

# GLEANINGS

THAT ALL CATHOLICS MATURE IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS,  
EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

MARCH/APRIL 2021

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## To the River, to the Desert, and Beyond

by Jim Murphy

One of the great Lenten themes of the Church is Jesus in the desert, after He had been baptized. Indeed, the Church's practice of Lenten disciplines for forty days is modeled on the 40 days spent by Christ in the wilderness. The Church is not simply calling us to observe Jesus in the wilderness, but to join Him there. We need to examine this aspect more carefully, not only to see what Jesus does, but to learn the lessons for our own journeys.

**The Baptism of Jesus:** What an extraordinary experience! The heavens open, the Spirit comes upon Jesus, and the Father's voice proclaims His pleasure and delight in His beloved Son. I don't think we can even comprehend what that moment must have been like for Jesus. Perfect union. Perfect love. The experience of the Holy Spirit.

**The Desert Journey:** Matthew tells us that it was the Spirit that led Jesus into the desert. Mark tells us that the Spirit actually drove Jesus into the desert! Why the desert?

You recall that the people of Israel spent 40 years in the desert. It was a journey of testing and purification for them. You also remember that Moses spent 40 days on the mountain, being with God and receiving the Law. The 40 days of Jesus in the desert corresponds with these two momentous events. He is the New Israel. He is greater than Moses. He completes what was lacking in those previous journeys.

The desert was always considered by the Jewish people to be the desolate place where evil spirits dwelt. Ironically, the mountains in the desert were often the places where people would encounter God. The desert was a place of testing and purification. It was a place of combat with evil, and with one's own human weakness.

To this difficult place Jesus goes, led there... driven there, by the Holy Spirit.

As if the rigors of surviving in this place, not to mention a 40 day fast, were not enough, "the tempter approached Him." Satan laid out three temptations:

- Turn stones into bread
- Throw yourself off the Temple
- Prostrate yourself and worship me.

As in all temptations that are presented man, there was a certain "reasonableness" in these seductions:

Jesus was literally hungry. The 40 day fast had severely weakened Him. What is wrong with taking care of yourself? Eating isn't some extravagant luxury. Be reasonable.

If Jesus threw Himself off the Temple and lived..... what a way to launch a ministry! You would have everyone's attention. You could get people to do anything you wanted them to do. It will also show the world His "anointing." Wouldn't that impress people!

Jesus is invited to worship Satan. If Jesus yields on this point, the devil will give Him all the power and influence in the world. Wouldn't that

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## WWCCR VISION AND MISSION

**Vision:** that all Catholics mature in a personal relationship with Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God The Father.

**Mission:** to renew the face of the earth by nurturing and inspiring Catholics:

- + To experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- + To fan into flame the gifts we receive through the Sacraments
- + To develop a deeper life of prayer and worship

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**GLEANNINGS** is the bimonthly newsletter published by Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal (WWCCR). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide teaching, news, and a calendar of events which help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the Church in Western Washington.

**Deadline:** in order for any articles, news, or calendar items to be considered for publication in **GLEANNINGS**, it must be submitted by the 1st of the month before the month of publication. All submissions subject to editing for length, accuracy, and clarity.

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## OFFICE NOTES FROM JEAN BEERS

Interim Office Manager

Everyone I have asked has said that the 2021 Virtual Women's Retreat left them inspired and elated. It truly was "A Spring of Water Flowing in the Parched Land."

By mail, each registrant received the beautifully planned and designed retreat journal that began on the inside cover with Our Retreat Prayer, written by coordinator Mary Pelton. The inside pages had themes and scriptures for each of the four sessions, followed by questions for small groups, preparing retreatants for the flow of the day.

The presenter, Joan Williamson, broadcast her enthusiasm for the Lord and his work in our lives right through the device screens and into our hearts. She led us through the retreat themes, helping us to "go in and go deep, as you are comfortable."

Even though we could not gather in person, we connected with her and our small breakout groups that met in four sessions. We listened to each other and felt love for each one as we shared about this time in our lives.

Praise and worship, led by Julia Cox before each session, had many of us standing up in front of our laptops to lift our hands and hearts to the Lord. Julia also led the music for the closing Mass, the second Vigil Mass for Fr. Jim Northrop that Saturday. His homily was an exhortation to trust in the Lord during these challenging times. He and Julia prayed and sang The Blessing over us that night, leaving us with the assurance of the Father's blessing on us and our families.

It was the first time we had done a virtual retreat and it became a whole new training course for everyone involved. Each retreat team member brought what technological knowledge they had and were challenged to learn more in order to bring about the whole event. Special thanks go to Julia Cox, Virginia King, Mary Pelton, and Fr. Jim Northrop for serving the technological needs. We thank all the small group facilitators (we had 10 of them!) and all the other Retreat Team members for their loving and prayerful service. ■



## Join "The Journey"

A video series with  
host Kianna Garmanian  
interviewing fellow Catholics  
about their walk with Jesus.

Find "The Journey" at [wwccr.org](http://wwccr.org)

be a good thing? Wouldn't it help Jesus accomplish the mission of bringing the entire world to the Father?

All three temptations offer the amazing, the dramatic, the "reasonable" way to get some things accomplished.

In each case, Jesus resists the bait, and declares His trust in God, rather than expedient solutions.

He was tested. He was obedient to God. He was found to be worthy.

The desert was not only about the temptations. It was also a time of deep communion with the Father. Like Moses on Sinai, Jesus receives in his very being the "new Law, the New Covenant of God" which He will take with Him when He leaves the desert and begins His mission.

The desert is a place of emptying. It is also a place of filling.

**Beyond the desert:** From the desert, Jesus comes forth to begin His public ministry. His first public words in Matthew's Gospel are a reprise of what John the Baptist proclaimed; "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Over the next three years, Christ spoke powerfully about the ways of God, and the need for all of humanity to conform itself to those ways. There is a certain irony here. Signs and wonders accompanied the preaching of Jesus. Was not Satan tempting Him back in the desert to "do the dramatic?" Jesus rejected them in the desert. Now He's performing signs and wonders! Simply put, the desert temptations were solutions offered under "the devil's

terms." Jesus rejects that completely. When offered by the Holy Spirit however, Jesus is willing to use the authentic power of God in order to usher in the Kingdom. Please note: The "dramatics" of Satan can often mimic the legitimate works of God—be discerning.

What lessons might we take away from this "Exodus" of Jesus; from the river, to the desert, to ministry?

**Yet God sends us there  
[to the desert]. Not to  
punish us, but to purify  
us, strengthen us, and  
ultimately heal us and  
prepare us for the work  
of the Kingdom.**

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At some point, all of us will "go to the wilderness." It usually is not a pleasant, feel-good experience. But it is a necessary part of the journey for any follower of Christ. I spent months in the deserts of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California when I made the journey with the cross across America back in the 90's. Sometimes I was completely alone for days at a time. I recall the advice of the desert fathers, the Christians who went to the desert in the early centuries of Christianity, in imitation of Christ. They said that when you go into the wilderness, you will encounter three realities: the real you, the real devil, and the real God. The real you will nearly drive you mad. The real devil will try to utterly destroy you. The real God will love you, heal you, and draw you close to Himself.

I would have to say that, in my limited experience, I can vouch for the accuracy of that.

**The question is:** where is your desert? Where is your wilderness? Ultimately it is deep within our hearts, within ourselves. It can be helping a loved one through a sickness. It's a home completely turned upside down by the realities of COVID-19. It can be a loved one "calling you out" for things in your life that you would rather not look at.

No one "wants" to go to the desert. It is difficult..... so very difficult.

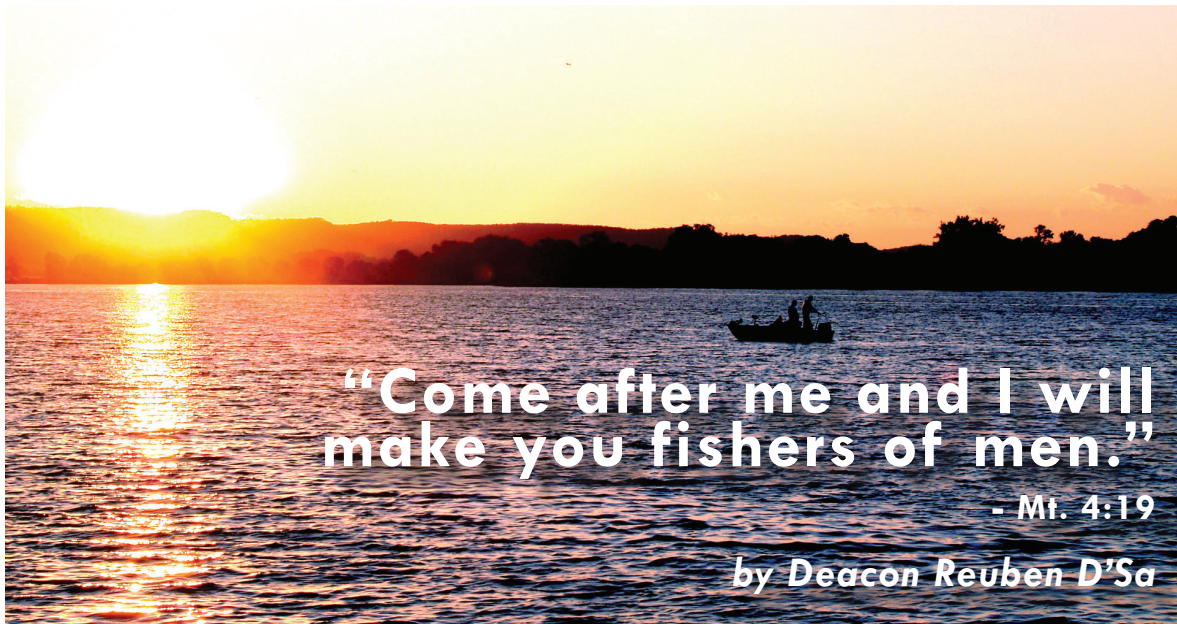
Yet God sends us there. Not to punish us, but to purify us, strengthen us, and ultimately heal us and prepare us for the work of the Kingdom.

Many of us think that once "the Dove comes upon us," our problems are over. Now that we are "anointed" everything is going to go our way.

The stark reality is that the Spirit is given to us not only to make us useful in ministry, but to both send us, then assist us, in our own struggles in the desert. It's a necessary aspect of the Christian life that very few people are willing to embrace with their eyes open. Even the struggles, even the testing, can be used by God to strengthen and purify us. In that same place of emptiness, brokenness, and poverty we also find a new and deeper filling.

Tested, humbled, strengthened, and filled—we join Jesus on the journey beyond the desert. ■

*Jim Murphy is the founder and director of Vera Cruz Communications.*



**“Come after me and I will  
make you fishers of men.”**

**- Mt. 4:19**

**by Deacon Reuben D'Sa**

FREEIMAGES/Brian Lary

**J**eremiah 29:11 says, ‘I know the plans I have for you...’. My faith journey took a turn from being a lukewarm Catholic, to walking with the Lord, after my encounter

**During this journey, I became increasingly aware of how blessed I was, and that these blessings were not mine to keep and enjoy, but to share.**

with Jesus. This happened through the baptism of the Holy Spirit at a retreat many years ago. That experience was not a dramatic one but rather a deep assurance that the Holy Spirit would begin working in

me if I allowed him, and my life would not be the same.

Over the next several years I got involved in ministering in various capacities, including doing music, teaching, and healing ministry with WWCCR, Renewed in Christ charismatic prayer group and my parish. My faith grew stronger, thanks to this wonderful community of faithful Catholics. I strived to use my gifts, even if they were not very well developed. During this journey, I became increasingly aware of how blessed I

was, and that these blessings were not mine to keep and enjoy, but to share.

I knew the Lord had something bigger planned for me. I did not know what, but I found myself surrendering to God. All of this led to the call and the 5-year Diaconate formation journey, ending in my ordination on December 19th, 2020. That ending is really the beginning of a new life of service.

When I reflect on this journey, I believe the Lord has a perfect plan for each of us. He has given us specific gifts and will equip us as needed. But we need to trust and believe in his goodness and his providence and surrender to his will. If we give him our Yes, he can and will multiply it, like the loaves and fish. At this time and place, there is a great need for laborers of various kinds.

What is the Lord calling you to do? Are you willing to trust in his will for you? This Lent, do not be afraid to say yes and see what the Lord will do. Blessings. ■

*Deacon Reuben D'sa was ordained as a permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Seattle and he now serves at St. Jude Parish, Redmond.*



# On the Right Path

by Andrea Garcia

*"Most important of all, pray to God to set your feet in the path of Truth."*  
- Sirach 37: 15

I have found for this Lenten season two ways to focus on listening to the Holy Spirit while keeping my feet on the right path.

## 1. Let God Lead:

I'm focusing on following God's lead in spite of my human tendency to question and hesitate for whatever

reason. "Help me, Lord, to rely more on the Holy Spirit so as to be an instrument in the world." Be a trumpet for the Lord, loud and proud!

**2. Learn:** By experience we grow. "Help me, Lord, to let go of anything that might hinder my spiritual growth, be it the TV, internet, or any slothfulness. Thank you for the holy sacraments and scripture, the word of God. It is our source of strength, our greatest weapons in combat with our enemy the devil. Amen."

What has the Holy Spirit been teaching you in this Lenten season?

Where is God leading you to be an instrument for Him, at work and at home?

How can the Holy Spirit help accomplish that? ■

Andrea Garcia is a WWCCR Board member and parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Church in Seattle.

# The Blessing

by Carolyn McNerney

*It is impossible to capture what it was like at the closing Mass for the Women's Retreat—whether present at St. Thomas or attending online. At the end of Mass, "The Blessing" was sung by Julia Cox and Fr. Jim Northrop, and interspersed with Fr. Jim speaking blessings and intercessions and praising the Lord. It was indescribable!*

*We want to, at least, share with you the prayers and blessings that Fr. Jim spoke out during the song, along with some of the scripture references that inspired the song lyrics.*

**Fr. Jim:** Lord, we come before you with an expectant faith. We know your goodness, your tenderness, your love, and your mercy. Open our hearts to receive the blessing you wish to pour forth upon us. And strengthen us in our inner self to know the height, the breadth, and the length and depths of your love, and completely fill us with your presence. In Jesus' name we pray.

## **Numbers 6:24-26:**

### **The Priestly Blessing**

*The Lord bless you and keep you!  
The Lord let his face shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you!*

*The Lord look upon you kindly and  
give you peace!*

**Fr. Jim:** O Lord, we just ask you to shine your face upon us. Gladden our hearts with the knowledge of your love, that we, through the greatness of your love, have access to your house. We can come before you and present our needs. We don't have to be ashamed. We don't have to live in a spirit of fear because you have set us free through your death and resurrection, Lord Jesus. Bless us and open our hearts now to the blessing you wish to bestow upon us. Thank you, Jesus.

When Elisha came before Elijah, he asked for a double portion of the mantle, of the anointing that the Lord had given Elijah. So, he thought big. So, let's now bring our bigger needs to the Lord. If there's something in your family or your workplace that's troubling you, bring it now before the Lord in a spirit of faith and ask for his blessing right now. He is good and generous. He promised to lavish the Holy Spirit upon his children in the last days.

Now we come in the spirit of faith and ask the Lord to bless us, to make his face shine upon us, to shower his affection and love upon us, to remove any fear, any shame, any effort of the enemy to thwart his divine plan in our lives. We come against it right now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we take authority in Jesus' name, and we pray in a very special way for the intercession of Mary our Mother, that her mantle be wrapped around us to draw us closer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## **Deuteronomy 7:9**

*Understand, then, that the Lord, your God, is God indeed, the faithful God who keeps his merciful covenant toward those who love him and keep his commandments.*

## **Psalm 103:17-18**

*But the Lord's kindness is forever,  
toward the faithful from age to age.  
He favors the children's children of  
those who keep his covenant, who  
take care to fulfill its precepts.*

**Fr. Jim:** Lord, we lift up every member of our family right now, and especially those who may not be walking with you, that they will come to know the love you have for them. We claim them now for Christ; we claim every person of our family, every person you've placed on

our hearts. We pray that they will come to know the depths of your love and the new life you offer us. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus. You will never be outdone in generosity. You're amazing. We love you and bless you and praise you. Give us back again the joy of salvation.

## **Psalm 118:6-7**

*The Lord is with me; I am not afraid;  
what can mortals do against me? The  
Lord is with me as my helper; I shall  
look in triumph on my foes.*

## **Psalm 121:8**

*The Lord will guard your coming and  
going both now and forever.*

## **Romans 8:31**

*If God is for us, who can be against us?*

**Fr. Jim:** Come down, Holy Spirit, upon your children. Fill us with the light of your love and mercy. Give us back again the joy of salvation, in Jesus' holy name. We praise you, Jesus.

Lord, send forth your Holy Spirit to anoint us with the oil of gladness. Send us forth to proclaim your name, to push back the darkness of the enemy and usher in your kingdom of light. You have given us everything we need to live a truly devout life and to praise you and be faithful and confident in you. Praise you. Thank you, Lord. Praise you, Lord. You will never abandon us. You are always with us. Praise you, Lord. ■

*You can watch the Women's Retreat closing Mass and The Blessing song and prayer on the St. Thomas Church Facebook page, <https://fb.watch/3CRFEbnCDL/> the second Vigil Mass for Saturday, February 6, 2021.*

*Carolyn McNerney is a regular volunteer at the WWCCR office and member of St. Theresa parish in Federal Way.*

## Please pray for these priests, deacons, and seminarians:

Mar 1	Pope Francis	Apr 1	Pope Francis
Mar 2	Archbishop Paul Etienne	Apr 2	Archbishop Paul Etienne
Mar 3	Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, MSpS	Apr 3	Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, MSpS
Mar 4	Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg	Apr 4	Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg
Mar 5	Fr. Jim Northrop	Apr 5	Fr. Jim Northrop
Mar 6	Fr. James Johnson	Apr 6	Fr. Isidro Lepez
Mar 7	Deacon James Johnson	Apr 7	Fr. Dwight Lewis
Mar 8	Fr. Tyler Johnson	Apr 8	Deacon Juan Lezcano
Mar 9	Deacon Fred Johnson	Apr 9	Fr. Richard Luberti
Mar 10	Deacon Dave Jones	Apr 10	Fr. John Ludvik
Mar 11	Fr. Clarence Jones	Apr 11	Deacon Craig Lundberg
Mar 12	Fr. Bernard Jonientz	Apr 12	Fr. Jan Lundberg
Mar 13	Fr. P.A. Kaech	Apr 13	Deacon Jack Luz
Mar 14	Seminarian Jeffery Kalsbeek	Apr 14	Seminarian Evan MacKenzie
Mar 15	Deacon Patrick Kelley	Apr 15	Fr. Fabian MacDonald
Mar 16	Deacon Dennis Kelly	Apr 16	Fr. Peter Mactutis
Mar 17	Deacon Lyle Kendall	Apr 17	Seminarian Maliko Madden
Mar 18	Deacon Larry Kheriaty	Apr 18	Fr. John Madigan
Mar 19	Fr. Young-Kwan Kim	Apr 19	Deacon Abel Magana-Sainz
Mar 20	Fr. Mark Kiszewski	Apr 20	Fr. Paul Magnano
Mar 21	Fr. Richard Klepac	Apr 21	Deacon Felix Maguire
Mar 22	Fr. Ronald Knudsen	Apr 22	Fr. Dominic David Maichrowicz
Mar 23	Deacon Richard Labrecque	Apr 23	Deacon Jorge Malca
Mar 24	Deacon Loren Lane	Apr 24	Fr. Maurice Mamba
Mar 25	Fr. Derek Lappe	Apr 25	Deacon Terry Marcell
Mar 26	Fr. Leo Larrivee	Apr 26	Fr. Jacob Maurer
Mar 27	Fr. Seamus Laverty	Apr 27	Fr. David Mayovsky
Mar 28	Fr. Gary Lazzeroni	Apr 28	Fr. Gerald Mayovsky
Mar 29	Fr. Jim Lee	Apr 29	Seminarian Gitau Mbuiyu
Mar 30	Fr. Se Ho Lee	Apr 30	Fr. Dean Mbuzi
Mar 31	Deacon Joe Lehman		

*Lord, lift up your holy priests; grant them the graces they need to minister to your people. Keep them pure and strong in your love; give them courage when things are difficult and accompany them when they are lonely; strengthen them in times of weakness. Amen.*



*Let us pray...*

**O Saint Joseph,**  
assist us by your  
powerful and effective  
intercession, and present  
this intention to your  
Divine foster-son, Jesus  
Christ, our Lord: We  
place the interests and  
needs of WWCCR  
before You, Jesus,  
especially our need for  
wisdom and provision  
for the future disposition  
of the WWCCR office  
building, for any  
re-structuring we need,  
and for the appropriate  
staffing, including our  
search for an Executive  
Director. Amen.

*(Feel free to cut out this prayer  
and keep it in your bible or  
prayer book.)*



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**GLEANNINGS**  
MARCH/APRIL 2021

## *Our Retreat Prayer*

*Good and gracious God, for  
you I thirst. In times of dryness  
and desolation, I seek you and  
your never-ending fulfillment.*

*Quench my thirst for  
you O Lord!*

*Allow me the grace to not only  
seek you, but to find you, to*

*rejoice in you as you rejoice in me  
and to allow me to rest in  
your bountiful love.*

*Flood my soul with your  
Spirit and life. Draw me  
close to you and fill me so that  
I may rest in your abundant  
refreshment and grace forever.  
Amen.*

*- Mary Pelton, WWCCR Women's Retreat Coordinator*