

NEW



A LENTEN EDITION
SPRING | 2011

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WAYS OF BEING CATHOLIC

RENT A PRIEST NEWS AND SPIRITUAL JOURNAL



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New Ways of Being Catholic

THE EVOLUTION OF CITI MINISTRIES/RENTAPRIEST.COM

The original mission of CITI (Celibacy Is the Issue) was to advocate optional celibacy for all priests. Frequent letters were sent to bishops, award-winning ads were seen in National Catholic Reporter and TV Guide Magazine, and there was a joining of forces with other like-minded church reform groups.

The effort, however, went nowhere. Optional celibacy was an 860 year-old problem and was considered “ho hum” by the news media; and Canon Law information about the use of married priests in priestless parishes did not alleviate the fear of the hierarchy among parishioners. Then, the catchy title “Rent A Priest” came in a dream.

From its initial publicity, the title “Rent A Priest” attracted the media from CBS-TV’s 60 Minutes (1995) to television networks in Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and the BBC. (Many of these interviews are now on Youtube.com and Vimeo.com.) We were not prepared, however, for the response that came from the media attention. Unchurched and frustrated Catholics began calling with unusual requests—marriages without annulments, interfaith marriages, non-Christian marriages, baptisms for those refused by parish priests because weekly donations weren’t being made by the parents.

As priests affiliated with CITI were becoming more fa-

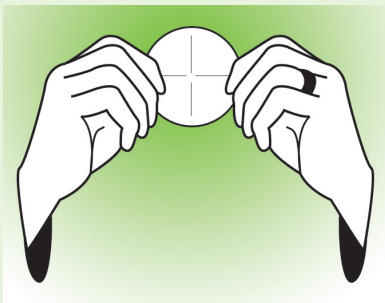
mous, calls started coming from hospitals, nursing and funeral homes when the local parish priest failed to respond. And, as the fruits of a theologically sound and experienced married priesthood were becoming more familiar, married priests were invited as family pastors, Home Mass presiders and discussion facilitators at small group gatherings. Everyone, of course, was/is invited to the Table.

These and the many other experiences priests affiliated with Rent A Priest have had, has affected their own internal spiritual and theological growth as priests, resulting in new thinking about new ways of being Catholic. We have presented a few provocative pieces in previous newsletters in order to enlighten our audience, and there will be even more concentration in this and future issues.

Note that this issue will be one of the last *printed* issues of the News and Spiritual Journal because of heavy costs in printing and postage, unless of course, we can find a benefactor. However, new more frequent editions will be available on our website and if we have your email address, we’ll be happy to send a notice when something new is posted. Those interested should send an email to info@rentapriest.com.

Louise Haggett,

President and Founder, CITI Ministries, Inc.



CITI MINISTRIES, INC.
(Celibacy Is the Issue)

WHO WE ARE

Lay-based organization that locates, recruits and promotes the availability of married Roman Catholic priests, valid according to Canon Law.

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

Just doing it! Catholic Church Canon Law #27 reads, “Custom is the best interpreter of laws.”

OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Society of Christ’s Priesthood-Religious society that certifies marriage & chaplain ministry in the Roman Catholic tradition
- God’s Yellow Pages-Phone Directory & Internet Listing of Sacred Ministers.
www.rentapriest.com

- House Church Communities with married priests
- Healing Ministry to victims of clergy sexual abuse
- Seminars and workshops
- Speakers’ Bureau
- Education and Research
- Quarterly Newsletter

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STRENGTHENING OUR SPIRITUAL IMMUNE SYSTEM

BY DONNA AMY PODOBINSKI, © The Society of Christ's Priesthood, donnaamypodobinski@comcast.net
The following workshop was presented at the International Council of Community Churches on July 23, 2010. It can serve as the foundation for a Lenten day or evening retreat. Donna is a former Carmelite contemplative (cloistered nun), who is now married to Rev. William Podobinski. She and Bill live in Pittsburgh, PA where Donna is available for personal and small group gatherings, online discussions and Skype meetings by appointment.

Welcoming Introduction

We are gathered here in this circle as a symbol of who we are and what we are really all about in relationship with one another. "God is love". (1 Jn. 4:8) We are called to be comfortable in love's presence. What better gift than when someone feels totally safe in our presence without any feeling of intimidation. When we choose to embrace inner peace we say to God, "In your presence I am totally OK!" A familiar description of where God dwells in relationship to us is--up there in heaven. In this workshop we will be referring to God as our source and God's position to us in daily life as indwelling within each of our spirits. But, before we begin let's take some moments to forget all things except that God as love is our inner peace source and foundation for a healthy and strong spiritual immune system. *(Note that in this workshop, the words love, source, peace, presence, center, indwelling, Trinitarian, wisdom, incarnate word, creator, redeemer and sanctifier are each another way to help us recognize God as actively involved in our lives in the present.)*

Centering Meditation

Present within each of us is our source ever calling us to see more than our earthly senses can perceive. Here, there are no past regrets nor future concerns. Here, all turmoil in our minds and hearts of this world is quieted. Each time we consciously enter within this eternal welcome center our spirits are given opportunity to soar to the heights and depths of our indwelling love source. Here, this life's experienced broken parts have already been re-created, life's hopeless situations have already been redeemed and life's perceived unholy moments have already been sanctified. Here, our whole being is

bathed with wellness. "It is indeed good to be here." (Mark 9:5)

In this eternally accessible and stable presence of our Indwelling-Trinitarian source is our identity, is our peace. "Heaven is within us." (Luke 17:21) Here we are forever held with an unspeakable supportive gentleness. From here, whenever we choose, nothing of this world can interrupt this love-peace infusion into our every thought, word and deed. So, we ask love's incarnate word, Jesus Christ, to awaken our inner awareness of the Spirit's sole mission of peace in our lives. Our part is simply to keep remembering that our love source is within us as our peace. (Mi. 5:4) Amen!

Now we will consider the importance of a healthy spiritual immune system.

Immune System Health

For our bodies a healthy immune system guards us against disease and helps us heal from shocks that might be physically harmful to us. As a two-time breast cancer survivor I am personally familiar with how cancer cells in one's body can threaten to take over if its growth is not stopped by nutrition, treatment and removal. Likewise, our faith needs to have a healthy immune system to protect against the unexpected destruction of our spiritual cells, and to replace damaged cells with healthy ones. Greed, control and fear are the three primary destructive cancers that ever seek to invade our spirits and weaken our spiritual immune systems. Freedom, Unity and Integrity are the white blood cells of a strong spiritual immune system, which, respectively, impede the growth of, as well as destroy, these primary spiritual



cancerous cells. As we learn about and share the unlimited applications of this call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity in every aspect of our daily lives, our spiritual immune system will be strengthened accordingly.

This workshop develops the key role that the universal call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity plays in healing and strengthening our spiritual immune systems for inner peace.

Viewing life through this threefold call, no matter our personal belief system, offers another perspective into our relationship with our source and with one another. (Eph. 2:14). To this end it is important to first define what it means to be not of this world.

Not Of This World

I began by asking us to forget all things except that God is love. This means that we are to “be in this world but not of it.” (John 17:15-16) To not be of this world simply means that we daily strive to walk in and with our indwelling source, by embracing the universal threefold call to all peoples. This call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity is programmed into our humanity’s very core as a spiritual DNA coding that connects us all. This code touches the heart of life’s meaning and purpose for our creation. It affirms everyone’s created equality; and is the common denominator for every belief system and governance by which all differences can be transcended. By replacing the destructive tendencies of greed, control and fear respectively with the life-giving qualities of Freedom’s generosity, Unity’s availability, and Integrity’s openness, this code-of-life ultimately leads us to our inner peace center. However, spiritual nutrition is needed to support application of this universal call in the nitty gritty of daily events.

Daily Spiritual Nutrition

As our bodies cannot be sustained without a variety of healthy foods each day, so too our spirits need to be daily fed. For our body’s immune system, organically grown foods naturally detoxify, feed and strengthen on the cellular level. So too, our spiritual immune systems need the organic basic three food groups of Freedom, Unity and Integrity. Superficiality is our spirit’s junk food that clogs, starves, and ultimately poisons and compromises our spiritual immune system accordingly.

We can read inspirational meditative books, even the Bible, and still not feed our spirits. Effective spiritual reading for strengthening our spiritual immune systems requires a conscious, open, listening connection to and with our indwelling source.

The term “reading” also has a broader meaning of “seeing.” One can also read the spiritual message in a sunset, in a misunderstanding, in a friend’s care-filled outreach, in a seed sprouting and even in a diagnosis of cancer. The whole of this life on earth is our source’s book-of-life to us. This life-filled book is eternally filled with all of the spiritual information that we will ever need to read as we approach everyone, every event and every thing in time. As a foundation for inner peace, attitude has everything to do with our ability to assimilate this spiritual information.

An Attitude of Gentleness or Attack

The most important way for preparing our minds and hearts to travel deep into our indwelling peace source is to take notice of our attitude-of-being from the moment we awaken until we retire. Do we find ourselves more often on the attack regarding things, situations and persons? Or, do we have an overall attitude of peace-filled gentleness? Every attacking reaction weakens our spiritual immune system, and every gentle response strengthens it. “A servant of the Lord is gentle to all.” (2 Ti 2:24)

An attitude of attack stems from nursing grievances. A healthy and strong spiritual immune system implies that we maintain a grievance-free attitude-of-being which is the meaning of to for-give, or to give before. Be always prepared beforehand to respond with an understanding mind and compassionate heart for the present moment. Love is always ahead of a potential fault in another. In our love source, forgiveness is not needed or even known since the need to forgive implies that one has a grievance against another in the first place. Love and grievance are contradictory, thus cannot co-exist. Jesus, our love source made flesh teaches this important lesson through a simple question and response: “Does anyone condemn you? Neither do I.” (Jn. 8:10-11) Taking offense is the seed of grievance. “Love does not take offense.” (1 Cor. 13:5)

To develop a gentle attitude-of-being does not imply that we negate any of the wide variety of feelings our Creator gave to us to use to express ourselves in any given situation. Our task is simply to bring our feelings into a peace-filled alignment with the situation at hand. Even tough love can be administered without anger. It is important not to equate gentleness with anger repression. Genuine gentleness proceeds directly from our conscious union with our indwelling love/peace source, “which guards our hearts and minds.” (Phil. 4:7) This union in turn, enables us to let go of all else.

Spiritual Foundation for Inner Peace: ‘Letting Go’

The ability to let go is the bottom-line requirement for successfully incorporating Freedom, Unity and Integrity into each life situation. To experience the presence of our peace source and, consequently, experience inner peace, we constantly need to work on letting go. This is a self discipline best begun in earliest childhood through adults not allowing us to get everything we want whenever we want it. When we are habitually ready and able to let go no matter the situation, we have touched the depth of what it means to be spiritually freed, united and integrated. Freedom enables us to let go of greed; Unity enables us to let go of control; and, Integrity enables us to let go of fear.

Separation From Our Source

We forever “live, move and have our being” within our indwelling source. (Acts 7:28) For each earth moment in time we allow our thoughts to either dwell in the past or in the future, we have chosen to separate ourselves from conscious presence to our indwelling source. The reason for this is because our source is only in the now. Past and future do not exist in our source, thus they both are an illusion. The chief consequence of choosing to dwell in the illusory, non-existent past or future is loss of inner peace. Our free will decision to mentally/emotionally leave our inner peace source connection can quickly result in chaotic thoughts and feelings. This attitude in turn weakens our spiritual immune system which has been pre-programmed to healthfully cope with our body’s perceived stresses of this world of space and time.

The key bottom line action for our maintaining an alignment of our thoughts and feelings with our peace

source is to remember who we are and where/how we are in existence. At the very least, living present to Presence (capital P) is far more interesting than living overwhelmed by guilt (past) or terrified of what might be (future). But, at the most, “eye has not seen nor ear heard” what our source, which is love/peace, has in store for us this moment in the now (1 Cor. 2:9). We need only to remember to re-center. If we hyphenate the term remember after the first two letters ‘re’, it now reads ‘re-member’ or to bring back together. We have now moved from the familiar concept of the term remember which is to recall to one of bringing all aspects of our thoughts and feelings into alignment with our one peace source . . . It’s like being glued back together when we feel that this life has pulled us apart!

Perceptual Change

Freedom, Unity and Integrity is the key enabler for transforming or replacing our transitory, earth-directed perceptions with eternally fulfilling, source-inspired perception. It can at times be a challenge to recognize and distinguish in ourselves between perceiving daily life superficially and seeing in and through our indwelling source.

We cannot force change of perception upon ourselves nor upon others. This undoing of earth-imprisoned thinking and feeling can only come gently through a gradual growing awareness of our love/peace source. As children this initial awareness comes through the persons in our lives who are genuinely connected with our one source. Their connection with our Indwelling source is seen in their own habitual loving outreach to others with a peace-filled spirit. So, parents/guardians themselves need to have a strong spiritual base that they can in turn teach their children first by example, how to acquire a freed-united-integrated mind and heart in relationship with others. Our love source has a dream for us all to be able to have a change of perception through Freedom, Unity and Integrity.

‘God Has A Dream’

First awareness for me of God having one dream for all peoples began when a very devout married woman with children came to the door of the Carmelite Monastery where I was a cloistered Nun. She expressed her desire for holiness as was the call to the nuns who traditionally



were put on a higher spiritual plain. I questioned putting one group of persons above or below another as being far from God's heart! After all, wasn't being at one with God's will for each of us the key to our holiness and not our vocation choice or state in life? So, from that point on I searched for the deepest meaning and purpose of Scripture's instruction to us to, "make vows to the Lord your God." (Ps. 76:11; Jn. 17:16-17)

Soon it became clear that indeed, everyone is called to become a consecrated spiritual person wholly dedicated to our Trinitarian source in whose image and likeness of love/peace we are made. And, that the essential meaning of a consecrated life is for us to willingly choose to live out this call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity in our relationships and works. This call is a covenant of peace with us. (Lev. 11:44; Gen. 1:26; Is. 54) And, from the standpoint of our indwelling source, this covenant with us will never be shaken. However, from our standpoint when we choose to not embrace this universal call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity, it is we who shake the effectiveness of this peace covenant in our own lives.

After I heard Dr. Martin Luther King's prophetic, "I have a dream" speech, I realized that the universal three-fold call is an eternal expression of our love source's dream for all peoples. This dream--love's goal--is peace and the threefold call is the means to achieve this goal. The seed for the development of supportive community as a vehicle for sharing this threefold universal call was planted in my heart. However in order to share this call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity among all of the world's peoples, we need to first understand it ourselves and be striving to live it.

A Consecrated Life

In traditional religious life, persons make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Their practical meaning is exclusive denial of specific personal things: marriage and one's will. In a sound-bite we could say, "no thing, no sex and no will!" But, the deepest spiritual meaning of the vow of poverty is poverty of spirit, of chastity is singleness of heart, and of obedience is hunger and thirst for holiness. (Matt 5:3, 8, 6) The universal inclusive application for all peoples of traditional vows can be likened to spiritual doors.

Poverty of spirit opens the door to Freedom by self-less giving. Freedom in turn beckons us to go beyond self seeking to spiritual wealth. Freedom of spirit enables us to let go and let God through being content with or without in recognition that everything in and of this world is passing. (Phil. 4:12; 1 Cor. 7:31)

Singleness of heart opens the door to Unity by being all embracing. Unity in turn beckons us to go beyond self centeredness to spiritual communion. Unity of spirit enables us to love our neighbor as ourselves in our love source, and, enables us to be ever ready to even lay down our lives for another. (Matt. 22:39; Jn. 15:13)

Hunger and thirst for holiness opens the door to Integrity by wholeness/holiness. Integrity in turn beckons us to go beyond self will to spiritual fulfillment. Integrity of spirit enables us to listen to our source voice in all aspects of daily life, and to hear the source word by reflective prayerful presence. (Mt. 17:05; Col. 4:02)

Through our consecration response to the call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity these three opened spiritual doors then reveal to us the fullness of our source's peace covenant.

Our Source as Trinity; Their Call as Threefold

Over the years, I began to see each creating-redeeming-sanctifying cyclical movement of our Indwelling-Trinitarian source as specializing in one of the three aspects of their call to us for Freedom, Unity and Integrity. In Scripture:

For Freedom, our source creator as birther of eternal light calls to us: "Let my people go!" (Gen. 1:3; Ex. 5:01);

For Unity, our source redeemer as incarnator of eternal love calls to us: "Be one as we are one." (Jn. 1:4, 14; 17:11, 26); and,

For Integrity, our source sanctifier as mover of eternal life calls to us: "Be holy; be whole." (Job. 33:4; Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48).

Freedom enables us to recognize our creator as our wisdom source; Unity enables us to recognize our redeemer as our directional source (the Way); and Integrity enables

us to recognize our sanctifier as our fulfillment source.

Freedom is a life-giving gift through our creating source (Father); Unity is a transforming gift through our redeeming source (Son); and Integrity is a purifying gift through our sanctifying source (Holy Spirit).

Freedom is expressed as selfless presence; Unity is expressed as supportive presence; and Integrity is expressed as prophetic presence.

The intrinsic fruit of Freedom is stewardship for the dedicated conscientious use of all spiritual and material resources; the fruit of Unity is compassion for the committed supportive care of all peoples and creatures; and the fruit of Integrity is balance for the developmental growth of personal and communal fulfillment.

As our union continues to deepen within our Trinitarian source, we become more transparent for the Spirit's presence and work through us. Our personal blessings also increase a hundredfold. (Mark 4:20) In the eternal cyclical movements of our creating-redeeming-sanctifying source, we see an unbroken circle having no beginning nor ending. As we habitually serve with poverty of spirit, love with singleness of heart and listen with hunger for holiness, we even begin to lose sight of the threefold call doors. When we know that we are one in source, there is no earthly reason to leave this circle, so, these doors are no longer even much noticed. Blest are we who have put aside greed, control and fear that these doors of Freedom, Unity and Integrity have been opened for us to enter." (Matt. 5:9) "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard what our love/peace source has in store for us!" (1 Cor. 2:9)

Understanding Relationship

Through this universal threefold call, our relationship with one another within our source in everyday life is clear: Freedom inspires us to live justly; Unity inspires us to love tenderly and Integrity inspires us to walk humbly with our indwelling source. (Deut. 10:12) Our every movement of being is called through Freedom, Unity and Integrity to be a reflection of our love/peace source in which we are sustained. This eternal connectedness is through our spirits which always have been in

the mind/heart of our source and will continue to be after the temporary custodianship of this physical vessel is completed. For I believe that we are not our physical bodies which are given us in time that we may freely serve, unitedly love and integratively listen toward a life and world in peace.

At the moment I realized how significantly my life affects everyone else's life, the words attributed to Jesus in Scripture took on new depth of meaning: "Whatever you do to others you do to Me" (Matt. 25:40) I believe that we are all members of the one body in our one source, which embraces all persons of every belief system. I also believe that all peoples on this earth are called to strive together to consciously enter into this eternal cyclical love/peace movement with our source through Freedom, Unity and Integrity. So, I began to look for even the smallest of ways by which I could incorporate Freedom, Unity and Integrity in every encounter and situation.

Once I was given an understanding of the eternal importance of our response to our love source's universal call to us, I have felt a personal responsibility to learn more and to find ways to share this call with others. Hope fills my heart that all peoples will one day recognize the universality of this call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity, understand the need for all to embrace it and see it realized. Consequently, attack in all forms would cease as gratitude replaces grievance. (Heb. 12:28) An era of peace can be ushered in. It is ultimately we together who choose war or who choose peace. (2 Cor. 10:13)

We are called to be in relationship with one another in our indwelling source through a threefold creating Freedom, redeeming Unity and sanctifying Integrity. It is this eternal relationship with one another that is the ultimate goal of our souls for personal and communal up-building. There is hope in my heart that others in every state in life will be lead to offer assistance in translating this universal call into everyone's language and culture; for every belief system and governance; for every economic level of existence; for every state in life; for every secular and ministerial service rendered and for every age and stage of our lives.



It's OK to Not be 'Perfect'

Be not discouraged. No one this side of Heaven can be perfectly gentle in all circumstances and feeling grateful every moment of every day! In our human concept of perfection, no one can perfectly incarnate our love/peace source in every thought, word and/or action. However, the spirit of our source is always perfectly present in us influencing every aspect of our lives. Our role is to simply let go. Exchange our attempts to control for transparency that the spirit of our love/peace source can freely work through our presence, communications and interactive relationships with one another. Remember our source's promise to bring good out of everything for those who genuinely are striving to embrace this universal call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity. (Romans 8:28)

Relationship Application

Practical application of the threefold call for Freedom, Unity and Integrity is learned with one another in each circumstance. Daily, the spirit of our indwelling love/peace source inspires an ever deepening understanding of the meaning of each of the three essential aspects of this universal call as we need. With our final breath we will then know that the depth and breadth of the spiritual and practical applications of Freedom, Unity and Integrity is truly endless. The relationship we have with our indwelling source while in this life reflects through our relationships with one another in community, as we embrace Freedom, Unity and Integrity. Embracing this threefold call is an expansive experience. It becomes more desirable each time the fruit of peace is experienced through the development of the spirit of gentleness in each new circumstance.

Ultimately, this threefold call is an eternal failsafe for our internal spiritual wars.

Summary Thoughts

Essential to our individual and communal spiritual health are three fundamental antioxidants, i.e., Freedom, Unity and Integrity. We have been given the gift of Freedom from this world's cares to choose Unity with one another from within our indwelling love/peace source for a life of Integrity, for wholeness and holiness with a gentle spirit. These three fundamental immune

strengthening factors is a universal call for everyone to embrace throughout the world. To the degree that every aspect of our humanness becomes aligned with our indwelling source of this universal call will we, accordingly, experience peace in our thoughts, words and actions. To this end, we are encouraged to help one another to remember that we are not our bodies; that the perceptions of our five senses can either lead us into awareness of our indwelling source or imprison us in the passing illusions of this world. Thus, we are called to a personal and communal passover from greed, control and fear through Freedom, Unity and Integrity to live justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with one another in our Trinitarian source. (Deut. 10:12) This is our response of consecration to love's covenant of peace within us. (Is. 54:10) As we let go of each new grievance with a grateful heart we can know that our "God is love."

Concluding Prayer

Blessed Trinity, You have called each of us to realize your dream in our lives for inner and worldwide peace. You have given us the way to this peace by strengthening our spiritual immune systems through Freedom, Unity and Integrity. (Phil. 4:13) You also call each of us individually and communally to share with others this universal threefold code of life that through your covenant of peace with us, justice for all peoples can be known. In you, our Trinitarian, indwelling source community, your dream of peace for us is already fulfilled. We need only to choose to be consciously at one with and in you as our peace source. Amen!



Strengthening Our Spiritual Immune System workshop discussion questions, featured on back cover, and other information are available at <http://www.rentapriest.com/>

INVITATION TO LOVE BY THOMAS KEATING

Reviewed by Rev. Jean Wilfred Pelletier, papajeano@gmail.com

People are starving for a more meaningful life. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are looking for pathways to Transcendence. Today, as in no other generation, spirituality is a common topic for conversation. Books abound on the subject. Spirituality is an 'in' word. Googling it offers opportunities for information that could satisfy all races, creeds, cultures, genders, sexual persuasions, and communities. There's something for everyone. And everyone keeps looking for these pathways to spirituality.

Precisely because of its popularity, however, the word 'spirituality'—much like its counterparts 'meditation' and 'contemplation'—has become all inclusive, somewhat ambiguous, certainly confusing, and perhaps misleading. It connotes almost anything from the heights of the mystical experiences of Theresa of Avila or Meister Eckart to the most nebulous practices of new-agers. A degree of sentimentality or some pietistic twaddle fits the term. Even Spirituality For Dummies is available.

Rightly so, the word can mean different things to different people, but I do not want to discuss that here. However, because of its contemporary vagueness, I believe the

reality of Christian spirituality has lost some of its profoundly classical sense. That is why I rejoice when I find a book that I feel worthy of the long tradition of the Roman Catholic Church—a book that is faithful to our very foundations and that enters well into our twenty-first century.

Such a book is Thomas Keating's *Invitation To Love* [Continuum Publishing Co., New York, 1999]. In its meager 151 pages, it captures for twenty-first century seekers what the great women and men, masters of earlier centuries, spoke of in what at times seems mystical verbiage. I strongly recommend devouring this book. Read it until all is totally understood and hopefully practiced.

I had to read it twice to get what I sought from it, and I shall indeed go back to it many times. Thomas Keating's book is a very thorough and exact theological, spiritual, psychological, and anthropological treatise of the spiritual life.

It was originally written for those who had been practicing Centering Prayer. This Cistercian priest hoped that its contents would help people on their "Christian spiritual path in a way consistent

with contemporary science, in particular, the insights of modern psychology." [p. 2] Thus, he treats all the areas of prayer, its stages, its obstacles, its paths, clearly describing the various dark nights of the spiritual life and the depths to which few of us feel called. Quickly, he shows us otherwise.

The book takes us from the fallenness of the human condition—the false self that Thomas Merton so perfectly described in the *New Seeds of Contemplation*—all the way to the unending transformative union with God, here and now—the God who inhabits us, others, and all creation. It is a wondrous, masterful study of spirituality in its deepest Christian sense.

There might be a risk in the reading. Due to its precise, clearly thought out but laconic language, the book may seem simplistic. Its profundity may be masked.

Yet, its pragmatic value, especially in its last chapter, is hard to match.

In brief it's the book that I have always wanted to write and whose fame I now must spread. It can't be sufficiently read, mastered, and lived.

**HAVE YOU STOPPED
GOING TO CHURCH?**

Or are you looking for something meaningful to supplement Sunday worship? Married priests have extensive theological backgrounds and are available to facilitate Lenten group discussions, provide spiritual guidance and/or celebrate Mass.

<http://www.rentapriest.com/married-priest-directory.php?country=United+States&state=&x=51&y=10>

WHERE ARE ALL THE PRIESTS?

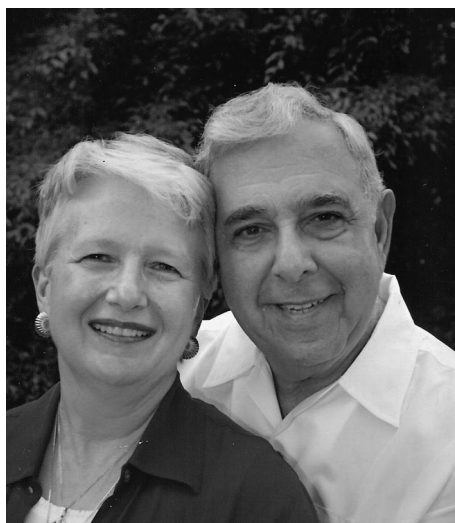
SHORTAGE or RESTRICTED?

What if we had over 100,000 validly ordained priests, world-wide and thousands in the U.S. Well, we have! These priests are no longer clerics, but according to the Church's own teaching they are still priests. They are not pedophiles, nor "womanizers," nor embezzlers of church funds. Their only crime is that they chose to marry someone they love, have families, and earn a living. Many continue to provide service to those who come to them for spiritual nourishment.

The following are testimonials from wives of married priests: women of integrity who have often been maligned for their love and encouragement, and have rarely been heard from in this time of crisis.

ways and everywhere to whomever they meet and provide the spiritual nourishment no longer evident in the institutional Church.

I am always impressed by the very positive feedback and notes my husband receives after a ceremony. The people are so grateful for the personal warmth, love, support and attention to detail which characterizes his ceremonies. They have felt the presence of Jesus.



Roseann, from Florida: —————○

After 12 years as a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, I took a leave of absence for personal reasons. During that time I met my future husband. Because of our similar backgrounds of religious life and priesthood, we found a strong foundation on which to build our relationship. We received dispensations and were married in June of 1974 and were blessed with four sons which made our life complete.

At this point, I am less of an institutional Catholic, but more of a Christian with strong roots in my Catholic Faith. I am disappointed in the way Church leaders have tacitly allowed the sexual abuse of children by some priests. I believe that they are missing out on the gifts and talents of married priests who try to live their lives in the service of others. Church leaders seem more concerned about making sure their people are following the rules and making donations, than they are about showing them how followers of Jesus would conduct themselves in the modern world.

The Church does not know, nor do they seem to care about the love these priests have for their vocation or for their dedication. Married priests reflect Jesus by their "priestliness" which evokes a response from people of all faiths. While they minister primarily to the faithful in weddings, baptisms, and funerals, they also minister al-



Diana, from Indiana: —————○

"Together with my husband, a married Catholic priest, we opened the doors to the Free Spirit Interfaith Church on June 1, 2003. This coincided with his 19th anniversary of ordination. What a befitting day for the opening of the doors to our new undertaking.

Our lives together have made a whole out of very wonderful separate lives. We both had very fulfilling careers before our marriage and



incredible lives since. When we met and came together, there was no doubt that we could be great together. The only doubt was: Could he feel as full as he did in his religious community? We now have two children and have been married for over 15 years. Many Catholics hear of our church and come for Sunday service (mass), weddings, counseling and above all acceptance. The rest of the week we reach out to those who need spiritual fulfillment.

I believe that those men that trained, were ordained, and then moved on, are courageous men. It is one thing to take on the priesthood without a family or other connections, but life is the connection. So what kind of priests are we getting? It takes a strong, unique man to leave the clerical state and create a life that no one told him that he could have. It

takes a creative soul to reach the consciousness levels that binds him to the spirit of the priesthood, as opposed to simply identifying with the position of cleric. I am puzzled that more do not see this.



Ellie, from California:

I have been married 21 years to my husband. We have no children. He was a religious for 25 years and has been a blessing in my life. So many challenges but we have grown and learned from our experiences.

The challenges came from family and friends. The ones we thought were going to support us, didn't. It's amazing how the ones that think they are more "religious" are the ones that were more critical. It made me feel like I was "Eve" and that I took my husband away from his active ministry . . . even though he was on a year's leave when I met him.

When we joined a "married priests" group, including their wives of course, I soon became disillusioned because it was all about the priests, and the wives seemed less important. I talked to my husband

about it and he understood my feelings. I believe that the wives need to be heard from. They are integral to a married priest's life. They are a team working together to meet the needs of so many lay people who have felt betrayed by Church leaders.

Many people tell me that I must be special because my husband chose me. I thank God every day that he is in my life. Ministry goes on for both of us. We visit the sick, the elderly and shut-ins. I run my own company. He does weddings and funerals. We really love our friends and spend a lot of time sharing and breaking bread together.



Jackie, from Georgia:

I have been married to a priest for 40 years this coming January. Jim was ordained in 1956. I was a former member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. We have three children and six grand-children. Two things stand out in our marriage. Almost everyone accepted our choice to marry except the

**“WAS JESUS
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BUT ONLY A
CHURCH RULE...”**



Institutional Church. Both families accepted our decision. My mother said, "What can I do to make your day special?" She even managed to locate yellow roses in the dead of winter for our ceremony in her home in Wisconsin.

When the people of our community in Maine learned of our past vocations, we found great support from both Catholics and those of other Faiths. No one questioned our integrity. They only considered who we were as a family and what we brought to the town. With the closing of parishes some asked: "Why can't Jim minister to us?" I have remained close to members of my religious order, visiting the Mother-house at times with our family. This has given me support and understanding when I sometimes felt outside the Church.

Jim and I have always been a close working team. What, except for book knowledge, did he know of a loving, intimate relationship and the everyday commitment to love and to be loved by another? I sometimes get angry at the Institutional Church for what they are doing, but am proud to be part of

Jim's priestly ministry . . . now our joint ministry.



Pat, from Virginia: —————○

I first met Carl, a Jesuit priest, while I was a pharmacy student at St. John's University. He was helping out at my parish and my parents invited him to dinner. We found that we had much in common during discussions at the dinner table.

Our friendship became more personal the day he shared an article about priests marrying: "Would you want your daughter to marry one?" I, half jokingly, said: "Nobody asked me!" In June 1968, we married and moved to Washington D.C. to start new jobs. Very quick-

ly we were involved in a new ministry for Catholics that welcomed married priests to lead Eucharistic Services.

We have two children, a son and a daughter. We decided to teach them their religious heritage and sent them to public schools. We belonged to a home-based worship community where we learned from other married priests, their wives and families.

I always ask those who believe that my husband's continuation in ministry is wrong: "Was Jesus wrong when he chose married men to be His apostles?" Mandatory celibacy is not God's law, but only a Church rule, which has been altered to accept married Protestant ministers who convert to Catholicism and retain their wives and families.

Over the past 42 years, we have complemented each other's efforts. A priest's wife can and must make him aware of sides of ministry where a male's perception alone can cause important blind spots.

We wives of married priests had no handbook to guide us in our partnership with a priest-husband.

IS THERE A CLOSED CHURCH NEAR YOU?

If your church is closing, has closed, or is in protest (vigil, etc.) and you are in discernment about the future of your community, Married Priests are available to help with the discernment process. Their theological and Scriptural backgrounds can be invaluable to your congregation. Check our www.rentapriest.com for one near you or contact info@rentapriest.com. We also have booklets, Canon Law information to help your group.



We are pioneers. I believe future generations will welcome and take for granted a priest-wife ministry.

Brigid, from California: ———○

I was born in Chicago of Irish immigrants, educated in Catholic schools, and entered The Sisters of Charity, BVM on my 18th birthday. My ten years as a nun were enriching and happy ones. Only one thing was missing; having someone to commit to and with whom I could create a family. I made my decision to leave in 1969, a period of great unrest in church communities.

Fortunately, I met my future husband who was struggling to make his own similar decision. We both felt that God directed our coming together. After spending a weekend gathering of priests, religious and laity, sponsored by the diocese of Sacramento in order to better appreciate each others life styles, Ed and I came to the realization that we could still serve God through our loving commitment in marriage.

We married in January, 1970. I had been teaching in a Catholic school, and within a week of our marriage I was fired, "because of the alledged scandal I was causing." During our 40+ years of marriage, we had three children, who have blessed us with five grandchildren. Fortunately for us, we all live in close proximity to each other. After my husband's retirement he discovered a new ministry in officiating at marriages through CITI/Rentapriest. He encourages Catholics to keep their

faith, and continue to believe in the true essence of Catholicism . . . the body of Christ, in the community of Faith, not in the hierarchical structure.



Marion, from Georgia: ———○

Don and I met in Atlanta. Both of us were on leave from our respective Religious Orders. I was a former member of a Franciscan Community. We had come in support of The Civil Rights Movement and our concern as Christians in the plight of the poor and the underserved.

Shortly after the Vatican II Council ('62-'65) there was general belief among the clergy that Pope Paul VI, would end mandatory celibacy for Roman Catholic priests, but pressure from those around him convinced the Pope that the "laity would be scandalized." I remember reading an article in a 1970 issue of the NCR, in which a Vatican official stated that priests didn't need to leave the priesthood over celibacy. He was basically saying that priests should go out, have their sexual fling, and then return to

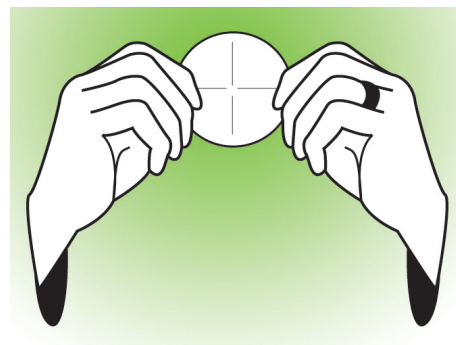
active ministry. This article angered me then and now. What an insult to men, like my husband, who have an intense desire to practice their priestly vocation yet want to be free to marry.

Together, in our "golden" years, we have chosen to live a quasi-hermitical life, living in the real world but also seeking a secluded retreat for prayer and reflection and have sought to share it with others. This includes a Eucharistic table service, in which we exercise the priesthood of the baptized.

I believe that married priests and their wives can witness, in a unique way that "we are church," that we are all called to priesthood.

Many married priests and their wives were maligned in the '60's and '70's as outcasts, but now I believe that time and events (and the Holy Spirit) are proving that married priests and their wives love the Church too much to live a lie. By their lives and actions, they are modeling a path that can bring new life to the church

Other stories welcome for future issues. Send to jameslovejoy@att.net



Honoring Jean Scanlan, deceased wife of a married priest.



If Jean Scanlan were with us today, she would want her story included among those in the previous article featuring the wives of married priests. Jean died in April, 2009, however, after battling cancer for many years. She had been married to Fr. Bob Scanlan of Au-

rora, IL for 35 years, being priest alongside him in their shared ministries and also as parents to two children.

A former Sinsinawa Dominican, she was involved in Youth Ministry, RCIA, Religious Education, all in

management capacities, as well as being the Principal of the Archbishop Romero Catholic School in Aurora. Jean also served for several years as a member of CITI's Advisory Committee, helping to steer the organization in service to those denied pastoral and sacramental care.

As profoundly expressed by Fr. Bob and Jean's friends at her funeral, she had a "oneness" with God, with people and with all creation. She was a deep faith-filled woman whose body, mind and spirit embraced God at every level. She strengthened anyone's faith when in her presence. Jean brought positive energy and enthusiasm to her relationships and always spoke out against injustice, and for truth and equality in all aspects of life and ministry, a dedication her devoted husband Fr. Bob continues to this day.

So, today, we remember and honor Jean, and we are grateful that we shared a small part of her life.

Bob Scanlan, Mary Jo Hazard & Louise Haggett

Closed Church Community Invites Married Priest as Pastor

KANSAS, OH: Diocese decided to close church five years ago. Parishioners vigiled for six months until the diocese sent police to remove them and lock the doors. The community wanted to stay together and invited a Polish National Church priest to preside. However, they decided their prophetic mission was to the Catholic Church, not the Polish Church, so they contacted Rev. Randall LaFond, affiliated with CITI/Rentapriest, to help in their 9-month discernment process. Now they meet in a local Methodist Church at 10:30am on Sundays for Eucharist, and Randall has been asked to be their permanent pastor. The full news story is available at <http://toledoblade.com/article/20110116/NEWS16/101150403> or on our website www.rentapriest.com

Please consider becoming a Support Member of CITI Ministries so that we can continue doing the work of Jesus: locating and recruiting married priests and serving those who have been turned away by the church.

COUPON:

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of ____\$50 ____\$100 ____\$250 ____\$500 ____\$1000 ____ (other)

- I'm interested in _____membership _____local faith community _____volunteering
- I am a _____lay person _____ordained/religious

Please make your check payable to CITI Ministries, Inc., and mail to: CITI, P.O. Box 360577, Strongsville, OH 44136-0010.
You may also donate on our website, www.rentapriest.com Thank you.

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Tel. _____ Email _____

CITI Ministries, Inc. is a 501.c3 nonprofit organization. Please remember us in your Will.



Book Review

"Perfect, A Love Story"



BY J.C. SOUCIER MORRIS PUBLISHING, KEARNEY, NE 2008

Reviewed by Rev. James Koerber; jkoerber@islc.net

This book gives full support to the old adage that men are good at dealing with systems while women are good at dealing with people. This oversimplification of dualities is probably perpetuated when a comparison is made between the number of corporate bankruptcies involving men as CEOs versus women as CEOs. Few organizations ever realize that the most important asset possessed is neither the structure nor the product, but the employees.

Judy Soucier is a good storyteller and holds the reader's interest as she unravels her love story with a Catholic priest in the state of Maine. It is hard to put the book down as the whirlwind romance unfolds together with the certainty of inevitable discovery, and eventual destruction, of the hoped for ending of "they lived happily ever after."

The chilling portrayal of the consistently logical and inhuman hierarchy is too well known to all who lived within the confines of the Roman collar. It may be an eye opener to normal people who have only a Sunday morning exposure to public consumption of clerical superficiality. This is no mistaking the absence of humanity and the intensity of Gitmo-like operational procedures. Power corrupts, and spiritual power corrupts spiritually.

I was somewhat disappointed in the apparent lack of responsibility that both main characters showed in their setting in motion a course of action that had so foreordained (pun intended) a conclusion. Much like a couple charging \$10,000 on a credit card and then being surprised when the bill has to be paid at the end of the month. This approach mirrors exactly the clerical hierarchy that installs and keeps in place a set of unreasonable expectations and then panics when unreasonable results are produced and average Catholics are no longer disposed to only obey, pay, and pray. Maybe that is the deeper message of the book.

This book is thus a microcosm of the dilemma produced by the increasing shortage of catholic priests and the decreasing proportions of Catholics who regularly attend Sunday Mass. If neither actuality if confronted and dealt with intelligently, the results will be easily predictable. Change is possible, but change has a price tag on it. One day the pope is said to have been showing visitors some of the wealth of the Vatican surroundings and one person remarked, "No longer can Peter say, 'Silver and gold I have none'." The pope is said to have responded to the visitor, "And no longer can Peter say, 'And I say to thee arise'."

CITI MINISTRIES FINANCIAL

12 Months Fiscal | October 1, 2009 – Sept. 30, 2010

INCOME

Memberships, contributions	\$62,702.00
Donated Services	18,012.34
Fundraising	15,920.00
Catholic Resource Center	314.50
Interest and other Income	3,146.15
Total Income	\$100,094.99

EXPENSES

Programs

Rentapriest advertising/promotion	\$16,454.62
Advertising (donated)	865.95
God's Yellow Pages	919.90
CITI Special Report-newsletter	5,739.79
Fundraising (5% of total budget)	4,543.86
- Website merchant fees \$1305.29	
- Christmas 2009 Special Appeal \$3238.57	
Informational Technology Project	4,523.98
Memberships-International Council Of Community Churches (ICCC)	4,280.91
Tithing (ICCC, SNAP, Bishops Accountability.org)	5,421.78
	\$42,750.79

Administration

Accounting and Legal	737.50
Board Meetings (reimbursed by members)	4,932.71
Meetings (Donated services)	550.05
Office Expenses	5,826.89
Office (Donated services)	772.90
Salaries – Office	24,997.00
Salaries (Donated services)	13,700.00
Payroll Taxes	1,912.37
Payroll (Donated services)	1,047.96
Rent and Utilities	8,687.01
Telephone (donated services)	1,075.48
	\$64,238.87
Total Expenses	\$106,990.66



New Ways of Being Catholic

STRENGTHENING OUR SPIRITUAL IMMUNE SYSTEM A LENTEN SELF OR GROUP RETREAT

- At what point in your life did you recognize your own inner peace Source?
- What have you done to strengthen or be more in touch with it?
- Do you live in the present-the past-the future? How do you succeed in transitioning in between these?
- Do you describe your own spirit as one with Freedom, Unity and Integrity? Or are there other adjectives more appropriate?
- Are you satisfied with God's choice of a life's role for you? How have you embraced it? For inner peace have you needed to make some perceptual changes to accept God's Plan for you?
- Do you feel that there are moments when your actions affect other lives?
- Can I recognize a grievance when one presents itself to me?
- What physiological signs are manifested when I am in the presence of a grievance?
- How do I generally relate to others at home, at work?
- Do I consistently receive reactions or responses from others to my words and actions?
- Since our attitude-of-being is a matter of free choice how do we want to go through our day feeling?
- Is it possible to be so entrenched in a daily grievance-driven state that one doesn't even recognize the signs of this destructive attitude? Does everyone else see our entrenchment?



CITI Ministries, Inc.
14 Middle Street, Suite 2
Brunswick, ME 04011 USA

Rent A Priest News and Spiritual Journal



STRENGTHENING OUR SPIRITUAL IMMUNE SYSTEM

Workshop Discussion

- At what point in your life did you recognize your own inner peace Source?
- What have you done to strengthen or be more in touch with it?
- Do you live in the present-the past-the future? How do you succeed in transitioning in between these?
- Do you describe your own spirit as one with Freedom, Unity and Integrity? Or are there other adjectives more appropriate?
- Are you satisfied with God's choice of a life's role for you? How have you embraced it? For inner peace have you needed to make some perceptual changes to accept God's Plan for you?
- Do you feel that there are moments when your actions affect other lives?

Next we have some specific discernment questions to help us recognize grievance and gratitude in our daily lives:

- Can I recognize a grievance when one presents itself to me?
- What physiological signs are manifested when I am in the presence of a grievance?
- How do I generally relate to others at home, at work?
- Do I consistently receive reactions or responses from others to my words and actions?

Viewed from a past/future perspective of this world, we have available an endless source of reasons for living in a state of grievance. But, we also have available an eternal Source of reasons for living in a state of gratitude. It is our choice.

- Since our attitude-of-being is a matter of free choice how do we want to go through our day feeling?
- Is it possible to be so entrenched in a daily grievance-driven state that one doesn't even recognize the signs of this destructive attitude? Does everyone else see our entrenchment?

The following are general sign posts of when we are in a grievance or gratitude attitude.

GRIEVANCE REACTIONS

(manifested through a bad-for-me rejection attitude)

We can choose to negatively view the experience of this moment as, 'bad for me', which results in experienced turmoil . . . an over-all fear-filled, chaotic reaction of mind-heart-body-spirit likened to being tossed around in this life's storms, outside of our Inner Peace Source Center. Living regretful of the past or anxious about the future imprisons us in this dysfunctional world through greed-control-fear reactions toward one another.

End 'fruit': chaotic thoughts and feelings of fear and attack recognized through a retaliatory spirit; feels like, 'yuck'. Our physical and spiritual immune systems will resent us, accordingly.

** Some personal examples of common grievance reactions helpful here.*

GRATITUDE RESPONSES

(manifested through a good-for-me acceptance attitude)

We can choose to positively view the experience of this moment as, 'good for me', which results in experienced calm . . . an over-all integral, balanced response of mind-heart body-spirit likened to remaining in the 'calm eye' of life's storms, our Indwelling Peace Source Center. Living gratefully in the timeless moment of the Now in which we can be aware of our **LOVE-PEACE SOURCE** Eternal Presence releases us from this dysfunctional world through free-united-integrated responses with one another.

End 'fruit': ordered thoughts and feelings of love and peace recognized through a gentle spirit, feels like, 'awe'. Our physical and spiritual immune systems will love us, accordingly.

** Encourage folks to give some personal examples of common gratitude responses.*

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION

It is vital that we translate Freedom-Unity-Integrity into everyone's language and understanding, for an example, the following is our Chiropractor's application of the threefold Call in his health service: To move (**Freedom**); To stretch (**Unity**); To strengthen (**Integrity**). The healing of Chiropractic care comes through the 'releasing' or moving of jammed joints; the stretching out of restricted muscles; and the building up of bone and muscle tissue by strengthening exercise. Spiritual applications: free our minds of greedy thoughts by moving away from attachments; unite our hearts against controlling words by stretching past self to others; and integrate our spirits to reject fearful actions by strengthening healthy resolves.

Perhaps a child's translation might simply be: to share (**Freedom**); to care (**Unity**); and to listen (**Integrity**)

- a. How might **Freedom-Unity-Integrity** be 'translated' for a Mother or Father; for a doctor; for a skilled laborer; for a lawyer; for a minister; for each Belief System and its leaders; for every government form and its officials, etc.?
- b. Does anyone have thoughts of application of **Freedom-Unity-Integrity** to your own particular service roles or state in life?
- c. How can each of our special gifts be used to take the concept of this universal threefold Call for **Freedom-Unity-Integrity** around the globe: Are you a musician, a song writer; can you rap? Are you in marketing? Are there opportunities to incorporate the threefold Call into your marketing advertising? Are you a teacher; a counselor? Are you a principal or on the school Board? What opportunities have you in the service of education to present this threefold Call for offsetting our human tendencies to gravitate toward greed-control-fear, which is the bully's attitude and goal from earliest childhood through all the stages of our adulthood?

RECOGNIZING GREED-CONTROL-FEAR,

(The antithesis of Freedom-Unity-Integrity)

Greed directs us to hold on tight to the 'stuff' of this life in both material elements as well as the human-made aspects of each of our Belief Systems. **Freedom** enables

us to let go of all inordinate desiring. **Freedom** is reflected in our expansive, self-less service with one another.

** What stuff do we find our happiness depends upon? Are we joy-filled or resentful givers of our material goods and abilities?*

Control directs us to hold on tight to the 'way' we think and feel about how others 'should' be thinking, feeling, and acting. **Unity** enables us to let go of all inordinate relational attachments. **Unity** is reflective in our inviting, compassionate love for one another.

** What way do we think and feel others should be and do? Are we understanding of or biased (prejudiced) of the diversity and differences among all God's Peoples?*

Fear directs us to hold on tight to the passing concepts of what this world considers to be 'securities'. **Integrity** enables us to let go of all inordinate spiritual falsehoods. **Integrity** is reflective in our broadening, open listening to one another.

** What passing securities of this world do we lean on? Are we clinging to our own wills or do we seek to learn and grow by listening to others?*

CYCLICAL INTER-RELATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF FREEDOM-UNITY-INTEGRITY

An example of how each one of the three aspects of the universal threefold Call effects the other two:

- **Freedom** for growth without greed → enables **Unity**;
- **Unity** for understanding without control → enables **Integrity**;
- **Integrity** for receptivity without fear → enables **Freedom** ...

** What practical examples can we give to show how intimately words and acts of Freedom-Unity-Integrity inter-relate with or effect each other?*