

# The Journal



January - February 2002

## Reflection

by Grant Crosswell & Colleen Lissamer, View Royal, BC

At the recent Corpus Conference in Bragg Creek, AB, we agreed to share the exciting challenge of being co-facilitators for the National Coordinating Team. We have been giving considerable thought and prayer to this responsibility and how we will proceed with it. We are in agreement that our strength as a family is to offer hospitality and that this charisma must be central to any leadership we provide.

Together with our son Neil we would like to visit the various regions over the next eighteen months to listen, encourage, and help to provide cohesion between the various small communities. We are enthusiastic about taking on this task and are very excited about working with such an outstanding coordinating team. We will be discussing how this can be achieved with the



coordinating team and hope to put together a plan of action by Easter. We have started by contacting and gathering the local Corpus people here on the Island by reaching out and dialoguing.

Our church and society need us more than ever before, and we are here to be a presence in the fabric of life. We feel humbled to work with and among so many talented women and men involved in Corpus, the renewal and the reform movements. We belong to a small faith community with numerous individuals, couples and families and religious. We are experiencing many opportunities to be church in a new way and are encouraged by our grass roots experience here on the Island.

*It is time for the faithful to form vital circles... great, vibrant new beginnings and joyful forms of Christian life that don't figure much statistically but are humanly great and have the power to shape the future.*

*Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium  
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**January - February 2002**  
**Vol. 5, No. 1**

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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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## **Corpus Canada Hospitality Ministry**

In order to encourage and facilitate Corpus members' involvement in the Hospitality ministry, I am spearheading the creation of a national database directory of Canadian resigned priests. Besides finding someone to set up and maintain a computerized database directory, I am working on the preparation of a questionnaire from which the data would be compiled, on the ways and means of inviting resigned priests to respond to the questionnaire, and on the eventual publication and dissemination of the directory. The major purpose of such a directory (other than an historical record of statistical data -which is also important), is support, moral and otherwise. As the questionnaire would invite resigned priests to tell us what they have done with their lives since transitioning (optional response and/or publication), I feel this would be a tremendous support for anyone reading a copy of the directory. I say this, because my experience -and I presume yours as well- of resigned priests is filled with wonder and admiration for lives so richly lived: great giftedness and inspiring examples - incredibly diverse - of gospel living.

If you can help in any way with the development of this directory, please contact me at:  
Tel: (250) 245-3365 or E-mail: ckfb@islandnet.com

Love and blessings! Francois Brassard, Ladysmith, BC

## **FOCUS TOPIC**

**for the March - April 2002 Issue**

In solving moral dilemmas, is it a viable approach to ask "What would Jesus do?" or is it just a slogan? What do you think? How does this apply to current global concerns such as Consumerism, Free Trade, Violence/Terrorism, Reproductive Technology...?

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

# Were We Only Dreaming?

by Jim Doyle, Sidney, BC



A long time ago, say 1963-64, many of us began to dream of a new understanding of Church. Bishops, Priests, theological writers, and yes, even laypeople engaged in the Church's day to day activities at the Parish level, had a sense that something wonderful was happening in the Church and in our lives. There was hope that new understandings were being offered that would bring about liberation, compassion and healing. We had a loving, gentle, and honest spiritual leader in Pope John XXIII, and so many thoughtful writers and teachers were being heard, perhaps for the first time by the average Catholic in the pews. Vatican II was taking place in Rome – just imagine, some 2500 Cardinals, Bishops, Patriarchs, Heads of Orders, theologians and lay advisors from all over the world were meeting to bring the Church into the modern world.

Overtures were being made to peoples of other faiths, religions, and even those professing no faith or understanding of creation as we understood it to be. For perhaps the first time we felt drawn to those of other Faiths, the Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and others, whose beliefs were to be respected, even appreciated.

During the Fall of 1964, my wife and I were privileged to be invited to spend ten days in Rome, as tourists. We had an opportunity to attend a couple of "Council Masses", with all the Council Fathers present, and later to attend one or two debriefings for the Press, at the end of a day's Council business. Of course, we were caught up in the atmosphere, feeling that we were witnesses to something significant and historical. By then Paul VI was the Pope when we attended an audience in St. Peter's Basilica, even having front row seats close to the Main Altar. This was pretty exciting stuff for a young Catholic couple with several children at home, and another on the way.

Returning home to Canada, we continued to read, engaged in programs searching for reform, met with Protestant communities, visited Jewish Synagogues and spent time with people just out there in our town. We appreciated Mass being

said in the vernacular, and the Priest now facing the congregation. More and wonderful things were on the horizon. Perhaps Priests would be allowed to marry, and some of the wise and holy women would be ordained to the Priesthood or even become Bishops. Why not?

About this time, the male dominated hierarchy, for the most part conservative by nature, began to exert its reactionary power. To an outsider (layperson), it seemed that so many were trying to convince us that the Council had been an aberration (mistake), needing to be shut down or short-circuited as quickly as possible. Many of our priest friends began to leave, mostly to marry, or just left to find their priestly (life's) work elsewhere. Some brave Bishops like Remi de Roo have continued to bear witness to what happened when the Holy Spirit was there blowing through the Council. Unfortunately so many others have found it more convenient to remain in communion with their fellow Bishops and Cardinals who toe the line of conservative thought. Why is it that serious, mature Bishops, to this day, continue to be intimidated from above, as they wring their hands about the lack of priests, while saying that they are not prepared to even discuss an optional celibacy allowing married clergy or to ordain women. Is it just denial or does this stem from a darker side of refusing to engage in the real dialogue of sexual dysfunction and gender bias within the Church?

My most serious concern is for my adult children and their children who have virtually no contact with the Catholic Church, nor do they seek their spiritual enlightenment in an institutional setting. We find that many of our friends who have come through the same life experience (Catholic schools, married early with lots of kids), in turn enrolling our own children in Catholic schools or Catholic Christian Doctrine courses have exactly the same results. How many generations are we going to write off before stirring ourselves to make significant changes that will inspire our children and other unchurched people to find God in their daily lives? My tone may seem urgent but this lack of inertia has gone on far too long.

So where do we go from here? Do people of Faith just sit back and wait for even graver loss of responsible leaders or do we look elsewhere among those already proven as Charismatic Leaders who no longer have the right to minister within the Church because of a discipline imposed from above. Who is going to serve the faithful?

For my part, I do not want to leave the Church, but do have the responsibility of pursuing my own Spiritual Journey. I want to belong to a community of faith reaching out to all, especially those denied a place at the table: the homeless, the poor, the recovering substance abuser, the imprisoned, and the ones we are most uncomfortable with. I want to be at the table with those who feel they have no right to be there. I want to take nourishment from all of the above, and to learn from their

sorrow and loneliness. I feel that this is where I will find the **One** who sat down with sinners and doubters like me. I need a community that will help us to find the Kingdom of which He spoke so often.

Can the Catholic Church help us to reveal the Kingdom or must it go through a real Advent before finding its way? Perhaps Corpus can be a witness, but it must not get caught up in endless debate in church protocol. It must instead, do as Christ himself taught through his actions, just go and do it, no matter what the cost.

Who am I to talk of these matters? What are my qualifications? Not much. Hey, I was never a priest, only a wayward altar boy, who became a caring husband, father, and adult Christian.

Were we only dreaming, and is the search for the Kingdom only an illusion?

What is to be done? And what does a caring Christian do about a dysfunctional Church whose main concern seems to be in maintaining a previous status quo? Where is the leadership within the Roman Catholic Church? When has the Church engaged in matters that concern the average person of Faith? The only initiatives that have

come to light have been originated outside the control of the Roman Curia, and they are soon banned, hidden or discredited out of hand. Those who have attempted to speak out on those old "chestnuts" i.e. Celibacy, Women's ordination and responsible family planning have been threatened, silenced or excommunicated, often enough, later to find themselves reinstated, to the embarrassment of all concerned.

For me, the renewal will not come from within the Church, nor from its Hierarchy, but from writers, thinkers and theologians who have long since parted company with the Institutional Church. Try looking for something to read that will point the way out of the present state of trauma. You will most likely find it in the writings of resigned priests and teachers, theologians denied teaching privileges, or among the books written by philosophers, psychologists, Buddhists or other people of conviction, but almost never from within the authoritative Church.

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### After Thirty Years by Charlie Callanan, St. John's, NF

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**I**t has been thirty years now, since I was "reduced to the lay state". This event took place in 1972 during the Pontificate of Paul VI. The document from Rome was sent to Syracuse because I was studying at Syracuse University at the time. I was taking Communications, specifically, Television

and Radio. These were studies not particularly relevant for a cleric but had a practical value in the "world".

After ordination in 1961 I found the adjustment to the modern world to be difficult and confusing. I had spent seven years living in the 13th century both mentally -studies had changed little from the middle ages, physically pastoral setting and farm life, and spiritually this was just before Vatican II was called by John XXIII. The lifestyle of seminaries of those days was certainly healthy and wholesome but in no way was it a training for work among modern people.

In 1973, after living in Ontario (mostly Ottawa) for twenty years, I had the good fortune of being offered a job in Newfoundland (where I was born). The job was with Memorial University where I worked with the Extension Service and with the Educational Television Dept. for twenty three years as a film and video maker, an adult education specialist and a communications trainer.

In 1975 I married Pat, a wonderful woman who has always been "the wind beneath my wings" and we have two great boys who are now in their early twenties.

I believe that the attitudes of people about men who make a transition from the priesthood have changed greatly over the past thirty years.

In 1980 I was asked by a broadcaster friend of mine to appear on a local CBC television program called, "Dialogue". Knowing that this man was a thoughtful person and in no way a sensationalist, I agreed to go on the show. In 1980 it was a very novel thing for anyone to speak about leaving the priesthood in Newfoundland and the program drew a good audience. I felt the discussion was very sane and reasonable and the interviewer was very understanding and polite. As soon as I got home the phone started to ring. It rang continuously until eighteen calls had come in to me. All but one of these calls were in high approval of what I had said and the actions I had taken. What surprised me most was that all the people who phoned me were of my parents generation. They thanked me for the information and for sharing my story. These were people of the old school and I really did not anticipate this very positive response.

I now realize that when Church officials used the phrase "people are not ready yet" for this information, they had no idea what they were talking about. The faithful have always had a lot of common sense, given to them by the Spirit of God and they should never be underestimated. The so called conservative people who phoned me after the show suggested to me that the Church should have told them about the issue of leaving the priesthood long ago and not have treated them like children as per usual.

About a month later, realizing that the Church needed to be defended, a couple of the older priests got on the same CBC program and, in my mind, did more damage to themselves by not being prepared and really saying nothing. For my part I had said nothing about the Church that needed defending in the

first place. I had said that my departure from the ministry had nothing to do with theology or belief in the truths of Catholic Christianity but had everything to do with the current lifestyle of clerics who were expected to live unmarried, outside the family context as a separate caste of people. This lifestyle was in no way fixed in stone and had only been in operation for about half of the total years that the Church was in the world.

Shortly after I had returned from Syracuse to Newfoundland I wrote a letter to the then Archbishop, offering my services to the dioceses in any way that he saw fit. He sent me a very sincere letter, thanking me and saying that perhaps some time in the future some of these things could possibly come about, but for now, I really appreciated this response as he was being truthful and understanding.

Thirty years later, the laity hardly think twice about departures from the priesthood. They are most supportive to those of us who have gone through or are going through life transitions. They are ready to help with advice, material goods and moral support to those who have given a major portion of their lives to training for or active years in the priesthood.

I believe that the Catholic laity are no longer waiting for that time when new armies of young celibates will fill our seminaries because they know that this is not going to happen again. Not soon. Not ever.

In the meantime, who are we who have resigned? Are we to be a lost generation... a transition people? I think we are more a transition people, a twentieth century phenomena called upon to show that there are many unresolved problems with the priesthood. These problems will have to be solved if the Church is to go on with the work of Christ. Having piles of new priests appearing on the scene

may not be the solution at all.

Many things in the Church have changed. Why has the life of priests remained so inflexible? Why are church leaders so fearful to discuss the priesthood in relationship to the celibacy issue? In these times can you really "withdraw" certain things from discussion? Jesus never limited discussions on anything. He was ready to face anything.

Those of us who have left the active ministry are a part of church history.

In future times we will be looked upon as a large group of clerics who left the ministry in the latter half of the twentieth century, during an "unsettled" time in church history. But then has there ever been a settled time in church history?

For whatever reason, young men no longer seem to see much sense in serving Christ by living a life separate from the laity while following a celibate lifestyle. I was in the seminary in the fifties with one hundred young men from all over Canada, many of them among the smartest, most promising young men in the country. (I include Chris Diamond, Jim Noonan, Joe Gubbles and many others.) All the seminaries were filled in those days.

Today there are more lay men and lay women studying theology and ministry then there are male celibate seminarians. So, what does the future hold for ministry in the Roman Catholic Church? Clearly, the old models will not prevail or resurrect themselves. We are in for new models of ministry. "The old order passes, giving way to the new, and God fulfills Himself in many ways." These new ways are being painfully born right now.

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## Married Priests as Missionaries

*by Jack Shea, Ottawa, ON (Corpus NCR)*

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There is an exciting development in the Church today related to a new understanding of the concept of "mission", an insight that could have profound long-range effects on the present notion of ministry.

The theme chosen as the subject for treatment in this issue of the Journal suggests that it is time to reflect on the consequences of the Vatican Council's decision, back in 1965, to take the issue of a change in the celibacy requirement for the priesthood off the agenda. Some new work by theologians in the Church in Asia might just provide an opportunity for Catholic priests who are currently married to bring their expertise to the ministry, even though they are presently not permitted to function publicly as priests.

We are referring here to a new insight into the concept of the "kingdom of God" as a basic element in the notion of mission especially as it is being presented by certain theologians in Asia. Because the Church in Asia is but a small minority among several large non-Christian religions, the Catholic Church has been required to rethink its approach to evangelization and adapt the mandate of Christ "to teach all nations" to the situation of its contemporaries.

But first, let us take a brief look at the concept of the "kingdom of God" as we have traditionally understood it in the Catholic Church.

Until recently the expression has been synonymous with the Church. But an evolution in this understanding is taking place.

Although the expression "the kingdom of God" was used in several Vatican II documents, principally in the document on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), the Council distanced itself from an identification of the notion of the kingdom as synonymous with the Roman Catholic Church as had been expressed in the Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, authored by Pope Pius XII.

Later, in his Encyclical Letter entitled "Redemptoris Missio" Pope John Paul, especially in the second chapter of this document published in 1990, clearly separates the notion of the kingdom from the Church, but shows that in Jesus Christ the kingdom is made present: "The proclamation and establishment of God's kingdom are the purpose of his mission ... but that is not all. Jesus himself is the Good News. ... the kingdom of God is at hand ... it is destined for all humankind"

Finally, in a document entitled "Evangelization in Asia", published in 1991, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Office for Evangelization states that the Reign of God is a universal reality, extending far beyond the boundaries of the Church. It is the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ, in which

Christians and others share together. They say "The Kingdom of God is therefore universally present and at work. Wherever men and women open themselves to the transcendent Divine Mystery which impinges upon them, and go out of themselves in love and service of fellow humans, there the Reign of God is at work ... Where God is accepted, where the Gospel values are lived, where the human being is respected ... there is the Kingdom".

Now, returning to our earlier reference to the meaning of mission there is some interesting writing being done on the subject by a theologian in Washington. He is Peter C. Phan, born in Vietnam and presently teaching at the Catholic University of America as well as serving as the current President of the Catholic Theology Society of America. He maintains that the present understanding of mission should be corrected. In fact he would have us reverse the notion of Church and reign of God.

Phan's theory is contained in a recent article entitled "Proclamation of the Reign of God as Mission of the Church: What for, to Whom, by Whom, with Whom, and How?" The full text of this remarkable article may be found on the internet at:

<http://sedos.org/english/phan.htm>. According to the author the historic notion of mission is that of saving souls by preaching to the pagans by missionary priests from our western countries, baptizing these persons and making them members of the Church.

It now appears that this traditional approach to evangelization is no longer relevant. With the end of colonialism, the political and social independence of developing countries and, in general, the massive rejection of traditional systems of belief in the post-modern world the former mission approach is no longer welcome.

Phan proposes that a new theology of mission must examine the relations between the four key terms, proclamation, reign of God, church and mission in a radically different way. According to him the old theology prioritizes these four realities in their descending order of importance: church, proclamation, mission and reign of God. The new way prioritizes them in just the opposite order: viz, reign of God, mission, proclamation and church. All the elements remain but the emphasis has changed.

Through the recent insights of biblical research we have come to realize that the reign of God was central in Jesus' ministry. It is the heart of his preaching: "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news". (Mk 1: 15).

His miraculous deeds are signs that the kingdom of God that he was announcing has arrived. This kingdom is said to be of God because its arrival signals the gracious, forgiving, and redeeming presence of Yahweh in the world, and it is not the fruit of human efforts. This kingdom is open to all, and all are invited to enter into it. (Lk 4:18).

Once again we read in *Redemptoris Missio* that liberation and salvation are brought by the Kingdom of God to human persons both in their physical and spiritual dimensions. "The kingdom aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another". The Encyclical continues: "The Kingdom is the concern of everyone: individuals, society, and the world. Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the Kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the

Kingdom of God is the manifestation and realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness." (15)

The meaning of the Kingdom is summarized succinctly in the Liturgy. We read in the Preface for the Mass on the Feast of Christ the King that this kingdom is one of "justice, love and peace".

So, what does this new appreciation of the importance of the teaching on the Kingdom of God and its new emphasis in the understanding of mission mean for a generation of married priests? To answer this question it would be fair to describe our present modern secular culture as a new type of missionary territory. Large numbers of our contemporaries have either rejected, or are disillusioned with, the Church or have no interest in formal religion. This is especially true of the younger generation, although there is an increasing interest among them in "spirituality".

It is our proposition that married priests are already engaged in this new type of priestly ministry and are especially adapted for it, for three reasons: location, training and motivation.

Married priests live with other people and share the same conditions of life. They are not monks but, rather, participate in the marriage partnership and family life. They work as academics, teachers, public servants and professionals. They are involved in the operation of the criminal justice system and serve as parole officers. They participate in voluntary organizations for the benefit of local charities or international development. They engage in debates with others on questions of genetic engineering and new kinds of questions about medical ethics. They live among others. Secondly, married priests have had many years of special training that equip them to share their theological insights, provide counselling and draw from the vast storehouse of the Church's social teaching as it applies to the social problems of our day. They continue their life of daily prayer and reading of spiritual authors and know how to apply the lessons of the gospel to the often painful problems of life in the city.

Finally, these men have the motivation that is needed for the long haul. Marriage with its joys and sorrows has contributed to their personal maturity and happiness. Above all this new condition has not taken away their deep love for Christ and his captivating appeal to human nature. They are ready and willing to share this passion with others.

In conclusion, there is a most interesting statement in one of the lesser-known documents from the Second Vatican Council that can further illuminate the subject under discussion, that is, the power and importance of the notion of the Kingdom of God in our midst. The reference is to the Council's Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*). The document reminds the missionary that he or she should be joined to those persons with whom they live with esteem and love. It encourages them to share in the cultural and social life of these persons by various exchanges and enterprises of human living. It continues: "Let them be familiar with their national and religious traditions, gladly and reverently laying bare the seeds of the Word which lie hidden in them ... but at the same time, let them try to illumine these treasures with the light of the gospel, to set them free, and to bring

them under the dominion of God their Saviour" (11)

Here, then, is the challenge that is offered to married priests, to accept the vision of a new apostolate by becoming missionaries in the kingdom that is unfolding among us.

"And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground ..... but when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mk 4:26).

### On The Lighter Side

A mother mouse and a baby mouse are walking along, when all of a sudden, a cat attacks them.

The mother mouse goes, "BARK!" and the cat runs away.

"See?" says the mother mouse to her baby. "Now do you see why it's important to be bilingual?"

## Much Obligated!

by Dan Driscoll, Goa, India



Germana & Dan Driscoll

It took me years to find Corpus Canada and when I did I was very pleasantly surprised to find two old partners, Jim Noonan and Chris Diamond. I am sending the following paragraphs now without any further tinkering even if pretty rambling and wordy.

I 'returned to lay status' (whether by reduction or promotion I know not', God knoweth), now more than thirty years ago. My whole 'ministerial life' can be summed up--five years teaching senior secondary classes at St. Pat's in Ottawa, and five more at Jasper Place; three baptisms, three burials, and one marriage other than my own. What I have to say may need some piecing together to make any sense, but perhaps something can be distilled from it.

I have been much intrigued with the exchange between Chris, Jim, Francois Brassard, and Phil Little re: 'MP participation in Parish affairs and practice--Parish Coordinators' and I was equally impressed by printed contributions in *The Journal* (2001) by M.Zarb, F.Brassard, J. Noonan, H. Vogles and A. Menu. High caliber stuff! Makes more sense now than in Ottawa Scholasticate days when, couched in the Latin language, it went right over, under, or straight through, my head.

But in the reading of *The Journal*, I kept feeling that I was missing out on something, and I wasn't able to get things perfectly straight via the Web site because of vision difficulty. Now, as of a week back, I got delivery by post (overseas post can be quirky at

times), with the great piece by Chris, 'analogy of the upholstered chair' (Chris always was a pretty good teacher); then the 'leadership' article by Art Menu, and Ruth Irving's 'Agape', and Dr. Zarb, who surely looks every inch the scriptural scholar, with his contributions on overseer, elder, and diakonia.

It is all a great read leaving me with a lot to think about. As I review my own intuitive wavering over the years, the only serious intention about 'service and participation' I can remember having was the thought of getting employment as the caretaker of a fine old church--one of any X'ian denomination, I guess, but with lots of that heavily varnished Canadian pine/fir woodwork; thus to qualify as 'servant of the servants of God' and incidentally gain rest for my feverish, Federal Civil Service tortured soul. As regards any continuance of 'ecclesial status' I regarded my dispensation as 'statutory closure' to that epoch of my life. I may not have wanted it precisely that way, but I am something of a fatalist. "Order of Melchizedek", 'indelible mark' {as per Butler's Catechism, etc.}---no longer in contention; 'strike three, and you're out; it's over when it's over.' I preferred, as my own spin doctor, to think of myself as 'returned' rather than 'reduced' to the lay state'.

When it comes to ritual and devotional practice, in public, local-circle, or personal guise, I do sometimes wonder if the Lord of All really needs as much of it as has been an assumption of our culture over past generations. Perhaps 'the Church as we know it should simply be let 'die on the vine', with most 'practicing Christians' observing a generation or so of 'The Grand Silence' while the ever evolving syntheses of world religious cultures, accelerated by new applications of communications technology, go on with a process of substitution & replacement--'the times they are a' changin'.

As for the vine itself I do think of it as 'a living vine' which will not, cannot, die & which seemingly dies only to live again, over eons of cultural time in "the Garden of God." I tend to think of this more by way of 'The resurrection' than 'the empty tomb'.

Thus it's possible that my little janitor job might have served a valid enough purpose: simply to preserve for the contemplation and edification of future generations some tangible elements of a great cultural history (Faith of our Fathers, Holy Faith) now on the list of endangered species though I tend not to think of any species, cultural or otherwise, as ever being really 'endangered'; sap in the vine just tends to ebb and flow.

The janitor job could amount I suppose to little more than my being keeper of a museum, but that might be enough; honest day's work for an honest day's pay. When the Sunday hordes come they

will have a nice clean place for their 'rituals'; which in no way should be denied them, but it is not for me to 'teach them to pray'; I might better be over at the Community C'tr (more like 'the magnetic pole of the emergent Christian community) where someone might be needed to sweep up after the Saturday night dance, as I used to do when I was a reverend teacher and compulsive 'youth organizer' in the High Schools.

Neither would I be completely neglectful of 'prayer': "Lord, let not there be too much spilled coke, scattered potato chips, ketchup on the drapes. Thank you Lord". Very private, personal, internal stuff, almost synonymous with one's breathing; perhaps my Hindu friends and neighbors here are onto something about how we should pray.

However, in agreement with Francois Brassard and Ruth Irving, I'm inclined to think that we will see more of the 'agape-type gathering', whereby people come 'to gather together in His Name'. They may indeed choose for themselves a leader, perhaps even an M.P. (I don't like the *word* and wish we could find a better one; it looks and sounds too much like other types of M.P.!), but with the least accent on deliberation just about any lady, gent or child would do to serve as leader, for that occasion, and most likely for that occasion only; unless of course one or another proves to be especially good at it, in which case the lot might fall again and again, and new things begin to happen; but as my mother used to say, "That's a horse of another color".

So much for 'parish coordination'. There may certainly be a place for it, but let no one given the prayer-leader role indulge in a hankering for things much beyond that, shortage of priests or no; with the mystical powers priests and bishops have enshrouded and enrobed themselves one might not be surprised if just three or four could do for an average sized city; once 'shortage of priests' becomes an issue there can never be enough. Here, where I am in Goa, the old Portuguese culture had practically every well-off citizen building his own chapel, so he could have a comfortable little walk for Mass, daily if you please; and perhaps Father could lead in evening rosary as well. So, you may be sure, things indeed have changed. Let Spirit shine like lightning, from the East even unto the West; 'so shall the coming of the Lord be'. What is probably needed is more *takers* than *givers*, when it comes to blazing trails for direction and flow of the Spirit.

When it comes to organization and institutionalization, let us or those who come after us 'see what the future holds'. As it is I don't even feel very comfortable with a 'block devotional group' – "small faith community", either for organization of it or attendance at it, and I'm not about to feel that this is a form of even mild apostasy. In fact I feel much less comfortable with that than with my old 'churchianity habit' which for some reason still dictates that I be off to my local chapel for 'Sunday Mass' whether I feel much like it or not. I call it "standing up with the Community"--'least I can do'; but it's more likely plain old 'conditioning'; from when my mother used to say, "Do WHAT you're told WHEN you're told, and we were told to go to church on Sunday. Perhaps many of us would all be better off waging a 'sunday jihad' against local filth and garbage bags.

I do like the trend whereby natural human events, of family, local community, even National rejoicing, mourning, or whatever, dictate our getting together for group expression of spiritual need, and

perhaps more appropriately in one another's homes than in a church. Babies are born, grandpas and grannies get sick or die, individuals become depressed; then families, friends and neighbors, even one or other from the wayside perhaps, may come together; and I have a feeling that selection of 'a presider' in such cases will be very intuitive on the part of the whole group. When the real need is there, the right person will emerge.

Other than that why not simply get together for a social purpose, to meet our friends, let the children play, to sit down for a nice meal. The Eucharist probably grew out of that anyway, so we need only to say thanks without too much by way of ritualistic fuss lest we are again tempted to sermonizing and devotional cant. A piece in the local paper recently was contributed by one who had just come out of hospital. One day he waited so long for the nurse to come that he wandered through the corridors to see where everyone was. He found them in the hospital foyer having 'a prayer meeting'. I have a feeling from reading Chris Diamond that he is leading in a good way when he agrees to celebrate 'with anyone who asks and is a believer'. 'I am vaguely tempted to ask, "Believer in what?", but I think that he may mean pretty much ANYONE who asks; proof of believing is in the asking? On the other hand I might not even ask; am I a believer or not? My notion would be that there is perhaps no one on the face of the earth who is not in the final analysis 'a believer'; believer in the whole of material creation as shot-through with Spirit Light; and this must be the foundation of all sacramental belief and practice in whatever cultural milieu it may be found.

Perhaps I'm a little tired, though hopefully not too cynical, but I cannot be fully at ease when at beginning of the meal everyone must join hands around the table, and someone begins to make a little speech with 'thanks to the Lord' for so many things; the list of course can be completely 'inexhaustable', and sometimes there can be danger of a 'back to the pulpit hour'. I think of that great old fellow in The Beverly Hillbillies: who at beginning of mealtime would look up, wave his hand to embrace everything and everyone including the whole world itself, and say quite matter of factly, "for what we are about to receive, much obliged."

"New institutions may indeed become necessary for meeting with new conditions, just as was the case in the past. Is it not likely that the institutional creations of the early Church HAD to happen, if there was not to be a proliferation of cult kinds of activity in times when 'religion' seemed to border on obsession and fanaticism. Here is where I begin to fall back more on 'separation of church and state. There surely must be regulatory process, but is the state authority not as well able to manage it without another vast regulatory institution as well. The tragedy may have been that purely human (and perhaps at times something even a bit less-than-human) ambition prevailed in many of the earlier institutional creations. Holy Roman Empire, (neither Holy, Roman nor Empire) and to top it all the pretensions of 'the sainted' Pius IX. Would all this and more be thought of in the reference Phil Little makes to "something very wrong". But, this too shall pass.

"And he who sat upon the Throne said, "Behold, I make all things New".

"Amen. Come Lord Jesus."

# Theological Soapbox

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



## Making Sense of the Bible (Part II)

In my previous Theological Soapbox I described the historical-critical method of Biblical exegesis. The goal of this method is to discover the literal meaning of Scripture, where literal is defined as the meaning that the human author of the Biblical passage intended. It is

not to be confused with literal as some fundamentalist Christians use this term, by which they indicate an interpretation which requires that descriptive Biblical passages be read as accounts of historical fact. For example, they would interpret the story in Genesis of the first man and woman as a description of historical events.

An exegete following the historical-critical method would interpret Genesis differently. The exegete would say that the authors of this passage did not think as we moderns do. We distinguish between an event and the meaning of the event. We consider the event to be caused by previous events. Both events and the causal process can be described scientifically. They exist outside of us. However, it is we who give an event its meaning. Unlike the event itself, which is the product of previous historical events, the meaning we give an event is the result of a social process of interpretation. The physical properties of the event are fixed in space and time, its meaning is variable, a product of the human mind.

The ancient Biblical authors did not separate an event from its meaning; in fact, they viewed the meaning of an event as the most important thing about the event. The authors of the first two chapters of Genesis were concerned with the meaning, not just of one event, but with the meaning of human life as the People of Israel experienced it. The authors conceptualized this meaning in the form of a story about God. This story is a myth. The events of this story do not exist in historical time. The story unfolds in the realm of meaning, outside the cause-and-effect sequence of historical events. It describes how the authors and their People experience their life and their relationship to their God.

The historical-critical exegete, being familiar with the genre of myth, asks, What meaning for human life, as they experienced it, did the authors of these passages intend to convey?

Exegesis by the historical-critical method has proved immensely illuminating over the past two centuries. The meanings intended by the Biblical authors are rich in spiritual truth. Taking mythical and poetic Biblical passages as historical accounts puts them into a straitjacket because we then limit their meaning to what we consider to be historically possible. When they are liberated to be myth and poetry, they can speak to us of the larger context in which history takes place. They bring us into the realm of God.

At the same time, if we limit the meaning of Biblical passages to what their authors intended, we may be shutting out other meanings that are equally or perhaps more important than what the authors intended. To see this we have to look closely at how Scripture is divinely inspired. We hold that Scripture is inspired by God. How does God inspire a

Biblical author? Does he put words into the authors head? Does he dictate the text? Some people think so, but I think not. I take for my model of divine inspiration the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child in her womb, the prophet we know as John the Baptist, leaped for joy. This was John's first prophecy. The child sensed, through the sound of Mary's voice, the presence of God. His leap was a prophetic symbol, interpreted correctly by Elizabeth, that the Lord was present in Mary's womb.

Did God say to the baby John, I (or my Son, or the Messiah) am now present in the world, causing the baby to leap. That clearly is nonsense. The unborn child was incapable of understanding any kind of communication in words or concepts. The Holy Spirit was in John in such a way that at the sound of Mary's voice, John's body felt the presence of God. But had he not heard the sound of Mary's voice, the baby would have not felt the presence of God.

The gift of inspiration, then, was not the sound of Mary's voice, but the recognition that the sound held the presence of God. The sound had to be heard by natural means. The recognition of what the sound contained came by inspiration.

In the same way, God does not give words to prophets. Prophets hear the words of others, or think up words on their own, as they try to understand what God is doing in the world. This trying to understand is hard work. But when the prophet finally hears or speaks words that are true, something within the prophet leaps for joy. The prophet recognizes that the words are true. Grace builds on nature. Inspiration confirms an understanding that has been arrived at by natural means.

So the prophet speaks, but that is only half the story. The prophecy only succeeds when the hearer recognizes that the words are true. And this recognition is also inspired. But has the hearer understood what the prophet has understood? Do the words mean the same to the hearer as to the prophet?

It is my view, and that of many before me, that the hearer of inspired words may interpret the words differently from their author and still by divine inspiration recognize the truth of the words *as he, the hearer, understands them*.

An example of this is how the Gospel of Matthew interprets the prophecy of Isaiah: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means, God with us (Mt 1:23). (In the original Hebrew text, it is a young woman, not a virgin that gives birth.) Isaiah's prophecy concerned the birth of a child in the prophets own time, hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. That is what his prophecy meant to him and that is what he intended to say. And this message was true. Matthew, on the other hand, hears in Isaiah's words a prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus. This is what Matthew understands. It is not what Isaiah intended. Nevertheless, Matthew is inspired to recognize the truth of the meaning he gives to Isaiah's words.

Had Matthew limited himself to interpreting the Bible only by means of the historical-critical method, he would have closed himself off from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which enabled him to recognize a greater truth than what Isaiah intended to say

## Theological Soapbox Continued...

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about a child born in Isaiah's time.

What if we were to approach Biblical passages the way literary critics approach a work of literature? For the critic, what the work means may be much more than what the author may have intended it to mean. The work is something which, once written, has its own separate existence apart from the writer. Because the work is made up of language, and language is inherently ambiguous, the work contains a multiplicity of meanings (some of which may contradict one another). Some of those meanings may be far more profound or beautiful than what the writer intended. If the works of Shakespeare, for example, could only mean what Shakespeare intended them to mean, we would have become bored with them very quickly. But as it is, each generation can find in the words of Shakespeare meanings and truth that Shakespeare himself never dreamed of.

What then of Scripture? We are not concerned with all the meanings it contains as an artifact of language. We are concerned with those meanings that communicate truths which God wishes to reveal. It is possible for the Holy Spirit to inspire in us John the Baptist-like recognition of the truth expressed by one or more of the many meanings the text contains. This would seem to be a good thing, and I cannot think of a reason why the Holy Spirit would not do so.

It is true that we avoid a danger if we accept only the meaning intended by the Biblical author, for then we cannot be misled by other, possibly false meanings the text may contain. For example, we can say to people who use the Book of Revelation to label some contemporary person or institution as the Whore of Babylon "Your interpretation is unacceptable" because we can show that this is not what the author of the book intended.

Yes, there is danger in allowing the wider scope of interpretation, but it is mitigated by controls. There is the text itself. While a passage may be inherently ambiguous, there is an infinitude of meanings it does not permit. If the passage of Isaiah quoted by Matthew had originally read "A prostitute shall conceive and bear a son" the interpretation "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son" would have been impossible.

Secondly there is the control that passages maintain internal consistency. If the original Isaiah had read "A young woman shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel" and in the next verse added "This shall be her second-born" once again the interpretation "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son" would have been impossible.

Finally there is the control of the *sensus fidelium* (what is believed in faith by the entire body of the faithful). One person's interpretation cannot be inspired if the People of God reject it. For the Spirit that inspires the individual is the same Spirit that inspires the Church.

With these controls in place, we can invite readers of the Bible to share with us a meaning contained in a text that they believe is a true interpretation inspired by the Holy Spirit, even if it is different from the meaning intended by the Biblical author. This makes the Bible an inexhaustible source of truth for every generation that seeks in the Bible guidance for the circumstances of their times. Many, perhaps most, claims of inspiration will turn out to be unfounded. But those interpretations which truly are inspired, which are in time confirmed by the *sensus fidelium*, will be invaluable to the People of God.

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## THIS & THAT

by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC

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Since the early '60s and especially under the present pope, the hierarchy has done its best to nullify the presence of resigned priests in the institutional church. It set up rules designed to exile us from the church, lest we be a "scandal to the faithful." Their effort was made difficult by the fact that Canon Law recognizes that we remain priests and that in emergency circumstances we may/must provide the sacraments to the

faithful who request them. That's Canon Law's way of saying that no

one can deny God's call, unless it be the one called. So, instead, by Vatican indult, we have been removed from the ranks of the clergy with all its perks and privileges and we have been reduced to the lay state. These arbitrary rules are not found in Canon Law. Actually, they make the resigned priest less equal than other ordinary lay persons, because they deny us the right to be a Reader, Eucharistic minister or Homilist, or be a religion teacher or administrator of a Catholic school. They even tell us where we may not live. In short, these rules were designed to destroy whatever credibility or influence we might have had as active priests due to our position or the exercise of our pastoral ministry. By these rules and, sometimes, by public and/or private remarks, we were made to feel guilty. We were, as one recent pope said, "Judas priests."

These tactics have been successfully used by many bishops, including the present bishop of Rome. Indeed, most resigned priests either left the institutional Church or continued to attend a parish where they kept their background hidden from everyone, including, quite often, their own children. But others have not gone quietly into the dark night of exile. They have remained true to God's call despite the efforts of the hierarchy to demean and isolate them. They have countered the isolation by creating associations of

## *This & That Continued...*

resigned priests in more than 25 countries of the world. The main function of these groups is to exercise a ministry of hospitality and support. Most of these groups began publishing newsletters in support of resigned priests and the Church reforms that they advocate. As a result of these efforts, more resigned priests have come out of the closet, and with greater self-esteem and a more profound appreciation of their God-given call, they have become true priests of Christ—true witnesses to the divine presence among us. This they do by proclaiming the Gospel message in many different ways both inside and outside the institutional Church.

Some resigned priests have continued to exercise privately a sacramental ministry either independently or through organizations like CITI, Inc. (Celibacy Is The Issue). Many other resigned priests have gotten involved in a wide variety of social justice ministries either through their professional work or through local and international organizations, religious or secular. Others have had tremendous influence as prophets of church renewal. You have seen the names of many of them in the pages of *The Journal*: Gregory Baum, Anthony Padovano, Terry Dosh, Paul Collins, Eugene Kennedy, Michael Farrell, Daniel Berrigan, John Shea, David Gawlik, John Shuster, Tom McMahan, Heinz Vogels, and the many members of Corpus Canada who have been featured in these pages.

At first, the bishops merely ignored us. But as we began to make waves, to seek long overdue changes, they sought to dismiss us as over-indulgent whiners and complainers. It has been to no avail, for we have matured and we have stayed the course.

Now you will have noticed that I haven't as yet mentioned women, whether they be the wives of married priests or former members of religious communities or both as one in the same (in the early years 60% of the resigned priests married nuns). That's because up to this point I have been concerned with the efforts of the hierarchy to silence or discredit those they deemed a serious threat to the clerical system and over whom they had more power to control. They didn't feel it necessary to be concerned about women, since they haven't any real power in the institutional church anyway. Or so they thought. That was a big mistake that the Vatican has recently begun to rectify by taking women's ordination off the table of discussion, requiring theologians to be licensed, silencing and/or defrocking troublesome nuns. Did they not

see the writing on the wall, when, after the Second Vatican Council, many religious communities of women made the enlightened decision to send their talented candidates to universities in the pursuit of graduate degrees in many fields but especially in the various branches of theology? Did they not expect these bright, talented women would expose the self-serving scriptural and historical interpretations that have made women second class citizens in the institutional church? It would appear that they have woefully underestimated the power of the feminist revolution. Indeed, these women, whether they have left their religious communities or not, are making an enormous contribution to the church renewal movement. The numbers speak for themselves. In the last 30 years the number of lay persons seeking graduate degrees in divinity and those working in parish ministry have increased fourfold, and 85% of them are women. As an aside, it is significant to note the considerable presence of married priests working cooperatively with women in church renewal organizations where women and/or women's issues predominate.

The tide has turned for all those prophets, men and women, working for church renewal. The priest shortage, clergy abuse cases and the "Chittister Affair" (WOW Conference in Dublin last July) have opened the minds and warmed the hearts of most Catholics to the need for sweeping changes. We are no longer in exile. In fact, we are in the forefront of the "future church."

We continue to listen carefully to the Spirit and, like Jesus, we proclaim a prophetic message to everyone, whether within the institutional church or outside it. We are building God's Global Community just as Jesus taught us. One need only read the signs of the times to see that the "Temple" church of the hierarchy, like the one in Jerusalem in 70 CE or like the one built under Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is tumbling, stone by stone. Unfortunately, the roles are now reversed as too many bishops have chosen to live in self-imposed exile on the "Titanic" barque of Peter steaming along on automatic pilot on a collision course with disaster. I sincerely pray that they will listen to the Holy Spirit, soften their hearts, and become the captains of the Ship God chose them to be.

### *Time To Move On*

Dear Friends,

I wish to end my time on the editorial board. For years my love and passion for Corpus Canada has been strong and, I feel, devoted. This might be a good time to add one or two new people to the team. I would like to see Grant and Colleen have bylines as coordinators in every issue. This may be some of the only contact, if I can say it that way, that readers will have with the leaders. I think leadership is important in this way.

I will always be involved through Fran, but presently, my jobs, my fictional writing, my art work, my grandkids, my mid-island groups and my generally large, but aging family (oldest sister is 87) are my energy foci. And have I mentioned my garden and green house?

Thanks for having me, Connie



# A Suggestion For Liturgical Celebrations

by Richard Haughian, Ottawa, ON (Corpus NCR)

Every month our local Corpus community gathers for a liturgical celebration. Corpus members take turns hosting these celebrations and take responsibility for preparing the liturgies. Prayer is followed by a wonderful potluck dinner, wine and socializing. After December's celebration at Jim and Norma's home, I had a few reflections that I think would enhance our prayer time together. I would like to share these with you and welcome your comments.

At our liturgical celebrations, after the scripture readings, the host usually offers a few introductory reflections on the scripture, and then invites others to share their reflections or insights. My observation is that, although the host begins with a thoughtful reflection on the scripture passages, very quickly the sharing leaves the scripture behind and enters into a discussion of various topics and issues, some of them quite predictable. During this discussion, some comments express a personal reflection, perhaps related to the scripture or the liturgical season; other comments respond to what someone else has said, which, in turn, invites another response, discussion or disagreement.

Although I appreciate hearing comments or discussion on particular topics of interest, I often feel confused as to the type of group we want to be and how we are to participate. I don't know if we are having a group scripture reflection - sharing what the Word is speaking to us that day; or a discussion group on current issues and favourite topics. I think that there is an important difference between these two types of groups - the dynamics and interaction can be very different. With the scripture reflection there is an emphasis on

listening to the scripture in a prayerful manner, sharing what we have heard and understood, and seeking a deeper insight into the scripture and how it is speaking to us personally. This, of course, may lead to a reflection on current issues or topics, but the prayerful context and scripture focus are not lost. A discussion group, on the other hand, is often more intellectual, encourages interaction, response, disagreement, and the development of particular topics or themes.

My preference is that the dialogue at liturgical celebrations be a reflection on scripture rather than a discussion group. There is a richness in scripture and a wealth of prayerful experience in our group that, I feel, need to be tapped. I know that I would welcome a more focused engagement around the scripture of the day and the way it is speaking to each of us. Such a focus could enrich our lives and transform us individually and as a group united in the Lord:

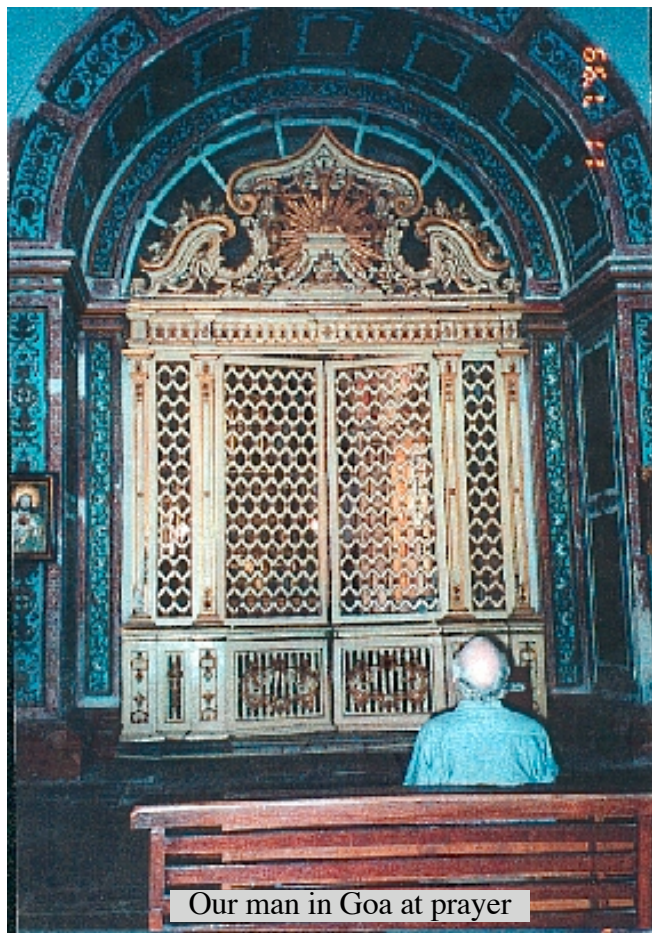
For the word of God is living and active,  
sharper than any two-edged sword,  
piercing to the division of soul and spirit,  
of joints and marrow,  
and discerning the thoughts and intentions  
of the heart.

(Heb. 4:12)

*What do you think?*

*Celebrating the 25 Anniversary  
of the ordination of women  
On St. Andrew's Day, 1976, the  
Anglican Church of Canada  
ordained its first women priests.*

*The priest is the teacher of  
prayer... in this context, I  
exhort all priests to carry out  
with confidence and courage  
their duty of guiding the  
community to authentic  
Christian prayer. This is a duty  
which no priest may ever  
forsake... John Paul II March  
14, 1999 Letter to Priests*



Our man in Goa at prayer



Three thought patterns have locked into position as I take my daily health walk among trees and around a lake. One is from the JOURNAL, Corpus Canada's yellow page report on our brother married priests up North, the second WEORC, Chicago's Marty Hegarty's brain child that helps priests and sisters in transition, the third the reform silence among my peer married priests in California. The first two blend well and the last is a sore thumb; Terry Dosh at one time had a thriving group of married priests in Santa Clara

County. I need be cautious for lack of communication among us Westerners has complicated reform to a point where no one knows where the other stands. I read with pleasure the vitality of the Canadians as they pioneer ahead and am envious of that Chicago bunch who holds days of recollection and renewal retreats.

I had a birthday e-mail from classmate Frank Maurovich, now with Maryknoll Magazine, reminding me of a basketball game in 1940, in which he recalls me bouncing the ball so hard in anger that it hit the ceiling; boys who grow up without a father often have fierce tempers, a psychological tool that covers over sorrow and painful loss. My having sought father figures in bishops and clergy was my biggest mistake; fathering two sons, now young men themselves, has helped me to grow up and manage my hostility.

Angry today? Yes, at the silence of the hierarchy as the people continue to suffer, poorly educated and the bishops taking a war-only-stand in spite of Bishop Tom Gumbleton's plea to follow the path of Jesus.

Angry at my local married priest peers? Perhaps, yet more mystified that these very men who broke from the apron strings of Holy Mother Church remain silent as our institutionally active brothers carry enormous burdens because the bishops are so cowardly. I often think of my class mates who now in their seventies bolster the sagging numbers of mass priest clergy 2001. I am interested in their health and morale. They are treated like pack animals not like human beings.

Now to these Canadians and my envy at being a twelve year seminary man who put in twenty six ordained institutional years, I reflect with awe on their spirituality. Men and their wives with one foot in the old world of pre-Vatican Two and the other in space age spirituality they shine forth from the pages of the JOURNAL as never having lost their love of God and people: service is their game. I just posted to Fintan Kilbride in Toronto recalling my meeting this Irishman in New York years ago; the Kilbride family volunteered to go into Eskimo country when the local chiefs requested the Roman church to vacate the pedophile priests, leaving the rural parishes without pastors (maybe for the best). To name just a few, the reflections of Arthur Menu, François Brassard, and Chris Diamond (their wives too should be mentioned) give me ample spiritual food

for thought on my long train trips to a cancer study. The spirit of these Canadian Corpus priests pours out of the pages of their JOURNAL; I am aware the fervor of their ordination day is alive, channeled now by Vatican Two into the direction of the modern world. In my California loneliness I am envious.

I read with intensity the simple four pages of WEORC. I'll never forget meeting Marty outside the Notre Dame football stadium, along with Tim Unsworth; we were to meet and here we were standing ten feet from each other, not knowing who the other was at first. With the number of old timers either having left ministry already and/or the field of men and women needing help and jobs in transition from "religious life" having dried up (today's seminarian and priest who leaves after ordination is a new breed of cat, often already into a second career before coming to seminary) the direction of WEORC is changing; the emphasis seems to be, e.g., helping out an orphanage in Sri Lanka run by a married priest couple. They also bring to our attention Dave Corcoran, incarcerated for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience; Marty speaks of Dave's ministry to the inmates and the support help offered to Dave's family. I have a great deal of admiration for these men who continue to follow the way of Jesus. Rome would deny David is doing ministry.

Throughout these paragraphs there is a brotherhood theme that harkens me back to seminary days; my first Christian community was my San Francisco family of the 1930's, followed in the 40's by what I now call the Marine Corps of the Roman Church, twelve years of unquestioning seminary "yes, sir/Father" and constant nose to the grindstone; I survived because of my brotherhood community which exists today in some of the greatest fellows I have ever known. I have been blessed with membership in the Menlo Men of 54, a pre Vatican Two class, that is heavily supplied with humor, humbleness, love of people and God; we are one of the few classes of St. Patrick's seminary, Menlo Park, Ca. who have always made welcome our married brothers at reunions and celebrations. The funerals of our deceased are glorious celebrations of life. We mourn 13 of an original 33.

I imagine the men of Canada, Chicago, Menlo Park often ask that old question so frequently encountered in pre-ordination days - QUO VADIS, DOMINE? Little did we realize in those days around World War Two that we would, in the age of space, travel in so many diverse directions. The spirit seems to have little regard for the Roman rule book and each has followed the mystery of his call. Brotherhood and community had woven their way into our early lives, so too human kindness, service, and an ancient boyhood dedication that still rings true in these men who once offered to God their Dominus Pars "The Lord is my portion and my lot." I can hear it, see it, feel it, ever alive as they work the crowds in a thousand different places and worldly pulpits. LaCordaire said it well when he prayed out what a glorious life this Jesus priesthood is all about.

In tribute to men who have followed their diverse calling and have not given up the cause of Christ, whether in parish or home, orphanage or prison, among the rich and the poor, among women and men and children & ah the mystery of it all! Our God has great humor! And to you all "ad multos annos!" and good health.

# Why Not Be a Mystic? by Frank X. Tuoti

review by Jim Noonan, Stittsville, ON (Corpus NCR)

Frank X. Tuoti has written a book that makes the subject of mysticism understandable and accessible to all Christians. It is a book that speaks to modern men and women in a language we can all appreciate and with examples we can all relate to. It covers the central questions and theology of mysticism in short chapters that can be read separately or in the context of the whole book. And it makes us all respond, "Why not?" to the question posed by the title of the book. Tuoti is a former Trappist who lived and studied with Thomas Merton in the Abbey of Gethsemani, and now lives in the Sonoran desert on the outskirts of Tucson, Arizona with his artist-wife Gale. There he teaches Centering Prayer and gives retreats on Christian mysticism and the spirituality of the Desert and Eastern Church Fathers. His life after Gethsemani shows us what Merton might have done had he left the monastery to marry M.

While Tuoti draws on and quotes liberally from modern writers on mysticism such as Merton, George Maloney (who also wrote the Introduction to the book), Bede Griffiths, Karl Rahner, and Evelyn Underhill, he is also steeped in the classic literature on mysticism of John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Meister Eckhart. And he finds the inspiration for all mystical experience in the Christian Scriptures.

The heart of the book is his insistence on the fact that the mystical experience is not just for those who have entered monasteries or convents, but for all Christians. In fact, he insists, monasteries and convents can sometimes be obstacles to true mysticism. The seed of mysticism is nourished by the water of baptism, and if it does not grow throughout the course of a person's life, that life will not reach

its full potential.

Tuoti quotes from several mystical writers to make his case. While Merton's many published writings are the most quoted source throughout the book, the gem of Merton quotations is Chapter 32, which contains all his counsels or "pensees" from a late manuscript *The Inner Experience*, which has never been published in book form. One of those gems for married people reads: "The union of man and wife in nuptial love is a sacred and symbolic act, the very nature of which signifies the mystery of the union of God and man in Christ. This mystery is the very heart of contemplation" (p. 164).

Karl Rahner, whom Tuoti calls "the Mystical Doctor of the twentieth century", is quoted as saying, "Mysticism occurs within the framework of normal graces...[and is] not confined to a privileged few" (p. 23). And in a very practical statement, Evelyn Underhill - the Anglican mystic of the early part of the twentieth century - says, "It has always been the mystics who have revitalized the Church. Mysticism will flourish when enough people desire it." To which Tuoti adds his Amen: "Nothing could be more salutary for the Church than to be bulging with mystics!" (p. 22).

This book is relevant for everyone in Corpus Canada, and for all Christians involved in the heavy challenge of putting their ideals and aspirations for a renewed Church into action. It reminds us that beneath our efforts to bring about change in the Church must lie a life united to God in the most intimate way possible.

## **ATTENTION**

### **International Recipients Of The Journal**

On January 14, 2002 Canada Post raised the surface rate for international recipients of printed papers from \$1.00 to \$1.75cdn. In view of this dramatic increase, we are asking our international subscribers with computers capable of downloading their copy from the Corpus Canada web site to forego receiving the printed copy. That's what Bill Welsh in Australia did. If you can do this, please inform Arthur Menu at his e-mail address: [amenu@islandnet.com](mailto:amenu@islandnet.com) Much appreciated!

In the meantime, you can view past and present issues of The Journal at the Corpus Canada web site: [www.corpuscanada.org](http://www.corpuscanada.org) Also, if you wish, we can advise you by e-mail whenever a new issue of The Journal has been posted to the web site.

### ***Love Will Find a Way***

This is a 92-page book which gives an overview of the shortage of priests in the Roman Catholic Church from 1990-2000. Compiled and edited by Ed and Minda Kelly, it consists of quotations and articles, many of them by bishops, on the dire situation in the Church caused by this shortage around the world including Canada. Altogether the book shows the worldwide support for a married priesthood by bishops, priests, and laity. Several declarations made by members of Corpus Canada in The Journal are quoted in the Canadian section of the book.

The book may be ordered from Ed Kelly at Box 3037, Manila, The Philippines. The cost for the book plus airmail is \$10.00 per copy, to be paid by a cheque or money order drawn against a U.S. bank.

Ed and Minda wrote: Dear Chris. Thanks for your kind letter. Thank François for the friendship he has shown us. We printed 2800 copies of "Love Will Find A Way" but the cost of mailing is such that it is four times the cost of the book. I am trying to find a cheaper way to do it. The book (which has articles by Jack Shea and Neil Parado) is an attempt to reverse the celibacy bit which is not talked about here. The hierarchy has a strangle hold on the country and likes to hide scandals.

Minda and Ed (formerly an Irish O Carm.) were married in '82 and have just finished 10 years of publishing The Married Priest. They have two daughters, Jennifer 18 and Caroline 16. They turned their house into a Youth Centre where about 300 students study and do research. (Editor)  
[kelly\\_edward@hotmail.com](mailto:kelly_edward@hotmail.com)

# Corpus Canada

## Who Are We?

We began and continue to be a support group for married Catholic priests, their families and friends, in dialogue with the hierarchy seeking an optional married priesthood.

We have become also 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 in the Church;
- Being a catalyst for development of leadership among all the baptised in the Church;

•Promotion of a wholesome view of sexuality;

- Justice for all based on Gospel values.

Our message is a healing one and is directed to everyone, including the marginalized in the Church. It is our hope to reach people through many ministries, and in a special way through the creation of small faith communities.

## How Do We Get There?

Through a collegial approach based on consensus reached through communal discernment in the Spirit, we share our gifts that all creation might be transformed according to God's loving plan.

## How Can I Join Or Show Support?

If you wish to join or renew your membership in Corpus Canada for the year 2001 (membership is open to all regardless of denominational affiliation), write to: Corpus Canada Treasurer, 9875 Seventh St., Sidney, BC V8L 2V8. 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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**Corpus Canada Web Site**  
<http://www.corpuscanada.org>

## HOW TO GET THE JOURNAL

If you are not now receiving The Journal and would like to, please fill out this form and mail it to the Treasurer, Xristos Community Society, 9875 Seventh Street, Sidney BC V8L 2V8.

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The Journal will be sent to you free of charge. If you would like to support the free distribution of The Journal, please send a cheque to "Xristos Community Society" c/o the Treasurer, Xristos Community Society, 9875 Seventh Street, Sidney BC V8L 2V8. Xristos Community Society is a registered charity. all donors of \$10 or more will receive an official tax receipt.

Thank you for your support of this Christian ministry.



Corpus Canada Treasurer

Alanna Menu

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# Grace-Filled Events: A Report From Corpus NCR

by Jim Noonan, Stittsville, ON (Corpus NCR)

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Corpus-NCR held two gatherings recently. On December 1 some forty people took part in a liturgy and potluck supper at Norma and Jim Noonan's home. Since the liturgy celebrated the First Sunday of Advent, the shared reflections focused on the role of the liturgical year and how to make this central in our lives when we live in a society which for the most part knows only January 1 as the beginning of the new year.

The meeting was graced by the presence of Joe and Yvonne Cashen from Mississauga. A member of the Coordinating Team of Corpus Canada, Joe spoke to the group of his work on the next Corpus Conference, and was assured by several Corpus-NCR members of their support and readiness to help in his preparations for the Conference.

On January 5, the eve of the Epiphany, we held our annual Christmas party in the usual location – the lounge of the condominium of Maurice and Claudia Sullivan. This year we were blessed by mild weather, and had a turnout of about sixty people. Those present at the potluck supper included members of CCO (Concerned Catholics of Ottawa) and CNWE (Catholic Network for Women's Equality) as well as those from Corpus-NCR.

One of the highlights of the evening was the grace composed and recited by our co-host Maurice Sullivan. The grace was remarkable for the way in which it combined Maurice's knowledge of theology, history and cosmology. Because of the special nature of the grace, it is reproduced here in its entirety:

## Giving Thanks for the Christmas Journey and Beyond

Let us give thanks

For the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem 2000 years ago,  
For the journey of the Magi, the angels and the shepherds,  
For the journey of Jesus, Mary and Joseph into Egypt,  
For the journey of Jesus throughout his public life and

For the journey of Jesus through his death and resurrection.

Let us give thanks

For the journey of the Christian Churches over the past 2000 years and

For the journey of all the world's religions over the past 5000 years.

Let us give thanks

For our journey to human consciousness over the past five million years,

For the journey of the animals, the birds and the flowers over the past 65 million years,

For the reptilian journey of the dinosaurs over the past 250 million years.

Let us give thanks

For the journey of the fishes and the plants over the past one billion years,

For the journey of the clouds, the rain, the rivers, the lakes and the mountains over the past two billion years,

For the journey of the microscopic cells and bacteria over the past three billion years.

Let us give thanks

For the journey of our planet earth and solar system over the past five billion years,

For the journey of our Milky Way Galaxy over the past ten billion years and,

For the journey of the quarks, the atoms and all the galaxies over the past 15 billion years,

And finally, let us give thanks For the journeys of light and our expanding universe And all the other journeys Which reveal to us The elegant creativity, the boundless generosity And infinite mystery of God. Amen!

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## **Connie, Thanks From the Editorial Team**

**H**i Connie, I want to express my appreciation for your signal contribution to the Connector and Journal. I especially valued your creative openness and boldness, and a wider vision when the rest of us got too narrowly focused. Thank you as well for the times you helped start our meeting off with a prayer. You will be missed but clearly your change of priorities means that you will be able to pursue interests that are more nurturing for your soul. I am confident the good you will now do for others will be of even greater value than the good you have done for the editorial board. Best wishes in all your endeavours. We will make sure Fran keeps us informed of your adventures.

Blessings, Arthur Menu

**D**ear Connie, May one congratulate you on making what must be both a somewhat painful decision to leave a position you have served in so well for such a long period and deciding to put more of your energy into other pursuits. Thank you for your kind words about missing me. I too miss the association with the Journal. They were exciting and challenging days and I look back on them with a sense of pleasure - particularly the association the team had over the years.

All love and blessings. Dick Perrott

**H**ello Connie, We could always count on your valuable input. Our readers have enjoyed the benefits of your gifts. On their and my own behalf, I thank you for everything you have done. All the best in what is yet to come. Chris Diamond

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