

Jesus – the Saviour in my Life

Lord and Saviour. St Paul says it for us: “I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness

Dear Joshua men,

I pray God’s richest blessing for you and your families this year. May it be a year of the ‘Lord’s favour’ for you. Each month this year, God willing, I will put before you in our reflections, some aspect of Jesus Lordship in our lives. As we grow in our Christian faith we become more deeply conscious of Jesus presence and love in our life.

Each day we rejoice in the extraordinary privilege that is ours: to have Him as our Lord, and to be able to place our poor, sinful life in his hands. Each day we know He safeguards us from the onslaught of the evil one. Each day we experience the gentle touch of his Spirit breathed upon us. We carry our lives in our hands, assured that our

offering and surrender gives great honour and glory to Him who first loved us and gave his life for our redemption.

What does this year hold for you? What plans have you in mind? For me, personally, I am challenged this year by the exhortation of St Peter, words directed to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, treasure the

same faith he himself has received (2 Peter 1:1). His challenge to me for this year is this: “Keep on growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Peter has come a long way. After his three-fold denial, Jesus asked him three times “Peter, do you love me?” His reply: “Lord, you know I love you” (John 21:17). If Jesus appeared to you tonight and asked the same question, what might your response be? I pray St Peter’s response can be the response of each one of us.

As for Saint Peter, so for Saint John. Both men marvelled that they had been given the wonderful privilege of “knowing” the Saviour. John expresses his wonderment this way: “Something we have heard and seen with our own eyes; this we have looked at and touched with our hands: the Word who is life. Him we proclaim” (1 John 1:1). And for us: Jesus is always foremost in our minds and in our hearts. Like Peter and John there needs to be a sense of wonderment to our faith.

As you know, we can know a lot about Jesus. There is a great search going on in the Church today to find the ‘historical Jesus’. We can leave that to those who do research in that area. Our concern is to know Jesus as

of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord” (Philippians 3:8).

To know Jesus is to have Him as our Saviour. That’s how Paul first encountered Jesus. Paul considered himself as having been the worst of sinners but Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He gave praise and thanks to God for the mercy shown to him. (1 Timothy 1:2-17). Open your heart every day to the saving mercy of God revealed in Jesus and learn to praise and thank God for the gift of his mercy in your life.

Not long ago we celebrated the Feast of Epiphany. This feast is about Jesus Christ being shown to us as the King of kings and Saviour of the world. Do I recognise Him as my King? Even after years there can still be areas of resistance in our life. If I find myself holding back, the Wise Men of the Epiphany story are presenting me with a challenge.

They are saying in effect: ‘Set out again in search of your Saviour, follow his star.’ They are also saying: ‘Bring Him a gift.’

What am I to bring? – myself - my life, my hope, my joy, my friendship, my love. For myself, if I find myself losing touch with Him I know I am neglecting my best Friend, the Saviour in my life. Spend a little time each day in his presence. He in turn will touch you with his Holy Spirit.

Finally, dear men, just a quick review of where we will go this year. Among the books on my shelf is a beautiful one, “Jesus of Nazareth” written by Pope Benedict XVI. Among the many beautiful chapters in this book, two stand out for me: the Pope presents Jesus as “the man of the Spirit” and “the Man of Prayer.”

Another of my books is “Jesus, a Portrait” by Gerald O’Collins SJ. He has several beautiful chapters that we can draw upon: “Jesus, the Healer”, “Jesus, the Story-teller”, “Jesus, the Teacher”, “Jesus, the Suffering Servant.”

A book I particularly love is “Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God” written by the great spiritual writer, Raniero Cantalamessa OFM. He has a beautiful chapter on ‘Loving Jesus.’

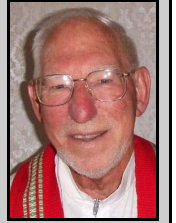
I hope I am wetting your appetite to draw closer to Jesus. Another book we can draw upon is “Images of Jesus” by Alfred McBride. He has a beautiful Easter chapter, “Jesus, my Joy”.

“Holy Spirit, teach me about the splendour of Jesus. Fill my heart with the ocean of his love. Captivate me so that I will desire Him. Holy Spirit, may I know your anointing more deeply this year. Continue reminding me of the life Christ won for me. I commit 2010 to you. May you be first in my heart and priorities during each of the days of this year. Be my guide through the uncharted paths ahead. Protect me from the evil one and empower me to live by faith, trust, and hope in my loving Father.”

Father Bruce McGill CSSR

National chaplain for
Joshua Catholic Men’s
Fellowship

cbm@redskiwi.org.nz



Joshua
newsletter

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Website:
www.joshua.org.nz

Email:
pontings@paradise.net.nz



Mike Conroy
Leader Joshua NLT

Greetings everyone.

Welcome to the first Joshua newsletter for 2010. By now most of us will be back to “normal” whatever “normal” means for each of us following the Christmas and New Year holiday period. I suppose in away it is a bit like the Church’s year – we have the special seasons like Advent and Christmas and then

we return to “ordinary” time. Ordinary can of course be anything but ordinary, both in the Gospels which tell us about Jesus, and in our own day to day lives.

I love the way the Church doesn’t just jump straight back into ordinary time after Christmas – we have the feasts of the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, the Epiphany which Fr Bruce has referred to in his article, and finally the Baptism of the Lord before we find ourselves back into ordinary time.

These feasts all help complete the picture of the birth of our Saviour and give us an insight into His early life on earth. God made us to know, love and serve Him. It would be hard for us to love a God whom nobody had ever seen, but by sending His Son into the world as a human person, born in the same way we are, growing up through childhood to adulthood and experiencing the things we do, God has made it so much easier for us to relate to him through knowing Jesus.

It is a master plan really when you think about it. It is true that the Bible does not record very much detail about Jesus’ childhood and early adult years, but there is plenty that we do know about his three years of public ministry. I’m looking forward very much to Fr Bruce’s series of articles this year that will help us to get to know Jesus even more. Our national theme for the year is **“Making Jesus the centre of our lives”** and to do this we not only need to now about Him, we need to **know** Him. By receiving these articles throughout the year and meditating on what they contain we will grow to know Jesus more and more. I can’t wait!

I was going to begin this column by wishing you a Happy New Year but chose not to. Don’t get me wrong, I do wish you all the best for 2010, it’s just that this greeting often seems to roll so easily off our tongues but sometimes it might not be the most appropriate thing to say to some people. Let me explain. For most of us we are probably quite happy to hear those words - we have had a bit of a break, been to the beach maybe and recharged the batteries a bit, so yes, we are feeling positive about the coming year.

For others, however, this may not be the case. They may have experienced a family tragedy, received some bad news recently or be struggling with personal issues that make it very difficult for them to be happy about the new year. I am aware of at least a couple of men who are currently

experiencing circumstances such as these and I’ve been wondering just what hope I could offer them when “Happy New Year” just doesn’t cut it. Yesterday, while attending a weekday Mass, something Father said during his short homily spoke that deeply to me about such things and so I thought it would be good to share it.

The gospel was Mark’s account of Jesus calming the wind and the waves while crossing the Sea of Galilee. Father pointed out that, while there was a great storm raging around the disciples in the boat, Jesus was there with them all the time, right in the midst of the turmoil. Like those men in the boat, we can easily begin to think Jesus may have fallen asleep on us or is not concerned for our safety and wellbeing when the storms of life assail us.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus is with us always but it is in those times especially that He expects us to place our trust most fully in Him. I hope that this truth might just help someone reading this.

With the year getting underway in earnest, several Joshua groups are taking the opportunity of getting together for a team retreat to prepare for the coming year. Northland and Wellington have done so already, as reported on page four in this newsletter. Hamilton branch are meeting next weekend.

From my own experience, such days are excellent value and really do help kick the year off on the right foot. Looking ahead for the year, at this stage the annual Joshua Leaders’ Retreat will take place in April, the Christchurch boys are organising a retreat in Wainui in May and Willow Park in Auckland has been booked for a mid-October retreat weekend.

The other major event on the horizon is the first international Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference to be held in Auckland at the end of September. Both Joshua and Dove have been asked to assist and support this conference which will bring together people from India, Asia, Australia, the Pacific Islands and of course New Zealand.

As part of the preparation for this conference, a fundraising concert has been arranged for 14th March at Baradene College, Auckland and I urge you to support this by attending that concert if at all possible – please refer to the advertisement in this newsletter for further details.

As you can see, the year is going to be another busy one, but exciting at the same time. The NLT is up for re-discernment this year at the Leaders’ Retreat in April. We have two or three new men who are to be discerned for the NLT also, but it would be good to have one or two more. If you feel God is calling you to serve Joshua in this way, please give Jim or I a call. If not, I ask that you keep all of us uplifted in prayer during the lead up to that weekend.

May the Lord bless you and your families abundantly this year and always.

Fundraising for the Oceania Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Conference 30th Sept - 3rd Oct 2010

"With a Song in My Heart"

You are invited to an evening of music performed by some of the leading singers and performers in Auckland accompanied by the Ben Fernandez Trio. The band will play a mix of popular jazz standards, swing , latin and pop classics with a jazz flavour. A couple of guest artistes will also be featured on the show.

Performers:

Verity Burgess - Vocals

Maria O'Flaherty - Vocals

Rahul Cardoza - Vocals

Award Winning BarberShop Quartet- Sons of a Pitch

Alberto Santirelli - Bass

Stephen Thomas - Drums

Russell McNaughton - Bass

Ben Fernandez - Pianist and Musical Director

Where: Baradene College, 237 Victoria Avenue, Remuera

When: Sunday, 14 March 2010 at 7pm

Entrance: \$20 per person (non-refundable)

Tickets and enquires to ACCR office: (09) 489 5613



Northland begins year with committee retreat

By Colin Lamb

Joshua Northland started 2010 with a committee retreat at Okaihau on January 11th. Present were Colin Lamb, Peter Jackson, Joe McMonagle, Paul Baker, Rodney Palmer, Howard Alexander, Fred, Graeme Nelson and Michael Hutt.

After being welcomed by Brother Dennis and Father Arthur, Father Arthur celebrated Mass. Prayers of the faithful were open and well participated in. Colin Lamb's karakia was a surprise to several who did not know he can speak Maori.

As at our monthly meetings we were blessed with the presence of Paul Baker and Rodney Palmer to provide us with music.

Brother Dennis gave an interesting talk on the skills and merits of good leadership before Bishop Colin from Dunedin, having arrived for meetings, agreed to anoint each member using oil from Graeme Nelson's olive grove.

Three members of our Fellowship have put their names up to serve on the committee with Peter Jackson looking to step down. Discernment of new committee members was carried out by Paul Baker, Rodney Palmer and Fred, who acts as adviser to the Northland Committee, while the remainder reflected on leadership, local history and shared recent experiences.

A good leader is servant and shepherd to those they lead. As Joe McMonagle, who is involved in youth programmes, said "They don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

Our thanks to Father Arthur and Brother Dennis for their input and the use of their wonderful facilities.

Jesus is my favourite loser. He fell for the entire human race.

Wellington committee gearing up for a big year

A small committee with a big heart, keen to follow NLT recommendations to centre the year around Making Jesus the Centre of Our Lives, we met on January 30 to plan the year.

The day contained Mass, prayer, scripture, discernment teaching and planning for both a Life In The Spirit Seminar and a one-day retreat. We reviewed the positives and negatives of the past year and there was reflection on what commitment we have as a Joshua group to outreach, also becoming aware of how our gifts are being used.

We prayed for forgiveness for the times we had not followed God's leading as He desired, as well as protection for those we had let down by not hearing their needs fully.

Brother Gerard Hogg shared a talk of which a condensed version follows on the next page. Anyone who attends the first Joshua meeting on February 18 will get the full version, a treat worth attending for.

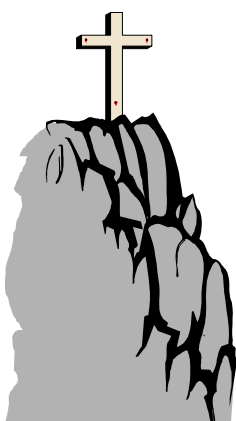
On the  lighter side

Who's toy is it?

Tom had won a toy at a raffle. He called his kids together to ask which one should have the present.

"Who is the most obedient?" he asked.
"Who never talks back to mother? Who does everything she says?"

Five small voices answered in unison:
"Okay, Dad, you get the toy."



Prayer support available

A prayer support link has been established within Joshua Fellowship.

Any request you have can be forwarded (easiest by email) to Jim Gribble jimp.gribble@gmail.com. Please include a CC (copy) to Peter Dawson pheadde@ihug.co.nz who will send it around the email list if Jim is unavailable.

If you are not yet on the list of men who receive requests please advise Jim. Many healings (and identifiable miracles) continue to occur as we pray. Please remember to contact Jim and/or Peter to record "results" of prayer. Testimony to Jesus' healing is not only always welcome but empowers and encourages others.

What Brother Gerard shared with the Wellington committee

In Friday's scripture reading from Mark 4: 35-41 we read about the concern of the men (later Apostles) in the boat on the lake with Jesus. They became very frightened in the middle of the storm and looked for help - help from others, help from Jesus. It just occurred to me that Jesus was asleep in the boat! My mother always said, "God is always watching you" and yet here we have an example of God asleep.

"Have you no faith?" asks Jesus. Life, in a sense, is a matter of learning to entrust ourselves more and more, into the hands of another. This is demonstrated throughout our lives - from birth to death. We can only survive, grow and be successful if we learn how to balance our lives, between being dependent and independent.

Together today you are here to join as a team to lead Joshua through the year ahead. Today, you as members of Joshua and as Catholic men are going aside from our usual Saturday activities to look at the leadership of Joshua for the year ahead.

I believe the main focus for each of us is to develop a close relationship with Jesus. Only then will we be open to the Holy Spirit so He can bless us and equip us.

As we read about Jesus in the gospels we see that to be with the Father Jesus withdraws from all activity in the ordinary world on a regular basis. He withdraws to 'the mountain of the Lord', like Moses did, to spend nights alone with the Father. Moses gives praise to the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. He thanks the Father for creating him through his life. In doing so he acknowledges that he is totally dependent on the Father for his every breath, for his every heartbeat, for his total existence in every way, every moment of every day.

In Father Bruce's article on page one he mentions among the books on his shelf is a beautiful one, "Jesus of Nazareth" written by Pope Benedict XVI. Recently I borrowed this from the Wellington library, even though I had no idea as to why I was moved to

go there.

Excerpts from the book:

Jesus' teaching is not the product of human learning, of whatever kind. It originates from immediate contact with the Father, from 'face to face' dialogue - from the vision of the one who rests close to the Father's heart. It is the Son's Word. Without this inner grounding, his teaching would be pure presumption.

That is just what the learned men of Jesus' time judged it to be, and they did so precisely because they could not accept its inner grounding: seeing and knowing face to face.

Again and again the Gospels note that Jesus withdrew 'to the mountain' to spend nights in prayer 'alone' with the Father. These short passages are fundamental for our understanding of Jesus; they lift the veil of mystery just a little; they give us a glimpse into Jesus' close contact with the Father, the source from which his action and teaching and suffering sprang.

This 'praying' of Jesus is the Son conversing with the Father; Jesus' human consciousness and will, his human soul, is taken up into that exchange, and in this way human 'praying' is able to become a participation in this close family communion with the Father.

Jesus is only able to speak about the Father in the way that he does, because of his close family connection and communion with the Father. The mystery of the Son as revealer of the Father is present in everything Jesus says and does.

Another important point appears here: We have said that in Jesus' close connection with the Father, his human soul is also taken up into the act of praying. He who sees Jesus - sees the Father (John 14:9). The disciple who walks with Jesus is thus caught up with him into communion with God. And that is what redemption means: this stepping beyond the limits of human nature, which has been a possibility and an expectation in man, God's image and likeness, since the moment of creation.

Question: When do you pray? When do you find a moment to be still? When do you let go and be still with Him? Where do you pray? Do you then write down a word or a scripture reference or record this moment of deep awareness of being in God's presence? Do you read these words again?

Very simply, honestly and happily, Let go and Let God into your lives. Amen.

Good News and Bad News for a pastor

Good News: You baptised seven people today in the river.

Bad News: You lost two of them in the swift current.

Good News: The Women's Guild voted to send you a get-well card.

Bad News: The vote passed 31-30.

Good News: The trustees finally voted to add more church parking.

Bad News: They are going to blacktop the front lawn of your parsonage.

Good News: Church attendance rose dramatically the last three weeks.

Bad News: You were on vacation.

ATTENTION

Archivists, hoarders or anyone else

Does anyone have an electronic copy (PDF) of the **newsletter for November 2002**? We have been publishing this since January 2002 and have a complete set except for this *collectors'* edition. Not like a rare stamp, but could be as scarce as hen's teeth.

S+u+p+p+l+e+m+e+n+t+s

By Dr. Michael A. Halleen

"I pray that . . . (God) may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being." (Ephesians 3:16)

The fitness centre in which I work out several times a week has pictures on the wall of club members who have won prizes in regional bodybuilding contests. One of them is of a fierce looking man who often has his workout at the same time of day-early morning - as I do. He has a shaved head, long moustache and eyes that bore holes through the air. His time in the gym is alone time - Mr Bodybuilder never speaks to anyone or even acknowledges that others of us are in the gym. The picture on the wall of his finely chiselled body in full flex pose, wearing the championship belt of the Masters Division (age 50 and above), is a reminder of who the alpha male is in this neck of the woods.

One holiday morning the club attendant was late arriving. Several of us sat in our cars, listening to radios,



'Hassles' of prayer that works

The minister's little six-year-old girl had been so naughty during the week that her mother decided to give her the worst kind of punishment. She told her she couldn't go to the Sunday School Picnic on Saturday.

When the day came, her mother felt she had been too harsh and changed her mind. When she told the little girl she could go to the picnic, the child's reaction was one of gloom and unhappiness.

"What's the matter? I thought you'd be glad to go to the picnic." her mother said.

"It's too late!" the little girl said. "I've already prayed for rain."



How long is it since you last visited the website? Check it out.

www.joshua.org.nz

waiting for the doors to open. Mr. Bodybuilder drove up in a canary-yellow convertible and started pacing up and down on the strip mall sidewalk. After a five-minute wait, he strode back to his car and said the only words I've ever heard him speak: "I can't wait! I've got supplements to take!"

The only supplements I take are jam on toast and cream in coffee. But apparently there are additives available that do more than stimulate the palate. Some seem to help one look like a Michelangelo statue. What if there were also supplements available to help improve one's attitude? A friendship pill, a good-cheer capsule, or a relax-and-smile tablet might help some I know. Some need persistence supplements, others could use a self-worth additive. Many would benefit from salting their breakfast with determination and a positive spirit.

What was impressive about Mr. Bodybuilder's commitment was his discipline. His supplements were taken at a certain time, with determined regularity. Nothing was going to prevent that from happening. The benefit of similar discipline in prayer . . . in study . . . in serving those in need . . . in worship . . . in building relationships within one's family-who can tell what kind of championship awaits the one who faithfully develops the inner being?

So when I saw another man on an exercise bike in the gym reading a Bible the other morning, I strode back to my car thinking, "I've got supplements to take!"

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National Leadership Team - *pray for your leaders!*

Leader: Mike Conroy,
23 Mason Rd, RD 9, Hamilton 3289 Ph 07 829-8616
email - mike.conroy@xtra.co.nz

Jim Gribble,
20 Grande Vue Road, Papatoetoe 2025 Ph 09 278-6326
email - jimp.gribble@gmail.com

Barry Reynolds,
15 Valley Road, Waiuku 2123 Ph 09 235-2451
email - linda49@xtra.co.nz

Do you want to talk with a Joshua man?

Northland - Ph Graeme Nelson, 09 432-3510
Auckland North Shore - Ph David Schischka,
09 834-4831 (interim leader)
Counties-Manukau - Ph Russ Toyne, 09 266-5920
Hamilton - Ph Peter Smith, 07 849-9491
Tauranga - Ph Owen Kowalewski, 07 578-3752
Rotorua - Ph Mark Copeland, 07 343-6570

Taranaki - Ph Dave Gardner, 06 753-6503
Wanganui - Ph Les Coleman, 06 343-8031
Palmerston North - Ph Bob Towers, 06 357-9609
Wellington - Ph David Monastra, 04 388-1079
Christchurch - Ph Phil Creed, 03 980-9126
Invercargill - Ph Herb Rikkerink, 03 215-7596