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My Ministry and COVID-19

by Fr. Tony Carrillo
of St. Theresa's Parish



Photo by Linda/Phil

I have celebrated Mass at an assisted living facility since it opened four years ago. Roughly 18 to 20 members attend the regular Sunday Mass. My wife and I would bring palms for Palm Sunday Mass and a gift on Easter Sunday. Additionally, I am the District Chaplain for four American Legion posts. I assist those veterans who are sick or have trouble adjusting to life challenges, participate in ceremonies on some important holidays, and attend general and executive board meetings. The veterans do keep me very busy.

Since COVID-19, the assisted living facility had to stop everyone from coming into the building. I am still in contact with some of the residents via telephone and have been called when a resident is leaving this earth and going home. As a Chaplain I continue with the meetings, but via zoom in lieu of person-to-person gatherings.

Notice: The Antioch Cross, left corner of page 1, is a Trademark registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office by the Catholic Church Of Antioch.

Thoughts on Finding Church in Times of Pandemic by the Presiding Bishop Mark Newman



Photo by Linda/Phil

"I went to bed one night and woke up in hell the next day". I overheard this remark recently in a conversation between two people in Denny's. (Yes, the Presiding Bishop sometimes eats at Denny's!) The remark brought home to me two powerful points about the COVID-19 pandemic; how it has significantly disrupted our lives and how quickly that disruption has come about—more quickly than we imagined and to a greater degree than we had anticipated. I doubt that any of us could have foreseen the disruption the COVID-19 pandemic would have on our lives and on our routines. No area of our lives has been untouched by the pandemic. The loss of life, the loss of employment and financial security, the loss of in-person contact with family and friends, as well as innumerable other losses weighs heavy on us all. At a time like this, we instinctively turn to the Church for support and comfort, only to find that we have also lost the ability to gather in person and draw comfort from communal worship.

In light of this, it's easy to become discouraged, dispirited, depressed even. It seems that at a time when we need Church the most, the Church is not there. Or is it? Has it gone away or is it that we have simply failed to see it present and active and vital in our lives despite the absence of shared worship? While communal worship, especially the Eucharist, is an integral part of our communal life, so also are the relationships that our communal worship has forged and strengthened, relationships that continue once we leave the building.

In the popular Catholic hymn by M.D. Ridge, By Cross and Water Signed, we sing,

"We were Church before these walls were built, by Cross and water signed.

And we carry Church within us when we leave these walls behind."

(continued on next page)

Thoughts on Finding Church (continued)

So, how has Church been present during this time? How have we carried Church within us since the pandemic has forced us to leave those walls behind? When we reach out to one another as many have, Church is present. Whenever we pray for one another, Church is present. When we participate in online liturgies, Church is present. Even if all we do is think about someone from our local church community of ministry, wonder about how they are managing the pandemic or if they're healthy or dealing with symptoms, Church is present. So, dear friends, despite the absence of in-person worship all these weeks, Church is alive and well. One of the many lessons that this pandemic can teach us is that what lies at the center of our faith is deep connection, first and foremost with Our Lord, but also equally as important, with one another. That connection is the essence of Church, a fact that is too often overlooked in our focus on structured worship experiences.

Still, we miss our time together for worship, as well we should. I'm sure we all look forward to the time when we can return to in-person worship and when we can come together again at Convocation. We know it's coming, but when remains to be seen. The safety and well-being of all who worship with us are of paramount importance, so I urge you to follow the recommendations of our public health officials concerning when and how it is safe to gather together.

In the meantime, let us continue to be Church through our concern for one another, our contacts with each other, and our prayers for the safety and well-being of all people. In closing, I would like to share with you a prayer I recently received from the Maryknoll Sisters. It is short but elegant. It is my prayer for me; it is my prayer for you:

*"Merciful God,
Bless us with Your healing grace.
Heal those who are sick.
Bring courage to those who are afraid,
Comfort to those who are mourning,
Strength to those caring for others,
Wisdom to those making decisions,
Insight for those looking for a cure.
Let us emerge from this trial
Secure in our hope and faith. Amen."*

Peace and all good, Most Rev. Mark Elliott Newman
Presiding Bishop

My Ministry and COVID-19 by Fr. Scott Carter of The Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience



Photo by Linda/Phil

This is a time of upheaval for all of us, and the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch's ministry in Oregon has obviously changed.

While devotion to our Christian mission remains undiminished, the ways in which the ministry expresses that larger mission have been disrupted. We no longer offer weekly Independent Catholic Communion services (Masses) and accompanying Q&A sessions for the public in public library meeting rooms. The rooms are, responsibly, still closed. We no longer visit the sick and dying in the hospital. The hospital has not yet invited spiritual care volunteers back. We no longer make a priest available to patients' family, hospital visitors, and staff in the hospital chapel, and we no longer teach contemplative prayer there. The hospital, again responsibly, has closed the small chapel to those activities. Sadly, the list of services the Pilgrim Chapel can no longer safely provide during the current health crisis could be continued.

It is true that we in Oregon are looking forward to the time when we can responsibly return to our traditional activities ministering to the spiritual needs of people in our community. Nonetheless, the Pilgrim Chapel is not waiting. Our hands are folded in faithful prayer, not in passivity. We're working to extend our presence to those in spiritual need through social media. We're operating a Google Voice telephone line inviting questions and requests, a line that also offers recorded blessings for all who call. We're reaching out to increase and improve our ecumenical and inter-religious relationships. We're reading, studying, praying, and preparing for the day we can resume indoor, group activities including instruction in contemplative prayer practices and indoor, in-person Masses. We're offering to meet in masks for conversation over coffee, and we're meeting (physically distanced) in parks when people request spiritual guidance. In many ways, the Pilgrim Chapel is using this as a retreat as we reevaluate how best to use our gifts to practice, promote, and support Independent Catholic spirituality in the future.

Turning Around by Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols



Photo by Linda/Phil

Last spring my husband and I were sailing across the Atlantic Ocean toward Spain, and the world changed overnight. At midnight, the announcement that flights from Europe to the US would soon be canceled was heard on the news. In a very quick few hours, our sailing hosts had assessed the situation, determined the best action, and planned ways to execute this action. By morning they were able to calmly tell the passengers what would happen. We needed to turn around.

This photo is a representation ships often have available, showing how far the ship has gone and where it is located. This particular photo is different than any we have seen, because the dark line from left to right shows how far we had gone (that's normal), but the arrow and logo show where we were after heading back.

The ages of the passengers determined which song was hummed, *Turn Around* from the 50's or *Turn Around* from the 60's. The first is about how quickly children grow up and the second is about unrequited love. Time does go by quickly; and expectations, hopes and dreams aren't always met, so both seemed to fit. But really, the point of the songs for us was really just the words turn around. We knew we needed to do this, but we were in a situation of not knowing what would be next. At the same time, we were feeling grateful for the care of the crew. We knew we were in a sheltered cocoon and that we were very lucky. No one became ill. We were in good hands. Communication was good, both between the crew and passengers as well as between the passengers. We really were blessed.

Everyone on the ship seemed to face turning around as an adventure. We trusted that we would be cared for; we worried about the details but let go of that worry. Overall, our attitudes remained positive, and we remained open to the events and announcements of each day.

This isn't only about passengers on a ship. Doing what we can to have a positive attitude is important for everyone, and it is important especially now. We don't know how the future will look. The changes the pandemic has created in our lives have already remained much longer than we expected. The means of interaction with others may remain masked and distanced longer than we'd like. Our workspaces may continue to be much different than before. Organizations may need to downsize or grow. Our ministries may change. We can panic, or like the passengers on the ship, we can trust.

This is a time of turning around. While we could try to continue in whatever direction we were headed, we may arrive to find more problems that we wish. However, if we were to turn around, meaning re-access, meaning remembering our history, remembering our call, remembering the reasons we said yes and why we do what we do, the results could be amazing. Or not. That's the purpose of taking this time to re-access, to evaluate, to 'Keep what works and throw out the rest,' as is said in 12 step groups.

After a re-assessment, we may determine that we need to step back, pause, and go back to basics. On the other hand, our re-assessment may help us realize we are already doing what is best. Or, doing a re-assessment may open doors to new directions. Any of those results are perfect. A caution, though, turning around doesn't mean going around in circles! Rather than a circle, see it as a highway round-about, through which we make turns that will take us to the best road for our journeys. May you take time to turn around, then to move forward. May your journey be blessed!



Photo by Linda/Phil

Ecumenical News: The Whole Inhabited World

by Fr. Scott Carter

This, *oikoumene* in Greek, “the whole inhabited world,” is the source of our English word *ecumenism*. Historically, the word was used to refer to the Roman Empire’s efforts to unify the habitable world under its standard and increase the visible unity of its own domains, usage that extended to the Christian Church’s “ecumenical” goals and, influenced by the Roman emperor, the formation of the early “ecumenical councils” that defined the Church itself. There are reams of historical and theological writing available on the subject of ecumenism, some of it fascinating and rewarding reading, but what is important for us here is what this means for Antioch.

Clearly, the religious organizations of the world are composed of human beings, and all of the attendant strife and misunderstanding involved in human interaction in the world is naturally evident in Christian relations. We all miss the mark, and yes, this weakens and undermines the Christian witness to the Gospels; still, emphasizing the “scandalous” nature of Christian disagreements seems less fruitful than acting to address the problems—moving forward to agree where possible and, where not yet possible, disagree with Love. We see the problem; we seek solutions.

Our Catholic tradition teaches us that greater unity begins with a lived understanding that we already have a form of unity that cannot be taken from us: we are repeatedly assured through tradition and Scripture that we *are*, as Christians, one. In the words of the creeds emerging from those early ecumenical councils and professed in individual churches of multiple denominations and no denominations, we are “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

When Scripture describes the fact of our unity as Christians, it also urges us to work to maintain our unity of Spirit and suggests a means of making ecumenical progress:

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift... He gave gifts to his people...

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ... We must no longer be children... But speaking truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” —Ephesians, 4:1-7

In the future, details can be shared about specific ecumenical activities, but for now, please know that this is the starting point. This is what I, as your Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Officer, under the direction of Presiding Bishop Mark, am using to guide ecumenical activities on your behalf. Interacting with other Christian denominations, we are using the unity we forever share as members of the one Body of Christ to inspire and guide us to grow as close as possible while, as Scripture advises, acknowledging and benefiting from the manifold individual and collective gifts God has given us. The Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch has special gifts, its own special charism. Our aim is to abundantly share those gifts, honoring them as not only a storehouse of treasures for the world, including our fellow Christians of other denominations, but also as a stewardship, a special responsibility too precious to be set aside.

Our unity in the Love of Christ, expressed through our varied gifts, is both the aim and method of our ecumenism. We find spiritual reassurance for this not only in Scripture and tradition, but also in the writings of Antioch’s original patriarch, Herman Adrian Spruit.

“Listen here, husband or wife, parent or child, preacher, pastor, parishioner, or priest, whoever you are who strives for the steep ascent on the ladder of evolution: the name of the game is LOVE. That’s the point where it starts, the modality by which it continues, and the means by which the goal is reached, and by which you find the consummation of life.” —The Rule of Antioch, p. 1

Through, with, and in the Love of Christ, stewarding and sharing the unique charism of the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, we are opening our hearts and drawing ever closer to “the whole inhabited world.”

My Ministry and COVID-19
by Rev. Mary Altalo of Sophia Ministries



Photo by Linda/Phil

Almost a year ago, I toured a beautiful old Church built in 1882 in a little town of Union Bridge, with less than 1,000 people in the heart of northern Maryland farm country. It had been closed for years and was awaiting someone to restore it. I fell in love with it and decided to make an offer as did many other folks. So I waited and waited and just waited. Eight months later, in the midst of a pandemic and Church closings, I received a phone call saying that the other bidders had dropped out and “Your offer has been accepted--You have the Church! Can you settle in 2 weeks!” Gasp! Somehow, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, I mustered a “Oh yes, of course”. I signed the preliminary documents in my driveway, on the hood of the notary’s car, dressed in my finest priestly mask, gloves and blue ink pen, and the life changing journey had begun.



Photo by Mary Altalo

So what was this incredible structure right on Main St. in the center of town to become? I decided to be silent and let the “Presence of the Place”, the “Spirit of Place” speak. Indeed it did and began through the voices of the folks who passed as I weeded the Church garden in the early morning, mask and all. Stories were shared as to what they missed since the Church was closed. Most questions were about the bells-- “What happened to the carillon that played several times a day and changed songs with the season? It just stopped several years ago. Are you going to start it again?” “A carillon?”, I asked. As far as I knew there was only one bell in the Church bell tower, so what were they hearing from the tower of this Church? I will find out and resolved that someday this Church would play its carillon again for the town. There were questions about the large 7’ plain wooden cross in the front yard. During Lent, I was told, the cross was draped in a large purple sash which would “turn white on Easter Sunday morning”---yes, that meaningful “ritual” would be preserved. And the Nativity Scene at the foot of the Cross each Christmastide to which a path was always shoveled through the snow so that the children could visit Baby Jesus? – Yes, I would keep that too. Finally there came in the mail a surprise donation from dear friends for a new sign for the Church!! – “Our Lady of the Bridge”- a spiritual enrichment center! A naming ceremony was promised! So daily I am seeing that invisible thread of the love energy voiced by this town for this “space” which is revealing its inherent sacredness.

Soon the “Spirit of the Place” began to speak through the light and silence of the interior worship space, like coming into the Church for prayers at sunset and stopping “dead in my tracks” as a neon bright trio of red and green arches appeared before me on the wall behind the altar. When I began to breathe again, I realized that the setting sun was shining through the west window of the Church projecting its image in the East. I now time my evening prayers at sunset each day, God’s time. The large old bible in the pulpit in front of the projection was appropriately left open to Gen 1 and as I read aloud Gen 1:26 to the “communion of saints” I began to feel that heart space open to bask in the eternal “image and likeness”.

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Photo by Mary Altalo

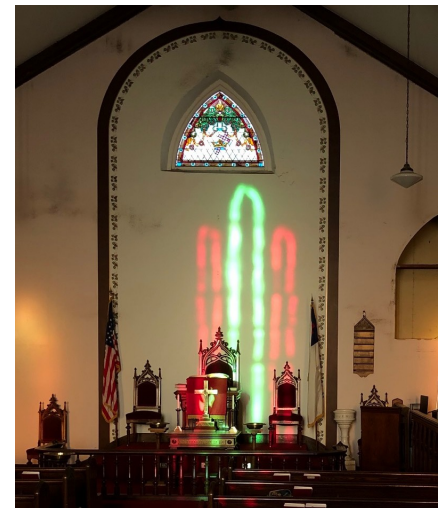


Photo by Mary Altalo

My Ministry and COVID-19 by Rev. Mary Altalo of Sophia Ministries (continued)

Here in this sanctuary is where the “electricity” of worship in the Eucharistic Liturgy would occur. I began to wonder how this community would represent “future church” in the Independent Catholic tradition? How can we best balance the contemplative way of life with sacred activism—I knew the key is Eucharist, and all else would flow from this experience. I also wondered how we can reclaim that Patristic understanding of the role and function of “Leiturgia” and celebrate “the 8th Day”, Resurrection day, in that liminal space out of time so as to “reveal and realize the Church’s own real nature—that life in Christ—that union in Christ with God the Holy Spirit, knowledge of the Truth, unity, love, grace, peace, salvation.” (A. Schmemman, *Liturgical Theology*, p 29). Again I return to silence and let the Spirit speak. Please keep me in your hearts and prayers. Blessings, Rev. Mary



Photos by Mary Altalo

My Ministry and COVID-19

by Fr. Ron Catherson of St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch



Photo by Linda/Phil

St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch is a small parish that meets every Sunday for Mass and on special Holy days such as Holy Week, Christmas, etc. We are able to help the poor within the community with food and gas assistance. Also, weekly Bible Study and Friday Lenten Events are provided for St. John's members and guests.

When restrictions were issued in New Mexico, places of worship were considered essential and not under the sanctions. However, it was not long, about a week, before places of worship were removed from the essential list.

However, since we are a small congregation and did not exceed the large gathering restrictions, we decided to continue to meet in person for Sunday Mass with all other events canceled. We could not meet at our regular place of worship, so we met at a member's home. Because of our meeting place we had to cancel all of the Holy Week events for 2020. We continued to meet throughout the COVID-19 restrictions.

Then a few weeks ago, places of worship were allowed to reopen at their building but only in a limited capacity. It was decided by the board that St. John's would be open for members only at this time. This kept our numbers down since that restriction still existed. We are awaiting the time we can open our doors to all who wish to join us in worship.

THE VOICE is not only our voice to one another; **THE VOICE** is our voice to the world.

If you have anything to share, contact me, Fr. Ron - your Editor, at roncat@zianet.com

Your **VOICE** is an important part of who the Catholic Church Of Antioch (CCOA) is.

For more information about the CCOA visit our website <http://www.churchofantioch.org/>

St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch's 8th Anniversary
by Fr. Ron Catherson

St. John's celebrated its 8th anniversary on July 26 (actual date is July 30th) with a few surprises for some of its members.

First, a special gift was purchased, blessed with prayers, Holy Water, and incense, and then hung in the church. The accompanying photograph provides a view of this gift.

Second, the church office was painted and the artwork was rearranged on the walls. These two pictures give you an idea of what was done. It looks much better in person!



Photo by Ron Catherson

**Accent wall is known as
the Wall of Crosses**



Photo by Ron Catherson

**Even the bookcases
received a face lift!**



Photo by Ron Catherson

Third, we had a lunch in the new office immediately following Mass. A great time, especially during this pandemic, was had by all in attendance. All members do their best to keep safe and care is taken, but we do find ways to enjoy all of the gifts of God. St. John's being active for 8 years is one of these gifts from God. The members of St. John's are looking forward to seeing what God has in store for them in the next 8 years!

'all shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well,'
Julian of Norwich, (1342 - ~1416) in *Revelations of Divine Love*.

All Roads lead to Utrecht?
by Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols

Two centuries after the Church of England broke from the Roman Church, events leading to another non-Roman Catholic Church were occurring in Utrecht, Holland. The Jesuits and Jansenists were quarreling. Rome deposed a bishop and the newly appointed bishop was shunned by the people. There were secret ordinations, morally right yet corporately wrong confirmations, and a morally right yet corporately really wrong consecration of a bishop (hence the Independent Sacramental Movement's mantra: illicit but valid!). Utrecht is the home of the Old Catholic Church, and many of the Independent Catholic churches have succession links to this church. For those in CCOA, we are not only linked through apostolic succession, but also through Herman Spruit's family. His father was from Holland and the family was Old Catholic.

Often the Old Catholic Church holds a summer school in Utrecht, something our Presiding Bishop was blessed to have attended in past years. This year, of course, travel wasn't possible. So, with great American initiative, a group affectionately known as Extraordinary Catholics created a virtual summer school, organized by the Hon. Rev. Jayme Mathias, Holy Family Catholic Church in Austin.

Four from CCOA participated: Presiding Bishop Mark Newman, Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols, Rev. Mary Altalo, and Rev. Scott Carter, who represents us in regular communication with members of the host group. In an intensive two-week program, led by amazing presenters, we learned about the history of the independent movement, and we met some of the most fascinating characters. My favorite ancient family, whom I had not known until this program are the Arnaulds, who were involved in an on-going controversy at Port-Royal. This family included many fabulous, strong, wise, outspoken, innovative, and independent women! While this family was my favorite, the other people in our history were also interesting, as were those who participated in the program. We were from all over the world, as perhaps would have been the case had we been in Utrecht, but most of us may not have been able to travel to Utrecht, even in a good year, so this program was definitely a blessing!

**Sophia's Stepping Out into
Continuing Education**
by Rev. Mary Altalo, Associate Dean

Since our founding in 1958, spiritual formation has played a major role in the training of future clergy within the seminary. In recent years however, we have received more inquiries about non-degree extracurricular programs in continuing education available to the wider community. In response to this need, Sophia Divinity School has developed a certificated continuing education program open to all jurisdictions, which will be enrolling students in winter 2020-2021. The short courses will be taught online in *Zoom* and are briefly described in our online 2020 catalog on p.8 as follows:

"The Continuing Education Program for Life-long Spiritual Enrichment Continuing Education Courses are provided in a separate, non-degree Program area within Sophia Divinity School which provides an opportunity for enhancing one's spiritual development through on-line short courses, in-person workshops and seminars of interest to the broader Christian community. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be earned for completion of all continuing education courses which cover such cross-cutting issues as Chaplaincy as a Ministry of Presence (also a new research area for our M.Div program- see catalog p. 19), The Christian Mystics, The New Mariology, Respecting Our Sacred Earth, and Ecumenical Liturgical Explorations. Information on the course offerings are updated annually on our website under Continuing Education Programs."



Our Sacred Earth

NOTICE: Convocation for 2020 has been canceled. See everyone in 2021!

Disclaimer: The thoughts and opinions herein are not meant to be official statements held by the Catholic Church Of Antioch, but rather are the opinions of the individual writers.