imprimatur: His Eminence Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga

Given at is Eminence's Residence

Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa

25th November 1994, Feast of St. Catherine, Martyr

APPENDIX D:

EPHESIANS

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

SCRIPTURAL PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

(FROM EPHESIANS 1:17-23; 3:14-21)

OUR FATHER, Who Art In Heaven...

FATHER IN HEAVEN, GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, FATHER OF GLORY, we pray that you give each of us in Your Church a Spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring us to full knowledge of You. We ask You to enlighten the eyes of our minds so that we can see what hope Your call holds for us, what rich glories You have promised the saints will inherit, and how infinitely great is the power that You have exercised for us believers. This we can tell from the strength of Your power at work in CHRIST JESUS when You used it to raise Him from the dead and make Him sit at Your Right Hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. You have put all things under His Feet, and made Him, as RULER OF EVERYTHING, the HEAD OF THE CHURCH, which is His Body, the fullness of Him Who fills the whole creation.

FATHER, from Whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name, this is what we pray as we kneel before You: Out of Your infinite glory, may You give us the power through YOUR SPIRIT for our hidden selves to grow strong, so that CHRIST may live in our hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, we will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height, and the depth, until, knowing the Love of CHRIST, which is beyond all knowledge, we are filled with the utter fullness of GOD.

GLORY BE TO YOU WHOSE POWER, WORKING IN US, CAN DO INFINITELY MORE THAN WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE; GLORY BE TO YOU FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS FOR EVER AND EVER AMEN. ALLELUIA.

APPENDIX E:

INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER

APPENDIX D:
INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER
(TO RENEW OUR COMMITMENT OF LOVE TO JESUS)

*“The Love of God has been poured forth in our hearts
by the Holy Spirit; and this is God’s Gift to us.” (Romans 5:5)*
“Come, Holy Spirit, Come.”

Let us sing and pray for a time to welcome and invite the Holy Spirit to come and fill us even more with God’s Divine Love and all of His Gifts right now.

As the Holy Spirit is filling our hearts even more with God’s Divine Love right now, we do not want to keep this Love just for ourselves. But we give it back first of all to Our Father in Heaven. Our Almighty Father has loved us with all of His Heart and we see this especially in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us renew our commitment of love to Our Father in Heaven together. And then renew our love to the Lord Jesus.

Let us pray:

“Dear Father in Heaven, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart, especially through our Lord Jesus Christ. I love you with all of my heart too. And I also love you in reparation for all those who do not love you today. “

We sing and pray a while, loving Our Father in Heaven ourselves. Then, as we love Our Father for others, especially in reparation for those who do not love God, we lift them up in our hands to the Father. “Abba Father, how I love you.”

Now we want to renew our commitment of love to Jesus together.

Let us pray:

“Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart and all of Your Life. Thank you for even shedding Your Precious Blood and dying on the cross for me. Thank you for forgiving all of my sins through your Holy Cross.

“Lord Jesus, come more deeply into my heart right now. Fill me more

with your Divine Love, with Your Divine Life. Please forgive me all my sins. I ask you to forgive me especially for all the times I was “God’s little helper”. Forgive me when I did not come to You first and ask You first what You wanted me to do, even when I pray. I DO want to follow You, Lord Jesus. Heal me, Lord. Fill me more with your Holy Spirit and Your Divine Love. Live out Your Life in Me.

“Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make Jesus the Lord of my whole life. I surrender my whole life to You. I give you my way of thinking I give you my way of doing things. I give you my way of praying. I renounce all the ways of the world. I renounce all sin. I renounce Satan and all his evil ways and all his evil spirits.

“I choose You, Lord Jesus. I choose Your Ways. Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make Jesus the Lord of my whole life and the Lord of my prayer. Release in me all of Your Gifts. Help me to love other people as Jesus does. Teach me how to pray. Help me to follow Jesus. Help me to be faithful to Jesus, so I can live in God’s Family forever. Amen.”

We can now take some time to sing and pray a love song to Jesus. As we pray, remember how Jesus came to Thomas after the resurrection. He said, “Look Thomas. Here are the wounds in My Hands and Feet and Side. Put your finger there. Doubt no longer, but only believe. This same Jesus is here with us right now. As we pray, close your eyes and look at Jesus as Thomas did. And maybe somehow you can reach up and put your finger into the wounds of Jesus today. Let His Precious Blood wash through you with all His Love and Mercy and Healing and Miracles. Then let us lift up our people to Jesus. Place them in His Sacred Heart so His precious Blood can wash through them, too, with all His Grace and Miracles.

Let us sing and pray, “Precious Jesus, how I love You.” Amen.