

THE FLAME OF LOVE
OF THE
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
PARTICIPANT GUIDE
SEMINARS 1 THRU 7

Welcome to the Flame of Love Seminars. They are designed for use in a small group meeting in someone's home (or in a parish setting.)

Our Presenter

Fr. James Otto, ordained in 1997, is pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Philadelphia. Our Lady guided his path into the seminary by leading him to Medjugorje and then to a young adult charismatic prayer group, where he heard God's call to the priesthood.

The Guide Itself

This Participant's Guide is written in conjunction with Fr. Otto's video talks. You should read the short outline before watching the tape and review the outline immediately after ("Repetition is the Mother of Studies"). End your weekly session with the group questions which are written to foster spiritual sharing. When you finish the seminars, you can be a teacher yourself and host them in your home. (Our Lady needs a great missionary of her Cause). Don't forget to pray for each other during these weeks. Also, be faithful each week. Your constant presence helps others. May Our Lady spread the effects of the grace of the Flame of Love over all of you.

Tony Mullen
National Director

INDEX

Seminar 1 – Your Invitation to Know Jesus	
Seminar 2 – Three Obstacles	
Seminar 3 – Explaining the Flame of Love.....	
Seminar 4 – Making Your Decision	
Seminar 5 - Prayer to Receive the Flame of Love.....	
Seminar 6 - You Need a Community.....	
Seminar 7 – Your Devout Life.....	

Seminar 1 – Your Invitation to Know Jesus

Purpose – To awaken you to Jesus' invitation – "I do not call you servants, but friends."
(Jn 15:15)

Thoughts:

1. Concerning every circle, there are 3 possible points – outside the circle, within and at the very center. Let the circle represent your life. Jesus is either outside, within or at the center. Jesus, of course, desires to be at your very center.
2. Jesus is a King. Your heart is a throne and He has every right to be the king of your life. However, you have many false kings. At every stage of your life, you change your false kings. During childhood, adolescence, young adult and adult years, you went from one King to another.
3. The saints also had their false kings. However, they were looking and searching until the great moment when Jesus awakened them and they accepted His invitation. These seminars are your time for seeking Jesus.
4. You must understand the Risen Jesus. During His 33 years on earth, Jesus was in only one place at one time. People had to be there to see Him. After the Resurrection, Jesus was not limited anymore. He came to the apostles whenever He chose. Now, He can come to you (that is your "awakening"). Even more, He lives in you by your Baptism.
5. You need to be awakened because Jesus wants to be your King, and live at the very center of your heart. In these seminars, you will seek and Jesus will come.

Group Discussion Questions

1. What brought you to these seminars?
2. What aspects of the video touched your heart?
3. Is Jesus your King, all day and every day?
4. Where is Jesus in your life – outside, inside, at the very center?
5. Try to think of some moments when you experienced Jesus' coming to you.

SEMINAR 1 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

- Day 1 Jesus calls us to friendship. **(John 15:11-17)**
Day 2 Jesus must be your king. **(John 18:33-40)**
Day 3 The Conversion Moment for Zaccheus **(Luke 19:1-10)**
Day 4 The Story of St. Paul's Conversion **(Acts 9:1-9)**
Day 5 Jesus' New Existence after the Resurrection **(Luke 24:33-43)**
Day 6 Jesus' Presence Until the End of Time **(Matthew 28:16-20)**
Day 7 Jesus Returns as King **(Matthew 24:29)**

Seminar Two – Three Obstacles

1. A football player receives the opening kickoff and has to run 100 yards. That is the easy part. The hard part are the eleven players who will be trying to tackle him.
2. You have many enemies to deter you from having Jesus as your king. The Church describes these enemies in three ways - the world, the flesh and the devil.

The World.

1. You cannot escape the world (unless you go to a monastery). The world is your daily culture which constantly influences you.
2. As if that is not enough, rich companies pay millions of dollars in advertising to gain your attention (and your money).
3. Over the past 50 years, this American culture has set aside God and is filled with sinful attitudes.
4. Inevitably, even with your good will, you are affected by a world which constantly claims your attention.
5. Elizabeth Kindelmann constantly recorded Jesus' complaints when her heart was given to worldly interests.

The Flesh

1. "Flesh" does not mean your body (which is good) but the disordered desires within you which affect your feelings, your thoughts and your desires.
2. If you live according to these disorderly powers your whole life will be out of order and God's plan will be destroyed.
3. Every person has two powers. The "spirit" tends toward God. The flesh tends toward yourself. They battle one another (every single day).
4. Your greatest victory will come by overcoming the Flesh and being led by the Spirit.

The Devil

1. God created intelligent angels and asked them to love and serve Him in heaven. Some said "yes" (like your Guardian Angel) and some said, "I will not serve."
2. Rejected by God, these evil angels formed their own Kingdom (of Darkness). We call this hell.
3. We human beings are far inferior to angels. However, the devils, jealous that we have a chance to enter heaven, are our sworn enemies.
4. Therefore, life on earth is a battlefield. Heaven and hell are at war and you are the prize they want to possess. (How naïve to think that we don't need to choose a king!)
5. Fortunately, we have many helps – Eucharist, confession, rosary and the Flame of Love.

Group Discussion Questions

1. What part of the teaching was new for you?
2. What parts of the video presentation touched you the most?
3. Please explain how you experience these 3 enemies.
4. What do you believe is your greatest obstacle?
5. Did you make any good resolutions?

SEMINAR 2 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 Jesus' Three Temptations (**Luke 4:1-13**)

Day 2 The World's Rejection of The Light (**John 1:5-13**)

Day 3 The World's hatred of Jesus and His Disciples. (**John 17:11-19**)

Day 4 The War Between Flesh and Spirit (**Romans 8:5-13**)

Day 5 The Works of the Flesh and the Fruits of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16-26**)

Day 6 Jesus' Power over devils (**Luke 11:14-23**)

Day 7 The Parable of the Weeds and Jesus' Explanation (**Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43**)

Seminar Three – Explaining The Flame of Love

1. Every human person has two lives – an internal life (thoughts, desires, feelings) and an external life (words and actions).
2. God also has two lives (so to speak). His internal life (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) never changes. His external life always brings forth new gifts.
3. For example, God has done many new things. He created the world, spoke to Israel, became a man and sent the Holy Spirit.
4. In one sense, the Catholic religion is complete. We have the Bible, the seven sacraments, the commandments and the Creed.
5. In another sense, the Catholic Church always receives new gifts. Elizabeth's Diary (fully approved by the Church) states that the Flame of Love is the greatest gift which God has given to the world in 2000 years.
6. Elizabeth was the first to receive this new gift and she is also the match which will light the flame for the whole world.
7. This Flame is Jesus Christ Himself. Because Our Lady's heart suffers from holding this Flame, it leaps out into our hearts (where it belongs). She goes everywhere, looking for people who want to receive the Flame.

Effects

1. The Flame of Love Diary lists 4 main effects:
 - A. Religious Experiences.

The person will experience God's presence. Our Lady promises miracles that will need no verification because each person will know that they have experienced Jesus' presence within.
 - B. Blinding Satan.

Satan enjoys tremendous powers in our modern world. He loves to cause sufferings. His power is everywhere and so people lose faith in God. All the doors have opened to him.
 - C. The Salvation of Souls

Constantly, Our Lady makes this her main purpose. The Flame will steal souls from Satan, even at the last minute. Blinding Satan leaves him powerless and earth can become more like the original Garden of Eden.
 - D. Blessings For Your Family
 1. As a mother and grandmother, Elizabeth's first concern was for her family. Our Lady frequently promised a special protection, especially at the moment of death.
 2. Gaining the Flame of Love graces for yourself will deeply affect all your family members.

The Urgency to Spread

Receiving the Flame placed a great responsibility upon Elizabeth. Urgency and activity to spread the message permeates the Diary. Our Lady frequently complains that the work was going too slowly and people (who should have helped) were placing obstacles. During these weeks, ask Our Lady what you can do for her.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Have you understood the greatness of this gift?
2. What promises have touched your heart?
3. What would happen in your life if Satan were blinded?
4. What blessings does your family need?
5. Do you think much about helping Our Lady to save souls?
6. Do you feel any desire to spread the Flame? Where would you start?

SEMINAR 3 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 Mary receives Jesus, the Flame of Love, into her womb. **(Luke 1:26-38)**

Day 2 So often in the diary, Mary invites Elizabeth to journey with her and Joseph to Bethlehem. **(Luke 2:1-20)**

Day 3 Joseph protects Jesus, the Flame of Love, not allowing Herod to kill him.
(Matthew 2:13-23)

Day 4 Accepting Jesus, the Flame of Love, draws Mary into Jesus' sufferings. **(Luke 2:22-35)**

Day 5 Mary fulfills her commitment to Jesus at the foot of the cross. **(John 19:25-37)**

Day 6 Jesus describes Himself as tying up Satan and plundering his house, i.e. the souls he has in his Power. **(Mark 3:23-30)**

Day 7 The two disciples try to describe their experiences of the Risen Jesus. **(Luke 24:28-35)**

Seminar 4 – Making Your Decision

1. The gospels describe two groups who followed Jesus – the crowds and the disciples. The crowds were many. The disciples were few.
2. You become a disciple by making a firm decision to have Jesus the King of your heart.
3. Some disciples followed Jesus in His travels, (the apostles). Some stayed at home. (Martha, Mary, Lazarus). Some wanted to follow Jesus but were told to go and tell others (the man freed from the devils).
4. Some wanted to be disciples but were not willing to pay the price – the rich young man, the man who delayed, the man who found the missionary life too difficult.
5. The true disciples varied greatly. Some had committed great sins (Mary Magdalen), had denied Jesus (Peter), or had run away (the apostles). However, they were still loyal to their decision.
6. Jesus gave parables about the pearl of a great price and the treasure hidden in the field. To be a disciple, the person, filled with joy, sells all he has to gain the prize.
7. Jesus does not hide the truth. Becoming a disciple means to enter a narrow gate and to walk a narrow road.
8. But consider what happens at the end of your life. You have used your years in serving Jesus and you look forward to being with Jesus (and all those whom you have helped) in heaven.
9. Make your decision now. “Jesus, I accept your invitation. I choose to be your disciple. I am yours until you come for me at the moment of my death.”

Group Discussion

1. Recall the important decisions of your life.
2. What opportunities did you accept?
3. What opportunities did you miss out on?
4. In your Catholic life, are you a disciple or just a member of the crowd?
5. If you choose to be a disciple, what sacrifices will you have to make?
6. What rewards will come to you?

SEMINAR 4 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 The first four disciples who left all to follow Jesus. **(Mark 1:14-20)**

Day 2 The parables of the joyful decision to sell all. **(Matthew 13:44-53)**

Day 3 Jesus describes His new family and the rewards of discipleship. **(Matthew 12:46-50)**
and **(Mark 10:28-31)**

Day 4 The crowds walk away. The apostles decide to remain. **(John 6:60-71)**

- Day 5 Jesus prophesies that even the disciples will waver in their commitment. (**Matthew 26:31-35**)
- Day 6 Judas, who looked like a disciple, makes his choice and leaves the last Supper. (**John 13:21-30**)
- Day 7 The beautiful story of Ruth deciding to accompany her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem.
(**Ruth 1:7-18**)

Seminar 5 – Prayer to Receive the Flame of Love

1. After each person receives a lit candle, the leader says the prayer, beginning with a renewal of the Baptismal promises

Questions

The prayer begins with the Baptismal promises:

Do you renounce Satan? – I do

Do you renounce all his works? - I do

Do you renounce all his seductions? – I do

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? – I do

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried? – I do

Do you believe that Jesus descended into hell; and on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and now sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty? – I do

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? – I do.

The Prayer

Imagine yourself clothed in white garments, a symbol of your Baptism and of your future life in heaven with the saints and angels.

As you receive a lit candle. Imagine yourself entering into that flame. What is this flame? It is Jesus Himself. Where are you? You are in Mary's Immaculate Heart, in the deepest center. Do not be afraid. You are not alone. The Virgin Mary is with you. Mary fills you with great desires so that you want to receive more and more of this Flame, surrender to the Flame and have it consume your whole life.

This Flame is the pearl of a great price, a treasure hidden in the field. Having found this pearl and this treasure, you want to sell all you have to purchase it.

Because you receive the Flame with others, you experience the communion of Saints. When one receives, all are blessed. When all receive, each is more blessed.

Open your eyes and experience the light and warmth of the lit candle. It is a symbol of the Flame of Love.

Now allow the Flame to enter within. Close your eyes and imagine Jesus living within you. Imagine Jesus in the mysteries of the rosary. He is conceived in Mary's womb. He sanctifies

John the Baptist and Elizabeth. He is born into the world. The shepherds and the Wise Men can see God's human face. At forty days, He fills the temple with light. At twelve, he fills that same temple with his teachings.

At 30, Jesus is baptized. He receives the Holy Spirit and hears the Father's voice. He changes water into wine. He preaches, heals, drives out demons and proclaims that the Kingdom is at hand. He reveals His full glory to Peter, James and John. On the night before His death, He says, "This is my Body" and "This is my blood".

He goes to the Garden where he accepts the Father's will. He gives Himself over to men whom Satan uses as his instruments. He accepts the wounds in His back and the thorns upon His head. He accepts the cross, walks to Calvary and dies for you.

His soul leaves His body and enters into eternal glory. Jesus' glorified soul reenters His body, glorifies it and raises it from the dead. He appears to His disciples, tells them to make disciples of all nations, and ascends to the Father's right hand. He sends the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, takes His mother into heaven, body and soul, and then, makes her queen of all the angels and saints.

After imagining Jesus in these gospel stories, allow the flame to come to your free will. You welcome Him and He enters your heart. Finally, Jesus is at the center of your life. He is your King. You place this fire on the lampstand and the flame gives light everywhere within you.

Right now, Our Lady embraces you and pours out her Flame of Love in great abundance. This is a holy and sacred moment. She sends this flame into your heart. The Flame leaps out of her heart because it causes Our Lady too much pain. She gives the fire far beyond your capacity to receive. She gives gifts that were meant for others but they did not receive.

Be still. The prayer is complete. Our Lady is pouring out the effects of grace of the Flame of Love.

SEMINAR 5 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

- Day 1 Mary praises God's generosity in giving her Jesus, the Flame of Love. **(Luke 1:46-56)**
- Day 2 The Baptism of Jesus is our model of receiving the Flame. **(Matthew 3:11-17)**
- Day 3 Jesus reveals His identity as the light of the world. **(John 8:12-20)**
- Day 4 The Ethiopian rejoices to accept the gift of Baptism. **(Acts 8:26-40)**
- Day 5 So many times, the gospel of Luke speaks about the treasures in Mary's heart. **(Luke 2:15-20; Luke 2:33-35; Luke 2:46-52)**
- Day 6 St. Paul explains the full effects of your Baptism. **(Romans 6:1-11)**
- Day 7 Paul tells Timothy to constantly stir up the flame of the Holy Spirit. **(2 Timothy 1:1-8)**

Seminar 6 – You Need a Community

1. To build a fire, logs of wood are brought together. To put out the fire, the logs are separated. To build her fire, Mary must bring us together. When we do not gather, the fire goes out.
2. You are Our Lady's logs and the gathering represents a weekly small prayer community.
3. The need to gather weekly in a small group is a new idea for Catholics. However, unless Catholics choose to join a Flame of Love group, no group will exist. If no group exists, no one can be invited to join. There will be no glowing fire. The catholic logs will remain scattered.

God's Plan in the Bible

For many centuries before Jesus, God's plan centered on the small nation of Israel, which brought forth Jesus. Although Jesus preached to the crowds, His plans centered upon the small community of disciples. When Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself only to the disciples, and sent the Holy Spirit only upon these disciples. After Pentecost, the disciples formed the newly baptized into a community because forming communities is always God's plan. We are only God's community when we come together.

Motivations

Why should you be faithful to a community?

1. Coming together is a sign to others that the members have found something important.
2. An individual person acting alone cannot accomplish great things. Even scientists gather in teams to make great discoveries.
3. When gathered, you become an invitation to others to gather with you.
4. Without our communities, Our Lady will have great difficulty in spreading her Flame of Love.
5. These communities are very diverse in size and in places where they meet.
6. The community is absolutely necessary so its members lead a devout life (Talk 7).

Group Discussion

1. Have you ever been a member of a small group before?
2. Do you realize the necessity of being a faithful member?
3. What blessings will you receive from the group?
4. What must you sacrifice to be faithful?
5. Do you think you will persevere – month after month?
6. What blessings will you bring to your small community?

SEMINAR 6 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 Jesus spends most of his ministry forming the community of disciples, explaining that they must serve one another. **(Mark 9:30-37)**

Day 2 Jesus' greatest happiness was when He ate with His disciples at the Last Supper. **(John 13:1-11)**

Day 3 Even in their fear, the disciples stayed together. Jesus returned a week later to join Thomas to the community. **John 20:19-29)**

Day 4 At His Ascension, Jesus told the disciples to remain in community, so they would all receive the Spirit. **(Acts 1:4-12)**

Day 5 Peter makes certain that the community of the apostles would be restored to 12. **(Acts 1:15-26)**

Day 6 The 3,000 newly baptized form the first Jerusalem community. **(Acts 2:42-47)**

Day 7 St. Paul uses the image of the human body to describe the Christian community with its oneness and its diversity. **(1 Corinthians 12:12-31)**

Seminar 7 – Your Devout Life

1. The new-born baby has all the powers and faculties of an adult. They just need time to grow.
2. At your Baptism, you became a spiritual baby. You have all the powers of the saints but you must make your decision to become devout.
3. Many people have good goals, like a family and a career, but for a Catholic, that is not enough. Your Baptism calls you to live a devout life.
4. Jesus' call to you is clear, "Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5:48)
5. All the saints heard this same call. Some when they were young and others when they were older.
6. The most important blessing of the Flame of Love is for you to respond to Jesus' call to be his saintly friend.
7. The early Christians heard this call but soon this flame grew very weak. So, God raised up St. Anthony (250 – 356 – 105 years!). After hearing God's call, thousands joined him in his monasteries. For the next 700 years, those who wanted to be saints, joined a convent or a monastery.
8. Then came St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. They didn't form monasteries because their members had to preach to the world.
9. Along came St. Francis de Sales. He wrote a book, "Introduction to the Devout Life" which taught everyone, (laymen and laywomen, single or married), how to become holy.
10. St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose Jesuits worked in the world, devised the Ignatian method of mental prayer for all those who lived in the world and wanted to pray well.
11. Other saints (Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross) divided this road to perfection into 3 stages. (You will learn all of this in the Devout Life Teachings).
12. Rejoice. You have completed the seminars. Imitate the blind beggar, Bartimaeus.

Our Model

The blind beggar, Bartimaeus, spent many lonely days sitting by the waysides of Jericho, until Jesus passed by. Jesus asked him, "What can I do for you?" He knew the answer, "Lord, that I may see."

After being healed, he didn't think of going home, but made a selfless decision. He followed Jesus to Jerusalem and became his disciple. (That is how we have his story. He was a faithful member of the Church).

Through these seminars, you have begun to see. Make your decision. Follow Jesus on the road to perfection all the years of your life.

Group Discussion

1. What gifts did you receive from these 7 seminars?
2. Can you recall your feelings when you first began these weeks?
3. What was the most special seminar for you? Was there any "turning point" for you?
4. Did you ever realize that Jesus called you to be a saint?
5. Will you be faithful to your small group community?

SEMINAR 7 - DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

- Day 1 In His eight beatitudes, Jesus sets high goals for His disciples. **(Matthew 5:1-12)**
- Day 2 Jesus wants His disciples to be perfect by forgiving others and loving their enemies.
(Matthew 5:38-48)
- Day 3 Paul describes his own conversion to holiness. **(Acts 22:1-16)**
- Day 4 The gospel of **Luke** pictures Jesus at prayer.
- a. After His Baptism **3:21**
 - b. Praying Frequently **5:16**
 - c. In the Garden **22:39-46**
- Day 5 Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. **(Matthew 6:5-14)**
- Day 6 Bartimaeus set right out on this road of perfection – following Jesus to Jerusalem.
(Mark 10:46-52)
- Day 7 Zaccheus makes great sacrifices to be perfect. **(Luke 19:1-10)**

Now, use the Flame of Love Devout Life Teachings on www.flameoflove.us (Click Resources)