



The Journal



July - September 2012

Dom Hélder Câmara



Fifty Years ago The Second Vatican Council (Vat II) opened on October 11, 1962. At the Council, Archbishop of Olinda and Reale, Dom Hélder Pessos Câmara, was known as “the bishop of the poor”. Tony Lalli S.X. in the Xaverian Mission Newsletter relates that Cardinal Arnos of Sao Paulo told Paul VI that Dom Hélder was “a poet, a mystic, and a missionary” who knows how to say things that people understand, who lives his life praying and always with God, and who brings the ideas of God to the hearts of the people. I have no doubt that he is the greatest man of the Church in Brazil.” Dom Hélder died on August 27, 1999; he was 90 years old.

In 1952, he was one of the founders of the Brazilian Bishops Conference and in 1954, of the American Bishops Conference. At that time, these were innovations in Church structure. His purpose in these activities was to make the bishops aware of the plight of the poor. Barry Healy calls Dom Câmara “one of the most significant religious figures of the 20th century, an instigator of the liberation theology trend in Latin American Catholicism, and a campaigner against military dictatorship.... The fact that he resolutely stood against repression inspired millions.” Dom Câmara influenced the Latin American Conferences of Medellin and Puebla (1968 and 1974) to make “the option for the poor” for justice and peace towards peaceful transformation of social conditions and military oppression. To this end the Medellin Conferences encouraged the formation of Basic Ecclesial Communities, known as small faith communities.

Today, we can add to Cardinal Arnos’ assessment that Dom Hélder was also a “White martyr” in that, while he did not die for his faith, he lived and suffered for his heroic witness to the Gospel and his dedication to the betterment of the poor in Latin America. This was his prayer:

“God permit that the symbol of my life be a candle that spends itself, that consumes itself while there is still wax to burn, when nothing more remains to be consumed, that my flame, yet an instant, dare to remain alive and afoot, to rumble after, happy in the conviction that one day the force of Right will conquer the pretended right of force.”

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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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Reflections On Vatican II by Charles Callanan, St. John's, NL

In a sense, Vatican II is important, more for what it was perceived to be than what it actually was. Very few people have read all the documents of Vatican II. In a way, as the advertising people will tell you, perception is more important than reality.

For most people, Vatican II was a brave breaking away from a "fortress" church to a "servant" church. The whole thing was triggered by Pope John XXIII.

As a young priest, I believed that a church council, any church council, provided a future direction for the Church. This was good news and it inspired many of us new priests. We were the last group that had received the complete Trent package.

To my good fortune, I was asked by the Provincial of the English Oblates to study the council documents and to "popularise" them for the Catholic public. I was joined by an older (than me) Oblate who was a theologian in this endeavour.

This other priest felt that we should go to Europe to get a good perspective on new trends. The idea was to gather information on where the Church was going and where it should attempt to go in the future. Starting in Holland, we moved to Belgium, Germany, France, England and Scotland. We spoke to both priests and laity about Church issues. This was in the mid to late sixties. I discovered that there were many ways to be a Christian Catholic and that my own Irish, Newfoundland, Ottawa Valley version was only one of them.

When we returned to Ontario, we designed a three evening session using information from Vatican II, films from the National Film Board, slide presentations and talks aimed at showing the people what the Church was becoming. Many received the message but there was a lot of flak, as you would expect when the concept of change is suggested in a centuries old institution.

The strange thing is that what we were doing in the mid sixties would be still considered avant garde today. The official Church, in the intervening years, seems to have stepped back from all of this, turned the ship around and headed back to a "fortress" Church idea. I did not go with them. I became more convinced that the whole lifestyle of priests was dysfunctional. Eventually I left the priesthood (not the Church), went to Syracuse University and studied communications, message design, radio and television. I spent my work life at Memorial University as a Film and television producer. Now the Pope is talking again about the documents of Vatican II!

The Man Who Gave In Secret

by *Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA*



When I was still a grandpa at the Children's Village, a man came to shampoo the carpets in my apartment. I had agreed to pay him \$100, which, considering the condition of the carpets, was a bargain.

During the course of his work he asked me about the Children's Village. "What kind of place is this anyway?" I told him it was a home for abused and neglected kids. "Really," he said. "You guys help these kids?" "Well we try our best," I replied.

When the guy was done with the carpets, I pulled out my wallet to pay him. "This one is on me," he said. "I have kids of my own at home. Thanks for doing what you're doing."

Please don't write this off as just another feel good story and go back to reading about the woman who was mugged in Oakland and the coach who abused kids on his basketball team.

I think it is important for us to pay attention to the good things that happen in our lives. If we but open our eyes to see, we are inundated with the goodness of people all around us and many times we choose to ignore it.

There is way more goodness out there than we realize so what's up

with our tendency to focus on the bad? We scan the newspaper or the Internet and our eyes fall on the seamy side of life. We wallow vicariously in the scuttlebutt about the preacher who cheats on his wife or the politician who cheats on his taxes.

But, you know something? You're messing with your mind when you remain unaware of the dude down the street who is a Big Brother to a troubled kid or the retired teacher who helps with the adult literacy program.

In the early days of the computer, they used to say "garbage in; garbage out." If we concentrate our attention on the garbage that enters our minds and ignore inputting the good stuff, no wonder we feel depressed.

Recently, I was honored to read the words of a 12 year-old boy who had been beaten so badly by his drunken dad that the boy had to be put in a group home. "I know my dad did bad things to me," he wrote, "but I forgive him, cuz I know nobody is perfect...and he is my dad." True story; beautiful young man. Folks, these kinds of stories are all around us.

I am not nor have I ever been a member of the Pollyanna Society of America. Hell no, as a Catholic priest for ten years, I have heard the confessions of some tough hombres. I know our dark side but refuse to let either myself or my fellow human beings be defined by our shadow. We are the creation of a kind and loving God and that goodness is in us and around us.

Want to know how I am so sure? Because one day I happened to meet this carpet installer who gave up his fee for a bunch of kids he didn't even know

<http://yagrowsoryadies.blogharbor.com>

Leo Kurtenbach, My Wonderful Brother-In-Law

by *François Brassard, Victoria, BC*

I met Leo Kurtenbach and his wife Helen in the summer of 1978, two years before his sister, Connie, and I got married. We were travelling from Toronto to Victoria with stops in Saskatchewan in order to visit her brothers and sisters and their families. We met Leo and Helen on that large ancestral farm, east of Cudworth, SK. He was heavily into grain farming and raising pigs.

Leo and Helen had also been raising children, six in all. Today, they are now grandparents many times over and great-grandparents as well. Leo is presently 93 and Helen is 90. They both retired from farming about 8 years ago and now live in Saskatoon. They are both quite alert and in fairly good health. From the many stories I've heard from their children, it is obvious that Leo and Helen have led very productive lives. Both Connie and I think they are wonderful people and we love them dearly.

If, as the title of this article indicates, I concentrate my attention on Leo at this point, it's because of the effect he has had and continues to have on my life. Leo has always been actively involved in many social issues, but particularly those related to farming. Among other things, he has been involved with co-op movements in Saskatchewan, Peace and Development activities in Cuba, and the "sem terra" movement in

Brazil. He has promoted peaceful, collaborative solutions to agricultural problems that small, family farms face. He still writes articles and "Letters to the Editor" pointing out injustices affecting small farmers. To illustrate this activity, I am copying below two "Letters" that Leo wrote (permission granted).

"To the Editor,

The Trans Pacific Partnership [TPP] talks are now in session in San Diego California, July 2nd to the 10th [2012].

Apparently Prime-Minister Harper's Chief of Staff has taken the lead in the effort to have Canada become a so-called partner in the semi-secret TPP negotiations.

Canada's involvement in the TPP is the sequel to the loss of producer control of the Canadian Wheat Board [CWB], including our federal government taking possession of millions of dollars of producer's investment in the assets and sales marketing expertise of the CWB. The TPP will probably complete the corporatization of Canada's primary production of food. It could lead to the delivery of the control of the primary production into the hands of global corporate interests.

What is probably under discussion is Canada's supply management programs for broiler hatching egg, chicken, dairy,

Leo Kurtenbach Continued...

egg and turkey industries. Chapter 11 of the NAFTA will also be considered. Canada's supply management programs would have to compete with the billions of dollars of subsidies that the American government doles out to corporations that are involved in the agricultural production of food.-- Is this the plan to rid the rural areas of farm families engaged in producing good wholesome food?

Some years ago, the economist, E.F. Shumacher wrote a popular book titled, "Small is Beautiful". It seems that we are now being propagandized into accepting the dogma that "Bigger is Better"

This letter is not meant to demean all corporations. But when you observe how some corporations, bloated with monetary resources use that power to buy up smaller businesses. one has to wonder, where does it all end?-- We know how Wall Street with all its monetary shenanigans contributed greatly to the recession of 2008. And just recently, Britain's Barclay bank, a monstrous corporation, who like Wall Street pays its CEO'S millions of dollars in annual salaries, plus other financial rewards to do more of the same."

"To the Editor, [Aug. 8, 2012]

Prime-Minister Harper came to a farm near Kindersley Saskatchewan, to inform a group of producers assembled there, that finally they would no longer be controlled by the Canadian Wheat Board [CWB]-- He did not tell them that they no longer have the right to democratically elect producers to an organization to sell their own grain.

Global grain interests who planned the demise of the CWB, glibly suggested that the CWB was an era of past times. They are wrong. The loss of the CWB has regressed the rights of producers to an era that existed in the 1920's and the 1930's.-- A time when our pioneer farm families were at the non-existent mercies of the autocrats of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. The problem that will now prevail is that producers will be at the mercies of a few giant global corporations. 70

to 90 per cent of the world's grain trade is controlled by the ABCD group. They are,-- Archer Daniel Midland, Bunge, Cargill and [Louis] Dreyfus. Canadians will witness the rapid expansion and control of agriculture by corporations.

The CWB consisted of fifteen directors. Ten of those directors were democratically elected bona fide prairie farmers. Over the many years of CWB tenure, a high percentage of those elected were solid supporters of the single desk selling monopoly of the CWB. In fact, a recent poll of producers held in the CWB region revealed that 61.77 per cent of producers favored the single desk monopoly of the CWB, while 38.22 opposed the single desk.

Harper and Ritz used questionable tactics to eliminate the CWB. They have done so with impunity. This is a government that regularly reminds Canada's parliamentarians that they have "a solid majority" in the House of Commons. That so-called majority represents fewer than 40 per cent of Canadians that voted for Conservatives candidates in the last election.--Over 60 per cent did not vote for Conservatives!

Your readers will recognize that there is a political label for a government that does comply with the bidding of the corporate sector, rather than comply to the wishes of the majority of Canadian voters.

Leo Kurtenbach, Saskatoon. Phone 652 5129."

Personal reflection.

For me, Leo Kurtenbach, is a wonderful, present day expression of what it really means to be a follower of Jesus, and that is very important to me. Leo inspires me to go and do the same according to the circumstances of my life.



Paradoxical Vines

by Jim Lauder, Victoria, BC



One afternoon our *Island Catholic News* board members were sitting around and casually discussing our work and the prospects for our futures as small faith groups who have the courage to speak the voice of prophetic Catholicism, and live our lives as best as we can according to gospel values. Vine imagery came up in

our conversation. It was our esteemed editor who thought of the institution as a solid structure that was at risk of being infiltrated by invasive vines. His comment about the vine excited me because it reminded me of the gospel verses found in John that focus on vine symbolism.

Thinking of the nature of vines as potentially invasive, unwanted, and a nuisance, offers us a paradox or a different way to think about vines that is contrary to the usual positive interpretation most people hold. For example, in John 15: 6, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (Nestle – Aland Greek English New Testament). In this verse and in subsequent verses, I believe what Jesus is saying to us is that we are inextricably interconnected to each other, and if we abide in what Jesus asks us to do, then we will bear much fruit.

Invasive, unwanted, a nuisance are words that seem like a stretch when we think of John’s gospel, yet ironically, many small faith communities who challenge the various teachings of the “institutional” church are no doubt considered a nuisance are certainly unwanted, and indeed sometimes cut off (silenced) or attempts are made to get rid of the annoyances that these groups and some individuals present to the status quo.

Metaphorically, I believe we the people are the sacred vines, and the living reality that has the power to transform. We the people of God

attach ourselves to a structure and have a role in supporting that very structure, and indeed, a role in transforming it as well.

I think metaphors and symbols are truly delightful because they offer us a multitude of different meanings, depending on our own values, choices and perceptions.

When I think of the beauty of vines growing on the walls of so many of our churches, the very architecture of the church and other buildings are embellished as a result of the lush green vines that grace their walls and entrances. The relationship between the structure and its vines is symbiotic as well, each supporting each other in co-created beauty.

For years I admired the extensive vines that framed the Empress Hotel here in Victoria. It underwent a massive renovation awhile back and many of its vines were removed which exposed broad surfaces of brick and concrete. The structure although beautiful, lacked its original character and charm and the warmth provided by the rich shades of green that exuded from its flourishing vines. As far as I am concerned, the grand hotel lost its majesty when it lost its vines. But thankfully, over time, the few vines that did remain have grown and the structure is transformed once again and retains its natural splendor.

Any seasoned gardener will tell you that English Ivy for example, is very beautiful but extremely invasive as well. Growing rapidly, and if left unattended, it spreads like wildflower. With its natural tentacles it has the power and fortitude to creep into the smallest of cracks in concrete, siding and other solid materials. It can potentially pull a wall down and crumble a structure if left uncared for. It’s also very difficult if not impossible to get rid of. What quiet transforming power the vine holds!

Closing Thoughts:

For those who despair and wonder about the future prospects of our small faith communities, I suggest we take heart and believe that we have the same power, fortitude and beauty as the English Ivy, and so many other vines, that grace our landscape and adorn the structures in our midst. With light, water, and nutrients in the form of love for our God, and for each other, we as the branches, and God as the vine, can flourish, co-exist, grace and transform some of those bare and bleak structures that are in need of growth and transformation.

In August Rev. Dr. Victoria Marie (Vikki) RCWP was accepted into the Xristos Community Society. Vikki is leader of Our Lady of Guadeloupe Tonzantin Community, Vancouver. Most of the members are active in social justice issues and in the activities of the Vancouver Catholic Worker, particularly in Aboriginal Rights and climate awareness. The Journal will carry more of her faith journey in future issues.

Mayne Island Awakening To Spirit Community

by Patricia Fitzgerald & Michele Birch-Conery, Victoria & Nanaimo, BC

A small private Chapel on beautiful Mayne Island has, since 2005, been the spiritual home of Roman Catholic Womenpriests in the area. On August 19th, 2012, the newly ordained priest Victoria Marie of East Vancouver together with Priests Michele Birch-Conery of Nanaimo and Rose Mewhort of Galiano Island concelebrated the

Eucharist in the St Clare and St Francis of Assisi Memorial Chapel.

Present to lay hands on Vikki were Archdeacon Ellen Willingham; Andrew Loveridge of Galiano; Terry Engel of Victoria; Pat Rupper and Pat McSherry of Vancouver; Yvette Buziak and Patricia Fitzgerald of Mayne Island. Victoria Marie will write in a future Journal about her ordination and the formation of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Tonantzín Community in East Vancouver.

The Chapel has a long and interesting history. It was built in the early 80's by Tom Fitzgerald on his own property as place for Catholics to worship, and as happens in small communities, many folk helped with the construction who belonged to other faith traditions or none. It has always been an ecumenical Chapel. The Diocese refused ownership though offered a loan at 5% interest which was declined in favour of donations and volunteer labour.

Many Catholic families visiting Mayne Island worshipped in the Chapel of St Francis in the Woods over nearly 30 years until Tom passed away on Jan 1st 2003.

[<http://www.mayneisland.com/inmemoriam/tomfitzgerald.htm>]
At this time, Church authorities announced that the Chapel was closed and the Catholics started meeting at the Anglican Church of St Mary Magdalene on Mayne Island. The pews and altar were removed from the Chapel - even the wood stove was removed. However, knowing Tom's desire for his Chapel to carry on serving after his death, his wife Patricia asked the authorities: "How can you close a private Chapel?" Patricia also knew that Tom privately favoured a married clergy and believed that women should be treated as equals in the Church. She opened the Chapel to all who wished to use it and received many donations, including another wood stove, chairs and cushions, and sacred objects from various religious traditions that adorn the Chapel walls and altars today.

In 2004 the Chapel's sponsorship was taken over by The Victoria Human Exchange Society a grassroots group that houses homeless people by sharing life's gifts much as the early Christians did. VHES uses the chapel as a sacred space where members can go for days of Retreat away from the city. On these days the marginalized persons

who are used to living at survival level in isolation and hopelessness, spend time learning about tools for living with others, sharing gifts, and supporting one another towards a healthier community in justice, peace and compassion. Comments from participants include: "We live in an age of anxiety, but being

with like-minded people can bring comfort and peace"; "A ray of hope!"; "This is the human spirit at its peak"; "Very productive - I feel I have a safe place to say what I need without being judged." "VHES has a life to it. The Creator Spirit - a life force -- promotes it and propels it to make choices."

<http://www.humanx.org - Services--Mayne Island Branch>.

In 2005, Patricia heard of the prophetic obedience of women who felt called to the priesthood and read of Priest Michele Birch-Conery's presence on Vancouver Island. She sent Michele a ferry ticket and invited her to come and make the Chapel

the home of the RCWP for the area. Patricia knew that this meant implicit excommunication but saw obedience to the Spirit as far more important than keeping man-made rules. Since then, many beautiful liturgies and retreats have been held at what was renamed, the St Clare and St Francis of Assisi Memorial Chapel. RCWP Bishop, Patricia Fresen, led a Retreat here as early as 2006, when Monica Kilburn Smith and Jim Lauder were still on the path to the diaconate and 3 other women were considering RCWP ordination. Jim Lauder celebrated his First Eucharist at the chapel in 2007 and went on to form the St Iris Faith Community in Victoria. The St Iris members look forward to a retreat day on Mayne Island on October 28th, 2012.

In the Fall of 2008, Rose Mewhort, from Galiano Island came on the path to ordination soon after attending an RCWP gathering at the chapel and not long afterwards, Kim Sylvester, a long-time friend of Jim's followed Rose. For a year, our gatherings consisted of an equal number of priests, ordinands and persons from Mayne and Vancouver Islands. In the summer of 2008, Bishop Patricia Fresen ordained Rose and Kim to the diaconate and in 2009, to the priesthood. Kim began gathering a worship community in Duncan and Rose became the priest for Mayne Island. Then we had a year of retreat as it were, a time of various kinds of development until Victoria Marie came on the path to ordination too after experiencing a concelebrated Eucharist with Rose and Michele. She soon visited Rose on Galiano for retreat and quiet times as she progressed towards her ordination. At those times, she also came to liturgy at the chapel and it was only fitting that she should come



Michele & Vikki

Mayne Island Continued...

again soon after her ordination to the priesthood. All of us, once again recognized the chapel and the presence of the Spirit in the chapel as one of our powerful heart-homes and Vikki, now with us, expands our range of welcome to embrace another new beginning in the reality of her community, Our Lady of Guadalupe Tontanzin in Vancouver.

I always experience the chapel space as somewhere where I re-ground myself in the foundational time we are still in, but without Patricia Fitzgerald's personal prophetic strength together with Rose's deeply contemplative spirituality with the community, none of this would have been possible. We continue with an unexplained vitality and appreciation for everyone's personal gifts and the gift of the chapel space when we come again to the Mayne Island community.

But many other groups began to use the sacred space and its peaceful surroundings including Peter Renner, Buddhist lay monk, who regularly holds day long silent local persons and groups hold healing sessions, meditation workshops and meetings to share insights and build community. The Chapel has become an interfaith and inter spiritual sacred space. So the decision was made to gain charitable status for the Chapel by incorporating the Mayne Island Awakening to Spirit Foundation, with the purpose of promoting Gatherings, maintaining the building, paying travel costs and fees for service. Charitable status was gained for MIASF in June of 2012, making it possible to give charitable receipts for donations. On Sunday September 16th, the Foundation will hold the third Annual General Meeting followed by an RCWP liturgy. All are welcome! Should you wish to support this worthy cause, please send cheques to MIASF at 313 Mariners Way, Mayne Island, V0N 2J2.



In My Wildest Dreams

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK



At one time, I would never have thought that I would host a Cardinal for lunch in my home. But, Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic was my classmate at St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto, for seven years. When he came to the seminary his English was weak and the Rector asked me to coach him because with his Slovene and my Polish we could communicate. So we became good friends and kept up a correspondence. In April 1994 he came to Regina for the funeral of our Archbishop Charles A. Halpin. I met Al at the airport and he came home with me for lunch. On a sad note, I visited with Al just a month before he died at the

I'm watching TV downstairs). They were delighted to hear that we were going to have our own woman bishop for Canada. When they learned that she was going to travel out West for an ordination in Vancouver, they decided to invite her for a weekend stopover in Regina.

So, on July 13, Roman Catholic Woman Bishop for Canada, Marie Bouclin, and her husband Albert, drove up to our home on 113 Tibbits Road in Regina. This was a new "feather in our visiting dignitaries hat"; it even tops the Cardinal's visit.

Last year, El's women's group thought it would be interesting to meet an RC woman priest. So they invited Monika Kilburn-Smith from Calgary to come to Regina. It was an inspiring weekend gathering and Eucharistic celebration. You can read more about her interesting ministry in the 2012 Number 2 issue of The Journal.

More about Bishop Marie's visit in Regina

The following is a quote from Marie's email. (She says to call her "Marie".)

"The talk in Regina was attended by about 45 people. We ended the day with Eucharist, followed by a potluck dinner at Kutarna's. Several women there had attended CNWE conferences over the years and indicated that Regina was ready for women priests. Some mentioned discerning a call to priesthood in about four women. One of those women has since contacted me. I'll put her in touch with Michelle. On Sunday we visited Loretta Kutarna with whom I'd served on the CNWE national work group and her husband Jake".

At the Regina gathering Marie spoke briefly about the history of the worldwide movement for women's ordination. She told the most interesting story of her own road to being called for ordination as a bishop. After a short refreshment break, she fielded many questions about women's ordination in general and some of

Scarborough nursing home in August last year.

A wilder dream followed!

Hosting a Cardinal years ago was nice for me but no big whoop beyond my personal enjoyment. Back then, news of ordaining women in the Catholic Church was to dream in technicolour. When we started Corpus Canada in 1989, we wondered whether we should include the ordination of women in our Mission Statement. Well, we did.

Not one of us dreamed that a short twenty-three years later, not only do we have a woman ordained to the priesthood, but even a woman ordained a Catholic Bishop!

And now here's the kicker!

These historic things always happen far away and you just read about them or see them on the News. But to actually meet a woman priest, let alone a woman Bishop is unusual. To actually share my home with them is something that Jung would call "synchronicity" at my stage of spiritual development.

What do you do if you are going to host a woman priest, or a Bishop and her husband for a weekend visit? I draped my front door with my Vatican flag, of course!

Here is what happened: my wife Eleanore (El for short) belongs to a couple of women's groups who meet each month for spiritual nourishment and socializing. (I don't join in the meetings when they are at our home, but I sure hear lot of laughter when



Albert & Marie Bouclin and Loretta Kutarna

Wildest Dreams Continued...

her personal views of the situation in the Catholic Church today. Later, on their website I counted 11 Bishops, 77 Priests, 19 Deacons, and 3 who have since passed away.

www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org

The Catacomb Document

Marie explained the Catacomb Document this way:

Near the close of Vatican Council II, on November 16, 1965, about forty Council Bishops met at the Catacombs of St. Domatila in Rome to sign a semi-secret pact intended to do away with the richness, pomp, and ceremony in the Catholic Church. Here in brief is the gist of what these Bishops wrote:

1. In housing, food, and transportation to seek to live as common people;
2. To renounce wealth and its appearance, especially in clothing (expensive materials and brilliant colours) and insignia of precious metals;
3. Not to possess property or bank accounts in their own name; where necessary, these accounts are to be in the name of a charitable work or the diocese;

4. Mindful of being pastors not administrators, where possible to confide administration to competent laypersons;

5. To refuse names and titles, such as Eminence, Excellency, Monsignor, that signify grandeur or power;

6. In social relations to avoid privileges, priority, preference of the rich and powerful, and receiving special places at religious services.

I had never heard of this document and found it most interesting. Marie stated that the women bishops all make a promise to live by the "Catacomb Document".

I'm sure most of us have never heard of it.

Marie stated that the women bishops all make a promise to live by the "Catacomb Document".

Wow!

What if all priests, Bishops and Cardinals did this! What if even just a few did it!

Well the ordained women are doing it!

Emil Kutarna



Meister Eckhart's Word Spirituality

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Meister Eckhart, using biblical language, expresses his faith experience this way: "God is the Word which speaks itself. Wherever God is, there God speaks this Word... As much as I am

near God, to that extent God speaks in me... All creatures want to express God in all their works... Whether they want to or not, whether it is pleasing or painful to them, all creatures want to speak God... All creatures may echo God in all their activities. Of course, it is just a small bit which they can reveal."

Eckhart follows the Old Testament (OT) and the Fourth Gospel (Jn) in that he plays upon God's Word, Light, Life, in the ways that both the OT and Jn did before him: Torah is God's Word/utterance giving light and life to humanity on its way to God. Living in accord with creation brings happiness and well-being (shalom/peace), the sense of security that the wise experience and for which they praise God's goodness.

In biblical Wisdom literature we read the following:

"The light of the new day is the path of the just; darkness is the way of the wicked." Prov 4: 18;

Qoheleth says "Only the fool walks in darkness; wisdom has the advantage over folly as light does over darkness." 2:13;

"Wisdom moves among people; she is the book of God's word which stands forever; those who keep her (Wisdom) live; those who desert her die." Baruch 3: 38, 4:1;

"What pleases God has been made known to us." Baruch 4:4

Even before God's Word becomes human in Jesus, God's light, life, wisdom, grace, and truth were made known in the universe.

The fourth Gospel (Jn) makes use of similar analogies in the proclamation of Jesus' message of God's presence. When Jn says "The Word became flesh and tabernacled in us, we perceived his glory (presence) the presence of a unique son from the Father, full of grace and truth.", he is using Israelite attributes for God: grace is God's hesed (gracious love) and emeth (fidelity) Jn 1:14 Jn weaves light, life, grace, truth, way "like a musical fugue". The Word incarnate is the God's new covenant for humanity. The Word is Light which shines in the dark and the dark cannot possess it; it is Life. In Jn, Jesus says "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me does not walk in the dark but has the light of life." 8:12 At the raising of Lazarus, life is restored to Lazarus at the word of Jesus, God's light. Jesus asks his disciples "Are there not 12 hours of the day? If one walks during the day, one does not stumble because one sees the light of this world." 11:9 "For a little while the light is with you. Walk then while you have that light so that the dark does not overtake you." 12:35 "I have come, light into the world that everyone who accepts me does not stay in the dark." 12:46 When Thomas tells

Jesus "We do not know where you are going"; then he asks "how then can we know the way?" Jesus tells him "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Jn 14:5,6.

Biblical spirituality is not monolithic; it has always been a multi-faceted phenomenon. The meeting of Judaic and christian peoples with other cultures resulted in a multi-dimensional understanding of God and what God has done for humanity through Judaism and Jesus. The understanding of God's Kingdom has at times slipped only too easily from making things right for the world and for people (doing justice) with compassion for the helpless to stressing the religious extraordinary. The belief that God has given human beings "dominion" over the earth has at times led some to the belief that one group should dominate, rule over, all other peoples and institutions. 'Witnessing' to personal experience, extraordinary (miraculous) healings, and other exotic religious phenomena, such as speaking in tongues - things that originally stood as evidence of God's presence - have at times lost their original purpose and become performances for their own sake or for the sake of the performers. In this way they have attracted those who are unsure of their relationship with God and the worth and holiness of ordinary life.

Fortunately, there have been others who maintained faith in the worth of all creation. They maintained a biblical spirituality that nourished the christian people, the craftsman, the housewife, the monk, the cleric, wherever they lived, whether in town or country, all who sought to worship God through the work of their daily lives. They worshipped God through their hospitality and care for one another, often in adversity, war, turmoil, plague, and other terrible circumstances. The following are only some of the many examples of such people:

Pelagius (5th.c) understood Jesus' gospel when he wrote "Can one be a christian whose bread no one has filled, whose drink no one refreshes, whose table no one knows, and whose roof no traveler has welcomed."

Pelagius prayed "We give thanks for the spirit of Jesus who uncovers that instinctive part of us that is of God. Jesus' good news does not tell us of our faults and flaws which we know already, but it reminds us that we are of God. Jesus shows us how to live God's gifts to the full in wisdom and not in ignorance, in love and not in fear, in reality and not in fantasy... Jesus shows us our true selves and he restores our memory of what is natural to us. He teaches us to be fully human and to respect our origin."

Seachlan (5th.c, Latin name Secundus) wrote: "The blessing of God is on our sharing when to the hungry we give to eat; to the thirsty we give to drink."

Based on his written works, we can say that Duns Scotus Eriugena (9th.c) prayed in this way: "We give thanks to you, Author of life, for your self-gift in the whole of creation. You set in place the dome of time and space as the womb from which all life emerges. There is no other roof on your house. Your image is in us, and all nature is your grace. Every creature shows forth your presence. At the core of creation is your Light from which all life arises. Everything that has come to be was contained in the light of your self-giving. Your Light is the centre of the circle from which everything radiates. Each shaft from the wheel of Light, the

Meister Eckhart Continued...

strength of the wind, the frailty of the child, the soaring of the bird, each thing that grows from the earth is an encounter with you. All creation is holy for within it lies your goodness. Your Word is the light that lies deep within our hearts.”

Meister Eckhart as a scholar knew well, lived, and taught this kind of concrete christian spirituality. “I have often said God is creating this entire world full and entire in the present moment. Everything God created, God creates now, all at once.” And again Eckhart says “All creatures are words of God. My mouth expresses and reveals God, but the existence of a stone does the same and people often recognize more from actions than from words.”

Eckhart used imagery from daily life. For example, “I take a basin of water, place a mirror in it, and set it under the sun’s orb. The sun then casts its brightness out of its disk and out of its core, and still is not diminished. The reflection of the mirror in the sun is like a sun within a sun, and yet the mirror is what it is. This is the way it is with God. God’s being, nature, and Godhead is in each soul, yet is not the soul. The reflection of the soul is God in God, and yet the soul is what it is.... God becomes God where all creatures express God. There God becomes “God”. When I was still in the core, the soil, the stream, and the source of the Godhead, no one asked me where I wanted to go or what I was doing. There was no one there who might have put such a question to me. But when I flowed out from there, all creatures called out: “God!” I was asked “Brother Eckhart, when did you go out of the house?” For I had been inside. In this way all creatures speak about “God.” And why don’t they speak about the Godhead? Everything within the Godhead is unity, and we cannot speak about it. God accomplishes, but the Godhead does not do so. There is no deed within the Godhead. The Godhead never goes searching for a deed. God and the Godhead are distinguished through deeds and a lack of deeds.... (and he adds humorously) If anyone has understood this sermon, I wish him well. If no one had been here, I would have preached it to this offering box. There are some poor people who will return to their homes and say: “I shall sit down somewhere, eat my loaf of bread, and serve God!”“ Fox says “Eckhart’s honour and capacity to enjoy himself and his work and to laugh at his word, his creation, and his preaching testify to how free a person he is. He seems to taste of some of the joy and rejoicing

that he attributes to God at his creation.”

Johann Eckhart as a Master Theologian, (hence his title Meister) was well versed in biblical theology. It is christian theology that God is revealed through creation that culminates ultimately in the Word who is not simply God’s power. “All things happened (egeneto) through him (Jesus, the Word) and not one thing happened without him.” Jn 1:3 The creative Word revealed God’s life and light.

This christian theology built on the theology of the Israelites. Even though they had not yet reached the point of belief in the Word of God as person, the Israelites believed that besides God’s utterances in Torah and the prophets, creation made God known to humanity. Torah was not only a collection of precepts; it was God’s voice for their guidance (Ex 23:20). The theology of Judaism was concrete. The psalmist says “The voice of the Lord is mighty.” Ps 29:3f ; “God of my ancestors, Lord of mercy, all things happen by your word.” Wisdom 9:10; Covenant love was God’s word to Israel through Moses (Ex 34:27); God’s goodness is imaged in down-to-earth terms: “O Yahweh, how precious is your kindness! They (Israel) take shelter in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the bounty of your house. You give them drink from your river of pleasure. With you is the fountain of life and by your light we see light.” Ps 36:7-10; “Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.” Ps 119:105; God’s house is life and light while Sheol is darkness and death.

With this tradition, Jesus and christians know God’s way. Eckhart speaks of the spiritual in people, made in God’s image with a spirit/soul that is boundless “without boundaries”. People are in God from the beginning and forever just as the Word is in God from all eternity. Each person is God’s “castle”: “There is a power in the spirit that alone is free; there is a shelter of the spirit; there is a light of the spirit; there is a spark... It is free of all names and bare of all forms, totally one and simple just as God is One and simple.... God comes to this castle in the soul... May God help us to be such a castle to which Jesus comes and where he will be received and where he will remain eternally in the way I have said. Amen”

The lordship of Jesus is not an apotheosis of power. Jesus is not Lord in order to dominate, oppress, rule, or control. All his life he has been serving and giving life to the poorest and neediest people. His lordship is not despotic, authoritarian, or imposed from above. It is power that enlivens, energy that gives life. The Roman emperors “lord it over the people”, and the powerful become tyrants. But not so with Jesus, and must not be so among his followers. This Jesus exalted by God, is the only Lord of the community. The life of his followers must be shaped by him. “If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” Rom 14:8 This is how the first generations of Christians lived. Jesus never called himself ‘messiah’. He raised expectations in some people that he was the “Messiah”. Jesus resisted the idea. He didn’t want to be thought of as a nationalistic Messiah. His plan for the reign of God was much more than that.

From *Jesus: An Historical Approximation* by Jose A. Pagola

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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