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TURNING POINT IN THE CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT

Chapter leaders of Call to Action who met in Chicago May 23-25 issued a statement to be shared with all members: "We no longer feel that 'knocking on the bishop's door' will produce change. WE ARE about being the CHURCH that is just, inclusive and accountable".

"In addition to fostering small faith groups, 'alternative' liturgical gatherings and celebrating involvement in other Christian (or faith) communities, this will involve energizing 'all the baptized' or the 'people of God' to involve themselves in being Church. From time to time it may also involve 'knocking the bishop' to point out how wrong it is to blindly follow leadership that is abusing power".

"We do seek to change minds, just not the bishops'. We must keep in mind that our objective is to influence the people who may be willing to live Church with us. The 'Catholic' bishops have shown themselves not interested or willing".

Needless to say, this memo has stimulated much conversation among CTA members via email discussions and other gatherings. This 'turning point' is already reflected in our new Mission Statement, shifting to a very positive approach, celebrating what is right in our church, yet continuing to provide a strong emphasis on changes that are needed.

We believe changes will come in due time under the guidance of the Spirit. In this newsletter are two examples of outstanding pastoral/spiritual leadership from two parish priests. There are numerous other examples that could be cited, but too few. There are many things to celebrate that are right, but too few. Now contrast with others stories, real life stories, not to be celebrated. For example, overheard in a conversation, "---at least we don't have to argue over what our priest says on Sunday because we can't understand him anyway." That example comes from a parish where a 'foreign' priest is assigned, who can barely speak English, let alone understand the people or their needs. It's difficult to imagine how that 'priest' could celebrate a transforming Sunday Eucharist. Or think of the parishioners who experienced during Sunday Mass the 'senior' priest forgetting to complete the 'words of consecration' and 'beginning the Lord's prayer' before the organist got his attention and helped correct the situation.

Indeed, the new mission statement of CTAMI is timely and calls out to empower people in justice, love and compassion, wherever they may be, with or without their bishop, with or without pastoral care. All Baptized are People of God; all are Church!

The Mission of Call to Action of Michigan

is to be a prophetic voice committed to the formation and support of inclusive Catholic communities of faith in the Spirit of Vatican II. This mission, rooted in the life and message of Jesus, compels us to reach out to empower people in justice, love, and compassion.

CTA METRO DETROIT: Mary Magdalen Prayer Service



From left: Therese Terns ("Everywoman"), Sue Sattler IHM (Helen Prejean), Barb Beesley IHM, Mary Ellen Gondeck, CSJ, Julia Archer (Ettty Hillesum), Elizabeth Kangas (Jean Donovan), Lynne Browning, Mary Ann Dunmire (Mary Lou Kownacki OSB), Eileen Burns, Gerry Sellman, Jeanette Barks, participated in the CTA Metro Detroit Mary Magdalene celebration. The ceremony, written by Mary Carry, highlighted the women as stellar examples of the prayer-action dimension of our lives, with Mary Magdalene being the epitomy of prayer-action. Special thanks to the SS. Simon and Jude Hospitality Committee for hosting a wonderful "afterglow."

CTA WELCOMES NEW TREASURER -- Janet Glisson, Co-Chairperson of the CTA – Lansing, has graciously agreed to assume the duties of treasurer for CTA of Michigan, effective May 1. Janet accepts this position with sound financial background as she retired from Chase Bank after 30 years of service. Janet has four adult children and 10 grandchildren to keep her life busy and interesting.

CTA attracted Janet about 10 years ago. She is firmly committed to a Catholic church which is inclusive and spiritually nourishing. She is currently busy planning the CTA 2009 State Conference to be held September 19.

Among her various other areas of interest and involvement, Janet worked with Beginning Experience of Lansing for 5 years, and has served 10 years on the regional board of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics and 5 years on the national board of this organization. She also volunteers for the American Red Cross. We gratefully welcome Janet to this position previously filled by Kim Franke of Kalamazoo. Janet accepted the position and we hope she will continue to serve in this capacity beyond the remaining months of this year.

The CTA-MI Board expresses sincere thanks to Kim Franke for her dedicated service as treasurer. Kim will remain on the board and represent the Kalamazoo area along with her husband, Jim Rose.

LANSING NEWS -- Eleven people held an informational demonstration in front of St. Mary's Cathedral in Lansing June 13 before the ordination ceremony for Father Mark Rutherford. CTA members carried signs, some made locally and others borrowed from CTA-Metro Detroit, with messages like "Jesus Was Inclusive" and "Married Priests Are Needed Now." Bishop Earl Boyea greeted some of the participants cordially and there were several favorable comments from people entering the church as well from passersby. But some people arriving for the ceremony were negative, accusing demonstrators of spoiling a special day. One woman said she felt as though a wedding were being disrupted. One of the CTA-Lansing demonstrators, Mary Jo White, was interviewed by a local TV station for the evening news as was Mike Diebold, the director of communications for the Lansing diocese.

The closing of a beloved 85 year-old Church in Lansing as well as the ordination demonstration prompted letters from CTA- Lansing members to The Lansing State Journal. The newspaper published several letters to the editor.

Janet Glisson and Karen Schrauben represented CTA-MI at a CTA national meeting. Topics included: participation in The American Catholic Council, the mission of Call To Action, the future of the organization and the ongoing need for communication. Karen and Janet also attended a lay synod in Chicago as well as a talk by Lena Woltering.



“SPEAK UP....

If the alarm had sounded just 30 seconds earlier, the Titanic would have survived.” (Fr. Gerry Bechard)

Fr. Gerry Bechard is a parish priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit where he is one of the founders of ‘Elephants in the Living Room’, a group of 170 priests and about 700 lay people. Bechard reviewed various patterns of clustering noting how difficult it is to be a pastor to three separate parishes.

“Ninety percent of contact with parishioners is before and after Mass. If you have to hurry off to another parish you lose that contact and it’s dehumanizing to the priest. You must have a strong pastoral presence or the community dies”. Bechard used the image of the Titanic to describe the state of the priest shortage. “Ships don’t sink at a consistent rate”, he said. “Don’t think that because things are going down slow, it’s ok”.

Bechard said there are now 300 priests in the Archdiocese of Detroit but projections say there will be only 94 in 17 years, with some saying there will be just 90 priests remaining in the next ten years. “Speak up,” he said, “if the alarm had sounded just 30 seconds earlier, the Titanic would have survived.”(this article appeared in the Fall of 2007 newsletter of FOCUS on FUTURE CHURCH .)

Call to Action has been speaking up for the past thirty years and continues to do so. A big thanks to you, Fr. Gerry!



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Call to Action,

I just received your letter today and I want to thank you for your support. Never in my wildest dreams would I ever have thought that my thesis in 2003 would be getting so much attention, or worse yet, be reason for firing. It helps me to realize that it is better that God doesn’t reveal in advance what is coming our way.

As devastating as this has all been, at the same time it has been a blessing because I have been affirmed a thousand times over. The outpouring of support by so many people like yourselves has been incredible. It is truly a revelation of God in our midst, and I am grateful, CTA.

United in Christ through the Spirit,
Your Sister in Christ,
Ruth Kolpack

From NCR, July 10, 2009---

A Farwell Tribute to Michael Jackson

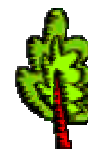


Michael Jackson was raised a Jehovah’s Witness. At ages 8 and 9 as the Jackson Five were just emerging, Jackson writes, (in 2000) “what I wanted more than anything else were the two things that make childhood the most wondrous years of life, namely, playtime and a feeling of freedom.” He wanted to build a tree house and roller skate, “but very early on, this became impossible”

“There was one day a week, however, that I was able to escape the stages of Hollywood and the crowds of the concert hall. That day was the Sabbath...the day I was able to step away from my unique life and glimpse the everyday.”

That peace did not last. “When circumstances made it increasingly complex for me to attend (church services), I was comforted by the belief that God exists in my heart, and in music and in beauty, not only in a building. But I still miss the sense of community that I felt there---I miss the friends and the people who treated me like I was simply one of them. Simply human. Sharing a day with God”

What a beautiful thought Michael leaves us for all time, “being simply human, sharing a day with God.”



“Lay your loved ones to rest the natural way”

The April 17, 2009 edition of NCR carried a truly informative article headlined with those words. The article, under the Ecology section, was written by Rich Heffern and highlighted Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Wyandotte, Michigan, which has become the first U.S. Catholic cemetery to offer a green burial option. Fr. Charles Morris is pictured with a big smile standing in the new “green” section.

CTA of MI commends Fr. Charles for this special kind of love for his parishioners, reaching out to them, allowing all the comfort of some choice in making burial plans for their loved ones. It all begins with love and caring, which in turn leads towards some deeply needed new thoughts and corrections around this issue. This is pastoral and spiritual leadership going forward into the 21st century. Thank you, Fr. Charles Morris.

Within the text of the article one can find a list of important changes outlined here.

For example, ‘green’ burial is a natural process by which a deceased person is laid to rest without embalment, entombment or the use of non-biodegradable materials. Embalming fluid is toxic and should not be put into the ground. The 12-and-a-half acre cemetery will dedicate a half acre to burial without embalming or vaults. Caskets used in that section will be biodegradable, and families will have the option to substitute shrouds, or even a favorite blanket, in place of a casket.

Joe Sehee, executive director of the Green Burial Council, is quoted extensively:

26 funeral homes in Michigan have been approved; many families choose cremation because it’s seen as more environmentally friendly than traditional burial; embalming, expensive sealed caskets and burial vaults are not required by law; half of what people spend money on is because they think they have to because it’s required by law---mainly caskets and embalming fluid; with a green burial the grave needs to be only three feet deep, speeding the recycling process.

These are just a few of the thoughts and directives suggested within the article. In short, a green cemetery allows nature take its course. The simplicity of a green burial is in tune with nature and need not be expensive. “There is no more appropriate way to honor our Catholic Christian tradition of Resurrection faith than by fitting into a natural cycle of death and rebirth where we honor both our loved ones and God’s good earth”, said Morris.



Metro Detroit, Rochester North Metro and Lansing

30 CTA members from Metro Detroit, Rochester North Metro and Lansing look forward to the day when no demonstration will be needed. Gail Hafner opened her home on Boston Blvd. for refreshments after the demonstration. Thanks, Gail!

Call To Action of Michigan
2009 State Conference
Saturday September 19, 2009 in Lansing
To view the brochure go to cta-mi.org!

**DARING TO BE FAITHFUL:
CALLED TO BE PROPHETIC**

Keynote Speaker:
**Edwina
Gateley**



REGISTRATION FORM:

Cost: \$40 members, \$45 after Sept. 1
\$50 non-members, \$55 after Sept. 1

Name: _____

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Send to: CTA-MI 2009 State Conference,
P.O. Box 12161
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Scholarships available.

Contact Eileen Burns: **tel:** 313-963-0448 **e-mail:** eb120246@sbcglobal.net

Location:
Delta Township Community Center
7550 W. Willow St, Lansing, MI 48917

Vendor space available but limited.
Contact: Karen @ 517-627-5534 or
kroses@comcast.net

To view details go to cta-mi.org and click "brochure"!

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*Unlike some organizations,
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Therefore, we really
appreciate your support
when you send dues and
donations to CTA-MI.*



Mary Jo McEvoy, Mary Jean Schoettle, Susan Masiak and Bob Fehribach took a stand for women and married men called to ordination at the Ordination Mass at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. Mary Jo also carried a hand-made sign in honor of her aunt, Stella Dolan IHM, a long time CTA member, supporter and demonstrator.