

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

Rev Ben van Lieshout
3 Stewarts Place
Holywood, Co Down
BT18 9DX
90424254
07974960570
benvl@onetel.com

Newsletter for the week of Sunday 17th October.

Dear friends,

This is the last newsletter that I will be sending out.

I began writing these newsletters in March of last year when we had the first lockdown.

The aim was to make it possible to live with the weekly gospel readings and accompany the celebration of The Act of Consecration from home at the time when no one was allowed to attend the services.

And it made it easier to communicate and share at a time when we were not allowed to meet face to face.

Back then nobody ever imagined that it would go on for as long as it has.

But thankfully most of the restrictions have now been lifted and we are again allowed to celebrate our services and meet as congregations in all the different centres.

So from now on I will still send you our program three or four times a year by email, starting with the Advent and Christmas program which I hope we can finalise in our congregational meeting in Hollywood this coming Sunday.

I will also again send out printed programs by post and share them out after the service for those who are on our mailing list.

If you would like to be included on this mailing list then please let me know.

Ben van Lieshout

Hollywood

Michaelmas

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
Sunday 17 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man Congregational meeting	10.00 11.15
Tuesday 19 th October	Gospel Study: Revelation 12, "A woman clothed with the sun"	20.00
Wednesday 20 th October	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Thursday 21 th October	Confirmation lesson	15.20

Glencraig

Thursday 14th October

The Act of Consecration of Man

9.30

Thursday 21st October

The Act of Consecration of Man

9.30

Mourne Grange

Saturday 23rd October

The Act of Consecration of Man

10.15

The gospel reading for this week is Revelations 12: 1-17

And a momentous image was unveiled in the world of spirit: a woman, clothed with the radiant power of the sun, the moon under her feet, her head adorned with the crown of the twelve stars of heaven. And she is with child and cries out in the labour and pain of giving birth.

And at the same time a second image was revealed in the heavens: a great fiery-red dragon with seven heads and ten horns. On its head it has seven crowns and its tail is sweeping a third of all the stars in heaven and dashing them onto the earth. And the dragon is standing before the woman about to give birth, so that when she bears the child he can eat it up. And she bore a child, a son "who would shepherd all nations with a rod of iron." And the woman's child was caught up to God and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place that God keeps ready there, so that they can take care of her for days numbering one thousand two hundred sixty.



And a war flared up in the spirit world. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. And the dragon fought in the midst of his own angels, but he was not strong enough, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. Down came the dragon, the giant, the serpent, the evil one called both Satan and the devil, deceiver of all the world. Onto the earth he came hurtling down, and all his angels with him.

And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying:

Now can begin the working which proceeds from our God—
The power to heal the world,
The power to transform all being,
The power to draw everything into godly being.
Arisen is the spirit leadership of his Christ.
Overthrown is the accuser of our brothers,
He who accused them night and day before the countenance of God.
They have overcome him through the blood and the sacrificial power of the Lamb
And by the divine Word to which they bore witness.
They did not love their own lives too dearly, and they did not fear death.
Therefore, rejoice you heavens
And all who lodge therein!
But woe to the earth and the sea:
For the Adversary has come down to you,
And he seethes with measureless fury,
For he knows that his time is short.

And when the dragon recognized that he had been cast onto the earth, he began to persecute the woman who had borne the son. Then the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she could fly into the desert to her appointed place, where she is to be nourished for a cycle of time, for cycles of time, and for half a cycle of time, far from the face of the serpent.

And the serpent opened his mouth and spewed out a river of water after the woman so she would be swept off her feet by the river. But then the earth came to the woman's assistance; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon spewed from his mouth. And the dragon burned with fury against the woman. He stormed away to make war on the rest of the woman's seed, people who keep to the divine world aims and who are united with the destiny and witnessing of Jesus. As I saw this I was standing on the sandy shore of the sea.



A homily on Revelations 12: 1-17

We see the mighty image of the radiant Cosmic Woman, clothed in sun, moon, and stars, labouring to give birth.

And we see the red, many-headed dragon, waiting to devour her child.

This Cosmic Woman is an image of the soul of a special cosmic community. She is the soul of a community formed of all communities that are labouring to give birth to the Christ.

She is the soul of all assemblies of people that stream the sunlight and warmth of love and wisdom.

She is the soul of groups of people that know how to master and properly use the creative, generative moon forces.

She is the soul of those bodies of people star-crowned with the work of healing and ordering destinies.

The dragon, however, is her counter-image. It is the image of angry, greedy, consuming passion; it is the image of a pernicious, calculating intellect that monetizes everything and everyone; it is a force that introduces a ruinous chaos into destinies.

Our earthly Christian communities are made up of individuals whom, through their bearing, Christ can wrest from the dragon, from the 'death of matter'.

Such individuals can belong not only to an earthly community, but also to the supersensible one, which is made up of all those who are aware of the healing power of Christ within themselves.

And in community, this healing force of the Christ within is potentized beyond what any individual can manifest.

Together we can resist the dragon.

Together we can help heal and order destinies.

Together, we can strengthen the soul of the Cosmic Woman who is giving birth to the Christ for all of humanity.