



ECC NEWS

A Quarterly Publication Produced by the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2008

In this issue:

- A Lenten Message
Bishop Peter Hickman
- The Artist Behind the Logo
- Katrina Survivors Find a Home in the ECC
- Ned Reidy Speaks at Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative
- ECC News Bites
- Reflections
2007 Synod

Upcoming Events

March 8th – 14th
Bishop Peter Visits
Colorado Communities

March 8th
Church of the Beloved,
Northglenn, CO

March 9th
Holy Family, Aurora, CO

March 14th
Ordination of Sheila
Dierks to Transitional
Deaconate Light of
Christ, Longmont, CO

March 19th
Pacific Regional Meeting
"Our Catholic Identity"
St. Matthew Ecumenical
Catholic Community,
Orange, CA

A Lenten Message Presiding Bishop Peter E. Hickman

Lent is already here and I haven't even begun to put away all the Christmas décor at my house. The word 'Lent', I am told, means spring. But as far as I am concerned (and the rest of the world at that) we are in the middle of winter. Sometimes I wish we would be on the Eastern Orthodox calendar. They are celebrating Easter on the 27th of April this year. So the Great Lenten fast does not begin for them until mid-March, just about the time that we Western Christians are celebrating Easter. This difference in the Liturgical calendar is one of the many reasons that led to the schism between the Eastern and Western churches.

The rule for reckoning the date of Easter for the Western Church goes something like this: Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox (March 21). The Eastern Church follows the more ancient practice which is similar except for one small detail: Easter is reckoned to be the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox after the Jewish Feast of the Passover. The Eastern Church's reckoning is dependent on the Jewish calendar. That makes sense in that Jesus was raised from the dead on the first Sunday after the Passover. The Western Church seems to have been motivated by a desire to be free of any dependence on any vestiges of Judaism. Could anti-Semitism have played a roll in this? I wonder. I understand that the ancient Celtic Church followed the Eastern practice until they were forced to adopt the Roman calendar.

The Lenten Season reminds us that there are seasons to our lives. We go through seasons of great joy and we go through seasons of loss and sadness. We go through seasons of great growth and activity. We go through seasons of tedium and decline.

The great motif of lent is that of journey. This reminds us that in many ways life can be likened to a journey. The road of life takes some very unexpected twists and turns. Sometimes, it is a path that is barely discernable taking us through the unfamiliar. At times, we are forging ahead blazing a new trail where no has walked before.

The daily readings during this time are from the stories of Israel's journey and wanderings in the desolation of the arid desert. Sometimes, I feel like I have been wandering in the desert of my life for the past forty years. Do you ever feel that way?

During the Lent we are invited to journey not alone but with Jesus. We are to be companions with Jesus and one another on this road of life. We do not walk alone. We are not to walk ahead. We are not to walk from behind. We are to walk together, side by side, with Jesus. And where is Jesus going? Where are we going?

Jesus is headed for Jerusalem. He goes to the Holy City to meet his destiny. He journeys toward the specter of death that he is destined to embrace. We, too, journey to our destiny. We, too, are going to the Holy City. We, too, are marching toward our own destiny with death. Jesus goes with the determination and resolve of faith. We, too, can go in the way of faith. Or we can choose to struggle against our destiny by going in our own direction thinking that we can avoid that which is inevitable. We can choose to live in denial and pretend that we are not on a journey at all. If we travel with Jesus during this season of lent we will pass through the desert of temptation and doubt. We will ascend the Mount of Transfiguration.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

We will walk through a strange and foreign land. Ultimately, we will reach our destination and our appointment with death.

But then something unimaginable happens. We pass through death with Jesus but death loses its hold upon us. It loses its hold on us because it has lost hold of Jesus who is resurrected to a new and indestructible life. His entire being is transformed into a new kind of life. Mortality is overcome by immortality. Death is swallowed up. His life is now filled with endless possibility and beauty. His body is made anew into a different sort of body, a glorified body, a temple of Holy Light. This is our real destiny. And as we walk with Jesus to embrace death we will also walk with him into this other kind of life which we call eternal. "Having died with Christ, we will also be raised with Christ."

Let this Lenten season enable you to enter into the mystery of this sacred journey. The mystery of death, resurrection, and eternal life. May the peace of Jesus abide always in your hearts.

In the Bonds of Christian Love,
+Peter,

The Logo...The Artist...The Gifts...



It is known across the nation as the ECC Logo, what many don't know is that the figure was derived from an original piece of art created & donated by Father Zilvinas Jakstas, ECC Pastor & Artist. The original icon was presented as a gift to the hosting community of Holy Family, Las Cruces, New

Mexico at the 1st Synod in 2005.

As Told By: Father Zilvinas Jakstas:

On the Left Side

"You and me, communion, family.

Alike but somehow different.

Created in His divine image, with individual but very valuable inherent gifts in the colorful communal picture."

In the Middle

"The Christ, the Teacher, the Center, the Head. His hands, legs, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and more...exposed."

On the Right Side

The Pathway. Our chosen one. Universal. Katholikos. The sombre cross: present tradition, past, generations, age... The bright: is new, untouched, green, ecumenical and open.



The second synod of the ECC brought a second gift pictured here. It was presented to the hosting community of Holy Spirit, Clearwater, Florida at the closing liturgy. Thank you Fr. Zilvinas, for the gifts you are, and bring to the ECC. You are one of our greatest treasures.

Katrina Survivors Find an ECC Home

Tony Mendoza
Little Rock, AK

My journey from being resident of New Orleans , Louisiana to Little Rock, Arkansas seems serendipitous, yet as time passes I truly believe the Holy Spirit is alive and working in the my life, leading me on a journey, and allowing me to trust the Lord .

August 2005 started out as another typical hot and humid summer month in New Orleans. My Life Partner Marty Harmon and I were celebrating 11 years of a shared life in this multicultural and unique city known for its music, cuisine and warm hospitality.

We had purchased our first home in the Gentilly neighborhood earlier in 2005, and were settled in a rhythm of life that included careers as physical therapist, enjoying our canine companions Maggy and Rufus, and walking in a faith journey together with a Catholic Franciscan Friary called Tau House. These Friars opened their doors to all who entered, with their ministry focused on those in the margins of society. Marty and I were part of this nurturing faith community for many years. Marty was baptized during Easter vigil 2000. It was a safe, loving, and accepting community which we cherished.

Monday August 29, 2005 our lives were forever changed. I lived through the experience of being in New Orleans during the hurricane as I was at Touro Infirmary working, "escaping" the city Wednesday after the storm. Thankfully, Marty and the dogs evacuated to Arkansas prior to the storm.

We lost all our material possessions. Our home was located two blocks from the levy break and was flooded to the roofline. Little Rock became our new home. For the first year post Katrina, we both were emotionally and mentally in shock. The healing

process began and evolved for us as we started a new life in this small city in the Bible belt. Roman Catholics make up less than 4% of the Arkansas state population.

By January 2007, we had begun seeking a church home. I was not hopeful that there would be a Faith community that was Catholic and gay friendly in Little Rock. On a Sunday morning in early April of 2007, I was browsing the local weekly Arkansas Times newspaper when my eye caught a familiar image on the back page. There was a small 2 inch block advertisement with the image of the San Damiano Cross. I was startled as this was the same image that Tau House used as their crucifix. I proceeded to read "ALL ARE WELCOME" at San Damiano Ecumenical Catholic Church. With much anticipation and hope, we showed up at Mass that evening. With open arms and love, Fr Fred and Sarah welcomed us for Eucharist. We had found a church home.

Hope fills us as we walk together in faith with San Damiano and the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. We have a renewed vigor and trust in God as life unfolds for us as survivors of Katrina, and are excited to be a part of the ECC. We attended Synod in October and were truly touched and inspired by the love, acceptance and affirmation we received. We trust God will continue to nurture us on this spiritual journey.

Father Ned Reidy Speaks at Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative

Rev. Kathy McCarty
Bermuda Dunes, CA



Father Ned Reidy was invited by the Celebration Committee for Dr. Martin Luther King events in Coachella Valley to be the main speaker at The Commemorative Celebration at the January 20th event.

Every year this event includes the whole valley: mayors, city council members, and folks from all the Southern California lower desert communities.

This event has been held each year at the Palm Springs Catholic Church, Our Lady of Solitude. Two days before the January 20 gathering the chairman of the committee was notified that Ned Reidy is barred from coming and speaking that church. "The decision has been made!" Someone had notified the chancery in the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Bernardino and "the Bishop had spoken!" However, ECC NEWS

Ned has been a foundational member of the Interfaith Council here in the Desert and, in no way, would they allow him to be cast out. Interfaith work has been a constant in Ned's life here and he is profoundly respected as is the Pathfinder ECC Community of the Risen Christ.

Very quickly, another church, St. Paul's Episcopal, wonderfully welcomed the service to be held there. When Ned got up speak to the full church he gave a very brief kind of explanation regarding the change and challenged Bishop Barnes to a debate! He went on to give an inspiring testimony regarding his own presence at the March on Washington in 1963 when he stood within twenty yards of Martin Luther King hearing his famous speech, "I had a dream".

Throughout the 1960's Ned was very active in the Civil Rights Movement that so profoundly changed our nation. In 1965 he marched in the Selma to Montgomery event pushing for equality in all public areas. In his home town of Chicago, marches were held in 1967 for fair housing. Ned would go into a real estate office and ask what was available for sale. He would be given a whole list of houses. Then a black couple would be sent later and would be told there were none. Each visit was secretly recorded.

Shortly after the owners were confronted as the tape was played for them to hear. They were then told that pickets would be in front of their office by morning.

Thinking that his Roman collar would protect him from any violence, Ned joined all the other marchers despite being warned of the great danger. Sure enough, on the first lap, he heard someone cry out, "Get that guy with the collar" and bricks came at him. Needless to say, he finished the march!

At the concluding prayer on January 20th, an African American pastor who was attending thanked Ned because both his color and his collar that were caught in photos helped in the overcoming of racial prejudice. Father Ned concluded the service blessing all who came. He also offered a blessing for his former employer, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Gerald Barnes.

News Bites

ECC Seminarians Invited to lead worship at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO

Mother Kae Madden presided over a mass with three woman seminarians from the ECC at the Ash Wednesday worship held February 6th at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, CO. ECC parishioners from local communities joined Iliff students and enjoyed a spirit filled homily by Sheila Dierks, an inspiring reading from Kathleen Gorman and a moving piano accompaniment by Teri Herroun.

February 2008

The Pathfinder Community of Bermuda Dunes, CA hosts the first Pacific Regional Meeting

December 7th, the Pathfinder Community of Bermuda Dunes, CA hosted the Pacific Region in its first regional meeting. Those in attendance were: Sophia Spirit from Santa Ana, CA, St. Matthew's from, Orange, CA, St. Andrew and St. Paul from Glendale, CA, Holy Trinity form Long Beach, CA, Mother Kathleen Jess from Calimesa, Deacon Jerry Vecchione from Banning, and Fr. Jim Lehman from Holy Family, Las Cruces, NM. A calendar was created and three committees were formed. Tony Bomkamp will head up a Regional Retreat Planning Team for the fall. Rev. Kathleen Jess will facilitate a regional newsletter and Fr. Mark Jaufmann is leading a team to find more effective ways of spreading the word about the ECC. The Regional group will meet again for Holy Week at St. Matthew's and has plans for a retreat in October.

Church of the Beloved in Northglenn, CO hosts the first Rocky Mountain Regional Meeting

December 19th the Rocky Mountain Region gathered at Church Of The Beloved in Northglenn, CO for their first regional meeting. Communities in attendance were Holy Family from Aurora, CO, Light of Christ from Longmont, CO and St. Augustine, from Denver, CO. Mother Kae led the gathering in prayer while Father Len Schreiner offered his musical gifts in Taize song. The day was filled with prayer and fellowship. The delegates present discussed building relationships among communities and what the future holds for the ECC in Colorado. Pooling resources and building local relationships through shared outreach projects and fellowship were the main themes left with delegates. The next meeting for the Rocky Mountain Region is scheduled for April 12th to be hosted by Light of Christ in Longmont, CO.

Bishop Peter Visits California Communities Holy Trinity, Long Beach, CA

In January Bishop Peter made a pastoral visit to Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Long, CA where he received 37 confirmants.

St. Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Community, Orange, CA

Bishop Peter confirms 45 candidates at his home parish in Orange, CA.

Pathfinder Community in Bermuda Dunes, CA

Saturday January 26th, the Pathfinder Community in Bermuda Dunes, CA, hosted a "Body-Wise" workshop created and facilitated by Eileen Knoff. Eileen is a spiritual director and a member of the pastoral leadership wisdom circle of the Spiritus Dei ECC Community in Seattle, WA. Those in attendance felt greatly benefited from her

workshop entitled "Body - Wise" a simple method of focusing on one's body to learn from its wisdom.

2007 ECC Synod, Clearwater, Florida

The Synod of 2007 was a Spirit filled experience that touched many in ways words can not describe.

A Special Thank-You to the community of Holy Spirit, Clearwater, FI, who welcomed delegates from across the country with hospitality and love. To all those who served on the many committees, in Florida, Colorado, New Mexico and California the communion offers endless gratitude.



"The Synod was awash with grace."

It was found everywhere.

The rituals, large groups working together, conversations on the beach, a recently ordained young woman concelebrating with our bishop, people passionate about living the gospel, hearing the stories of individuals and faith communities, tears, laughter, and hugs.

Rose Shank



"I was both moved and very proud of what was accomplished at the Synod."

The Spirit did indeed move among us. In putting ourselves squarely in the tradition of the apostles, we are standing on the shoulders of giants, and can see and shape our future.

Fr. Jerry Barlow



"The only thing missing was all of us dancing together!"

I am not an overly pious sort when it comes to religious language. However, I believe the Synod was the example of the wind of the Spirit blowing among and through Her people. The exercising of the diversity of gifts, making "space" for everyone to have a voice, the ability to hear one another.

Fr. Scott Jenkins

Editor's note: Contributions to ECC News are welcome. Send your submission to administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org