

Diaspora

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MEMBERSHIP

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The Presidents' Desk

by Tom & Michaelita Quinn



Those of you who attended the Annual Membership Meeting at the 2009 FCM Assembly in July heard an update about the FCM Strategic Plan. To everyone's delight, the plan is now completed, having been approved in full at the Circle of Directors' meeting which preceded the Assembly.

This Plan was developed using direct input from the membership over a two-year period starting in March 2007. Thanks to all of you, FCM has a relevant plan for its pivotal leadership role in the ministerial movement that is flooding this country.

The proposed FCM Programs and Services, listed in the last issue of the Diaspora, were discussed and enhanced, and final lists were approved. Three days later, at the Annual Membership Meeting, FCM members were invited to help create or expand some programs and services from these lists. And several quickly chose one or more to work on.

This next phase is an exciting time for all of us as we now start to implement the FCM Strategic Plan. In addition to your involvement, the Circle identified its three top priorities from the Plan to implement during the next year:

- Provide for certification of members (Strategic Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2).
- Provide for endorsement of members (Strategic Goal 1, Objectives 1.3 and 1.4).
- Clarify FCM as an entity and review the governance structure (Org. Goal, Obj. 8).

So now, we invite you also to become involved in creating or expanding one or more of the programs or services identified with an * asterisk in the columns listed on page 9. Please email us at quinnems@aol.com with your name and the program or service in which you are interested and we will be in touch.

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ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

Your **FCM Member Renewal** packet will be mailed on October 15, 2009. We encourage you to renew and pay **ONLINE** this year. Renewing **ONLINE** through PayPal is easy, safe and secure. **PLEASE NOTE:** All areas of your renewal form **MUST** be completed before it is submitted for processing.

Thank you for your cooperation.

– Carolyn and Tom, Membership Coordinators



Regional News

NORTHEAST REGION

by Patricia and Paul Stubenbort



Congratulations to those of you who were able to make the trip to Columbus, Ohio for the

FCM assembly. What we all experienced was the exciting reality of the Gospel Ministries that FCM members are engaged in all over the country. It made our heart beat a little faster to realize we are part of this extraordinary scene. We hope to see even more of you at the Assembly being planned for Dallas next year.

From the Northeast, FCM welcomed eight newly certified members to our ranks:

• **Jonathan Kraus**, *Warminster, PA*, is a hospital chaplain and bereavement counselor.

• **Rudolph Croteau**, *Niantic, CT*, assists the chaplain at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with teaching, liturgy and retreats.

• **Carol Croteau**, *Niantic, CT*, is the founder of Bethsaida Community for homeless women and helps them with Gestalt Pastoral Care.

• **Hugh Brady**, *Buffalo, NY*, runs a methadone clinic and co-organizes meditation retreats and weekly meditation experiences.

• **John Anderson**, *New York, NY*, coordinates bereavement services for Pax Christi Hospice in NY and assists at an agency for homeless people with HIV.

• **Gerard Friscia**, *Franklin Lakes, NJ*, prepares couples for matrimony and officiates their weddings.

• **Michael Nicosia**, *Rochester, NY*, is a lay Chaplain for Dignity, Rochester

and staff Chaplain at St. John's Home, Rochester.

• **Chava Redonnet**, *Rochester, NY*, is a chaplain with Rochester Catholic Worker and will wind up a chaplain residency this year.

All of these newly certified members came to us through other members who recognized the outstanding qualities and ministries of these eight people.

Look around you. When you see someone who would fit right into FCM, give them the opportunity to join us so we can help nourish their ministry.

FCM Northeast will have a gathering at the home of **Pat and Paul Stubenbort** on Sunday, October 18, 2009. Address: 6528 Hessian Turn, Bensalem, Pa. 19020. Phone: 215. 752. 7493. (We are 20 minutes north of Philadelphia right off I-95.) paulpatusa@hotmail.com We want to schedule similar get-togethers in the North Jersey, New York and New England areas in the not too distant future.

PACIFIC REGION

by Mary and Nick De Los Reyes



One of the key insights of FCM over the years is that those who are engaged in ministry need the support that comes from being in fellowship with others in ministry. FCM ministers are encouraged to meet in local groups. Annually, FCM has a national assembly. This summer the assembly was held in Columbus, Ohio. I believe that all those who attended were affirmed and energized. Mary and I certainly were. We hope to see you at the next national assembly.

Special congratulations to two FCM

members from the Pacific Region: FCM endorsed **R. John Jeffery, M.Div.** for certification as a Board Certified Chaplain by the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. He is currently employed as Manager of Spiritual Care Services at the San Francisco Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center. Originally from the Methodist tradition, John now considers himself to be an inter-faith minister.

FCM certified **Donna Schrieber, RN, M.Div.** Donna worked as a nurse for more than 30 years. After getting her M. Div. from Drew University, she served as a Local Pastor in the United Methodist Church in New Jersey. Now in Washington State, she has completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education. Certification will be helpful to her in her chaplaincy work. Donna feels privileged to share God's love with patients and those who care them.

FCM is honored to facilitate John and Donna in their ministry. FCM is also honored by the presence of all its members and by all the ministry you provide. Thank you!

SOUTHERN REGION

by Virginia and Robert Graf



Since our last issue, two members of the Southern region have been certified at the summer meeting of the Circle of Directors and two members have been ordained bishops!

What a wonderful opportunity to meet, greet and celebrate with two newly consecrated catholic women bishops, **Bridget Mary Meehan** and **Andrea Johnson**. The liturgy and sharing on Saturday, August 15, was

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Regional News, continued

truly uplifting. We are proud that both women, members of Roman Women Catholic Priests (RCWP), are also members of FCM. In fact, Bridgette Mary served as president of FCM from 1998- 2004! We pledge them our support and cooperation in their prophetic episcopal ministry.

Here is a thumbnail summary of the ministry of one of our newly certified members. **Gilbert "Bert" Thurston** is currently the full-time chaplain of a nursing home in Georgia. He has served as a youth pastor, the director of Christian Education, and as a chaplain in a hospital and a homeless shelter. He has worked in local church ministry as a pastoral intern. He is a 2007 graduate of Candler School of Theology in Atlanta with a Master of Divinity degree. He has completed eight units of CPE and is pursuing APC board certification. He maintains his membership in a local Methodist community but serves all in his professional ministry.

We congratulate **Mary McGrath** and her team for a well-planned conference in Columbus. **In Summer 2011** (less than two years away) **the national FCM conference will take place in our region**, probably near Dulles airport in Washington, D.C. Already we have loads of ideas!

This coming November, at the US Catholic Bishops' meeting in Washington, D.C., some of us will join with a Corpus initiative to carry signs reminding the bishops and the public of the Catholic parishes that have been closed for lack of clergy. For more details call us at 304-728-2829.

GREAT LAKES REGION

by Tom Stricker



What is happening in the Great Lakes Region? First of all, please mark your calendars for a Great Lakes regional retreat September

17 through September 19, 2010, at Maria Stein Retreat Center. John Schultz and Dagmar Celeste will be assisting in the planning. If anyone else is interested please drop me an e-mail. Thanks m. Here's to planning ahead!

In the coming months, I will be lifting up and recognizing various communities that are gathering for prayer in our region. Mary Reaman, an FCM member, is the leader of one such community in Dayton, Ohio. It is exciting to see the good things that are happening in The Tree of Life Community. As part of my column, I am inviting members of the Great Lakes to write about their ministries. Please see Mary's article about the Tree of Life community on page 4.

MOUNTAINS & PLAINS REGION

by Michael Keefe



Greetings from the Mountains and Plains! Once again we'd like to thank God, **Mary McGrath** and all who made the National

Conference in Columbus, Ohio, such an inspiring event and a chance to deepen our FCM relationships. For those of you who were there you know what I'm talking about. For those of you who were unable to be there we pray for God's blessings and hope some of the Spirit will rub off.

At the Circle meeting we certified several members. From our region we'd like to welcome **Christy Howard-Steele, Michael Inyart, and Kathy Redig.**

• **Christy Howard-Steele** is from the Chicago area. She currently is employed as a hospital chaplain and also was endorsed as part of her process for Hospital Chaplaincy employment and for the Association of Professional

Chaplains Board Certification. Her FCM colleague is Jeanne Hale who was certified and endorsed earlier this year at the February gathering. Christy's emphasis in ministry is helping hurting people. She has an assortment of ministries including Bible study, work at a shelter, and worship services at a women's prison.

• **Michael Inyart** is well-known to the St. Louis FCM members. He was ordained in 1976 and served in three parishes until 1984. He then worked as a social worker. He is married to Maribeth and they have three daughters. He and his wife have been involved in prison ministry, parish ministry, and ministry to their children whom they home-schooled for 13 years.

• **Kathy Redig** has three areas currently of ministry: as a chaplain of 14 years serving a hospital and nursing home complex; serving a small parish entitled "All are One Catholic Church," and as regional administrator of the RCWP-Midwest Region. She has a MA in Pastoral Ministries from St. Mary's University in Winona, MN and CPE.

As you know we keep encouraging local gatherings/churches. Francis Baiocchi always sends me a bulletin from Jesus Our Shepherd Church of Hartford, WI. They have a web-site, www.jesusour shepherd.org. I checked out their web-page and find it's quite informative. The pastors are Jack Lutz, Don Wright, Bob Scanlan and Frank Baiocchi. The associates are Alice Iaquina, Kathy Vandenberg, and Robert Weiss. They meet regularly Sundays at 9:30 a.m. If you're in the area, be sure to stop by. I'm sure they'd love to have you.

Remember *The Reaching Out* community near St. Louis meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at Des Peres Hospital just outside of St. Louis? The FCM of St. Louis also meets regularly. For more information contact Wayne Bryant. Wayne tells us

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Regional News, continued

the next regularly scheduled meeting is September 19 at 7 p.m. at Wayne's house.

I'm hoping the Chicago area will have their annual summer gathering. I still haven't heard anything, but as soon as I know, I'll be glad to let you know.

Keep in mind the National Call to Action gathering in Milwaukee, November 6-8. FCM will be gathering probably November 7 in the afternoon. More details to follow.

Again, I hope you are alive and well with the Spirit. ¶



Congratulating the endorsees are FCM Co-President Michaelita Quinn, Director at Large Bill Manseau, newly certified and endorsed Christy Howard-Steele, John A. Boylan, and Jean Hale, and Co-President Tom Quinn

FOCUS on a MINISTRY

Tree of Life Community

Supplement to Great Lakes Regional News

by Mary Reaman

Tree of Life Community (TLC) in Dayton, Ohio, is approaching its 4th birthday on September 10, 2009! We'll celebrate our birthday at our Sunday Gathering on September 13th. Join us if you're nearby! Tree of Life Community is housed at Mack Memorial Church of the Brethren where we rent the sanctuary, an office and meeting space. Currently, Mack Memorial Church of the Brethren is home to five congregations including the Brethren, TLC, Friends/Quakers, and two small Gospel churches. We are located at 1717 Salem Avenue in Dayton. TLC's Sunday Gatherings are currently held at 11 a.m.

As a young alternative community, TLC has about 50 members. We describe ourselves as a progressive post-denominational community that gathers around the belief that WE ARE ONE. We endeavor to build bridges of awareness, understanding and acceptance between people, communities and spiritual traditions. One of the ways we do that is by incorporating scriptures from diverse world religions into our Gatherings. We also experiment with meditative

practices from various traditions so as to nurture our own understanding and spiritual practice. While we celebrate communion regularly, we also explore a myriad of ways to experience communion and unity, besides breaking bread and sharing the cup.

One of the best things we do at TLC is "Tree Talk." After every Sunday Gathering we move from the sanctuary to our basement space where refreshments are provided. There we invite those who attended the Sunday Gathering to grab a seat in our circle for a group process of theological reflection. Using the common experience of the Gathering we just shared together the group is asked to reflect on their experience. By sharing the things that move us, challenge us, and inspire us from the Gathering we discern how the Divine Presence is participating in our individual lives and the life of the community. Tree Talk is a big part of our Sunday morning experience. It's a time when we share the depths of our lives and intentionally consider how the message of the day calls us to live with greater awareness and authenticity in our relationships with God, each other and the planet on which we live. Typically 90 to 95 percent of the people who come for Sunday Gathering remain for Tree Talk. As we share our lives, our struggles and triumphs we come to see as a community that we truly are One, that your experience is much like my experience, your hopes and dreams connected to mine. Tree Talk helps us see that while we are each special, the walk of life we all traverse involves many births, deaths and resurrections for each of us and is hardly unique to any of us. In Tree Talk, our lives become the scriptures from which we find truth and meaning.

We are just coming off a great community retreat entitled, "Come to the Feast!" We spent three days together praying, laughing, contemplating, singing, eating and enjoying one another's company in the presence of the Divine. About 35 of us and five of our kids whom we call our "Tree Frogs" made a retreat together over the weekend of July 31-Aug. 2, and it was fabulous. Led and facilitated by a team of Tree of Life Community members, the retreat was a time of renewal and rejuvenation for individuals, couples and families.

Tree of Life Community is still young and small in size. We are praying and also invite your prayers for growth – not only in depth but also in width – so we can continue to sustain ourselves and reach out to the larger community. Check out our website www.TreeOfLifeDayton.com and see what we're up to. Details about our birthday celebration are there. You can also hear great homilies by our pastor, Rev. Dr. Mary H. Reaman and under the music tab you can hear some TLC originals by our music minister P.R. Frank. I'd love to hear your feedback about our website! You can email me at reamko@gmail.com to share your comments. ¶



A Word from the Chair

by Antoinette Marold

A Lesson

BE KIND AND MERCIFUL. LET NO ONE EVER COME TO YOU WITHOUT COMING AWAY BETTER AND HAPPIER.

--Mother Teresa

A Thank You

As I reflected on this quote of Mother Teresa's, it brought to mind the 2009 FCM Assembly in July. What an awesome and dynamic assembly! A huge THANK YOU to all who attended and especially to **Mary McGrath**, the assembly planner, Keynote speaker FCM member, **Mike Tynan**, and the keynote panel. Thank you to the wonderful FCM members who presented classes, dances, and panel discussions. This event could not have come together without FCM members giving generously of their time, talent and experience.

How wonderful you are! I was so pleased for the opportunity to meet you personally. Mark your calendars for the **next assembly, June 25 - 27, 2010 in Dallas, Texas**, where FCM and CORPUS will present a joint conference.

Some photos from the assembly are online at www.federationofchristianministries.org

Click on the assembly drop down menu. My apologies to the members who were in attendance and are not in the photos.

What's New?

The Circle of Directors, Central office and *Diaspora* have new email addresses, which are listed in this issue and on the website. Please add these new addresses to your address book.

Please keep the Central Office updated with your latest mail and email address. You will be receiving FCM information via email so please check to see that we are not in your junk mail. The new Central Office email address is: centraloffice@FCMmail.org

Renewing and paying your 2010 Membership will be available ONLINE in mid-October. Complete your Annual Report and pay our fee via PayPal, which is a safe and most efficient way to renew. Your free ministry listing on the FCM website form will also be ONLINE at that time. ¶

Winners of the Anthony Soto Award

Tom Leonhardt and Carolyn Horvath received the Anthony Soto Award following the Saturday night dinner. Tom and Carolyn have been past co-presidents and former vice presidents of FCM. They currently serve as FCM Membership Coordinators and FCM Central Office. The Anthony Soto Award is given each year to an FCM member or to a couple who exemplifies the spirit and vision of the friar and pastor, scholar and field worker, dreamer and organizer, idealist and activist, husband and father, and long-time FCM member after whom the award is named. The recipients are chosen by a committee from the FCM region in which the National Assembly is held. Carolyn and Tom were chosen because they exemplify loving persistence in following their conscience in continuing the work of Christ among us. FCM Chair Antoinette Marold and conference Coordinator Mary McGrath presented Tom and Carolyn with the award. ¶



NEW LEADERSHIP for FCM PEACE and JUSTICE

by Michaelita and Tom Quinn

We are very happy to introduce Larry DiPaul as the newly appointed Chair of FCM Peace and Justice. Leadership in Peace and Justice has been passed from Gerry Grudzen who first created this FCM initiative six years ago. At the FCM Assembly in July, Gerry was given the Certificate of Service for laying a wide foundation on which to build future growth in this important area.

Larry brings over 25 years of experience and involvement in peace and justice issues as an organizer, visionary, and leader. These are the qualities needed to "...lead the Peace and Justice initiative of FCM by organizing, expanding, and promoting activities through a Peace and Justice Committee" as stated in the job description of the FCM Chair.

Currently, Larry is Director of the Office of Social Justice Ministry, Diocese of Camden, NJ. In this role, which he was asked to create, he plans, hosts, and sponsors monthly peace and justice sessions; develops and offers peace and justice education and formation workshops; organizes peace and justice education retreats; and creates and coordinates all peace and justice activities for a large geographic area.

From 2004 to 2007, Larry was the director of the Romero Center in Camden, NJ. He developed it into a retreat and social justice education center that today continues its mission and growth through staff leadership. Larry has also served as the Director of Christian Service Programs at local high schools and as professor or lecturer on social justice/peace and justice at three universities. Using a pastoral group, he co-authored a Faith and Justice Manual. His additional community involvement includes volunteering in homeless shelters, SOA (School of the Americas) Watch, hospice, and Habitat for Humanity.

Larry has been a certified FCM member since 1999, has held and attended local FCM meetings, and was a presenter at the FCM National Assembly in Rochester.

In his own words, Larry looks forward to his role with FCM:



"I see Peace and Justice Ministry as rooted in and flowing from our Baptismal / Pentecost call to leaven the mission and story of Jesus, individually and communally. We are called to cooperate with God's grace in building up the Kingdom / Reign of God that Jesus embodied, and now, that the Communities of Faith reflect. In that Kingdom / Reign, the poor, sick, hurting, hungry, and all the many faces of the invisible Lazarus are central, and, not only call for our response, but, are, indeed, our path to transformation and salvation, and a Matthew 25 understanding of discipleship.

"So, how do we walk that journey prayerfully, collaboratively and reflectively? I hope to be able to coordinate the FCM efforts already underway, suggest ways to begin, continue, or deepen Peace and Justice Ministry, as well as offer resources to those involved. I will also write articles for the Diaspora. We'll see where the Spirit leads and guides us.

"Think of me as a resource on social justice topics and themes, [for] relevant articles that can be used for individual reflection or groups discussion, [for] a series of peace and justice sessions that leaders can use or that they can tailor to fit the needs or expectations of their community. I can also visit different regions at the invitation of regional FCM Vice Presidents to discuss ways to organize peace and justice gatherings and initiatives.

Please feel free to contact me at: peace_justice@FCMmail.org, or by phone 856-964-9777 (office) or 215-380-6676 (cell). I look forward to our working together!" ¶

HONORING FCM'S DECEASED MEMBERS

Following registration at the 2009 FCM Assembly in Columbus in July and the welcoming reception, we held a Service of Remembrance and Release led by John Chuchman and Karen Schrauben. Conference Coordinator Mary McGrath welcomed members and read a portion of John Chuchman's poem, *Compassion* to open the service.

Compassion

For me, Compassion is Celebration!
It is not about feelings of pity,
but feelings of togetherness.

Pity operates at a level of separateness;
I feel sorry for you.

My awareness of our togetherness
in Compassion
urges me to
rejoice at your joy and
grieve at your sorrow,
together.

In celebration,
I have been able to forget
in order to remember.

I had to forget or let go of
problems, difficulties, pain, sorrow,
in order to remember
the togetherness
that makes your suffering mine
and to imagine
some relief from that suffering.

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FCM CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: Biblical Aspects of Homelessness



by Mike Tynan, FCM Member, Great Lakes Region

Mike is Director of Homeless Services with Community Housing Network in Columbus, Ohio. He presented the Saturday morning Keynote Address at the July 2009 FCM Conference-Ed.

One of the first aspects of homelessness that we come across in the Bible comes from the pages of Genesis—and it’s an eviction. Adam and Eve are “set out” of their garden estate for violations of their lease.

When I talk to prospective staff members [at the Community Housing Network], I ask them to think about what else is lost, besides the dwelling place, when a person becomes homeless. And whether you believe that first couple was mythical or historical, I ask: What did they lose? Shelter, security, stability, comfort, food source, self esteem, confidence, health, and so many other amenities—physical, psychological and spiritual. I suppose we could say, metaphorically speaking, that the human race has been trying to get back home ever since. But I think it’s important that we understand that a home is much more than a place.

Another way people can become homeless is by making a misjudgment about a move, attempting to go someplace to get a new start, but then everything falls apart. Thus it was for Jacob’s family, which he moved in search of food. With Joseph in a high position, things were looking pretty good. And then we read that ominous line in Exodus: “Then a new king, who knew nothing of Joseph, came to power in Egypt.” Displaced people, immigrants, transients—we call them. They are people on the move, but who have gotten stuck. Promises are not kept; laws must be diverted. Jacob’s boys were in the same truck as the Joads in the *Grapes of Wrath*

Once again we meet the family of Jacob, now led by Moses, wandering homeless in the desert. Living in tents, but still exposed to the elements, they didn’t have much to carry with them. And yet, they managed to bring along the closest thing to a house that they had, the Ark of the Covenant, the temporary place where their God would periodically dwell among them. Homeless people have very limited means by which to transport anything precious—a shopping cart, a knapsack, or a black trash bag—and what does that say about what is precious to a person. Wandering leads to further loss—photo albums and address books are left behind; identification papers get lost or stolen, or simply outdated. What would you take with you?

People on the move are always searching for food. Often the manna, the quail, the water are provided by modern day soup kitchens, weekly breakfasts or dinners, sandwich lines, a burger bought by a passerby, a casserole dinner provided by a kindly church community, or maybe whatever can be snuck out of the carryout or the gas station market. Providing food is perhaps the most common and direct form of assistance that volunteers and faith communities can give. But homeless men, women and children do not live by bread alone. Many faith communities provide moments of prayer, entire services in their churches, in the camps and in the parks. A memorial service for a departed tenant or for all the homeless friends who may have died during the year makes the living feel a part of the community.

A homeless people had a homeless God. When King David was settled in his palace, we are told that he conceived a plan to build a house for the Lord. Perhaps it was his intent to tether Yahweh to Mt. Zion, enclose “the divine” in walls of cedar, and precious metals. But Nathan puts a hold on those plans and reports that Yahweh has no need of a house, that the years of wandering in a tent or a canopy were just fine. “In all my wanderings everywhere among the Israelites, did I ever utter a word to any one of the judges to ask: Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” The Psalmist will later declare that all the earth is God’s footstool. Surprisingly, many persons who are, as we say, living on the land, appear to be reluctant to make use of the shelters or begin the process for housing. That leads some cynics to dismiss them: “They just want to be homeless.” My belief is that the vast majority choose living on the land over being controlled and managed by the system. Perhaps Yahweh chose against a temple because the leadership might come to believe that they had control over God. In fact, even after Solomon does build the magnificent temple, there is a continuing tension in the prophetic writings about the over dependence and reliance upon the temple. In my role as Director of Housing I often have to reflect on how much power I am perceived to have, because in a sense I hold the keys.

Perhaps there can be nothing more bitter in addition to homelessness, than to be mocked for it—that most horrendous experience of looking over your shoulder or looking back through the years and counting the cost. That was the experience of the people of Judah, the citizens of Jerusalem, as they walked into exile in Babylon. And they heard their captors say, “Sing for us the songs of Zion.” Or continually they were questioned, “Where is your God?” Perhaps the ridicule of the homeless man or woman today is not centered on the loss of a religious connection, but surely there remains something of that stigma, as many members of society are ready to blame, to judge, to withhold empathy. Always looking for the “deserving poor,” they miss the truly beaten down, the ex-offenders, the alcoholics and addicts, the victims of the sex industry. What are our eyes able to see? Or do we see without perceiving?

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Lastly, let us consider that the one in whom Christians seek refuge, Jesus, is reported to have been born in a stable—not so different from an abandoned warehouse—because there was no room for his family in the inn. When pursued by those who wished to follow him, he reminded them that “the foxes have dens and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” He lodged for a time with Peter and Andrew; he was a guest with Martha and Mary, he ate out often, but doesn’t seem to have had a place where he could entertain. Even that last meal with his friends was in a borrowed room.

John tells us in his first chapter that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. But the Greek words are more picturesque than that. The Greek says, “He pitched his tent among us.” I have often marveled that upon announcing that the Word was made flesh that the author immediately emphasizes that that flesh needed shelter, if only a tent. But that tent is a reminder of the wandering Israelites and the tent that they carried about in the desert.

So am I saying that homelessness is a good thing, something to be emulated because that was the way of Yahweh, the way of Jesus? By no means. What I am saying is that being homeless is not an occasion for judgment. It is not necessarily something to be distained, although not something to be desired, either. Homelessness is a loss, in which the homeless person must struggle to maintain one’s self and one’s sanity, to find protection from the elements, to seek a place in a community that has left them behind. Among the homeless we will find the ex-offenders who can never seem to be punished enough for whatever crime they may have committed. Among the homeless we find the disturbed and the disturbing. The Scriptures caution us to welcome strangers for some have entertained angels unaware. The Greeks called the poor the Ambassadors of the Gods. What are these ambassadors telling us today?

And how do you speak to an ambassador of God? I think we can find some answers in the ministry of Jesus. I don’t recall that there was an episode of Jesus meeting someone who was actually called “homeless,” but there were many whom he met on his journey who possessed the characteristics of those whom we would today call homeless. There were those possessed; as frightening and surprising as folks whom we call mentally ill. There were prostitutes, women, and perhaps men, whose circumstances forced them to barter their bodies as well as their souls, for shelter or protection. There were the lepers, who through no fault of their own were treated as outcasts, unclean and untouchable. There were the blind, the deaf, the paralyzed, who society judged as guilty—of something!

But we see Jesus making himself available to all of them. We see Jesus listening to them and responding. We

don’t see condescension; we don’t see judgment. We see him touching the untouchables. I believe he learned from them, empathized with them and empowered them, even as he healed them. And I’ll bet there were more than a few of these folks, on the fringes of the crowd, who ate some of the loaves and fishes. ¶



Mike brought with him an outstanding interdenominational panel of professionals, each of whom talked about their experiences with homelessness. From left, formerly homeless, Xavier Jones now works with homeless persons; Bishop Jerry Pierce, pastor of Strong Tower Apostolic Church recently lived and slept for 30 days under a bridge with homeless persons and distributed to them 1600 bibles he had collected



From left, Rev. Lee Anne Reat, pastor of St. John Episcopal Church, which provides weekly dinners and outdoor liturgies for homeless persons; and, Rev. Jennifer Casto, pastor of New Life Methodist Church, which provides Sunday breakfast as a way of engaging with homeless men and women.





FCM Peace & Justice

by Larry DiPaul

“By now, you’ve probably read about it: a Middle East religious and political “dissident” taken captive by a Western government, interrogated, ridiculed, made to endure denigrating postures, beaten and eventually killed. His name? Jesus Christ. Two thousand years later, Christ remains with us, and so does torture.” (from *Why the Church Condemns Torture* by Anthony Flott).

Is water-boarding torture or simply an enhanced interrogation technique? People from all walks of life continue to dissect nuances and definitions. For me, water-boarding is an act of violence, with questionable purpose and questionable results. The end does not justify the means is still an operative moral principle for all Faith Traditions.

There may be a more Faith-based and less politics-based way to frame our conversation. All human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. We are called to recognize the dignity of God in all people. Any act of violence against any of God’s children is morally unacceptable. (I’ll get to the issue of self-preservation and self-defense soon.)

In my opinion, the legal choice to abort an unborn child, even though that decision may be interwoven with fear or desperation, is an act of violence against a child of God, for those who believe that life begins at conception. Capital punishment often supported through a veil of fear, revenge, and,

on occasion, a tinge of racism, is an act of violence against a child of God. War is an act of violence against God’s children.

All the life and just relationship issues, including stem-cell research (which, for some, can be likened to a type of embryonic water-boarding – extracting potentially life-saving information through immoral means), euthanasia, abuse of the air we breathe and the water we drink, unjust working conditions and wages, poverty, homelessness, hunger – are all morally unacceptable acts of violence against God’s children.

I would like to offer a point for discussion, relative to the issues of self-preservation and self-defense. Why didn’t Jesus do more to defend Himself when faced with Pilate’s “enhanced interrogation techniques?” Maybe Jesus did not consider self-preservation a Kingdom-of-God ideal. Apparently, the martyred Apostles did not either. Do we? We seem to justify certain decisions on the basis of self- or national preservation. We often hear those who have health care and those who are documented citizens ask the very basic question: How will universal health care and immigration reform affect me?

Yet, Martin Luther King, reflecting on the Good Samaritan story, indicted institutional religion, as Jesus so often did. He said that “the first question which the priest and the Levite asked (on the Jericho Road) was: If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? But the Good Samaritan reversed the

question: If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him? Maybe the crucifixion is Jesus’ way of saying that He (and, hopefully, His followers), would rather die, obedient to God’s radical way of love, than to strike back those who threatened or harmed Him. Maybe non-violent resistance to injury is the most effective way to speak truth to power. Easter is God’s way of proclaiming that Jesus’ non-violent response is the true and lasting path to reconciliation, renewal, justice, and life. In short, solidarity, like love, demands that we die to self. The price is that dear!

So here we are, living in a world of uncertainty, in dire need of prayerful dialogue and a just response. We are inundated with information from those who entice us to create and evaluate policy through our fears and self-interests. We also know that when anyone raises the level of fear, they reduce the level of reason, compromising moral conduct.

Some journalists take a pledge to practice “without fear or favor.” We, as bearers of a Judeo-Christian ethic, could pledge to live our lives without fear or favor. Of course, we did just that at Baptism, when we became citizens of the Kingdom of God – the Cross of universal reconciliation and love over-shadowing the flags of our nations, and the armor of self-preservation. I hope that this article leads to further dialogue, as we wrestle with a just response to the signs of our times. ¶

To offer a response to this article, please email: diaspora@FCMmail.org

The President’s Desk, continued from page 1

FCM Programs

- Certification Program
- *Endorsement Program
- *Mentoring Program
- *Training and Education Program
- *Ministry Network Program
- *Denominational Concerns Program

- *Peace and Justice Program
- *Faith Community Dev. Program

FCM Services

- Diaspora newsletter
- FCM website
- Ministry listing on FCM website
- Regional networking and support

- Annual National Assembly
- Prayer support
- National Directory of Members
- National registry for baptisms, marriages, and holy unions
- Central Office for membership services
- *Organizational partnerships

** to be created or expanded*

Deceased, continued from pg. 6

I have found that
there cannot be true
compassion
without celebration
nor true celebration
without Compassion.

Bill Manseau then read the following list of the deceased members:

Herman Briggerman
George Buck

Rocco Caporole
Richard Cassidy
Don Cordero
Louise Dee
Romeo DiBenedetto
James Dooley
Joseph Eisenberg
Joe Emmanuel
Tom Fangman
Juan Gonzales
James Harris
David Jacquet
Edward Kalmanek
Raymond Kelly

Barbara Bent Kenna
Jack Lang
Cecilia Langlieb
Bill Leahy
George Lesinski
Bruno Massotti
James McCuster
James McEntee
Michael McFadden
Bernie McGolderick
Daniel McGrew
Thomas Murphy
Greg Nadeau
Basil Nichols

Margaret O'Neil
Joseph O'Rourke
Joseph Pugliese
Jerry Ritzel
Paul Schlesinger
Paul Schoenenberger
Richard Sinner
Anthony Soto
Peter Tintes
Tim Welsh
Jack Wilcox
Mary Lou Zehfess
Any FCM member we may
have omitted... ¶

NEW GRAD PROGRAMS AT GMU

*by Gerald Grudzen, Ph.D.
President, Global Ministries University*

Over the past year, Global Ministries University has expanded its course and degree offerings to include three new programs: two new Master's degree programs and a new joint doctoral program with the College of Religious Studies at Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Global Ministries is moving toward a broader understanding of ministry to reflect our global orientation. We are including more courses and programs that focus on interreligious and interfaith training as part of the new era in which we live. We feel that training for ministry will increasingly include knowledge and understanding of other religious traditions along with the cultures from which they originated. We also are addressing the increasing cultural and religious diversity found in the United States and most parts of the world.

The Sacred Arts program (one of the new Master's programs) will feature the close relationship between artistic inspiration and the search for spiritual values found in historical and contemporary creative arts. The other new Master's program in Contemporary Christianity will address many of the historical issues raised by the studies undertaken in the Jesus Seminar over the past decades and the new insights into the origins of Christianity.

Here is a summary of the new Master's degree programs:

• **Master Of Theology In Sacred Arts.** This creative program explores spirituality through the arts, offering imaginative courses related to painting, music, cinema, and self-expression. For example: **TH542 The Sacred Art and Wisdom of Hildegard of Bingen** explores the motifs within Hildegard's ancient wisdom and features the following forms of sacred art making: poetry writing, visual prayer collage, and

mandala drawing; **TH543 Cinema: Inspiration for the Spirit** explores the power of film to move the spirit and focuses on spiritual transformation through cinematic inspiration; **TH546 Transformational Theater** involves the medium of the expressive arts and explores spirituality by dancing in the streets, singing in the rain and shining like a beacon into the dark and forgotten cells of prisons and institutions.

• **Master Of Theology In Contemporary Christianity.** A new perspective of Christianity for the 21st century features recent research related to the study of the historical Jesus. For example: **TH655 Introduction to Contemporary Christianity** presents a compelling view of the way the Gospels of the New Testament were written, when and why they were written, based on the most recent and reliable scholarly research on the Gospels; **TH660 Exploring the Identity and Role of Jesus** features Michael Morwood's exploration of some of the fundamental issues of Christian faith in the context of today's understanding of the beginnings of the universe, the formation of the planets, the emergence of life and the development of culture. **TH665 Jewish Midrash and the Gospels** centers on John Shelby Spong's compelling view of the Gospels as thoroughly Jewish texts, a collection of Jewish midrashic stories written to fill needs in the Jewish Calendar and Jewish Liturgical Year by early Christians. It provides the student with the most recent and reliable scholarly research on the Gospels.

The third new graduate program is a joint doctoral degree sponsored by GMU and the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University located just outside Bangkok. This program will lead to a Doctor of World Religions degree from GMU and a Ph.D. from the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University. This is a research oriented Ph.D. program that can be earned completely online. Mahidol University is one of the leading public universities in Asia

continued on the next page

with a Buddhist orientation and foundation. The College of Religious Studies has been approved by the Thai Ministry of Education to develop this PhD program. The areas of study for the doctoral program can include any of the following subject areas: Comparative Religious Studies and Interreligious Studies, Buddhist studies, Religion and Science and Religion and Psychology. GMU and Mahidol University are also working in collaboration with another globally oriented organization entitled Globalization for the Common Good, which sponsors major annual conferences on global spirituality and the reform of the global economy. FCM and GMU are supporting the Globalization for the Common Good conference that will be held at California Lutheran University from June 6 to June 10, 2010. Here is a link to the 2010 Globalization for the Common Good conference: <http://www.callutheran.edu/CLV/> The 2011 Globalization Conference will be held at the College of Religious Studies in Bangkok, Thailand.

All of these new programs can be found on the GMU web site. For further information on any of these programs, please contact GMU via email or phone at the contact information found on our web site. <http://www.globalministries-university.org/> ¶

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Global Ministries University: GMU offers degree completion programs and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs.

For more information, visit web site: www.globalministriesuniversity.org

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Phone: 866 419-8020 toll-free

FCM Certificates

These lovely certificates are available from the Secretary. Please specify your choice: Baptism, Marriage, Holy Union and the number you need. The certificates are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Each is printed on certificate weight paper in blue ink and carry the FCM logo and seal.

FCM Central Registry & Certification

The FCM Central Registry for Baptism, Marriage and Holy Unions is managed by Paul Reithmaier, 7415-K Triwoods Dr., Shrewsbury, MO 63119. Forms are available from Paul or can be printed from the regional website <http://home.att.net/~fcmmp>. A small donation to cover the cost of maintaining the service is appreciated. FCM Certification dates correspond with the Circle of Director's Meeting and is posted in the *Diaspora*.

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*Check out the
Official FCM site!*

www.federationofchristianministries.org



- Information on FCM Certification.
- Links to earning a Pastoral Ministry Certificate or a Degree in Religious Studies.
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