

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Sunday 10th October.

Dear friends,

As I started preparing this newsletter I remembered that at Michaelmas time last year we were about to begin yet another lockdown.

For the past year and a half we have struggled with restrictions of one kind or another and it is quite clear that in our time the powers of darkness that are described in this week's gospel are actively at work in the world. But we have managed to continue meeting, celebrating the sacraments, praying and sharing in our congregations and at times I have felt that the challenges we faced have made our sense of purpose stronger.

Now that restrictions are gradually being lifted we have to make sure that we don't lose sight of the Michaelic challenge that we have as a Christian Community.

The light of our prayer is needed more than ever.

Ben van Lieshout

Hollywood

Michaelmas

Tuesday 5 th October	Gospel Study: Matthew 22, The kingly wedding	20.00
Wednesday 6 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Thursday 7 th October	First confirmation lesson for Lucia de Villeneuve and Jed Williams	15.20
Tuesday 12 th October	Gospel Study: Ephesians 6, The armour of God	20.00
Wednesday 13 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Thursday 14 th October	Confirmation lesson	15.20

Glencraig

Thursday 7 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30
Thursday 14 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30

Mourne Grange

Friday 8 th October	Talk: "What's evil good for?"	16.00
Sunday 10 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 6:10-19

What it comes to in the end is this: grasp the power that streams to you in the experience of Christ in the soul and the powerful regency of his pure spiritual strength.

Put on the power of God as one puts on full armour, so that you may stand against the well-aimed attacks of the adversary. For our struggle is not to fight against powers of flesh and blood, but

against spirit beings mighty in the stream of time,

against spirit beings powerful in the moulding of earth substance,

against cosmic powers whose darkness rules the present time,

against spirits who carry evil into the realms of the spiritual world.

Therefore take up the full armour of God, that you may be able to stand your ground on the day when evil unfolds its greatest strength, and victoriously withstand it.

Stand firm, then, girded with the truth, like a warrior firmly girded. Connect yourself with all in the world as is justified in the spiritual world, and this connection with the spirit will protect you like a strong breastplate.

And may Peace stream through you, down to your feet, so that on your path you spread peace, as the message that comes from the realm of the angels.

In all your deeds have trust in God. This trust will be like a mighty shield; with it, you can quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take into your thinking the certainty of Christ's healing deed. It will protect your head like a helmet.

And the spirit, which has become living in you, you shall grasp as one grasps a sharp sword. The sword of the spirit is the working of the Word of God.

May this armour clothe you in all your prayers and supplications so that in the right moment, you raise yourself in prayer to the spirit. To this end, direct your spirit-strength in all your efforts of soul and in your intercessions for all who would know Christ's healing power.

Feel yourself united in prayer with all other bearers of the spirit. Take me into your prayers, so that when I open my mouth, the strength of the word will be given to me. Then I can courageously and openly bring the knowledge of that holy mystery that lives in the message of the Gospel, for which I am a priestly messenger enchained. Out of the Gospel itself, there streams to me the free strength to speak with the courage I need.



A homily on Ephesians 6

How timely is the Gospel reading in this year! Our spiritual enemies, spiritual beings aiming their arrows of fear and despair at our souls full, are on the attack. Paul encourages us to fight a spiritual battle. It is not a battle of aggression, for it is not our task (nor is it even possible) to destroy our eternal enemy. Rather we are to arm ourselves for our own souls' self-defence so that we can resist the fear and remain inwardly upright.

We shield ourselves from these attacks of fear by remaining in trust and truth. This trust is in humankind's ultimate goal, the goal of learning to love. This truth we acquire by remaining in the current moment, the Now, which is ruled by Christ. For the truth is that fear often causes us to project a false picture into the future, which, in a vicious cycle, then inspires more fear. The truth is that the future is constantly changing, moment by moment, day by day, based on what human beings do in those moments and days. We are all involved in the process of creating the future. Any fixed picture of the future, hammered hard by constant discussion and steeped in worry generated by fear, is premature.

“Do not worry about tomorrow,” says Christ, “for tomorrow can worry about itself. Each day has enough challenge of its own.” (Matthew 6:34) We act, we trust, we pray, one day, one moment at a time.

We must not underestimate the power of the light-filled energy that is generated by our prayers and sacraments, even when only an apparent few participate on earth. Behind each one of us stand all those who have died, who still take an active interest in their loved ones on earth. Mingling with them are those about to be born into the world, with their ideals and hopes. And above us, all stands the angelic world. Deeds of prayer and sacrament generate a healing light, a bright energy. Given into the hands of the angels, this energy can work as a positive force in world karma, helping shape the future. Michael and his host of angels beckon us toward the courage and trust that arises in our awareness of this truth.

A second-century mystic, Evagrius of Pontos, wrote:

If you would pray in truth, you will
suspect a deeper sense of curious confidence.

And a host of angels will walk beside you

Showing you the purpose of created things.



When the angel of the Lord arrives,
he scatters by his word alone
every force that acts against us,
and brings to our spirits that light
that shines without deception.*

*Evagrius of Pontos, (345-399) "Effusions on Prayer," in *Love's Immensity, Mystics on the Endless Light*.