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The Antioch Community Voice

A newsletter published by the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch

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Spring, 2012

**2012 ~ the Year of Appreciation for the contributions of
Mary Louise Reynolds (Matriarch Meri Louise Spruit) to the
Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch**



© professional, name unknown



+++Herman Adrian Spruit and +++Meri

2012 ~ the Year of Appreciation for the contributions of Mary Louise Reynolds (Matriarch Meri Louise Spruit) to the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch

On the 18th day of December, 2011, Presiding Bishop Mark Elliot Newman proclaimed 2012 as a year of special recognition of our dear +++Meri.

Meri Louise Reynolds was known within the Independent and Old catholic Movement as +++Meri Louise Spruit. From church archives, we learn that she “received her high episcopal elevation from Patriarch Herman Adrian Spruit on the ship Queen Mary docked at Long Beach, California, January 26, 1986.”

Matriarch Meri Louise retired “after thirty years of devoted service. ...During her earlier years of life in service to the church, Matriarch Meri Louise worked closely with the late Patriarch Herman Adrian Spruit (Adrian VII), twelve years advancing through the ranks of Holy Orders, church administration, Rector of Sophia Divinity School, and serving nineteen years as Matriarch.”

In addition to serving the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, Matriarch Meri became well known among the other independent and Old Catholic movement, sharing her many talents, and her embodiment of the Divine Feminine.

We love you, +++Meri!



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Lenten Joy

Bishop Jack Isbell

In the Early Christian Church the first expanded season of the Church Year was the addition of the great 40 days of Lent. This originally was a time of penance and preparation for the celebration of Easter: The festival of Christ's Resurrection. It was a time for those who had been separated from the church could prepare to re-enter the membership of the church. In the Dark Ages the preparation was taken over by penance and "woe is me" types of thinking. People no longer could see the Joy that was coming during Easter.

In the 1200's St. Francis again brought joy to Life in the Church. Franciscans by the example of the 'Poor Little Man of Assisi' began to experience new joy in all of their lives and ministry in the Church. A publication that I receive often from a Poor Clare Monastery in Washington State, USA is entitled "Joy Notes!" I believe that instead of giving up things in Lent (most that we take up again after Easter) we should begin to take on things that are positive and always helpful to others. I believe that we are drawn by Spirit to do works of Mercy for those that are in need. There are many charities that could use our help. The homeless are all around us and we can begin to help them to find homes, the basics of life in food, medicine, and shelter. Every community has organizations that are working to help the homeless. They can use our volunteer hours, presence, donations of money, and clothing. I use this as an example because the homeless repre-

sent populations that are often ignored.

There are many wonderful charities and people that could be helped during Lent as well as all year long. In order to restore real JOY in Lent, we must reach out and take on new projects to help and assist others in need. It could also be as simple as reaching out to the lonely and those left alone by many. Perhaps there is a member of your family or a close friend who you have not contacted (call, write, e-mail, visit etc.) in a long time. Lent is the time that you can cheer such people up by your contact or visit. Hospitals and Nursing Homes almost always appreciate visitors or volunteers. I realize HIPPA regulations make it difficult just to visit but there are ways of doing this if you agree to volunteer. You can add joy to some one's life by a cheerful and regular visit. Lent would be a great time to begin to do such visiting and/or volunteering.

JOY in Lent can also be experienced by self-preparation and reflection. This is the season to read a good book or take up a serious study of the Scriptures. Perhaps a new resolve to create a "Rule of Life" for you to begin to follow, or to be more frequent in worship and creative Spiritual Exercises, will also bring back JOY to your life and ministry. I really believe having a Spiritual Director will add new meaning and JOY to your life. I've had a Spiritual Director on a regular basis for over 30 years. I've lived in 3 different places and in each move (continued ..)

LENTEN JOY, continued

I found a new Spiritual Director, who has added such JOY to my life throughout the year!

I remember Lent when I was a child. I grew up in both Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches. When we visited my mother's home town in Kentucky, two of her brothers and one sister were Roman Catholic. I always went to mass with them. I remember 'Passiontide' when all the statues were veiled and we were always fasting with no meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. My father's sister was Lutheran and I remember attending church with my Aunt and Uncle. In that Lutheran Church, of course, the pastor talked about giving up things during Lent—but Lutherans really have beautiful chorales, choirs, hymns, beautiful music, all of which was inspiring. There was always a 'Tenebrae', or Service of Darkness. Such Services were uplifting and pointed to Easter JOY. It seems to me that when you can make your Lent more JOY filled then you really know how to celebrate Easter!

I encourage all who read this little epistle, to make Lent mean something different this year. Remember to take on new projects, persons, and or study, so you will begin to see that Lent can be JOY filled and not a 'downer'. Cursillo taught me, many years ago, three words that can make such difference all year round: Prayer, Study, and Action! If you put these three little words to work for you, I assure you, that this

this coming Eastertide will be wonderful. May the Spirit keep you faithful and JOY filled during all the seasons of your life.

Perspective on Lent

Mary Altalo

First Day of the Lenten Celebration- "Cleansing Wednesday"



Mary Photo © Phil Nichols

Some of the most glorious events in the life of Jesus fall within the 40 days of lent—a time to rejoice throughout the season not just on Easter. It is also the time that Jesus did his most concerted teaching---the lessons were coming fast and furious , he wanted to get everything in that had been given him to teach. It has always been difficult for me to understand why , if all of lent points to the resurrection of the lord, the culmination, that we spend all these 40 days remembering how terrible we all are and will just fall away to reveal my true Spirit. Apocalyptic perspective. Repentance means to turn away - yes not only turn away from error but turn and change your entire perspective and live in God's kingdom now. Christ says if you keep just 2 commandments, you taste the new world NOW, you are saved. So I rejoice at this knowledge. I do not start out parading my ashes to others as is reprimanded by Jesus in today's gospel---dust to dust—no—if we truly believe that we are a spiritual being in an earthly existence then (continued...)



Photo© taken by +Linda Rounds-Nichols

PERSPECTIVE ON LENT, continued

I will return to that glorious nature, not dust to dust, but light to light.

Many see the third eye as symbolic of true seeing which opens during meditation. Perhaps it is significant that ashes are placed over the third eye,---a way of keeping truths hidden?

I will not give ashes on the first day of lent, but use cotton and water to cleanse the spiritual third eye for new vision during the renewal season. I will begin a Lenten bouquet with a lily which I will display on my altar- to remind me of the purity with which God made each of us and to which we will return-- To remind us of how much joy we bring to God when our total focus is on our creator.

I will light the first candle of the Lenten season to remind me of the Light I share with God. And sing an Allelujah to remind me of our salvation NOW that Christ has brought.

written for Mary

© Becky Taylor

**Lord, first comfort me, change my water to wine,
Sooth me with Your forgiveness.
My feelings tell me that I am not worthy of Your gifts,
Of Your blessings.
So I confess to You...I am not worthy.
And I am answered,
*"Precious One, only ask and you shall receive".***

But Lord, won't my, and our, many requests burden you?

"Precious One, the more you receive, the more you strengthen Me."

So this is the way freely given?

This is unconditional Love?

"Yes, This is why it is called a gift."

Now I notice that concrete can be broken by a tiny flower.

Now I notice how bright can be a candle alone in the darkness.

Now I notice that I cannot empty myself of love,

And I cannot store love by withholding it from others.

Now I know that I am a part of infinite love,

I do not produce it but I can give it by passing it on.

I can reduce it by trying to hold it in my private revelries.

Lord let me be a tiny flower of Your love; not willfully attempting to change another, but rather reaching for You as I rise and crack through a hardened heart.

change a life to pure

© *Becky Taylor*

**Hatred finds me willing to endure
it's passing,
my brow the color of Hysop,
my wine the color of glass.
Passion opens me like cosmic
lace,
and the winds of unholy ardor
pass.
For it is not a momentum borne of
me which moves you,
and not my presence you fear...
But a motion sickness rules you,
and but a symbol which you see
clear.
The dark fluid of denial runs
freely from your veins,
staining all who seek to salvage
your remains.
For to bind a wound from which
flows anger,
is a questionable cure.
But to kiss the breach and cool
the rancor,
can change a life to pure.**

Photo © of Becky
taken by
Phil Nichols



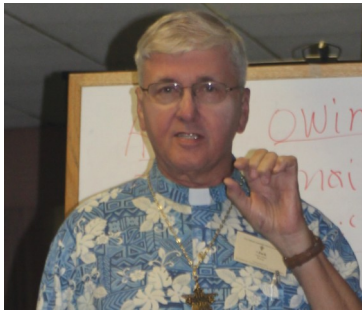
Closeness Is Clarity

© *Becky Taylor*

**Lord give me the strength to stand
with You,
When I am most bitter.
I need the courage to stand with
Your presence,
When my worst moments sabo-
tage my spirit.
O Lord, abandon not my sinful self,
Stand with me, as I display my
neediness.
Show me how I might pray for my
needs,
and be true to You.
I know so well the desires I suffer,
And know so fleetingly Your will.
My thoughts ever flood my con-
sciousness,
While I strain against them to
clear a space for You.
And now
I am once again humbled.
You come to me,
amidst my mindful clutter.
In Your closeness,
So light and delicate and whole,
My weighty confusion dissipates.
In favor of Your presence,
Lesser concerns, for what is not?
vanish.
I am reminded,
not to accept the challenge of
management.
So I seek not answers
But rather, closeness to You.
Therein is found the fulfillment
of all questions.**

The Little Church that Cares

Bishop Jack Isbell



+Jack Photo © Phil Nichols

I've been interested in reading about the "Emergent Church Movement." This new formula for church growth

teaches that churches should not be interested in numbers, but rather in the quality of the member's life and ministry. It also teaches that churches should not own buildings or property. Instead it encourages little cell type churches to meet in homes or other borrowed spaces. When they grow bigger than such small spaces can accommodate, they should attempt to share the building with other larger established churches.

Most large institutional churches use their large buildings mainly for worship only on one day each week. They are often very happy to rent out their sanctuary or smaller rooms to other churches that are in the "Emergent Church Movement". Our little church here in Honolulu, Hawaii has followed the advice of the Emergent Churches in meeting first in a small space and then moving to larger quarters.

We were founded in 2006 and for 3 years we worshiped at the Episcopal Student Center at the University of Hawai'i. In 2009 we moved to our present location at

Queen Emma Gardens. This is the condominium where another clergy person and I reside. We now worship in a Japanese style Tea House (designed for parties at our condos) which is located next to a "Koi" Pond surrounded by Monkey Pod Trees and Norfolk Pine trees and beautiful Hawaiian plants and flowers. We have over 1,000 brightly colored Koi in the pond and a family of Teal Ducks with several ducklings born each Spring. Since we are a CCOA Parish in the Franciscan Tradition, our congregation of 8 loves all the Fauna and Flora! Most of the members of our church live at Queen Emma Gardens Condominiums. Sr. Barbara rides her bike each Sunday to our Mass .



Nick+ Photo © Phil Nichols

The other clergy take turns preaching and celebrating the Eucharist. Fr. Nick brings a guided meditation each week from his Unity Church background.

We are blessed with a Homily "Talk Back" time after each short talk about the Gospel for the Day. The members of the church always ask great questions of the clergy and of each other. Fr. Nick is the time keeper to keep us on track and we manage to do the worship in about an hour each Sunday. Some members and visitors stay behind

THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT- CARES, continued....

additional questions and usually they get answers too. I say usually because we all know that some Spiritual Questions need further time and reflection to find answers that fit each person's pathway and beliefs.

Sr. Barbara was ordained a priest at our church in 2011 and Fr. Carl Matthews was ordained a priest at our parish in 2008. Our church just had two of our number move back to the U. S. Main land recently and we are now to 6 members. Word of mouth seems to work best in attracting new congregants. Diversity in Spiritual belief, action, and ministry also seems to mark such 'Emergent Churches.' Our youngest member is twenty-something and our oldest is eighty-something. That member has lived at Queen Emma Gardens for over 35 years. We believe that Mother Father God always sends interested persons and possible future members! We have decided that if our numbers ever get below 5 we will move up to an apartment and be a "House Church" again. The emphasis is on Quality not Quantity!



Photo © owned by Hawaii's CCOA church

Our members come from different races, cultures, and religious traditions. We see our self as Independent Catholic and are open to other faiths represented in our Islands. Buddhism seems to have a real influence on our lives and worship as well. Queen Emma Gardens is located in the shadow of 3 Buddhist temples (Kwan Yin Temple, a Chinese Temple and a Japanese Temple.) This spectrum of influence from world religions is also present in many "Emergent Churches." We are also very proud of the social activism of many of our members. We have interesting political discussions also — most of our members are Democrats (as are most people in this very Democratic State of Hawai'i) but all are welcome and none are ever turned away because of political beliefs. We just seem to respect one another's diversity in age, race, gender, sexual preference, culture and spirituality. The One Spirit seems to call our little church to continue being the "Servant Church" by becoming more visible in our social activism and testimony to a living Gospel of Love. We are so proud to be an "Emergent Church!"



Sr. Barb+, Carl+, +Jack, and Nick+
Photo © owned by Hawaii's CCOA church

... thy kingdom has come....

Mary Altaló

Jesus raised the level of understanding by his teachings and demonstrated the concepts by his healings and miracles. Jesus' premise is that if we live by the two commandments of love, we experience what it is like to live under God's rule immediately and individually. We taste now freedom, and the result is inner peace, harmony, forgiveness, understanding, and unconditional love of all. That is living in the kingdom which Jesus says in the Aramaic version of the Lord's Prayer, "thy Kingdom has come, thy will has been done on earth (in the physical forms of spirit) as it is in heaven (individualizations of spirit on the non-physical plane). The way it spreads is not by conquering nations, but by conquering minds and hearts through reason and understanding and love. Jesus had to move the concept of the Kingdom from without to WITHIN. Jesus brought up an entire culture to another level, giving them a picture of a "kingdom" where they were in control because the kingdom was within, they were able to influence it as they accepted and lived by its rules. By taking the kingdom of God, the utopia, and putting it within, it was now within their power to obtain.

A corollary to this is that if the kingdom is within, then they must have God within themselves. And if God lives within, then a new way of praying and appealing to this indwelling God makes sense - and Jesus showed them how through the lord's prayer . If God was within me, then God is within ALL

people, thus when I interact with others, I interact with the "divine neighbor". If all of God is within me, then I have access to God's wisdom by which I can act rightly; and in acting rightly, I am acting with God's power. If I act with God's power, then "I can do these things and more" as Jesus said. As I do these things and more, I am modeling the divine and teaching others to do the same, which is the goal and purpose of our existence. And when we all do this, the world is living under Divine rule and the Kingdom of God is ours.

We are the vehicle through which further truths are revealed and demonstrated. What we have to access and discern by reason and intuition is the wisdom that Jesus already had. He saw us as the Divine in potential. We need only to be aware and to accept that original goodness that we were created with, and see that true goodness in others, to unleash the kingdom now. We must step forward to change any practices which fail to see the goodness and beauty of humankind. We have the power to do this today — to look at any practices which stress the negative "sinful doomed creature" and replace them with the true value as revealed by Jesus.



Homelessness in America

+Linda Rounds-Nichols

*For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me drink;
when I was homeless, you gave me a welcome....*

Matthew 25:35, Weymouth New Testament

Last December, Carl Matthews+, CCOA priest and director of mission outreach at St. Joseph of the Pines, participated in a Candlelight Vigil, a memorial for the North Carolina homeless who have died. Carl+ was quoted in *The Pilot* (December 23, 2011 issue), saying, "Each [one who has died] was one of a kind, a person with unique gifts, attributes, hopes and dreams."

Carl+ then wrote a position paper on Homelessness for CCOA. This position paper has been posted on the CCOA general email list and the seminarians' email list, and it will be posted on the new website.

Thanks, Carl+, for showing us how to walk the talk!

~ Thinking of You ~

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all who have requested prayers through the prayer request page on our website.

In addition, our thoughts and prayers are with:

Kathy Perry
Diana Phipps
Carl Matthews
Dolly Ryan Walker
Vincent Rocha
Daniel Barcenas Arellano



Coming Events

March: unveiling of our new website!

April 14: Ordination of Dolly Ryan-Walker to the priesthood.

April 15: Elevation/ordination of Vincent Rocha to the Order of Cleric

May 26: Ordination of Daniel Barcenas Arellano to the priesthood

October 25-29: CCOA Convocation



+Mark Elliott Newman,
CCOA Presiding Bishop
© photo by Phil Nichols

**"The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."**

Numbers 6:24-26

The Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch is an independent jurisdiction within the sacramental tradition. Webpage: www.churchofantioch.org

This newsletter is brought to you by the CCOA Communications Committee: +Jack Isbell, Carl Matthews+ and +Linda Rounds-Nichols, editor. We thank those who submitted materials for this issue, and invite all CCOA clergy and seminarians to submit materials for the next issue. Submission deadline: July 1, to lindaroundsnichols@yahoo.com.