

# The Journal

Summer 2003



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## CIRCULAR LETTER # 4 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MARRIED CATHOLIC PRIESTS (June 30, 2003)

*"Yahweh gives death and life, brings down to Sheol and draws up; Yahweh makes poor and rich; he humbles and also exalts."  
1 Sam 2: 6-7*

At the major turning points of my life, I have always sought direction from the source of my life, the Creator God, because I am a believer. At the end of this month of June I will be joining the group of retirees with all the good and the less good that that entails, particularly the aspect of financial resources. I will have to put an end to my incessant traveling, and thus cut back on long established contacts. In the last five years I have traveled in Europe, but before that I traveled extensively in Africa, in Latin America and in the Middle East. Happily, I am finally rejoining my family, and especially my wife, Maryan whom many of you know, and who has suffered terribly the imposed separations brought about by my commercial activity. Having said this, I believe that, henceforth, I will have more time for reflection as regards our International Federation, even though finances will restrict my travels.

The Board of the Executive Committee has met regularly in order to keep tabs on the activities and concerns of our group members. Also, this protects us from the pitfalls of misunderstandings and dysfunctionality. Since my last letter many events have taken place on the global level (war in Irak, natural disasters, epidemics), the social level (anti-globalisation and other demonstrations designed to achieve peace and justice), and even the ecclesial level (the pope's journeys, canonisations, gatherings of church renewal movements). We cannot remain indifferent to all these events.

The activity of the group members of our Federation has been quite intense. I need to underline a few of the more recent points or events:

- 1) Among others is the remarkable effort and contribution of the secretary of the Latin-American Federation, Franz Wieser (Peru), to communicate and propagate information.
- 2) In the spring, just before the holidays, all the member groups got together in order to evaluate their activities and to encourage one another: ADVENT/Great Britain, Corpus Canada, Corpus USA, H.L.M./Belgium, MO.CE.OP, Prêtres En Foyer, France Nord, V.K.P.F/Germany. These groups, among others, informed us, in one way or another, of their renewed vitality.
- 3) The first meeting of delegates from different European groups took place at Fos-Sur-Mer (France) in mid-May, 2003. They sought pathways toward the formation of a European Federation that could revitalise member groups in accordance with the direction and decisions of the General Assembly of Leganés (Spain 09/02).
- 4) The publications of the different groups illustrate well the effort and work of devoted people who are not always recognized. They allow us not only to remain in contact, but also to nourish us morally and spiritually.

All this internal activity is directed toward outreach to the ecclesial communities where we live, as well as to the world.

I want to thank the different groups for inviting me to participate in their gatherings or their Annual General Meetings. Unfortunately, neither my economic means nor my schedule allow me to do all that I would like.

Please note that as of July 1, 2003, I will be residing in Madrid; thus, do not address messages to me in France. Following are my new address and particulars: Aitor Orube, Calanda 8 - 1 A, Madrid, Spain 28043  
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**CORPUS: CANADIAN ORGANIZATION for a RENEWED PRIESTHOOD UNITED for SERVICE**

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**Summer 2003**  
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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 February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

Address all submissions and correspondence

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### **Corpus Telephone Hotline**

At the recent Corpus Canada Annual General Meeting, Connie Kurtenbach offered to call Corpus members in an effort to continue the live telling of stories so wonderfully begun at the National Conference.  
Tel: 250-245-3365

### ***FOCUS TOPIC*** *for the Fall 2003 Issue*

What is your experience of body-centred spirituality? For example, Yoga, Tai Chi, Martial Arts, Pranic Healing, Therapeutic Touch, Tantric Buddhism...

*Note Articles for this issue are due by November 15.*

# Celtic Spirituality

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC

*“The loving Lord blessed and divided five loaves and two fishes among five thousand.*

*Bless us too, O Lord in our share and in our sharing.”*

(Province of Ulster table prayer)



The modern Irish Roman Catholic Church was created in post-Famine Ireland. There are many reasons for this, but the main architect of the modern Irish church was Paul, Cardinal Cullen. Cardinal Newman said of him “Poor Dr. Cullen, he makes no one his friend.” In Ireland, Cullen did not seem to care. He was more Roman than Irish in training and outlook. He went to Rome at 18 where he stayed for nearly thirty years. He became a favourite of Pius IX who named him Apostolic Delegate to Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh, and then in spite of Irish christian history, of Dublin, and finally Cardinal. Cullen reflected Pius IX’s view of the church and he imposed it on the Irish.

Cullen was a farmer’s son who became a prince of the Church, a diplomat, an intriguer, admired by some and feared by many. As with many high-placed Roman Church officials, he was politically deft and ideologically rigid. He said of the destructive 1840’s Irish Famine that it was “a calamity with which God wishes to purify the Irish people.”

Cullen reshaped the Irish Church. He began with the hierarchy by selecting men of his own thinking, and he made them bishops and parish priests. He coerced the clergy. He praised a Waterford priest for having “built several churches, greatly increased annual contributions to Rome, closed down the state school and the government supported workhouse for the poor.” He had a running battle with the Irish seminary in Maynooth because he preferred Roman-trained priests. He suppressed wakes and cross-road dancing. He loved pomp and ceremony. The people who survived the Famine flooded the churches. Cullen saw their need and in this respect, he was a great success. He brought in another wave of foreign Religious Orders- Jesuits, Dominicans, and others, to take care of the increased parish work. Cullen promoted processions, novenas, and devotions; he encouraged choirs and better preaching. The spirituality of the church in modern Ireland, and to a large extent wherever Irish missionary priests

subsequently went, is a result of his engineering. Even a brief look at the history of Irish priests abroad- the North American Roman Catholic Church, for example- points in this direction.

Today, all of post-colonial Ireland- North and South- is on a new voyage. Much-beloved community priest, Fr. Des Wilson of the Springhill Community in Belfast, says: “It is a voyage of discovery. We learned history but it was a colonial history that said we had no history. Now we are catching glimpses year by year of that which made us who and what we are, glimpses of our own people of whom we have had no sight for ages. For example, the Brehon Laws were more humane than the laws of the Romans or Greeks, more humane than the Code of Hamurabi and the Old Testament, more humane than the Chinese law systems. Today, when we see our people slipping away from imposed systems and reverting to the customs of old times- marriage customs, restorative justice customs- we do not blame them for apostasy; we see them quietly returning to an ancient mode of civilised thought which was enlightened because it grew up with our people... I belong to those fortunate heirs who for the first time may look forward to having the freedom to rejoice in the past and to mold a fitting future for all our people.”(In “Being Irish” by Paddy Logue, married priest)

May God bless every step that they take and the ground under their feet!

Celtic christian spirituality developed from the twin foundations of an established celtic culture and a christian biblical outlook. High among the old Irish gods was Lugh of the Long Hand, the generous god, the god of light, after whom is named the month of August-Lunasa (Lughnasa). Hearing the christian scriptures, the Irish identified with the “light” language of John’s gospel, known then and now as the spiritual gospel.

The ancient Irish enjoyed the concept of three’s: there are three female gods who have given their names to Ireland- Eire, Banba, and Fodhla. The Dagda, the good god, was worshipped in threefold form. There are three major patron saints in Ireland, Patrick, Brigid, and Colmcille. The stories surrounding Brigid, Ireland’s most famous woman saint, arise from the myths about Brigid, the daughter of The Dagda. She was renowned for her healing and she was prayed to for fertility. Her feast is still celebrated on February 1, Imbolc, the start of Spring, and her cross (St. Brigid’s Cross) is a cross coming out of a solar wheel and a symbol of good fortune. It is still made by Irish families on Feb. 1 and given at a house blessing, and it hangs in most Irish houses including my own.

Most major christian sites in Ireland were originally pre-christian holy places: Armagh and Cashel are only two of many examples. In all of these sites, Celtic christian spirituality grew over 8 centuries far away from the centralizing Roman influence which was spending its efforts extending power and control over christian churches who would or were made to attend to it. Even after the Synod of Whitby (7th c.) when the Anglo-Saxon church went Roman and the Irish walked away, the celtic church remained an un-centralized church, a federation of mixed male/female/family monastic settlements under the leadership of abbots/abbesses who were consecrated male and female and married with married bishops and married priests who took care of the faithful within the clann

## *Celtic Spirituality Continued...*

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structure.

All over Ireland, certain families were stewards of the clann's 'church' lands and from these (eireanagh families) were chosen the priest and the bishop. My ancestors, the O' Diomhain family, part of a federation of clans along the Lower Bann, was one example of this common practice. This practice was ended with the so-called "reform" of the Irish Church in the 13th century Synod of Cashel when the politics coming from Canterbury and Rome forced the Roman diocesan system of church governance on the Irish Church. Before this time, the Irish Church was not an urban church and did not build large stone churches but gathered the people in the open around the stone high crosses and small stone chapels. These sites are still there today. It is a spiritual lift to visit Inchagoill in Lough Corrib and to see the old stone 5th century church and altar, with the oldest christian inscription outside of the Roman catacombs in Old Irish (Lia Lugaedon Macc Menueh/Stone of Lugaedon, son of Menueh). It is in contrast to the huge (beautiful in its own way) Augustinian Abbey ruin in nearby Cong.

Two questions often guide a people's spirituality: What is the world of the immortals like and where do we go when we die? Briefly, in their view of the world, the Irish lived on the surface of the land and the 'mystical' people lived in the sacred places, the stone circles and the huge mounds (the hollow hills) that were found all over the country. This gives rise to the fairy stories and the immortals who had 'neart' (plenty/strength/power) and could interfere in human affairs. The relationship of the two was generally good. At certain times of the year, the gates were open and the people of the si (shee as in banshee) could mingle with those who lived on the surface. So Ireland had two kinds of dwellers- the visible and the sometimes visible- both belonging to the land, the fertile mother who nourishes all her children.

The otherworld where we go when we die is everyone's dream: islands with beautiful people everlastingly young in everlasting summer, with music and plenty to eat and drink. On these islands there is no sorrow, sickness, nor death, and no fear of treachery. The Song of Maelduin says "We die in the bliss of a great new birth. Goodbye fading phantoms of pain and mirth, and fading loves of the old green earth." The Irish had no fear of 'hell'.

These attitudes carried over into their christian spirituality. Some people think that the Irish never were christian because they continued to believe in the innate goodness of human nature and they did not believe in hell. It is remarkable that even today, many christians do not want to give up their belief in hell-fire and eternal damnation.

The Roman church did not acknowledge the existence of the Irish church for the 600 years between the synods of Whitby and Cashel. All the well-known Irish saints were canonized by the Irish people during that time; the last of them was St. Lawrence O'Toole in the 1200's. After the synod of Cashel, Rome did not canonize an Irish saint until recent modern times when Oliver Plunket was 'sainted'. He is venerated in Ireland today (though in his lifetime he did not identify much with the common people) and people flock every year as my family did to pray at his shrine in Drogheda.

The Irish church, however, was not all roses. There were battles between christian clans and abbots. And there were the Ceile De

(Culdees) whose spiritual athletics provoked division within communities with their ascetic practices and challenges that upset the flow of the common spiritual life within the community.

So while the Irish church was not diocesan for over 800 years and Irish culture did not consist of towns and was not influenced by the development of the Roman form of church culture, it did not exist in isolation. It related well with the Greek, Coptic, Syrian, and Egyptian churches and it peopled the British and Continental European churches with saints, scholars, monasteries, and leaders of communities, and at the same time, it produced major christian spiritual works such as those of St. Pelagius and St. Eriugena. (They are in heaven, so I canonized them.)

St. Pelagius, (Morgan in Irish) late 4th century, reflecting the Irish tradition in which he was raised, taught that God's image is in us: nature and grace are God's gifts; grace reveals nature while sin hides its natural beauty.

Eriugena, 9th century, saw it this way: The Incarnate Word sweeps away the shadows of our false phantasies. Eriugena taught that the scriptures and creation show forth the life force 'neart' (God) : "Every visible and invisible creature is a theophany." (Periphyseon # 681 A) More than 1000 years ago, he taught that the creation story in Genesis is a meditation and not a chronological account! At the very core of creation is the Light of God from which all life arises. Everything that has ever come to be was contained in the light of God' first self-giving. Because of this, all creation is one interwoven reality, and every subsequent manifestation of God is contained in God's first gift. Light is the centre of the circle from which everything radiates. (Note the Irish highcross and St. Brigid's cross.) The light may become dulled by darkness, but never overcome. It issues from the "womb" of God invisible to our eyes. God is the Inscrutable, The Divine Dark beyond our imagining. Each spoke in the wheel of light, the strength of the wind, the frailty of the child, the soaring of the bird, the things that grow from the earth, everything manifests God, yet God is more than all of them and can never be known fully. God "runs" through everything, activates everything, is closer to us than anything else, and is encountered in all creation. It is God running through everything that causes it to be. The Incarnate Word of God liberates the light that lies deeply hidden within the heart: Nature is the gift of being; Grace is the gift of well-being.

In creation, God set in place the dome of time and space as the "womb" from which all life emerges. The wind stirs up the waters. From this turbulence, the visible forms of the mystery of God are drawn. In his letters, Pelagius writes, "The narrow shafts of divine light pierce the veil that separates heaven from earth."

The celts believed that the strength of the wind and the strength of passion are needed to stir up the life-force and that these are positive aspects of the laws of both nature and human nature. Like everything that is natural, people too need to follow the energies that boil up within them. Inner guidance (rather than control from without) results in a rich variety of liturgies and devout practices. There is no roof on God's house. God's voice is in the fiery flame and the sound of rushing waters (Rev.1:14).

The firmness and fertility of the earth signify God's steadfast generosity in creation. Eriugena writes that the most beautiful

## Celtic Spirituality Continued...

firmness of the earth nourishes and fattens the seeds and the trees by the moisture of the earth. The roots of creation reach into the depths of God. God's goodness lies at the heart of creation: the fertility/creativity of God, the Goodness of God, summons all things out of non-being into being... Goodness does not come from essence; essence comes from goodness... Evil results from being false to one's self, from non-being, and from meaninglessness. Remove goodness from life and nothing remains. Whatever is destructive of life is evil; wickedness corrupts and dissolves being. The earth is holy for within it runs the goodness of God (Eriugena).

God speaks and creation comes about, revealing God. Love of the sun, the moon, the skies, and the stars brings the grace of God. Though the sun is masculine and the moon feminine, "The image of God is neither male nor female." says Eriugena.

The celtic collection of prayers in the *Carmina Gadelica* (available on the web) is full of prayers that praise God in the lights of the sky: "Glory to thee, Sun, Face of the God of life.... Hail to thee, Moon, Maiden of the graces, Queen-maiden of good fortune." It is in the night lights that aspects of God's Face, missed during the day, are made known to us "through the dark clouds as through dark tears." To know the night is not to fear it. Dawn and dusk, the time of the two lights, is the time of birdsong and scented flowers.

All creatures taste, see, hear, smell, feel the gifts of God and "make visible the invisible" (Eriugena) revealing the mystery. Columbanus says that if you know God's creatures, you know God. The Celtic Christians saw God in the animal world too and used animals in their depiction of God's messengers. St. Colman MacLennan kept three pets: a rooster to wake him for prayer; a mouse to nibble his toes when he dozed off; a fly to mark his place in the psalms. The delightful 9th century poem, *Pangur Ban*, relates the philosopher-monk's meditation on his cat.

Eriugena says that we are not separated from our final destiny/paradise by time and space but by our degree of wholeness. "If we fail," he says, "we cannot lay the blame on nature for that would be to blame God." We fail when we do not use our senses to set free the strength that is in us. Knowledge of God is not a dictate of any magisterium but of the experience that comes from our senses. The unknown in any person far exceeds what can be known; therefore, he argues that the unknown of God far exceeds what can be known.

People are made in God's image; the deepest part of every person is of God; people are true to their nature when they reflect God, and not to do so is to be untrue to their nature. A person cannot be contained in a definition for each person is a deep mystery, with the capacity to create, redeem, and inspire (Eriugena). The divine image in us can be covered over but never destroyed. "The integrity of no one is destroyed though all, except Christ, have been defiled." Our failures do not have the power to erase the divine image which is part of our very essence. Whatever is of God is true and cannot be destroyed. God walks in the garden looking for us. We may wander in "the soul's forgetfulness... the leprosy of the soul" that distorts the beauty of

God's image within us, but Divine Grace heals this leprosy, this perversion of our nature. Christ shows us our true selves, restores our memory of what is natural to us, teaches us that he is fully human without flaw and distortion. The gospels are not there to tell us of our flaws and failings which we know already, but to remind us of what we have forgotten- that we come from God and are truly fortunate in our nature but we need to be reconnected. According to Pelagius, Jesus shows us God's true Self and humanity's true self.

Pelagius accounts for the good done by those who do not know Jesus by saying that there is an instinctive part of us that is of God. Christ's work uncovers this immortal and indestructible instinct where it has been obscured- and in practical terms, it always is obscured. Pelagius admitted that he had never known anyone who was free from flaws. "Only when a person recognizes who she is will she be able to use to the full God's gifts: to live in wisdom and not ignorance, in love and not fear, in reality and not fantasy. Have regard for your origin, consider your lineage, respect your noble stock, acknowledge that you are born of God as well as of man... Nothing is

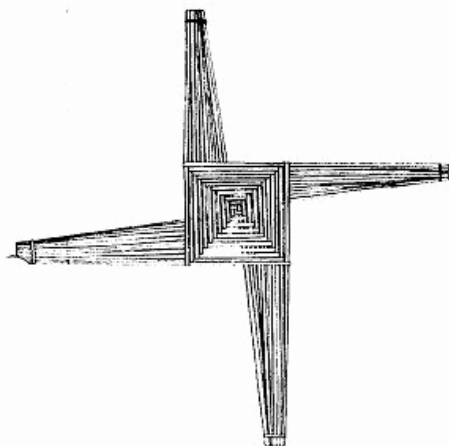
so offensive, so detestable as to hate another person or to want to injure anyone; nothing is so commendable as to love everyone... disparagement of another is a very grave fault for it makes the other appear worthless." (Letter to Demitrias)

Pelagius followed the celtic philosophy of life that morality was personal and that each one was responsible. In contrast to Augustine, he maintained that people could on their own take the basic step to achieve salvation. Otherwise, he believed that the moral order was endangered if, as Augustine said, humanity took on Adam's sin and had no free will to avoid sin. For Pelagius, Truth/Trust is the basis of holiness and of religion. Pelagius was indicted many

times but always acquitted. He defended himself well and made sense. His enemies-Augustine and Jerome mainly- pursued him relentlessly. Pelagius thought that Augustine was a Manichean at heart.

For the Irish, Christianity is practical. Christians, following Jesus, exercise hospitality by having an open table with "plenty of food, plenty of drink, and plenty of beds." Pelagius writes "Can one be a Christian whose bread has filled no one, whose drink has refreshed no one, whose table knows no one, and whose roof no stranger or traveler has welcomed?" Fastidius, a 5th century celtic bishop, says the same thing: "Do you think yourself Christian if you oppress the poor? If you enrich yourself by making others poor? If you wring your food from other's tears? A Christian is one who never allows the poor to be oppressed... whose door is open to all, whose table every poor man knows, whose food is offered to all."

Irish people today are returning to the spirituality that nourished their lives for nearly 1500 years. In their religious practices, they are keeping the best from their recent life experiences, but they have no difficulty in discarding anything that does not foster their innate sense of God's presence. Faith communities abound, such as Brothers And Sisters In Christ (B.A.S.I.C.) and Irish spiritual leaders are mining the old Gaelic prayers and traditions. The mounting information that



## Celtic Spirituality Continued...

surrounds people today has shown that politics shaped many Church decisions in the past. The faithful carried the faith when there were no pastors. For example, in much of the 18th century, there were as few as two bishops in all of Ireland. Andrew Greeley wrote recently: "The Irish hierarchy is, though one may not think it possible, even more clueless than the American... Catholics in Ireland are still catholic but now on their own terms. Bishops tell me that the laity can't do that which proves how clueless they are. They no longer control the laity with the threat of mortal sin and eternal damnation... People continue to believe in God, Jesus, Mary, the Eucharist, life after death, and the Church. If you wish to argue moral practices with them (Irish catholics) you better have good arguments in the language that ordinary people talk."

In an old legend, Fionn MacCumhaill (McCool) asked the Fianna one day "What is the sweetest music in the world?"

One said "The song of the cuckoo in the high branch of the tree."

Another said "The laughter of a young girl."

A third "The distant baying of the hounds."

"The whisper of a loved one."

"Indeed," said Fionn "These are all sweet sounds."

So the Fianna asked him what he thought was the sweetest music in the world.

"The sweetest music in the world is the music of what happens," he answered.

Creative spirituality takes everyday happenings as the self-giving of The Author of life.

### On The Lighter Side!

I recently picked a new doctor. After two visits and exhaustive lab tests, he said I was doing "fairly well" for my age (88).

A little concerned about the comment, I couldn't resist asking, "Do you think I'll live to be 90?"

He asked, "Well, do you smoke tobacco or drink beer?"

"Oh no," I replied, "I've never done either."

Then he asked, "Do you eat rib-eye steaks and barbecued ribs?"

I said, "No, I've heard that all 'red meat' is very unhealthy!"

"Do you spend a lot of time in the sun, like playing golf?" he asked.

"No I don't," I replied.

He said, "Do you gamble, drive fast cars, or fool around?"

"No," I said, "I've never done any of those things."

He looked at me and said, "Then why do you want to live to be 90?"

*Donagh O'Shea OP in "Take Nothing for the Journey" tells the following story :*

**I**t is now late afternoon and I sit within its (his tent) space, knowing nothing but the necessity of returning to reality. The stream beside me dashes purposefully to its destination, to the ocean where all purposes and destinations become one.

We always speak of higher purposes; well, the ocean is a lower purpose, a deeper purpose. This is a more restful image than higher purposes. Every influence in our world sends us up, praises higher intensity. Those expensive rockets to nowhere are the culmination of modern culture and symbols of the way we think we ought to live. I will sit by this stream and try climbing down, try to learn deeper purposes.

I search in my pocket for my rosary. Recently, this form of prayer has become very meaningful for me. Something happens to time when you pray this way. The string of beads has a beginning and an end, and the end is the beginning. It is a loop and it creates a 'time-loop.' It is a circle, a perfect figure that needs to go nowhere, and it suggests a contemplative pool, an image of the roundness of the ocean, the perfect possession of eternity.

In Irish it is called 'paidrin'; paidir means prayer, and comes from Pater noster. It is a more essential word for prayer than any other I can think of. Jesus said, "Ask the Father." If you put the emphasis on 'ask,' you get words like pray, prier, pregar, all of which mean 'ask'. Or, as in Irish, you can put the emphasis on 'Father' which I think is a better idea.

I often invent my own 'mysteries,' or rather I pick many more than fifteen from the pages of the Gospels. This evening I want to see the Lord 'climbing down.' I imagine him visiting one of his favourite families, Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus, to rest after a day of heat and frustration. I see him asleep in the corner and the others on tip-toe so as not to wake him. When you sleep you almost resemble an object. Who and Where and What is he when he is asleep?

The Hail Marys are a way of measuring time. They are also pure atmosphere, mostly memory where there is no need to concentrate on the words. If it seems a little drowsy, that may have something to do with 'climbing down' and 'deep purposes.' Prayer-time seems to be quite different from clock-time. It is in some sense an inner time, a time in which past and future are in the present, a time that embraces remembrance and hope.



# Emil's Story

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK

*After the opening prayer at the start of the Corpus Canada AGM gathering in Sidney, May '03, time was spent hearing the stories of how each person there first experienced Corpus Canada. Emil Kutarna got the stories going using notes from Felix Kryzanowski to detail how things developed from the time of their first knowing each other.*

Eleanore and I were married in '71; we were unique in our diocese because it was unusual for a priest to get married. Shortly after that, Felix and Jane Beyke Kryzanowski were married. We heard about them and since then we have remained close friends. since. We (the two couples) were at that time getting a magazine called "Free Priests." This gave us much to think about and to discuss together. It was the beginning of a long dialogue on a married priesthood. In '75, Felix wrote a newsletter, "Married Priests/Women Priests"; he mailed it to 12 married priests that he knew of in Saskatchewan. He got some response, particularly one from Jake and Loretta Kutarna.

After that for many years we continued to meet together, to welcome newly married priests, and to support one another. The major development happened in the late '80's. In December '88, I was coming out of the library when I noticed a book, "Love Is Always: A Priest Marries" by Michael Miles. Michael was a married priest in Colorado and Bishop Hunthausen had allowed him to continue to minister in the university community where Michael and his wife lived. Then somebody sat on Hunthausen. I read the book and loaned it to Felix, and he phoned Michael. About the same time, Lawrence Dimant, a priest in Humboldt, told us about Dan and Mary Ann Gerwing. Felix phoned Dan and Mary Ann.

In April '89, a group of us got together on our patio: Joe & Victoria Gubbels, Jake, Loretta, Felix, Jane, Dan, Mary Ann, and there may have been others but, forgive me, I can't remember. We discussed Michael's book and the growing number of married priests and the growing priest shortage in Canada. We were getting excited. Mary Ann said "Either do something or shut up about it." It was then determined to start Western Corpus Canada. We were familiar with Corpus USA. We talked about holding a Conference in October '89.

In June '89, Jean and Dan went to Columbus, Ohio to the Corpus USA Conference and met Anthony Padovano, Terry Dosh, Jack Shea from Ottawa, Don Moncrief, Tom Harpur from Toronto, Dagmar Celeste, wife of the Governor of Ohio (Dagmar was ordained priest last year on the Danube), Carey Landry and many others. They also got from Terry Dosh a list of 30 names in Canada and began to contact people. Tom Ratterman (Ontario) and Ed Cormier (Manitoba) were the first to respond.

Having listened to the many voices of married priest couples from every region of Canada and with the encouragement of Corpus USA, Western Corpus Canada was renamed Corpus Canada in June, and in July '89, Felix and Jane published the first issue of the Corpus Canada Journal.

In October '89, Corpus Canada held a Conference in Saskatoon with couples from every region of Canada. The

Conference was described as "Healing, Informative, Joyful." I have an album of pictures from that Conference. Regional contacts were named and a strategic planning session was organised for Calgary in November at which for Corpus Canada the meaning of CORPUS was changed to Canadian Organization for a Renewed Priesthood United for Service. The identity of the organization was set out and the coordinating team was named. Jack and Shirley Kirley hosted the meeting. Corpus Canada has since then maintained a United Canadian effort towards a Reformed Priesthood. In the November '89 issue of the Journal, Fr. James Gray, OSB is quoted as saying "I cannot believe that God is responsible for priestless Sunday services. It does seem, however, that Rome is deaf to the sensible pleas of bishops and people around the world to update its clerical system." Little progress has been made in Rome since then. I would like to see us collect the themes of our National Conferences.

This is a story of a Corpus Canada action at the cathedral in Regina. Really, Joe Gubbels was the instigator. (NO! NO! from Joe)

In early 1990, (when Corpus Canada was not long organized) for the first time in the history of the cathedral of Regina, there was to be no priest for a Sunday mass, and it was Jimmy Weisgerber who announced that the following Sunday liturgy would be led by a lay presider. Jimmy had to be away and he could not get anyone "to take over" for him.

Joe and I thought "the cathedral in Regina!" Since 1913, it has never missed a Sunday mass; AND here we are 12 trained and ordained priests available. So we wrote out an information sheet and we said that there were 12 priests available to take the Sunday mass and that the only reason we were not allowed to do this was because we were married. We put this information sheet on the car windshields of the people inside the cathedral. And then we went home.

Then somebody noticed our handout and notified the church committee; they read the notice and took most of our notices off the the cars. A few of the parishioners got them.

But Jimmy was very upset when he got back and he got together with us. He didn't know what to say. He said he could accept it but he was in charge and all that stuff. Then shortly after that, I had to see the bishop (Helpen) over something to do with vocations (!). And Boy! he reamed me out, up and down: "It is you guys that have caused this shortage of priests: he really gave me sh..! The secretaries outside could hear even though we were behind closed doors. He got very emotional and threw his glasses on the desk. He really went into a rant. When he was finished and sat down, I said that I could understand where he was coming from but now I wanted him to hear where I was coming from. I told him that I had felt my not being married was a detriment to my salvation and that I

could not continue the way I was. I asked him to try thinking of what it was like to go through hell and to have to explain this to parents, family, and friends. I asked him "Isn't marriage a sacrament?" Well, he calmed down after a few minutes and he just sat there in silence. On my way out, he gave me a hug and helped me into my coat. After that, no matter where he saw me he went out of his way to come over and say 'Hello.'

Let me finish with some insights that I got from Corpus Canada early on:

We divided the Conference group into two- one for the men and one for the women.

Here we are, I thought, poor priests who have left the ministry. Our brother priests have abandoned us and look down on us just as if we had died. But the people who were really suffering were the women because they told their stories of what it felt like to be married to a priest.

The other big insight came from Tad Guzie. At that Edmonton Conference, there was a Ukrainian married priest, an Anglican married priest, and a married woman priest and we discussed married ministry. Tad said that at their home eucharistic gatherings, his wife, Noreen, often presided. That threw me! I was shocked and asked "What about ordination and the indelible mark?" Tad assured me that there was no indelible mark! That was my second shock and it took me a long time to get over it.

(Someone in the audience remarked "Emil, You've left an indelible mark." Emil replied, "I've been trying to clean it up ever since.")

**Editor's Note:** The first and subsequent issues of *Corpus Canada Journal* detail Emil's story. In the first issue of July '89 there are the following items and more:

- first, a statement of intent for the Journal "to be a digest of articles,

*letters, news, words for the education, encouragement, edification of all of us in the Catholic Church: laity, married priests, celibate priests, bishops;"*

- second, letters from Dianne Peck in Nova Scotia, a celibate priest in Quebec, a married priest in Ontario;

- then, notes of contributions of money;

- goals of Corpus Canada;

- quotes from Dagmar Celeste such as, "Priests are not banned for their sexual activity, but for accepting the responsibility of marriage."

*Moreover, an incident similar to the priestless Sunday in Regina happened in Sidney, BC in the late 90's. Corpus Vancouver Island met in Sidney one Saturday evening. Out of respect for the Eucharistic gathering in the local parish to which some of our members belonged, the Corpus members went to the local parish church for mass. We discovered that the liturgy was being led by Corpus members, Dick and Marguerite Perrott with a Corpus member giving the homily. So the whole parish community went through a 'secundum quid' eucharist with a large number of ordained priests in attendance.*

*Since its formation, Corpus Canada has been accepted nationally and internationally. It represents Canada at the International Federation of Married Priests and other church and priesthood reform associations. Its members strive to live in their faith communities the reformed priesthood that marked Corpus Canada's beginning. It is a free association of people united in a common goal but with regional and individual ministries. In numbers, it has only a small fraction of the married priests in Canada; many others say that they are glad Corpus Canada exists. The Journal strives to carry out its original intent.*

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## Dianne's Story

by Dianne Peck, Sydney, NS

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I'm from the 'other' Sydney, on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, and our Corpus group is unique in that we never have had a married priest as a member. In the early 80's, a few friends and I were getting excited about the talk of a married priesthood. We couldn't believe we were actually living to see this and it became a driving passion so that we wanted to do whatever we could to make this happen. That was before the 'pull back' from Vatican II when renewal was just rolling. We were going to be part of it, and we anticipated that within five to ten years this married priesthood would be a done deal and very common. I was ecstatic. I thought that now my sons and my daughter could go into the priesthood if they wanted to and still be able to choose marriage also. I was determined.

One day while out for a walk, my friend came out waving a newspaper; it was the Catholic New Times. In it there was a section, 'Small but Beautiful Ads.' In there was a tiny ad for Corpus (USA- Core Of Resigned Priests United for Service) with contact information. My friend said, "What do you think this is?" I said "I don't know." But we wrote to the address, a very apprehensive letter to find out just who they were. If they had been a flag-waving group against Rome, we did not

want to be part of it. We got a beautiful letter back telling us what the soul and spirit of Corpus was. We fell in love right there and then and we knew that was our path. We were put on Terry Dosh's mailing list. That early newsletter was really only a flyer, but Terry always wrote us a personal note and we felt supported.

We were not a group but simply a few of us getting the newsletter and getting together to discuss it. Then Corpus USA announced a conference for New York and there I met Jim Noonan, Jack Shea, Joe Dietrich, and Alex Campbell from Ottawa. I could not believe that there was a Canadian contact. We went around together as a Canadian contingent!

The next thing I remember was being in contact with Emil for the Journal in '89. We formed a group and we worked very hard to recruit married priests. We were mostly women. We had a breakthrough when we met Rita Chaisson, the widow of (Fr.) Larry O'Keefe. That was the closest we ever came to having a married priest member. Rita and Larry's brother joined our group, and we actively wrote letters and lobbied and did CBC interviews.

## Corpus Canada Stories Continued...

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This was all very radical- just the concept of married priests in our diocese! We contacted married priests in Halifax. We heard that there had been a Corpus group in Halifax; but it had not gone well and the married priests there did not want to be connected with Corpus. So we went to Halifax and we met with about 15 married priests. Jack Kirley was there, in fact. Some were very interested in the new Corpus Canada. I remember Steve Carew. For a short while it looked like Halifax was going to form a group and Steve Carew was to go on the Coordinating Team but it did not work out and Halifax did not form a group in the end. In some way, we did not feel we were a real Corpus group until we could get some married priests. When we told others about Corpus Canada, they would ask "Are you married to a priest?" Or "Why do you have this group?"

I know that many of you know Sis McNeil who would love to be here and sends her love, warmth, and greetings. Before I came here, Sis and I were talking about why we were in this group. She said that she felt such deep embarrassment, really deep embarrassment, about the institutional church's treatment of the priests who had married. She felt she had to do something, to reach out and support them. She felt, as we all feel, the injustice of imposed celibacy and the intolerance of the church for our married priests. In our diocese, it was so "hush, hush, and get out of here, a scandal." They were not to stay geographically close. There was such shame put on them. We saw the horror of that.

My reason had to do with the fact that I believed so much in the high ideals of marriage and the spirituality of sex and marriage. Somewhere in me was the deep wound: "You cannot put priesthood and marriage together. Marriage would somehow sully and debase priesthood." I could not articulate that then, but I knew that there would be an incompleteness until marriage and priesthood could be united. I knew that theologically there was something terribly wrong. That was my deepest driving force and it still is.

Every year there was a diocesan collection for the seminary in Ottawa for 'Vocations.' We canvassed friends and neighbours and asked people to give that money to Corpus Canada instead. We wrote

to the diocese with the signatures of the people who said that they were giving their money to CC to make a statement about the exclusivity of Vocations and that we did not want our money to support seminaries until they were inclusive. This was a very deep blow to the diocese. All we knew was that after that, the bishop started warning priests to have nothing to do with CC.

Then the Vision campaign came along. We had one brave priest who put the Vision petition in the back of his church. Within hours, he got a phone call from the bishop "Get that out of there." We had a bake sale at the local mall to raise money and to get signatures for the campaign. I went to the mall manager and told him what CC was and what we were doing. We got a table from 3pm until closing time. About 4pm, he came and said "I have to ask you to leave." Somebody, very upset, had gone and complained to him for allowing this. We had seen the person from one of the diocesan committees pace back and forth in front of our booth. He went to the manager and complained. We said "Fine" and packed up our tent and stole away.

There are 'conservatives' and 'liberals' and we need a strategy to decrease the division.

In the diocese, there are many married priests but they left more than 20 years ago and have reestablished their lives. And there are others who do not believe in organizations such as Corpus. Corpus Canada gave us a place and a support community on the cutting edge to connect with. We need that very much. The church needs that very much. We are at peace with our role. We have had to 'glory in our uniqueness,' a Corpus group with no priests.

We are no longer a Corpus group now. We have evolved into a spirituality group of six women. Emil and Eleanore came to visit one year and gave us much emotional support. Jack and Sheila came too another time. I was always made to feel special by all of you, and that is enough. I want to go home with a sense of where we are going for the future. We will know that before we leave here this weekend.

### *Dianne Peck's Reflection on the National Corpus Conference May'03*

I found the Conference very significant for a number of reasons.

It was my first time back to a national Corpus conference in quite awhile and the feelings of being connected again were awesome.

The first omen of good things to come was the National Coordinating Team meeting the evening before the conference opened.

Alanna and Art's easy-flowing hospitality (including supper on the BB-Q) set the tone that continued throughout the weekend.

The NCT meeting and the conference to follow flowed with a great softness of spirit and of heart. I don't know how else to describe it. There was a predominant gentleness that I still am refreshed by. This was particularly true of the pre-voting discussions and the voting itself. There was no stringency. There was empathic listening. There was voting that came only from hearts that had been deeply searched. There was voting that came out of utmost concern for the good of all.

There was a quiet richness about us, maybe like aged wine that doesn't have to work at being full-bodied. It just is. Or maybe we were like the ten-year-old scotch that Art had heard about. It is produced here in Cape Breton of late and sells for \$75. a bottle. It obviously knows what it is worth. I came home from the conference with a new knowing about our worth. About the worth of mutual respect, mutual deference, mutual acknowledgment, mutual desire for love to prevail among us.

We gathered to tell our stories. There were stories about courage, about struggle, about difficult lessons, about sheer delight, and about great fun. The storytelling also revealed the ways in which we have grown, quietly, perhaps unnoticed, into maturity and fullness of heart. Yes, we are aging, but what matters is that our aging has been a ripening. As we move forward we do so with confidence based on this knowledge: What we do, whatever works we decide to pursue as a national organization, can only succeed because first we have become.

Many thanks to conference hosts Alanna and Art Menu and the Sidney Corpus group. Your labors were abundantly multiplied.

# Ron & Martha's Story

by Ron & Martha Dobben, Edmonton, AB

Ron and Martha Dobbin each took a mike and Martha encouraged Ron to go first. They will be married 30 years in September; they have two children, a son and a daughter.

## Ron's Story:

There were about 16 of us who left the Edmonton diocese within a year. Everybody was in a pretty sad state of disarray dealing with personal, clerical, domestic, and employment problems. We were all floundering all over the place. There was no anchor. Some of us got together. Findlay MacDonald, Alex McDougall, and a lot of the Cape Bretoners stayed close together. Outside of that, it seemed that some of our closest clerical friends had no time for a married priest. I had been fired by the diocese and that created a lot of bitterness. However, I learned a long time ago to put away the chain saw; now I use soft butter instead.

In our beginning with Corpus Canada (CC), we were very reluctant. Bernie and Denise Bryden, god-parents to our daughter, Jennie, had come over for a visit and started talking about CC and an upcoming conference in Saskatoon. By the way, they send their regards to everyone. They are heading for Nova Scotia tomorrow and would like to be here but could not dovetail the two events. When they left our house, Martha said "I think we should go."

We had been pretty well ostracized by the church in the Edmonton area and by family and friends- just about anybody we knew except for a few good friends who were catholic and some priests who felt it did not make them unworthy to speak to us. So we went to Saskatoon and it was really fun! I knew Jake and Emil from the Western Priests' Conference.

Saskatoon was for Martha and me an event of hope. All of a sudden we felt that there was a lot of people like ourselves who enjoyed life, who still had faith, who thought that church was not necessarily religion, and that religion did not have to be bound by a whole bunch of canonical rules and by stuffed shirts who didn't have time for other people and who had no charity nor justice. So for us, CC was hope and we spent about seven years on the Corpus Team in various capacities. We hosted two national conferences in Edmonton and we have attended every conference since. We have always had a good time and we have seen many changes over the years. The main reason we attend is the people, above everything else, the people. We all can read books and listen to tapes.

The meetings we attended were always fun. We struggled with many concepts. We saw CC leave the corporate model and adopt the consensus model in Victoria in '95. Arthur, Dianne, Grant, Colleen, Connie and I (and others?) were part of establishing the first National Coordinating Committee. We had long hard discussions over ideas, but at the end of an evening, we would close our eyes and arrive at a decision by consensus.

## Martha's Story:

I don't have a lot to add. CC was a terrific support group. We were fortunate to have some married priest friends. There were about six of us that got together all the time, but we felt we wanted a bigger group. That was our main joy in finding CC. It's the feeling that the church is not necessarily the way to go. There are many ways. The more we sat and listened to people, the more comfortable we got with

the idea. We feel very comfortable with where we are now. I appreciated the equality of women.

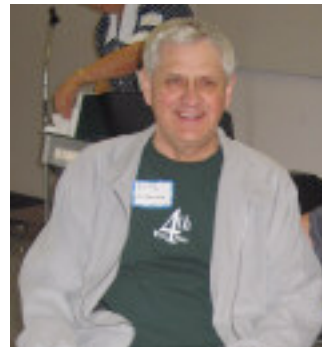
## Ron again:

We struggled with equality. The church is still struggling with it. Our Corpus group got very angry when the pope said that the ordination of women was not a matter for discussion. So, we started the Discipleship of Equals. CC was encouraging the formation of small faith groups. Our group is still going. We, about 12-15 of us, meet every four weeks in our homes. We have spiritual moments, encouragement, and justice issues. We touch it all- politics and theology. It's a good solid group. Corpus is part of it. We haven't changed the church on the ordination of women, but we care less about it now. We feel that women have their own rightful part to play.

We are saddened at funerals when the cleric still says "We believe you have to be a catholic to receive holy communion, and if you are not a catholic, don't come to receive but come up and cross your arms and I'll give you my blessing." I feel that this is the epitome of arrogance, a terrible scandal. CC isn't going to change that. Clerics will still feel that they humble themselves to give their blessing. Nothing wrong with a blessing- but for a cleric to single people out, even a cleric with vision and personal charm!

We have had "Welcome into the world" gatherings for little ones. We have prayed over them and blessed them. We have been condemned by the bishop for doing that.

CC is not a cohesive group in any area. That is one thing we have experienced. But we have seen CC go through Who we are; Where we are going; What's our meaning. It is life that has meaning and CC is part of that- fun as well as substantial.



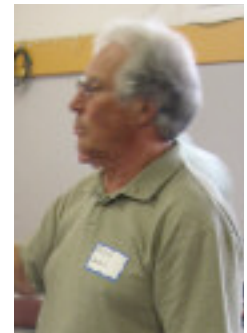
Emil Kutarna



Dianne Peck



Martha Dobbin



Ron Dobbin

Can Corpus be a support for a gay priest who resigns? The Journal states that we began as a support group for married Catholic priests. It goes on to say we have become a faith community reaching out to others in need as Jesus did.

Eleanore and I have a number of gay friends and priests among them, some resigned and some still 'in.' At first thought it may seem odd that we, a married "straight" couple should find such warm friendships with gay persons, and priests in particular. I think belonging to Corpus and its philosophy has something to do with it.

Looking back over the years, we note that there are some things we have done that got a positive response. One thing we've done is reached out. Given the current attitude within our society, and with the Catholic Church in particular, we had to be sensitive as to how to reach out without causing hurt or embarrassment. From one priest we learned that we had to use our 'gaydar.' I had never heard of it. "Well," he said, "You know what radar is for airplanes. You pick up a signal on the radar screen that an aircraft is in the vicinity. Gaydar is like that. Gay people have this antenna that can pick up the signal of another gay person in a crowd, where other "straights" may be totally unaware. I know Eleanore is much better at this than I am. She has always been the one to make the contact. This must be a special talent that Corpus women have, I guess.

Making contact is the difficult part, and the women seem to do it best. Once that's done, then the second stage seems to be food. Again, Eleanore pulls out the stops on her Ukrainian cooking, I pull out the Polish corks on the wine, and we just have a great conversation. About two bottles later, for whatever reason, the topic of priesthood comes up. I can't understand it. Maybe there still exists this bond of ordination. Or maybe it is a relic of clericalism. Whatever. It's all psycho-illogical.

Anyway, my curiosity asks questions, and when our friendship is secure enough, the gay priests have a lot to enlighten us. For example, one priest said he took the courage/chance of writing to his bishop about being gay. The bishop replied – three months later! My first reaction was disgust. The shepherd was too busy looking after the hundred sheep that didn't need him, so he was too busy to attend to one that agonized before being able to speak up. But then my gentle Polish

nature intervened. I guess the bishop was so dumbstruck that he just did not know how to respond. If he had a wife like Eleanore, this would not have happened, would it? With her gaydar, she would have suggested that he invite the priest for supper long ago, and the letter would never need to be written in the first place. Oh dear. Such is life without a wife.

Why would a gay priest write to his bishop? To get a dispensation? For what? Well, different priests had different responses to that question. One felt that living with this big "secret" was too suffocating. For his own peace of mind he had to be open with his bishop. I think that the courage this took is a healthy sign of personal integrity. Maybe the bishop already knew or suspected. And if he did, he couldn't let on or be open about it. So let's put it on the line with the bishop and 'name the elephant in the living room'.

Honesty is good, but sometimes honesty has a price. You're wondering what the bishop replied. So did I. I was disappointed. The bishop's reply was a formal "Thank you for your letter, etc. etc." Then he reminded the priest about the Church teachings about homosexuality, and even if he resigns from the priesthood, any sex was a sin. "Yours in Christ...." Is there a wind blowing in here? Did I just hear a door slam shut? Not even a simple invitation to dinner? Darn! (Do I have pyrogies on my mind or what?).

Another priest was a religious. He told his superior that he just wanted to live a normal life with a partner. The superior strongly suggested that he not stay in the same city as the community he was at then. He did move several provinces away. There he found a larger gay community and made new friends. They made him and his partner a nice 'commitment celebration.' If I recall correctly, I think both their parents were there as well. Life apparently is OK with them. I have to confess that we've been lax in keeping up contact. I better get my Corpus conscience activated and write or email. I might be a good candidate for bishop, too busy with the 100 and forgetting those that moved afar. Give myself a penance: Three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys. Go in peace.

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### Church Turmoil – adapted from *The London Independent*

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In the August 10 edition of the London Independent, Simon Parke tells why, after 20 years as a priest, he is leaving the Church of England. He says that the Pharisees are running the asylum because they are rich and the Church of England is bankrupt.

He says that after 20 years as a priest, "It has been painful for me, saying goodbye to this strange, privileged, dog-collared, crucifying existence, for which the pay is £16,000 a year with a big, rent-free house."

Is my forthcoming leap from the ship an act of disillusionment at the nature of the church? Not exclusively, but I do admit that, on one level, the omens are not good. When the marketing team of a topflight ad agency tried to market the church at Christmas, it failed to come up with any ideas to sell churchgoing. At the University of Gloucestershire, they're dropping religious studies because the students

find God boring. And then, of course, there is the gay issue. In America, the Episcopalians are in shock over the appointment of the openly gay bishop Gene Robinson. In Rome, the Pope denounces gay marriage and, by implication, gay practice as something akin to the axis of evil, only worse. And in England, there was the fudge and mismanagement of the gay scholar Jeffrey John being proposed as Bishop of Reading and then being forced to stand down.

One thing we must understand about the Church of England is this: the Pharisees are running the asylum. They are worthy people, but they hide behind rules, unable to cope with mystery and spirit. They look in the book of Leviticus and see clear denunciations of same-sex relationships; they read verses in Paul's Letter to the Romans talking about 'unnatural relationships.' There is, in this psyche, a deep desire for issues to

## Church Turmoil Continued...

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be black and white, fenced in, particularly in the tumultuous sphere of sex. The Pharisees added more than 600 rules to the spiritual life in order to protect the original Ten Commandments. Jesus, however, had a different approach. Rather than add, he summed it all up into two guides to life: to love God and to love others.

That vision seems long gone, this summer, as we listen to this pharisaical mantra: "We do not say a homosexual disposition is wrong - just its physical expression." Think of how poor Canon John had to reassure us all, confirming that he was now non-practising. Phew! That's a relief. He used to do it, but he doesn't now. But wait a minute - when exactly did he stop? Yesterday? Five weeks ago? How long ago, exactly? I think rule 601 is due.

As I say, the Pharisees are running the asylum and they are running it because they are rich and the Church of England is bankrupt. This is a crisis, and the church leadership is attracted to anyone with cash. So, with their large congregations around Bromley and beyond, and their success-driven, clean-cut, prepackaged, winner-takes-all salvation, the rich wield huge financial clout. And so it is that authorities, who really should know better, pay great honour to them in public, and feel

themselves squeezed by them in private.

Is there hope in all this? Yes, there is. Rowan Williams is a good and wise man, even though he stands in the midst of this crisis like a frightened rabbit. He doesn't have to. The Archbishop can call their bluff, and venture into the virgin territory of honesty, instead of this excruciating pretense of unity. Honesty is quite attractive sometimes, while unity - like happiness - is an outcome, not a vision. It certainly isn't a god to be worshipped.

What the church needs to do amid its activist, middle-management new culture, with its audits, action plans, consultation documents, appraisals, questionnaires and targets, is recover its contemplative heart. Only contemplation will help us to discover the truth, that there are untold chemistries of possibility, for, even right wingers, women and practising gays can make good priests. It is truths such as these which are God's quiet whisper, and after 20 years, I hear that clearer now than ever.

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## Evolution & Morality

by Tom Hassett, Victoria, BC

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The Vatican's policy on homosexuality is entirely consistent with the teachings of the Church. These teachings are, in turn, derived from the traditional, Catholic understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage and the family in their role of procreating and educating children.

It is our understanding that because humans take so much longer than other species to mature, God has instituted, (through the process of evolution and through Divine

revelation), the permanent bonding of two unrelated adults of opposite sex as a Sacrament. The question is, can this position change? Can any moral teaching change, so that what was morally wrong for everyone in the past becomes morally obligatory for some people in the future?

We know that the human species is slowly but constantly developing, adapting itself by natural selection to its changing environment. Does this demand a gradual change in what is naturally good or evil for us to do? If humanity is evolving, can what is "humane" remain unchanged? If some naturally good or evil actions can change their morality, can all naturally good or evil actions change? If not, why not?

Obviously, our present natural law concerning incest simply did not apply to the first human family. Early humans were obliged by the natural law to commit incest, practise polygamy, avoid all contraceptives and even practice bestiality by mating with anthropoids (neanderthals) in order to increase and multiply our peculiar genes. Equally obvious, the marriage of brothers and sisters or the mating with anthropoids which was dictated by natural law at the beginning of our race would be totally unacceptable, unnatural today.

Both human nature and the human condition have changed. Even in the last thousand years, natural evils like world wars, charging interest for borrowed money, human slavery and the torture of suspected heretics have all been subjected to shifting moral judgments. Is the Vatican's policy of linking the sex act primarily with conception still valid in a world of artificial insemination, genetic engineering and 6 billion people?

In the past, homosexual behaviour was quite reasonably seen to be a moral disorder, unnatural just as using a contraceptive was considered to be a moral evil because procreation and child rearing were considered to be the principal goals of both marriage and human sexuality. Sexual behaviour that frustrated the principal goal of sexuality was therefore regarded as unnatural. A secondary goal of marriage and sexuality is marital bonding, a necessary condition for the long term nurturing or education of children, a primary goal of marriage.

In view of the enormous growth and the changed distribution of the world's population, have human reproduction and marital bonding changed places in the order of priorities? There are now over six billion people who can kill every living thing in seconds and who are rapidly exhausting the earth's nonrenewable resources. I think it would be fair to say that, given our present predicament of growing populations, world wars and declining resources, the education of children and the marital bonding which education requires have become the principal goals of most marriages. On the other hand, for the past fifty years, human reproduction has been at most, a secondary goal of marriage and it has been deliberately avoided in most sexual activity in marriage. In our vast but interdependent world, the physical and spiritual nurturing, that is to say, the education of existing populations and the marital bonding which make this possible must take precedence over reproduction if we are to

## *Evolution & Morality Continued...*

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eliminate war, disease, poverty and resource exhaustion. Clearly, the childless marriages of devoted partners who are dedicated to the life long care of others are now an essential component of today's society.

In the past, their natural sterility was rightly regarded as a handicap, but in our present densely populated world and for the foreseeable future, a couple's sterile sexual activity helps them to maintain that strong marital bond which enhances their ability to serve others without prior and conflicting family obligations. In fact, in some countries, such couples will soon replace child bearing couples as the basic unit of society. If marital bonding has become more important for the preservation and improvement of the species than human reproduction, are we thereby justified in preventing reproduction in most sexual activity by using contraceptives or sterilization? Are we justified in approving single sex partnerships? Can actions which were naturally evil for everyone for thousands, perhaps millions of years become naturally good and obligatory for some people? St. Thomas Aquinas gives an example of something which is naturally evil which can change into a natural good, in fact, an obligation. The refusal to repay a debt is a natural evil for human nature but under certain conditions, for example, when the creditor becomes an enemy of the country and the debt consists in weapons, refusal to repay becomes a matter of natural obligation for the debtor. Thomas thought that a natural evil, refusal to repay a debt, can become a natural and necessary good under special conditions. Is this situational ethics? How can natural good or evil depend on circumstances? Without reducing the problem to mere semantics, there appears to be a real difference between a circumstance and a condition. However, in considering the sexual love of two particular humans, their marital status is a critical condition of their behaviour and not a mere circumstance.

Only God's nature is immutable. Our nature, our humanity, is mutable and therefore subject to the constantly changing conditions of human and animal life. To put it in contemporary language, we should recognize that we, like every other living species, are evolving. Sterile sexual activity might well be a natural obligation for a couple to preserve marital bonding while any activity that led to conception (in vitro fertilization, failure to use a contraceptive,) would be a natural evil for a couple.

Perhaps the time has not yet come for the Catholic hierarchy to approve of such a development but I think the time has come for us as a Church to examine our gradually evolving human nature, natural law and the physical universe. It is certainly time for us to consider eventual alterations in what is naturally wrong or right for us to do. Human nature and its law, expressing God's image and desire, simply do not have God's quality of immutability. Apart from the natural law's vague first precept of "do good, avoid evil" our nature and its law remain imperfect, ever changing, ever developing and growing towards perfection. It is true that in time, our Creator and Redeemer will replace our corruptible, mutable nature with immortality and our natural law will be replaced with a clear understanding of everlasting Truth and Goodness. Until then, the time has certainly come for all of us Catholics to present the teachings of the Church, God's people, on sexuality, marriage and the family from our experience of Christ as ministers of this Sacrament in this century. We should join our voices to the voices of other married persons such as Peter and Paul and their successors in the first few hundred years of the Roman Catholic Church

when they restricted Bishops to having only one wife. Cardinal Hume in his book by Peter Sandford is quoted as saying "I made a decision never to talk about sexual ethics. I'm not an expert on the subject. I'm very conscious that I'm a celibate and my comments will be interpreted because of that." It is unfortunate that more Bishops and Popes have not followed his example.

***Since Bishops and Popes have refused to receive Christ in the Sacrament of Matrimony for well over a thousand years, it is now especially important for them to listen to the voice of God in God's people in matters that involve marriage, the education of children, contraception, married clergy, homosexuality, divorce, child abuse, abortion, women in the priesthood, rape, family violence or genetic engineering, to mention only a few.***

It is not that the teachings of the Magisterium must always represent the beliefs of the majority of Catholics. Truth does not depend on the number of people who believe it. Nor does one have to be married to know about marriage. Neither celibate ignorance nor even male bias in the Magisterium are the major factors in the need to listen to the voices of married people. The single and most pressing reason to listen to married people arises from the fact that those who have received the sacrament of Matrimony from Christ in their spouse (not from the Bishop and his priests) have the primary right and responsibility from Christ to teach their children. Through this Sacrament, when they teach their children, they do so on behalf of Jesus. Jesus was not only talking to Bishops. He was talking to all His people. That is why Baptism by the laity, not just the Bishops, has always been accepted as a Sacrament and why parents and not just the Bishops are an integral part of the magisterium, the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, the people of God.

It is significant that when Popes and Bishops have usurped the role of married people in the education of children, the results have so often been criminally disastrous for their helpless victims and a shameful tragedy for the whole Church. In many countries, Bishops and Popes have tried to replace marriage and the family, which God has taken millions of years to evolve, by setting up residential schools, staffed exclusively by celibates. In junior seminaries, orphanages and first nations' residential schools they have too often prevented, not helped, the education of children. By the same token, when Bishops work with parents by providing (with parental funds) for day schools, the results have been for the most part a healthy and beneficial alternative to the state run secular system. It would be most unfortunate, therefore, if the Popes and Bishops were ever to speak in contradiction to their people on any matter, but especially in matters that directly concern marriage and the family. A disembodied head is just as dead as a decapitated body. Pope and people, clergy and laity, need each other for mutual growth in the living Body of Christ. If Popes and Bishops were to consider themselves as independent organisms, corporations which could survive (like Church property) without priests, nuns and people, they would be reducing themselves to decapitated heads. This is not to say their statements would be false if they were in open

## Evolution & Morality Continued...

opposition to their own people. This is simply to say they would be unbelievable. We would have no assurance of the presence of Christ in such a monologue from such a disembodied head. It would be like a Pope teaching about contraception (or anything else) in complete opposition to the rest of the Bishops, priests and people. What he taught would be unbelievable, even if it were true. If a layman's, priest's or Bishop's teaching is truly a dialogue and not just another monologue, then we have His promise that Christ is with us both, in the hearing as well as the speaking. In the early Church, during the last 75 years in the Ukraine and for a very brief time in El Salvador, for the last 50 years in China and for many years in East Timor, Bishop and people were close enough in their belief and love to go through prison and death as a single community, not as two separate, conflicting factions. They listened to each other.

True, Christ has promised to be with us all days, even to the end of the world. But He gave us no guarantee that the Catholic Church will survive in any particular place, whether it is on a hill called Golgotha or on one called the Vatican. The virtual disappearance of the Catholic Church of Augustine in Tunisia or the Catholic Church of Ignatius in present day Syria and Jerusalem clearly proves that. Can the Canadian Catholic Bishops and people listen to each other, without the threat of prison or death but with the very real chance of extinction as a community? I wonder.

At a time when contemporary governments and social changes are virtually destroying marriage and the family, the Magisterium cannot continue to ignore the teachings of a large portion of itself, the men and

women who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage and who were authorized by Christ through His sacrament to teach God's Word to their children. But is anyone up there listening? Ignatius, a Bishop of Antioch who wrote about 75 years after the death of Jesus, could not have imagined such a situation. Ignatius tells us to "listen to the Bishop, just as God listens to you". Ignatius expects priests and laity to listen to him like God listens to him. His people were not treated like sheep. They were spoken to like they were God, for by their Baptism, faith and love, they were fellow members of the same Divine family and the immediate source of a Bishop's wisdom and power. Even the pagan Roman governor Pliny in his letter to Trajan noticed that the early Christians were 'praying antiphonally,' That is to say, first one part of the church and then the other would pray so that at one time or another each person would speak for Christ and then would listen to Christ in the person of their neighbour, man or woman, clerical or lay. It appears that the teaching presence of Jesus was not so much in the Bishop or in the people as in their dialogue, their interaction, their conversation, their holy communion. If Bishops and people build that relationship once again, it will not be just a revolution. It will be a reformation. True, the human species with its laws is constantly evolving. That does not really matter for it is our relationship between each other and with God which is everlasting. To be in love is to be in God. St. John and I are in agreement on that!

### Letters

**I**t was wonderful to be with you all in Sidney- Much love abounded. Just want to comment on Art's resignation from NCT. Can't express enough thanks for his performance that was consistently above the call of duty. His strengths in logistics, synthesis and perceptive listening have been immeasurable in shaping a national Corpus organization. His zest for new horizons has kept it future-oriented. I, for one, reluctantly release you, Art. But I do. May the energy you have poured into the NCT be multiplied a hundred fold for your personal life and for the many other capacities in which you serve. And so Joe, welcome! And thanks for stepping up to the plate as NCT Facilitator.

I'm happy to pledge my support especially during your "initiation" period.  
Dianne Peck

**We** in Winnipeg are saddened by Art's stepping down from the NCT. He was a very valuable member. We are consoled by his pledge to continue to serve CC. We hope he will continue as well his very enlightening TS in the Journal.  
Neil Parado

**I**, too, wish to thank Art for his great work with Corpus. I know that just because he resigned from the NCT doesn't mean that he will not still be involved. It was a great conference in Sidney, BC. All conferences are great. We get to meet our friends, have friendly discussions and propose solutions for the Universal Roman Catholic Church. The food was great, maybe too great! The dancing helped to wear it off. Thank you to the organizing committee. You did a wonderful job. The good Lord knows I accepted the national coordinator job, knowing that I have some good people to help keep our Corpus movement going. But, where do we start? What do you want us to do? Let's look at some innovative initiative. We have the Journal which is carrying important messages throughout Canada and internationally. How can we increase its distribution? Let's start NOW.  
Joe Gubbels

**J**ake and I had a great time at the Sidney conference. What a great job of organizing by Arthur and Alanna with their team (sorry I don't remember all the names). The weather was perfect. There was food and refreshment available all the time - muffins, coffee or tea, juices, fruits, and the lunches just hit the spot. The supper was a feast. The facilities couldn't be better. Jim Doyle picked us up at the airport and chauffeured us during the conference. I am sure glad I came.

Thank you Arthur for steering the ship these past years. We cleared past a good number of rocky shores and survived. I salute our new captain Joe Gubbels. If he can handle the folks in trouble with the laws of Canada, I suppose he should handle us renegades in trouble with the laws of Rome. A big thanks to the Journal team, and Chris Diamond especially recently for the pictures so soon after we got home. I must also say a word of thanks to Dianne Peck. The fact that she went to so much trouble to get from one end of the country to the other to be at the conference, is an inspiration to me.  
Emil Kutarna

# Theological Soapbox

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC

## WHAT THE CHURCH CAN LEARN FROM THE 12 STEP PROGRAM (PART I)

What is the most vital and influential form of spirituality in the world today? Ask ten people and you may get ten different answers. My answer is the 12 Step Program, first formulated in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and now practiced by many people and followed by many organizations of people recovering from addictions of all sorts. Everyone I have met who has followed this program with dedication has impressed me as being more spiritually alive than most people I meet, including folks who go to church regularly. This raises the question whether the churches can learn something from the 12 Step Program (which, besides the 12 steps themselves, includes the "twelve traditions").

The 12 steps themselves (as attested by the founders of AA) are firmly rooted in the Christian tradition. In fact, I learned the teachings whereof the 12 steps may be regarded as specific applications in my Catholic catechism classes while still in elementary school. Here are the 12 steps as used in Alcoholics Anonymous (for alcohol you can substitute any other kind of addiction). Underneath each one, labeled "A," I describe the Catholic teaching corresponding to it as the teaching was presented to me in catechism class. Also underneath, labeled "B," is the way I understand this teaching today.

The pre-Vatican II theology of my catechism class (represented by the "A" formulas) has become obsolete to a degree, and although it contains errors, it remains serviceable, and is certainly better than no theology at all. My current theology (represented by the "B" formulas) has two fundamental premises: (1) that the strongest impulse in human beings is to adore something, and (2) that we come to God by developing our human potential to the fullest.

This is the first of a series of Theological Soapbox articles on this topic. In this article I present the first 6 Steps and my commentary upon them.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

*(A) We are born and live under the dominion of tendencies that lead us to commit sins, and by our own power cannot overcome these tendencies. (The doctrine of original sin)*

*(B) We have an innate need to adore something. When we adore things other than God, devoting time, energy and resources to these idols, we do not have enough time, energy and resources to live the full, rich and rewarding lives we are capable of. Being born ignorant into a world full of ambiguity and confusion, we inevitably begin adoring many things that are not God and become attached to these idols. By our own power we are not able to distinguish what is God from what is not God and overcome our attachment to idols so as to adore God alone.*

2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

*(A) God's grace through Jesus Christ frees us from the overmastering power of our sinful tendencies, and while not removing our sinful tendencies, enables us to avoid committing serious (mortal) sins. This allows us to hope that we will be saved and enjoy eternal happiness. To the degree that we dedicate ourselves to the way of perfection (celibacy, complete obedience to ecclesiastical authority, prayer and mortification of the flesh and other spiritual disciplines) we are enabled to avoid less serious (venial) sins.*

*(B) God can give us an experience of God that will enable us to distinguish what is God from what is not God. If we then choose to adore God, we will be freed from our attachment to idols. Unlike the adoration of idols, adoration of God makes it possible for us to live full, rich and rewarding lives, develop our human potential to the fullest, and be comforted by the hope of resurrection into God's new creation.*

3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

*(A) While faith in Jesus Christ is a gift, God wants all people to be saved. Therefore, if anyone open to the truth has the gospel rightly preached to them, they will receive the gift of faith.*

*(B) Those of us who adore something other than God sooner or later realize that our life is going from bad to worse. We also realize that adoring nothing would not improve our situation. If we are humble enough to be willing to do anything to get help, we eventually do one of the following three things. If we believe there is a God, we reach the point of desperation where we ask God to help us. If we do not believe that there is a God, our desperation is such that we nevertheless cry out, "Somebody or something greater than me, help me!" Whichever of these things we do, we receive the help we need to reverse the direction of our lives at least for a short time. If we continue to turn to this source of help, the new direction for our lives will become firmly established. Those who do not believe in God may or may not come to understand that the "somebody or something" that is helping them, and that they are adoring (although they may not use this word), is God.*

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*(A) If we return to the practice of our faith after having lapsed, or come as an adult to the faith, we must make an examination of conscience covering all the time we were not practicing the faith with the intention of making a general confession in the sacrament of penance.*

*(B) As best we can we must become aware of all the things we have been adoring that are not God, the tendencies and attachments that influence us to continue to adore these idols, and the choices we must make to establish ourselves firmly in the adoration of God and prevent falling back into our old ways.*

5. We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human

## Focus Continued...

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being the exact nature of our wrongs.

*(A) Having made a thorough examination of conscience, we make a general confession in the sacrament of penance, in which we confess all of our previously unconfessed sins to the priest.*

*(B) In order to achieve clarity about what we need to do in order to forego idolatry and adore God alone, and to commit ourselves more fully to this change, it is helpful to take into our confidence a trustworthy and spiritually mature person with whom we can speak freely and who will understand and support what we are doing. It will also be helpful to join a community of faith that will nurture us in our new way of life.*

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

*(A) In making an examination of conscience and general confession, we are resolved not to sin again, avoid the near occasions of sin, take whatever measures are necessary to protect ourselves from temptation,*

*and make use of what the Church offers for the spiritual assistance of its members (pious practices, confession, holy communion, etc.).*

*(B) We understand that adoration of God means that we accept God as our teacher, and that God will teach us through the events of our life. We become attentive to what is happening within and outside of ourselves. We look for patterns in our own ways of thinking and behaving. We learn what facilitates our adoration of God alone and what makes it more difficult for us to adore God. We pray, participate in public worship, and make use of the Bible and other sources of guidance, especially the advice and wisdom of spiritually mature people. We do not try to achieve perfection all at once but do what we can day by day to grow spiritually, not being too concerned with our shortcomings and failures as long as we are moving in the right direction. "Two steps forward, one step back," is okay.*

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## How The 12 Steps Helped Me

by John C

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The twelve step program suggests we give back what we've received; I'll attempt here to share how AA12 step spirituality has helped me. Briefly, here's some of my life's story: Born in '31 in Eastern Canada, I grew up in a middle class family and kept busy with school, sports, and Anglican church youth activities. After graduation from high school, I worked nearly seven years for a bank throughout the Maritimes and Toronto. In Toronto in '53, I experienced the first big turning point in my life: I became a catholic.

Two years later I entered a teaching religious Order and after nine years of study, I was ordained priest in '64. I then taught high school in Southern Ontario for six years. Then, for some inexplicable reason, I decided to leave the Order and the ministry in '71. I continued to teach from '71 until I retired in '89. During that time, I met and married my first wife in '73. We remained together quite happily until her untimely death from cancer in '93. Three years later, I married the lovely lady I'm contentedly living with now. That's my life in a nutshell without the mention of alcohol.

But alcohol played a big part from about '65 on. Gradual weekend drinking turned into a daily routine. Even though for years I was able to kind of control the amount I consumed, I was never really successful. Fear and denial were my constant companions. I didn't want others to know how much I drank and I even tried to keep this fact from myself as well.

Eventually, the drink became a power in and of itself; my daily drinking progressed until it became all consuming. Finally in '91, I hit bottom and I had to reach out for help. It wasn't easy asking for help. My false pride prevented my reaching out for a long time. However, my sense of failure and brokenness, together with a humiliating experience at that time, gave me the willingness to ask for relief from my alcohol problem. Help came through my doctor, a treatment facility, and most importantly, form AA. Discovering AA has been the most important turning point in my life. This fellowship with its God-centred 12 step program is still a big part of my life today.

Working through the 12 steps has helped me discover blocks to truth

and right living. I came to see that I had to change much of my old behaviour in order to grow spiritually. I had to start by admitting my powerlessness over my alcohol addiction; I was able to come to the realization that alcohol was only a symptom of a deeper disease of self-centredness, along with all its attendant defects of character. Once I faced my pain and recognized my powerlessness, I began to see more clearly the directions laid out in the 12 steps, and they required that I rely less and less on my own power and more and more on God's.

Previously, My alcoholism prevented me from taking a good look at myself. Many of us had, and perhaps still have, problems in the sexual, social, and monetary areas of life. I was no exception. I was always demanding more than my share. The program has helped me achieve a more balanced perspective in these three areas. I find now that I'm more accepting of myself, with all my limitations than I ever was before. So too, I believe my relationships with those with whom I come in contact have improved. My money worries have greatly diminished. Over time, I'm hopeful that even deeply ingrained defects and shortcomings will eventually disappear, providing I continue to work the 12 steps and live the program.

Each day, with God's help, I try to discover more about myself and how I might be of more service to others. What needs to be changed in my behaviour? How can I build on my strengths? Do I owe an apology? Was I resentful or angry? How honest am I? Why am I fearful at times? Am I always willing and open? Was I grateful today? This daily practice, I think, helps me grow spiritually.

One of our founders (Bill W.) said "All of us has (sic) a story of suffering transmuted under grace into spiritual progress." I believe that to be true. I'm learning too that "we" is more important than "me" and that I'm just one among many who come together for a larger purpose: to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

# How Has 12 Step Spirituality Helped Me?

by S.S.

Trust God, clean house, serve others. I can't; God can; I'll let God. These were the mantras for me early in recovery. God still remained the figure I had learned about in Sunday school, so how could I trust God? I didn't believe that I was important enough for God to remove my obsession.

I'm a compulsive overeater, and so my disease started early in life and was always running the show. If I wasn't eating I was planning the next meal, or snack, or binge. There were very few moments when I didn't obsess about something and then the 'reward' would be something to eat.

When I started to go to Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meetings, I had difficulty truly believing that my childhood God cared enough about me to remove the obsession for food. He had so many other things to worry about (war, famine, floods, etc.). I had 'dieted up' to 300 pounds and I still felt that if I found the right diet, then I could ask God for help. I really hadn't surrendered to the fact that I was powerless and that God had the power to do what I couldn't do alone. I certainly wasn't ready to let God take on my eating.

After a year of going to meetings I attended an OA retreat. It was suggested that I write a want ad to my Higher Power. Making the ad as personal as I could helped me form a picture of someone who cared

about me and cared that I might start living free from my obsessions.

Want ad in hand, I started to "act as if" God was really that someone. Slowly, I started to trust that I was personally cared for and about. Someone wanted me to live, not just exist. As that belief became stronger, I started to see how others were accomplishing what I wanted, but I was still far from that.

Then in exasperation I made plans to leave the fellowship. I had finally admitted defeat. The concept of God, the one I had been pretending existed stepped in. I was ready and my teacher appeared.

God became my constant conscious companion. I completely trusted that my obsession could be removed and gave it to God at every turn.

At this point with weight less of an issue, another sponsor has come into my life and I am now working at deepening my spirituality. More of my life needs to be left in the hands of that Power Greater than myself. I am grateful that the possibility exists for an ever-changing, ever-present companion. As I go forward, serving others, I'll trust God and let God do what I could never do alone.

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## My Experience Of 12 Step Spirituality

by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC

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My experience of the Twelve Step Movement was powerfully instrumental in changing the direction of my spiritual life, and for this I am eternally grateful. Let me explain how this could be.

I entered the religious life in my late teens totally convinced that it was the only way that I could save my soul from all the evils of this world. I had swallowed hook, line and sinker the Jansenistic teachings of my French Canadian family and church. Pent up inside me like a bottle of pop in the sun were the classic feelings of life. Psychologists describe them as the *big 4*: mad, sad, glad and scared. I had them all, and they wanted to be expressed, but I didn't know what they were. I sensed their power and it scared me. Inculturation told me they were dangerous, bad, to be avoided, buried, lost.

I remember my secret crying at night for months over the death of my brother George. World War II took him down at age 20. I was eight. He was my hero. I so identified with him that I was convinced that I too would die at age 20. I never realized it until now, but that's when I made my first vows in my Augustinian community.

I remember one day when I was 10 how I organized and cleaned my father's messy workbench in the basement. He hadn't asked me to. I was very good at it. I had hoped that he would notice it and that he would give me the recognition and praise that I so longed for from him. A week went by before he came upstairs in a tear one afternoon. He screamed in frustration that he couldn't find the tool that he was looking for. I said nothing. I was devastated and furiously angry. But the longing for connection remained. Many years later I would suddenly burst into uncontrollable sobs while watching episodes of the Walton's, when John Boy received heartfelt recognition from his father.

I remember that early summer when my friend Leo and I went camping on Cape Cod. One day we went into the Howard Johnson's restaurant in

Orleans, and I was amazed to see my grade 8 sweetheart, Elaine, working as a waitress. I awkwardly asked her out on a date. We saw one another several times that week. The sensual feelings were utterly intoxicating, more powerful than a bouquet of aromatic roses. The rest of that summer was like the 40 days in the desert. What was I to do with all those feelings? In late August I entered the novitiate.

For me religious life was a good place to hide from all those hellish feelings. And I could honestly pretty up such poor motivation with the thought of future good deeds done as a priest. However, as John Bradshaw would later point out in his books, the feelings kept wanting to rear their ugly heads. I soon convinced myself that the only way to keep them shackled in their dungeon and, thus, please God, was to faithfully follow all the rules and regulations of my religious community.

During the formation years leading to the priesthood, I unwittingly followed the spiritual tradition of the Pharisees of Jesus' time: separation from the 'world' and scrupulous adherence to the 'Law.' It felt comfortable. It gave me some sense of security and control over my connection to God. In reality, it allowed me to live a short distance from my body, totally immersed in the abstract world of the intellect. In terms of Kohlberg's paradigm of moral maturation, I was stuck at the "conventional level," moving in and out of stages three and four: 3. "That which is approved by my 'family' is *good*; that which they disapprove is *bad*."

4. "That which maintains order and is sanctioned by law is *good*; that which violates law or custom is *bad*."

The first five years of ordained priesthood allowed me to maintain more or less this spiritual structure. Indeed, they were

spent in the cloistered atmosphere of a minor seminary where I taught the social sciences, my field of expertise. I buried myself in work, either in teaching or in pastoral ministry. I was profoundly happy.

Then came Vatican II, and the cracks began to appear in my spiritual world. The minor seminary was closed, because its hothouse atmosphere was deemed psychologically unhealthy for the development of young teens thinking about becoming priests. I fought the closure of the seminary with righteous might, but it was to no avail.

My failed opposition to the progressive thoughts and decisions of my religious superiors brought with it strong feelings of disillusionment with the religious life. I was reassigned to an ecumenical retreat house as business manager and retreat master. All were welcome and all came, men and *women*, high school boys and *girls*. And the walls of protection so arduously built to keep out feelings cracked and crumbled. The psychosomatic consequences detailed by Bradshaw and others soon followed. I became increasingly disturbed emotionally and suffered several nervous ailments: migraines, shingles, psoriasis. Was I in the dark night of the soul and was I losing my vocation? I requested a leave of absence so that I could get some psychological help. It was granted and I went to Toronto.

I got a job as a personnel consultant so that I could support myself and my therapy financially. In the process of doing some group work, I met my future wife, Connie, who had left her religious community and had come to Toronto on a parallel therapeutic journey. After having received considerable help, at least sufficiently to recognize and accept a feeling when I had one, I decided to enter the training program to become a psychotherapist. Independently, so did Connie. We became good friends and several years later we married.

This is when the deeper healing began to take place. We were two very different personalities: she the bright, intuitive extrovert, and I the rational, organized introvert, she totally comfortable in the world of feelings, I struggling to recognize and deal with them. Faith, compassion and patience were the love glue that kept us together and enabled us to share our gifts.

However, I still felt uncomfortable around expressed feelings and particularly angry feelings. Rather than feel them I worked. I worked hard all the time. It was easy to justify and it was a comforting narcotic. Connie was not happy about this and, from time to time, confronted me rather sharply. I listened somewhat grudgingly, if not

angrily, promised to do better, but it would soon fade.

I don't remember how it is that I went to that first, all-men Adult Children Anonymous (ACA) meeting. I was terrified by it and it took six weeks before I returned. Then I typically stuck with it quite faithfully for seven years, the last four in a second stage recovery program.

I finally admitted that I was a workaholic and that I was powerless to stop that dysfunctional behaviour. I quickly learned that only with God's power could I overcome it. With time I decided to let go and let God help me. Getting through steps 4 through 10 took years of work. Even though I left the group several years ago, I am still working on steps 11 and 12: my spiritual contact with God and my efforts to recognize and respond to God's invitation to give my gifts as God calls me to.

Many years have passed since I left Kohlberg's fourth level of moral maturation. I'm grateful to God that I have the opportunity to pursue his seventh level or ACA's twelfth step or Deepak Chopra's and Caroline Myss' sixth and seventh stages of spiritual growth. In terms of my Christian heritage I choose to spend the rest of my time on the material plane living, working and loving within the Church Radiant, the People of God building the House of Love as God would have it.

At the end of her book, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, Caroline Myss writes the following (p.290):

"This age of consciousness is not pushing us merely to indulge in new spiritual theories or play thought games that unite physics with Zen Buddhism. We are meant to move toward self-discovery and spiritual maturity, to be ready and able to live a life that matters to us and those around us.

"We contain the scripture. We contain Divinity. We are Divinity. We are the church, the synagogue, the ashram. We need but close our eyes and feel the energy of the sacraments, the sefirot, the charkas, as the origin of our own power – as the energy that fuels our biology. Ironically, once we realize the stuff of which we are made, we have no choice but to live a spiritual life."

Too often the institutional churches do not teach and preach the spiritual life. Not to worry, God's Spirit of Love inspires many messengers like the founders of the Twelve Step Movement.

### R & The 12 Steps

Because anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our fellowship, I wish to remain so - outside of our groups - no names. Because of "the programme" I am enabled to live with strength and hope. These come from a source outside myself which had not become available to me through my exposure to conventional religion. Most helpful in finding some peace of mind is the concept that I gain a measure of serenity by accepting the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference - if I ask.

# Regions Write

*CORPUS-NCR and Corpus Canada*  
by Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON



Since Jack Shea and I, both members of Corpus-NCR, resigned from the National Coordinating Team of Corpus Canada in March of this year, there has been some discussion of the relationship between the two organizations. Some people assumed that our resignations

signified that Corpus-NCR had withdrawn from Corpus Canada. For this reason I would like to give some history of Corpus-NCR to help clarify the relationship between our two groups.

The Corpus group in the National Capital Region began in the fall of 1989 under the leadership of Jack Shea and his wife Jean James, and of Alex and Marlene Campbell, both married-priest couples. Jack and Jean had attended the Corpus-USA Conference in Columbus, Ohio in June of that year, and came back convinced that Corpus had a role to play in the Ottawa area. (This inspiration occurred coincidentally about the same time as Corpus Canada began in Western Canada under the guidance of Daniel Gerwing, who also attended the Corpus-USA Conference in Columbus; his group in Regina began in the spring of that year.) Exploratory meetings, with much printed material for discussion supplied by the Shea/James's and the Campbell's were held at the homes of these two couples, and later at the homes of other couples who became involved in the group.

Before long, monthly meetings were held, and a core of some twenty people attended these early meetings. A mailing list was prepared of those interested in the group, some of whom attended regularly and some sporadically. The latest mailing list (June 2003) contains the names of sixty-two—twenty-six couples, and ten individuals. The list includes street addresses with postal codes, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

As the group evolved a need was felt for a mission statement to clarify its goals. To develop this statement, several meetings were conducted by Alex and Marlene Campbell, who have much experience in animating groups. By November 1991 a statement of the Mission, Goals and Objectives of CORPUS Canada, National Capital Region was agreed upon by the group. These remain its guiding principles.

Meetings are held about once a month. For a time the group met on Sunday afternoons at the Springhurst Residence in Ottawa of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Later it met regularly at the homes of members on Saturday evenings for a potluck supper as well as a liturgy, a business session, and a social gathering. Most recently we have often met at community centers in the Ottawa area to accommodate the large numbers who attend, while continuing to meet at some individuals' homes

These gatherings are supplemented by a Christmas party at Maurice and Claudia Sullivan's condominium in Ottawa, an outdoor liturgy and

potluck dinner in June at the country home of Paul and Sandra Glynn in Arnprior, and a weekend fall retreat at the Galilee Centre in Arnprior. These last three events are shared with members of CCO (Concerned Catholics of Ottawa) and CNWE (Catholic Network for Women's Equality). Alone or in conjunction with these other groups Corpus-NCR has sponsored public lectures by several people including Terry Dosh and Philip Kaufman, OSB. These joint efforts have helped to bring the members of all three groups closer together.

Members have also attended the conferences of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests and of CORPUS-USA. In 1994 CORPUS-NCR hosted the national conference of CORPUS Canada, held at Carleton University in Ottawa. It also held a tenth-year-anniversary day in 1999 to mark its own founding, and hosted a National Coordinating Team meeting in 2000,

From its beginning in 1989 Corpus-NCR has been associated with Corpus Canada, but it has always been a separate and independent organization. For a while it paid a group membership to Corpus Canada, but several years ago decided that those individuals who wanted to belong to Corpus Canada would send in their own contributions, and that Corpus-NCR as a group would no longer pay a membership fee. This clearly indicated that Corpus-NCR as a group did not belong to Corpus Canada; only those members belonged who chose to join individually.

That is the situation which remains to this day. Based on the last membership list I received from Corpus Canada, about four couples who belong to Corpus-NCR also belong to Corpus Canada. So the fact that two members of Corpus-NCR resigned from the Team does not mean that Corpus-NCR has withdrawn from Corpus Canada, since it has in fact not belonged to Corpus Canada as a group in recent years.

Early in 2003, when the Coordinating Team was unable to vote on whether to join the new North Atlantic Federation of Catholic Priests and their Wives (its latest name), Corpus-NCR decided as a group to apply for membership in the new Federation. It was eligible to do so since the new Federation accepts regional groups as well as national groups among its members. When its application was accepted, Corpus-NCR also voted to change its official name to Corpus-National Capital Region (Canada) to identify it as a group from Canada among the groups from eight other countries that belong to the new international organization. It will be represented by two of its members – Jack Shea and Jean James -- at the founding conference of NAFCPW in Wiesbaden, Germany from August 31 to September 3 of this year. We hope to report to *The Journal* on decisions that are made at this founding conference.

Corpus-NCR (Canada) supports the aims of Corpus Canada and hopes that we are able to work together on common projects in the future. We hope too that one day we will be able to work together as members of NAFCPW, even though Corpus Canada decided in a motion at its conference in May of this year not to join the new Federation "at this time."

## Regions Write Continued...

### Restore Optional Celibacy

Quotes Compiled by Neil Parado, Winnipeg, MB

In 2002 Robert Pledl, the Catholic lawyer who represented the St. Lawrence Seminary sex-abuse victims in Mount Royal, Wisconsin, believed that mandatory celibacy created a clerical world where women and children were the enemy and that the accumulating scandals signaled the need for reform. Ernesto F. Herrera of Manila Times, in his article "Should priests be allowed to marry?" asked: "Would there be no more sex scandals in the Church once priests are allowed to marry? The latest crisis to hit the local Church further begs the question, whether it is time for the Catholic hierarchy to tackle some much-needed reform... An examination of compulsory celibacy should be an element of such reform."

Rev. Dr. Heinz Vogels agrees with lawyer Pledl: I see a connection between the necessity to suppress sexual instincts because of the law of mandatory celibacy, and the escapes that some of the priests seek with those who are easily available, that is, children and women, especially young ones and married ones. No profession has so many child and other sex abuse cases as priests.

Edward Kelly in his book "Sex and the Church," p. vi, points out: "It is wrong to reject our full humanity or be ordered to reject it. A person may freely decide to live a celibate life; an institution may encourage it. But compulsory celibacy contravenes the law of nature, and nature will have its revenge. So we see many priests today, unable to endure lifelong celibacy. They live a double life, and many people (especially women) get hurt. Their ministry is compromised. They themselves are compromised as human beings, often yielding to drink, despair or loneliness."

Last June 17/03 the Editorial and Opinion on Celibacy in the Philippine Daily Inquirer ([www.inq7.net](http://www.inq7.net)) concluded: It is no surefire guarantee, but if Catholic priests were given the option of marriage, the Church might see fewer cases of sexual harassment, seduction and unwanted pregnancies. That conclusion is corroborated by Prof. Thomas Groome who writes in CITI Salutes Integrity ( Celibacy Is The Issue 10th Anniversary Issue, p. 10 ): There are some 13, 000 married deacons in the U.S. Catholic Church, but there is no sex abuse scandal among them.

Cardinal Karl Lehmann, President of the German Bishops' Conference, told the reporter of the magazine Bunte in Oct./01: "During the Bishops Synod in Rome, I was seated next to Cardinal Husar, the Archbishop of Lemberg in Ukraine, who has 540 married priests and only 38 celibate ones. The same ratio applies to some Near East Churches in Lebanon and so on. Rev. Dr. Vogels asked: Did you ever hear of pedophilia cases in these Churches where a married Catholic priesthood is admitted? Remove the legal pressures by restoring optional celibacy and you'll have no scandals. Jesus said: Not all are capable of not marrying, but only those to whom it has been given ( Mt. 19:11 ).

Rev. Dr. Richard Sipe in *A Secret World, Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy*, 1990, shows that only 10% of the priests are capable of charismatic celibacy. All the others ( 90% ) are forced by law to live a celibate life.

Prof. Dr. Beatrice Ferrolli, Austria, remarked at the burial of Cardinal Hans Herman Groer who was involved years back in a homosexual scandal with minors in Austria: Not he is guilty who fails in

complying with an unfulfillable legal demand of mandatory celibacy. Guilty is the one who issues such a demand. The leaders of the Church did that. Jesus did not demand it. Then on June 28, 2003, 3:34 PM EDT, Nicole Winfield, Associated Press Writer, writes the following: The Vatican reaffirmed celibacy for priests Saturday, rejecting arguments that the Roman Catholic Church could resolve the 'crisis' of decreasing numbers of clergy by opening the priesthood to married men.

Instead, the Vatican said, current priests should dedicate themselves to attracting more candidates by better explaining the priesthood to lay Catholics and encouraging families and children to consider religious vocations...

The document acknowledged there were fewer and fewer men signing up for the priesthood, but said removing the celibacy requirement wasn't the answer.

A revision of the present discipline in this regard would not help to resolve the crisis of vocations to the priesthood being felt in many parts of Europe," the document said. "A commitment to the service of the Gospel of hope also demands that the Church make every effort to propose celibacy in its full biblical, theological and spiritual richness."

Dr. Vogels said: "I read this statement in Germany, as well. We have a proverb: 'It is like whistling in the woods because of being frightened by the darkness.' They know their case is lost, they have no arguments, but they want to keep the discipline as long as the present Pope lives, who made too strong statements in favor of mandatory celibacy as to be able to withdraw from that position."

As to their only argument: You can explain the richness of celibacy as long as you wish, you will never increase the number of charismatic celibates by instruction! It is a matter of grace, as Christ says, and this grace is given only to a few: "Not all are capable of this but only those to whom it has been given, for there are (a few) eunuchs from their birth, and (a few) eunuchs made so by man, and (obviously also a few) eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom" (Mt 19:11-12). Against this there are no efforts by better instruction that will be able to create celibates.

"The official Church," Rev. Dr. Anthony Padovano contends, "has no biblical arguments, theological reasoning or pastoral benefits to support its present policy on mandatory celibacy. The policy has become almost absurd in its full articulation. It reads as follows: 'Celibacy is mandatory for all priests of the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church who were not Protestants first, or who, if they are Catholics, have not yet divorced their wives, or separated from them sexually, or buried them.'"



# THIS & THAT - PASTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC



Connie and I recently attended the induction service for Rev. Gordon Payne, the Anglican archdeacon, at St. Peter's Quamichan parish (Duncan, BC). Chris and Naomi Diamond and Michael Zarb were also present. You see, Gordon and his wife, Heather, are part of our Corpus mid-island small faith community.

At the reception following the service, several parishioners who are long time participants in Chris and Naomi's ecumenical bible study group, asked us how we liked the

liturgy. Both Connie and I responded very positively. "Except for most of the hymns sung, it was a wonderfully familiar Catholic experience," said Connie. Chris thought the homily by Canon Bill Morrison was superb. "That's something you don't often get in a Catholic church," he said.

What impressed me, however, was the liturgy of the induction part of the service. It was led by the bishop, it included members of the clergy, men and women, robed and sitting in the sanctuary, and, most importantly, in my opinion, it involved very actively a number of

lay leaders of the parish, both men and women. The symbols presented, the words spoken, and the hymns sung reminded everyone that Fr. Gordon, the new pastor, was being welcomed as the servant leader whose job it was to foster the spiritual growth of the parish community, that all were to work collaboratively toward that goal, and that, in doing so, they would enhance the spiritual life of the diocesan community.

For me this liturgy expressed the essence of the Christian task facing any of its communities. It spelled out well the responsibility of each of its members, but especially that of the pastor. Talk about accountability! "Boy, we sure could use that kind of induction liturgy in the Catholic church" was my enthusiastic comment to the group.

Indeed, what am I here for anyway, if it isn't to enhance not only my own spiritual life, but everyone else's that I relate to as well. "Love my neighbour, as myself!" Too often the leadership of the Catholic church translates that to mean: "pay, pray and obey!" Of course, that doesn't work anymore with an increasingly well-educated laity. Dissatisfied, lay people ignore, resist or journey on to greener spiritual pastures.

The Catholic hierarchy needs to take a lesson from the Anglican church, or more dramatically, from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Which kind of spiritual leader do you want to be like, Cornelius Fudge or Albus Dumbledore?

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## Media Release: Religion-Victoria Times Colonist

Saturday July 26, 2003

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### *Luring back married priests seen as solution to shortage* By Ian Dutton, Times Colonist staff

Mass at a Roman Catholic church can be a sensory feast, a riot of colour, sound and smell designed to fill a worshipper's heart with joy and mind with wonder.

But increasingly serving as a counterpoint to the brashness of the ceremony is the colour grey, the grey hair that so often defines the congregants and almost always the priests.

As the priesthood ages, the number of young men willing to take vows has dwindled, creating a critical shortage of clerics available to tend to the needs of the faithful.

"The days when the lineup started at the door to enter the priesthood are certainly gone," said Fr. Bill Kokesch, spokesman for the Canadian College of Catholic Bishops in Ottawa.

"A conference on the question of vocations was held last year for all of North America, looking for strategies to increase interest and participation and list recommendations about how to make it happen."

He said every facet of the church has to work on recruitment - bishops, teachers, parents - to make sure the best and the brightest young Catholic men consider the priesthood.

And, he said, because of sexual abuse scandals in the U.S. church, especially in the Boston region, the pressure is on to make recruitment even more selective.

"There's no prospect of lowering standards, that's for certain, and

considerable pressure, because of the sexual abuse situation, to make sure we get only the very best."

But there's one group that's offering a solution.

Corpus Canada, like its U.S. counterpart, is an agency set up to help men who have left the priesthood, often to marry, to make the transition to civilian life.

But François Brassard, spokesman for Corpus Canada, stressed those married priests are an untapped resource that the Catholic church is ignoring.

Brassard, who was active as a priest for more than 20 years, both in a teaching and a pastoral role, said the men who leave the priesthood are technically still priests.

"If they have their papers, as I do, they are still priests," he said. "I am a priest in good standing."

"We can perform weddings and so on and under Canon Law we can still celebrate Mass in emergency situations, or if requested to do so by the faithful."

"At Corpus, we would argue that the current shortage of priests is just such an emergency. And that's why we put our names out there with the people."

Brassard said the former priests fill many roles in the community, as counsellors, social workers, even - like former BCGEU head John Shields - as labour leaders.

He said there are more married priests in the diocese of Victoria than there are active priests.

But Kokesch said there is no formal dialogue between the church

and Corpus, though the bishops are aware of the organization and monitor its writings.

He said he's not convinced the group is offering a valid solution. "Anglicans and other denominations that permit a married clergy are also suffering a shortage of clerics," Kokesh said. "Allowing married priests is not the solution. What's needed is education and commitment to a vocation."

Brassard, who left the priesthood more than 30 years ago, said Corpus has been successful in removing the taint from priests who step away from their vows in order to marry.

"I have been in churches where a priest announced that it was their final service and they were leaving to get married and there was applause and congratulations," he said.

"Don't think that happened in my day. Some priests were even told that they had to leave the diocese, that they could no longer live there.

"We have been successful in changing that, even if not in being reinstated as priests."

Brassard also said many of the estranged priests would not seek reinstatement, even if it were offered.

There would have to be significant changes in the way the Vatican viewed the role of the priest to lure many of them back - himself included, he said.

And while he expects no significant change under the current Pope, whom he describes as a traditionalist, he said there is almost certainly change coming.

"If you read between the lines, there is a great push for change,"

Brassard said. "Change doesn't come from the top, it comes from the great mass of the people who make up the church.

"That's why Corpus's role is to get the message out to the people.

And the people themselves see that change is necessary and once that happens, the people in the hierarchy will not be able to stop it even if they wanted to."

### Why ADVENT Refused To Join The Proposed North Atlantic Federation

In a letter dated March 21, 2003 addressed to the Secretary of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests, the executive of ADVENT wrote:

We wish to make crystal clear Advent's position re the proposed North Atlantic Federation. We in Advent wish to be entirely disassociated from this proposed federation in spite of false claims to the contrary. Our reasons for this decision have already been spelt out in writing:

- The proposal runs counter to what had been decided and voted on at Madrid.
- We see this move as divisive and militating against the rich diversity of our international cooperation.
- We have no problem at all with the "Spanish influence," which seems to have been the motivation for the proposed North Atlantic Federation.
- We strongly object to Advent's name being used as it has been in trying to manipulate the move to the constitution of a North Atlantic federation. At no point did we express the desire to be part of this move. In addition we see from the correspondence that Leaven in Ireland is also claimed as supporter. We are aware, based on information from Aidan O'Keefe, that in November Leaven did not even have an elected committee. Perhaps you should contact Leaven to ascertain if they too have been falsely represented. Indeed, we would recommend that all groups, for whom approval has been claimed, be contacted to ascertain how far consultation has been pursued in each case.

*The Gospels contain no teaching of Jesus; they give us collections of scattered and often disjointed sayings. These can be arranged under headings, topics or themes; but conclusions which can be drawn from such arrangements are the teaching not of Jesus but of his interpreters... But one is aware of venerable "doctrines" proposed as the teachings of Jesus, such as the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, the establishment of the monarchical episcopate and the apostolic succession, none of which has the slightest foundation in the sayings of Jesus, and one takes due precautions. The sayings attributed to Jesus can, with varying degrees of probability, be traced back to the words of Jesus himself; sayings so traced are called by my colleagues "authentic" sayings. Sayings not judged authentic are attributed to the early disciples and scribes who made efforts to reconstruct the sayings of Jesus by the use of imagination or to construct what they thought he would have said about situations concerning which the collective memory of the disciples preserved no authentic sayings...*

*I assume that the "real" or the "historical" Jesus is more responsible than anyone else for what is preserved of his sayings and his doings in the Gospels. I do not believe that the Jesus of the Gospels is the creation of the nameless and barely literate believers of the first century.*

*from The Civilization of Christianity by John L.McKenzie*

# *European Federation: Working Group*

*by Mike Hyland, Advent*

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*Fos-sur-Mer, France: July 17th-18th, 2003.*

The first meeting of the working group was called by the International Executive Committee in response to the decision voted upon at Madrid to explore the possibility of setting up a European Federation of the married priest groups. Invitations were sent to all the European groups. Present were representatives of Advent (GB), Vocatio (Italy), Hors les Murs (Belgium), Prêtres en foyer (France), MOCEOP (Spain). France North meets only once a year and so there was as yet no mandate to take part.

## Session 1

There was an animated discussion concerning the decision taken by certain individuals, contrary to what was agreed and voted upon at Madrid, to set up a north atlantic federation.

The Executive Committee's position seemed to be that they had to accept the fact that this had happened. It was not their place to judge and we would have to wait till the next General Assembly (2005) to resolve this issue.

The general feeling was that if the Executive Committee could not solve this problem they should send it back to the national groups. After a lengthy discussion the following decisions became clear:

1. That it should be made quite clear, in the public domain, that this was contrary to the decision taken at Madrid and was the work of certain individuals acting ultra vires.
2. That it should be made clear where these individuals had been more than economical with the truth e.g. claiming that groups like Advent were signed up to the North Atlantic Federation when in fact they were not.
3. That it should be made clear that the north atlantic federation had stolen the title of the International Federation's bulletin 'Ministerium Novum'.
4. That our displeasure with this manipulation should be made clear at the next General Assembly.
5. That the way forward was to follow the mandate of Madrid and explore the possibility of setting up a European Federation.

## Session 2.

Here the focus was upon the reason for setting up and the function of a European Federation, the juridical statute of the Federation and the financial aspects. The basis which had been proposed by the International Executive Committee was the statutes and by-laws of the International Federation. These were in two separate documents with a view to the juridical status of the International Federation in Belgian Law.

Discussion rapidly led us in another direction. The proposal was to combine the two documents as we did not require the juridical status in Belgian law that the International Federation had rightly sought. The national groups would belong to the European Federation because they could relate more easily, geographically, culturally and economically to the other European groups. There would be the possibility of more frequent meetings and the possibility of facing up to shared social and cultural questions. It was also felt that the section in the statutes on objectives and orientation was not strong enough. Pierre Colet of Belgium accepted to act as secretary of the work group till 2005. He would produce a French draft to be worked on at the next meeting. Then the task of translation would be undertaken.

## Session 3.

The discussions of the previous sessions were drawn together. Whereas the International Federation was rather a 'top down' form of organisation, we preferred to function differently. There would be no General Assembly, but rather a 'Conseil d'Administration' which would take on the functions of a General Assembly. The direction of movement would be from the national groups to the 'Conseil d'Administration' which would then diffuse back to the groups. Meetings of the Federation would then function rather as seminars, study sessions, or the like.

A provisional calendar was agreed. The next General Assembly of the International Federation would be in 2005. Before the end of November 2004 our task as a working group must be finished. We must complete the statutes, organise the team, resolve the question of our relationship with other existing federations: The next meeting will be November 8-9, 2003. Questions of organisation were raised. Portugal appears to wish to join following the General Assembly 2005 when accepted by the International Federation. There will be no concept of 'big and small' groups having more or less votes according to size. Each country will have three votes and the chair will have a casting vote. The 'Conseil d'Administration' will consist of one representative from each country elected by the groups in that country. The Bureau will be elected by the 'Conseil d'Administration.'

The functions of the International General Assembly at the European level, accepting new members and revising statutes, will be carried out by the 'Conseil d'Administration.'

A provisional budget will have to be worked out. Each group will pay a subscription to the European Federation which will then subscribe to the International Federation/Confederation. In this way the ideals of solidarity and subsidiarity are well served.

**O**n the occasion of the Canadian controversy re 'Same Sex Marriage,' let me share with The Journal readers the following reflection. Same sex marriage is a committed permanent civil union of same sex couples. Homosexuality is still shrouded in mystery. One source claims chromosomal anomaly; another, claims environmental influence; a third source suggests that it is a gift from God. This latter source distinguishes homosexuality by orientation and homosexuality by preference.

My opinion is that Sacred Scripture condemns homosexuality by preference or choice. Homosexual orientation is not sinful because it is imbedded in nature by God to achieve God's own mysterious Divine Plan.

Leonard E. Schmidt, Co-chairperson, Alpha & Omega Christian Community of Manitoba



# 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.

**Corpus Canada Web Site**  
<http://www.corpuscanada.org>

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## 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, 9710 First St., Sidney, BC V8L 3C9. 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.

*Please note Brenden Fletcher of Calgary keeps Corpus Calgary up to speed on Team E-mails and general information.*  
[bpffletch@yahoo.com](mailto:bpffletch@yahoo.com)

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*Thank you for your support of this Christian ministry.*

**Corpus Canada Treasurer**  
**Alanna Menu**

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