



# The Journal



April - June 2012

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## Theological Soapbox: Whoever Has Seen Me Has Seen The Father

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC

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*God is both the subject and object of adoration.*

**G**od is subject of adoration in the saints by the indwelling of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in each saint. The saint by God's grace incarnates the Trinity and the Son's adoration of the Father within the Trinity is lived out by the saint. While the Trinity is equally present in all the saints, the manner in which the Trinity acts through the saint is unique to each saint. Thus each saint is God, but in an individually distinct way.

The indwelling of the Trinity is the way in which the saints are most fully one with God.

However, God may also be adored as an object outside the saint. To have God as the object of a relationship requires that God be manifested in a finite way because the human mind cannot comprehend the infinite reality that is God. Jesus is the finite manifestation of God. The Second Person of the Trinity is incarnate in the man, Jesus. Through the unity of the Father and the Holy Spirit with the Son, the Trinity is made incarnate through the Son. As a result, the three Persons of the Trinity are apprehended equally when Jesus is apprehended. Whoever sees Jesus truly sees all three Persons of the Trinity.

While the distinctness of the three Persons is experienced subjectively by the saints through the indwelling of the Trinity, the saints do not experience the distinctness of the three Persons in their adoration of Jesus as object. The adoration of the Father by the Son that the saints experience through the indwelling of the Trinity, is acted out in the realm of objects by the saints' adoration of Jesus, as that human object by whom the Father is represented. In directing their adoration to Jesus, the saints are adoring the Father. As Jesus taught, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

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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.

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### Ten Principles of Creation Spirituality

1. The universe is fundamentally a blessing.  
Our relationship with the Universe fills us with awe.
2. In Creation, God is both immanent and transcendent. This is panentheism which is not theism (God out there) and not atheism (no God anywhere).  
We experience that the Divine is in all things and all things are in the Divine.
3. God is as much Mother as Father, as much Child as Parent, as much God in mystery as the God in history, as much beyond all words and images as in all forms and beings.  
We are liberated from the need to cling to God in one form or one literal name.
4. In our lives, it is through the work of spiritual practice that we find our deep and true selves.  
Through the arts of meditation and silence we cultivate a clarity of mind and move beyond fear into compassion and community.
5. Our inner work can be understood as a four-fold journey involving:
  - awe, delight, amazement (known as the Via Positiva)
  - uncertainty, darkness, suffering, letting go (Via Negativa)
  - birthing, creativity, passion (Via Creativa)
  - justice, healing, celebration (Via Transformativa)We weave through these paths like a spiral danced, not a ladder climbed.
6. Every one of us is a mystic.  
We can enter the mystical as much through beauty (Via Positiva) as through contemplation and suffering (Via Negativa). We are born full of wonder and can recover it at any age.
7. Every one of us is an artist.  
Whatever the expression of our creativity, it is our prayer and praise (Via Creativa).
8. Every one of us is a prophet.  
Our prophetic work is to interfere with all forms of injustice and that which interrupts authentic life (Via Transformativa).
9. Diversity is the nature of the Universe. We rejoice in and courageously honor the rich diversity within the Cosmos and expressed among individuals and across multiple cultures, religions and ancestral traditions.
10. The basic work of God is compassion and we, who are all original blessings and sons and daughters of the Divine, are called to compassion.  
We acknowledge our shared interdependence; we rejoice at one another's joys and grieve at one another's sorrows and labor to heal the causes of those sorrows.

# The Signs Of The Times

by François Brassard, Victoria, BC



I have always been a keen observer of current events and that has served me well in my past professional capacity as a social science teacher.

That is an interpretive science and I am fully aware that I bring my own socio-cultural and historical background to bear when I try to make sense out of what is happening in the world today.

My spiritual beliefs definitely affect how I view and make sense of current events. For instance, I don't accept the 'Redemptive God' implied in St. Augustine's

concept of Original Sin. Rather, I embrace the 'God' of Unconditional Love that Jesus revealed from his own spiritual experience. His was not a 'God' of judgment, punishment and hell. He was fully aware that we humans can and do make choices that are harmful to self and to others. From his experience, Jesus was telling us that the Compassionate One was calling us to make loving, caring choices so that all and everything might find eternal fulfillment in God's Loving Presence.

There are many people today, mostly Christians, who read the signs of the times in a manner that lead them to believe that the long awaited Armageddon will finally take place before the end of the year 2012. They base this view on interpretations of Mayan and other more recent prophecies. They also see recent natural catastrophes, as well as economic, social and political turmoil in the world all leading up to the planet's demise.

I don't see it that way at all. Indeed, I see 2012 finally ushering in the 'Age of Aquarius,' that is, an age of largely, non-violent, cooperative effort led by various youth movements to resolve major economic, social and political injustices plaguing the planet. Like all creative endeavours, the process is and will be messy, but it will lead eventually to a more ecologically sound world in the broad sense of the term.

There are a number of signs that lead me to this conclusion and I will list them here. Each one would require more in depth analysis than I can provide here in order to substantiate my interpreted position. However, it is a start in the right direction.

First, there is the "Arab Spring" movement, a non-violent cry for economic and political justice put forth by the youth of Middle Eastern countries. It has been violently resisted by the powers that be and, unfortunately, a good many of the reformers have responded defensively with violence. However, the amazing thing is that the movement has not been squelched. Indeed, the demand for change morphs and defines itself better as the struggle for resolution persists.

The recession of 2008 which was generated by abuses in the banking and real estate industries in the U.S. and Europe for the most part, has produced high unemployment rates worldwide, and this has led to other localized protest movements seeking a collaborative resolution

of problems.

The "Occupy Wall Street" movement in North America called on the 1% of 'corporatocracy' to renegotiate its economic and political hegemony in a more sustainable manner favourable to the 99% of the population. Some would say that the protests fizzled because of a failure to focus on the 'how-to's'. Not true! The movement raised awareness of the dire situation, and many groups are now focusing on solutions: changes to the banking and taxation systems that allow unwarranted privileges and power to major corporations, particularly in the petroleum and chemical industries.

The recession has caused serious financial havoc in a number of Euro-zone countries such as Greece, Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain. Powerful conservative elements in Germany (Merkel) and France (Sarkozy) have sought to stabilize the Euro by imposing severe bank loans on countries like Greece which would in turn require draconian austerity measures to pay back the loans and thus avoid default. On June 17 the Greeks will go to the polls once again, and there is already considerable opposition to the austerity measures. Should the opposition win and austerity measures be defeated, it will be important to see if Greek and EU leaders will resolve their financial problems in a collaborative manner.

In late May of this year, Francois Hollande of France won the presidential election by galvanizing the youth of the country to bring about economic, social and environmental reforms without imposing austerity programs. Legislative elections in June of this year will determine whether he will be successful in his endeavours. He will need a majority coalition of the left and I predict that he will get it.

In the last federal election in Canada, the New Democratic Party made spectacular gains in members elected to Parliament. This was particularly true in Quebec where the party leader, Jack Layton, was able to energize the youth of the province on a platform of common sense economic, political and environmental reforms. Presently, the newly elected leader of the New Democratic Party, Thomas Mulcair, is spearheading resistance to the Harper government's insistence on introducing austerity measures. It remains to be seen whether the general population will follow his lead. For more information on the advisability of implementing austerity measures in a slumping economy, see the Austerity Measures by Paul Krugman

([http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/opinion/krugman-the-austerity-agenda.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/opinion/krugman-the-austerity-agenda.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print)). More recently, Mulcair has criticized the Alberta Tar Sands, strangely not on environmental grounds (many others are doing that), but rather on economic grounds. He claims that the tar sands development has inflated the Canadian currency and that the 'petro-dollar' is inflicting permanent damage on other sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing, resulting in a sharp increase in the unemployment rate. It is a phenomenon reminiscent of what economists call the "Dutch Disease." Mulcair is facing stiff resistance from the political right. Can this not be resolved collaboratively? (See: "Dutch Disease denial" by Christopher Majka

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/christophermajka/2012/05/dutch-disease-denial-inflation-politics-and-tar>)

## The Signs Of The Times Continued...

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Presently, in the U.S., President Obama is already showing signs of building his re-election campaign on economic reforms reminiscent of "Occupy Wall Street" demands.

In the domain of religion, it is interesting to note how in the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican effort to reign in the power of women religious in the U.S. is meeting with popular resistance by the laity, especially women, and by a few outspoken members of the clergy.

Also, in the U.S., many Catholics and others have voiced disapproval of certain bishops' interference in the federal election, telling voters not to vote for President Obama because of his positions on sexual matters that they find contrary to Church teaching. Because the vast majority of the Catholic faithful disagree with the bishops on all these matters, it is not difficult to understand why the credibility of the hierarchy has plummeted so radically. Rather than teach and live the Gospel values that Jesus proclaimed and that the women religious of the U.S. have modeled for the last 40 years, they prefer to maintain their power at all costs in order to preserve their narrow vision of Church.

The signs of the times make it clear that all those who subjugate others for reasons of pride, greed or the love of power, will not succeed, for the tipping point is fast approaching when the Spirit will fill the hearts of all humans urging them to choose to live in compassionate harmony with all God's creatures.

This becomes abundantly clear to me when I witness each day so many people or groups who care for others in such wonderful ways. To illustrate this point, I mention two groups that Connie and I, together with others, have supported for more than 20 years. Through Corpus Canada we have promoted common sense changes in Roman

Catholic church discipline: optional celibacy and the reform of priestly ministry. Some would say that we have failed to realize our goals. Practically speaking that is true, but with the help of many others we have raised the awareness of people concerning these issues to the point that 90% of Catholics favour these changes. Soon, these changes will be embraced by the hierarchy. In Spirit time, it's only a second.

The second group that we have supported since 2005 is the Roman Catholic WomenPriests movement (RCWP). We have been involved in mentoring Michele Birch Conery, the first Canadian woman to be ordained a priest. The major goal of RCWP is to help bring about church renewal in particular ways as directed by Gospel values made clear for our times by the Vatican II Council. One such value that Jesus made clear is that women are to be respected as equal partners with men in building the City of God. That value has rarely been lived both in the world and in the Church. As a movement in the Church, RCWP chooses to contribute in a particular way to making the above Gospel value a reality in the Church and, more specifically, in the area of leadership. RCWP does this by promoting the ordination of women who model a renewed form of ministry more faithful to the vision of Jesus. Also, it is the hope and desire of all the members of RCWP, ordained and non-ordained alike, to bring about the realization of its vision in accordance with the call of the Spirit.

I am sure that you could all cite many other examples of individuals and organizations who provide a compassionate response to the ills of the planet. Jesus would tell us that these are the greatest signs of the times.

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**Jill Mabel Brockway and Hedy Gammon**



Christus Duncan learned that Jill Mabel Brockway died on May 17. She is seen here with Hedy Gammon at Jill's 100th birthday celebration. Like Hedy, Jill and her late husband, Eric, welcomed Christus Duncan in their home often over many years. As it said in the notice of her death "Jill will be greatly missed by her family and all who knew her. She has touched the lives of many people around the world."

# All Are Welcome!

by *Monica Kilburn-Smith, Roman Catholic Womanpriest, Pastor/Celebrant, Calgary, AB*

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St. Brigid of Kildare Catholic Faith Community  
**ALL ARE WELCOME!**



St. Brigid's is a Catholic faith community in Calgary committed to addressing issues of equality and justice in the Roman Catholic Church, including the need for a priesthood open to women and men, married and unmarried. Our growing community is prophetically obedient to the aliveness of God's Spirit in the church and world of today. We celebrate, share and rejoice in the love of God through liturgy, sacrament, and caring community.

For more information and Mass times/locations visit [www.saintbrigids.org](http://www.saintbrigids.org)

## Monica Kilburn-Smith:

At St. Brigid's, the future of the church is already underway. Along with many other people in communities of renewal around the world, we at St. Brigid's are traveling forward with courage and confidence, following the God of visionary and audacious loving, daring to take our place in the growing community of witnesses who are prophetically obedient to the aliveness of God's Spirit at work in the world of today.

## Corinne and Darrel Winter:

St Brigid's Faith Community is inclusive, as at each mass Monica reminds us: "Everyone is welcome at the table." Decisions are democratically made; everyone's opinions and ideas are welcome and respected. An example would be how, through honest and direct conversation, we arrived at a decision, as a community, regarding our participation in the Swerve magazine article. (See link below.) We love the inclusive language within the liturgy, eg. using the Aramaic Lord's Prayer. We also like the way St. Brigid's embraces Celtic, cosmic and progressive concepts, merging the old and the new, and being unafraid to question and challenge unjust practices within the church.

## Lori P. Dexter: (Edmonton area)

I first heard about RCWP about eight years ago when I happened to catch a radio program whose host was interviewing one of the first Roman Catholic Womenpriests. I was surprised that this community existed and also hopeful and excited to think that I might belong to such a community one day. A few years later I decided to investigate a little more about RCWP and I recall my disappointment when I discovered that Edmonton did not have an RCWP community and the closest one was Calgary. It never ceases to amaze me just how life unfolds sometimes because in the summer of 2010 I met a Roman Catholic woman who was in the process of discerning a call to the priesthood and the rest, as they say, is history.

On March 31, 2012 Ruth Wasylenko was ordained a Roman Catholic womanpriest in her home in Edmonton, AB. She is

Edmonton's first and only womanpriest and since the time of her ordination, our faith community has started growing. We are a community that celebrates Eucharist at an open table, meaning all are welcome. Having a woman priest sends the message that no one is excluded from the sacraments of the Church. Gender, marital status, race, religion, and sexual orientation are not barriers for those who come to the table hungry for Love, unity, justice and communion.

(Ed's note: Ruth hosts in her home a Eucharistic celebration, Sundays at 2 p.m. in Sherwood Park, AB. For more information, contact Lori at [ldexter@telus.net](mailto:ldexter@telus.net). Ed.)

Recently, I have had the occasion to talk with a number of people who are interested in RCWP and our newly formed community in Edmonton. Everyone has their own stories about their experiences with the institutional Church and their reasons for seeking spiritual nourishment elsewhere, but out of it all there seems to arise one theme: hope. I recognized it quickly because it was what I felt so strongly when I first heard about RCWP. RCWP is a symbol of hope for many of us, both women and men but I think especially women. Throughout the history of the institutional Church, women who have felt the call to the priesthood have been forced to live their lives without the hope of fulfilling their deepest desire. I am sure that the priests of the Corpus community can relate to these women, which no doubt explains the support that Corpus and RCWP provide for one another. We are the people of God coming together out of a shared desire to help bring about the Kingdom of God. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit new faith communities are being created and, I for one, have renewed hope for the Church within my heart.

## Genny Kilburn-Smith:

St. Brigid's is a small community of believers, who gather once a month to celebrate our faith with people of many different



*St. Brigid's Cross*

## All Are Welcome! Continued...

backgrounds, races, ages and even denominations. Despite these differences, St. Brigid's is always ready to welcome, befriend and adopt newcomers into our community with warm and accepting hearts and hands. Whether there are 5 or 50 people, the faith of those gathered is strong and powerful. One never leaves without feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit empowering us to "go in peace to love and serve our God."

My favourite parts of the Mass are the music and the homily. The music team is wonderful and they always provide songs to help everyone express their faith. Often times there is movement or the joining of hands to accompany the many Celtic blessings songs we sing, during which I feel the Holy Spirit's presence more than ever. The homily is always well-written and inspirational, filled with wisdom, guidance and a profound interpretation of the word. Monica not only writes these brilliant homilies, but she always speaks right to the soul of all those present and passes her knowledge and passion onto them.

St. Brigid's provides me with such a sense of belonging. I used to volunteer at other parishes but I never felt so much a part of the community as I do at St. Brigid's. I now feel the freedom to voice my opinion and be as involved as I like and am always acknowledged and appreciated. Another big difference is how much my spirituality has deepened since the inception of St. Brigid's. I've learned so much in the past four years about the church, life, spirit and spirituality, and so much more. I feel I still have a long way to go on my spiritual journey but I fear it may never have begun had it not been for St. Brigid's guiding the way.

A few months ago when the Swerve Magazine article planning started, there was a lot of happy anticipation amongst our St. Brigid's community members (although there were some mixed feelings, too). We've had media coverage before, although Swerve was the first front page story we've ever had. It was quite exciting, and I'm looking forward to perhaps more publicity in the future to help spread the word about RCWP and our community. I think there are plenty of people who would come if they knew about it, so I think we should try and get the word out there as much as we can. The people who came to interview community members and take the photos for the article all seemed very delighted by what our community is doing and stands for, which added to the zest of the article, in my opinion. There was a lot of positive feedback afterward, and I think everyone hopes to see our community grow.



### Maureen Bibby:

I attend St. Brigid's out of a sense of needing to put my money where my mouth is, or at least my feet. There is no just reason why women cannot serve our faith communities as priests. We the people need to follow our consciences on this justice issue of women / married men currently not being allowed ordination by the Vatican.

I treasure the courage of Monica to follow through with ordination and I stand with her and the members of this community as witnesses to the change that will come in the greater church and has come in these pockets of prophetic obedience.

I also treasure the inclusivity of the liturgy at St Brigid's. It is a small community that fosters an open heart, community

attentiveness and a willingness to step forward in courage and joy rather than sinking into judgement and condemnation of those not yet in agreement with this process of renewal. I feel blest that this monthly liturgy is available in my city thanks to the courage of Monica and those about her.

### Mary Anne:

St Brigid's is a place where I can celebrate the expression of my faith and feel completely relaxed with who I am. I am pleased that some others there have told me

they are not Catholic, yet they feel they belong. I'm glad I don't have to feel on edge, wondering if something will be said to point out that they are not "full members" of the community.

In fact, all are welcomed as whole persons, with warm hospitality. Perhaps it is safe to assume that by paying attention to their inner journey, the non-Catholics will know if and when and how to make a more formal profession of our faith. More important is the presence and celebration that is easily shared.

I am grateful for a place in which I can open my heart in liturgy and not worry about needing to engage in a private strategy of grappling with a message of how negative humanity is, or how dependent we are upon the sacraments, or feel lectured to. While I do generally appreciate lectures, I refer to the all too common experience of top-down relationship. God knows I'm sure I've been on both sides of the hierarchical dichotomy more times than is healthy, and I greatly appreciate those times, such as at St Brigid's, when deep respect and love is the basis exchange. We easily recognize leaders with these life-giving qualities. They

## All Are Welcome! Continued...

expand my experience of soul. At every liturgy, I feel grateful that Monica is a leader who keeps us connected to the whole of life and brings it to the altar in thanksgiving. I can join with my whole self.

The most important part of St Brigid's is the community of people whose gentle commitment and support combine with an intentional expression of faith to give us a Roman Catholic woman priest. I am relatively new and over time I am getting to know the individual members. One of my favourite things to do is to have real visits after mass. I'm glad that we do this regularly.

### Bill Way:

I wrote this article because I was moved by the experience of Ruth Wasylenko's ordination.

As I returned from Edmonton Saturday afternoon, after Ruth Wasylenko's ordination, I couldn't find a better description of the experience than the story of the Transfiguration. Check out Matthew 17: 1-9. Three disciples were walking up a mountain with Jesus. As usual, they didn't know what was about to happen. At the top of the mountain, Jesus' clothes became radiant white and then there appeared two amazing people, Moses and Elijah.

Here was I. I came to Edmonton to share my music at the ordination of an old friend, Ruth Wasylenko. What struck me was the holy presence of these women; the Bishop Marie Boudin and the priests, Michele, Monica and now Ruth. It was a transfiguration, in an ordinary house in an ordinary living room, with four extraordinary people. I kept wondering, hungering, 'Why couldn't there be 500 people there to share this incredible liturgy?' Like Peter, I wanted to stay awhile, wanted to share this experience with many more people. I didn't look for camping supplies, but I could understand why Peter, James and John wanted to pitch some tents and stay awhile. The other apostles didn't get the chance to participate in the amazing transfiguration. Most of my community didn't experience this radiant ordination. But I did. I wouldn't be surprised if I was telling this story in another 20 years. It was amazing!

I am very inspired by the spirituality at St. Brigid's in Calgary. I feel challenged to grow and to be more inclusive. I can feel the Holy Spirit working through the congregation and through Monica. I am happy to contribute my part through our music and I look forward to participating with our parish.

Long may we grow!

### Lois Perron:

While broadening my understanding of the Catholic faith at a biblical theology course, my image of God was lifted out of the confines of patriarchal tradition to include the feminine and universal aspects of the Divine. It was then that I became aware of the

ordination of women priests and was absolutely in awe of these women's strength of spirit and conviction to take this leap of faith, knowing that the hierarchy was not get prepared to accept their gifts and calling to ministry.

The issue of gender social justice narrow-mindedly continues to prevail in one of the world's largest institutions. What an incredible step forward it would be for all of humanity if this was to change.

Our faith community of St. Brigid's, along with the entire Roman Catholic Womenpriests movement, has stepped forward to respond prophetically in a similar fashion as the Suffragettes and the "Tea Parties" of the Famous Five. Our inclusive-language liturgies that focus on the unconditional love of God inspire us to welcome all to the celebration table. While still in our fledgling stage, faith

communities like ours send a powerful message to those who want to maintain the status quo, considering historical evidence that women played a significant role in Jesus' ministry.

The tipping point of acceptance of women in leadership in the RC church may not have been reached yet, but it will come through the perseverance of grass-root movements at the bottom of the pyramid that form the foundation of church, and through generating awareness that other options are available. Those who share similar concerns for true gender equality in all aspects of our culture and world will continue to be a voice for the future.



### Marie P:

One of my first experiences at St. Brigid's was at a confirmation – Bishop Patricia Fresen administering the sacrament and Monica and Michele Birch-Conery co-presiding, all in an all-inclusive way. I was touched by their presence, and as the service continued I felt a sprinkling -- tiny droplets of blessings (like when you spray perfume from a spray bottle) nurturing my soul. Returning home I slept in these blessings. It was profound and felt like I'd waited for this a long, long time.

I really like this all-inclusive community -- it is a shelter and a loving place to worship - ritualistic, yet offering a variety of choices in prayer and worship. Also it is profound in that we celebrate many feasts all at one time -- the church feasts/special days, the Celtic feasts and secular events like Mother's Day and Father's Day – whatever falls at a particular time in the calendar. Now I see some I knew from long ago coming to Sunday worship with us.

### Jenny Miler:

My dad was a devout Catholic and I want to respect his memory, and continue on with our faith. That was fine when I was a little girl in the 50's; but it is 60 years later and the world has changed

## RCWP-Canada Continued...

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and grown but the Catholic Church has not. I can no longer bear that women are treated like second-class citizens and priests are not allowed to marry. The archaic birth control rules are ridiculous and very few Catholics adhere to them, except for the poor women in third world countries who are having too many children and getting aides.

I tried to keep going to church but I would leave mass angry about some paternalistic words in a song or a ridiculous sermon about a passage in the bible in which the predominant role of women was prostitution. I had pretty well stopped going to church. I wanted to find a group that questioned what was happening in the Catholic Church instead of blindly following rules that do not make sense. Why should I have to leave the church like everyone else? Why shouldn't the church grow and change like everything else does?

I believe in Jesus and his teachings and Jesus did not treat women like second-class citizens. Jesus would have welcomed women priests; it was only later that the patriarchal institution began.

One day about four years ago I read an article in the Calgary Herald about Monica's ordination. I contacted her and that started the renewal of my Catholic faith. We have a wonderful, questioning, intelligent, supportive, all-inclusive community. Monica, whether or not she is a woman, is a most warm, inspiring, thoughtful priest. Our mass has the same parts of other masses, but our words and songs are carefully chosen and respectful to all. Monica's homilies and interpretations of the bible readings are truly inspiring. Now when mass is over I feel peaceful and rejuvenated instead of feeling angry like I did in the past.

### Garth Miller:

I always deplored patriarchal hierarchies, and the Catholic church's whole existence is based on the "old boys' club" mentality. Women's

role in the church has always been one of a "servile minion" position.

I always taught my students, on a daily basis, that gender equality is of tantamount importance. I taught for 39 years and this message was delivered thousands of times. There is no gender equality in the Catholic Church, making it a hypocritical institution.

Celibacy is unnatural and it is one of the main reasons why sexual abuse has occurred too often in the Catholic Church. If priests are not allowed to marry this will continue. It is yet another reason that women priests should be ordained. The Vatican's failure to deal with the abuse in the church is inexcusable.

There are many things that attracted me to St. Brigid's- St. Brigid's is a vibrant community of free thinkers and Christ-like people who accept individuals for who they are. Everyone is accepted and welcomed at the Eucharist regardless of gender or sexual orientation. It is an exercise of love and acceptance. If the Catholic Church wishes to grow, it must address these issues. If it decides to remain in the "dark ages" it will seal its doom as a result.

Jesus' ideas of "love thy neighbour" and the Vatican's stance on issues are a dichotomy that makes no sense. Jesus' love of women and their inclusion in church affairs is something that is lacking in the modern day church. This has to change.

Link to story on line from Swerve Magazine, Calgary:

<http://swervecalgary.com/2012/04/16/a-womans-place-is-at-the-alter/>



*Monica presiding in Regina*

# Meister Eckhart O.P. 1260-1329

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Meister Eckhart's spirituality continues on today alive and well -- 700 years after his 70 year sojourn in 13th century Germany! His down-to-earth biblical spirituality, expressed in his likewise down-to-earth mystical manner, has been an inspiration to many and continues to be an inspiration today.

Matthew Fox in his introduction to *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality In New Translation* (1980) gives a long list of well known people who, down the centuries, have discovered the wisdom of Meister Eckhart. In *Breakthrough*, for example, Fox writes "Martin Heidegger not only called Eckhart a 'master of letter and life' but took one of the words Eckhart had invented, *Gelassenheit* ('letting be'), as a title for an address delivered in his homeland in 1955."

Eckhart's times were turbulent in European secular and ecclesiastical matters. Like much of Church history, the centuries before and after the millenium record a spirituality that seems to have had more to do with power and ruling -- with so-called christendom -- rather than with Jesus' gospel of God's Kingdom. In *Christian Spirituality: God's Presence through the Ages* 1989 p.183, Richard Woods O.P. writes that the papal concern then was for "territorial sovereignty". The lives of many of the then popes do not make for edifying reading in terms of the practice of gospel values, devotional worship, or the apostolic life. Even the attempts at Church reform were directed to Church structure, government, and administration. For example, the reforms of Gregory VII (1073 -1085) which had major influence on subsequent centuries were directed towards establishing universal papal jurisdiction in temporal and spiritual matters. Gregory's "27 Papal Pronouncements" were about papal power and position: kissing the pope's feet; claiming the right to depose secular rulers, kings, and emperors, to appoint and move bishops, and not being judged by anyone. The principal 'christian duty' for high and low, clerical and lay christians was to obey the pope!

Prior to Eckhart's time, English Pope Adrian IV, in virtue of Gregory VII's reform, gave Ireland to Henry II of England ("Laudabiliter" 1155). Pope Adrian's gift of Ireland to Henry was part of the papal efforts to extend the Roman pontif's political jurisdiction. Henry also wished to make his son, John, King of Ireland. The Archbishop of Canterbury too wanted his see to have jurisdiction over Ireland as the principal see for Ireland as well as England. It was part of the "reform" that disapproved of the Celtic Rite which had not followed Roman diocesan structure and practice

nor had ever sent tithes to Rome. For centuries, Celtic spiritual leaders had founded abbeys and spiritual centres all over Europe. Their spiritual "creational" tradition was biblical and their down-to-earth spirituality was popular. Because of their missionary efforts and in spite of the political climate of the times in Europe, christian gospel spirituality grew and developed.

By the end of the 12th century, many European lay people were critical of the lives of the clergy. Notable were the Poor of Christ, (1170) also called The Poor in Spirit. By the time of the Reformation they were known as the Waldensians; Their spirituality was based on the Bible, poverty, and preaching. Another group, the Albigensians (formerly the Cathars, from the Greek word meaning the purists) were more extreme in their spiritual practices. They had many followers even among northern European bishops who resented the newly-fashioned papal powers. The Poor of Christ and the Albigensians did not intend to start new christian sects. However, they were extreme in their spiritual practices. They were declared heretical and they were persecuted by the Inquisition. These groups illustrated the frustration of sincere christians and their dedication to a more spiritual and devotional catholicity.

Not extreme were the Beguines, a lay women's movement which came about independent of clerical influence. These women saw the need for a biblical down-to-earth spiritual life while living in the world. They begged in the streets; they worked at sewing and spinning and weaving; they helped the poor and widows, people who had few resources of their own. In the evenings after their day's labour, they gathered for prayer, study, and discussion. They were what would be called today "small faith communities". They had no rule of life, no doctrine, no constitution, no particular authority; they did not take vows and anyone could join or leave the community at any time; each group was autonomous; in the movement, there was great variation in practice to meet local needs and to lead the prophetic life. Groups lived close together in a beguineage; they were suppressed and reestablished by papal decrees several times. The last Amsterdam Beguine died in 1971. They had a fascinating history,

The Beguines with their emphasis on service to the poor and simplicity of apostolic life made an impact on the newly forming mendicant religious Orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Carmelites (Greyfriars, Blackfriars, Whitefriars). It was the time of Francis of Assisi (d 1226): "God is in all creation." & "Imitate Christ in simplicity and poverty."; (Bishop) Albert the Great O.P. (d 1280) who fostered study and holiness of life; his student, Thomas Aquinas O.P. (d 1274) advocated 'neither contemplation alone nor action alone is the higher form of christian life, but contemplation in action.'; Bonaventure OFM (d 1274): "Creation is the mirror reflecting God's power, wisdom, and goodness." Quoted by Richard P. McBrien in *Catholicism* 1981 p.1064

Beguine discernment came from study and openness to solutions to problems. The new mendicant Orders helped them by opening convents and houses of refuge for the Beguine women.

The Begards were groups of lay men who were dissatisfied with

## Meister Eckhart Continued...

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the clerical ecclesiastics; the Begards took it on themselves to remedy their situation. At first, they drew their membership from workingmen: craft guilds, blacksmiths, and the like, but they soon spread to taking care of any others in need of their help. Like the Beguines, their main object was to find a better devotional christian life than that which they saw exemplified by the clerical and hierarchical Church; they wished to follow the apostolic life and to do apostolic work in and about the cities where the need was greatest. For example, during the Black Plague they often took it on themselves to bury the dead. They were good christian men, but they did not find favour with the hierarchy, and like the Beguines, they were often accused of heresy.

The desire for a more truly catholic spiritual life did not affect only continental Europe; it blossomed also in the insular English Church. John Wycliffe, 1324-1384, of Wiclif village in Yorkshire, was an ardent reformer of catholic life in England. At the age of 32, having observed the degree of clerical ignorance and depravity, he wrote a treatise called "The Last Age of the Church". Fortunately, his prognosis for the impending end did not prove as correct as his strategy for reform.

As a teacher at Oxford, a preacher, and a scholar, he is well known as the first to translate Jerome's Latin Vulgate Gospels into English for those who "seke no straunge englishe, bot esieste ond communiste... so that thei that knoweth not the latyne..." may be able to read and understand the scriptures and to nourish the faithful with them. His translation was circulated and copied by many for a long time afterwards, and other scholars undertook to follow his example by putting the scriptures into English. After his death, he was declared a heretic at the Council of Constance in 1415. His bones were dug up and burned and his ashes thrown into the Swift near Lutterworth. Wyckliffe had predicted this for he had written in "The Wicket" in 1381 "They say

it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English, and so they would condemn the Holy Ghost who gave it in tongues to the apostles of Christ to speak the Word of God in all languages that were ordained of God under heaven. Acts 11 ("The Wicket" #IV 1546 edition)

This is a brief glimpse of the European ecclesiastical situation into which Meister Eckhart was born and in which he developed and lived his vision of the christian life. With his wisdom, his practice, his preaching, and his guidance, he brought many others to a christian way of living. He built on the work of the greatest catholic mind of the Middle Ages, Duns Scotus Eriugena (815 - 877) who like Pelagius before him offered an alternative to the opinions of Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430) and to the time before dogmas became the standard of christian faith. In tune with that early catholic vision, he taught that God surpasses all human understanding and cannot be defined by any name. All creation reflects the universal reality of God, whose creative power cannot be comprehended by anyone. Each species is good because it participates in God's goodness. Evil is evident to the extent that one fails to participate in the goodness of God. Every genus and species is interconnected. Human nature is part divine and part animal. Sin is misdirected human will declaring something to be good when it is not good; it derives from the animal part of human beings. God wills that all creation be restored back to the Creator

Knowledge of Eckhart's time, his spirituality, his way of expressing his faith, and his usefulness for today's catholic living will be the subject of future issues of The Journal.

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### Membership

by John Churchman

Earlier in my life,  
when my identity was derived  
from my Church,  
I gave it unquestioned loyalty.

That sense of belonging  
gave me feelings of  
security, pleasure, power.

Along the way,  
I discovered that  
over-identification with Church  
by its members  
supported hierarchical resistance  
to any constructive change.

I encountered and eventually confronted  
peer and hierarchical pressure  
to conform,  
by not following my conscience.

If I continued to identify  
with the hierarchical value system,  
I would have had to resist those who disagreed with it  
as well as my own conscience.

What I thought was Church Authority  
was really hierarchical authoritarianism.

Jesus taught that  
authority is designed to serve those it leads  
out of self-centered motivation  
into the freedom and accountability  
of full personhood.

Blind conformity to authoritarianism  
was not/is not freeing.

I started life in dependency  
which had to die  
if I were to grow into true adulthood.

I discovered that if any person or group

stood in the way of true growth,  
I had to say "No" and stick to it.

The Spiritual Journey  
was lonely in the beginning  
as those who continued to derive their  
identity from Church  
thought me deviant,  
but new supportive relationships  
emerged  
and I learned that  
God does not take anything away  
without giving us something better.

On reflection,  
a significant part of my genuine  
Spiritual growth and development  
resulted from  
freeing myself  
from tyranny,  
the tyranny of hierarchical  
authoritarianism.

# What Is A Bishop?

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK



The simple answer in the Catholic Church is that a Bishop is a successor of the Apostles. But just what does that mean? To answer that is not so simple.

The simple answer contains a whole host of assumptions. For example, the assumption that his

ordination gives him an unbroken lineage back through history to one of the apostles. Although he may have a document to this effect, the fact is it may be very difficult to prove this, given that the early Christians did not keep records like we do today.

Apart from that the office of bishop can be viewed from many angles: theologically, historically, ecclesiastically, politically, sociologically and so on, you get my meaning.

From an ecclesiological angle the ordination of women in the Catholic Church is creating quite a stir. The Vatican says that only men can be ordained. Because the ordination of women is a serious threat to ecclesiastical authority, women who claim to be ordained to the priesthood or episcopacy are automatically excommunicated. In earlier ages this would have meant being burned at the stake!

From a theological angle in the Catholic Church, some women are claiming that a) the theology of male only ordination has no foundation in scripture or tradition, and b) to deny ordination to women is gender discrimination, therefore against basic God-given human rights.

May we go a little deeper into the question? Essentially before God every person is equal. God does not look upon a bishop any more favourably because he is a bishop than a street sweeper because of his low social status. A couple in Minnesota left the parish they called home for 52 years when a new pastor came to the parish. He placed in the sacristy a declaration by St. John Vianney: "After God, the priest is everything". The couple were right, St. John Vianney and the pastor were wrong.

So why do priests and bishops receive the adulation that they do if before God they are no different than you and me? It's the Christian Myth. We are living the religious myth – the Biblical story of creation and the redemption. Don't let the word "Myth" distract you in thinking that religion is all a hoax. If you read Joseph Campbell's books you will understand that all through history people live by a story that gives meaning to their lives. We are no different. Christians have their myth, Muslims and Buddhists have their myth, and so on.

Does that mean the myth is real or not? It is as real as you believe it to be. You can believe that Jesus is God or not. Many Christians do

not believe it. You can believe that a priest or bishop has special power to consecrate bread and wine to become the body and blood of Jesus – the Mass. There are solid Catholic theologians that dispute that. Edward Schillebeeckx, a Vatican II peritus maintains that in a mission country if no priest is available the people themselves can celebrate the Eucharist. Recently the Benedictines in Holland suggested the same for their country to answer the need for ministry where a priest is not available.

The bottom line seems to be that as social beings we find that being organized helps reach our goals. This requires rules (like Canon Law) by which we give authority to individuals (hopefully qualified) to lead us toward our common goals.

A problem sometimes arises when the rules hinder rather than help toward the goals. At the women's ordination in Victoria, BC, Bishop Friesen openly said that they were breaking Canon Law, but that it is an unjust law and therefore needs to be broken. If enough people break a law, then the authority of that law is lost. With the increase in women's ordination, this is what is happening to Canon Law today.

The principle of "Sensus Fidelium" operates here. Vatican II calls it 'the supernatural appreciation of the faith [sensusfidei] of the whole people' (70) and 'the intimate sense of spiritual realities' (71) that the faithful have, that is, the sensus fidelium. (Quote from The International Theological Commission statement "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria" on the Vatican website).

In conclusion, the office of bishop is whatever you believe it to be. If enough believe together you have "sensus fidelium" which may be stated as a law. When enough people question that law then it seems that the sensus fidelium may be evolving in its understanding of the myth supporting that law. With what is happening in the Catholic Church today, there is little doubt in my mind that change is in the wind, more inclusivity, and I think that's for the better.



Jake Kutarna's adventures in his wheelchair were featured in the issue of Oct-Dec 2011.

# A Kid With Integrity

by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA

*This is a true story:*



I'm taking this tall Afro-American teenager out with me to help him look for a job. A friend had helped him with his resume and it looked pretty good except there was little to show for his work experience.

"Alonzo, that one paragraph, that's all you have?" "Yea, it is what it is," he replied. "Nothing else?" I inquired. Then Alonzo said, "My mom wanted me to put down that I had worked for her in her cleaning business. That would have made it sound a little better but"....he hesitated. "So why

didn't you?" "Because it wasn't true." "In other words, it would have been a lie?" "Yep," he answered.

We rode in silence for a while. Then, Alonzo glanced at me. "Did I do the right thing?" "Alonzo, what do you think?" "Yes, I feel that I did." he reflected. "Maybe nobody else would have found out I lied but I would have known."

Wow! Was I hearing things? Here is a kid who respected his word, a word, I might add, that did not come from the mouth of an altar boy from an

intact family but from a kid who had been around the block a few times. Alonzo is the progeny of a run away dad and an abusive mom. He was raised in a series of group homes and foster homes. He never even knew who his bio mom was until he was nearly fifteen years of age, only to find out that she is an addict and a drug dealer.

So how do you explain the honesty, the integrity of a kid like Alonzo?

We think we know people but we don't. Somewhere, deep within the soul of this youth was a sense of character that I could not begin to explain. He didn't cheat, not because he was afraid to be caught but because he would not be true to himself. This young kid discovered something about life that manages to elude so many in our culture. When we lie, when we pretend to be someone we are not, we diminish ourselves.

I felt humbled to be in the presence of a young man like Alonzo. I thought to myself how many privileged kids would have hesitated to tell a little lie to get ahead? When you get down to it, we are all getting pretty damn blasé about telling the truth aren't we? We may not admit we lie. We say we MISSPOKE, as though that's any different.

Our heroes betray us, but a black teenage kid from a dysfunctional family stands head and shoulders above us all. "If I had lied no one else might have known but I would have known." Words like these are not the words of a boy but a man, a real man.

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## Open Letter To The Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith

by Fr. Des Wilson, Belfast

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We are puzzled by the fact that you and we preach the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit and then you tell us, so inspired, to stop talking as if we had nothing important to say. This is not a matter of doctrine, it is one of logic and we are inclined to judge these things by logic as well as doctrine and not too often by emotion. We remember the Gamaliel principle (you remember it too) when forced to make a decision, he told his colleagues "If this be of God, it is useless to

oppose it; if it be of human planning it will fade away in any case" and so we should not take extraordinary measures for ordinary happenings.

You may be aware that in recent years we have lost to the priesthood some of our best intellects because priests were disciplined sometimes for trivialities, sometimes for making people aware that the church is a seeking church, not a triumphant one. When the issues involved were trivial, we rightly feared that some important people in our church were trying to drag us with them on a road which might well lead from mediocrity to obscurity. We Irish Catholics have a strong intellectual tradition; we founded the ancient equivalent of a university in Clonmacnois centuries before our colleagues in Britain founded Oxford and Cambridge, and we took our part in intellectual leadership in Europe even when the empire centred in Rome was collapsing, indeed especially when it was. So you can see we have some experience in intellectual and spiritual leadership. It would be sad and quite unworthy if you were to insist at this time that we be reduced to tearing pages out of monthly religious magazines or asking permission not just to change laws but even to write about them.

As well as this we are wary of anonymous messages to anonymous receivers. We believe Our Lord Jesus was serious when He said people

## Open Letter Continued...

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sometimes worked in secret because their works were evil. That is disquieting anywhere but especially in the community of the People of God. And most especially to the priests and to others whom you have told to be quiet. I am presuming that the title, The People of God, still officially applies although I understand that even at the time of the Second Vatican Council there was a desire among some of you to avoid it. Most of us accept the title with pride and gratitude but find it impossible to accept that we have to be a Silent People of God.

So for reasons of logic, theology, scripture, history and reason we know it is damaging to us all to try to solve problems by silencing speakers rather than by fostering and freshening ideas. You may possibly agree that this is so, but in any case, censors tend to disappear into irrelevance while ideas tend to remain if they are

interesting ones and all the more so if they are good ones, which is highly likely given that those who have them rely on the Holy Spirit for their spiritual and intellectual vigour.

So I do ask you to join us in our decision not to be afraid of each other but to talk to each other with courtesy, remembering that when you silence good people, it is a shame for you, but if we allow it to happen, it is a shame for us.

Looking back on more than sixty years as a Catholic priest, I think I know the value of those who choose their own silence, but also the emptiness of those who enforce silence on others.

With great hopes for blessing for you and for a Church which enlightens the world,

Desmond Wilson, 6 Springhill Close, Belfast BT 12 7SE.

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## News From Walsingham

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As the repeated mantra of "only celibacy" is chanted by Rome, through the back door it is clear that celibacy is the requirement for clergy unfortunately enough to have been originally baptised in the Roman rite but not for those who transition from other rites or communions. Of course we know that the Vatican welcomes these former Anglican ministers into communion so long as they renounce the validity of their previous ordination and maintain their ideological opposition to women and gays in ministry. They must accept official second class clergy status; they can't be full pastors but they can be associate pastors, and now they can operate within their own vicariate.

News from The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham in Scotland

Stanley James Gordon Bennie to be ordained to the Sacred Priesthood on Tuesday 11th September at 12 noon in St Columba's Cathedral, Oban, by Bishop Joseph Toal, Bishop of of Argyll & the Isles, in the presence of

Monsignor Keith Newton, Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

### Visit from our Ordinary

It is a great joy to report that Monsignor Keith Newton, The Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, will be the Chief Concelebrant at the Ordinariate Mass in St Peter and St Boniface Fortrose on Sunday 5th August.

Mgr Keith will be on holiday in the West Highlands with his wife, Gill, and they plan to spend a few days in Inverness with Fr Len and Ruth on their way back home. So it is the perfect opportunity for all in the Ordinariate in Scotland to meet our Ordinary.

The Mass on Sunday 5th August will be at 11am as usual and afterwards we will all travel to Aultgowrie Mill by Muir of Ord, the home of Rosanna and John Clegg, for a relaxing and informal lunch prepared by the Highland group.

An invitation is extended to all members of the Ordinariate in Scotland. For those travelling from a distance, accommodation can be arranged with Ordinariate folk in the Highlands.

Please contact Fr Len for further details.

It will be very good to have Mgr Keith with us and the opportunity to meet with him, and with Gill, informally in the splendid setting of Aultgowrie Mill. It is hoped that as many people as possible from the Ordinariate group in Scotland will also be present. This date has been chosen because the Diocesan priests of Argyll will be meeting in Oban during that week.



Dan Driscoll, who has supported Corpus Canada and contributed articles for The Journal, has returned to Canada from his home in Goa and is now living in Dartmouth, NS. As reported on page 9 of the July-Sept 2011 issue of The Journal, Dan's wife Germana died at their home in Goa. Dan from his varied life experiences has much to offer to our readers. We look forward to hearing from Dan again when he is settled in Dartmouth.

# 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 baptized 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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## How Can I Join Or Show Support?

If you wish to join or renew your membership in Corpus Canada for the year 2012 (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.

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