

# *The Journal*

*Winter 2005*



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## Corpus Canada Thanksgiving Gatherings

*Ladysmith local group*



*Regina Conference*

*Seattle Gathering*



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**The Journal**  
**Winter 2005**  
**Vol. 8, No. 1**

## Editorial Team

Chris Diamond François Brassard  
Arthur Menu Phil Little  
Jim Noonan (NCR Regional Editor)  
Emil Kutarna (SK Regional Editor)

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.

Address all submissions and correspondence to the **Principal Editor:**

Chris Diamond  
4390 Kingscote Rd.  
Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N2  
Phone: (250) 743-5088  
Email: diamondcnf@shaw.ca

## Desktop Publisher:

Michael Irving  
Email: ballinderry@shaw.ca

## Assembling & Mailing:

Jim Doyle & crew

## PUBLISHER

Xristos Community Society  
35-10070 Fifth Street, Sidney, BC V8L 2X9  
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## *A Renewed Ministry For Today*

The VIth Congress of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests will be held in Wiesbaden, Germany, September 16-19, 2005.

For registration details in french or english contact François Brassard at ckfb@telus.net or (250) 245-3365

## *FOCUS TOPIC* *for the Spring 2005 Issue*

How did you overcome your addiction to the institutional Church?  
Tell us your story.

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

# FINTAN KILBRIDE: WELL DONE, GOOD & FAITHFUL SERVANT

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Fintan Kenise Siobhan Julie King Ciara Nelson

At its annual general meeting on Sunday, March 13, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association will award the Marion Tyrrell Memorial Award of Merit for 2005 to Fintan Kilbride. Fintan says "It is both flattering and humbling, but it will help promote the work I do in Haiti, Nicaragua, and elsewhere."

Fintan, one of eight children, was born in Tipperary, Ireland in 1927. He was ordained priest in 1954 and spent 15 years in Nigeria where he organized the building of three high schools, a teacher training-college, and a 50-bed hospital. He survived a cargo plane crash and the turbulence of a country in turmoil.

After he was expelled by the government, he worked at raising the consciousness of people about Biafra and Nigeria. He then studied in New York earning two M. A. degrees at Iona College and Fordham U. where he met and married Kenise Murphy.

"I am so grateful for an ever-loving and ever-patient family:

supportive and inspiring Kenise, daughters Siobhan and Ciara, and Ciara's husband, Nelson, and now, newly arrived Declan Joseph. I thank God also for the good health to continue working." And work he certainly has: over 50 years as priest and teacher. His ministry has taken him to Haiti with Solidarite-Sud

(solidaritesudhaiti@videotron.ca) a Gatineau, Quebec-based charitable organization run by volunteers building schools, drop-in centres, drinking water systems; he has built schools in Nicaragua, and brought medical and educational aid to Jamaica. He is a board member of Free the Children, an organization founded in 1995 by 12 year old Craig Kielburger (www.freethechildren.org) which has been a partner in the building of 400 schools in

developing countries.

Fintan was also Eastern Nigeria tennis champion, and he has won 6 Canadian and 19 U.S. National Racquetball Championships as well as the World 65+, the U.S.

National 60+ and 65+ and at 69 the Ontario Provincial 35+ and 45+ divisions. The American Masters Racquetball Association adopted the *Fintan Kilbride Rule*: One age category per player! It has been said: "A gentleman in every sense of the word with his soft brogue and great control, he is more than deserving of all the titles and awards he has captured."

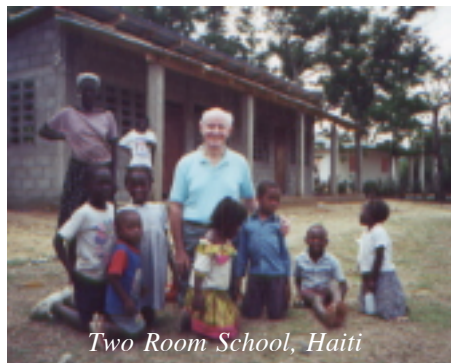
"He brings the world to students and students to the world," say his fellow

teachers. More than 500 students have gone to work for a time with him in Jamaica. He inspires parents who in turn galvanize schools to become involved: Blessed Sacrament Elementary School in Toronto, Our Lady of

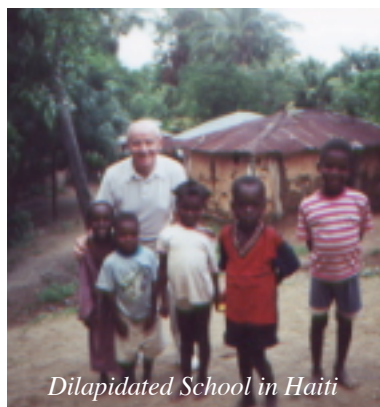
Fatima Elementary School in Toronto, All Saints Elementary School in Etobicoke, Notre Dame Elementary School in Kitchener, Ont. these schools have raised \$25,000, \$12,000, \$7,000, \$10,000; one student twice swam 5 miles in Lake Muskoka and raised \$3,000 each time; one elementary school principal donated \$2,500 himself for a school in Guatemala and he said that the Haiti project was the highlight of his teaching career.

"I can build a school for \$6,000," says Fintan. When he speaks about the need,

one by one people get fired up. His prayer is: "Each of us can change the world, little by little, one person at a time."



Two Room School, Haiti



Dilapidated School in Haiti



I want to thank the Editorial Team for giving us the opportunity to share our lives with each other under the headings of family and ministry. The walk down memory lane that preparing this article afforded me was enjoyable, and also beneficial. It sharpened my insights into what my life and ministry have been about.

I left Convent life in 1965, dragging behind me feelings of shame, failure, and self-condemnation because I hadn't persevered in my vows. I was not going to be 'in ministry', despite heroic efforts to live as a vowed religious. And even worse was the guilt and shame of "abandoning God's will for my life". Heavy stuff to haul, at the tender age of 22 years.

I am happy to say that it is almost impossible to get in touch with the emotional charge of that belief now, the belief that ministry was only for those who were religious professionals. Because my exodus coincided with Vatican II and its revised theology of the laity, my story eventually took a wonderful turn. Gradually the realization took hold throughout the Church that ministry was about serving the world in any way that brought it wholeness and respite from its suffering, and that anyone could do it. So I was able to see that my ministry was my teaching, whether it was in the public school classroom, in my home with my children, or in my diocese with youth and adults. And no secondhand ministry this, I was operating at the core of the Gospel mandate to go and teach all nations.

At the forefront of the centers of influence that were leading me in feelings of confidence and self-worth was of course Corpus, first Corpus US in the early 80's, and a few years later, Corpus Canada. Corpus continues to inform and expand my soul's grasp of how vast and infinite the concept of ministry is, how varied and unlimited and breathtakingly expansive its borders are.

In the last five years my life has undergone perhaps its most dramatic metamorphosis, which included learning to live alone, and starting a brand new career. Last fall I completed certification with the International Coach Academy and have begun yet another aspect of a teaching ministry. I have called my business "Oh But you Can Coaching" because I was in danger of letting a false belief, "I can't",

take over my life.

A Life Coach is a map maker and a guide, taking a client from a place of inertia to a place of accomplishment and success. This process applies to any aspect of life, from relationship inertia, to immobility in career, life transitions, and personal issues like weight health or a lack of self-esteem. We get stuck for a lot of different reasons.

What has been a pearl of great price for me is that coaching is a spiritually based action. Almost all our outer issues have inner solutions. In my practice we uncover the limiting belief that lies behind the inertia. My work is all about the Scripture truth that "as we think in our heart, so we are". Our Heart, our deep Self, our Subconscious has all power to heal and free. It holds the answers we need to solve our problems, the exact solutions we need to create our lives whatever way we want them to be. Our job is the "tearing down of strongholds", those belief systems that tell us we can't, are too old, not experienced enough, not strong enough, etc. Our job is simply to change our minds so our Inner Self can go ahead and bring about our heart's desire.

To fast track a client's efforts to uncover and ditch limiting beliefs I use an energy based technique called EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). EFT, like acupuncture and other meridian-based technologies, is based on the premise that everything in creation is electromagnetic energy, and that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system. EFT uses tapping with the fingers (instead of with needles) on selected points, to release the blocked energy. Then emotional and physical healing follows. And becoming whole is the best definition of salvation I know. The EFT process often gives immediate and non-traumatic results, painlessly addressing often long-standing blocks to a client's well-being.

I can't express the depth of quiet joy I experience when a client calls with a report like the one I got yesterday. Two weeks ago I tapped with a woman in Florida (coaching sessions take place primarily over the phone) on her discouragement and the second

## Focus Continued...

guessing of her abilities as a new therapist. She was seriously considering abandoning her career. Yesterday she called to report that she had acquired five new clients, who phoned her “out of the blue” because they had heard she was a compassionate but tough therapist who meant what she said and was what they needed. In such moments I fill with peace, and with the knowledge that all the roads that I have walked, over a forty year span, were always the right roads and that they were always leading, incontrovertibly, to the place my young Convent soul so passionately longed for.

Today I live jubilantly in my spirit, carrying out a ministry that has pushed past the borders of parish, family, and even Christianity, to where multitudes of the anawim live, and where my joy is a teaching ministry whose goal is to speak words of support that “are like gentle rain on tender young plants”. Deut. 32:2



*Dianne with daughter Jana & new Son-in-Law Peter*



*Dianne's Sons: Andy, Joe, Kelly & Ian*

For more information on EFT, and a free manual, go to: [www.emofree.com](http://www.emofree.com)

For an easy and free EFT instruction session go to:  
[www.caroltuttlelearningcenter.com](http://www.caroltuttlelearningcenter.com) and click on “Learn How to do Emotional Freedom Technique”, in the left hand column.

To contact Dianne Peck, phone 902-562-7982 or go to: [www.diannepeck.com](http://www.diannepeck.com)

### *Nuns celebrate Mass without priest* *The Corpus Canada Journal, February 1995*

On the TV documentary “60 Minutes” Sister Donna Quinn of Chicago was shown with other women “saying Mass by themselves without the benefit of a catholic priest.”

At the Corpus National Conference (USA) in May ‘94 I asked the speaker, theologian Mary Malone, if she knew of nuns saying Mass. Her response was “Yes, and it’s more common than people think.”

At the Call to Action conference in Chicago ‘91 a Sister at our discussion table told us they regularly celebrate Mass without a priest.

# Confessions of a Bapto-Catholic: A child of the 60s & loving it

by Dan Colborne, Victoria, BC



In the 1960s my parents' generation came unglued. Elvis shook his hips and everything shook. The Brits showed up again, and some fool let 'em in. Suddenly we had Beatles, Stones, hippies, Yippies, revolution, riots, and there goes the neighbourhood. And everything went pop, from music to politics to religion. There was a pop President (JFK), a pop Prime Minister (Trudeau), and the church, believe it or not, led the parade with John XXIII, the first truly popular Pope since the Reformation. He invited change. And I was there. And I was loving it.

I was raised a Roman Catholic, in a thoroughly Catholic family, with seven siblings to prove it. My father was a remarkable man in a provincial sort of way; a member of the Alberta Legislature, a Cabinet Minister and a prominent Catholic layman. I was unremarkable, living in Edmonton and attending a Catholic high school where Connie Kurtenbach, in her former life as Sr. Loyola, was one of my teachers. I played football, sang in a folk group

Connie directed, and raced through three years of high school in three and a half years.

But in my heart, as in the hearts of most young people, mysterious longings were astir. It wasn't fame, fortune or even popularity I longed for. It wasn't money or power, but something smaller, simpler and better. In all that crazy unglued world, with competing truth claims tumbling and stumbling over one another, and nuclear holocaust set to swallow it all, I was longing for significance. Mattering matters.

In the fall of '68 I attended a Leighton Ford Crusade (a Billy Graham associate) expecting to be entertained by this strange, cultural phenomenon. I was entertained, but also deeply challenged as he talked about Jesus in a startling new way, and urged me to believe in him radically, personally. Suddenly people like St. Francis, Martin Luther King Jr., and many of the nuns and priests I'd known began to make more sense to me as this radical Jesus dared me to follow him wherever he led.

Credo (I believe) literally means "I give my heart", and that's what I did. And he has led me where I would never have been wise enough to go; first into education, then into marriage with my wife Suzanne, and then into the Baptist Ministry of all things. And through it all I've been in love with seeing people discover this same radical Jesus, and follow him wherever he leads.

For me, that's what a Baptist church, or any church for that matter, should be about; getting to know Jesus and following him wherever he leads. We want people evangelized, catechized, baptized, but mostly radicalized by Jesus. What else would one expect of people who turn the world upside down? (Acts 17:6) What else would one expect of a guy who lived through the 1960s and loved it?

*Ernie & Eileen Little at the Chocolate Dance, Cedar, BC celebrating the 60th anniversary of their engagement.*

## Journal Response

*Just read Corpus Canada for the Fall. I especially enjoyed the articles about Moorwood and Snipe's books. Perhaps I will get to read them one of these days. In the articles I sense struggle, impatience, yet hope for the church. Your commitment to be part of the slow change is remarkable.*

*Mary, Juneau, Alaska*



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

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## Married Priest Responds to the Call of His Community

*The Corpus Canada Journal, February 1995, told the story of Tom Raterman's service.*

A few years ago, the local Canadian Legion asked me (Tom Raterman) to be its Padre. At first the requests were for Remembrance Day Services. After a while I got other requests from members and non-members who had seen me at Remembrance days. They wanted me to perform marriage ceremonies for them. With regret I had to decline. I went through the complicated response about being a married Catholic priest etc. I found that people lost interest very quickly after they heard "I can't because..." People wanted service not excuses. So last year I decided, after many requests, to seek out a way to be re-instated for marriages. I first tried the Federation of Christian Ministries because I knew that many of its members were married catholic priests. It was a false start. The Federation is based in the U.S. and is not recognized as a religious body in Canada. So I could not be certified as a minister of marriages through that organization.

Eventually, I found a Canadian church whose creed was broad enough and who were willing enough to accommodate both my legal needs for certification and my faith perspective. This is the Christian Church— Church of Christ.

I pursued my registration with an eye to handling the Legion related request. But I soon found that I was receiving requests from all over. There is a huge demand for religious ceremonies from "No Name" ministers. The demand is from those who are not affiliated with an established congregation. From June to December 1994, I met with, helped design the liturgy, performed and registered 10 marriages and 2 funerals. Actually I had more requests than those, but I did not have the time to do all of them....

... there are many in our vast church who need to speak to someone who is traditionally identified as a priest. I know that there are also those in our church who have trouble with the idea of a continuance of any vestige of a male-only clericalism. I am one of these people. But beyond ideology there is a pastoral need which is defined by access to the current priesthood. I am such a priest, and the question is not whether I would like not to be but rather will I be of service if asked. I have chosen to be (of service when asked).

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## VATICAN II: THE RENEWED PRIESTHOOD-SEXUAL EVOLUTION

*by Jack Shea, Ottawa, ON*

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A short time ago it was reported from Rome that a recently-published book on sexuality by two well-known theologians sets out to address Vatican concerns about the declining birth rates among Italian Roman Catholics.

The book, "It's A Sin Not To Do It," was written by Roberto Beretta and Elisabeta Broli, who write regularly for the Italian Bishops' magazine, *Avvenire*. The book promises the reader answers to "everything you wanted to know about sex but the

Church (almost) never dared to tell you."

The book's jacket-cover underlines the central message: "Sex? God invented it. Original sin? Sex has nothing to do with it. Without sex there is no real marriage." According to one of the authors, Beretta, the book is a comprehensive summary of the Church's doctrine on sexuality, couched in deliberately populist language. He says that the Vatican has not raised any concerns about the tone and style of the book.

To say the least, this "so-called sex guide" marks a dramatic break with traditional Church pronouncements on physical intimacy. We have come a long way from pre-Vatican II teachings on the place of sex in the life of a marriage.

We are continuing here to examine the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and their implications for the renewed Catholic priesthood. As counselors and spiritual leaders priests are expected to be able to support single and married people in the understanding of the giftedness of sexuality in God's plan for humankind.

Many priests will recall their Seminary treatment of "materia de sexto." Before the Council the study of such intimate material was usually reserved to the final, deacon, year of priestly preparation. It usually dealt with the negative sides of sexual behaviour, the occasions of sin, mortal and venial sins, impediments to marriage, etc.

Vatican II changed all that, and some of the richest theology of marriage and sexuality evolved during the final sessions of the Second Vatican Council. The only trouble is that, no sooner had these insights into the beauty of sexuality contained in the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, been published than Pope Paul's Encyclical Letter, "Humanae Vitae," appeared and put a damper on the

## *Renewed Priesthood Continued...*

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exciting new treatment of the subject.

It is hard to believe that it was just three short years between the end of the Council in 1965 and the bombshell of Paul's prohibition of contraception in 1968 that stunned the world and the Bishops' Conferences everywhere.

The Encyclical was, of course, the result of the deliberations of the Papal Birth Control Commission which was set up by John XIII in March 1963. And even though the Encyclical contained some brief references to the positive aspects of sexuality from the Council, the general thrust of the publication was Pope Paul's rejection of contraception.

From today's perspective, some forty years after the Council, we are now realizing that even before the word of the fresh insights of the Council reached the local clergy everywhere, the impression, created by the new Encyclical, was that the lid had been put on any teaching or preaching of the Council's new and dynamic understanding of the beauty and value of sexuality. But first let's see what the Council had to say on the subject.

The relevant paragraphs in *Gaudium et Spes* are from numbers 47-52. In this short section of the Pastoral Constitution the Council Fathers spell out a new vision of sexual love.

From now on marriage is described as a covenant or relationship rather than in the language of a contract. A personalist approach to marriage is adopted, even defining marriage as a relationship in which the couple 'mutually bestow and accept each other.' The traditional reference to the primary (procreation) and secondary (mutual support) ends of marriage is dropped.

The expression and deepening of faithful married love, which has as its source God's love, by sexual intercourse is an entirely new Church language.

Children are the 'supreme gift' of the love relationship, rather than the primary end of marriage. Even the needs of the children give place to the couple's loving relationship which determines the lifelong character of their union.

Finally, limiting the size of their families can be a responsible (even, at times, necessary) decision for Christian couples.

A number of commentaries on the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality are now appearing, a fact that illustrates the importance people attach to the relevance of the gospel to their lives.

In a recent article in the "U.S. Catholic," Father Alan Phillip, C.P. writes that we need priests with a lived experience of married love. He says, "If priests were husbands and fathers, they would have more credibility in giving guidance to Catholic couples and families - and in challenging today's sex-saturated culture."

He goes on, "all the good will in the world doesn't make up for this lack of experience. As spiritual leaders we priests haven't 'walked a mile in the shoes' of the married people we are meant to lead. We can preach about the should's and should not's of sexual morality. And we can certainly say a lot about abstinence, denial and sublimation. But what do we know of the human wholeness and spiritual holiness that can be achieved in the bonding of body, heart, will and soul through the sacrament of marriage?"

There are now thousands of married priests who know what he is saying and who are living the experience he describes.

Last August an important Congress took place in Wiesbaden,

Germany, on the theme of sexuality. It was the first educational conference sponsored by the newly-formed North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood.

The gathering attracted participants from eleven countries. The theme of the Congress was "Power and Sex in a Renewed Church and Priesthood." There were several major presentations on the new understanding of sexuality since the Council, one of which was delivered by Anthony Padovano, the Corpus Ambassador, who addressed the subject with his usual eloquence and insight.

In his presentation Dr. Padovano dealt with the question of power in the Church. He said that sex becomes a problem when power becomes a problem. The gospel dealt more with power problems than with sexual problems. Since Jesus regularly resists power as a defining characteristic of his life, sex is not of the utmost significance in his preaching.

Applying this analogy to the use of power in the Church today he then spoke strongly of the advantages of a Council, such as the Second Vatican Council, over the use of power by the papacy. He said that history shows that a Council is the most sophisticated, inclusive and influential way to shape the Church. "Power and authority issues are best solved in a Council. The papacy tends to use power absolutely and narrowly and it, therefore, gives us some of our most inept sexual teaching. The Council is more diffuse and even temporary. It is less likely to seek absolute power and its very structure resists narrowness." Another highlight of the Congress was a lecture given by Dr. Jack Dominian, a layman psychiatrist from London, England who has written some thirty books on marriage and the family.

He claims that Vatican II attempted to remove the long shadow of Augustine's negative attitude toward sexuality that survives to this very day, despite modifications by Aquinas.

He said that for the last thirty-five years, since *Humanae Vitae*, "the Catholic Church has been tearing itself to pieces in arguments over contraception."

He traced the goodness and positive meaning of love to references in the book of Genesis where we see that marriage and the equality of the sexes and the complete acceptance of sex are good. "God saw all that he had made and it was very good." A second account in Genesis states that humankind was made in the image of God. "He created men and women in his image." He blessed and commanded them to be fruitful. Later, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians compared the love of spouses to that of Christ and his Church.

Dominian suggests that Christianity must embrace sexuality and critically assess it in terms of love. The world expects Christianity to reject sex but we must not fall into that trap. Sex is good and holy but everything the sexual revolution has achieved is not necessarily good. Christianity must act as a critic.

The Wiesbaden Congress issued a Final Statement which included the following: "Sexual love is the most creative gift God gave us. It draws the whole human family into love and gives it life. Life and love are signs of God's presence. We make love and life happen through our sexual commitments..... The teaching of Vatican II on authority and sexuality, on collegiality and marriage, is far more liberating and evangelical than much of the teaching that precedes and follows it."

## Renewed Priesthood Continued...

In his most recent book on the priesthood, "Priests - a Calling in Crisis," Andrew Greeley makes a surprising comment when writing about today's priests. He says that the great majority of priests of all ages do not agree with many of the Church's teachings on sexual issues.

In a similar vein, the prominent Catholic theologian, Timothy Radcliffe, the former Master General of the Dominican Order, recently said to a group of priests at a Conference in Atlanta: "In my experience much of the Church's moral teaching, especially its sexual teaching, simply makes little sense to many even committed and practicing Catholics."

So the time has come to rediscover the riches of God's gift of sexuality to humankind. From the creative words of Genesis that "it is very

good" to the wisdom of St. Paul that the gift of sex is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church, the renewed priesthood should be in the forefront of the renewal of this great blessing on humankind and the refreshing new treatment of sexuality that began during the Second Vatican Council and is the starting point for a wholesome new appreciation of the dignity and mystery of sexuality for our times.

Perhaps the new Italian book "It's A Sin Not To Do It" will ignite a new sexual revolution, after all.

This article first appeared in the January/February 2005 issue of Corpus Reports.

## CONVERSATIONS WITH JESUS: THE HITCH-HIKER

by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC



I was driving along the coast road in the old blue van when I saw a man in the distance hitch-hiking. He was poorly dressed for the cold. For security reasons I don't normally pick up hitch-hikers, except for natives. Shoulders up and one hand in his pocket and the other thumbing a ride, he looked cold. Natives don't often have the money for transportation, public or private. As I approached him, a quick glance told me he had the dark hair and complexion of a native from one of the nearby bands. I put on my right hand signal light and came to an idling stop on the shoulder about 75 feet beyond him. I leaned over and unlocked the door, as he came trotting up. He got in, belted up and thanked me for picking him up. "No problem," I said. "Where are you headed?" I asked.

"Wherever you're going," he said.

I thought that was an odd answer, but I chalked it up as an easy-going native response, and so I responded in kind: "Well, let me know when you get where you're going." That was the end of the small talk.

Most natives that I've picked up don't talk much, and he seemed no exception. A full five minutes went by before a word was spoken. That used to bother me, and I'd try to fill the void with small talk. But I quickly got used to it and learned to drive along calmly in silence. It's kind of nice because I've become more aware of the other person. And that certainly was the case this time. In fact, I've rarely felt such powerful feelings radiating toward me, feelings of peace and warmth. It's crazy, I know, but I was hoping the trip home would take a very long time. Who was he, I wondered.

The answer came in a flash when he calmly broke the silence: "How is Misha?"

"Oh, Jesus, it's you," I blurted.

"And how is Misha?" he repeated.

"Funny you should ask," I said, "because I've just left her at the vet in Cobble Hill. They're going to repair torn ligaments in her right rear knee and remove a cyst on her back the size of a golf ball. I'll go back tomorrow to pick her up. I really hope everything goes well."

"Don't worry. It will."

"You know, Jesus, it recently occurred to me that our family angel sent Misha to Connie and me to up our laughter quotient. I know we adopted her from Connie's friend Miriam just before she died, but it's more like she adopted us. Being a 'bichon' she can get into a lot of trouble, believe me. She can't stand it, if we happen to be away for any length of time. We've had to dog-proof cupboards, put kitty's food up where she can't reach it, and now we put her in her little kennel if we're gone for an hour or two. She feels secure there and she dances all about when we come back and let her out. She races about, finds one of her 'stuffies' and invites one of us, usually me, to play tug-o'-war with her. Golly, she makes us laugh. And other times, like now, when we know she's hurting, we really feel sad and concerned. It hurts us to see her trot along on three legs." "Actually, Fran, I

asked your angel to send her to you."

"Why?"

"To humanize you."

"What do you mean?"

"When you become aware of someone like Misha and provide her with loving care, then you become more human, just as God intended. When Connie lavishes such loving care on all those beautiful plants, bushes and flowers in those large garden beds you have, she becomes more human. When you prune your fruit trees, and spray them at the right time, and put 'tanglefoot' on duct tape at the foot of a tree to keep the ants off; when you cull excess fruit to allow more productive growth; when you pick the fruit to make delicious jams, jellies and wines; when you do these things, you become more human. The same is true for all the animals I sent you: Winsome, Fluffy, Cleo, Jacques and now Misha. It's true as well for all those children that you and Connie have taught and counselled in the various schools where you worked. And the

challenge to provide loving care was even far greater for those children that you took into your home; they all required special care, an informed awareness of their particular difficulties and a willingness to help them blossom and become the unique human beings they were intended to be. And think of all the adults you and Connie have counselled over the years, especially Connie. She has not wasted the great gifts of insight, understanding and wisdom that she is blessed with. She has developed them and uses them in many creative ways."

"I don't understand. How does all that make us more human?" I asked as I was slowing down for a red light in the distance. When I came to a full stop, I turned toward Jesus to hear his answer, but I was stunned to see that he was no longer there. I thought about that and decided that he got where he was going. I guess he felt that together we all could find the answer to that question.

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## Letter to Member of Parliament: Same Sex Marriage

by Phil Little, Cedar, BC

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I take this opportunity to address you on this very important and sensitive issue of "same-sex marriage". I must first identify myself so that in fairness you can appreciate the comments made, which come with

a lifetime of learning and growing more humble with the years.

I am a retired ordained Catholic priest - having retired from the active ministry but in good standing with the Church. I have taught in the Ontario separate school system for more than 20 years and in the public system for only a few years. I am also married (to a woman) and I have three adult children. I grew up in a traditional Catholic world where persons who were different were unsaved and needed to be avoided lest one be tempted. We were not allowed to attend the weddings of cousins who were raised in other Christian churches. My mother was not allowed to enroll me in swimming classes at the Y.M.C.A. because it was a Protestant organization, better that I drown I suppose than be contaminated by heretical children. I never had a Jewish friend until after I retired from the ministry, and was working as a teacher in Ontario. And I didn't know any homosexuals until late in my seminary training. Part of the irony in this is that well over a third of my classmates in the seminary - including many who were ordained - have since "come out of the closet". If in those early days they had a hunch that they might be gay - they accepted the traditional teaching that simply being gay was sinful and a guarantee of damnation. Some, perhaps to hide their "orientation", are among the most strident among clergy today in homophobic rhetoric. One of my closest friends - a classmate also ordained for more than 25 years - "came out" and accepted his homosexual orientation. He retired from the clergy rather than be forced to play the anti-gay game that is required by those who want a church

position and more important for men past middle age - their pension.

This makes the official position of the Catholic Church even more tragic. It is more than an attempt to impose a conservative Christian "sharia" on all people, not just those of their own denomination, but it is a rejection of the reality of the Church itself. Sociological studies in Canada and the USA show that up to a third and in places a half of all Roman Catholic clergy are gay. The majority are faithful to their vows and are good priests.

The traditional appeal to scripture to condemn homosexuality is largely disowned even by conservative scripture scholars. Any reading of ancient religious texts requires a complementary understanding of culture and history. What is obvious is that in the Christian scriptures the person "Jesus of Nazareth" had nothing to say about homosexuality, and actually had very little to say about sexuality at all. Regarding marriage there is a text that indicates that Jesus did not favour easy divorces, but that there were some exceptions. If one were to monitor regular pronouncements by Catholic clergy from the Vatican to local diocesan chancelleries (such as pronouncements by bishops in Calgary, Toronto, and elsewhere) you would think that Jesus had nothing but sex on his agenda. It is simply not there. The widow of the slain civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, just recently stepped into the controversy. Mrs. Coretta Scott King said "Gay and lesbian people have families, and their families should have legal protection, whether by marriage or civil union", she said in a March 23, 2004 address. "A constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages is a form of gay bashing, and it would do nothing at all to protect traditional marriages". I highlighted these comments because I believe that the opposition to same-sex marriage, particularly by Catholic church leaders, is nothing less than an attempt to make homophobia acceptable in Canada. The bishop of Calgary asks that parliamentarians go back a hundred years and use force to make homosexuality illegal.

## Letter to MP Continued...

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Bishop Henry said "Since homosexuality, adultery, prostitution and pornography undermine the foundations of the family, the basis of society, then the state must use its coercive power to proscribe or curtail them in the interests of the common good".

Perhaps it is because I am now getting older - probably older than most parliamentarians today - but I do not see issues so much as black and white. People who were born left-handed were considered to be wrongly oriented and great efforts were made (and sometimes great harm done) to make them do things "the proper 'right' way". As a student of theology, I now believe that these persistent rejections of people as they are born is an insult to the Creator. Gay people cannot be other than gay, just as heterosexual people are what they are. Yes people can be coerced to behave differently, and even to use violence against those who are different (or secretly the same) - but this does not change the essence of how people are made.

There are some who wish to sit on the fence and please everyone. "Why not let gays have civil unions? That should satisfy them" is what we hear from some self-professed moderates. The reality is that when two people live together with a commitment to share, and at times to raise a family, this is called a "marriage". I know now that homosexual unions can be as faithful and as loving as heterosexual unions. And yes, the project of marriage among homosexual partners can experience the same problems and failure rates as among the majority of us. As a Catholic clergyman I am well aware that the failure rate of Catholic unions is just about on par with the rest of society. No group has an exclusive right to success and certainly no group can claim to have its act together.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops ceased to speak for Canadian Catholics many years ago. Yes - today they can get groups like the Knights of Columbus (with funding from the United States KofC) to orchestrate postcard campaigns. The reality is that very few Catholics look to the bishops for moral guidance. On matters of sexual morality there are few groups with lower credibility than the Catholic bishops although in fairness there has been an effort to reform.

One of the issues that parliamentarians will need to look at is the right of religious groups to preserve their own religious traditions - even if these are different than acceptable legal norms. Catholic or other churches should not be required to accept same-sex unions. However, these groups cannot have it both ways. It seems to me that church groups want the lucrative marriage business and most have applied for civil minister or civil commissioner status for its clergy. As is the reality in other predominantly Catholic countries, such as in Latin America and Europe, there is a separation of church and civil marriages. Civil marriages are a pre-requisite for church marriages but they are separate. Religious groups can continue to discriminate against identifiable groups if they do so within their own jurisdictions. However religious groups must conform to restrictions accepted by civil legislation - for example some churches may still allow marriages of 14 year old persons, or they may forbid marriages based on racial, sexual or ethnic grounds. But civil marriage must be the norm as established by law. What church groups do within their own walls is a matter between them and their congregants, so long as their definitions fall within the civil code (i.e. the persons getting married are legally married in a civil ceremony before attempting a religious marriage).

Another issue that parliamentarians should consider is the tax-exempt

status of church groups. The tax-exempt or charitable status given to groups is with an agreement that these groups act solely in a religious or charitable function and do not participate in political or lobby groups. Hence groups like Greenpeace cannot give charitable receipts because it is engaged in political activity and it is up front about its intentions and goals. It is imperative that either all groups be given tax-exempt status or that groups which are clearly involved in political lobbying (as occurred in the previous federal election) voluntarily relinquish their tax-exempt status. Without a doubt some churches have violated the spirit and the letter of the law regarding this matter. The Catholic church in Canada is acting as an agent of its main headquarters - the Vatican - which is a church but it is also a State governed by a Head of State. As parliamentarians you are aware of the lobbying power of this great institution, and the influence it can have on citizens and to be blunt - voters. This issue of same-sex marriage is then only part of a much larger effort to return to the past when the Christian churches literally dictated law in this young country. We are now a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. In some ways we are still a very religious people although fewer are members of churches.

The law of the country must reflect this broad reality and it must conform to the very definition of what makes Canada different than other nations. (I worked as a missionary in Peru during eight years of military dictatorship and I constantly remind people up here of what a blessed country Canada really is in so many ways that we take for granted.) I would not even want to say "tolerant" but rather "accepting" of differences. For our young people this is much easier - my children have grown up in a reality where their classmates and friends were from all over the world - different nationalities, different religions, different ethnic groups and different sexual orientations. It is in some ways more difficult for them - but I wouldn't want them to grow up in the very narrow white Christian world of my youth.

Some parliamentarians face a difficult choice - either because of constituents back home who are rigidly defined on this issue or perhaps strong religious connections to a defined tradition. I would plead with them - with you perhaps - to look first at your responsibility as a parliamentarian - as a law maker. The laws of Canada cannot proscribe any person for being who he/she is by birth. Other laws which were discriminatory have been changed - at times with great resistance. Women needed brave and daring legislators willing to acknowledge them as "persons" entitled to the same vote as their men relatives. Other ethnic groups have faced systemic discrimination and every province has brought in Human Rights legislation - not yet perfect - but indeed a model for the rest of the world. Of that we should be proud.

I believe that parliamentarians today can make the tough choices for the future of Canada - as a diverse nation - and be proud of their participation in building a society that values equality. That is what this is all about.

I hope that your vote in the House of Commons will be for the Canada that we are becoming. I will be praying that you are open to the spirit of the Creator who has made us all different - but yes brothers and sisters.

# Theological Soapbox

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC

## MAINLINE CHRISTIAN SEXUAL MORALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY (PART II)



In the first article of this series, which appeared in the previous issue of *The Journal*, I made the following points.

(1) When Christians make judgements about whether a particular action is moral or immoral they consider three questions: Does the action benefit or harm me? Does

the action benefit or harm others (the common good)? Is the action specifically commanded or forbidden by one of God's revealed laws?

(2) When spiritual benefits and harms, and consequences in the afterlife, are taken into account, the Christian can say that there is no contradiction between what is good for me, good for others, and God's laws.

(3) In judging the morality of an action, Christians ask the three questions mentioned above, whether the action benefits or harms themselves, benefits or harms others, and obeys or disobeys God's laws. However, if a Christian knows the answer to any one of those three questions, he knows the answer to the other two, because there can never be a true conflict between what is good or harmful for the Christian, what is good or harmful for others, and what is commanded by God's laws.

I concluded my previous article with the following comment: "Some readers may think that of the three questions a Christian must ask when deliberating on the morality of a particular action, the question of whether the action is commanded or forbidden by God's revealed law would be the easiest to answer. After all, we can open the Bible and look it up. Things are not that simple".

In this article I wish to explain why "things are not that simple".

By way of context for this discussion, I note that the Roman Catholic Church, along with several other mainline denominations, does not teach that God dictated the Bible word for word. Biblical authors were inspired, but they could only understand and communicate the content of that inspiration in the language of their culture. Human language is a crude tool for expressing God's thinking (see Isaiah 55:9), so we can never assume that the way a commandment is expressed in scripture exactly communicates the mind of God. That being said, let us consider the commandments as we find them in scripture.

Most commandments admit of exceptions. For example, scripture permits people to kill in self-defence, to carry out a judicial sentence, or to wage a just war. Only the most general admit of no exceptions (e.g., "Do good", "Love your neighbour", "Love your enemies").

Therefore, in interpreting a commandment in scripture and determining

its application, one must know what counts as an exception to the commandment. Scripture does not state all the legitimate exceptions to the commandments contained in scripture. When we make a judgement about what constitutes a legitimate exception to a commandment we are doing what the Church has always done. For example, the elders of the Church in Jerusalem made an exception to the Jewish ritual and purity laws in the case of non-Jews who had converted to Christianity (Acts 15:19-21).

The next thing to take into account is that the commandments found in scripture address the situation of the people of Israel at particular times in their history. The Old Testament depicts God as permitting and commanding some things that today we would consider wrong, such as slavery, treating women and children as property, and killing civilians in warfare. The ancient Israelites had only a partial understanding of God's will. Jesus said as much when he told a questioner that Moses permitted divorce only because of the people's hardness of heart (Mark 10:5). In short, a commandment that reflects the best understanding of ancient Israel may not reflect contemporary understanding. And obeying it may not be God's will for us.

Finally we must recognize that God is not arbitrary. He does not issue commandments without a reason. Something does not become good because God commands it, rather God commands it because it is good.

Therefore, no commandment or interpretation of a commandment is valid if it commands an action that is not good. We judge the moral goodness of an action by evaluating the action in light of what we know. We look at the action in the context of other commandments and moral principles that we accept as valid. We consider whether doing it will have good or harmful consequences. We compare it to actions we know are good or not good. We consider our feelings about the action. We determine if there is a consensus about the action among people we acknowledge to be good people. If we arrive by all these routes at the sure conclusion that the commanded action is not good, then we judge that the commandment (or interpretation of a commandment) does not truly express God's will. The mere existence of the commandment in scripture is not sufficient to validate it.

Determining what is right and wrong is never simply a matter of looking up commandments in scripture. On the other hand, God did nurture the moral development of the people of Israel through the commandments found in scripture, even those that display an incomplete or distorted understanding of the mind of God. The Ten Commandments remain valid as guidelines. Numerous other commandments invite us to a deeper understanding of what is truly good for ourselves and for others (see, for example, Leviticus 19).

In the next article in this series, using the foundation I have established, I will present my view of how mainline Christian sexual morality will develop in the twenty-first century.

# Circular Letter No. 9

by Aitor Orube, Madrid, Spain

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In my last letter I wrote with fondness about our late Vice-President, friend and fellow pilgrim, bishop Jeronimó Podestá. His dear wife, Clelia Luro, informs us that she received a message of gratitude from the city of Buenos Aires with respect to our dear brother in faith.

In my Circular Letter No. 7 of July 2004, I raised a few questions that we might ask ourselves in our groups as to how at the upcoming Congress we might envisage the evolution from a federation to a confederation.

I remind you that the Executive Committee (EC) of the International Federation will hold its annual meeting in Brussels at the end of January 2005. In view of the paucity of funds for more frequent meetings, we will spend the large majority of our time preparing for the Congress and General Assembly taking place in Wiesbaden (near

Frankfurt, Germany) from 16 to 19 September 2005.

On January 15, 2005 we will celebrate in Paris the 10th anniversary of the removal of Jacques Gaillot as bishop of the diocese of Evreux (France) and of his appointment as bishop of Partenia (diocese without territory). Bishop Gaillot has always received us graciously, either in Madrid or in Paris, and we wish to express to him our solidarity and support for the particular methods he has developed for exercising ministry in a diocese without territory, and also for his efforts to resolve the situation of immigrants without papers.

Through God's grace, may we also be faithful to our prophetic mission, strong in faith, constant in prayer and proclamation of the gospel message!

# Circular Letter No. 10

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After 20 years of existence, we, Group-Members of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests, are aware that our movement is at an important turning point. I'll come back to this point later. Today, however, at the request of the Executive Committee (EC), I would like to speak clearly about the difficulties that the International Federation is facing on its evolutionary journey toward its new status as a Confederation.

1) The last General Assembly (GA) of Leganés (Madrid) in September 2002, decided in favour of becoming a Confederation of Federations. This meant that Group-Members would become members of a Federation. Considering the limited resources at our disposal, the structure of this Confederation must be simple and frugal, without juridical status and totally dedicated to facilitating contacts between the Federations. At the GA of Leganés, the EC was asked to do everything necessary for the creation of the European Federation. However, the EC only meets once a year. For this reason all the workshop sessions for this project were held at the home of the EC Secretary in Fos-sur-Mer (near Marseille, France) in 2003 and 2004. For this we wish to express our gratitude to Michèle and Claude Bertin. Our Group-Members have already been informed of the results of the workgroup's efforts, and the Statutes of the European Federation will be officially presented at the GA of Wiesbaden.

2) The first difficulty occurred because of the rapid and unforeseen formation of the North Atlantic Federation that not only could have, but should have invited, or at least consulted, the Group-Members of Europe for the creation of a continental federation. In view of the existence of the Latin-American Federation for a Renewed Priestly Ministry with a Vice-president on the EC, as well as the existence of a North American Vice-president on the EC, it was normal to expect a federation based solely on the European continent.

Thus, even before the topic [of the European Federation] was broached at the EC in January 2003, we were presented with the 'fait accompli' of the formation of the "North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood," created by a few people before taking the time to secure the explicit and unanimous approval of their groups. Based on information received, this is evidently the case for the Corpus groups in Canada and for the German group.

3) It is true that, theoretically, we could have foreseen a European

Federation with two groups divided along linguistic and, possibly, cultural lines, in the same way that the Latin-American Federation has three geographic sub-groups. But the facts went otherwise, making light of what seemed reasonable in a harmonious and well balanced atmosphere working for the common good, as might be expected among believers.

As a result, the continental aspect of a European federation was forgotten and the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood was peremptorily created. The EC has regretted this process. However, not having received the power to judge or condemn anyone, the EC has contented itself with taking note of this fact and to concentrate on its received mission to facilitate the creation of the European Federation formed by willing members.

4) If, on the one hand we recognize the right of association and the freedom of spirit that we all have, we should, nevertheless, also recognize that we have the freedom of opinion as regards facts or inappropriate behaviour, without, of course, resorting to excommunication or juridical condemnation. Personally, I do not like disputes, fights, arguments, manipulations or exclusions. According to comments received, this has generated a certain confusion among the Group-Members.

5) On the other hand, one should not forget that there are some Group-Members who do not see themselves as part of any federation, but who must, nevertheless, have a place within the Confederation so as to maintain contact with the Coordinating Committee, while waiting to opt for one federation or another. Our spirit of openness must be such that all must be able to find their niche among us. This represents the practical exercise of pluralism and catholicity that enables us to attain unity. Recognizing diversity is the condition of unity, not uniformity, which in the end is doomed to fail.

The facts of the past having been clarified, I believe we should look ahead and, like Jesus, continue the journey undertaken with our objectives and options for defending justice, and thus establish the Realm of God in ourselves and around us. As Ramon Alario, president of MOCEOP/Spain, says, it's not about debating personal questions, but rather about finding out how to coordinate effectively and evangelically the groups and

## Circular Letters Continued...

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movements that have been formed over the 20 years of existence of our International Federation of Married Catholic Priests. As well, as C. Russel Ditzel, president of Corpus USA, says, we should recognize that in our groups we meet people with whom we can really share our faith, encourage one another in our hope, and nourish our fraternal love.

You will receive shortly the Minutes of the EC Meeting held in Brussels at the end of January 2005. In view of the smooth functioning of the General Assembly in Wiesbaden, the EC has elaborated steps in a consultation that would facilitate the passage from an International Federation to a Confederation (cf. questions annexed to this letter). The EC feels that a positive response to each question would facilitate the new existence of the 'Confederation of Federations.'

For the moment we foresee a brief presentation of each of the Federations outlining their objectives and statutes, as well as its chosen delegate and alternate to the Coordinating Committee of the Confederation.

The Federations considered are:

- The Latin-American Federation for a Renewed Priestly Ministry;
- The European Federation;
- The North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood;
- The Philippine Federation of Married Catholic Priests;
- (and possibly) The Australian Federation.

The General Assembly will take place according to the existing statutes of the International Federation. In order to take part, the Group-Members will have paid their fees in conscience and according to their capabilities.

In conclusion, I would like to echo our friend, Jacques Gaillot, the bishop of Partenina, who just published his "Carnets de Route" (Notes

on the Journey) which have appeared each month on his web site these last six years. After ten years on the road, he has shown himself to be sensitive to all that has happened to him 'on the road.'

Your colleague on the journey,

Aitor Orube, President of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests

### **Annexed Questions for the Coordinating Committee (CC) for the Confederation**

I: Do you accept the nominated Federations as part of the new Confederation? Yes - No

II: In six parts:

- 1) Should we create a structure for the Coordination of the Federations? Yes - No
- 2) Do you accept the nomination of a delegate and alternate from each Federation to constitute the "Coordinating Committee" (CC)? Yes - No
- 3) Should we maintain only the three members of the Executive Office of the International Federation for the next six months to assure continuity of activities? Yes - No
- 4) Do you accept the termination of the International Federation?
- 5) Do you want the CC to continue the mission of the International Federation and to create the structure and statutes for this new Confederation? Yes - No
- 6) Should the CC explore the means to preserve contact with all non-Federated members?

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## Lay sermons permitted, Vatican tells Swiss bishops.

*by Chris Pongratz-Lippitt, Vienna, Austria*

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*The Tablet Newsletter*  
*12 February 2005*

**P**roposals by Swiss bishops to allow lay theologians to give sermons and Protestants to receive Communion have met with the approval of the Curia in Rome, Bishop Amédée Grab, president of the Swiss bishops' conference, said this week.

The Swiss church is having to cope with a shortage of priests and in an effort to deal with the crisis its bishops' conference has come up with controversial plans to make greater use of the laity serving as pastoral assistants. The Swiss bishops' conference has now declared that the assistants (who hold university degrees in theology) are to be allowed to preach during Mass and baptize whenever a priest was not available. The bishops, who announced to journalists following their return from their ad limina visit to Rome that they have secured Curial backing for their plans, have also secured the necessary permission for the Protestant partner in a mixed marriage to receive the Eucharist in a Catholic Church. The general secretary of the Swiss bishops' conference, Agnell Rickenmann, said that the two declarations were partly a response to the shortage of priests in Switzerland, but also reflected the Swiss Church's 'independence.' He said: "In Switzerland we have a 30-year tradition of theologically trained lay people active in the Church."

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

**IT WAS PALM SUNDAY AND, BECAUSE OF A SORE THROAT, FIVE-YEAR-OLD JOHNNY STAYED HOME FROM CHURCH WITH A SITTER. WHEN THE FAMILY RETURNED HOME, THEY WERE CARRYING SEVERAL PALM BRANCHES. THE BOY ASKED WHAT THEY WERE FOR. "PEOPLE HELD THEM OVER JESUS' HEAD AS HE WALKED BY."**

**"WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT," THE BOY GROANED, "THE ONE SUNDAY I DON'T GO, HE SHOWS UP!"**

# Community Views: Fall & Winter Activities

by Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON, Corpus-NCR



Corpus-NCR engaged in many activities last fall and this winter.

The first was a gathering in October at the home of Jack Shea and Jean James for a prayerful liturgy and a delicious potluck meal. One of the highlights of the evening was a report by Jack and Jean on the Congress of the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood which took place in Wiesbaden, Germany from August 26-29. As President of the Federation Jack was very enthusiastic about the Congress and the many expert speakers who addressed its theme "Power and Sex in a Renewed Church and Priesthood".

The new website of Corpus-NCR was launched at this gathering. Jim Noonan reported on its evolution and encouraged members to contribute to it and to publicize it among their friends and other organizations to which they belong. A display of the website competed for attention with the delicious food.

Several members attended the annual shared retreat with members of Concerned Catholics of Ottawa, Catholic Network for Women's

Equality, and the Cosmology Group. The retreat, which took place on October 23-24, was held at the Galilee Mission Centre in Arnprior, Ontario.

The theme of the retreat was "The Lotus and the Cross: A path to Christian prayer through Buddhist meditation". The first day concentrated on Buddhist theory and practice, and was led by Angela Sumegi, a Buddhist who teaches religion at Carleton University. The evening included a film "In the Footsteps of the Buddha", followed by a social. The second day focused on forms of Christian meditation that have been influenced by Buddhism; the presenters on this day were Joan McGuiness, who leads a prayer group in Ottawa, and Diane Haughian, a member of Corpus-NCR. That day culminated in a Eucharistic celebration that included both Buddhist and Catholic prayers. All in all the participants were deeply satisfied by this weekend of presentations, meditation, discussion and oral prayer.

Further insight into the experience of Buddhist meditation may be gained by reading an article by Fred Miller, one of the participants in the retreat. His ten-page paper is entitled "The Search for Enlightenment: A Christian Discovers the Buddhist Path". Fred had taken a course on Buddhism from Angela Sumegi at Carleton, and wrote the essay prior to the retreat. His insightful personal journey may be read on the Corpus-NCR website at: [www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org](http://www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org).

On November 27 Corpus-NCR and friends gathered at the home of Raymond and Virginia Lafond. This gathering included a potluck supper, liturgy, business, and socializing. On January 8, 2005 the annual Christmas dinner was again held in the lounge of the condominium of Maurice and Claudia Sullivan. A highlight of this evening was Maurice's annual inspiring grace before the meal, which has been printed separately in this issue of The Journal.

February included two events in close succession. The first was the usual potluck evening, this one at the home of Tom and Mary Joy on February 19. The second was the annual business meeting held at the Oblate Residence on Springhurst Avenue.

## ***Website Launched by Corpus-NCR - [www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org](http://www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org)***

Corpus-NCR's new website was launched recently at a gathering at the home of Jack Shea and Jean James. The launch was the culmination of over a year's work by a committee of this Ottawa Corpus group.

- The committee chair was Jack Shea, and the other members were Greg Humbert, Maurice Sullivan, Cliff Power and Jim Noonan.
- The webmaster is Joe Cece of Corpus USA, who generously provided the technical expertise to get the site operational. Jim Noonan is the site's editor.
- The website is updated regularly, and contains the following pages that are accessible from the Home Page: Calendar of Events; Activities; Articles & Letters; Books, Films & Reviews; News; and Links & Resources. A final page indicates how you can Contact Us.

One of the links on the site is to the Corpus Canada website ([www.corpuscanada.org](http://www.corpuscanada.org)). Michael Zarb has kindly put a link on the Corpus Canada website to ours, so you are encouraged to look at our site from time to time and send us any comments you have on it. It is also linked to the websites of the other countries that belong to the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood, and to several other sites relevant to renewal-minded Christians.

We look upon this new venture as an important modern ministry for reaching out with our thoughts, activities and prayers to people around the globe. May Jesus, who urged us to bring the Gospel to the "whole wide world", enable us to do so through the "world wide web".



### *Edmonton News: Joe Retires*

**J**oe Gubbels has spent the last 4 years with the First Nations in The lesser Slave Lake region of Northern Alberta and has passed the grand old age of 65. He has been dedicated and persistent in setting up programmes particularly in the Driftpile community: "Always willing to assist any family in the best way he can over and above his working hours," says his colleague.

Joe has been well received. He has encouraged youth to become leaders among their peers in wholesome activities. He will pack this in on March 17, 2005 and look for another ministry. He says "My work with the First Nations has been very interesting and rewarding. I received much more than I gave. I will miss this work but, the last few months have been rather exhausting and I need some lighter duty. Besides there are other people who can do my job."

### *Winnipeg News by Leonard Schmidt*

**T**he following appeared in The Winnipeg Free Press on the Faith Page:

'No Man is an Island,' by Thomas Merton was the spiritual growth topic at the meeting of the Alpha & Omega Christian Community Monday, January 17 at 1:30.

Our previous meeting held in November featured the playing of an audio tape about a spiritual dialogue between Neale Donald Walsch and Depak Chopra, M.D. Eleven people participated in sharing their animated reaction to these two speakers.



### *Letter & Response*

Bonjour,

Merci pour l'information relative au changement d'intitulé de votre site. Etant une association également concernée par la question du célibat des prêtres - et même si PLEIN JOUR, fondée par des femmes, représente avant tout le point de vue des "femmes concernées" - nous regrettons de ne pas avoir trouvé de lien avec votre site. Ca serait sympa de le mentionner au moins. Si vous le souhaitez, nous pouvons de même inclure sur notre site un lien avec CORPUS CANADA.

Cordialement, Elisabeth Szen, pour PLEIN JOUR, <http://plein.jour.free.fr>

Chère Elizabeth,

Merci de m'avoir écrit au sujet de Plein Jour. Je ne connaissais pas cette organization. Je suis allé directement à votre site. Quelle joie de l'avoir trouvé! Bien sûr, j'écrirai à qui de droit pour inclure votre site sur celui de Corpus Canada. Aussi, je ferai de mon mieux pour le faire inclure aussi sur le site de Corpus USA et Corpus NCR (Canada).

Blessings! François

# OUR ROCK

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC

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Christianity rests on the Incarnation. The hymn at the beginning of John's Gospel puts it this way: "The Word was God... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth... and of his fulness we have all received... grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jesus is our Rock.

The gospels show that Jesus believed that people have direct access to God's reliable and unconditional love (grace and truth) in God's Kingdom here and now. Jesus knew all about the Jerusalem temple and its cultic priestly caste who claimed a monopoly on access to God. The temple priesthood was the Jewish form of clericalism in Jesus' day.

Clericalism, apart from seeking position, power, pomp, and ceremony, makes laws and sees that everyone keeps them, and it determines what must be taught in order to be orthodox. It likes to believe and teach that it controls access to God. It is a system failure: many hard-working conscientious, pastoral-minded priests find it difficult to escape from it.

Jesus, faced with the clericalism of his time, healed the broken-hearted, the social outcasts, the blind, the lame, the sick, the oppressed: "Blessed are they who recognize their need for God." His "Do this in memory of me," like his washing of the feet encompassed his total service. When Jesus gathered his disciples, he invested none of them with power over the other disciples nor over the fulness of grace and truth. He left no cultic priestly caste nor a hierarchy to dispense access to God's grace and truth. But he did leave a community of men and women with a mandate to serve one another in God's Way and to practice the common table. This common table became the eucharistic gathering which anyone in the gathering (assembly/church) can bring about: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am..." It was beautifully simple and it suited the people, the place, and the time then and ever since.

As christianity grew and developed throughout the centuries, however, the need for new community organization often arose. Within its first century under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the christian koinonia ordained deacons, bishops, and priests to lead the community in its service to the Kingdom of God as Jesus understood it. Throughout the history of the church, there have been and there still are many outstanding and inspiring servant-leaders.

But history also shows that those in Holy Orders, as they came to be called, have been a mixed blessing. The best organization can be abused even by people with the best intentions. A clerical caste has come about that thrives on power, position, and prestige; it is not what Jesus stood for nor is it true to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And it seems that the higher one goes up the power chain, the harder it is to be true to service to God's people.

I paraphrase a passage from "The Closing of the Western Mind" by Charles Freeman:

By about the year 200 AD as the church spread, the bishops were in great turmoil. There were many religious groups that had taken Jesus over as a useful figure whom they interpreted according to their own ends, for example, Gnostics, Montanists, Marcionites.... Christian writings, which had often been addressed to local churches, were being accepted as authoritative universally but they were being interpreted freely. Bishops, who were usually better educated and possessed of better leadership qualities than the masses, began to see themselves as the only real successors to the Apostles with better understanding of what the christian message meant. Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" was very appealing to many bishops. Plato's idea that the masses were chained in ignorance at the back of the cave while the few enlightened ones walked freely in the light at the mouth of the cave was used to support the bishops' claim to be the enlightened authoritative interpreters of the christian message. The virtue of faith came to be understood as accepting whatever the bishops said was revealed truth. This was what was meant by 'orthodoxy.'

The turmoil was still evident at the formulation of the creeds. Gregory Nazianzus in the 4th c. wrote about the bishops' debate in formulating the Nicene Creed: "I finished my speech, but they squawked in every direction, a flock of jackdaws combining together, a rabble of adolescents, a gang of youths, a whirlwind raising dust under pressure of air currents, people who were not mature neither in fear of God nor in years and who would pay no attention, they spluttered confused stuff, and like wasps rushed directly at what was in front of their faces."

I don't want here to go through the whole (sometimes sordid) history of clericalism, but in the words of Kenneth Milne of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, we cannot "defend the indefensible;" [we must] "question the questionable" in the light of "and of his fulness we have all received." Some bishops have challenged the system and have been banished for it. For example, in one instance eighteen bishops were opposed to Augustine's position on original sin, but to no avail. Freeman cites Julian of Eclanum who wrote to Augustine:

"Babies, you say, carry the burden of another's sin, not any of their own... Explain to me, then, who this person is who sends the innocent to punishment. You answer, God...God, you say, the very one who commends his love to us, who has loved us and not spared his son but handed him over to us, he judges us in this way; he persecutes new born children; he hands over babies to eternal flames because of their bad wills, when he knows they have not so much formed a will, good or bad... It would show a just and reasonable sense of propriety to treat you as beneath argument; you have come so far from religious feeling, from civilized standards,

## Our Rock Continued...

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so far indeed from common sense, that you think your Lord capable of committing crimes which would hardly be found among barbarian tribes.”

There is no recorded reply from Augustine. We still labour under the curse of the concept of original sin.

Pelagius believed that lust/passion was a good thing in itself but that it could be abused; Augustine thought that it was a bad thing in itself but that it could be put to a good use through marriage. Pelagius won the debate, but Augustine won the politics and Augustine's position was 'official' for ever after. What a difference it would have made if the Celt had won the political war as well. But clericalism believes that it owns the right to admit the faithful to grace and truth— in the name of Jesus of course.

The christian community recognized its need to make deacons, bishops, and priests, but unwholesome trends crept in, and so today the rise of the clerical caste needs to be reexamined. It is the official

position of the church that the christian people are priestly— Very Good! But it is also the official position, reiterated at Vatican II, in The Constitution of the Church #10 that the bishop and the priest are “essentially different” from the laity as priests and by their power they teach and rule the priestly people and the bishop has the fulness of the priesthood. The laity can exercise their priesthood by receiving the sacraments. According to this description, Jesus' own disciples would not have been christian. We need to take another look at that.

The whole church is the real successor to the apostles; clericalism claims that only the bishops are. The most important sacrament for cementing together the christian community and for the development of the spiritual life, the eucharist, is in the hands of the priestly caste. There are many clerical claims that all need to be looked at.

The questionable has to be questioned.

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## The View From Heaven: A Christmas Reflection

by Maurice Sullivan, Ottawa, ON, Corpus-NCR

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*(This reflection was the 2005 grace given before the Corpus-NCR, CNWE, CCO, and Cosmology groups dinner at the home of Maurice and Claudia Sullivan on January 8, 2005.*

*But Maurice's thoughts and the quotations from astronauts in it are timeless, and are submitted to readers of The Journal for your edification just as they edified those of us at the dinner. Jim Noonan, regional editor, The Journal.)*

On the first Christmas night what was the view from heaven? On the first Christmas night did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and the Prophets see a tiny baby in Bethlehem wrapped in swaddling clothes? Did the Choirs of Angels in Heaven see baby Jesus lying in a manger? On that night did all the Saints from ancient times see a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour”?

The Christmas Story is a Heavenly Story and the view from heaven on that first Christmas night, filled the hearts of the angels and saints with wonder and awe, with love and compassion. And it has continued to do so for countless numbers of people all over the world ever since.

But a strange thing happened recently. During the second half of the 20th century, a select group of people, from many different nations of the world, were shot into the heavens on the backs of giant military missiles. And when they sped into the heavens in their tiny spacecrafts, they too were astonished to find their hearts filled with awe and wonder, love and compassion as had been the experience of the Saints and the Heavenly Host 2000 years before. But this time the awe and wonder and love were not engendered by the sight of a tiny babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. This time the compassion and love flowing from their hearts was directed towards a tiny planet, gliding silently in the blackness of space. The planet was not wrapped in swaddling clothes, but rather wrapped in the clothing of a flimsy cellophane membrane extending less than 50 miles high. We call this delicate protective clothing which shields us from the vacuum and radiation of outer space - the earth's atmosphere.

Here are a few comments reflecting the astonishment and awe experienced by some of the astronauts as they recalled their View from Heaven weeks and months after their return to earth:

Astronaut Rusty Schweickart:

“From the moon, Earth is so small and so fragile, and such a precious little spot in the universe, that you can black it out with your thumb. Then you realize that on that spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you--all of human history and music and poetry and art and death and birth and love,--all of it, there on that little spot, that you can cover with your thumb. And you realize from that perspective that you have changed forever--that your relationship to the earth is no longer what it used to be.”

**Astronaut, James Irwin:**

## A Christmas Reflection Continued...

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"Earth reminded me of a Christmas tree ornament, hanging in the blackness of space. As we got farther and farther away it diminished in size. Finally it shrank to the size of a marble, the most beautiful marble you can imagine. That beautiful, warm, living object looked so fragile, so delicate! Seeing the earth this way...made me appreciate again the wonder of God."

### **Astronaut Boris Volynov:**

"During a space flight, the psyche of each astronaut is reshaped. Having seen the sun, the stars, and our planet, you become more full of life, softer. You begin to look at all living things with greater trepidation and you begin to be more kind and patient with the people around you. At any rate that is what happened to me."

### **Astronaut Prince Sultan bin Salman al-Saud:**

"The first day we all pointed to our own countries. The 3rd or 4th day we were pointing to our continents. By the 5th day we were aware of only one earth."

### **Astronaut Gene Cernan:**

"From up there you don't see the barriers of colour and religion and politics that divide this world. You only see the boundaries of God, not the man-made ones. You wonder, if you could get everyone in the world up there, wouldn't they have a different feeling and mentality?"

### **Astronaut Senator Edwin Carn of Utah:**

"You certainly come to the recognition that there aren't any political boundaries out there. You see it as one world, and you recognize how insignificant planet Earth is when you look at 10 billion stars in the Milky Way and recognize that our star is a rather minor one. You look out there millions of light years, and it is impossible to comprehend the vastness of space. It is humbling."

### **Astronaut Michael Collins:**

"I think the view from 100,000 miles up, could be invaluable in getting people to work together. The pity is that this heavenly view has been the exclusive property of a handful of test pilots, rather than the world leaders who need it. The best crew for an Apollo mission would be a philosopher, a priest and a poet. Unfortunately, they would kill

themselves trying to fly the spacecraft."

### **Astronaut Sigmund John:**

"Before I flew, I was already aware of how small and vulnerable our tiny planet is, but only when I saw it from space, in all its ineffable beauty and fragility, did I realize that humankind's most urgent task is to cherish and preserve it for future generations."

### **Astronaut Joseph Allen:**

"With all the arguments pro and con for going to the moon, no one suggested that we should do it just to look at the Earth. But that may have been the most important reason of all for going there!!"

### **Astronaut Gorman Cernan:**

"I was the last man to walk on the moon in December 1972. I stood in the blue darkness and looked in awe at the Earth. What I saw was too beautiful to grasp. It was just too beautiful to have happened by accident. It doesn't matter how you choose to worship God--God has to exist to have created what I was privileged to see."

There are many other similar quotations from these and other astronauts which might be added to this list. However, we can conclude from the perspective of the New Testament's Infancy Narratives and from the perspective of these astronauts, that the View from Heaven is the most awesome and the most critical relative to the future of the human race.

For as in the Ancient Christmas Story, the hearts of those who looked down from heaven were filled with awe and wonder, with love and compassion for a precious and fragile tiny baby Jesus, so too, in the new 20th Century Story of the Universe, those who once again looked down from heaven were filled anew with a similar awe and wonder, love and compassion. But this time it was for a precious and fragile tiny planet Earth.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

THE PROSPECTIVE FATHER-IN-LAW  
ASKED, "YOUNG MAN, CAN YOU  
SUPPORT A FAMILY?"

THE SURPRISED GROOM-TO-BE  
REPLIED, "WELL, NO. I WAS JUST  
PLANNING TO SUPPORT YOUR  
DAUGHTER. THE REST OF YOU WILL  
HAVE TO FEND FOR YOURSELVES."

*Explaining the resurrection of Jesus, Origen in the early 200's uses the Platonic distinction of soul and body: "in the body there lies a certain principle which is not corrupted from which the body is raised in corruption..." but that Jesus' body was literally raised is "preached in the churches for the simpleminded and for the ears of the common crowd who are led on to lead better lives by their belief" (Jaroslav Pelikan in "The Christian Tradition").*



# Corpus Canada

## Who Are We?

We are a faith community of men and women empowered by our baptism in Jesus' Spirit to reach out to others in their need as Jesus did. We also provide support for married Roman Catholic priests, their family and friends.

## Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to

- Renewal of ministries in the Church, including an ordained ministry open to men and women, married and unmarried;
- A vision of Church that includes all people who profess faith in Jesus Christ;
- Development of leadership among all the baptised in the Church;
- Promotion of a wholesome view of sexuality;
- Justice for all based on Gospel values.

Our message is a healing one and is directed to everyone, including the marginalized in the Church. It is our hope to reach people through many ministries, and in a special way through the creation of small faith communities.

## How Do We Get There?

Through a collegial approach based on consensus reached through communal discernment in the Spirit, we share our gifts that all creation might be transformed according to God's loving plan.

# Corpus Canada National Coordinating Team

**Coordinator**  
**Joe Gubbels**

Email: joegubbs@telusplanet.net

**Eloi Arsenault**

St. Philip & St. James Church  
R.R.#4, Wellington, PE C0B 2E0  
Tel: (902) 854-2915

Email: loi.arsenault@pei.sympatico.ca

**François Brassard**

**Chris Diamond**

**Emil Kutarna**

113 Tibbets Road, Regina SK S4S 2Y9

Tel: (306) 586-2853

Email: emil@kutarna.net

**Jim Lynn**

Box 2702, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R1

Tel: (867) 873-8529

Email: jjniteowl@hotmail.com

**John Palardy**

Tel: (403) 556-7855

Email: palardyj@telusplanet.net

**Dianne Peck**

11 Union Street, Sydney NS B1S 4X6

Tel: (902) 562-7982

Email: diannep@ns.sympatico.ca

**Leonard Schmidt**

902 Borebank Street, Winnipeg MB R3N 1G6

Tel: (204) 487-3553

Email: schmidt@TOTAL.NET

## How Can I Join Or Show Support?

If you wish to join or renew your membership in Corpus Canada for the year 2005

(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."

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*Thank you for your support of this Christian ministry.*

**Corpus Canada Treasurer**

**Alanna Menu**

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**Corpus Canada Media Representative & Contact Person to the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests**

**François Brassard**

422 Davis Rd., Ladysmith, BC V9G 1V3

Tel: (250) 245-3365

Email: ckfb@telus.net

\*\*\*\*\*

**Corpus Canada Web Site Manager**

**Michael Zarb**

Email: mzarb@shaw.ca

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