



The Journal



Fall 2005

The Bakery Shop

by Thomas R. Haney

"This is the bread that comes down from heaven..." Jn 6:41-51

There's a bakery shop
in the middle of the block
that sits like a rusty can
amid porcelain treasures.
If you slow down your busy steps
you can smell the rich aroma
pouring out of the little man's doughy thurible.
He says "It's Italian bread" but
there's always a wink and a smile.
He whispers the price like words of consecration
and delivers the loaves like communion.

Down the street there's a little church
newly renovated
but aged with debt.
There's a little man there too
who's preoccupied with bread.
"It's flesh," he claims, "for the life
of the world" and there's no
wink, smile, no conviction,
no price except that sweaty debt.

And, Lord, where is your sacrament?
My faith tells me it's in your church
but I keep going back to the bakery.

Outside the bakery,
I hear friendship calling across
the air waves of a honking horn

and know You are here.
I see love in little eyes drawing
a bead on a caterpillar which
taxis confidently
in its holding pattern
And know You are here.

I sit across from a smile whose
laser beam of affirmation
disintegrates my social anxiety
and know You are here—
and I want to celebrate!

So I gather the sights, sounds and smells
the smiles and feelings
all the flesh of my world
where I experience You.

I bring these gifts,
my flesh-enlivened world
and celebrate my experience of You
in broken bread and living wine
and the bakery and the church are one,
the sacrament is complete.

from *Today's Spirituality: The Jesus Story*
Revisited
(Thomas More Press, 1990)

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The Journal welcomes submissions from small faith communities and individuals that share its vision of the Christian Church as one in which all are equal, decisions are made by consensus, healthy relationships are nurtured, justice is done, and the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

All submissions to the Journal must be received by February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

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See the back page for further details.

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Kristos and Corpus Vancouver Island members extended sympathy and prayers to Tony and Edith Gvora on the recent death of Tony's mother, Julia. Tony and Edith wrote the following to us:

*We express our deepest gratitude for your caring and your prayers at this time of our loss, the passing of Julia Gvora. Prior to her death, she requested a service at the Franciscan Friary in Victoria where she had been nourished spiritually for nine years. With our Appreciation and Love
Tony & Edith Gvora*

FOCUS TOPIC

for the Winter 2006 Issue

I am a cafeteria Catholic and proud of it! What's on your menu for spiritual nourishment? If your background is from another faith community and you pick and choose, tell us about it.

Note Articles for this issue are due by February 15.

HOW MY EXPERIENCE OF KEATS' ODE ON A GRECIAN URN NURTURED MY SPIRIT
by Jim Noonan, Ottawa, ON



The theme of Keats's famous poem is the search for permanence and the eternal in a world of change and flux. It is a search that all of us have felt in our own lives as we long for the continuation and prolongation of experiences, objects, and people who have meant much to us.

For Keats this longing was expressed in Ode on a Grecian Urn, a short poem of only fifty lines, arranged in five stanzas of ten lines each. In it he reflects on how all the things he saw on the urn depicting people and events in a small town in Greece were immortalized by the very fact that they were caught in this work of art at a particular moment in time—the men, the women, the gods, the timbrels, the leaves, the townspeople, the melodies, the piper, the sacrificial animal, the altar, the young lovers.

The idea of stopping the onslaught of time was very close to Keats as he wrote this poem in May, 1919, two years before his death in Rome from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five. The same disease had already killed his mother and his brother. As one reads this and his other great odes, we see that he found in art the permanence he could not find in life.

Standing out among the figures on the urn are the young lovers Keats refers to several times. No doubt he anticipated when he wrote the poem the loss he and his love Fanny Brawne would feel when the time came for his own separation from her in death. So he finds consolation in the lovers he sees on the urn and immortalizes them in the poem as they were already immortalized on the urn:

*Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love and she be fair! (ll. 17-20)*

The lovers on the urn are caught in an unfulfilled kiss, a disappointment many of us have felt in life. But for Keats the consolation of their being frozen at this moment in time at the apex of their youth and beauty more than offsets the disappointment of the failed kiss. Their youth and beauty will remain since “Forever wilt thou love and she be fair!”

Keats's final reflection on the permanence bestowed by art and the creative imagination is contained in the last four lines of the poem. They are addressed to the urn itself:

*When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,”—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.
(ll. 46-50)*

Here again is the keen awareness of the ravages of time and the toll of suffering in life, but there is also the triumphant declaration about the truth of life in the memorable phrase “Beauty is truth, truth beauty.”

This phrase has been much discussed, and has been interpreted in many different ways. Here is my take on what Keats is saying: Only when something is grasped in all its particularity, which is its beauty, is it truly known. The greatest expression of the beauty of something is not an abstract concept but its incarnation in art, whether it be in pottery, sculpture, music, poetry, painting, fiction, drama, or dance. Hence Keats can say, with the emphasis on the last word, “truth is beauty”.

The response to the unchangeable beauty of art in whatever form it appears is love, and this beauty remains for us to cherish even as we change and grow old. Grasping things in all their beauty and particularity one comes as close as one can on this earth to understanding what reality is. It is for this reason “that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

We might add that that is all we will know in heaven as well if we accept the description of eternal bliss as described in the letter of St. John: “We shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) Our knowledge and love of God will be based, not on abstractions about Him, but on the experience of Him in His fullness. We shall understand the truth of God because we shall see the beauty of God.

Art, in a Grecian urn, or in a poem about a Grecian urn, is a foretaste of that fullness we will enjoy when we see the beauty and truth of God. But art is only a foretaste, though it is, outside of love itself, probably the finest foretaste we will have on earth of the joy that awaits us in heaven. For now, even in a great work of art, “we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, then we shall see face to face.” (1 Cor. 13:12) And the result of that seeing will be perfect love, just as all beauty evokes a response of love.

I, for one, am grateful to Keats in his Ode on a Grecian Urn for helping me appreciate what eternity and the vision of God mean. Its beauty has truly touched me and nurtured my spirit.

-Full text of poem on page 20-

PUT AWAY THE LOLLIPOP

by John Palardy, Calgary, AB



“Put away the lollipop”. A very good friend, Monsignor Tom Dentici of Carbondale, Colorado, spoke the above quote to me. After several moments of quiet reflection on those words I realized that what Tom was saying to me is that we need to have a deep and constant faith without the crutches provided by external trappings. Tom was responding to my enthusiastic description of peering through the eyepiece and seeing the light of day manufactured some millions of years ago coming from a distant galaxy. You see, for my retirement, my wife Joan gave me an eight-inch reflector telescope that I have taken out doors on clear and cool evenings to peer at the stars.

The artist of the star show is no less than the Father of all creation. The tool for the depiction was a computer connected to a digital camera that in turn was attached to a deep space telescope. (Be assured this was not my equipment.) This may sound like a flight into the science of astronomy rather than faith but not for me. Was it not a deeply religious experience for Abram to look up, and be told by Yahweh that he will be the father of a great nation, more numerous than the stars of the sky? At that time Abram had no idea of how vast and numerous the heaven truly is.

If the psalmist, and the sight by Jesus seeing the lilies of the field result in them commenting on nature, and finding therein inspiration for another view of the divine, can I not also look at nature and marvel at the richness of creation? I do not have the best of equipment or a scientific mind to push the bounds of human knowledge. Still I look and read about it and soak in the beauty and profound sense of wonder at what Yahweh has made.

Tom suggests that we need a simple faith based on the veracity of the scripture. I am not so easily persuaded. Maybe I am the real Thomas in this case. I do not read

Genesis and believe in a literal creation in seven days. In fact I still see the work of creation continuing all around me. I marvel at the gift of intelligence that has been given to this creature we call man. Humanity and specifically the principles of science have given us wondrous insight into both the macro and micro universe in an ever-expanding way.

There is a major debate raging in some states to the south of us over the controversy between evolution and intelligent design. Luckily for us as Catholics this does not pose a problem. We can accept the theory of evolution as verifiable science while still in faith holding belief in an almighty, conscious, power that sustains this infinite universe and all it contains.

When I consider the universe as presented by the likes of Stephen Hawkings, Charles Darwin, Einstein, Thiehard de Chardin as well as the writings of Bill Bryson it only makes me consider ever more the power behind it all. As I look upon the vastness of our universe and then compare it to what I know about my life and community it makes me wonder if there are other forms of higher life out there. I am not thinking of aliens from space but rather the potential for other forms of consciousness and intelligence.

We know that this universe also exists in a non material state; for sure spiritual forms do exist within the created universe because they are right here in you and me. For me it certainly is not a huge leap of intellect or faith to know, believe and accept that there is a wondrous unimaginable spiritual, life giving force right here that is behind this whole affair.

Tom may tell me to get rid of the lollipop but I say NO! I like the taste and the nourishment that I get when I lick that lollipop.

By the way for anyone who is curious the photo above is of: The Colliding Galaxies of NGC 520, the jumble of stars, gas, and dust that is NGC 520 is now thought to incorporate the remains of two separate galaxies. It lies about 100 million light-years distant.





For this month's Journal I'd like to share some thoughts on the Focus Topic: How I have been touched by Beauty through a work of art.

John O'Donohue says many beautiful things in his book, *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*.

He says, "To achieve a glimpse of inner beauty strengthens our sense of dignity and grace.

The glimpse enables

us; it helps awaken and refine our reverence for the intimate eternal that dwells in us". (p.56)

And again, "Only if there is beauty in us can we recognize beauty elsewhere".

One of my passions is the study and practice of healing for our bodies, minds, hearts, and spirits.

One of the works of art that has touched me is the beauty of wholeness in the human person. In rosy-cheeked babies and in the twinkling blue eyes of my 85 year old neighbor, in the strength of our muscles and the straightness of our bones, in the fleetness of a child and the grace of a matriarch. And in particular, in the dancing, swaying, ever-in-motion flow of the quantum particles that form our very being. I like to call it Quantum Beauty.

Everything about the life force, about the cosmic energy that informs everything and that is everything, is beautiful.

It is the source of health and sparkle and dance. When we interrupt its frequency rates, we become ill, and only when we restore the specified frequency level for each organ and tissue and cell, is health restored.

It is that direct. It is that unencumbered. It is that simple a praxis. The aspect of Quantum Beauty that totally does me in? That says it all for me? That leaves me breathless?

It is this: we, you and I, every single human being, is able to manage, direct, be in charge of the quantum life force that pervades and permeates us.

That is the same as saying that we can heal ourselves...of anything. The concept is breathtaking in its scope. Imagine being able to heal yourself of any and all sickness.

I'd like to share some of the latest information I've gathered about the body's ability to use its own energy frequencies to heal itself.

In the beginning of our history we had one method of healing our sickness, and that was prayer, to pray to the gods we knew. Then we began discovering the healing qualities of herbs, and added them to our arsenal. Slowly we learned how to use surgery for healing, and then chemicals and drugs. None of these tools has replaced another. We still can use any or all of them and it is wise to do so. Now

there is another tool that is being used and is gradually being incorporated into the medical profession, and that is the use of energy or frequency.

Dr. Ben Johnson explains that for awhile now medicine has been using energy for diagnosis and treatment. Some examples are: to break up kidney stones, do Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), which measures the resonant frequencies of the atoms in the different tissues, to use electrical frequencies to help bones heal, the use of x-rays to image other parts of the body, to use EEG to measure frequencies produced by the brain and EKG to measure those produced by the heart.

He also tells us that it is by sending out frequencies that the brain communicates to the rest of the body, certain frequencies for the white blood cell, different ones for a nerve or a muscle, etc.

We know that frequencies are there and the rate at which they are moving because we can measure them electronically.

In fact, you can purchase a gadget at an electronics store and measure the frequency of anything, your forehead, the chair, an apple, because all matter is made of moving, dancing particles of energy or frequency.

The bottom line is, we are huge energy/frequency generators. We are constantly generating frequencies. Every cell in our body generates frequency. When the rate of frequency is interrupted, usually by stress, the result is mental or emotional or spiritual or physical disease. That has been the premise, for more than 5000 years, of Eastern healing practice, and now the Western world is exploring and incorporating it into Western medical practices. We are creating the best of both worlds.

In the last half of the twentieth century and at this moment, scientists, physicists and cosmologists are discovering new uses for quantum physics. For example, our cell phone can send a picture to someone three thousand miles away in about ten seconds.

In the field of healing, it is because we are understanding, through quantum physics, what our body and mind and spirit are made of (energy particles), that we are breaking through to new ways of healing, and self-healing.

Dr. Alex Lloyd, founder of a self-healing system called *The Healing Codes*, says that the greatest minds of modern times predicted a healing breakthrough based on the body's own energy resources.

The following Nobel Laureates have made these observations about energy and energy healing:

- Albert Einstein, "All matter is energy".
- Semyon D. Kirlian, "All living organisms emit an energy field".
- Prof. Harold Burr, "The energy field starts it all".
- Prof. Murray Gell-Mann, "Body chemistry is governed by quantum cellular physics".
- Prof. William Tiller, "Future medicine will be based on controlling energy in the body".
- Dr. George Crile, "Diseases are to be diagnosed and prevented via energy field assessment".
- There are many therapies, often referred to as alternative methods, that effectively deal with energy healing. For example, Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, Tai Chi, TFT (Thought Field Energy), EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), Healing Touch, TAT (Tapas

Acupuncture Technique).

There is a great merging happening between Eastern and Western medicine. More and more, traditional practitioners and traditional practices are merging with alternative practices. I attended an EFT conference in Chicago a year ago and was thrilled to discover that at least 50% of those attending were from some branch of traditional medical practices, doctors, nurses, psychotherapists, psychologists, etc.

O'Donohue says, "Ultimately, beauty is a profound illumination of presence, a stirring of the invisible in visible form, and in order to receive this we need to cultivate a new style of approaching the world". (O'Donohue, p.23)

The following is a statement that offers a new style of approaching the world of our bodies and their health, and that confirms the inner power at work in us, stirring the invisible into visible form, stirring quantum health into physical form. It says: "You form your physical body at a deeply unconscious level with great discrimination, miraculous clarity, and intimate unconscious knowledge of each minute cell that composes it. All information is given to you and to your cells through these inner channels of knowing" (from *Seth Speaks!*).

I am profoundly touched by the Beauty that is this re-creative and restorative power, and that is also the very essence of our quantum universe and our quantum selves.

Sophia Wisdom:

Action Steps:

1. Love your body and its amazing ability to heal itself. Our bodies have an actual and real built-in healing program. They are programmed to heal and only wait for us to learn what the program commands are.

2. In order to feel more at home with your own unlimited potential to heal yourself by balancing and altering the rate of your body's frequencies, visit some websites that are leading the way in energy healing.

Example:

For EFT info:

www.emofree.com

www.bradyates.net

For The Healing Codes info:

www.thehealingcodes.com

For alternative practices in psychotherapy:

www.sandplay.info

For an example of how traditional and alternative medicine is working together to achieve whole person healing:

www.taraomagh.com

Tara is a beautiful healing centre located in Omagh, Ireland.

Reflection On The Poetry Of Joseph Mary Plunkett

by *Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC*

Joseph Mary Plunkett was born in Ireland on Nov. 21, 1887. He had tuberculosis as a child and lived in the Mediterranean area for many years where he became well versed in Arabic literature. When he returned to Ireland, he immersed himself in his Irish culture and Irish nationalism. He founded the Irish Theatre in 1914. He was one of the signers of the Proclamation of Irish Independence, and at age 28, he was executed in Kilmainham Gaol on May 4, 1916 for his part in the Easter Rising. He married Grace Gifford in prison on the night before his execution.

I recite lines from his many poems particularly when I am outdoors admiring God's creation.

I See His Blood Upon The Rose

I see his blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of his eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but his voice— and carven by his power
Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

The Spark

Because I know the spark
Of God has no eclipse,
Now Death and I embark
And sail into the dark
With laughter on our lips.

The Stars Sang In God's Garden

The stars sang in God's garden;
The stars are the birds of God;
The night-time is God's harvest,
Its fruits are the words of God.

A Wave Of The Sea

My soul's in the salt of the sea
In the weight of the wave
In the bubbles of foam
In the ways of the wind.
My gift is the depth of the sea
The strength of the wave
The lightness of foam
The speed of the wind.

A Modern Day Parable

by Ray Smith, Sidney, BC

The following is a true account of an experience I had back in 1989.

I was at the pinnacle of my career as president and ceo of a medium-size oil and gas exploration and production company. Based in Calgary, I was required to attend four corporate board meetings a year; two in Vancouver and two in Toronto. Vancouver was my preferred location and I always sought accommodation in the Bayshore Inn located in Coal Harbour and adjacent to Stanley Park. I was attracted to this hotel because of its location and unlike other downtown hotels I could open the windows and enjoy the sea air and the sound of seagulls in the morning. Usually, the board meetings were over in one day but on this occasion the agenda required a second day which gave me the pleasure of enjoying the Bayshore Inn for two nights.

In keeping with my Vancouver routine I planned my arrival from Calgary with sufficient daylight remaining so as to check into the hotel and then do a fast walk around the seawall bordering Stanley Park before dark. Having completed the loop, it was with a ravenous appetite that I proceeded to the cosy dining room and selected a booth close to where the pianist, bassist and violinist would soon perform. I was greeted by a pleasantly-smiling, forties-something waitress who recited the daily specials waiting patiently while I perused the menu, chose my dinner and selected an appropriate wine to which the waitress pronounced that I had indeed made excellent choices. (Later she would approve my dessert selection.) Perhaps because the dining was not particularly busy she was most attentive and during the course of the meal asked numerous questions "Where are you from? Do you come to Vancouver often? What do you do? How many children do you have? How long are you staying in Vancouver?" etc. So went the evening and as I left the dining room to retire to my room, I reflected on how the evening had indeed been an enjoyable experience thanks to good food, good music and a friendly, attentive waitress.

Following the board meeting next day I briefly returned to the hotel before proceeding to do my walk around the seawall this time going in the opposite direction for a change in scenery. This exercise completed, I headed for the hotel dining room and as I recall, selected the same booth I had the previous evening. To my delight, the same waitress was on duty. She approached my table, smiled and proceeded to recite the evening specials. After careful consideration I chose my

meal, the waitress remarked on the excellent choice I had made and then began a series of questions: "Where are you from? Do you come to Vancouver often? What do you do? How many children do you have? How long are you staying in Vancouver?" etc. To my consternation she showed not the slightest sign of recognition that she had seen me before. Should I have challenged her? Perhaps, but I was really too stunned to do so and with the food, music and attention less enchanting than on the previous occasion I did not dally long over dinner and retired to my room.

On the flight back to Calgary the following morning I reflected on my dining room experience. My waitress had developed a routine that undoubtedly helped to make her guests feel at home. Appreciative diners would be inclined to respond with a generous tip (I did- at least the first evening!). Here was a woman who no doubt had served at tables for many years; perhaps the routine had created a monotony that absorbed her being to the extent her actions lost all meaning. I felt very grateful -and perhaps a little smug- for my line of work where no two days were exactly alike. My days could be exhilarating, disappointing, occasionally dreadful, but never boring.

I had wanted to share this experience years ago but did not do so because the exercise seemed pointless and certainly depressing. Recently, however, I was awakened to the fact that there was a message here, that this story could be seen as a parable.

How often do we, myself included, participate in religious celebrations, repetitiously reciting creeds and liturgies that are out of touch with scientific discoveries that provide new understanding, including current cosmology and the concept of the Cosmic Christ? Rituals are important, but only if they are meaningful and draw us into closer communion with God. Repetitious recitation of words that no longer inspire and excite do not serve God or us well. Are we too, looking for a tip in the form of special dispensation? Have we lost the exhilaration that enabled the Psalmist to shout: "I will praise you Lord with all my heart!" "Sing a new song to the Lord!" "Praise God with shouts of joy, all people!" "Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving- go into its courts with praise!"

Quotes from a talk by Karen Armstrong at Transylvania University Notes from Paschal Baute

The Chinese rituals of politeness create their own sense of a holy place.

We must be the change we want to see in the world.

The Christian emphasis on Doctrine, Orthodoxy, is self-indulgent guesswork.

Fundamentalism is not orthodoxy, or right teaching, but a break with the past. It is rebellion against Modernity, a fear of and disappointment with Modern society. Fundamentalists form a sacred enclave to shut out the rest of the world. It is fear of contamination.

Tuesdays With Morrie

by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA

I find myself re-reading "Tuesdays With Morrie" for the third time. What a marvelous read! For those of you who have not read it, "Tuesdays With Morrie" is the story of an old professor dying of ALS, spending his Tuesdays with a former student, sharing with him some of life's great secrets. Despite his weakening condition, Morrie takes time to talk, not only to the young man, but to many other people who come to the old man's house with their problems.

At one point in the book, the dying man asks his former student, "Why do you think it's important for me to listen to other people's problems? Don't I have enough pain and suffering of my own?" He answers his own question. "Of course I do, but giving to other people is what makes me feel ALIVE. When I give my time, when I can make someone smile after he was feeling sad, it's as close to healthy as I ever feel."

I think most of us, as we age, can relate to Morrie's desire to feel ALIVE. We go to fitness centers or buy new clothes so we can look better. We leave the house and go on a trip to get out of our rut. We rearrange the furniture or plant a garden or get ourselves a tummy tuck so we can demonstrate to ourselves and to others that we may be old but we're not dead. All these behaviors are very natural and perhaps helpful,

but I suspect that none of them are as effective as Morrie's formula for feeling really alive, giving to other people.

It's hardly a new idea. Who has not been touched by the Prayer of St. Francis Assisi.... the one that goes "It is in giving that we receive, in loving that we are loved etc." But we forget, get preoccupied with ourselves and our own issues. We're afraid to give of ourselves lest someone take advantage of us.

I recall talking to a recently retired man a while back who admitted to me that he was bored with life. I suggested to him that he consider volunteering. "Oh, no, not me," he said emphatically. "Whatever I do, I want to get paid for." He preferred being bored to, in his words, "being a sucker and working for nothing."

I don't think Morrie thought he was being taken advantage of by people who looked for his counsel, even as he was dying. Morrie was wise enough to know that he needed them as much as they needed him. We are built that way, we human beings. Despite our illusion of independence, we need one another. We need to give and to receive. The magic happens when the two become one.

Book Review by *François Brassard* *The Oyster Speaks, The Chemainus Writers*

In this beautifully compiled collection of short fiction and poems we glimpse the writing of four very diverse writers. They bring a broad cross section of outlooks and writing approaches to this highly readable anthology.

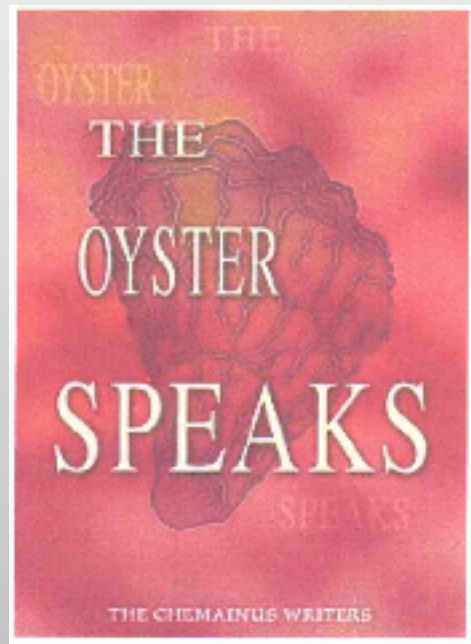
Each contributor has come to creating with words through other artistic mediums. Bernice Ramsdin Firth sees life in stone. Together with her word portraits she has contributed the line drawings that enhance the pages of *The Oyster Speaks*. Liz Maxwell Forbes chronicles our lives and reports our journeys in community newspapers. Tom Masters writes through the lens of television while bringing a journalist's sensibility to fiction. Connie Kurtenbach hears music in the words that form her poems and direct her fiction.

The Oyster Speaks is the kind of book you want to pick up, let linger in your hand, keep on your shelves, revisit and give to friends.

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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN IRENAEUS

by Dr. Michael Zarb, Cobble Hill, BC



Irenaeus (originally from Smyrna c.140-202) was an elder in the congregation of Lyons who became its leader after the death of Pothinus. He went to Rome to carry to Eleutherius, a christian leader in Rome, a letter concerning the Montanistic troubles and was one of the principal combatants against the Gnostics. His major extant writing is *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge falsely so-called* commonly known as *Adversus Haereses* (AH), extant in a Latin translation, together with some sections in the original Greek. Its composition, in instalments, is usually dated ca.180, based on the succession lists in which the author names Eleutherius (ca.174-ca.189) as current leader of the congregation of Rome [AH 3.3.3]. Another complete extant work is the *Demonstration (Proof) of the Apostolic Preaching*. This was written at the earliest after *Adversus Haereses*, to which reference is made in chap.99. An Armenian version was discovered in 1904.

Eusebius (ca.263-339) is the principal source for our knowledge of the lost works of Irenaeus which include at least the treatises *On the Ogdoad* and *Concerning Knowledge* and letters *On Schism* (to Blastus) and *On the Monarchy [of God]* (to Florinus; Eus. Hist. Eccl. 5.20.1), as well as the full text of the letter to Victor [c.188-198]. Some other fragments sometimes attributed to Irenaeus are suspect.

Leadership— *Episkopos* and *Presbuteros*

Still, at the time of Irenaeus, the leadership nomenclature had not yet acquired definite connotation and usage. Irenaeus calls Polycarp indifferently '*episkopos*' [in AH 3.3.4] and '*presbuteros*' in his letter to Florinus [Epist. ad Florin. in Eus. HE 5.20.7]; that is, he uses interchangeably the terms 'overseer/superintendent' and 'elder' and, which is even more significant, in a formal letter to Victor (one of the prominent leaders of the Roman community and whom later tradition would elevate to 'pope'; from the circumstances of the case,

Irenaeus would be the least likely to omit any form of right or courtesy) Irenaeus speaks of Victor's predecessors by name as '*presbuteroi*': "Among these were the elders (*presbuteroi*) before Soter, who presided over the community which you now rule. We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus (or Sixtus)" [Epist. ad Victor. in Eus. HE 5.24].

So in Eusebius' writings these leaders were known as '*presbuteroi*' (elders) and not '*episkopoi*' and surely not 'popes,' a title derived from the Greek *papas*, a child's word for father and an appellation not yet found in the literature of this period applied to anyone in the Christian communities; perhaps they still respected the Gospel injunction in Mt 23.9, "And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven."

These leaders, although respected as the administrators of the community were not considered irreproachable or infallible; according to Eusebius, Irenaeus and other *episkopoi* disagreed with and rejected Victor's ruling regarding the cutting off from the common unity of certain communities of Asia over the issue of the celebration of Easter. Eusebius describes the attitude of other leaders thus, "But this did not please all the *episkopoi*. And they besought him to consider the things of peace, and of neighbourly unity and love." Their extant words sharply rebuke Victor. Among them was Irenaeus, who, sending letters in the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, maintained that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be observed only on the Lord's day. He fittingly admonishes Victor that he should not cut off "whole communities of God who observe the tradition of an ancient custom" [Eus. HE 5.24]. Note the terminology of Eusebius: the *episkopoi* 'sharply rebuke' Victor and Irenaeus 'fittingly admonishes' him. Even Eusebius, writing in the 4th century when the church hierarchy was receiving full imperial power and authority, seems to agree that Victor had no right to 'excommunicate' other communities, and he does not add any title to Victor (who is 'Pope' according to later Roman Catholic tradition). This clearly indicates that in this period there was no 'Pope', neither in function nor office nor title yet invented. These *episkopoi*, including Irenaeus, did not recognise any special authority or power 'to bind and loose' transmitted in succession from Peter. Eusebius too did not mention any appeal by Victor to his supposed special authority based on the Petrine commission of Mt 16.18f.

This circumstance would have been the most appropriate opportunity to invoke the Petrine authority had it existed. At this time there was no hierarchical organization among the different communities. This took time to develop and it required the boost of imperial recognition to bestow upon the superior community the power to coerce the various other churches into an organised unity.

Further, Victor of Rome does not seem to have been very 'infallible' in his knowledge of and vigilance for the correct doctrine; in a fragment of a letter to him, preserved in a Syriac manuscript, Irenaeus advises Victor regarding the writings of Florinus in Rome, to "expel these writings from among you, as bringing disgrace upon you, since their author boasts himself to be one of your company." This indicates that within the congregation

supervised by Victor— the supposedly infallible ‘poppe’— there were elders who had different views and taught and published the divergent doctrines of the Gnostics and that the ‘orthodox’ groups, Gnostics, and others still mingled.

Elders

Several times Irenaeus writes of elders of old (without naming them) who were disciples of the apostles and who were responsible for the tradition of the doctrine from the apostles, and thus he speaks of the succession of elders [AH 2. 22.5; 3. 2.2; 3. 21.3,4; 5. 5.1; 5. 20.2; 5. 33.3; 5. 36.1]. They should be obeyed [AH 4. 26.2]. Several times he also mentions individual elders, without disclosing their names, as sources of the tradition [AH 1. 15.6; 4. 27.1; 4. 30.1; 4. 31.1; 4. 32.1]. Unfortunately this militates against his reliability; it seems more likely he didn’t have real names because these elders were fictitious. No one bases the evidence of an argument on a statement such as, ‘I heard a preacher say so,’ and expects to be taken seriously, certainly not in a treatise endeavouring to establish the veracity of the doctrine.

The Latin translator of Irenaeus translating *presbuteros* by *senior* may indicate that the term *presbyter* had not yet entered the Latin language to denote a specific ecclesiastical title but that the Greek term was also still used and understood in the sense of ‘elder’ as used and understood by members of non-Christian associations.

Since Irenaeus does not deal with administrative officers as such, the *diakonoi* are not his concern; he mentions Stephen [AH 3. 12.10; cf. AH 1.26.3; AH 4.15.1] and in an anecdote mentions ‘one of our servers’ without naming him [AH 1. 13.5].

Priests

Irenaeus does not make any point of a christian priesthood; it is non-existent for him despite his insistence on and championing of the apostolic succession. Except for the general priesthood of the community, no sacerdotal authority or any type of priestly power is mentioned. Besides references to Old and New Testament Jewish priests and pagan ones, he uses the word twice in relation to the ‘heretics.’ He calls the Simonian leaders (perhaps sarcastically) “the mystic priests” [AH 1. 23.4] and he figuratively describes Menander “the father and the high priest of that doctrine” [AH 3. 4.3].

Like several writers before him he believes in the priesthood of Christ; in order to represent Jesus as priest, Irenaeus grabs any sacerdotal feature he could find and applies it symbolically and allegorically to the character of Christ e.g. the priesthood of Zacharias in Luke [AH 3. 11.8]; the healing of the sick, the propitiating for men and suffering death are considered “performing the offices of the high priest” [AH 4. 8.2]; and he sees the priestly office of Jesus even in the clothing of the apparition at Rev 1.12 [AH 4. 20.11].

Like Justin, he seems to regard the whole church as priestly: “For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank. And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually” [AH 4. 8.3] and again, “I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests.” [AH 5, 34.3]. Irenaeus insists that God is in no need of sacrifice but speaks of the eucharistic gift as offered at an altar which is still

thought of as in heaven: “... so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although he stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also his will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there]... the tabernacle also...” [AH 4, 18.6]. Thus Irenaeus does not recognise the individual Christian priest offering the sacrificial Christ; this concept would be alien to him. His idea of sacrifice or offering confirms this as well; for him the efficaciousness of the offering depends on the motives and holiness of the individual [AH 4. 18.3]. It is not until the communion table has become explicitly an altar that the Eucharistic president becomes explicitly a priest (*hiereus, sacerdos*).

The first Christian writer to call a Christian leader a priest is Polycrates of Ephesus, a contemporary of Irenaeus (c.190) and he does it, strangely, in calling ‘John, the beloved of the Lord,’ not only a teacher but also a priest (*hiereus*) “who wore the sacerdotal plate/tiara” ‘*petalon*’ [Polycrates to Victor of Rome (189-98), in Eusebius H. E., 5, 24, 3.]. This is a confusion with the Jewish priest’s breast plate or mitre in the time of Jesus when there were only Jewish priests. This is obviously rhetorical flourish; it cannot constitute evidence for the christian priest. The christian priest, rather than being the New Testament counterpart of the Old Covenantal priest, is priest only in analogy for a specific point as for example, the need of obedience to leaders in *1 Clement* and the support of the prophets in *Didache*.

Apostolic Succession and tradition

The many different and diverse groups present at this time within the Christian movement was a grave concern for the main/larger groups; some considered the situation dangerous and embarked into action to stem the tide. They started to write refutations of the doctrines of other groups they considered were adulterating the true doctrinal tradition of the apostles. The champion among them in the last quarter of the second century was Irenaeus who wrote *Adversus Haereses* for this purpose. One of the main arguments employed was the notion of Apostolic succession because they couldn’t allow any more the practice of the freelance teacher and prophet to dominate; so they insisted that doctrinal truth was only passed on from the Apostles through the successive *episkopoi*; they devised the notion that the teaching role was the sole prerogative of the *episkopos*. However, despite the strident repetitions, this does not seem to have been a very cogent argument because the dissident groups claimed Apostolic succession as well. So long as both sides insisted that theirs was the authentic tradition, no progress could be made. For both camps, this tradition was normally guaranteed by reference to the Apostles. Hence, many of the Gnostic texts which have survived, similarly to the books of the New Testament, claim authorship by one or other of the disciples of Jesus. Each side produced writings purportedly written by the apostles, as evidenced by the plethora of pseudonymous writings in their names. All sides claimed that they, and only they, were teaching the truth, and they unfortunately condemned and demonized the others. So, for example Marcion

claimed that he had restored again the truth specially revealed to Paul, after the twelve had defected. Valentinus was said by his disciples to have been taught by Teudas, a disciple of Paul, and Basilides was hailed as a disciple of Glaucias, amanuensis of Peter. Furthermore, we certainly do not have any compendium of the beliefs and doctrine the apostles subscribed to since we don't have their writings except for Paul. The writings in the names of Peter, James, Jude and John and some attributed to Paul in the NT are as pseudonymous as the writings claimed by the Gnostics.

Thus Irenaeus makes Apostolic succession a mainstay of his topic in his refutations; he repeats his statements again and again. However, he tried to do better than the opposition by drawing up the list of elders for the Roman congregation in line from the apostles which he might have obtained from Hegesippus some years before who published a list according to Eusebius [HE 4.22.2-3, if reliable]. Thus he writes: "The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Assembly (*ekklesia*), committed into the hands of Linus the office of the oversight. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the oversight... To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the oversight. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Assembly from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth." [AH 3. 3.3].

This list seems to be contrived. Irenaeus elsewhere gives the list from Sixtus onwards (see above), so it is probable that since 'Sixtus' means 'sixth' it was obvious that he had five predecessors and Irenaeus or whoever devised the list added five names: Linus is named in 2Tim 4.21, not an authentic letter but thought to be by Paul at the time. Anacletus probably deduced from the words in Titus 1.7, "the *episkopos* must be irreproachable" which is *anenkletos* in Greek. Clement was regarded as the Clement of Phil 4.3 and was believed, without any evidence, to be the writer of *1 Clement*. Where the fourth and fifth names come from is not known. The last one at time of writing, Eleutherius, is conveniently the twelfth just like the number of the apostles! Inventive manipulation for the sake of argument without historical basis at its best. Of course, some of these persons, if historical at all, at their time were possibly elders (*presbuteroi*) who afterwards were elected *episkopoi*, as we find them titled at the time of Irenaeus, and in their turn they were, by later Catholic tradition, elevated to popes. More detrimental to Irenaeus' argument is the fact that both for the Roman and other congregations there is no previous evidence of these successions; for example, had there been succession of leadership from Paul or another apostle in Corinth, *1 Clement* would have used this fact as an argument against the removal of the *episkopoi*. Leaders were chosen or removed by the community not appointed by the predecessor.

Supremacy of Rome?

Some Catholics claim that Irenaeus has a passage indicating the supremacy of the community of Rome over the other Christian communities, "For to this Assembly, on account of more potent principality, it is necessary that every Assembly, that is, the faithful who are from everywhere, resort; in which [Assembly] ever, by those who are from everywhere, has been preserved that tradition which is from the apostles." [AH 3. 1.2]. Here is the passage in Latin— the Greek original is not extant: *Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiolem principitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio.*

The main point of contention is the verb *convenire ad* which is translated 'agree with' by the Catholic proponents referred to above; however, in its classical and Vulgate use it means 'to come together, meet together, assemble, resort,' only in rare constructions could it mean 'be fitting to something'. So in this case it would be stretching the meaning especially since the text has *undique* 'from everywhere' indicating 'motion' rather than *ubique* 'everywhere, in every place.' The point of this passage is that the frequent visits of the faithful from other regions keep the faith of the Roman church on track.

The pre-eminence he refers to is either the political pre-eminence of Rome as the capital of the empire or its special status because it was founded by two apostles, Peter and Paul mentioned immediately before the passage above, " [We do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Assembly founded and organised at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the overseers" [AH 3. 1.2]. Here, of course, Irenaeus is unreliable since this contradicts Acts and Romans— Paul did not found the Roman church. Acts tells us that there were Christians in Rome already before Paul was taken there as prisoner and Paul writes to Rome not as a community established by him but by someone else.

One may conclude that, in the time of Irenaeus, towards the end of the second century, the overall situation of leadership in the Christian communities, from what we glean from the information indicated in the writings of the Christian writers up to Irenaeus, comprises the following factors:

- a) there was great diversity in leadership;
- b) there was no hierarchy among the communities but each enjoyed its autonomy;
- c) though some communities in Rome enjoyed perhaps a precedence of honour due to Rome being the head of the empire, the attempt at establishing or asserting superiority was rejected by the other communities;
- d) there is no indication at all of either the title or function of a 'pope' as the supreme ruler over the leaders of the other communities; and
- e) the terminology indicating the leaders was still fluid, and that these terms (e.g. *episkopos*, *presbuter*) were the normal titles used at the time by other non-Christian associations.

Reflection On Michele's Celebration

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



Some Sow That Others May Reap

On September 10, a large group of people gathered at the home of Connie Kurtenbach and François Brassard in Ladysmith to celebrate with Michele Birch-Connery. It was the first public exercise of her

priestly ordination. It was a joy-filled celebration with music beforehand and a delicious meal afterwards. The eucharistic celebration was unique in that Michele as Canada's first Roman Catholic womanpriest presided. The group participated with enjoyment at the singing, the readings, the homily, the familiar movement of the liturgy.

The people gathered there knew the Vatican stance on the ordination of women to the Roman Catholic (RC) priesthood. But it is a stance that is not accepted by many Roman Catholics. Some RC women celebrate the eucharist in their communities, as is the right of any christian, without the benefit of ordination which is necessary only for public eucharistic celebrations in the name of the RC Church. But there is also a group of dedicated RC women who are committed to making known that priestly ordination for women is a valid sacrament in the RC Church. This group, Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW), has exercised the right and has painstakingly followed the requirements for sacramental ordination. Not all these women like the emphasis on the externals of the canonical procedure that is thought necessary for valid ordination, but they have followed the canonical requirements to the letter so that it cannot be said of them that they are not validly ordained bishops, priests, and deacons.

I stress this latter point because there are some among those who would like to see a renewed RC priesthood that does not resemble the clerical model that now operates within and controls the RC Church. I am one of them, and I hold that our whole RC church is being held in thrall to a system that is by and large politically driven. I would like to see that changed. It is being talked about that the present pope is thinking about ordaining married men to the RC priesthood to alleviate the shortage of priests. I fear that such a decision is a papal decision and perhaps a way of avoiding the ordination of women; it is a decision in which the faithful in general have no part.

Pope John Paul II did his best in 1994 to stop the discussion of women's ordination when he pronounced that by the ordinary universal Magisterium of the church women could not validly be ordained priests. This position has been upheld by Benedict XVI. The language used by both is nothing but theological jargon and a heavy hand to prevent the discussion. The insidious thing about the statement on women's ordination is that the present pope is a smart theologian who knows better.

1. The ban on women's ordination does not come from Holy Scripture. JPII gave the example of Mary, the mother of the Lord, not being ordained priest. That argument is nonsense since Jesus ordained no one;
2. The church's position on women's ordination has been around for a

long time but it has not always been part of the "constantly held Tradition of the Church";

3. Ordaining women is not part of the "deposit of the faith of the Church". The deposit of the faith has never been defined.

These weaknesses in the papal argument were all pointed out by RC scripture scholars and theologians in 1994.

The pope's statement is a clever strategy and it will take an enormous effort by the Church to undo the damage and to point out that when a pope speaks in this way, he speaks personally and it is outside of his authority to impose his personal view on the Church. The pope is to be listened to carefully— which is the meaning of 'obey'— and accepted when, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the pope speaks the truth of the gospel.

In its prayers, its practice, and its theology, the church most commonly uses the name Jesus Christ. But sometimes with confusion. For example, it is often said that "Christ instituted the Sacraments", as though Jesus had done this during his earthly life. Or "Christ founded the Church on the Twelve Apostles, made them bishops, and later they ordained others as bishops, and deacons, and then bishops ordained priests". All of this as if Jesus had done these or at least laid out the blueprint.

It is true that as disciples of Jesus we firmly believe that the presence of Jesus Christ (Jesus raised and anointed by God) is in the church and that the Holy Spirit guided the church to the point of setting up the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. We believe that this church as it grew required structure and organization, and we often express this in a favourite scripture metaphor "Christ is the head and we are the body". But it was a slow developing process fraught with error, argument, turmoil, experimentation, discussion, and discernment. We do not easily tune in to the Holy Spirit.

Early christianity does not display uniformity of attitudes, ideas, and practice. Early Jewish-christian groups reflect different attitudes towards the Gentiles; salvation was not always considered universal; ministries existed for the community but some were to the Gentiles as well. The early christians were well aware of offices and structures within the Jewish communities, but the disciples of Jesus did not show any tendency or need to bring such offices and structures into their churches. For example, they had no holy places, no priesthood, no ritual sacrifices.

What the early churches did have and did hand on were the functions of charismatic prophets, teachers, apostles, and elders. There was no 'divine' institution of these functions either in the Old Testament nor in the New. They came about through cultural development; their function was to unite the community, to "build up the body". The existence of elders in the churches did not come from The Twelve nor were they looked upon as successors to the Apostles. With the elders and teachers in place, there was no need for holy places, priests, nor sacrifices. Ministries were seen as aspects of prophecy which was given by the Spirit and was the property of everyone— Everyone had the Spirit!

Elders (presbyters) were a natural cultural Jewish thing. They did not have a priestly function. They were the principal agents for

Celebration Continued...

building up the early christian communities through governance, guidance, and teaching. They were not officers of the community; no one laid hands on them and said "Now you are an elder". They were autonomous. What counted most was not age but experience in the community. When a christian church saw the need for management, they selected one or more from the elders to oversee (to bishop) the gathering. These bishops did not take the place of the elders.

Deacons, bishops, and elders were not three levels of one office.

The major shift in the second century towards a manager (bishop) overseeing local christian gatherings was not for cultic functions—sacrifice with priests. Up until 200 A.D. christians were reluctant to use the word 'priest' (hierus/sacerdos) of anyone in the church. But towards the end of the second century as Greek and Roman influence grew, there was a movement towards cultic worship with cultic leaders— elders and bishops— who led the liturgies of baptism, eucharist, laying on of hands, preaching, and forgiveness of sin.

By the fourth century, the elders had gradually lost their independence. Bishops had taken over counselling, the 'care of souls', cultic leadership, and the teaching functions. Elders then had to be ordained by the bishop as helpers in liturgy. The bishop was called Sacerdos (Priest) and the elders were the sacerdotium (priesthood). Bishops had become more numerous and politically astute; they had lawyers, and they were not afraid to use power. To justify their

authority, they called themselves 'Successors to the Apostles'. That was the time of Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Cyril, Basil, Chrysostom... By 325, clergy (elders and deacons) under a single bishop were distinct from the laity, and all authority in a church was seen to come from the bishop.

The Jesus movement at first was a religious gathering in contact with Jesus for the worship of God. As christians they were resurrection people who shared a common baptism, breaking of bread, and laying on of hands. Some disciples functioned in particular ways— elders, prophets, apostles, teachers.

I am not making this up. This is a summary of the Church's Tradition that RC scripture scholars, historians, and theologians, many of whom are bishops and cardinals, know and write about. If only the Vatican would become catholic again...

Joseph Ratzinger himself in his Commentary on the Doctrine of Vatican II wrote the following:

Over the pope as the expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, if necessary even against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority. This emphasis on the individual, whose conscience is beyond the claim of external social groups, even of the official Church, establishes a principle in opposition to increasing totalitarianism.

Faces at Michele's Celebration



Reflection On Wiesbaden

by D'Arcy Coulson, Luskville, QC



2005 Congress and General Assembly: The International Federation of Married Catholic Priests (IFMCP), September 16-19, Wiesbaden, Germany

The session was hosted by Ernst Sillmann, President of the German married priest federation (VkpPF), and held at the Wilhelm-Kempf Haus, in Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt.

The President of IFMCP, Aitor Arube of Spain, had overall responsibility for

follow-up to the September 20, 2002 General Assembly in Leganes, Spain for the presentation of an historic proposal for the establishment of a 'Confederation of Federations' to replace the IFMCP, as put forward in 2002.

Attending from Canada were Jack Shea, President of the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood (NAFRCP), his wife Jean, both members as well of Corpus-NCR, Francois Brassard and Joseph Gubbels (Corpus Canada), and Jim and Norma Noonan and myself (Corpus-NCR and NAFRCP).

The principal event of this Conference, apart from the two major presentations by Dr. Esteban and Mme Gombault was the setting up of a new Confederation of the existing four regional Federations of married Catholic priests. The General Assembly voted in favour of this new Confederation replacing the existing International Federation of Married Catholic Priests as of September 19, 2005.

A 'Co-ordinating Committee' of the four Presidents was struck and charged to deal with statutes and operating procedures for the new Confederation that includes the Latin American Federation for a Renewed Priestly Ministry, the Philippine Federation of Catholic Married Priests, the European Federation of Catholic Married Priests, and the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood. An Australian association is also possible.

The Presidents of these four federations were designated as the principal members of the new Confederation. They are Orlando Gutierrez (Latin American Federation), Paraguay, Orlando Carvajal (Philippine Federation), Cebu City, Philippines, Pierre Collet (European Federation), Brussels, Belgium, and Jack Shea (North Atlantic Federation), Ottawa, Canada. These officers of the new Confederation held a first meeting in Wiesbaden, on Monday, September 19.

The meeting in Wiesbaden was considered by many participants to be an historically important event within the Church. More than 60 participants from 14 countries participated. Similar organizations now exist in at least 25 countries.

Faced with a doubling of the number of Catholics globally since 1975, the Church is experiencing no or little growth in the number of active priests serving them. As many as 125,000 priests globally have resigned or have lost their clerical status under current canon law due to their decision to marry. The participants in Wiesbaden were not aware of any formal ecclesial initiatives to invite married priests back to active ministry.

The global shortfall of Catholic clergy is generally ascribed to a combination of factors-retirement of elderly clergy, an increase in

resignations by priests who marry (125,000), a major reduction in the numbers of seminarians in most countries due principally, it is suggested, to the present policy on mandatory celibacy.

Other factors discussed include lifelong commitment, full-time engagement without part-time options, and quite limited income. The professional work environment and the work culture of the Church for priests and other ministers have also been put forward as factors to explain the diminishing numbers of vocations under present policy. Exclusion of women from ordination to the priesthood is also seen as an additional obvious major factor. Catholics keen on 'going to Mass on Sunday' are finding it increasingly difficult as churches are closed or the number of Masses is reduced. Church income has diminished significantly.

Many organizations are being formed or are active in most countries working for change in the way that the Church organizes itself and the way that the ministry is offered. In the absence of an adequate number of diocesan priests and fewer members of religious orders, men and women, the work of the Church on a day-to-day basis is dramatically more limited.

The Wiesbaden Congress focused this year on 'The Renewal of Ministries and Services Today'. The Congress took place just weeks before the October Synod of Bishops in Rome called to discuss the Eucharist. It was understood in Wiesbaden that the shortage of priests to celebrate the Eucharist was not, to their astonishment, on the Bishops' agenda. It was the general sense that most Catholic laity and most clergy, even most diocesan bishops, favour an optional celibacy for Catholic priests and, for some, marriage.

The Congress program featured two principal presentations. The first was given by Dr. Rafael Esteban, a Spanish-born member of the White Fathers missionary Order. He worked in Ghana, then in Madrid (African Information Centre) and in London (Missionary Institute). He now teaches at the Missionary Institute and works in parish work in Cambridge, England. He has a doctorate from the Gregorian University. His major interest is the Church and a participative culture within it. He spoke to 'From Holiness to Compassion, Living and Loving in a Messy World'. The second presenter was Alice Gombault, active in 'Women and Men in the Church' (WMC) and 'Rights and Freedom in the Churches' (RFC). She taught at the Catholic Institute in Paris. She is editor of 'Reseaux des Parvis', a review that is a vehicle for Church renewal. She is married with five children and 12 grandchildren. She addressed 'Women Ministries: What Contribution Toward A Renewed Church?'

Rafael Esteban

Esteban challenged traditional thinking about the Christian's sense of being 'in the world' but preoccupied with 'holiness' understood to be a state separate from and apart from 'the world'.

Rather than getting caught up with cultish practices which favour preoccupation with individual spiritual correctness, and conformity to rules, he sees ministry as emphasizing service that we offer compassionately to the world in which we live, working with people as and where they are. We are necessarily affected by our feelings about our world. Given great suffering, sin and

death, broken promises and relationships, greed and unfairness, neglect of the old and women and children, drugs and sexual exploitation, we must see our world as 'broken' and either to be distanced from or to be in need of our care, love and compassion, as our response to the call that we love one another.

Some see the world as in need of sanitizing and repair. He cautions against our repeated efforts to take a 'social engineering approach to change', a return to Eden through flight from a hostile world behind the walls of a mythical Jerusalem as a Chosen People.

Rather, he urged, we should choose to live in the world as it is, a messy world, but one loved by God as it is, with all the warts, not exclusive but inclusive. The Chosen People in this context are not always a holy people, and might be served by a domineering clericalism. Given the choice between an obsession with 'holiness', with rules and spiritual correctness, it is so much better to become entrained with compassion, to be with those who suffer or who are in pain, to enter into their 'messy' lives, in word and deed, giving up our dominant male preoccupation with power, neatness and control, in favor of recovery of nurturing and compassion. Our ministry must be one of caring, nurturing community and healing through our compassion, which is God's compassion.

Better the freedom, compassion and grace of Jesus, who spent time with sinners and the ritually impure, and who loved the world as he found it. Would Jesus exclude the divorced or gays? Would Jesus forbid intercommunion or restrict the taking of communion by public figures who are not 'correct'? To see the Church as a 'Chosen People' can be an 'ideological lock-in' that binds to a dark side- leading to defensiveness and protection of the institution as 'holy' but without accountability and transparency.

Obsession with control and fear of freedom, with blind obedience, with sexuality and purity, convinced we know or are in possession of 'the truth' leads to authoritarianism and a sense of righteousness. The Church has become a hierarchically controlled clerical institution, 'monarchical', when much of the world lives in or is moving towards societies which are increasingly democratic, transparent and participative. The cross is the proof that God does love the world. The Church is not called to be a 'holy territory' for the righteous but a compassionate space where sinners who have been forgiven live on the edge between grace and sin, where the Father embraces the prodigal son, where as a community of the followers of Christ we are entrained into the dynamic of compassion, to 'enter the brokenness of humanity', bringing to the suffering of a broken world reconciliation and healing, as Jesus does.

It is through rituals that we make connections between the broken world and the Church. Ritual gives a sense of entrainment to our community of believers which can enter into God's dance and shares God's compassion.

Esteban sees in quantum physics, Newton, Darwin, Einstein, chaos theory and quantum theology insights into the human condition, notions of church and ministry, freedom and creativeness and even a vision of the future, of redemption and salvation.

Through the Cross, a compassionate God and sinful world are reconciled in a redeeming embrace in God's Spirit and through the Church's ministry of compassion. The emphasis of a renewed ministry in a renewed Church is on compassion. We will be known

for how we love one another, how we care for others, how others are brought to Christ through the compassion extended to them through our agency, which is Christ's compassion.

Alice Gombault

Women in the Church suffer under 'anthropological apartheid' through discriminatory practices, notably the non-ordination of women. There is a disconnect between Church practices and declarations of human rights in contemporary societies. Only men teach, sanctify and govern in the Church. The status of women in modern societies other than in the Church is now fully equal and recognized by law in most advanced countries.

A pontifical biblical commission advised Paul VI in the 1970s that there seemed to be no obstacle to bestowing on women the ministries of reconciliation and the Eucharist, advice which was not ultimately acted on, apparently.

The tradition of masculine dominance and gender bias is clear and increasingly challenged by women and by women in the Church. Does Christ carry within himself only his masculine identity or all of humankind? Can one sustain seriously the 'in persona Christi' argument excluding women from ordination when men and women were saved with equal and identical benefits, rights and privileges? Women and men can act 'in persona Christi' and the exclusion of women from priesthood cannot be justified. In 'Mulieris dignitatem' John Paul II in 1988 spoke of the essential equality and perfect reciprocity that exists between men and women, though gender bias and sexual stereotyping continues, as in 'the eternal woman' image and myth. Gombault describes the early and more recent positioning on the role of women in the Church by John Paul II and the present Pope, then Cardinal Ratzinger. The militancy of women in the Church has become more overt and widespread. They see Canon 1024, restricting ordination to men, as an immoral ecclesial law. There are increasing numbers of organized gestures to challenge present Church policies and practices.

Women have been ordained not only as deacons but as priests and bishops in other Christian churches but also in the Roman Catholic Church, albeit without regular but real authority.

Gombault maintains that the present clerical and hierarchical mode of leadership in the Church and the opposition to women's ordination blocks any effort at broader renewal in the Church as well. Indeed some who oppose renewal can be said to welcome the present dilemma, awaiting further deterioration and loss of the centrality of the Eucharist. Nor are women content to wait - there are already instances of adaptation and change as women in ministry seek new ways of discretely organizing ministry and living the faith. The authorities attempt to maintain uniformity and consistency, often on a questionable basis, but the reform and renewal continues if on the margins.

Rome seems preoccupied with closing paths to change more than renewal, preoccupied more, it is suggested, with control and authority. Are central authorities and clericalism dealing with a few isolated women, or with a gathering, irrepressible wave?

Mobilization of the media around recent events, such as the ordination of women on boats on international water in Europe and

Wiesbaden Continued...

North America, events carefully staged and widely followed, possesses strong powerful symbolic and political energy.

Noting the use of excommunication by clerical authorities, Gombault closes with a reference to Acts 5: 35-39: '[Be] careful what you do to these [women]. You could find yourselves fighting against God'.

The stimulating presentations were followed by question periods and discussion. It was agreed that media relations and communication would be followed up by the various participating federations in Latin America, Europe, the North Atlantic, and the Philippines.

Kabir, an Indian mystic (1440–1518) wrote: Jump into experience while you are alive! What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death. If you don't break your ropes while you are alive. do you think ghosts will do it after? If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire. So plunge into the truth. Excerpts from The Winged Energy of Delight translated by Robert Bly

Wiesbaden Congress Report by François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC



The Congress of the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests that took place near Wiesbaden, Germany September 16-19, 2005 had two parts: a full day's conference on "Ministry in Today's Church" and a General Assembly where delegates could discuss and decide matters pertinent to the Federation.

In this issue of The Journal you will find several articles that provide information on one or both parts of the Congress. Pierre Collet, the Belgian president of the new European Federation of Married Catholic Priests, provides a brief report of the Congress from a European perspective (my translation). A second report is provided by Orlando Carvajal, the president of the Philippine Federation of Married Catholic Priests and their Families. I was deeply moved by the positive contributions and interventions that both these people made during the General Assembly of the Congress. You will also find in The Journal the "Final Declaration" of the Congress.

In this article I would like to comment solely on the conference given by Dr. Alice Gombault of Paris, France on "Women Ministries." You can access the entire text in English (my translation) in the Articles section of the Corpus Canada web site (www.corpuscanada.org).

Though Dr. Gombault did speak about the important contributions of women involved in non-ordained ministries in today's Church, it was her analysis of the women's ordination movement that I found most interesting. She documented, firstly, the Vatican's arguments and strategies against the ordination of women, and secondly, the responses to these points. Her documentation makes clear that there are no valid scriptural or theological arguments against the ordination of women. The only valid argument remaining in the Vatican's arsenal of opposition is that of 'tradition.' It's the weakest argument of all, firstly, because historical evidence indicates that, though men have predominantly filled leadership roles in the history of the Church, some few women have as well; secondly, as is true of all institutions,

traditions change. Contrary to what Rome would have us believe, change is and always has been a constant in the history of the Christian Church, and especially, as we now know through scholarly research, at its very beginnings. And these changes apply both to teachings and to disciplines or practices. In the discussion period after the conference, the following question was raised: "if the only argument remaining against the ordination of women is that of tradition ('we can't ordain women, because we've never done it'), then how do we address it?" The answer was given by one of the women-bishops, Dr. Patricia Fresen, who recently ordained Michele Birch-Conery of Parksville, BC: change the tradition by showing that it has been done in the past and by doing it now, even though it is against Canon Law (Canon 1024). The answer was as brilliant as it was simple. Indeed, one of the very oldest traditions in the Church is the doctrine of 'reception.' A teaching or a practice of the Church is not valid if it was never or is no longer 'received' or accepted by the People of God. This is as true of birth control as it is of the use of altar girls. In conversations with delegates after the conference, it was clear to me that everyone agreed that there were no valid arguments in theory against the ordination of women. However, I did encounter considerable opposition to the 'de facto' or, so-called 'river ordinations' that have recently taken place, and this for very different reasons. They range from the traditional to the far left on the church renewal spectrum. I will take them in that order and respond to each of them as best I can from the point of view of the RC Women-priests movement, the European organization that sponsors the 'river ordinations.' There are some people who oppose the 'de facto' ordinations precisely because they are 'contra legem' (against the law). They see them as acts of defiance against the hierarchy that further alienate the church renewal movement from the Catholic mainstream. The Women-priests movement denies firmly any intention of defiance in their actions. On the contrary, it is a courageous act of love that drives them. They consciously choose to do what they do out of 'prophetic obedience' (cf. the excerpt on Prophetic Obedience by Dr. Patricia Fresen in the accompanying article, p21). It is prophetic obedience that calls them to take action against an unjust law of the Church. Also, like so many other people, they see the Church in disarray, due in large part to the present clerical system of leadership. Catholics are leaving the institutional church in droves and the

Wiesbaden Continued...

hierarchy doesn't understand how its leadership style has contributed to making the church irrelevant. The bishops can no longer lead, because they no longer have much credibility. In response to this critical situation, the RC Women-priests movement has chosen to model in the manner of Jesus an inclusive and empowering form of leadership. I will speak to this in greater detail below.

There are many people, mostly women from the WOW or WOC movements, who oppose the 'de facto' ordinations of women, because they see them either as giving comfort to or continuing the 'sacred domination' (term used by Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza) of the clerical, hierarchical, male-dominated form of leadership. I had a wonderful conversation at the Congress with a non-ordained deaconess who holds this position. I was moved by her sincere love of the Church as evidenced by her deaconal ministry. I responded to her from my lived experience of the RC Women-priests movement. I agreed with her that what she and others fear is a real danger, and that to avoid it requires constant, vigilant care and prayer on the part of everyone in the church renewal movement. I told her that in this respect I was impressed and encouraged by the manner and actions of the ordained women that I have met. I pointed out the example of the two women-bishops present at the Congress in Wiesbaden. Both by their humble, yet energetic presence in discussions on this topic, and by their attentive and engaging style in a social setting, they provided a refreshing alternative to the clerical style of leadership.

More pertinent to this point are certain policies adopted by the RC Women-priests movement. There is a non-essential element of the rite of ordination to the diaconate that the women-bishops omit: the integration of the ordinand into the ranks of the clergy. Technically speaking, all these ordained women are lay deacons, priests or bishops. Better said, they are ordained leaders of the People of God. Their vocations were discerned in the Spirit, validated and acclaimed by the People of God among whom there are no castes. That is why they refuse to use titles of respect or privilege, such as 'Reverend,' 'Monsignor,' 'Mother,' 'Sister,' etc. They prefer to be addressed by who they are, that is, by name, e.g. Michele for Michele Birch-Conery.

Another policy or directive given to these ordained ministers, relates to the manner by which they exercise their ministry: they are urged to avoid any conflict or interference with the territorial authority of the clerical leadership. This is the same principle long followed by the (male) married Roman Catholic priests who continue to exercise their ministry in various ways. The clerical leadership is pleased with this policy, because it facilitates their decision to ignore or suppress the whole movement of women's ordination. The ordained women are pleased with this policy, because it provides them the freedom to exercise a different form of ordained ministry, one that is outside of the box of the present, strictly construed, sacramental ministry. It is in this sense that Michele Birch-Conery speaks of her 'priestly ministry of reconciliation,' which she exercises in secular settings, such as nursing homes, hospitals or at her day job at the North Island College. The compassion she brings to her interactions with people in her day-to-day world brings healing and reconciliation that releases, in turn, all kinds of creative energy.

The points just made raise several other objections against the ordination of women that I have heard.

Some people criticize these illegal ordinations as creating a 'parallel' or schismatic church. The RC Women-priests movement denies this categorically. Their heart is in the Church they love. They are merely

modelling a more Jesus-like form of ordained ministry. They feel called to do this, not only because it is the right thing to do in and of itself, but also because it is absolutely necessary to provide a new vision of the institutional Church, if and when it implodes because of the management style of the clerical leadership.

Another objection that I have heard goes like this: "The last thing the Church needs is 'vagrant' priests." The reference here is to 'loose' priests, that is, priests who roam about doing ministry without any official or practical connection to episcopal authority and oversight. The objection is valid and raises a critical point, namely that all ordained ministry is validated by the Christian community through its chosen leaders. Because the RC Women-priests movement is still small and the present ordained ministers are geographically isolated, the danger of irresponsible ministry is real. The three women-bishops at present are acutely aware of this danger and have taken measures to avoid it.

Through the use of electronic technology, they are providing candidates for ordination, as well as present ordinands, accountable opportunities in distance education for enlightened ministries. Also, they are presently creating an on-line forum or parliament for the discussion of issues related to the RC Women-priests movement. As face-to-face contact is also necessary, all candidates are urged to prepare for ordination or exercise their ordained ministry within the context and safeguard of a collegial Small Faith Community. Actually, it is the community that prayerfully discerns and validates the personal call of the candidate. Also, it is from the community that the candidate is sent forth to be ordained, and it is to the community that the ordained minister returns in order to exercise ministry. This was ritually expressed in the case of Michele Birch-Conery. Our Corpus mid-island community sent her to Gananque on July 17 to be ordained, and we celebrated the inauguration of her priestly ministry on September 10. She remains a part of our local community and she receives considerable enlightenment and support from it.

A far left objection to the ordination of women or men calls for a radical re-visioning of all ministry: "We don't need ordained ministry; it just leads to excessive institutionalism." In this view, all followers of Jesus are called to serve others according to their gifts, and this is what the community of believers should be actively promoting. While this is true and desirable, the present social context within the Church necessitates some organization in order to make that happen. Ordained leadership can provide the environment, inspiration and encouragement to make that happen. We need a 'both/and' approach rather than an 'either/or.'

In conclusion, it seems to me that the women's ordination movement offers a wonderful opportunity to advance the cause of church renewal, and I was delighted to experience the importance afforded to women's ministries at the Wiesbaden Congress.

Report on the 6th International Congress of Married Priests

by Pierre Collet, President of the European Federation & Coordinator of the new International Confederation



The 6th International Congress of Married Catholic Priests took place in Wiesbaden, Germany, September 16-19, 2005. It was hosted by the German group: "Vereinigung Katholischer Priester und ihrer Frauen," which did a remarkable job as much organizationally as in providing both comfort and a

warm welcome. We thank them.

This Congress was of utmost importance because it needed to finalize a decisive evolution of our organization. First for economic reasons, it became increasingly difficult to hold intercontinental congresses. For six years now, the process of transformation of our movement into a Confederation of continental Federations, had been underway.

However, it would be less than candid not to admit that other factors, cultural and social and therefore, also, theological, were pushing us in this direction. Indeed, we experienced once again these differences during this last Congress of the International Federation. It was not always easy to admit with serenity that very different theologies and practices risked dividing us quite seriously. It was truly the challenge of unity within diversity that we needed to confront and overcome with a lot of good will...and compromise. For example, it became clear that the surprise visit of two recently ordained women-bishops

took on quite different significance for the participants according to groups, countries and continents...

The last official act of the Executive Committee of the outgoing Federation was, once again, to send a letter to the upcoming synod of bishops to ask them urgently to abolish the law of obligatory celibacy for priests of the Latin Catholic Church.

One full day of the Congress was devoted to conferences and discussions on the theme of "The Renewal of Ministries as services for today." Participants were able to hear an original presentation by Rafael Esteban, a White Father of Spanish origin doing ministry in Cambridge, England. He tried to show to what extent modern theology as well as anthropology push us to revise not only the traditional concept of ministries, but also the role of the Church in general and even of the faith, in the direction of a 'living-with' others as they are, just as God has done since the beginning of Creation and through the Incarnation.

The second conference given by Alice Gombault, editor of "Réseaux du Parvis," Paris, analysed the opportunities and ambiguities of present research on 'women ministries.' Whatever one might think about the 'contra legem' ordinations these past years, there is no doubt that much greater attention to the 'woman factor' will be a determining element in any reform and renewal in the Catholic Church.

Just before the Congress, delegates of the new European Federation gathered to table its constitution and elect its representatives. This Federation brings together groups from France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Great Britain.

Reflections on the International Congress

by Orlando Carvajal, President of the Philippines Federation



Good to hear from you. I want to make a full-blown report at our national convention next year in April about the Wiesbaden experience. I suppose that is too long a wait for you. So here are some quick thoughts. There were three things that impressed me and really gave me a good

feeling during the conference.

One is the almost (though not quite, as I have observed) unanimous focus on renewing the priestly ministry in the context of the over-all transformation of the Church towards relevance in the post-modern world. Specifically, I liked the move to phase out an elite clergy, ordained by bishops, and have instead pastors, chosen by the community, for a more compassionate church. I like the acceptance of women as pastors. I think this is something the new church will have to recognize, the equality of men and women in the service of the flock.

Two, I was struck, amazed, at the explicit avoidance of anything that would hint of schism. It tells me that it is our love for the Church

that wants us to transform it. This is much more positive and Christian than just criticizing and condemning the conservative hierarchy and not having anything to do with them. We must disagree as brothers.

Thus too, like the local staff, I was edified by the brotherly love that permeated our discussions which were not always, as expected, devoid of sharp and emphatic disagreements. In short, the process was even more impressive than the content of the whole affair.

As a result, I left feeling happy to belong to such a group. I left with a greater resolve to contribute more of myself to the group but primarily to the Philippine Federation that I head.

It was very nice meeting all of you. I hope what I have written answers your need. God bless you. Till next. Orlando



Final Declaration

Of the International Congress of Married Priests

After twenty years of existence, the International Federation of Married Catholic Priests, has had its 6th International Congress in Wilhelm-Kempf-Haus, Wiesbaden, Germany from September 16-19, 2005 with the theme: “the renewal of ministries today.”

At the closing of this Assembly we want to declare our firm commitment to the renewal of the church and of its ministries in fidelity to the Spirit of the Second Vatican Council, aware of the actual circumstances of the world and of the church. This renewal has new urgency. In this context we want to offer to the church the search for alternative models of being church and of ministering in the church.

We assert our love and loyalty to the church. We do not want in any way to constitute a parallel church and desire to engage in a constructive dialogue with the bishops.

We affirm the importance of the church for all of us as an instrument to encourage us and to enable us to deepen our option for the poor and marginalised. We commit at the same time to help the church to be at the service of the world and not to be an end in itself.

During this Assembly we have gained a deeper appreciation of the

issue of the ordination of women and of the ministries of women in the church. This General Assembly with the delegates of 25 national groups from four continents has decided to re-organize as a Confederation of Federations:

- 1) Latin-American Federation;
- 2) Philippines Federation;
- 3) European Federation;
- 4) North-Atlantic Federation.

This Confederation wants:

- a) to strengthen the links between their groups;
- b) to accelerate the growth of the International Movement for the Renewal of Ministries in the world;
- c) to encourage the exchange of pastoral experiences;
- d) to support the aspirations of all the members through their meetings and web site.

It has been a long journey of solidarity and grace. As we take our journey in a new direction, we pray that God will guide us with wisdom and courage to that Love which we have sought from our very beginnings.



When the charge of heresy is raised in Christian communities today, there is a tendency to associate that stigma with wild-eyed radicals proposing new ideas. In Christian history, however, some of the most significant heresies have been conservative rather than radical— the tendency to hold on to old theological answers when new questions have caused the main body of Christians to move on to new answers... “Orthodoxy,” then, is not always the possession of those who try to hold on to the past. One may find a truer criterion in the direction toward which Christian thought has been tending, even if that direction suggests that past formulations of truth have been considered inadequate to answer new questions.

Raymond E Brown, S.S.

The Community of the Beloved Disciple (Paulist Press, 1979 p.80)

Throughout the North (of Canada) I experience people longing for God and for right relationships; I experience people who are deeply spiritual and who are searching for ways to grow spiritually; I experience people forgiving and asking for forgiveness; and I experience people welcoming those who are different from them, those who have made mistakes. Yes, I believe God’s Spirit is moving strongly in the North and that the church has a future. If you are asking me if the church as we have known it will survive, I would have to say that I cannot possibly see how that can happen. The church, however, is much broader and deeper than anything we have known.

Marie Zarowny SSA

“How my thinking has changed” Catholic New Times, Sept. 25, ‘05

Theological Soapbox: A Perfect Poem

by Arthur Menu, Sidney, BC



If The Journal were delivered as an audio CD, I would play you the Pie Jesu from Gabriel Fauré's Requiem as my selection of a work of art that has nourished my spirit. But as The Journal is delivered in writing I offer you the most perfect poem that I know, John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Keats (1795-1821) wrote this poem at the age of 23. To me this poem speaks of life and death, with which Keats was intimately familiar. His father died in an accident when Keats was a child. His mother died from tuberculosis when he was a teenager. And his brother Tom, to whom he was very close, and whom Keats nursed through his final illness, died from tuberculosis the year before Keats wrote the poem. Keats himself was to contract tuberculosis and die from it at the age of 25.

Keats was confronted more starkly than most of us with the transience of life. How clear in his mind must have been the image of his brother in boisterous good health juxtaposed with the image of his brother drawn and weak on his deathbed! If Keats could, would he have not taken one moment he had spent in his brother's company, perhaps a moment of shared delight on an afternoon excursion, and made that moment last forever. His brother would always be the laughing, joyful Tom on that afternoon, never growing sick or old, never dying.

For Keats the truth of Tom would be captured in that one moment frozen in eternity. This is who Tom is, not the dying shell of a man on his deathbed. Tom in the full bloom of beauty is the true Tom.

The Grecian urn captures the beauty of the moment, the height of joy of the people represented on it, their seeking just the moment before their attaining. Captured in the full flush of life, on the verge of, and anticipating, the fulfilment of their deepest longing, never more themselves than in this moment, they are in this moment both beautiful and true.

In this world one must be alive to have moments of pure happiness. But to be alive means to be subject to time, and happy moments pass. But as a Christian I believe in resurrection into eternal life. I believe that, through Jesus, God has bridged the seemingly unbridgeable gap between the eternally beautiful but lifeless truth represented by the Grecian urn, and life in this world in which the truth of the moment lasts no longer than the moment itself. I believe that in God's kingdom we will have ever new joys without having to give up old joys. Life will not be one joy taking the place of another joy, but the eternal accumulation of joys, all of which will be experienced together forever. In God's kingdom, the figures on the urn live!

Prophetic Obedience: The Experience & Vision of R.C. Womenpriests

by *Patricia Fresen, PhD., Womanbishop*



the Spirit, who we believe is always moving and awakening (yes, calling) us to new levels of awareness. As Isaiah says so often: Listen to me, pay attention and your soul will live. (e.g. Is.55:3) Why is this obedience called prophetic? I think it is because the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament and also, our contemporary prophets like Oscar Romero, Dorothy Day and Nelson Mandela, and yes, Gisela Forster and Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger were and are women and men who 'listened to a different drum'. They became aware of what was wrong within their own society and they felt impelled to take a stand, to speak out, to name what was wrong. And, as we know, those in power usually do not want to hear what the prophets say, because it means giving up their positions of privilege and power - or at least sharing privilege and power, and once these are shared the entire system changes from being dualistic to being one in which the equality, dignity and freedom of all are respected.

In summary:

- Prophetic obedience often involves taking a stand for justice in the face of injustice or discrimination.
- In prophetic obedience, our understanding of authority and of obedience changes. The role of leadership is not to give orders but to call the community to be about what they have said they are about, challenging them to be who they are. Prophetic obedience leads us towards the recognition of equality: a discipleship of equals, rather than the older 'family' model (Father, Mother, superior-subject) still prevalent in the Church. We move towards co-authority, co-obedience and interdependence.
- We each live out of our personal centre, our inner authority but at the same time within the framework of the vision we hold in common. Prophetic obedience may at times require disobedience to an unjust law for the sake of God's reign (In Europe we are often called the 'contra legem' group, because our way is to break what we regard as an unjust law).

It is a pity that the official Roman Catholic church clings largely to the values and the worldview of many centuries ago and still organizes itself as a feudal society. It is a pity that the Roman Catholic church is still influenced by the Greco-Roman and later the Augustinian view of women, regarding them as intrinsically inferior to men. This worldview is reflected in Canon Law and in Church structures.

In this older worldview, obedience was understood as doing what you were told by those in authority. But obedience is not doing what you are told by someone else, unless you are a child. Obedience for adults, as we know, comes from the Latin *ob-audire*, attentive listening: - listening in the first place to myself, my own formed conscience, my values, my sense of what is right and wrong, listening to my heart; - attentive listening to the signs of the times, to what is going on in the world and in the church, to new levels of awareness and new developments within humanity; listening, individually and together, to

Reflection in a Greek Museum

by *Tom Hassett, Victoria, BC*



It was in August, 2004, a few weeks after the death of my eldest sister, and 2 months after the death of my second oldest sister. July had also been the 4th anniversary of the sudden death of our 22 year old son. By the end of August I was not feeling up to yet another emotional experience. Maybe that is why I remember it so well. I had a day to myself at the Archeological

Museum in Athens, while my oldest son was working out for the Olympic rowing finals on the week end. As it happened, he didn't get a medal to go with his Atlanta silver so I need not have felt so guilty for taking off.

It was awesome to see that bronze, more than 7 foot high Poseidon, (the Roman Neptune) looking straight ahead without fear, (for he looks neither up nor down to anyone – neither god nor man) in the act of hurling his tripod into the sea (c.460 BC).

I stood in awe at the life sized boy on a racing horse, gripping for dear life the (now non-existent) reins and the mane but grinning (or was it grimacing) at me from the 2nd century BC. The speed, the thrill and the fright of it all was fixed there before me.

But these two figures only set me up for what I saw in a huge hall filled with funerary monuments. Part way through the hall

Reflection Continued...

there was a carved white marble tombstone that had 5 figures on it. On the right was the figure of Hermes, a young man with wings on his ankles, the angel of death and the messenger of the gods, the Roman Mercury. He was walking determinedly away to the right, leading a beautiful young woman, holding her left hand firmly in his right. She was looking back over her shoulder at her father, a seated, older man, clean shaven and partially bald, whose wife was standing behind him and whose young son was standing beside her and his father. The father was reaching out with his left hand, trying to grasp the outstretched hand of his daughter but she had moved a little too far away and so they were no longer in touch.

All four of them, parents and children, were looking at each other with so much longing and agonizing grief that I could almost see the depth and the power of their affection for each other. Here, written in stone 600 years before Nicea, was a reflection, an embodiment of the mutual and unselfish Love between Parent and Offspring that we call the Trinity. The four of them have been dead and forgotten for thousands of years but I believe that their affectionate relationship with each other is still real. I could see that their love will never die.



Homosexuality: A Christian Problem?

by Des Wilson, Belfast, Ireland



There is a Catholic legal principle that when there is a difference of opinion among experts we are all free to choose whichever interpretation of law seems right to us. Scholars are deeply divided about the nature of homosexuality and about its moral meaning. Without choosing which ideas are right and which are wrong, Catholic principle says that while such differences exist among experts we are free to choose our own interpretation on the

merits of the case as we see them. This means we are not justified by Catholic belief in rejecting anybody's views on the matter or in deriding those who hold them. While we may choose the severe view or the liberal one ourselves we are bound to have respect for the one accepted by others— this is the Catholic principle. And if we accept the more view we have to find reasons for it other than Catholic moral teaching....

What Is Normal?

One possible reason for Christian disarray about homosexuality— and sexuality in general— may be confusion about what is 'normal'. The word 'normal' seems easy to understand but has caused a lot of suffering. What is normal? Part of the human condition is that some people grow up with exceptionally acute reasoning abilities and some

with much less. The existence of people with less intellectual ability or greater intellectual ability is accepted as a normal part of the human condition. Highly intellectual people are normal. People with gravely acute disabilities are normal. These are all normal because theirs are usual conditions of the human race. Differences are normal. It is normal that a proportion of the human population is homosexual. Homosexual people are normal. So are heterosexual people and people at different points of the sexual spectrum.

However, we can and do create a second definition of normality. We said in the past that people born with disabilities are abnormal— this is inaccurate and cruel and such descriptions are passing out of favour. In an extreme case it has been said that the normal human being is white, fair, Aryan, or whatever. This description of normality in human beings is both inaccurate and dangerous. Black—skinned people are normal, although they are a minority; fair—skinned people are normal not because they are a majority but because they are part of the human pattern; highly intelligent people and highly disabled people are normal because they are part of the usually experienced human pattern. We must not confuse majority and normality. We need new terms....

Homosexuality is a part of the pattern of human life which we know is constant. Homosexuality is normal. It is just as illogical to describe homosexuality as abnormal as it is to describe exceptionally intellectual people as abnormal. Each of these groups is a minority of the human race and a minority is not an abnormality.

The full text of this can be obtained from Fr. Des Wilson, Director Springhill Community House education and development project 1972-present. Director Upper Springfield Resource Centre 1977-1980 local community development.

Michele Birch-Connery Visits Calgary

by John Palardy, Calgary, AB



It was a meaningful time in Calgary. The Calgary chapter of the Vatican II group, in cooperation with Calgary Corpus invited Michele Birch Conery for the weekend of October 1st and 2nd. Friday evening was an informal open house and reception at the residence of Angelina Waldon. This was a chance for about 30 people to meet Michele for the first time. It was a pleasant evening with much discussion.

St. David's United Church was a gracious host to approximately 25

searching Christians on Saturday afternoon. This was a more formal presentation by Michele who shared her personal spiritual journey and a not taken lightly process of discernment. This process lead her to the decision to step forward in prophetic obedience to place herself as a candidate for women's ordination as a Roman Catholic priest. We found this to be a moving example of the spirit calling her forth to follow the less traveled path of spiritual giving of her self to the Lord to 'do with her what he will'.

As a late middle-aged woman who has a well established teaching career she is not looking for her priesthood to be anything more than a service to those who specifically request her pastoral care. As such she is not attached to a Religious order or to a Diocesan Bishop. Hence she neither has nor will have a pre-determined pastoral charge. Her work will much more look like that of the worker priests of France.

When I first heard about this movement and the fact that Michele was to be ordained on international waters out of Gananoque Ontario, I was rather skeptical about this new movement within the church. I have also experienced others within Corpus who are cool to this phenomenon. However, there is strong historical evidence that in the

Church's beginnings ordination to the priesthood was not an exclusively male prerogative. Then, most recently, the movement coming out of Europe has progressed to the point of ordination to priesthood and episcopacy by legitimately consecrated Roman Catholic Bishops. (This establishes the historic succession required by church authorities.) The article "Prophetic obedience: The Experience and Vision of RC Womenpriests" by Patricia Fresen, Ph.D.. outlines this recent activity within the emerging church.

Michele finished the afternoon session with a video of the ordination ceremony. It appears to have been a reverent, prayerful and joyous celebration. The ordaining bishops were Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger, Gisela Forster and Patricia Fresen.

The Eucharistic celebration was held on Sunday morning, October 2, at a private residence. This celebration was a very collaborative one; similar to the style used by the Corpus groups I have been a part of. Michele used the gospel of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman to reflect upon the progressive, thinking out of the box, perspective that Jesus as a prophet took. Can we simplify it and say that Jesus was a revolutionary, as was summarized in our summer Journal article 'Prophet, Priest, and King in the Tradition of Biblical Radicalism?' She made the connection between his actions of prophetic obedience and that of this movement, for "prophetic obedience often involves taking a stand for justice in the face of injustice or discrimination... obedience leads us towards the recognition of equality: a discipleship of equals." In such a church "we move towards co-authority, co-obedience and interdependence."

The morning ended with warm fellowship and the sharing of a meal. All in all it was a lovely morning enjoyed by all. The only downer was that Michele had to leave for the airport rather shortly thereafter, which left only a minimal amount of time together.



Some Xristos People at the regular Society gatherings

Corpus Canada

Who Are We?

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

Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to

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

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

How Do We Get There?

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

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Corpus-NCR (Canada)
www.ca.renewedpriesthood.org
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Corpus Canada Treasurer

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