



ECC NEWS

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Upcoming Events

- **September 14** – West Coast Clergy and Lay Leader Retreat at Church of the Holy Trinity, Long Beach, California
- **October 24-27** – Synod 2007 at Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida
For more information on the Synod, see our website at www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org
- **October 27** – First Annual Gospel Blues and BBQ fundraiser at Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida

A Message from our Presiding Bishop Peter J. Hickman

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In my travels on behalf of the people of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion these past several months I have been impressed with how so many among you are constantly engaged in the labor of loving service on behalf of your local faith community, to the ECC as a whole, and to those in need, especially the poor, in the world around us. What a marvelous thing this is. Your exuberance and dedication to serve those in need is a wonderful gift placed in you by God through the Holy Spirit. Countless lives are being touched by the love of God through you. In this I greatly rejoice.

However, I have also observed that many of you seem to be overcome by all this endless activity and are feeling the strain and the exhaustion which can lead to what we call "burnout" which often leads to resentment toward the very people we seek to serve. Your noble efforts on behalf of others are hard to argue against precisely because it is so difficult to oppose such goodness. Some may be tempted to give up altogether while others to play the part of the martyr.

I think that the question facing us is not as simple as one of whether to serve or not to serve. That question has two different answers and each of us is tempted to choose one or the other and judging harshly the one who chooses not as we have chosen. Herein is the dilemma and conflict.

I think that it is possible that there is another entirely different question that we are missing. This is a question that might lead nearer the truth than we may at first suppose. If we were to give it some thought we may hit upon this deeper and more important question. What does God want me to do?

More important than our willingness to serve the poor or to serve the church is our willingness to do God's will and God's will only. I think that something can be learned from two stories in the Gospels, which concern the same person, Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha.

In the first story Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to every word coming forth from His mouth. She was basking in his presence and soaking in all His teaching. Meanwhile, Martha is overcome with the activity of making sure everyone had something to eat. After all, wherever Jesus went crowds were sure to follow even when He was visiting the humble home of one of His friends. In this case he was visiting the home of Martha and Mary. Martha became irritated with Mary and asked Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help her with the work. After all, that would be the only sensible and just thing to do. Surprisingly, Jesus then turned to Martha and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are concerned with many things. Mary has chosen the better portion and it shall not be taken from her."

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Mary chose to be present to Jesus first, to sit at His feet, to listen to his voice. After all, He could easily feed thousands in a moment. Had he not done so before with only two fish and three loaves? Mary chose the better portion. Have we chosen the better portion? I wonder.

The other story is about the time just before the death of Jesus where again he is a guest at the home of Mary and Martha. On this occasion Mary comes to Jesus, breaks open an expensive alabaster jar of perfumed ointment and anoints His feet and wiping them with her hair. Judas takes note of this and criticizes Mary's extravagance saying, "What a waste! This perfumed ointment could have been sold and the money given to the poor!" Jesus came to Mary's defense saying that Mary has done a good thing. "The poor you will have with you always. But you will not always have me with you. She has done a good thing for me. She is preparing me for my burial."

Loving devotion and attention to Jesus is of greater importance than all our works of charity. "If I give up everything I have to feed the poor and even hand up my very body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing."

I think this is the deeper question. Are you willing to surrender your lives to Jesus in loving devotion and attentiveness and do only those things that He wills for you? Indeed that is the question for all of us. We must determine to hear the voice of Jesus and then to obey what He tells us to do. Obedience to the voice of Jesus, despite how we feel, is our only obligation. It is your obligation. It is my obligation. It is our collective obligation. Since this is what is expected of us then how could God withhold the necessary direction that we need and ask for? "Ask, and it shall be given you," and, "How much more will Abba God give the Holy Spirit to them who ask?"

Then a funny thing begins to happen when we are obedient to Jesus: our marriages are blessed, the poor are fed, our churches grow, and we become creatures of indescribable beauty and glory.

I know that I oversimplify a very complex situation. Yet, I do believe that we are at a place in our spiritual journey that we need to have this kind of spiritual direction. Spiritual direction comes in many ways and forms. But find it we must. It is, after all, the better portion. The only cost would be your time and, of course, your whole life.

In the Bonds of Christ's love,
Bishop Peter J. Hickman

Toward a Younger Vision

Rev. Scott Jenkins
Aurora, Colorado

Our youth are the church of tomorrow!...to which I say, NONSENSE!

It is this partial truth that has been rattling around inside of me now for many, many months. The more I ponder its implications, the more I become concerned for both our young people and the church at large.

To put it simply, the church must be a place for, of, and by our young people today or there may not be a church of tomorrow! As it is with things like this, it just would not let go of me. It has been rattling around within me to the point of exasperation and finally... inspiration.

What began as a troubled seedling within has worked its way through the soil of my life and has blossomed with the beginnings of an idea. How about if we pool our resources and form a National Youth Council? (You all will most definitely improve on the name!)

To make this happen, I will function as sort of the gathering place. Each person would send me two names, one of someone in your high-school group and one adult sponsor with e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Then we could set up times throughout the year to meet electronically (conference or video-conference calls) and discuss such things as Regional or National Youth Retreats or whatever the Spirit lays on us.

I hope to have our names by the end of July and our first contact during the third week in August.

It is ambitious, I know. But something tells me it would be well worth the investment. Together, humbly depending on the Spirit, we could do some pretty amazing things. Please pray about this with me. When you are ready...just email the info to me at fr.scott@churchofhollyfamily.org or call/text me at 720-298-3583.

I will be praying too...and waiting to receive your responses. Thank you.

PS Let the text messages fly!!!

ECC News Bites

Synod Update -- October 24-27, 2007

Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida

Synod and hotel registration are available online
www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org.

Topics slated for the agenda are:

- Formation of a National Youth Council
- Institution of new leaders in the House of Pastors and the House of Laity
- Episcopal Commission:
The Office of Bishop; the Nature of Authority; the Ministry of a Bishop; and Matters of Jurisdiction and Procedure
- Ratification of the Leadership Council
- Legislation will be presented surrounding these topics and voted on
- An outreach Service Project for the entire convention

Holy Spirit ECC, Clearwater, FL...

congratulations to Fr. Jack Lorden on his 40th anniversary of ordained priesthood. Fr. Jack, ordained as a bi-ritual Melkite Catholic priest, has served in Melkite parishes, as a military chaplain and currently as a pastoral associate at Holy Spirit.



Holy Family, Las Cruces, NM...

On May 4th Bishop Peter arrived in Las Cruces for the Dedication of Holy Family Church Building and Confirmation

Congratulations to Rev. Jim Lehman, recipient of the 2007 Southern New Mexico Pride Award for the work he and his parish have done over the years in support of the gay and lesbian community.



Holy Spirit Catholic Community of Boston formerly A Pilgrim People...

marked their one-year anniversary, as they were welcomed into the ECC. On June 24th Bishop Peter presided at the celebration held at Christ Church in Wellesley MA, where over 75 people were gathered. Welcome Holy Spirit Catholic Community to the ECC!

Sts. Clare & Francis Ecumenical Catholic Community, St. Louis, MO...

hosted the first House of Pastors (HOP) retreat on June 29th. "The dynamics and grace that were shared at our HOP gathering in St. Louis was powerful." Rev. Steve Roszczewski

"It was extremely valuable to have a moment at the HOP retreat where building relationships was the only agenda item." George Von Stamwitz

Light of Christ, Longmont, CO...

Dean C. Jones, PhD., a member of Light of Christ Ecumenical Catholic Community in Longmont, Colorado, is writing a book about Light of Christ and the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. If you wish to participate in a survey or share your story, please contact him at Dean C. Jones, 1064 Delta Dr, #C, Lafayette, CO 80026, Tel: 303.494.0628 or dejn7@aol.com.

Introducing the Chancellor of the ECC

In January 2006, Bishop Peter appointed George von Stamwitz as Chancellor for the Communion. George comes to us from Sts. Clare and Francis in St. Louis, Missouri. He is a partner in a St. Louis based law firm and he chairs the environmental law department. He also is President of a consulting firm called AT Environmental, which coordinates the redevelopment of contaminated sites.

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After many years of leading seminars and bible studies, George went back to school part time to study theology. In 2004 George received his Masters in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology with an emphasis on Biblical Studies and he is on the preaching team at Sts. Clare and Francis.

George chairs the Leadership Council for the ECC and advises Bishop Peter and the Council on both internal and external affairs. (George is a great place to start if you have a question or an issue to discuss). He is excited about helping to build structures and procedures in the ECC that speak to our values of inclusion, collaboration and the dignity of each person.

George is married to Alicia who works in Catholic publishing. They have two daughters, Teresa (23) and Maria (21).

ECC Women of the Rocky Mountain Region

Journey to the call is what they share. These are their stories the women of the Rocky Mountain Region.

Mother Kae Madden,

Church of the Beloved, Northglenn, CO
My life has contained the call to priesthood, unnamed, for as long as I remember. I have gone about the work of serving God and leading God's people while an illusive vision shimmered outside the limits of my ability to see. The image would play upon my mind, and I would reach out to grasp it while it receded beyond my touch.

I longed for a resolution to the incongruence that persisted, a discontent that convicted me of not living the life that I was chosen to live. I was living out the "next best things" in countless ways, yet the One Call for which I was born remained unarticulated, unformed in word and name. There was a barrier, a wall, past which I could not see. The music on the other side called to me but I could not go to it. My journals spoke of a butterfly waiting to emerge from a cocoon and images of pregnancy.

In February 2003, at the appointed time, in the company of prayer-drenched friends, I was surprised to find the words and say them aloud, "I am called to priesthood."

Then, through impossible Grace and a good and faithful servant, I learned of the ECC, a life-changing Gift. The next three years were a

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whirlwind of evaluating my experience and transcripts (undergraduate B.A. and Master of Arts in Adult Christian Community Development), additional study, preparation for the transitional diaconate, and finally to be ordained a priest on July 29, 2006.

I truly float on a river of grace. I live with the privilege of serving God's people as priest. I delight in celebrating Mass, training liturgical ministers, visiting the sick, baptizing babies (my grandsons included), sitting with the dying, forming our parish council, and preaching. Our community has wonderful souls who are growing in love and teaching me how to love. I have emerged gloriously from the cocoon in which I was formed and am dancing with the Spirit.

Teri Harroun

Light of Christ, Longmont, CO

Journey

2005 was the year that we started Light of Christ ECC parish in Longmont, Colorado. It was a transformational and empowering year, with many new possibilities.

I have completed one year now of seminary. If my next years at seminary are a ladder, then I feel like I am standing on the bottom rung, and now I have to climb. I am very aware of how much I don't know, how much I have to learn. But I am also aware, that I have been in formation for a long time before I even knew that God and I shared a dream.

My formation is not like a ladder; it is a spiral, a constant endeavor of learning and growth. For now the ladder is there, it is part of my journey. However, when I get to the top rung, it is not the end of my formational journey. I may get a piece of paper along the way, I may get ordained, but I will continue to be in formation, to be walking the spiral, where all I think, say, and do emanates from my center and speaks my story.

In my formation I must know, tell, live, and lead the story, the Gospel. I think I've been doing this for a while, colored and encouraged by my mystic tendencies. Now I also must study and learn all of these Gospel stories and then I must discover my Gospel. I must be authentic to what God is revealing to me, and to who God calls me to be as well as be authentic to my tradition and faith community.

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Eucharist is at the center of my story. I used to step over people in the pews on my way to Eucharist. But Eucharist now is a fuller, more complete, holy, intimate timeless moment where I

no longer step over people in the pews, but I get to call them, pick them up, and bring them with me to Table. This unfettered inclusion is the story that has most inspired and given life to me in the ECC, and is central to my Gospel. God has always been faithful to each one of us; Christ has prepared the Table and called to each one of us; Spirit has dwelt and spoken through each one of us. All are welcome at Table to serve and to be served. And the formation continues...

Sheila Dierks

Light of Christ, Longmont, CO

I am a crone. (That's a word we need to take back!) I'm 63 years old and working toward wisdom. For decades, I've been invited to prepare the space for the Eucharistic table as well as for all our celebrations. I'm married to Peter, mother of four and grandmother of three.

ECC has graciously opened her doors to me and to others who have been outside the fold in terms of ordination. There is, I feel, a wonderful sense of the urging of Spirit, of hope-laced participation, and I believe I stand along with sisters and brothers in the middle of a community of hope. All is possible.

The invitation to discernment toward ordination is filled with a variety of paths of learning. School is one of them. I've completed the first year of a two-year program at Iliff School of Theology. Then there is community life, parish worship, peaceful moments on my back deck with the sweetness of the honeysuckle, or the sharpness of cold and bright stars in January, reading prayers for the earth, writing letters to Senator Salazar about immigration politics, instant messaging our children, worshipping with my women's group, sharing dinner with my husband, and sitting in the hospital rooms of suffering women and men.

This is a gracing process. The life I live is seasoned with the spice of Spirit; a chance to taste a tremendous variety of experiences previously unknown as well as familiar ones with new gusto.

Each month, often each day, is a fresh opportunity to savor the banquet. It seems that this is what discernment must be. I cannot know what will be offered next, but I am sated daily with the presence of Spirit Godde in my hopes, my

community, my experience, the abundance of goodness, this table of delights.

Kathleen Gorman

Church of the Holy Family, Aurora, CO

How did I get to the ECC?

I was working as a Financial Advisor at Wachovia Securities and one of my peers mentioned that he was going to be interning as a hospital chaplain in the summer. Chills went through my body as I thought, "THAT'S it! That is what I should do with the rest of my life!"

But, I hesitated in acting on this direct hit from the Holy Spirit because I didn't really understand what opportunities would be available. I was a roaming Catholic so I did not think that I could get the proper backing to be a Catholic Chaplain.

Long story short, and again because of a direct hit from the Holy Spirit, I decided to enroll at Iliff School of Theology. During my first class of the 2006-2007 school year, two women (Sheila Dierks and Teri Harroun) introduced themselves as Ecumenical Catholics. I nabbed them at the break and asked them to tell me about being an Ecumenical Catholic, which sent me running to Holy Family in Aurora to see if it was really true that I could maintain my Catholic rituals but be congruent with my heart and soul! My true passion is hospital Chaplaincy, but ordination is not out of the question!

I'm currently attending Iliff to get a Masters of Divinity and should complete this degree program by December 2008 or spring 2009!

Sharon Taylor

Church of the Holy Family, Aurora, CO

Who, me?

My awareness of a potential call to ordained ministry was first met with the surprise and discomfort demonstrated by the characters played by Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy when the character played by Sydney Poitier appeared on their doorstep in the movie *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* This movie serves as a reference point because as a woman in her mid-fifties, my worldview was shaped by the events that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. As such, I had certain challenges to overcome relative to that worldview and a call to ordained ministry.

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The initial thought seemed audacious, and for quite a long time I thought it was something else. Perhaps it was a call to serve in spiritual direction, and in following this sense, I completed the Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program and am a certified spiritual director. Then, I developed all sorts of reasoning about how I would have greater voice as a member of the laity. Finally, one day, I accepted the possibility of a call to ordained ministry and knew that taking steps in that direction would be required in order to be certain.

This fall, I begin work on a Masters degree in Specialized Ministry at Iliff School of Theology. I'm in the process of inviting individuals to be members of my discernment group. These people will walk with me throughout my degree program. At the conclusion of the first academic year, they will either confirm or deny my perceived call based on our journeying together. I anticipate that this time will be rich for all of us.



Bishop Peter Hickman Apostolic Succession Narrative

Bishop Peter Elder Hickman was elected by the people of the Saint Matthew Old Catholic Community in Orange, CA and presented as a candidate for Episcopal consecration to the Ecumenical Communion of Catholic and Apostolic Churches.

He was ordained a bishop on May 19, 1996 in California. Three bishops participated in the ordination: The Most Reverend Augustin Sicard of San Antonio, TX; The Most Reverend Daniel Gincig, the presiding bishop of the American Old Catholic Church headquartered in Aurora, CO; and the late Rt. Reverend Herron Samm, an Anglican bishop, of Brooklyn, NY.

The Apostolic Succession of Bishop Peter Hickman includes lines derived from The Apostolic Catholic Church of Brazil (via Durarte Costa, a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil), The Old Catholic Church (via Arnold Harris Mathew who was of the line of the Archbishop of Utrecht), and the Anglican Church (via the Archbishop of Canterbury of The Church of England).

Bishop Hickman was 40 years of age when he was consecrated. Before that, he served as the founding pastor of the Saint Matthew Community of Orange for eleven years. The Most Reverend Patrick Joseph Callahan in La Habra, CA ordained him a priest in October of 1984. He continues to serve as the pastor of the Saint Matthew Community as well as the presiding bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion having been elected to that office at the Convocation of the 11 founding Catholic Communities of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion in September of 2003.

Visits Across the Nation

Bishop Peter visits...

- * July 21 - 22
Holy Spirit, Tampa, FL
- * August
Spiritus Dei, Seattle/Tacoma, WA
Saint Ignatius, Seattle, WA
Saint Lawrence, British Columbia
- * September 7 – 8
Sts. Clare and Francis in St. Louis, Missouri
Ordination Celebration
Deacan Jessica Rowley

Editor's note: Contributions to ECC News are welcome.

Send your submission to administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org