



# The Journal

January - March 2007



## St. Tassach's Church



County Down is Saint Patrick country. This beautiful land is well worth a pilgrimage there “Where the Mountains Of Mourne sweep down to the sea” and the Silent Valley rests amid the green hills.

Bishop Patrick, son of Calpornius a christian deacon and grandson of Potitus a priest, landed at the mouth of the Slaney River. He was given a barn by Dichu, and there he made it his first establishment. The place is called Saul. Sabhall in Old Irish means a barn. It is near Downpatrick where Patrick is buried. Saul is a place of pilgrimage, not on March 17 but in the summer when the weather is better and people can bring a picnic lunch and sit out on the hill in comfort.

Saint Tassach's Church is in Raholp near Sabhall. Murchiu's seventh century text states “When the hour of his (Patrick's) death was approaching he received the Sacrament from the hands of Bishop Tassach for his journey to a blessed life.” St. Tasach was a skilled craftsman and his feast is celebrated on April 14.

Text by Chris Diamond, Irish photos by Ruth Irving

The Journal  
January - March 2007  
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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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See the back page for further details.

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The Journal readers were saddened to learn that Jim Roberts died last Dec. 23. Jim was born in Brooklyn in 1928; he was ordained priest in Rome in 1956. He was a well-loved, warm and friendly disciple of Jesus. He was an active participant in social justice issues and in the rights of marginalized people. He stood up for the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and served the people of Vancouver with enthusiasm. To earn a living, he taught at Vancouver Community College, and was active in East-West religious dialogue. Corpus Canada remembers his support when it was a fledgling movement.  
For all that has been, give thanks; for all that shall be, say 'Yes'.

## FOCUS TOPIC

*for the April - June 2007 Issue*

Being honest with the people we love: old crimes and past history, family secrets, sexual orientation, fidelity in marriage, children, faith community, personal life of the leader, the boss, the politician...

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

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

# The Spirituality Of Discernment & Consensus

from *The Journal*, January/February 1997

When everybody is sensitive to all the nuances going around, and not merely to what is happening in one's own mind, there forms a meaning which is shared. In that way, we can talk together coherently and think together (dialogue). It is this shared meaning that is the "glue" or "cement" that holds people or societies together.

A great deal of what we call "discussion" is not deeply serious in the sense that there are all sorts of things held to be non-negotiable, untouchable, things that people don't even want to talk about. Discussion is like a ping-pong game: people batting ideas back and forth in order to win the game.

Phildea Fleming and James Brodsky excerpts from *On Dialogue* by David Bohm

The function of christian priesthood is not for the exclusively few gifted ones to bring to the people divine gifts which they lack but to awaken and realize the implicit priestliness of every person. Vatican II gave the church back to the people of God, but Rome and conservative hierarchy still insist that the Spirit speaks only from the top down. Dialogue is not regarded as useful or necessary by Rome or by most (R.C.) bishops.

Pascal Baute in *"The Priestliness of the Human Heart"*

The Church is in a crisis situation and the discernment-consensus process is urgently needed to deal with it. Secularism is a source of ever increasing damage to the fabric of our world. The rule of death and destruction to people and planet seems to reign supreme. To transform this evil and make the world according to God's Way as Jesus taught us, we, christians, must be as one, clearly focused on our God given objective and powerfully at work.

François Brassard

"Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister and mother." The real family is the family of God, those who do the will of God... They acquire the family bond with God and with each other... The reign of God is constituted by a number of people, a social body whose fellowship is comparable with the bond of love of a family group. Jesus envisioned humanity as one family under the fatherhood of God. As I understand it, that is the same kind of oneness that the consensus process seeks to attain.

Michael Zarb commenting on Mk 3: 34

To live in discernment and consensus is to live in a process of discriminating the core issues and choosing actions as one so that we might effect the changes and the transformation that will make the world safe, healed, and whole.

Connie Kurtenbach

I believe that all christian communities would be wise to implement the consensus model in order to be authentically christian. The consensus model seeks to make every member in the community a success because the decisions are done together, no matter how long it takes.

Sheldon Oleksyn

When consensus is reached, it is because we have all come to see that a particular action is the one that best reflects our common values and priorities. In theological language this means that we reach consensus only if we are in spiritual communion with one another.

Arthur Menu



Saint Eoan's Church is at St. John's Point. The present church is a tenth century stone church that was built on the site of the earlier small wood church. There is a holy well and a bullaun, a hollowed stone that originally served as a mortar for grinding cereals and then, when it was well hollowed, as a baptismal font. There are many of these bullauns connected to ancient churches



FOCUS: What nurtures your spirituality?

# Surviving Today's Catholicism

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK



A good friend recently told me of an upsetting experience at a Mass she attended in Los Angeles. Many bishops attended. When they entered in procession dressed in all their regalia, what impressed her was that there was not a single female in the procession. The all male image of her

Church was too much to stomach. It made her feel that she did not belong, so she left.

I, being male, might not have felt that. But there are other aspects of the Mass that disturb me more and more. Do I keep going and silently put up with it? Do I quit going? Then what do I put in its place?

One group of Catholics in Nutley, New Jersey, have formed a sort of "underground" church called "The Inclusive Community". They celebrate Mass and receive communion on Sundays from Catholic priests who had resigned and married. This group is technically part of the United Church of Christ denomination and welcomes anyone from other denominations, although most of them are Catholic.

Another group in Rochester, New York, goes a step further. Spiritus Christi has 1500 members. It is led by James Callan, a suspended Catholic priest, and Mary Ramerman, a woman priest. They work on a very strong outreach to the poor and a strong message of inclusion. Everyone is welcome and is invited to receive communion at regular Sunday Masses.

In Morristown, New Jersey, a retired priest celebrates Mass two Sundays a month for a group of 50 called Voice of the Faithful. Maria Cleary says "we're all people who have made a lifelong commitment to the Catholic Church, but for a variety of reasons have become disillusioned. . . . They feel that this is an alternative for them, that they're worshipping with like-minded Catholics".

I was in a discussion group in Saskatoon some time ago attended by Religious women mostly. In our group there were five nuns, one laywoman and myself. I told them that I had heard some nuns in the U.S.A. have been celebrating Mass without a priest. But of course they wouldn't do this in Canada, would they? As though this was old news, they said this had been going on long ago. Reasons given were: no priest available, or the priest was so old or outdated that they held their own celebration after he did his duty.

Those are a few examples of how some people are surviving their frustrations with what is going on in the Church today. I wonder how many are like me: I go to Sunday Mass and grit my teeth at so much that rubs me the wrong way, but feel helpless to do anything about it. Or they don't go. Surveys show that Mass attendance has dropped. Did I read somewhere that it was as low as 15% attendance in Quebec – Catholic! Quebec? It suggests that many have opted to just drop out. I wonder why – frustration? Boredom? Irrelevance? And yet other surveys show that there is a great deal of interest in Spirituality, even among

those that don't belong to any church.

So where do I go from here? At present I share the sentiments of Rebecca Ortelli of the Inclusive Community in Nutley, N.J. who said, "I don't think I should have to give up my Catholicism. That's part of who I am". So I need a "survival manual".

To start with, I need to figure out how to cope with all that rubs me the wrong way in the Mass. The sexist language is one obvious thing. I've heard some women simply change the wording of anything they say in the prayers. For example, say "Glory to God in the highest and peace to *God's* people on earth". And in response to "Pray friends that my sacrifice and yours..." at the Offertory, I would say, "May the Lord accept this sacrifice at *OUR* hands..." After all it is not only the priest's offering. Furthermore, it would be so much more meaningful if everyone spoke the words of consecration together, not only the priest. There is theological argument for that.

Another problem I have with the Mass prayers goes deeper than just wording. I think it is time to change the theological emphasis from Redemption to Thanksgiving. Why do we have to keep beating our breasts so much and telling God how sinful we are? Does God really want that from us? If you look at it psychologically, it isn't even healthy to constantly dwell on guilt. When it is a lifetime habit like at the Mass repeated so often, this has got to create a poor self-image. Take notice how often we remind ourselves of sin: right at the beginning, think of our sins, make an act of contrition. Is this the best note on which to begin our prayer? If you went to visit your mom and dad, would your first words as you walk in the door be something like, "Gee, I'm so sorry I was such a bad son or daughter...I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry (Kyrie Eleison, three times etc. remember the old days?)."

How about something like this: Leader: "What a glorious day it is, thanks be to God!" Response: "How wonderful it is to gather as a family to celebrate with joy and count our blessings!" Another example: instead of "Behold the Lamb of God (note the redemptionist theology)...Lord I am not worthy to receive you...". Change this to: Leader: "Come forward to partake at the Table of the Lord". Response: "How wonderful it is to share so beautiful a feast!"

Another thing that bothers me is clericalism. I'm sure most clergy do not realize how much they are a part of this. By clericalism I mean the class distinction between those in Holy Orders and the rest of us lowly laypersons. This business of sheep and shepherds just doesn't fit right somehow. We need to be careful how we interpret Scriptures. When we read that Jesus told Peter upon this rock he would build his church, many good Catholics, without question take this to mean Jesus named Peter the first Pope. Which is ridiculous. First of all, the idea of a pope did not arise until over a hundred years later in Rome, and secondly, what we today understand as the Catholic Church was completely foreign to the mind of Jesus himself because he was a devout Jew who went to synagogue on the Sabbath. Because the Gospels were written almost a hundred years after Jesus died, Scripture scholars see this passage written into the narrative to

support one side of a dispute over leadership among the followers of Jesus.

So this whole idea that priests and bishops are somehow closer to God because they are ordained, is nonsense. The pedophilia scandals should debunk that myth. I think clericalism is further reinforced by confession. You must go to a priest to get God's forgiveness. This puts the penitent in a lower position to the priest. To say that the priest himself must confess too, doesn't make it any better because when do you ever see a priest go to confession? Clerical clothes and vestments, the Roman collar, the title "Father", I think it would be better if these were dropped.

My friend was at the Call To Action conference recently. She told me that one of the most meaningful experiences she had was at the closing Mass where all stood around a table, priests did not wear vestments, some women wore stoles in support of women's ordination. But what thrilled her the most was that everyone spoke the words of consecration together.

I liked that. I guess it would be asking too much for churches to renovate. Instead of an altar set up like a stage for the priest to perform "his" Mass how nice it would be if there was a table in the centre and everyone was around it on one level. Churches would have

to be smaller to make this workable for everyone to participate. Well, good!

Oh well, in the meantime, how do I survive? I like to read. By luck I inherited a box of back issues and a subscription to Theological Studies, Theology Digest and the Catholic Biblical Quarterly. I am amazed at how forward thinking a lot of this is. Many ideas that I wondered about have been discussed in these publications, and to my surprise, I haven't been that far out! Then there are the Catholic papers, The Prairie Messenger, Catholic New Times (how sad it is no longer publishing), the National Catholic Reporter, Call To Action News, Spirituality Reprint, and of course our own Corpus Canada Journal.

And so many wonderful books by Kung, Haring, Schillebeeckx, Schussler-Fiorenza, Spong, O Murchu, Morwood, Chittister, Armstrong, Malone, Hays, Robert Service, and others I can't think of now.

These are some of the things that nurture my spirituality and the reading is my spiritual well, along with discussing ideas with my friends. I have to admit that the parish Sunday service does not do much for me. I go, to meet people, and to take grandma, and maybe out of habit. So far I'm surviving.

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## New Wine In New Wine Skins

*by Ron Atwell, Victoria, BC*

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READING: 1 Samuel 2:18-21,

**M**ore and more, I am realising that we should never stop growing in our knowledge and understanding. As life unfolds and as new knowledge comes to light, we need to expand our thinking to grasp those new truths and to incorporate them into our thinking and understanding of life. That goes for just about every discipline under the sun.

It certainly applies to *science and technology*. Who would have thought that in our own lifetime we would have progressed from crank-handled telephones to the Internet... or from five day train trips across the country to the jet-age... let alone the space-age? Today, events around the world are brought into our living rooms on the same day as they are happening on the other side of the planet. So much so that there's almost an overload of information for us to process. Life has become far more complex and perplexing for us than it was for our parents and grandparents. But somehow, we have to learn to cope with it. Modern science and technology has almost compelled us to expand our thinking to incorporate this new knowledge.

*Business and industry* has changed so that our forebears would hardly recognise them. Just the other day, I was talking to a Hollander, who grew up in a village in Holland, where every village had a wide variety of crafts and skills. His father was a baker who produced breads and confectionery for the whole town. If a window was broken, they called in the glazier. If a tap needed fixing, they called in the plumber. If a door came off its hinges the carpenter was called in. Most businesses were local businesses that provided employment for the townsfolk and supplied their needs at the same time.

In today's global economy, we find that, like Packman, big businesses come along and swallow-up the smaller businesses. Big Agricultural Companies have replaced the family farm. Everything is governed by the "bottom-line", and if goods can be manufactured at a cheaper cost, factories are moved to locations in poorer countries where labour is cheaper. That used to be Mexico or Taiwan. Now just about everything is manufactured in China. Can you imagine how your parents would have reacted to that?

*Education too* has changed from the days of the "Teacher-tell" style where children's minds were thought of as empty vessels into which one poured as much knowledge as a child's mind could contain and discipline was metered-out to ensure that the student did learn as much as possible. More and more today, the emphasis is on the child discovering for himself or herself the truths they need to learn and retain. Visual aids have become a big teaching tool, and students resort as much to the Internet for their research as they used to resort to the library.

*Religion* has had to change with changing times. Of course, there are those who resist change, maybe because they feel more comfortable in the "old ways. Certainly the hierarchies of the mainstream churches do not want to change because it would undercut their authority and so-called prestige. And that goes for the left-wing, as well as the right-wing churches.

We have had to revise our thinking about Creation, and the Bible, and heaven and hell, given the new knowledge that has come to light. Nowadays no thinking person would picture God as Michael Angelo depicted God on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or heaven and hell as literal places up above or down below. And to think of God in purely spiritual terms is difficult. It's much easier to picture him in a physical form. The same goes for heaven and hell. But, as

## Focus Continued...

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Marcus Borg and Bishop Spong and others have been trying to teach us, God IS Spirit, "in all, and through all, and over all." This has actually upgraded the value of humankind, because it tells us that we too are spiritual beings, that the Spirit of God breathes in, and works through us, making us "a little lower than the angels" as the Psalmist puts it.

All this expanded knowledge and so much more, we have had to think our way through and incorporate in our minds. And all of this expanded knowledge we have had to put to work and act upon.

But while all this news and all these new discoveries have been external to us, having been bombarded at us from every side, we seem to have been able to grow and develop mentally to adapt to our new environment.

But when it comes to our own personal growth, changing and adapting is a lot harder. Maybe it's our mindset. Maybe we have become entrenched in our ways over the years. Maybe we feel comfortable with our old patterns of behaviour. Or maybe we've become lazy and just follow the old so-called "tried and true" pathways of thought and action, in much the same way as people follow a path across a park, unthinkingly walking along the most direct path that has been carved over a field for years.

It amazes me how couples can exhibit the same dysfunctional behaviours in the way they relate to each other. There is for instance, one couple who just seems incapable of changing. They're stuck in a truly dysfunctional rut. She is a control freak who must get her own way, either by exhibiting anger or tears. While he has allowed himself to become a doormat whom she walks all over, In other words, he has learned to play the part of the victim who is always crying the blues, with a "poor me" attitude. But over the years, he has *allowed* that to happen. Whether they know it or not, they have *chosen* that way of relating to each other. It is a choice they have deliberately made.

I know of other couples that are exactly the opposite. The husband is the dominant one while the wife is the submissive type. Their relationship is horribly dysfunctional, but they seem unwilling, or unable, to change. Still, if only they were willing to change and grow, there are other ways of relating that work better and could lead to a happier, more equal partnership, such as learning listening skills and better communication skills, discussing problems rather than shouting and screaming at each other. Instead of using accusative statements, such as "You always do that or you never do that," they might use expressions that are not threatening, but simply own the way they see it or the way they feel, recognising that they may or may not be wrong, but, at least, they acknowledge the possibility that they may be wrong. I could go on and on about this, but suffice it to say that a good counselor could suggest better ways of communicating and of relating to one another if the couple is willing to try. But changing one's attitudes and behaviour is perhaps the toughest thing to do.

It involves what we used to call *the "cycle of learning"* which meant that, after trying out a behaviour, one should stop and reflect on how well or how badly that went. And based on whether the behaviour worked or not, one could make up one's mind whether to use that behaviour again, or change a behaviour that didn't work well. Then one should generalize and try out the modified behaviour again. If it works, then adopt that new behaviour pattern. If not, then try something else that might work better.

That is how one might change and grow in one's personal life. But

there is always room in our lives for change and growth. That's where we can learn from Hannah. You will remember that she dedicated her first-born, Samuel, to the Lord, in the charge of old Eli. But every year she made a new coat for Samuel and took it to him, recognizing that children grow out of their old clothing, which must be replaced by a bigger coat at least every year. As Margaret Silf writes; "...I too need new mental and spiritual "clothes" each year. I grow out of my mind-sets just as a child grows out of his clothes....I find that I can rarely respond fully to tomorrow's problems using yesterday's mind-set... which means, of course, that we have to let go of the outgrown mind-set, a process that isn't always painless." ("Lighted Windows") So maybe we too grow out of our old habits and behaviour-patterns and need to put on new ones.

I think that is what Jesus meant, when he said that one can not patch an old garment with a new, unshrunk piece of cloth, which would only tear the old garment when it shrank. The same goes for putting new wine into old wineskins, that are already stretched to the limit with the previous fermentation. No, new wine must be put into new wineskins, which are still pliable and can stretch as the new wine ferments.

So, whether we need to grow in our understanding of our changing world in order to adapt more fully to changing circumstances; or we need to change and grow *in ourselves* in order to relate more happily to others and live more fulfilling lives, we *must change and grow*. For that seems to be a principle of life itself, otherwise we might well become stilted and stunted personalities.

### Patrick's Prayer

I arise today through the strength of heaven;

Light of the sun, Radiance of the moon,  
Splendour of fire, Speed of lightning,  
Swiftness of wind, Depth of sea,  
Stability of earth, Firmness of rock.

God's strength to guide me,  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to see me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's hand to guide me  
God's way before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's host to save me.

I arise today through a mighty strength,  
the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the threeness,  
Through confessing the oneness of the  
Creator.

# History As Spiritual Source

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



There's much spiritual nourishment to be gained from the lessons of history: Bible history, Church history, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, Celtic, Norse, American, East, West, North, South histories,

and many others, and finally, one's own personal history. History is the "teacher of life" said Pope John XXIII. As Fionn, in one of the early Ulster Gaelic legends, says "The sweetest music in the world is the music of what happens" or as D. H. Lawrence writes, it is the "essential oil distilled out of every experience like hazel nuts in autumn, sweet and sound."

Bible history illustrates the human endeavour of people who reflected on their own and other's experience, and inspired by God's Spirit, put down their reflection in stories. Thereby they have helped others to make sense out of the world in which they live. These Bible stories are works of great human imaging: They tell different versions of the Creation and the experience of humanity's flaws; the Flood and the value of a second chance to start over again; the Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah stories of the forming of nomad families; the coming together of the Hebrews and their rescue from the oppressor in Egypt; the rise of the Israelites, the tyranny of their kings, and the witness of the prophets; the rebuilding of the second Jerusalem temple and the making of the Jews. These are not stories merely to entertain children on Sunday mornings while their elders get on with the serious business of worshipping God in the big people's church. These are the accounts of serious people endeavouring to give meaning to human life and to God's tolerance of our human efforts to get it right. The inspired Bible histories show us that any event in history can be used to liberate people or to keep them in slavery to those who use power for their own selfish ends and who use money, politics, and religion to maintain that the way things are is the way they are supposed to be.

Christian history shows the successes and the failures of many to do things God's way. It was not long after Jesus' death that major differences arose among Jesus' followers about his vision of God's Kingdom: How Jewish did one have to be to belong to God's Kingdom? Who was for James, or Apollo, or Paul, or Peter? How far does christian hospitality extend? Which group has the teaching of Jesus' disciples and apostles? Before there was a clerical hierarchy, these and many other questions arose and were settled by men and women of good will living in a troubled world and searching for God's will. There was no one way of praising God for what God had done in Jesus and no one way of worshipping God. These Jesus followers travelled the extent of the Mediterranean world and brought their understandings with them to mix with other cultures and understandings.

In the course of time as the communities grew, they became more

complex. A complexity that Jesus and his disciples did not have to deal with brought changes to the organization of the christian groups and required people with leadership qualities that were not foreseen. The original charismatic structure of teachers, prophets, elders gave way to a management (episcopal) structure. That might have been expected, but it did not have to entail a worshipping community with a priesthood in submission to a bishop. The community model became the leader model to better meet the needs of the people who believed that the Spirit of Jesus, God's Spirit, was guiding them. Even then, a hierarchy was not a necessary result. For centuries, there was no one dominant christian community in the Mediterranean world, no one dominant christian leader, no one espoused spirituality. But the ordered communities with a cultic priesthood, while not a bad thing in itself, did lead to a greater politicizing within and among the churches. The culture of the Empire saw to that, not Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God.

The patriarchal hierarchy in the Church is a human construct. It may be seen as an expression of "God's Will" at a point of growth in the christian community, but it is not a dogma of faith anymore than the "divine right of kings". It cannot be invoked as unalterable, the way that things are supposed to be forever. History, the "teacher of life" and source of spiritual growth, shows that patriarchal hierarchy is a changeable administrative structure that is well past its usefulness. It will not change easily even as more and more people give it less heed and live their christian lives without it. The hierarchy is not the Church, nor is the Church the hierarchy. Most people today who have had trouble with what they call "the Church" usually mean that they have had a run-in with a hierarch.

It was Pope Gregory VII in the 11th century who changed the papacy into the monarchical legalistic juridical phenomenon that has existed for almost a thousand years and has grown like Pinocchio's nose. Gregory claimed jurisdiction over the whole world, civil and religious (!) and the right to appoint every bishop. There was need for a change in his day and he brought it about, but it was a mixed blessing; Gregory enabled the Church to carry on its mission but in the process he started centralizing all power and authority in the pope and he gave a different face to the sign of unity. The 'Do as I tell you' obedience became the norm of Catholic faith. Conformity became more important than the Kingdom of God; local churches suffered and still suffer. The Church has carried on, but its centralized Roman Curial form of administration has grown too wieldy and is being left behind.

The Greek classics tell universal worthwhile stories that have as much validity today as they did when they were first produced. Two works illustrate this: Sophicles' *Antigone* and Homer's *Odyssey*. *Antigone* was popular in the 1960s, a time of civil disobedience, because, in determining a person's course of action over obedience to the will of the king, it dramatizes the place of a person's moral conscience. It is regaining popularity again today. Homer too is valid today because it stresses the value of family and home- "no sweeter sight to the eye"- and hospitality to the stranger and the guest who "might be a god in disguise". These two works from among the many other Greek works are "teachers of life".

The history of christianity in Ireland offers a mixed bag of great good done and awful atrocities perpetrated. Gaelic christianity was different from the typical Continental European model. Gaelic society was not feudal; it was organized in the clann or tuatha structure where the family or groups of families owned the land. Each group determined who was to lead it.

The Old Irish Church had bishops but no diocesan structure. Christians gathered in mixed monasteries or with a bishop around small wooden churches and later small stone churches. The church land belonged to the clann who appointed the bishop usually from the clann. The Church of the Gaels did not accept the diocesan hierarchal organization until the 12th century and then it was because of the politics that came from outside Ireland for the purpose of 'reform'. The old Gaelic abbeys and monasteries were replaced by the religious Orders from England and Europe. The new Religious Orders- Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Cistercians- gradually acquired ownership of large tracts of land. The Irish did not like the Roman diocesan Church structure, huge stone buildings, and celibate monks in strange robes. They preferred the abbeys, family bishops and priests. The Franciscans, for example, with their poverty, simple dress, and no large buildings nor lands were the most popular priests right through the 18th century.

Irish Catholicism as it is known today is not traditionally Irish but is a product of the 19th c. It was the work of Paul Cardinal Cullen, the first Irish bishop to be made Cardinal (1867). He brought the Irish Church into line with the Roman model of religious practice. For example, Cullen took Irish Catholicism out of the homes where it had survived through the Penal times of the previous three centuries, and he built churches in towns and villages. He changed community piety into personal devotions, mass attendance, novenas, rosaries and Benediction, Forty Hours, prayers, processions and special occasions for devotional exercises. He built Catholic schools. Most of the things that are characteristic of Irish Catholicism in the 20th century are due to Paul Cullen, not to traditional Irish practice.

He was born in Ireland in 1803, he went to Rome to study when he was 18, and he remained there for 29 years until 1849 when the Irish people were devastated by the Great Famine. To the surprise of the Irish hierarchy, Cullen was made Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Delegate to Ireland. He remained in Armagh for two years only and then he had himself made Archbishop of Dublin while keeping his title of Primate and Apostolic Delegate. He was a brilliant man: in Rome, he

taught in the Irish College and became its Superior; he represented Ireland at the Vatican; he had the confidence of Pope Pius XI and the Curia. In private he preferred to speak Italian. He was politically deft, rigidly Catholic, ascetic, and cold. He liked the English and the aristocracy; he disliked Protestants. He loved pomp and ceremony. For 30 years, he appointed those who followed his plan.

His success lay in giving Irish Catholics a sense of pride that had been taken away. He encouraged religious sisters and vocations to the priesthood. He exported Irish Catholicism to the U. S. and elsewhere because he influenced the appointment of bishops wherever Irish clergy had emigrated. Cullen said that the Great Famine of the 1840s in which more than a million Irish Catholic people died was simply the work of God to purify the Irish. He was opposed by the faculty of Maynooth who thought that Rome had too much power over the clergy. Cardinal Newman said that Cullen made no friends. He died in 1878. He succeeded mainly because Irish Catholics are devotional, close to their priests; the spirituality of the people does not change much. Their "Lordships", the Irish bishops, have generally been remote figures who followed the centuries-old Roman policy of not offending the British Crown.

History is full of lessons for living. The way things are is often not the way they could be; by observing them, it is possible to grasp how they might be. Some years ago, I read William Kophart's *Extraordinary Groups*, a study of a few religious communities, such as the Amish, Oneidas, Shakers, Mormons, Hutterites, and others. There were many things about these groups that amazed me but that I would never adopt; there were other things that were worth adopting. For example, there is the Mormon family-kin emphasis and the weekly family night practice. So it is with learning from history: History contains examples of many things to be avoided and many things that are worthwhile. It takes study and dialogue to determine what is worthwhile and what is to be avoided. People of good will can travel together to discern what is for the good of all. Good leaders lead the way and, by their way of life, others are invited along. World history tells the stories of such people. History also shows that many claims that are made are not always valid and need to be examined.

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## Book Review

by Dr. Michael Zarb, Cobble Hill, BC

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*Parables as Subversive Speech : Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed.*  
**William R. Herzog II;**  
*Westminster/John Knox Press,*  
*Louisville, Kentucky, 1994.*

Although published more than a decade ago this book still holds its place as a 'ground-breaking book', as some have called it, that revolutionized the study of Jesus' parables.

At the outset Herzog acknowledges his

indebtedness to the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in helping him to understand Jesus' ministry and parables [p 16 ff], namely that Jesus' parables explore how human beings could respond to break the spiral of violence and the cycle of poverty created by exploitation; he compares Jesus' use of parables with Freire's work in 'liberating' the self-defeating mindsets of illiterate peasants. Therefore the parables of Jesus were forms of social analysis (and designed to stimulate social analysis) that expose the contradictions between the actual situation of their hearers and the Torah of God.

William Herzog presents an historical Jesus, who as champion

## Book Review Continued...

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of the systematically impoverished, exploited, disenfranchised poor, spoke parables that were critical of the rich exploiters and oppressors - an elite that collaborated with the Roman overlords. Jesus' intent was to condemn and subvert the powerful religious and political elite that were oppressing the people. In its turn this subversive intent was subverted, softened and emasculated by the evangelists/gospel writers who re-scripted Jesus' subversive stories into moralizing, theological homilies. Herzog suggests that Jesus, as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed presented parables not as sermons, but as discussion-starters, especially to challenge that concept of reality promoted by the ruling elite to justify their right to power, wealth and privilege while legitimizing the subsistence level of the masses they exploited.

According to Herzog, "parables were not earthly stories with heavenly meanings but earthy stories with heavy meanings, weighted down by an awareness of the workings of exploitation in the world of their hearers. The focus of the parables was not on a vision of glory of the reign of God, but on the gory details of how oppression served the interests of a ruling class" [p. 3].

Herzog argues that for these pleasing, evangelistic, preachy reconstructions of the evangelists, Jesus would not have been hounded and crucified; he says, "If he had been the kind of teacher popularly portrayed in the North American Church, a master of the inner life, teaching the importance of spirituality and a private relationship with God, he would have been supported by the Romans as part of their rural pacification program" (p.27). The Romans crucified three kinds of offenders: rebellious slaves, habitual criminals and conspirators against Roman rule. Since it seems clear Jesus was neither a slave nor a bandit, it is precisely because Jesus was so politically threatening to the establishment of his day that he was publicly humiliated, tortured and put to death.

Herzog deals with nine parables: Laborers in the vineyard (Mt 20.1-16); Wicked tenants (Mk 12.1-12); Rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16.19-31); Unmerciful servant (Mt 18.23-35); Talents (Mt 25.18-30; Lk 19.11-27); Pharisee and toll collector (Lk 18.1-8); Friend at midnight (Lk 11.5-8); Unjust judge (Lk 18.1-8); Dishonest steward (Lk 16.1-9).

According to Herzog these stories depicted everyday life only to introduce shocking departures from it. For instance, an elite goes to the marketplace to exploit groups of day-laborers, but one of the day-laborers challenges him (Mt.20:1-15). Exploited vineyard tenants refuse rent payments to the landlord and even assault his agents (Mk 12.1-12). Lazarus, a destitute man, ends up in Abraham's bosom, while a rich man burns in Hades (Lk.16:19-31). A retainer buries his master's money instead of investing it to make more, and then he blows the whistle on the tyrant (Mt.25:14-28/Lk.19:12-24). A widow is treated unjustly in court, but she relentlessly and publicly refuses to accept the judge's verdict (Lk.18:2-5). A messianic king forgives a colossal debt, but this messiah turns out to be not such a benign character after all (Mt.18:23-34). Jesus empowered people by allowing them to understand the world on their own terms for a change.

The masters and landowners in these stories are not ciphers for God; just the opposite: they are exactly as portrayed. The first day-laborers do not represent Israel, or Jewish Christians and the last do not stand for the early church and Gentile Christians in Matthew's community, but are real exploited day-laborers. The denarius is not a metaphor for salvation but a real denarius, the subsistence wage. The unjust judge is

not a figure of God but a real representative of a corrupt, uncaring elite while the widow is not the praying Christian but a real widow at the bottom of the social heap. The talents are not God's gifts but large amounts of money for investment and the servants are not the believers but the stooges of the exploitative elite master.

After analysing the context afforded by the evangelists and the corresponding interpretations of the commentators Herzog investigates in detail the cultural and social background of the situations depicted by the parables and concludes in favour of their literality over against allegory or polyvalence or even metaphor. The stories exposed evil by holding it up to the light. To Jesus' likely audience of mainly poor peasants they sounded differently than to the evangelists' audience or to us today.

Jesus intentionally highlighted or perhaps exaggerated certain points in telling the parables to make the injustice perfectly clear to the people so that they would open their eyes to the terrible plight of those at the bottom. Jesus wanted the people of his day to see the sick exploitation of the expendables by the elites.

Summarizing and doing great injustice to Herzog's excellent detailed exposition, I take the liberty to give a brief glimpse at the Unjust Judge parable (Lk 18.1-8). Jesus is reported to have told the story of an unjust judge who finally gives justice to a poor widow just to get her off his back. The favorite theme of prayer in Luke, the introduction (v.1) and concluding remark (v.6f) indicate that the context of prayer is artificially created by the author of Luke. The description of the uncaring judge conflicts with Jesus' picture of a compassionate fatherly God, a difficulty that has given great headaches to many commentators. If the parable's purpose was simply to teach the need for prayer why the ugly picture? Herzog asks, "If Jesus was saying to his disciples that they should not doubt God's 'power, goodness and help,' why include in the parable a figure who calls all three attributes into question?" (p.219)

The parable gives far more details about both the judge and the widow than are needed to make the simple point about prayer. The judge, for example, is from the city, does not fear God and has no respect for people. This judge "doesn't fear God," which meant he had no regard for the Torah, nor did he have any regard for this helpless widow whom he would have considered worthless.

Nor should the fact that Jesus chooses a woman to antagonize the judge be overlooked. In addition to being particularly oppressed because of her gender in a patriarchal society, this unfortunate woman also happens to be a widow, which means she had no means of support, no husband to provide her daily needs. As a widow, she was a particularly vulnerable member of society, and it seems likely the hearers of this parable would have inferred the woman was caught up in some sort of inheritance dispute. Apparently "the very presence of a widow in court is in itself an extraordinary event that witnesses to her vulnerability." (p.228) Male family members would normally appear for her; she has no male family members or kinship support. If she didn't receive justice, as prescribed by the Torah, which makes special provisions for widows and orphans, she

## Book Review Continued...

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would have likely ended up homeless and victim to starvation. By her aggressive insistence she calls the judge to accountability not by denouncing him "but by demanding he do his duty." "The refusal of the widow to accept her predestined role breaks social barriers and crosses forbidden social and gender boundaries. The result of her shameless behaviour is a just verdict." (p.232)

Instead of talking on prayer, Jesus, by this brief but powerful picture was exposing the corrupt judiciary of his time as did the prophet Amos before him (Amos 5.10-12 - p.221).

Just because the evangelists placed these stories in the context of their own themes, it does not follow that Jesus told these stories in the same contexts. They had different purposes. It was not the intention of the

gospel authors to write the history of an historical individual, but to (re)create a powerful literary figure to be the bearer of their message. The placing of these stories in favorite theme contexts of the evangelist should signal the alarm and impel us to search for a more congenial context in the culture of Jesus' time. The evangelists wrote for a Christian audience, Jesus spoke to a Jewish audience devoid of any hint of Christianity.

The road ahead for the understanding of Jesus lies not in rehashing the stagnant contexts laid out by the evangelists but in exploring beyond these contexts as William Herzog's challenging and fresh perspective has shown.

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### Fintan Kilbride

*March 18, 1927 – December 21, 2006*

Fintan was born in Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland and grew up in Clonmel, County Tipperary. He was predeceased by his parents, Bernard Joseph and Ann Ledwith Kilbride, and by his sister, Nuala Waters (Frank).

Fintan entered the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in 1944 and taught in Trinidad and Eastern Nigeria. Before being expelled from Nigeria in 1970 after the Biafran war, Fintan had built a hospital and taught in six high schools, three of which he had also built.

He taught at Neil McNeil High School in Toronto from 1975 to 1992 and created Students Crossing Borders, originally an international cooperative education program to introduce students to the realities of living and working in less developed countries, and to the responsibilities that privilege brings.

Besides his wife Kenise Murphy Kilbride whom he married in 1973, Fintan leaves his daughters Sioban Kilbride, Ciara Kilbride Amaral (Nelson), grandchildren Declan and Rianne, brothers Rev. Brian, Aidan (Mary), Kevin (Ita), and Rev. Malachy, sisters Dympna Bevan and Louise Jennings (George), also many devoted cousins, relatives by marriage, and friends from Rotary, Solidarity-Haiti, Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, Free the Children, Coalition of Concerned Canadian Catholics, Catholic Network for Women's Equality, and of course, Corpus Canada, and then all the others around the world who benefited from his warm-hearted and tireless commitment to justice for the poor in Haiti, Nicaragua, Jamaica and Africa.

Recipient of the Francis Liberman Award for outstanding Service as a Spiritan, the Marian Tyrrell award for promoting social justice as a teacher, and the Lewis Perinbam award for international development, he also prized the many personal letters from former students and others that spoke of their conviction that they could make a difference on behalf of the children of the poor.

For a number of years after Corpus Canada was founded in 1989, Fintan and Kenise were the Toronto area contact persons. Our March/April Corpus Canada Journal 1993 carried Fintan's picture in racquetball attire as he won the World Racquetball championship at age 65! What a life!

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## Our Dear Fintan

*by Phil Little, Cedar, BC*

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One of the good guys has gone. We, who have been schooled in a theology that stresses that death has lost its sting and that resurrection is the promise to all those baptized in faith, should be more joyful. While I know that Fintan lived the good life, he literally

"ran the good race", he was a "saint" in the best sense living the hope of the gospel message, I feel a sadness that such goodness could end, be taken, escape from our grasp.

My wife Anne Marie and I drove down Island to Victoria in November of 2005 to meet Fintan who was there to receive the prestigious Lewis Perinbam Award in International Development. The award highlighted Fintan's 55 years as a "teacher" in the fullest meaning of the word. When we met Fintan at the hotel it was obvious that he was struggling and he spoke of his illness which had been diagnosed shortly after receiving from O.E.C.T.A. the "Marion Tyrrell Award for Merit", the highest honor given to a teacher by the Catholic teacher's association in Ontario. Fintan had met an opponent who would not relent - cancer.

He survived a plane crash when he was taking medical supplies into the troubled region of Biafra, activities which eventually got him expelled from Nigeria. But before he left he succeeded in building a teaching college, a number of schools and a 50 bed



hospital. Even in his absence his good work would continue. Fintan was a member of “the Spiritans”, and it was through those connections that now as a married priest he came to Canada to teach in a Catholic high school of Toronto. He was a teacher who inspired not only his students but also his fellow teachers. For Fintan teaching was more than a job - it was his purpose. He was forced to retire at 65 which is

when most people realized that he was actually that old. He had the stamina and agility of a much younger man, as he proved continuously in international racquet ball tournaments defeating athletes in lower age groups. More than once he won the North-American seniors championship.

I first met Fintan through Teachers for Social Justice, a small group of Catholic teachers who at that time still thought that Vatican II was going to happen. I was a member of E.N.D. (Educators for Nuclear Disarmament) as I was teaching in the public board at that time. When in 1985 I was transferred to the Catholic board I found myself “at



home” with this group of activists who sought to live and teach gospel values. Fintan was more than a colleague to most of us - he was a mentor.

In his blog B. Scott Currie also calls Fintan his “mentor” as does Craig Kielburger, an internationally recognized youth activist from “Free the Children”. Craig admits that meeting Fintan “altered the course of my life” and that he was “the inspiration behind the movement to abolish child

labour around the world.” Another teacher, Jodie Guillemette who was a participant in “Students Crossing Borders”, an international educational experience directed by Fintan, describes this contact as “life-altering”. Ted Schmidt in his blog titled “Theology in the Vineyard” wrote a beautiful memorial titled “Fintan the Unforgettable”. Ted ends his beautiful remembrance saying “The quote from Francis of Assisi on Fintan’s mass card perfectly summed up his rich life.”

Go teach all nations - if necessary use words.” Fintan was not all work, he was life and it was a life shared with his beloved - Kenise and their two daughters Siobhan and Ciara, and their extended families. Would it be wrong to be a little bit jealous of these who lived so close to Fintan - our “mentor”, “friend” and “brother”.

So if we still experience this loss of someone so precious, and accept that he is now at rest, we know that all that he has done continues in those whose spirits have been set on fire. In a Catholic New Times article in 2003 Fintan was called “God’s marathon runner”. In his obituary the family calls him “our dear Fintan”. To the creator spirit and Kenise and the family, we can only say “thank you for sharing him with us”.



## Theological Soapbox: Benefits For The Righteous

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



“I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread” (Psalm 37:25).

This verse from Psalm 37 expresses a thought that is common in the Old Testament. It seems to say that good people will prosper. Yet this flies in the face of experience, for we all know that there have been many good people who have experienced extreme

poverty, great loss, sickness, or untimely death.

But one thing we must never do is think that the writers of the books

of the Bible were stupid. There can be no doubt that the writer of Psalm 37 observed that prosperity is not always the lot of the righteous, indeed that the righteous often suffer greatly. It is plain to all that being good does not guarantee that one will escape the many kinds of disaster that can befall human beings.

It is often the case that circumstances beyond the righteous person's control determine whether good or bad things happen to him or her. In a drought the righteous will go hungry. When it floods they will drown or lose their homes. In war they will be killed or enslaved. In a time of plague they will sicken and die. Their fate in this regard will not differ from that of the wicked.

The writer of Psalm 37 knows all this. So what is he saying? What advantage do the righteous have over the wicked? It seems

to me that the writer is saying that in stable times, when disaster does not strike, and demand for the necessities of life does not exceed supply, the righteous person will always have enough to lead a decent life. The writer does not promise riches, only enough to lead a decent life.

As for the wicked, in the same circumstances, there is no guarantee that their wicked actions will not result in disaster for them. They may through good luck avoid disaster, and die old and wealthy, but they will never feel secure, never be at peace, because every wicked action puts them at risk. The righteous person may be in danger from circumstances beyond his or her control, but the wicked person is also in danger from circumstances over which he or she does have control. His or her wicked choices will necessarily cause him or her to feel stress, negatively affect his or her relationships with others, and might lead to the loss of wealth, position and reputation.

When we look at the New Testament, we may ask where Jesus stands with regard to this Old Testament teaching. One difference between most of the writers of the Old Testament (probably including the writer of Psalm 37) and Jesus is that the Old Testament writers did not include rewards in the afterlife among the benefits of righteousness, and Jesus did. Belief in the resurrection of the dead, and judgment and reward and punishment for deeds done in one's earthly life, was a late belief in Israel's history, and by no means universal among the Jews of Jesus' time.

Nevertheless, there is no reason to hold that Jesus disagreed with the Old Testament view. The saying of Jesus, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age-houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions-and in the age to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30), does not contradict the Old Testament view. In fact, to the extent that one regards this "leaving

of possessions" (which is better understood as a commitment to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the use of one's possessions than as giving up legal title to them) as defining the righteousness of a disciple of Jesus, this teaching accords with the Old Testament view.

What then are we to make of the passage (John 16:2) in which Jesus predicts that some of his disciples in days to come will be killed in bearing witness to their faith? These martyrs certainly will not receive the "hundredfold now in this age" that Jesus promised those who leave everything for his sake. But first let us note that martyrdom is always a free choice. God never compels someone to be a martyr. The invitation to martyrdom is like Jesus' invitation to the rich man to leave his possessions and follow Jesus (Mark 10:17-27). Accepting the invitation has spiritual benefits but one need not accept the invitation in order to be saved. Anyone who obeys the commandments will gain eternal life, including the rich, because with God "all things are possible". The martyrs willingly sacrifice their hundredfold reward in this age in order to receive a more immediate and greater reward in the kingdom of God.

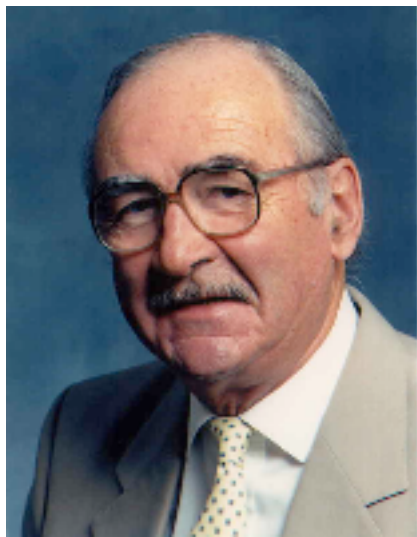
The time of the martyrs of the early Church constitutes the Church's heroic age. But let us not forget that the martyrs were a very small percentage of the Christian population. Martyrdom is a grace and a special vocation, rather like consecrated celibacy. It is not meant to be the lot of the majority of Christians. No less than the Old Testament writers, we can be assured that, barring disasters, if we live righteously, we will always have enough to live a decent (but not necessarily wealthy) life. This is a truth that has been neglected by theologians, who have been more interested in trying to answer the question why God permits disasters. Yet the assurance provided by this truth far outweighs, in its impact on the day-to-day life of Christians, the disquiet of knowing that disaster may strike at any moment.

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## Report On The 2005 Synod On The Eucharist Delayed

*by Jack Shea, Ottawa, ON*

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The Synod on the Eucharist took place in Rome in October 2005 and yet the final report of this important event has not yet been published. The theme of the gathering was "The Eucharist - source and summit of the Church's life and mission."

It was expected that this meeting of the Bishop-delegates from all over the world under the chairmanship of Pope Benedict would provide some direction to overcome the drastic shortage of priests and closing of

parishes so that the 'bread of life' would be available to the faithful everywhere in the world.

Many Catholic movements pushing for changes in the Church appealed to the world's bishops to discuss issues such as married priests and inter-Communion that would make the Eucharist more accessible to the Christian faithful.

At the present time half of the parishes and missions around the world do not have regular access to the Eucharist, and many bishops attending the Synod have complained that the priest shortage has impaired their ability to provide the Eucharist to their faithful.

In a survey sent to more than 15,000 priests in 55 U.S. dioceses, Future Church and a partner group, Call to Action, said 67 percent of priests who responded agreed mandatory celibacy should be discussed at the Synod.

It is reported that at least four of the Synod working-groups prepared recommendations on the issue of the possibility of ordaining married men but the final message emanating from the Synod makes no mention of this question.

According to Proposition # 11, titled "The Scarcity of Priests", the final list of 50 Propositions treats of celibacy as follows:

"The Synod Fathers have affirmed the importance of the inestimable gift of ecclesiastical celibacy in the practice of the Latin Church. With reference to the magisterium, in particular Vatican II and the recent popes, the Fathers have asked that the reasons for the relationship between celibacy and priestly ordination be illustrated adequately to the faithful, in full respect for the tradition of the Eastern churches. Some made reference to the 'virī probati' but this hypothesis was evaluated as a path not to follow."

At the conclusion of the Synod Marc Cardinal Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada, was chosen as Chairman of the Episcopal Council charged with preparing the Apostolic Exhortation dealing with the final message of the Synod. Following the submission of such a report the Pope usually signs the document and makes it his own. However, since the Synod is an advisory body, the propositions amount to indications of the body's thinking. It is up to Benedict XVI to decide what action, if any, to take with them.

Now, almost eighteen months since the conclusion of the Synod, the Church is still awaiting the appearance of the document that will present the final results on the Synod which was entitled "The Eucharist - source and summit of the Church's life and mission."

The Council, made up of fifteen members, that was commissioned to prepare the final report for the Pope's signature met in Rome at the beginning of June, 2006, and Benedict XVI, in greeting its members, urged them to move the work along more quickly.

According to the authoritative Rome correspondent of the Chiesa News Service, Sandro Magister, Benedict said: "I must say that during the 'ad limina' visits, a number of bishops ask me: 'But when will the post-synodal document arrive?' And I reply: 'They're working on it. And it certainly can't take them much longer.' I see gathered

here so many competent men that I cannot help but hope to see this document soon, and learn from it myself, so that it can be published for the benefit of the whole Church, which truly is waiting for it."

Spurred on thus by the pope, according to Magister, the fifteen accelerated the work, and in their final communique, released on June 10, they guaranteed that the text was almost ready, and "it can soon be delivered to the Holy Father."

Seven months later, in the January 13, 2007 issue of *The Tablet*, the highly-regarded Catholic publication from London, its Rome correspondent Robert Mickens, referring to the "Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Bishops' Synod", writes:

"The text has been ready since at least early September. But Pope Benedict did not write it. Evidently, that task was given to a Capuchin friar who lives here in Rome. And he's produced 160 pages that one monsignor who saw it described as a "pappardella". For those who do not know Italian, that's not a compliment. And it has nothing to do with an item among the pasta dishes on a trattoria menu. Basically, the source said that the document is too long and too repetitive. And he said it looked like "many hands" had added to the first draft. Even the Pope sent his own "suggestions" to be incorporated into the text - after all, the exhortation is going to bear his name."

Given the world-wide shortage of priests, who alone can provide the Eucharist to the People of God, everyone is awaiting publication of the final Report on the Synod and wondering if Pope Benedict will in his own name respond to the urgent needs of the faithful to have access to "The Eucharist - source and summit of the Church's life and mission."

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## An Open Letter To His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

by *Leonard Schmidt, Winnipeg, MB*

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**Y**our Holiness, May I comment on two of Ratzinger's views on celibacy (R1 and R2)?

Ratzinger also wrote in *The Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End*

of the Millennium about the willingness to dialogue.

There are three areas of dialogue, namely, (1) The acceptability of Carl Jung's theory of integration; (2) The intention of the Holy Spirit regarding celibacy as evident in the archives of Pope Innocent II and of the Second Lateran Council; (3) The desirability of promoting a spirituality of union with God (cf. 4 attachments) among parish priests to strengthen their faith in the importance of their witness to the kingdom of heaven by means of their fidelity to celibacy (cf. R1, below).

### **PART I**

R1: "Celibacy arises from the saying of Christ: There are those who give up marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven... The priests give testimony to the Kingdom of Heaven with their whole existence..."

R2: "Israel marches into the land. Each of the eleven tribes gets a share of the land. Only the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, doesn't get an inheritance. Its inheritance is God alone. This means, in practical terms, its members live on the cult offerings.... The essential point is that they have no property. In Psalm 16 we read: 'You are my assigned portion; I have drawn you as my lot' God is my land... The land where the priest lives is God."

These two above ideals are enticing to the idealistic youth on a CONSCIOUS level. But, is it not possible that God has a different plan or predestination for this seminarian in whose SUBCONSCIOUS He has embedded, instilled another orientation? Eventually, the ordained youth may receive the insight - with moral certitude - by means of God's grace that his orientation is to become a sexually active heterosexual.

To alleviate the conflict between his idealistic CONSCIOUS and his realistic SUBCONSCIOUS, this young priest must resign, get married and thus achieve Jungian INTEGRATION of his

## Open Letter Continued...

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### CONSCIOUS and SUBCONSCIOUS.

Do you label as rationalization the process of justifying the priest's departure? Perhaps it is so; then, may not Ratzinger's idealistic justification of priestly celibacy (Cf. R2) be termed rationalization? For example, it seems to me that when the Levi tribe was given Temple offerings and God as its inheritance, it did not have to pledge, promise, or utter a vow of, celibacy.

My spiritual director instructed me that when contemplating such phenomena as the Holocaust, we must consider the combination of divine predestination and human free will. Other phenomena, such as erstwhile Ku Klux Klan and contemporary 9-11 El Qaeda terrorism, the pedophile crisis, as well as the departures over the past 40 years or so, of around 25% of Roman Catholic priests to get married, fall into the same category of predestination and free will, just as illustrated in the Book of Job. It must be noted that Job was given the opportunity to exercise his free will within the context of predestination.

In 1139 the Second Lateran Council banned clerical marriage. Would Your Holiness be willing to permit access to the archives of Pope Innocent II and of this Ecumenical Council to discern realistically God's plan regarding priestly celibacy as effected by the Holy Spirit? A precedent was created when the Vatican generously and transparently accorded archival access to David Rabinowich of Seattle, Washington, producer of the documentary, "Secret Files of the Inquisition," viewed on Vision Channel twice in 2006.

Here in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as well as in Toronto, Ontario, married men were ordained for the Ukrainian Catholic Church. For this reason and others, it is hoped prophetically that, at the end of this millennium, we can look forward to the Roman Catholic Church lifting its ban on ordaining married men.

### PART II

#### (SPIRITUALITY, CELIBACY'S SAFEGUARD)

How many seminarians have been taught to practice faithfully on a

daily basis Carmelite Spirituality or its equivalent, in preparation for their solitary priestly life? May UNION WITH GOD (a divine gift) be the reward for transforming their lonely rectories into havens of solitude and silence as they emulate the original hermits/Elijah on Mount Carmel, I pray... Cf. 3 attachments: Carmelite Spirituality (Parts 1- 3), followed by "Ascent of Mount Carmel (Book 1)," by St. John of the Cross, O.C.D., Doctor of Mystical Theology. This latter attachment provides access to Book 2 at the end of Book 1, by clicking on the inscription "Book 2." Similarly, for Books 3 and 4 (also known as "The Dark Night of the Soul").

For beginners or those proficient in spiritual growth, The Ascent of Mount Carmel provides step-by-step instruction on how to attain the summit, symbol for UNION WITH GOD.

### PART II

#### (3 QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE)

1. Does the Roman Catholic Church recognize and accept the Jungian treatment/therapy of INTEGRATION?
2. Realistically, what was the precise motivation of Innocent II and of the Second Lateran Council in banning clerical marriage?
3. In order to protect the gift of celibacy, does Your Holiness agree that UNION WITH GOD should be the prime focus of the diocesan/religious parish priest?

Needless to say, I found your book, Holy Father, both inspiring and thought-provoking.

YOURS FILIALLY AND GRATEFULLY, YOUR HOLINESS,  
Leonard E. Schmidt, M.A. (Laval, B.Ed. & B.A.(Man.)  
Co-Chair Alpha & Omega Christian Community of Manitoba; a  
member of the Coordinating Committee of Corpus Canada; and  
Lecturer, Knights of Columbus, St. John Brebeuf Council  
#1107

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## Dear Reverend Neil

by *Jesús Ángel Miguel García, Winnipeg, MB*

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For over a year the Alpha and Omega Christian Community of Manitoba has been gathering once a month to study the 16th century Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross. Under the spiritual direction of Rev. Leonard Schmidt and Msgr. Dr. Neil Parado, the group has been rediscovering, verse by verse, the meaning and personal message behind the Spiritual Canticle.

St. John of the Cross' writings have served once more as *umbilical cord* to connect past and present, peoples from around the world right here in Winnipeg, and these with God. The Spanish mystic's spirituality transcends time, nationalities and languages.

Although Fray Luis de León, another Spanish poet and ascetic, said there are not enough words to express the feelings of the soul, St. John of the Cross managed to do precisely that. He is one of the foremost mystics and poets in the Spanish language. Although his complete poems add up to less than 2,500 verses, two of them - the Spiritual Canticle and Dark Night of the Soul— are widely considered to be among the best poems ever written in Spanish, both for their formal stylistic point of view and their rich symbolism and imagery. His writings reflect what Quevedo, one of the greatest Spanish 17th

century writers, remarked: "There are short books that, to understand them properly, one needs a very long life."

At a personal level, I was most fortunate and gratified to get to know the Alpha and Omega Christian Community of Manitoba. Their friendship, generosity, support and guidance through my spiritual path has been a true blessing. At times, it seemed as if St. John of the Cross had made possible this fortuitous encounter.

It was in 2005 when I saw an announcement in the Faith page in The Winnipeg Free Press about Alpha and Omega and the seminar on St. John of the Cross. Being a Spanish Catholic myself, from the same region as St. John of the Cross, Castilla y León, and having also studied with the Jesuits, the advertisement definitely caught my attention. "A group studying St. John of the Cross in Winnipeg? In the middle of the Prairies?," I thought. It seemed to me most unlikely. Since I had been promoting and supporting Spanish cultural events in Winnipeg since 2003, I decided to call Leonard to inquire about the study group.

Leonard's academic acumen, spirituality and human warmth make the meetings more and more interesting every time the group

## Dear Reverend Neil Continued...

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meets. They are always well structured. The texts to be studied are always handed out well in advance of the meetings, at times months in advance. Supplementary publications and bibliography are distributed by email and accessed from the Internet. There is always a designated person to present a particular section of the Spiritual Canticle. That always helps members to participate and express thoughts about the meanings of the text, at times prompting recounts of one's spiritual journey. On more than one occasion we have resorted to the original text in Spanish to see what St. John of the Cross really meant. My background as a linguist and Hispanist can be of some help in these cases. We have also shared books and materials about St. John of the Cross, and listened to CDs of Spanish and Canadian musicians who have been inspired by the Spiritual Canticle.

Month after month we have been inspired by the Spiritual Canticle's inviting and exemplary message. In it the bride (representing the soul) searches for the bridegroom (representing God), and is anxious at having lost him; both are filled with joy upon reuniting.

The ascetical endeavour of a soul looking for perfect union with God that St. John writes about has helped members from the Alpha and Omega to learn from, and try to achieve, that state of Grace through the systematic study of the Spiritual Canticle.

One of the things that I was very pleased to witness was the Christian values that Alpha and Omega group of Manitoba live by. Most notably, Leonard and Neil live by what they study and preach. Their gentleness, kindness and fraternal support help bring the best in many people they come across.

In many ways, Catholics like Leonard and Neil, and groups like Alpha and Omega, are the bearers of St. John of the Cross' legacy. He was a major figure in the Catholic training in the spiritual life and theology of the Church; he created the Discalced Carmelites to return to the Order's spiritual foundations, and contributed to a new spiritual movement that focused on the devotional life and a personal relationship with Christ. Leonard and Neil are following similar steps today in Winnipeg, in the sense that they are helping to bring many people closer to Christ through the writing of one of the Doctors of the Church. Like St. John of the Cross, who is also considered "Teacher of the Faith" by the Anglican Church, Leonard and Neil are also great teachers of our Faith.

The Alpha and Omega's study meetings are an example of the power of words. The word is people's tool to get closer to each other and, in our case, to help each other to get closer to the Word. It is through words indeed that God transmits His message and that our lives are transformed.

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## Corpus-NCR's Annual Christmas Party

by Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON

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The annual Christmas party for members and friends of Corpus-NCR was held once again in the lounge of the condominium of Maurice and Claudia Sullivan in Ottawa on January 6, 2007. Also present were members of Concerned Catholics of Ottawa, the Catholic Network for Women's Equality, and the Cosmology and Spirituality Group to make up a total of 62 people at the party and potluck supper.

This was approximately the 13th year that the Sullivans have hosted this Christmas gathering. To mark the occasion Corpus presented Maurice and Claudia with a large, lavishly illustrated book entitled 'Cosmos: A Field Guide' by Giles Sparrow. The book was chosen to mark the special interest and expertise Maurice and Claudia have in the related study of cosmology and theology. In fact, Maurice founded and leads a monthly discussion for the Cosmology and Spirituality Group, which includes many Corpus-NCR members.

Maurice's interest in cosmology was manifested once again in the grace he delivered at the beginning of the meal. Because of its elegance and insight his grace has been published in The Journal in the past. This year's grace was no exception, and it read as follows:

### The Thomas Gospel's Kingdom View

"The Kingdom of Heaven is inside you and outside you"

(1) And Jesus said, "If two people make peace with one another in a single house, they will say to the mountain, 'Move from here!' and it will move."

(2) And Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the Kingdom is in the sky!' then the birds of heaven will precede you.

"And if your leaders say to you, 'Look, the kingdom is in the sea!' then the fish of the ocean will precede you. Rather the Kingdom of Heaven is inside you and outside you also."

(3) And Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is spread over the whole earth and people do not see it!" Thomas 113

### The Kingdom View

by John Andrew Storey

*In their ancient isolation*

*Races framed their Kingdom codes*

*And the peoples of each nation*

*Trod their solitary roads.*

*Now the distances are shrinking.*

*Through travel and web page*

*All the earth's domains are linking*

*Spreading knowledge of each age.*

*New times demand new measures*

*And new ways we must explore.*

*Let each faith bring its treasures*

*To enhance the common store.*

*Then no more will creeds divide us*

*Though we love our own the best*

*For the Kingdom View will guide us*

*As we join in common quest.*

In the business portion of the evening Jim Noonan reported on the activity on the Corpus-NCR website

(www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org). He noted that it receives an average of thirty hits per day, and some days has over 100 hits. He urged those present to comment on and contribute to the site, and to tell their friends about it.

The next Corpus-NCR gathering was held on February 17 at the home of Raymond and Virginia Lafond, and was co-hosted by Rick and Diane Haughian.

# 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.

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