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Ecumenical Update by Father Scott Carter



Photo by Linda/Phil

It's a privilege to serve as your ecumenical and interreligious affairs officer here in the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, and it's something I truly enjoy. Under the direction of Presiding Bishop Mark Newman, Antioch continues to actively work to improve the unity of the "one, holy, and apostolic Church" headed by Christ.

We also look for ways to improve our understanding of and relationships with those in our human family on other religious or spiritual paths. As I write this, we look forward to participating in the upcoming gathering of the Parliament of the World's Religions, an organization expressing a twofold mission: to "cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities"; and to "foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions to address the critical issues of our time." The Parliament is justified in describing
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Letter From Presiding Bishop



Photo by Linda/Phil

Dear clergy, seminarians, parishioners, friends of the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, Peace, Joy, and Apostolic Blessings!

If you have ever received an email from my personal email account, you have undoubtedly seen the tag line, a quote attributed to Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, "If the path before you is clear, it's probably someone else's". And while Jung undoubtedly meant that statement in reference to a person's intrapsychic life, I suspect that it is equally true of organizations and institutions, including the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch.

In the past several years, we have been on a path of reorientation and redirection; some might say a path of redefinition. We have embraced more fully the Christian mystical tradition; we have affirmed as foundational the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and have agreed in principle with the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry Document of the World Council of Churches. We have become more active in the Independent/Old Catholic Movement through our participation in the Catholic Bishops' Forum and Extraordinary Catholics. We are in the process of updating our Canons, The Book of Order, and we are in the process of restructuring our seminary program. We have also added new policies on bullying, harassment, and discrimination. For all intents and purposes, the path before us is clear. But is it? And if it is, just how clear is it?

Those questions are not meant to imply that the path is not clear or that it is not ours, as Jung's statement suggests. It is entirely possible for an organization or an institution's path ahead to be clear and easily known. Rather, what I am wondering is if the next phase of our work is to look at where we are at, where we think we are going, and if we are in agreement that that is where we should be going. This is not to suggest that there is anything wrong with the decisions we have made or with our current activities. It is however wise in the midst of a process of change, to pause and evaluate if our goals are
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Letter From Presiding Bishop (continued)

clear and are mutually shared, or if any changes are needed. This will ensure economy of time, effort, and energy as we continue on. A period of self-examination and self-reflection may also yield new insights, new inspirations, and new energies, as the Spirit wills.

To that end, I will be calling a Church-wide Zoom meeting at a date to be determined in order to invite input and discussion from the entire Church. I would like to encourage all clergy, active and inactive, and all interested laity to participate as their circumstances allow. Anyone of us is capable of great insights; the sum of us is capable of even greater insights!

I look forward to our discussions ahead.

Remembering Bishop Spong 1931-2021 by Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols



Photo from
wikipedia

John Shelby Spong, an independent believer, progressive thinker, prolific writer, and champion of all people, died last month. Just as Jesus wasn't trying to start a new church, but rather open the eyes of his fellow Jewish people, Spong wanted to open the eyes of his fellow Episcopalians and the rest of us. The titles of some of

his books explain: *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, *A New Christianity for a New World*, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, *Liberating the Gospels: Reading the Bible With Jewish Eyes*, to name only a few. And, like our founder, Herman Adrian Spruit, Spong wanted us to think, to explore our beliefs and to grow, as evidenced in *Unbelievable: Why Neither Ancient Creeds Nor the Reformation Can Produce a Living Faith Today*. He also wanted to prepare us for the inevitable future, as in *Re-Claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World*. Spong will be missed, and yet he lives on through his writing, encouraging us to both reclaim and reevaluate our faith and practices. Agreeing with him or not, to continue our own growth as Christians, we would all do well to regularly read and re-read his writings.

Ecumenical Update (continued)

their 1893 Chicago convention as “the landmark beginning of the modern interfaith movement.” This year’s virtual gathering will include Dr. Jane Goodall, Karen Armstrong, the 14th Dalai Lama, and a diversity of other spiritual “luminaries.” I know all of us in Antioch’s clergy are excited to participate and represent the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch.

As your ecumenical officer, I continue to help organize, attend, and participate in virtual gatherings of our friends who consider themselves Independent Catholic, Old Catholic (although in the United States only our Episcopal friends are actually “Old Catholic” in the sense that they are in full communion with the Union of Utrecht), or part of the broader Independent Sacramental Movement. It’s great to be “in the room” representing Antioch. It helps give me, and therefore Bishop Mark and all of us, a sense of how the Spirit is stirring among our friends in Christ. It also means I’ve had many opportunities to describe the beautiful gifts Antioch has to share, including what I think of as one of our crown jewels, the Sophia Divinity School. As the corpus of published works on the subject of Independent Catholicism expands, I hope that we will be well-represented in print along with other independent jurisdictions, for example, in the pages of the new and growing “Extraordinary Catholics” magazine, which is also online, and in any books or other future publications created from the recorded, online, multi-jurisdictional conversations on topics of interest to Independent Catholics or spiritual seekers in general.

Finally, I’ll be attending the October Independent Catholic Bishops’ Forum in St. Louis in-person in order to support Bishops Mark and Michael, and Bishop Linda, who will be joining us virtually, and to help represent our Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch. In the past the event has felt productive and enjoyable, inspiring even, and I look forward to sharing my thoughts about this year’s gathering in a future column.



“Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue is not a luxury, but something which our world, wounded by conflict and division, increasingly needs.”

Pope Francis

Millennial

What is missing?



There were no winners! The answers are 1) The Great Lakes and 2) New Zealand. Better luck next time!

Reflections on Ministries of Presence

by Reverend Mary Altalo



Photo by Linda/Phil

"I am not married to sorrow. I just choose not to look away... there is deep beauty in not averting our gaze. No matter how hard it is, no matter how heartbreaking it can be. It is about presence. It is about bearing witness... when we do not divert our gaze, something is revealed—the very marrow of life. We change. A transformation occurs. Our consciousness shifts."

This beautiful quotation by Terry Tempest Williams expresses the deep sentiment which many thousands have felt during the pandemic. It is about viewing all our interactions in this world through the eyes of compassion, through the eyes of The Christ. Whether our vocations are as parents or caregivers of elderly parents, as social/environmental justice activists, as hospice, hospital or university chaplains, schoolteachers, pastors, community caregivers and advocates, we are all ministers of the Presence of the risen Christ. Not averting our gaze from the suffering but seeing only incarnate Presence of the Divine is the theological underpinning of Spiritual Care.

The "incarnational" experience of inter-abiding with another being, of sharing in both joys and sorrows, of "intention-embedded attention", a "traveling with" as the Celtic Anam Cara (soul friend) or spiritual companion, a "Beholding" of their Godly essence is the foundational principle of Ministries of The Presence.

It is a seeing as the Mystics see. It is one of the centerpieces of the Wisdom Tradition which has sustained diverse faith traditions over the millennia. It is that internal "parrhesia", a "knowing" in your depths the beauty of the individual in front of you and a humility toward the goodness you perceive in their presence. It is about covenantal relationship, a mirror of that first covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of "I will

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Reflections on Ministries of Presence (continued)

be with you always”, the promise that is carried out through you “en Christo” this very day . It is an understanding that the source of this Presence is not us but that we are the clarified instrument through which the “healing waters” flow.

It is about Divine exchange which takes place in “Mercy”, that Trinitarian flow which gathers in, forgives and sanctifies. To become Mercy itself is the anticipated outcome of the Hesychast Tradition’s Jesus Prayer, (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on Me.”) It is an “enfoldment” which is non-reversible generating a “mystical hope “, the immediate experience of being met, held in communion, by something intimately at hand”. This Presence which I behold and with which I behold another is the Resurrected Body of Christ.

I have often reflected on my time in Sophia Divinity School journeying together through the purification process of the Minor and Major Orders. We might view these rites and rituals as Ministries of Presence as well, where an experience of an ever-deepening awareness of the wellspring of Divine energy is given the opportunity to irrupt and flow through us to “the other”. Through the Orders, we embed ourselves more deeply in this Presence as an abiding state of being. This begins with kenosis, a release of our worldly attachments- to “die before you die” as the Mystics say. Contemplative prayer, spiritual formation, liturgical worship, and theological instruction guide us to the freedom we seek to develop a conscious relationship with Christ, ourselves and “the other”. We become the vessel for Christ’s healing energy. We transform from individuals to fullness of Personhood and Ministers of the Presence.

The Presiding Bishop Travels by Presiding Bishop Mark Newman



Photo by Linda/Phil

One of the benefits of being the Presiding Bishop is the opportunity to visit and spend time with our clergy and their ministries. In June, accompanied by Bishop Michael and his husband Sean, I visited St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch in Las Cruces, NM and was able to worship with the community as well as visit with Fr. Ron. As always, we were greeted warmly and made to feel at home. Thank you, Fr. Ron and St. John's, for your gracious hospitality.

July found me on the east coast where I had the privilege of spending time with Rev. Mary in Union Bridge MD. It was my first visit to her church building and I am confident that it will not be my last. What an achievement! My time with Rev. Mary was relaxed, full of warm hospitality, stimulating conversation, and the best cookies I’ve had in a long time! Thank you, Rev. Mary.

In addition to spending time with Rev. Mary, I was also fortunate to be able to visit with Bro. Jeremiah, aka Fr. Jerry, in Philadelphia, where we had the opportunity to explore his current ministry and his plans for the future. Like all our ministries, Brother’s ministry meets unique unmet needs, which he would best be able to describe. In addition to his full time secular job, Bro. Jeremiah is currently enrolled in a two year spiritual direction training program, which will add to the repertoire of skills he brings to his ministry. Brother is one of our hidden gems, whom I encourage you all to discover.

In October, I will be attending the annual meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Forum in St. Louis, along with Bishop Michael and our Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Officer, Fr. Scott. Bishop Linda will be attending virtually. The Forum is a gathering of Independent and Old Catholic Bishops exploring how we can work together to strengthen the Independent Sacramental Movement. Following participation in the Forum, I will be traveling to Austin TX to assist Fr. Jayme Mathias’ community, Holy Family Catholic Church, by confirming one of the parishioners and ordaining another to the diaconate. I feel honored to be invited to assist his community and look forward to my time with them.

There are no further travel plans at present but once the pandemic situation is more stable and international travel relatively safe, a visit to our daughter Church in Mexico is on my mind as is a return visit to our daughter Church in New Zealand.

"Truth and Reconciliation -- Opening Our Borders to Healing"

by Bishop Michael Talbot



Photo by Linda/Phil

Today I finally find myself back in Canada after two years of lockdowns and border closings to be seated at the dinner table with my 85 year old dad. Much has changed over the last two years. We both have gotten older and perhaps more plump. Getting here was not as simple as before with the new requirements for COVID-19 vaccinations in hand and PCR tests completed at the Phoenix airport Sean and I passed through the gate and boarded Air Canada to begin the first leg of our trip to Canada by flying to Vancouver and then catching my connecting flight to Winnipeg. Arriving in Canada the Canadian Customs scrutinized our documents before giving us entry. Having made this trip countless times over the last 30 years this time it was different. I reflected on the 'meaning and purpose' of borders and how we experience them. For some the border

defines who a people are. For others, a means of protection. A border can be ideological or geographical and how that border is recognized is very much a political or cultural statement. Borders exist personally as in "Don't crowd my space." As a people we revere our cultural, social and religious experiences as a way of life that defines who we are. Often those definitions become ingrained statements manifesting borders and nations. Why am I bringing all this up? Often we can create borders that define us and them.

In Canada today they are celebrating the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honours the lost children and Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process. There were 140 federally run Indian Residential Schools which operated in Canada between 1831 and 1998. The last school closed only 23 years ago. Survivors advocated for recognition and reparations and demanded accountability for the lasting harms caused. I know only too well the experience of the Indigenous people who suffered under the definitions of religious and social ideologies established by early colonizers when defining borders were established in Canada. The first boarding schools for Indigenous children in what would become Canada were established by Roman Catholic missionaries in 17th century colonial New France. In the first half of the 19th century, residential schools for Indigenous children were established under British colonial rule in Upper Canada (southern Ontario). Founded on notions of racial, cultural, and spiritual superiority, these schools attempted to convert Indigenous children to Christianity and separate them from their traditional cultures. In an effort to establish colonial borders the cultural and social borders of the indigenous people were ignored and every attempt was made to eradicate their existence. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

"Truth and Reconciliation' I think is a fitting term that we can all reflect on, especially in our current experience of political, social and religious upheavals. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission ran from 2008 to 2015 and provided those directly or indirectly affected by the Indian Residential Schools policy with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. Out of this dialogue the Federal Government acknowledged the atrocities of systematic attempts to destroy a culture and people as being less civilized and in need of conversion. Today, this day of remembering acknowledges the attempt to acknowledge the truth of what happened and the effort to seek healing. As a former pastor of the Ojibway Heron Bay Reservation on the north shores of Lake Superior I encountered the lingering suffering of families whose children were literally rounded up and sent to residential schools all in the name of making them 'civilized christians'. Today Canadians are asked to wear orange to commemorate those who suffered abuse, illness and death in the residential school system. The wearing of orange commemorates "the experience of Phyllis Webstad, a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation, on her first day of school, where she arrived dressed in a new orange shirt, which was taken from her. It is now a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations."

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>.

What are the borders that we create? How and why do we enforce them? Do the borders we have include or exclude people? Do the borders ensure the unique dignity of every person? I realize that while this is a Canadian experience perhaps there is something we can all learn from our neighbors to the north.

Staying Connected
by Presiding Bishop Mark Newman



Photo by Linda/Phil

As the pandemic continues on in its various waxing and waning phases, one of the challenges the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch has faced is how to maintain connection among clergy and seminarians. Connection among clergy and seminarians is an important indicator of the overall health of the Church; without it, it is difficult to maintain the sense of community that is essential to the vitality of the Church.

In years past, the primary way this connection was maintained was by attendance at our annual Convocation. Last year and again this year, out of an abundance of caution, we have had to cancel in-person attendance. While we hope that the pandemic will be sufficiently under control in 2022 to allow us to meet again in person, if there's anything that this pandemic has taught us, it's that nothing is certain.

Despite this, the Church has done an admirable job of staying connected. We have gathered for on-line lectio divina, Lenten and Advent services, "coffee club chats", and continuing education sessions. I am very grateful to Bishop Linda for her insightful presentation on the role of dreams in one's spiritual life and to Rev. Mary for her meaningful dive into the hidden gems of the Cross of Antioch. Stay tuned, for more continuing education sessions are on the horizon!

While I am overall gratified by the efforts expended by most of our clergy to stay connected, I recognize that there are sometimes conflicts in scheduling that preclude a clergyperson from participating in our online meetings or continuing education sessions. I am grateful that for the most part I am informed of that. But I am disappointed and quite frankly concerned when my personal outreach to a clergyperson goes unanswered or rebuffed. The relationship between a bishop and the clergy whom s/he serves is equally as important as the relationship between clergy and seminarians in general.

Consequently, in the weeks ahead, I will be reaching out to some individuals for a virtual "pastoral visit". I am requesting the courtesy of a positive response to my request. As Presiding Bishop, it is important that I have a good working relationship with each of you, that I know your needs, your concerns, your challenges, your successes, and hopes for the future of your ministry, as well as your overall experience with the Church. My goal, my responsibility as Presiding Bishop is to assist each and every one of you to be successful and fulfilled in your ministry. How can I do that if we're not connected? To those to whom this may apply, I ask you to please consider this prayerfully.

The First in a New Series of CCOA Continuing Education
by Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols



Photo by Linda/Phil

I was honored to be selected to present the first workshop in a new continuing education series for CCOA seminarians, clergy, and friends. Other members of CCOA clergy will be asked to do the same in the months ahead. We will each select the topic for our mini-workshop so I selected the topic *Dreams: Messages from God*. I facilitated this presentation using a powerpoint presentation that included music, pictures, quotations, references to movies, and a wide-range of information about dreams and dreaming.

According to many dream specialists, all people dream, even if we don't remember the 5-6-7 dreams most of us have each night. If we do remember, we may only remember one or two short dreams, or we may find that we dream lengthy on-going sagas. Our dreams may seem to relate directly to our waking life or may be very strange, venturing into the unknown. Whatever and however we dream, if we work with the dreams, we may find messages we wouldn't expect.

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It is unfortunate when people don't remember their dreams because as Alan Protor of the Hayden Institute says, "Dreams ignored are unopened messages from God." Dreams promote our health, our self-understanding, and our spiritual growth.

We reviewed some of the dreams we find in the Bible and considered ways we can delve more deeply into those dreams and our own. One of those ways is to join or create a dream group. There are many methods that can help us learn from our dreams and working with others in a dream group can open the paths to messages we might not access on our own. We learned the steps I was taught during Alan Protor's Dreams Workshop held at the Virtual Spiritual Directors International Virtual Conference this past spring.

Of course, we can't work on our dreams unless we remember them, so I encourage everyone to make a quick note about a dream upon waking, no matter how hazy the memory is. When we record the dream in a dream journal later, we may find more details arise. That's a good beginning, which can then be followed by further dream work if desired. Whatever you chose to do, or not do, with your dreams, my wish for you is what you may have heard at bedtime as a child: "Sweet Dreams!"

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Robert A. Johnson. INNER WORK. 1986.*

Jean-Claude Koven. GOING DEEPER. 2004.

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John A. Sanford. DREAMS – GOD'S FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE, 1989.

Helping One Another

by Bishop Linda Rounds-Nichols



Photo by Linda/Phil

The Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch is one of many Independent Sacramental Churches, and as such we have a responsibility to respond when others need assistance. Such was the case in May of this year.

Bishop David Doyle, of the North American Catholic Ecumenical Church (NAECE), was seeking a third bishop for the ordination of a bishop during a service held in Albuquerque. I met Bishop Doyle a few years ago when I attended one of his worship services and we've stayed in touch through Facebook, so was invited to be that third bishop.

The service was held at Our Lady of the Valley Episcopal Church and the priest and another member of the parish attended, as well as friends of the newly ordained bishop and a number people from the NACEC.

Pictured below are: Bishop Thomas Clark, who was between jurisdictions, Bishop David Doyle, NACEC; Bishop Scott Burris, the new NACEC bishop; and myself.



Christmas!
by Fr. Ron Catherson



Photo by Linda/Phil

Yes, it is almost Christmas 2021. At St. John's Catholic Church of Antioch in Las Cruces, NM, we are beginning our preparations for the holiday which includes our outreach to the homeless and enhancing the worship space. During Advent we have a pregnant Mary on a donkey with Joseph leading them. During the Christmas season, a new set of Nativity figures will be displayed (pictured below). The gifts from the three wise men will open on Epiphany and display gold, frankincense, and myrrh. All of the work we do during this time is a reminder to us, and others, what the season is about – the special gifts given to all of humanity. May you have a very blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!



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/>

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