



The Antioch Community Voice

A newsletter published by the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch

Winter, 2016-2017

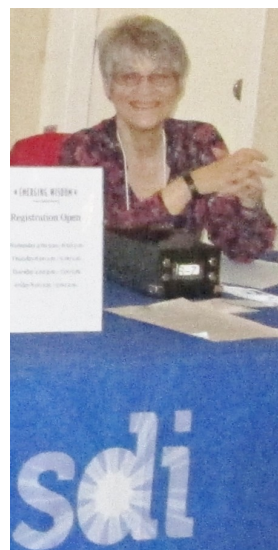
Spiritual Directors International 2016 Educational Event in San Diego.



Bp. Mark



Bp. Linda, Phil; Bp. Mark, Fr. Rick and Darlene



Bp. Linda volunteered and helped with registration. Bp. Mark also volunteered, and introduced a presenter. (Once a deacon—always a deacon—we are ready to help!)



Welcome Back!

CCOA is pleased that Bishop Diana Phipps, Texas and Rev. Father Klaas Tuinman, Canada returned to our ranks this past fall. Welcome Back!!



Curriculum Revision

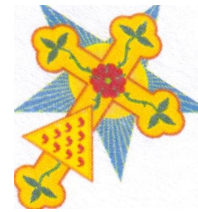
Bachelor of Divinity

After working on revisions for a few months, Sophia Divinity School unveiled a new curriculum last year. The new Bachelor of Divinity curriculum begins with a three course candidacy program, giving the incoming seminarian and the seminary a chance to get to know each other. If both feel we have a good fit, then after successful completion of the first three courses, the seminarian is accepted as a candidate for continued study toward either a degree or possible ordination. At this point, the seminarian takes three sections of study leading to the possibility of ordination as Healer, followed by three other sections, leading to the possibility of ordination as deacon. After this, the candidate completes preparation for the priesthood.

Our former curriculum was good; however the revised curriculum groups like topics together, which will increase the intensity of the study. We are excited about the revised Bachelor of Divinity program, which is the basic degree needed prior to ordination.

We welcome our new seminarian, William from Phoenix, who is the first to participate in this program.

*For more information, please review our catalog at
www.churchofantioch.org.*



Master of Divinity

The revised MDiv program is completely new!

We are excited to offer qualified students the opportunity for concentrated research in areas such as Christian and Pastoral Ethics, History of Christianity, or Christology.

Dn. Scott, from California, is about to begin this new program.

As Jesus would want it—working with others!



Presiding Bishop Mark Newman and Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols, acting on behalf of Archbishop Leon Hunt of the United Kingdom, ordained the Rev. Elizabeth Ann Bryan to the episcopal order, sub conditione on June 25, 2016.

Bishop Ann was left without a jurisdiction when her former Presiding Bishop died. She turned to Archbishop Leon since he and her former bishop had known each other during the time that Archbishop Leon lived in the United States. Archbishop Leon accepted her into the Autocephalous Catholic Church of Antioch of the United Kingdom.

Although she lives in the United States, Bishop Ann remains under the UK jurisdiction of the Church, answerable directly to Archbishop Leon. The UK and US branches of the Catholic Church of Antioch are in full inter-communion.



Fr. Tom, Bp. Linda, Rev. Deacon Scott, Bp. Mark, Fr. Tony and Rev. Deacon Meredith.

Fr. Tom, Fr. Tony and Deacon Meredith are all with Trinity Episcopal Church in Ashland, OR. CCOA was honored to have their participation in Rev. Dn. Scott's ordination.

More celebrations!

At last, after years of traveling, interviewing, and interacting with folks from CCOA and other independent jurisdictions, Julie was able to present her book! We were able to read about ourselves!

Julie Byrne is shown here with +Mark. The long-awaited for (for us) book is: **The Other Catholics: Remaking America's Largest Religion**.

Anyone interested in the big picture of catholicism should read this book. You'll see some familiar names!



CCOA Presiding Bishop, Mark Elliott Newman wed Ryan Gallo Obado at a Dignity Worship Service in Phoenix on September 17, 2016.



Sophia Divinity School seminarian, Ron, of Las Cruces, New Mexico, became Deacon Ron in May.

Being A Deacon

Deacon Ron Catherson

May 22, 2016 was a wonderful day; I was ordained a Deacon. It was the beginning of the realization that my calling was coming to life. Yes, I have been working on classes through the Sophia Divinity School and studied, studied, and studied. But no book or conversation can really prepare you for actually being a Deacon within a church community.

The first Sunday (May 29th) of being with my community as a Deacon, was a baptism by fire for sure! I had the honor and privilege of baptizing a new born baby boy. He is the grandson of one of St. John's members. The week was busy planning to incorporate in our service the baptism rite. Who am I kidding! It was a VERY busy week of not only planning the first service of St. John's but incorporating a baptism into the service as well. Double duty. My calling truly came to life when I said the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." I am looking forward to the next baptism.

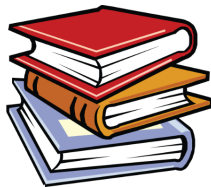
Just a couple of weeks ago, I officiated at my first wedding. Again, I needed to incorporate the couple's requests for their wedding into our regular service at St. John's. This time, I had several weeks of working and developing our service and only had the task of adding the wedding. What a blessing to officiate at a special friend's wedding. The groom is a very active 83 year-old with a bride only a few years younger! Again, my calling came to life when I said, "I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. ..." I am looking forward to the next wedding.

My next event will be a memorial service for the wife of a man who died from lung cancer. I have worked with her and her family to develop a service to use to remember his life. Because of special circumstances, the date has been postponed until she is settled in a local nursing home. I know that this is needed for the family, but I am not looking forward to the next memorial service or funeral.

Every Sunday I do look forward to presiding at communion service and providing the Body and Blood of Christ to each of the members, plus receiving Him myself. This part of my ministry is also very fulfilling. I am receiving a taste of what it will be like when I am ordained a Priest. I can only imagine at this time the feeling of consecrating the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And this will become a weekly function of my ministry!



Back to my seminary work of studying, studying, and studying.



(St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch where I serve as a Deacon)

Convocation—2016 in Carefree, Arizona

Contemplative Spirituality, A 21st Century Renaissance of the Christian Mystical Tradition



Jeff+ Genung and Mary+ Altalo were the main presenters.



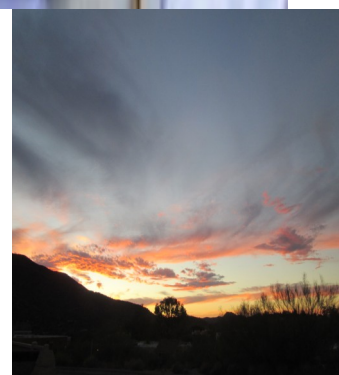
Scott Carter was ordained as a priest.



Klaas+, pictured elsewhere, and +Diana, here with +Mark and +Linda, returned to CCOA.



We enjoyed our time together....



.. and the location!



A New Priest

Scott Carter+

The Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch has a new priest for its chartered ministry in Ashland, Oregon, and I am it.

My name is Scott, excuse me, Father Scott Carter of the Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience, A Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch. Yes, it makes for a long official business name with the state of Oregon—and for an unwieldy domain name and email address. Still, it hints at who we are and what we’re trying to do here in Ashland. I say “we” because my ordination has made it possible for the CCOA to be fully sacramentally present here in Southern Oregon.

My ordination was a long time coming. It was roughly a dozen years after when I first wrote to Archbishop Richard and began taking seminary classes that I was finally ordained this October at the convocation in Carefree, Arizona. Granted, I had no idea if I really wanted to be a priest when I began, no understanding that the pull I felt inside was truly a vocation.

I should say again here what I have been repeating to everyone who will listen. Sophia Divinity School does a number of things well, and it excels at guiding seminarians through the process of spiritual formation, particularly when it comes to discernment. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dean †Linda, Presiding Bishop Mark, my most recent mentor Mother Mary, and everyone who shepherded me toward that life-changing day in Carefree. They spent many years helping me understand my own gifts, my own strengths and weaknesses, in an effort to discern how best I might love and serve. Yes, I did the work. I worked long and hard, sincerely and with commitment, uninterested in cutting corners because I wanted to be changed. I believe in religion as a transformative discipline. Thanks to Antioch, Sophia, and the One we serve, I did grow. I am changed.

If you know me, you know I am often moved in sacramental settings, particularly during the Eucharist. If you attended my ordination you saw me start crying almost immediately after beginning the reading Bishop Mark asked me to do. He asked me at the last minute, and I still don’t know if he did that intentionally to throw me off balance and open me up to a spontaneous, more vulnerable moment. If so, it worked. As I started reading, I felt the Word was speaking through my mouth and directly to my heart. When the tears began falling I was actually afraid they wouldn’t stop throughout the ceremony.

That night and the next day I celebrated with pictures and heart to heart conversations with all the beautiful souls of Antioch. I felt what I still feel every day. I’ve done what God has called me to do. I’ve accomplished it with the help of Antioch, Sophia, and above all through the grace of God, and now I’m prepared to answer the continuing call of the Holy Spirit. Here I am. (continued)



Scott+, shown with Dn. Ron 7

A New Priest, continued

The Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience is a ministry without a building or a traditional congregation. It exists to practice, support, and promote Independent Catholic spirituality, especially the traditions of pilgrimage, contemplation, and the divine gift of individual conscience. The Chapel serves spiritual seekers who feel called to the Way, including those who may feel exiled, alienated, or excluded. It is catholic in conscience and independent of Rome.

The Chapel offers access to the mystical, contemplative traditions of Christianity. It believes in the life-changing power of a relationship with Christ and teaches the practice of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. At the same time, it respects science, modern scholarship, and the human intellect, honoring the divine gift of the individual's informed conscience.

Going forward, the Pilgrim Chapel's newly ordained Independent Catholic priest will offer the traditional Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Matrimony, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Sick (Healing or Anointing), as well as spiritual advice and support to all who seek it. The Chapel, as I proudly proclaim, is a chartered ministry of the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, an inclusive and non-dogmatic branch of the One, Holy Christian Church: The Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience, A Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch.

While I've been scrambling to catch up after returning to a post-convocation computer meltdown and a series of family health challenges, I'm excited about the possibilities ahead. If you'd like to follow along with the ministry's activities, please visit www.pilgrimchapelofcontemplativeconscience.org and like the Chapel's Facebook page. It's proving a great way to stay in touch with and available to people.

Oh, and if you heard me laughing about what a great idea I thought it would be for the Pilgrim Chapel to "tiny church" in- "tiny house" and wheels for wed- and wide, you know someone else was a good idea saw a television cial featuring an officiant" hauling church all over the side, people smil- passed. I don't do something simi- ally, but I do know more than ever we could use those smiles.



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Reclaiming the Contemplative Tradition of the Christian Mystics

Mary Altalo+

For the past several years, the COA Convocations have followed the Ancient Mystical Stream beginning with Kathryn Damiano's presentation in 2012 on Spiritual Transformation followed by Paul Smith's *Integral Christianity* in 2013 and Bishop Leon Hunt's *Mapping the Temple of the Holy Spirit* in 2014. This year, I was honored to co-facilitate Convocation 2016 with Fr. Jeff Genung, whose beautiful contemplative practices were threaded throughout the days allowing a mystical time to "center" and deepen our experience of the Divine. Heartfelt thanks goes to all our Bishops, Priests, Deacons, seminarians and guests for the beautiful liturgies, animated discussions, and open exchange of ideas. I offer here are a few reflections from our time together to take into your daily lives for further "mulling" and personal vetting. What has touched my soul may not touch yours in the same way- that is the beauty of our COA inclusivity of all viewpoints. For those who were unable to attend, I hope this may give you a taste of the wonders of the contemplative experience that the Mystics have shared with us

*"To be a Mystic Means to Experience or to be in the Presence of God
and the Presence of One's Own Soul at the Same Time" -E. Underhill*

The Ancient Wisdom Traditions teach that there is Divine reality beneath and inherent in the world of things. There is in the human soul a natural capacity, similarity and longing for this Divine reality, and the final goal of all existence is union with their Divine reality. This is the Unitive Mystery and is the common core of all faiths. It is the tradition, consciousness, approach and the "worldview" of the Mystics. And it is the mystical stream in which the COA is bathed and a worldview and lifestyle to which we are called.

The Ancient mode of knowing is a *Participatory Knowing*-- a knowing that is personal, experiential and tending toward union with that which is known. One participates in the Divine Flow. It is ultimately centered in our identity, and is the experience of allowing Spirit to know through us, to speak in and through us. It is the Jesus way of knowing, the consciousness Jesus wished for us. It is contained in the Aramaic call to "Metanoia", to "step into our higher consciousness". And it is "the Gift" already within us all, awaiting our discovery and activation.

The Mystics bear witness to the possibility of union with the Divine in this lifetime—our union—our spiritual transformation- and urge us on with spiritual practices to reveal that we are already "One" and have never been separate from the Divine- or each other. This is our true identity. This *knowing* is the salvation that Jesus brought, and the Mystics make visible the hidden underlying pattern of the divine plan. They serve as companions, spiritual guides and teachers, lending encouragement and consolation. Reading the Mystics helps us give voice to our own mystical experiences and help us vet our own mystical encounters. So many times we tend to dismiss or distrust our experiences. They urge us to pay attention. They urge us to question and undertake that difficult quest, much as today's Progressive Christianity movement has urged us to do. (Continued)

Reclaiming the Contemplative Tradition of the Christian Mystics, continued

Jesus pragmatically lays out the tumultuous journey in logion 2 of the Gospel of Thomas: *“If you are searching you must not stop until you find. When you find, however, you will be troubled. Your confusion will give way to wonder. In wonder you will reign over all things. Your sovereignty will be your rest.”* (expanding on Matt 7:7-8)

Mystics hold a contemplative “worldview”, a dynamic relational way of seeing and being which allows us to “know with” the Christ, not just know *about* God. It is a visionary way of seeing, a non-dual perceiving from unitive consciousness. This does not mean that one does not “see” the dualities, but has an increasing capacity for tolerating and holding paradox. Above all, a contemplative worldview perceives God’s manifestation in all creation- a panentheistic view (everything is in God and God is in everything)-- perceiving the world holistically with spiritual senses which includes perceiving ourselves, others and world as Divine manifestations, and acting out of that center.

The experience of Divinity described by the Christian Mystics is referred to as contemplation. Centering prayer, lectio divina, psalmody or even walking in nature or attentive gardening are spiritual practices which one initiates out of desire for union in anticipation of opening into that contemplative state. However contemplation is not regarded as another method or technique that I initiate. Contemplation has been described as the *receptive stance* that offers the least resistance to the Divine “pull” into the mystical stream. It is also described as the event or relationship or infilling with the Divine itself. It is *willingness* NOT willfulness. It is a God-initiated event, a “giving way” (some may call it “surrender”) to the unitive consciousness within. It is a dynamic relational way of being. It is “The Beholding Itself”, which is done unto us. It is a graced awakening, a *Mary Consciousness*, the consciousness of the Annunciation, the consciousness of complete humility and trust in the divine process and total resignation to the mystical stream- a total relinquishment of the self- a *kenosis* or self-emptying in readiness for the divine infilling which then overflows through you to others, gathering them back into the eternal flow.

Thomas Merton describes the threshold into this “space” as “le pointe vierge”, the virgin point, the realm between being and non-being, the gateway to non-duality. He also refers to it as the “temps vierge”, the eternal now, the “Hodie” of the Advent call that Christ is born “today”- the eternal today, the “sempiternal of Panikkar where Chronos turns to Kairos. It is echoed in the deacon’s call in the Orthodox Mass “Come, it is time for the Lord to Act”!

Entrainment into this timeless presence, this contemplatio, this transformational “space” is what the Mystics experienced and struggled to express in words, music, paintings, and verse. Saint Bonaventure likened it to the “Mercy Seat” of the Ark of the Covenant guarded by the two Cherubim posed in a contemplative “stance” creating the place where Yahweh said “I will come to meet you there” (Ex 25:22),-- the space where God meets Man—the place of transformation. This is *contemplatio* - where mystics such as Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, and John of the Cross each participated (continued)

Reclaiming the Contemplative Tradition of the Christian Mystics, continued

participated in a transfiguration process in which their soul, their consciousness becomes Christ's consciousness, the "It is not I who lives but Christ who lives in me" participatory experience of Paul, the "Christophany" of Raimon Panikkar, the "Christogenesis" of Teilhard de Chardin.

And more astoundingly, while in this Christ Consciousness, they participated in the intra-Trinitarian consciousness that Jesus shared with "The Father" and "The Spirit"-- Living in Fullness of Divine Trinitarian *Relationship* thru Christ. Theresa writes of it in this way in her *Interior Castle*: *"At the same time, through a wondrous kind of knowledge, she (soul) apprehends the truth that all three divine Persons are one substance and one power and one knowing and one God alone...The soul realizes then that what the rest of us know by faith, you might say, she (soul) understands by sight. But this is not a seeing with the eyes of the body or even the eyes of the soul. It isn't a visual revelation...Here, all three Persons communicate themselves to the soul. They speak to her, explaining things, like what Christ meant in the gospels when he said that he and the Father and the Holy Spirit come to dwell inside the soul who loves God and honors his ways...Oh, Lord help me! There's a big difference between believing these words by hearing them and being led to understand the truth they represent in this direct and wondrous way! The soul is more amazed every day as she discovers that these divine Persons never leave her anymore... Through this sublime knowing she clearly sees that they are with her always. She perceives their sacred presence in a radically inner place, inside her own depths. She just hasn't learned the language to be able to explain this knowing."*

John of the Cross in the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel* expresses it as follows: *"One should not think it impossible that the soul be capable of so sublime an activity as this breathing in God, through participation as God breathes in her. For, granted that God favors her by union with the Most Blessed Trinity, in which she becomes deiform and God through participation, how could it be incredible that she also understand, know, and love— or better that this be done in her— in the Trinity, together with it, as does the Trinity itself! Yet God accomplishes this in the soul through communication and participation. This is transformation in the three Persons in power and wisdom and love, and thus the soul is like God through this transformation. He created her in His image and likeness that she might attain such resemblance."*... *"God refuses to be known, only to be loved"*.

Julian of Norwich in *Showings* exclaims: *"The Trinity suddenly filled my heart with the greatest joy...For the Trinity is God, God is the Trinity; the Trinity is our maker and protector, the Trinity is our dear friend forever, our everlasting joy and bliss, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this was shown in the first revelation, and in all of them; for it seems to me that where Jesus is spoken of, the Holy Trinity is to be understood."* (continued)

Reclaiming the Contemplative Tradition of the Christian Mystics, continued

And Hildegard of Bingen sees not only her soul filled with the Trinity but all of creation. To her Trinity is the principle of relatedness: *“All Creation Is Trinity In Expression”, “Trinity Is The Principle Of Creativity And Greening Power”; “Trinity Is The Inter-connectedness Of All Reality”; “Trinity Is The Vision Of A Connected Universe”.*

And yet there is more, for while in Trinitarian consciousness we clearly see our purpose in this lifetime, and begin its fulfillment. We serve! This “knowing through Christ and Trinity”, demands action from us for the gathering in of the world, gathering back to God, the “Christogenesis” of the Cosmos which requires contemplative engagement with the world-- a contemplative entrainment and enfolding of the world. Contemplatives do not just bask in the radiance of Oneness but draw the “other” and all creation into their “enlightened” consciousness through “re-specting” them (acknowledging their Divine origins), communing with and companioning them-- “Eucharisting” with them-- flowing the same love to them that they eternally receive in the stance of contemplatio. We are called to repeat what was done unto us. We must repeat the dynamic pattern-- the emptying, the being infilled, the overflowing to others, and inflow again by the Trinity.

Teresa of Avila says it best (Interior Castle). “Shortly after God granted her the revelation of the three divine Persons” the “worldview” shifts and she experiences a passionate desire to be helpful to others: *‘You may think that an experience like this would propel the soul beyond herself, that she would become so absorbed she could focus on nothing else. Actually when it comes to doing anything related to serving God, she is more present than ever before. As soon as she finishes such a task, she rests again in that divine companionship’*”. Hildegard of Bingen calls it *Unleashing of Self-Expression which heals*.

And so this 3-fold, mystical process experienced in contemplation-- this kenosis or total self-givingness, in preparation for Divine *incarnational* upwelling from our true center, and subsequent overflow of love to others as “Eucharisting”, as “communing”, eternally “gathers back” creation into an ever expanding spiral of agape love. This love is our Being, our Esse, our nature and thus, through the process of contemplation we exemplify the Trinitarian template, the ordered process of world creation and consummation—or as Bonaventure would say: All is Emanation, Exemplarism and Consummation. Fr. Richard Rohr calls it the Divine Dance! Awesome, isn’t it!

For Further Reading: I am indebted to the work of my contemplative teachers, Fr. Richard Rohr, Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault and Dr. James Finley at the Living School of the Centers for Actions and Contemplation for enabling me to glimpse the magnificent vista that the Mystics saw. For those interested in further reading: *The Divine Dance* and *Eager to Love* by Richard Rohr; *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three* and *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening* by Cynthia Bourgeault; *Through the Narrow Gate* (CD set), and *Christian Meditation* by James Finley; *God For Us* by La Cugna; *The Trinity* by Rahner; *Christophany* by Panikkar; *Mystical Theology* by William Johnson; *Mystics* by Harmless; *Roots of Christian Mysticism* by Olivier Clement; *A Book of Hours* by Thomas Merton; *Journey of the Soul into God* by Bonaventure; *Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila; *Showings* by Julian of Norwich; *Ascent of Mt. Carmel* by John of the Cross.

Exegesis Edge and Subtle Hermeneutics, Part III

{Editors Note: Part I was in the 2015 newsletter, and Part II in the 2016 edition.

Both can be found on the CCOA webpage.}

PART THREE: LISTENING TO SCRIPTURE

Exegesis is critically interpreting a text in an attempt to "draw the meaning out" of it. Exegesis focuses on grammar, terminology, identification of the source, and literary criticism. "It can be difficult enough to understand what someone in our own family tries to say to us. The difficulty increases--almost beyond comprehension, so to speak--when we try to understand a message directed to an ancient tribe of Semites or to a gaggle of first-century Corinthians recently converted from outright paganism. Yet even this is not enough; we cannot be content with understanding just the ancient message. We need to make sense of it as a message relevant to us today. We who look to the Bible for a word from God need first to hear that Biblical word in its original context. At least, someone needs to hear it for us in that way and to help us see what it meant. But this means doing whatever we can to project ourselves back into that ancient original setting in order to hear those ancient words, as well as we can, with the ears of their first audiences. That is the task of exegesis: To project us back into that ancient world. Without exegesis, we can easily "hear" something completely different from the message first delivered. Sound, backward-projecting exegesis begins with the languages."⁷

If we are to study Scripture and seek its meaning, we must understand how to listen to it. Professor Erickson writes, "Again, the point is not that we master this literature (as if we could in the midst of ordinary life). Rather, the point is to be aware of its usefulness and its availability, and, as far as is practical, to be always reading in it. What we want is an ever-expanding sense of life among the ancients. We want an increased ability to hear the New Testament as its first readers heard it, to enlarge our understanding of their shared presuppositions about life. Reading in this literature is a bit like listening to tape recordings of their very voices, like watching an early newsreel of Kaiser Wilhelm strutting around in his plumed helmet and enormous mustache."⁸

An essential tool for listening to Scripture is to apply hermeneutics to our study.⁹ Hermeneutics refines the text by asking three "what's" in seeking understanding of Scripture as written by the author: What role does divine illumination play in the interpretation of Scripture? (Theory) What process can we follow to determine whether an apparent chiasm was intentional by the author? (Methods) What are the limits of the teachings of Christ and beliefs of the Church? (Principles)

Hermeneutical questions in Biblical exegesis encompass two major categories: philosophical hermeneutics and the meaning of inspired scripture. Philosophical categories include modern perspectives and the usefulness of exegesis. The meaning of inspired scripture encompasses the literal sense, the spiritual sense, and the fuller sense.¹⁰

(Continued)

PART THREE: LISTENING TO SCRIPTURE, CONTINUED

Hermeneutics subtly incorporates literary and historical methods in seeking meaning and insight of Scripture. “The Bible is the Word of God for all succeeding ages. Hence, there is an absolute necessity of a hermeneutical theory which allows for the incorporation of the methods of literary and historical criticism within a broader model of interpretation. It is a question of overcoming the distance between the time of the authors that first addresses the Biblical texts and our own contemporary age. Moreover, this must be done in a way that permits a correct actualization of the scriptural message so that the Christian life of faith may find nourishment.”¹¹

The literal sense is not to be confused with the "literalist" sense as defined by Fundamentalists and Evangelicals. It is not sufficient to translate a text word for word in order to obtain its literal sense. One must understand the text according to the literary conventions of the time. When a text is metaphorical, its literal sense is not that which flows immediately from a word-to-word translation but that which corresponds to the metaphorical use of these terms. “When it is a story, the literal sense does not necessarily imply belief the facts recounted actually took place because a story need not belong to the genre of history but instead may be a work of fiction.”¹²

Hermeneutics focuses on the fuller spiritual sense of the meaning of Scripture. “We can define the spiritual sense, as understood by Christian faith, as the meaning expressed by the Biblical texts when read under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, and of the new life which flows from it. In this context, the New Testament recognizes the fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures. It is therefore acceptable to reread the scriptures in the light of this new context which is that of life in the Spirit.”^{13, 14}

A final subtle element in the use of hermeneutics is to consider the tradition of the Church, especially during the early years of its formation. Over the 2,000 years of its history, the Church has experienced the emergence of three distinct callings of the Holy Spirit regarding Biblical interpretation in the tradition. They are: formation of the canon, the Patristic exegesis, and the roles of various members of the Church. Monsignor eloquently stresses the importance of Church tradition: “The Fathers of the Church, who had a particular role in the process of the formation of the canon, likewise have a foundational role in relation to the living tradition which unceasingly accompanies and guides the Church's reading and interpretation of scripture. Within the broader current of the tradition, the particular contribution of Patristic exegesis consists in that it draws out from the totality of scripture the orientations which shaped the doctrinal tradition of the Church and provides a rich theological teaching for the instruction and spiritual sustenance of the faithful. Above all, the Fathers understood the Bible as the Book of God; the single work of a single author. However, this does not mean they reduced the human authors to nothing more than passive instruments as do Fundamentalists, Evangelicals, and other believers in Biblical inerrancy. They were also quite capable of (continued)

PART THREE: LISTENING TO SCRIPTURE, CONTINUED

according to a particular book its own specific purpose. Convinced they were dealing with the Book of God and therefore with something of inexhaustible meaning, the Fathers held that any particular passage is open to interpretation on an allegorical basis. However, they also consider that others are free to offer something else provided what is offered respects the analogy of faith.”¹⁵

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the greatest of all our exegetical and hermeneutical endeavors is seen in the way we speak and live. “Exegesis provides the raw material for thinking about these issues. As such, it packs enormous power for transforming us according to that incarnational model; it will affect all aspects of our lives. The incarnation, in fact, epitomizes God’s determination to channel his message to humanity *through* humanity. If our people are to hear that message, they will hear it through us, or through someone just as human as we are. In a very important sense, even the Bible is written and preserved through human effort. Therefore, if we want our people to hear God’s message with clarity and accuracy—that is, with “authority”—there is no better way to accomplish our desire than by reflecting the results of our exegesis in our own thinking and behavior: Exegesis, hermeneutics and leadership are all of one cloth: Christ-centered integrity.”¹⁶

In addition to gathering an expanding sense of the larger Biblical-theological context, we also acknowledge the special relevance exegesis and hermeneutics has for sermons and teaching. It is important to devote space to this dimension of Biblical interpretation as well. We can do this in the form of providing some suggestions for communicating exegetical results through preaching and teaching.¹⁷

Clergy are called by the Holy Spirit to preach and teach the Gospel in order to bring about enlightenment to the Body of Christ. Ernest Holmes writes, “The mental and spiritual practitioner is one who has dedicated his life—his time, his energies, his intelligence—to helping others, through mental and spiritual means and methods.”¹⁸ Monsignor Sweeley brings this point in greater context within the tradition and structure of the Church by writing, “In the exercise of their pastoral ministry, bishops as successors of the apostles are the first witnesses and guarantors of the living tradition within which scripture is interpreted. Priests have as their primary duty the proclamation of the Word. They are gifted with a charism for the interpretation of scripture; when, transmitting not their own ideas but the Word of God, they apply the eternal truth of the Gospel to the concrete circumstances of daily life. It belongs to priests and to deacons, especially when they administer the sacraments, to make clear the unity constituted by Word and sacrament in the ministry of the Church.”¹⁹ (continued)

PART THREE: LISTENING TO SCRIPTURE, CONTINUED

Dedicating focus on exegesis for Scriptural interpretation richly rewards the seeker with a valuable edge that greatly benefits the Church. Hermeneutics subtly refines the exegetical process and brings illumination and joy to those who treasure listening to the inspiration of Scripture. In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul points out the importance of Scripture, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." (Romans 15:4, NIV) As shepherds of the flock we are called by Spirit to nourish with the Bread of Life. "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." (John 21:15, NIV)

End Notes

7. Erickson, pp.20-21
8. Erikson, p.55
9. It is important to know the differences between exegeses and hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the field of study concerned with how we interpret the Bible. Exegesis is the actual interpretation of the Bible by drawing the meaning out of the Biblical text.
10. Sweeley, John W. *Hermeneutics*. 2014, p.119
11. Sweeley, p.121
12. Sweeley, p. 122
13. Sweeley, p. 123
14. "One might think of the fuller sense as another way of indicating the spiritual sense of a Biblical text in the case where the spiritual sense is distinct from the literal sense. The fuller sense has its foundation in the fact that the Holy Spirit, the principal author of the Bible, guided the human authors in their choice of words and expressions. The Holy Spirit did this in such a way that the writers expressed truth to the fullest depths of the Holy Spirit but they could not perceive these depths themselves." Sweeley, pp.124-125
15. Sweeley, pp. 150-151
16. Erickson, p.208
17. Preparation for homilies begins once you have a text and you carry out an exegesis of it in order to decide what it meant. Sound and careful exegesis provides the essential control on application. These exegetical results are what you should now seek to make relevant to the people. Professor Erickson gives clergy four guidelines to follow using exegesis: **First**, determine how culture-transcendent or how culture-bound your exegetical results are; **Second**, seek and then teach or preach the main point of your Biblical text; **Thirdly**, know your people. In a sense, exegetically analyze your audience. Be conscious of the common humanity your people share with the original audiences and authors. Both groups experience such things as fear, insecurity, pride, lust, anger, greed, hope, love, dreams and more. On the other hand, be equally conscious of differences in cultural settings and issues. Television, nuclear war, off-shore drilling, suicide bombers, labor strikes, cigarettes, ecological destruction and so on either played no role in the first-century world at all, or if they did, they may not have carried the same connotations for Christians then as they do today. Remember that your people are like you. Remember that you need to speak to the real issues of their lives, and therefore you need to know your people. Do not think you can justify always isolating yourself in your study. On the other hand, you cannot expect to feed your people without regularly isolating yourself in your study. It's a two-sided hermeneutical task requiring effective balance. It is not easy, but neither is it impossible, and it is essential for the health of the church; **Fourthly**, apply the Word of God to the situation your people and you are facing. On the one hand, avoid presenting a merely exegetical study without reference to your people's need; on the other hand, avoid merely addressing people's need without responsible application of exegetical results. We need a message. Erickson, pp. 214-216
18. Holmes, p. 168
19. Sweeley, 152





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

CCOA's Presiding Bishop Mark and Bishop Linda visited COA-Australia during Holy Week. COA-AU is one of the many jurisdictions in the Herman Adrian Spruit~Meri Reynolds Spruit legacy. +Mark and +Linda are shown here with ApB. Frank, Bp. Leonie and many of the AU clergy.

***"May YHWH bless you and keep you!
May YHWH's face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
May YHWH look kindly upon you, and give you peace!"***

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