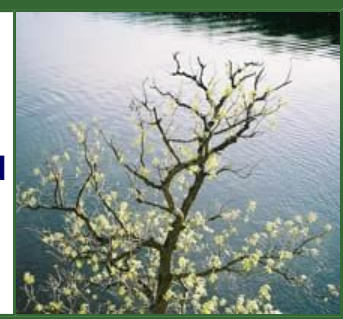


The Progressive Catholic Voice

An independent and grassroots forum for reflection, dialogue, and the exchange of ideas within the Catholic community of Minnesota and beyond

August 2008



*The Progressive Catholic Voice
can now be easily [downloaded](#) (.pdf) and printed!*



Dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, who heard and responded to God's call to "repair my Church," and, in so doing, emulated the justice-making and compassion of our brother Jesus.

The Progressive Catholic Voice

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A Special Appeal to Our Readers

Friends,

This is our 11th issue of *The Progressive Catholic Voice (PCV)* monthly online journal, and we want to take this opportunity to do two things.

First, we thank the many people who have contacted us to tell us how much they've appreciated the articles and perspective of the *PCV*. We seem to be realizing one of the core components of our mission, articulated last October in our inaugural issue: to develop and unify the progressive Catholic voice of the local Church.

Second, we appeal to you for financial assistance. Up until now, *The Progressive Catholic Voice* has been funded by the [Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities \(CPCSM\)](#), an independent, grassroots organization that receives no financial support from the Archdiocese. CPCSM continues to fund the *PCV*, but the organization's funds are seriously depleted. Both CPCSM and *The Progressive Catholic Voice* are volunteer organizations, with the exception of Michael Bayly who serves as both executive coordinator of CPCSM and coordinating editor of the *PCV*. Michael holds two Master's Degrees and makes a whopping salary of one thousand dollars a month!

Although we are beginning to develop a cadre of small donors as our publication and events become known, many funding organizations tend to be shy of those who speak critically of the Archdiocese -- despite the fact that our work is well researched, thoughtfully written, and respectful. Though we will continue to apply for grants from various funding organizations with little success, we have to rely on individual givers. And that's where you come in.

If you've appreciated and been encouraged and inspired by the material we've published these past 11 months, then we ask you to consider making a financial contribution to help keep *The Progressive Catholic Voice* afloat.

Donation checks can be made out to "CPCSM" and mailed to: CPCSM, c/o The House of the Beloved Disciple, 2913 13th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407. Please earmark your check by specifying "PCV" in the memo line.

Or -- as a new feature of *The Progressive Catholic Voice* -- you may prefer to make a secure online contribution with a credit card through the popular and well respected PayPal service, by clicking on the following "DONATE" button:



(Please Note: Although "Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities" (the non-profit corporation and fiscal agent through which the Progressive Catholic Voice accepts contributions) appears at the top of the donation page that you will see after clicking on this button, your contribution will go directly into CPCSM's Progressive Catholic Voice Account.)

It may be helpful to know that the Minnesota Tax Code now provides a 50% income deduction for charitable contributions over \$500.

We also welcome any suggestions you might have for other funding sources.

Yours sincerely,

The Editorial Team

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The Progressive Catholic Voice

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Mary Beckfeld

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The Progressive Catholic Voice's Endorsing Organizations (To Date)

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Minnesota

[Network of Spiritual Progressives \(Minnesota Chapter\)](#)

[The Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities \(CPCSM\)](#)

[Catholic Rainbow Parents](#)

[Dignity Twin Cities](#)

[Inclusive Catholics](#)

[CORPUS](#)

[Anthony Signorelli and Call to Liberty](#)

Dialoguing with the Archbishop

By the Editorial Team

Archbishop John C. Nienstedt writes a column in *The Catholic Spirit* entitled "In God's Good Time." We take his public statements as an opportunity to discuss his views with him.

Dear Archbishop Nienstedt:

The reports from World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, have been ecstatic. It must have been an awe inspiring event, 400,000 people, 170,000 of them young people from all over the world.

As one blogger put his reaction:

So was this World Youth Day a success? Yes! Yes! Sydneysiders have been absolutely captivated by our presence; the hardness of the cynics' hearts have been melted; there is a renewed interest in Christianity and faith in general in and around Sydney. If the first fruits are any indication, the seeds of this World Youth Day have fallen on good soil and, if well tended to, will yield a harvest of "a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold" (Matthew 13:8).

Look out, world. Here we come! . . .

There is an arrogance about this that is, perhaps, excusable in youth. But we think arrogance, militancy, and triumphalism might be the direct result of the Pope's messages to the young people of the world. That raises some questions for us.

The Pope began working up enthusiasm in his *Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Young People of the World on the Occasion of the XXIII World Youth Day, 2008*, in July, 2007. We also read his homily at the Eucharist at Randwick Racecourse on July 20, and his homily at the Eucharist with bishops, seminarians, and novices at the dedication of the new altar at the Cathedral of Sydney on July 19.

We notice three themes in his communications: the power of the Holy Spirit is under the control of the Roman Catholic Church; this power is conferred upon the young people in the sacrament of confirmation; and, finally, the power is given to them to go out to evangelize a world that is lost, dead or dying, corrupted by an erroneous desire for freedom and autonomy. Do you think there may be a problem in indoctrinating an enthusiastic crowd of young people with a message of superiority like this?

The text of the Pope's homily at the Mass on July 20 at which he also confirmed several young people was "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." (Acts 1:8) He uses the word "power" more than 20 times in the three-page speech. "Open your hearts to that power!" "The power of the Spirit never ceases to fill the Church with life! Through the grace of the Church's sacraments, that power also flows deep within us...."

Then there is the bleak view of the world: The world "wants to forget God, or even rejects him in the name of falsely-conceived freedom." "In so many of our societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert is spreading; an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair. How many of our contemporaries have built broken and empty cisterns ... in a desperate search for meaning... "

And from his homily to the young religious professionals:

However, we find ourselves immersed in a world that would set God 'aside'. In the name of human freedom and autonomy, God's name is passed over in silence, religion is reduced to private devotion, and faith is shunned in the public square. Wherever man is diminished, the world around us is also diminished; it loses its ultimate meaning and strays from its goal. What emerges is a culture, not of life, but of death. How could this be considered 'progress'? It is a backward step, a form of regression which ultimately dries up the very sources of life for individuals and all of society.

We were happy to see one reference to beauty in the world and to the Spirit active outside the Roman Catholic Church: "Here in Australia, this 'great south land of the Holy Spirit', all of us have had an unforgettable experience of the Spirit's presence and power in the beauty of nature." Nevertheless, the religious experience of all the other citizens of Australia or their strong ethical lives didn't get a mention. He

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[Roman Catholic Womenpriests](#)

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[Richard Sipe: Priests, Celibacy, and Sexuality](#)

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did quote John Paul II as writing: "A new evangelization is the first priority for the Church in Oceania." We don't know what that says about the Pope's assessment of the spiritual life of Australians.

We can see that the Pope is trying to create confidence in young Catholics to live exemplary lives and to help build the kingdom of God. But we wonder if creating in them a sense of superhuman power, as well as certainty that their path is the only one, is good pedagogy. We wonder if instilling in them a fearful disdain for the world outside their Catholic world is wise. We can hardly be "leaven" if we are condescending to our neighbors. As young people mature, they begin to see the complexities of real life and look upon the Catholic Church's claims to exclusivity and certainty as simplistic, or worse, self-serving as a way to retain power. That may account for the exodus of so many adults from Catholicism in recent years.

Of course, the adults in these young people's lives will try to direct their enthusiasm when they get home. In countries where religious freedom is respected, adults might raise the question of whether the Holy Spirit is free to inspire other people's religions. They might lead the young people to appreciate the goodness present in their neighbors of whatever religion -- Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist -- as well as the goodness that can be present in people who do not profess a religion at all.

Pope Benedict says an ominous thing about adults, though. "The difficulty that adults undoubtedly find in approaching the sphere of youth in a comprehensive and convincing way could be a sign with which the Spirit is urging you young people to take this task upon yourselves." He is talking about the evangelization of other young people. We hope the young people don't take that to mean they have superior faith to the adults in their lives. We also hope you had success "in approaching the sphere of youth in a comprehensive and convincing way" with the three catechetical instructions you were invited to give.

We don't want to be overly apprehensive. Since you are attentive to young people's responses, we would like to hear your take on whether the young people you were with came away with a sense of humility, a sense of being on a faith journey with all the religions in this world where hope is tied to justice.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Team of *The Progressive Catholic Voice*:

Michael Bayly
Mary Beckfeld
Susan Kramp
David McCaffrey
Mary Lynn Murphy
Rick Notch
Theresa O'Brien, CSJ
Paula Ruddy

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"We Are All the Rock"
An interview with Roman Catholic Womanpriest Judith McKloskey

By Michael J. Bayly



Newly ordained, Womenpriests Judith McKloskey (left) and Alice laquinta (right), are presented to an applauding congregation by Womanbishop Dr. Patricia Fresen at their ordination ceremony in Minneapolis on August 12, 2007.

PCV: Can you explain what exactly the Vatican recently said about women who have been ordained as Catholic priests and deacons.

Judith McKloskey: On May 29, 2008, (ironically, the eve of the 577th anniversary of St. Joan of Arc being burned at the stake) the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly named the Congregation for the Defense of the Faith) issued a General Decree.

The translated text follows.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith General Decree

Regarding the crime of attempting sacred ordination of a woman

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to protect the nature and validity of the sacrament of holy orders, in virtue of the special faculty conferred to it by the supreme authority of the Church (see canon 30, Canon Law), in the Ordinary Session of December 19, 2007, has decreed:

Remaining firm on what has been established by canon 1378 of the Canon Law, both he who has attempted to confer holy orders on a woman, and the woman who has attempted to receive the said sacrament, incurs in *latae sententiae* excommunication, reserved to the Apostolic See.

If he who has attempted to confer holy orders on a woman or if the woman who has attempted to receive holy orders, is a member of the faithful subject to the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches, remaining firm on what has been established by canon 1443 of the same Code, they will be punished with major excommunication, whose remission remains reserved to the Apostolic See (see canon 1423, Canon Law of the Eastern Churches).

The current decree will come into immediate force from the moment of publication in the 'Osservatore Romano' and is absolute and universal.

The Decree is signed by William Cardinal Levada, Prefect, and Angelo Amata, SDB, Titular Archbishop of Sila, Secretary.

An accompanying [article](#) by Catholic News Agency, mentioned several recent ceremonies (referred to as

“attempted ordinations”), including the November 11, 2007, ordinations in St. Louis of Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath and the May 4, 2008, ceremony involving Kathy Redig of Winona, Minnesota.

“*In latae sententiae*” is a type of excommunication which church officials say occurs automatically upon certain actions. It has been interpreted historically to mean that persons are not permitted to receive the sacraments nor to hold public leadership positions in the church. In many cases, this type of excommunication can be lifted locally. But in these cases, church officials say, only the Apostolic See can receive these persons back into the Church. This particular decree, in official language, is “absolute,” “universal,” and “immediately effective.”

PCV: How has this personally affected you? What’s been the response of the Roman Catholic Womenpriests movement?

Judith McKloskey: From my childhood I remember a poem Edwin Markham wrote:

He drew a circle that shut me out.
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

My immediate response was deep sadness that the top authorities in our Church have chosen to issue this decree. Instead of spending energy and resources addressing the major issues facing our Church and world, they are hurling verbal lightning bolts at a few mostly-retirement-aged women and men. A healthier way to “protect the faith and unity of the Church” is to bring policies and practices more in line with the values Jesus lived for. Church authorities could be dedicated to protecting the young from abuse, insuring equal treatment of women and the poor in our world, and addressing global environmental degradation. Church authorities could re-establish access to the sacraments as its top internal priority. Persons could be called forth for sacramental ministry based on their gifts, not their gender or marital status.

Soon after my initial reaction, I began to see the decree as an affirmation that Church officials are now taking the Roman Catholic Womenpriests initiative seriously.

If Church authorities would engage in dialog rather than in pronouncements, they could find ways to incorporate our efforts into the larger Church. We do not intend to form a schismatic Church. We are asking our Church to expand its imagination in service of its mission.

I am not surprised that the Vatican has issued this decree, just disappointed. When I took this public step, I knew there would be consequences, some of which would not be pleasant. God calls me to follow in faith, even when that means risking the wrath of Church officials. My ordination is valid; it was performed by a bishop who was consecrated by three bishops in active ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. I reject the phrase “crime of attempting sacred ordination of a woman.” Pedophilia is a crime; covering up pedophilia is a crime; stealing from the Church is a crime. Responding to a call from the depths of one’s conscience is not a crime.

Personally, the excommunication decree has affected me mostly as a time and energy drain. Thinking about it takes energy and time I prefer to spend serving the needs of the persons and communities who contact me. I cannot count the number of Catholics who have expressed to me their delight in and gratitude for the fact that women are now serving as deacons and priests within Catholic communities. I often hear: “It’s long overdue!” and “Your courage brings me hope for the future of our Church.” At the seven ordinations in which I have fully participated, the tears in the eyes of those assembled, the cheers and the ovations greeting the newly ordained stand for me as lighthouses on the difficult and foggy days. I continue to receive communion with a clear conscience. Far from “gambling with my soul” (to use the phrase of one conservative commentator), I am in joyful peace. Each day affirms my choice to respond publicly to a call I first heard in early childhood.

The Roman Catholic Womenpriests movement rejects the penalty of excommunication. We consider ourselves loyal members of the RC Church. We stand in the prophetic tradition of holy disobedience to what we believe is an unjust canon law – canon 1024 – which reserves ordination to men. We believe canon 849, that baptism [not gender] is the gateway to the sacraments. Recent scholarship affirms that women were ordained in the first thousand years of our Church’s history. We are reclaiming that history. Roman Catholic Womenpriests offers a model of a renewed priesthood in a community of equals. And yes, some people and some Church leaders find that very threatening.

PCV: Can you talk briefly about the Roman Catholic Womenpriests movement? When did it start? What are its aims? How prevalent is it?

Judith McKloskey: The RCWP movement began in Austria and Germany in the late 1990's, when some Catholic women convened to study theology. They, in effect, developed a seminary program. Upon the completion of their studies, they eventually located several bishops who agreed to ordain some of them. On June 29, 2002, seven women were ordained priests by validly ordained male bishops. The ceremony took place on a ship on the Danube River, between two countries. These seven women were formally excommunicated. The next year two of these women were consecrated bishops. There are now five bishops, including one from California. These women were consecrated as bishops so that they will ordain women to the transitional diaconate, then to the priesthood.

RCWP is an international initiative. Its mission is to spiritually prepare, ordain, and support women and men from all states of life, who are theologically qualified, who are committed to an inclusive model of Church, and who are called by the Holy Spirit and their communities to minister to the People of God.



Womanbishop Dr. Patricia Fresen places her hands on the head of Judith McKloskey during her ordination ceremony on August 12, 2007, in Minneapolis.

Growth in Europe is slow; their circumstances are greatly different from those in the U.S. and Canada. RCWP has grown quickly here in North America. The first ordination in North America took place in 2005 on a ship on the St. Lawrence Seaway, between the U.S. and Canada. The first ordination in the U.S. was in 2006 in Pittsburgh. Because of the rapid growth, regions were formed. In 2007, there were seven ordination ceremonies in North America; as of July, there have been five ordinations in 2008 in North America. Two or three more ordinations for 2008 have been scheduled.

In addition to the public ordinations, there have been some what we call "catacomb ordinations." These are for women and men whose public ordinations would most likely result in loss of livelihood, because they work within Roman Catholic churches and organizations.

As of July 20, 2008, six years after the first U.S. woman, Dagmar Celeste, was ordained a priest through RCWP, there are 30 priests in RCWP and 11 deacons in the U.S. In Minnesota, as of this date we have three priests: Regina Nicolosi of Red Wing, Kathy Redig of Winona, and myself, Judith McKloskey, of Eden Prairie. Mary Smith of Long Lake is now a deacon. Other women are in RCWP's formation program; still others are discerning their calls.

(NOTE: A book about RCWP, entitled *Women Find A Way*, has recently been published. Information about it can be found [here](#). Another good source of information is the official [RCWP website](#))

PCV: Monsignor Angelo Amato of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently declared that: "The Church does not feel authorized to change the will of its founder Jesus Christ," an apparent reference to Christ having chosen only men as his apostles. How do you respond to such a contention?

Judith McKloskey: When I first read, back in 1994, that Church officials said the Church didn't have the authority to ordain women, I laughed. Think about it. When have you EVER heard R.C. Church leaders say they lack authority to do anything? When it serves one's purposes, it is easy to hide behind the skirts of history.

The contention that the Church cannot ordain women because Jesus did not ordain them is illogical. First, Jesus did not ordain anyone to the priesthood as it has evolved over time. Second, Jesus chose mostly married Jewish men as disciples. Jesus did not ordain any Caucasian, celibate men. But then, this entire discussion is not about logic, nor has it ever been. As Rev. Nancy Taylor said after the recent RCWP ordinations in Boston, "Prejudice in liturgical clothing is still prejudice."

As far as interpreting the will of Jesus and speaking for Jesus, anyone claiming that ability would be wise to be cautious. At most we can hope to spend our lives in humble discernment of what we believe is God's

voice in our world. God is God; we humans are not.

PCV: What drew you to be ordained? What sustains you during these difficult times? What keeps you hopeful?

Judith McKloskey: My path to sacramental ministry has been a spiritual river in my life since early childhood. Where could the yearning go? In 4th grade I was told girls couldn't even serve at the altar, much less become priests. The river went underground for years, because priesthood was a forbidden dream for women in the RC Church. Little did I know, God was using all the experiences of my life to prepare me. Outside of and within my Roman Catholicism, the formation continued. On January 9, 1994, I responded fully, clearly, and consciously to this call to sacramental service. Every day of my life since then I have lived as priest, to the best of my ability. After continued theological studies and completing the RCWP formation program, I was ordained to the diaconate in October, 2006. On August 12, 2007, to my great joy, I was publicly ordained to the priesthood here in Minneapolis, along with Alice Iaquina from the Milwaukee area. Ordained to the diaconate that day were Kathy Redig of Winona, and Ree Hudson and Elsie McGrath of the St. Louis area.

What sustains me is prayer and spiritual practice, mine and that of the many persons who are kind enough to keep me in their prayers and thoughts. My family and friends bring me strength and the perspective of humor. What also sustains me and brightens the occasional down days is God's people. *Sensus fidelium* is a phrase used to indicate that a doctrine or belief is fully valid because it is accepted, or received, by the people. I believe that God's love includes all of us. When the official Church leaders speak from a narrow perspective, I remember the many people who have contacted me to offer support and affirmation and gratitude.

My business card includes the phrase "celebrating sacraments and rituals with faith communities." At baptisms, weddings, anointings, reconciliations, attendance at ordinations, and at the bedsides of those chronically ill or near the threshold of death, I have been privileged to witness the sacred events of people's lives. Throughout this first year I have been invited to celebrate Eucharist with diverse communities. It is an honor to discern with and facilitate the community prayer of a particular group of people with their God. This mission and these shining moments in time are what keep me going.

Here is one example. One day recently I celebrated Eucharist with a group of people at someone's family farm. After morning prayer the next day, a community leader invited me to be seated in the center of the circle of people gathered. They'd all heard about the excommunication decree, he said, and found it ridiculous. But they figured it would help me to hear so from them. They surrounded me in the circle, touched me, and many prayed aloud about their gratitude that I had been ordained to serve them as priest. Two spoke of receiving joy and serenity from me. As tears flowed down every face I saw, I remembered that very morning, walking across a field and finding myself standing upon a large flat boulder, hidden among the stalks of waist high grain. The words "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" came to me and I realized it was the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. The words are for all of us. We are all the rock upon which Jesus builds – all of us baptized Christians, serving God and each other and our world to the best of our abilities. In this I place my hope!



Michael Bayly with Judith McKloskey at the reception dinner following her ordination ceremony.

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Some Good Advice from George B. Wilson, SJ, in *Clericalism: The Death of Priesthood* A Book Review

By Paula Ruddy

We at PCV are going to try to change our language usage. It is a first step, George B. Wilson, SJ, says, to clearing up muddled thinking about the role of clergy and, thereby, reducing the tendency toward a twisted clericalism that is the death of true priesthood.

Wilson has written a great little book. Only 150 pages, it was published by the [Liturgical Press](#) in Collegeville, in 2008. From his perspectives as cleric, theologian, and staff member for thirty-four years in the Management Design Institute, Cincinnati, he gets right to the heart of the matter in a conversational style with lots of examples. He also offers a plan of action.

He begins by making a distinction between the religious reality denoted by the term “priest” and the sociological reality denoted by the term “clergy.” We are all, by our baptism, initiated into the priestly life, while only some of us, according to our gifts, are ordained into the role of clergy. Whether we have grown into our priestly way of life depends on our spiritual maturity, not on the roles we are filling in the religious social order.

The ... significant issue lies in the fact that the identification of priests with clergy involves mixing—confusing—two radically different orders of *reality*. “Priest” is a religious term, pointing us to the transcendent or numinous or sacred dimension of life, to the holy. “Clergy” is a sociological term that names the fact that society recognizes a certain segment of its members as having recognizable social features and norms that distinguish them from the rest of society. When we confuse these two orders of reality by interchanging the two terms, we implicitly ratify the notion that priestly activity is the prerogative only of these individuals socially recognized by their ordination. Priestly—sacred—activity is the preserve of the ordained: laity need not apply. By continuing to make our clergy the only manifestation of priestliness, we reduce our lay faithful to passive recipients of the holy actions of the ordained, diminishing the dignity that should rightly be theirs by virtue of their baptism and confirmation. (p. xv)

So the questions are: What does “priestliness” look like? What is a cleric’s role? How do good people who desire to serve as clerics get programmed into a corrupting culture of clericalism? And finally, can we turn our current situation in the US Roman Catholic Church around? Wilson answers all of them.

Priests

According to Wilson, priestliness is about relating, person to person. He first uses the language of the Christian theology of love. And then he grounds that language in the concepts of personalism.

...one profound element of the call to baptismal priesting: the challenge always to act relationally toward my neighbor.

My neighbor is a person, a singular embodiment of God’s creation. A subject exactly like me. A free agent acting out the mystery of personhood, never merely the function of my need. I am called to awe and reverence and respect, to remove my sandals before the divine revealed in this person called neighbor, sister, brother. We are called to stand and relate free subject to free subject -- face to face -- and I am called to make my contribution to that relationship by being present to my partner. Personal relationship is peer-to-peer, inimical to

any and all manifestations of superiority/inferiority, whatever their supposed ground. ...To the extent that we allow a role to dominate the interaction with another, to make of the other an inferior (or superior), the dignity of personhood and relationship is destroyed. (p. 47)

Wilson gives the example of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin acting as priest in the midst of the sexual abuse scandal in 1993.

When Bernardin was accused of sexual misconduct by Stephen Cook, the legal community offered him the same kind of counsel they gave to other bishops in the public spotlight amid accusations of sexual misconduct: if you must talk before the media at all – and it's better if you can avoid it completely – do so only with a prepared text, and answer no questions off the cuff. And by no means allow yourself to risk a face-to-face meeting with your accuser. What you say could be used against you in his suit.

Their admonitions are a classic example of the clerical mind-set that, in its efforts to protect against legal and monetary liability, advises the abandonment of every potential for the human, interpersonal dialogue that might promote healing. Bernardin was made of better stuff. He chose a different, baptismal route, as we know. He confronted the situation. He stood before the press, spoke as the words came to him, and gave direct answers to any question they chose to ask. He was naked, not hiding behind some cloak of imputed dignity. He invited Stephen to talk with him as brother to brother.

Bernardin's pastoral response led this troubled young man to retract his false accusation. The cardinal acted in a way which protected Stephen's dignity as it reversed the media machine's thirst for scandal. (p. 80)

The equality among us, clergy and laity, is that we are all supposed to be doing the inner work that is necessary for the gifts of the Spirit to bear fruit in priestliness in our everyday interactions. To be priestly is to be in touch with the reality of one's own and other people's lives, attentive to them and to situations, responsive to the Spirit, and open to communication, person to person.

Clergy

Wilson says the professional role in all walks of life is similarly clerical. The word "clergy" comes from the Greek, meaning an "inheritance." These are the people whom the society has credentialed to perform a task. Lawyers, doctors, social workers, military officers, nurses, educators are board certified. They are educated, trained, and tested to provide services in the society. They have "inherited" know-how and the approbation of the state to use it.

In the world of religion, some people are trained for service roles in the church and are credentialed by ordination to clerical orders. They are priests by Christian baptism and they become sacramental ministers or pastors by their ordination, but they do not become holy. Wilson tells how throughout his thirteen years of Jesuit formation, he and his classmates were told repeatedly that ordination would not change them. If they were not men of prayer before ordination, they would not become so on that day. Then at his ordination retreat, no less a person than John Courtney Murray, the retreat director, told them that ordination would change them dramatically. He saw that both statements were true. Ordination did not fill the gaps in his personal development, but it did set him all at once into a prestigious club with power he did not earn or have to be accountable for. He testifies to the many good clergy persons who have grown in the priestly life while functioning as clerics in the Roman Catholic Church.

Clericalism

But not all or even most. Wilson says, "...the risk that clergyhood will degenerate into clericalism is not limited to only the ordained. Nor is it gender specific. It is present wherever members of any clergy in society unwittingly avoid shouldering the demanding responsibility for their own personal growth and integrity by overidentifying with a group that promises pre-packaged glory." (p. 53)

When the professionals and the people they are serving confuse the role in religious organizations with an elevated status, then a culture of religious clericalism develops. "To designate any individual member a priest in a way that distinguishes him from the other members of the holy community or, much less, elevates him above them (which, as we have seen, is one tendency that comes with every clergyhood) distorts the nature of the Gospel message."

Superiority, entitlement, and disdain for those to be served corrupt the relationality of the role. Lay people

expect ordained clergy to carry the burden of holiness for them and are scandalized when they do not. Neither clergy nor lay people grow up, thus “the death of priesthood.” We are all responsible for clericalism, clerics who think their ordination sets them apart as superior as well as lay people who put up with that relationship.

The culture that has developed is a closed system out of which it is very hard to emerge. Assumptions are unquestioned and “early adopters” of new patterns of behavior are vilified, even condemned. Clericalized clergy do not want to lose power; clericalized lay people do not want the responsibility of running their own organizations. On top of that, clericalization is sometimes defended with theological rhetoric. To be “set apart” is erroneously thought to be holy.

Wilson devotes chapter 4 to the influence of clericalism in the sex abuse scandal. Using the metaphor of a drama, he shows the parts played by all the clerical systems involved, the ordained clergy, the bishops network, the legal system’s professionals on both sides, and the media, all acting from the assumptions that control their cultures. History will tell the story of how love among the brothers and sisters of the people of God survived, how justice, and fair reporting, and human values came through in the clash of clericalisms among the players in the drama.

In chapters 5 and 6, Wilson tells us what we must do to reform the clericalized culture in the Roman Catholic Church. He cites three levels of response to the problems exposed by the sex abuse scandal: 1) institution of preventive measures, which the Bishops initiated in Dallas; 2) reform of organizational structures, necessary but not sufficient; and 3) cultural transformation, hardest, but the *sine qua non* of reform.

Cultural Transformation

After taking responsibility for our own contribution to the present clericalized state of our Catholic culture, we should, according to Wilson, take heed of some principles for the renewal process. It will take time, it will be conflictual, it must be a shared responsibility, and it will be more behavioral than conceptual. Each person must commit to changing his or her expectations and habits of behavior.

Where we see models of clergy and lay people all being priestly together, i.e., sharing as equals in the work of growing in love, we have to make them known, celebrate them. Sharing “best practices” for transforming cultures is the way that change occurs.

Chapter 6 gives the blueprint for making the change happen, one section for ordained clergy to question themselves, one for lay people. This you have to read yourself. It deserves study in parishes and in small communities of clergy and laypeople who can work the program together. The book is available locally at [St Martin's Table](#) for \$19.95.

If you have read the book, you are invited to fill in the gaps I have left with your comments about what interested you in Wilson’s book. We need to talk.

Paula Ruddy is a founding member of *The Progressive Catholic Voice* editorial team.

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Relationship: The Crucial Factor in Sexual Morality

By Cletus Wessels, OP

I wish to describe the meaning of human sexuality in a way that frees us from some of the straightjackets of traditional ethical thinking. In my years as a student in the 1950s and early in my time as a professor, we tended to understand human sexuality in terms of its actions. The category of sins were described in terms of different actions: sexual intercourse without marriage, sodomy, masturbation, rape, adultery, etc. I wish to change the focus from acts to relationships. For me, the quality of relationships is the crucial factor.

The fullness of human sexuality is a gender-based relationship of the whole person founded on varying

levels of intimacy and commitment manifested externally and physically in appropriate ways with regard to both personal and social values. Each of these dimensions can be described briefly.

A gender-based relationship of the whole person: Human sexuality does not flow primarily from the sexual organs or the bodily actions of the people involved. Gender identity can be seen in terms of a person's genetic and genital makeup, but more importantly a person's gender identity is found in a psychic and social self-perception as male or female. The whole person is necessarily bound up with gender and gender-based relationships.

Founded on varying levels of intimacy and commitment: These two qualities are the foundation stones of the fullness of human sexuality. By *intimacy*, we mean mutual self-disclosure, the sharing of life found in friendship, cooperation, and healthy competition. Such mutual self-disclosure is found in three dimensions of human life. There is a mature intimacy with the self in which a person has obtained a true sense of identity without which there can be no self-disclosure. There is an intimacy with the Earth and with all creation that brings balance to selfhood and a deeper sense of relationality. Finally, true selfhood requires intimacy with God in which a person experiences the intimate presence of God and the true meaning of love. Intimacy with self, with the Earth, and with God are the source of mutual self-disclosure.

By commitment, I mean *mutual responsibility*. In all relationships mutual responsibility is fundamental, but in our society a difficult reality. People fear commitment. We have a mobile society with an uncertain future; we are a culture of individuals who fear the loss of freedom; we are vulnerable people despite all of our façade of strength, and all of these work against commitment.

The following are the positive foundations of mutual responsibility:

- 1) Investment – a mature relationship requires time and energy.
- 2) Wholeness which involves the whole person without immature projections.
- 3) Choice – there must be freedom and not compulsion, not infatuation but real love.
- 4) A public and personal awareness of this mutual responsibility – friends and family know the commitment.

It almost goes without saying that there are varying levels of intimacy and commitment. The intimacy and commitment of two high school kids is different from an engaged couple. The college student with a chance acquaintance does not have the quality of two mature friends. The new friend with whom a handshake is appropriate differs from a long-time family friend with whom a hug and a kiss is appropriate. The quality of the relationship is the most important factor. Sexual intercourse is not virtuous or licentious because of the action itself but by the quality of the relationship. Sexual intercourse of an engaged couple with a deep sense of intimacy and commitment may be more virtuous and a fuller expression of human sexuality than sexual intercourse of a married couple with little or no intimacy and commitment. A gay or lesbian couple with many years of intimacy and commitment and a married straight couple with a similar background can equally share their lives in a physical and genital embrace of love. Both relationships can be an expression of the fullness of human sexuality.

Morality within sexual relationships depends upon the fullness of human sexuality. Thus, homosexuality must be judged by the quality of the relationship and not by the character of the act involved. There are different physical expressions of love and intimacy and commitment, and diversity is the rule of the Earth. The Earth, which emerges from the loving presence of God within, has so much diversity that it goes beyond our comprehension. Likewise within the human family, which emerges from the presence of the God within, has the same diversity in race and color, in cultures and religions, and in the diversity of sexual relationships. There is diversity with human sexuality where we find people more inclined to a single life and some to a married life, some people are gay/lesbian and some are straight. Gay/lesbian people have been ostracized because they are different, but now the Earth shows us that difference is richness. Gay/lesbian people have always contributed to our social and religious communities, and now they are being called to bring their richness out in the open for all humankind.

Cletus Wessels is a Dominican priest who served for eighteen years as a professor of theology at Aquinas Institute, a graduate school of theology. Later he taught at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was pastor of the Parish of St. Albert the Great in Minneapolis, Minnesota from 1988 to 1997. Currently, Cletus is engaged in a free-lance ministry of lectures and workshops, preaching parish retreats and missions, and teaching adult faith formation in parishes. He is the author of two books: [*The Holy Web: Church and the New Universe Story* \(2000\)](#) and [*Jesus in the New Universe Story* \(2003\)](#).

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Gratitude: A Bicycle Adventure

By Brian McNeill

Editor's Note: *Brian McNeill recently completed the Red Ribbon Ride and raised over \$2,500 for Twin Cities-based HIV/AIDS service agencies. With his permission, we are reprinting the following letter he sent to his contributors.*

Dear Friends and Family,

While I nurse some sore muscles from the just completed Red Ribbon Ride, I wanted to say a formal word of thanks to you all for providing me with the contributions to make the ride possible. To conclude the process for this year, I thought I should let you in on part of the subjective experience.

Anyone on The Ride with a little theological training recognizes immediately that the organizers attempt to make it a transcendent experience. The official theme song of the weekend was "I Can Fly." At the opening ceremonies at The Mall of America, and the closing ceremony at the state capitol in St. Paul four days later, the earnestness was thicker than sun block ooze.

In the too early light of the first day, as we jostled our bikes, our gear, and our not adequately rested bodies to the wide-screened rotunda of The Mall, we were told that if the ride is not a life-changing experience then something is wrong. Since my life was going along much as it had since my last ride in 2005, I was feeling pretty ambivalent about this. I knew that a change would do me good because at 54 I found myself both a little bored and boring. However, it seemed unlikely that between the *uber* commercialism of the Mall of America, and the humble burghs of Lake City, Wabasha, Rochester, and Northfield, my life was going to improve dramatically. Having signed up only to raise money for HIV/ AIDS and get a bunch of exercise, I was suddenly cast upon the horns of an existential problem: somehow, in a mere four days, I needed to either change or be changed.

Just south of Rosemount, the predicted thunderstorms appeared overhead. As the rain began I pulled into Pit Stop 3 in the parking lot of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Miesville, 44 miles and three hours south of Bloomington. Along with the lightning, word crackled over the walkie-talkies of the support staff that they need to pull all the riders off the route. A wise decision.

About a dozen of us huddled under a maple tree for a few minutes, until the crew directed us into the church. The elderly caretaker quietly turned on the lights of the church hall and welcomed us into the huge space that eventually held all 200 riders and 130 crew members. Before the crowd arrived I asked him if I could see the attached church itself, that dated from the late 1800s. He led me in and turned on the lights. Two other riders and I, well-sweated and in butt-tight lycra, stood and admired the guilded, over-stated sanctuary. The church let us stay until the storm passed. The crew had our lunch trucked over. Someone suggested we take up a collection, and a basket filled with bills.

Now here was something to give me pause. Without notice the little parish of St. Joseph's opened its doors to 300 people to get them out of the way of a storm. I felt there was a message here somewhere, but I didn't know what it was as I swung onto my bike three hours later. I did know I was grateful to Scott, who came over and sat at my table when I was feeling odd because I didn't know anyone in the room and didn't have anyone to talk to. Scott worked for Wells Fargo, one of the event sponsors, and was part of their large (25+ member) team. He lived with, but was not partnered to, a man I knew, a former member of Dignity Twin Cities, I discovered.

I wasn't part of a team as most riders were. The magic of the ride was supposed to happen among your teammates, and I had none. Scott was on the ride as a motorcycle crew member who stood at his post with an orange flag and tried to keep riders from being hit as they navigated through possibly fatal intersections. He said it really helped when people said "thanks."

The tradition of the ride is to have riders camp in tents each night. I tried that in 2005, with dismal results. Best I could figure, I slept a total of eight hours the three nights of that ride. I kept thinking I would have a seizure from lack of sleep and fall under the wheels of an 18 wheeler as I was riding the white line on a bumpy concrete highway with gravel shoulders.

Fortunately, I lived to tell the tale, but this time around I opted to make a concession to my age and reserved a motel room for each night. Lake City was a nasty smoker's room at the AmericInn, Rochester was the EconoLodge, and Northfield was the Super 8. Of the three, the Econolodge won the prize as the best of my informal tour of budget motels.

That first night, after a shower and a little nap, I walked to the park where the majority were camping. The dining hall was too warm so I took my plastic plate out to a picnic table where I joined a young woman already seated. She asked if we were next to a lake or a river. The park is a little peninsula jutting into the river. Our picnic table sat on the edge of the park lawn, about ten feet up the river bank. I explained to the young woman that Lake Pepin is a widening of the Mississippi River.

We were joined by a pony-tailed rider, about my age, carrying a mandolin on his back and a plate in his hands. After he sat down, he looked out from our perch and said, "Is that barge moving?" I turned around and across the river saw a gleaming white tugboat pushing a raft of ten barges. I replied, "It must be because it wasn't there five minutes ago." As we stared, we saw it making slow, graceful progress past the sandstone bluffs of the Wisconsin side. In the aftermath of the afternoon's storm, the winds had died, the sun reflected blindingly off the white tug, and the green bluffs of the river were tinged with gold.

After dinner I walked back to my motel. I grabbed a small chocolate shake from the Burger King next door, and settled onto the motel's outdoor pool patio that overlooked Highway 61 and Lake Pepin. The barge we spotted earlier was far down the river, almost out of sight. As the world grew dark, I realized that the message from St. Joseph's was that I was on retreat. The theme the retreat master had chosen was mortality.

Total miles on Day One is 79.7, and it is mostly rolling hills and prairie. The total for Day Two is 73.1 miles, but you have to work your way out of the Mississippi River Valley and through the Zumbro River Valley on some really tough hills. Near the end of The Ride, Ted, from New York City, who has done the AIDS rides in New York and California, told me that the hills on Day Two are the equal of anything on those other rides. The big, mile-long hills, are a little before and little after Millville. (Not to be confused with Miesville!)

Although I had turned them down, a fellow rider just ahead of me on the second of the monster hills, on the far side of Millville, accepted the invitation of one of the support vehicles to escort him up the hill with music. We were pretty much alone on the incline as we went up to some jazzy disco music I had never heard before. We were both pumping like mad in our lowest gear while the woman riding shotgun in the SUV with the music blasting banged a tambourine in time with the beat. I couldn't help but smile because it really did help make the climb easier. It lightened the mood and made it all look, sound, and feel as silly as it was, until we got to the top.

At the very top our disco playing tambourine tapping SUV pulled away, I pedaled ahead of Albert, who had accepted the music invitation, and yelled at the crew of a second support vehicle standing at the top, "Right or Left?" "Left," they yelled back. We dutifully turned, out of breath, waiting for the strength to return to our legs. Gaining speed we clicked into lower gears. After about a mile, a third support vehicle pulled up to us and yelled, "They changed the signs." "What?" we yelled back. "Somebody switched the signs at the top of the hill. You're heading in the wrong direction." Albert encouraged them to keep going to catch the few riders ahead of us and turned around saying, "At least they caught us before we went any further." I said, "I'm taking a break," as I thought to myself, "Son of bitch!! This is what is called being on the losing end of a dirty trick." As I stood alone on the shoulder, sipping some water, and looking out across the green fields I asked myself, "If I were on antidepressants would I be less pissed off, as Albert seems to be?"

Two hours later, at lunch in Elgin, I was sitting with a man who introduced himself as Johnny. He told me about being HIV positive for over 25 years, and diagnosed with AIDS sometime in the mid-90s. We are the same age. His skin was tan and leathery, and he had nice bulging biceps, but the smaller, bumpy kind an older man gets, not the massive arms of a younger body builder. By way of making conversation, I mentioned that as I rode past the fields of soybeans, the cows, goats, barns, and farmhouses I asked myself if it would be better to be a farmer than the city boy that I was. He replied by telling me of his father, a farmer, selling his cows because he overfed them, out of pity, after they developed fatty ovaries and did not produce as many calves. This brief story was a perfect answer to my question. Do I want to deal with fatty cow ovaries? Do I have a clue as to how to do that?

I dreaded Day Three and its 75 miles. On the 2005 Ride it was the hardest of all the days because we rode into a strong headwind, the temperature reached 100 degrees, and my back ached from the riding and sleeping on an air mattress the two previous nights. To the rest of the world Olmsted County is almost all gently rolling, green, farm country with the famous Mayo Clinic plunked down in the middle of it. To me it was a windy hell.

This year the day started off much better, with less wind, and no backache, but by mid-morning, I was being bothered by chafing. At Pit Stop 2 in Pine City I stopped by the First Aid table and was directed to the Udder Guard tub. I popped the lid, took a blob of the light green butter, and headed for the Port-a-Potty.

Udder Guard is designed to do exactly what its name implies, and I love it. When you are straining against a headwind on the third day of your ride, if you are greased up with Udder Guard you feel connected to the world of the present and the world of the past. The grim-faced farmers who pass you in their dented pickups look at you as a nuisance on the road and a dressed up jackass. Little do they know as they effortlessly zoom past that you are slipping through farm world greased up with Udder Guard and working your butt off to get to the top of the next rise in the road. You want to yell at them, "If you think this is so easy, get out of your pickup and you try it." In calmer moments, as I strain alone to get past the next farm or the next hill, somehow because I have Udder Guard on my underside I feel connected to the backbreaking work of clearing the forests that once covered this land, and making the showcase farms that are blossoming here now. Somehow having my butt greased up with the same stuff they put on their cows connects me to stern faced farmers, to their land, and to work we are all doing to stay alive.

At the hotel in Northfield I called Steve, my partner, and said I was not looking forward to the evening. We were asked in the strongest terms to be present to hear Ryan White's mother, Jeanne White, speak to the riders and crew at the Northfield Middle School, our base camp for the night. In the end I was glad I attended. Jeanne White is a no-nonsense, working class mom whose love for her son was so strong that it brought her to the center of the world stage in the fight against AIDS. I feared an hour of sentimentality and pathos, but heard humor, joy, courage, and a stunning revelation of the power of love. She reported compassion for Ryan from the likes of Nancy Reagan, Michael Jackson, Elton John, and Elizabeth Taylor. When asked by the audience what was her funniest experience with Elton John, who had befriended Ryan, she said that when planning Ryan's funeral, Elton thought that Michael Jackson should not be a pall bearer because he might drop the casket.

Although the motels were better than the tent, I slept lousy each night. I was up at four o'clock each morning to catch the five o'clock shuttle the crews ran between the motels and the school ground camps. Day Four was no different. I was waiting at the line at 6:30am for the go-ahead when the course officially opened for the last 46.9 miles. The morning was cool and misty in Northfield, but the sky cleared by the time I hit the River Boulevard in St Paul, Summit Avenue, and the State Capitol. I brought a book along to help me through the morning wait in the "holding area" in Cass Gilbert Park on the hill behind the capitol where I arrived at 10:30am. About one o'clock riders and crew donned new white T-shirts with the Red Ribbon Ride logo and paraded to the front steps of the capitol.

The speaker's platform was set up against the lowest set of the Capitol steps. With a little clever choreography, the riders rode down the hill past the speakers platform, to the right of the capitol in a pretty white wave, and parked in two lines on either side of the platform, leaving the sidewalk directly in front of the podium empty. The empty space between the lines of riders was then filled with the crew members who paraded in with red streamers. As they came up the walk between the lines of rides, we hailed them with a shower of water from our rider water bottles. The music on the speakers was pumped way up playing "Celebrate." The water sparkled in the sunlight as it arced over crew members and splashed on everyone. It felt great in the 85 degree heat. You felt like a kid again, having a water fight on your bike in the summer sunshine. The marble dome of the Capitol gleamed white and gold beneath a cloudless blue sky. The speakers called us heroes, which we all knew was hyperbole. But we were human beings. We knew this is as good as life gets, as we ended our trip through the green-jeweled world of our home. Joy, like glory, is fleeting. Friends, crew members, teams, family, and partners help; but you ride the hills, the road, and the wind alone.

Brian McNeill, Rider # 128
July 21, 2008

Brian McNeill is president of Dignity Twin Cities and convener of Rainbow Sash Alliance USA.

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Parasites, Scavengers, and Ghouls

By Polly Mann

It didn't appear to be a big event, but apparently it was enough to satisfy the media for quite a spell. "Tar Balls Found on Alameda Beach" was how the San Francisco paper described the event on the front page in several columns. Tar balls? Little bits of tar varying in size from a dime to a quarter, evidence of an oil spill. A few hours later in Alameda, the entire beach area had been closed off to the public. Several men and women walked up and down, shoveling bits of what must have been tar balls into plastic bags. Helicopters hovered overhead. A large round machine resembling Marine sonar equipment rested on the sand, attended by men in white.

Half of a mile down the beach, park police rode in majestic dignity on beautiful slow-moving steeds. A young straight-haired blonde woman was talking earnestly into a television camera. Undoubtedly, other news reporters were nearby. The San Francisco media had one ready-made item for the front page of the day and several days thereafter. Gasoline at \$4.50 a gallon, a water shortage, the declining economy, and ongoing US wars would not be covered at all, or, would only be touched upon.

The media makes their living relating information they think will interest the average individual (AI) who on one level scrounges to keep his or her head above water, and, on another level, works at accumulating, shopping, traveling, spending, etc. The media's job is to keep this AI supporting TV, radio, or newspapers. They are scavengers in that they "bottom feed," believing that provides greater interest for the AI.

So the public hears day after day the story of Barak Obama's reaction to the sermon of a retired minister rather than his views on a possible U.S. bombing of Iran. When on national TV a newscaster presented questions from the public for Obama, one choice was from a nasal-voiced woman who inquired, "Why doesn't Mr. Obama wear a flag pin in his lapel like my husband?"

The result of this investigative journalism was that Mr. Obama does now, indeed, wear a flag pin.

As for being ghouls, any horror story—be it a baby violently ill after accidentally eating his father's Viagra or the recent Midwestern floods—gives the media material to feed off for days. They do prefer, however, a local horror story. An AI doesn't need to know about a monsoon killing thousands in Bangladesh nearly so much as a hometown police chase.

Not all the media are parasites, scavengers or ghouls, of course. There are fine news people, reporters and editors. But the American public is surfeited with trivia when what is needed for a fully functioning democracy is a knowledge of current events, history and an analysis of their importance. Political campaigns, especially, provide occasions for comparison of the candidates' views on important issues affecting the nation.

Unfortunately, these campaigns are treated as horse races by the corporate media—just another item for their feeding frenzies.

***Polly Mann** is a longtime advocate for justice and peace, and co-founder of [Women Against Military Madness](#). This article was originally published in the July/August issue of the [Worldwide WAMM](#) newsletter. It's reprinted here with permission.*

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Peace Island

By Susu Jeffrey

Susu Jeffrey shares her vision of Peace Island – a solutions-based, nonpartisan conference that during the upcoming Republican Convention will confront problems not people.

The idea of a Peace Island conference came to me, whole, in the middle of a meal. Shortly after the announcement of Saint Paul as the location of the Republican National Convention (RNC), September 1-4, I

wrote “peace island” on a napkin scrap, and lost it. But the idea festered – an undeclared recession, war without end, and 15,000 media people coming to town looking for a story.

Peace Island aims to be completely unlike the Washington regime: nonpartisan, with a commitment to dialogue, green, future-looking, thoughtful and affordable. No public official or candidate for office is invited among the 25-plus speakers. The format for each session is a keynote speech (35-minute limit), followed by several 10-minute presentations by expert thinkers and doers who will head hour-long breakout meetings.

Finding solutions

“Hope in a Time of Crisis—PEACE ISLAND—A Solutions-Driven Conference” is the name and philosophy of the gathering. Concordia University, off I-94 in Saint Paul, is the place, although the metaphoric Peace Island is a center, intended to broadcast ideas about living in peace with the earth and each other.

For two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 2-3, we will focus on Energy and the Environment, Global Peace and Nonviolence, and Justice and Human Rights. People recognize the problems. It's the solutions we want to hear more about. Consider a 30-70-split—30 percent framing the problem, 70 percent serving up answers. Solutions exist already—everything from light bulbs to negotiation, recycling, international law, eating with an eye on your food footprint.

Retrofitting homes and businesses for energy efficiency would save money and fuel and our disastrous energy-war policies in the short run, and provide employment at home. In the long run, energy efficiency would improve health and the environment, and keep those jobs, since there is no end of infrastructure to upgrade, as we learned from the Mississippi bridge collapse.

Why are we paying for both the war and the oil, for both medical insurance and medical services? We pay double!

Inaction is no longer an option. Millions of people stopped smoking cigarettes, so stop buying (usually tap) water in toxic plastic bottles. How about charging for waste removal by volume and weight?

Hope in a Time of Crisis

Here is a sample of the menu of solutions Peace Island is offering: *Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Energy Policy; Micro-Finance: Empowering Individuals to Make a Difference; Remaking Our Food System; Restoring Ethical Decision-Making in Government; Sustainability: The New Business Model*. Peace Island speakers actually have practical ways to move our constipated system into peaceful sustainability.

Ah, the sustainability threat, the threat to the model of constant, cancer-like growth.

Saint Paul

You have to wonder why the RNC would pick Saint Paul, a small city, with little public space. The Xcel convention site is halfway down the Mississippi bluff, the steep bluff that was a waterfall 10,000 years ago. Saint Paul is “not near anything in the United States except Canada.” The city received \$50 million for “security” for the delegates and non-delegates.

In November 2006 when the Peace Island planners started meeting we were told to “Go to Minneapolis” by a representative of the Saint Paul mayor’s office. The RNC has reserved 45,000 hotel rooms and the entire Science Museum. We’re talking big business, big media, big “security,” and the bars open until 4 a.m. -- homeless out, hookers in.

Obstacles

Twin Cities churches have denied space to peace groups during the RNC because it's “too political” (read: *we-might-lose-our-tax-status*). It's that “peace threat” aggravated by media hype about Republicans versus protesters. If everybody is on one side or the other, then we're screaming at each other from the sidelines with nobody on the field. Peace Island is about confronting problems, not people.

Mainstream media are already pitting Peace Island against the Grand Old Party. Let me be absolutely clear since the Peace Island idea started with me. My father was a Republican Congressman who was a main author of the G.I. Bill of Rights (1944). I would organize the same conference if the Democratic Party were coming to town.

Susu Jeffrey is one of a committee of eight planning the Peace Island Conference, sponsored by the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers, a nonpartisan coalition of 73 peace, justice, environmental, and UN-advocacy organizations.

For more information about the Peace Island Conference -- including registration and cost, scholarships, speakers, schedule, and directions to Concordia University -- visit www.PeaceIsland.us.

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Parish Life: St. Mary's of Mapleton Scenes of Church People Caught in Conflict

Selected from *Waiting for Mozart* by Charles Pilon
(To learn more about *Waiting for Mozart* or to purchase this book, visit [Charles' website](#).)

Third in a Four-Part Series

Editor's Note: *Waiting for Mozart* is the story of a titanic power struggle and the madness it causes in a fictitious Roman Catholic parish, St. Mary's of Mapleton, twenty-five years after Vatican II. Following is the third installment of a four-part series featuring an excerpt from the novel and a reflection some years later by one character in the scene selected.

William Coughlin Hunt reviewed *Waiting for Mozart* in the [May issue of The Progressive Catholic Voice](#). To purchase the book, visit www.charlespilon.com.

Introduction

If you are a member of a parish, on its staff or its parish council, you will recognize the characters in this story. You may find yourself there, too.

Father Joseph Burns is the pastor at St. Mary's in Mapleton, Minnesota, a first-ring suburb of St. Paul. It is late 1989, twenty-five years after the Second Vatican Council; and Father Joe has been finding himself under increasing pressure as the years have passed. He has coaxed and at times steamrolled his parishioners into creating a new kind of Catholic parish envisioned by Vatican II. He has a lay staff and an active parish council.

Together, through good times and bad, they have implemented many of the changes called for by Vatican II. Somehow, however, he seems to have created a monster. Or so he believes. Parishioners have the idea that their baptism makes them the Church – that they are the People of God.

The pastor asked the parish council to prepare a report on how St. Mary's staff salaries and wages compared to those in comparable parishes. They collect and study the available data, then work on the report for six months before they are ready to present it. At the meeting, the pastor arbitrarily refuses to consider or even receive the report. It's a waste of time, he says. "There. Is. No. Money." This indignity is a last straw for the council and their fury becomes the last straw for the pastor, putting him over the edge. The volcanic parish council meeting changes lives – and life at St. Mary's – for good.

Scene Three: Scheduling the Staff Meeting

(Excerpted from Chapter Nine of *Waiting for Mozart*)

The pastor returned to the parish and immediately went to the parish office in the old school building. After he routinely slid a hand in and out of the mail slot assigned to him, he told Betty Halvorsen, his secretary and the faithful and trusted office manager for eighteen years, to schedule a staff meeting for 3:30 that afternoon.

"Staff is pretty well scattered today, Father Joe. I'm not sure I can get them together for you."

“They’re not volunteers, are they, Betty? They have work hours, after all.” *A man should be able to have a staff meeting when he needs one, for cripeessake.* “Start calling around, please. Set it for 3:30 and tell them we’ll be starting precisely on time.”

“I’ll do my best, Father.” She handed him a message. Sheila Martinson had just called. “Says she has to see you for sure this morning sometime and can arrange her schedule to do so.”

The pastor folded the note. “It’s important to have them all at the meeting, Betty. Be sure you get everyone. Three-thirty sharp.”

“How’d it go?” she inquired.

“How’d what go?”

“The meeting. The council meeting last night.”

“Oh, yes. The meeting. Badly,” he mumbled. “Badly,” he muttered to himself, absentmindedly checking again for messages in his mailbox.

“It’s short notice for a staff meeting, Father.”

“We don’t have meetings on notice, Betty. We have meetings when I need them. I need one today. Please get everybody together.”

“I’ll do my best.”

Joe tucked the note to call Sheila into his shirt pocket, grabbed a tablet from the counter in front of the mailboxes, and left the parish office for his study in the rectory.

A Reflection by Betty Halvorsen Some Years Later

Sometimes it helped me to think of St. Mary’s as the pastor’s own little company. There were days I hated the idea, but frankly, it helped me to put up with the situation. It was a way to keep things straight in my head and be very clear with myself about my job. At times, you had to recognize it – St. Mary’s was the pastor’s privately held company.

I thought of him as having founded the company when he arrived in 1971, nineteen years before things crashed. He had a lot invested as the owner. The company was doing well. It made good products – call them mousetraps; or shovels or copy machines. It’s what we did – church programs, church services. They were good programs, good products.

We had good employees. Bills got paid on time. The place *looked* good. People continued to put down their money on Sundays for the programs, the products. They didn’t always like the way the boss, the owner, did things – the business – but who was to complain? They had what they paid for. They got their grace.

“Staying on the straight and narrow,” they’d explain. “Doing our best,” they said. “Why blame father? Hey, he’s overworked. It’s *his* church. Just be quiet and be thankful. You want to be a member here or work here? Fine. The pastor’s the boss. You do things his way. Not yours to say. Not yours to ask.”

Some said it was awful.

Yes, in many ways it was. And it wasn’t. True, it wasn’t – at it’s heart – the new kind of Church you were supposed to be after the 1960’s, but when you work for a man for nearly twenty years you get to know him and sometimes you make allowances.

Charles Pilon lives with his wife Ana in Roseville, Minnesota, where they raised their three children. Chuck was ordained a Catholic priest in 1962 and left the priesthood in 1970. He did not leave the Church, however, and has remained an active member from the people’s side of the altar.

To learn more about *Waiting for Mozart* or to purchase this book, visit Charles Pilon’s [website](#).

Upcoming Events – August 2008

Remembering Victims of Injustice and War

When: August 1–9, 2008
Monday-Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Saturday – Sunday: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Where: Cathedral of St. Paul (234 Selby Ave., St. Paul).

Note the organizers: “This week-long event is a silent meditation to remember all victims of injustice and war, and to reflect on not only what has happened and is happening in our world, but to consider how, as individuals, each of us can work for positive change in our communities. ... As a result of this silent meditation and/or prayer, we not only remember victims of injustice and war, but envision a world in which we, as active participants and leaders, work for a world where war is unused and justice prevails with resources shared fairly and respectfully.”

Dignity Twin Cities Liturgy

When: 7:30 pm
Friday, August 8, and Friday, August 22, 2008.

Where: [Prospect Park United Methodist Church](#)
22 Orlin Ave. SE
Minneapolis

[Dignity Twin Cities](#) meets every second and fourth Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church. Celebrating its 33rd anniversary this year, Dignity Twin Cities is one of 70+ Dignity chapters across the nation. Dignity encourages and helps LGBT people experience dignity through the integration of their spirituality and their sexuality. The organization envisions and works for a time when LGBT Catholics are affirmed as beloved persons of God and, as such, can participate fully in all aspects of life within both the church and society.

For directions, click [here](#).

War Made Easy

When: 10:30 a.m., Saturday, August 9, 2008.

Where: Riverview Theatre (3800 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis)

Please join Coleen Rowley at the Riverview Theatre on Saturday August 9th for a showing of [War Made Easy](#), the provocative film narrated by Sean Penn comparing the history of the Vietnam and Iraq Wars.

War Made Easy reaches into the Orwellian memory hole to expose a 50-year pattern of government deception and media spin that has dragged the United States into one war after another from Vietnam to Iraq. Narrated by actor and activist Sean Penn, the film exhumes remarkable archival footage of official distortion and exaggeration from LBJ to George W. Bush, revealing in stunning detail how the American news media have uncritically disseminated the pro-war messages of successive presidential administrations.

War Made Easy gives special attention to parallels between the Vietnam war and the war in Iraq. Guided by media critic Norman Solomon’s meticulous research and tough-minded analysis, the film presents

disturbing examples of propaganda and media complicity from the present -- alongside rare footage of political leaders and leading journalists from the past, including Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, dissident Senator Wayne Morse, and news correspondents Walter Cronkite and Morley Safer.

Cost: Although a \$10 dollar tax deductible donation is requested for the [Peace Island Picnic](#) to be held on Harriet Island on September 4th during the Republican National Convention, no one will be turned away from this screening of *War Made Easy*.

August Meeting of Network of Spiritual Progressives

When: 7:00 p.m., Monday, August 11, 2008. (Come at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments and fellowship.)

Where: [Plymouth Church](#)

1900 Nicolett Avenue

(One block north of Franklin Avenue)

Minneapolis, MN

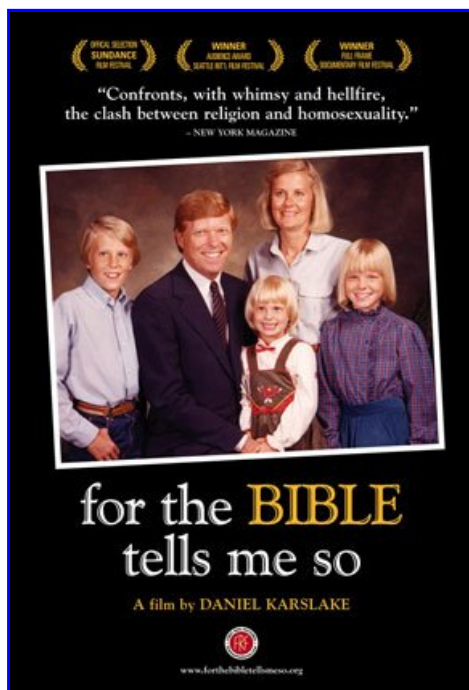
(Enter the door under the canopy off the rear parking lot and go downstairs to the Jackman Room.)

Network of Spiritual Progressives-Minnesota (NSP-MN) co-founder, Lisa Venable, author of *God for President: A Parable about the Power of Love*, will be the featured speaker this month and will share her thoughts on "Making Love Greater than Fear." Says André Samples, NSP-MN Chair: "As spiritual progressives, we have a grand opportunity to bring more love and compassion into the election scene (especially during the Republican convention here at home!) by creating a space of Love. Lisa will discuss the 'Circle of Listening' and lead us in a new kind of conversation, one that will greatly benefit us in our disagreements with those on the other 'side' of the aisle."

For more information, visit the [website](#) of the Minnesota chapter of the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

Four Screenings of the Award-Winning Documentary *For The BIBLE Tells Me So*

This film offers healing, clarity, and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.



When: 6:30 pm, Wednesday, August 20, 2008

Where: [Gloria Dei Lutheran Church](#)

700 Snelling Avenue S

St. Paul, MN

Cost: Donations accepted.

Contact: (651) 699-1378 / [More Details](#)

When: 7:00 pm, Wednesday, August 20, 2008

7:00 pm, Thursday, August 21, 2008

Where: [St. Luke Episcopal Church](#)

1884 22nd Street NW

Rochester, MN

Cost: Donations accepted

Contact: (507) 259-9025

When: 6:00 pm, Friday, September 12, 2008

Where: [Grace Community Church UCC](#)

986 Forest Street, St. Paul

Cost: Donations accepted

Contact: (651) 771-7649

20th Annual International Two Spirit (LGBT Native People) Gathering



When: August 28 - September 1, 2008.

Where: [Audubon Center of the North Woods](#)
54165 Audubon Dr.
Sandstone, MN 55072

Please note: This event is only for Native community members, their partners and families.

Our cultures and communities celebrate two decades of international Indigenous organizing, and look ahead to the coming two decades of cultural regeneration.

Minnesota welcomes Native community members, their partners and families, to the place where The Basket and the Bow was hosted in 1988, which gave rise to the annual GLBT Native Gathering.

Beginning the third circle

In 1988 Native people hosted a historic two day event in Minneapolis. The consensus of the 100+ participants was that an annual gathering of LGBT Native people needed to take place. The following year, the international community asked Minnesota to host the event again. In the years that followed - Winnipeg, Oregon, Vancouver, Arizona, Kansas, New Brunswick, Toronto , etc - this spiritual gathering of cultural regeneration began to travel in a great circle around North America year by year. We have seen two great circles of this event completed during the past two decades, touching the lives of about 2,400 Native people, our partners and families. We are preparing for the third turning of this medicine wheel.

The planning council of the 20th Anniversary International Two Spirit Gathering is pleased to share an invitation with the Two Spirit communities to attend this event that marks an important milestone in our cultural histories and our social, health, artistic and spiritual revitalization.

Email contact: twospiritpressroom@yahoo.com

(This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots; so you need JavaScript enabled to view it .)

For more information about this gathering, click [here](#).

For more history and background about the Two Spirit movement, click [here](#).



A Great Gift Idea!

To order printed 18x24 commemorative posters celebrating this event, click [here](#).

Proceeds help support programming and participation of Native Elders, youth, and women.

[For a PDF of this poster](#)

Looking Ahead . . .

March on the Republican National Convention (RNC) and Stop the War!

When: Monday, September 1, 2008.

Where: State Capitol, St. Paul (to be followed by a march to the Xcel Energy Center).

From the website of the Anti-War Committee, one of the key organizers of this event: "Join the anti-war rally and march in St. Paul on Labor Day, September 1st. As the Republicans name a pro-war candidate, let's remind them that we demand an end to the war and occupation of Iraq now. Let's make September 1, 2008, a day that the war-mongers will remember when the anti-war movement stood up to them."

For more information, click [here](#).

Peace Island Conference

When: September 2-3, 2008.

Where: Concordia University (275 Syndicate Street North, St. Paul).

Note the organizers of this conference:

Peace Island will convene as a solutions-driven conference at Concordia University, St. Paul, to promote and celebrate peace, justice, harmony, nonviolence, and care of the earth.

Nationally known speakers have been invited to participate in panels and discussions relating to their field of expertise.

The conference will run two days, with three plenary sessions each day. The plenary will be followed by four breakout sessions where all attendees will contribute to the discussion and the solutions.

Entertainment, films, and other discussions and presentations will be offered in between the sessions. And, a large gathering/break room, "The Commons," will be available for organizations to have tables to display their information.

To read organizer Susu Jeffrey's article on Peace Island, click [here](#).

For more information about Peace Island, visit www.PeaceIsland.us.

Peace Island Picnic

When: 1:00-8:00 p.m., Thursday, September 4, 2008.

Where: Harriet Island, St. Paul (across the Mississippi River from the Republican National Convention)

The organizers of the Peace Island Picnic, including FBI whistleblower and *Time* magazine "Person of the Year," Coleen Rowley, note that this event is "a non-partisan event that will cap preceding days of marches, parades, bannerings, and other artistic 'UnConvention' expressions planned for when the national focus is on the Republican National Convention in St. Paul."

Music at the picnic will be provided by Toa Rodriguez-Seeger, Larry Long, David Rovics, and others.

Cost: Free

For more information, click [here](#).

PFLAG Regional Conference

When: Saturday, September 27, 2008

Where: Hotel Sofitel

The following notice comes to us from Deb LeMay, Office Administrator at PFLAG St. Paul / Minneapolis:

On Saturday, September 27, 2008 PFLAG St. Paul / Minneapolis will host a regional conference "**PFLAG – Links to the Future**" which will draw individuals from PFLAG chapters from the five-state area as well as from the many community connections we already have. It will be a day of networking, workshops (16 to choose from), discussions and celebration for the LGBT community and allies.

We expect to draw roughly 200 attendees to the conference. What will be unique about the PFLAG conference is that even though the focus will be on LGBT issues, more than half of the attendees will be straight allies coming from both metro and rural areas to gain further education and support, critical to the advocacy of our LGBT loved ones.

PFLAG would like to invite you to be part of this conference! Maybe you would like to present one or more workshops; host a resource table; or simply attend the conference. Whatever your commitment, please know we value your presence.

For conference information as well as workshop and exhibitor applications, please access our website at www.pflagtc.org

Thank you in advance as you consider sharing your time and resources. Please forward this information to any persons and organizations you'd like to see included in this event!

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