



The Journal



Summer 2006

Excerpt From Call To Action Conference 1999

The question of women celebrating Eucharist is a bristly one, a controversial one. It troubles, infuriates, shocks and scandalizes some, even as women's liturgies all over the country give joy, comfort and hope to others.

The question, however, isn't going to go away. It will follow us into the new millennium and will play a vital role in the church's slow transformation because women celebrating Eucharist nudge the church toward the ideal of true Christian community. They remind us that in Christ there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free. They challenge understandings of Eucharist that serve to legitimate clerical control. They recreate liturgical space. They use images, symbols, and myths related to women's experience and their sense of themselves as images of God. Women preach without constraint in these settings. They find refuge from Sunday liturgies which function all too often to deepen their sense of alienation from the Church because these celebrations are so thoroughly shot through with male-centred language, male imagery, and male-inspired rubric.

Women's Eucharists find their place ultimately in a wide-ranging reexamination of the meaning of church, sacrament, and ministry. They open out on questions that Mary Collins, liturgist and theologian, poses when she asks, "On what grounds and according to what criteria and for what purposes is any Christian, male or female, called to ordination in a church of Jesus Christ? How is church grounded in Christian baptism to be reconciled with clericalized ministry? If the theological tradition as it developed is historically intelligible, is it any longer theologically defensible? What is suitable church order at the end of the twentieth century? The emphasis Mary Collins places here on the baptismal theology of a call to discipleship broadens the horizons of the Christian vocation. Her questions invite us to bridge the great divide that separates lay and clerical, men and women, celibate and married.

It is within the theological and ecclesial framework that Mary Collins hints at that I find the meaning of Women Celebrating Eucharist.
Kay Ashe, O.P.

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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.

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Xristos Community Society
35-10070 Fifth Street, Sidney, BC V8L 2X9
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product
Agreement No. 40025971

Xristos Community Society, a non-denominational society incorporated in British Columbia, serves the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship and the promotion and development of Christian small faith communities across Canada. Xristos Community Society is a registered charity in Canada. The Journal is distributed free of charge. Xristos Community Society needs and welcomes donations in support of its ministry. See the back page for further details.

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This, then, is salvation, when we marvel at the beauty of created things and praise the beautiful providence of their Creator or when we purchase heavenly goods by our compassion for the works of creation.

If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is Thank You, it will be enough.

Meister Eckhart O.P. 13th century saint, spiritual guide in his own time and ever since, theologian, and contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, he was condemned by Pope John XXII.

*God, This is your day; with your rainbow colours, it is beautiful. No matter how hard we try to forget you, you always come back to mind.
Nootka prayer*

FOCUS TOPIC

for the Fall 2006 Issue

Beyond the stable, what is Mary's mission in the world?

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

Reader's may send in items of interest to the Corpus Canada Forum at
www.corpuscanada.org

A Model For The Renewal Of Ordained Ministry

by *François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC*



In the last issue of *The Journal* (p.1) I wrote about Corpus Canada's vision of ordained ministry. I suggested that the primary function of the ordained minister consists in exercising prophetic leadership just as Jesus did, and I explained what I meant by that.

Though Corpus Canada as a national organization has sown many seeds in its effort to persuade the hierarchy to bring about this vision of a renewed ordained ministry, it has not as yet been successful. However, "the fields are now ripe and ready to be harvested" (Jn 4/35). How can this be?

In 1995 at the National Conference of Corpus Canada in Victoria, BC, the decision was made to direct our efforts for renewal toward the vast majority of the People of God. We hoped to accomplish this through Small Faith Communities. Many of us have been working at this on a local level for quite some time and with a fair amount of success. On the national level, Corpus Canada has sought to realize its vision of ordained ministry by inspiring and energizing the readership community of *The Journal*. I believe this is the best thing Corpus Canada at the national level has done and continues to do.

In this issue of *The Journal* we pursue our vision by highlighting the ordained ministry of a prophetic voice, Michele Birch-Conery. The common conviction among the People of God is that women can and must be included as equals among the ordained.

Personally, I am convinced that the Women's Ordination movement and, particularly, the RCWP (Roman Catholic Women Priests) movement that was responsible for Michele's ordination is grace driven by the Holy Spirit, and that the prophetic leadership of women like Michele will ultimately bring to fruition the vision of renewed leadership in the Catholic Church so much desired by the faithful, including the

faithful of Corpus Canada.

I would like to tell you why I feel so hopeful. Over a year ago Connie and I were chosen by Global Ministries University to assist Michele in preparation for her ordination on July 25, 2005. We, and our Corpus mid-island faith community, still work closely with Michele assisting her in her ministry. Personally, I am amazed by what the Spirit has accomplished in and through Michele. Even her fragile physical health has improved. She has shown wisdom and leadership in the delicate beginnings of the RCWP organization in North America. In terms of her pastoral ministry, one must keep in mind that Michele is a 'worker priest,' she teaches at North Island College, and so her ministry must work around that. Also, the RCWP movement counsels its ordained members to do everything possible in their pastoral ministry to avoid conflict with the hierarchy. Keeping this in mind, this is what Michele recently wrote when asked by a journalist to describe how she does pastoral ministry 'outside the Church.'

"It's been a beautiful experience. I go where I am called. It all opened up wide because of the great media coverage I had from Canada when I was ordained on the St. Lawrence last year. People then knew and had heard of me.

"I gave my first blessing to a couple who recognized me when I landed home at the Cassidy airport in Nanaimo and my second over the BC airwaves on a radio talk show. In Parksville I was stopped, in the aisles of the grocery store, at the mall, in parking lots, as people expressed support and would say 'it's about time!' I was particularly moved by a young woman at the grocery check-out stand. She was so excited she said that she had even watched French TV, so she could get more information. I don't know if she was a Catholic, but it seemed to me it was my strong action that spoke to her, because she had fire in her eyes and showed hope, and I thought, 'well, yes, it will give hope to young people that they can make a difference whether they are Catholic or not.' Every time I go through the bank, the manager smiles and waves, and surely not because he thinks I'm going to get rich. He still does this and a year has gone by.

"I had strong support from my colleagues at North Island College, even though some were Catholic and many were not, and I involved them in my journey. Three of them have become part of a small faith community along with several people from Parksville, and we meet in my home for Eucharist and potluck and just hanging out to talk and share our wisdom and give each other support for what's going on in our lives. I find that people just love to be accepted and to hang out together in smaller community and to feel with God through each other and me. They leave heartened. We meet every other month at my home. Soon I believe we will be ten including friends from across the street who have children and who would like them baptized. The initiative for this community that meets here came from a married Roman Catholic priest

Focus Continued...

and his spouse, a former Sister of St. Ann. Then the others came because they felt alienated and disenfranchised by the Church and they long for this kind of community of inclusion and acceptance.

"On September 10, 2005 the mid-island Corpus community sponsored an outdoor Eucharist and we invited 150 people. Many invitations and requests came from that event, and these have led to ministry opportunities. One thing just leads to another. Some people from Dignity Vancouver were at that event and they invited me to give a weekend retreat completed by a Eucharistic celebration at a private home. We had an amazing time together, as I validated and honoured their prophetic witnessing since they were born, and together we became loving community during the retreat, and I loaded the liturgy of fire that we celebrated with every passage of tenderness and in-dwelling of the Spirit I could find. Afterwards, while still at the home and during another potluck, I administered the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to several people.

"Also, because of the September 10 event, I was invited to speak with the Voice Of The Faithful group in Sidney, and this was a powerful experience for all of us as we explored the importance of standing together as the People of God in support of survivors of priest sexual abuse and for changes in the structures of the Church. As these were all active parish people we could not meet on Roman Catholic church property or celebrate the Eucharist, so we found sanctuary in the Bethel Baptist church, and I surrounded our evening of considerations in a liturgy of light. Afterwards, I passed out shortbread cookies drenched in caramel. They were the size of saucers and so they shared them with each other by breaking them and in a way, you could say we became Christ's Eucharistic presence to each other. There is always a way to move around with the Spirit if one listens and attends. Mostly, I affirmed the rightness of the prophetic work these people are doing, and for them that was a gift, as they are not always met with support.

"At the September 10 celebration a woman, Patricia Fitzgerald, sent me a round trip ferry ticket to Mayne island. Her late husband, Thomas Fitzgerald, built a chapel on their property before he died. She requested that I bless it on March 25. I gathered with her and a number of her support community, the Victoria Human Exchange Society, and we began our extraordinary journey together. Our liturgies are participatory and so I do not preside on my own; rather I co-celebrate, particularly if there are former clerical priests present. We share out parts of the Eucharistic liturgy, such that we are the community who together make Christ present in the priesthood of the faithful. We have now met five months consecutively and are



growing in such a way together that I'm sensing it's time for us to make a retreat and explore various prayer practices, and also think further what it means to be prophetic witnesses on the margins of the Church in our time.

"Currently, two more potential communities are asking for me and I am thinking of designing a kind of circuit weekend once a month where I go to Nanaimo, then to Victoria and over to Mayne island. I would have hospitality along the way and the candidate/ordinand from Victoria would partner with me in this.

"In a very different kind of ministry, I am the team assistant for bishop Patricia Fresen (Germany) for the Canadian candidates in the training program. Actually, I was just with her in Ottawa in August for the diaconate ordination of one of our candidates, as well as for a retreat with two other Canadian candidates on the path to ordination.

"In November, I will again be with Dr. Patricia Fresen at the Call To Action Gathering in Seattle and will be con-celebrating a Eucharist with her in Olympia before she returns with me to Vancouver Island. Hopefully, we will go to Mayne Island where we will spend time in retreat again with two other Canadian candidates on the path to ordination in the West.

"Every day I listen and attend to God and those around me, and sure enough I am always led to respond to some need that comes from the fact that I am ordained."

The journalist who asked Michele to describe her priestly ministry 'outside the Church' is preparing a TV documentary on the women's ordination movement. When she presented a preliminary proposal to a TV station, a female executive made the following remark:

"Personally, I don't want to know the real reasons why Rome won't let women be ordained. I want to know why women go to such lengths to be part of an organization that rejects them." Michele was asked to respond to this last question, and here is her response.

"Why did Ghandi in India, or Nelson Mandela in South Africa go to the lengths they did to change unjust systems and laws? Why did Rosa Parks refuse to go to the back of the bus? Then what did these people start that brought a long walk to freedom? It is the same thing.

"We challenge an institution saturated in Canon Law with many unjust laws that deeply affect the lives of the people. One law that we challenge in particular is the RC Church's refusal to ordain

Focus Continued...

women. It is based in a theology of prejudice, discrimination and deep misogyny and sexism. By going ahead with ordinations we challenge all these oppressive behaviours derived from an unjust law that claims women cannot be ordained.

"Furthermore, the institution does not hold all the People of God in unity. Many believe and are waiting for deliverance from these oppressions. Since being ordained, I minister to these people who look for me, and gradually, one priest at a time, one person at a time, there is an awakening in empowerment. This will become the work not only of those of us standing for a non-hierarchical model of priesthood but of the people who desire inclusion and equality. We are working together to transform an institution that desperately needs renewal from the grassroots up and out.

"When I started in 2004, it may have seemed like this was an insane step but Roman Catholicism is the tradition I was born into. I knew, now that others were starting to take steps in ordaining women, that it was my duty to join them and to challenge what has gone wrong. This is not through direct confrontation but in working for change with those who are longing for it. It is a walk of peace, not rebellion, of service and compassion and not of arrogance and the desire for power. It does not at all seem like a far-fetched or insane notion now. There is too much support. I think that what is happening now is part of a re-configuration for equality and justice taking place in many Christian denominations and probably all faith traditions. It will have effects we can't foresee in that others will become empowered to act in many different areas of our public and private worlds to change unjust laws and to become strong in the changes that can then come.

"I have complete peace. The Church leadership's reactions feel like a flea bite on an elephant because I believe we have broken open what was closed, such that everyone, no matter their position, will have to re-think and discern what they believe. They will have to re-

experience what they thought they knew in the light of what comes to be as we work with the people, especially the marginalized and

disenfranchised. I give very little thought to the institution, but rather to what I am called to do for those coming forward to ask for my presence with them. I go where I am called and respond to the needs expressed and I do not forget that the Holy Spirit, particularly in the feminine face of God has prepared me for this. When the time came that the first women were ordained in 2002, I recognized what this meant and now I am on the way with like-minded persons who understand what this is about. Make no mistake. We are now on the move in a way that is not outside the beliefs of the best minds and hearts of women and men in the Church. This is an effort theologically supported and long in the making and it comes from deep inside the truth of a Church that has surely lost the way for being only male, only patriarchal in its conception of reality. Distorted thinking and behaviour come from that and the men inflict as much suffering on themselves as on the women. This violence must stop. We in Roman Catholic Women Priests are moving away from such behaviours towards something different which, perhaps, you must see to believe."

This movement started with seven courageous women who were ordained to the priesthood on the Danube in 2002. Fifteen more have followed in their footsteps. From the combined group four have been ordained as bishops. And there are over 100 candidates in training for ordination. The pastoral ministry, now and in the future, that flows from this source is a blessing from on high. It fills me and many others with hope that our Catholic Church can become once again a Spirit filled beacon of light and love. It has inspired Connie and myself to found Ministry Without Borders (www.ministry-without-borders.org), a non-profit religious society dedicated at present to helping the RCWP movement to flourish.



Sophia: Open Letter To Michele Birch-Connerly

by Dianne Peck, Sydney, NS

Dear Michele,

This letter is a response to your public statements as they are quoted in Fran Brassard's article in this Journal Issue.

I haven't met you, and when I studied the focus topic for this Journal, which included an invitation to write about you as a prophetic Catholic voice, I didn't know how I could do so. But then I read Fran's article, "A Model for the Renewal of Ordained Ministry". In it he quotes several of your public responses to media questions, and your explanations of your choice to become ordained. I would like to share with you the ways in which your public testimony has touched my own life and the insights about my world that you have given me.

Michele: "I go where I am called and respond to the needs expressed".

Mid-life has almost surprised me with my new work as a Life Coach and an Alternative Energy Practitioner. I have no doubt that it is the beautiful culmination of all the preceding years. This is where it all was ultimately leading. I, too, feel I am going where I am called in order to meet the needs that call me.

But at times this feels somewhat undefined. It feels frightening.

Michele: "...I do not forget that the Holy Spirit, particularly in the feminine face of God, has prepared me for this".

You remind me that I am never alone, that Source, the Deep Soul, the Goddess, the Universe, Holy Spirit, however we name the God-Within, has prepared me thoroughly and completely for this time and lovingly companions me at every moment.

Michele: "It is time for us to....think further what it means to be prophetic witnesses... in our time".

You remind me that this is true not only for the ordained but for each of us, on whatever stage we are living out our lives. You evidence for all, ordained or not, Catholic or not, what can be done from the margins of the particular reality of each one of us.

Michele: "There is always a way to move around with the Spirit if one listens and attends".

I read many articles and books on listening to the inner voice. They say that intuition means inner voice. They teach us that nothing can happen until we start there, and from there move into action, what they refer to as inspired action - action that is led by our deeper knowing.

This kind of action cuts to the heart of what needs to be done and shows us the steps to take to get the most effective results in the least amount of time.

It is my opinion that your ministry is steadily branching out in strong and healthy ways because of your "listening and attending". This *modus operandi* is my goal and it is encouraging to see it at work in your life.

Michele: "Now I am on the way with like-minded persons".

One of my urgent needs was to connect with others who are doing the same work I am. I began by asking for this gift, and I have just found a local group of 'like-minded persons' who have been immeasurably welcoming and supportive.

Michele: "This is a walk of peace, not rebellion, of service and compassion, not of arrogance and the desire for power".

Just last evening I read that a good intention is everything. That a pure intention is the foundation. When we keep the right intention, it is the



same as opening our heart and letting ourselves be seen. It comes across to those on the receiving end as love. It comes across as an invitation to trust that the path you give witness to is safe to follow. Then everything about you grows and flourishes. Thank you for your pure intention.

Michele: "I have complete peace. The Church leadership's reactions feel like a flea bite on an elephant".

Here you are at the heart of one of my recurring challenges. It comes from my false fear of being heckled, accused, criticized, and all the other things we feel when the work we are doing is under attack.

And here you are, walking tall and elegant right through it. Do you know the book, "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz? One of the agreements that we are to make with ourselves is to "take nothing personally". He continues to say that this is not easy, but it is crucial that we do it. He explains that we take something personally because we agree, even at a hidden level, with what was said. But the truth is that nothing others say or do is because of us. It is because of themselves. So my hecklers do not speak my truth. What they speak is only about them. When I take what they have said personally, I am accepting the emotional refuse of the speaker and making it my own. When I don't, I have peace. Your witness in this is very freeing for me.

Michele: "It (becoming ordained) does not at all seem like a far-fetched or insane notion now. There is too much support."

What touches my heart in this statement is that first you took the leap into the unknown. Then the support followed. Your leaping reminds me of a line from the movie "After Goodbye: An Aids Story" that says: "When you come to the edge of all you have known and you step off into the darkness, one of two things will happen. You will find your self standing on solid ground, or you will be taught how to fly".

Michele: "It will have effects we cannot see in that others will become empowered to act in many different areas of our public and private worlds..."

The bottom line in my writing this letter, Michele, is to tell you that your words have left me feeling deeply empowered. My ministry platform is not the injustice of Church laws per se. But it is the spreading of a Gospel of good news through healing and leading people in the restoration of wholeness to their lives. It has required leaps into the unknown and will require yet more. It has meant criticism and there will be more hecklers to come. But what's a flea bite to an elephant?

It Is Time

by Dr. Bridget Mary Meehan, Falls Church, VA

It is time for the full equality of women in the church. Women and men are created in God's image and both may represent Christ as priests. Women priests remind us that women are equal symbols of the holy and that the identity of priests should reflect the experiences and spiritual authority of women. Women priests help the church to recognize women's rightful place as equals in the governing structures of the church.

It is time to reclaim our Catholic heritage. Jesus treated women and men as equals and partners in ministry, and so should the church. Mary of Magdala, the first to encounter the Risen Christ was commissioned by Christ to be the apostle to the apostles. St Paul called Junia an "outstanding apostle". In 1976, the Pontifical Biblical Commission concluded that there is no biblical reason to prohibit women's ordination.

There is archaeological evidence of women deacons, priests and bishops on frescoes and tombstones in Rome, Southern Italy and Northern Africa. Popes and bishops such as Gelasius and Atto of Vercelli both acknowledge that the church did ordain women in the early centuries. Evidence in the Celtic Church indicates that women and men were equals in preaching the Gospel, presiding at Mass and at the other sacraments. In the sixth century, three Roman bishops at Tours wrote a letter to two Breton priests Lovocat and Cathern, expressing their concern that women were allowed to preside at Eucharist. According to the Irish Life of Brigid, St. Brigid, a bishop, presided at a double monastery of women and men in Kildare. Reclaiming our ancient spiritual heritage, women priests are shaping a more inclusive, Christ-centered church of equals in the 21st century.

It is time to transform the current hierarchical structures of the contemporary church. The clerical structure needs to be transformed into an open participatory model that honors the gifts of God in the people of God. The present gap between clergy and lay needs to be eliminated. We advocate a move from an unaccountable top-down hierarchy to a people-empowered discipleship of equals. Roman Catholic womenpriests offer a collaborative community model of ministry based on co-creation with the people we serve.

It is time for holy disobedience. In obedience to the Gospel of Jesus we are disobeying an unjust law that discriminates against women. The Catholic Church teaches that a law must be received by the faithful. Seventy percent of Catholics in the U.S. support women's ordination. Therefore canon 1024 which states that only a baptized male may receive Holy Orders does not have the force of law because

it has not been accepted by the community or *sensus fidelium*. In fact, we have a moral obligation to disobey this unjust law. St. Augustine said that an "unjust law is no law at all." As Cardinal Walter Kasper, the former bishop of Rottenberg-Stuttgart, Germany and current president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council

for Promoting Christian Unity wrote: "Some situations oblige one to obey God and one's own conscience, rather than the leaders of the church."

Indeed, one may even be obliged to accept excommunication, rather than act against one's conscience. In addition, Canon 849 states that baptism is the gateway to the sacraments which includes Holy Orders. Therefore, baptism is the foundation for the validity of Holy Orders not male gender. Thus, Canon 1024 denies full membership to women in the church and contradicts Canon 849 which opens all the

sacraments to all members of the church. In other words, the sacrament of Baptism makes us equals in Christ. St. Paul taught, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer servant or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

It is time for an inclusive church in which all are welcome at the table. "You have given me a reason to return to the church," remarked a woman's recent email in response to the news that 8 more women would be ordained as Roman Catholic priests in Pittsburgh on July, 31, 2006. Like this woman, many have been alienated by the institutional church, including the divorced and separated, gays and lesbians, and women who feel like second-class citizens in their own church and who seek a church where they will find acceptance and a spiritual home.

It is time to reclaim the feminine spirit in the church. The Catholic Church has a long history of condemning visionary prophetic women like Joan of Arc who was burned at the stake and declared a heretic, only to be later declared a saint. It is our hope that one day we too will be proclaimed by the church we love as women who led the church to a new era of justice and equality for all the People of God. The call for the full equality of women in the church is the voice of God in our time.

Dr. Bridget Mary Meehan, a Sister for Christian Community, dean of the Doctor of Ministry program for Global Ministries University and author of 15 books, was ordained a priest on July 31, 2006.



Roman Catholic Womanpriests: Prophetic Voice

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCW) have been driven to do what they have done by bad theology. It is bad theology to assert that Jesus made only men priests since it is well known

that Jesus made no priests and no bishops at all. It is bad theology to assert that ordaining only men to the priesthood belongs to "the deposit of the faith because it is an act of Jesus". Many who make these assertions know that such statements are bad theology. It does not matter if the assertions are made by one pope or several popes, or cardinals, or officials of the Roman Curia, or any others who believe that they have authority to say so, however sincerely they believe that they speak Catholic Truth. Their sincerity does not alter the fact that bishops and priests in the churches came about as the result of decisions by the churches and can easily be changed if the churches continue to listen to the Holy Spirit in the matter. That is good theology.

I refer readers to the excellent articles written by Dr. Michael Zarb for *The Journal* over the past five years.

It is said by some that there are other motives for Roman Catholic authorities not to allow the ordination of women to the priesthood. I have no way of knowing of such motives. I can guess, as anyone else can, but guessing is not good practice and so I prefer not to. I do know what the New Testament says and I also know about when, in the history of the followers of Jesus, the practice of naming some Christians to serve as housekeepers, caretakers, or maintenance people, to look after or manage the community's goods and affairs. These servants of the community came to be known first by the Greek secular term, 'episcopoi' i.e. managers, and eventually near the close of the second century when they took over the liturgical roles, 'priest'.

Roman Catholic history scholars accept that the city of Rome itself during New Testament times and afterwards had more than one of these 'episcopoi' managing the many Christian communities in Rome. Peter was never one of them. Peter, leader of Jesus' earliest disciples, was a missionary apostle like other named apostles. He preached the good news in many cities. He gave his life doing so. Peter was never an episcopos/manager/bishop nor a priest. There is nothing that anyone can assert that will change that.

Those who functioned as episcopoi later took on the title of priest (sacerdos); the traditional elders (presbuteroi) were demoted to the role of helper 'priests'; the episcopoi asserted that all authority in a Christian community came from the newly created Order of Bishop. They began to look and act somewhat like our modern bishops. When that change came about, the third century churches had come a long way from Jesus and his Jewish context.

As leaders of the Christian communities, the bishops believed that they were acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the good of the

churches. I accept that wholeheartedly. In that sense it can be said that the churches acting in the name of Christ (i.e. not Jesus living in the flesh, but Jesus exalted and "seated at God's right hand") made bishops and priests. The move from the election of bishops and priests by local churches to the modern clerical state has been a mixed blessing and needs a great deal of re-discernment. Today, there are those who long for the whole Church to listen to the Holy Spirit once more in order to develop a new priesthood. Prophetic voices in the Church are telling us so.

That should end the argument that women are forbidden by God's Law from being ordained priests. But lawyers never let a case rest with only one argument and Church lawyers are no exception. So rationalization comes into play. That is a sure-fire recipe for bad theology.

It is often asserted in theological jargon that "the deposit of faith" supports the practice of not ordaining women. The never defined "deposit of faith" seems to be tied in with what some call "God's Plan that Christ gave to his Twelve Apostles" (again not Jesus in his earthly life but the exalted Jesus after his death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven to a group that only later became known as The Twelve Apostles). There is no record of this Plan of God but it is now seen as having been the constant practice of the Church: constant, that is, since the time when the churches began to ordain only men as bishops and priests, and that time was long after Jesus and original followers were dead. That argument brings us back again to a decision made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to what I said above about it.

Another assertion is that RCW defy "Apostolic authority". Apostolic authority is the gift that Jesus left to his first disciples who passed it on to the Christian gatherings or 'churches'. Apostolic authority is a gift to the whole Christian people. It is not the special charism, right, or position of a select few, call them what you like. God's authority is gift to those who serve God's Kingdom. For example, John the Baptist was apostled by God; Jesus was seen as God's apostle, God's prophet who acted with God's authority; Jesus in turn apostled his disciples in service to God's Kingdom so that they might change their world into a place where everyone would get a fair share. Authority is a charism to enable people to grow in God's Way. Apostolic authority in the Christian context makes sense only when it helps people change from self-serving ways to growth in God's way.

RCW are exercising their apostolic authority in claiming a new priesthood. They offer it to the Christian community for scrutiny. They have been driven to it by bullies. Forbidding discussion of women's ordination to priesthood and announcing that it is part of God's Plan that women cannot be ordained priests is a bullying tactic. It attempts to preempt dialogue. It uses force to put the whole Roman Catholic Church into a position that many Roman Catholic scholars do not think is justified by either holy scripture or tradition. It is an attempt to strong-arm the People of God (not women only) into submission for fear that the whole edifice will come tumbling down.

Bullies have to be challenged. That is the only way to deal with them. RCW are prophetic in quietly challenging the bullies by

doing what they say Roman Catholic women cannot do. RCW are totally Jesus-like in trying to be sensitive to the feelings of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. RCW are going out of their way to be canonical in their ordination ceremonies.

I feel that the Roman Catholic Hierarchy will disregard RCW's efforts to follow canonical procedures; that the RCW's efforts will do nothing to change the Roman Catholic Hierarchy's opinion of them nor their actions; in fact, the Roman Catholic Hierarchy will only see them not as the actions of committed catholic women but as futile attempts of dissatisfied women; and that the Roman Catholic Hierarchy will continue to force their clerical context on the whole Roman Catholic Church.

Will the whole Roman Catholic edifice come tumbling down? Perhaps it will as we know it. But, Please God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will rise anew to serve God's Kingdom.

Please remember in your prayers members of The Journal family who are gravely ill and about to undergo surgery:

Robert Little, son of Phil and Anne Marie Little, who lives in Hamilton, ON;

Sister Margaret Quinn SM of Prince George;

(Rev.) Ron Attwell, Minister of Emmanuel Home Church in Victoria, BC.

We pray that we will have good news of them in the next issue of The Journal.

Women's Ordination

by *Tom McMahon, San Jose, CA*



Chris Diamond requested my ideas about the women being ordained priests on the riverboat Majestic as it plies the Allegheny, the Momongahela, and Ohio Rivers. I know two of the women. When I read Elizabeth Fernandez' no-content article in the San Francisco Chronicle I offered no comment.

Diamond's request has me before my computer with

thinking hat on, and yet I approach where angels fear to tread. "if it is of God it will last; if not it will perish." (Acts 5:39) Does a very confused people of God need this today? I dread the talk about excommunication, so foreign to Vatican 2.

First I researched the rivers and their names; life-giving flowing waters carry new life. I know that rivers have been chosen to avoid the jurisdiction of the roman bishop, as was the Danube when Austrian/German women were ordained. Allegheny is a Native American name and takes us back into pre-constitutional America, whereas Momongahela is yacht harbor water, and the Ohio into which the two drain is a major contributor to the Mississippi, the great American water artery. Are these women offering a message, combining the old and new that will flow through the center of America with a challenging blend of old church and new church, old ministry and new ministry? The ordination ceremony itself is cut from a medieval pattern, replete with the majestic pomp of a feudal age hierarchy and priesthood. Is the very setting of dodging episcopal jurisdiction and power a key to folly? Is there comparison to 2006 training of Pullman Car porters? Or female stewards on board the Titanic? Are these women entering a forbidden time zone,

an obsolete form of ministry?

I know the ceremony well, having experienced ordination in 1954. My seeing the women prone on the floor in an expression of death to the world brings back my personal clerical struggle to re-enter the goodness of the world as Vatican II cancelled out the Jansenistic negativity of human sexuality and all creation. I was 25 when ordained and I recall that slight negative sensitivity within me as the archbishop placed the roman stole of power upon my shoulders. I had in 12 years of seminary watched my priest uncle serve his people with no want for power over them, he a meaningful member of my family community especially after the death of my father when I was two. I wondered as I saw the women being vested with roman stole if they had any sense of the clerical/lay separation that accompanies a Trenten ordination; the people so often see the male priest as having a magic power that bonds him uniquely with God. And now on the female in whose very body there is such Godliness! On the TV last night, a clip showed an elderly woman in alb and stole, very old and tired looking; my heart bled for her, and I wondered what she could do now that she is ordained that she could not do before this ceremony? Do male priests anoint or hear confessions in 2006 like we did in 1960? Has the whole world vision of Jesus and religion changed? These women will say mass, perhaps the focus of this women's ordination.

In my studies of what is the mass, I am aware that it was in the 17th century that the concept of "mass priest" came to be- men set aside mainly to "say" mass and collect stipends while people watched. What was a "mass" like in the 6th or 8th century? I am sure that women presided at liturgy in the 2nd century. Was mass a five minute breaking of bread in days of persecution? I suggest that a vibrant community of faith in Jesus existed. I doubt if a presider, she or he, wore roman vestments. Early Christians were aware that a roman cross had impaled their Jesus, and roman law pronounced him a criminal; early Christians feared a priesthood repeating the sacred men of the Jerusalem temple. Did the bishops, who were already government officials, sell out Jesus at the Council of Nicea in 325? I lament that my friends who had ordaining hands placed on their heads

know so little history of church and priesthood. "if it is of God it will last; if not..." Reports of the ordination had a flavor of a naughty experience taking place, with talk of defiance.

The issues of a lay priesthood as promoted by Yves Congar in the 1930's (Congar, John the 23rd's architect of Vatican II); the renovation of the Trenten sacramental system; what is a Jesus priesthood?; did Jesus ordain at the Last Supper?; what is a Eucharist and/or a eucharist?; are these the questions that are discussed out of papal earshot? The male priesthood is demoralized and in disarray, perhaps nearing extinction within decades and bishops importing men from foreign countries who flee from American authority when they are apprehended in heinous crimes. Is the answer the ordination of women on the Allegheny River? Two weeks ago I wished them well- "ad multos annos" as they followed their interpretation of the Spirit. Perhaps only the Shadow knows. And who knows if the Shadow isn't the Holy Spirit about her work of renovation. I shall be long dead before we see the results. "If it is of God..."; "Come Holy Ghost, Creator blest."; renew as Thou desire; Thy will be done. Tom McMahon, who doesn't wear clericals anymore.



Response To Roman Manchester

by Phil Little, Cedar, BC



"Speaking as a validly ordained Catholic priest" living on Vancouver Island, it would seem appropriate to nuance the personal opinion of colleague Roman Manchester, who is more than a continent away on this issue. I

regret the unintentional misinformation given by my colleague which could cause some confusion in understanding the complexity of this matter. Ordination in the universal catholic church is a process of leadership confirmation with variances in ritual but often preserving a common link in apostolic succession. The theory or myth is that all priests are ordained by bishops who in turn claim their ordination to previous bishops - at least to the time of the emperor Constantine. Officially all ordinations are traced back to Peter, the apostle, to Jesus and the first "Pope"; however, there is no historical basis to the assumption that Peter or any apostle ordained any bishops or priests.

The ordinations of 12 women recently would be more properly classified as "illicit" rather than "invalid", meaning that the ordinations were conducted without official approval but as they were ordained by bishops whose claim to apostolic succession is without doubt preserved, the ordinations are valid. The ordinations in other non-Roman denominations, and in other independent catholic groups such as the "old Catholic church" and the schismatic "Pius X movement"

(which Pope Benedict XVI is currently seeking to welcome back into communion) remain recognized as "valid" even if outside the norms.

To speak of one's gender or sexual orientation as an "impediment" raises many ghosts that the church really does not want to deal with. If a woman is unable to receive ordination because of her different sexual mechanics, then she is also logically unable to receive baptism. The early church resolved this problem when after serious debate it was resolved (by a group of male bishops) that women indeed did have souls and could be baptised. A female child can be validly baptised and a female adult can be ordained as deacon, priest or bishop and there is historical evidence that such ordinations are not new.

As the church has discriminated in its politics against people of colour, or other national or racial divides, in its ordination policies and then "changed" to a more enlightened policy, so too will its policy on the ordination of women. For the time being, in the Roman tradition it remains "a boys club" and will remain so until "the boys" find themselves on the out with the majority of church members.

On August 14, '06, Roman Manchester, pastor of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Providence, wrote the following in "Women can't just 'ordain' themselves":

SPEAKING as a validly ordained Catholic priest, I believe that the headline of the July 31 news article "12 women to ordain themselves as priests" was right on target. These women are ordaining themselves as priests, which, in and of itself, renders the ordinations invalid.

No one has the authority to ordain themselves. The church must call a person to ordination. This is at the very heart of the concept of vocation. Neither does anyone, female or male, have

the right to be ordained a priest. Using such language only leads to further confusion. The church does not recognize anyone's right to become a priest, any more than the government recognizes anyone's right to enlist in the military. Just as the Department of Defense recognizes certain disqualifying impediments to military service, the church recognizes certain impediments to priestly ordination. For reasons that are too numerous and complicated to condense within the parameters of this column, being female is one such impediment. There are good reasons for this, however, if one is willing to examine the issue with an open mind, even at the risk of being labeled a sexist by those who simply do not want to understand the issue beyond their own shortsighted perspective....



Anything But A Settled Matter

by Tom Roberts, National Catholic Reporter

Deborah Halter is a bright, engaging, devoted Catholic woman called to ordained ministry. In her book, *The Papal No: A Comprehensive Guide to the Vatican's Rejection of Women's Ordination*, she has written with great depth and scholarship of the church's refusal to allow women into the ranks of ordained ministers.

I find Deborah Halter's work so valuable. She shows that the church's decision about women's ordination -- whatever other pillars it may rest on -- leans heavily on ancient misconceptions about women that thread through the church's thinking on a range of issues down the ages.

The consequence? A lot remains to be discussed and figured out, I think. Some women don't have the time and, sadly, Halter is one of them.

Catholic women fill the pulpits of scores of other Christian denominations. The congregations of other denominations are full of ex-Catholics, many of them women who simply have had it with exclusive language, exclusion from the pulpit, exclusion from the sanctuary and exclusion from the endless hierarchical circles where decisions are made, not infrequently about how women should behave as good Catholics.

Others have simply left and gone nowhere. They are weary of the fight, exhausted with trying to make a case that seems perfectly clear to so many other rational, devoted, dedicated Christians... All of them, I think, force us to think about who we are as a Catholic Christian community; about what our language and symbols mean; about how limited, perhaps, are our understanding of our own tradition and of God's mind on the issue.

We may be told that we can no longer speak of this topic. That it is settled. Bishops, grudgingly or gladly, do as they are told. Women ordained on boats are excommunicated; questioners are told to be quiet; and those who leave are said to be simply wrong, wayward, but at least now out of the way. And all of it lands in the sanctuary as a grumpy, rather ineffectual "harrumph." It looks to me to be anything but a settled matter.

Excerpt from the National Catholic Reporter, September 1, 2006

Theological Soapbox: Marriage Vows & Marital Fidelity

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



One of the blessings of science is the light it can shed on human behaviour. In particular evolutionary biology helps us understand why we humans do the things we do. In this article I consider whether the moral precept to be faithful to one's spouse, which finds its classical expression in the Biblical commandment

'You shall not commit adultery', and the marriage vow of sexual fidelity, have their basis in the evolution of the human species. I will also consider the implications of this for the institution of marriage. One of the foundational principles of evolution is natural selection, which Wikipedia (the online internet encyclopedia) defines as follows: 'Natural selection is the process by which individual organisms with favorable traits are more likely to survive and reproduce than those with unfavorable traits. Natural selection works on the whole individual, but only the heritable component of a trait will be passed on to the offspring, with the result that favorable, heritable traits become more common in the next generation.'

If some part of the human population has a trait by which it is able to produce more offspring than the rest of the population, then that trait will eventually come to be shared by all or most of the entire population. Suppose a man X possesses a trait T by which he tries to prevent his mate from having sex with anyone else, thereby ensuring that all or most of his mate's offspring would also be his offspring, and therefore inherit the trait. Suppose another man Y lacks the trait.

Suppose that X's mate bears eight children and Y's mate bears eight children. Because X has the trait T, he tries to ensure that his mate bears only his children. Let us suppose he is largely successful, and that he fathers seven of his mate's eight children. On the other hand, Y, lacking T, does not try to ensure his mate bears only his children. Let us suppose that he fathers only four of his mate's eight children. The consequence of this, extended across the whole population, is that men with the trait T will have on average more offspring than men without T. The result through natural selection is that the trait T will spread to all or most of the population.

From an evolutionary point of view such a trait must exist. In fact, experience confirms this. We call the trait 'jealousy'. It is natural to be jealous and most spouses are jealous. (There are some people who claim not to be jealous of their spouses, but they would appear to be very much a minority.) Where jealousy is operative and marital infidelity occurs, there is likely to be anger and resentment. The marital relationship is stressed. This can have negative effects on children in the family. In many cases it will lead to separation and divorce. As stable families serve the interests of society, societies historically have enforced fidelity by punishing adultery. An example of this is the commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery', of the Law of Moses. In ancient Israel violation of the commandment could be punished by

stoning.

In the development of the sacramental theology of marriage in the Catholic Church, it came to be understood that in order for a couple validly to contract a sacramental marriage, each party had to make a commitment to be faithful to the other. This commitment often finds expression in the promise or vow of fidelity that the bride and groom make to each other in the marriage ceremony.

Given that adultery is forbidden in the ten commandments, it would seem superfluous to require a couple to promise not to commit adultery. But making the vow adds some extra motivation for being faithful. Whereas a person might not feel bound by the ten commandments because of a lack of religious conviction, it is another thing to break a promise one has made to another person. Some spouses who would otherwise be unfaithful, no doubt have remained faithful because they could not in good conscience break their promise.

That is what is gained by requiring the vow. On the other hand, when a person who has made the vow is unfaithful, the damage to the marriage is greater than if he or she had not made the vow. For now the person has committed two offenses. He or she has committed adultery, and he or she has also broken a solemn promise. Breaking the promise can be more hurtful than the adultery. For while adultery arouses jealousy and causes anger and resentment, breaking the promise is a violation of trust.

In view of the potential damage of breaking the vow, it would not be prudent to make the vow unless one could be sure that one could keep it. Given human weakness in the face of sexual temptation, the ability to be faithful can only be considered a grace. Only those with Christian faith, or something equivalent to Christian faith, can be confident of receiving the grace to be faithful.

I think the Church does a great disservice to people who do not have the faith through which they may seek and receive the grace to be faithful, when it requires them to vow fidelity as a condition of marriage. The couple, if they do not make the vow, might find a way to salvage their marriage should one or both of them prove unfaithful. But if they make the vow, and adultery occurs, the combination of adultery and promise breaking may make it impossible to save the marriage.

What I am proposing is that the Church offer its members the option of contracting a non-sacramental marriage if they do not feel ready or able to make the vow of sexual faithfulness. In fact, this is an option that more and more people are exercising by entering into common law marriages. By requiring that all Christian marriages be sacramental, the Church is missing an opportunity to integrate people in common law marriages into the life of the Church. The Church could be nurturing their faith so that one day they would be able to promise fidelity and thereby sacramentalize their marriage.

The key is to understand that non-sacramental marriage is not a sin but a good thing in itself, with potential to develop into something better.

God Our Heavenly Mother

by Kaye Ashe O.P., Berkeley, CA



My experience of God has been filtered, then, through family, parish, teachers, and other writings. It remains to speak of nature, art, friends, and strangers.

There are those who in their hungering to know the principle that lies behind the mystery of their own lives and the life they see about them have settled on the sun, or trees, or the wind, and have worshipped them. And who can blame them? And who can deny that these

things reflect the source of all life? There is a willow tree that I can see even now that speaks volumes to me of God's grace, of her fluidity, of her sorrow, and her hospitality, for the willow welcomes all sorts of life and nourishes many creatures in her capacious bosom.

Nature is eternally changing and eternally remaining the same. Her exuberance, gaiety, mystery, and fecundity, her extraordinary generosity, indeed profligacy, her power, tenderness, vitality, and allure—all of this has provided me with glimpses of God and with excuses to speak with her or to remain in quiet awe or fascination before her terrible beauty. The Hebrews knew very well that God was to be found in nature. Elijah found him finally in a gentle breeze, but he knew the Lord was passing when he experienced the wind rending mountains and shattering rocks, when he felt the earthquake and saw flames of fire. And the psalmist awaited a God who would "come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth." God is rock and dew and mountain refuge in the Old Testament. He can be seen in fertile fields and heard from burning bushes.

If nature has revealed God's face to me, so have artists with their disconcerting way of seeing through and under things, juxtaposing the most unlikely things, arranging simple lines and colors into the most evocative compositions, clothing the most commonplace things in mystery, moving with such ease through the worlds of illusion and fantasy. It was especially when I came up against Romanesque, medieval and Renaissance art in churches and museums of Europe that I found God speaking out of stained glass windows, carvings, canvases, and frescoes. The Spirit was alive in these figures of the women and men of the Old and New Testaments, Mary, Jesus, the apostles, and saints. There was something here besides cunning craftsmanship, something beyond art for art's sake. The wonder, the longing, the sorrow and compassion, the simple love, the silent contemplation of these figures in glass, stone, wood, and oil spoke of the desire and faith of those who created them and of their conviction that the divine was tangible in the world around them. It would be difficult to look at them for very long without sharing that conviction. I could see now what people meant who called art God's deep mirror, a truth that had escaped me when my idea of a nice statue of Our Lady was a Humble representation or one of those extremely slim, expressionless pieces in the '50s.

And is God lurking in music and in literature? Yes, of course. And in theater. For all these things have elements of play and of beauty; they are gratuitous but full of meaning. They remind us that God is lively and infinitely creative. Or is it only Bach, Michelangelo, Moliere, Charlotte Bronte, Twyla Tharp, and Leontybe Price who are lively and creative and ingenious? Should we sing our hymns to humanity instead of to the living God? Perhaps others are content to do so. Myself, I

can't stifle the conviction expressed by Aquinas' treatise on the Divine Names: "The being of all things is derived from the divine beauty."

If my experience of God is ultimately intensely personal, this reflection on God and me makes me conscious of how intimately that experience is bound up with my cultural environment, and this has included elements as diverse as the Judeo-Christian tradition, Celtic Catholicism, the Western heritage with its Greek and Roman influences, and a little touch of American puritanism. These, together with the Dominican tradition, have provided me with a framework for imaging God; they have given me the means of interpreting my experience of the divine.

Sometimes they have thrown up barriers to my attempt to understand God and myself, but generally they contain within themselves the correctives for their own limitations. I have no illusions that this combination of religious and cultural traditions has said the last word about God. I would like to know more about the African, Indian, and Oriental ways of speaking to and of God, aware that no single tradition has plumbed God's depth. I long outgrew my youthful complacency that having mastered the Catechism I had definitely triumphed over Error and grasped Truth in its entirety.

And so I come to friends. What have they to do with God and me? A great deal because, as any neophyte in the ways of God knows, the best part of making any headway at all into God's inner life is experiencing a relationship of knowing and being known, loving and being loved. God's own inner life is essentially one of communication and loving relationship. We're called to share in it. But to share in it at all, I must have some experience of these realities somewhere this side of the Godhead. Indeed, it is the human-to-human experience of acceptance, trust, self-revelation, and mutual love that gives me some inkling of what goes on at the center of God's being and what can transpire between God and us. The love of friends, always unmerited and incapable of being commanded, makes me capable of believing in God's gratuitous love. The fact that they can see beyond my pettiness and jealousy and selfishness, indeed can even coax me out of these things, lets me know I'm redeemable. If they are willing to make room for me, steal hours to spend with me, offer me the gift of their beauty and vulnerability and precious selves, rely on me not to betray their trust, and await these things from me, then I begin to get some idea of the kind of gift God offers and expects of me. Furthermore, friends intensify my pleasure in and deepen my knowledge about the other things that reveal God to me: nature, Scripture, literature, music, theater, art, fantasy, whimsy, and humor.

Strangers, too, intervene between God and me. Like every child, I had been warned to beware of strangers. Strangers, foreigners, and aliens represent, after all, the unknown. Best be wary, then, if not downright hostile. But God, too, represents the unknown, and both God and the stranger challenge me to come closer, to do away with the wall that divides us. Scripture is clear about it; in welcoming the stranger, we welcome God. The stranger holds secrets about God that even friends cannot reveal to us.

Excerpt from: God & Me edited by Candida Lund, Thomas More Press

Community News

Corpus Sidney Community Report

Our Corpus Sidney small faith community has continued to meet over the summer every second Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. We rotate the meeting place among our homes and the person whose home we meet in the host. The host may also choose to preside at the Eucharist that is part of all our meetings, or may invite another person to preside. While hosts often invite one of our married priest members to preside, on occasion a host who is not ordained will preside.

A typical meeting begins with some time for personal check-in as people share stories of how God has blessed or challenged them since the last meeting. We then listen to some readings from the Bible, either the readings of the day or readings chosen in view of a particular theme. After listening to the readings we share our thoughts about them or the theme of the meeting, if a theme has been chosen. We then invite people to offer prayers of petition or thanksgiving, and then we celebrate the Eucharist. Everyone present says the words of consecration.

We take a collection which is used for charitable and social purposes. This year we decided to sponsor a child through Christian Child Care International, a Catholic organization headquartered in Nova Scotia. Our child is a boy in Paraguay named Dario, who was ten years old when we began to sponsor him. Every month \$29 is withdrawn by CCCI from our group's bank account to provide Dario and his family with assistance. Dario has written two short letters to us (translated by a CCCI representative). Each letter from him also included a current photo of him. Even in the short time we have sponsored him he has noticeably grown!

Members of our group take turns answering Dario's letters, and we pray for him and his families at our meetings. It feels good to know that we are doing something to make our world a better place.

Love With Your Whole Heart

The most revolutionary part of Jesus' teaching was that a good inner disposition -- a good heart -- is more important than following codes for correct external behavior. It's as simple as that, yet the literal-minded and the orthodox sticklers for form keep missing it. Where is this God's kingdom of yours, they keep asking him. What is it like? When it is coming? How should we behave to get in? Give us some rules.

And he keeps telling them, it's here, it's all around you but you haven't recognized it, it's inside you, it's spread all over this earth, and the only rules you need worry about are loving God with your whole heart and loving one another as I have loved you.

Gail Godwin in
Heart: A Personal Journey Through Its Myths and Meanings

Christus Duncan Report

More than 20 years ago in the days when Vatican II meant something, at the instigation of Anglican priest, Bill Morrison, pastor of St Peter's, Quamichan, an ecumenical Bible study group gathered for a course of Images of God in the Old Testament. Bill asked Chris and Naomi Diamond to be part of it. Each week the group had supper, study and discussion. When the course was finished, we decided to keep on meeting every week in the same way, and so the Wednesday Night Scripture Study Group began. The focus of the group has been to determine to the best of our ability the meaning of the text that we are studying.

In due course, Bill moved on to another post in the diocese, and Chris has led ever since. Dr. Michael Zarb has led studies of particular topics, such as The Messianic references in the Old Testament, the Passion Narratives, and other biblical topics chosen by the group. Succeeding pastors were supportive of the study group and attended whenever they were able. This year, however, the group renamed itself Christus Duncan and chose (Rev.) Gregg Shoop, a former pastor of St. Peter's and who has been part of the group for many years, to serve as its pastor.

People of other denominations have joined and been welcome. We have thrived; at one time our numbers increased until more than 25 people crowded into each other's homes each week for fellowship, a meal, study and discussion. The numbers have fluctuated as some have moved away from the Duncan area, some have become infirm and found it difficult to get about each Wednesday evening, and others have died, but the group has maintained about 20 people who enjoy the gathering regularly.

In the last few years, we have left off meeting during the summer as people were taken up with family times. For example:

- Marj Gillingham had a 'stay at home' summer, and she is presently looking forward to seeing her granddaughter and husband who return shortly from a trip to Europe.
- Ruth Hollinger had an "out of the ordinary week" at Sorrento where she participated in a week long seminar led by the Rev Alan Jones, San Francisco. The theme was being aware of God in a terrorist world. It involved much poetry, meditation and yoga.
- Nicki Blair-Speirs sold her business in Duncan and is looking forward to having more time with the group again.
- Marg Ellis had a wonderful, if exhausting, trip to Drumheller with her children.
- Marg White had successful eye surgery.
- Fran Sweatman and husband, Hank, visited with their son and daughter-in-law, who live in a house boat on the Fraser River.

We welcomed two former members, Ted Shiner from Halifax, NS who returned to the area for a visit and Ray Jones returned from Ireland who came to look for a house in the area. Both have been recently widowed. We were all saddened at the loss of two wonderful women, Nicky Shiner and Margaret Jones, who hosted us regularly and whose presence contributed greatly to our weekly gatherings. The group will resume gathering on Sept.6 at the Diamond's.

Western Washington Call to Action Presents

www.ctaww.org

Dr. Patricia Fresen,
Roman Catholic Bishop, speaks on

The Journey from Apartheid to a Radically Reformed Catholic Church

November 11, Saturday, at 2 PM at First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Avenue, Seattle (located at the corner of Harvard and Seneca, a block west of Broadway).

A Liturgy will be celebrated on Sunday, November 12, at 2 PM at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 911 Stewart St. in Downtown Seattle.

Freewill Donations of \$15 are suggested.

Ministry Without Borders is pleased to announce that Bishop Patricia Fresen will also be speaking in Victoria, BC later in the same week. Check the web site for the exact date and location once it has been determined:

www.ministry-without-borders.org



Dr. Patricia Fresen is Roman Catholic theologian from South Africa and was ordained a priest in August, 2003. Even more intriguing is that she was a Dominican nun there for 44 years until she was forced to recant her ordination or resign. What is unique about her story is her perspective on the connection between discrimination based on race and based on sex, and the destructive effects of both. She currently serves as the director of formation for the Roman Catholic Women Priests Program based in Germany and Austria.

Excerpt From A Supportive Talk By An Active Priest *by Richard G. Rento*



Had anyone asked me a few weeks ago how many priests in this diocese have left the active (sic) ministry, I would have said maybe 30 or so. I was astounded to discover that there has actually been 116.

I appeal to you, my married brothers and your wives, do not deny the church your input. You know that you have something

true and valuable to contribute. Do this from the authentic experience of your spirit filled lives.

I appeal to you to realize that you have a role to play. We must not turn principally to men who represent a thousand year tradition of celibacy for insight into our stewardship as sexual beings. NO!

You who have experience in marriage and parenthood must be among our chief teachers of the present and into the future. I urge you to speak up in every way you can.

How I wish we could turn for weekend services to you who are willing. I anticipate that your experience of marriage, child rearing, and earning a living in the marketplace would make your homilies uniquely relevant. It seems to me that it is precisely for the Sunday Eucharist gatherings that we need you most of all.

I encourage you to continue to communicating to the church and its leaders your well considered thoughts about what the church must do to recover from its present malaise and move resolutely into a robust future.

The full text can be found on the Corpus Canada website.
<www.corpuscanada.org>

Corpus Canada

Who Are We?

We are 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. We also provide support for married Roman Catholic priests, their family and friends.

Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to

- Renewal of ministries in the Church, including an ordained ministry open to men and women, married and unmarried;
- A vision of Church that includes all people who profess faith in Jesus Christ;
- 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, especially 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
www.corpuscanada.org
Corpus-NCR (Canada)
www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org
Corpus USA
www.corpus.org

Corpus Canada National Coordinating Team

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Joe Gubbels

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