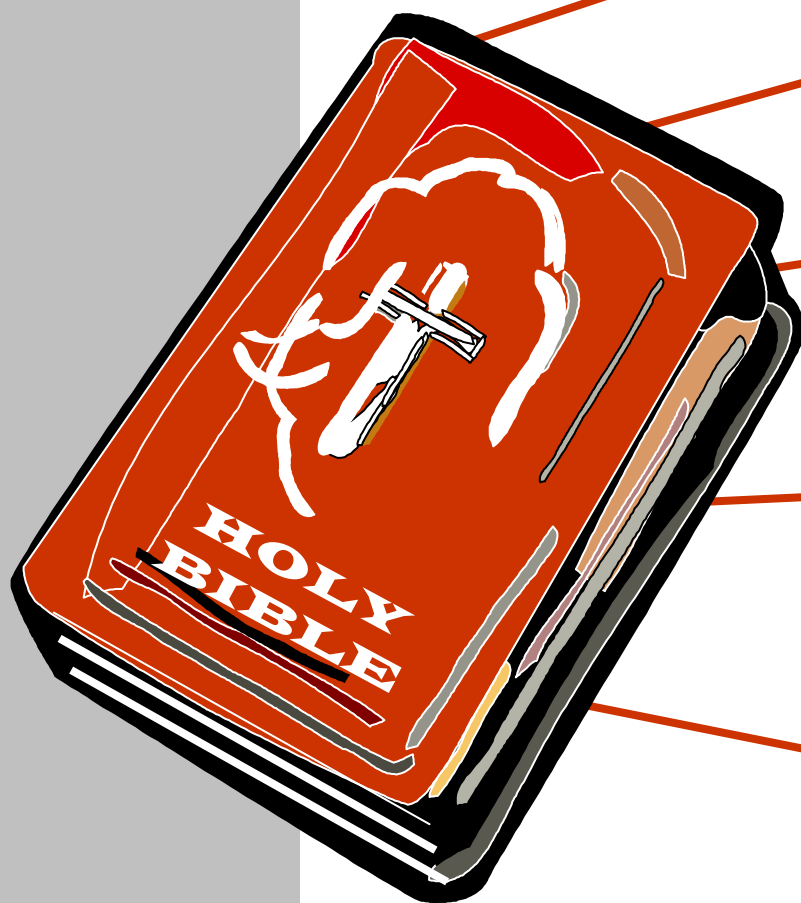


Dr. Richard Westley asked,
"Is the Christian Enterprise beginning to unravel"?



Is the Christmas story true?

Have the faithful been shielded from a truth discovered over a century ago?

Are we called to witness the unraveling of "traditional Christianity" so we can be unified with all mankind under God?

Is the transformation to "spirituality" in place of religiosity the work of the Holy Spirit?

How can we participate in (rather than just witness) this historic transformation? (so many no longer go to church) ?

A Special Edition of Come As You Are

TABLE OF CONTENTS

To our Readers	2	Life in Paradox" Book review	12
The Christian Enterprise: beginning to unravel	3	CITINews	13
The Catholic Tradition's "Real" Treasures	7	ICCC Conference Report	14
Responding to God's Word Creatively...	10	Obituaries	15

CITI MINISTRIES, INC.**WHO WE ARE**

Believers in Married Priests

OUR MISSION

To work toward the full utilization of married Roman Catholic priests in filling the spiritual needs of the people of God.

OUR STRATEGY

Practice becomes custom, custom becomes law in the church.
(Canon Law #27)

OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Society of Christ's Priesthood- Religious society that certifies marriage and chaplain ministry in the Roman Catholic tradition
- *God's Yellow Pages*-Internet and Printed listing of Sacred Ministers. www.rentapriest.com
- *Seminars and Workshops – Education – Research*
- *Healing Ministry to clergy abuse victims/survivors*
- *Faith Worshipping communities*
- *Come As You Are® Newsletter*
- *Speakers' Bureau*

MEMBERSHIP

Supporting Members \$50 per year
Includes Periodic Newsletter

For *God's Yellow Pages* and *Certified Memberships*, contact CITI's office.

Dear CITI:
Enclosed is

Membership donation \$50
 Monthly Pledge
 Other donation

Call me

I have stocks to donate
 I would like to volunteer
 I'd like to start/join a Mass Community

I am a lay person
 ordained/religious

Credit Card Type _____

Credit Card Number _____

Credit Card Exp. Date _____

**Please send to: CITI Ministries, Inc.,
14 Middle Street, Suite 2
Brunswick, ME 04011
207-729-7673**

**Email: CITIMinistries@aol.com
www.rentapriest.com**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel. _____

Email _____

CITI is a 501.c3 nonprofit corporation.
Thank you.

To Our Readers:

Once my “pay, pray and obey” Catholic bubble burst 17 years ago (the founding of CITI), I began questioning a lot of things about my religion. More recently, I have become curious about the Scriptures and have attended Bible classes. As a parochial school Catholic of the 40s and 50s, we were not encouraged to read the Bible. It was more important that we learn our Catechism. A recent Vatican document, however, now calls urgent attention to Catholics’ lack of knowledge and confusion about the truths of the faith concerning Scripture and recommends Bible education. We might ask, “Why now?”

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181024_rc_synod_doc_20081024_message-synod_en.html.

During the last century, it seems that many scripture scholars began challenging biblical stories wondering whether that they may be legends and parables rather than historical truths. The information wasn't highly publicized for fear of scandalizing believers. Could this new revelation that is becoming more widely known be the reason for the Vatican's urgency to have Catholics read and study the Bible? How can we possibly understand what we were not taught in the first place?

In this special edition of *Come As You Are*®, Dr. Richard Westley, Professor Emeritus of Loyola University presents, “The Unraveling of Christianity,” a provocative workshop that questions the historical authenticity of the Scriptures. Dr. Westley conducted the workshop “Live Life As It Comes” in the fall of 2008, later published in an Australian Catholic newspaper. We believe it is so profound that it warrants additional distribution, hence this special edition of *Come As You Are*®.

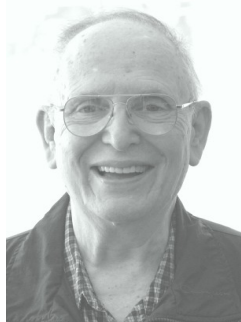
We hope you will be curious enough to gather in small groups and discuss the contents along with Westley's dialogue questions. Comments are also welcome here for possible future publication. Send them to citiminstries@aol.com. Note that Dr. Westley is available for workshops on the subject (rjwestley@aol.com).

LH

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR SUPPORT MEMBERSHIP FOR 2009?

Over the past two years, new members have joined CITI in a support membership category which we very much appreciate. These and other donations continue to assist us in promoting married priests, publishing *Come As You Are*® and upgrading our technology in order to be able to respond to the spiritual needs of people in a more efficient way. If you have not renewed your membership, this is a gentle reminder to do so at this time. Annual membership donation is \$50.

You can use the coupon to the left. Maybe you'd like to join those who contribute monthly. We can handle that too. Thanks.



LIVE LIFE AS IT COMES

A 2-part workshop by Dr. Richard Westley,
Professor Emeritus of Loyola University, Chicago

INTRODUCTION

We could just as easily have been born at the height of the Middle Ages. In those days the Catholic faith permeated every aspect of life and everyone assumed it to be absolutely true just the way it was proclaimed from on high. Had we been born then, we would have lived out our days without ever calling anything the Church said into question. That would have been nice. But we were not born in the Middle Ages. No, we were born at this special time in history. Our youth was spent in a world, faith-wise, which was not unlike the Middle Ages. So, it has come as something of a surprise to us in our old age to discover that God has chosen to have us live into the 21st century and witness that moment in history when the whole Catholic/Christian enterprise as it was presented for almost 2000 years is beginning to unravel. We did not choose to live in these trying times that sorely challenge our youthful understandings. Still, we must live life as it comes to us. We have no choice but to live it as best we can.

What does one do when one has outgrown one's childhood religion? When most of what one hears in church is silly and no longer makes sense in the 21st century? What to do when your life experience exceeds that of most of your priests? When the truths you've gleaned from the hard knocks of your own lived experience are rejected as of no consequence by those in authority, who will accept only their own truths, which all too often turn out to be simply antiquated religious beliefs?

What to do when you finally have to admit to yourself that the Catholic religion into which you were born has become too narrow, too restrictive, and even downright mistaken? In short, what are we to do in the face of the "spiritual crisis", which by the way is universal, facing not only Catholics but other Christians, and believers of every stripe? (Except fundamentalists, of course.) What to do? There seem to be only three alternatives. (1) Walk away altogether. (2) Adopt a bunker mentality and become a fundamentalist. (3) Hang on to what is good and wise in the Catholic tradition but go on to form a new understanding for the 21st century. Having chosen the third alternative, this Workshop attempts to salvage some of the goodness and wisdom of the Catholic tradition and then forge a new understanding, thereby *morphing our Catholic upbringing into something new*, something more suitable for the 21st century. It is entitled: Live Life As It Comes! RJWestley

SESSION I: THE CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE IS BEGINNING TO UNRAVEL

The flyer for this workshop confidently announced... "the whole Catholic/Christian enterprise as it was presented for almost 2000 years is beginning to unravel." Surely that statement is an exaggeration.

Not true! Did you notice the commotion within the Anglican/Episcopal Communion when, on Dec. 21, 2007, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, announced that the Christmas story, so dear to Christians, was probably not true but a powerful legend? He specifically said that there was no manger, there was no star in the East, there were no three kings,

Jesus was probably not born in a stable, and the virgin birth is highly questionable. It is an edifying story, but it is not factual. Across the world Anglican and Episcopalian Bishops weighed in, some siding with Williams, others, while not denying what he said, characterized his timing for the statement, four days before Christmas, as particularly unfortunate. Can you imagine the Pope having the courage to proclaim that truth to the Catholic faithful? Hardly.

Look, sooner or later, fundamentalism notwithstanding, the faithful in the pews of *all* the Christian denominations are going to have to face up to the fact that the Bible, including the New Testament, does not tell us what God has said to humankind so much as

what our spiritual ancestors have had to say to us *about* God. It has been over a century since that truth was discovered by Scripture scholars, but preachers, for fear of scandalizing believers, have by and large adopted a policy of shielding the faithful from those findings. That means that *for more than a century now Traditional Christianity has been living on borrowed time.*

When we were being instructed in the faith at our mother's knee - though we didn't know it - the clock was already ticking. When the good nuns formed us in the Catholic tradition—the clock was ticking. In high school when we were again assured of the truths of the Catholic faith—the clock was ticking. In college as we became adults—the clock was ticking. When we married and tried to share the faith of our ancestors with our own children - the clock was ticking. When we went through our mid-life crises - the clock was ticking. The findings of the experts have at long last begun to trickle down to the people in the pews. Many of our own family members and loved ones died in happy ignorance of those findings. But we, by the grace and will of God, have lived long enough to be forced to deal with the fact that **the clock has stopped ticking. Time is now up!** Like it or not, the total unraveling of "Traditional Christianity" has finally begun on our watch.

No one is claiming that authentic Christianity is coming to an end any time soon. Not at all. The claim is that "Traditional Christianity" is now beginning a rather rapid decline but that authentic "Christian faith" will only completely disappear if it is not profoundly transformed. Two thousand years of "Traditional Christianity" is more than enough. The next thousand years (the so-called "third millennium") belongs to the Holy Spirit's work of transforming *all* the parochial divisive religions of the world, not just Christianity, in favor of a "spirituality" which honors God and unifies humankind. Remember Viktor Frankl's **monoanthropism?** [explained on page 5]. Naturally, we shall not live to see that work fulfilled, but we are called to witness and participate in its beginnings within our Catholic Church. Vatican II was already a step in that direction. Unfortunately it has been undermined and its effect blunted by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. But, as our own lived experience teaches us, opposition to the Spirit can never really be successful. In the end, the Spirit always wins out.

*Have the faithful
been shielded from
a truth
discovered over a
century ago?*

KEY ELEMENTS IN THE DECLINE

1. The Revised View of Scripture

For centuries (actually two millennia) believers never doubted that the Bible says it like it is. How could they? After all, it was purported to be the "Word of God". Now in increasing numbers believers are having to face the harsh fact that Scripture may not be the sort of thing they thought it was. If the Christmas story isn't factual, one cannot help but wonder what other things in Scripture presumed to be factually real - aren't? The list is growing. In the Old Testament: the Creation story, the Adam & Eve story, the Abraham story, the Noah and the Ark story, the Sodom & Gomorrah story, the Moses story etc. In the New Testament: the Annunciation story, the Christmas story, Jesus' Baptism story, the Wedding at Cana story, the Lazarus story, the Palm Sunday story, the post-crucifixion stories etc. The non-factual nature of those, and other legends is causing people to lose faith in the traditional concept of revelation.

Nonetheless, the Bible remains one of the most important documents in human history. It is replete with legendary stories which, like Shakespeare, have become part of the spiritual heritage not only of Jews and Christians but of the whole human race. No one denies that. The issue is that for two thousand years believers have looked on the Bible as God-made, whereas it is really man-made. What was thought to be of time transcending value turns out to be historically dated and part of the "social world" of the particular Scripture writer involved. When Paul counsels "wives be subject to your husbands" - that should not be taken to be a timeless truth, but a reflection of the times in which he lived. As Marcus Borg has observed:

"Social world" is an important and illuminating shorthand term. It refers to the social environment of a particular time and place. It basically means the same as "culture", understood as everything that humans add to nature. It is the social canopy under which people live. A very comprehensive term, it includes political and economic systems, codes of behavior and convention, understandings of what is real and how to live, religious traditions and practices, language, technology and more - (*Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 2006, p. 78)

Similarly, when the Gospel writers have Jesus condemn divorce and remarriage - that too is a function of the "social world" of that time. Contemporary experience reveals that some second marriages can be edifying and authentic signs of the "kingdom*". So the question becomes are we to follow the "social world" of first century Palestine, or be allowed to create a whole new "social world" in keeping with what the Holy Spirit is revealing to humankind now? That also applies to the issue of gay and lesbian relationships. To take the condemnations in Scripture as definitive, is to adopt the "social world" of ancient Israel, when all the signs are that the Holy Spirit is trying to reveal to us that such relationships can be good and signs of the "kingdom" Jesus preached. As I said in *Morality & Its Beyond*, in some instances such relationships actually achieve the level of being "sacrament" for the believing community. This revised view of Scripture is the primary impetus for the unraveling of "Traditional Christianity" in our day.

*"Kingdom" is not a typo. In an age when monarchy is in decline and is generally thought of pejoratively, it seems prudent to avoid the word "kingdom", which can be seen as sexist as well. I have therefore opted to adopt "kingdom" to avoid those difficulties. Besides, when God reigns and the Spirit rules - all of humankind are spiritual "kinfolk" to one another.

Are we called to witness the unraveling of traditional Christianity so we can be unified with all mankind under God?

2. The Holy Spirit

A second source of energy for the current unraveling is the fact that Spirit has been outrageously overlooked in "Traditional Christianity". To safeguard the centrality of Christ, Scripture speaks of Spirit as Jesus' gift and portrays Spirit as coming into the world only *after* Jesus. Imagine how embarrassing it would be to call Jesus the "Savior of the world" and have the Holy Spirit out there doing its thing unrelated to Jesus. To avoid that embarrassment, our ancestors in faith linked the Holy Spirit to Christ, so much so that in Christian circles the Holy Spirit became known as "the Spirit of Christ". You did not find One without the Other.

Marvelous. There's just one problem. The followers of Jesus would not have been able to recognize him as "the Offspring of God" were it not for the presence of the Holy Spirit within them. That means that the Holy Spirit was already "in the world" *before* Jesus - not after. To hold otherwise takes you right back to the then and there and leaves no room for the here and now. You get stuck in the historical and cultural limitations of first century Palestine. Actually, the Holy Spirit is present to us now and has been present throughout the whole of human history. Anywhere

anything good and noble has happened among us, there the Spirit of God has been active. The Holy Spirit's presence encompasses all of human history. That means, in Christian terms, that God has entered human history not once but **twice**. First as God's Spirit lavished on all of creation thus permeating human life from the beginning, and second as Jesus the Christ. Spirit, then, is the inexorable power of union within all of creation. Spirit is what creates, preserves and integrates life in the cosmos, and even the cosmos itself. Spirit is the divine present throughout all of God's creation. Spirit is the force behind the process of convergence within humanity - is a pre-requisite for the

Coming of the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed. To have ignored Spirit and when not ignored to have limited Spirit within Christian parochial boundaries - is indeed outrageous.

Now how, you ask, does all that contribute to the present unraveling? Certainly love, compassion and all sorts of human goodness existed in the world *before* Jesus. But those things are not simply laudable human occurrences, they

are the work of the Spirit wherever they occur. That is why the path of goodness *is* the path to God, i.e. one is only able to journey that path thanks to the presence of the Spirit. Whenever in human history a person followed that path she moved godward even if totally unrelated to Christ or Christianity. The conclusion is that thanks to the Spirit, the Christian enterprise is not the only game in town, there are many other ways to move godward, Christianity is only one of the many "divine franchises". That leads to the conclusion that if one withdraws from Christianity that does not necessarily mean they give up on moving godward. One may choose to remain Catholic/Christian, but that is no longer an absolute necessity. The lessening of that "necessity" contributes to the current unraveling.

3. Democracy

The popes and bishops never tire of reminding us that the Catholic Church is **not** a democracy. So blind are they that they actually think that keeping their adult members in subservience and a kind of abject obedience is God's will. They fail to see that the spread of democracy is really the work of the Spirit, and they fail to appreciate that "Traditional Christianity" cannot be attractive to people raised from childhood on democratic principles. Among such people there is a natural urge to expunge authoritarianism and claims of dogmatic infallibility from their lives. That urge adds to the current impetus for unraveling.

4. Feminism & The Role of Women

If "Traditional Christianity" were only "hierarchical" 21st century folks just might be able to accept it. (I guess I really don't believe that.) But, unfortunately, it is also "patriarchal", which prevents it from taking half the human race seriously. At a time when the marginalization of women is receding in cultures all around the world, it remains virulently present in the Catholic Church. In the face of history, Catholic Church authorities continue to publicly proclaim the secondary status not only of women but of lay Catholics as well. Outrageous. Such patent stupidity contributes added impetus to the current forces for unraveling.

5. Monoanthropism vs. Catholic Exclusivity

And finally, we should recall the words of Viktor Frankl:

Another step now must be taken, thousands of years after mankind developed monotheism, the belief in the one God. Monotheism is not enough; it will not do. What we need is not only the belief in the one God but also the awareness of the one mankind, the awareness of the unity of humanity. I would call it "*mono-anthropism*".

Frankl contends that the millennia long belief in "one God", while an important development in human history, is no longer enough to insure human survival on the planet. If we are not to be destroyed by the hateful divisions, sectarianism, violence and war that mark our era, we must come to *truly* believe in "one humanity". We are all sisters and brothers, occupants of the same planet, connected to one another by our common humanity and by the presence of the Spirit within.

Jesus revealed to us that God's dream for humankind involves -emancipation from all that keeps us divided and "at war" with one another. Just as there is but "one God", so, there is to be "one people" in whom God dwells. That's the dream, that's the goal, that's always been the goal, and that's the very reason we have Church and is the deepest, truest meaning of the word "Catholic". Instead, "being Catholic" has become a sign of exclusivity separating us from our sisters and brothers in the world.

This contributes to unraveling because people recognize that such a stance not only separates them from others it separates them from the dream and mission of authentic Christianity as well. #

Is the transformation to "spirituality" in place of religiosity" the work of the Holy Spirit?

*In this session we have tried to chronicle the unraveling process occurring on our watch. Doing that necessarily caused us to stress some of the negatives of "Traditional Christianity". **Fine.** But it is equally true that underneath the barnacles that characterize so much of "Traditional Christianity" there is a treasure trove of pure gold. It is to some of those treasures that we shall turn next.*

DIALOGUE QUESTIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE IS BEGINNING TO UNRAVEL!

1. How does it with the preachers in your life? That is, are they still trying to protect the congregation from what the experts are saying about Scripture, or are they trying to gently introduce the new perspective? Whichever alternative they have chosen, how is that working? How do you react to it?

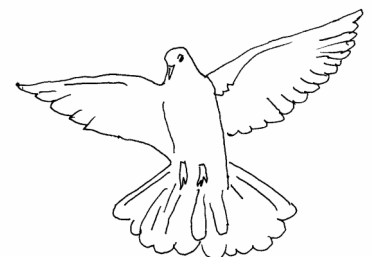
2. Westley claims that "for more than a century now Traditional Christianity has been living on borrowed time." That's our entire lifetime! Do you have a sense, as he claims, that time is now up - and that we've entered a new era for Christian faith? What about his claim that Christianity is *only one* of the many divine franchises?

3. "God has entered human history not once but twice. First as God's Spirit lavished on all of creation thus permeating human life from the beginning, and second as Jesus the Christ." What do you make of the claim that the Spirit came before Jesus, not after? As you see it, what difference does that make?

4. Westley lists 5 factors that are contributing to the unraveling of "Traditional Christianity". What are your thoughts on the matter?

- Revised view of Scripture
- Revised view of Spirit
- The rise of Democratic Principles
- Feminism & the Marginalization of Women
- Human Solidarity (Monoanthropism)

5. At the end, Westley speaks of a "treasure trove of pure gold" within "Traditional Christianity". Any ideas about what sorts of things he might be talking about?



LIVE LIFE AS IT COMES

SESSION II: THE CATHOLIC TRADITION'S "REAL" TREASURES

Keynote: "Alienated Christians need not necessarily chuck their Christianity to find peace of soul. In their own religious tradition they can find stepping-stones that lead to spiritual fulfillment, wherever it may eventually lie." - Daniel A. Helminiak, *The Transcended Christian: Spiritual Lessons for the Twenty-First Century*, Alyson Books, New York, 2007, p. 15.

Catholicism has a deep and rich spiritual heritage, but of late it seems to have ignored that heritage. Instead, it has chosen to push a cold and calculating agenda, i.e. an exclusively papal interpretation of Scripture; rote acceptance of Vatican approved doctrines; a suspicion of science and its advances; relentless moralizing about every aspect of life; unbending allegiance to orthodoxy; and an inflated view of Catholicism's superiority. The papacy has become imperial, and bishops world wide are reduced to the role of Vatican surrogates. As a result, Catholicism seems to many to have become simple-minded and out of touch. In such an atmosphere the "treasures" of Catholicism generally go unattended and unmined.

The "good news" is that despite all that, those "treasures" remain readily available even to alienated Catholics who leave the institution, as well as to those who choose to remain, be they alienated or not. The "bad news", for the institution at least, is that all those "Catholic" treasures are transportable, i.e. they are not so "Catholic" that they cannot readily become elements of a spiritual life *outside* the institution.

St. Paul: "*Sisters and brothers, I would not have you ignorant regarding spiritual things.*" - 1 Cor. 12:1

Treasure #1

We don't often think of it, but our lives and our thoughts take place against a backdrop which profoundly affects how we think and how we live. Deep within all of us is an image or picture of reality as indifferent, as threatening and destructive, or as nurturing and life-giving. How we characterize reality profoundly affects our response to life. Western culture would have us image reality as ultimately indifferent. Reality is made up of atoms and subatomic particles, a cosmic soup, which is indifferent to human purposes and hopes. Reality simply is what it is. That is why today more and more find the existence of God questionable and irrelevant. But even believers are affected by this cultural view. Unless we have had some sort of transforming experience, our belief in God is simply added to the basic scientific picture of reality as inanimate and impersonal.

In such a world, the Catholic/Christian position on God is a real treasure. It is a treasure not because it affirms God's "existence", even some philosophers and scientists do that, but because it proclaims something much more significant to us. And what in today's world could possibly be more significant than affirming God's "existence"? Why affirming God's "presence" of course. This Christianity has done from the start. What earthly good is a God who exists, who created the cosmos, but who remains aloof and not lovingly "present" to humankind? None whatsoever.

Who among us hasn't had a feeling of insignificance after reading *National Geographic* or viewing the *Discovery Channel* on the vastness of the cosmos? A universe, we are told, which is characterized by chaos and ruled by chance. In such circumstances human projects count for naught, and human aspirations no more than empty dreams. Hurling through space on spaceship Earth, we are horribly vulnerable and terribly alone, unable to decide whether the flow of the universe in which we are caught up is malevolent toward humankind or just completely indifferent. In either case, our personal fate is sealed, we are destined for ultimate annihilation.

Against so dismal a story, Catholicism/Christianity has always presented its alternative account. Not only are we not alone, God's loving "presence" to every human being, thanks to the Spirit, confirms that human life is not insignificant, it is of great value. In fact, if we but cooperate with the flow of that Spirit, we, ourselves, become divinized. The cosmos no longer seems unfriendly, chaotic and indifferent, Divine Love permeates everything, making life ultimately good. In the end, each of us must decide which sort of universe our experience tells us we're living in. Our choice in this matter greatly affects the kind of lives we lead. Turn your back on the Church if you must, but be sure to take Treasure #1, **God's loving Presence within you**, with you as you move out the door.

Treasure #2

What's It All About Alfie? If there is one thing we learned in the second half of the 20th century, thanks to people like Viktor Frankl, it is that "man's search for meaning" is vitally important and central to human life. One reason most Catholics weren't concerned with that was because just "being Catholic" meant you didn't have to *search* for meaning - you already had it. It had been revealed to you. As Parker Palmer says:

We are born with a seed of selfhood that contains the **spiritual DNA** of our uniqueness - an encoded birthright knowledge of **who we are, why we are here, and how we are related to others. We may abandon that knowledge** as the years go by, **but it never abandons us.**" - (Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2004.)

That is no small thing in a world like ours where so many find their lives meaningless and are, therefore, condemned to an endless and fruitless search. One of the great "treasures" of Catholicism/Christianity is that it reveals to its adherents the "meaning" of life. What is that meaning?

The fact that "God so loved the world..." affirms the nobility and grandeur of human life. It also reveals the meaning of "the good life". No, it is not consumerism and a life of pleasure and relative affluence. The meaning of "the good life" is that **people matter**, and our life together is *really* what life is all about. As Fr. Don Headley put it:

We are relational beings both inside and out. We are all touched by each other forever; there is no escape and no respite to the echo and reverberations which we are and which surround us. We are parts of a great web of relationships where all salvation of the human spirit takes place.

We always experience joy when we possess something truly good for us. Of course, "things" can be very good, but faith and experience reveal that only "persons" are the very dwelling place of Goodness Itself. Nothing is so like God, nothing is so God-filled as a human person. Small wonder then that loving "things" is not as pleasant and joyfilled for us as loving and being loved by persons. To love persons *is* to love God, to love God *is* to love persons. (1 John 4:20). Turn your back on the

institution if you will, but for heaven's sake be sure to take Treasure #2, **that people matter and are really what life's all about**, with you as you walk away.

Treasure #3

Having a "holy" book can be dangerous, as is proved by Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalisms. However, leaving literal interpretation aside, **Scripture is a real "treasure"**. It is a repository of so much spiritual wisdom that it is unthinkable that we should try to cope with life's unfolding without it. It is one of the real "gifts" to the world by Catholicism/Christianity. Of course, it becomes less of a "gift" when taken literally or treated as a theological treatise or a doctrinal summary by which to judge orthodoxy.

Treasure #3a: Parables

Jesus didn't teach in a textbook sort of way - in the Jewish tradition he conveyed his message primarily by telling stories. Stories which revealed that the Power behind the unfolding of the universe is beneficent and can be trusted. People latched on to his "parables", repeating them to others, because in some mysterious way his stories illumined their experience, bespoke hope and made living a bit easier and more hopeful.

One didn't have to be educated to grasp their meaning, one only had to be open enough to let the story resonate with one's own life experience. Having struggled with life - people knew what Jesus was talking about - they didn't need religious teachers to tell them. For many who heard him it was the first time they could trust the primordial message they had already discovered in their own hearts by themselves. No one is totally blind when it comes to the things of the heart. After all, we are not novices at coping with life as it unfolds. Like those who heard Jesus, we already have enough experience to know how life really works.

The parables of Jesus reveal that truth to those who have ears to hear.

While it is understandable why you might want to free yourself from the Catholicism of your youth, surely you don't want to continue your spiritual journey without illuminating stories like that of The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Good Shepherd, The Mustard Seed, The Wise & Foolish Virgins, Lazarus & The Rich Man etc. Besides, you can't really get rid of those parables simply by leaving. They are etched in our memory since childhood and continue to show us the way of Jesus even when we don't follow it.

Treasure #3b: A Glimpse of God

In Jesus' world the issue was never whether God existed or not, that was never questioned. The basic issue was - what was God really like. Despite all the "God-talk" going on out there, then and now, God still remains the great Unknown. Human thought and language are too limited to grasp the transcendent infinity of God. Still, the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures, especially the parables and teachings of Jesus, give us a glimpse of what God is like and what God desires for us and our world. The Old Testament says of God: "You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love." (Nehemiah 9:17) Jesus invites us to see God as life-giving, generous, even lavish. "See how God feeds the birds and clothes the lilies..." (Matthew 6:25-33; Luke 12:22-31) In addition, he calls us to be compassionate, just as Our Father in heaven is. (Luke 6:36) If we are to move god-ward, within or outside the institution, we must be a compassionate and caring people.

As for what God desires of us, the Old Testament says it clearly: "You have been told what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8) And this from Amos: "I take no delight in your sacrifices...let justice flow like a river and righteousness like an unfailing stream." Jesus confirms the Old Testament view that God's "passion" is for "justice" by his consistent teaching on the Kindom, which is often called the "Kindom of Justice". If we are to move god-ward, within or outside the institution, we must be a people that thirsts for peace and justice. Having this "glimpse of God" is a real treasure and the basis of any authentic spirituality.

Treasure #4

Throughout history human beings have had transcendent experiences. Experiences which transport people to another dimension of reality, and give them a sense of union with God. We may ourselves never have had such experiences, but we all know of people who have. One of the treasures of Catholic/Christianity is that it supplies us with a means to talk about such experiences in terms of God, the Holy Spirit and union with Christ. Imagine being unable to put mystical-like experiences into even halting words, imagine how barren that would make our lives. It is a real treasure to be able to articulate something of them.

Treasure #5

There they are on the mantel, all the pictures of loved ones who have gone before us into the mystery of death. Having them there is a mixed blessing. Sometimes we find joy in remembering this thing or that about this one or that. The joy of remembering their presence and their love warms our hearts. That's why we keep those pictures there in full view. We like to remember them. But at other times we find those pictures to be a source of anxiety causing us to question whether we'll ever see those folks again, or whether they have gone into nothingness. Fear follows as we think of our own going into nothingness after them.

That thought is beyond bearing. We cannot accept it as the final word. That is why of all the treasures of Catholicism/Christianity we find Treasure #5, the bold assertion in the face of science and the nay-sayers that death is not the end for us, the most precious treasure of all. To give it up is to court depression, disaster and despair.

The Final Treasure

The Final Treasure is the truly "catholic" treasure. That is to say it is the most universal and the least parochial of Catholicism's treasures. If, as we believe, the Spirit of God is flowing through creation, and that it is the same Spirit of the same God, then there ought to be a common core of truth in all authentic religions and spiritualities. One of the true treasures of Catholicism is that it offers just such a unifying core, and when it does so, it is truly "catholic".

What is that Spiritual Core? It is Treasure #6, of Catholicism and it is:

You are not alone, you are loved by God and are precious in God's sight. Egotism, indifference, hatred and injustice diminish you, because all human beings are kinfolk to one another. Be not afraid to turn from evil and repent, because God's forgiveness is readily at hand. Extending that forgiveness to others and treating them with care and compassion nourishes your spirit and will eventually transform the world. Finally, be not afraid - death is not the end - don't you know you are "spirit" and are destined to live forever with that God Who loves you?

For Christ's sake, be sure to take that message with you -whichever direction you choose to go on your spiritual journey from here on out. RJWestley@aol.com

How can we participate in (rather than just witness) this historic transformation? (so many no longer go to church)?

DIALOGUE QUESTIONS FOR THE CATHOLIC TRADITION'S "REAL" TREASURES

1. When you view TV programs that present the vastness of the cosmos - what are your reactions? Do they sort of undermine your faith? Just a little? Explain.
2. What do you take the "meaning of life" to be? Does your Catholic background play any role in your having that view? Explain.
 - a) What do you think of Westley's claim that the "meaning of life" is - PEOPLE MATTER and OUR LIFE TOGETHER IS WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT? Does your experience confirm that view or not?
3. Westley claims that no one is completely blind to the things of the heart, *and* that we are not novices at coping with life. What is that all about? Why in the world would he think it important to make such claims?
4. Can't ignore the "death thing"! Share your experience with pictures of your departed loved ones. What story do you tell yourself about how this is all going to end?
5. To say that all the Catholic treasures listed are "transportable" - just shows that they are *not* authentically Catholic (with a capital "C"). Doesn't it?
 - a) Why, do you think, didn't Westley list things like Eucharist, Jesus as Lord and Savior of the world, Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, Mary as Mother of God, as the "Catholic" treasures?

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Marcus Borg, *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 2006.

Spencer Burke & Barry Taylor, *A Heretic's Guide to Eternity*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2006.

Daniel A. Helminiak, *The Transcended Christian: Spiritual Lessons for the Twenty-First Century*, Alyson Books, New York, 2007.

Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*, Continuum, New York, 2008.

Brian McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that could Change Everything*, W Publishing Group, Nashville, Tennessee, 2006.

John Shelby Spong, *Jesus for the Non-Religious*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 2007.



RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD CREATIVELY IS FRIGHTENINGLY WONDERFUL: A MARRIAGE OF WORD AND LIFE

On June 12, 2008 the Catholic News Service published a notice that publicized a working document to be used by the Synod of Bishops on the Bible. It called for a creative pastoral response to a growing hunger among Catholics for the word of God and said the synod should help find ways for Catholics to better understand Scripture and relate it to their everyday lives, including works of justice and charity.

The 86-page document, called an "instrumentum laboris," served as a discussion guideline for the Oct. 5-26 synod, which treated the theme: "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church." While strongly rejecting a fundamentalist approach and encouraging a daily reading of Scripture, it also included many cautionary notes. Essentially, there was a sense that the laity still needed priestly instruction in order to understand the texts properly. Accordingly, there was an emphasis on the readings from the lectionary, Sunday and weekdays, which would be elucidated by well-prepared homilies that would help the folks in the pews to incorporate God's word in their everyday lives.

I cannot argue with the concept. It is a holy and wholesome thing to make the Word of God relevant in today's world. But, I can quarrel with the idea that laity are unable to unpack the texts and apply their value without ordained assistance. In fact, I think the challenge that comes with confronting difficult passages can stir the spiritual juices and evoke a pondering and meditation that might not otherwise occur.

At the same time, to respond to God's word creatively is also to evoke critical reaction. For many, "them's fightin' words." I can recall my own study of Scripture in the fifties. Obviously pre-Vatican II, our commission as high school students was to memorize proof texts. Sister would give us a fact and a corresponding "proof" from Scripture. Tests to confirm our ability to retain the details would then follow. So, I remember committing to memory the fact that Jesus was poor and then affirming his poverty with this Bible verse: "And Jesus said to him [a scribe who sought to follow Jesus] 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his

of reasoning applied to the Hebrew Scriptures, otherwise known as the Old Testament Discussion was not permitted and would have been futile in any event. What argument could be posed that would not also have been a refutation of Scripture and, by association, a denial of the validity of God's word? It was a "The Bible says it. I believe it. And that's that."

Thankfully, those days are long gone. But, in many circles, the attitude of obedience without question has remained. Of course, study of the literal sense of Scripture is necessary. We cannot deny or omit historical facts. We cannot overlook the reality and impact of societal biases and restrictions, or its prohibitions. We cannot ignore the limits of time, space, science, education, and religious understanding. But, neither can we pretend that there has been no process or progress since biblical times.

The good news is that God's word is dynamic, not static. It is creative and both makes and reveals all things anew. The Bible is not composed of words that are ultimately dead letters, but is alive with a vibrant and vital message for today.

I can clearly recall Fr. Raymond Brown's admonition to the budding theologians in graduate school at St. Joseph College. "Remember", he continually stated, "Jesus was a Jew who lived in the first third of the first century. Do not ask what Jesus thought about nuclear proliferation. There was no such thing in his day. But, do ask what Jesus thought about loving one's enemy."

His warning was overt. Do not overlay Jesus' words with the problems and challenges of the 21st century. At the same time, find and utilize the values that lie beneath his words. Take them seriously and act upon them creatively so that the Word of God may be loved and lived today. This serious action can only be undertaken with any degree of validity if we give scripture a higher priority in the church and read it meditatively, pondering the portrait of God working in human history to save us. In turn, this means studying Scripture. My experience in facilitating Scripture study groups since 1972 has led me to believe firmly in the power of challenging discussion. Remove the labels we place upon each other and know that all are welcome to share their understanding of God's word. In fact, the diversity will more readily allow truth to emerge.

Although each individual is equipped to read the Bible, a knowledgeable leader—not necessarily a cleric—is critical to the process. Otherwise, a sharing of ignorance can lead to confusion. I found it most enlightening that the synod document indicated the

necessity of, "A focus on improved formation for process or progress since biblical times.

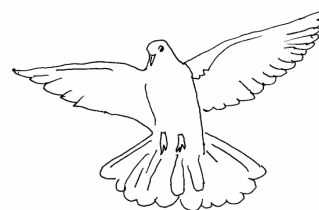
The good news is that God's word is dynamic, not static. It is creative and both makes and reveals all things anew. The Bible is not composed of words that are ultimately dead letters, but is alive with a vibrant and vital message for today.

Granted the ideal of all Christians gaining a profound understanding of Scripture in all its levels, the reality is that most will limit their exposure to what they hear at liturgy or read in a short devotional. Many may be intimidated by challenging passages or ones that seem totally irrelevant. I remember my first attempts at reading Scripture. Other than the familiar verses, I could not seem to integrate the words into my life on any meaningful level. Thankfully, I was urged to continue. One day, the words became God's Word, God's message to me. From that time to this, I have taken a second look at everything. All that surrounds me bears God's Word, inspires me, illumines my life, and interprets it from a divine perspective.

The literalist rigidity of fundamentalism would not allow this vitality. Nor would the fear of "making a mistake in interpretation." Scripture does not focus on dogma. Dogma, at its heart, is based on Scripture. Both must breathe and give breath to God's spirit moving among God's people. Otherwise, the truth remains hidden. We continue to be enslaved. And God's desire that we be free is held captive.

Ultimately, as the document declares, "The Bible is not exclusively for Christians; it is a treasure for all humanity. Through fraternal and personal contact, it can become the source of inspiration for those who do not believe in Christ. "If that is not a creative response, I don't know what is! hope5@mindspring.com

Fran Salone-Pelletier has a Master's degree in Theology and is the author of *Awakening to God: The Sunday Readings in Our Lives* [a trilogy of Scriptural meditations], Lead Chaplain at Brunswick Community Hospital, Religious educator, retreat leader, and lecturer.



BOOK REVIEW: *Life in Paradox, the story of a gay catholic priest*, by Paul Edward Murray, O Books, Washington, USA (ISBN 978-1-84694-112-2)

"Paradox": any person, thing, or situation exhibiting an apparently contradictory nature; unbelievable (from the second edition of Random House Webster's unabridged dictionary).

Father Paul Murray's story of his life presents three compelling portraits of as many diverse structures: the gay culture, Catholic Rectory living, and a compromised Catholic hierarchy. Intertwined with these portraits is the personal journey of a gay Catholic Priest who maintains his integrity and his identity (you really can't have one without the other) while shining a bright light on areas not accustomed to public viewing in the naked sunshine of high noon. He does it perceptively, tellingly, and with complete candor. One does not have to agree. If one does not agree, though, reasons must be given. Integrity has its demands.

I am not a gay person, and I have not taken the energy and time to attempt to examine the ways and rationale of the gay community. I had no reason to do so. My clerical priestly ministry was not directly involved with the gay community as such, and my non-clerical jobs did not specifically deal with them. Father Murray's presentation, however, opened up doors to my thinking as to how much better a job I could have done had I positively included a gay outreach in my various activities and ministries.

I did spend over 11 years in catholic rectory living (facetiously refer to it as 11 years in homes for unwed fathers) but nowhere else, except in this book, have I seen it described in such razor sharp, accurate detail that highlights the incongruities of imposing unlimited parental control over competent adults. The closest comparison in today's world would be to visit a nursing home where adults are treated as veritable children (as a currently functioning chaplain, part time, at an 88 bed nursing home in South Carolina I feel experienced enough to make that comparison).

The compromised hierarchy is described in minute detail as it tries to have it both ways, and usually, as in

the real world, it comes up short. All bureaucracies are the same. Having spent 11 years dealing with ecclesiastical hierarchy, 20 years with federal and corporate officials, and 10 years with state functionaries, the only perceived difference was that one of these groups wore its collars differently than the rest. Control, control, and more control.

An unintended consequence, possibly, of this book was the deft portrayal of the basic humanity of Cardinal Hickey of Washington. I saw him pictured as a man who tried to balance his own humanity as a person with the ecclesiastical requirements of his position. For the most part he succeeded. In the final analysis we must conclude, integrity is identity -- you can't have one without the other. Father Paul Murray succeeded on both counts.

In this I congratulate him.

jkoerber@islc.net

Note: Sadly, Fr. Paul Murray died unexpectedly in January, 2008. He did read this review prior to his death and was pleased with it. "Life in Paradox" is available at AMAZON.COM.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CITI'S NEWLY CERTIFIED PRIESTS IN 2008

Edgard Martinez, CA; James Hushek, AZ; John Gallagher, NJ; Mark Szymcik, MA; Anthony Macri, FL; Jim Roche, NJ; Christopher Bisett, MD; John Wentland, CT; Jacek Zebrowski, MI; George Adusei-Bonsu, OH; John King, OH; John Bischoff, OR; Andrew Santos, IN; Michael Bishop, CA; Noel Clarke, NY; Philip Cerrato, VA; Daniel Sparapani, MI; Theodore Roman, NJ; and Jesus Rivera, MD.

Priests who are certified through CITI are certified as Roman Catholic priests. They receive further ecclesiastical endorsement through CITI's affiliation with the International Council of Community Churches which is a member of both the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches. Information regarding CITI/ICCC certification may be obtained by writing citimministries@aol.com or calling 1-800-PRIEST 9

CITI'S BLOGSPOT is available to anyone who wants to read or post: www.rentapriest.blogspot.com. In order to post, write frrich@mac.com.

CITI/RENTAPRIEST NEWS



SAY HELLO TO DARLENE KRITZMAN

Darlene joined CITI's Brunswick, Maine office in the fall of 2008 to assist in the coordination of Rentapriest activity among married priests as well as public requests. Her attention to detail is perfect for

the tasks involving priests' listings, sacramental records and keeping the office organized.

Darlene was born in Maine and has had a varied administrative career from entrepreneurial projects to museum archival work while bringing up a family of three with her late husband Andy. She is also a very good singer having performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. with her mother a few years ago. Next time you call the office (207-729-7673) say hello to Darlene.

CITI TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Phase One of our Tech Update was installed in our office computers in late March. Phase One involved the networking of computers as well as file integration of our records. Once the data is entered, a project for the next few months, contact information changes will only have to be entered once and wherever that name appears, the change will automatically follow. We also anticipate that by summer, married priests will be able to fill out the sacramental registries online and submit them for automatic entry into the database. In addition, the "paper" we have from past entries will have both database info as well as a .pdf version of the original document attached to the same file.

Concurrent with data entry, we will begin work on the virtual side of the Tech Update. This process will allow priests to access their own secure files online the way we can pull up our own personal accounts on Amazon.com for instance. It is anticipated that this will include not only sacramental registry, but CITI annual renewals as well as changes in address and other contact information for the website and printed listings.

We appreciate the donations sent from priests who will benefit from these changes, especially those who have joined the "Monthly Contribution Club." Thanks so much

The more we take risks,
The more alive we are.
If we don't
we will be sorry for changes
we did not make

MARRIED PRIESTS AND BAPTISMS

Because the subject of the legitimacy of baptisms by married priests comes up on occasion, the following Canon laws that apply which have been published before, are again being shared with you:

Can. 230.3: "Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are not available, lay Catholics even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of their functions...confer baptism."

Can. 861.2: "If the ordinary minister is absent or impeded, a catechist or some other person deputed to this office by the local Ordinary, may lawfully confer baptism; indeed in a case of necessity, **any person who has the requisite intention may do so.**"

Can. 877.1: "The parish priest of the place in which the baptism was conferred must carefully and without delay record in the register of baptism the names of the baptized, the minister, the parents, the sponsors and, if there were such, the witnesses, and the place and date of baptism. He must also enter the date and place of birth."

Can. 878: "If baptism was administered neither by the parish priest nor in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever that was, must notify the parish priest of the parish in which the baptism was administered, so that he may register the baptism in accordance with Can. 877."

Upon conferring baptism, it is therefore recommended that married priests write a letter to the local parish and include the above canons to apprise him of his duty, if the parents wish to have the baptism recorded in institutional records.

In 1997, Toronto Bishop John Sherlock made a public announcement that all who are baptized by married priests will be accepted in the church. Same holds true with other sacramental activity of married priests, according to Canon Law. A recent article in the Chicago Tribune regarding the shortage of priests indicated that "only ordained priests can anoint ill Catholics." Married priests are ordained priests by virtue of Canon 290: "...once validly received, sacred ordination never becomes invalid."

We look forward to the day when *pro-action* will replace *pacivity* among Catholics still in the pews who are afraid of inviting a married priest to celebrate Mass inside the church building when no celibate priest is available. Pew Catholics have no idea just how much power they have, for it was grassroots that were responsible, by just doing it, for female altar servers, Midnight Mass at 10:00 p.m., eating meat on Fridays, no longer wearing hats in church. And married priests are already ordained, a very easy transition. Look what started the Civil Rights Movement:

REPORT: ICCC'S 2008 SUMMER CONFERENCE

Reported by

Rev. William and Donna Amy Podobinski

The International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) was serendipitously formed over 50 years ago when a black church and white church decided to worship together. The organization has now grown to 150 member churches who gather annually—pastors and congregants—for sharing of spirituality.



*Rev. William and
Donna Amy Podobinski*

As CITI's 2008 delegates, our experience at the Summer Conference was a "love/light-filled space" from beginning to end. We felt like "wide-eyed children on Christmas morning." That ICCC members are one in community and one in God/Love was the recurring awesome and wondrous expression felt throughout the week, whether it exemplified itself in Bible Study, a daily occurrence, or whether it was in sharing bread during the Prayer Breakfasts, luncheons or morning/evening worship.

Among the ICCC ministerial team, there are now "Pastors without Portfolio," not affiliated with a specific church community, but making themselves available to churches and people, the same way priests affiliated with CITI/Society of Christ's Priesthood have done for 17 years.

ICCC struggles with identification (who are we?) and their goals (where are we going?) as CITI has over previous years. The founding of each CITI and ICCC was inspired by the Holy Spirit and unfortunately she did not provide a map or crystal ball. We can only do what we are inspired to do or how we happen to evolve, and grow only at the rate the Holy Spirit determines. Some believe that "without vision, the people will perish," as indicated during one of the ICCC workshops, to which we say, "without faith in the Holy Spirit, our future may not become clear."

In the meantime, we must keep moving forward "spreading God's Love through ministry that is based on 'freedom' (freeing ourselves from all prejudices), 'integrity' (our wholeness) and 'unity' (being fully embraced in one another), a message that came across so vividly at the Conference.

ICCC speaks to the relational aspects of a one-ness in humankind—a KIN-DOM—a genuine witness validated in the ministry of our own "Priests without Borders"—married and resigned affiliated priests with CITI and the Society of Christ's Priesthood.

Perhaps, we too are in the middle of a spiritual awakening. donnaamypodobinski@comcast.net



*Bill and Donna,
Juanita and Pastor
Louis A. Barnes*

COME TO THE 2009 ICCC CONFERENCE

When: Sunday, July 19-Wednesday, July 22, 2009

Where: St. Louis, Missouri

Bible Study Leader: Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler, Jr., Assoc. Prof, Bible at Union Theological Seminary, PSCE, the Charlotte Campus; also former lecturer at Duke Divinity School, NC.

See www.icccusa.com for info on workshops, Ministerium meetings and other events. This a group of spirit-filled, interdenominational, interfaith, interracial, nondenominational and post-denominational folks, and is the best conference I have ever attended. LH



*ICCC National Coordinator Rev.
Michael Livingston with Mom & Dad*

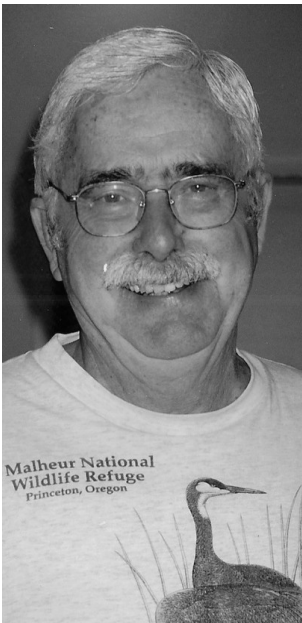
OBITUARIES

Catherine Shuster

1925-2008

Mother of CITI VP John Shuster

Catherine Shuster, 83, of Greenfield, PA passed on to eternal life on the glorious day of Friday, Aug. 15, 2008, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was born in 1925 in Pittsburgh to Mathias and Mathilda Miller, of Hays, and as a high school graduate looking for a job won a citywide typing championship, achieving 125 words a minute, which helped her win a position at the Pittsburgh Board of Education. While serving there as a secretary, she met a young teacher, Andrew, who would become her husband. Catherine was a forthright and practical woman whose resourcefulness and gift for hospitality made her home a wonderful gathering place for family and friends. She was a deeply spiritual person who was very involved in her Roman Catholic faith. Like so many women of her generation, she accomplished extraordinary things without drawing attention to herself. She and her dear husband lived a full life together, and now they are together for eternity. Her life is an inspiration to her family and all who had the privilege to know her. Mother of CITI's Vice President and Married Priest John M. (Sally) Shuster, she and her beloved husband Andrew brought five other children into the world. She was also the grandmother of 14. Catherine was an avid supporter of CITI



Jim Magmer

1922-2008

CITI Advisory Member
Come As You Are editor

Jim Magmer, Jesuit, journalist, teacher, husband, father, grandfather and friend, died Thursday, Dec. 18, at age 86.

Jim Magmer was born Nov. 14, 1922, in Jackson, Mich. He moved to Portland in 1966 when he left the Jesuit order and the University of Detroit where he was head of the Journalism Department. He

was ordained a priest in 1948.

In Portland he worked as an Oregonian reporter, a journalism instructor at Portland Community College, interim director of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and freelance journalist. He helped organize a support group for married priests in Oregon, the Umbrella Group. He served nationally as newsletter editor for CORPUS, one of the oldest reform groups in the Roman Catholic Church, and for CITI Ministries' Come As You Are Spiritual Journal, which he helped conceptualize and was its first editor for several years. Jim had also been a member of CITI's Advisory Committee and was very active in ministry as a Catholic Chaplain providing pastoral and sacramental assistance to all who requested it at his local hospital, regardless of religion. Upon his death, he bequeathed his Chalice to CITI. Survivors include his wife of 35 years, Jeanne and four children and five grandchildren and one great grandchild. We will miss Jim's smiling eyes *always*.



NEWBORN COMMUNITY OF FAITH CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD

Newborn Community of Faith was founded by Married Priest Fred and Melissa Ruof along with the local members who gather as a community for faith sharing and to be involved in various outreach programs within their surroundings. It combines inter-racial, inter-denominational, even post-denominational people together with a common thread of service. Some of their programs include a residential drug recovery program for women, independent living for “graduates” to help get them on their feet again, a cultural arts center and a memory garden and mural for neighbors lost over the years due to tragic substance abuse. Service to those in need has been life’s work for Fred who was one of the first Vatican II priests to leave his clerical ministry and marry back in the late 1960s, after which he offered his home to other priests in transition. He later formed a nonprofit agency that became the support network for a nationwide EMT system in our hospitals. Fred’s work with substance abuse in the Baltimore area began in a chapel aboard an abandoned ship in Baltimore that was used as a rehabilitation facility, all the while doing what he could to help reform the Catholic Church. We applaud his (and Melissa’s) most recent venture. For more information, you may contact Fred at 410-462-3297, 1928 Pennsylvania Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217 or email fred.ruof@verizon.net.



Special
Edition

Come As You Are Spring 2009
www.rentapriest.com

CITIMinistries, Inc.
14 Middle Street, Suite 2
Brunswick, ME 04011