

An Interview with Ellen Chaksil, author of *WITH GOD THERE IS HOPE*

- 1. For you and many others, prayer is a real force in the world that can affect the outcome of situations. How does prayer work?**

Yes, prayer is a real force. This communication with God has resulted in healings and answers in many diverse situations. Yet, response to prayer remains a mystery, all having to do with God's will. Numerous times, we pray and experience positive responses to that prayer. Then again, we pray and pray, with no positive response, therein lies the mystery, also the necessity to trust in God's love for us, He alone knows what is best for us.

- 2. You're a member of the Charismatic Renewal movement. What is it?**

The Charismatic Renewal is a movement concerned with the awakening of the Spirit of God we received at baptism. Participants are led to recognize the Holy Spirit's presence within us and then cooperate and participate with Him as He works in our lives. Via the renewal, the gifts presented by God at Pentecost are recognized, accepted and so used in today's world.

- 3. Your spiritual journey has taken you to a point where God speaks to you. Do you think there is a special reason why you were chosen as a messenger of God?**

I have no knowledge as to why God has chosen me to be His messenger in today's world. I do know however, that He has no favorites, this grace is for any of His Children, they have only to love Him, open themselves to Him, and so desire to do His will, following in the way He has shown.

- 4. How have your family and friends reacted to your communications with God? Has there been anyone close to you who has doubted your special relationship with God?**

It is now 30 years that I have entered into this close personal relationship with the Lord and to my knowledge, my family, especially my husband of 58 years has not doubted my relationship with God. My husband accompanies me in all my involvements with the Church, he, as well as my children and grandchildren have been open to have me pray with them, we have also discussed happenings which have occurred in my journey with the Lord.

5. What message has God entrusted you to share with the rest of the world?

The primary message God has entrusted to me is one of hope for the physical salvation of the whole of humanity. When, as has happened in the past, an asteroid or another body in space threatens collision with Planet Earth, the combined prayer of all God's Children will result in the emanation of an energy which will prevent this from happening. Why? We, each of us, is made in the image and likeness of God and so continued existence is necessary to fulfill God's plan.

6. You believe that all religions share a path towards God. At the core of your message is the belief that we all need to come together in prayer in order to prevent a world catastrophe. Do you think this is a realistic goal in today's society?

I do believe that the above plan is realistic. Why? As we all know the greatest instinct within the human person is to live and so there can be no doubt that we would participate in prayer and petition our One True God and Creator to attain that end. Taking one look at the world today and even in the past, perhaps the threat of collision will be the only way humanity will unite.

7. Did you ever feel fear when you realized that God was speaking to you and entrusting you with his mission?

My fear from time to time, even now, was and is that I would die before getting this message out to the whole of humanity. I believe so in the hereafter that I feared facing God with my mission unfinished. Yet I am content in the knowledge that God knows that I have done and am doing everything within my power to accomplish this task assigned to me by God's Holy Spirit.

8. You write that you have been blessed with the ability to speak in tongues? What exactly does that mean and how does it work?

Speaking in tongues is a charism, a gift dispensed by the Holy Spirit. This gift was experienced by the early Christians at Pentecost more than 2000 years ago. When you ask, "how does tongues work?" Here too we are presented with the mystery of God and so I can answer only by offering my experience of tongues: In 1978 when hands had been laid upon me for the awakening of God's Holy Spirit within me, I was totally focusing upon the love I had for Jesus Christ. Then without any expectation or engagement of my own will, I heard myself utter some words I did not understand. Tongues are definitely an asset while praying; one is able to focus upon God without words interfering or being an obstacle, the tongue is able to move as the Spirit directs while the mind is united with God.

9. You've had the good fortune of being received by two popes. How did it feel to meet the popes and share your special gift with them? How did they respond?

Yes, I have met both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. I had been writing to Pope John Paul since 1978. In 1988, God opened a door and I was able to meet him. In 1992 I was able to speak personally with him. Finally in 1996 I received a blessing and was assured he was aware of what I had been writing to him. As for Pope Benedict, my meeting with him was at an audience in the Vatican, during that short time I was able to exchange greetings with him and came away with the impression that he is a shy, caring and gentle human being. Presently, I am awaiting a response to a letter I had written to him a month or so ago. A copy of my book was also placed on a table provided for that purpose at an audience.

10. How has your understanding of being and living as a Catholic changed since the Vatican II reforms?

Since Vatican II, my understanding and being as a Catholic has not changed, for the Church has always called us to holiness, living according to God's Commandments. Reforms in the Liturgy have, however, benefited me greatly. To name a few: Hearing God's Word in my own language. Participating in the Mass. Feeding myself with the Lord's Body and Blood. Exchanging a sign of peace with my Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Understanding other religions, etc.

11. Are you concerned that Pope Benedict's approval of conservative reforms in the Church will alienate people who want a more personal experience with Jesus and God from the Church? How did you respond to Pope Benedict's recent visit?

I am not concerned that conservative reforms, such as allowing the celebration of the Latin Mass will alienate people. Those who desire this traditional way of worship have a right to participate in the same. I am pleased however, that we have the choice to attend the Mass we choose.

12. What is the role of women in today's Church? Do you think women should play a more prominent role in the Church?

Following Vatican II, the role of women in the Church has been greatly expanded. Their assistance as Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Lectors, Altar Servers, etc., is accepted and deeply appreciated in today's Church. I believe Pope John XXIII was a prophet, he foresaw the shortage of priests and so all these lay people have filled a tremendous need. As for the future, when another need arises, God's response will become evident in the fulfillment of that need and if it should be an even greater role for women, then so be it.

13. Religion is obviously one of the most important aspects of your life. How has it sustained you in both the joyous and most difficult times in your life?

Without God, I know I could not have come through the many situations of pain and sorrow which I have experienced. He has always been there for me, I needed only to focus upon the words of St. Paul in Romans 8:28, which I shall paraphrase: Because I know God loves me and I love Him, this situation will, most assuredly, work together for good.

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