

I'm excited about what the Lord's doing as we begin our study of Romans. I'm so grateful to be part of a Community that is dedicated to the Holy Spirit and desiring to allow Holy Spirit to be our teacher. Isn't that a true sign and wonder?

At the Council Retreat this year we heard from members asking us that we have more teachings Sunday night. We want you all to know we heard you. The Council submitted our year to our Community Pastoral leader, Fr Fred Close and so are beginning this journey to study Romans 8. Why Romans 8? We all have different devotions which I believe are all good personal devotions but the devotion to Holy Spirit is what we all share in common at Mother of God. Fr Francis Martin said the primary purpose to life in Community is to know the Holy Spirit freedom within.

The goal of these 10 weeks is for all of us to begin reading and studying the book of Romans 8 and begin to better gain perspective of Paul the Apostle on the identity and benefits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believer. Our goal over the next few weeks is to identify the Spirit's movement in our minds so that we can learn to "set our minds" under the Spirit and to act more and more with the Spirit of God. God created each of us for so much more than the flesh, but for a relationship with a loving Father. God wants us to have more joy and learn more about Jesus called his greatest gift- the Holy Spirit indwelling.

To begin, I wanted to start with a quote from St Augustine's statement on the book of Romans about our need to recognize the Holy Spirit. What Augustine says is the Holy Spirit is to be identified within us to mature each person in the Spirit: The church needs people to know the indwelling Spirit:

"We affirm therefore, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us.. although they do not know this. They are unconscious of Him although He is in them, just as they are unconscious of their own mind... These also he calls little ones, not in carnal but in spiritual age (1Cor. 3:1) So their understanding did not recognize the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and they were sensual, not spiritual, despite the Holy Spirit's indwelling, because their understanding could not recognize His indwelling Spirit." On the Presence of God Ch 26

Our goal is to recognize his indwelling. This indwelling defines the Romans 8 is all about. We have the Spirit of God living "in" us, but we can be unconscious of Him. So, the big question is, how do we grow into maturity of more Spirit consciousness?

Romans 8 begins in the great crescendo! Paul recognizes the two powers of the Spirit and the flesh and proclaims our freedom. Do we recognize this movement of the Spirit? St Augustine says our faith in the Scripture that reveals God's word and gives the Holy Spirit. So, as we approach Romans 8 let's go as students of the Holy Spirit desirous to grow in the Holy Spirit this Lent... This life in the Holy Spirit. Paul mentions the Holy Spirit 21 times in one chapter according to theologian Dr Scott Hahn.

As we read through Romans 8:1-5 identify the Spirit? We might ask what benefit is there in living under the reasoning of the Spirit? What does Paul have to say about this freedom? What action does Paul recommend that we take to win the battle of our minds? Paul defines for us the conflict we face against ourselves by living under the law of Spirit God or the law of sin and death. What do we

fill our minds with? We gain clarity when I believe we will make you and all MOG an oasis of freedom in the Spirit. Be set free! *How can we expect to confront the lies of the Devil or the desires of our flesh if we are not spending sufficient time in prayer and with Scripture to allow truth to fill our minds?"*

The following are a few principle reasons Paul states in Romans 8:1-4 and identified to help you.

**Principle reason #1. I am now free, I am “not condemned”!**

**” Therefore, now, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit life set me free from the law of sin and death.”**

Take this principle to your prayer time and ask Holy Spirit to reveal more to you! These words define our true condition now in Christ. Set free by a new power this second of the Spirit of life. We are free from the power of sin and death. Without Christ we live under another law, the natural law which lives under the law of condemnation of sin and death. Today, we live under law of psychology and sociology. *St Thomas Aquinas says “The grace of God through Jesus Christ has freed me from the body of this death and in this consists our redemption. Therefore, now that we have been freed through grace, there is no condemnation left, because the condemnation has been removed both as regards guilt and as regards punishment: “It is he himself who grants peace, who is there who will condemn?” (Job 34:29). St Thomas Aquinas Para. 601 Commentary on Romans So realize the Holy Spirit still convicts us of sin but it is to repent and receive more life.*

*Our suffering in life* can negatively influence how we live. Life happens and we are naturally led to respond to the negative at times so negatively. We can respond from a “sin and death” mentality of wild imaginations of what our culture dictates. Or better, we can respond from law of Spirit mentality. God has freed us sin and death by knowing the indwelling Spirit of whom Romans 8 says is in us. The Devil leads many astray into self-condemnation, self-accusation and fleshly thoughts by using law of condemnation or damnation. This knowledge of our freedom from “sin and death” empowers one to rise-up in the Spirit above sin and death thoughts to release and live by the love of the Spirit.

**Example:** One painful experience I when though was when my preborn son Nickolas died. I was devastated by our loss. At seven months pregnant Lea lost our child. We went from dreaming about a life with another son to holding a 1 pound lifeless little baby in my hands. I recall going to my prayer time and reading this Romans 8:1 scripture... Free from the law of death and asking how does this work? I began to come up against this law of death which is ultimate suffering. But I prayed this fact... I am free of the laws of death of the negativity of death and believe new law of Spirit life. This law of sin and death is real to me. But our hope is this Gospel of resurrection and the life which I choose to believe.

**Principle reason #2 “I now live under the “law of the Spirit of life”. .. Rom.8:2 ... the law of the Spirit of life set me free of the law of sin and death” Why?** The reason is now we have the power of Christ indwelling in us. So, what do you understand the law to mean? This word “law” we read about in Romans 1, 2. This word is very important concept for us to correctly understand. The law means more than just a set of rules. Dr Scott Hahn defines it as an authority and power. Fr Francis Martin says Paul uses the word in the sense of power or the energy to do. “For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh,<sup>[b]</sup> God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering... ” Are the laws Paul defines for us? St Thomas Aquinas commentary on Romans points out there are four types of laws... “*but the Holy*

*Spirit dwelling in the mind not only teaches what is to be done by instructing the intellect but also inclines the affection to act aright: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things," So the four laws are:*

1. The law of Moses... Greek word "nomos", is a legal system of moral rules that defines the expectations of what was expected of our Jewish ancestors.
2. The law of flesh or inclination to sin in our desires, Catholic theology calls the flesh concupiscence – this law is either powerless to do in flesh or the power of sin that dwells in our members weakens us.... Brings into captivity of desire...
3. The Law of reason or natural law – “at war with the law of my mind” “Set the mind” is the critical command of St Paul and the Spirit who is in you will give you his power.. St Thomas identifies that we are to “reason in faith” as we call upon the power of the Holy Spirit living in us... T
4. The new Law of the Spirit of life – St Thomas “ just as the natural spirit makes the life of nature, so the divine Spirit makes the life of grace.... It is the Spirit that gives life” Jn 4:63 Ezek 1:2 The Spirit of life was in the wheels” This law means a power ... the power of God’s Spirit gives you the ability to grow into as we exercise the Spirit daily. St Thomas says 602 In one way this law can be the Holy Spirit, so that the law of the Spirit means the law which is the Spirit. For a law is given in order that through it men may be lead to the good...603 In another way, the law of the spirit can be the proper effect of the Holy Spirit, namely, faith working through love. This faith teaches us what is to be done. “His anointing teaches you about everything” I Jn 2:27 T

**Example:** I had a grudge against a person for many years. I was mentally stuck under the emotions of harm done to me. I had no desire to forgive him. I just couldn’t forgive this man. I was powerless. Then I read Romans 8 and that the power comes from above. My prayer became Holy Spirit I don’t the power, but you do. Please work your power in me. I repent for my upsets and ask for your power of Indwelling Spirit to be released in me now. I was free.

**Principle reason #3 The righteousness of Jesus Christ is in me. What are the benefits to us of the Spirit? 1. Full 2. Now move according to Spirit 3. Spirit indwells in us**

Romans 8:4 *“in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be **fully met in us**, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”.* When we pray in Holy Spirit, we see another power move *“according to the Spirit” in our spirit.* Our spirits are full of something all the time. Our spirit can have the legalism mentality of our natural minds or the law of Spirit of life, to forgive, to be joyful released in my heart. In the Spirit our reasoning changes from power of flesh reasoning to the power of Spirit reasoning. 1. Christ has fully met all requirements. How full is fully met? 2. This seal of his righteousness is in us now. Christ is in you! As we set our minds I set my mind on the Spirit. Jesus Spirit brings grace to our minds. Our goal daily should be to set our minds again on Jesus Christ and live under new law of the Spirit... Get your thinking right. This year realize this important truth...THERE IS A BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND>>>

Lucifer wants into your mind! Lucifer wants to insert our flesh reasoning which will stop Faith from flowing into you... We want to win the battle for the mind each day...

1. Legal example: My daughter told me how her work associate had spent thousands of dollars at Nieman Marcus. This lady recently went to return some shoes and the sales girl at the counter said when she tried to return them "No madam, it's over the past due date. The women then said "look I love this store and I spend thousands of dollars with you each year, I'm a long time customer." Sales girl said, "No this is the rule". She said "but let me talk to management. So, the Manager looked her account up in the computer and said, yes Miss, we're so sorry. Thank you for your business and yes, we will take your return, we are so sorry to inconvenience you! One person had legal mind set, the other had relationship ... Legalism only sees what you're missing where the Spirit only sees in you and other "Christ fullness! ... We need to say to legalism no thanks I'm full already...

2. BRO FRANCIS Trappist Monk 93 years old... Won the battle for his mind. HOW? He kept his thoughts only on Praising Christ, no matter what the situation when you praise you will move to an internal freedom of the Law of Spirit. God defies the natural laws, time and space, to higher supernatural law of Spirit. I have come to live in the Power in Praise to be free..... Romans 8:5 "But those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires... What does this mean? Our minds operate on words. Words can break you or make you... One lie carefully placed by Devil in you can stop the God faith connect..... Pray to Light of Holy Spirit to see what's in your spirit.

Audible praise has power to break off the flesh's law under sin and death, so we enjoy now the indwelling Spirit... Praise frees one from grip of anxiety of this world to be truly free in him... How is this possible? Ask for more of Holy Spirit.

Finally, in review lets repeat every morning this week these three key reasons of the Spirit are: #1 I am now free, I am not condemned #2 I now live under the law of the Spirit of life not the law of sin and death and corruption ..#3 The righteousness of Jesus live indwells in me... Wow!! Thank you, Jesus, !!! ***How can we expect to confront the lies of the Devil or the desires of our flesh if we are not spending sufficient time in prayer and with Scripture to allow truth to fill our minds?"***

Discussion Questions:

Q 1. You are free from the law of sin and death. Can you identify the spirit within yourself? Do you see that you are now free in the Law of the Spirit to allow Holy Spirit to empower your spirit to reason under the Law of Holy Spirit? Where in your life does this happen?

Q2. The Holy Spirit power is alive **in us!!!!** Can you describe a time when you experienced the exchange from powerless self -flesh spirit to the Law of the Spirit of Life? What was the benefit to you?

Q3. When do you recognize you live under the law of the Spirit the most? What would you describe happens when you read scripture or have a time of personal Praise and Worship time or go to Adoration or Eucharist?