



# The Journal

January - March 2010

This remarkable case of Jesus (Love God and love your neighbour as yourself) ... invites further reflection. In Volume One of *A Marginal Jew* I had to struggle mightily with round-about arguments to establish that Jesus was not illiterate. The best indirect argument that I could muster was that all the Gospels agree that Jesus not only taught the common people but also engaged in scriptural debates with Jewish scholars in both Galilee and Jerusalem. The mere fact that Jesus could participate actively in such debates without totally discrediting himself in the eyes of ordinary Jews argues not only for his basic literacy but also for a fair knowledge of the written Torah of Moses.... Where could a boy from a hole-in-the-wall town like Nazareth receive such an education? ... failing some spectacular archaeological discovery, we will never know how a woodworker from Nazareth wound up with such a remarkable degree of competence in the Torah....

The bare-bones tradition behind Mark's 12:28-34 ("Which is the first of all the commandments?...") shows us that the historical Jesus did not simply issue ad-hoc halakic (legal) pronouncements on scattered topics like divorce, oaths, or the sabbath. He did reflect on the totality of Torah and did extract from that totality the love of God and the love of neighbour as the *first* and *second* commandments of the Torah, superior to all others. Love--of God first and of our neighbour second, in that pointed order--is supreme in the Law (not the squeezed down legalistic straightjacket word 'law'). Other statutes--while by no means rejected or denigrated--are of lesser importance.

That much the historical Jesus says. But that is all he says. Once we move on to claiming that Jesus made love the hermeneutical key for interpreting the whole Law or the supreme principle from which all other commandments can be deduced or by which they can be judged, we have shifted from the historical Jesus to the Matthean Jesus--the original sin of most Christian exegetes expounding on the historical Jesus and the Law. It is Matthew, and Matthew alone, who both draws the two love commandments closer together and, more significant, states that the whole Law "hangs upon" (depends on? is deducible from? is to be interpreted by?) these two commandments taken together. With Matthew we have the first great (Jewish-) Christian exercise in making the halaka of the Jewish Jesus serviceable to an embryonic Christian system of morality. It is an important step in Christian thought, but one that is not to be attributed to the historical Jew named Jesus.

...Jesus the Jew reflected not only on individual halakic questions alive in Judaism at his time but also--in a truly creative fashion--on Torah as a whole in relation to its parts. And, in the end, his reflection led to love--specifically, to love of God and love of neighbour as supreme. All you need is love? Hardly. For Jesus, you need the Torah as a whole. Nothing could be more foreign to this Palestinian Jew than a facile antithesis between Law and love. But love, as commanded by the Law, comes first--and second.

Extracted from *A Marginal Jew*, (Vol IV) *Law and Love* by John P. Meier pp575-6

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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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### RCWP ORDINATIONS

On April 17th at United Centennial Church in Victoria (Gorge Road East) at 2:00 P.M., two more women from the Roman Catholic Women Priests (RCWP) movement will be ordained to the priesthood. One of them, Kim Sylvester, is a member of our mid-island Corpus Canada community. Vancouver Island members of Corpus Canada are proud to support these RCWP women who, like Jesus, choose to engage in pastoral ministry based on prophetic obedience to the call of the Spirit.

As these women receive no financial support from the institutional RC church to aid them in the exercise of their ministry, we are asking you to join us in establishing a fund in support of RCWP ministries. Please send your donations to the Xristos Community Society, care of Alanna Menu, Treasurer, 35 - 10070 Fifth Street, Sidney, BC V8L 2X9.

### Roy Bourgeois and Patricia Fresen to Speak

On Tuesday, April 13th at United Centennial Church in Victoria at 7:00 P.M., Roy Bourgeois of the School of the Americas Watch, will address the need to "Shatter the Stained Glass Ceiling" in the RC church. Patricia Fresen, the RCWP bishop originally from South Africa, will expand on this theme, pointing out how the prophetic action of women can contribute powerfully to a renewed christian church. What a privilege to hear from two Roman Catholic liberational activists who have paid a high price for standing as prophetic witnesses true to their human rights understanding. As well, they both have a prophetic view of what is coming towards us in the 21st century. Whether we agree with them entirely or not, we will hear from two fiery and passionate lovers of our Church and humanity who will undoubtedly move our hearts and spirits and lead us to some new perspectives on the tasks ahead of us. All are welcome. Please come.

*Blessings! François Brassard & Connie Kurtenbach*

# Keeping The Vatican II Promise Alive

by Phil Little, Ladysmith, BC



Some in the rest of the country may think of Vancouver Island as the hinterland - not only beyond the Rockies but even separated from the continent by the oceanic waters of what some would like to call the "Salish Sea". At the official level, the Church on the Island is just about as moribund as in the rest of the country sporting parishes without clergy, an abandonment of ministry to the native communities, and a

growing dependence on a foreign clergy escaping the Third World for the comfort of a permanent job and rectory among the "Haves" rather than the "Have Nots".

A small but determined group coming out of small Catholic communities (sometimes called Basic Christian Communities) throughout the Island decided to keep the Vatican II flame burning with a series of events to mark the Golden Anniversary of the historic call for Vatican II by the beloved John XXIII in 1959. This program was titled "A church for the 21st Century - The Spirit of Vatican II in Our Time". The Catholic community on the Island is specially gifted as the retired bishop of the diocese is Remi DeRoo, who is one of the few bishops of the Second Vatican Council who is still alive. Remi (as he is so often known by his first name) holds the distinction of being designated as the "Benjamin" of the Council Fathers by John

XXIII. It was only appropriate that the opening event of this series be Bishop DeRoo, but the diocese tried to thwart these plans by prohibiting any parish in the diocese from holding Vatican II commemorative events in which Bishop DeRoo would be the main speaker.

The diocese has never clarified if this direction came from the local bishop who personally might not support Vatican II reforms, or whether this move came from higher up in the CCCB or the Papal Nuncio's office. The event organizers quickly realized that when one door is closed, another opens and they could look for other venues to host these events. In October 2009 Bishop DeRoo kicked off the series in a neutral location with a talk titled "The Signs of the Times".

The second event of the series highlighted well known Catholic educator and writer Ted Schmidt, who spoke to different groups in Victoria and Parksville. Ted spoke with great enthusiasm and hope for all that Vatican II promised and the work that still needed to be done. He emphasized that the very concept of "church" had made a paradigm shift from institution to "community". This community is called to be a "pilgrim church", always welcoming reform and change to be faithful to its mission. As is typical Ted Schmidt, his message was replete with insights borrowed from Catholic intellectuals and leaders like Daniel Berrigan, Yves Congar, and Bishop Alexander Carter (who is quoted as saying "The Roman church is a monstrosity. Its head is way out of proportion to its body." Of course a dominant thread though out his presentation would be "sensus fidelium", highlighting a firm belief that the Spirit is "given to the entire church" and not just to a ruling elite.

The Series on Vatican II will continue with more speakers specially connected to the reform movement of Vatican II and will conclude in late April with noted Canadian theologian Gregory Baum.

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## Vatican II: An Unfinished Project: From Hierarchy To Communio

by Ted Schmidt, Toronto, ON

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*The chosen people of God is one: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph.4:5)...They possess in common, one hope and one undivided charity. Hence, there is Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race, or nationality, social condition or sex, because, there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you all are one in Christ Jesus."(Gal. 3:28)*

Lumen Gentium #32

*"What we see before us are the beginning death throes of the medieval monarchical model that was based on the belief that a small select minority of the educated privileged and power-invested was called forth by God to manage the temporal and spiritual lives of the faceless masses on the presumption that their unlettered states equalled ignorance. This is 2002 not 1302. We have grown up, We are educated and demand a voice."*

Tom Doyle OP

*The work of Vatican II has remained an unfinished building site. It is a transitional council.*

Hermann Pottmeyer



Ted Schmidt

In the brief time allotted to me I wish to focus on the absolutely extraordinary developments in ecclesiology since Vatican II. It is my contention that the fundamental ecclesiological truth defined during the Council is that we are an absolutely egalitarian people, **a communio**, a

discipleship of equals. It is only after this self definition that we then move to the question of organization. This church, this people of God exists prior to any internal architecture. This fundamental structure, trinitarian and thus relational, must be our way forward. This exciting development, is one the first shoots of a new paradigm one which sees the church moving from hierarchy to dialogue where the entire people of God participate in the divine authority.

Prelates at whatever level are no longer seen as on a higher rung closer to God but members of a largely lay organization which they are called to accompany and serve. The will of God is no longer seen as that communicated directly to church officials and then downward. This new paradigm of course is in its infancy and we might say, stalled in its inevitable implementation by the first wave of predictable reaction. This democratic thrust this rediscovery of the post-resurrection apostolic church's absence of distinctions is nicely expressed by singer Paul Simon:

*Everyone gets a tongue to speak  
and everyone hears an inner voice*

Paul Simon: "How can you live in the Northeast?"

Brought into being to counteract the excessive hierarchical self definition of the church the **new root metaphor People of God** is the great achievement of the Council, a retrieval of an understanding of church presupposed in our first thousand years.

Further to this, and part of the new paradigm, we acknowledge ourselves **a pilgrim church**, the People of God, on a never ending historical journey cast out on the turbulent yet grace-filled sea of history. No longer a self-contained unit, replete with all the answers we are a church "semper reformanda", always in the process of renewing itself. This renewal process is charismatic, relying on the Holy Spirit, "the co-founder of the church"- as Yves Congar described her. This Spirit is alive in the church and the world. This is another great shift in self understanding.

### The move to the Holy Spirit

First we have a new root metaphor, the People of God. Now we increasingly move away from a Christomonism, a Mel Gibson-like fixation on Jesus the Son to a forward looking pneumatological orientation and another root metaphor, the Temple of the Spirit which infuses all in baptism. So from now on no more pyramid--- that was upended in the Exodus and Pentecost. Henceforth we will be

moving into a deeper communion wherein the Spirit, animates a more inclusive Body." **no longer Jew, nor Greek, nor male nor female but one in Christ.** " (Gal 3:28)

While the Council genuflects in the direction of the hierarchical model, it was then seen as much too rigid and institutional. it was a model foreign to scripture's servanthood and equality model. The kingdom of equals *de necessitate* must inevitably lead to a structural equality. Matt 16:17-19 ("Thou art Peter") is followed by Matt 18:18. Here it is the assembled community---and not individuals within the community who are responsible for doctrine and morals. This of course changed as the church adopted the dominant mentality of Roman structures.

This may be the time to mention the famous words of Achille Ratti, Pius XI (1922-1939) to the Canadian college of priests, 2 weeks before he died in 1939. We owe this anecdote to Alexander Carter: "**The Roman church is a monstrosity. Its head is way out of proportion to its body.**"

While the document Lumen Gentium made tentative stabs at embodying the communitarian priority, it still remains underdeveloped at every level of the church. As does the pneumatology which pales in comparison to the Orthodox church. Still we see in LG that "**The whole body of the faithful who have received an anointing which comes from the holy one cannot be mistaken in belief...this sense of faith (sensus fidei) aroused and sustained by by the spirit of truth, the people of God, guided (of course) by the sacred magisterium which it faithfully obeys, receives not the word of human beings but truly the word of God...**" (12). Yet we must return and acknowledge that the whole Council was a "signs of the times" Council, one which paid close attention to the Holy Spirit's activity in the broader culture. Rome of course does not share the broader church's enthusiasm for equality and participation!

Although priests were exhorted on the Decree on Ministry to "foster with diligence the exalted charisms of the laity" there has not been much of this. The Pauline warning in Thessalonians apparently has also not been heeded by that last two papacies: "**Do not stifle the Spirit.**" The bridge between church as event and church as institution is still much too wide.

Dan Berrigan's line still has much truth: If today's bishops were there at Pentecost they would have arrived with fire hoses!"

And let us remember that the 60s ('The times they are a changin') seem to have been a period of graced efflorescence of divine activity---fresh demands for peace (the peace movement) for human rights (the civil rights movement) for demands for inclusion( the women's and gay rights' movements). It was the same Paraclete who was operative inside and outside the walls of the Vatican.

That this change has not eventuated into more accommodating historical structures however is also plain and an increasing bone of contention among the baptized. This of course is to be expected in any organic organization. Two reactionary papacies can not reverse this powerful *communio* ecclesiology.

# Vatican II Continued...

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## Moving to adulthood

Several factors have speeded up this tension, this lamentable clinging to old wineskins. The holy ferment bubbling in the People of God, the 99% of the church, is being resisted at the highest levels of the Catholic church. All organizations resist change and few surrender power of their own volition. These are sociological truisms and we accept them. Yet we still ask Bruce Cockburn's question:

### **why does history take such a long time?**

Another factor is the rapid advance of theological understanding among the laity, a move beyond its spiritual adolescence to an adulthood which increasingly refuses co-dependence. The ecclesial vision cemented at Vatican II and described above is increasingly finding a home among the 99%---particularly in democratic communities that The Church is the People of God, a community of equals, baptized into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the head of the church. In this church the priority of baptism over holy orders is acknowledged. It reminds church leaders that their fundamental identity comes at their baptism.

The resourcement which took place at the Council retrieved the insight that distinctions in the post-resurrection community and onwards were absent. The word *hiericus* is never used in the NT to separate out ministers. It is however used to describe Jesus (Heb 2: 17, 3: 1 ("Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the **apostle and high priest** whom we confess" or in that famous passage of 1 Peter, the whole people of God:

***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2: 9-10***

For the post resurrection church it was discipleship which mattered. As Alexandre Faivre (*The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*) points out: "There were only Christians and disciples claiming Christ as their master." By the Carolingian period (8th and 9th centuries) the second class citizenship of the laity had become formalized and spectatorship became the order of the day. Chapter 5 of *Lumen Gentium* ratifies the primordial identification of all Christians. There are no second class members.

It was Yves Congar's work the fingerprints of whom are seen in the document *Lumen Gentium* that the People of God takes pride of place over the hierarchical orientation of the church. The early Church's emphasis on the equality of all God's people re-emerges and we see the priority of baptism, discipleship and mission.

Let us briefly stop and re-examine the stunning "signs of the times" which have emerged since the Council and aided the universal Church, the world Church in Rahner's definition, a Church no longer held hostage to imperial dreams and language and outmoded and destructive ideologies such as patriarchy and androcentrism. Here we can point to several "theologies of suspicion"---liberationist, feminist, black, mujerista---not to mention the relatively new cry of the earth. All of these have been gifts which have helped dismantle the Eurocentric, hierarchic and clerical deformations which have

dominated the Church.

The definitive break from a centralized feudal monarchy has occurred. The statistics are all there to state the obvious: the Western church is in deep crisis, one of dwindling membership and one of a language which fails to engage. For example one in ten Americans are now ex-Catholics, the second largest 'denomination' in the United States.

Seemingly this catastrophe does not seem to bother the JP II bishops who owed their positions to Rome. The idea of the "**sensus fidelium**", that the Spirit is given to the entire church and all the baptized have a voice in this church is still anathema to them. It appears almost like an "institutional autism", a discombobulated existence which fails to connect. They seem to have forgotten Paul VI's ringing words from *Populorum Progressio* 1967: "Evangelization must touch life."

Have they not noticed that the childish codependence, "Father knows best" which suited the arcane medieval structure dominated and in many cases served well by educated clerical celibates has vanished? In their isolated ignorance have they not noticed that that old church was dead, blown apart by the gale force irruption of the Spirit at Vatican II. The much needed transformation of an inert, theologically backward, scripturally ignorant mass has slowly but surely grown into a more responsible group of educated believers. Newly awakened the baptized had begun to "pick up their pallets and walk"(Mark 2:9). Almost overnight (45 years since the beginning of the Council) the non-ordained have inexorably morphed into a priesthood of all believers, an idea which had taken decades to sink in. The realization had finally permeated many: the Catholic Church is not the papacy, the bishop is not the church and the priest is not the pope in his parish.

This is no longer the church of Robert Bellarmine: We are the successors of Peter but not his vicar. nor any man's nor and apostle's. We Who is a Christian? One who obeys the pope and the pastor appointed by him.

Robert Bellarmine sj (d 1621)  
nor of Pius X: (1906)

The church is essentially an unequal society comprising two categories of persons , the pastors and the flock....In the hierarchy alone reside the power and authority necessary to move and direct all the members of the society to its end. As to the laity they have no other right than to let themselves be guided and so follow their pastors in docility.

## ***Nos Vehementer***

nor of Mons George Talbot the English secretary to Pio Nono:  
**the role of the laity is to hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all.**

## **Cardinal Newman**

In 1801 a man was born whose felicitous life would span the nineteenth century and who would help save the Church from its worse excesses. His name was John Henry Newman.

In 1832, when Newman was thirty-one and a young Anglican cleric, Gregory XVI (1831-1846) released *Mirari Vos* a ferocious condemnation of modernity which had fallen under the sway of

“wicked men, impostors and propagators of new ideas.” His pontificate would be followed by that of Pio Nono (1846-1878), one which radically inflated the creeping infallibilism of the papacy. God the Unknown, the Incomprehensible Mystery would end up a captive of the Petrine Office and the narrow men of the Curia.

Newman, who entered the Catholic Church in 1845, wrote in his diaries about the Church which constantly found itself on wrong side of history, human rights and progress. Under Pio Nono it had become “a stern nemesis...a tyrannous use of his (Pio Nono's) spiritual power...he claimed he exercised larger power than any Pope ever did.”

Newman the convert never bought into the strange cult of the papacy, “A church within a Church”, he called it. With his Anglican background, he was never trapped by the ultramontane worldview of his Catholic contemporaries or the sterile Neo-Thomism it espoused. He brought to the Catholic Church a historian's deep appreciation of the entire people of God as the bearer of the Spirit. By the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962), infallibility or indefectibility belonged not to the papacy but the whole church. This is why Pope Paul VI referred to Vatican II as “Newman's Council.”

John Henry Newman's great contribution to our modern ecclesiology and the role of the *sensus fidelium* was his insistence that the whole church was the bearer of revelation, that infallibility had in fact been exercised in many ways---in councils, papal pronouncement and the witness of the entire people. His famous essay *On Consulting the Faithful* (1859) staked this position out. He showed particularly in the period of the Arian heresy that it was the lay people (**the *sensus fidelium***) who were closer to the truth. The Magisterium by itself could never be the sole locus of truth. It must be received as well by the faithful. He broadened his thinking to also include the great theological schools of the Middle Ages whose role it was to articulate mystery, truths which were deemed supernatural. Men like Aquinas, Albertus Magnus etc. set boundaries, refined definitions etc. These learned men(sic) through the free interplay and exchange of ideas were the necessary mediators of mystery for the laity. This idea as M. D. Chenu stated, “the church only rediscovered in the 20th century.” A necessary addendum here would be that increased education, theological and otherwise, has pushed the *sensus fidelium* to the forefront.

We owe to John Henry Newman the insistence of a more organic, less juridical sense of the Church. When he was seventy years of age the First Vatican Council (1870) ended in a shambles, polarized by the very narrow definition of papal infallibility which would hold sway until Vatican II. It was here on June 18, 1870 that Cardinal Filippo Guidi, representing the Dominican order tried to bring Pio Nono to his senses. Guidi insisted that papal infallibility could only be considered within the total episcopacy. The pope was so incensed that he summoned Guidi to his apartment and accused him of treachery (“You, on whom I bestowed the Cardinal's hat”). Guidi insisted he was within the broad tradition of the Church. And then the infamous remark which summed up the arrogance of the ultramontane papacy. “**Tradizione! Io sono la tradizione.. Io, io sono la Chiesa**” (no translation necessary!). This narrow definition reigned until Vatican II where theologians like Yves Congar dealt papalism a near fatal blow and it was here that the growing clamor for the respect for *sensus fidelium* took hold.

The great achievement of Vatican II, acknowledged by the overwhelming majority, was an ecclesiology of communion, the idea that the Church primarily was relational, a People of God modeled on the equality of the Trinity. A slow but inexorable paradigm shift had taken place which moved the Church beyond a mere juridical and institutional understanding. Ironically it rediscovered its first millenium roots. In Congar's words, “It is a community of salvation not so much an institution of salvation.”

The statement *Gaudium et Spes* correctly analyzed the paradigm shift: “The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one.” The 60s exploded with an insistence on respect for human experience and inclusion. This holy demand showed itself everywhere---in African countries throwing off colonial pasts, in women battling patriarchy, gays demanding equality, blacks insisting on civil rights etc.

The Roman Church acknowledging this period as a “*kairos*”, a moment of great grace rediscovered pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. A new humility seized the Church which increasingly defined itself as a pilgrim on the way, hardly the *societas perfecta* of earlier ages. The Church indeed had made wrong turns in its all too human existence and one of those temporary dead ends was the freezing out of the lay voice as absolutely necessary to include and heed in the handing on of tradition. The great statement *Lumen Gentium* ratified this.

Before the Church is hierarchical it is a communion, a society of equals led by the Spirit to hear and discern God's word. Bishops before they can teach must listen. Same for the Bishop of Rome. All of the baptized are “the faithful” bound to the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

Bernard Lonergan has described this change which occurred at Vatican II as a move from a Classicist world view to Historical Mindedness. This new theological paradigm which pays attention to incarnational, personalist and existential responses to newness and evolving ideas within history is now finding a home in this new ecclesiology taking shape in our pilgrim church. This is ecclesiology from below, inductive rather than deductive.

The Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) states this:

*Those who exercise episcopate in the Body of Christ must not be separated from the 'symphony' of the whole people of God in which they have their part to play. They need to be alert to the *sensus fidelium*, in which they share, if they are to be made aware when something is needed for the well-being and mission of the community, or when some element of the Tradition needs to be received in a fresh way. (#30)*

### The rise of the *sensus fidelium*

Contemporary theology tells us that we all share one baptism a participation in the divine wisdom. Each person has a “*sensus fidei*.” It must get a feel for an understanding of the entire faithful (“*sensus fidelium*”). Cardinal Newman called this the “*conspiratio fidelium at pastorum*” the breathing together of the faithful and the pastors. Latterly women, gay, the poor, the earth have all demanded a hearing, broadening the reflection of the entire people, not just a clerical caste. The problem of course is

that there have been little efforts made by the ordained hierarchy (Pope, Bishop, priest) to hear what the overwhelming majority of the nonordained are saying or thinking. In many ways we have been slow to leave behind a feudal clerical past where the ordained were often the best educated. This is clearly not the case today. The new wine has literally burst the old wineskins and there is no looking back. Scripture is not kind to those who look back. As my old professor McLuhan used to say a rear view mirror is essential but you're gone if you don't look to the horizon in front of you! Make no mistake a kairos is upon us. In 1985 the bishops acknowledged this in the Final Report of the Extraordinary synod when they said: ***“The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of Vatican II.” Another way to highlight this would be to say the Trinity is not a hierarchy but a community.***

Fundamentalism has many disfigured faces in our suffering world today. Sadly within the oldest Christian communion of all, the Roman Catholic Church, persists in an almost adamant feudal fashion, to deny that the Holy Spirit moves through all and all must be consulted. There are church mechanisms in place to enter into this necessary conversation but frightened bishops as of now refuse to use them.

Modern analytical tools have made us aware of the systemic oppression of the lay voice, the damning of the Spirit, the consequent depression caused by obstructionist bishops chosen to lock change and who who answer to a constituency of one, Rome. Yet The move beyond infantilization to adulthood has begun. Voice has been reclaimed and it says the present system is unsustainable. It cannot endure because a church based on equality before God cannot tolerate discrimination of any kind; a church whose self-designation is that of sacrament must incarnate what it points to; a church with such a rich social teaching must ultimately practice what it preaches.

It is my conclusion that Vatican II's central idea of *communio* has continued to find an increasingly permanent home in the bosom of the Catholic faithful. As ARCIC stated it is the people of God as a whole who are the bearers of the living Tradition. It is this tradition that Jaroslav Pelikan pointed to as “the living spirit of the dead”,

continuously refreshed by Congars' “forgotten God”, the Spirit as we journey through history. This living tradition animated by the Holy Spirit through all the members of the church has made us aware that we all have a “*sensus fidei*” “an active capacity for spiritual discernment. Church leadership must not only acknowledge this but enter into serious dialogue with it. If it fails to do this it will end up where it presently lies in the stagnant waters of Traditionalism where we no longer reflect ‘the living spirit of the dead’ but rather “the dead spirit of the living.” We try to recreate the past, but it is like a cadaver without an animating spirit, it is the words without the music---Roman collars, Latin masses, a top down authoritarian ecclesiology as an answer to a new future and a new song which beckons us.

In a prophetic book written in 1971 called the Shape of the Church to Come Karl Rahner warned of this retrograde move of back to the church of the little flock.” It must be fought with the utmost severity in the name of true faith and authentic Christianity” he said.

***If we talk of the 'little flock to defend our cosy traditionalism and stale pseudo-orthodoxy, in fear of the mentality of modern man and modern society, if we tacitly consent to the departure of restless, questioning people from the Church so that we can return to our repose and orderly life and everything in the church becomes as it was before, we are propagating , not the attitude proper to Christ's little flock but a petty sectarian mentality.”***

Vatican II in its shift from hierarchy to *communio* beckons us beyond the timorous church of the little flock to the more inclusive and dynamic church where the *sensus fidelium* is honoured and where a tired and breathless institution hobbled by a debilitating asthma can finally breathe “ with two lungs.”

## Basic Christian Community: Vancouver Island Mission Statement

We are called by God to find his presence in our lives through reflection on how the Holy Scriptures reflect our own experience. To do this we nurture each other with a strong and prayerful community spirit and we are attentive to the signs of the times we live in. We are committed to working for social justice, evangelization and christian unity in a spirit of love.

The BCC's Newsletter is available from Peter Gubbels at [pmgubbels@shaw.ca](mailto:pmgubbels@shaw.ca) or 1912 Shotbolt Road, Victoria, BC, V8S 2K9



In early January 2010, Sr. Sandra Schneiders wrote a five part essay on “Religious Life as Prophetic Life Form.” It was written in response to the Vatican imposition of two 'inquisitorial' visitations on the religious life of women's congregations (sic: why not men's?) in the USA. Schneiders is a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters. She is a professor of New Testament Studies and Christian Spirituality at

the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, CA. I have carefully read the entire essay and find it totally brilliant: easy to read, very clear, and most enlightening in terms of the age-old conflict of blind obedience to human authority versus prophetic obedience to divine authority.

Schneiders presents a comprehensive response to the Vatican 'charges' that Leadership Conference of Women Religious-type Congregations in the USA “have implemented in their lives and in their ministries changes called for by Vatican II” that are weakening 'traditional' religious life. Schneiders claims that the underlying problem centers on the Vatican's insistence that religious life requires 'blind obedience to hierarchical authority.' Schneiders responds that the religious life of Christians, in whatever form, calls, first and foremost, for 'prophetic obedience to God.' She bases her claim on the pre-Easter Jesus' very own experience. She places Jesus in the hallowed tradition of the great prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Using Jesus' ministry of word and deed as a template, she describes the call, mission and characteristic experience of the true prophet. Finally, she justifies her claim by pointing out that the post-Easter Jesus commissioned his followers to go and do as he did.

In my view, what Schneiders describes applies not just to women's (and men's) religious communities, but, also, to ordained ministers (wonderfully applicable to RCWP priests) and to all the laity of any christian (or other religious) denomination, as well as to all humans of good will. This wide application is based on the understanding that the failure of the pre-Easter Jesus' prophetic mission was not due only to the self-gratifying interests of the political (Roman Empire) and religious (Jerusalem hierarchy) power elites of the time. Insofar as any of us, both then, since and now fail to embrace and live out in our own time and in our own way what Jesus called the 'reign of God,' then the world's domination systems will not be defeated. Jesus' Spirit-filled vision of God inspired his 'new commandment:' be compassionate, because my 'abba' is Total Compassion. He wanted us to replace 'power over' with 'power for' the benefit of all based on love of God and love of neighbour.

This is and has always been the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ's Church. The Second Vatican Council promoted this vision of Church

as the prophetic People of God. And Sr. Sandra Schneiders contends that the vast majority of women's Religious Congregations since Vatican II have wholeheartedly embraced this vision and do their very best to live it out in word and deed, much to the dislike of traditionalist officials in Rome who would like to return to the unquestioning 'power-over' rule of the Council of Trent (1540's).

In my view, this brilliant essay brings inspiration and hope to many Roman Catholics and others who are disaffected with the patriarchal/hierarchical church. My reading of the signs of the times tells me that the youth (25-45) of today would choose to follow, each in their own way, the prophetic Jesus described in this essay.

In order to provide the readers of this hard copy of The Journal with a concrete sense of the prophetic Jesus described by Sr. Sandra Schneiders, I am copying below pertinent excerpts from the essay, identified by the use of a different font. Those interested in reading the complete essay (37 pages) may do so by going to the online version of this issue of The Journal.

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#### Part 1:

##### Concerning the prophet and prophetic ministry.

“Throughout his public ministry Jesus functioned as a prophet recognizably in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, especially Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea who are evoked explicitly and implicitly in the narrative of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. People clearly regarded Jesus as a prophet (see Mt.14:5; 21:11, 46; Lk. 7:16; 7:39; Jn. 6:14) and he did not reject or refuse this identification as he did that of king.

“The first thing to say about biblical prophecy is that it is not about foretelling the future, predicting what will happen at a chronologically later date. Prophecy is about telling the absolute future of God, what Jesus called “The Reign of God,” into the present. The prophet is immersed in the life of the people in a particular place and time and is commissioned by God to interpret that situation in the light of God's dream for this people and the whole of humanity. Listening to the voice of God, reading the “signs of the times” (see Mt. 16:13), and focusing the Word of God in the present is the defining feature of prophecy.

“The prophet is not a divine 'ambassador pleni-potentiary' from God, who alone has independent or absolute access to God's plan. The prophet is part of the people to whom he or she is sent, nurtured from birth in the religious and social wisdom of that people, product of its history, participant in its prayer, inheritor of its dreams, victim of and sometimes even sharer in its sins and errors. It is because the prophet is one with the people that he or she can speak for this people to God and for God to this people.

“But the prophet, one of and with the people, is also in a special relationship with God. Most of the great prophetic figures, like Moses, Jeremiah and Hosea, Mary and Jesus himself were called by God to their special mission in some kind of intense,

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transformative, revelatory religious experience that scripture presents as an 'inaugural vision' or a prophetic call. Jesus' baptism followed by the desert temptations are presented as such an experience. God takes possession of the prophet in a special way, more or less to the exclusion of any other major life commitment, and forms the prophet spiritually...to mediate the special interaction between God, this people, and the particular historical situation.

"However, the prophet is not a puppet. Everything depends on the prophet's obedience, the prophet's 'yes.' Jesus' "Be gone, Satan" and choice to serve God alone (Mt. 4:10) in response to God's choice of him as "Beloved Son," or Mary's "Be it done to me according to [God's] word" (Lk. 1:36) in response to her call to be mother of the messiah, exemplify the partnership of God and the prophets in the great work to which God calls them.

"The task of the prophet is to bear witness to God, by word and work, to God's people in a particular context or historical situation.

"Because prophecy is concrete and particular rather than abstract and general the prophet tends to use a particular "genre" or type of speech. The pre-Easter Jesus (more accurately pictured by the Synoptic than by John in this regard) did not usually teach formally in the sense of expounding scriptural texts or official ecclesiastical positions, giving long theological or moral discourses, or explaining difficult concepts. His discourse was metaphorical and participative.

"First, the prophet's message is not about 'the world beyond' or outside this one. Jesus tended to teach metaphorically, by parable ("likeness" stories) or aphorism (pithy "one-liners"). His stories and aphorisms were about everyday realities in this world: about farming and baking, shepherding or tax collecting; about parents and children, guests and strangers, traveling and building, borrowing and lending, marrying, giving birth, dying. They functioned to subvert the conventional wisdom associated with these everyday realities and thereby shed new light on the more important realities that they symbolized.

"Second, Jesus' prophetic discourse was not simply expository. He often taught participatively, explicitly or implicitly asking his hearers, "What do you think?" Who showed himself neighbor to the one who fell among robbers? Would you, if you were the older son, go in to the celebration for your renegade brother? Was the father of the prodigal a naïve chump or a God figure? Which is the greatest commandment? What would that vineyard owner do to those wicked tenants? Would you have stoned her? Should the last shift workers have gotten as much as the first shift ones? The question, inviting the hearer to moral responsibility, rather than the prescribed answer, is characteristic of prophetic engagement.

"The other major device of the prophets, besides their particular metaphorical and participative rhetoric, was their works, their symbolic actions, sometimes explained and sometimes left for the viewer to interpret. Jesus revealed God through acts of healing, exorcism, and other works of power. But one of Jesus' most striking symbolic actions, repeated again and again in numerous settings, as expression of the new dispensation God was establishing, was crossing social and religious boundaries, subverting the purity rules of Israel.

"Jesus did this in myriad ways but the most striking was his open table fellowship. A major charge against Jesus was, "He welcomes sinners and tax-collectors and eats with them" (Lk. 15:2). He also touched or let himself be touched by "unclean" people like lepers (see

Mk. 1:41), or a hemorrhaging woman (Mt. 9:20), or a corpse (Lk. 7:14). He ate with unpurified hands out of unkosher dishes (see Mk. 7:2-20). He let sinners touch him, intimately (see Lk. 7:39). He interacted with women in public and private without the presence of male family members (see Jn. 4). He spoke with, learned from, and even marveled at the faith of non-Jews (e.g., Mt. 15:22-28; Lk. 7:1-9).

"Lest we think the Jews were finicky legalists completely unlike our own religious selves we might think about some of our own rules and regulations. Who are the "sinners" we excommunicate or exclude from our sacramental table, the "unclean" we regard as "intrinsically disordered," the religious "others" whose faith we regard as "gravely defective"?

"Finally, Jesus did highly provocative symbolic acts. He broke the Sabbath for the sake of people in need (e.g., Mk. 3:1-6). He even drove licensed functionaries out of the temple during a major feast, an unmistakably anti-temple act (Mt. 21:12-14). And he meekly rode a donkey into the Holy City through one gate just as the Emperor's representative, Pilate, was riding into it in royal splendor through the opposite gate, a deliberately anti-imperial gesture (see Mk. 11:1-10 and Mt. 21:1-10). Such prophetic actions could hardly be taken lightly.

"But what is this prophetic speaking and acting all about? To what, or better to whom, was Jesus' bearing witness? Marcus Borg (Jesus, ch. 7) captures this well in two words: to God as compassion, and to justice as God's dream for humanity. Jesus as we will discuss below, was a mystic or a contemplative, a man in deep experiential communion with God. God, for Jesus, was not an object of theological belief, much less a moral enforcer presiding over humanity from 'heaven.'

"The God of Jesus was not only compassionate but compassion itself. In God there was no wrath, no violence, no vengeance or retaliation. Jesus' God drew no boundaries between those on the inside and those on the outside, the good sheep and the lost, the sinners and the upright, the clean and the unclean (except perhaps that Jesus seemed to prefer the less acceptable!). God had no purity requirements. The God of Jesus sent rain and sun on just and unjust alike (see Mt. 5:45). Jesus' Abba was the parent of the prodigal, a God who was inconceivable in a legalistic framework where good and evil were rigorously defined and rewards and punishments stringently applied. The infinite compassion of God filled the heart of Jesus and poured out of him in his practice of total inclusivity and boundless free forgiveness.

"Probably the most stunning story in the Gospel expressing this God-image of Jesus is not a parable but a narrated event. It is 'housed' now in John's Gospel (Jn. 7:53-8:11) [and is] often titled 'A Woman Taken in Adultery.'

[In response,] "Jesus does not enter into an argument about the nature of God or sexual morality, about the validity of the Law or about the authority of the hierarchy, or even about the reach of Roman jurisdiction. He simply turns the focus from the woman to the religious officials themselves. He does not say adultery is all right. He does not say the woman is innocent. He does not dispute the legitimacy of capital punishment. He does not ask

## *Blind Or Prophetic Obedience Continued...*

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where her accomplice is or who was eye-witness to the offense. He does not even ask if she is repentant. He says in effect, 'The case may be exactly as you say. The problem is, where can we find someone who is qualified to apply the penalty? Is there one among you who is sinless and is therefore qualified to punish a sinner?'

"If the one who is qualified to condemn simply declines to do so, what becomes of dominant power, of condemnation and punishment, as a way of handling evil and maintaining moral order? The enormity of this question is quite probably the reason this text had trouble getting into the canon.

"Jesus' symbolic act seems to say something about God that is inconceivable, and totally unacceptable, in a framework of law, sin, judgment, retribution, punishment -- in the human program of how to run a tight moral ship in a religious institution. He seems to be suggesting by this prophetic act, as he did with the parable of the Prodigal Son, that God is operating in a framework that is radically different from ours, that makes no appeal to coercive power. Indeed, he seems to be saying that God is radically different from us and that our image of God says more about us than about God.

"If God's nature is boundless compassion, total inclusivity, absolute free forgiveness, what does this imply for us? Borg says that if compassion is God's nature then justice is God's passion. Justice, however, is not divine retribution carried out by humans, but right relations among humans who are all equally sinners and between humans who are all sinful and God who is infinite compassion. Justice is not 'an eye for an eye' but the definitive eradication of all that is contrary to compassion, namely, anger, violence, vengeance, oppression, domination, and all their kin.

"Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, with his resounding prophetic, 'but I say to you,' interiorized the Law without invalidating its external observance. His symbolic action in the Temple interiorized worship without declaring public worship invalid. But when all was said and done there remained only the double law of total love of God and total love of neighbor. For Jesus this was 'the whole law and the prophets' (see Mt. 22:35-40). Anything that could not fit under that rubric was peripheral and relative and could be put aside if necessary to further the agenda of love.

"We know well that Jesus, like the prophets of Israel before him, did not 'succeed' in his prophetic mission. He suffered the fate of the prophet that he himself had described (see Mt. 23:29-36). He died as the victim of the Empire in collusion with the Temple authorities. If the story had ended there we would have proof that his prophetic mission was a fool's errand rather than a divine commission, a quixotic dream that could not come true in the 'real world' where evil can only be handled by force. But the story did not end there. God raised Jesus from the dead and Jesus committed his prophetic mission to his followers.

"In summary, Jesus is the embodiment of the prophetic mission and his ministry is the expression in action, in word and work, of that mission. His mission was to "tell into the present," by word and deed, the absolute future of God which is what the Synoptics call the "Reign of God," John calls "eternal life," and Paul usually calls "life in the Spirit." That reality is a new dispensation in which all are called to share, here and now. It is the dispensation of shalom which is the earthly realization of the love of God in the community of love

of neighbor. It is God's compassion expressed in human justice. This, not institutional or ecclesiastical projects, and certainly not a religious domination system, is what Religious are called to serve. Jesus, in prophetic word and work, not institution maintenance, is the model of ministry for Religious."

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### **Part 2: Concerning the conflict between the prophet and legitimate authority: blind obedience versus prophetic obedience.**

"The prophet's direct and immediate experience of God is the root of her or his words and actions. But this activity is often enough critical of or even in opposition to the positions of the legitimate ecclesiastical authorities who are usually presented as, and in fact are, God's institutional representatives. Jesus' confrontation with the officials over the woman taken in adultery was not an isolated case. He was frequently in heated conflict with the hierarchy.

"Jesus did not claim personal divine authority when he acted prophetically in relation to the religious institution. He claimed to be speaking for God, not as God.

"Jesus had prophetic credibility among the people because he 'spoke with authority,' precisely not as the scribes, that is, not by virtue of institutional position nor backed up by texts (see Mk. 1:27; Mt. 7:29). He spoke 'like no other person ever has' (cf. Jn. 7:45-46). It was not because he was God in thin disguise or because he was credentialed by the religious establishment, but because his truth telling, despite overwhelming personal threat when what he said and did ran counter to what the laws or the officials required, manifested to the people that he was indeed representing the true God.

"The problem for Jesus' contemporaries was the same as ours today. How are we to judge between voices competing for our acceptance? How do we recognize the prophet, the one who "speaks for God?" Obviously, as the horror of the Holocaust made clear for all time, it is profoundly immoral to uncritically "follow orders" simply because they come from someone in authority. Jesus warned his contemporaries to beware of the official teachers, of the priests and elders and Pharisees who "sit in the chair of Moses" but are hypocrites (see Mt. 23:1-5), whited sepulchers (see Mt. 23:27), self-serving oppressors of the poor in the name of God.

"Besides an intense life of prayer which unites the prophet to God, a second requirement of prophetic identity and mission is a certain freedom from attachments which pressure the person to prefer personal or institutional goods, the maintaining of the status quo within which one's own position and interests are protected, to God's interests or the good of those to whom one is sent.

"Discernment based on attentive listening [to the Spirit], not submission to the will of another, is the essence of prophetic obedience.

"Third, a major and non-negotiable criterion of the true prophet is the coherence between the prophet's message and the prophet's life.

"The issue that emerges as central when the prophetic charism conflicts with institutional authority is precisely the one operative in much of the current struggle between the institutional church

## Blind Or Prophetic Obedience Continued...

and religious, namely, obedience. Can we equate obedience to God with doing what we are told by people who hold office? And can we submissively abstain from interpreting the present situation in light of the Gospel and responding to the present needs of real people, because those who hold office require that we do so?

“It appears from Jesus' practice and especially from his life that religious obedience cannot be adequately understood or defined as “blind or absolute submission to official authority,” whether to people, teaching, or laws. No matter how highly placed in the religious institution they might be, human beings do not take God's place in the life of believers.”



Sandra Schneider

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### Not Aramaic: Comments On “The Our Father Translated From The Aramaic” by Bishop Patricia Fresen, RCWP in The Journal, Oct. - Dec. 2009 by Dr. Michael Zarb, Duncan, BC

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When I read this article I was somewhat annoyed at Neil Douglas-Klotz's audacity to claim as the meaning of Aramaic what obviously is not such to anyone who knows Aramaic.

Readers should be aware that the dictionaries as well as other authorities Douglas-Klotz lists in his bibliography do not support the foreign meanings he assigns to the Syriac terms. His main support for the meanings of the roots is Antoine Fabre D'Olivet.

Fabre D'Olivet (died 1825)

held the opinion that the Hebrew contained in Genesis is the pure idiom of the ancient Egyptians and that when the Hebrews became Jews they no longer spoke nor understood their original tongue; he denies the value of the Hebrew as it is understood today, and he has undertaken to restore this tongue lost for twenty-five centuries. Basing his conjectural meanings on hieroglyphics, he wrote his work on the Hebrew language, *La Langue Hébraïque Restituée*, in 1815, even before the Rosetta Stone was deciphered (1822), let alone the time when the texts were studied and the meaning of the Egyptian language established which took some time after the decipherment. Hence his meanings of the Hebrew roots are all mistaken. Besides, Egyptian is not the basis of Semitic languages. Obviously, no linguist today considers him an authority. This notwithstanding, Douglas-Klotz bases many of his root meanings on the erroneous meanings of D'Olivet. Douglas-Klotz's foundation is totally unreliable; therefore, so also are his explanations.

Douglas-Klotz's rendition is an insult to the beautiful, concise and basic prayer that the Our Father is. Douglas-Klotz and Bishop Fresen

have the right to meditate whatever they like but they are not justified to present their fancy as the thoughts of Jesus under the guise of Aramaic. Unfortunately, those who are not familiar with Aramaic or biblical scholarship are misled by the high rhetorical flourishes employed in this miscalled translation.

The rendition at the end of the article is definitely not a translation nor even a paraphrase but a preacher's verbose exposition consisting of a jumble of irrelevant words that have no basis in the Aramaic terms, or Greek for that matter.

From the outset two points need to be clarified:

a) First, the claims of several modern groups asserting that Syriac is the language of Jesus are completely incorrect. Syriac was the Aramaic dialect of the city and region of Edessa (now Urfa, Turkey), the area on the borders between Syria and Turkey. The literature flourished from 3rd to 13th cent. AD; it comprises the Peshitta and a rich Christian literature by the Syriac Fathers and later writers. This is distant from Jesus both geographically and chronologically. On the other hand, as Jesus is supposed to have lived in Galilee and Palestine, the closest Aramaic dialect would be Palestinian Aramaic which is represented by writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls especially Genesis Apocryphon, the Palestinian Targum as well as Jewish post-biblical texts of the 2nd to the 5th cent. AD i.e. the Targumim Onkelos and Jonathan, some Midrashim and the Jerusalem Talmud which were redacted in Tiberias.

b) The second point is that the gospels were written in Greek, not in Aramaic as the Aramaic-Jesus groups claim. The Syriac rendition, called the Peshitta (early 5th century) is, in its entirety, a translation of the Greek text - including the many accretions and interpolations in the latter's redaction history. Apart from other evidence, this is clear from its linguistic dependence on the Greek, for example, it uses such words as "ewangelium" Gk: "euangelion"; ewkaristiya Gk: eukaristia; paraqlita Gk: parakletos etc. -- this means that it was written at a time when these Greek words had already gained currency as Christian technical terms even in the Syriac speaking communities.

I am now going to comment section by section, and in order to

## Not Aramaic Continued...

avoid confusion, the quotes from Douglas-Klots and Fresen follow the initials DK-F; my comments follow MZ; and in order to show that the Syriac text is equivalent to the Greek, I supply a literal translation of the Syriac for each verse at the end of each section.

**DK-F:** 1. Ab from Abba + Bwn - ray or emanation from Source, birthing ...

**MZ:** These are not the meanings of the Syriac words. These definitions and many other explanations Douglas-Klotz uses in his exposition are not found in the standard scholarly dictionaries of Aramaic.

First, "Abba" does not connote birthing let alone emanation; second, according to DK-F's explanation "Ab" does not refer to the supreme God but to a lesser, secondary one since "Ab" is a ray, emanated, i.e. originated, from the Source. This means a hierarchy of gods which surely can't be the thought of Jesus or any other faithful Jew. I detect Gnostic jargon. Would the Source be the Pleroma then? Does this refer to the eons, Demiurgos or Barbelo? -- Father-Mother, androgynous, hermaphrodite, in Gnostic theology/mythology would refer to Barbelo; artificer of cosmos would refer to Demiurgos.

"Ab, abba" means father, not "father-mother" or "birther". It contains no feminine connotations; it has other figurative/transferred meanings, such as 'generator and teacher'. This does not obtain only in the Aramaic word, however, but also in other languages, e.g. in English: Church Fathers, Fathers of Confederation. Jesus of gospels expressed his theology by emphasizing the fatherhood of God, not 'motherhood' and definitely not 'androgynism'. He chose the male imagery, 'father', as a key metaphor for his theology, i.e. God is the father, the head of the family, caring and providing for his children [e.g. Mt 5:45, 48; 6:26, 32; 7:11 etc.], not at all as the creator of the cosmos. Had he wanted the metaphor 'mother, birther', he would have used "em, imma" in Aramaic. This would have been nothing extraordinary. In the Old Testament there are precedents of God represented in female imagery e.g. Is 42:14; 49:15; 66:13.

Furthermore, Jesus was not loath to employ female imagery, e.g. in the lament over Jerusalem, he uses the figure of the mother when he compares himself with the hen gathering her chicks under her wings. Jesus' characterization of God as Father was nothing new, it continued what already existed in the Old Testament [Dt 32:6; Jer 3:4,19; 31:9; Is 63:16; 64:7; Mal 1:6; 2:10], in the intertestamental literature [ Sir 23:1,4 (address in prayer); Wis 2:16; 14:3 (address in prayer); Tob13:4; 3Mac 5:7; 6:3 (address in prayer), 8; Jub 1:24], and which we find in later Jewish prayers such as the Qaddish. Jesus was a Jew and he spoke to Jews in Jewish concepts. If some people today do not like to describe God as father, that is their problem not the problem of the gospel Jesus.

Contrary to what Douglas-Klotz wants us to believe is the fact that the Syriac Fathers, surely possessing a good grasp of their mother tongue, whose bible was the Peshitta and probably some of them were involved in its translation, did not at all understand 'ab' as 'father-mother'; this latter is shown in some early writings where they assign the female principle, not to the 'ab' but to the Spirit, 'ruha', feminine in Aramaic, who in several instances is even called the 'mother'.

"Abun "[aboon] is not formed from abba+bun, -- this is incorrect grammatical analysis -- but from ab+u+n, "n" being the pronominal

suffix 1st pers. plural meaning 'our' - Aramaic, like most Semitic languages, does not have separate possessive adjectives (like Eng: our; Fr: notre) but these are expressed by the pronominal suffix attached to the noun; it is a morphological element, totally devoid of mysticism; it has no "vibrations, moves or changes"[DK-F]. The "u" ['oo'] is simply a phonological element, a vowel to facilitate the pronunciation. It does not mean or connote, as DK-F says, "the Breath or Spirit or wind that carries the flow ..." Attributing meanings to vowels is again a Gnostic notion, namely that in Gnosticism the 7 Greek vowels carry symbolism e.g. sometimes they represent the 7 archons (including Pneuma) or planets etc. There is no mysticism in phonological and morphological elements; this "oo" has as much mystic meaning as the e between x and s in "foxes"!

By the way, Jesus more than likely would have said 'Abuna' in Palestinian Aramaic or 'Abunan' in the Galilean dialect; the Syriac word is the exact equivalent of the Gk: 'pater emon' = 'our father', not "O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos"[DK-F]. Seven words for one is not a translation but a sermon!

Moreover, it is unlikely that Jesus thought of the 'Cosmos', the concept was absent from the Hebrew and Aramaic culture of the day; they had no word for 'world, universe'. The entire spacial extent was expressed by 'the skies and the earth'.

**DK-F:** d'bwashmaya ... shm (Shem): name, light, vibration, word, radiation, resonance... aya: the shining or vibration includes every centre of activity...

**MZ:** Wrong analysis again, "shmaya" is not a combination of shem+aya but it is one word in the plural meaning sky; there are no "shining or vibrations" [DK-F] in "aya" it is just the grammatical ending of the emphatic plural, i.e. "the skies"; Aramaic does not have the definite article but uses the emphatic state instead; and that's what the audience would have understood and that's what Jesus would have meant not this mumbo jumbo of Douglas-Klotz. This attribution of mystic meanings to morphological elements is most bizarre and absurd.

MZ translation of the Syriac: Our Father who (art) in the skies /heavens.

**DK-F:** 2) Nethqadash shmakh ... the root "shem:" the divine name light, sound, experience, vibration ... qadash = holy; neth: may it become or be held holy ...

**MZ:** 'shem = name' only, not "light, sound, experience, vibration" [DK-F], this is the worst type of eisegesis, that is, imposing totally alien concepts on the terms. Actually in Jewish usage 'hashem' = 'the Name' was and still is a substitute for God and the tetragrammaton. The petition just means "may you be revered/considered holy". There are no "inner shrines, resonant spaces or vibrations" nor musical instruments [DK-F]!

**DK-F:** neth ...

**MZ:** Incorrect analysis again; this is not one word or one part but it is two verbal elements: n+vowel+t. The 't' is the preformative indicating the passive form (Ethpael) of the verb: 'be sanctified'; and the 'n' is the 3rd pers sing. prefix in the conjugation (imperfect) of the verb; the 3rd pers. sing. imperfect in Palestinian Aramaic is expressed by 'y', not by 'n' as in Syriac, so if this was said by Jesus, he would have said 'yitqaddash'.

## Not Aramaic Continued...

**MZ trans:** sanctified by your name.

**DK-F:** 3) Teytey malkutakh...Teytey = "come" but includes mutual desire, as in a "nuptial chamber," a place where mutual desire is fulfilled and birthing begins.

**MZ:** A Gnostic notion again - bridechamber, 'nymphon' is Gnostic jargon - e.g. the souls after liberation are wedded to their angels. This is violence to the meaning of the term; alien concepts are imposed. If the verb 'ata = to come', connotes 'nuptial chambers' I wonder what Douglas-Klotz would render the well known 'maran ata' -- 'Our Lord had his honeymoon' I suppose!

**DK-F:** Malkuthakh = the quality of ruling principles that guide our lives ...

**MZ:** This word simply means 'your kingdom/sovereignty' and has nothing to do with the Great Mother of the Middle East. Yes, "malkuta" is feminine, so what? All things are either masculine or feminine in Semitic languages as in many other languages. The Greek word for kingdom, "basileia" is also feminine so what's the big deal with "malkuta" being feminine? Is this more Gnostic jargon since they often emphasized the female principle?

**MZ trans:** May your kingdom come.

**DK-F:** 4) Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph b'arha

**MZ:** Palestinian Aram. probably better: "tihweh re'utak hek di bishmayya ap 'al ar'a" [I transcribe letter 'ayin by apostrophe'] i.e. re'utak instead of tsebyonak, both mean 'will, desire' equivalent to the Gk "thelema" - There is no 'vortex of harmony' or 'host of stars whirling' [DK-F]. Here there is a Syriac variant: the Curetonian has the plural 'your desires/wishes.'

**DK-F:** arha = earth, may be the original source of the English word. It carries the ideas of earth as another living being, rather than an object to be exploited. The old Hebrew roots mean "all of nature," all natural gatherings of mass or form produced by the universal force AR (power with movement). From this root comes the word "ardour."

**MZ:** More confusion: In Hebrew earth is "arets" [alef-resh-tsade]; in Aramaic "ar'a" [alef-resh-'ayin]. They have different roots. How is this "AR" written in Hebrew or Aramaic? There is no such root as "AR" whether written aleph-resh or ayin-resh. Including the false etymologies, this is all based on the fantasy of D'Olivet.

**MZ trans:** may your will/wish be as (it is) in the skies/heavens so on earth.

**DK-F:** 5) Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana ... lachma = A word rich in meaning, "lachma" is both "bread" and "insight" or wisdom or understanding. It is related to a more basic root, "hochma," wisdom, which is feminine.

**MZ:** No! 'lahma = bread, food', it has nothing to do with the Hebrew word 'hokma' = wisdom; in Aramaic, 'hekma, hekimta'; the root consonants are different.

'Sunqan, sunqana = need'. Here we have a crux interpretum. The Greek word "epiousion" occurs only in this passage [found in Matthew, Luke, & Didache], and nowhere else in all of Greek literature. Origen expressly says it was not used in his time and suspects it was invented by the evangelists' source; in other words, most likely there was no such word in Greek. Therefore, the ancient translators, guessing at the meaning, produced several variants thus:

a) Old Syriac [the Curetonian, MS syrç] has "amina = continual, constant";

b) the Peshitta [this text: MSS syrç; syrç] has "desunqanan = of our need", -- thus we have two variants in the supposed Syriac wording of Jesus;

Which one did he really use?

c) further Coptic [MS copbo] has "that comes";

d) Jerome attests that the Gospel of the Hebrews [these days known as the Gosp. of the Nazarenes] has 'mahar = of tomorrow',

e) while Jerome then gives his own guesses and renders in his Vulgate: 'quotidianus' = "daily" in Luke and 'supersubstantialis' = "supersubstantial" in Matthew ... etc.

So why should we take the Peshitta as the real words of Jesus? It is unclear which bread we should ask for because the Greek text is unclear and the other texts are all dependent on it.

In Pal.Aram. Jesus could possibly have said, "lahmana di misteya hab lanah yoma denah". "misteya" = satiety, enough, plenty - so literally "our bread of satiety give to us this day"

**MZ trans:** Give to us the bread of our need today.

**DK-F:** 6) Washboqlan khaubayn aykanna daphkhnan shbwoqan khayyabayn

(And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us)....

**MZ:** "Hobah = debt", figuratively "sin, fault" and "hayyabin" = "debtors", figuratively "offenders". Debts towards God are of course the sins and hence Luke used sins instead of debts, possibly to make it more intelligible for his gentile readers though he then, in the second part, uses "debtors".

The verb 'shbaq' literally means "to leave behind" not "return to original state, or re-establish ties" as DK-F says. Readers are familiar with another instance of this verb in Jesus' word on the cross "Eloi, Eloi, lamah shabaqtani", literally: 'why have you left me behind, i.e. abandoned me?'

**MZ trans:** And leave behind (forgive) for us our debts as also we have left behind (forgiven) for our debtors.

**DK-F:** 7) Wela tahlan l'nesyuna (Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil) .... These are probably the least understood and, because of the Greek

version, the most mistranslated lines of the prayer. In the Aramaic version, no one outside "leads us into temptation" least of all God.

**MZ:** No, it is not the fault of the Greek version. On the contrary, the 'mistranslation' lies on the part of Douglas-Klotz; he has it all wrong. The Syriac boldly states that yes it is God who brings us into the test. It uses the imperfect Af'el, a causative form (i.e. it connotes compulsion) with the negative, which is best rendered by the imperative: "do not bring us to" addressed to God. The verb "al" means "to enter"; in the Af'el, i.e. the causative form, it means, "to make enter, to bring to, to lead", not as DK-F, "let be seduced by the appearance of". So literally the Syriac means 'do not make us enter' and there is no addressee other than God. This is corroborated by the variant in the Curetonian MS that has "wela teytiyn" = 'and make us not come into' i.e. the imperfect Af'el of the verb "ata, to come". This clearly indicates that the Syriac translators, both of the Peshitta and of the Curetonian, understood the Greek "me

## Not Aramaic Continued...

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eisenegkes ... eis” to connote that God makes people enter into the test and expressed it as such, both of them employing the Afel, in their translation. This is also consonant with the concepts of the time both in Jesus' mind and in that of his audience. There are several examples in the Old Testament where God leads to the test [Ex 16:4; 20:20; Dt 8:3; 13:3 etc.]; so also Paul, Rom 9:18; they believed that God was the cause of everything both good and bad. Change in this thinking is first seen in epistle of James 1.13ff.

**MZ trans:** And do not make us enter into the test.

**DK-F:** 8) Ela patzan min bisha (but deliver us from evil)  
patzan = free us, loosen the hold of...

**MZ:** In Palestinian Aramaic, Jesus maybe used, “atstselna” = protect us, spare us.

**DK-F:** bisha = does mean evil or error, but in the Aramaic sense of 'unripeness' or inappropriate action.

**MZ:** Again inventing Aramaic meanings that do not exist: "bisha" = "evil, wrong, wickedness; misfortune" and that's it.

**MZ trans:** But deliver/save us from evil

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In conclusion, I highlight two points:

a) There are several variants (more than I pointed out) in the Syriac texts of this prayer; thus, one is at a loss to decide the actual wording of Jesus, in addition to the fact that this is not Jesus' dialect; in his dialect, Pal Aram., there would also be variants and perhaps even more significant, therefore, we cannot be sure which word he would have used out of a choice of synonyms equivalent to the same Greek word. Apart from the complex issues of textual transmission, this is one reason why serious scholars of the New Testament do not attempt, though there were some trials in the past without success, to translate the Greek text back into Palestinian Aramaic and claim the actual words of Jesus.

b) The Syriac text is a word for word translation of the Greek MSS and has the same meaning as the Greek, give or take a word here and there, so all the weird concepts imposed on the Aramaic terms are just the fabrication, influenced by Gnostic mythology, of Douglas-Klotz and not the meaning of the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic.

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## Guatemala Trip by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA

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I've found the best way to travel to a third world country is to come prepared to help their children. In Guatemala, I was treated not as a tourist but a member of the family.

The accommodations were Spartan; travel along pot-holed roads was far from smooth. The food was adequate but hardly gourmet. I have been fortunate enough, as a travel writer to have visited, many different countries all over the world, sometimes getting VIP treatment in swank hotels, yet in no place on earth did I feel so welcome, so at home as in Guatemala. It was clear to me from the beginning that the people of Guatemalans saw me not as a tourist but as a member of the family.

For the past five years I have been a sponsor (the Guatemalans call me a godfather) to an eleven-year-old Mayan boy who lives in the remote western highlands of Guatemala. The \$30 per month I send for Alex's support hardly qualifies me as a major donor but it has helped him get an education in a country with one of the highest illiteracy rates in the western hemisphere. Alex's dad was killed in the Guatemalan civil war when the boy was just five years old. Now his Mom is the sole support of her three children. She makes about three dollars a day taking in laundry so even the modest amount of financial help I give the family makes a dramatic difference.

On this trip I traveled with seventy other sponsors, all recruited through an organization called The Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. When we met our kids and their families at the CFCA center, it was a scene to trump the best of a Disney feel-good movie. Americans of all ages, many parents, brought their own kids with them, hugging their godchildren and their families like it was this gigantic international family re-union. Physically, the contrast between the well-fed Norte Americans and their Guatemalan cousins could not have been greater. But it didn't seem to matter. By their hugs and their cheers, Guatemalans were telling us thank you for coming from such a long way to visit them.

Typically, most of us spoke little or no Spanish. To compound the communication difficulties, many from our new extended families spoke one of the many Mayan languages, only a smidgeon of Spanish and no English. Hand gestures, smiles and the language of the heart enabled us to do just fine. Differences melted away in a common concern and love for children, their children who had now become OURS too.

Thanks to the good offices of the CFCA, we were divided into smaller groups and given escorted visits to the homes of the children we were sponsoring. It was a sobering experience. Sometime during our lives most of us have seen photos of the living conditions of people in third world countries. Actually walking the walk through the tiny dirt-floored houses and meeting the people who had become part of our family made us painfully aware of the material goods we take for granted. We live well, very well in comparison.

The personal highlight of my trip to Guatemala was re-connecting with my own special kid. Seeing the boy I have been writing to for the past five years was more than special. Alex and I first met when he was only seven-years-old. The change I saw in him was dramatic. The skinny little boy had developed into a handsome young man, serious, responsible, a wood-gatherer for the family “stove”, baby sitter for his younger siblings, and the “man of the house” for his mom. His mother told me he loves to go to school. Parents don't hear that very often in our country.

Alex has his fun side too. We kicked around a soccer ball a little and I played with him and his little sister with the walkie-talkie I had brought him from Radio Shack. I watched him goofing off with his two-year-old brother and blowing bubbles at his mom. In my own totally unbiased opinion, this is a good kid on his way to becoming a good man.

To me, what makes trips like this one so different from the usual organized tourist jaunt is that you are coming as a friend not simply a tourist. You are investing your interest, even sharing a portion of your wealth in supporting the children of the country you have come to visit. Is there any greater way to win the hearts of parents than to honor their kids?

You, in turn, learn another culture from the inside out. One very obvious part of their way of life is their spirituality. The people we met were routinely making reference to God in their conversations. Their attitude towards life, with all its hardships, was one of gratitude. These are people of a deep faith. Having the chance to interact with people who put God and family first in their lives makes you pause and wonder about our own values.

# Of This And That

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK



This is a brief chat about married priests and their families in Saskatchewan, and other tid-bits that come to mind.

There are thirty-seven married priests that I know of in the province. Seventeen are in Saskatoon, six are in Regina, and the other thirteen are spread out between Battleford, North Battleford, Domremy, Silton, Lumsden, Prince Albert, Mellville, Yorkton, Tisdale, Unity, Watson, and Little Bear Lake. There are others possibly that I do not know of.

There three Ukrainian married priests that I know of who are pastors of parishes in Wynyard, Melfort and Kamsack. The Wynyard priest came from the Ukraine, the other two are from Saskatchewan. One was from Wishart where I was pastor for 13 years. He was ordained by Bishop Bzdel, also from Wishart. Bzdel's mother and my wife El's mother are first cousins, so I got to know Bzdel when he was a Redemptorist priest visiting his mother on the farm near Wishart. Wishart is a small village, so everybody knows everybody.

My contact with married priests is mostly with my brother Jake and his wife Loretta. Jake is retired; he was the Director of Community Colleges for Saskatchewan. Loretta is a Court Reporter. They live in Lumsden, a half hour drive from Regina. We often meet for breakfast at "The Club" (AKA the Casino). We discuss the latest church news and share our theological reading. Jake is in a wheelchair now. He had a spine operation that left his legs partially paralysed. Their daughter Jana is an artist in Regina and has had several successful shows. Jake adopted Loretta's four children from a previous marriage.

Felix and Jane Kryzanowski occasionally join us at "The Club". They are both retired and do a lot of travelling with their fifth wheel, visiting Jane's relatives in the USA. Last year they visited Poland to

see the birthplace of his mom and dad. They have a married daughter in Guelph, another in Calgary, and a single daughter at University in Regina.

Miguel and Tina Leon are in Regina. They have two daughters and a son. Miguel is a teacher and chaplain at the Catholic High school. Miguel was a seminary professor in Peru. One of his colleagues became a bishop, and today is the President of Peru, of course without the approval of the Holy See. Miguel paid him a visit last year.

Pius and Linda Sieben are our good friends living in Yorkton. Pius was an Oblate and the director of education for the Battleford's Catholic schools before he married Linda. He adopted Linda's four children when they married in Saskatoon. Pius was manager of the Food Bank there for a number of years. They now live in Yorkton where he is a greeter at Superstore and Linda is a medical secretary.

Recently I was at a funeral in Regina of Peter Ziegler, Tim's father. Tim and Shelley live in Saskatoon. They have three young children. Our condolences Tim.

Eleanore meets regularly with a group of women they call the "Yaddas". They have organized very successful women's retreats with Edwina Gateley. Edwina founded the Voluntary Mission Movement in her native Britain and Genesis House in Chicago. Her bestselling books include *Soul Sisters*, *Christ in the Margins* and *In God's Womb*. Edwina is too feminist for some bishops who have forbidden her to speak at Catholic venues. St. Michael's Retreat at Lumsden is an interdenominational facility run by the Franciscans, so there was no problem holding the retreat there. She packed the house.

Speaking of bishops, Michael O'Neil, the bishop of Regina when I married was at the head table at my wedding dinner. Bishop Halpin came after him and it was in his Diocesan print shop that I published the Corpus Canada Journal, and he received the first copy hot off the press. We sent the Journal complimentary to all the bishops of Canada. One bishop asked to cancel and two bishops renewed, the others remained silent, but I bet they looked at it. Bishop Reme DeRoo came to our Corpus meeting in Victoria. As a married priest I had such good relations with the late Regina Bishops Michael O'Neil, Charles Halpin and Peter Mallon, that when they saw me at a public gathering, they took the initiative to come over to greet me. I am sorry to report that when Bishop Daniel Bohan came to Regina I wrote him a nice letter letting him know there are over two dozen married priests in the Archdiocese, and I would like to acquaint him with our Canadian organization. I never got a reply. I never expected such a contrast.



Jake Kutarna

# 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.

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