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Attention: Announcing Two Big Events!

The first is the Michael Morwood Conference on April 24th; the second is the Michigan CTA Conference, September 11th, Fr. Roy Bourgeois presenting. How privileged we are to have the opportunity to hear these two outstanding presenters! Thank you, Board members of Washtenaw Chapter and Board Members of CTA-MI Chapter for your selection and the diligent effort it took in advance to bring them to us.

A flyer appears in this newsletter containing all the important information regarding the April 24th meeting. The 9/11 Conference will be covered in more detail in the Summer newsletter. Mark your calendars for these two dates!

Michael Morwood comes as no stranger to many of us, having presented at CTA National and CTAMI in the past. He raises questions and issues of faith that are on the minds of many Catholics and other Christians today. No one does it better than Michael in bringing clarity and intelligence to difficult questions. He provides such excellent background and context in his presentations so as to enlighten and inspire his audiences. Plan to enjoy a day with Michael and many of your friends. Better still, bring a friend.

Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois brings other important messages. Despite his threatened excommunication from the Catholic Church, he has not changed his view that Women who are called to priesthood should be ordained. He states, "I feel I am a priest in good conscience. I feel that if I went against my conscience, I would be an unfaithful priest. I feel I am in good standing with God. Am I a priest in good standing with the Vatican? No." We stand with Fr. Roy.

He continues to celebrate mass privately in his apartment in Columbus GA, where he carries on the 20 year-old campaign to close the US Army's School of the Americas at near by Fort Benning. The institute trains soldiers from throughout Latin America. (ed.note – from my readings and understanding dozens of SOA's graduates are responsible for political killings and dictatorial coups during the past half century.)

What's wrong with this picture? A 70 year old Maryknoll priest, dedicated to working for peace and justice, with full support of Maryknoll superior, Fr. Ed Dougherty, now threatened with excommunication because of his beliefs based on the understanding of justice and equality as expressed in the Gospels? Come and let him answer that question and many others in person. What a grand and great story awaits us!

CTA Metro Detroit Coming Events

March 30 – Seder Meal – contact Eileen Burns for details

April 11 – Monthly Meeting @ Gerry Sellman’s – 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. We will continue discussing Bishop John Shelby Spong’s book “Born of a Woman” and have liturgy/solstice celebrations. As we resume our monthly meetings, we will focus not only on Bishop Spong’s book, but we will also be discussing what it means to be an intentional community. All are welcome to join in.

Saturday, May 22 - Join in peaceful demonstration at the Presbyteral Ordination, at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Detroit, MI. Time: 8:30 to 10:00 am. Refreshments after at Gail Hafner's home.

We hope everyone had a meaningful Lent. About 15 CTA-Metro Detroiters gathered each Saturday during Lent to discuss the stories in, “Cry Justice Cry Hope” by Joan Chittister and Beverly Bell. Joan challenged us:

“The tests of what it is to be truly alive is the determination of what has meaning to you. What makes you cry? What makes you angry? What gives you sorrow? What gives you joy? Take time to answer these questions. ‘Live to the point of tears,’ Albert Camus wrote. Live, in other words, as if the life of the rest of the world depended on yours’.”

--Julia Archer and Eileen Burns, CTA Metro Detroit Branch Co-Chairs



From Lansing

The regular meeting for our Branch is the third Thursday of the month. We are excited to report that Dick Preston of Lansing was invited to the Episcopal Ordination of Roman Catholic Womanpriest, Olivia Doko, in San Jose, California on February 27, 2010.

While there Dick was surprised to learn that RCWP do not only include women but men also. The RCWP mission is to be an inclusive community, not excluding those called to priesthood because of gender or marital status. In her CTA-National presentation, Bishop Patricia Fresen’s talk was titled “I Am Calling Both Women and Men to Priesthood”.

The Year of the Priest - Some Reflections

Ireland : In Dublin there are now just two priests under the age of 35 in the diocese while 46 are over the age of 80. The dwindling numbers meant the 199 parishes that make up the diocese would soon be at a minimum capacity of one priest each. (Currently, Ireland is in the midst of a massive clerical sexual abuse crisis.)

Germany: The Catholic Church here has reported a sharp fall in priestly vocations, despite the election of a German pope, with 842 now studying at the country’s seminaries compared with 1,122 five years ago. (Sensational media reports of sexual abuse flared up in Germany just as Irish bishops left for Rome for a Feb 16-17 summit with the Vatican .)

Spain : Of the 23,059 churches, 10,615 do not have a full-time priest. The average age of priests is rising, and now stands at 63. Currently there are 12 of 77 diocesan sees vacant.

France : There are only 9,000 priests today, compared with 40,000 in 1940. There are now more than 1,300 foreign priests, about half from Africa, many from Poland and Vietnam .

United Kingdom : There are now 3,614 diocesan priests, 100 more than last year. This could be due to increased numbers coming for short periods from abroad or improved reporting by dioceses. The number of Religious priests has declined by 243 to 1,069. Women now represent nearly half of all Church of England ordinations. Of the 552 new full-and part time clergy ordained in 2007---a 15% increase on the previous year---some 262 were women.

In U.S. : Cardinal Egan of New York in a recent radio interview spoke regarding mandatory celibacy: “I think that it’s going to be discussed; it’s a perfectly legitimate discussion. It has to be looked at. And I am not so sure it wouldn’t be a good idea to decide on the basis of geography and culture not to make an across-the-board determination. Is it a closed issue? No. That’s not a dogmatic stand”.

Sr. Christine Shenk – “Coming from Egan I think it is a sign that the conversation is ripening. He’s not the poster child for progressivism. It shows we’re much closer to having this issue addressed by the Vatican than most people realize.” And Thomas Reese, S.J. – “In a sense, what he said is obvious. But not many cardinals do that. It was brave for him to say what everybody’s thinking.”

Finally, excerpts from Eugene Kennedy “ --- Marriage would demand that popes and bishops change themselves. It would make them have to grow up as they give up the vain notion of the perfection of the hierarchical life---to forge a thriving if ever imperfect equal relationship with another person. --- authentic human experience must be reclaimed in order to restore the balance of health within the church ---- Real women are needed in ministry to make sure that we have real men in ministry.”



Michael Morwood Saturday, April 24, 2010

Reshaping Christian Thought and Imagination

Much of Christian theology has been based on dualistic notions of heaven-earth, with earth as the center of the cosmos and God as an overseeing, ruling deity. Jesus has been viewed as the unique "way" to heaven or where God dwells.

Now theology finds itself caught in the biggest shift ever in our understanding of the cosmos and what it means to assert that "God is everywhere". Caught in this shift, we want to establish solid ground on which to articulate Christian faith that honors the mystery of God, Jesus as revealer of this mystery in human form, the wonder of who and what we are, our connection with all creation, the purpose of prayer and sacraments, and the role of the "Church" in the world.

Saturday, April 24, 2010

Time: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Location:

**Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth
704 Airport Blvd.
Ann Arbor, MI**

(Located just south of the intersection of I-94 and S. State Street and just north of the intersection of S. State Street and Ellsworth Road)



*Washtenaw Area of
Michigan Call To Action -
Progressive and Inclusive
Catholic Community
working together for
equality and justice*

www.cta-wc.org

REGISTRATION FORM

**Washtenaw Area of Michigan CTA
April 24, 2010, Michael Morwood
Registration Information**

Cost: \$30 by April 1, 2010
\$35 after April 1, 2010

(Registration includes continental breakfast and lunch)

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

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Email: _____

No. attending _____ @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

Check or money order enclosed: \$ _____

(made to Washtenaw Area CTA)

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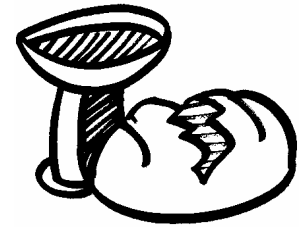
**Washtenaw Area CTA Morwood Registration
Joyce and Ron Mason
30840 Running Stream # 21
Farmington Hills, MI 48334**

Phone: 248-865-9544

Email: ronjoymason@aol.com

On Community

Eucharistic Celebrations ...



In the Brighton/ Ann Arbor, Michigan area, on the 4th Sunday of every month, twenty or more come together to celebrate Eucharist. One individual, Marie, a 95 year old Ann Arborite, brings an almost youthful spirit to the gathering, well read, and hosts a meditation group at her home twice a month. She is an inspiration. Another individual could be a U. of M. college student. One (sometimes two) of the group is a married priest.

Two or three, sometimes four religious order women are in the group. Gays and Lesbians are welcome and are present to our gathering. Overall this group is comprised of a variety of professions, ages, a few more women than men, all catholic people who no longer find their parish liturgy spiritually transforming to their satisfaction. For all of us after almost 10 years of gathering together, this has become our primary place to celebrate Eucharist. On a website one is invited to our “Inclusive Liturgy”.

As we gather, one finds a table in the center of the room, with table cloth, a small loaf of bread and a glass of wine. A candle is lit. We begin with an opening song, followed by each person passing a small candle lighted from the center one to one another as each offers a prayer or expresses an intention. An hour long dialogue homily follows Scripture or other readings. In preparation pertinent theological, spiritual, ecclesiastical reflections are emailed in advance. Through this process members continue to grow confident to speak on issues, even at times “outspoken”. We love it and support one another and also listen to contrary points of view, allowing all to grow spiritually.

After praying the Eucharistic prayer together and sharing the Bread and Wine, we sing Communion songs and closing songs before sharing with each other an embrace of peace and love. Then we share a delicious potluck and more conversation.

When we first began meeting in each other’s homes, we experienced doubts, uncertainties, hesitation during a time of transitioning from a ‘big church’ to a ‘house church’. As the only ‘ordained’, (married) priest in the group, people deferred often to my comments or to my role as ‘presider’, but not anymore. We have outgrown that outdated paradigm to embracing an early Christian view, that we are privileged, an awareness of being Christ-centered, that we are the Body of Christ, coming together to celebrate who we are. We know we are meeting to share the good news of the Risen Lord and to go forward in peace and love to serve.

Other branches in Detroit, Lansing, and Kalamazoo also are celebrating small group Liturgies and will share their stories in future letters.



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.

Visit
www.cta-mi.org
for past and current
newsletters!

Editor's Reflection

about the Synod of the Baptized

A recent email got my full attention! (Thank you, John Chuchman) It read: "Synod of the Baptized for the local church of St. Paul and Minneapolis: Claiming Our Place at the Table!" Sept. 18, 2010. It continued "--- We are committed by our baptism to our Church tradition, but we see some disconnects between Our Roman Catholic Church practices and the mission of the Catholic Church. The disconnects and our responses to them are matters of conscience for us. We want to be a transformed culture within our local Church Community in response to the Spirit of God and in service of the Church's mission."

Are these wonderful folks on to something? Could their Synod be a sign of a paradigm shift in how to go about doing business, so to speak, of reconciling differences, disconnects so evident within the catholic culture? Is their aim to begin transforming parishioners everywhere through a corrected theology of their Baptismal commitment?

I would like to attend their Synod and see for myself.

I believe the key words are "becoming a transformed culture within our local Church Community"? Is it just possible that the Spirit of Call to Action of some 30 plus years to keep alive the Spirit of Vatican II is beginning to emerge into a new Jerusalem experience within the baptized community. What I am trying to say is this: Call to Action, National, State, and Local is struggling, struggling to grow, struggling to keep memberships active, to pay the cost of doing business. Call to Action has been in the trenches, doing the grunt work, taking on the major issues, trying to address the disconnects. And after so many years of dedicated and brilliant leaders doing conferences, writing books, teaching the documents of Vatican II, and supported by so many baptized catholic faithful, the disconnects between Church belief and practices and the conscience of catholic people, individually and collectively, seem to be widening instead of getting resolved. Has the time come to try a Synod of the Baptized?

Vatican II's "Gaudium et Spes" (Joy and Hope) teaches the baptismal commitment to discipleship and following Jesus involves a call to holiness for all Christians. This is foundational for all Catholics/Christians everywhere. Name all the vows one can think of, yet in and of themselves all other vows do not add anything to this fundamental vow but specify how the individual Christian lives out the baptismal vow.

THERE IT IS! THIS IS WHAT I/WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON WITH OUR LOCAL CHURCH PARISHIONERS. From that common ground could we begin to address disconnects? In time could ALL the baptized gradually come to better understand injustice, exclusivity, hierarchical abuse, rights of all the baptized, and enable a transformation into the Spirit of God and in the service of the church's mission instead of remaining 'timid, silent, pray, pay and obey, confused and abused, frozen, not chosen people of God. In other words, once people are grounded in the CORRECTED theology of their Baptismal commitment would there not follow a gradual coming together of "progressives" and "conservatives" and lead to a gradual better understanding of their differences and some reconciliation? Can such a Synod help transform a culture within local Church communities? I for one look forward to learning more about their Synod.

Arnie Messing

When reading articles by Joan Chittester and "Historical Changes in the Catholic Church" I think we in CTA are part of this. We hear it in Joan's voice, the WomenPriests, and all who sit in Eucharistic circles and share their truth. Will our names be remembered? I doubt it – have our voices/or actions planted seeds – I believe they have. Mother Teresa when asked how she cared for so many – her reply – 'one soul at a time'. Barbara Lee

And Randy Vonck adds, following our recent small group liturgy, the theme being Abuse and Violence, "---our number may be small relative to the church as a whole, but the ideas we push are large. As Margaret Meed said: "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". I'm glad to belong to such a caring, thoughtful and inclusive community".

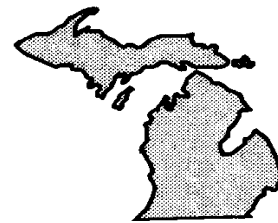
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*Unlike some organizations,
National Call to Action does
not share dues with CTA-MI.*

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



Saturday, May 22 –
**Join in peaceful demonstration
at the Presbyteral Ordination**
at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Detroit, MI.
Time: 8:30 to 10:00 am.
Refreshments after at Gail Hafner's home.

Michigan CTA Conference
September 11th, 2010
Fr. Roy Bourgeois presenting!
Location: Plymouth Congregational Church
2201 E. Grand River Ave. Lansing, MI 48912
More details in the Summer CTA Michigan Newsletter!