

GOOD NEWS LETTER

from The Healing Prayer Institute

Issue #2

August 2007

HPI NOW IN ITS 5TH YEAR

The Healing Prayer Institute (HPI) was incorporated in 2002 as a non-profit ministry with a Board of Directors. Its stated purpose was "to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ in power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The institute provides seminars and opportunities to grow in the understanding and use of the healing gifts of the Holy Spirit ... It is devoted to fully following the teaching of the Catholic Church." Between April 2003 and September 2005, HPI offered a series of 11 workshops on various aspects of the healing ministry. These were attended by a total of 220 different individuals, with attendance ranging from 20 to 100 per workshop. Workshops usually included inspiring teaching and time to actually practice healing prayer.

In January 2006, the Board of Directors decided it was time to move to a new phase, emphasizing training healing teams to minister in individual parishes. In the next 12 months HPI used its resources to help three parishes set up new healing teams and to help a fourth team, already established, prepare for a new phase in their ministry. (See story inside.) More parishes have expressed an interest in using our support to start healing teams.

Meanwhile, since last August, the Board has offered two workshops, which were enthusiastically received. (See stories inside.) Our only regret has been that more people did not come and benefit from the outstanding speakers we were able to make available. Be sure to watch for and attend this year's offerings! We are planning a workshop for November on the perils of New Age practices. Our speaker will be a published author who made use of them and was delivered. (See story inside.)

Healing Prayer Institute (HPI)
P. O. Box 200404
Cleveland, OH 44120
216.371.5133
www.healingprayerinstitute.com

Workshops Presented in 2007

FATHER LARRY CAREW ON SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEALER

On February 24, we heard a wonderful workshop by Fr. Larry Carew on the Spirituality of the Healer. Fr. Carew has been involved in the charismatic renewal for 35 years. He is currently involved in healing ministry in prisons and has written a book (*Healer of Hearts, Healer of Minds*) and authored or co-authored four healing retreats. For me, his workshop was a powerful source of hope, joy and healing.

Father Carew spoke movingly of the need for us to pray for healing both for ourselves and for others. He said healing is underemphasized in the Church, and we must not settle for less than all the joy God has for us and all He intends us to become. Merely offering up our sufferings may ignore the possibility of healing, but if we unite them with the sufferings of Jesus in His Passion, we can experience the healing and joy of His Resurrection.

And we are called to witness Jesus not only through words but through deeds. "People have a need to see the compassion and hope of Jesus in our eyes, feel the gentleness of Jesus in our touch. Each of us is supposed to be a living audiovisual of Jesus in spite of our weakness, and to be Jesus for them as if He were there in the flesh." He assured us that people who receive prayer for healing are always healed in some way, but not always in the way we ask.

Father Carew spoke of the importance Jesus attached to healing. "He bent over backwards to heal on the Sabbath, which offended a lot of people. Why? He was saying the Father is a healing God and the Sabbath was the best time to heal." Just as when God instituted the Sabbath it was a time to rejoice over the goodness of His creation, so now our Sunday is a time we rejoice in the New Creation, the Risen Christ. "I know that New Creation isn't just a neat metaphor. People really get changed permanently for the better if they stay with Christ."

INTERCESSORS OF THE LAMB TEACH ABOUT HEART PRAYER

On April 14 of this year, we were blessed to have Sisters Mary Immaculata and Mary Cristina of the Intercessors of the Lamb with us for a workshop. Their humility, simplicity, and humor were a powerful part of their message.

In her first talk on contemplation or heart prayer, Sr. Mary Cristina noted that we have become a doing Church, but we need to go back to being a praying, listening, discerning Church; this would make our doing more fruitful. Our first necessity is to establish a heart-to-heart connection with God, a process requiring silence and solitude, healing and repentance.

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MOIRA NOONAN TO SPEAK ON PERILS OF NEW AGE

In an attempt to respond to questions from attendees at our workshops and to the widespread use of and confusion about such New Age practices as reiki, we are very happy to be able to offer a workshop on the dangers of the New Age. It will be the weekend of November 9-11. Our presenter will be Moira Noonan, author of *Ransomed From Darkness: The New Age, Christian Faith and the Battle for Souls*. This book is "a moving and sometimes harrowing account of the author's journey from her childhood faith, into the depths of the New Age movement and the occult, and her eventual redemption through the intercession of Christ and His Church." It has received favorable reviews from Fr. Stan Fortuna, Fr. John Hampsch, and other well-known Catholic teachers. Ms. Noonan has been speaking all over the U.S. One of the priests who came to Cleveland to the meeting of diocesan liaisons to the charismatic renewal that Fr. Bob Franco set up said he had heard her in California and been much impressed. More details on the workshop will be in the flyers we will mail out this fall. Be sure to come! (If you are not on our mailing list, call HPI at 216-371-5133 to be added.)

GOOD NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Last September healing prayer teams trained by a group of healing pray-ers headed by Sandy Zorn began their ministry at **St. Peter the Apostle** parish in **Brook Park**. After their pastor Fr. Jim Stenger commissioned them at Mass on Sunday, September 24, many parishioners lined up to be prayed with. All were grateful and enthusiastic.

In January, the new healing prayer team at **St. Martin of Tours, Maple Heights** asked for and received a "refresher course" from Sandy Z. and members of the healing prayer team at St. John Neumann.

Two training sessions were scheduled for **St. Matthias parish, Parma** in February.

We have received several inquiries from other parishes who might be interested in setting up healing prayer teams. **What about yours? Call HPI at 216-371-5133 for more information or to set up training.**

We would also like to know of any ongoing prayer ministry in your parish, such as Healing Masses, prayer teams available to pray with people for healing after Masses, or at a regularly scheduled prayer meeting. That too would be GOOD NEWS.

Recipients of Healing Tell Their Stories

SARAH'S TESTIMONY

I want to express my thanks to God for his healing touch which has set me free from a debilitating anxiety. Two years ago I underwent a brain scan known as a SPECT scan which showed an overabundance of activity in the portion of the brain that reveals anxiety. Subsequently, several months ago I went through healing prayer with Sandy and Rita at St. John Neumann. I was taken through my birth process and healed of the memory of the cord around my neck during delivery. Immediately, the following morning as I awoke I felt no anxiety. This was the time of day when I was most plagued by anxiety. A few weeks later, I was given a second brain scan which revealed no anxiety. My experience of peace was scientifically proven.

GOD HEALS TRAGIC PAST

This past February my father passed away. He had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's seven years prior to his death. It was not his disease and death that was so remarkable, but the way God chose to work through this painful time to reveal His healing power.

Both of my parents were alcoholics. My father left us shortly after my sister was born with cerebral palsy. I was six years old. My mother had to sell our home in Massachusetts and move back to Cleveland by herself to raise three small children.

I was the oldest of the three. My brother and I thought that we had two mothers, the kind one who loved us and the cruel one who had violent outbursts of anger. She vented her anger and frustration at me much the same way her abusive father vented at her. Raising a handicapped child was so difficult and time-consuming that my brother and I learned to raise ourselves. We were not permitted to have problems, as only my sister had problems. All of the pain of my parents divorce, trying to make friends in a new school and a new city, and the loss of my father's presence were the beginning of a long, dark chapter in my life when God was the only person I could turn to in my isolation.

My mother remarried when I was ten and we were adopted by my step-father. My years from six through my teens and twenties were riddled with insecurity and pain. My father had almost no contact with us as we grew up, and I learned to suppress the pain of rejection and abandonment that I felt.

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I married and had two healthy children. When my son was ten and my daughter was nine, we had a baby with Down Syndrome. I knew that I could not raise him and give my other two children enough attention and love. We found an adoptive family who took him when he was two weeks old.

The pain of the loss of my son far outweighed all of the pain of my childhood. I kept my faith, attended Mass daily, and continued to pray through the pain, but I felt that God had abandoned me. I had resigned myself to living with an excruciatingly painful wound for the rest of my life. And then three and a half years later, my dad died. It seemed to be the catalyst that brought all the suppressed pain from the past to the forefront of my consciousness and it was so heavy that I could no longer carry it.

In March I went to see Sandy Zorn and Rita Salak. (Both of these women are members of St. John Neumann parish healing team in Strongsville, and Sandy is a member of the HPI Board.) I began to speak about my childhood wounds and how I had forgiven my father, but felt tremendous loss in never knowing who he was. Then I told them about a dream I recently had. In the dream two men were strapped to two separate tables. I was forced to watch as the two men had their faces ripped off and sewn on to each other. This dream was significant in that it revealed to me that my identity had been painfully removed against my will. As Leanne Payne and many other psychologists will attest, it is from our fathers that we receive our identity. It was as if mine had been surgically removed and I had been missing who I was for most of my life. I had drifted through life as somewhat invisible.

Then I began to explain how I felt so punished by God with the birth of our handicapped son. I explained how I had previously asked God to allow me to be united to Jesus in His pain. I told Sandy and Rita that a year before our son was born I had a dream that I was looking out of a window and saw a long arid desert with ground so dry that there were deep cracks and fissures and it supported the life of only a few small scrubby green plants. I knew that I must cross this desert so in my dream I climbed out the window and began to traverse the parched landscape.

As I related this to Rita and Sandy, with deep groans and heavy sobbing, they listened with love and kindness. And then Sandy began to pray in tongues. I felt some oppression lift and a wave of peace descended over me. She started to tell me that I must accept the pain of my handicapped child and his adoption as a gift from God. She reminded me that I had asked for union with Jesus in His suffering and crucifixion and God had granted me something that He rarely gives to anyone. She said that the world would not see it as a gift, but those with spiritual eyes would see this as the path of a saint. I protested that it was too hard to be a saint and that although I formerly had desired to be a saint, now I only wanted to be an average person because the life of a saint is too difficult and painful.

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Sandy and Rita prayed for my broken heart. They asked Jesus to open it up, heal the inside and to remove the infectious wound. They asked Jesus to pour His precious blood into it and to let His blood flow through me. I felt this cleansing, healing and strengthening as they prayed. Jesus was there, ministering to me. I felt God was tending to me with spiritual surgery, hidden from the world for a heart that belonged to Him throughout my life. I had been faithful to Him through the testing and now He was being faithful to me, meeting my every need. Sandy said, "It may take some time for you to realize what God has done."

When I left, I drove home thanking God for my new heart and the blood of His Son, which flowed through it. I could not process what had happened because it was a spiritual surgery, hidden from the eyes of my intellect.

When I went to the memorial service for my father, things were different. I was able to look people in the eye and not shrink from their gaze. I was different, my thoughts were different and I was no longer anxious or afraid. The lost part of my identity had been restored and I felt whole. I experienced joy for the first time since I was six.

It had been forty years since my father had left us. God had faithfully guided me through the pain of my desert experience and I now emerged prepared to do His will as an instrument that is sound and effective for Him.

I continue to thank Him for healing my wounds and ministering to me through Sandy and Rita. God was faithful to complete a good work that He had begun in me. When the Son sets us free, we are free indeed!

INTERCESSORS (continued from page 2)

It is a process to which we are all called and which prepares us for discernment, for a life of knowing God's will in our hearts and living it. Sr. Mary Immaculata told us about the discerning heart in the second talk of the day.

Finally Sr. Mary Cristina told us about intercession. She said this is not just petitionary prayer, but is Jesus within us, praying to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. It can only happen if we have a heart-to-heart relationship with God, but all are called to it through our Baptism into the priesthood of Jesus.

What a beautiful day we had listening to those Sisters! We hope to invite them back. In the meantime, they have many books and other materials available through their website www.bellwetheromaha.org.

This issue edited by Sue Palmieri.