



# ECC NEWS

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## ECC Celebrates 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On September 19th, the Ecumenical Catholic Communion gives thanks and celebrates its life for five years. It was on this date in 2003 that twelve communities gathered to vision together and to ratify our ECC Constitution at the altar of Saint Matthew Church in Orange, California. Present in the hearts of all that evening was the immense joy of something much larger than ourselves at work, of gathering to be the Church for which we all had longed. For some, it was a re-building, for others, it was a renewal, and yet for others, it was a homecoming to that which we all loved: Catholic Christian community.



## Upcoming Events

### September 17th

Ordinations to the Diaconate  
Longmont CO

### October 20-24th

The ECC 2008 House of Pastors Retreat  
Eden Seminary  
St. Louis, MO

### October 24th

Ordinations to the Diaconate  
St. Louis, MO

The Ecumenical Catholic Communion was born amid tears and joyful sips of champagne, and today continues its journey of growth; "being the change we seek", constantly being re-born through hopes and dreams, hard work and tireless ministry, sacrifice and generosity, and the simple gathering of the people of God "to be the Body of Christ, nourished by the Body of Christ on the altar".

Our journey together has and will continue to welcome new communities of faith, wonderful new expressions of the same that has been lovingly handed to us through the centuries. With super-abundant gifts of grace and holy wisdom, through our experience of Catholic Christian community, we now prepare the same to hand on to those who follow us.

Beyond our wildest imaginings, we can joyfully celebrate all that has been these last five years and eagerly look forward to our accompaniment with one another in the years that lay ahead. Thank you for being this intriguing, yet awesome "communion of communities!" Happy Anniversary, holy People of God!

## An Exhilarating Time for the ECC in Boston

Charlie Davis  
Fripp Island, NC



Bishop Dana Reynolds, Charlie Davis, Bishop Peter Hickman

Bishop Peter Hickman, Fr. Scott Jenkins, Charlie Davis and Teri Thompson represented the ECC at the Inclusive Ministry Conference held in July and sponsored jointly by Roman Catholic Women Priests [RCWP]; Married Catholic Priests [CORPUS]; the Women's Ordination Council [WOC]; and the Federation of Christian Ministries [FCM].

The conference theme, *Inclusive Ministry and Renewal in a Complex Age*, drew 250 attendees from across the nation and the globe. The ECC offered a workshop on "How to Start an Alternative Catholic Community," which was highly attended and well received.

Fellowship and renewal were offered as representatives from the ECC and CORPUS broke bread together and laid plans for building bridges.

Bishop Peter offered the closing liturgy for the conference. That afternoon, RCWP ordained three women to the priesthood and one to the diaconate. Bishops Dana Reynolds of CA and Ida Raming of Germany presided and Bishop Peter participated in the official ceremonies.

A special thank you goes to Holy Spirit, the local ECC community, for their hospitality to the ECC members who attended from California, Colorado, Seattle and Missouri.



Eileen Knoff, Don Pachuta, Kae Schmitt, Fr. Scott Jenkins

Bishop Peter met with members of the Holy Spirit Community in Needham, MA. Kay Schmitt said, "The pot luck with Bishop Peter provided wonderful sharing, fellowship, joy and good food, a great celebration of Peter's visit with Holy Spirit."

## The Parish of Sts. Francis and Clare

Fr. Joe Spina OSF, Pastor  
Fort Lauderdale, FL



We came into existence as members of Holy Angels Parish of The National Catholic Church (NCC) of North America, Inc. After surveying the scene and recognizing an excess of clergy, we, the Franciscans of Fort Lauderdale, began to search for more productive ways of ministering to God's family with all of its character and diversity.

After a time of searching for suitable sites, we happened upon the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, an ELCA parish, in downtown Fort Lauderdale, which is an area of new growth and potential. Our first official liturgy was on Christmas Eve 2004. Most in attendance were family and friends.

Each Liturgy is preceded by the brothers and parish community jointly sharing in Evening Prayer, which is a hallmark of our co-patrons, Francis and Clare. We are likewise blessed with a powerful musical presence.

For various reasons, we decided to withdraw from the NCC and continued as an independent Catholic community. Realizing the need for an authentic Catholic image with which we would be comfortable, we investigated and then contacted the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. As we continue to journey together, we pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit as we bring to and receive from our new Communion of believers.

At present, our attendance is in the mid-forties. We are a mix of diverse backgrounds and various religious experiences. All are welcome at the table of Jesus whose body we are and receive.

An interesting side note: First Lutheran was originally Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church. The Lutherans purchased it in the 1940s and moved it piece by piece to its present location. You may recall that Anthony was a Franciscan friar and a contemporary of Francis. Our hosts explain that the building has come full circle with our presence.

If you ever find yourself in south Florida, please be sure to come and worship with us. We are one family – thanks be to God!  
<http://www.stsfrancisandclare.org>

## The Franciscans of Fort Lauderdale

Fr. Joe Spina OSF  
Fort Lauderdale, FL



We are a non-residential community of five and are based on the Third Order Regular rule of Francis of Assisi. Our point of origin comes from The Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn, New York. Joe Spina was a member of that Community and when he felt called to return to an official Franciscan way of life, he contacted the Brothers and they gave him one of their habits. Would it not be so very good for this spirit to embrace the entire Church? At that point his ministry was within the framework of the Anglican Catholic Church.

The journey from New York to Fort Lauderdale was completed in 1989. After five years of no community life, there were many inquiries over the years but all were "looking to be cared for." An inquiry was made from three men seeking a non-residential way of life and after awhile, they went their own way.

From these beginnings, others began to inquire: Vincent, a former Benedictine monk and priest from Paterson, New Jersey; Peter, a former member of the Holy Name Province; Richard, an insurance adjustor and John, retired from the Navy; all are lifelong Catholics. Three are ordained and two non-ordained. One's status in Community is not determined by ordination.

Presently, we staff the Parish of Sts. Francis and Clare in downtown Fort Lauderdale and are chaplains to the Humane Society of Broward County and to Holly Dogs, a rescue group involved with the Hollywood Greyhound track whose owners bring their animal companions to Mass on the fourth Saturday. One fun ministry is the blessing of the dogs at an annual Florida Marlins game. Our brothers also are involved in nursing home/senior center ministry as well as at local hospitals.

As a community we minister to whomever God sends to us. We share with the diverse, authentic brothers and sisters who gravitated to Francis of Assisi, who as the Mirror of Christ so perfectly reflected the Word made Flesh.

Our Community speaks for itself. Should it be God's will for us to grow, it will happen. As we walk in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi we reflect on his words: Preach the Gospel everyday – even using words when necessary.

*"May we all be instruments of God's peace!"*

To read about Fr. Joe Spina, a Padre for the Marlins and the good work the Franciscans do go to the link:

[www.palmbeachpost.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/palmbeach/marlinsblog/entries/2008/05/02/a\\_padre\\_for\\_the\\_marlins.html](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/palmbeach/marlinsblog/entries/2008/05/02/a_padre_for_the_marlins.html)

## News Bites

### Ordinations to the Diaconate:

#### Wednesday, September 17

Bishop Rick Hollingsworth, Presider  
Light of Christ, Longmont, CO

Teri Harroun Light Of Christ ECC – CO  
Kathleen Gorman Church of the Holy Family – CO

#### Friday, October 24

Bishop Peter Hickman, Presider  
St. Louis, MO

Rosa Buffone Holy Spirit ECC-MA  
Verona Mazzei Holy Spirit ECC-MA  
Tom Altepeter Oshkosh, WI  
Catherine Schmitt St. Louis, MO

### The 2008 ECC House of Pastors Retreat

#### October 20-24

The 2008 ECC House of Pastors Retreat will be held October 20-24 at Eden Seminary in St. Louis, MO. The theme of the retreat is Called into Communion [*koinonia*]. Morning sessions with offer "bread for the head and spirit" followed by group discussions to "chew and swallow" the bread offered. A unique feature of the retreat will be a creative experience offered each evening by Fr Zilvinas Jakstas that will be as "an invitation to walk with yourself thru music, art and action"—so that hopefully we experience *koinonia* even with ourselves! For more information go to: [www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org](http://www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org)

### Speaking of Funding . . .

At the National Synod in October 2007, the House of Laity proposed an injection of funds (\$5 from each registered adult member) early in our year to allow the operations budget to begin 2008 in the black. It was agreed upon by each member community with delegate representation that the HOL would roll out its first national fundraiser in 2008. The national office received \$7,068.00 from participating communities. A heartfelt THANK YOU goes to the communities that participated.

Celi Martinez  
House of Laity Co-Leader

### Stories of the ECC

#### ***A New Light: The Ecumenical Catholic Communion*** by Dean Jones.

Dean traveled across the United States gathering stories from members of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion for this independent work. His interviews reveal the hearts and minds of lay people, female and male clergy, both incardinated and ordained, single mothers and families, as they journey to new life in ECC church communities. For more information contact [dejn7@aol.com](mailto:dejn7@aol.com)

### **National Health Insurance Update**

Group insurance investigations have provided us with some valuable information for the future as the ECC continues to grow.

Offering a nationwide group insurance plan to all members of ECC communities is not an option. A group plan can only insure *employees* of ECC communities.

In limiting the group to ECC employees only, group insurance companies consider our group very small. Given our size, we fall under higher scrutiny. We learned that:

1. When an insurance company assumes all risk for the group, they require a track record, or group claims history. As a new group, we do not have a claims history. Most insurance companies would also require that we insure a minimum of 75% of all eligible ECC employees. Some eligible ECC employees may have access to cheaper plans elsewhere, through large employers, etc., and thus complying with this requirement at present would be difficult.
2. The ECC would have the option to self-insure, meaning that the ECC assumes all risk. This would be the best avenue for establishing a claims history, but requires substantial monetary reserves to pay for claims and a third-party administrator for claims processing. This is a very expensive option, and the ECC would have to be quite sound financially at the parish, regional, and national levels to do this.

At present, we don't see any other option than to wait for more growth throughout the ECC if we want to provide insurance for employees of ECC communities. We have decided to table our interest in group insurance until the time appears more opportune. – Frank Krebs and Barb Fichter

### **Silver Anniversary Celebration**

Aurora, CO

Congratulations to Fr. Scott Jenkins on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination. Pastor to Church of the Holy Family, Fr. Scott and his community will celebrate an additional milestone, the 10 year anniversary of Holy Family, with an annual picnic and Mass in the park on Sunday, September 14.

### **Celebrating our Catholic Identity**

Las Cruces, NM

On April 13, Fr. Jim Lehman celebrated the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and service to the faith community of Holy Family in Las Cruces. Holy Family started with 12 people and today includes more than 120 families.

Bishops, priests and his family came from around the country to celebrate. Highlighting the celebration was a presentation by Fr. Zilvinas of the Holy Family icon to the community. The Bishops in attendance used the time together to develop a Bishops Forum, a place to continue dialogue about the needs of Old Catholics in this country and ways to work together.

### **Rocky Mountain Regional Meetings**

Denver, CO

ECC delegates of the Rocky Mountain Region met in April at Light of Christ in Longmont, in June at Holy Family, Aurora and most recently again in July at St. Augustine in Denver, to further their work in the regionalization process. Communities in attendance were Holy Family, Aurora, CO, Light of Christ, Longmont, CO, St. Augustine, Denver CO, Imago Dei, Capitol Hill, CO, and Church of the Beloved, Northglenn, CO.

Chief among the outcomes of these meetings is a document that outlines the purpose and selection process for the Rocky Mountain Regional Council. A discernment retreat is scheduled for November 8 during which members of the first Rocky Mountain Regional Council will be identified. Please keep them in your prayers on this most important day.

### **Pacific Coast Regional Meeting**

Orange, CA

Members of the Pacific Coast Region met on August 22 to discuss the possibility of creating a California diocese for the ECC. We were joined by Bishop Tom Abel and Mother Janine Stock, who represented the American Catholic Church, Diocese of California, and acted as advisors to the gathering.

While there was enthusiasm for the choice of a diocesan bishop and the formation of a diocese, some members cautioned us about the need for more resources and more communities to make such a plan viable. Additionally, others asked about the communities in the region that are outside California: Would they feel left out of the process? Should we make the diocese larger than California or would this defeat the purpose of attempting to create a smaller jurisdiction to address the needs of local faith communities and help to support their efforts?

Thus, a long process of discernment is underway, and many voices will hopefully come to consensus about the timing and efforts of creating the smaller regional Church. – Fr. Jim Farris

**Editor's note:** Contributions to ECC News are welcome. Send your submission to [administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org](mailto:administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org)