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EDITORIAL

A Millennium Challenge for Corpus

by Jack Shea

When Allen Moore, the new President of CORPUS U.S.A. suggested in his inaugural address (Corpus Reports Vol. 25, #1) that CORPUS is "in transition" he offered a great challenge to the membership to explore new directions. Although he pointed out that we have not accomplished our primary goal "to reinstate to active canonical ministry in the Roman Catholic Church those non-clerical priests who are qualified and ready to serve," he suggested that nevertheless, a growing number are troubled by the limitations implied in the statement of the primary goal. He also raised the possibility that the organization might support and work for other reform issues while continuing on the quest for the attainment of the primary goal.

In this year, when Corpus U.S.A., Corpus Canada, and Presencia Nueva (Mexico) are co-sponsoring the Congress of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests, I write as a member of Corpus Canada to propose a course of action in response to Allen's welcome challenge.

It strikes me that at this point in time, on the eve of a new millennium, there exists an interesting and no doubt a providential convergence of events in the life of the Church and its redemptive mission, a convergence that could provide a creative insight for a new direction for Corpus.

There appear to be three major developments that touch profoundly on the efficacy of the Church to share the "good news" of the paschal mystery and fulfill its mandate to "Go out to the whole world: proclaim the good news to all creation. (Luke 16:16)

THE FIRST PHENOMENON

In the first place, during the Second Vatican Council the Church adopted a new attitude towards the world. Secondly, we now have a large number of married Catholic priests in our countries; and, thirdly, a strategic new approach to the preaching of the gospel or evangelization is being encouraged.

Before the Council, the world was seen at the very least as an obstacle to the mission of the Church, or at worst, a source of evil from which Christians must distance themselves at the price of their salvation. Now, however, we read in the great "Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the World Today" (*Gaudium et Spes*), that the world is seen in an entirely new light.

The Church now identifies herself with the world and its progress, its joys, its hopes, its griefs and anxieties. The Church and the world are intimately linked and everything genuinely human finds an echo in the Church because it is linked with humankind by the deepest bonds. The Church even expresses solidarity with the world as well as respect and love. In short, "the world is the theater of human history."

THE SECOND PHENOMENON

The second phenomenon is the presence today of many thousands of married Roman Catholic priests, even though their mission and ministry are not yet recognized by the official Church. Nevertheless, they represent a new manner of sacerdotal presence in this world.

The typical Corpus member is a married priest who lives with other people just as Christ lived among the people of his day. This priest shops at the supermarket, endures the stress of commuter traffic, suffers from the fear of being downsized at work, shares with his wife the cost of putting food on the table, is protective of his children and, in general, experiences the same daily burdens and frustrations as any other citizen.

And yet this same person experiences the unity of priesthood and marriage and the compatibility of the two vocations. He lives this unity in the joys and problems of daily living. But he is no longer a cleric and therefore sees no need for those protections and privileges of another age. Nor is he a monk living in isolation. In his new situation, even celibacy can be seen as a counter-sign to his contemporaries and could separate him from those with whom he lives and works.

THE THIRD PHENOMENON

The third element in this examination of a new role for Corpus is the current emphasis on evangelization and the corresponding insights into preaching the gospel in a post-modern age. Writing some thirty years ago, the Council Fathers recognized that the gospel must now be preached in an entirely new environment. In fact they devoted an entire chapter in *Gaudium et Spes* to the subject of "culture." Here they urge the people of God to try to understand the ways of thinking and acting of their contemporaries as expressed in popular culture to be better able to adapt Christian teaching to the current zeitgeist.

Soon after he was appointed as the new Archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal George gave an interesting insight into the

current religious climate. He said we are just beginning to scratch the surface of the meaning of Vatican II and it is now time to enter into the meaning of the Council more deeply than we have in the last thirty years.

In his view, the Church spent the last thousand years spreading the gospel from the Mediterranean area to the rest of the world. This initial mission has now been completed, the gospel is now available to the entire world. So we are now entering a new age of evangelization, one which will be significantly more difficult. Today, rather than spreading the gospel in geographical settings, we must engage in a process of inculturation by applying the lessons of the gospel to current social institutions and structures and invite our contemporaries to accept the radical demands of justice and love that are inherent in the message of Jesus.

Pope Paul VI expressed this new principle of "inculturation" even more clearly. Writing ten years after the Council in the document "On Evangelization in the Modern World" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*) he elaborated on the concept that we must not limit the preaching of the gospel to individuals but stressed the need to instill the spirit of the gospel into the very fabric of our modern culture. These are his words:

"...it is a question not only of preaching the gospel in wider geographic areas or to even greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the gospel, humankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation."

So the stage is set for new beginnings. The Church and the world appear to have a new relationship. There is a new model of ministry in our midst and we are discovering new insights into the means of sharing with our friends and fellow-workers the excitement of the promise of our salvation.

Given this new situation, what are the implications for Corpus? First of all, we members of Corpus must continue to respect and support our brother priests who choose to live a life of celibacy. Also we must be supportive of the various reform initiatives in the Church today, whether the Call To Action Conferences, We are Church movement, support for the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church or women's equality in every Church office. However, for many Corpus members, a new day is dawning. It is no longer necessary to live with the nostalgia for a former style of ministry. The priesthood of Jesus Christ in which we are privileged to share means more than dispensing the sacraments.

We even have St. Paul's words to support this statement. In an exaggerated manner of speech, he went out of his way to take no credit for administering baptism when he said, "I am thankful that I never baptized any of you after Crispus and Gaius." (1 Cor. 1:14). He then continues to explain what his ministry did entail, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the good news." (1 Cor. 1:17). In these words Paul is but reflecting his participation in the mandate of Christ himself who said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43).

In my view, the greatest contribution that Corpus can make at this point in the life of the Church is to reflect on, and share, our unique experience. As members of this remarkable social movement we should challenge one another, using Corpus as the vehicle, to articulate our experience in bringing the message of the gospel in our new environment. We have the example of St. Paul, who, in order to introduce the people of Athens and Corinth to the mystery of Christ and his law of love, had first of all to understand the workings of Greek culture.

Whether our members are in social work, prison ministry, community planning, journalism, the professions, etc., we must begin to use our insights into the workings of modern society. In short, we have to build conceptual models which will bring about the necessary pastoral adjustments in church practice to institute new forms of ministry to the faithful and the world.

We need to bring to this task the tools of the social sciences concerning institutional and social change. Other priests before us have been similarly challenged and carried out this apostolate. For example, a Marist priest, William Feree of Dayton, Ohio, was actively involved in such pioneering work fifty years ago.

During his recent visit to Mexico City, Pope John Paul announced that this year would be a special year of evangelization during which everyone should be invited to enter into an encounter with Christ. I am sure that Corpus is ready to accept the challenge of this new commitment.

In the light of the new dimensions described above, the famous words of the Cure of Ars take on a new meaning: "The world belongs to those who love it most and who prove that love."

THE TRAGEDY OF REMI DE ROO

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC

By now many of The Journal's readers will have heard how Remi De Roo, the retired bishop of Victoria, was forbidden by Rome from speaking to a conference sponsored by the International Federation of Married Priests. He had already agreed to speak at the conference that was held in July of this year in Atlanta, when he received the letter instructing him to not to speak. He decided to obey Rome's directive, and did not go to Atlanta.

Rome did not want him to speak at the conference because some of the people participating in the conference have publicly stated their opposition to some papal teachings. De Roo had not thought this a reason to decline when he was first invited to speak. When he changed his mind and decided not to speak at the conference, it was not because he found Rome's reasons persuasive, but because he did not want to be perceived as going against Rome's orders. This affair certainly raises questions about the relationship of bishops in the Church to the pope. Vatican II teaches that bishops have an office and an authority that is proper to them, and not delegated to them by the pope. Vatican II also teaches that each bishop, as a member of the college of bishops, has a pastoral responsibility for the whole church, not just his own diocese. Rome's action toward De Roo appears to challenge the teaching of Vatican II. De Roo has always presented himself as a champion of Vatican II. Nevertheless, he chose to obey Rome rather than take a stand in support of conciliar teaching. That is a decision that De Roo made, perhaps as a matter of conscience, and I am not going to criticize him for it. It may be that De Roo's interpretation of Vatican II required him to accede to Rome's demand. Or he may have had personal reasons of which we are ignorant.

What makes me sad -- and the reason I have entitled this article "The Tragedy of Remi De Roo" -- is that De Roo missed a wonderful opportunity to live more deeply the beatitude of Jesus, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Mt 5:10-12).

Let it be said that De Roo has already lived this beatitude because of the criticism he has received from conservative elements in the Catholic Church for some of the progressive things he has done as the bishop of Victoria. Nevertheless, he has retained his position of honour in the hierarchy and in the Church.

If he had defied Rome, as the Israelite prophets defied the kings of Israel, in order to hold up the prophetic vision of Vatican II, he would have suffered Rome's wrath and would have become persona non grata to many bishops. He would have lost a measure of influence in the councils of the bishops. He would have lost the friendship of some important people.

But what would he have gained? He would have shared in the suffering of Jesus who was rejected, cast out and defamed by the religious and civil authorities of Israel. He would have shared in the suffering of countless Catholics who have been excluded from participation and honour in the Church because they obeyed their conscience rather than ecclesiastical authority.

He would have stood in solidarity with the outcasts of the Church: the married priests, the divorced and remarried, the homosexuals.

As a married priest I have experienced the reward of the beatitude, which God begins to bestow even in this life. By experiencing the rejection of Church authorities, their refusal to recognize my vocation as a married priest, I have had a taste of the cup that Jesus drank. But this taste has brought a depth to my relationship with Jesus that I never had as a priest before my marriage. It has made me more a man of prayer, more a man dependent on God and less dependent on the approval of human beings.

As a celibate priest I stood in solidarity with marginalized people in principle and intellectually, but as a married priest I found myself in their company and accepted as one of them. These were people who had found God in a place where the Church said God could not be. They were priests who found God both in their priestly vocation and in

marriage. They were people who had gone through a divorce without benefit of a Church annulment and found God in a second marriage. They were homosexuals who found God in the intimate love of a person of the same sex.

I don't want to romanticize us. It hurts to lose honour and privilege. It hurts to be the object of condemnation and contempt. It causes distress, emotional pain and anger. Priests who were taught to hate their sexuality, flee intimacy, and live in a state of infantile dependency on Church authority, are not always successful in meeting the challenge of marriage and making their own way in the world. They may suffer frequently from depression and anxiety. They may not be easy to live with. They may react to the excessive otherworldliness of their life in the clergy by naively buying into the materialism that pervades our secular culture. They may vent their anger not only on the Church that cast them out but on their fellow outcasts. They may abuse others in the same way they were abused by the Church. No, I do not always find my fellow outcasts to be pleasant company, nor do they always find me so. But I will say this about us outcasts: we are real. Our choice to believe in God as we found God, and the suffering that choice brought us, has made us real. Our relationships may sometimes be rocky, but they are real human relationships. Somehow we have lost the means to pretend that we are anything but flawed human beings. If you join our company you will always be aware of hanging on the cross of being human. The only thing we can offer you are honest human relationships.

Bishop De Roo, you will always be welcome to join us.

The Rock

An Exegesis of Matthew 16. 17-19

by Michael Zarb, Cobble Hill, BC

Matthew 16.17-19 has been used by the leaders of the Catholic church to claim many powers. When this passage is seen through the eyes of first century people, not yet overburdened by later patristic and medieval interpretations, it takes a different meaning.

The majority of scholars consider Mark to be the first gospel written in the 70s, and then in the 80s and 90s Matthew and Luke were written using Mark as one of their sources.

The passage dealing with Peter's statement about the person of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi is found in all three synoptic gospels; however, the part containing the saying of Jesus about the 'rock' is exclusively Matthaean, which from the outset makes it suspect. Had this saying, so important for the authority of the popes, as medieval theologians make it to be, been in the tradition of a historic event, the omission by both Mark and Luke would be in dire need of an explanation. Obviously, the saying is an addition to the story as found in Mark. It is strictly Matthaean material added either by the author of Matthew's gospel or even added later.

Here is the context:

16.13-14 - At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks other people's view of himself; and the reply of the disciples follows.

16.15-16 - Jesus asks the disciples their opinion about him; Peter answers for the disciples.

16.17-19 - Jesus' promises to Peter.

16.20 - The charge to secrecy.

16. 21 - First prediction of Jesus' death.

16. 22-23 - Peter's rebuke and Jesus' rebuff.

16.24-26 - Conditions of discipleship.

16.27-28 - The Son of Man comes in judgement.

The part that concerns us here is v.17-19.

In this whole passage (vv. 13-28), Matthew brings together the three titles of Jesus: Son of Man (v.13, "I" in Mk and Lk), Messiah (Christos) and Son of God (v.16); and then again Son of Man twice at the end of the pericope (v.27,28). Matthew is emphasizing the titles; obviously his concern is the aggrandizement of Jesus, not of any other person.

In Peter's statement (v.16), Matthew adds 'the Son of the living God' to the 'Messiah' in Mk and Lk. Further, it is also equivalent to the question of the priest at the trial (Mt 26.63) again different from that of the other synoptics. Matthew's editorial hand is clearly evident.

In vv. 17-19, in response to Peter's solemn statement, Matthew adds a saying by Jesus, which is, probably, entirely Matthew's own creation. Matthew's love for triadic forms is exhibited here at its best - three parts, each one also containing three parts:

1- a (17b) "Happy are you, Simon Barjona,

b (17c) because flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you,

c (17d) but my Father in heaven [has revealed this to you].

2- a (18a) And I say to you, you are 'a loose Rock'[Gk. *petros* (masc.)],

b (18b) and on this bedrock [Gk. *petra* (fem.)] I will build my community,

c (18c) and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

3- a (19a) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,

b (19b) and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven,

c (19c) and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven."

v. 17 - Jesus approves Peter's statement and declares him 'happy, blessed'; however, he does not credit its content to him, but rather to a special revelation of the Father; surely there is no valid reason here why Jesus should make Peter the foundation of his community.

v. 18 -The Greek speaking members of the Matthaean community would easily see the pun on the name of Peter but would also recognize the normal meaning of the terms used; they knew that a '*petros*' i.e. 'a loose rock or detached stone' is not a '*petra*', 'bedrock', the word used in the parable of the Wise Builder (7.24) which Matthew surely has in mind here. *Petros* is equivalent to *lithos* the stone or rock one builds with (or throws at dogs, as the ancients did!);

so, since Peter is the representative of the disciples who are the present community of Jesus, he, with the disciples, would be part of the superstructure, not the foundation.

In Matthew's mind, Jesus, as the wise builder of the parable, builds on a firm foundation (7.24), namely the revelation of the Father, not on a weak man like Peter who is a 'Satan' and a 'stumbling block' as he is called a few verses below (v.23). The demonstrative 'this' refers to what Jesus is talking about, i.e. the revelation from the Father that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, in the same way that 'these my words' are the 'rock' in 7.24. If Matthew meant Peter to be the foundation, then, when Jesus was addressing him, it would have been more appropriate for him to say: "on you I will build my community." But Matthew changed the terms from *'petros'* to *'petra'* thus using another word with a another meaning and in a another gender; and he did so, precisely, because he did not mean the same 'rock'. This consideration is crucial for the correct interpretation. The emphasis is on the fact that Jesus' community is to be built on a firm foundation. What qualities or attributes does Peter have to qualify as a firm foundation? His nickname as 'a stone'? Hardly.

From the considerations above, allow me to paraphrase the text: "And I tell you, indeed you are a building stone [as your nickname states] since the Father revealed this to you; and in addition, on this bedrock (the revelation of the Father) I will build my community." Matthew's intention here is not the aggrandizement of Peter. Rather, he is pointing out with emphasis that the faith of the community rests on the firm foundation of Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the Son of God. Revelation is the major theme of the pericope.

'My community': This is not the community of disciples of the historic Jesus of Nazareth, but rather the future disciples of the Matthean community. The historical Jesus of Nazareth did not look forward to an organized following, an institution, to succeed him, but to the coming of a new supernatural order, the kingdom of God. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, lived as a Jew and died as a Jew; as such, it was unthinkable for the historical Jesus to start another religion. Matthew's Jesus, therefore, is the exalted Jesus, the Jesus of the faith of the Matthean community. It is he who speaks and is even represented as having divine prerogatives, (cf. the Son of Man comes with 'his' angels (v.27) and the Son of Man coming in 'his' kingdom (v.28); cf. also the final judgement scene Mt 25.31ff.). So this is the community of the Jesus of faith, the Matthean community in the 90s that believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

'Gates of Hades': Gk. *'hades'* and Heb. *'sheol'* meaning the abode of the dead, but at times, also, of demonic powers, and is thus used for the personified power of death. The term 'gates' is sometimes used metonymically for the 'city' and by extension for its 'rulers'. So the imagery here is that of the rulers of the underworld bursting forth from the gates to attack the people, the community of the Messiah, the Son of God - perhaps a reference to persecutions the Matthean community was undergoing at the time. This is the imagery of Jewish apocalyptists who believed that the powers of cosmic chaos, in the end time, would unleash unparalleled tribulation upon the world (cf.. Rev 9.1-11). Possibly Matthew uses the 'gate' image here, instead of a clearer 'the powers of Hades', in order to parallel the 'keys' connoting 'gates' of the kingdom of heaven.

v. 19 - 'Keys of the kingdom of heaven': The Matthean Jesus uses the future tense in v.18-19 precisely because it is not the historical Jesus who is speaking, but the author of Mt speaking to his community. The historical Jesus could not yet bequeath any authority to his disciples because at that time the scribes and the Pharisees still sat 'on Moses' seat' and they were to be followed (23.2-3). It is only the exalted Jesus who claims, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (28.18); he has a kingdom (v.28), sits in judgement as king (25.40) and is thus able to hand over the 'keys of the kingdom'.

Matthew here transfers 'the keys' from the Q passage (Lk 11.52 'the key of knowledge' // Mt 23.13 where the scribes and Pharisees shut the kingdom of heaven), to the Matthean community represented by Peter. 'Keys' here (v19) does not seem to connote the means to open in order to enable entry into the kingdom, but, rather, to permit God's dominion to extend from the heavenly sphere to the earthly one, as in 'your kingdom/dominion come on earth as it is in heaven' in the Lord's Prayer (6.10, exclusively Matthean); the following part of the promise makes this clear. The community of the exalted Jesus has the 'keys' and in chapter 28 they are enjoined to make disciples of the Gentiles, to open/reveal the kingdom for others, teaching them to observe Jesus' law, for "I (the foundation, the *'petra'*) will be with you always, to the close of the age"(28.18-20).,

'Binding and loosing': this idiom, in rabbinical tradition almost always denotes authoritative halakic decisions. The Greek of this statement is ambiguous:

A.- classically as a future perfect, it translates, "will have been bound/loosed," -the action in the second part is prior to that of the first part, meaning that the action in heaven is before the action on earth, or

B.- the Greek past participle is taken as an adjective and is thus rendered: "will be bound/loosed," meaning that the action in heaven follows that on earth. This is the traditional interpretation, very convenient for the power grabbers. Interpretation B turns theology upside down: first earth decides, then heaven has to follow, making the human the decider and God the lackey, the follower. This is an abrogation of the prerogatives of God diametrically opposite to the theology of Matthew, for whom God is sovereign and supreme. This would be the acme of blasphemy for the contemporaries of Matthew. Moreover, setting up Peter as the chief rabbi, the arbiter of '*halakah*', runs counter to Matthew's explicit prohibition of hierarchical leaders at 23.8-10: "v.8 -But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students; v.9 -And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father, the one in heaven; v.10 -Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah." Even the title 'pope' (Gk 'papas' i.e. 'father') rubs against the grain of this gospel saying!

On the other hand, interpretation A keeps theology right side up: heaven decides and earth is to follow. The community, firmly established on the revelation of the Father and in possession of the keys that enable God's dominion to pour down on earth, will make sure its decisions conform to those already established in heaven. So Matthew is here saying that the community learns its '*halakah*' (way, rule of life) not from any man but from God or the exalted Jesus. Note that this saying is repeated at 18.18, addressed to the disciples, obviously indicating that in Matthew's mind this 'binding and loosing' is not the exclusive prerogative of Peter but of the whole community, as it is meant to be in this passage, since Peter is representing the community.

Note the future in these sayings: this is a promise; the historical Peter does not receive anything - no keys, no status as foundation, no authority, no power. One has to ask then: when did the actual investiture of power to Peter take place? In fact, it is nowhere to be found. How can that be? How could such an important event not be recorded? Had it taken place, wouldn't the author of Acts, who mentions the stay of forty days of the resurrected Jesus, mention this important event to boost up the image of one of the two heroes of his book? If Peter had this extraordinary power to bind even God, why would Paul rebuke him, precisely, on issues of '*halakah*'?: Gal 2.11 - "But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the good news, I said to Cephas before them all, 'If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?'" Peter the vacillator, a wobbly foundation indeed!

Peter was certainly one of the pillars (Gal 2.9) of the nascent Messianic movement, but he did not have the extraordinary powers that the Roman Catholic church claims for him and for his supposed successors.

Ed. Note: Michael Zarb is a Scripture scholar and former member of the French team of the 'Ecole Biblique de Jérusalem' that originally worked on the Dead Sea Scrolls. The editors asked him to do an exegetical study of this crucial passage in Matthew that Roman bishops have long claimed to be the scriptural 'bedrock' upon which papal power rests.

Synod of Jerusalem Keynote Address, Aug. 1, 1999

by Louise L. Haggett, Synod President

For the benefit of those who are not aware of the history of the Synod, I shall offer a brief explanation, as it began with the work of the Spirit and a woman. David Rice tells the story in his book "Shattered Vows":

Carla Camellini, a charismatic, received messages from Jesus in prayer for eighteen years. Fr. Conrad Baisi, a theologian, seminary professor and spiritual advisor studied her case for ten years and thought her charism was similar to that of Teresa of Avila.

Don Paolo Camellini was a parish priest of a mountain village in the Apennines where Carla used to take her two children for holidays before she was widowed. She knew Don Paolo only slightly.

In 1970, Carla went to Don Paolo and told him she had had a revelation that they should get married, so as to dedicate themselves to the cause of married priests. Jesus had told her that he wanted married priests, but only in holiness, 'holy as priests, and holy as spouses.'

Though devoted to his celibate life, Don Paolo wrote a letter to his bishop telling him that "Jesus asked her to marry me." Paolo's dispensation came within a month. When David Rice asked Carla what Jesus' exact words were, she replied, "Do not fear this choice, because it (the married priesthood) is a spot of oil that grows always bigger, and that no one can ever stop. I wanted this mission for a renewed Church. Because too much blood has been poured out for this my work in you..."

Ten years later, in 1980, Carla told Don Paolo, "Jesus told me it is time to go out and talk to everybody, in any way possible. Like at Pentecost." This is how the international gatherings began. The first, a Synod, was held in Ariccia just outside Rome and was attended mostly by Europeans. The coordinators were Paolo Camellini, German theologian Dr. Heinz Jurgen Vogels and Lambert Van Gelder, a Dutch Augustinian church journalist. All have since served on the International Federation's board and were or are president of their respective country's married priest organizations. Currently, Vogels and Van Gelder are co-editors of the Federation's newsletter, "Ministerium Novum," and members of the Executive Committee of this Synod.

The subject of the first Synod was the desirability of a married priesthood with a specific focus on biblical, theological and historical data. It was at this meeting in Ariccia that the idea of founding an International Federation out of the 30 national groups of married priests came to be. Its first gathering, from then on called Congress, took place also in Ariccia two years later in 1987. International Congresses have been held every three years since, in Netherlands in 1990, Madrid in 1993 which I had the privilege of attending, Brazil in 1996 and the Atlanta Congress this week. As David Rice put it in his book, "Each (meeting) has had its own particular flavor and emphasis. As experience accumulates, thinking matures and goals are refined."

The second Synod took place in Assisi in the fall of 1995, a few weeks before the earthquake that damaged the basilica and burial ground of St. Francis. This was an awe-inspiring occasion for those of us who attended. Without a specific agenda, the outcome of the Assisi Synod was a prophetic view of the church of the future in home-based worshipping communities.

The third Synod was to take place in Jerusalem in the year 2000, the reason for its name. The Federation's board decided that it be held in Atlanta in conjunction with the Congress. The success of the Jerusalem/Atlanta session, like Assisi, will depend on three freedoms:

1. Freedom of expression by participants. The participants must have complete freedom to express themselves as agents of the Spirit, even if it means questioning some of the interpretations of the Gospel. Jesuit Chris Moss wrote: "the Scriptures were written from within a patriarchal society, in which women were considered inferior to men and in a society with a pre-modern understanding of sexuality...;"

2. Freedom from judgment. This Synod is not about judging someone else's message. It's about the wonder and awe of that message. After all, the Holy Spirit is in charge of the Synod. Freedom is not freedom unless we are willing to give it away.

3. Freedom to accept a different course of action. This means that while the Synod may have had an opening agenda, to criticize or ignore a message that is contrary to our beliefs will be to refuse the overall message.

Ed. Note: This text was excerpted and edited by F. Brassard.

Document of the Synod of Jerusalem, Session in Atlanta, GA, August 1-3, 1999

From the earliest days, the People of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, have often gathered at times of crisis in the form of a Holy Synod to search for new directions.

In the spirit of the First Council in Jerusalem, and the Second Vatican Council and its response to the signs of the times, we too wish to address the needs of the People of God and their profound longing for a basic modification in the exercise of pastoral leadership.

This Synod, authorized through Baptism and Ordination and representing different callings in the Catholic Church, makes these recommendations to the Bishop of Rome, Peter's successor.

In response to the invitation of John Paul II to discuss with him how to exercise his ministry (Ut Unum Sint no.95) we ask him to:

1) Renounce the recent custom of appointing bishops and restore it to the local communities, because Peter did not appoint the other apostles. Jesus did. (Lumen Gentium 27)*

2) Convoke a Universal Council of all Christian Denominations, as recently recommended by the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, to review the decisions and practices of the second millennium in the Western Church regarding primacy, infallibility, collegiality, ministry, sexuality, and social and ecclesial justice.**

In conclusion, the members of this Synod respectfully urge our brother John Paul II to respond positively to the proposals presented here. In the meantime, the People of God have the right to have their spiritual needs met. We continue to follow our calling from Jesus in responding to them.

* Cf. supporting commentary no. 1 (available upon request)

** Cf. supporting commentary no. 2 (available upon request)

Human Rights in the Church and Reconciliation Final Declaration of the Fifth Congress of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests

The International Federation of Married Catholic Priests, meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, from July 28 to August 1, 1999, with representatives from four continents and sixteen countries, explored the issue of human rights within the Church and Reconciliation.

We note that the recognition of human rights as a fundamental charter for the human family was powerfully set in motion by the American Revolution (1776), the French Revolution (1789), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Second Vatican Council (1965). We are especially conscious of these rights as we meet in Atlanta, the city where the civil rights of all people were eloquently proclaimed and prophetically declared.

We express disappointment that the institutional Roman Catholic Church does not acknowledge and promote all the human rights of its members. There is a dichotomy between the preaching of the Vatican to the world and its practice within its own household. We married priests believe that obligatory celibacy violates the right to marriage given to all in Genesis and the New Testament, an inalienable right that must not be violated by any human institution. Pope Pius XI himself declared that "no human law can take away from people the original human right to marry" (Casti Connubii).

We observe that in a century when human rights have been expressly applied to women, that the Vatican, although declaring that women should be honored and recognized as equal, is not willing to grant women equal authority in the Church.

We declare, furthermore, that a more evangelical and collegial approach to authority and structure in the Church would protect the human and Christian rights of all its members. We endorse the recommendations made recently in the international Synods of Asia and Oceania calling on the pope to follow more faithfully the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on collegiality. This same Council called for the recognition of the *sensus fidelium* of the laity (Lumen Gentium, 12). This has been discounted. It also called for bishops to be regarded, not as vicars of the pope but as ambassadors of Christ (Lumen Gentium, 27). This has been discounted.

We recognize that our agenda for prophetic reform cannot succeed unless God's Spirit moves it forward and God's People receive it. We know also that imagination and creativity and courage and, yes, even humour are the signs of God's presence and grace.

We call, therefore, in this Jubilee millennial year, for reconciliation: by the recognition in the Catholic Church of full human rights for all its members and, especially, by the recognition of equality for women and the freedom for priests to marry. Such a Church will witness to the world the liberty, equality, and solidarity of the People of God.