

The Journal

Spring 2005



40 Years Ago: The Second Vatican Council The Bible Today Nov. '65

The fourth session of the Second Vatican Council had an auspicious beginning. In his address the Holy Father (Paul VI) announced the formation of an episcopal synod, and on the following day the motu proprio describing it was read. While this is not the direct work of the Council Fathers, it can be seen as the fruit of the Council inasmuch as debates on collegiality, on the reform of the Curia and on the government of dioceses were major factors influencing the synod's formation. The whole process of decentralization, considered by some as the most important element in any reform of the Church, is expected now to be greatly expedited. The bishops will have a more direct hand in the government of the Church than in the past when this was realized only in general Councils. It could even be argued that if the new episcopal synod achieves the ends for which it was constituted, there would be no more need for general Councils. How unwieldy these can be is becoming more and more evident as the Council continues. The machinery of conciliar procedure is necessarily cumbersome, for when more than two thousand men meet as a deliberative body, there is bound to be confusion and delay.

Eugene H. Maly

On the opening day (of the fourth session) of the Council the Holy Father pledged himself to the creation of a synod of bishops, representatives from all the regional conferences who would play an important directive role in the future of the Church. On the second day of the Council, he returned to the Aula for the reading of the motu proprio which perfectly fulfilled his promise of an episcopal synod and outlined its constitution in detail.

The only way to describe the reaction of the Council is to say that all this was met with a tempered spirit. Emotions of joy, gratitude and fear were real. But spontaneous outbursts and unsettling nervousness were significantly lacking. When the Holy Father announced the forthcoming synod of bishops, The Conciliar Fathers received the news without applause. The majority certainly rejoiced at the prospect; but the usualness of good things coming after long anticipation and much hard work had made them accustomed to accept the end result with a spirit free of superficial emotionalism. Only time and experience can account for such chastened reactions.

Homogeneity of cultural and theological development has probably contributed to a false concept of unity in matters of theological truth. The theologians of the Eastern rites, and especially the Patriarch, Maximos IV Saigh, have made this charge, insisting that the Latin Church must still be converted to a true catholicity. Our theological inbreeding has blinded us to many of the rich insights developed in a different cultural milieu and against a different historical background. One example of this is the theology of the Holy Spirit, which plays such an important part in Eastern theology. Similarly. Vatican II's doctrine of episcopal collegiality owes much to the Eastern Church's traditional emphasis of it.

Barnabas M. Ahern, C.P.

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Spring 2005
Vol. 8, No. 2

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
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product
Agreement No. 40025971

Xristos Community Society, a non-denominational society incorporated in British Columbia, serves the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship and the promotion and development of Christian small faith communities across Canada. Xristos Community Society is a registered charity in Canada. The Journal is distributed free of charge. Xristos Community Society needs and welcomes donations in support of its ministry.

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In the first half of this year, much has been written about this year's two popes, John Paul II and Benedict 16. The Journal has also received articles from many readers. We would like to thank all those who sent us their thoughts and reflections. However, there was nothing new in them that had not already been said over and over again in the media. It would be difficult to find words to that effect. So, this issue makes no comment on the two popes.

Chris Diamond ed.

FOCUS TOPIC

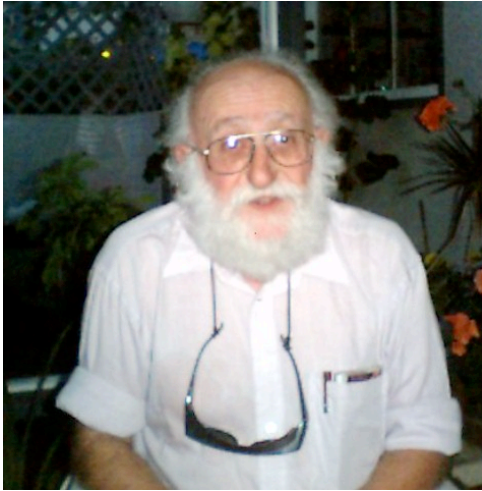
for the Summer 2005 Issue

Local groups meet local needs: How did serving others
make you a community?

Note Articles for this issue are due by August 15.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN JUSTIN MARTYR

by Dr. Michael Zarb, Cobble Hill, BC



Justin Martyr, a gentile from Neapolis in Palestine, who studied with the Stoics, Aristotelians, Pythagoreans, and Platonists in Asia Minor and eventually converted to Christianity and taught in Rome was a Christian apologist. Three of his writings, *The First Apology*, *The Second Apology*, and *The Dialogue with*

Trypho, the Jew, exist in complete form, though there is some question about the precise relationship between the *First and Second Apology*. According to 1Apol 26.8 he wrote a book against the dissenting Christian groups which is now lost. Other documents attributed to Justin - *The Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, *On the Sole Government of God*, and *On the Resurrection* - are of dubious authenticity. His apology is dedicated to Emperor Antoninus who ruled from 138 to 161 so his writing period is usually placed in the fifties and sixties of the second century. Tradition has it that he suffered martyrdom early in the reign of Marcus Aurelius under the prefect Junius Rusticus (162-168).

Concept of church

Justin calls the members of the community 'Christians' both in the Apologies and the Dialogue and informs that the name comes from the name of Christ, "the community which has sprung from his name and partakes of his name -for we are all called Christians." (Dial 63.5; 1Apol 12.9). However for him the true Christians are those who live by the precepts of Christ, "And let those who are not found living as he taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to his word:..." (1Apol 16); moreover he even condones punishment by the authorities, "And as to those who are not living pursuant to these his teachings, and are Christians only in name, we demand that all such be punished by you" (Ibid.). In this respect Justin also admits of Christians before Christ, "and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians (i.e. non-Greek), Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious." (1Apol 46)

Justin sees the community of Christians as diffused around the world, comprising 'men of every race' (1Apol 1; 25; 32; 40; 53; 56 etc.) both ignorant and educated people, '...not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated, despising both glory, and fear, and death' (2Apol 10). He says the thanksgiving of the Eucharist is offered 'in all places throughout the world' (Dial 117.1); and again, 'For there is not one single race of

men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus.' (Dial 117.5) Justin seems to believe that belief in Christ has already spread over the whole earth but obviously he is using hyperbole. He also states there were more Christians from among the pagans than from the Jews or Samaritans, 'and knowing that the Christians from among the Gentiles are both more numerous and more true than those from among the Jews and Samaritans?' (1Apol 53) 2Clement, more or less from the same period, makes a similar statement, '... For the children of the desolate are more than of her that has the husband, he (i.e. God) so spoke, because our people (i.e. Gentiles) seemed desolate and forsaken of God, whereas now, having believed, we have become more than those who seemed to have God (i.e. the Jews).' (2Clem 2.3)

The ecclesiology of Justin is based on the idea that Christianity has taken the place of Israel as the favoured people of God: he compares the church with Rachel and the synagogue with Leah, "The marriages of Jacob were types of that which Christ was about to accomplish. For it was not lawful for Jacob to marry two sisters at once. And he serves Laban for [one of] the daughters; and being deceived in [the obtaining of] the younger, he again served seven years. Now Leah is your people and synagogue; but Rachel is our community (*ekklesia*). And for these, and for the servants in both, Christ even now serves." (Dial 134.3; cf. also Dial 63.5)

In Dial 42.3 he uses the metaphor of the body and its members, "Such a thing as you may witness in the body: although the members are enumerated as many, all are called one, and are a body. For, indeed, a commonwealth and a community (*ekklesia*), though many individuals in number, are in fact as one, called and addressed by one appellation."

Heretics

Despite his claim to unity and oneness of the Christians, there are serious divisions. The word 'heresy' comes from the Greek word *hairesis* meaning 'choice, inclination, opinion and hence system of philosophic principles, school, sect.' Justin always uses the term with a pejorative connotation. Thus, even Christianity is called heresy by the Jews, he tells Tripho, "but at that time you selected and sent out from Jerusalem chosen men through all the land to tell that the godless heresy of the Christians had sprung up..." (Dial 17.1) and again, "as I said before you have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilaean deceiver..." (Dial 108.02) On the other hand among the Christians there are some whom Justin calls heretics, "Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish." (Dial 80.03) He even wrote a book against them, now lost, "But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you." (1Apol 26.08) He describes them as, "... such men confessing themselves to be Christians, and admitting the crucified Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, yet not teaching his doctrines, but those of the spirits of error..." (Dial 35.02) to which he adds

sayings attributed to Jesus as foreseeing the schisms, "For he said, 'Many shall come in My name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.'" And, "There shall be schisms and heresies..." (Dial 35.03)

Justin complains that the heretics are not persecuted and tries, by innuendo, to impute to them the slanders circulated about the Christians concerning the improprieties supposedly occurring in their meetings, "6. All who take their opinions from these men, [i.e. Simon Magus, Menander and Marcion] are, as we before said, called Christians... 7. And whether they perpetrate those fabulous and shameful deeds -- the upsetting of the lamp, and promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh -- we know not; but we do know that they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you, at least on account of their opinions." (1Apol 26.6-7)

The Leadership

As it was no part of his apologetic purpose to expound the nature of the structure of the Christian community, Justin gives but little information concerning the organization of the congregation. In an attempt to emphasize the simplicity and harmlessness of the Christian worship he throws light on the functionaries of the community in his description of the celebration of baptism and the eucharist.

In 1Apol 61-66 he gives two descriptions: first he describes baptism followed by the eucharist and then again he describes the Sunday Eucharist.

Baptism: He describes the baptismal ritual in 1Apol 61: "2 As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. 3. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water." After various scriptural explanations and comparisons with the initiation into the pagan mysteries he continues the description in chapter 65, "1. But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the illuminated person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation." Then he continues with the celebration of the Eucharist which will be considered after these remarks.

In this account of the baptism we find several interesting features: a period of pre-baptismal instruction is presupposed, as in the *Didache* (Did 7.1) and a period, length not specified, of prayer and fasting, in which members of the community join, seems to prelude the baptism; *Didache* (Did 7.4) limits this to one or two days before baptism. Significant is Justin's use of the plural for both witnesses and baptized... *we* teach... *they* are instructed... *we* pray and fast along with *them*... *they* are brought by *us*... *they* are then washed in the water. In 1Apol 65.1 however, the candidate is in the singular though

not the witnesses; here Justin may be writing from the point of view of the convert rather than describing a single baptism. What is certain is that Justin doesn't mention a ministrant of the baptism, quite far from Ignatius' insistence to have no baptism apart from the *episkopos* (e.g. Ign Smyr 8.2). The collective (and single?) baptismal ceremonies were perhaps performed on a certain day of the year such as Pascha and Pentecost as a few decades later was described by Tertullian (c. 206, cf. *De Baptismo* 19).

It is clear from this account, as from the *Didache's* (Did 7.1-4), that members of the community took a significant part in the baptism. It is not unreasonable to assume that it is these witnesses who put the questions to the baptized, heard their confession of faith, and baptized them. It was more a communal function than that of an individual official. On the other hand in the eucharistic accounts Justin mentions officials.

Eucharist: The baptismal ceremony is followed by the celebration of the Eucharist, "2 Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. 3. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. 4 (explanation of 'Amen.')

5. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us servers (*diakonoi*) give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine and water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion." (1Apol 65.2ff.) and continues in chapter 66.1. "And this food is called among us 'Thanksgiving' (*eukaristia*), of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined."

In 1Apol 67 Justin gives another similar account of the Eucharist at the regular Sunday worship of the Christian community: "3. And on the day called Sunday (literally 'the day called of the sun'), all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; 4. then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. 5. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the servers (*diakonoi*). 6. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. 7. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common

assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to his apostles and disciples, he taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.”

These important passages supplement the sparse information available to us concerning the ritual of the Eucharist in the first two centuries.

The eucharistic elements are ‘bread (*artos*) and cup of water and wine mixed with water (*potêrion hudatos kai kramatos*)’ and ‘bread and wine and water’ in 1Ap 65, then again ‘bread and wine and water’ (*oinos kai hudôr*) in chapter 67 which give the impression they are three elements. The terms for the wine are different, ‘*krama*’ means wine with water while ‘*oinos*’ means wine. However *oinos* would also be wine with water for as a rule, the ancient Greeks and Romans did not drink their wine pure, but mixed with water. Those who drank wine neat were more likely than not considered drunkards or gluttons or barbarians (cf. Martial 1.11; Plato, *Laws* 637). The water was presumably used to dilute the wine in a considerable proportion, as was commonly done when drinking wine, not just a few drops of water as done in the later mass. In normal wine-drinking even a fifty-fifty blend was by some considered strong (Aristophanes, *Wealth* 1132); most advise more water than wine (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 10.426b-427a); Hesiod recommends three parts water to one part wine (*Works and Days* 596).

From Justin’s description one gathers that the prayers said over the eucharistic elements were not a fixed formula but were left to the discretion and ability of the president, “offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability.” This indicates that it was not the ‘word of institution’ that were pronounced over the elements but a thanksgiving of a “considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands.” Similarly in *Didache* (9-10) we find the suggested prayer of thanksgiving with no ‘words of institution’ and instruction that the prophets may improvise as they wished. Moreover 1Cor 11.23ff does not contain any indication that this was the eucharistic formula used in the eucharistic celebration of the Corinthian community. Paul reminds them what he had taught them i.e. what Jesus did, not what they say at their communal meal, “23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that...” He insists that it is the ‘body and blood of the Lord’ (v. 27), which obviously they did not repeat every time they had the meal. ‘Do this in memory of me’ is not “say this’ but ‘do’ i.e. eat and share the bread and wine together; besides, the Synoptic Jesus does not establish the formula but the action.

It is significant that in both descriptions there is no mention of the *episkopos* or *presbuteros* taking part in the service. Three officials are mentioned, the reader, the president and the servers. The reader’s task is to read from the Old Testament (the writings of the prophets) and from what Justin calls ‘the memoirs of the apostles’ which elsewhere he identifies with ‘Gospels’ (1Apol 66.3). This seems to be the earliest mention of reading from New Testament literature in public worship (another reference possibly in this period is 2Clem 19.1). The server’s (or assistant’s - *diakonos*) task is to distribute the eucharistic food to those present and even to carry it to the absent members. The president’s (*proestôs* which some translate ‘ruler’) tasks were varied: in

the baptismal eucharist he receives the bread and wine, gives praise and glory and offers thanks at considerable length and in the Sunday worship he verbally instructs, and exhorts before the eucharist, offers prayers and thanksgivings for the bread and wine and after the Eucharist he received the donations of the community which he distributes to the needy.

From the expression ‘the president of the brethren’ and from his task to care for the needy, it may be inferred this is a permanent office rather than a temporary function for the ceremony. The claim of some commentators who see ‘bishops’ all over the place where Christian leadership is concerned explains that Justin purposely refrains from employing the term *episkopos* to avoid a technical term out of deference to pagan susceptibilities to whom the expression might have been obscure or misleading. However, that explanation is itself incorrect and misleading. In fact, the term *episkopos* was not an ecclesiastical technical term at this time but a common term denoting the overseers of projects and groups such as in the many associations or clubs in existence. No non-Christian would be confused by the term at that time. Moreover if this were the case why would Justin not deem it inappropriate to use other common terms as ‘technical’ words e.g., ‘those who are called by us servers (*diakonoï*),’ a term similarly used in common parlance but applied to a functionary in the Christian associations? Had he been reluctant to use ‘technical’ terms why does he define the bread, wine and water as ‘this food we call *eukaristia*’ or baptism as ‘regeneration’ or ‘illumination’? Had ‘*episkopos*’ been the term commonly used for the leader of the community and/or the officiant at the eucharist Justin would not have refrained from using it. A probable explanation why he uses ‘president / ruler’ (*proestôs*), is that, since he is supposedly writing to the emperor and in different parts of the empire, the leader of the Christian liturgy and groups was called by various names (*episkopos*, *presbuteros* etc.) he uses a more general term. Or an even more probable reason is that in Rome itself this was the more common term used. It is significant that the same term is found in Hermas, writing in Rome barely two decades before Justin, applied to the elders (Vis 2 4.3, “the elders that preside over the community”). It is also an interesting fact that we don’t find the term *episkopos* applied to the chief officer of the Roman congregation until a period later than that of Justin although in Syria and Asia Minor it had been used some forty years earlier (cf. the Ignatian correspondence). Clement of Rome uses ‘*episkopos*’ and ‘*presbuteros*’ interchangeably of the leadership in Corinth, not explicitly mentioning any officials of Rome, and Ignatius himself is silent, in his Epistle to the Romans, as to any ‘*episkopos*’ in Rome.

Priesthood of Christ and the community: Probably it would have been blasphemous for Justin to call the community leaders ‘priests’ since for him Christ is the High Priest and the whole community is a priestly people. The notion of sacrifice (*thusia*) in Justin includes whatever is offered to God whether it is prayer, thanksgiving (Dial 117.2), the Jewish practices and pagan offerings to the gods, or Jesus’ suffering on the cross (Dial 40.1,2,4; Dial 111.3). The eucharist is considered sacrifice (Dial

41.3; Dial 117.1) in as much as it is the thanksgiving *par excellence* not in the sense of the sacrifice of Christ. It is the Christian community as a whole that offers the sacrifices; it is a community of priests: "...we are the true high priestly race of God, as even God Himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles sacrifices are presented to him well-pleasing and pure. Now God receives sacrifices from no one, except through his priests" (Dial 116.3); and again "Accordingly, God, anticipating all the sacrifices which we offer through this name, and which Jesus the Christ enjoined us to offer, i.e., in the Thanksgiving (*eukaristia*) of the bread and the cup, and which are presented by Christians in all places throughout the world, bears witness that they are well-pleasing to him." (Dial 117.1, 2). Justin's concept of the priesthood of the community differs from that in *1 Peter* and *Revelation*. In *1 Peter* the priesthood of the community connotes the identity of temple, priest and sacrifice and therefore the people offer themselves (1Pet 2.5,9), whereas in Justin the Christians are a priestly race in as much as they offer the sacrifice, in particular the Thanksgiving. In *Revelation* the priesthood of the 'elect' is envisaged as occurring in the future Messianic Kingdom (Rev 1.6; 5.10; 20.6). No individual Christian is

a priest - the notion of one individual offering Christ as a sacrifice is absent from Justin's mind and there is no evidence that any Christian had that notion at this time, the mid-second century.

According to Justin the individual who is the priest of the Christians is no one else but Jesus Christ; he likes to title him "the eternal priest" (Dial 42.1; 96.1; 113.5), "everlasting priest" (Dial 33.1,2) and high priest (Dial 33.2; 116.1); and several times he identifies Jesus as the "priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Dial 33.1, 2, 6; 32.6; 63.3; 83.2).

Conclusion

The Christian communities in Rome in this period were certainly fractured. Justin attests to serious divisions among them, divisions serious enough to induce him to hate the dissenters so much that he wishes the authorities to punish them and even condemn them to death. Justin's animosity against his co-religionist adversaries was one of the seeds that grew and developed into the later persecutions against those branded 'heretics' by the faction that acquired political power and termed itself 'orthodoxy.'

THE RIGHT TO KILL

by Tom Hassett, Victoria, BC

In the past, the right to kill someone – either the self or someone else – has always been a frequent topic of discussion and legislation but this "right" was often disguised in order to sound politically correct. For many years we often read and heard of killing as "execution", killing in "self defense" or killing in "national defense". We still play at semantics because more recently, deliberate killing is clouded by expressions like the "right to die", "friendly fire", "collateral damage", "assisted suicide", "euthanasia", and a woman's "right to choose".

In most civilized countries like Canada, it is now considered illegal for the government to kill convicted criminals while many of these same countries use tax money to pay doctors to kill unborn children at the mother's request. In these countries, it is illegal for anyone - even a parent - to kill a severely handicapped child but in these same countries, it is legally correct for adults to kill themselves, regardless of their age or health. However, it remains criminal for anyone to assist them.

Is there any sort of rhyme or reason, any sort of consistency - no matter how devious - to the legality of this right to kill? Is the will of the people, no matter how arbitrary, the sole criterion for the legality of killing in a secular democracy? Does this mean that a secular government, (democratic or otherwise) now has the divine power, not merely to decide precisely what is murder, but to change an action into murder (or an action worthy of tax support) merely by deciding that it is? Surely only a god can make an action either homicide or a doctor's civic duty (like execution or abortion) simply by declaring it to be such. Surely only a god can create something by simply willing it to be? Surely only a god's word precedes the creation of a fact? How can the state be truly secular if it sees itself as a god?

Perhaps the time has come for secular society to start living up to its name and stop acting as if it were some kind of a god. Perhaps it is time to recognize that a secular, godless society cannot make human behaviour either humane or inhuman - simply by saying that it is.

Overcoming My Addiction to the Institutional Church

by Fred Williams, Calgary, AB



Right off, I have to say that marrying my beloved Catherine was my crowning moment. The beginning had to be an intensive course in group process (Encounter or T- groups) at the University of California, San Diego, in 1969.

That Spring I met up with a Jesuit (Fr. Bob?) from Regina who had taken the course the previous summer. I told him that I was seeking something that would help a person break out of 'the mold' (whatever that meant to me then!). It was a breakthrough where I saw myself getting off my clerical high horse down to eye-ball relations with the rest of my fellow human beings.

We were often reminded during the course to get out of our heads and to share at the gut level. This was a good beginning for me because our clerical training was all hard work learning dogma, rules, regulations, laws, and even more laws. That stuff was piled pretty high on us. It would take me years to shake it off, but the course experience was a good beginning for me.

In the Fall of that same year (1969), I registered at Fordham to begin graduate studies in Educational Studies (Counselling). This course had some of the same features as the San Diego course, namely, "Get in touch with your feelings." But perhaps the greater breakthrough was the experience of New York City, a wonderful town! It had it all! During the week we worked our butts off, but come the weekend we were 'on the town.' We were about 10 clerics from Western Canada; I had known them all before from clergy conferences and meetings. Everyone of us, myself included, dated someone, mostly women religious on study leave. We certainly let our hair down (I had some then) in cabarets, dances, Broadway theatres, ballets, the Metropolitan Opera, baseball games at Yankee Stadium, Carnegie Hall, and so on. Most of the ten clerics eventually married later on but not to those same sisters. Two of the wildest ones are still active in the clerical priesthood; one became Vicar-General of his diocese. (Is there a message here?) It was a gradual process for them in making the Big Break into marriage.

After two years, I graduated and returned to retreat ministry at the Franciscan Retreat House near Calgary. Besides conducting closed retreats, I became involved in the Marriage Encounter movement, hosting the first ones in Calgary and then joining the M. E. Team as a presenter throughout the 1970's. What an

experience to work along with couples who had such honesty, such openness, such willingness to share their deepest selves. Again, it was getting 'out of your head and deeper into a feeling level.' Thirty years later, I am still in contact with the M. E. Team members and executive leaders. In fact, when Catherine and I married, they put on a surprise reception for us. No hang-ups there! No recriminations! Just a lot of wonderful loving to us!

At the end of the 1970's, I requested a sabbatical to get training in the field of addiction. This took me to the Hazelden Foundation near Minneapolis, Minnesota, and into a deep involvement in A. A.'s 12 Step Program. At the Retreat Centre prior to this, I had done a lot of work with recovering alcoholics and their families. But I had always felt that there was something lacking. A year's training at one of the premier rehab centres in the U.S. was to change all that. A big theme for trainees at Hazelden was "Put your own house in order if you are going to work with people." We had group therapy among ourselves each day for two hours five days a week. There was to be no deception, no hiding, and once again, getting to a gut level about your 'real' life. I was required as a trainee to take the 4th and 5th steps of A.A. This was a profound experience: in Step 4 we "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Trainees did not do this on their own. Each one was assigned an addiction counselor to help in the preparation of this inventory. I remember having done a general confession in preparation for ordination as recommended by my spiritual director at the time. But the moral inventory was something else! Then came Step 5 wherein "We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." A Lutheran pastor on staff was assigned to hear my 5th Step. Talk about coming down off my clerical high horse! This was humility at the deepest level confession to a Lutheran minister!

I returned to Calgary in 1980 and worked in addiction for the next twenty two years. It led me indirectly to meeting Catherine, my Love. Besides my counselling work, in the 1980's I was involved with two groups for divorced and separated persons. One was *Divorced and Separated Catholic Organization* (DASCO) founded by Fr. Pat O'Byrne (Bishop Paul's brother). Eventually, I would help bring to Calgary an adjunct of this called Beginning Experience (B.E.), a programme modeled on the M.E. weekends. It was for divorced and separated people but it also included the widowed as well. These B.E. weekends were a powerful way of helping hurting persons to close the door on the past and move forward in their lives. A wonderful side effect was that a number of them found a new life partner, some with church approval and some without. Even then, while still a cleric I would counsel them to do what their conscience

told them to do no matter what church law had to say. To this day, I do not know of one of those marriages ending, and I rejoice that I was part of it. (Is there a message here?)

Now for the rest of the story. Here I met my wife, Catherine. She came to work in the addiction field as a nurse at an alcoholic treatment centre I was directing at the time. We talked much over lunch about her alcoholic marriage and not being able to break from it, having a six year old son to care for. I recommended that she take a B.E. weekend. She eventually became a team member for these weekends and then she was chosen to be our team leader. It was in those years that our love blossomed. As the 80's ended, I

proposed to her. She accepted. We were married after Christmas 1991. In January we attended our first Corpus Canada meeting in Calgary thanks to Jack Kirley. We have never looked back. The DASCO and B.E. groups, like the M.E. group, gave us a huge reception after hearing of our marriage.

As I reread my story on breaking from the Institutional Church, I see it as a break from the authoritarian, controlling, know-it-all, CLERICAL way of life. Are they not one and the same? To me, clericalism is a scourge, a blight, a cancer upon the Body of Christ. It needs to be cleansed— totally and irrevocably!

The Path To Spiritual Recovery

by Connie Kurtenbach, Ladysmith, BC



I'd like to think I was devoted to the Institutional Church, not addicted to it. Most of us can't easily imagine being addicted to a religion, a church, a god. After all, it's too holy and apostolic. It houses all truth. It is the straight and narrow pathway to heavenly life. Every metaphor seems to sound good. Remember the rituals on television around the pope's death? What could be better than that? Over the years, look at all the books we

read, the prayers we said, the discussions we had. In fact, we spend most of every day immersed in the Church. I will always love the liturgies, the music, and the community of that time. But that time is past. It has little power over me. The encyclical of JPII on women killed the last vestige of connection I felt to the Roman church. It was all talk. There is no place for women to be empowered in that Roman Church.

Let me be clear. I have witnessed many kinds of addiction and managed the smoking addiction for many years. That I settled at 60 years old. As a psychotherapist I know that an addiction is a pathological relationship to a cause, a person or drug. Alcohol was the addiction of choice in my day. I might have developed that addiction, but alcohol mostly made me sick, so I never got onto it as an addiction. I did witness addictions. It's really important to know there is a drink in the house at all times. Drinking has all kinds of rituals: happy hour, sneaky secret drinking and weekend binges, to

name a few. For years it was a lifestyle condoned in most social gatherings. We saw it in the movies and television as part of our entertainment. Drinking was a way to relax. It tastes so good. By the fifth drink it's heavenly. We read brand names; everyone has their favorite; we discuss it endlessly. Do you remember the famous 'shaken not stirred' martini? Do you remember the falling down drunk on the corner, at a party, in your house? Ah! That was just a party that went over the top. Or he's got the "flu," not a hangover. Action. Camera. Pretend. And so delusion and denial begins.

The first thing about religion, like alcohol addiction, is that it can feel good. And God knows we want to feel good. Especially if we think we feel bad. We usually enter into this style of religion in our families. Now there is the beginning of a potential addiction. We need to feel different. We need to mood alter. We begin to develop this mood altering behaviour at several levels: in our thinking, our feeling and our actions. We bargain with God. We make storm novenas. We practice rituals of payback to God. Remember that phase? That's developing mood altering behaviour, a magical thinking relationship with a cause and a person: our Roman Church and our Image of God. If our self-esteem and sense of integrity are weak, we are more vulnerable to this pattern. We do not even know we are in a trade-off. Our relational immaturity keeps us powerless. AA talks a lot about delusion and denial. We give away our power. We just don't see the delusion. But we still need it.

This pattern often exists in Roman Catholic families. Cradle Catholics have all the language of affirming, loving and functional messages on the one hand and scolding, guilt and punishing on the other. Catholics, among other religions, can fling around the language and behaviour we all know too well that is hypocritical: cursing, deception, mean spiritedness and coldness at home, while pious, pleasant, even generous and prayerful at church. These mixed messages can be toxic to children enjoying natural spirituality. Remember the days of setting up the ironing board as the altar with special cloths laid down smoothly, some unlit candles and Mama's stand up crucifix? I can still see myself officiating as priest to my little friends, distributing peppermint candies for communion: "Pax vobiscum" and "Et cum Spiritu tuo."

Later, I got sent to play the organ and sing in the choir. The boy down the street became a priest. I didn't know I couldn't be a priest! But I did become a nun and for the most part loved it. Vatican II was a huge awakening call. We became aware of the unspoken messages of family and Church that can lead to our own brokenness and behaviour compensation for a problem we do not understand and cannot recognize for some time. How does one break out of this cultural trance?

A loving experience can awaken our lost spiritual self. It can be as dramatic as a near death experience, something scary, something sobering or timely like Vatican II and all that followed. We begin to wake up from our altered state. Perhaps it's the parish priest encouraging us, a great teacher reading our soul, a healing therapist leading us into the light, an AA family ready and waiting to support us. Perhaps it is all of them. We do awaken, perhaps jolted by the experience of our pain, and begin to heal and find our power. A client once told me in trepidation that Jesus had visited her in the detox centre. He reached out to her in this vision. She did not dare believe she deserved it. Could it be real or a hallucination? Oh yes, it was real! It was her conversion from alcohol, sexual addiction, drugs and bulimia. It is the awakening that lifts us from our drug induced state and our addictive behaviours. It is the beginning of a process that will become concrete and create changes in thought, feelings and actions. A habit, which is a series of repeated behaviours, will be changed. Step by step, with others of like mind and health, we are led to a new vision. Remember the first Corpus Canada Conference in Saskatoon? It was so uplifting and exciting to hear Terry Dosh awaken our sensitivity to the married priest, his partner and family.

Central to an awakening experience is the development of functional and loving relationships at all levels: with self, family, friends and larger systems such as the institutional church and, of course, with a Power greater than ourselves. As this continues to grow, the institutional church loses its power over us. It can have power over many still, but for me it is a show of power. It is theatre. Camera, action, pretense! My real life is with those I love and share community: my family, friends, and seekers of deep spirituality. We are the believers, and the visionaries. We are not the patriarchal, all male, monolithic Roman Church. We are Church. We are people of God, followers of the Way.

We can have our vision and be released from our inner wounds. We can also detach from family system messages and finally from the fear of eternal condemnation engendered by a dysfunctional Church organization. We can be released from the fear of a patriarchal god or pope. We can be free from creeping infallibilism, immature sexuality, brokered sacramentality and the intellectual seduction of magisterial messages based on poor theology. We can change our thoughts, our feelings and our actions. We can aspire to Kohlberg's higher stages of consciousness and moral behaviour. We can become, as Liliana Kopp suggests, a 'Church Radiant.' Day by day, we are liberated. We can bring the sacraments to each other, we can develop loving relationships, we can honour our charisms, because we have found our true self and therefore are connected to our true self-love and integrity. And once there is a loving "I," as Buber says, there can be a "thou." This is how we complete the divine enterprise.

I want to say something about our women in these times. We are vigilant. We are seekers far beyond the Roman Church. We have

reached back to the Source and found our Way. As women of the world, we have learned that a conversion experienced must be guarded vigilantly and nurtured continually. An awakening gifted and a path chosen to wholeness, healing and holiness is not secured. We need to hold fast to this calling and be open forever to transformation.

We must pray, meditate, and speak out at all times. If this institutional Church does not have a place for us in its paradigm, we must make our place with the people of the world. We can celebrate with great joy the vastness of love we have accessed in our new freedom. Our subjugation to a male Church is over. The last shred of addiction has dissolved. With Martin Luther King's visionary words, we each can say: "I have a dream."

We can build new and healthy family churches (communities) that are God-centered, not Clergy-centered, churches that are collegial and consensual. As Christina Baldwin says, we sit at the rim of the circle with Spirit in the centre. We, the people of God, honour ourselves and our neighbours, whether Jew or Samaritan, man or woman, free or slave. We are all pilgrims on a journey to Unconditional Love. We are truly God's people. This journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, says Lao Tzu. Our Higher Power is with us.

We will sing and dance in the new times: "Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est."

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A young lad from Newfoundland was walking up the wharf carrying two live three-pound lobsters, one in each hand. It was three weeks after the season closed!

At the end of the wharf he met the Fisheries Officer who said: "Well me lad, I got you this time - with two live lobsters three weeks after the season closed!" The lad said, "No- you're wrong! These are two trained lobsters that I caught two weeks before the season ended." The Fisheries Officer asked, "Trained? How?" "Well, each day I take these two from my house down to the wharf and put them in the water for a swim. While they swim I sit on the wharf and have me a smoke, or two. After about 15 minutes I whistle and up comes my two lobsters and I then take them home again." "That's a likely story," the Fisheries Officer said. "Let's take them on down the wharf and see if it's true." So, the lad went ahead of the Fisheries Officer to the end of the wharf where, under supervision, he gently lowered both lobsters into the water. Then he sat on a wharf piling and lit up one smoke, then another. After about 15 minutes the Fisheries Officer said to the lad, "How about whistling?" "What for?" said the young lad. The Fisheries Officer said, "To call in the lobsters." The lad asked "What lobsters?"



The theme-question for this Journal edition asks, “How did you overcome your addiction to the institutional Church?”

My addiction looked more like a terrifying codependency, terrifying because without it I felt I would be rudderless. Who would give me an infallible blueprint for getting into heaven? Form my conscience? Keep me from falling into that dangerous

place called Relativism? From becoming what was perhaps the most frightening threat of all, a “Cafeteria Catholic”?

A primary factor in setting me free were the theologians, the ones who were called radicals, and many of whom were silenced or ejected. We cannot overstate the power of the spoken and written word. What those theologians who have been and continue to be both subjugating and subversive in their words, have done for me is -1- to have undone the limited and distorted interpretation of scripture that the institutional Church has often promulgated, whether unknowingly or not -2- opened me to the freedom of the vast richness of the word when it is interpreted and taught from a place of integrity, from a place of intuitive knowing, from a place of daring to believe in Goodness that is beyond human comprehension, from a place of original blessing instead of original sin. (Fox, Original Blessing). Here are some of the ways radical and daring theology has changed my life.

Take for example the command to believe the Good News and repent. The word “repent” always meant self-flagellation, feelings of not being good enough, of being in a constant state of mea culpa. The only legitimate position at the foot of the altar was on my knees, head bowed, and fist to breast. But when good theology rewrites the same scripture as “believe the good news and change your mentality”, well, I can go somewhere with that. Now I can examine what the belief system is (the mindset, the mentality) that has been keeping me down, keeping me blocked from my good, from the Good News. Now I can decide first of all, if it was I or someone else who put that belief system there, and whether it's one I want to keep or to throw away.

A sample case: When I decided, at a very early age, that I'd be sure to get the love I needed if I was perfect, and when this was deeply imbedded in my mind by the insistent and literal exhortation to “be perfect as your heavenly Father”, I was launched on a life's journey marked by struggle, fear, and endless self-judgment. “Repent” became another synonym for ‘set the bar higher, strive more, only perfection is acceptable’. And the hallmarks of my life became stress, self-rejection, and Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

It is my heart's greatest blessing that brave women and men dared to write the Spirit-truth of the Word of God. Consider these lovely facts: Spanish Jesuit José Ignacio Gonzalez Faus -1- speaks about the moral freedom of Gal.3:13, “The Messiah has rescued us from the

curse of morals”, setting us free to believe that actions that were previously demanded by morals now come from the push rising up from the interior of the human being as a reply to the deep knowing that one is loved by Divine Source. -2- about the end of religion referred to in 1Jn 2:7, that institutionalism is replaced by love of humankind, and that leaders never strike a command unless those it will affect have participated in its creation.

Then there are those life-giving writers who interpret the command to be reborn as the command to parent yourself with compassion and joy. Who hold that Jesus' positioning himself outside any existing religious group of his time flings open the gates of the kingdom to everyone, whether Gentile or Jew or Christian or Hindu or Muslim or pagan...

And what about the boldness of Joseph Campbell (classed as Scholar and not specifically as Theologian) when he says, “by eating the forbidden fruit we initiate ourselves into life”. That takes my breath away.

What about the concept of the Kingdom itself? The premise that the Kingdom of God is within, reverberates with possibility and passion. Again, Joseph Campbell on this: “The experience of eternity here and now is the purpose of life” and “All worlds, all Gods, all heavens, all hells are within us”.

The theme of the International Conference in September /05 of the IFMCP (International Federation of Married Catholic Priests) is “Renewed Ministries - Services for Today”.

Their underlying commitment is to bringing in the Kingdom, today. Some of the questions this raises for me are: How do both the poor and the rich need to experience the kingdom in their lives right here and right now? What is their pain and what is their healing? What mentality needs to be changed? What form does the sweetness of milk and honey need to take in order for them to be able to drink it, even recognize it?

What does “Your Kingdom come” mean for your life and mine? It means many powerful, subversive things.

For me it means I am at last ecstatic to be where I am in my life, teaching the Good News to any and all, in what I call “ministry without borders”.

This is what I teach:

-1- The power to create is now ours. “All of us have learned from him that humankind has been created creator.” R. Garaudy in El Ciervo. Or “Do you not know that you are gods?”

-2- We are the source of our own healing. “Your faith has made you whole”. Faus points out that Jesus did not attribute the healing to his power but to the receiver's belief.

-3- The kingdom has no borders. “Two thousand years later an ever-increasing number of Christians..keep discovering that Jesus...is bigger than the apostles and wider than Christianity”.

-4- Our word is law. “Let the weak say...I am strong”; “if you believe what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you”; “only say the word...”

-5- Our thoughts and emotions create our reality. “As you think in your heart, so are you”.

And this is how I teach it. If the listeners are among those for whom scripture assures credibility and gives comfort, I present it in the language of scripture.

If they are among those for whom science and quantum physics and cosmology give credibility and a common place of self-identification, then it is a simple thing to use the language of those disciplines. For truth is truth, and there is nothing in scripture that isn't born out in the other bodies of knowledge.

And so this is my freedom, and Sophia's wisdom for me: to know, really know, that there are no heights or depths to which we can go where Truth has not gone before us; to dare to believe, with confidence, that no interpretation of scripture that frees the deep soul can be too good to be true.

CONVERSATIONS WITH JESUS: A POWERFUL DREAM

by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC



This past April I had what I would describe as a very powerful dream. I was standing in St. Peter's square in Rome. It was a misty, grey day. The square was packed with people. All around me people were chanting loudly: "the Pope is dead! Long live the Pope!" For some reason I felt cold and uncomfortable. Suddenly, a man with hippy-like hair and beard and dressed as an Arab, was standing beside me. To his left was a tall handsome dog. I remember that I

was astounded that he was not on a lead. In fact, he had no collar around his neck. He was a blue-merle collie just like our 'Jacques' had been. I stooped to ruffle his mane and in his excitement to greet me he wagged his tail furiously and began to bark, except that no sound came out of his throat. It was then that I knew that this was really Jacques, visiting from 'the other side.' As I realised this, I immediately stood up and looked searchingly into the eyes of the 'Arab' standing beside me. Seeing astonishment on my face and before I could get a word out, he said in a firm voice: "What are you doing here? Let the dead bury the dead."

"What do you mean," I blurted.

"You know what I mean," he responded. "I've told you before that the realm of God is within you. My Father is asking you to put your gifts to work, to be of service to all, but especially to those in greatest need."

"I want to," I stammered, "but I don't know how."

"Don't worry," he said, "it will be revealed to you. Let me tell you a story. There is a young man in Montreal of Jewish background like myself. From since he was a boy, the Spirit had prepared him for a special task and gifted him with practical intelligence, compassion and generosity. Five years ago he graduated with a degree in engineering. Soon after, without realizing consciously that he was responding to God's call, he decided to put his talents to work by helping the rural poor of Africa. Together with a colleague, he put together a non-governmental organization called 'Engineers Without Borders.' They prepare and send engineers to poor rural areas of Africa. They listen respectfully to their needs and they ask how they could be of help in resolving problems of poverty. For instance, they have developed simple treadle pumps that have enabled poor farmers to irrigate their fields in areas of little rainfall. The organization supplies the pumps and the know-how to farmers to operate and maintain the pumps themselves. There are already thousands of such

engineers working in some capacity for this organization, and they do an enormous amount of good."

At this point, Misha started barking at some cat howling in the back yard, and it woke me from a deep sleep. I usually have trouble remembering dreams, but this one was incredibly vivid. Not taking any chances, I got up right away and wrote down all that I could remember.

In mid-May I had another wonderful dream during which I and others were involved in founding and running an organization called: 'Ministry Without Borders.' I woke up totally excited and grateful. I hadn't really expected Jesus to send an answer this quickly.

Prayers for Peace

Hindu

Oh God, lead us from darkness to light.

Oh God, lead us from death to immortality.

May there be peace on earth.

May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all.

May all beneficent beings bring peace to us.

May all things be a source of peace to us.

And may thy peace itself bestow peace on all.

And may that peace come to me also.

Jewish

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the paths of the most high.

And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation - neither shall they learn war any more.

And none shall be afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

First Nations

O Great spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you;

To your messengers in the four winds, and

to Mother Earth who provides for your children.

Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other, so that they may grow with peace in mind.

Let us learn to share all good things that you provide for us on this Earth.

Theological Soapbox

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



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

In the first article of this series, which appeared two issues ago in *The Journal*, I made the following points:

When Christians make judgments

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? Is the action specifically commanded or forbidden by one of God's laws?

When spiritual benefits and harms, and consequences in the afterlife, are included in total of benefits and harms, the Christian can say that there is no contradiction between what is good or harmful for me, good or harmful for others, and God's laws. What is good for me will also be good for others and in accord with God's law; what is harmful for me will also be harmful for others and contrary to God's law. I will henceforth refer to this as the principle of congruence.

In the second article of this series, I claimed that the Biblical statements of God's laws are the human authors' interpretations of God's mind, and, therefore, they do not, because of human limitations, fully express the mind of God. As a result, our understanding of God's mind can change and grow. Furthermore, all Biblical statements of God's laws, with the exception of a few of the most general (e.g., love your neighbour, do good, avoid evil), admit of exceptions, the scope of which calls for the exercise of moral judgment. In consequence of these facts, one cannot justify a claim that a particular action is right or wrong simply on the basis that it accords with or contravenes a Biblical statement of God's law.

In this article I attempt to answer the question, on what basis do we judge a sexual act to be right or wrong? To say that something is right because I consider it right, or wrong because I consider it wrong, is to empty the concepts of right and wrong of all meaning. The history of moral philosophy is a succession of attempts to discover what the objective grounds for moral judgments are. I will not go into all the theories that have been propounded. I will simply present my view of what the objective grounds for moral judgments are. Readers may have a different view. I claim that moral judgments that are arrived at on the grounds I propose will be found to be in accord with moral judgments that people actually do make.

I begin with the observation that people have desires. We desire to have, experience, or possess certain things, and desire to avoid certain things. These desires may be instinctual (e.g., desires for food, rest, sex) or socially conditioned (e.g., desires for a large house, luxurious car, a high paying job) or spiritual (e.g., desires for inner peace,

altruistic love, communion with God). What they all have in common is that they are feelings, as opposed to conclusions arrived at by reasoning, and they arise within us spontaneously, without our choosing.

It is my contention that the satisfaction of desires provides the objective grounds for determining what benefits and harms us.

The degree of satisfaction we feel in obtaining what we desire, or the degree of pain we feel when we experience something which we desire to avoid, varies depending on the desires involved. Because every individual knows his or her desires, satisfactions, and pains better than anyone else, no other person or group of persons is as well equipped as the individual to determine what desires must be fulfilled or not fulfilled, if the individual is to feel satisfaction or pain. If one's doing a particular action satisfies a desire, this counts as objective evidence that the action will be to one's benefit. What one desires and what will satisfy those desires can be determined objectively.

We have conflicting desires. A person may desire sex with someone other than his spouse. He may also desire to keep the promise of sexual fidelity that he made to his spouse. If the pain of breaking his promise outweighs the satisfaction of extramarital sex, then the only choice that leaves the person feeling more satisfaction than pain is the choice to be faithful. The evidence supports the judgment that having extramarital sex will harm him. Furthermore, the person must consider how his spouse will be benefited or harmed by his having extramarital sex. If he judges that his spouse will be harmed, then, in accordance with the principle of congruence (see above), he must infer that having extramarital sex will harm him as well.

Consider the case of a couple deciding whether to engage in premarital sex. Through the use of an oral contraceptive, the risk of pregnancy is negligible. The man has determined that having sex will bring him more satisfaction than pain, but he knows by the principle of congruence that having sex will not benefit him if it does not benefit the woman. The woman has determined that having sex will bring her more satisfaction than pain, but she knows that having sex will not benefit her if it does not benefit the man. So what evidence do each of them have as to whether having sex will benefit his or her partner? If the woman honestly assures the man that sex will bring her satisfaction, this counts as evidence for the man that sex will benefit her. If the man honestly assures the woman that sex will bring him satisfaction, this counts as evidence for the woman that sex will benefit him.

If the couple are Christian the only remaining consideration is whether sex will violate God's law. If they subject the Biblical and traditional Christian attitude toward premarital sex to critical analysis, they are likely to conclude that the main reason for the moral condemnation of premarital sex was the economic and social consequences of unwanted pregnancies. With the development of safe and effective contraceptives, the traditional condemnation is put into question, and cannot outweigh the evidence they have, based on the satisfaction that sex will bring them, that having sex will be beneficial for them.

This is exactly the moral judgment that people are making today. It will soon be the case, if it is not already the case, that

most people in North America and Europe will have sex before marriage. And most of these feel that they are not doing anything wrong.

I am not saying that individuals never make mistakes in their moral judgments about their sexual actions. They do. I claim only that no one knows better than the individuals involved the objective grounds for determining the morality of a sexual act.

In conclusion, I maintain that Christian sexual morality is objective and depends on three things: (1) the satisfaction of desires, (2) God's law, (3) the principle of congruence.

It does not follow, as some might think, that this version of sexual morality will lead people to have sex with complete abandon. People have many more desires than the desire for sex. Many of these desires cannot be satisfied if sexual desire is always indulged. Making moral judgments requires that one weigh all one's conflicting desires against one another in order to determine what will truly be satisfactory. The principle of congruence requires that one take into account how others will be benefited or harmed by one's actions. Christians must bring their understanding of God's mind into the judgment as well. Doing all of this requires self-knowledge, honest communication with others, and the ability to foresee the probable outcomes of one's actions and to weigh the satisfactions and pains associated with various combinations of outcomes.

A certain level of maturity is required of those who would take this approach to moral decision making.

Nor does this morality preclude society's making laws restricting the freedom of minors to engage in sex. While some minors might have the maturity to make moral judgments regarding sex, their right to do so may be limited in order to protect other minors who do not have this maturity.

It is my contention that before the end of the twenty-first century most mainline Christian churches will accept the following as a basic principle of sexual morality: all voluntary sexual acts involving one or more people are permissible, as long as each participant, on objective grounds, judges the act not to be harmful to anyone.

The chief historical cause of this development in sexual morality within mainline Christianity is democracy's recognition of the capacity of individuals to determine what is best for themselves. With the availability of convenient, safe and effective contraception, we can expect that far more Christians than in the past will come to the conclusion that premarital and other forms of consensual sex are more beneficial than harmful.

Book Review

by *Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON*



The Priest Who Couldn't Cheat: Life Beyond the Roman Collar

By *Hank Mattimore (Mequon, WI: Caritas Communications, 2004) xi, 129pp. paperback; \$14.95 USD*

I was initially drawn to this book by three things: the intriguing title The Priest Who

Couldn't Cheat, the fact that the author Hank Mattimore belonged to the same religious order—the Oblates of Mary Immaculate—as I did, he to an American province, and I to a Canadian province; and my meeting and chatting with him at the Corpus USA Conference in 2004.

Hank Mattimore is the youngest of five children in a family of four boys and one girl. Following his attendance at Catholic schools in Buffalo and a junior seminary in Newport, New York, he then takes us into his year in the Oblate novitiate in Ipswich, Mass., six years in the seminary in Washington, DC, and his ordination there in 1961. After a year of pastoral training, he volunteered to serve as a missionary in Japan, and spent the next six years there. He then returned to the United States where he worked in a parish in an Afro-American neighborhood of St. Petersburg, Florida, whence he decided to take a six months leave of absence from his duties, and eventually resign as an active priest.

This story is told in thirty-four short chapters and a page-long epilogue. The chapters are really vignettes from Mattimore's life as seen in five stages that make up the main divisions of the book. The vignettes are straightforward, honest and at times humorous, and provide insight into the life of a man who was formed to be and worked as a priest in the 1950s and 60s, all critical years in the history of the modern priesthood—years that included the Second Vatican Council.

While the book is Mattimore's own story, it is also the story of his family, his relatives, his schoolmates, his fellow seminarians and priests, and the people he worked with in Japan and Florida. And while it contains no extended analysis of the Church and its problems in those crucial years, it does present pointed commentary on many issues that concern contemporary Catholics, including the Church's attitude toward sex, the training of priests, clerical celibacy, the Church's missionary activity, the role of dogma and belief in the life of a Catholic, and even the relation between clerical celibacy and the current sexual abuse crisis. Detailed commentary on these issues he leaves to others, including his readers, who can draw their own conclusions about the Church and the priesthood in the modern world.

Mattimore is not harshly condemnatory of the Church; he tells his own story and how he felt the need to move on after ten years in the priesthood. Yet the one incident that stands out occurs when he announced his decision to take a leave of absence to the bishop of St. Petersburg. He was dismissed with a curt, "Pack your things and go. The sooner the better" without even a handshake, and with a final directive: "And Father Mattimore, do me a favor and do not tell your

Book Review Continued...

parishioners that you are leaving." (p. 117) It would be nice to think that bishops no longer take this inhuman approach to their priests even when they "leave."

Nor is there acrimony towards the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who, he says in his dedication of the book, "taught me to have compassion for the poor and marginalized." Yet it would be interesting to know how his Oblate superiors accepted the news of his leaving compared to the cruel dismissal by his bishop.

The book contains a Reader's Group Guide for Discussion, and it encourages readers to participate in Book Club discussions with the author. For this purpose it even gives the author's telephone number (707-544-3763) and email address (hmattimore@yahoo.com). It may be ordered by writing to: Caritas Communications; 5526 W. Elmhurst Drive; Suite 101; Mequon, WI; USA 53092-2010, or by emailing: dgawlik@wi.rr.com.

MISSIVE FROM A WOW 2005 PLANNER

By Virginia Lafond, Co-chair, WOW 2005 Host Committee

"A Celebration of Women's Call to a Renewed Priesthood in the Catholic Church," the theme of WOW 2001, is one aspect of the famous Dublin conference that impressed me deeply. Besides that and the fact that I was actually at WOW 2001 with six other Canadians, what also stands out in my memory's store is the question I posed to myself while there. The question was: what in heaven's name are you – you who discern no call to ordained priesthood – doing here? Rather swiftly and pretty certainly Spirit-filled, the answer was to play out over the course of these last four years.

As many of you now already know, the **Second International Ecumenical Women's Ordination Worldwide Conference (WOW 2005)** will take place at Carleton University, in Ottawa, from July 22 – 24, 2005. Under its title "Breaking Silence, Breaking Bread: Christ calls Women to Lead," participants from all over the planet will be gathering to consider the rightful place of women in Christian churches and also to continue planning to effect changes to the status quo.

I have been a WOW 2005 planner ever since the Ottawa Chapter of Canada's Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE) was asked if we would take the torch from the Irish group, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, which successfully convened the first international conference of WOW in 2001. From its beginning, WOW 2005's Host Committee has been ecumenical. We were pleased that many volunteers from various Christian denominations enthusiastically came forward early on. For the past year and when the planning group had become well beyond-ordinary-living-room-size, we have held our meetings in City View United Church thanks to Reverend Whit Strong, City View's pastor. As well, some members of CNWE outside of Ottawa have also joined in the effort. The members of Corpus (National Capital Region) have agreed to take on the key responsibility of providing hospitality. Many thanks.

"Hands-down exciting!" is how a friend of mine rightly described the WOW 2005 program. Picture this: some coming to WOW 2005 will have arrived straight off the Witness Wagon that has been traveling through the eastern United States throughout the week before. The Witness Wagoners will disembark at the Statue of the Famous Five on Parliament Hill. After a reception, tireless justice worker and renowned former mayor of Ottawa, **Marion Dewar**, will address the conference. Immediately following, **Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**, ecclesial feminist theologian, will give her keynote entitled "We are Church: A Kingdom of Priests." On Saturday morning, we'll be hearing from the

second keynote speaker who is none other than **Rosemary Radford Ruether**. "The Church as Community of Liberation from Patriarchy: Ministry as Praxis of Discipleship of Equals" is her title.

Besides entertainment and liturgical celebrations, WOW 2005 will be offering still more. Nearly forty workshops/panels appear on the program. These range from **Dorothy Irvin's** "Women Priests and Bishops in the Early Church: the Archaeological Documentation" and **Mary Schaefer's** "The Modes of Christ's Active Presence in the Liturgy" to **John N.**

Collins' "Inescapable Connections between New Testament Diakonia, Women and Ordination" and **Ida Raming's** "Ordination *Contra Legem* – A Way to Overcome Discrimination Against Women in the Roman Catholic Church?" As far as the many workshops/panels go, that, as they say, is the good news! The bad news? WOW 2005 participants must choose only two. Never mind! Many will be available on tape.

For those of you who have already registered, may I, on behalf of the Host Committee, extend an early word of "Welcome!" For those of you who have still to make your plans, we ask you to consider coming. Yes, it is fairly expensive but necessarily so. (Women's various positions in patriarchal Christian churches have left us with little or no seed money, and certainly no slush funds to offer reduced subscription costs.) If you absolutely can't make it, would you consider donating to WOW 2005 or to the Travel Fund? (The Travel Fund is attempting to provide the wherewithal for some women to come to WOW 2005 from impoverished countries.)

The address for WOW 2005 donations: WOW 2005, PO BOX 38009, RPO Rideauview, Ottawa ON K2C 3Y7.

The address for Travel Fund donations: Danielle Whissell, 2194 Josephine Street, Sudbury ON P3A 2N2.

Cheques should be made out to: WOW 2005.

Finally, would you all, fellow Corpus members, please join us in prayer not only that WOW 2005 be successful for those who attend but that WOW 2005 be successful beyond itself. Like you, I, as a Corpus member, live in hope for the day when married priests can exercise their priesthood actively in the Catholic Church. I trust that all of us as Corpus members are also living for the day when women have long since had to face the pervasively present sinful/patriarchal obstacles to respond to their calls to priesthood. On this Pentecost Sunday as I finish this missive, I pray the Spirit indeed lights her fire in each of us and uses it as She wills, especially as we approach WOW 2005!

Priests in Love: Roman Catholic Clergy & their Intimate Friendships by Jane Anderson, Yakamia, Australia, ISBN 0-8264-1702-7



Fr. Andrew P. Connolly of the Diocese of Rockville Centre writes an excellent review of Priests in Love in the National Catholic Reporter, May 20, '05 issue. He writes:

“Jane Anderson has done the Catholic church a great service with her book. She has won the confidence of a significant number of priests, especially of priests in love. This confidence allows them to speak to the church through her book in a way that has not been done before, at least to my knowledge. She brings into the discussion about priestly celibacy

the voices of priests bound by a law of celibacy but conflicted by the human experience of love. She offers these priests anonymity to facilitate their speaking the truth of their experiences to the whole church, a large part of which is not yet ready to listen to their stories.

Their stories are profoundly sad and dancingly happy, constricting and gloriously liberating, generating both despair and hope for the future of the Catholic priesthood and the church... The author is critical of the hierarchy for a patriarchal style of governance and a rigidity and narrowness that stifle the Spirit. The refusal to discuss publicly the many issues surrounding mandatory celibacy is producing a malaise and a discontent that ultimately harms the church.”

In seven chapters with a prologue, conclusion and a personal postscript, Anderson allows priests with friends (her name for priests with lovers) to tell their stories. It is hard to put the book down once you have begun. You will often want to recommend others to read it, and you will also hope that bishops will listen to these stories and take

them to heart.

The following are some excerpts from the Conclusion:

Compulsory celibacy is not just about a priest being denied a sexually intimate friendship. Rather, celibacy is a complex practice that goes to the heart of who and what we are in the church today.

It is about the pope and the curia trying to maintain a particular way of being church that they arbitrarily consider timeless, and therefore of God. In their attempt to transcend sexuality, they communicate the priority of their version of spirituality over and above everything in the world, a world they are highly critical of. Yet these church authorities find it difficult to commend or even understand everyday dimensions of life, where ordinary people live out their faith...

Some priests with friends try to merge the idea of being an effective priest in a committed friendship, a social fusion that they express in public...

Many friends of priests know that their relationships help those whom they love to maintain their integrity, and in fact make them better priests. Nonetheless, in the church, they remain subordinated by their gender or sexual orientation, and as a group they remain officially nonexistent and socially pressured to keep their relationships hidden. Often friends of priests endure enormous hardship, the degree of which is yet to be recognized and acknowledged....

Anderson writes a well researched book from a depth of family and parish involvement. In the Preface, she writes “Over the past ten years, I have listened to approximately fifty priests who have had the faith and courage to share their experiences of celibacy and sexually intimate friendships, despite the fear and hostility they expect to endure.”

Priests in Love is recommended by Donald Cozzens, Richard Sipe, and Paul Collins.

Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC

Celibacy: Public Dignity, Private Turmoil by Jane Anderson

Tom fell in love with Anna. Theirs was a sweet romance, filled with engaging conversation, a sense of fun, feelings of tenderness and intimate affection. Tom and Anna were given a gift of love that celebrated the good news of their humanity.

It lasted a year before the brakes of their circumstance were applied. Those twelve months ended in a bittersweet farewell. Anna moved on, leaving Tom to consider his priesthood.

Fr. Tom's story is not unique. Behind the façade of compulsory celibacy, bishops and priests experience celibacy in a variety of ways. For some, celibacy is a way of loving that produces generosity of service and maturity of heart. For others, celibacy is an unwelcomed imposition that restricts the ability to minister and live life to the full. Then there are men, like Fr. Tom, who fall in love. The law, however, ensures that they and their troubled confreres continue to publicly dignify celibacy, while experiencing private turmoil.

Yet such turmoil is not restricted to reluctant celibates and priests in

love, it can affect those who experience celibacy as a charism. These bishops and priests, in seeing good priests suffer the burden of compulsory celibacy, feel concern for their confreres.

On the other side of the façade, lay people are equally affected by compulsory celibacy, whether they know it or not. For the phenomenon of unfulfilled priests and concerned confreres has a direct consequence for their lives and the community at large.

First, let us consider some aspects of compulsory celibacy that create difficulty for the clergy. This imposition demands inflexible social and personal boundaries that control adult relationships, limit experience and contort feelings. As a result, bishops and priests can find it difficult to stand on their own two feet, be in touch with their feelings, and act out of their personal convictions. More specifically, the obligation to celibacy cannot but help repress the exploration of sexuality and adult growth and development.

In forbidding dissent, the upper hierarchy restricts the possibility of open discussion, leaving each and every bishop and priest to work out his celibacy and sexuality for himself. That private

search often leads to unique ways of dealing with these issues, some of which are not life giving. The continual stream of media reports about sexual abuse evidence this to some extent: news that adds to parish tales about priests resorting to the celibacy vaccine (alcohol), gambling, other distractions and having casual affairs. But the testament remains the same: some, if not many, bishops and priests endure hardship with celibacy.

Additionally, bishops and priests, regardless of whether they realise contentment with celibacy or not, are confined by the all-male, celibate clerical culture. This culture prevents these men from formally and publicly exploring questions about sexual intimacy, man-woman relationships, sexual orientation, and the moral goodness of sexuality. They and their confreres are limited to speaking about celibacy and sexuality in socially acceptable and superficial ways.

A priesthood that cannot openly address contemporary questions about sexuality inevitably hampers the faith journey of laypeople. These pilgrims often have to negotiate various relationships in which one or more of the following may be involved: premarital sex, extramarital sex, contraception, abortion, family life, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, the role of women in the Church and society, their ordination to the priesthood, clerical celibacy and the male monopoly of leadership.

Meanwhile, laypeople listen to homilies that reduce relational complexities to the demands of an anachronistic patriarchy. Ancient rhetoric is unable to answer such questions as: When should I leave this desperately unhappy marriage? How can I tell my mother about my lesbian daughter? When is the right time to move in with my lover? How can I persuade my partner to do his fair share of domestic chores? Is it better to marry after or before our baby is born? Significant numbers of Catholics in the pews subsequently re-examine certainties, switch off, or leave. Moreover, most Catholics wouldn't even think to ask priests for advice on these matters.

Then there are lay Catholics who are searching for a contemporary spirituality in which sexuality is not regarded as a distraction but an important component in their holistic search. These people seek a religion that advocates and celebrates sexuality as a part of God's design. As for younger Catholics - except for those who have a fundamentalist inclination - the idea that women and those with a homosexual orientation should be discriminated against is increasingly considered unjust. The idea that priests are not allowed to marry is also implausible. Civil society with its educational and legal institutions have socialised younger generations in ways that advocate sexual egalitarianism, an attitude that these progressive Catholics have integrated into their religious and moral beliefs.

Nevertheless, the gulf between clergy and laypeople may not be as great as what seems apparent. Behind the façade of compulsory celibacy, some bishops and priests are exploring sexuality in ways that are similar to that of lay pilgrims. These clergy attempt to advocate the equality of all people, and appropriately minister to those who experience sexual complexities in their relationships. Some of these bishops and priests may also recognize that patriarchy does not adequately meet their own needs and desires. Often following sincere attempts at honouring the practice of celibacy, and having usually suffered in the process, these clerics may find a special friendship that provides mutual companionship, sexual intimacy and faithful

commitment.

Entrusting oneself to such a friendship while staying in the priesthood is not easy. These clerics must go through an arduous and lonely conversion that demands the renegotiation of former promises to celibacy and the priesthood, and finding different understandings that accommodate their participation in the Sacraments. They must also engage with broader religious and social change while skillfully resisting the expectations of a powerful church hierarchy and conservative parishioners who maintain fixed ideas about personal and social relationships.

Along the way, these clergy encounter major moral dilemmas and renegotiate their identity as priests. There is also a need to create strategies that counter Catholic stereotypes, imposed by a defensive and controlling Church. Yet this arduous and often lengthy quest can lead these clerics to the belief that their friendships are both moral and divinely blessed.

Such a search also bears fruit for other Catholics. Bishops and priests who have established loving and deeply committed relationships, despite the hostile circumstances, have made valuable discoveries about faith and humanity, spirituality and sexuality. Their knowledge and experience provides a valuable albeit untapped resource for our Church.

There is a sequel to Fr. Tom and Anna's story. Several years later, Tom developed an illness that required considerable care. Anna returned to look after him, which she did with much tenderness. They then decided to stay together, she living in a neighbouring parish while he continued to minister. Over the years, each helped the other in their lives and ministries, while confirming the commitment to their relationship through sexual love. That love also bears a good harvest for those in their parishes.

However, the assistant priest has just reported Fr. Tom's "affair" to the bishop, an action that leaves those concerned - and we, the readers - with a question: What will happen? Perhaps you might also ask: What can we do?

In recent decades, compulsory celibacy has caused considerable grief and concern, directly and indirectly, to clerics and laypeople. Now, then, is the favourable time, the right time to listen, the day to help, and the moment to raise your voice for reform (2 Cor 6:2).

When Faith is Lived

I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. But when it is lived it becomes self-propagating.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

CLERICAL CELIBACY

by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

Amid the recognition of the proper humility by which a member of another faith gives advice to his Christian brethren, I must sound off on what I feel is the greatest issue confronting Catholicism, namely, the issue of clerical celibacy. Religion is, above all else, about the family. It's about a man and a woman practicing love to each other in a Godly framework, and bringing children into the world that will lead a Godly life and continue in the pathways of the religious tradition. All this is contradicted when the very leaders of the Church are not allowed to marry or have children themselves. As we try and create a society where women are respected by men, where the fairer sex are treated as beings that domesticate and civilize men, what message does it send that those who run the Church can live without a woman? How can a Priest properly convey to his flock that sexuality can be sanctified and that love is holy, when it appears as though he must remove himself from the possible corruption of a physical relationship since he is wholly consecrated to G-d? Will young boys learn to respect and venerate women if he never witnesses the dignified affection between a Priest and his bride? Is a good woman not a conduit, rather than an impediment, to G-d? And is it not unrealistic, not to mention inhumane, to ask a man who wants to serve G-d and the community with all his heart to go through life without a companion, to know only the external love of congregants rather than the intimate love of a soul-mate? Is it fair to ask a man to have no real home, no real warmth by which to be nurtured, to give and give but to never receive? It has been my honor to have been a Rabbi since the tender age of 21. The Rabbinate is my life's calling, being a teacher of Judaism and Biblical values my highest passion. But I declare unequivocally that if the pursuit of this calling had forced me to give up marriage or the possibility of children, I would never have considered it in the first place. I could not bare the loneliness or the cruelty of a life in which my most private self could never be shared, where my deepest self could never be known. And I would have been angry at G-d for having demanded so ungodly a sacrifice. And if my communal responsibilities began to seriously interfere with the health of my marriage or my availability to my children, then I would have to curtail those responsibilities and put my family first. I realize that this is one of the arguments as to why Priests should not marry, so that they may focus all their energies on their communities. But when you have a family you are given ever greater energies. When you have children you learn a far deeper form of love than you ever thought possible. And then you can share that with your congregants.

Amid all the coverage on the death of Pope John Paul II, and the commentary on the global outpouring of grief occasioned by his passing, almost no one commented on the tragedy of this great man having no immediate family members present at the time of his illness or demise. He was mourned as a Pope, as an institution, as a warm and caring leader. But he was not mourned as a man, as a husband, as a grandfather. One can only imagine, and commiserate with, the extreme loneliness of the Pope as he suffered through illness without the gentle touch of a wife, or the warm embrace of his own child, to give him the intimate caring that only family can provide.

And can Catholicism really hope to grow in the West if Priests are not allowed to marry? I refer not only to the terrible dearth of Priests in Europe, the sharp decline caused primarily by most young men's refusal to embrace clerical celibacy. Indeed, as the NY Times recently reported,

in all of France last year, only 90 priests were ordained, compared with 566 in 1966. But I refer even more to the inability of a celibate priest to really impact on a community. When a Priest cannot have a family that invites congregants in to see a living example of a faith-based family unit, his effectiveness as a spiritual leader is severely compromised. As a Rabbi I know that the best way to bring people into the faith is to have them over to your home, to share with them a warm family dinner, to have them interact with your kids and show them that the religious life is one suffused with abundant and infinite blessing. In the Jewish religion a Rabbi who doesn't open his home to his community is sure to fail at his vocation. He is much more successful laughing with congregants over a warm meal than delivering even his best sermon from the pulpit. The principal forum for religion is not the Church of the Synagogue, but the home, the place where spiritual values can be married with everyday living. But Catholicism deprives itself of the ability to directly impact on congregants by denying Priests real homes to which they can invite their flock. I also believe that clerical celibacy is the factor that was most responsible for the pedophile Priest scandal, but not for the reasons you've already heard. It's not that Priests are denied sex, and therefore act out in an aberrant fashion, a silly argument which suggests that sexual violence is a product of sexual denial. Less so is it a function of the Priesthood attracting pedophiles in the first place who think that the clerical orders will cure them of their dangerous predisposition, another silly argument which in reality is a disguised and unjust attack against Catholicism. Rather, I believe the issue is that since Catholicism insists that priests not marry, a priest is forced to interact with children as an individual rather than as the head of a household, as a person rather than as a family man. As such, these attachments become too personal and too close. As a Rabbi, when I counsel couples, women, or even kids, it is almost always done at my home, where my wife and kids are present, even though they may not be in the room at the time of the counseling. Hence, there is a general family atmosphere, and the person who comes to see me gets to know the family just as they get to know me. But a priest has no such environment and the counseling he offers women and children is therefore always between two individuals rather than between a family and an individual. There is no wife to protect the Priest from attachments that grow too intimate. As the world's most populous religion, the health of Catholicism directly impacts the health of every other religion. And it is therefore my sincere hope that Pope Benedict XVI will succeed where the great Pope John Paul II did not, namely, in reviving Church attendance and affiliation in the great democracies of the West. He can begin by tackling the issue of clerical celibacy head on.

François Brassard will represent Corpus Canada at the International Congress in Germany in September.

News From Joe in Guadeloupe

by Joe Gubbels, Edmonton, AB



I know what it is like to receive letters from traveling people. I wish you were all here with me to experience a different life style and wonderful people. I'll try to keep this short, but you know how I am, always in the thick of things.

Today is May 20, 2005. The temperature right now at 6:15 is 32C in my apartment. I get up between 5:00 and 6:00 as I go to bed between 19:30 and 20:30 each night. By 21:00 95% of the apartments have their

lights out. People go to bed early here and rise early. The bakery opens at 6:30.

Luckily I have air conditioning in my bedroom. I keep it at 25C and spend most of my time in there while studying French. During the day I perspire like a horse sweats. It is just like olden days working in old man Baron's greenhouse planting irises. I just put the thermometer outside on the balcony in the direct sunlight. It registered 49C. After 5 weeks, I'm already down one notch on my belt, so the heat has its advantages.

The food is quite different. After we feed the students (between 50 and 60 each day), we eat the same food. I also get invited out to eat with the people from time to time. I wrote to some of you on a post card what I have eaten at times with my eyes closed. I have eaten, at different times, pig tail and pig snout à la bean soup. I thought eating moose nose with the Crees was strange. I must say though, that tail and snout did taste a little like pig. Other than this we have eaten a lot of fish, chicken, turkey and other stuff that I haven't figured out what it is. Also, we eat a lot of tropical fruit, especially, coconut and drink its water fresh out of the coconut.

We are kept quite busy as a volunteer at *Secour Catholique* (Catholic Social Services). Secour Catholique is part of Caritas in France. It is a large organization like Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace in Canada. There are about 15 different outlets in Guadeloupe. I work out of the central office in Pointe à Pitre. This is great for me, as I go with the other volunteers to deliver and pick up all kinds of things for the other outlets.

I generally work 6 hours a day. My position is assistant janitor, as I was assigned to work with the janitor. I help him with everything from keeping the building clean; changing light bulbs; receiving donations of clothes (tons of shoes); separating the good stuff and turfing the bad and bugs, so the women volunteers can examine, fold and sort for easy access; provide security when the people come in to receive donations (some people are not too healthy and make unreasonable demands on

the women who distribute the goods). We send bags of clothes to a charitable organization in Cuba. One of the major tasks is to prepare the tables for the student lunch and clean up after. The kids are great. They all try to speak English with me. We do a lot of laughing together.

In spite of the seriousness of our job, we have a good time and have fun together. The volunteers wouldn't come, if they didn't enjoy the time together. I look forward to each day. Yve, mon chef (boss), is a real character. He is actually from Haiti. In his patois/creole English he always tells me: "You do pety good work for a whitemán in dis things". It's hilarious. He's about half my size and black as the ace of spades. I trudge around behind him carrying the fluorescents, broom and whatever. The people look at us and wonder.

My French is coming along, slowly. I study about 2 hours a day (most days). I can ask a lot of questions, but it is difficult to understand what the people are saying. Eye contact is pretty hard, when one doesn't know what they are talking about. I say a lot of "wee, wee, wee's", and repeat a word here and there that I recognize; 'maison, femme, rhum,' etc., but get in trouble when they ask me a question. Then I have to say, "lentement, s'il vous plait." After about 5 minutes, I begin to know what they are talking about. But, the people are very patient with me – merci le bon Seigneur.

Check out the following hyperlink, <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/gp.htm>, if you want to see a map of Guadeloupe. So far, I've pretty well covered the major spots on the two main islands of Guadeloupe (Grande-Terre and Basse-Terre). I still have to visit the volcano at La Soufrière and scuba diving at ilets de Pigeon. I already took a day trip with a family to the island of La Désirade (part of Guadeloupe). The waves (Atlantic Ocean) were huge – somewhat like between Powell River and Comox at a bad time). But there is lots to see and experience and I only have 5 more week-ends to see it all.

The 'rhum' is good here. It is just like a good Scotch, but a lot cheaper. It costs €6 euros for a 1 litre bottle of 50% Damoiseau Rhum. The Creole drink is called a Ti-Punch (small glass with a squeezed lime-half and a teaspoon of sugar – one pours in the amount of rum to one's taste). I must say that I'm getting used to drinking/sipping it. It sure stimulates a good appetite.

Well, it is time to get back to work. I may get fired.

Peter's Pence

Sing a song of Peter's Pence, a pocket full of 'Why?'
All the pretty cardinals baked in a pie.
When the pie is ready, the 'birds' begin to sing.
Isn't it an awful thing to set before the King?
One is in the praying house praying for the others;
One is in the garden consulting with his brothers;
All are in procession dressed in fancy clothes;
Splendid antiquity, very good for shows.

Chris Diamond



In late March of this year, Connie and I were contacted by Bill Manseau of Corpus USA, who serves as the Dean of the M.Div. Program for Global Ministries University, an on-line university for theological studies. He asked us if we would serve as Sacramental Mentors for a candidate on Vancouver Island who is a member of Catholic Network for Women's Equality and who will be the first Canadian woman to be ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. We heartily agreed. And thus has begun an exciting adventure for us all.

We have met several times now with Michele Birch-Conery as she pursues her studies in preparation for her ordination in July after the Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW) Conference in Ottawa. She was ordained to the diaconate last June on a ship on the Danube in international waters (and thus free from Canonical territorial restrictions). This is the same place where Gisela Forster and Christine-Mayr Lumetzberger were ordained to the priesthood a few years earlier, and later secretly ordained as bishops by Catholic bishops 'in good standing.' I mention this because it is these two women bishops who will ordain Michele and seven other women to the priesthood on a boat in international waters near Gananoque, Ontario.

Michele is now a part of our mid-island Corpus family, and she made a wonderful contribution to our discussion at our last gathering. The topic was "50 ways to improve women's lives in the Church." After an initial exchange, Michele suggested that one important way would be to put an end to efforts to define who women are. The wisdom of this remark became clear with further discussion. Indeed, traditional definitions of women as 'brides of Christ' or as distinct from men by

their 'complementary' attributes, have subverted the freedom and equality (Galatians) of women in the Church. In fact, the historical treatment of women in the Church is contrary to the radical egalitarian treatment of women that Jesus practised during his ministry. In this regard we agreed that the best way to improve women's lives in the Church was to return to our source and to become true 'followers of the Way.'

At the end of our meeting we prayed as we normally do, but in a special way we prayed that the Spirit might guide and strengthen Michele as she pursues her prophetic journey. We left our gathering on a great high that evening.

Biography

Michele Birch-Conery, M.F.A., Creative Writing and Ph.D. in English Literature is a published poet and a feminist literary critic writing in an experimental genre she calls "Inclusive Discourse." She is an educator at North Island College, a multi-campus community reaching people in rural areas of Vancouver Island. Since 1990, she has taught Canadian and Women's Literature, Global Perspectives and Issues in Women's Health in Women's Studies. From 1963 to 1974, she studied and taught with the Sisters of the Holy Names in Oregon and Washington. Their progressive vision for the Church and their commitment to social justice which flow from their charisma in education for social justice influences her ministry. Dr Birch-Conery is a feminist activist now working with Women Elders in Action on pension reform. She lives in Parksville, BC.

michelebirchconery@shaw.ca

Michelle Birch Conery

Ordained womandeacon 2004 womanpriest 2005

The exact roots of Christian thinking on celibacy are difficult to determine; many diverse influences seem to enter the picture:

1. Paul's "There are some who are eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven."
2. Dedicated virgins who were pledged to celibate life;
3. A depreciation of the bodily and material;
4. Old Testament Levitical legislation indicating a relationship of sexuality with the sacred;
5. Theory of asceticism that sexuality imprisons man's bodiliness;
6. Socio-economic situation of the clergy.

(For the full text see "Ministry to Word and Sacrament" by Bernard Cooke, Fortress Press p.545.)

ALPHAMEGA OF MANITOBA REPORT

by Neil Parado, Winnepeg, MB

GREETINGS to all:

At our March 17th meeting at the residence of Len and Adeline, Normand Blondin gave a beautiful critique of the book entitled *Course in Miracles*. And at our April 21st meeting of Alphamega Len rendered a summary of Betty Eadie's book entitled *Embraced by the Light* with the simple message of love: *We are to love one another. We are to be kind, to be tolerant, to give generous service.*

TO BE CELIBATE OR NOT TO BE CELIBATE!

The R.C. priest today who chooses to remain celibate may be in conflict with his unconscious orientation to be non-celibate; thus, he will remain unintegrated. But, if he chooses, honorably, to follow his orientation, he is less christian in the eyes of present papal discipline.

Leonard E. Schmidt

Whether or not there is an acute shortage of celibate priests, optional celibacy is the only alternative. The Alphamega group of Manitoba prays for authentic tradition in this matter.

Neil Parado

THE PILTDOWN MAN STORY

by Dan Driscol, Goa, India



The 'discovery', in England of 'an ape-like fossil ancestral to modern humans' was first reported in 1912, amid great national rejoicing. The fossil was assigned the genus designation '*Eoanthropus* -- Dawn Man', and the species-name of '*Homo Dawsoni*' after Charles Dawson, an amateur naturalist. It is

said that *Knighthood* was conferred on at least two prominent English academics as reward for expertise applied to the identification of those ancient remains. But increasingly, over time, anthropological controversy about Piltdown Man developed, persisted, and finally prevailed and in 1953 scientific analysis conclusively proved it to be a forgery.

As you may recall from your 'Jesuit History' the 'Society' was suppressed (yet another time) in France in the early 1900's. French Jesuit houses of formation were relocated to the Channel Island of Jersey and to mainland Britain. A member of the Society has written of a laughable scenario, when a band of 'hikers' in all manner of ill-fitting secular dress (scrounged up to replace clerical garb) arrived at a Channel Port for the crossing. Everyone knew the '*incognitos*' were French Jesuits enroute to their new location, but none would be so ill natured as to make any issue of it. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who was then a young Jesuit Seminarian, was one of that 'hiking party'.

The young Teilhard (usually pronounced, with the French intonation, 'Tayaar') had a great penchant for 'rocks' and 'durable things', as is well known from his biographers and from his personal reminiscences. He was fascinated by all the disciplines relating to geology, archeology, etc., and his choice of emphasis for Post-graduate University studies was in that field. Soon he was riding his bicycle from the Jesuit House of Studies in *Hastings* over to where a newfound amateur-naturalist friend by name Charles Dawson was engaged in pursuit of old bones at *Piltdown*, a digging site near there.

It would seem that Dawson was quite a unique character - a combination of jovial enthusiasm, wit, and with perhaps a mischievous twinkle in the eye hinting at an amateur's contempt for much of the academic posturing that prevailed among 'professionals' of the time. The young Teilhard may have been quite in awe of him, and it was no secret that they were often in each other's company. They shared enthusiasm about 'Piltdown', and Teilhard in a letter to a friend told of being 'taken to the site', and of 'the wealth of fossil remains' that might be found there. In the 'time-frame' this would have been circa 1910. The Piltdown Man '*find*' made International headlines in 1912. By 1915 Teilhard had been drafted by the French Military and posted for service with a Medical Corps unit to the battlefield, an experience that inspired some of his best writing (*Writings in Time of War*, Collins, 1968). Dawson died in 1915; I presume that Dawson himself 'discovered the pre-hominid skull', the same which he had with great patience and considerable skill 'modified' a couple of years earlier with expertly filed-down teeth from an ape fossil delicately fitted into their new space; but

my own reading has not gone so far as to know details about the actual circumstances of 'the find'. This could be crucial to final judgments in the matter because it may well be that Dawson's intention was to temporarily embarrass some erstwhile colleagues--but then his own fatal illness intervened. The precise identity of the one who actually made the find would be an important aspect of any further research, before rushing to judgment about Dawson's ultimate motivation. How much, if anything at all, Teilhard knew of the 'trickster-role' played by Dawson in the affair, no one may ever know; but conspiracy theories abounded in scientific and academic circles concerning Piltdown; suggestions were made that Dawson 'had not acted alone', and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's name began to appear in critical scientific literature. For reasons that I still cannot fully understand Teilhard had more than a normal share of vicious critics. There is a 'Professor Zainer' (a very 'heavy-duty' English academic) who seems to have linked the thinking of T. de Chardin in with excesses of the 'flower children' of the sixties. The immensely popular British columnist Kenneth Tynan is said to have targeted him as a favorite 'whipping boy', and is quoted as having been 'merciless with the hapless Teilhard de Chardin'. Part of it, I suppose, would have been a carry-over from the old '*Creationist- Evolutionist Debates*'; the Scientists criticized him for 'speaking for science' (Zainer), and Theologians couldn't abide the evolutionary spin he had given to theological speculation. His problems with the Vatican began with denial of tenure at the Institute of Paris, and transfer (by order of his Jesuit Superiors) to a field of operations in China, certainly because of reservations about his 'orthodoxy' (c. 1924). He remained in China for twenty-three years where he did outstanding work, particularly in respect to identification of the 'Peking Man' fossil, for which he is credited as 'co-discoverer'. But on his return to Europe from China in the mid-forties he was to find that opposition from Rome was now even more implacable, particularly in respect to publication of his writings. Having narrowly escaped being included on '*the Index of Forbidden Books*', publication of his works was arranged through intervention by loyal friends among the laity only after his death. If it were today the, media would probably crucify him on the Piltdown business alone, if for no better reason than that it would sell a lot of 'media product'. I still have a set of three audiocassettes (now of very poor quality) recorded off-air in 1983, of a three-program radio series about Teilhard, done for the CBC by Michael Higgins of the old St. Jerome's College, now integrated with the U. of Waterloo. Many prominent academics and interesting people were interviewed, among them Richard Leakey the Kenyan Anthropologist. Leakey was asked for comment concerning Teilhard and 'the Piltdown affair', and I may say that his response was very much as I would think of it myself. Leakey spoke in a manner of 'amused and forgiving tolerance'. "Yes, he was pretty well convinced that Teilhard may have known something about what Dawson was up to" - and then Leakey goes on to explain the very human aspect of it all. Teilhard was not much more than a boy at the time, a youthful admirer who had been let in on an academic joke that would later

Pitldown Man Continued...

get out of control and go sadly wrong. By the time Teilhard was discharged from the French Army Dawson had himself died, and Teilhard upon completion of his Doctorate was about to assume the Chair of Paleontology at the Institute of Paris. By the time the hoax element was revealed (in 1953 nearly forty years later) Teilhard was within two years of his own death (from a heart attack in New York City where he had been given *Emeritus* status by the Wenner Gren Foundation). The point that Leakey makes is, in my opinion, this: 'What good would have been achieved by Teilhard's going into this complex business upon his return from the War? It would have written *finis* to his academic career for no just reason, and surely he had enough difficulties of an academic and professional nature to contend with as it was'. So, in Leakey's sympathetic view, the rational thing for Teilhard to have done was simply to 'let bygones be bygones' - to forget about it, and keep moving on. I would be in substantial agreement with Leakey's view. But what impresses me about this 'Pitldown aspect' of the Teilhard story is the burden that the man may have had to bear, through a whole lifetime, because of some wiseacre's silly prank; this, in addition to the several other difficulties, which as one biographer relates 'would often be cause for him to 'break down in spells of uncontrollable weeping.' To me it is a really poignant *human-interest story*, and I tend to think of him as one of the 'Martyrs' of our century just completed, in addition of course to undoubted status (even if unofficial) as 'a modern Doctor of the Church'.

It is recorded somewhere that when Teilhard died in New York (at 'afternoon tea' with friends on Easter Sunday--the day on which he is

said to have 'wished to die'), his body was laid out in the Jesuit House chapel awaiting funeral arrangements; practically no one in that large Jesuit Community had the faintest idea of who the deceased was, other than "that French priest who was doing research at the nearby *Wenner Gren*', and staying here". I have read that one mourner only followed the hearse to the Jesuit Cemetery sixty miles north of downtown NYC---a woman, carrying a floral bouquet. And I have read, but cannot now cite a reference, that the marker-stone on the grave had his name misspelled. Morris West's novel, *Shoes of the Fisherman*, included the character of a '*Fr. Telemond*', who was in the opinion of a literary reviewer, 'a thinly disguised fictional counterpart for the Jesuit scientist and mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin'. West's novel, which was for some time on best-seller lists following its release, was versioned as a film under direction of Michael Anderson in 1968, but despite a cast including Anthony Quinn, Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud it was given, justifiably, a 'turkey rating' by *The Martin and Porter Film Guide*; quote: "*boring film about an enthusiastic Pope who tries single-handedly to stop nuclear war, starvation and world strife.*" 'Pere Telemond', played by Olivier, is the Jesuit priest-philosopher who in the novel is depicted as having deep discussions with 'Pope Kiril' (Quinn) as a close friend, while on an unofficial, and highly irregular, 'houseguest visit' to the papal apartments.

Essay

by Dermot Lane, Ireland

The following is excerpted from an excellent essay by Dermot A. Lane in "Religion and Politics in Ireland at the turn of the millennium" by James P. Mackey and Enda McDonagh. Fr. Lane is the Parish Priest of Balally in Dublin, the author of books on theology, and the President of the Mater Dei Institute of Education.

Probably the most important development of Vatican II was a change in outlook and this can be summed up in terms of a new openness to the world. The church began to see itself as that reality which exists in the world and for the world. This new attitude is captured in a series of shifts that could be described in terms of a movement from anathema to dialogue, from isolation to solidarity, from opposition to conversation, and from being a subculture within society to entering into a real dialogue with modernity. A new way of doing theology begins to come into being which embraces for the first time the importance of human experience, acknowledges the emergence of a historical consciousness, and recognizes the reality of pluralism.

Vatican II, for those who read the internal history of the council, was a qualified success over the monolithic neo-scholastic approach to theology. There is a clear shift from a deductive-scholastic theology to an inductive-personalist theology. For example the Constitution on Revelation sees revelation no longer as a series of propositional statements about God but as an account of God's personal self-communication to the world in history, especially in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Further, the council sought to

overcome the dualism that existed heretofore between nature and grace that was so strong in the neo-scholastic manuals of theology. In addition, the mission of the church was perceived in more unified terms as embracing a religious dimension as well as a temporal aspect in terms of renewing the secular order. Consequently the role of the church in the world is to scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the gospel. It is within this larger context that we can better appreciate what happened at Vatican II in the area of justice...

[However], in 1979 John Paul II took over... [His] social encyclicals are a return to a non-historical deductive methodology and seek to work out universal principles of justice for application within the local Christian community...

At present there are two different conceptions of Christianity vying with each other. There is the self-understanding of the church as a community of interpretation dedicated to guarding a body of truths handed down from revelation and tradition. This body of truths is often referred to as the deposit of faith, though there is some confusion as to what constitutes the deposit of faith as distinct from secondary cultural accretions to the faith. This understanding of Christianity sees faith primarily as an intellectual assent to a body of truths given in revelation.

In contrast there is also an understanding of Christianity which sees the church as a community of praxis, dedicated to the

Essay Continued...

continuation of the ministry of Jesus in the world today in the name of the coming reign of God... This understanding sees faith embracing a praxis of justice and liberation that effects an ongoing process of personal conversion and social transformation... Personal experience and the praxis of liberation in the name of the gospel are regarded as sources of theological knowledge and truth. According to this point of view, revelation is understood as the personal self-communication of God in history, with particular reference to the normative character of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for understanding revelation today.

At present there is a serious separation of theory and praxis within the

life of the church. The current standoff between a non-historical deductive approach and a historically conscious inductivist methodology in matters of faith and justice is a source of tension... damaging the credibility of the church in a variety of areas which range from social justice to liturgy, from ministry to the exercise of authority, and from Christian identity to the meaning of religious pluralism.

An echo of this tension can be heard in recent exchanges between (Cardinals) Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper over the relationship between the universal and the local church.

Hank's Story

by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA

I'm tooling down the interstate in my bright red Dodge Colt. It's December 1971. "Yippee!" I sing out to the open road. In the trunk of my car, deep in the luggage, underneath two pair of pants, some cutoffs and my one sport coat, lies a black clerical shirt with a worn white collar attached and a pair of black pants. Symbols of my ten years as a priest, I had brought them along "just in case" I changed my mind and decided to go back to the ranks of the clergy. Officially, I am on a six months leave of absence from the priesthood but my gut is telling me that I'm never going back. I'm driving from Florida to San Francisco. Just me. I have a little over a thousand dollars to my name, a car that's half paid for and an M.A. in education. I'm 36 years old and about to start a new life.

The first time I was conscious of beginning a new life, I was just a teenager." A recent graduate of Fallon High School in Buffalo, I was entering the junior seminary of the Oblates Of Mary Immaculate. For the next nine years, as I progressed through the novitiate and the major seminary in Washington, D.C., my life would be spent in a clerical and religious cocoon. No sex; no women; no money; no decisions. The seminary bells governed our life. The bells summoned us at 5:30 in the morning and reminded us to turn off the lights at 10 P.M. They told us when to go to class, when to eat, when to pray. We wore the same garb, the long black cassock and collar; ate the same food and followed the same schedule. Looking back, it was eerie the way we sort of ghost walked through those seminary years, asking no questions, absorbing, like human sponges, whatever we were taught. While young men our age were starting careers and families, our growth as human beings came to a stand still. While our contemporaries wrestled with paying the rent, we had oreo cookies and milk breaks.

At the time, it didn't dawn on me that I was living in a twilight zone kind of existence. I felt privileged to be studying for the priesthood and if living in a society without woman, isolated from the world around us, is what it took to become a priest, hey, I was ready. My Catholic family back in Buffalo, N.Y was proud of me, my Dad and siblings honored to have a member of the family in the seminary. I felt special, one of only a very few chosen by God to serve Him. Besides, there was this camaraderie among us, which made our very restricted life style, bearable. We were, after all, young and idealistic, our dreams as big as the world. Like some kind of Roman collar marines, we sort of got off on putting up with the sacrifice of living this very restricted (and celibate) life.

Upon ordination, I volunteered to go to Japan, where I embarked with

the zeal of a St. Francis Xavier to convert the "pagans" of Japan to the one, true faith. It didn't take me long to discover that the Japanese were not particularly interested in learning about my Jesus. Little by little, I began to sense that God is bigger than our Christian dogmas. Six years later I returned to the United States, spectacularly unsuccessful as a convert maker and beginning to question my own faith.

I was supposed to return to Japan after a few months' furlough but found myself in 1968 in a country in turmoil. There were racial riots, the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and a nation at war with itself over the Vietnam War. I volunteered to remain at home and work in an inner city parish in St. Petersburg, FL. While in St. Pete, I started a Day Care Center for disadvantaged kids, two group homes for boys, an interracial summer camp and, for the first time as a priest, felt that I was accomplishing something with my life.

What was missing for me and what the clerical priesthood would not allow was the human dimension. I was now 36 years old and, despite my accomplishments, was feeling lonely and unfulfilled. I craved intimacy, a woman with whom to share my life, a family. I hungered for the touch of another human being. It was no longer enough to be a "father." I wanted to be a Dad to my own children.

Years later, friends of mine tell me "Wow! It must have taken a lot of courage to leave the priesthood after all those years." To which I reply, "The truth is, I didn't know what I was getting into." I pretty much knew what I didn't want. I wasn't at all sure what I wanted. In those days, I may have had the veneer of a grown up man but I was still a boy. I had never written a check or slept with a woman. I knew nothing of the world of work or how to hunt for an apartment or what food cost or how to go about getting myself launched into a life so dramatically different from the clerical life I had lived for eighteen years. I felt alternately scared and happy, fearful of the future and confident that I was doing the right thing. Recently, in writing my recollections of my days in the priesthood, I referred to the drive I took from Florida to San Francisco as my "Freedom Drive." Not a bad title.

Blessedly, I had no idea of the adjustment that lay before me. I knew no one in San Francisco, neither family nor friends. I chose to go to the west coast on a whim. On my way back from

Hank's Story Continued...

the six years I had spent as a missionary priest in Japan, I stopped in the "City By the Bay" and was charmed by it. I guess that I wanted to be as far away from St. Petersburg as I could to make a fresh start. What hadn't occurred to me was that I was a popular and successful priest in St. Petersburg. In going from a community where everyone knew me, from a position of respect and status, to being a single, unemployed thirty something newcomer in a strange city was going to be a challenge.

For the first week or so, I played out my adolescent fantasies. After securing a studio apartment in San Francisco, I headed down to Broadway where Carol Doda was doing her bare breast act and the "Green Door" was showing at one of the movie theaters. I recall leaving a strip show where a young college girl gyrated nude on a platform while a handful of lonely men devoured her body with their eyes. The experience left me feeling dirty and persuaded me that spectator sex was not going to fulfill my craving for intimacy with a woman.

Within two weeks of leaving the priesthood, I met Lillian at a support group for former priests and nuns called "Next Step." Far from a nun, Lillian was a 26 year old vivacious, slightly nutsy Jewish atheist, who helped facilitate groups for Next Step. I went out with Lillian, my first date since my senior year in high school. Two weeks later, this sex starved, very immature priest moved in with my Jewish atheist girl friend. Six months later we were married and within a year had the first of our two kids.

I think my brother married priests will concur that there are few transitions in life more challenging than entering into a committed relationship with a woman after a life of celibacy. Sex was only part of it. I was woefully unprepared to live that closely with another person. My training for the priesthood did not include a course on "Living intimately with a woman." The earthy details were one thing. Good grief! The first time I walked into our shared bathroom and found a bra and panties hanging on the shower door, I knew my life style was forever changed. That small stuff I could deal with but meeting the emotional needs of another person in my life, day in and day out, was more difficult. I wanted her sexually but was not ready to be open to her needs. I had a lot of growing up to do. The celibate life may give you the freedom to be of service to people but there is no guarantee that it won't leave you a dried-up old bachelor sealed off from the joy and the pain of intimacy with another human being.

I soon discovered that if I felt stretched by living intimately with my wife, bringing up kids and the responsibility of providing for a family, stretched me even more. I felt I was being dragged kicking and screaming out of my adolescence, at the tender age of 36. There were consolations. No, much more than "consolations." Being present at the birth of my two kids was a peak experience. Being a Dad to my son and daughter brought out a side of me that had been hidden all those years of being only a "Father." My love for my kids was, and is, "a love that is more than a love." If I should die penniless, the experience of fathering children will always make me feel a very wealthy man.

To my sorrow, my wife of almost 20 years filed for divorce back in 1992. I regretted it deeply and still, especially for the sake of my kids, wish with all my heart that it had never happened. I went through a very dark night. A little voice kept whispering in my ear, "Hey, Hank. You blew it again didn't you? First, you bail out on your priesthood. Now you fail in your marriage. Can't you do anything right?"

If there was a silver lining to this painful experience, it did bring me face

to face with the God I had left during my years with Lillian. Little by little, I began to rediscover my lost faith. I reconnected with the Oblates at a reunion they sponsored for their former members. It felt good to see some of my oldest and best friends again. In time, I found myself volunteering to help launch a lay associates program for the Oblates and, for a brief moment, even considered returning to the Oblates and the priesthood.

Then, at a support group for persons newly divorced or widowed, I met Kathleen. In time, I knew I had found a best friend, a soul mate, and a person with whom I wanted to share my life. Still, I hesitated, wanting to be sure, when, of course, we both knew that you can never be sure. Finally, we decided to go for it. For our wedding ceremony, we invited Harry Feldmann, a fellow Oblate and former classmate to officiate. He and his wife, Madeline, came out to California for the wedding. Another new beginning.

It's been over thirty years since I heard a person's confession or celebrated Mass or given a sermon in church. The white collar and black clerical shirt that I packed in the trunk of my little Dodge Colt have long since disappeared. Yet, sometimes I wonder if the oils of ordination still remain moist on my hands. Reflecting on my work life since leaving the clerical priesthood, I realize that my entire career has been in the human services. I have been the Director of a community services organization and a Senior Center. I was on the staff of an agency that served people living with AIDS and facilitated support groups for the families of people afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease. I have mentored teen-age boys and taught literacy to people in jail. In so many ways, I may have left my Roman collar behind me but not my priesthood.

This past summer, I joined up with three guys on the golf course; all of them complete strangers, to make up a foursome. We're sitting on the bench at the sixth tee waiting to tee off, when, out of the blue, one of the golfers says to me "Are you a priest?" Surprised, I look at him for a moment. "No, but I used to be a long time ago. How did you know?" He replies, "Oh, I don't know. There's just something about you."

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Granda's Age

Little Johnny asked: "Granda, how old are you?"

Granda answered: "39 and holding. Johnny thought for a moment and then asked: "How old would you be if you let go?"



Corpus Canada

Who Are We?

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

Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to

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

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

How Do We Get There?

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

Corpus Canada 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

(see box at lower right)

Chris Diamond

(see page 2 column one)

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: schmidt1@TOTAL.NET

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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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