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Women Priests: Heresy?

Earlier this year, one of our CTA North Metro members had occasion to write a letter of apology to Archbishop Allen Vigneron that initiated an exchange of views. At the CTA demonstration supporting women's ordination, and married priests, Susan overheard a hurtful, disrespectful remark made by a first-time participant. In her letter, she conveyed sincere and heartfelt apologies for the incident. However, she also noted that "we feel very strongly about the need for Rome's policies in regard to priestly gender and mandatory celibacy to change - I make no apology for that or for protesting. Our intent is to call attention to the need for change, not to disrespect anyone participating in the ordination ceremonies."

Shortly thereafter, the Archbishop responded to Susan with a lengthy letter. He graciously accepted her apology. He then explained that limiting ordination to men is not based on "Rome's policies" but infallible doctrine, stating that "the Pope cannot change it, since it is given to the Church by Christ himself." In fact, "If a man were to be elected Pope and then try to change this, he would be a public heretic and by that fact no longer Pope. As a bishop, charged with a duty that, while different in scope than that of the Pope, is equal in gravity, I would not accept and could never accept the possibility of women being ordained priests."

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CTA-MI Board members from left to right are: Beth Rindler, Jeannie Daly, Mike Daly, Jerry Schoof, Janet Glisson, Mary Fran Barber, Karen Schrauben, Mary Cay Sengsock, Julia Archer, and Marianne Bernard.

Board Conducted Productive Retreat

Work was the order of the week-end as the CTA-MI Board convened for its retreat this year held November 19 - 21. Friday afternoon the Membership Committee met to plan for 2011 and after dinner the CTA board met for its November business meeting. Three officers were installed including Jeannine Daly as president, Mary Cay Sengstock as secretary and Marianne Bernard as interim vice-president to replace Linda Schmidt who resigned.

Mary Fran Barber facilitated the group workshop which lasted all-day Saturday. She challenged board representatives to identify what CTA-MI has to offer its members. She then directed board members to break into groups to work on strategies related to our newly adopted goals patterned after those of CTA National, to **educate, activate and inspire** Catholics. Our new mission statement stemmed from criticism at last September's State Conference which brought to the board's attention that our mission statement was not in agreement with our purpose as stated in our by-laws.

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The Mission of Call to Action of Michigan

Call to Action of Michigan educates, inspires and activates Catholics to work for justice and build inclusive communities of faith through a lens of anti-oppression principles including anti-racism.

CTA Metro Detroit Hosts Workshop on Wakes/Funerals

What better way to spend a Saturday than talking about one's demise. Not a real uplifting time, you say? Well, you are wrong. Recently, 23 CTA members gathered to listen to presenters to learn how to begin the conversation with families about wake and funeral plans. Believe it or not – a good time was had by all!

The workshop included a variety of informed presenters – Arnie Messing, Gail Hafner, Jeannette Barks, Eileen Burns, Marianne Bernard. Topics included: Theology of Transition, green burials, how to put together a wake/funeral service which may or may not be in a Church, Scripture and music resources, funeral home/State requirements. Sr. Gerry shared her funeral liturgy that she has already prepared, and Mary Hennig told how she initiated the conversation with some of her children about her wake and funeral wishes. The lunch time conversations where people interacted and shared their stories was an important part of the workshop. “The dynamics of the group was very good. The information was helpful as well. I'm glad that I attended,” said Mary Jean Schoettle of Rochester Hills. Mary Eckert of Northville also found the workshop worthwhile. “I had already done some planning but hadn't completed some things and hadn't even thought of others. The day provided an array of resources and thoughts and things to reflect on. That approach is what works for me. I also greatly appreciated that there were handouts and respectful questions and opinions shared and received.”

CTA Metro Detroit is compiling a resource library on wakes and funerals. For information, contact Eileen Burns at eb120246@sbcglobal.net.



Gail Hafner



Arnie Messing



Jeanette Barks

Arnie, Gail and Jeanette presented valuable information at the Wakes/Funeral Preparation workshop.

DEATH ...While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton batting, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased.

The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with impeccable dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: 'Glory be unto the Faaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he goooes.'

Michigan's delegation to the 2010 CTA National Conference included 94 members who pre-registered as well as additional members who registered at the door. CTA-MI President, Jeannine Daly, welcomed those members from throughout our state who gathered for the MI Caucus prior to the opening keynoter, Shane Claiborne.

Joan Chittister enlivened Sunday morning's CTA crowd with her message which is a “thorn in the side” of the Catholic Church. She encouraged CTA members to continue to remind the hierarchy that people do have rights within our church and we have a call to work for social justice. The crowd responded at the end of her presentation with a standing ovation and chanted “Joan for Pope!”

CTA's National Conference for 2010 included many younger faces, an encouraging sign for an organization whose population has not attracted many younger members. Two of the young keynote speakers, Shane Claiborne and Asra Nomani each told riveting stories of personal spiritual quests, Shane in North Philadelphia and Asra Nomani in her mosque in Morgantown, West Virginia. Neither of these speakers is Catholic, but both told important faith stories.

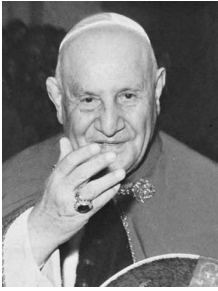
The Friday night audience sat listening to Shane, the energetic young man in long dreadlocks whose constant motion filled the stage. He comes from a strong evangelical tradition in Tennessee, but now serves the homeless as a spokesperson and as a member of their community. He brings a non-violent presence to crime filled streets, largely by being a spokesperson for the voiceless and by distracting children with his juggling and unicycle endeavors.

Saturday morning Ms. Nomani related her challenging survival as an unwed pregnant Muslim woman whose traditional punishment would have been death by stoning! Her parents supported their daughter despite the traditional taboo she had violated. Her story of oppression and fighting it is not unlike that of Catholic women. Eventually she had the courage to enter by the main entrance to the mosque which had previously been reserved for MEN only. -- Jeannie Daly



CTA-MI offers its prayers and condolences at the death of beloved member, Maryann Carr. Maryann belonged to St. Daniel Parish in Clarkston. She was a devoted follower of Jesus, true friend and eternal optimist.

Maryann, Presente!



Reflections ...

As we in CTA-MI approach a new year perhaps it is time to reflect again on the person most responsible for Vatican II, the good Pope John XXIII, (Angelo Roncalli, a country boy). The following is a small sampling of his wit and wisdom:

Addressing an audience at a Greek College in Rome “---I am only infallible if I speak infallibly but I shall never do that, so I am not infallible”.

While visiting a nursing home run by nuns to visit a prelate who at death’s door and after ringing the bell. The Sister on duty nearly fainted from emotion when she saw the Pope standing in front of her. “No need to be alarmed, Sister”, he said. “After all, I’m only the Pope. Go get your superior”. And Pope John cooled his heels like anybody else until the superior arrived.

Someone asked the Pope whether he liked television. “I should say I do!” “Ever since, thanks to TV, I saw myself made Pope, I attach a great importance to it”.

A prelate of the Curia told the Pope: “It is absolutely impossible to open the Council in 1963.” John replied: “Fine, we’ll open it in 1962!”

Once somebody asked Pope John what he would like to do after the Council finished its labors. He replied: “Spend a whole day tilling the fields with my brothers”.

“The idea of the Council did not ripen in me as the fruit of long meditation, but came forth like the flower of an unexpected spring”.

“Unity in necessary things, freedom in doubtful things, charity in all things”.

A book titled “Wit and Wisdom of Good Pope John” contains 200 pages of stories, anecdotes, sayings depicting the life, the spirit of that good man.

After Pope John there followed Pope Paul VI, John Paul II and now Benedict XVI.

One can only imagine what kind of Church we might be today had his same spirit of kindness, caring, humor, humility and courage, love and peace continued to be so clearly communicated and exemplified throughout the world. We in Call to Action should rightfully feel proud, joyful and really good about our mission and hard work to stay connected to the legacy of Good Pope John. We should be more determined than ever to work at carrying out the work begun by John 23rd so clearly enunciated in the Council’s 16 documents. Cardinal Dearden did his part by calling the first Call to Action Conference. Is it time to let go of some of the sadness and darkness that have come into our lives over these past 30 years or so? Is it time to embrace more strongly than ever teachings of the Second Vatican Council and relish in the joy and peace that come with celebrating who we are, The People of God, The Body of Christ, the Risen Lord of the Universe!

--Arnie

Embracing and Shaping Our Future as Church – Part II

In his book, *The Future of the Eucharist*, (Paulist Press, 1997) Bernard Cooke broadens our understanding of “real presence” and extends the concept to include Christ’s dynamic presence in the community.



Intentional Communities

Cooke believes that while individuals may have specific functions at the Eucharist, the entire community performs the eucharistic action (pg. 32). If this is so, then the community gathered is the celebrant of the Eucharist. It is the community that “does” the Eucharist. This is another example of a type of intentional community. Kim Franke and Jim Rose, co-chairs of the Kalamazoo branch have worked to form an intentional community for a number of years, and now a seed of hope is germinating. “We began out of our frustration with parish liturgies that were not inclusive, nourishing or life-giving,” said Kim. “We are all tired of wasting time, energy and talent on trying to influence the hierarchy.” The group meets twice monthly to break celebrate Eucharist, open Scripture and enjoy one another’s company. Group size varies from six to eighteen. The group plans some outreach activities in the future. Barb Huber, one of the members, finds that there is more work involved than belonging to a parish where you just show up and someone else does all the work behind the scenes. “Yet these liturgies are meaningful to me whatever the attendance, and I liked preparing the two times I was ‘in charge’ as well as guiding the process where almost everything was done in community – praying etc.”

Kim offers sound advice for those thinking about starting an intentional community.

1. Be patient. We have tried for about five years to get a consistent group going in Kalamazoo. If it is of God, it will take root and flourish at the right time.
2. Rotate responsibilities.
3. Discern what each member needs or wants and then try to find a way to meet those needs and use the particular talents each person offers.
4. Avoid becoming a gripe session about the Church.
5. Don’t fret over numbers. Where two or three are gathered...
6. Be open to new ideas and welcome new members, but a core group seems essential for continuity.”

The CTA-MI Board of Directors is committed to helping facilitate this process for anyone trying to form an intentional community. We would be happy to meet with anyone and share some basic principles. One of the things I learned at the mini-retreat on intentional communities that I attended at the CTA National Assembly was that most people are coming together not around a project or a cause. Rather, people are looking for communities that provide spiritual support and nourishment. “What could bring us together is dealing with our grief in losing our Church,” said one presenter. We have to find a way to open our hearts wide enough to hold the tension between what is and what could be. Intentional communities are one way to do this.

-- Eileen Burns



New Macomb County Branch

CTA-MI has a new branch! The new group is located and meets in Macomb County. We held our first meeting in August at the home of John Kinkel and Norma Josef. We met again in October, when Frank and Maria Grimminger were our hosts. Both meetings had 10-12 participants engaged in interesting discussions of current Church issues and personal experiences with the Church.

At our October meeting, we were pleased to have as guest Susan Masiak from the North Metro branch. Susan shared with us her interchange with Archbishop Vigneron on the CTA demonstration at the Detroit ordination ceremony. The archbishop's reaction was a foreshadowing of his reaction to the ACC just a few weeks later! Thanks to Susan for sharing with us!

Our next meeting will be early December. Our hostess will be Grace Hill.

Jerry Schoof has agreed to be our liaison to the CTA-MI Board, and Maria Grimminger will handle our communication. For more information on our activities you can reach them by email: Jerry Schoof: j.schoof@att.net, Maria Grimminger: fmgrim@att.net

--Mary Cay Sengstock

Intros ...

My name is Jerry Schoof. I am the representative to the CTA-MI board from the newly formed Macomb Branch. I am a lifelong Michigan Catholic. (Not the newspaper) I was invited to join just as the branch was being formed. I accepted because Vatican II showed me what church could be and I was involved in the synods that Cardinal Dearden fostered. I live in Macomb County. I worship in Oakland County. I look forward to working with the newsletter editor in the future.

My name is Maria Grimminger. I volunteered to be the communicator for our newly formed CTA-MI Macomb Branch. I am excited about our new branch as well as CTA-MI as it provides an opportunity to be with people who are in love with the teachings of Vatican II and are looking for ways to keep these teachings alive within our Church. I've been a life long Catholic who envisions an inclusive Church where everyone is welcome to the table and everyone's gifts are recognized, valued and cherished.

Macomb goes to Milwaukee (CTA)

Sr. Joan Chittister hit the proverbial nail on the head. She reminded us that we've been learning all weekend about what's been going on in our church. It is not pretty. The national meetings help us dial up to the central theme of the last decade. The Catholic Church is in error. The gates of hell have already prevailed against it in many ways. More bad news here in Detroit about the sex abuse scandal (2 part series in Detroit Free Press). \$2.7 billion paid out thus far in victim legal claims. No one is really talking about the ordination of women in the parishes.

What is it? Is the whole church that dull? Discrimination is illegal, right? Is it just me or do we have a serious problem with the Condoms/AIDS teaching of the pope? (The more I look at Sr. Joan, I think: she would make a great bishop.) After a few beers and a sandwich, I hear moans about the new English translation of the mass. Another distraction. And then there is the line: for every one person who joins the Catholic Church, three leave.

The recent *Commonweal* articles are a hot topic. Don't we need a national conference to get our act together? Our children and grandchildren are depending on us. But our Archbishop has declare American Catholic Council meeting in Detroit, 2011, out of bounds for 1.4 million Catholics here. Hello? The new Macomb branch is planning its 3rd meeting and there is plenty of work to do. We have been learning what's been going on in the church around here. We need some change.

-- John Kinkel, john.kinkel@gmail.com



From CTA Kalamazoo

After an inspiring and challenging National Conference in Milwaukee the Kzoo branch reassembled and celebrated Eucharist at the home of Kim Franke and Jim Rose on November 14. Mark and Becky Blazek contributed a powerful penitential rite and Barbara Huber prepared prayers of the faithful. Jim downloaded the music we used and Kim prepared the remainder. We share the leadership of the service as well as insights gleaned from the Word. The eight who attended later shared snacks and conversations on books, movies and what life was bringing to them at the moment. Dora visited with her friend Kathy Hurley and will contact the Lansing branch for future events in that area.

Our fledgling group is becoming more committed to regular meetings and sharing responsibilities for the continuation of our home church. We will meet two times in Advent. Dec. 5 back at Kim and Jim's and the location for the Dec.19 gathering to be determined. We know we are Church and are taking that responsibility seriously. No longer are we trying to influence change in the hierarchy but are answering the call of the prophet Micah to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God. We have all agreed that we want to be an inclusive, welcoming church and are working to make that happen. Blessings to all.

-- Kim Franke

Board had Productive Retreat

Continued from page 1

Our new mission statement reads: *Call to Action of Michigan educates, inspires and activates Catholics to act for justice and build inclusive communities of faith through a lens of anti-oppression principles including anti-racism.*

The Michigan Board adopted CTA National's:

Core Beliefs that we believe: the **people** of God are called to live lives rooted in the gospel. The **Church** is the people of God and the people of God are accountable to the Creator and each other. Faith **communities** have the responsibility to foster inclusivity and justice. Every **individual** has the right to act according to an informed conscience and the responsibility to promote the equality and dignity of all people.

Vision Statement: Call to Action will be the leader in challenging Catholics to work for justice and build inclusive communities.

Goals: to educate, inspire and activate Catholics.

Submitted by Jeannie Daly

CTA-MI President's Annual Report 2010



At the November Board Retreat:

1. The Board adopted the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan which includes CTA-MI Core Beliefs, Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Goals.

For the first time, we developed a shared dues collection with National which allows Michigan members to receive a discount on both State and National dues.

2. Installed the President, Vice-President and Secretary.

We had over 100 members attend the CTA National Convention in Milwaukee. At the annual CTA-MI State Conference, in Lansing:

1. We hosted Fr. Roy Bourgeois and his "Shattering the Stained Glass Ceiling" presentation.
2. "In the Spirit Award" was presented to Fr. Roy for his efforts to bring about equality for women (Women's Ordination) and his School of America Watch.
3. Adopted the newly amended By-Laws.
4. Elected a President and Secretary for 2011-2012.
5. Showed the award winning film "Pink Smoke over the Vatican".

We conducted two Ordination Demonstrations, one in Detroit, and one in Lansing. Detroit's demonstration sparked an interesting correspondence with Archbishop Vigneron in which he clearly explained his belief that women may never be ordained!

Held quarterly board meetings (one via teleconference) to help our Branch Leaders share ideas and keep abreast of what was happening across the state.

A New CTA Branch began meeting in Macomb County.

Multi-Branch participated in the Seder Meal held in Warren.

Our CTA-MI President sent and received a correspondence with Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter regarding our shared efforts in the struggle for women's equality.

We provided three Newsletters to our membership.

Two Branches Sponsored Mary Magdalene Celebrations.

Michigan CTA chapters continue to meet in small inclusive faith communities, conduct book discussions, co-operate with other organizations such as Pax Christi, Men and Women in Black, Elephants in the Living Room, WOC and other groups with a common focus of bringing our church's justice agenda to fruition. Vatican II did happen, and we remember its promise.

President Jeannie Daly

Women Priests: Heresy?

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The Archbishop then warned Susan of the dangers of continuing to place her own opinions above "the truth of Christ offered to us in the Church." He reminded her that she is at a "crossroads" between following "authoritative truth" and growing weaker in her faith. "In short, if you persevere in your conviction women can be ordained you are undermining your faith in Christ."

But now the rest of the story! Susan decided to respond. She summoned the assistance of people with a more extensive theological background than she has and conducted extensive research. Then, she wrote back to the Archbishop: "I was frankly surprised to read in your letter that women could never be ordained because it violates infallible doctrine given by Christ himself. I have understood that infallibility in matters of faith and morals was declared by Vatican I and that popes have declared infallibility only twice, for the doctrines of Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary into heaven."

Susan's carefully written paper then challenged Vigneron on every point. She quoted from the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) on "Tradition and Ordination of Women;" she stated how Cardinal Ratzinger confirmed that it was not John Paul II's intention to issue an ex cathedra definition in "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis;" she recalled how Jesus and the early church included women in ministry; she found a statement written in the 14th century by Bishop Pelagio complaining that women are still being ordained and hearing confessions." She included quotes from Canon Law of the Church. Space in this newsletter allows for only this small portion of her entire document. She concluded her letter with "Finally, I send my prayers and sincere caring for you as you lead the church in Detroit during these challenging times."

Since the Archbishop's letter had been a private correspondence, Susan requested that she be permitted to share his letter with other members of Call to Action. The Archbishop's Secretary (Rev. Charles Fox) wrote back to give this permission, and also to reiterate the Archbishop's reason for the infallibility of the 'doctrine' limiting ordination to men (that the "ordinary" Magisterium can be infallible as are the acts of Extraordinary Magisterium (i.e., solemn declarations from a council or when the pope speaks "ex cathedra.")

The Secretary also noted that the "analysis of the Catholic Theological Society of America regarding this teaching cited in your reply to the Archbishop, is unreliable." Not that any of Susan's analysis was flawed, but that the CTSA's analysis was unreliable!

We in CTA support Susan's effort here to speak out as an educated lay person. She did her homework and was able to respectfully disagree with the Archbishop. She summarized her position in her second letter to the Archbishop: "I am an educated Catholic. I listened as Vatican II opened the windows to the Spirit, recognized as acting in laity as well as clergy. It is my quest to follow Christ ever more faithfully that compels me to be active in my parish, participate in Call to Action, work and volunteer in organizations that work towards charity and justice." This is exactly the position of many CTA members. We believe it is critical for more of us to speak up and write informed respectful, loving letters to the members of the hierarchy to express what we believe we hear the Spirit say.

–Susan/Arnie

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CTA-MI 2010 State Conference

Call To Action-Michigan honored guest speaker, Fr. Roy Bourgeois, at the annual State Conference in recognition of his openness to the Gospel, of his:

- Radical message of Jesus;
- Compassionate solidarity with the poor of the world;
- Resounding witness to close the School of the Americas;
- Unwavering support of women seeking full participation in the sacramental life of the Church;
- Witnessing unyielding hope that resists despair;
- Courageously standing as a prophetic beacon of a life lived "In the Spirit."

Roy spoke of his personal journey, his work with the closing of the School of the Americas, and his support of women's ordination. Roy has paid the price for walking in the footsteps of Jesus, and CTA-MI is proud to support him.



Jeannine Daly, President, presents Fr. Roy with the 2010 In the Spirit award at the annual State Conference.



Janet Glisson, Karen Schrauben, co-chairs of CTA-Lansing, with Fr. Roy.