



# The Journal



Fall 2006

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*To Our Lady*  
By Margaret Starbird.

We have known you in  
a thousand faces,  
seen traces of your graciousness  
in untold scores of places.

We have found you  
in works of art,  
in drops of dew,  
and on a dragonfly's wing-  
opalescent, gossamer,  
and strong as fragile can be.

Your heartbeat pulses  
through the universe,  
steady and faithful,  
bringing blossoms to bud,  
birthing fawns and  
hatching goslings-  
web and hoof,  
warp and woof  
of your subtle tapestry.

Mirror of Divinity,  
you bless creation  
incarnate from your womb.

Source of our life, you live.

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With thanks to Margaret for her personal  
attention to this publication.  
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The Journal  
Fall 2006  
Vol. 9, No. 4

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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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## FOCUS TOPIC

*for the Winter 2007 Issue*

What nurtures your spirituality? What is your spiritual well? Your bubbling spring?

**Note: Articles for this issue are due by February 15.**

Reader's may send in items of interest to the Corpus Canada Forum at [www.corpuscanada.org](http://www.corpuscanada.org)

# Finding Mary

by *Connie Kurtenbach, Ladysmith, BC*



The journey through three generations of women brings memories of my own journey of finding Mary. As a child, in a Benedictine parish, I knew just where to find Mary. She is at the front of the Church on the left altar. I love looking at her and talking to her. She wears a

white dress, with a blue veil, folds her hands in prayer and holds a gold rosary. I think I would like to someday have a gold rosary. My second Mary is on a medal, a miraculous medal that I wear with my scapular. She has her arms down and rays shower from her fingertips all around. I also wish I could have rays shoot from my hands. It must be the most wonderful feeling! I know these Mary's are the mother of Jesus. We have a picture of Jesus with his heart showing, right at the top of our stairs. I love all the Mary hymns we sing at Church, the rosary and the Hail Mary's we say at home. She is my refuge in sad times and she keeps secret all my hopes and dreams.

As I travel the path of my spirituality and my academic learning, I find the Mary of many names and titles and the Mary through the eyes of Church history, albeit a Church history told entirely by men. I read the New Testament stories and see the Mary in the stable with Joseph and baby Jesus, outside the Temple looking for Jesus, and later attending the wedding at Cana. I also meet Mary and Martha of Bethany; I meet the woman who anointed his feet with oil; I meet the suffering and downtrodden women of Jesus' time and walk with them through to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. And I am moved by the presence of Mary Magdalene at the resurrection. I begin to read more Church history. My path seems more diverse and the turns are not always clear.

I am now wandering into the church of the fifth century through to the twelfth century. We now have Mary as a Virgin, then Jesus as a virgin and then Mary is the Mother of God. But then not all the theologians agree and Mary begins to be split into several Mary's. Now there are Councils and heresies, the split seems greater between the Middle Eastern Fathers and the Roman Fathers. Before we know it, we are into deep dualism and endless distortions of sexuality and now we have Mary, the Mother of Jesus, virginalized, immacularized and assumed into heaven as the Queen of Heaven. It must be added that Mary Magdalene is now a prostitute, there are definitely not any women leaders in the early Church, so the men say, and all the women in Jesus' life and in the Gospel communities are mere shadows. Yet the

twists and turns of the church that made celibacy mandatory for the ordained by 1139 still create great Church sites in the name of Mary, that is the Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

What is this strange journey I am on now? There are at least three paths facing me and I do not know if any of them can bring me to Mary, as I need her and all the women in the Gospels. Now the Augustinian dualism of good and evil is strong; sexuality seems much darker and purity and redemption are strong points in the monarchical structure of the Church that is firmly in place. Shall I relive the Burning Times, The Inquisition, and the Asceticism of these ages or shall I soar to the top of the Cathedrals and find Mary? Is it in this very architecture and stone that I find some great lost truth? I must gaze more closely at the carving of Mary and the Child. I will enter into the mystery and magic of myth. The primary myth of Isis and Osiris unfolds the mystical journey of the Goddess Isis seeking her dead god husband and finding him and conceiving a son from him. The stonework of Mary and child is the stonework surely based on Isis and Horus, her son. But the metaphors begin to abound: out of death comes life. The goddess gives birth to the savior, the virgin birth is more about spiritual transformation and the sacred child will teach compassion, forgiveness and love. I am taken to all the great river myths: the Nile, the Tigres and the Ganges. We, the women of the church, are not gone, we are goddesses!!! We are Artemis, Leda, Persephone, Inanna, Isis, Venus and, of course, the Dark Madonna. These are all Queens of the Heaven. Great thanks to be able to find the studies from the Ganges and to learn about the stages of spiritual development, and to know that the heart chakra is the birthplace of spiritual development. Jesus of the virgin birth is the Jesus of the heart charka. He is the transformer! All the spiritual riches I found on this journey brought me back to the Gospels and to Jesus.

If I can stay in the mystery, then Jesus is the Grail King. Although it is a complicated and compensatory myth, I love the image of the Grail King riding to meet his challenger and crying: "Love!" He is wounded, and he still teaches love, compassion, and forgiveness. He is the wounded savior that Mary brought us and pointed to. He will teach us to love our own life. He will teach us that the "spiritual life is the bouquet of the natural life"(Joseph Campbell). All the ritual, miracles and stories hold us in the higher chakra states of our spiritual journey. To be disconnected from our natural life is to wound us. This legacy of disconnection we carry from Hebraic patriarchal time, when the goddess was called the abomination, and it held over in the Christian Church, where the split of Mary from the natural life of a woman, takes away all the power of the woman and the place of woman in the church. It is simply 'unnatural.' Jesus did reach out to all the marginalized women of his time. He challenged his

**FOCUS: Beyond the Stable, what is Mary's mission in the world?**

culture.

The Church failed to follow Jesus. And it fails me and the women of the church. In more recent times, many feminist theologians teach what the Church has hidden from us about woman. Many theologians have challenged the Church and some have been silenced. But the teachers of our time urge us on to learn new and wonderful paradigms.

At last, it is now time to look at the other Mary: Mary Magdalene. She is in all four Gospels. I like to think that she is the royal bride that anointed the Grail King. I feel so hopeful when I think it is possible that this ritual could have been a marriage ritual; that Jesus lived the natural life of a Jew; that Mary Magdalene was very important in his life, at least as one of the companions. She appears in all four Gospels and is the central figure in the Resurrection story. Even if Church history lessens or demotes her in various teachings over time, there are other paradigms of research that see her as a leader as well as other women leaders of the early times.

Without Mary and Mary Magdalene and all the women leaders of the early Church, we have lost the natural, the whole of humanity in the Roman Catholic Church. I found Mary, the mother of Jesus, a Jewish woman. I found Mary Magdalene, the companion of Jesus. Yes, the church has given us some versions of the women, but like

the Madonna of Czestochowa, it is a scarred and wounded version of the true woman. I love the sonorous writings that speak of a New Eve, a New "Mary," Sophia-goddess of wisdom, Gaia - earth mother and the Ground of Our Being.

I will always love my childhood images of Mary, for even my child heart somehow knew the great truths. I have been blessed with the most wonderful teachers on my journey. Blessed be.

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Litany

Litany of Sophia-Maria

adapted from the Litany of Loreto  
by St. Francis of Assisi Faith Community  
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for Roman Catholic Womenpriests, Canada  
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Faithful sister  
Authentic friend  
Amiable presence  
Spirit of Good Counsel  
Woman of Wisdom  
Woman of Peace  
Woman empowered  
Woman of justice  
Woman most merciful  
Cause of our joy  
Mary most spiritual  
Mary most honorable

Mystical Rose  
House of God  
Guide to Heaven  
Morning Star  
Health of the Sick  
Refuge of sinners  
Comfort of the Afflicted  
Friend of prophets  
Friend of apostles  
Friend of Martyrs  
Friend of all servant disciples  
Amen

Mother with our Creator

**R: Sophia-Maria pray for us.**

Mother of Christ

Mother of Divine Grace

Mother pure of heart\Generous Mother

IN MEMORIAM

Bill Fenlon, August 29, 1927 - October 23, 2006

Called to the Catholic priesthood in 1956. Called to marriage in 1972.

Called to God in his 80th year surrounded by family after a brief and courageous battle with cancer. In his youth, he was a promising hockey player but chose to enter the priesthood and served several parishes in the diocese of Thunder Bay. He and Sue were married in 1972. He worked as Assistant Administrator at the Oxford Regional Centre in Woodstock, Ontario. Bill was also a licensed marriage celebrant. Their sons Brodie and Ben, daughter Nikki and their extended families mourn his passing.

Sue's good friend, Diana (who lives in Ladysmith), said:

"There was a beautiful Mass held in Bill's honour, followed by a reception at the Golf and Country Club in Cambridge, Ontario on October 28, 2006. I was privileged to attend and to be there for my friend Sue. I will always hold Bill's memory in my heart, as I loved him as a brother and a friend."

In talking to Sue on Thursday, November 9, I asked what she would like to share with us about Bill. In no particular order: "He loved doing baptisms; he loved spending time with the kids; he was thrilled with his grandchildren. Bill had a big presence as you know. I am just going through his music collection: he loved all kinds of music - lots of jazz, big band - but what an eclectic collection."

Joan Lang and friends from London were also able to attend the service and sent the notice to the Journal. Joan had brought Fran and I to Bill and Sue's home in London a number of years ago. As always, meeting and sharing the journey with married priests and their families seems to make them family. Connie Kurtenbach, Ladysmith, BC

# Three Voices

by *Connie Kurtenbach, Ladysmith, BC*

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## Mary “Granny” Dolan

Q: Christmas is coming nearer. What do you think about at this time and about the manger scene of long ago?

A: I think about the homeless; especially the young homeless mothers. And I think of the empty stable. Mary and Joseph found this place for their baby, for Jesus. I think of the people in our community who are trying to create a home for the homeless mothers and their babies. It shall be called Serenity House.

(We light a candle and Mary places her blue beaded rosary on the table.)

Q: How has Mary been part of your life over the years?

A: As you can see, I still carry my rosary. As a child and young person, growing up in an Irish Catholic home in Scotland, the rosary was the common form of prayer. We said the Hail Mary; we prayed in church, at home and sometimes, especially in May and October, the priest would remind us to say the rosary together as a family in devotion to Mary.

I loved the mystery, the statues, the candles and the beads. I understood Mary became

the mother of Jesus because she said yes to the angel. Because of her YES, Jesus came on earth.

Q: What about your life in Canada?

A: As a mother, I shared my ideas of Mary, teaching that she was patient and gentle. The rosary had less emphasis, even though all the children were given beads. My father gave me a set of rosary beads to give to my oldest daughter, Paula, on her wedding day.

Q: Can you say more about Mary, the mother of Jesus?

A: Almost every Irish Catholic family had a child called Mary. I always loved that my name is Mary.

I am Mary's child.

(Mary begins to talk more intensely. I listen and record.)

One of my important prayers for years is the 'Memorare.' She does not always “answer” the way I want - I remember my brother's tragic end. It was difficult.

Mary is a final refuge and so at that time I remember thinking of Mary saying at the wedding of Cana: Do whatever he tells you. It is a strong message.

I think of her suffering and my mother's suffering. I think of the Stations of the Cross.

As a young girl I wanted to be the girl to crown Mary in May. I did not get chosen. Another girl did.

Recently I had a 'home celebration of roses.' I made a tiny crown out of dry rose buds for Mary's statue. It was lovely.

I loved the litany of Mary: the songs: “O Mary, we crown thee with blossoms today....”

I did study the apparitions. My confirmation name is Bernadette. I did go to Lourdes.

And I believe in the mysterious healings.

The truth is I have not meditated enough.

Now in my life, Mary seems much greater than before. Somehow Mary has become more divine and Jesus has become more human. Mother earth/earth mother, source of life and light! A great energy- like the vastness of the blue sky, the sea, eternity- it's all there in blue and gold, very beautiful and wondrous. She is there when I call. She is there to welcome me home.

## Paula, daughter of Mary, mother of Angela

We are welcomed into Paula and Gary's new house on Heron's Way. I bring fruit of the vine in the form of grape jelly Fran and I have made from our red grapes. I bring six-year-old Angela a box of crayons. Mary brings a special plaque of Mary that was Paula's but needing fixing and the rosary she made while Paula was in labour.

Paula is a beautiful looking woman, who serves us coffee and we sit around the table. I sense her beauty is a kind of inner gentleness. Angela has several projects on the go as we talk. This time I did not use questions in the same way, since there were four of us.

Paula always loved the tradition of going to church in the Christmas season. She looked forward to the traditional practices of setting up the Nativity scene at home. It started with the feast of St. Nicholas and went right on to Christmas: the excitement of shopping, the music, the food and the family was all very special.

Since Angela was born, she does not do the “church stuff.” Some years ago they went to the church pageant and mass. The music was great and the priest was terrible. He basically said things that were not welcoming. No more church stuff. I am not comfortable in a church.

Especially since Angela has come, my husband and I have our own traditions; some come from our families and some we have chosen. We love the Nativity scene and we read the Christmas story. One of our greatest joys was Angela's baptism at home at Christmas. My husband read a poem and the ceremony was very comfortable and relaxed and joyful.

Paula and Gary lived more recently in Arizona. When I asked her about Mary, she brought out a lovely album, showing some photos of the Sedona chapel, the Madonna and Child cathedral and the stunning rock formation that is called 'Madonna and child.'

I asked about what they teach as parents. Paula encourages good values, and the practice of virtues (a program at her school). Through stories and others ways, she and Gary teach Angela to live with care and love and respect of nature and live with respect and care for herself and others. That seemed to pretty well cover all the messages of Jesus.

Once again we hear the voice of a mother, like Mary, the mother of Jesus, speaking of her child and the teachings she hopes her child will embrace in the world.

## Angela, daughter of Paula, granddaughter of Mary

Angela Rose Ramwell is six years old and now attends the public school very near her home.

She studies me and says she knows I have come to interview her. I am not sure she knows what that is exactly. “Yes, you can interview me,” she says.

Q. Well, I thought I would ask you some questions. I see you are printing and drawing. What is that?

A: I am writing about horses and Flicka. (She just saw the movie My Friend Flicka).

She moves to my side of the table. I give her the crayons and paper.

Q. So, Angela I hear you went to a Catholic school here when you got back from Arizona. Did you like the school?

A: Not a bit.

Q: Did you learn about Jesus?

A: Yes. He was born in a barn.

Q. Tell me about that.

A: Well, he is the God of everybody. They brought him treasures.

Q: What kind of treasures?

A: Gold and diamonds and rubies.

Q: Do you talk to Jesus?

A: No. You can't talk to Jesus. You can't phone. He is in Heaven, but you can pray.

She dashes off and returns with three things.

A: This is my diary. This is my address book. This is my rosary case. These must be some of her treasures!

All the items are a true pink colour. When she opens the rosary case, she takes out a shiny pink pearl rosary. At this time, Granny also brings out the rosary she made while Angela was being born. We talk about these items. Angela also tells me she went to Treasure Cove Camp. I am not sure what the connection is, but it may be the treasure word or a memory of her Catholic school experience.

Now Angela has brought her horse things to me and says:

Q. I want to interview you. What do you know about horses?

A: Well, Angela, I grew up on a big farm and I rode a black, fat horse named Mabel when I was your age.

Angela's on a roll now! This is a CEO in the making! She munches on a cookie and tells me to write about stallions. She is going to dictate! I write. When I finish, she wants to know the name of all my horses. I am supposed to write them down on her stallion page. She starts to draw a series of horses.

At this point I am actually interviewing Paula. She mentions the Nativity scenes.

So I ask Angela.

Q: Do you think you could draw me a Nativity scene for my paper (The Journal)?

A: I will think about it.

End of Interviews. I hear later from Mary that she has drawn something, but wants to know if she can get it back. So Mary explains that I will scan it and then return it.

I loved doing the interviews. It seems clear that the next generation and their children are making their own traditions and rituals. In this family, the Madonna, the child Jesus and the rosary still hold special memories. I pray that they, like Mary, will "treasure all these things in their hearts and grow in wisdom."(Luke 2:51-52)



# Guadalupe Replaces Coatlicue, But Is She The Mother Of The Nazarene?

by Phil Little, Cedar, BC



I have always had a fondness for the story of Guadalupe. I met my wife, Anne Marie, in Mexico in the summer of 1969 when we were both university students, and at that time we viewed the sacred image in the old Basilica which was sinking into the lake bed of the ancient city of Tenochtitlan. Later as a missionary in South America I studied the importance of Marian shinses such as Luján in Argentina, Caacupé in Paraguay, and Copacabana in Bolivia which replaced mother earth goddess figures in pre-conquest cultures.

Coatlicue is the Aztec goddess of life and death, a virgin maiden who was miraculously impregnated and gave birth to

Quetzalcoatl and numerous other deities. She was not a fashion statement with her necklace of human hearts and a skirt of snakes. "Coa" in the language of Náhuatl, means "snake". A more benevolent form of the feminine goddess named Tonantzin was the earth and fertility goddess known as "Our Lady Mother". Her sacred site was the hill of Tepeyec, on which a temple had been built.

When the Spanish conquistador Cortes approached the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), the emperor Moctezuma II met the Spaniards at the temple of Tonantzin. The story goes that the invaders were most ungracious towards the Aztec welcoming committee by knocking over the statue of the goddess and replacing her with a Madonna statue from Europe. The Aztec empire was at this time in crisis and not known for its benevolence, even to its own people. Worse was to come with the conquest.

An Aztec convert who took the name Juan Diego was walking by the hill of Tepeyec one day in 1531. Even to a convert this was still a sacred site, connected to the deity of the Moon, and the place where the cosmic kingdom had begun to unravel. Not much is known about Cuauhtlatoatzin (which means "the talking eagle") as he was known before his baptism, and even a former Abbott of the Basilica of Guadalupe, Guillermo Schulenburg, in 1996 suggested that he is not entirely a "historical" figure. The first written mention of Juan Diego is found in the "Nican Nopohua" document, almost a century after the events. That minor detail did not prevent John Paul II from adding Juan Diego to the official chorus of the Roman (Catholic) pantheon in 2002.

As Juan Diego walked by Tepeyec, he was called by a young brown-

skinned woman who called herself "Coatlaxopeuh" (1), "xopeuh" meaning to crush serpents (Gen3:15). Literally then she addressed herself as "who crushes the serpent" and a close pronunciation of this name would be "quatlasupe", which was similar in sound to Guadalupe, an Iberian Madonna who is sometimes depicted as standing on the head of a bull between its horns. (By coincidence the first voyage of Columbus was authorized by Queen Isabel at the Friary of "Santa Maria de Guadalupe" in Spain.) Coatlxapeuh who is known ever since as Guadalupe sent Juan Diego to the bishop asking that a shrine (temple) be built for her where the previous temple to Tonantzin once stood. To get the bishop on side a number of miracles occurred.

The greatest of these miracles is the imprint of the image of Coatlxapeuh, the young brown skinned woman who spoke in Náhuatl, on the tilma of Juan Diego. The tilma, used as a cloak, was woven of course maguey cactus fiber. The image is reputed to be a mixture of different artistic mediums, including oils and pastels. It was the perfect image for it equally appealed to both conquerors and conquered.

The Spaniards saw in it a confirmation of their Marian devotions coupled to their mandate to discover and subjugate the Americas. They recognized their Virgin Madonna standing between the horns of a bull. They identified with the nobility of renaissance style of dress worn by the Virgin. She is even protected by an angel who looks like a figure from a Vatican fresco.

The conquered "indios" saw something else. They identified with the goddess who was so powerful that she stood blocking the rays of the sun and standing on the moon. (Think of the pyramids of Teotihuacán dedicated to two of the most powerful Aztec deities - the sun and the moon.) Yet so powerful, she is still so gentle that her feet are cushioned by an angel holding a pillow on which she stands. She wears a dress adorned with flowers of the region and she is wearing a waist sash indicating that she is pregnant. She is brown and mestizo - the first Mexican. She is what Mexico will become- a blend of two cultures and two civilizations.

Father Virgilio Elizondo suggests that Guadalupe is something of the third manifestation of Eve. The first Eve gave birth to humanity but also lost the struggle with the serpent. The new Eve, Mary of Nazareth, gave birth to the new era of salvation. "Now Mary of Tepeyec would be the mother of the ultimate humanity which started not with the conquest



but with the Incarnation of Christ in America". (2)

Unless we choose to be blind to the best of modern biblical scholarship, we know that what we know about the historical Jesus is minimal. Even the gospels have adorned the historical Jesus with theological baggage, some of which is no longer useful or relevant. What we know about his mother is even less- if nothing at all. Scholars such as J. Dominic Crossan (3) help us to understand the context of a prophetic figure that would come out of Nazareth, the fringe of the Jewish kingdom of the north. We know of the insecurity faced by a young maiden as the Roman armies continually passed through Galilee, through Nazareth, on their way to suppress yet another Jewish rebellion. We are told that Mary was found to be unmarried and with child, a dangerous situation for women of the Middle East then as it is now. Anything else is myth, conjecture, and theology. The Christmas nativity scene owes more to St. Francis than it does to the gospels.

The first decade of the conquest of the Americas seemed intent on the annihilation of the "indios", the native peoples, by sword, plague and slavery. Did the appearance of Guadalupe save the first world people or did it ensure their domination? Did the "Virgin Morena" (brown virgin) cause the conquerors to recognize the dignity of their subjugated Indians or did it stifle a revolt of the suffering poor by giving religious legitimacy to the conquest?

There is no Mexico today without Guadalupe. The struggle for independence under Miguel Hidalgo was fought under the slogan "Death to the Spaniards and long live the Virgin of Guadalupe". Her

banner was carried into battle, not only by Hidalgo but later by Morales and Zapata. In current times, the image of Guadalupe is integral to the struggle of the Zapatista revolution. Not all Mexicans are Christian but all are Guadalupanos.

The struggle of the Mexican American to the north commonly unfurls the banner of Guadalupe in its struggle for identity, dignity, and human rights. César Chávez and Dolores Huerta founded the U.F.W. under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe who was according to Huerta "a symbol of faith, hope and leadership". (4) Guadalupe is an icon for women who seek strength, dignity and control of their own lives.

Then perhaps it doesn't really matter if Guadalupe is the same as the Mary of Nazareth, about whom we know so little. She is definitely not Coatlicue, but does seem a lot like Tonantzin. If there was a Mary of Nazareth for whom the Magnificat resonates in such potential for turning upside down the world order, then Guadalupe is the new world manifestation of that potential. "He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty" (Luke 1:51-53).

- 1) <http://www.sxws.com/charis/mary12.htm>
  - 2) <http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Dec1999/feature2.asp>
  - 3) <http://www.johndcrossan.com/>
  - 4) [http://www.mexconnect.com/mex\\_/travel/jking/jkguadalupe.html](http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/travel/jking/jkguadalupe.html)
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### *Sophia: Mary Of The Feminine* by Dianne Peck, Sydney, NS

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For this article I am translating the question, "What is Mary's mission in the world?" as, "What is the mission of the Goddess or the Feminine in the world?"

And I am translating the terms "Feminine" and "Goddess" to mean the principle of the feminine/goddess as it is found in our human psyche, whether we are male or female.

And therefore the mission of Mary, of the

Feminine, becomes our mission, we women and men who belong to the incarnate order of things.

Charlene Proctor, In "Goddess 101," lists the following as the qualities of the feminine:

The feminine is the presence in the world of creative energy.

It is the desire to create hope out of loss.

It represents the human capacity for spiritual consciousness or the

higher self.

It is symbolic of birth, life, death, and resurrection.

It is the sustainer of life and the life giver.

It is a metaphor for earth and its capacity to create and recreate life.

I would like to propose that being these qualities, making them present, incarnating them, is the mission beyond the stable not only of Mary, but of each woman, man and child.

Helen Luke, in her book, *The Way of Woman: Awakening the Perennial Feminine*, says that the Goddess "carries the image of that which nourishes and gives birth to all the values of true relatedness and to the tender understanding of the heart."

She describes the basic feminine nature as "that which receives, nourishes, and gives birth on all levels...through the ability to bring up the water of life from under the earth."

And again, the feminine is "the quality of receptivity;" it is the mission of receiving the seed and then nurturing it "in silence and secrecy." The nature of the feminine is to nourish the roots of the seed it has received, to foster its growth in the dark so that it may reach up into the light.

Well. I would like to be able to take all these magnificent quotes and expound on them, break them open at great length and offer abundant insight into them. But my coffers of insight as yet are not that full. As yet. They are growing, though, which is the goal. So here is what's happening for me in this arena of the mission of

the feminine or the goddess, the mission of incarnating the divine today.

My learning experiences are happening on two fronts. The first is with the command to love myself. I can't begin to articulate the difference that pouring out thoughts of self-love, tenderness, kindness, support, care, and nurture is making to my life. This practice has taken me back into my ancestral mindsets where my task is that of Vasalisa in *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, by Clarissa Estes. Vasalisa's task was to sort this from that, specifically, the poppy seeds from the sand.

"The psychic tasks are these: learning fine discrimination, separating one thing from another with finest discernment." (Estes)

One way I am carrying out this sorting task is to choose which of the inheritances I want to keep and which I need to discard. Which writings on the walls of my DNA are loving and nurturing and true, and which are false and negating but still time-honored and long-practiced in my family of origin.

An example is the belief that "we (the ancestral we) are not business people. We don't have a head for it and deep down we don't really trust those who do." I had no idea how paralyzing those beliefs in me were until I choose to become self-employed.

You can see the dilemma. It has been like putting the gas pedal to the floor while slamming on the brakes.

You can also see what going into the secret places, the beautiful dark places, and sorting the poppy seeds from the grains of sand, is doing for me. What nurturing the soil with immense forgiveness, tenderness and love is doing for me. The result is that hope is created out of loss. The result is that the feminine, the goddess, is incarnated in my life, small section by small section, and ipso facto, in the world.

This process has led me to the second front which is the marketplace, the towers of commerce.

Proctor tells us to develop our corporate soul. She says that feminine presence is the presence of spirit, of breath, and that when the feminine is not present in the workplace we are without breath. She urges us to integrate the polarities, which are out of balance with too much warrior spirit and not enough Goddess values. To bring those feminine values that result in companies shifting from control to empowerment.

Helen Luke gives a specific example of this shift in values as it relates to our concepts and use of money. She describes the origin of coinage as the symbol of the simple exchange of goods and services. And that this exchange was done in the feelings of earning and paying. That what was earned was paid for, with good feeling (employer), and what was paid for was earned (employee), with the same good feeling. And that the transaction was a compact and not just a contract.

She outlines the difference between a compact (feminine), which is an agreement based on feeling values, a coming together in peace (cum pace), and a contract (masculine), which is a legal or financial agreement which binds outwardly, regardless of human feelings involved.

And so. As I charge down this path of being involved in the world of commerce in a very personal way, and of going where my ancestors feared to tread, I discover a vast ocean of opportunity to take the mission of the feminine, of the Goddess, far beyond the stable.

Sophia wisdom: The very definition of the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is 'exchange' on earth. Helen Luke, *The way of Woman*.

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## Our Lady And Mother, Mary

by Tom Hassett, Victoria, BC

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**H**er mission today is what it has always been, the Incarnation. It is to bring God into the here and now, into present day humanity. The birth of Jesus in the stable involves God becoming an integral part of God's creation, of being one with a particular time and space (with all its needs) through the willingness of His mother. In her arms, He

faces shepherds and their families. In her arms, He becomes a Jew by enduring the pain and the shedding of His blood at His circumcision in the temple. In her arms, He faces the 3 wise men from Persia and then has to flee with her to Egypt when Herod, a fellow Jew, tries to kill Him. Twelve years later, Mary brings Him once again to the

temple where He instructs the priests who marvel at His wisdom. She also loses Him there until the third day. Mary presents Him again at Cana where He changes the timing of His revelation to suit her wishes - which are to meet the peculiar needs of that time and place.

She expands her mission of Incarnation on Golgatha (where she again loses Him until the third day) for Mary becomes the foster mother of John and by bringing the risen Jesus to her adopted son, she becomes the foster mother to all the other children of God, the other apostles and disciples whose faith in the risen Jesus makes them the adopted sisters and brothers of the risen Jesus. In her Assumption, Mary has also risen from death and brings the risen Jesus into the lives of each one of us, making Him aware of our needs, our limitations and our emptiness without Him. Jesus is the first born of a new species and His mother is the mother of that species. As in Cana, she also makes us aware of our need to follow His directions - to love one another as He has loved us. When we, like Him and His mother, have loved one another with self sacrifice, the risen Jesus will have truly become incarnate in each one of us.

# Mary In New Testament Theology

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Twelve biblical scholars- 4 Lutherans, 4 Roman Catholics, 2 Episcopalians, and 2 from Reformed Churches- studied the marian references in the New Testament. This resulted in *Mary in the new*

*Testament* published in 1978 by Fortress Press (ISBN 0 8006 1345 7). Much of the following information is a summary of their work though not always their wording.

The New Testament (NT) refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus, directly and indirectly.

## Paul's Writings

Paul never speaks of Mary by name, but because in some verses he writes about Jesus as a fully human being born in the same way as anyone else, he indirectly refers to Mary: Jesus is "born of a woman". Paul writes about Jesus primarily as "Our lord, Jesus anointed, ordained son of God in power according to spirit of holiness through resurrection" Rom 4:1-4.

Other verses in Paul are very likely early expressions of how the first followers of Jesus understood Jesus' origins. For example, in what is likely an early christian hymn in Phil 2, Paul speaks about Jesus having been born "in likeness of men", and in Rom 1 he says that Jesus is "born of the seed of David according to the flesh". In Gal 1:19, Paul says that he met "James, the Lord's brother" which was the accepted identification of James, the leader of the Jerusalem community of Jesus' followers. Later in Gal 4:4-5, Paul argues that "God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law that those under the law might be rescued and that they might receive adoption." In other words, *Paul accepted Jesus' human origins*. For his own good reasons, Paul did not write about Jesus' life history nor that of Mary, his mother.

## The Gospels

The only way we have of getting to know Jesus is through the Gospels, written 1-2 generations after his life from accounts that differ in many details by people who lived in diverse places and situations. The commonly accepted view of the formation of the Gospels is that they came about in three stages:

1. Deeds and sayings of Jesus on which the Gospels are based;
2. Traditions about these deeds and sayings as interpreted by individual disciples and communities who recalled them, studied them, reflected on them, and passed them on;
3. The Gospels written by evangelists who collected, selected, combined, and rethought the traditions, and then shaped the narratives that reflect the deeds and sayings of Jesus and, to some degree, the purpose of a community. Their focus is on Jesus who was exalted by God after his crucifixion; it is only indirectly on his mother, Mary.

## The Gospel of Mark (Mk)

Mk 3:31-35 stresses Jesus' humanity and his humble origins and contrasts these with Jesus' teaching and deeds: Jesus is not understood by his relatives. Mk uses this episode to relate a Jesus' saying "Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" in much the same way as another evangelist does in Lk 11:28 where, in answer to the woman who has just blessed his mother, Jesus replies: "Happy indeed are those who hear the word of God and keep it".

It is not known if Jesus' "own relatives" who came to seize him saying "He is out of his mind" (Mk 3:21) are the same as "His mother and his brothers" of Mk 3:31 who arrive at a house and call to him.

Mk 6:3-4 says that in Jesus' own country many asked "Is this not the woodworker, Mary's son, brother of James and Joses, and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they hesitated about him. But Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and among his own relatives and in his own house... He was amazed at their unbelief."

Only Mk calls Jesus the woodworker and Mk does not mention Joseph. This same saying is found in the following:

MT 13:55 "Is this not the son of the woodworker? Is not his mother called Mary?"

Lk 4:22 "Is this not the son of Joseph?"

Jn 6:42 "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and his mother?"

Mt leaves out the remark that "Jesus is beside himself" and "among his own."

These accounts are retold so variously that no conclusion is possible about the exact composition of Jesus' family. The meaning of the texts that call Jesus "Joseph's son" depends largely on later church perspectives and not on exegesis of the texts.

## The Gospel of Matthew (Mt)

One purpose of Mt is to prove that Jesus was part of God's plan from the start. So right away Mt includes Gentiles in the introduction to the gospel; for example, there are the women in Jesus' genealogy and the Magi in the birth story. Besides Mary, the other named women (mostly foreigners) were instruments in God's plan. The heroes of Mt's birth story are Joseph, a devout Jew, and the Magi. The villains are the Jewish king, the Temple priests, the scribes, and all Jerusalem.

In the genealogy, Mt does not say Jesus was Joseph's son but "Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom Jesus was born." Later he would call Jesus "the son of the woodworker". Did Mt inherit the genealogy and the other details of Jesus' birth?— Joseph the dreamer going to Egypt; Moses saved from the wicked ruler and going to Egypt; the slaughter of male children by the wicked ruler; the star rising much to the ire of King Balak; the miraculous birth of Jesus (by the holy Spirit) announced by an angel in a dream.

As the first followers of Jesus tell his life story, Jesus is God's son by the Holy Spirit at the resurrection (Rom 1 above, & Acts 13:33): "What God promised to our fathers he has fulfilled this day by raising up Jesus as it is written in Ps. 2: 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.'" Then later when the synoptic Gospels

## Focus Continued...

were composed, the quotation from Ps. 2 was moved to Jesus' baptism. The traditional accounts of Jesus' ministry, passion, and resurrection were written first and then the infancy narratives in Mt and Lk were added to them. These texts about Jesus' birth are theological statements about Jesus as the Christ more than statements about Mary. Jesus does not *become* "God's son"; Jesus is God's son "*born of the virgin Mary*", a statement not about Mary but about Jesus. Mt also calls Jesus "God's son" at 2:15,14:33 & 16:16.

### The Gospel of Luke (Lk)

The writer of Lk & Acts claims accuracy ("eye witness accounts"). This claim is akin to the way Greek historians used the phrase to gain credibility for their words. The purpose of Lk is to generate faith. However, there are other NT texts which contradict some of the history in Lk/Acts. In Lk as in Mt, Jesus is God's son from the first moment of his life.

Lk in chapters 1 and 2 passes on the traditions that had developed around Jesus' birth. Lk's annunciation passage, Lk 1:26-38, reflects the way that the first and second generation christian communities thought of and passed on their beliefs about the exalted Jesus from his moment of conception. It does not mean that there was a special revelation to Mary at that moment. Mary did not know that Jesus was God's son all his life. But Mary is depicted in Lk as the one who hears through the Angel Gabriel God's invitation and she accepts it- in biblical terms "she obeys", that means that *she listens carefully to God's message and she responds*. Like the other disciples of Jesus, Mary at some point becomes part of the Kingdom community. Acts 1:14 For Lk, God's Spirit, who brings forth the Christian community, has been at work in Mary from the beginning.

Because of this, she is the first Christian disciple, the foremost listener and doer of Jesus' message about God's Kingdom. She is not Jesus' first disciple in time but she is foremost in her response to her son's preaching and practice of God's Kingdom. It is later mariology that makes the annunciation a special revelation to Mary.

The saying "Let it be done to me according to your word" in v38 is Lk's version of Mk 3:31 & Lk 11:27 "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" and "Happy is she who believed that the things spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled". Lk 1:45

In Lk, the angel greets Mary with the usual Greek greeting, "Hail favoured one" OR in some translations "Rejoice full of grace one" ("full of grace" is a text that greatly influenced later mariology). "The

Lord (is) with you" and "Blessed are you among women" are words that were also addressed to other women in the past: "Blessed be Jael among women" Judg 5:24; "Judith, you are blessed by the Most High God above all women on earth" Jdt 13:18; "Blessed is the fruit of your womb" was also the blessing of Moses on the Hebrews for their obedience/listening to the voice of God in Deut 28:1.

Lk 2:1-20 seems to be a composite of separate stories: There are two spellings for Mary: Hebrew in 16 and Greek in 19; Lk repeats Joseph's Davidic origin and Mary's pregnancy with no reference to anything miraculous; Lk does not seem to be aware of the stages in Jewish marriage; Lk says that Mary is "betrothed" to Joseph. (Some Old Latin and Sinaitic Syrian texts, perhaps knowing these stages or fearing to give scandal, have "wife of Joseph".)

In what has become a key statement "**Mary kept these things in her heart**" in v19 and a similar one in v51, Lk may have inherited from his sources two endings to two different stories. They are not just Mary's memories. At some time early in the Jesus movement, Mary would have reflected on and interpreted what she saw as God's plan beginning with Jesus' infancy through to his becoming a man. OR It may be that these statements in vv19 & 51 may be Lk's own contribution to the infancy stories-The same expression is used for Jacob about Joseph and Nebuchadnezzar about Daniel.

*In Lk, Mary's attitude to God's plan is one of humility, acceptance, and obedience, and in this way she is the model disciple. When she reflected in her heart is not determined. Lk speaks of Mary as a believer and part of the christian family, the handmaid of the Lord.*

Lk's two other infancy events, 2:21-40, are Jesus' circumcision/naming and the presentation in the Temple. In Lk the angel tells Mary to name the boy Jesus; in Mt the angel tells Joseph. As pious Jews, the parents fulfill the Mosaic law though the payment was 5 shekels to buy Jesus back from the Temple. A woman's purification did not have to be done in the Temple.

In Lk 2:41-52, Jesus' parents are again shown to be pious Jews. In this episode Lk has Jesus state his relationship to God, and Joseph and Mary do not understand. No previous knowledge of Jesus' origins is presupposed; so they do not understand. Mary, however, "kept these things in her heart."

### The Gospel of John (Jn)

In Jn 1:11 "his own" are the Jewish people and 1:12-13 those who believe in him "are begotten of God". In Jn "being begotten by



God” in no way implies a miraculous begetting/conception. Jn attaches no importance to where Jesus was born, nor how, nor to descent from David’s line.

Some have seen the Cana story in Jn 2: 1-12 as originally a miracle story without the dialogue between Jesus and Mary: A younger Jesus doing wonders as found in apocryphal gospels and in Lk 2 where the twelve year old Jesus astounds scholars with his knowledge. But that is not how Jn presents the Cana sign. *For Jn, it is about Jesus replacing the water of Jewish purification with the best ‘wine’ in great abundance and thus manifesting his glory “as of the only son of the Father”*. Mary has a part in it. Her observation “They have no wine” is like the saying in Mk 8:2 “How can we feed these people in the desert when we have no bread?” Jn contrasts Jesus’ earthly connection with the will of the heavenly Father, God.

“What to me and to you, Woman?” indicates “It’s not our affair.” And while ‘Woman’ is not a common way of addressing one’s mother, Jesus does it here and at the cross. It is not rude nor impolite, though followed by “my hour has not yet come” it carries a negative implication. In Jn, Jesus is portrayed addressing other women as ‘Woman’. Mt 13:28; Lk 13:12; Jn 4:21; 8:10; 20:13. Jesus’ Hour, a Johannine expression, does not come until his passion, death, and passover to God at which time his mother, again ‘Woman’, is there at the cross. At Cana, Mary’s “Do whatever he tells you” is a puzzle like the saying in the second Cana sign: “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe” Jn 4:46. Jn’s Jesus has a dislike for requests for a ‘sign’.

Jn 6:42, “Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother?” is like the question in the Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman story. Jn often operates on two levels: the level of the speaker who asks a question or makes a statement, for example, “How can he say ‘I have come down from heaven?’ ” and this leads into a Jesus’ saying- “No one can come to me...”

Jn 7:10 is about Jesus’ brothers and their disbelief. They want him to do his “works” (i.e. his signs) in Jerusalem. Jn never mentions the brothers again! Jn is not hostile to Mary as he is to Jesus’ brothers. This may reflect the Johannine community’s attitude towards the Jerusalem community of James, who was “the brother of the Lord”. These communities had different views of Jesus and of what it meant to be a Kingdom family.

8:41 “We (Jews) are not born of fornication. We have one father, God himself.” This is thought to reflect an accusation made against Jesus because of his birth. Jesus answers “You belong to your father the devil... a murderer from the beginning...” v44.

In the second half of Jn’s gospel, Jesus addresses his faithful followers. As part of that, Jn puts the following in 19:25-27: “By the cross of Jesus stood his mother...Jesus seeing his mother with the disciple whom he loved standing by, he said to his mother ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.” *For Jn, it is not physical relationship that is important in God’s Kingdom*. Just before he dies saying “It is finished and handing over his spirit”, Jesus gives these two beloved ones into the care of one another and in this way creates a Kingdom family.

### Revelation

In Rev 12, the woman “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” is often interpreted as a marian image, but this text is likely a Jewish image that passed over to Christians. In the vision, heaven and earth are depicted at the same time. The “woman” is Israel or the People of God/the Church. The birth of the Messiah/Christ (Jewish/christian) has begun the defeat of the devil but the conquest is not yet completed.

### Conclusion

Mary was not a follower of Jesus during his ministry but soon after his resurrection she is part of a community of disciples and her participation earns her a special mention in the Acts of the Apostles. After that she disappears from the NT. The birth of Jesus from the virgin Mary is told principally in Mt. It is in Lk’s infancy chapters that Mary is depicted as the humble and obedient young Jewish girl who listens carefully to God’s message; she is the voice of the poor and helpless. In this way, she is the model disciple who with her “Be it done to me according to your word” is “the handmaid of the Lord”. At some point in her life, she ponders on the life of her son, Jesus. Jn’s understanding of Mary is shown in the crucifixion account. There at the cross, the formation of the Kingdom family of the Beloved Disciple and Jesus’ mother takes place.



# Pondering With Mary

by Frederick A. Miller, Ottawa, ON



When Jim Noonan asked me to write something on Mary for *The Corpus Journal* I was taken back to my years as Editor of *Oblate Missions* magazine when I often wrote reflections on Mary. Then I always tried to relate what I said about her to some practical aspect of people's lives. How will I write about Mary for today's readers of *The Journal*? And what are the implications of the focus: *Beyond the Stable*?

The first thing that leapt into my mind was an image, a woman I had seen the other day at the mall. She startled me, though I was walking fast on my daily exercise and only glimpsed her. She was oriental. She was seated on a bench in a perfect lotus position, her legs folded under her, her hands held in her lap like a bowl, her eyes cast down in contemplation. Close by people were lined up to buy lottery tickets, Others, like me, were in transit, hurrying on their errands, restless, rushing, anonymous, hoping not to be detained even by the chance meeting of friends.

The Scripture that leaps to mind is from Luke 2:19, "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." The operative word is 'pondering.' It stops the mind short, calls attention. Pondering denotes a listening, reflective focusing. Mary had a lot to think about because a lot was happening in her life. We know what those things were: "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed-and you yourself will be pierced with a sword-so that the thoughts of many hearts will be laid bare." Luke 2:34, 35. What, on the other hand, is happening in our lives today? What's going on? We, too, have lots to ponder.

Continuing to take my cue from chance encounters I was thumbing through the stations on TV when I was arrested by the sight of the Dalai Lama in conversation with Dr. Michael Meaney, professor of Psychiatry, Neurology and Neurosurgery and Director of a study of Behaviour, Genes and Environment at McGill University, and Depak Chopra the noted thinker and author. Their conversation was related to the inauguration of The Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education in Vancouver. The \$60 million center, located in the heart of Vancouver, is scheduled to open in 2009. It is a non-religious and non-political institution for dialogue on

the world's problems. What does this say to us Christians about ourselves and our churches? How are we addressing the problems of our time? This used to be our purview, our area of expertise.

Dr. Meaney was making a point. He was saying that the way things are today in family life many children are growing up without proper parenting. The child's first experience is the mother's affection. That experience is foundational for the normal, healthy development of the child's brain. This is not a religious truth, he said, but a biological one. If the child fails to receive the love and affection of its mother bad things happen: jealousy, fear and anger become fixed responses that make for a volatile human being in adulthood. I hear of that all the time from my wife, a teacher in the Separate School System in Ontario. In her experience many children come from one-parent homes where the father has walked out or where there is conflict, and it shows. The good in the child is submerged by these negative impulses.

Depak Chopra, in response, suggested that we regard motherhood as "the most sacred profession on earth." That, of course, is not new thinking. The Church has some claim to the idea. It is an important emphasis. We are talking about the formation of human beings meant to live in harmony in a threatening world. Not all women, of course are called to marriage and motherhood. This is not to demean the vocation of the nun, often called "Mother," the childless married woman or the single woman in the world. They all have the possibility of being nurturing in the context of their vocation too.

The Dalai Lama said, "I am 71 years old and deep in my mind I experience my mother's care and this gives me inner peace, inner calmness. All have the same potential. We have to live together to share our common world. We must educate."

Chopra introduced the subject of conflict resolution. He spoke of the need for respect due to every person; of the need for justice in our relationships; that forgiveness has to be a part of our way of dealing with one another. The Dalai Lama suggested that compassion is the only way to heal society. This is Buddhist thought in a nutshell.

At the opposite pole is the notion of suicide, the deliberate negation of one's life. In my notes of this conversation I have the name Jeremy Hainsworth. A newspaper reporter or columnist, he had written about some gay men deliberately looking to become infected with the AIDS virus simply to get it over with. One of them brought this into the conversation possibly as an example of what can result from lack of mothering.

About that time a lone gunman entered Dawson College in Montreal and began shooting students at random. The young gunman, steeped in the goth culture and enamored of guns, killed a girl and injured several other students before turning the gun on himself. The irony that is seldom mentioned in this story is that Dawson College is built on the site of the original Motherhouse of the Congregation of Notre Dame, a community of Sisters renowned for their Christian education

of young women. Now, as with so many other communities of religious women, the size of the community is greatly diminished to the impoverishment of our society. How Catholic education has changed!

In the next few days on my walks in the mall I noticed other young people dressed in the clothing typical of the goth culture: black clothing, long black coats, hair dyed black, black eye shadow, black boots, many exposed steel zippers. And I wondered, where is the Church? Who is reaching out to young people with a message of hope?

Mary not only pondered. She acted. She was involved in the raising of her son. She initiated his ministry at Cana. She did not shrink from Calvary when he carried his cross and was there when he died upon it. And she continues to speak and act beyond the grave, calling us to repentance at Lourdes, Fatima and at other places and at other times. Are we listening?

Pondering the events of our lives or of the day is a good starting point. The young oriental woman contemplating in the midst of mall hustle and bustle was not withdrawing from life. She was experiencing it. As Sister Elaine MacInnes says in her book **Zen Contemplation**, "Zen is experiencing fully at all times." Nor is this an exercise in self absorption. "When we leave our cushions each day, this generating power continues to move us in compassion and action...we should be shot off our cushions for service in this world of greed, anger and ignorance."

It is a sad irony that while the Dalai Lama has a \$60 million center carrying his name dedicated to peace and education, our Church, which holds the secret of Life in Christ, is sunk in a state of depression, mired in scandals and inertia. The Church ponders, but fails to take appropriate action; for decades the bishops of Canada have petitioned Rome for a married clergy in the North among the Native peoples whose culture has no concept of celibacy. Nothing happened. Meanwhile, as priests die off and are not replaced, people are deprived of the sacraments. So much for the sacrifices of the heroic Oblate missionaries, who spent their lives in isolation from their own cultures, far from their homes, learning new and difficult languages and lifestyles in a harsh land. What does that tell us about the relative importance which the Institution places on the Eucharist and celibacy? Clerical celibacy is a discipline of the Church. It could be changed in a moment. There is also the question of women priests, another matter the leadership in Rome refuses to face, choosing instead to hide behind a shield of 'definitive' excluding women from ordination without consulting the bishops or the faithful and against the advice of Scripture scholars who, when questioned for a Scriptural basis for a male only priesthood, found none.

I am reading a book, **The Great Depression** by Pierre Berton. It tells how the leaders of our nation denied there was a crisis of unemployment while thousands starved in the streets. I find an interesting parallel with what has been happening in our Church over the years since the Council. The Church has harboured sexual abusers among its clergy, covering up, protecting the institution, and by default preferring to sacrifice children. It is no wonder that priesthood is not attractive to idealistic young men today.

I would like to paraphrase an editorial quoted from the Winnipeg Free Press of March 18, 1933, in the frontispiece of Berton's book in indictment of the political leaders of our country during the time of the

great depression. I apply it instead to some, even the highest, among the leadership of our Church in the face of crises it could have addressed but did not.

The historian of the future, when he writes about the Church and the great defection, will comment upon the remarkable ineptitude of the Church's leadership when faced with questions of policy and matters of scandal among the clergy. He will write of the obstinate refusal of the leadership to face realities, of their pitiful and tragic tactic of citing tradition in defense of inaction and their naive expectation that Providence, direct intervention by God, would come to their rescue and save them from the consequences of their refusal to look at what was happening in front of their eyes, or forestall events that loomed black in the sky, plain to be seen, and take such steps as were possible to mitigate the fury of the storm. The severity of the condemnation will be measured by the extent of the power which was not used and the responsibility that was not accepted.

*Fred Miller, a former Oblate of Mary Immaculate, was closely associated with Oblate Missions magazine during his 45 years as an Oblate. He married Anne Marie Bazinet in 1993. They are living in Ottawa.*

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### Report On The North Atlantic Federation For A Renewed Catholic Priesthood

*by Jack Shea, Ottawa, ON*

The North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood (NAF) held an Executive Meeting at the Anglican Retreat House, St. Columba's, in Woking, England on October 1, 2006. Woking is a residential suburb of greater London. The Meeting reviewed the NAF participation in the newly-formed Confederation of Married Priests and outlined plans for a General Assembly of the NAF to take place in Rome in October 2007. Also, elections were held during the meeting. A new President was elected, Lambert van Gelder of Nijmegen, Holland. He is a long-time member of the married priests' movement and editor of the publication "Ministerium Novum".

Jack Shea, a member of the Canadian Corpus-National Capital Region had completed a three-year term as the first President of the NAF. Heinz Vogels of Bonn, Germany was elected as Secretary of the NAF. Wim Vandervelden of Holland continues as Treasurer.

# Dr. Patricia Fresen - Roman Catholic Bishop

by Phil Little, Cedar, BC



## The Journey from Apartheid To a Radically Reformed Catholic Church

Sponsored by: Ministry Without Borders  
November 18th at St. Aidan's United Church

To be present for this truly historical moment was a joy and a blessing. With the assistance of "Ministry without Borders" the first woman Roman Catholic bishop visited Vancouver Island on Nov 18th to speak and to dialogue in an ecumenical gathering that included many Roman Catholic clergy.

Patricia Fresen is director of formation for the Roman Catholic Women Priests program and she was visiting the west coast to dialogue with ordained women priests and candidates in formation. Michele Birch-Conery, Canada's first woman R.C. priest who lives on Vancouver Island, was present for this event and participated in the concluding prayer of the gathering. The Rev. Karen Dickey, Minister at St. Aidan's United Church, gave the words of welcome. While for Roman Catholics this event was a new experience, for members of other sister communions the recognition of women as equals in baptism is something now of distant history. Patricia was introduced by Connie Kurtenbach, co-director along with her husband François Brassard, of Ministry Without Borders (<http://www.ministry-without-borders.org/>).

A "google" search of "Patricia Fresen" results in hundreds of links, starting with her own autobiography ([http://www.virtuelle-dioezese.de/Lebenslauf\\_Patricia\\_Fresen.html](http://www.virtuelle-dioezese.de/Lebenslauf_Patricia_Fresen.html)), which was part of her formal presentation. As a Dominican nun, inspired by Archbishop Dennis Hurley OMI who was an early leader in the anti-apartheid movement, Patricia went through her own journey of conversion and trial, including arrest and imprisonment because she allowed black students to attend the school for which she was Principal. That experience taught her that it was wrong to obey laws which are fundamentally oppressive and unjust. At the time she did not understand that the lesson would become so personal in her own journey of faith. Being excluded by Canon Law and particularly with the teaching of John Paul II in his letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, first caused "anger", but this developed into an awareness of her own "longing" to be a priest. Catholics were told that not only could women not be ordained, contrary to the history of the church, but that they should no longer discuss the matter.

Patricia was sent to Rome to study theology and she trained alongside others who would be ordained, even though she proved to be a better student than many. While the pain of exclusion was something she had to deal with, ordination was something which others urged upon her. She was ordained a priest in Barcelona in 2003 and after that a group of male Roman Catholic bishops still in good standing with Rome persuaded her to accept episcopal ordination because the church needed her leadership.

In the dialogue that followed her presentation, Patricia was questioned on one theme repeatedly. Surprisingly perhaps the question was best formulated by a priest of the Victoria diocese who asked why women "would opt for a model of leadership in the old mold that is obviously destructive and abusive and is simply not working". To this Patricia responded that RCWP is not buying into the old model and she distributed a handout outlining the "renewed model of ordained ministry" and the implications such a renewed ministry would have on the church. Patricia insisted that in accepting ordination in the apostolic succession at this time provides "credibility" and "authority" for women's ordination in the Roman Catholic tradition.

When asked why she would choose to stay in the R.C. church, and why she wouldn't go to some other church that accepts women in leadership, Patricia simply replied that she was "Catholic to the bones" and that going elsewhere would not serve the needs of the Catholic church. She accepted ordination at the request of male bishops so that she could serve the church.

What was most inspirational during this presentation was the realization that Patricia Fresen was not just someone who talked the talk, but she had walked the talk. Her struggle for human rights and equality is genuine and rooted in the struggle against apartheid which was a system based on racial discrimination. Her optimism and joy is grounded in a strong belief that the wall of gender discrimination which so cripples and wounds the church will also collapse and become just another of those embarrassing tidbits of our Catholic history.

## Thank You

*I wish to express my sincere thanks for The Journal. I so appreciate it, especially the articles you publish. Naturally our community of R.C. Womenpriests is especially happy about this latest issue regarding women's ordination. We find that the theology expressed in The Journal resonates with us and is an important resource for the many people who are aware that we are a church in crisis.*

*Thank you so much for editing The Journal. We need it badly, as it helps us read and reflect on the signs of the times.*

*Loving greetings,  
Patricia Fresen*

# Renewed Model Of Ordained Ministry: Part Of Post Modern Paradigm-Shift by Dr. Patricia Fresen, R.C. Womenpriests (RCWP)



## CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE RATHER THAN A CLERICAL CHURCH

1. Communitarian rather than hierarchical structures. Pyramid model turned upside-down.

Leadership elected by community.  
Constitution written by community.

2. Separation of

administration and sacramental leadership. Both elected by community.

3. Accountability of all elected leaders, including bishops, to community.

4. Justice and human dignity.

5. Servant leadership: empowerment, rather than domination & control.

6. Inclusivity: re gender, sexual orientation, other church traditions.

7. Unity in diversity, rather than uniformity, especially re culture.

8. Worker-priests, in the sense of self-supporting.

9. Prophetic obedience, communally and individually.

10. Understanding chaos, as having creative potential: interplay between chaos and self-organization is part of organic growth.

11. Non-violence.

12. Interdependence: earth, human community, church.

13. A reflective, contemplative stance which does not insist on controlling or explaining everything, but embraces the mystery within ourselves, the community, the church, the universe.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH

a) Profound implications for theology: our whole understanding of

God would shift. God, as Sandra Schneiders says, is NOT "two men and a bird". Exclusively male images of God would no longer be acceptable, since it would be acknowledged that both women and men are created in God's image.

b) Christology would be affected: women and men are both "in Christo Jesu" and they can both act *in persona Christi*.

c) Ecclesiology would be affected: who and what is the church? We would have a people's church rather than hierarchical/clerical church. Is the church divided into a male clerical caste at the top of the pyramid, having all the power over everyone else? Or are we a community of equals with different ministries?

d) Future of church would depend on the people in churches all around the world. Local churches would be more autonomous, as in early centuries.

e) Church governance would be reformed: whole church community would have a say and would have full voting rights for all leaders, including the pope.

f) Inculturated church - different cultural expressions of liturgy and governance would be appreciated.

g) Recognition of priesthood of all baptized, yet with spiritual leadership.

h) Institutional church would be forced to react or respond to changes: fight, flight or freeze. At present the mode seems to be "freeze".

i) The church's understanding of sexuality would be greatly affected: is sexuality holy or not?

j) People would have to think for themselves, not passively obey orders. People would have to grow up, develop independent thinking and make decisions and be proactive. Present need for ordination of women in full apostolic succession is a matter of JUSTICE; later a different model may emerge.

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[michelebirchconery@shaw.ca](mailto:michelebirchconery@shaw.ca)

RCWP websites: [www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org](http://www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org) &

[www.virtuelle-dioezese.de](http://www.virtuelle-dioezese.de)

## Corpus-NCR Members Attend Retreat On Islam At Galilee Centre In Arnprior by Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON



Several members of Corpus-NCR attended a retreat from October 15-16 with the theme "A Prayerful Encounter with Islam (History, Spirituality and Current Social Reality)". It was another of the annual retreats at the Galilee Centre in Arnprior, Ontario held for several groups in the Ottawa

area including Corpus-NCR, Catholic Network for Women's Equality, Concerned Catholics of Ottawa, the Cosmology and Spirituality Group, and others interested in the theme.

The facilitator for the retreat was Khadija Haffajee, a Muslim teacher

and lecturer in Ottawa. The coordinator was John Kroetch, who was assisted by a committee that included Corpus-NCR members and others. The committee met several times during the summer months to plan the retreat.

The retreat consisted of lectures by Khadija followed by questions, recitation of the Muslim daily prayers at the proper prayer time, large and small group discussions, periods of private time and of silent reflection, a social gathering on Saturday evening, and an integrated Islamic-Christian liturgy on Sunday morning.

The holiness of the retreat was intensified by the fact that it took place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In fact, Khadija had to give up some of her own prayer time in Ramadan to attend this retreat with Christians.

A survey of the topics covered during Khadija's presentations will give some idea of the breadth of the retreat: 1) General background

## Corpus-NCR Islam Retreat Continued...

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of Islam; 2) Life of the Prophet and the Revelation of the Qur'an; 3) Muslims in Canada, and; 4) Misconceptions of Islam and Issues of Today.

One of the great benefits of these lectures was not only to inform retreatants about the nature of Islam, but also to help them overcome misunderstandings about the Muslim religion. For example, in explaining the meaning of "jihad", which is often referred to as a "holy war", Khadija pointed out that its primary meaning is personal struggle for holiness; it also includes the notion of struggle for justice. But the idea of a "holy war" is not found in the Qur'an.

The liturgy, prepared by Khadija and Alex Campbell, consisted of Muslim and Christian hymns and prayers, readings from the Qur'an and the Gospels and responses to them, as well as a candle lighting ceremony and the kiss of peace. Shared reflections during the liturgy gave people a chance to express their sorrow for misconceptions about

and injuries towards those of the Muslim faith, as well as gratitude for the contributions of Islam to the world.

There was general agreement among the twenty-five who attended the retreat that it was a great success. Retreatants were especially grateful to Khadija for the insights she gave us into Islam, and for the warmth and good humour with which she shared these insights. When the evaluations of the retreat were read and tallied, most people agreed that its success could be summed up in one word: Khadija! For her and for her gracious presence among us for two days, we are deeply grateful.

Several people who made the retreat have volunteered to serve on the committee to plan next year's retreat. May its theme be as enriching, and may it be as well planned and as fruitful to its participants as was this year's retreat at the Galilee Centre.

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### Book Review

by *Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC*

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*The Tent of Abraham: Stories of Hope and Peace for Jews, Christians, and Muslims*

by Joan Chittister, OSB, Murshid Saadt Shakur Chishti, and Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Beacon Press, Boston ISBN 0 8070 7728 3

In the introduction to *The Tent of Abraham*, the authors begin with the following:

"There is an Abrahamic family." Like all families, it shares a story. But part of what it shares is that different members of the family tell different versions of the story...

So it has been for the different religions that trace their genealogical or spiritual lineage to Abraham...The Abrahamic family has crystallized into three religious communities— Judaism, Christianity, and Islam... For much (not all) of their histories, their versions of the story have been contentious, bitter, violent...

"This book is intended to affirm and weave together the different strands of the Abrahamic stories, the threads of different colors, into a garment that can glow in beauty."

And so in *The Tent of Abraham*, Waskow relates the Bible story and the Jewish interpretations of Abraham's journey; Chishti unfolds the Abraham stories "scattered over many different chapters in the Quran" and he gives their Muslim interpretations; Chittister gives a christian interpretation and application of the story of Abraham. For example, Chittister writes "Sarah, mother of the new covenant, has all the signs of a small-minded woman, however much her historic greatness— too proud to admit that Ishmael was first born, Hagar, maidservant to Sarah, perhaps, but mother of the first-born child, from whom that other "great nation" would rise, was haughty and overbearing, uppity and smug.

And Abraham, though deeply distressed by the situation, gave in to Sarah, drove Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert with nothing but a small bottle of water to sustain them. And God rescued them, too.

"The story of Abraham is one struggle after another, one mistake after another, one conflict after another, one sinful rebellion after another— and one divine rescue after another.

"The story of Abraham is a story of deception, shame, fear, and faithlessness in men and women alike, both chosen and not. If anything, some of the best characters in the telling are not the children of Israel, the chosen ones, at all. They are the pagans, the foreigners, the unbelievers: the king of Sodom, the priest Melchizedek, and King Abimelech.

"So what can such a narrative have to say to us about our own situation today, our own lack of care for the other, our own foolish and deadly overreactions to those who disagree with us, our own violent responses to those who threaten us? We are all to blame. No one is sinless, Everyone must repent."

*The Tent of Abraham* gives practical resources that came out of retreats held at The Shalom Center, Philadelphia, for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders and scholars. The chapter *How to Pitch Your Own Tent* is "Erector-set Directions for Successful Interfaith Retreats."

The book ends with a story by Rabbi Phyllis Berman entitled "Why Hagar Left."

It is very easy to recommend *The Tent of Abraham* to readers of *The Journal*. It is easy to read and it is full of information that most of us have not encountered before. It may help us to understand and respect other points of view, to live together in peace with people of other faiths, and to appreciate the common heritage of Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

# Theological Soapbox: Rethinking The End Of The World

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



As we near the end of the church year the lectionary readings begin to focus on the end times and the second coming of Christ. In the lifetime of St. Paul Christians were expecting the imminent coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. By the time the later books of the New Testament were written the delay in the second coming began to be viewed as a problem that needed explaining. 'But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.' (2 Peter 3:8-9)

After two thousand years of waiting, perhaps it's time we started questioning whether Christ's return to earth will be a historical event, like his birth, or something rather different.

I suggest we need to start by asking some fundamental questions. Why did God create human beings? The answer I learned from my childhood catechism lessons was that God created human beings to know, love and serve God and be happy with God forever.

This implies that God sees a value in every human being that knows, loves and serves God and shares in God's happiness. The fact that God created the human *race*, i.e., creatures that reproduce and grow in number implies that God sees a value in there being more than one or a small number of human beings. In other words, the more human beings that know, love and serve God and share God's happiness, the better.

If follows from this that God would want there to be an infinite number of human beings, that God would want the number of humans to increase throughout eternity. Consequently if there should be a second coming of Christ, and that second coming stops the reproduction of the human race as we know it, God would have to create a second human race (or a race of beings equivalent to human beings) to continue populating eternity. This might involve the evolution of a new species of humans on earth or elsewhere in this physical universe, or the creation of a new physical universe in which such beings would come into existence. God would have to become

incarnate again in this new race and die and rise again, for the salvation of the new race would require it.

If this new race in turn came to an end with a second coming of its own Christ, then God would have to create yet another race, and so on. Eternity would see an unending creation of such races.

An alternative way of looking at things would be to say that the second coming of Christ is not a singular historical event. Rather, Christ will come again, indeed has been coming again, through the continuing evolution of humanity. The human race will continue and reproduce through all eternity during which time humanity will continue building the kingdom of God. At no time will it be possible to say the kingdom of God has completely come. Only when eternity is viewed as a whole, will it be possible to say that the kingdom is complete. Those human beings who die throughout the course of eternity will, upon dying, be raised immediately to life outside of time. They will be able to view the whole of eternity at once and enjoy the fullness of the kingdom.

What then are we to make of Jesus' admonition to stay awake, for the Son of Man will return unexpectedly to judge all people? In my view Christ does come again for each person at the moment of death. For each individual, death will come unexpectedly, simply because the experience of dying is unimaginable and therefore cannot be anticipated. At the moment of death each person enters timelessness and in timelessness all humans who have ever lived throughout eternity will be gathered together, either in communion with God (the kingdom of God) or in rejection of God (self-centred isolation).

The words of the Nicene Creed are true. Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. What needs to change are the pictures in our head of how this will look. I propose that Christ will come for the human race as a whole through the evolution of humanity and human culture in a process that will have no historical end. I propose that Christ will come again for each individual human being at death. In the realm of timelessness, into which those who love God will upon dying be raised, the Christ who is both a divine and human individual and the Christ who is incarnate in the evolution of the human race, are one and the same Christ. This is the Mystical Body of Christ.

## Manitoba Notice

by Leonard & Adeline Schmidt, Winnipeg, MB  
Co-Chair, AOCC

The Alpha and Omega Christian Community (AOCC) of Manitoba met on Friday, November 17, at 902 Borebank Street, at 1:30 P.M. to discuss chapters 1 - 7, book 1, "Ascent of Mount Carmel," by Saint John of the Cross, 16th century Spanish mystic and poet. Our next meeting will probably be held on the third Friday in January, 2007. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of this book by email, may request it by contacting [adeline.leonard.schmidt@shaw.ca](mailto:adeline.leonard.schmidt@shaw.ca)

## *Chris & Naomi's 40th Anniversary*

In October, Mid-Island Corpus celebrated with the Diamond family and friends the 40th wedding anniversary of Chris and Naomi Diamond. Organized by their three daughters the afternoon party of about 50 people including five granddaughters and one grandson brought much loving and lighthearted remembrance, lovely treats to enjoy, and friends and family who have treasured much of it along the way. Fun stories, songs, and great people made for more wonderful memories for the Diamonds!



# 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](http://www.corpuscanada.org)  
**Corpus-NCR (Canada)**  
[www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org](http://www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org)  
**Corpus USA**  
[www.corpus.org](http://www.corpus.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 2007 (membership is open to all regardless of denominational affiliation), write to: Corpus Canada Treasurer, 35 - 10070 Fifth Street Sidney, BC V8L 2X9. Enclose a cheque for \$50 (individual membership) or \$75 (family membership) payable to "Corpus Canada." Corpus Canada will donate \$25 of your membership fee to Xristos Community Society in your name, and Xristos will send you an official tax receipt. At the request of Corpus Canada, Xristos Community Society distributes The Journal free of charge to the membership of Corpus Canada.

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The Journal will be sent to you free of charge. If you would like to support the free distribution of The Journal, please send a cheque to "Xristos Community Society" c/o the Treasurer, Xristos Community Society, 35 - 10070 Fifth Street Sidney, BC V8L 2X9. Xristos Community Society is a registered charity. All donors of \$10 or more will receive an official tax receipt. Thank you for your support of this Christian ministry.

**Corpus Canada Treasurer**

**Alanna Menu**

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