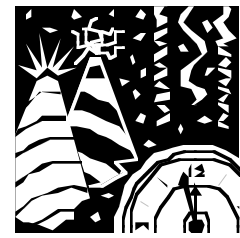
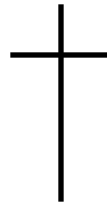


# The Journal



*Happy New Year!*

*January - February 2001*

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## Editorial

*by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC*

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More than 55 years ago, I apprenticed as an upholsterer and served two years of my young life in Belfast at the trade- long enough to know that I did not want to do that for the rest of my life and long enough to learn some skills that have stayed with me and proved useful for the rest of my life. I learned what it means to take the craft of a bygone someone and the fashions of a bygone mind and to strip away what has worn out or outlived its usefulness, and by getting down to the frame, to rebuild it. I learned the value of reconstructing and conserving something useful and passing it on to some future person to make of it what others and I had done in the past. I also learned that in the home, no one wants just the frame of something. To be able to talk about the quality of the frame may be a good selling point, and to know the value of the frame helps in understanding the piece, but in the home, what is wanted is a good useable item.

In the church today, we are trying to get down to the frame in order to rebuild something that we can enjoy, use, and hand on to the future. The base is God's Way (the Kingdom) as we got it from Jesus, for example, the all-inclusive attitude that there are no outcasts, no marginalised, that everyone counts. All are welcome in Jesus' group, to eat at Jesus' table. No one is to be excommunicated, cut off, chastised, unless they stand against this attitude; Jesus was exasperated at the stupidity of those who would not see this (Mk 3: 29). The antipathy of the Jewish Hierarchy executed Jesus, maintaining that he had contempt for God (!) when, in fact, he had disdain only for their restrictive Codes. This was long before a christian hierarchy was ever dreamed of- it took a very long time before the christian community became aware that hierarchy was an (divinely) inspired idea. As a christian community, we would do well to look carefully at what Jesus did during his lifetime and what the community did in his name after his women disciples brought the men together again in Galilee.

That is only a start. It is often said that if Jesus or one of his friends arrived at one of our churches, s/he would think that s/he had arrived at a foreign temple with Highpriests or Roman Senators dressed to impress with their rank and importance. I can live with that because I know that if by some magic I were to visit Jesus or one of his friends, I would end up in a synagogue in good Jewish fashion. I do not want to go back to old times or to bring old times forward. But they give me an understanding of our foundations.

I know that apostolic succession is not a specialty of any particular group within the koinonia but that it is a prerogative of the whole. Each local christian community is successor to the apostles and each one of us has apostolic succession in so far as we belong to a christian community. I know that under the guidance of Jesus' spirit, each community chose men and women to be its servants- hosts, teachers, prophets, elders, bishops, and so on. Without election by the community, no one had a recognized service. Today, a community, such as Corpus Canada, can make its own priests and bishops with apostolic succession. They would be in union with the catholic church and with the pope though the pope may not consider himself to be in union with them. I know that the appointment of bishops was not a prerogative of the pope until it was written into the 1917 Code.

I know that a married priesthood is the norm in the catholic church. I know that women priests have not been the norm but that is a shameful Roman fashion for local communities to change. I know that a local christian community can efficaciously celebrate the sacraments without asking anyone's permission. I know that popes like the rest of us have not always been good christians and have made many mistakes and that they will make more, that some popes have caused destructive division within the church, and that it is up to rest of us to point that out as the Council of Constance did in 1415 and as the Code of Canon Law enjoins upon us. It would do us all well to study church history to learn from the past that we might fruitfully fashion the future.

I know that in moments of profound emotion, the Roman Catholic Church, concerned as it is with Codes, may not be the place to experience God's Way. People in joy are not always able to celebrate a marriage. People in grief do not always find comfort. An AIDS death, a child's death, a painful divorce, a new marriage, each may go disdained or unheeded. In many other life events, God's Way is often expressed in other church and natural communities. God is there and blesses them.

I know that when I wished to marry, in 1966, which I did with church consent, the Roman Catholic Church in the person of its chief servant said that like Judas it were better if I had not been born. My mother, my sister, and my brothers forgave him, in time. Naomi and our three daughters eventually, when they knew about it, forgave him. I forgave him. We did not wait until the Jubilee Year 2000. We were graced long before that. I know that the home is the first church, the always church, the church that

*continued on page 3*

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January - February 2001

Vol. 4, No. 1

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Emil Katerna (SK Regional Editor)

The Journal welcomes submissions from small faith communities and individuals that share its vision of the Christian Church as one in which all are equal, decisions are made by consensus, healthy relationships are nurtured, justice is done, and the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

All submissions to the Journal must be received by the 15th of each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September and November.

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## Renew Your Membership In Corpus Canada

Send your membership fees to Alanna Menu, Corpus Canada Treasurer,  
9878 Seventh Street, Sidney, BC V8L 2V8 (See P.24 for details.)

Corpus members with email can join the Corpus-N list and participate in discussions.

If you have internet access, check out Corpus Canada's new WEB SITE:

<http://www.corpuscanada.org>

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## FOCUS TOPIC

*for the March - April 2001 Issue*

The Political Church: Doing Politics Well in the Church

*Articles for this issue are due by March 15.*

really matters. The Roman Catholic Church Hierarchy does not want to talk to me- in spite of my faith, my training, my priesthood. But, my family, my faith communities, myself, we have grown because we were forced to go on seeking God's Way without it. With the help of many others, we have had to reconstruct and conserve.

The basic frame of the church is the koinonia willed to us by God in Jesus: as Jesus is one with God so we are one with God, with Jesus, and with one another. The koinonia comes first. Under the guidance of the Spirit, the koinonia has had servants among whom are found equally men and women, teachers, healers, prophets, bishops, priests, and hosts of others who have served the church well. It is often said that the church is not a democracy. Indeed it is not. Neither is the church an autocracy, monarchy, or any other kind of 'cracy'. For the good order of the church, there needs to be governance so that the koinonia of God's chosen people - people chosen for service to God's way - can fulfill its mission. In the church, there are no archies. There are no divine rights over, only the divine right to freedom to serve. The christian community, in union with God and Jesus and one another, has the ability to give life (the authority) to invest leaders with the service of acting on behalf of the community. That is part of the fundamental framework within which we all must live and work and which no one has the power to change.

The Second Vatican Council went in the right direction when it stressed that the church is The People of God. The 1983 Code was to put that idea into church law. It managed only some of it, and what the Code did produce has to be approached in the spirit of Vatican II. Similarly, subsequent edicts, decisions, and letters from the pope/curia have value only in so far as they are in accord with the spirit of God's Way and The Council. In terms of the good news of Jesus, papal and curial decisions may have no authority at all.

As local christian communities, we need to be aware of our legitimacy, our autonomy, and our opportunity to live God's Way. That does not mean that anything goes. We need to be part of the catholic church, to maintain contact with our history, our spiritual origins (that go back much further than organized religion), and our lived experience. In this way, we can rediscover that the ordinary is holy, that the holy is holy in and of itself, and that the sacred is sacred because we declare it to be sacred. Through our regular and joyful gathering, we can learn the meaning of the scriptures and develop a spirituality that embraces the whole person. Local christian communities have the opportunity to exercise relationships in an intimate group and to show diocesan and parish church communities how the christian life can be lived more fully. We can live ecumenism, knowing that we do not have to leave one church community to be part of another. God's Way is not divisive except, of course, for those who will not see

### ***Congratulations Michael!***

We really enjoy the articles in The Journal. I particularly have enjoyed Michael Zarb's biblical theology on the priesthood. He is the third author I have come across on the subject. Who does the consecrating at the eucharist? Our local Corpus is alive and well. We had some 20 people out for our Advent liturgy and party. A great celebration!

Fred Williams, Calgary

### **Dear Members of Corpus Canada:**

Please pray for Aurele Ouimet, a married priest and member of Corpus-NCR, who died on December 12 at the age of 74. His funeral Mass will be celebrated tomorrow at 11 a.m. in St. Benoit Abbe Church in Hull, Quebec. A priest of the diocese of Hull, and for many years the only Quebec member of Corpus, he was an active member of Corpus-NCR until illness about five years ago limited his involvement in our group. May he rest in peace.

## **Profiles**

### **Dear Corpus Canada Members:**

The editorial board of The Journal has asked me to email you about a feature they would like to see revived, namely, a profile in each issue of a person, a couple, or persons of interest to Corpus members. This was done sporadically in the past, but it dropped off, and the board feels it could once again be an interesting and informative feature of The Journal. The profile could be of people in Corpus Canada, such as Francois Brassard and Connie Kurtenbach, or people who have affected Corpus Canada, such as Anthony Padovano and Joan Chittister.

Any member of Corpus could write the article of about 500 words, and email it directly to the editor, Chris Diamond and the publisher Michael Irving, preferably in "rich text format" (rtf), though other formats are acceptable. The usual deadlines for articles, as noted on page 2 of every issue of The Journal, should be observed.

It is suggested you contact the individuals you write about, and get or verify some basic information about them and their lives. A photograph, which you might get from the subjects, could accompany the article. You might also want to suggest subjects for a profile, about whom someone else could write.

The editorial board may draw up a list of suggested people for profiles, and ask others to write about them.

Please give this topic some serious thought, and take part in what could be an attractive and regular feature of The Journal.

Yours in Christ,

Jim Noonan, Facilitator  
Corpus Canada

# Theological Soapbox

## Leadership In The Church (Part III)

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



In the first article in this three-part series I stated the view that the most important communities in the Church are the Church's worshipping communities. These are communities that gather regularly for worship, help one another in times of need, and support the work of evangelization. In the Catholic Church the worshipping community is typically a parish, but it may be a

Basic Church Community, a local community of a religious order, or some other grouping.

The reason that these communities are the most important in the Church, as compared to larger groupings such as dioceses or associations of churches, is that they offer their members the opportunity to know and love God through companionship with others. In my mind there is no question that we experience God most powerfully in those who know us well and love us as we are. The worshipping community, if it is not too large, provides the most favourable milieu for people to know one another well and love one another.

Why is this? When we get to know another person well, we sooner or later become aware of some aspect of them that we dislike or they do something that deeply hurts us. In the normal course of human affairs, when this happens the relationship with the person will not grow closer, or it will be impaired, or be broken off. In a worshipping community, however, the act of participating in Christian worship together with the person moves us toward reconciliation with them. The smaller the worshipping community is, the more powerful the reconciling effect of worship. If one is a part of a small group meeting regularly for eucharist, where one cannot escape the sight and felt presence of the other person, where one touches them physically in the kiss of peace and speaks words of peace to them, one will find the relationship being healed. The only thing that can prevent healing from happening is if one or other of the parties withdraws from the worshipping community.

The small worshipping community establishes a dynamic among its members whereby they grow to know one another better and better and in consequence have to forgive one another again and again in ways that stretch the limits of their magnanimity. The companionship of knowing another person more and more and forgiving them again and again is the one and only engine of spiritual growth for human beings. Prayer, or devotion to a creed, or charitable works are of use only to the extent that they bring us to, and sustain us in, this kind of companionship.

Given the importance of the worshipping community, it is clear that leadership in the worshipping community, without which no worshipping community can long survive, has to be of utmost concern for Christians.

In the first in this series of articles I defined leaders as "individuals who have the task of coordinating the activities of the members of the community so that the community as a whole can accomplish its purposes". I emphasized that the members of the community must freely make the community goals their own and freely accept direction from the leader whom they have chosen to coordinate their activity.

This definition highlights what can be called the managerial or supervisory aspect of leadership. Many of the goals of a worshipping community can only be achieved through the coordinated activity of many individuals. Co-ordination of activity requires that there be at least one person who has the "big picture," i.e., someone who understands what each worker has to do in order for the goal to be achieved. The supervisor has to make sure that each worker knows what their individual task is. The supervisor has to check that each worker is doing their assigned task, and if they are not, take steps to correct the situation. There is an inescapable disciplinary aspect to leadership because even though people may freely agree to do something, they do not always carry through. In accepting to work on a project under a supervisor, most workers will accept discipline as long as the supervisor is fair. (In my view it is the disciplinary aspect of leadership that is hardest and most likely to cause people to avoid or step down from leadership positions.)

Besides supervising, a leader must inspire. In the conduct of a project there may come a time when those involved become tired or dispirited. They may lose sight of the goal. They may forget what it was that led them to offer themselves for the task in the first place. At this point a leader must remind them of the reason for the project and make that reason come alive for them again. The leader will ask them to look within themselves and see that in their hearts they still cherish the goal. The leader will demand that they be true to themselves and the commitment they made.

I have spoken so far about leadership exercised in a given project. However, the worshipping community itself may be regarded as an ongoing project of its members, a project which is inclusive of all the activities that make up the life of the community. And so we should consider the role of the leader of the worshipping community. What do we expect of the leader of the community?

First of all, the leader will be chosen in a manner determined by consensus of the whole community. The community may decide to meet and pray until there is unanimous agreement about who shall lead. Or the community may decide to have nominations and an election, the person getting the most votes being the leader. Or the community may decide to allow someone outside the community (e.g., the bishop) to choose the leader. The manner of selection matters not as long as it reflects a consensus of the whole community.

The leader of the community will have a comprehensive understanding of the community "goals, values and aspirations--"

## *Theological Soapbox Continued...*

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the big picture. In consultation with the community the leader will develop a plan to achieve those goals, and obtain the approval of the community to implement the plan. The leader and the community will choose subleaders to lead the various components of the plan. The leader will co-ordinate, supervise and inspire these subleaders as they and their helpers carry out their assignments. When necessary, the leader will speak inspirationally to the whole community gathered together, encouraging people to persevere in their efforts.

In the Church that is coming to birth in our time, who will lead our worshipping communities? In the Roman Catholic Church before Vatican Council II it was the parish priest who had this responsibility. Since the Council, parish councils have come to share in some of the leadership of the worshipping community. How much leadership they exercise has depended on how much power the parish priest delegated to them.

In my view a council cannot be the most effective leader of a worshipping community. I believe that human communities function best when one individual has the role of community leader, and exercises leadership with the advice and consent of a council of community representatives.

Among all the other things a leader does, he or she is a symbol of the community itself, a human expression of the community's identity and will. In the presence of this living symbol, community members find a focus that draws forth their feelings about the community, and in talking to and about the leader, they are able to put words to what they feel.

When all this is taken into account, who should lead the worshipping community? Note that there is nothing in the definition of leadership that requires that the community leader celebrate sacraments. If a priest is understood as primarily someone who has

the "power" to celebrate sacraments, then it is quite conceivable for a priest to serve as a subleader with responsibility for celebrating sacraments. In that case the community leader could be a "layperson" who happens to possess the qualities needed in a community leader. (In my view all Christians in virtue of their baptism have the "power" to celebrate all the sacraments. If that is so, the distinction between priest and layperson, based on the priest's having a power the layperson does not, vanishes.)

In so far as the community leader is a symbol of the whole community, however, it is appropriate that he or she preside at or chair the community's principal liturgical celebrations and business meetings.

In my view the size of worshipping community that best nurtures spiritual growth is one that allows the members the time and opportunity to tell the story of their spiritual journeys to one another, to reflect together on the saving truths these stories reveal, to come to know one another more and more, forgive one another more and more, and offer each other help in times of need. It is obvious that this size will be much smaller than most of our present day parishes.

At the same time there are things that we as Christians wish to do that call for larger organizations than a small worshipping community, for example, Christian education of children, social and political action, theological research, ecumenical dialogue, large-scale evangelization, and, what is of crucial importance, the recruitment and training of leaders and candidates for leadership in worshipping communities. So there will always be a place for parish-sized, diocesan, regional, national and international communities, the members of which will find their main spiritual sustenance in the worshipping communities to which they belong.

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## Letters

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We hear from Italy, Canada, Africa, Ireland, England, United States, etc. - please complete the list. We are Irish, German, Italian, - please complete the list. We, here in the United States, are from the North, the South, the West - and a lot from back East.

Please help me complete the list. We are Diocesan, Franciscan, Trappist, Augustinian - please help. All of the above is wonderful only in that we come together in our Catholicity. We are universal and we are one. We are learning that our Catholicity extends to include (at John Shuster's Liturgy we had - John help.) Protestant, Jew, Liberal, Conservative and Ancient (?) Catholics. We are military and we are civilian. We are old and we are young. We are male and we are female. We are celibate, heterosexual and gay. I've often thought that maybe there are more married priest get togethers than there are of those in assignments.

Like so many things I write - this may be a lot of jibberish. However, I have grown a little this past year by having an awful lot of compassion for my brothers and sisters who have been isolated. Isolated and persecuted. I've often thought of how much more difficult it would be to persecute them if I were at their side - if I were there with them. However, I think it has helped them to know that I am just here. Perhaps, there is some strength for them in knowing that they are so intimately linked with so many of us who do think and relate with them. We are Catholic.

Frank Kabisch

I congratulate you all on the treasure trove you publish, The Journal. Obviously your contributors are dedicated, intelligent Christians, priestly people. I learn and I enjoy. The Journal is one of many I read and I rank it high.

Tom McMahon, San Jose, Ca.

I was surfing geocities and checked out your site at geocities/diamondcn. I have a good friend with a really similar site, and I passed your url along to her. Have you ever seen a weblog? I was noticing your writing style, and I think the weblog format might really work well for you. I just started one recently, and I am actually thinking of dumping my homepage in favor of just having the weblog, since I'm enjoying it so much more than maintaining my homesite. Anyway, I really just wanted to say thanks for an interesting site!

Bianca Broussard

# RAINBOWS - from HURT, through HEALING, to HOPE

by Margaret Quinn, RSM - RAINBOWS Director, Northern BC

“The Challenge of Family Healing” was the title of a three part letter which was published in 1996 by the eight Bishops of Northern Canada. This letter from the Catholic leaders of the north focused on suffering in families and on the Church’s desire and responsibility to help alleviate that suffering. The Bishops challenge the local faith communities “to make your faith a living reality in today’s world” by supporting these families and helping them build the confidence and skills they need.

It was at the time when the background work for this letter was being done that I was searching for ways to help the many hurting children and families that I was encountering as Principal of St. Mary’s School in Prince George. The trauma and upset so many of them were experiencing because of death, divorce, separation, abandonment and other painful transitions in their families concerned me deeply and I felt that, as Christian communities, we should and could be doing more to help these struggling families.



So when I approached our Bishop, Gerry Wiesner OMI, one of the eight who signed the letter, for approval and support in setting up the RAINBOWS peer support program for grieving children, I received his unconditional approval, support and encouragement. I was invited to address the Priests’ Council and the Catholic Principals’ Meetings on several occasions and with their backing, support and encouragement the RAINBOWS program has been set up in almost every parish of the diocese. It is important to mention that RAINBOWS is a non-denominational program which is open to volunteers and participants from the whole community. In most cases the Catholic school buildings are used, but the facilitators (volunteers who lead the program) are recruited from the total community - various professions and churches. In this way the compassion and skills of the community are being channeled to benefit children and families in need.

Children are profoundly affected by loss caused by death, separation, divorce or abandonment. Their shell of security has been broken open. Sometimes they are bargained for and fought over and given conflicting messages by parents and extended family. They are confused and feel that their world is falling down around them. They are grieving over the loss of their former security. Very often their parents are too occupied with their own pain and confusion to offer help. These children need the time and compassionate attention of caring, trained adults to listen to them and help them through their grieving to healing and hope. Without this help the unresolved grief remains buried alive and may surface later in life causing problems at home, in school or with the law. Some turn to drugs, alcohol or suicide. It is often carried into adult life, into marriages that fail, continuing the cycle. It makes more sense to help a five year old deal with grief now than to wait ten, fifteen or twenty years when it will have become a complex problem.

The RAINBOWS program was developed to answer this need and

help children deal with their grief. My first introduction to the program was at Christ Community Church in Nanaimo where Ann-Marie Hewer set up and directed BC’s first RAINBOWS site some sixteen years ago. It is now flourishing on Vancouver Island, in places in the lower mainland, the Okanagan, the Kootenays, here in Prince George and across northern BC.

RAINBOWS has a BC - [www.rainbows.bc.ca](http://www.rainbows.bc.ca) - and an international - [www.rainbows.org](http://www.rainbows.org) - website on the internet where you can access extensive information about its history, mission, locations, contacts etc. So it is not necessary to go into any of that here.

The six years that I have been involved in RAINBOWS have been very satisfying and fulfilling. It is so heartening and encouraging to hear children say such things as, “RAINBOWS was the difference between life and death for me.” This was from a participant who, before hearing about RAINBOWS, had been considering suicide as a way out of her pain. Some of the most common comments are:

“I learned that I’m not alone in this, others are going through the same and we help each other.”

“I know now that the divorce/ separation/ death is not my fault.”

“In RAINBOWS I learned how to forgive and to help others in my family to forgive.”

“The leaders helped me to share my feelings.”

“I know now that my Dad and Mom are divorced from each other but they both still love me.”

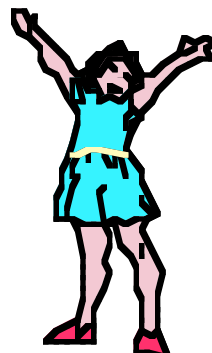
“I learned how to talk about my feelings.”

“I’m not afraid to talk about my Dad’s death now - it doesn’t scare me.”

In the past week four people who called to register children in RAINBOWS said, “I hear nothing but good things about RAINBOWS.” Parents tell us communication has improved,

school grades have gone up, children are less angry, more at peace and more cooperative at home and in school. So you can make a difference in the life of a child by volunteering in the RAINBOWS program in your area.

We know that we are only touching the “tip of the iceberg” and that the “Challenge of Family Healing” is still a huge task. But if we don’t get involved, if we



don’t reach out, what will happen to:

- the children who are hungry - not necessarily for food, but for attention - someone to listen to their hearts?
- the children who are thirsty - not necessarily for water - but for love?
- the children who are homeless - not necessarily for a roof over their heads - but for a place to feel they belong?

By our pulling together, responding to the need, we can make a difference. We can restore the child-like sparkle to our youth by helping them in their journey from hurt through healing to hope.

# Home At Agape - Agape At Home

by Ruth Irving, Nanaimo, BC



There it was. The call from Mom and Dad that I had been waiting for. It was time to get shoes on, gather at the front door with my two younger sisters, and collect up the portion of our dinner that Mom had offered to share tonight. Dad had papers in his hands and the car keys. In each of the five of us there was a common air. The kind of

feeling one gets when she knows she really belongs. Suddenly I remembered the kid at school this week who had asked "What's Agape?". I kicked stones in the driveway while we waited for Dad to load Mom's dish into the jeep. Too bad for that kid I was thinking. What do you mean "What's Agape?", everyone should have Agape.

Yaaaah! Kirk and Rene were already here! We were at Hilary's house where we loved to meet because it had so much room for everyone and her Mom always made bread. Our friends from out of town were just pulling in behind us and the car that belonged to the new family was parked over in the shade. If someone had seen the three of us hop out of the jeep they may have guessed we were about to embark on a vacation. Little would they have known that we came here or to the other families' houses every third Saturday. The parents all insisted on the third-Saturday schedule, despite our pleas for EVERY Saturday.

Big sets of arms met us in customary hugs at the front door and coats were handed over in the fashion that says you get to settle in for a good long time. It took a while to get the whole group hugged and greeted but I just couldn't leave anyone out, though we were in a hurry to see if the puppet theatre was set up yet. Hilary's Dad and Kirk did the funniest skits for all us kids. I was the oldest child so I usually got to sit one of the babies or toddlers on my lap for the show which made me feel important and helpful. Mom's dish was sent hastily to the kitchen where it joined similar dishes to make up a family of entrees that would be shared later in the most loving of feasts. Actually we learned last time that's what Agape means: a love feast. It made sense to me, we loved everyone here and we ate together at a multi-leveled collection of tables and mismatched chairs, piano bench and step-stools.

By the time we sat down to eat we had run our legs off outside in games of hide and seek and tag where no one kept track of winners and bigger people pretended not to see littler people until a real thrill was achieved for both. The puppet theatre had been brought to life for the three rows of children aged 1-12 years and for their parents who milled happily between there and the kitchen. Didn't the kid at school get to do things like this? I wondered. At least the kids in our group do. General activity of one delight or another filled in the spaces that gave way to the opportunity to play or help or talk to someone who thought you were important or funny or

smart. Then Betty would pick up her guitar and tell us to gather for the sing-song and it was our job to hand out the song books. She could lead us in any of the songs and each of us, child or adult, got a turn at requesting one.

After all this dinner tasted great. One of the adults would say a prayer to get us started and when we were at Hilary's house we always got to sing Johnny Appleseed for prayer. Sometimes we got special juice in grown-up fancy glasses so we could share bread and "wine" together as a whole group.

After dinner we cozied up on couches and chairs, all the families together and quiet, and watched as Hilary's Dad lit a big candle on the table in the middle of our circle. Lots of thought had to go into this part. In preparation for each gathering I would search my memory for the best contribution I could make. The "Christ candle" was lit in honour of each of us and without pressure or judgement we took our turn to share our highlight of the last three weeks with everyone else. Sometimes it was straightforward like telling about a fieldtrip at school or an award. Other times I wanted to be more adult and thoughtful. There was no shortage of interesting contributions from our circle and it was fun when there was overlap. Sometimes something from the last gathering was the highlight for one or more of us.

The night was dark and the jeep was warm, my sister's head had just fallen to rest on my shoulder as we drove the familiar roads home. I thought back on the day with a sense of familiarity and satisfaction. I had heard the adults talking at one point today while we were playing and parts of their conversation were coming back to me in the silence. They were discussing scriptures and Christianity and community belonging. I got the sense that our community, our Agape, offered me, offered all of us, a chance to belong in the exact way Jesus wished for for everyone. A chance to belong in a way far different from being a member at a fitness club or a muffin-stop chat group. I got a chance at Agape to be "filled up" by other people, to soak up their verification of my significance to the rest, to learn from others other than teachers or my parents. I got a chance to share joy and laughter with other kids I had come to feel close to. I got a chance to give and contribute to loving family, first in my immediate family, and then in a group of six families. I got a lot out of the whole experience. I hope that kid at school gets stuff like this. Maybe tomorrow I'll ask him.

**F**or Christians, a vision of the Kingdom that fails to stretch us- humanly, spiritually, and culturally- cannot possibly be the authentic one. A spirituality of the Kingdom, at all times, opens us up at all times to the entire universe, to behold the glory and grandeur of our co-creative God, spearheading the creation and destruction of our evolutionary coming-to-be.  
(Reclaiming Spirituality by Diarmuid O'Murchu)

## Elder in the New Testament

by Dr. Michael Zarb, Cobble Hill, BC



Elder translates the Greek '*presbuteros*', comparative of '*presbus*' meaning 'old'. In ancient Greek, apart from the basic connotation of age, it carries also the positive elements of importance, precedence and venerability, hence its use as title to denote the president of colleges and assemblies or the senior groups of various kinds like guilds and village government.

In Judaism and Christianity we meet parallel usage, that of age and as a term denoting a place of dignity in the community. In the Old Testament the 'Elders of Israel' are men of position and

influence representing the community in both religious and civil matters. In the Hasmonaean period the supreme ruling body of the Jews with its seat in Jerusalem was the 'council of elders' (*gerousia* or '*presbuteroi*', cf. 1 and 2 Maccabees). Gradually a separate distinction developed between the priestly members, the scribes (*grammateis*) and the lay notables (elders, '*presbuteroi*') constituting the Sanhedrin (*sunedrion, gerousia*), - this is the situation presented in the synoptic gospels. After the destruction of Jerusalem the great Sanhedrin was succeeded by the Sanhedrin of Jabneh, comprising 72 elders mirroring the council of elders appointed by Moses, now divested of all political powers. Its members were exclusively Pharisaic scribes, no longer including priestly aristocracy or lay nobility. This body became the higher school of scribal learning, the normative authority in the exposition and application of the Torah for all Judaism. The investigation of the usage of the term in the New Testament needs to be considered against this background.

### The Pauline Writings

There is no mention of any elder in the genuine Paulines, which are the earliest documents in the New Testament. Since Paul does not mention elders but mentions other functionaries it is highly probable that during his time the Christian communities were not led by elders but by prophets, teachers etc. Paul mentions types of leadership of the Christian communities minus the elders. Had Christian elders existed during his time, it is more likely that he would have mentioned them with the others. Paul's situation was that before the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE); the institution of elders was still part of the Jewish system including priesthood and Sanhedrin. The Messianic Jews would not set up their elders in opposition to the Jewish elders because they still recognized these as their own leaders since they still considered themselves Jews, members of those communities, whether in Jerusalem, outside Jerusalem or in the Dispersion. The Jewish elders were not yet supplanted, the break had not occurred yet and there was no need for such a break. The situation changed after the fall of Jerusalem when the separation of the Messianic Jews from the non-Messianic ones began to take a more distinctive shape and it is at this time that the Messianic communities adopted the Jewish form of leadership

which at the same time the non-Messianic Jews were also developing as the result of the demise of the priestly system. So Acts and the other writings mentioning Messianic elders in this period reflect their own situation in the late decades of the century or later and not the pre-70 CE situation. - Regarding the completely Gentile-Christian congregations, if there were any such at all, the creation of the elder system would also be unlikely. Why import a system from another culture, i.e. Jewish, which the Jewish Christians themselves do not adopt or use? Besides, Paul talks of the system of guidance and instruction in the Messianic congregations as one emanating from the Holy Spirit not a mirror image of the Sanhedrin or the synagogue.

### Paul's system:

In Paul's time, according to his writings, order in the Messianic congregations was spiritual and charismatic rather than institutional and hierarchical. For Paul every Christian has the Spirit, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." (Rom 8:9). Each individual is given a task or ministry, "... the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses." (1Cor 12:11) and "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." (1Cor. 14:26 ; cf. 1Cor 12:7,18) This diversity is freely assigned by the Spirit and is thus fundamentally equal; superiority and subordination are incidental. Thus the enumerations of the different gifts are not strictly systematical - yet the gifts/tasks involving the ministry of the word (envoy, prophet and teacher) are always to the fore [note also that prophecy is the gift to be aspired to by all (1Cor 14)] It is of utmost importance for Paul that these gifts/tasks require the foundation of love, otherwise they are nothing; he emphasizes this requirement in no uncertain terms in 1Cor 13:1ff. Note also that the list in Rom 12:3ff blends into the call to love (v.9) and see also 13:8-10.

Paul presents three lists of gifts / tasks / functions operating in the Christian communities:

**List 1** :- 1Cor. 12:8 "To one is given through the Spirit the **utterance of wisdom**, and to another the **utterance of knowledge** according to the same Spirit, 9 to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by the one Spirit, 10 to another the **working of miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another the **discernment of spirits**, to another various kinds of **tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses."

**List 2** :- 1Cor. 12:28 "And God has appointed in the community first **envoys**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**; then **deeds of power**, then gifts of **healing**, forms of

**assistance**, forms of **leadership** (*'kubernêseis'*), various kinds of **tongues**. 29 Are all envoys? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all **interpret**?"

**List 3** :- Rom. 12:4 "For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: **prophecy**, in proportion to faith; 7 **ministry**, in ministering; the **teacher**, in teaching; 8 the **exhorter**, in exhortation; the **giver**, in generosity; the **leader** (*'proistamenos'*), in diligence; the **compassionate**, in cheerfulness."

Regarding leadership in these listings, the terms used are *'kubernêseis'* - leadership, guidance (1Cor 12:28 - only here in NT) and *'proistamenos'* - the one in front, leader (Rom 12:8 - only here and 1 Thess 5:12). The 'overseers' \* of Phil 1:1, not a title yet but still a general term, is deemed included in these terms of guiding and leadership; they are synonyms. The absence of 'elders' however, a term that in Paul's time was extant as a title in the Jewish system, is significant.

In 1 Thess 5:12 when Paul appeals to the community, "to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you (*'proistamenous'*) in the Lord and admonish you," he employs general terms, he does not mention any offices though obviously there was leadership in the community. Had there been any Christian offices or titles, such as elders, wouldn't it have been easier for Paul to mention them? He also doesn't mention or address them by name which one would expect had there been a prominent person holding a prominent office. Leadership possibly rotated on an *ad hoc* basis according to abilities and needs. In the Thessalonian case the early community Paul writes to was probably a workers' association / guild that accepted Messianism as a group and therefore the leadership Paul refers to in this writing consists of the leaders of the association indicating that Paul allows his communities to develop locally without imposing on them any "ecclesiastical leadership".

Paul deals with gifts not offices precisely because in the early communities there were no offices; each member had a gift/ task (1Cor 12:11) or office if one prefers this term but, as the saying goes, "When everybody is somebody, nobody is anybody." The time of Paul was the early formative period, a time of building. Offices were not yet established, they gradually grew out of and replaced the gifts. - One may compare the shortness of the list of gifts in Eph 4:11 (a later writing) which is perhaps an indication that the exercise of charisms in the communities was dying out.

Disciplinary authority, in the Jewish system was carried out by the Sanhedrin or council of elders in the local communities not by the whole congregation; Paul however, requests the community to take disciplinary measures against offenders, a clear indication that the Messianic system in his time was not modeled on the Jewish council of elders. Furthermore, neither do we find one person in office exercising discipline over the community or individual members. This function was left to the Messianic group as a whole, for example, when Paul chides abuses in the communities he does not refer to anyone in authority to correct the abuse but addresses the

whole community. Thus in the case of Corinth (1 Cor 11:17ff.) he knows no one to whom he can resort as a leader to advise regarding the correction of the abuses in the observance of the Lord's Supper; he appeals to the Messianic congregation as a whole. Again, in the case of the sexual offender in 1 Cor 5:1ff. Paul appeals to no community leader or committee of elders to hand him over to Satan but advises the assembly to convene as one body in order to remove the offender.

The synagogue system, that is, that of the local Jewish congregations in the towns and villages both in Palestine and in the Dispersion had elders in charge of the affairs of the congregation with special officers appointed for particular purposes. There was no one nominated to conduct worship proper, i.e. reading of scripture, preaching and public prayer. These were performed by members of the congregation or visitors, cf. Jesus speaking in synagogues. The officers were: 1) The 'archisynagogos' (Heb: *'rosh hakneset'*, president) who supervised the arrangement of divine worship and the business of the synagogue as a whole. 2) The receiver of alms (Heb: *'gabbay sedaqah'*) who was in charge of the collections and the distribution of the help for the needy. 3) The minister (Heb. *'hazzan hakneset'*; Gk. *'upêretês, diakonos'*) - his tasks were, a) to bring out and afterwards replace the holy writings, b) to blow the trumpet to announce the beginning and end of the Sabbath, c) to teach children to read and d) to execute punishment on those condemned to be scourged. Paul mentions instances when he himself was at the receiving end of this last task of this officer (1 Cor 11:24). This is a further indication that the Christian communities of Paul's time were not independent communities, otherwise why would Paul submit to the discipline of the 'others'? Obviously he was a full member of the Jewish congregation and was subject to its discipline.

In the **Gospels** all instances refer to the Jewish elders.

In **Acts**, in chapters 2-6, the Jewish elders are referred to in their conflicts with the Envoys and then again in chapters 22-25 where Paul is in conflict with them.

### **Messianic elders in Acts**

The Jerusalem community:

Acts 11:30 is the first passage where Luke uses the word 'elders' with reference to leaders of the Messianic community. They are abruptly mentioned in the matter concerning the collection by the Christians of Antioch in aid of the congregation of Jerusalem. Their full role is not spelled out but in this instance it may be assumed that it involves the administration of the relief fund. However it cannot be restricted to the sole management of the 'welfare' of the community since in chapter 15 the elders have a prominent role in decision making on the same footing as the Envoys and James. Luke does not tell us when and how the 'elders' emerge alongside the Envoys.

In chapter 15 the 'elders' are paired with the 'Envoys' in the discussions and decision concerning the admission of Gentiles

into the Messianic communities (15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4). They are even included in the greetings of the letter (15:23) - Luke sees this deciding group of leaders patterned after the Sanhedrin, sort of a supreme court and normative teaching office for the whole movement which is unlikely to have been the case, given that the Sanhedrin was very alive and kicking at the time, not easily duplicated especially in terms of decisions concerning 'halakah' (way of life), for a group of Jews still under its aegis. Luke himself, in Acts, tells of the early Christians still participating in Jewish religious and civic life, in fact even obeying the orders of the Sanhedrin; how could they decide 'halakah', specifically regarding the admission of Gentiles, on their own? This would constitute a grave usurpation of the powers and authority of the Sanhedrin who were the arbiters determining who could join the Jewish community or not. It is worth noting that Paul, in Galatians 2, in his meeting with the Christian leadership in Jerusalem, if this refers to the same meeting as that in Acts 15, (the issue is problematical) does not mention any group of elders but only James, Cephas and John, "those reputed to be pillars", - there is no council of elders setup. Luke retrojects elements of his own situation, when his Christian community was governed by elders, into the past, the time of early Christianity and Paul.

In Acts 21:18, on his last visit to Jerusalem Paul goes to James, "and all the elders were present." The 'Envoys' are not on the scene any more. The leading figure is James but he is accompanied by the elders and this group advises Paul what he should do to correct the unfavourable impression held by some unidentified people accusing him of leading Jews to apostasy. This episode is the last time the Christian community of Jerusalem or its leaders are mentioned in Acts. In 11:30 and 21:18 the elders are mentioned without the 'apostoloi', as compared to chapter 15, so the group of elders, representative of the community, in these two passages resembles more the Jewish synagogue council.

### In the Dispersion:

At 14:23 Acts has Paul appointing 'elders' in congregations he had set up. This picture corresponds with Titus 1:5 but not with the community organization which emerges from the genuine Pauline letters, i.e. having a charismatic order rather than a hierarchical one. Again in 20:17, from Miletus, Paul calls for the 'elders' of Ephesus and delivers his farewell speech - indicating Luke's assumption that the Christian communities were governed by 'elders'. Paul's speech indicates Luke's conception of the tasks of the elders, v.28 "Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,\* to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son." They are to follow his example and protect the community against the danger of error which threatens from without (v.29) and from within (v.30) Luke reflects the ecclesiastical setup of his own time, assuming his situation already existed in the time of Paul. By placing them on the same footing as the Envoys and even claiming for them their appointment by Paul, Luke ratifies the institution of elders of his own time.

### Other Writings

The **Pastorals**, not authored by Paul but are later writings in his name, present a different community order from that in the genuine

Paulines. In the passages in which 'presbuteros' occurs the usage is not quite consistent; in 1 Tim 5:1 (and 2) 'presbuteros' is clearly a designation of age, opposed to 'neôteros' (young). Elsewhere it is a title for bearers of the office of leadership. The elders are a group, a college (*presbuterion* 1 Tim 4:14) who take part in the appointment of Timothy by the laying on of hands. Titus (Tit 1:5) is directed to appoint elders in every town. Here the qualities of such men is indicated, v.6 "someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious." The Holy Spirit, here, does not choose the person for the function, as in Paul's time, but Titus himself does it according to certain criteria. In 1 Tim 5:22 the appointment also depends on the human agent, so Timothy receives the caution to not appoint (lay on hands) too hastily.

According to 1 Tim 5:17 those who discharge their office are to receive double honour, apparently referring to due respect and material remuneration, and enjoy special disciplinary protection (v.19 - charge against an elder on the evidence of two or three witnesses). V.17 seems to distinguish between functions, those who only preside and those who also preach and teach. In v. 20 Timothy is directed to rebuke, in the presence of the community, those elders who persist in their faults. This is another change from the Pauline system where discipline was the prerogative of the whole congregation not of one person.

**1Peter** (another late pseudonymous writing). In 1 Pet 5:1ff. the author designating himself as a fellow elder ('*sunpresbuteros*'), exhorts the elders of the communities to whom he writes, v.2 "to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it-- not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. 5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' " Although the shepherd/flock metaphor may convey a pastoral and spiritual duty, the warning against greed (cf Tit 1:7; 1 Tim 3:8) and abuse of power also indicates the remuneration received by the officer and the administrative nature of the office. In v.5 there is an antithesis between '*neôteroi*' (younger) and '*presbuteroi*' (older/elder) but opinion is divided whether what is inculcated is respect to office or to age. In general the elders would be, if not necessarily the oldest people in the community, surely of mature age but sometimes there were relatively young elders such as the case of Timothy (1 Tim 4:12).

**James** (a late pseudonymous writing.) James mentions elders alone in 5:14. In case of sickness one is to summon "the elders of the congregation" in order that they may cure the sick by prayer and anointing "in the name of the Lord." These are office-bearers of the congregation, - note the article - not charismatically endowed older men. The 'charisma' of healing in the Pauline letters is now tied to the institution; it is now reduced to prayer and symbolic

anointing by the leaders of the congregation.

**2 and 3 John** 'The elder' is the self designation of the writer of these two letters, one to a community, 'the elect lady' and the other to an individual, Gaius. He seems to write 2 Jn from another community which he refers to as 'your elect sister'. He writes in the context of trouble regarding authority. His authority is not recognised by Diotrophes who puts himself first, and decides whom he accepts in the community or whom he throws out (3 Jn 9f). The latter seems to be an elder who took over the sole authority of the community upon himself thus indulging in monarchical leadership against whom the 'elder' has no effective recourse. The conduct of the opponent would have been quite impossible had the 'elder' been an 'Envoy' of Jesus; in such a conflict the author would certainly have appealed to his 'apostolic' status. Thus here again, in these late 1st or early 2nd century writings we get a different picture from that of the earlier period represented in the Paulines.

**Revelation** In the visions of the author, 24 elders surround the throne of God in heaven along with the four beasts (Rev 4:4,10; 5:5,6,8,11,14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4). These are heavenly

beings as clearly shown by the throne on which they sit, the white robes and the crowns they wear (4:4; 11:16). The title 'elders' suggests that they are envisioned as God's council of elders (cf. Is 24:23) whose functions are worship and praise of God. These have nothing to do with the government of the Christian congregations.

The New Testament presents two different pictures of the organization of the Christian communities of the first century, a charismatic one as opposed to a hierarchical one. The earlier writings, the Paulines, written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE give us a view of communities, inspired by the Messianic ideals, pooling together their resources to build up their small groups, each member sharing his/her gifts for the buildup and the wellbeing of the community. The later writings, written, maybe all of them, after the separation of the Messianic Jews from the non-Messianic ones in the eighties and nineties show a hierarchical organization modeled on the Jewish system of elders with officers, a system that continued to develop into a completely institutionalised and monarchical government.

\* **Note:** the overseers (*episkopoi*) and servers (*diakonoi*) in the New Testament will be discussed in a future article.

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## Rethinking Leadership: Storytelling as Builder of Community

by Paschal Baute

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**Synopsis:** This is a method of teaching but more, also, a method of building community. It can be used anywhere with any group, and also one with diverse beliefs. We have eleven years of practice with it in our Spiritual Growth Network of Kentucky. The theology is that of the Mystical Body of Christ, which tells us that we each are a story of God, each with diverse gifts to offer, and much to learn from one another.

First I will tell you about it, then I will do it, and you can copy me. Note: this format is suitable to use with those from any wisdom tradition, that is, mixed groups of every kind. Those who do not like explanations can skip to part 2, the practicum.

### Introduction.

One of our problems today is that our theology has become so focussed on words, that it has largely betrayed the power of the Word (in its original Aramaic, *dabbar*, meaning creative energy), as Matthew Fox noted. In our attempts to reach a rational understanding of mystery, we have often lost sight of the story which sustains and nourishes theological discourse. We have neglected the story as story with the result that over centuries we have turned stories into ideological statements, giving literal meaning to something that was never meant to be taken literally. We have forgotten that story is the most dynamic and versatile tool available to us humans for the discovery of meaning and mystery.

Norman O. Brown once claimed that meaning is not in things but in between. It's not in the events, nor in objects, nor even in proven discoveries that ultimate truth lies, but in the process of searching, seeking, experimenting, and discovering.

Over time, teachings taken from stories, parables and lives have

assumed the ideological proportions of dogma and Right Teaching. Then stories that invited wonder and awe and insight, initially offering hope, new life and liberation became millstones, burdens that no longer inspire but instead stifle and stultify. All the major religions today, --and theology in general -- suffer from narrative starvation and privation. Even when the original myths are still narrated, they are so couched in rationalistic, legalistic or devotional framings that inhibit and even prevent the story from being dynamically retold in today's context.

The entire bible, as well as the sacred texts of other wisdom traditions, is primarily a collection of stories, and "love letters," and not primarily a record of facts and events.

In a faith context, what brings meaning and integration to experience are not facts; they are secondary, always secondary. "It is the story (and not the facts) that grips the imagination, impregnates the heart, and animates the spirit from within, empowering."

Jesus did not preach in any formal sense, nor did he theologize, nor attempt to establish anything like what we have today as church. Jesus told stories, the best remembered of these being parables, some 39. These have an archetypal, primordial significance: They are not just ordinary stories. In fact, there is no such thing as an "ordinary" story, because none of us are ordinary. The parables belong to a vein of prophetic discourse aiming to disturb and challenge the hearers, and to motivate them to move into a very different way of envisioning the world and themselves.

Bausch (1984) delineates the marks of the New Testament parables. They uncover:

- our competitiveness and envy, and invite us to brotherhood and sisterhood instead.

## Focus Continued...

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- our wrong centering and invite us to a right centering.
- our need to hoard and exclude and invite us to share and include.
- our assumptions and challenge us to turn them around.
- our timidity and invite us to risk all for the sake of God's Reign.
- our self-centered despair and distrust and invite us to hope.

The parable entraps us into thinking deeply about life and coming to a decision that can be life-transforming. Consider 2 Samuel 12, when Nathan trapped David into condemning himself.

What is the role of Church in all of this? Jesus showed little concern for church and no concern whatever for its organization, as "church" is mentioned only once in the four Gospels, in a single text whose historicity is arguable. Church is meant, we suggest, to be the community that continues the stories, both the servant and the herald of the exciting news of the New Reign of God in the world today. The main function of church is to create and nourish disciples who are empowered to renew the world. We do that by gathering the people and telling the stories that proclaim the Good News, and by telling OUR stories as witness to the Spirit today, since revelation is never complete. All else is secondary. That includes ritual, tradition, orthodoxy, and canon law.

Many Christian churches today have betrayed the reason for their existence. The major crisis facing the churches is not the drop in numbers, failure to organize, insufficient programs, shortage of ordained clergy, or lack of financial support. The major problem is that they have lost touch with the Reign of God agenda, that is, they no longer tell the stories in a way that speaks to the modern heart and mind, in a way that can create disciples. Many churches, I suggest, have lost their souls. Many have become social clubs and enclaves. They have forgotten that the Spirit calls each one from within, usually by a story or by a sharing of some personal experience, often a crisis. The institutional churches instead often try to fit people into ideologies, rituals, programs, traditions, or literal interpretations with no understanding that context influences everything. Most churches today seem inward looking, concerned with what is deemed necessary for their survival, and more particularly for the survival of the current power structures.

So far astray are most churches that any group that meets in order to tell the stories, even to tell their own stories, in a setting where personal faith is valued, is likely to be more engaged spiritually, more encouraged, more accepted, more deeply moved, more vulnerable, with more incentive to personal change than in an hour of preaching or Eucharistic celebration. For example, there is often more spirituality in a 12 step AA meeting than occurs in most religious services.

Without vulnerability, personal change is unlikely. "Church" or the realization of the Reign of God already amongst us, happens whenever there is this kind of vulnerable sharing, this kind of listening to the uniqueness of Another's journey. He told us so, and gave us examples. Whenever we respond to each other in a caring way, "ministry" happens, inadvertent ministry, and the priestliness of us all is affirmed, and the Story of this mystery we call Emmanuel is implicitly recognized and welcomed. And we are continuing the stories...Note here that hospitality to the Stranger is one of the most

common threads of all Wisdom traditions.

In order for people to authenticate their journey, they need a sacred and safe space in which to tell their stories, and to ask all sorts of questions concerning their journeys. We introduce you today to a method or technique that allows each to do this, at their own pace, with respect for the individual and in a manner that helps create community among the participants. Story, or parable, as Jesus used it, allows each person to respond from within. It is also a way of hiding the truth from those who are not ready for it.

Now I will tell you a story.... Give you some questions about it, and ask you to share in small groups. This is best done in three steps, and you can use one at a time for three meetings if you choose. Practicum follows. You will learn this process, and can lead it elsewhere when you are ready. Zen saying: "when the student is ready the teacher will appear."

### FOUR HOLY PERSONS: A PARABLE

Note: the story teller can tell this in three parts. In each part, the story is first told. It is then followed by questions to be used for 1. journaling (10-15 min), 2. small group discussion (10-15 min), and 3. large group discussion. This can take up to 1-1.5 hours.

This method has five major effects:

- it allows each person to affirm and authenticate their own journey with others--summoning each to be spirit led;
- encourages hearing and valuing of others' uniqueness;
- deepens our vulnerability to one another, that is we risk being moved by another's story;
- we learn to value story for story's sake;
- it serves to create local community.

NB. We use and prefer a meditative or centering silence at the beginning and end. Also I tell the story with drumming.

#### Story, part 1

Four holy persons came out of the desert: three men and a woman. The first holy man said: "I have found the Book of Holy Wisdom that has the answer to everything. We will follow it in everything we do." He soon had many disciples, and they distinguished themselves by following the Sacred Book to the very letter. The Book was their guide to everything that they did, a codebook of rules for life. The disciples distinguished themselves by their love of this book and their ability to quote it for any occasion. The Book was revered and honored by many.

The second holy man said, "I have found wondrous strange feelings of Great Devotion with God in our rituals. All our talk and songs will help promote and produce these exquisite feelings." Many became his disciples, and they distinguished themselves and were well known by their enthusiastic feelings of Holy Devotion and their magnificent and solemn rituals of worship. No one could sing and praise God the way they did. Their members were most likely to be transported into feelings of ecstasy.

The third holy man said, "I have found the Way to God is by being a voluntary celibate which is a necessary witness to an unholy world." He required his immediate disciples to imitate him, although ordinary folk were not required to do so. He too had

many followers, and they distinguished themselves by the fact that all the officials were voluntary eunuchs, had many ranks and titles, wore special clothes, and offered great certainty of their Traditions and Creeds to those who followed. These holy men were greatly admired. This group also had a large following. They were distinguished by their certainty of their creeds, sense of uniqueness, and the great history of their Traditions.

The fourth holy person, a woman, said, "We will find this mystery we call God by serving others wherever and whenever we can, with all the riff-raff of the world, especially the poor and suffering, even if we break some of the rules of the Ancients and don't always have special feelings. Furthermore we will make no distinctions among ourselves or others. She said anyone can do this at any time, without being in any way special, and that all people everywhere could find this Great Mystery of Divine Hospitality in welcoming the Stranger, the Outsiders. Sacred Books, Holy Devotion, or Following Distinguished Persons and Holy Creeds were useful but not essential. Many came to observe but few imitated her. There was nothing noteworthy in belonging to this group except their kindness and service of others. They distinguished themselves only by their compassion for the needy.

Story teller may stop here and list one or two of these questions for small group discussion. Select which of these below that you prefer. Preferably only 2 or 3, but this story is rich for exploration and can be returned to if desired.

Why were the first three more successful in gaining followers than the fourth? Which human needs were the first three appealing to? Why did the third holy man have a large following? Which of the four mystified themselves and their authority? Which of the groups was more likely to have pride and righteousness? Which of the groups gave their members the most feeling of specialness? Which of the groups was more likely to look down upon and disparage those who did not belong to it, the outsiders? Which of the four in your opinion was truly from God as you understand this Mystery? Which might be the hardest to follow? Which offered the most protection against uncertainty, fear and guilt? Following which holy person requires more vulnerability from oneself? Which of the holy persons, in your opinion, is the closest to the mission Jesus announced in Luke 4:18; and which is the closest to His life? What are several reasons why the fourth holy person might be the most difficult for some to follow? Which group was the most inclusively catholic? In which community were the outsiders and marginal more likely to be welcomed? In which community is the "hole in our heart" that all of us experience more likely to be filled with the risky caring for others, living on the edge, rather than the sense that we have "arrived" simply by belonging? Which path would others say you are now following by your life? Which would a TV camera following your life show that you prefer? We can say that each of the four holy persons above represent a valuable, respected Wisdom tradition which has led some people into holiness. Go back through the door of your imagination.

After small group discussion, story teller may proceed to part 2

### Story part 2

Later you learned of a fifth holy person who was also known to be

very wise. She was an old crone, but known to read hearts and see into souls. Seekers and Searches came to her to learn what was to be the next step on their journey. She seldom failed to give a wise and helpful answer. It was not known if it was her ancient age, her woundedness, loss and grief in her own life, her history of listening carefully and well, or a special giftedness, but there was an aura to her that seemed to command respect and awe. It was not easy to find her.

Story teller may stop here for part 2 and further questions for journaling and / or small group.

Would you have reason to seek out her wise response to some current issue on your own journey? Would you want to, sit at her feet, to learn the secrets of her wisdom and her great powers of discernment? Is it possibly, that some part of you would like to be like her, that is, someone wise who could offer mentoring and guidance to others? Could this possibly become another path to be followed? Is it a separate wisdom path to be a spiritual mentor accepting all others in an inclusive kind of spirituality, another path of wisdom. Could you aspire to be a mentor to others on their journey as she is and does?

Storyteller may stop here for part 2

Take a long walk just reviewing the five paths in your mind. Write your own commentary or meditation upon this. Share both the parable and your commentary with at least one other person, your discussion partner, mentor or a significant other.

### Story, part 3

Suddenly, an Angel of God appeared to all four Wisdom teachers, and said: "Your world is finished. Your Wisdom traditions, while good and holy in themselves are no longer sufficient. In fact, they have become divisive of the Human Family. Each Way is a metaphor for God, but instead of understanding the metaphor as a referent to Mystery, as a Way, you have fallen in love with your Metaphor, your way, and judged others. The Metaphor has become the Absolute. The Creator of the Universe is making a new world, and this new world must have a new way of Wisdom which celebrates the solidarity of the human family."

"Come with me into this spaceship as we leave for another universe. If you can agree among yourselves what this new way will be, I am the Angel of Mercy, and you shall live and all prosper. If you cannot agree among yourselves, I am the Angel of Death, and we are headed into the awe filled Divine Presence."

"Now I know this is a hard task. So I will give you two tips about the new Way you shall discover together or die. Number one, there are four different activities, and Number two, determining all four is too much for your current state of Wisdom, so I shall tell you the first, which you should already know. Are you ready? The first is: 'Gather the People.' Now what are the other three? You must agree."

The four Holy Persons did not talk to each other at once. As they circled the earth several times preceding their long trip to another world, they saw the continents of the world passing beneath them. They, each in turn, came to the realization that their own Way was indeed insular in origin and practice, and did in fact, create boundaries between people. Then they began to talk.

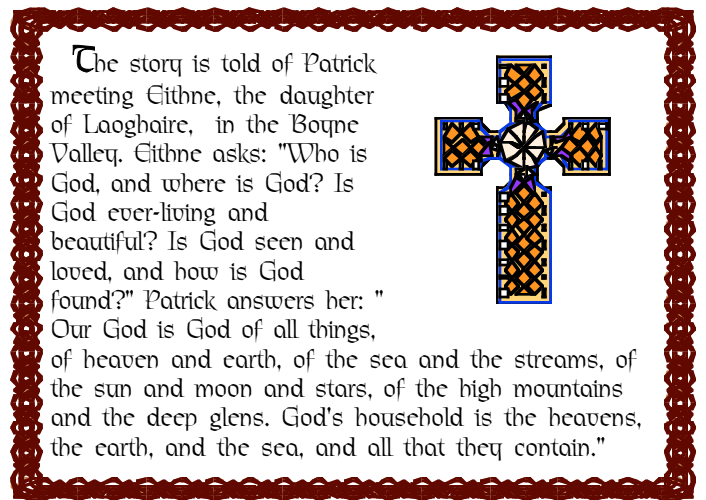
Journaling and small group discussion: what are the other three activities you as leader of your community would implement to carry on an inclusive spiritual tradition that could reach across all faith boundaries?

*continued on page 17*

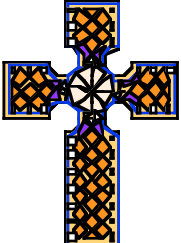
### On The Lighter Side!

On the veterinarian's door "Back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"  
"Unattended children will be given a free puppy"

At the muffler shop "No need for an appointment; we will hear you coming."



The story is told of Patrick meeting Eithne, the daughter of Laoghaire, in the Boyne Valley. Eithne asks: "Who is God, and where is God? Is God ever-living and beautiful? Is God seen and loved, and how is God found?" Patrick answers her: "Our God is God of all things, of heaven and earth, of the sea and the streams, of the sun and moon and stars, of the high mountains and the deep glens. God's household is the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that they contain."



## The People Of God

*by Janet Malone*

I read with interest the articles on leadership in the church in the September-October 2000 issue of *The Journal*. Since I have written on this topic in religious life, (*The Dance of Leadership, Human Development, Fall 1998*), I would like to offer some distinctions that have been hinted at in some of the articles in the last issue.

It is evident that the patriarchal, hierarchical structures of our church challenge us in our exercise of leadership. If we believe what Vatican Council II reiterated for us, namely, that the church is really the people of God, how then do we truly become leaders, leaders that hold the vision of the mission of Jesus Christ in a reciprocal dance of leadership-followership? We must ask ourselves in this model of reciprocity, mutuality, and equality if indeed, "every leader is given responsibility for the activities of a group"? (*The Journal, 2000, 1*)

In this article, I invite us to look at leadership in the church contextualized within a quantum theological perspective, a model that emphasizes right relationships, reciprocity, mutuality and interdependency. Unless we envision leadership within this paradigm shift, "the temptation to use Christian preaching and teaching to maintain power structures rather than challenge them is strong and deceptive" (Ellen Leonard, *Rethinking the Call to Serve, CRC Bulletin, 1997, 6*)

### TOWER OF BABEL

What is leadership anyway? Ideally, we see our church as the people of God; practically it is run as an organization, a pyramidal institution in which confusion reigns from using the terms leadership, management and administration synonymously. Etymologically, management comes from *manus* (hand), indicating the day-to-day handling of a business, the controlling or directing of an operation... producing, implementing, innovating and integrating all its aspects (Paul Hersey & Ken Blanchard, 1982, *Management of Organizational Behaviour*). Administration, on the other hand, is defined as the carrying out of tasks necessary for the management of an organization. One could say that administrators carry out the dictates of management. Witness the administration of

any parish in which it is often said that the "secretary" or the "treasurer" manages the church. Because management and administration have many things in common, they too are often considered synonymous. Both focus primarily on maintenance rather than vision.

This is not to say that management and administration are irrelevant in the day-to-day functioning of a parish. Not at all. Initiative and expertise are clearly essential in the management and administration of our church. Confusion however, and even abuse and oppression occur when these maintenance roles are not differentiated from leadership. We need all of them in our church; they are not either-or but both-and. At the same time, we need to have leadership in our church where its role is clear and distinct from administration and management.

The lived reality is that many organizations, including the church, are built on a mechanistic and hierarchical model of governance. People are treated as machines; order, control, predictability and status quo are paramount. "A hierarchical organization creates a strong magnetic attraction toward the top as power becomes more and more concentrated until it finally becomes ultimate in the one who occupies the single position at the pinnacle" (John D. Ingalls, *A Trainer's Guide to Andragogy, 1976, 108*). In such a system, tremendous psychic energy is expended to maintain the control and order deemed necessary. Abuse of power can lead to "power over". People at the top may collude, albeit at times unconsciously, with keeping the power in the hands of a few.

### LEADERSHIP

Leadership is about sharing power in determining the vision, the force within the church which ignites the spiritual and psychic imaginations of the membership to follow their dreams for the reign of God. In the new world order of a quantum universe with right relationships as paramount, leadership is not the prerogative of one person. Rather, it is contextual and interdependent; it does not occur without followership. Leadership involves the ability to

intuit the church's vision together with the members, in which the leader has been mandated "the capacity to influence the behaviour of others toward some goal or objective" (Richard McCormick, *America*, 1996, 13).

In a quantum world of interconnections, part of the leader's role as a source of vision and vitality, is "to evoke followership... It is impossible to expect any plan or idea to be real if employees (church members) do not have the opportunity to personally interact with it. Therefore we cannot talk people into reality because there truly is no reality to describe if they haven't been there. It is the participation process that generates the reality to which they make their commitment" (Margmet Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 1992, 302-144, 67).

Today, within this quantum universe, a hierarchical model of leadership is no longer relevant; it is in fact, counter-productive. We all know people will only support what they have a stake in. With its emphasis on relationships of mutual respect, this new type of leadership is a dance that requires both leadership and followership; it means dreaming dreams, encouraging others' dreams and inviting the actualization of both leadership and followership. "Knowing the steps ahead of time is not important; being willing to engage with the music and move freely onto the dance floor is what's key" (Wheatley, 1992, 142-143).

### **BOTH-AND**

From this perspective, leadership in our church is an invitation and a challenge to both leadership and followership. It is a both-and dynamic that is scary because it requires a moving away from the hierarchical, patriarchal model of only "Father knows best." It is also scary because it means moving away from the administrative and managerial aspects of church life. These complement leadership which is about dancing in partnership with church members into the radical call of the priesthood of the laity.

### **BORN LEADERS??**

We often hear people speak of "born" leaders. And we often slip into the temptation of the "quality" or "trait" approach to leadership, enumerating the characteristics of "real" leaders. I submit that leaders are not "born" but evolve, mature, become transformed in a participative, interconnected way with followers, in what quantum physicists call contextualism, "a sensitivity to the interdependency between how things appear and the environment which causes them to appear" (Wheatley, 1992, 63). Of course the context is established by the value we give to the relationships involved... the mutual dance of leadership-followership.

Leaders and followers influence each other so that the type of dance ultimately chosen, as well as the tempo and rhythm, come from both parties. It is in such openness of participation that the steps of the dance unfold; they are not preplanned but take their shape and form from the whole. This new model of leadership in our church would take on new meaning where leaders and followers are moved forward to the rhythm and beat of the vision that is enfolded in both. "Pray who is the dancer and who the dance? Often it is more a case of we being danced rather than we controlling our movements and moods" (Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Quantum Theology*, 1997, 55).

### **INFLUENCE**

Leadership and followership are both about influencing, each in very different ways. What is important to realize in the church is the necessity of the two. "Any time an individual is attempting to influence the behaviour of someone else, that individual is the potential leader and the person she or he is attempting to influence is the potential follower..." (Paul Hersey, & Ken Blanchard, 1984, 83). From this perspective then, leadership-followership is a process which can be aborted if forced, pushed, controlled. In its essence, it is power sharing, "power with". It is a co-creation which emphasizes partnership, cooperation, empowerment and an end to both patriarchy and matriarchy and the concomitant hierarchy.

Management and administration are thus distinguished from leadership in a quantum theological model of church. The former are more concrete, tangible, maintenance-focused. Leadership-followership is about holding the vision and as such is more ephemeral, more scary because the focus is on sharing power in the change, chaos, dreaming and visioning of both the leaders and followers in the church.

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP-FOLLOWERSHIP**

As highlighted in Luke 22: 24-27, Jesus is the model par excellence of the dance of leadership-followership in the church. Responding to a power struggle going on among his disciples about who was the greatest (like parish councils of today??), Jesus said: "Let the greatest among you be as the youngest and the leader as the servant ... I am among you as one who serves."

Yet, the very notion of servant leadership-followership is fraught with negative connotations, stemming in part, from the Latin root of servant meaning "slave" (*servus*). Jesus' life is an example of the essence of service that is respectful, caring, mutual and reciprocal. The idea of "servant" however can suggest one who is less than or not as good as the "master". A servant is one who is hired from on high to do the dirty jobs. Jesus modeled servant leadership as reciprocal servant leadership-followership.

Today, in the church then, as we (re-)appropriate servant leadership-followership we must ask ourselves: can we use this language in ways that are not oppressive? If, linguistically, language is a symbol system that bespeaks our reality, how then do we paradoxically live into servant leadership-followership in ways that are mutual, reciprocal and empowering rather than patriarchal, hierarchical and oppressive? Indeed, "it is not easy to remove servant language from the hierarchical power structures of society" (Leonard, 1997, 6). How then do we develop alternative ecclesial and societal structures that ensure "power with"?

And so, we come full circle to the question of leadership in the church. It is within the new model of a quantum universe of right relationships, that the dance of servant leadership-followership must take place. It is in the ebb and flow of listening and dialogue that a sacred space for the dance of questioning, so essential to leadership-followership, is created.

This is a dance of asking the core, deeply meaningful questions of the pilgrim journey of the church requiring kenosis, metanoia and ultimately transformation, of entering into "the great universal dance of being and becoming" (O'Murchu, 1997, 177).



## On The Lighter Side!

On the door of the maternity ward "Push, Push, Push"  
On the podiatrist's door "Time wounds all heels"

## My Experience Of A Parish Small Faith Community

*by Maureen McIntyre, Ottawa, ON (Corpus NCR)*

For the last two years I have been a member of a small group of parishioners who have been meeting bi-weekly in a "small faith community" to pray together, to reflect upon scripture, to share our faith, to support and challenge one another, and to learn together. We look forward to a gathering which feels like a microcosm of our parish to which we are all very devoted.

St. Joseph's Parish, in the centre of Ottawa, is not a "geographical parish". At least 85% of the parishioners who regularly attend St. Joe's come from outside the parish boundaries. Some of them drive as much as 40 kilometres to come to St. Joe's for Sunday Eucharist. They are drawn there by an active community, good music and meaningful liturgy. They are also people who are attracted by the parish ministry to the homeless and the hungry.

One of the problems of this kind of parish is that there are pockets of "St. Joe's people" all over the city who only see one another on Sundays or on rare occasions when they come back to a special event.

It was out of this reality that one of the Jubilee Year projects at St. Joe's was to form small faith communities in the various areas where our parishioners live. People were asked to sign up if they were interested and then were grouped by neighborhood. The first year there were five small faith communities meeting weekly or bi-weekly. Three groups are still meeting regularly and there are plans to form other groups.

Our little group in the Orleans suburb of Ottawa supports one another in trying to live a Christian life in a very secular world. It keeps us grounded in the Word of God and challenges us to reach out into our community. In a mobile, pluralistic society such as we have today, it is good to gather with friends who share the values and beliefs that we hold dear.

We feel more connected to our parish and spend some time reflecting on how we can make our parish a better place. Recently we were reflecting on the story of Bartemaeus and noticing how alienated he was in his community. That led to a discussion of who might be alienated at our parish. From there we began to notice how the welcoming ministry at St. Joe's was in need of people. "Welcoming" is an important part of the St. Joe's Mission Statement and we could see that it needed help. So the following Sunday seven eager people presented themselves at the doors of the church at the 11:30 Mass to help welcome new and old to the Sunday Liturgy. At it happened, the Parish Team had been discussing the very problem that week and were planning to try to recruit more people. The Holy Spirit works quickly at St. Joe's!

Our group meetings begin with a short prayer service and well-chosen music. Then we read aloud each reading for the following Sunday and

pay attention to what struck us. We discuss the readings and also follow a guide with reflection questions. None of us are biblical scholars but that is not a problem. We meet in one another's houses and have simple refreshments. We take turns facilitating the discussion but if a member is not comfortable doing that, that's okay. If a member is reluctant to express an opinion or share a feeling, that's okay too. We go where the Spirit takes us. The result is that we pay much more attention to the readings and the homilies the following Sunday and are anxious to see what the homilist has to say. It may be that if enough small faith communities are formed, the homilists will be kept on their toes.

The parish intends to foster more small faith communities and to form a core group from those communities to assist our Pastoral Associate with planning and choosing material. This year we have had our second Saturday retreat where all the groups come together. This was a very good experience of fellowship and the sharing of ideas.

There is definitely something exciting happening and it is different from the Sunday liturgies and is different from other parish groups. I particularly like being able to comment on and discuss the readings. I sometimes have quite a time not talking back to the homilists during Mass, so at a small faith community meeting I can engage in the discussion.

Small faith communities really enhance the life of the parish community, whether it is a geographical parish or a spreadout parish like St. Joe's as well as deepening the faith of the members, they provide a depth of knowledge and commitment beyond what can be achieved at weekend liturgies.

Note: Two sources of regular weekly scriptural texts, commentaries and suggested actions are published as follows:

- Celebrating the Word, by Frank Ruetz, C.R., Director of Resurrection Centre, Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G7. For information or subscriptions: FAX: 1-519-885-4731 E-mail: [fjruetz@netcom.ca](mailto:fjruetz@netcom.ca) Toll free: 1-877-242-7935 Website: [celebratingtheword.com](http://celebratingtheword.com) - (sample outlines available).

- Quest - A Reflection Booklet for Small Faith Communities - The Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities, 467 Bloomfield, CT 06002, (860) 243-9642; Fax No. (860) 286-0289.

# Comments On A "New Model Of Church"

by Jim Noonan, Stittsville, ON (Corpus NCR)

Archbishop Gervais' efforts to involve religious and lay people in the Archdiocese of Ottawa more fully into the operations of parishes where there is a shortage of priests are praiseworthy and innovative. And people like Sister Jeannine Gauthier are to be admired for their willingness to assist in this regard by performing baptisms, marriages, funerals, and "worship services".

But their functions always fall short of saying Mass, that is, building the Christian community through the celebration of the Eucharist. Yet the Christian community is essentially a Eucharistic community, one that is built largely by celebrating Mass as a community, which Sister Jeannine and others who lead worship services cannot do.

Many of the communities which these good people serve in the Ottawa archdiocese and elsewhere in Canada have had the number of Masses in their parishes, even on Sundays, reduced and often replaced by a worship service that is basically a Communion service without the interaction that is the Mass, which basically constitutes the Christian community. In other communities the attempt to maintain

a reasonable number of Masses on Sunday has strained many aging priests to the breaking point.

In the light of the present shortage of priests to build the Eucharistic community, would it not be also fitting for the Archbishop and others in the Catholic community to work towards making vibrant Eucharistic communities widespread through the ordination of women like Sister Jeannine, the ordination to the priesthood of the married deacons and other men and women who assist in parishes, and the reconciliation of priests who have married and are willing to work again as priests?

Many of the efforts of this new "model of church" described in the article are largely bandaid solutions to the real problem of a shortage of priests, which continues to grow in Canada and throughout the world. Isn't it time to address the problem of compulsory celibacy of Roman Catholic priests, and replace it by a priesthood which is inclusive of men and women, and of married and celibate priests in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the Eucharistic community that is the Catholic Church?

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## Rethinking Leadership: Storytelling as Builder of Community *(cont. from p 14)*

by Paschal Baute

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Gather the People  
Tell the Stories  
Break the Bread  
Welcome the Stranger

(P.S. The storyteller, faith community facilitator, will not, cannot experience the power of this process until she / he actually does it, as it invites the Spirit of Relational Creativity into each life, each story. It is the process, not the words that invites Spirit. Doing it will alone make it your own. Once you learn the power of it, you will do it or some aspect of your own adaptation in many places. Also, You now have the power to help others authenticate their spiritual journeys and to create community, no matter where you go, without faculties, vestments or vessels. Welcome to the Global village of searchers to be found everywhere.

In the Spiritual Growth Network of Kentucky, we now have eleven years experience in this process. Note that this process uses the power of the story to create community but it is actually the power of each story, shared, accepted, valued and affirmed that is the empowering. Thus this process is a true affirmation of the power inherent in the Mystical Body of Christ, per se, in itself, across all boundaries. The storyteller is only the facilitator, as was Jesus in his parables. We find a Centering silence as a setting for this process awesome in itself.

([www.lexpages.com/SGN.Namaste.](http://www.lexpages.com/SGN.Namaste.))

Epilogue. 11/9

My theology of Story is based, as well as on the assumptions defined earlier, also on these.

1. The appreciation of God happens at all levels of being and life, especially that the point of departure where the mind can no longer

go. Heart must be summoned.

2. A new cosmic Christ is emerging for our generation, new stories, poetry, myths.

3. Our challenge is to find ways to aid Christ be born in the hearts of all people--people without generative, empowering stories and myths.

4. Can we as a people begin to have the wisdom to see that the Christ-event is occurring now, already, in people, one by one? Whether invoked or not, This mystery is already present, within, around, among and speaking to us through each other.

5. So, Christ emerges from OUR history, our INDIVIDUAL history, from our stories.

6. Each rebirth is already happening, now; we just need to recognize it and affirm it. "We have but to allow ourselves to recognize that we are all the cultural and spiritual mud from which the lotus can grow." --Fr. Michael Adams.

7. All our theology, creeds and conceptual frameworks for thinking of God are biased and contextual. No one source of knowledge, theological, scriptural or otherwise can provide a complete description of reality.

8. All particular religious stories belong to a larger story. All texts are only approximations that require fresh interpretation in each new cultural epoch.

9. The mystery of life is fundamentally open ended. Theology is not about consigning truth to dogmas, creeds, or religions, but about opening up new horizons of possibilities and meanings, to be found everywhere.

10. Revelation AND creation is ongoing. Revelation cannot be subsumed in any creed, religion or cultural epoch.

"All religions are true for their time. If we can find what the truth is and separate it from the temporal inflection, then we can be our

"same old religion" into a new set of metaphors. " --Joseph Campbell. Therefore, you, each of you, and we, all of us, are the new story. Note: Numbers 7-10 are taken from Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Quantum Theology*, Crossroad, 1997.

"Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change, truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts.--Salman Rushdie, *One Thousand Days in a Balloon*," *New York Times*, December 12, 1991. quoted in *The Story of Your Life: Becoming the Author of Your Experience*, Mandy Aftel, Simon Shuster, 1996

"The problem with any written text is that you cannot canonize it unless you canonize the worldview in which it was incubated, and that would be intellectual suicide, for time moves and worldviews change." --Benard J. Lee, *The Future Church of 140 B.C.E.* Crossroad, NY, 1995, p. 27. "The ability to perceive or think differently is more important than the knowledge gained." David Bohm.

Seeker:

the way that can be formulated and given to you is not the way.  
the way that can be consciously and safely trodden is not the way.  
the way that we can know with our minds is not the way.  
You will find it only through your own experience,  
through your own story, always,  
listening to your heart  
in the presence of mystery. --anon.

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the Mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." (Albert Einstein, *What I Believe*, 1930) Now each of you has the power through the above process learned and practiced, to 1) create community, 2) summon

to an authentic spirituality, 3) begin to think outside the box, with any group, no matter where you go, no matter the Wisdom tradition your listeners are part of; 4) thereby affirming your own story, and 5) inviting others to freshly affirm their own. You begin again to be present to others in the great tradition of Jesus as storyteller and mentor of Wisdom.

Welcome to the global village of searchers and storytellers to be found everywhere.

Selected reading list:

- Leonardo Boff. *Church: Charism and Power (Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church)*, Crossroad, 1985.
- Robert McAfee Brown. *Spirituality and Liberation*. Westminster, 1988. Wahlbert Buhlmann. *With Eyes to See (Church and the World in the Third Millennium)*, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1990.
- Robert K. Greenleaf. *Servant Leadership*. Paulist. 1977.
- Elizabeth Johnson. *She Who Is*.
- Bernard J. Lee. *The Future Church of 140 B.C.E. (A hidden revolution)* Crossroad, 1995.
- Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Daimon*, Quantum Theology, 1997.
- Ruth Sawyer. *The Way of the Storyteller*. Penguin, 1962.
- Theology by the People, edited by Samuel Amirtham and John S. Pobee. *World Council of Churches*, Geneva, 1986.
- Garry Wills, *Certain Trumpets: the call of leaders*. Simon Shuster, 1994.

"No one person, past or present, has the 'secret' for becoming a leader, or even for fostering leaders. A sense of diverse opportunities is one of the best lessons that can be taken from a study of great leaders in their incommunicable historical moments....Tell me who your admired leaders are, and you have bared your soul." Garry Wills, p. 270.

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## This & That

*François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC*

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For five years now *Corpus Canada* has boldly proclaimed in every issue of *The Journal* its main action strategy, namely "the creation of local faith communities." What have we done about it? In my view, not nearly enough. I feel very strongly about this topic because it is one of the most effective, rewarding ways to enhance the spiritual lives of the churchd or the unchurchd. And at the same time, it is the most efficient grassroots means of bringing about Church

reform and renewal.

Several months ago I was approached by a couple who attend the local Ladysmith parish where the pastor is very sick and visiting priests come to replace him from time to time. They asked me if "I said Mass at the Abbey (our Guest House)." I said yes, from time to time, in the context of a gathering of a small faith community. They asked me if I would "say Mass" for them here at

the Abbey. I said no, but that I would do so in their own home, if they wanted to gather some of their friends together. They enthusiastically agreed. I went the next Saturday afternoon. There were about 14 people, kids included. We gathered around two tables set up on a large back deck overlooking the ocean which was about 100 feet away: oh! the beauty of Godde's cathedral. They asked me how I should be addressed and I said my name was François, but they could call me Fran. So they call me Fr. Fran. Whatever. To create a sacred moment before we began, I took my stole, kissed it reverently, and put it 'round my neck and over my civvies draped body (I was equal to them, but I had a presider's servant role to fulfill). We shared the Sunday readings. I began the homily by pointing out the theme running through the texts, set the texts in their historical context where necessary to understand certain passages, told a contemporary story to illustrate the theme of the texts, and then asked a question that called for an answer from their own lives that was related to the theme. And I threw it open to them. The exchange that occurred then was incredible; it blew my mind. And it happens like this every time we gather. The eucharistic liturgy is short and simple (Chris Diamond is very good at producing simple, yet

moving texts) with everybody participating. After, we had a pot luck barbecue where conversation continued naturally along the lines of the shared homily. And this has happened every time we have met, which is once a month. Now they want to be a small faith community where the adults will gather to discuss spiritual topics on days other than when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. I can't tell you enough how rewarding this is for me!, how much it validates my servant leadership priesthood, how simply it brings about real grassroots renewal. Now, I'm not the

only Married Priest building Small Faith Communities. There are many others who have been doing this for years. I read their amazing stories on the CITI-L internet discussion list (citi-l@lists.sparklist.com), and it inspires me to do more. Whether you are a Married Priest or not, you can do the same. And you don't need permission from the hierarchy in order to build Small Faith Communities: the right of association is incorporated in Canon Law. Just Do It!

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## Profile

### My Journey of Faith

*by Roseleen Walsh, Belfast*

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I was conscious of beginning the journey when I was very young. Our street, Commedagh Drive (named after a mountain) backed on to a very large field; in the center of the field was a river, enveloped by banks of blackberry bushes and trees with strong branches from which, back in the fifties, all the children from Commedagh and Bearnagh Drive would swing during the hot summer holidays. I remember one day in particular sitting alone down by the river watching it as it passed through on its way to the Lagan; I wondered where its journey began but as a child I only guessed that it started off from the Black mountain and passed through Andersonstown. My senses were tuned into the steady sound of the water as it continued on its journey; sometime later with the warm sun on my back I took off my shoes and dangled my feet in the cool, clear water. It struck me then that there seemed to be no end to this water. It just kept coming; I didn't know how this was happening, but it was real and it was amazing; I just knew that like the sun on my back, it was there!

I remember our teacher, Miss Shields from St Teresa's, telling us that God's love had no beginning and no end, that God always was and always will be. So watching the river and knowing that no one was making it flow, I understood what our teacher had told us. It all seemed so natural.

My faith in God's love and mercy have remained as full of wonder and beauty for me today as it did on that summer's day all those years ago. The river is covered over now and the field was made into a playing pitch covered with soft mud material; but when the rain is heavy the river swells and can still be heard as it rushes on its journey to the Lagan; I listen for it as I make my way daily up the path that leads on to the pitch. If you don't listen for it, you won't hear it. Like our faith in God, sometimes we over shadow it; to see and hear God in our lives we must keep ourselves tuned in on whatever wave length has connected us to God.

Sometimes my favorite wavelength (the Catholic Church) has so much interference on its air ways that I've felt like disconnecting and tuning in to another station. One such time in my life was when I was interned in Armagh prison. I felt I had been deserted and left alone. That feeling of being alone and rejected by those we love, believe in and share the same faith with is a devastating

experience for any human being to go through. In my cell, I wrote To My Silent Church.



#### To My Silent Church

Silence or Cell?  
Divided nations conquer well.  
For imitation love of peace  
Give all up to the oppressor.  
Lose all, forget those who have given all  
So you can live in your imitation home  
Made of imitation  
Security.

Silence or Cell?  
I choose cell.  
My words were quiet  
But I was not silent.  
I did not want the cell.  
It came, because  
I could not bear the silence.  
The Silence was imitation,  
Not truth  
Incomprehensible

Christ died because he could  
Not stand the Silence.  
Because of your silence  
I am condemned  
To be without freedom.  
I am therefore dead!  
Speak! Talk now!  
Silent ones.

# Corpus Calgary Meeting

by Chuck McLellan

Corpus Calgary ---At the beginning of December the group met at Bragg Creek. In this Community which hugs its artists, we have a two tier existence: the foothills and the mountains. The area is called Kananaskiis, the Indian word "to be in touch with nature." Thirty people came to celebrate. This time was different from past years in that we had in our presence a baby, teenagers and a person celebrating a ninetieth birthday. "Your young men will dream dreams and your older persons will see visions." We had it all together.

It seemed like yesterday that this group played pond hockey until there was no second wind left. This year we were satisfied with a short walk and time to ponder. Firma Terra never felt so good. I guess we are at the stage when our knees buckle but our belt around the waist does not. The Liturgy was a leader's delight. A baby; twins celebrating a birthday; Marquerite Watson celebrating a ninetieth birthday; Frank Hoearth retiring from Social Work with the City of Calgary. With all these candles to light something celebrative was bound to happen. The theme GRACE as the Surprise of God is evident in the movie "Sometimes It's a Wonderful Life". It is about the sudden surprise of friendship in our life. We can feel alone and suddenly a friendship breaks through, to prove us wrong. In our celebration, as well, people come and surround us in a redeeming moment. We are glad that Mary McLellan has not recovered from her role as an English Arts Teacher, thus we could prod her into reading the poem LITTLE LAMB {Blake }

He is called by thy name  
For he calls HIMSELF a Lamb  
He is meek and he is mild  
He became a little Child  
We are called by His name

As a response, Sheldon and Carlene Oleksyn gave a reflection on the experience of child birth and how it has brought them closer to Godde. We don't know the hour or the day, so our task is to be ready when Godde will visit us in new and exciting ways. At this time we needed to unmask our sorrow at the death of Bill Kelly. He was a leader among the Basilian Fathers and taught many years in Lethbridge AB. The latter part of his life he gave his gift of love to his wife Marion, his nephews and nieces. The imprint of his joy and laughter is everywhere. We keep in mind the sick: Tad Gusie; Bernie Bryden, and Lucille Neyron. Joan Palardy and Catherine Williams are in recovery from accidents.

The group talked about the possibility of hosting a national Conference, sometime in the Fall. A Committee of six was struck to pursue the idea. Fred Williams provided some well timed humor re the ninetieth birthday of Marquerite Watson and in the right spirit: Four Golfers are on the golf course. Three of them are complaining - One says the fairways are TOO long; another the hills are too HIGH; another the sandtraps are TOO deep. The forth says at least we are all on this side of the GRASS.

## Alphamega of Manitoba Report

by Rev. Dr. Neil Parado

The ALPHAMEGA community welcomed with open arms Rev. Dale Duval and his wife Linda as members. We invite Corpus Canada members and supporters to kindly pray for the healing of Dean Venchuk, 28, Dale's step-son who is battling cancer. ALPHAMEGA (Alpha and Omega Christian Community of Manitoba) meets regularly on the second Friday of the month at the residence of Rev. Len & Mrs. Adeline Schmidt on 902 Borebank St., Winnipeg. Anyone interested in attending could phone (204) 487-3553 for info re our Breaking of the Bread Prayer time. Rev. Neil and Mrs. Gory Parado are busily involved with the activities of three civic organizations in the Filipino-Canadian Community, namely, the Knights of the Order of Dr. Jose Rizal, Coalition of Filipino-Canadians on Violence Prevention and the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers, Inc. (MAFTI). In the last federal election Neil and Gory also actively campaigned for the re-election of Dr. Rey Pagtakhan to the Parliament. Dr. Rey easily won a 4th consecutive term as MP for Winnipeg North-St. Paul, and recently was appointed Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, a distinctive honor he richly deserves and which the Filipino-Canadian Communities throughout Canada and everywhere are proud of. We, the ALPHAMEGA executive, Rev. Len and Mrs. Adeline Schmidt, Rev. Neil and Mrs. Gory Parado, Rev. Dale and Mrs. Linda Duvall, Tony Bott and Richard Marcoux, convey to the Corpus Canada family our New Year greetings of new hopes and expectations !

## Vocations Week

This is the letter I sent to Island Catholic News in response to their article about Vocation Week.

Dear Editor:

Thank you for reminding me to pray for Vocations and thanks to John for his kind words stressing their variety. I am also reminded that our Diocesan Synod urged women with a vocation to the priesthood to pray, study, and seek ordination. I pray that their vocation will be recognized by the hierarchical church as it is by The People of God throughout the world. These women throughout the world urge the need for a renewed priesthood. Such organizations as WOW (Women's Ordination Worldwide) and B.A.S.I.C. (Brothers And Sisters In Christ) as well as Epiphany in Australia, Advent in England, Leaven in Ireland, Family Priests in the Philippines, Ministerium Novum worldwide, Corpus USA, our own Corpus Canada, and many many others give testimony to the cry of staunch Roman Catholic voices who seek to dialogue about this. The need for a renewed priesthood, women and men priests, married and single priests, is not about the present shortage of priests- even with an abundance of priests, there still is the need for such a renewed priesthood. When we pray for vocations, we pray that we will recognize and ordain the ones that the Holy Spirit has given us in abundance.

Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill

# Where Have All The MP's Gone?

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK

**Early History:** Before 1989, married priests in Canada had little idea of how many or where other married priests there were. Unknown to each other, two groups of married priests were meeting, one in the National Capital Region, Ottawa, and the other in Saskatchewan, Regina and Saskatoon. No doubt others were gathering besides these groups.

The Saskatchewan group decided to go national and so a newsletter was sent out asking for information of any married priests in Canada. Five years later there were 350 married priests on the mailing list.

**Ten Years Later:** There are 25 married priests among the 43 paid up members of Corpus Canada on the Journal mailing list. Another 103 receive the Journal besides these members. No doubt there are married priests receiving the Journal who did not become members of Corpus Canada.

**So What?** I guess the answer is: "so whatever we want to do with this information". At our National Team meeting in Ottawa October 2000, Jim Cashen accepted the position of Outreach Representative.

**Contacting Married Priests:** As the Sask. Corpus rep. my plan is to send a one or two page letter to the Saskatchewan MP addresses. First I want to re-establish contact with each one personally. Next I would share some news of Corpus Canada:

our Web site, the Journal on the net, the discussion group Corpus-L, the National Team site at Corpus-N, some information about pensions of which many married priests are unjustly deprived, and such other information that may be of interest.

A mailing to the 41 Sask. MP's at 47c would cost about \$20 - not too bad. To think of a mailing to the clergy and laity as well would be quite costly.

Next I would like to phone each one and establish a more personal contact. Now with cheaper long distance phone, this is possible. Also phoning will help find the address of those mailings that were returned, and possibly any new MPs. I'll report the results in a future article in the Journal.

**Sask. Region News**

Felix Kryzanowski and Emil Kutarna had lunch with Archbishop Peter Mallon last November. Emil shared with him the results of Corpus Canada's National Team meeting of October 2000. In particular Emil emphasized the question of pensions being denied to married priests. Felix emphasized the problem of inequality in the church regarding women. Bishop Mallon was very cordial and expressed interest in future meetings with us.

## Tapestries

by Connie Kurtenbach, Ladysmith, BC

The first time I saw a weaver working at her loom, I was awe struck. Those many-coloured threads were being moved in a mysterious, synchronistic way. Slowly, the design was revealed. As I looked back and remembered the weaving of the Mid-Island faith community, I saw the beginnings of the first tapestry.

The second tapestry is the Sacred Circle of Women. From 1995 to 2001 I have been weaver and woven in both, as have been my spiritual brothers and sisters. The Mid-Island community began after the 1995 National Corpus Conference. From that time to now we gather about 18 to 20 times a year. In the skein from the year 2000, we met for liturgy, pot-luck dinners, prayer, wine tasting and themed conversations. Interwoven among our faith-filled gatherings, we participated in the Journal community, sponsored an Enneagram workshop, welcomed Jack and Jean Shea from Ottawa, kept contact with the Oleksyn and Little families, and gathered with the larger Island community. In a pastoral skein, Chris, editor of The Journal, is in his 17th year as leader of

an ecumenical Bible Study community; Gordon continues to serve as pastor of St. Paul's in Nanaimo; and François has been called to form a house church and support group for some families who have no local parish priest. Michael, our resident Scripture scholar and web master of the Corpus Canada web site, soon away to Malta for a family visit, tells us that after months of health concerns, the specialists have pronounced: "there is nothing in his head (!?) and he is a good-hearted man." He is a treasure and shares generously. As we women do so well, we are multi-tasking in our careers, our families, our friends, and, of course, exercise! We are the hearth, heart and support of our families. We carry burdens on our backs; we can cry with each other or laugh ourselves silly. We are community all the time, not just when we gather.

This leads me to the second tapestry - the Sacred Circle of Women: four of us steadfast in our intention to begin our sixth year. We gather

twice a month, in search of deep spirituality. The skein may appear more primitive like the first circle in time, around the fire, mending our hearts and healing the planet. We draw on many sources for prayer, healing and sharing. Our personal histories are Christian and we hold that Tradition with respect and treasure old rituals. We continue to co-create new ceremony. One of our sisters writes in the Circle book: "The circle is a holy time, a time of growth, prayer and sharing. This has enabled me to grow in other areas of my life. And our prayers and energy are needed in the universe." Our circle time can be stressful, agitating, reflective, enlightening and courageous. This reminds me of Scott Peck's "The Different Drummer," where he talks about "the struggles of a community in growth and in achieving authentic community." He says you know you're there because "the signs lead you to agape, which gives joy and glory." I hope we are all weaving these threads. Henry Nouwen once said in "The Wounded Healer" - "the greatest gift we can give each other is our woundedness." Then we can weave many tapestries of communities, living in "love, harmony and peace-making." The weaver works the loom and the tapestries of whole, living communities are revealed. And the tapestries are suffused with the Light. Bless us all!

We met on Sunday for an afternoon of conversation and companionship. Frank and Dolores Sienna hosted at their home in Kitchener. Bill and Sue Fenlon, with grandson Liam, Mike and Carol O'Kane, Joan, Fintan Kilbride and Mark and I travelled from various locations for the afternoon. Turkey and fixin's, followed by a wonderful array of desserts, was served. Most of the afternoon was spent chatting in the sunroom and the backyard while enjoying Frank and Dolores' homemade red wine.

This was a great opportunity for me, being new to the scene, to put faces to some names I've seen only on e-mails so far and to spend some time socializing with other priests and their wives/partners. Joan talked to us about one of CITI's new strategic directions, namely the formation of small faith communities. The idea is that such small communities would form and in time result in more communities forming from that initial community. Joan also shared CITI USA and CITI CANADA's efforts toward providing denominational support for provincial "marriage officer"(Carol's term) licensing.

Mike and Carol shared their astonishing marriage ministry; Carol's total for 2000 will be 85! Fintan talked about his volunteer work with Free the Children. We all talked about our times in the seminary and in institutional ministry, and - more importantly, I think - what's been happening since. The whole afternoon was very informal and very pleasant. As wonderful as linking "virtually" can be, meeting face-to-face can't be beat. Hopefully, other such informal social gatherings will be organized and provide opportunities for others to come and meet together.

## Where Have All The MP's Gone? - A Response

*by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC*

Emil Kutarna raises a very important question. Personally, I'm more interested in the answer. Why? Because a lot of married priests who have worked and continue to work hard in the Married Priest reform movement feel frustrated with what appears to be considerable apathy on the part of the great majority of married priests. Underlying Emil's question is a desire to reach out to married priests and to urge them to become active in the reform movement (note Emil's action oriented program). I know that's the ardent desire of many married priests in CITI (Celibacy Is The Issue). So, I'd like to take a stab at an answer to Emil's question.

What is happening? Here are a few suggestions: The first wave of priests who transitioned are retiring and/or dying. Many of those still living don't have the health or energy to be active in the Married Priest reform movement. The "younger" priests presently transitioning are really not interested in actively participating in this reform movement, and this for different reasons: They have recently embraced the sacrament of life and are totally immersed in it. Their connection to the institutional church is minimal at best. When I have asked why, I get answers like; irrelevant, head in the sand, unjust, corrupt, hypocritical. They prefer to exercise a christian ministry in the midst of secular society, more often than not in a manner connected with their employment. They are more interested in spirituality than in religion.

In my view, this last point offers a positive opening through which

Emil and others might attract such priests to the Small Faith Community movement. After all, as Arthur Menu and Chris Diamond say in their articles, the priest is essentially the one who "gathers" the People. So, for those of us who love the Church, even with all its institutional warts, and who want to see the Church, and particularly, the priesthood renewed, what can we do?

Personally, I believe The Journal makes a very positive contribution to the Church/priesthood renewal movement. Unfortunately, it doesn't reach enough people to make a significant impact. This raises a media/public relations question. We need to find better ways to reach the public at large with the important message we feel called to proclaim. To do that, we need to connect the message to the profound needs of society in an attractive manner. In this respect, I am very much impressed with the positive press coverage CITI has been able to garnish in so short a period of time. Louise Haggett deserves a lot of credit for this. As Media and Public Relations representative for Corpus Canada, I have learned a lot from her and the CITI organization. If you have any suggestions for me re Media and Public Relations, maybe a team of us could come up with a program better designed to respond to the problem raised by Emil Kutarna's question.

The Corpus Sidney group continues to meet one evening each month (the day changes from month to month) for sharing, eucharist and social time. Because of our busy schedules we rarely have everyone present for any given meeting, but if everyone came, we would probably number about a dozen people. We meet at members' homes, and it us up to the host to lead the liturgy or ask someone else to do so. In our liturgy we make no distinction between those among us who have been ordained and those who have not. We are all involved in our local parish as well, so the Corpus group is only one of the ways we meet our spiritual needs. Our parish priest is supportive of Corpus and our vision of Church, for which we are grateful. Our group has helped all of us live our Christian vocation and grow spiritually.

We started back in 1980, with a history of some people already into the idea just after Vatican Two. We are a California non-profit organization with tax deductible. In reality we are a group of seeking Christians who meet three Sundays a month for simple home liturgy and discussion and we have a social life as well. Illness and age are beginning to take its toll. We really have no priest as I have schooled them well in the priesthood of the baptized ; I am the teacher and MC at the our services , getting them more and more to express themselves as they wish. It has been wonderful for me as I served 26 years in institutional ministry and now enjoy being a member of a faith community. Over the years we have covered a lot of educational Vatican Two , along with a good imagination.

### On The Lighter Side!

Once upon a time, an ould fellow lived alone with only his dog which he doted on. The dog died, and so the ould fellow went over to the parish priest. "Father, the ould dog is dead. Would you say a mass for him?"

The PP replied: "No, we can't say a mass for a dead animal, but I hear there is a minister down the road and there is no knowing what she will do."

"Right!" says the ould fellow. "I'll go down right away. Do you think a couple of thousand ought to handle the expenses for the service?"

"Hold on a minute," says the PP. "For God's sake, why didn't you tell me your dog was a catholic?"

### Fr. Michael Keane's Reinstatement (Dublin)

### Malta Inches On Towards The 21st Century

We have good news in Leaven this week. Do you know about Fr Michael Keane who was suspended 23 years ago and evicted from his home after a row which I don't remember now what it was all about, although I've heard it many times. Fr. Michael has been very high profile over the years always speaking out and supporting married priests and the ordination of women.

He has now been reinstated at a special reconciliation mass which was celebrated by Bishop Eamon Walsh last Sunday. He made a great speech at the end appealing to the Church on the issues of married priests and women's ordination. It was also a very touching speech which I would love you to hear. I'll try to get a copy of it for you. He received a standing ovation which seemed to go on and on. I doubt the little parish church in St. Jude's has ever seen the like.

The crowds lined up afterwards to shake his hand and show their support. I felt it demonstrated the people's support not only for Fr. Michael but also for what he stands for. It all reminded Roman of the release of Nelson Mandela. This reinstatement reflects a change in the Irish Church. Many priests are speaking out now and this is giving courage to others. President McAleese (a woman!) has certainly contributed to these changes and it all reflects a changing more confident Irish people of the twenty first century.

### Priests clash with their archbishop in the media

A Maltese priest wrote a letter in the Church's own paper *Il-Gens* criticizing the way the Archbishop judged an interview carried by a local TV programme with another priest. Writing in Friday's issue of *Il-Gens*, Fr. John Avellino defended lecturer Fr. René Camilleri against what the Archbishop said about him when he was recently interviewed on talk show TVM, Malta's national station. In that programme Fr. Camilleri did not mince his words when he gave his views about contraception, women priests, celibacy and divorce and said that he believes that in the long-term the Church will review its opinion on the first three issues. The Archbishop Mgr. Joseph Mercieca immediately answered back that whoever speaks like that, either does not know the teaching of the Church or does not want to give it. Fr. Avellino said he did not understand the Archbishop's attitude against a man-priest who genuinely loves the Church and just wants to be a voice for those who are suffering. This is not the first time that Fr. René and the Archbishop clashed in public with contrasting views over the Maltese church, with Fr. René being regarded as progressive and open-minded.

# Corpus Canada

## Who Are We?

We began as a support group for married Catholic priests, their wives and friends, seeking acceptance by the hierarchy of an optional married priesthood.

We have become a faith community of men and women empowered by our baptism in Jesus' Spirit to reach out to others in their need as Jesus did.

## Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to:

- Renewal of ministry (service) in the Church.
- Promotion of a wholesome view of sexuality.
- Justice for all based on Gospel values in matters related to the governance of the Catholic Church.

Our message is a healing one and is directed to everyone, but especially to the marginalized in the Church. It is our hope to reach them through the creation of local faith communities.

## How Do We Get There?

Through a collegial approach based on consensus reached through discernment in the Spirit, we share our gifts in small faith communities building Christ's body (CORPUS).

## How Can I Join Or Show Support?

If you wish to join or renew your membership in Corpus Canada for the year 2000 (membership is open to all regardless of denominational affiliation), write to Jake Kutarna, Corpus Canada Treasurer, Box 176, Lumsden SK S0G 3C0. Enclose a cheque for \$50 (individual membership) or \$75 (family membership) payable to "Corpus Canada." Corpus Canada will donate \$25 of your membership fee to Xristos Community Society in your name, and Xristos will send you an official tax receipt. At the

request of Corpus Canada, Xristos Community Society distributes The Journal free of charge to the membership of Corpus Canada.

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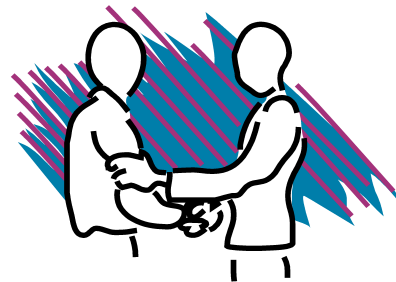
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