

Federation of Christian Ministries



Newsletter

July/August 2018

VOL. 52 - Number 4





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2018 Assembly
July 20 - 22
Doubletree by Hilton
Philadelphia Airport
Register Now!
www.FCM2018assembly.org*

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TOM STRICKER

CHAIRPERSON

July/August 2018

VOL. 52 NO. 4

CELEBRATING



We Can Do Something to End Gun Violence

Given that FCM is a convention of churches, I believe we have a responsibility to speak out on issues that affect the well-being of our sisters and brothers. I have been waiting to see if any significant changes would take place following the shootings in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas. I have also been waiting to see if those we have elected to represent us in the House and Senate would do any more than offer condolences and prayers for the families of the deceased. Sadly, I am still waiting. For reasons beyond my understanding, legislators seem immobilized and refuse to take action to protect the lives of children and adults. I believe it is time for all of us to step up and demand our government do its job.

Between October 7, 2001 and January 28, 2015, our nation lost 5,346 women and men who were killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Between 2001 and 2012, 6,410 women were killed by an intimate partner with a firearm in the United States. The rate at which people die as a result of shootings in our nation is more than 7 times that of the next country which happens to be Canada. (In the USA, 3.61 residents per 100,000 die versus Canada at .5 per 100,000 residents.)

We can begin to stop this madness without violating our rights under the Second Amendment to the Constitution. I would like to offer some information and encourage everyone to call, write or e-mail their members of Congress to initiate federal legislation to protect us. And while I understand in and of itself legislation will not bring a complete halt to the killings, it can significantly reduce the rate at which these senseless mass murders happen. Here are four steps we can all take:

1. The great majority of Americans agree that *universal background checks* do not violate our Constitutional rights. Requiring this step prior to an individual buying a gun would be a protection for our liberty and our safety. Obtaining a gun ought to be an arduous process that requires training over several months, background screening, mental health screening and annual relicensing. As you may know, a person can be on a "No Fly List" and still be able to purchase as many guns and as much ammunition as they like, no questions asked. One does not need to produce a photo ID to buy a gun. An illegal immigrant can buy a gun. There are indications ISIS urges its members to come to the USA and buy guns because there are so few restrictions. Mandatory background checks at the federal level would do something to protect lives while still respecting the 2nd Amendment.

2. Both Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and President Ronald Reagan have stated semi-automatic weapons, rifles with "bump stocks" and other "military-style" firearms do not belong in the hands of civilians. A *ban on such weapons, as well as limitations on high capacity magazines* would certainly reduce the number of Americans who die as a result of their use. Today a person under 21 can buy a semi-automatic gun and a bump stock but cannot buy a handgun. An individual shooter with such a weapon often has greater fire power than law enforcement officials. This why the majority of police officers are in favor of banning these type of guns which were surely not considered by our founders in crafting the Second Amendment.

3. Any individual who allows someone access to a gun (who may even be a child or adolescent) and that person commits a murder, *the owner of the gun needs to be held responsible*. Gun owners need to be committed to their responsibility to secure firearms, storing them safely and especially keeping them out of the hands of minors. The responsibility for ownership must include reporting a missing gun within 24 hours and involve liability if a minor uses that weapon in the commission of a crime. We need mandatory reporting of violations of gun laws with consequences when the reporting does not happen.

4. Public money for counseling that goes to schools and ADAMAS boards have been cut severely over the past several years. *Funding for mental health counseling needs to be restored and increased*. These four steps will not stop all the killings but surely will put a stop to a significant number of fatal shootings. I urge all FCM members to be involved in a dialogue about this issue as well as writing and contacting our representatives in Congress and the Senate. www.ProCon.org - "Understanding the Issues and Understanding Each Other" is a good place to see the overall dialogue on line. Be informed and let your voice be heard.

Federation of Christian Ministries

50 Years, Power and the Spiritual Life



TOM CUSACK
PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT

July/August 2018

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CELEBRATING



Congratulations, FCM. You will celebrate 50 years of FCM service to thousands of people this July in the Assembly in Philadelphia. For a new religious body to experience this kind of longevity is unusual and wonderful. It means that over decades the mission and vision of FCM has been continuously affirmed and renewed by dedicated members who have seen the light of Christ shining through FCM. My hope is that those of you who have not yet registered for the Assembly will seriously consider that registration and then do it. You can be sure that your lives in FCM will be supported and inspired by your attendance. This is not a normal conference. This is a special event in the life of FCM. Please be part of it. <http://www.fcm2018assembly.org/>

Fifty years in the life of a small religious organization is a long time. But this organization, our FCM, takes its context and meaning from the ongoing mission of Jesus of Nazareth, started by him 2000 years ago. By attempting to be congruent with his view, we automatically take the long view. During these 2000 years his influence has caused both great advances and has been blunted by great resistance. Examining the Roman Empire and its culture of conquest, colonial exploitation, and the use of terroristic force, we see a template of how power deals with those over whom it would lord that power. Jesus died as a result of his way of living confronting those Roman characteristics of raw power. It does not take an in depth review of Western history to see those examples of power employed with regularity over the centuries. Incas, Aztecs, Native Americans, and Africans can tell those stories with ease.

In the last fifty years our country has been enmeshed in an ongoing series of major military wars/operations. FCM was founded during the turmoil of 1968 and the Vietnam War. Subsequently our country continued to conduct the Cold War with its threat of mutual nuclear annihilation, the proxy war in Afghanistan, the invasion of Granada, the occupation of Panama, the First Gulf war, the invasion of Haiti, the invasion of Iraq, ongoing military actions across the globe to the present day. Recently America threatened nuclear annihilation of another country in response to its threats. America with its military spending and action is the war power of the world.

Now we see the rise throughout the world and in our own country of divisive nationalism, racism and xenophobia. As I write this article our country is exercising at our borders the terroristic taking of children from their desperate parents, who seek to come into the United States for safety and promise. It is obvious that power has not been restrained by 2000 years of the Christian tradition...even here. So what do we, who are FCM, do?

First, as citizens we have the capacity to influence governmental events. We do this by communicating with our Congress-person, our two senators, and the President. We are not living in normal times so I request that you do this on a regular schedule, giving prayer and thought to your letters and emails, and delivering them from your inner source of light. Then vote whenever you have the opportunity.

Again, we are not living in normal times, so we need to be operating at a higher level of "normal" in our spiritual lives. By spending more time in prayer and meditation, systematically, we can be guided by the Holy Spirit in our response to the times. I would like to see several FCM charismatic saints arise to provide more spiritual leadership to the entire country. For this to happen each of us must go more deeply into the spiritual life so that we can be used as better tools for confronting power and for fostering the mission of Jesus. You know how, the challenge is committing the time. You can do this.

I'll see you at the Assembly, and I'll hope we all hear there a positive report to us from Jesus that FCM has been overwhelming him with prayers and meditation-force for our guidance and inspiration. Philadelphia saw the launch of the American experiment over 200 years ago. It is fitting that FCM's second 50 years be launched from there.



Federation of Christian Ministries

Philadelphia



MICHAELITA QUINN
ASSEMBLY
CHAIRPERSON

2018 ASSEMBLY

July/August 2018

VOL. 52 NO. 4

Federation of Christian Ministries

It's almost here!

The 2018 FCM 50th Anniversary Celebration!

The largest gathering ever, yes, ever to attend an FCM Assembly will gather in the great city of Philadelphia to reflect on the past, celebrate the present, and consider the future. They're coming from 31 states, probably your state.

The Friday evening 50th Celebration will be like nothing you've ever seen at an Assembly. And Saturday is packed full with keynoters, workshops, and a worship service which enfolds FCM Commissioning and Endorsement.

An update on FCM happenings and a final Interfaith Service for all will end this wonderful weekend. Just turn the page for all the details.

So, are you coming? Yes, you can still register! Just turn one more page.

Come to celebrate!
See old friends!
Be with new ones!
It's the 50th!



FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

CELEBRATING

50

Years of Ministry
Reflecting on the past
Celebrating the present
Shaping the future

1968 ♦ 2018

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RABBI RAMI SHAPIRO

*Four Points, Five Questions:
Ministry in the Second Axial Age*



SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

Faith and Witness in the Public Square

FCM 2018 ASSEMBLY

JULY 20 - 22, 2018



DOUBLETREE BY HILTON HOTEL - PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT

4509 Island Avenue - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

www.FCM2018assembly.org

www.federationofchristianministries.org

Federation of Christian Ministries 2018 Assembly Quick Look



Friday - July 20, 2018
Registration 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

50th Anniversary Celebration
5:30 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres (cash bar)
6:15 p.m. Celebration Dinner
7:00 p.m. Assembly Welcome/Program

Saturday - July 21, 2018

7:00 a.m. Morning Meditation, optional

8:00 a.m. **Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. **Keynote: Rabbi Rami Shapiro**

10:30 - 11:45 a.m. Panel Sessions and Workshops

Centering Prayer: The Deeper Connection.....Presenter: Maria Gullo

End of Life Care: Integrating Cultural Humility and an End of Life Doula Approach to Spiritually Diverse Populations

Presenters: Dennis O'Keefe, Cathy O'Keefe, Marita Grudzen

Transgender Support: Trans Christian Voices Facilitator: Patty Stricker, Presenter: Linda Roberts

12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:45 - 3:00 p.m. Panel Sessions and Workshops

God's Cocktail: Addiction, Faith and Hope.... Facilitator: Joe Ruane, Presenters: Carl Yusavitz with a recovering person
Diversity and Spirituality of FCM Faith Communities....Facilitator: Gerry Grudzen

Panel: Juanita Cordero, Linda Gonzales, Jim Korbel, Jack Cunningham, Carolyn Horvath, Tom Leonhardt, Ann Wagner
Spiritual Health and Interfaith Care that Nurtures Healthiness: A Chaplain's Perspective....

Facilitator: Amy Simpson Bennethum, Panel: Adam James, Lavender Kelley, Heidi Tierney

3:15 p.m. **Keynote: Simone Campbell, SSS**

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Cash Bar

5:45 - 7:00 p.m. **Dinner**

7:15 p.m. **Worship Service with Commissioning and Endorsement**

8:15 p.m. Dessert Reception

Sunday - July 22, 2018

8:30 a.m. **Breakfast**

9:30 a.m. FCM Membership Meeting

11:00 a.m. Interfaith Community Service

11:45 a.m. Assembly ends. Safe Travel

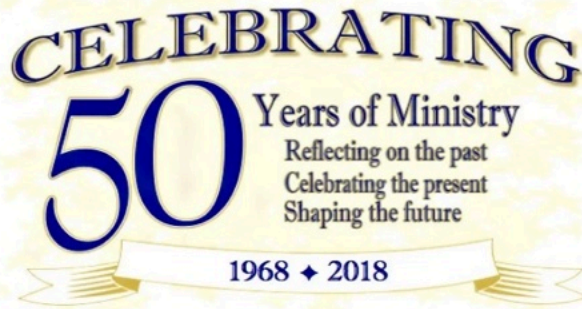


FCM 2018 ASSEMBLY - JULY 20-22, 2018

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON HOTEL - PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT - 4509 ISLAND AVENUE - PHILADELPHIA, PA

WWW.FCM2018ASSEMBLY.ORG

Federation of Christian Ministries 2018 Assembly



JULY 20 - 22, 2018

DOUBLETREE by Hilton Hotel
Philadelphia Airport
4509 Island Avenue
Philadelphia, PA



Assembly Registration

Registration Deadline July 11, 2018

Registration Fee - \$320

50th Anniversary Celebration and all meals included

REGISTRATION FEE IS FINAL - NO REFUNDS

Registrations can be made and paid for ONLINE at www.FCM2018assembly.org

Hotel Reservations

Doubletree by Hilton Hotel - Philadelphia Airport - 4509 Island Avenue - Philadelphia, PA

Reservations can be made by calling **1-800-445-8667**

Free airport shuttle...free parking...free wireless high speed Internet...indoor pool...fitness center...

Attendance Certificates available ...

For additional information www.FCM2018assembly.org



Realm - Let's Get Connected by Amy Simpson Bennethum

July/August 2018
VOL. 52 NO. 4

The Federation of Christian Ministries is updating the administrative tools our Circle of Directors use to run the daily operations of our organization AND adding more ways for our members to communicate and connect with each other. This new program is called **Realm**.

What is Realm? *Realm is a real ministry tool.*

Realm is an online ministry tool designed for real time connection. It helps our organization connect with you and you connect with us. Realm allows you to manage your personal information and who is allowed to see it, control your giving, and keep in touch with the groups that matter to you.

Why use Realm? *Realm strengthens FCM connections.*

Realm helps us serve you better. Everyone can be connected from anywhere at any time, right from our mobile devices. It engages everyone in the life of our organization by supporting the healthy relationships essential to our mission. We'll stay organized, and you'll stay informed about all of the opportunities for fellowship. When we share life together, we will grow together.

What about my privacy? *Realm is safe, private, and secure.*

Your privacy is one of our greatest concerns. Realm is only made up of the people in FCM, it's not like a social network that's open to everyone. Realm keeps your data safe and gives you control over what information you share and who can see it.

How do I start? *Follow a few simple steps.*

*****On Monday, June 25 you received an email invitation to join Realm*****

1. **Use the link in your email invitation and follow the steps to create a password.**
You will receive an email invite to create an account in our new online community, Realm. Use the link in that email and follow the steps to create a password.
2. **Log In.**
Log in to the Realm site using your email and the password you created in step 1.
3. **Update your profile.**
Every FCM member gets a unique profile. Check to make sure that we have your address and other personal information entered correctly under My Profile. If anything is incorrect, you can change it.
4. **Get the Mobile App.**
The easiest way people in FCM will access Realm is with their mobile device. Although it's not required, it certainly is a popular and convenient way to connect. Stay connected to FCM wherever you go by downloading the free Connect – Our Church Community app for iPhone and Android devices.

Note: *Your Realm login works on your home computer and on your mobile devices, so when you sign into Realm, use the login you created in step 1 for the computer or the app.*

What if I have questions?

If you have any questions, contact Amy Simpson at connect@FCMmail.org

**Amy will also be available at the Assembly in Philadelphia to answer your questions and help you connect with Realm.
Look for the Realm table.**



Federation of Christian Ministries



PETER STRENING

SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

July/August 2018

VOL. 52 NO. 4

CELEBRATING

50
1968
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2018
YEARS

Lessons Learned: Giving and Receiving

(Editor's note: Many thanks to Peter for this reflection. He serves as Specialized Ministries liaison from the Mountains and Plains region.)

Within FCM, Specialized Ministries is a resource that provides guidance and support for our members who find themselves called to ministries of specialized care, such as chaplaincy, spiritual care education, pastoral counseling and others. Those who participate in Specialized Ministries have the opportunity to strengthen our community of ministry (as well as the communities that our membership serves) by being good stewards of our endorsement process. Accompanying those who are going through this process is good and challenging work. At its core it is a blessing; we are blessed to be fellow travelers with those who are identifying and claiming their gifts for ministry. We are mindful of our mission as a Christ-inspired, ecumenical, post-denominational community and we are inspired by the new members who share our mission.

My work with Specialized Ministries is also inspired by my own ministry of spiritual care and clinical pastoral education. I have been blessed with the opportunity to serve as chaplain and ACPE Certified Educator with the Fort Collins Clinical Pastoral Education program in Fort Collins, Colorado. My spiritual care ministry is with older adults and their families in an assisted living community that is part of Columbine Health Systems. My office is a converted residential room, and my "neighbors" are residents who live in the assisted living community. I find opportunities every day to get to know the residents and their families, to hear their stories, and to share in their hopes and concerns.

There are many chances to be present to others, and to provide encouragement and solace. I am glad that I have the opportunity to give to others. I am able to utilize the gifts that I have been given for the good of others. I am able to answer the call to ministry that seems to run deeply within me. The Sacred is named in many different ways by those in my care;

I endeavor to experience the Sacred with them as it is revealed in our relationships with one another.

More and more I am aware of what I am receiving from others. What I have received seems to outpace what I think I have given. Two doors down from me is where Len lives. Len is 92 years old. Last November his wife of 71 years died;

Len is in the process of recalibrating his life. His own health is fragile. He is determined to maintain his independence for as long as he is able. Fortunately for me, Len has apparently adopted me as a surrogate son. (Len has a large, supportive family of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren).

He stops by my office almost daily. Our conversations range from speaking about the weather, to reminiscing about past joys and challenges, to wondering together what it is like to live graciously with what we cannot control. It is through these conversations that I have been so greatly blessed. When Len says "I guess this is what one has to expect when you get to be my age!" he is not serving up a platitude. Instead he is speaking from the heart, expressing his willingness to trust in his own life with courage and grace, even in the face of fear and uncertainty. Len is not done living. He is a quietly religious man who is putting his trust in trusting. He shares stories from his life with a sense of delight, as if these experiences still surprise him. Above all, Len is grateful; he has attached his current life to that gratitude.

I marvel at the way that Len and I have found one another. My own father, with whom I was very close, died five years ago at the age of 97. I still miss him. Being with Len has allowed me to pick up where my dad and I left off, and has helped me to grieve his loss well. I am reminded of the ways in which I have been blessed. I am more attuned to my gratitude. I realize that as I give I am receiving. I believe that both Len and I are being blessed with strength and wisdom that neither of us saw coming.

This is how we identify ourselves as FCM members: *"Ministering to God's people, we serve as equals and partners."* Specialized Ministries collaborates with those in our membership who are responding to the call to minister in settings of spiritual care and counseling. When I sought endorsement I was blessed to be supported and challenged by FCM colleagues who understood that our ministries require us to have education, clinical training, professional support and theological grounding, so that we may be responsive to those in our care and effective as equals and partners in their healing processes. What I have come to learn is that the blessing of giving so often has led to the blessing of receiving. I am grateful to be able to participate in the work of Specialized Ministries within FCM.



**GINNY CUSACK
GROUP MEMBER
COORDINATOR**

FCM GROUP MEMBERS

July/August 2018
VOL. 52 NO. 4



Faith Communities Share Resources



FCM Group Members

The final meeting of the first series of FCM Group Member Zoom Networking Meetings was Sunday, June 10. Participants agreed that they benefited from hearing what other faith communities are doing regarding liturgy, social justice, and membership issues such as recruitment and making the public aware of their existence. Watch for the beginning of the new series this Fall. We welcome topic suggestions and day(s) and time(s) best for each faith community to meet. Contact Ginny Cusack at Cusack.g@gmail.com or Marita Grudzen at maritagrudzen@gmail.com to let us know your thoughts. Below are valuable resources members shared during the meetings.

Tom Stricker: Living Beatitudes (tomstricker2009@gmail.com)

1. "Inclusive Hymns for Liberation, Peace and Justice. Copyright 2011 By Jann Alderedge-Clayton Published in the United States of America by Eakin Press P.O. Box 331779 Fort Worth, Texas 76163 www.EakinPress.com
2. "Inclusive Hymns for liberating Christians" Copyright 2006 by Jann Alderedge-Clayton Published in the United States of America by Eakin Press P.O. Box 331779 Fort Worth, Texas 76163 www.EakinPress.com
3. Contact Tom for 2 Eucharistic Prayers that he shared with the group

Marie David: St. Mary of Magdala Church revmariedavid@gmail.com

1. Faith communities are encouraged to sign their community information on the website www.alternativecatholiccommunities.org This is a website that her husband Jim, fellow FCM member, developed so that the public can access when they want to find a faith community in a specific area.
2. Traditional Lectionary Reading Adapted, from Marie David

Maryann Crilly: Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community maryann.crilly@gmail.com

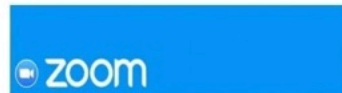
1. Visit this website: <https://progressivechristianity.org/worship-planning/> for lots of resources for planning liturgies. A person or group can register to join the network of progressive Christians at this same website.

Carl Yusavitz: Sanctuary of Peace cusavitz@pennfoundation.org

1. Religious News Service <https://religionnews.com/> which is a news agency covering religion ethics, spirituality and moral issues. RNS employs a network of correspondents providing news and information on all faiths and religious movements to newspapers, magazines, broadcast organizations and religious publications. It also features commentary by [Richard Mouw](#), [Thomas J. Reese](#), [Jana Riess](#), [Mark Silk](#).
2. The Message Ministry Edition: The Bible in Contemporary Language by Eugene H. Peterso

Tom Leonhardt and Carolyn Horvath: Hope House of Prayer (ch.tj199@gmail.com)

1. Tom Leonhardt wrote a book of liturgies based on the Aramaic Words of Jesus, the Lord's prayer and the Beatitudes. Their community uses parts of that book or entire liturgies depending on the topic of the week. The community also has a file full of liturgies that the community members created, which they are happy to share.



Federation of Christian Ministries

Community Celebrates With FCM

by Gerald Grudzen



(Editor's note: thanks to **Gerry Grudzen** and his wife **Marita Grudzen** for submitting this issue's article on group members.)

La Comunidad des Ministerios Christianos (FCM in Spanish) became one of the first communities to affiliate with FCM through the leadership of **Anthony Soto** and **Phyllis Soto**. A Franciscan priest and pastor, Anthony led the largest Mexican American parish in East San Jose, California, Our Lady of Guadalupe. He and Phyllis also co-founded a series of programs for Mexican American Catholics and by 1978, La Comunidad had emerged as an outgrowth of that retreat movement. Marita and I joined the community in 1979 when we moved to San Jose from New York.

Several members of the community participated in the FCM Assembly at Phoenix, Arizona in August of 1979. One of the highlights was the liturgy led by Alla Bozarth-Campbell, one of the first Episcopal woman priests, joined at the altar by members of the Comunidad including Phyllis, **Jesse Garibaldi** and **Marita Grudzen**. The following year we hosted one of the largest assemblies ever held by FCM at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California with a keynote by Thomas Berry on a Theology of the Earth.

The community has continued to meet twice each month for the past 39 years in members' homes in San Jose. **Linda Gonzales**, one of the original members coordinates the schedule for the meetings and keeps up to date on members' lives. (Linda will present the history of the Comunidad at the FCM Assembly.) Recently the Comunidad had a celebration of life for one of the original members, Maria Oropesa. It was co-led by Maria's husband **Manuel Yaniz**, and two other members, Marita and **Susana Gallardo**. In our bi-monthly gatherings we break open the Word together, celebrate the Eucharist and share a meal. This has created deep spiritual and interpersonal bonds which have included mediation of conflicts.

Community members have been leaders in several social justice ministries in the San Jose area such as programs serving the homeless, employment training, social services for the large immigrant population, support for the Farmworker's Union led by Cesar Chavez and mental health programs. Previous national leaders in FCM came from the Comunidad as well, in addition to myself and Marita. These have included **Peggy Ripp** (now deceased), **Phil Ripp** and **Linda Gonzales**. The community also hosted two other Assemblies in San Jose.

The commissioned members of La Comunidad have performed Baptisms in the community, rituals of legacy including Eucharist shortly before a member has died, and celebrations of the lives of members upon their death. We also support one another in the challenges we face in our personal lives which have included death of a loved one, transition to meaningful engagement at the time of retirement, and assistance in times of illness or isolation. This religious and spiritual community has played such a significant part in all the lives of its members, and will continue to be a commitment we will honor throughout our lives.

Photos from top down: Women Members of La Comunidad at the Celebration of Life for Maria Oropesa...Marita Grudzen & Phyllis Soto...Susan Gallardo & Phyllis Soto at Maria Oropesa's Memorial...Linda Gonzales...Jim Korel of La .Comunidad, CET & UFW (Farm Workers Union)...Marita Grudzen, Manuel Yaniz & Susana Gallardo members of La Comunidad





Don't Take It Personally

by Tom Leonhardt

July/August 2018
VOL. 52 NO. 4

"Don't take it personally." We've all heard those words. It's good advice whenever someone throws a monkey wrench into the works. Yet when you think about it, we are inclined to take many things personally even when what happens does not involve another human. When a tree falls on someone, it is not personal.

When an animal or insect bites it is not personal. Even when we are physically hurt by another human we easily take it as personal, but it isn't necessarily so. After all, you may even have given cause by your own behavior. The bottom line is that this interchange is not personal, simply ego enmeshment.

Our reactions are fundamentally unconscious. With egos and their self-preoccupation, given the "provocation," the object of retaliation could be anybody but we incorrectly judge it to be personal. In *A New Earth* Eckhart Tolle suggests that one ought never take the arrows of ego personally. In fact, if we do not take ego assault personally the arrows never land. Our "true Self" cannot be harmed by insults, by "name-calling." Of course, we easily fall out of who we really are into various personas and do take things very personally.

This does not mean when we are physically struck it does not really hurt. Nor does it imply that if we can prevent an attack we should not. Tolle is very clear in his directive to speak a clear, firm **NO!** in the face of abusive behavior. It is up to us to determine what that response is going to look like.

Unconscious ego enmeshment is a significantly harmful way to live and the pattern manifests in entire cultures. That is why we engage in war, from interpersonal spats to domestic violence, to street violence, to civil war, to international conflicts. The challenge is to grow in mindfulness of what is going on: my feelings, my reactions. When my ego is engaged, there is trouble if my ego is running the show rather than giving outward direction in service to my heart. So, mindfulness practice helps deepen our awareness of what is going on so we don't get hooked.

Many of us find ourselves confused and dismayed at the fractures in our nation and our world. Yet change happens only one person at a time, or as the famous saying would have it: "Be the change you want to see in the world." The words of the song are: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." It is work: gradual, conscious and sober! We grow up in families, neighborhoods, churches and schools which in varying degrees model and foster behaviors that breed entitlement, a sense of superiority, and separateness. Mindfulness opens the door to change!

The practice of conscious breathing suggested by Tolle is helpful: three deep, even, conscious breaths. Do it whenever you think of it. I find it challenging to complete three deep, even, conscious breaths without being interrupted by monkey mind. Tolle claims that doing this practice for one year brings transformation. About that I do not know. What I do know is that practice makes change possible. As we become more aware of the suffering caused by ego we can choose to try something different. Getting ego in hand is the ground of spiritual growth. This is not new. It is as old as true wisdom. It was part of the picture in the ancient Middle East embedded in the mythology of the whole region.

It is clear from Matthew's saying about baptism with breath and fire that initiatory rituals were known, and from other sources practiced, in the earliest Christian communities. It is however instructive to listen to Cynthia Bourgeault (*The Meaning of Mary Magdalene*) where she notes: "Initiatic rituals can briefly change people's states, transporting them into ecstatic visions and cosmic consciousness. But gnosis is about stages; it is integral knowledge brought about by the slow unification of one's being. In the wonderful words of the contemporary Jewish teacher Rami Shapiro, it is 'not only an altered state of mind (moving from narrow to spacious), but an altered trait of behavior, moving from selfishness, fear, and narcissism to justice, compassion, and humility.' Jesus taught gnosis and was a master of gnosis ...but he did not change anyone's states, either by secret rituals or esoteric information. Rather, he set his disciples upon the only known path to integral transformation: the slow and persistent overcoming of the ego through a lifelong practice of surrender and non-attachment His gnosis is gradual, conscious, and sober."(p. 39).

So the task becomes the commitment over the long haul to a process which is gradual, conscious and sober on this progressive journey to deepest consciousness or gnosis. At that point there is no "other," there is only unity, universal consciousness, Christ-Consciousness. The earliest criterion in Islam for orthodoxy was: "La illaha il Allah," there is nothing but the One, nothing but God.

The bottom line is about the long haul of commitment to a process which is gradual, conscious and sober on this progressive journey to deepest consciousness.



Federation of Christian Ministries

Our common experience is that we do not simply arrive at a new level or stage of consciousness and stay there. That is the point of the commitment to the process. We may find ourselves at times buoyed by the felt movement of the Spirit. At other times we slip back into the ego experience where it is all about little separate me. Paul's disappointment with his disciples is pertinent here. We find ourselves blaming, complaining, judging, perhaps punishing. Sometimes it suddenly comes upon us, and we find ourselves wrapped up in our own little, private world.

Let me provide one example of what our minds do, using a judging scenario: I am driving down the highway observing the speed limit, and another car is exceeding the speed limit, weaving in and out of traffic. Right away I am judging the "weaver" as dangerous, careless, self-absorbed just to get ahead. Later I learn that the "weaver" is a highly efficient and trained racecar driver who is responding to a real emergency with no time to enlist the aid of a police escort. The fact is, we never know what the situation is when we start judging, blaming, criticizing. We make up stories which make us feel justified or superior. That is what ego looks like. Spiritual practice helps us gradually to become more present, observing and letting go of the ceaseless stories fabricated by the mind. Nothing wrong with the mind until, as often, it takes off with a life of its own.

When we are hurt we need to pay close attention to what happens. We may be clumsy, slip and fall. What happens? Do we blame ourselves, someone else or the furniture? Or do we simply stay, drop the stories, and do what needs to be done next: take care of a cut, call 911, ask for help? Do we breathe three deep even breaths and calm down or do we create drama? What do we do with natural disasters or accidents with or without someone being at fault? Some of us grew up assigning the results of natural disasters to God. It was God's will. God does not give us more than we can handle. This is simply another way of taking things personally. Consider one of the wisdom sayings in the gospels: "Your heavenly Father's sun rises on the bad and the good, he rains on the just and the unjust."(Mt. 5:45) In other words, it is not personal. On the psychic or ego level, discussed earlier, we take things personally. We need a personal Savior to make it through this life to the "next life." To keep us in line we need a God who is going to punish us or reward us personally.

Institutional religion is generally stuck at this "personal" level, the ego level where most everything is personal, even the obviously impersonal happenings like natural disasters. A blatant example of this stuck-ness, is the creation of doctrine/dogma, setting in stone many elements of a tradition's story laying groundwork for fundamentalism, whether scriptural, doctrinal, or ritual. Fundamentalist extremism, however, does not exhaust the challenges of literalism, dogmatism, and separatism.

It seems to me that religious institutional leadership is still rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic when what is needed is spiritual, not religious renewal.

These issues pervade institutional religious systems. Patriarchy infests all institutional religious systems making some people important and other largely dispensable: first and second-class citizens.

No doubt there is change afoot as consciousness arises, but in some ways the push toward transformation appears to be at the beginning stages. It seems to me that religious institutional leadership is still rearranging the chairs on the Titanic when what is needed is spiritual, not religious renewal. If the mass of religious leaders is unwilling to change, to whom do we turn? Transformation happens one person at a time. Resources are available and not hidden away. The resources just need to be used regardless of which religious tradition or particular sect of a given tradition.

One obstacle to be overcome is the fear of exploring outside the familiar walls that seem safe but really are not. The familiar walls keep us stuck and doctrinal rigidity is a separator not a unifier. Authority can and does discourage exploring and doing something different or unfamiliar. Regular attendance at church, synagogue, temple or mosque does not bring about deeper consciousness. Rote recitation of prayers and engagement in rituals does not do it either. On the other hand while being aware of the pitfalls of institutional religion, it is critical not to be judgmental of people for whom the status quo makes sense. Paul saw there is more than the literal story and it is helpful to imitate his example, inviting hearers to go deeper, to discover that there is more! They may accept the invitation or not.

Transformation happens when we engage in practices that wake us up to individual and collective ego. Daily, gradual, conscious, sober practice leads us to recognize that when things happen to us—positive or negative—it is not personal. When several years ago I heard a known and respected teacher say of "God," "it's not personal," I was shocked. However, "impersonal" does not deny the reality of love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, life, energy and the other hundreds of qualities we have ascribed to a "Personal God." These qualities are the very essence or ground of the deepest reality.



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Ramakrishna said it well: "God can be reached through many paths; each of these sectarian religions points out a path which ultimately leads to divinity. Yes, all religions are paths, but the paths are not God. I have seen all sects and all paths. I do not care for them anymore. People belonging to these sects quarrel so much! After trying all religions, I have realized that God is the whole and I am God's part; that God is the sovereign and I am a servant; again, I realize God is I; I am God...God is not only personal and with form but can take the form of Krishna, Christ or any other incarnation. It is true that God manifests God's Self in infinite forms to fulfill the desires of devotees. It is also true that God is formless, indivisible Existence—Intelligence—Bliss Absolute."

When Ramakrishna speaks of God as personal, he is clearly speaking of *our perception*, "ego, persona" level or the level of spirit, pneumatic. In either case God is perceived as "other," just as we *perceive* people and other beings as "other." The mystery is that at the bottom line, ALL IS ONE! So, in our day-to-day lives we need to pay attention, holding lightly our perceptions, growing in awareness through practice, noting what our minds are doing, noting whether the running story is all about me, "ego, persona" or the level of Spirit.

Through the centuries the mystics of the various traditions have known that there is more, something further...that it is really all about love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness...and that all is ONE. But mystics too, are human and like the rest of us move back and forth between stages of awareness. So, back to the process of growing, one day at a time, learning to stay longer and longer at the level of attending to the Spirit with less and less lapsing back to the ego level...and eventually getting longer and longer glimpses of unitive consciousness, Christ-Consciousness, Buddha Consciousness. The goal is to bring that unitive consciousness into our daily lives, where the rubber meets the road! Yes, as Meister Eckhart said centuries ago, "The seed of a pear tree grows into a pear tree. The seed of a hazel tree grows into a hazel tree. A seed of God grows into God." What a wonder! It is our sublime call!

"Toward the ONE, the perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty, the Only Being, united with all the illuminated souls, who form the embodiment of the Mystery, the Spirit of Guidance!"

- Hazrat Inayat Khan, a mentor to Samuel Lewis who originated the Dances of Universal Peace, brought Sufism to the West in 1910.

BAPTISM
ATTENTION

All FCM members who preside at BAPTISMS
You are required to register the Baptism with the FCM Registry Office
The registry form is available on the FCM website.

- ◆ Go to www.federationofchristianministries.org
- ◆ Login to the Members Only area of the website.
- ◆ Click on Members Only link on the top right of the page.
- ◆ Click on Baptism Registry Form. You can complete the registry ONLINE or download a PDF form and mail it to the registry office. The address is on the form.

Questions?
Please email registry@FCMmail.org. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



Federation of Christian Ministries

A Witness to New Life

by William J. Manseau

July/August 2018
VOL. 52 NO. 4



On June 14, 1969 on a Saturday afternoon, Mary Doherty and I married in Boston. It seemed to be big news at least that is how the media treated it. Later that summer Eugene Bianchi, a married Jesuit priest was in Boston as principal speaker for the first general meeting of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association for Pastoral Renewal (NAPR). NAPR was seeking "to educate to the validity of a married clergy as well as a celibate clergy in the future framework of the Catholic Ministry." Mary and I attended the meeting and Gene invited us to attend the first SPFM national convention to be held in Washington DC, November 7-9.

The founders of SPFM saw themselves as "priests and people striving to be open to the Spirit of a New Pentecost, and to embody that Spirit in a Church that is Christian. We can do this only if we ourselves are a Christian community... The purpose of the Society is to contribute in a concrete and experimental way to a far-reaching renewal of the Church's ministry." Initially the members saw themselves only as ordained Roman Catholic priests and supporters. That would develop over time into something more dynamic and expansive yet hopefully always true to its roots. It was in the aftermath of Vatican Council II which sought to be experienced as a new Pentecost.

Fifty five people participated in that conference chaired by Carl and Patricia Hemmer, Lee and Carol Ann Breyer, and Richard Lipka and his wife. The meeting was held in a basement (not an upper room) at the Center for Christian Renewal in Washington, DC which had established as a base for the 50 priests of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC who had been suspended by Cardinal O'Boyle for their public refusal to support Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. At the time SPFM had a list of nearly one thousand members and was growing rapidly according to President Bianchi in his opening address where he said that his understanding of SPFM was as "a small and opened-ended freedom movement which is part of a much wider freedom movement in our society."

The conference included reports on a meeting by the public relations committee with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The SPFM thesis was "that the married priesthood is a valid and valuable form of ministry, and, therefore, should be established in the Catholic Church." The meeting almost didn't happen because the bishops refused to have women present. They had had no foreknowledge of such inclusion and reacted against it "as a ploy." The SPFM Committee "finally decided to go ahead with meeting with only the male members seated, but to regularly report the procedures to the rest of the committee comprised of ladies in waiting."

Although the meeting resolved nothing, Patrick K. Best reported, "it was significant in that: the meeting was a first step for both sides towards confrontation and hopefully resolution of some very explosive internal combustible matters; the meeting was honest and the questions searching; it was a step toward a more mature relationship." He concluded: "I feel that the meeting was successful in that it brought into sharp focus the bishops' objections against our "illegal" ministry, and that it brought out our objections against 'abuse of authority.' In summary, the bishops feel we are in schism and that we have broken a sacred commitment. I feel that we should meet again with the bishops, and that the next agenda should deal directly with those charges. We should state very clearly that what we are doing is not schismatic, but rather, religious disobedience to unjust laws; and that our commitment is to people, the same as theirs."

The agenda also included a report by SPFM Vice President Rocco Caporale on the First European Assembly of Priests in Rome in November, 1969 which he had attended as an observer. It was composed of nearly 200 hundred priests, mostly still active in the official structure and representing 8 countries: Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Austria. They claimed to represent nearly 10,000 priests.



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His impression was that the Europeans were divided on local political issues and had two groups: The North-Europeans aimed to systematically restructure the Church from the present conditions; the Latins aimed to radically pull it down in the hope of remaking it according to their concepts. It could not agree on a common text so it closed without formulating resolutions or an official document. Reflecting upon the quality of the Free Ministry Movement in Europe and in the USA, Rocco stated the Europeans are clearly interested in ecclesiology as a whole, and in the ministry as a residual issue. The Americans focus on the new ministry and attempts to build a new ecclesiology around it.

Another perspective was offered by Paul Mayer who had recently returned from ministry in Latin America in "Reflections on New Styles of Ministry." Paul stated "It cannot be emphasized too strongly that church renewal can be a subtle but dangerous new ploy of the forces of reaction. Causes such as the abolition of the clerical celibacy, civil rights and due process for priests, and the support for birth control are surely good in themselves. Yet, they are still intramural navel-gazing issues, which divert our limited energies and resources from the deeper ones.

"One cannot afford to debate over the color of the drawing room drapes while the city is burning. The facts of United States violence, hunger, militarism, racism (both domestic and exported), and the ever growing subversion of human rights are surely all symptoms of a society aflame with its own destruction. We must break the bonds of our ecclesiastical narcissism to minister to these needs. A church which exists for itself is a perversion of the community which the New Testament describes."

These divergent points of view became apparent in the business meeting when a motion was made and carried that election of Officers and Executive Board be deferred until a modified statement of purpose of SPFM was discussed and agreed upon. A motion was made by Tom Durkin and carried for an amendment to add after "ordained priests" as members "and is open to those who collaborate in the ministry as associate members in the original statement of purpose." Associate Member status included the right to vote. This took place after the women present complained that they were excluded from decision making. At the next Annual Convention of SPFM held in Berkeley, CA on August 7 – 9, 1970, Vicki Di Benedetto, Albuquerque, NM and Jane Eggleston, Castro Valley, CA were elected to the Executive Board and Pauline Fox was elected with Charles S. Sullivan as Representative at Large.

In spite of the carried motion that no election of officers and executive board take place, on a motion by Carol Mrowicki which carried, it was agreed that the present officers would continue in service including Eugene C. Bianchi, of Atlanta, GA President, Rocco Caporale, Claremont, CA, Vice-President; Thomas J. Durkin, Oakland, CA, Executive Secretary; Patrick J. Best, Pleasant Bridge, MI, Treasurer. Another motion carried that three Executive Board members elected in Detroit continue, Vincent Eckholm, Chicago, IL; Thomas Pucelik, Peoria, IL; and Richard Lipka, Baltimore, MD. A motion was passed that five additional members be elected to the Executive Board Romeo Di Benedetto, Albuquerque, NM; Richard Cassidy, Roselle, NJ; Carl Hemmer, Silver Spring, MD; Charles Sullivan, Minneapolis, MN; and William Manseau, Boston, MA.

I am here offering a gallery of names, of trail blazers upon whose shoulders we stand that we might celebrate and thank them. They have made it possible for us to shortly celebrate 50 years of trail blazing ministry as the Federation of Christian Ministries. Hopefully, some of them will be with us in Philadelphia. I am also lifting up the issues which opened a new path to the future for SPFM. These issues mirrored what was going on in the Church at large as it grappled with the forces released by the Second Vatican Council.

In 1973 a summer correspondence took place among the member of the SPFM Board of Directors over the future of the Society. William F. Powers has provided a comprehensive description of that correspondence in his "Free Priests, The Movement of Ministerial Reform in the American Catholic Church" in Part 3, Chapter 8. In short a proposal, entitled "A Hand Full of Seeds" was made by me that the SPFM expand its horizons and organizational mission. It called for and featured Service, Enablement, Education, Development and Spirituality. It provided under Enablement for a program to certify or commission persons for ministry in the name of SPFM or its continuing organization. As an ecumenical Christian worshipping community it would be both Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Evangelical. By Evangelical I meant not a surface, emotion-based style of faith without intellectual roots, but that represented and articulated by Hans Asmussen and his fellow Protestant colleagues in the Samlung Movement in their "The Unfinished Reformation". (Fides Publishers Assoc., Notre Dame, 1961) and it would actualize in a seed form what Vatican Council II in its Decree on Ecumenism meant when it stated in its Introduction: "For almost everyone regards the body in which he has heard the Gospel as his Church and indeed, God's Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and set forth into the world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God."

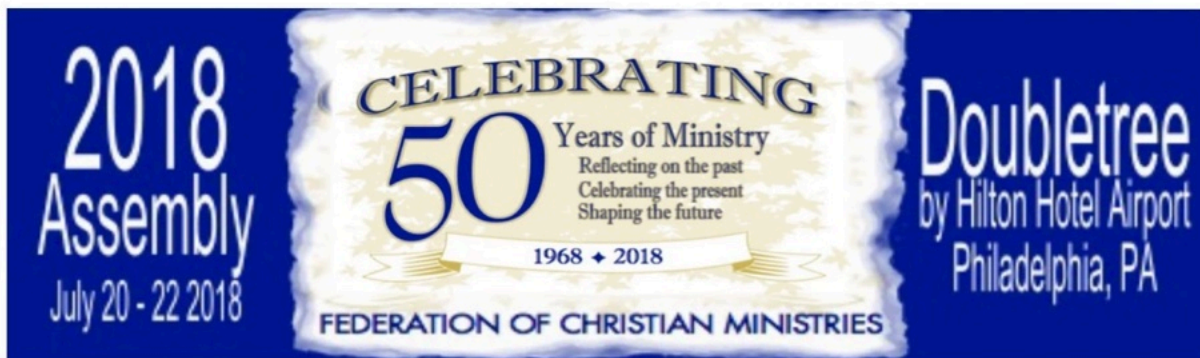
It would be based upon the model of the dual ecclesial standing or Bi-Ritual Taizie Community in France which has both Roman Catholic and Protestant members, and it would be civilly certifiable as a church. As such it would have the capacity to authorize or commission its own members as clergy recognizable as such in the civil arena. I proposed that we name our new community The National Catholic Ministerial Conference, a concept I had experienced as a Dual-Standing Roman Catholic Ecumenical Minister for several years in the United Church of Christ. Terence Dosh, later an editor of FCM's newsletter, DIASPORA, led the meeting in a consideration of the principal functions of a Christian community, Koinonia, Diakonia and Marturia.

Following a vigorous debate the name Fellowship of Christian Ministries was chosen by the assembly and the Hand Full of Seeds proposal was adopted. For the initial next year we would be known as The Fellowship of Christian Ministries Continuing SPFM and the following year, simply the Fellowship of Christian Ministries. Elections were held and I was elected President, Gerald and Marita Grudzen as Vice President, Peter Paul Brennan as Secretary and my wife, Mary as Treasurer to implement the new vision for our SPFM mission, now to be known as the Fellowship of Christian Ministries. The decision to adopt the Hand Full of Seeds with its provision for a program to certify or commission persons for ministry turned out to be the key to FCM's longevity and vitality for it served both married priests, "lay" men and women who sought it out to support their own calls to an ecumenically based ministerial service who bring with them the riches of their own Spiritual/Religious Traditions. In more recent years it has birthed FCM's Specialized Ministries' Professional Religious Endorsement Program.

Our proposal to establish a process for ministerial certification mandated that a principal qualification criterion was to have at least a designated ministerial peer to whom the candidate was to be accountable for their ministry since all Christian ministry (maturity and diakonia) was seen to be rooted in Christian community or koinonia. Such community was to be experienced in domestic or house church. Our vision was to have a national network of house churches. Those of us who had been elected knew that we needed ourselves to be a community if we were to foster FCM as a community so we met as often as we could for our Board meetings bringing our babies and young children.

I cannot conclude this reflection on our FCM beginnings without citing the great missionary journey across the United States which Gerald and Marita Grudzen undertook when they relocated from White Plains, New York to California. During that trek they visited SPFM/FCM households across the nation spreading the Word of our second birth and knitting together our disparate little domestic and house churches into a national community which gathered annually. They were true evangelizing missionaries carrying the good news of new life in the Diaspora in which we found ourselves. It is indeed impressive to witness the continued commitment to house church and small faith communities in FCM co-led by Ginny Cusack and Marita Grudzen, Group Member Coordinator and Facilitator, our own apostles to the apostles. It has been a great privilege to participate in this new birth moment movement of service in the Church and I am grateful to all with whom I have collaborated along the way in our shared path of discipleship.

William J. Manseau





VICE PRESIDENT
DAN PELLEGRIN

Northeast Regional News

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CELEBRATING

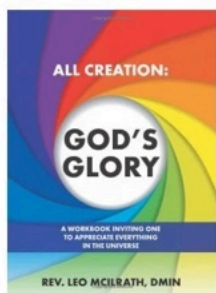
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Profound Thoughts

“Thrive.” That’s the word I choose to title this, my last column as vice-president of the Northeast region. At a recent retirement party the cake was inscribed, “You’re dead to us now.” That made me laugh, as I hope it did you. I know that it is not the universal sentiment (not at my retirement anyway). This is not “farewell,” for I am not leaving. I will joyously remain an FCM member, most thankful for the bountiful blessings that have flowed to me over the past three years. Winnie the Pooh said it very well: “How lucky I am to have something that makes saying Goodbye so hard.”

I thank especially all the members of our region for the charity and undeserved kindness you have shown me. I thank the members of the Circle and guiding forces of FCM who have provided me with inspiration, *caritas*, and patience: **Tom Cusack** and **Ginny Cusack**, **Tom Stricker**, **Tony Ercolano**, **Carolyn Horvath** and **Tom Leonhardt**, **Antoinette Marold**, our previous and current treasurers **Susan Ross** and **Heidi Tierney**, **John Polanski**, and my fellow regional vice presidents of FCM.

So many members have come to FCM after seeing our Constitution on the web. It brings to mind a thought attributed to George Washington in his farewell address: “Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it’s really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power – with our participation and the choices we make.” This profundity is my parting gift to you.



All Creation: GOD'S GLORY

A recently published workbook by FCM Member, Pastor Leo McIlrath, D Min, offers an opportunity to expand our knowledge of God's "wonder-full" creation, while enhancing our memory skills.

Available:
<https://www.amazon.com/All-Creation-Glory-Leo-McIlrath/dp/1532021844>
and at the Assembly.



With Deepest Sympathy

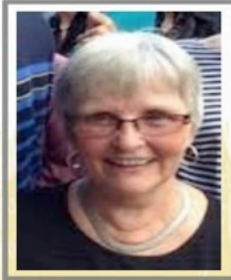
Long time FCM member, James Hally passed into Spirit on June 13, 2018.
Our deepest sympathy to his wife Rosie.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on
Thursday, June 21, 2018 at
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church
Camden, NJ 08104

Rosie can be reached at:
1901 J. F. Kennedy Blvd.
Apt. 1808
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Federation of Christian Ministries

Causes For Celebration



VICE PRESIDENT
DIANE DOUGHERTY



Congratulations to Living Water Inclusive Catholic Community... In 2013 FCM became a Convention of Churches, "a designation that reflects FCM has been more than an association of individuals. Many of our members serve and lead congregations some of which are IRS recognized churches, others are state incorporated, and others are unincorporated associations."

On June 3rd I had the distinct honor of celebrating the 10th Anniversary of one of our Group members, **Living Waters Catholic Inclusive Community** of Catonsville, VA, participating in a beautiful reflection of members who serve and lead this congregation.

Living Waters is one of the first Inclusive Catholic Communities in the United States, begun by **Roman Catholic Woman Priests, Bishop Andrea Johnson and Gloria Carpento** in their home in 2011. They have had 9 vocations rise up from that small community, many of whom are members of FCM, and who carry out their mission by working in the healing ministries as chaplains, offering interfaith worship services as well as participating in sacramental services such as Baptisms and Weddings. As partners with FCM, they are a valued part of our mission to serve God's people as equals. We are enriched by their ministries and send them abundant blessings for many years to come.

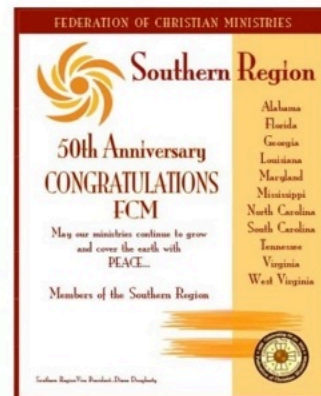


Good things come in small packages... A mini-meeting was held June 2 in McLean, VA thanks to **Shane MacCarthy** who arranged a gathering space at St. Luke's Serbian Orthodox Church. During our time together we shared deeply about our connections with FCM and how it supports us on our journey. Shane has been in the organization since the beginning, and **Ken Knapp** was secretary and treasurer. **Judy Lorenz** and I are more recent members. We all spoke about the demands of our aging families and communities, most particularly about Ken's wife who is in the last stages of her life journey. The conversation made us look forward to the presentation on **End of Life Care** - a workshop at our upcoming Assembly.

Visit the Southern Region Table at the Assembly

Welcome New Members

Mike Woods, Johnson City, TN
Vance Midgett, Raleigh, NC
Brenda Smith, Winder, GA
Ann Tempkin, Decatur, GA
Frank Ferguson, Newport News, VA
David Lamp, Norfolk, VA
Kristin Fulton, Bellaire, FL
Cassandra Wood, Largo FL
Barry Bruce, Birmingham, AL



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VICE PRESIDENT
RON DAVIS

Great Lakes Regional News

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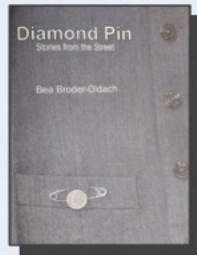
Reaching Out For Years To Come

Each one reach one... As I write this, I find myself deeply grateful for members who took time to refer friends to FCM after hearing their stories and calls to ministry. Four times over the spring, prospective commissioning candidates talked with me because they learned about us from members within the Great Lakes Region. **Amy Simpson** took the time to talk to two CPE residents at Cincinnati's Children's Hospital. **Richard Cruse** did likewise with a CPE resident at Indiana University Hospital and **Bea Broder** shared with a CPE resident at the Ohio State University. Needless to say, this outreach is of benefit to FCM as well as prospective members. It is a very effective way of growing FCM's reach particularly to specialized ministries. Thanks to all who are sharing your story!

Local gathering generates interest... The heart of my FCM work over the last two months has been about building relationships with current members and developing new ones with candidates for commissioning. On May 6th, 10 of us gathered at my home for a potluck meal. Half of those who attended were chaplain residents who are in the last days of their CPE program who came to the potluck in order to learn more about FCM and to build new relationships within the community. We were blessed to have a great time together, enjoying some delicious food and sharing stories and in the process found one another to be interesting, like-minded and fun. There was a sweet spirit amongst the group that day and each one of the chaplain residents said that they would continue the process of seeking out commissioning with FCM.

Preparing for commissioning... May was a busy month. I made efforts to stay in touch with five people who were continuing their commissioning process. We had conversations on the phone and I was able to have at least one face-to-face visit with each candidate, talking about FCM, life and ministry.

Anniversary calls us together... As spring moves towards summer, attention is on the 50th Anniversary of FCM and I am looking forward to traveling to Philadelphia for the Assembly. I am grateful to be a part of this faith community and look forward to fellowship, learning, worship and downtime with those who will gather. I thank God for blessing us for the last 50 years and my hope is for a bright future, touching our world in the years to come.



Announcing Book Release
Diamond Pin: Stories from the Street
by
FCM Member, Bea Broder-Oldach

A collection of 26 vignettes from a chaplain's journey in street ministry among people living with homelessness and in poverty.

to order email: bhbroder@gmail.com
www.amazon.com/dp/1944581111
Also available at the Assembly

Federation of Christian Ministries



VICE PRESIDENT
RICHARD JAMES

Mts. & Plains Regional News

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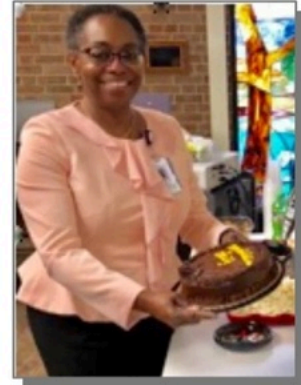
CELEBRATING



We Stand On Holy Ground

Greetings, I hope your summer is going well. I hope that you have already taken or have planned to take a little time for self-care. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the FCM assembly July 22, 2018. FCM is celebrating the 50 years of ministry. Wow! What a blessing that will be!

I am proud to announce the latest accomplishment of my friend and fellow Mountains and Plains member **Christy Howard-Steele** who has recently been designated APCE Board Certified Clinical Pastoral Educator. Join me in sending her our heartfelt congratulations and prayers for continued meaningful and fruitful ministry. Recently the Department of Mission Spiritual Care at Advocate/Aurora Christ Medical Center gathered to celebrate her outstanding work.



For our *Reflections in Ministry* feature this issue, I would like to offer this from my own recent personal experience. I begin with a familiar passage: "Then God said, 'Do not come near; take the sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'" (Ex. 3:5) I am so glad Moses was able to sense by hearing and by sight a representation of God's presence and appreciated that place as holy ground. In so doing he was enabled to embrace divine benevolent guidance for himself and humanity. Moses did not allow himself to be distracted from the holy presence of God. If we observe well, if we listen well, the voice of the Divine will instruct and lead us to embrace what I called God's Divine Benevolent Intent—a type of Holy Ground.

At the same time, there are occasions we find ourselves hijacked by distraction, disrespecting, and trampling on the holy ground of God's presence, thus forfeiting divine guidance. One such distractive incident occurred one morning during an encounter between the Surgical Trauma Intensive Care (STIC) interdisciplinary team at Advocate Christ Medical Center and a 73-year-old patient with her husband at the bedside along with a well-meaning dialysis nurse technician who proved to be one of the proverbial "too many cooks who spoil the broth."

Before our encounter during the STIC meeting, we discussed the medical status and care of twenty-three patients, one of whom was Mrs. Barbra Johnson a 68-year-old, female patient accompanied by her husband, Mr. Jack Johnson (not their real names). We learned that after a bad fall at home Mrs. Johnson had undergone two surgical procedures. She was also scheduled for dialysis treatment later that morning. On top of that, there was also a new diagnosis of extensive cancer throughout her body. The physician stated that additional surgery was no longer a viable option because her medical condition compromised the state of her vascular system. The physician's recommendation was to forgo further surgery, discontinue dialysis treatments, and treat her pain by introducing palliative care, and perhaps hospice.

Based on this we planned that a smaller group of the STIC interdisciplinary team consisting of the chief physician, resident physician, the patient's nurse and a nurse practitioner and myself would meet with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Our objective was to enable the patient and her husband to make informed decisions so that she might have the opportunity to enjoy as much quality of life as possible with her husband, family, and friends. Our goals were to discuss the severity of her medical condition, lack of meaningful options, the possibility of a significant care intervention, and develop goals of care. We arranged to have a meeting at 1:00 PM that afternoon.

When we enter the room, we found Mrs. Johnson receiving treatment from a dialysis nurse. The nurse positioned herself between the patient and her husband and appeared to be monitoring the dialysis equipment. As the physician began to speak, the nurse interrupted the flow of conversation by introducing occasional comments toward the patient, at times contradicting the physician's report of his assessment, all of which made it difficult for Mr. and Mrs. Johnson to understand what was taking place. She meant well, but she was out of order and inappropriate.

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Anyone who has been in that kind of conversation knows it takes sensitive, painstaking effort to make progress and when that is interrupted it is often necessary to start over again. Before long it seemed as though two-and-a-half conversations were going on the room: one between the nurse and the patient, one between the social worker and the husband and one between the chief physician and the team. I attempted to address the awkward and dysfunctional babbling by saying, "There are too many conversations going on at the same time." When the chief physician thanked me I thought it would have been enough to get on the right track. However, the nurse continued to interrupt the doctor and others on the interdisciplinary team with unfocused though well-meaning babble until we all retreated from the room leaving a very anxious Mr. and Mrs. Johnson.

While outside room and in sight of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, I wondered how we might resume the conversation about our care plan. I also wondered how I might recover and enhance the working relationship between myself and my colleague the dialysis nurse. Clearly, we would soon work together on behalf of patients and their families.

As I thought about these things, a request came from the patient through her husband. "My wife would like for you to pray for her. Could you pray for us, Chaplain?" I entered the room again and inquired about their concerns. Again, the nurse interrupted, saying, "I can call a priest for you." She had had good intentions, but was uninformed as to their spiritual/religious history and the relationship I established with them. They had already informed me that while their religious background was Catholic they had not worshiped in the Catholic Church in over 30 years.

Given this situation I spoke up to the nurse: "Could you give us a moment alone while I attend to their request?" The nurse became a bit more insistent: "I am a nurse and I do spiritual case too!" I responded, "I understand that. However, right now you are interfering in my effort to respond appropriately to their request." Then she said, "Oh we are going to talk about this." I said, "Indeed we will." She stepped out of the room, and I continued my inquiry regarding their prayer concerns and prayed with them.

Ten minutes later, I sought out the nurse. "Could we have that conversation now?" Our confrontational conversation went something like this. As I began to speak to her, she repeatedly interrupted me. I asked, "Can I talk for just a minute, please?" Her response was, "No you can not." So I held my peace and allowed her to continue speaking until she ran out of things to say five minutes later. Then I said, "I want to bring to your attention the fact that the interdisciplinary team had discussed the patient's medical condition this morning and developed a plan to offer available pathways of care for the consideration of the patient and her husband. The way you repeatedly interrupted me in the patient's room was just as you repeatedly interrupted the physician in his effort to communicate with the patient and her husband. And if you were to ask any member of the interdisciplinary team about their experience of you, I sure that they will tell you the same thing."

Having the opportunity to express myself, I intentionally compare her interaction with me to her behavior in the room. My hope was to hold up a metaphorical mirror up to the nurse so that she could experience herself. There was a long pause of silence, and then we parted ways. It soaked in for a few days, and eventually we recovered our working relationship.

I believe holy ground is a place where one can sense the suffering of the human condition and the presence of God's benevolent intent in action and participate in that activity. If we observe well, if we listen well, the voice of the Divine will instruct and lead us to embrace and join in offering God's Divine Benevolent Intent. Sometimes we must help ourselves and others to still ourselves, so we can experience we are standing on Holy Ground.

Rather than removing our sandals, we remove all the aspects of our well-meaning yet misguided agendas. We become respectful of God's presence and the present needs of suffering persons. So I ask you now. Where in your ministry has Holy Ground been disturbed, disrespected, ignored, and the blessings of Divine Benevolent Intent forfeited? Are you ready to recover that Holy Ground?



Federation of Christian Ministries



**VICE PRESIDENT
DONNA SCHREIBER**

Pacific Regional News

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CELEBRATING



New Members, Video Meetings Unite Region

Please join me in welcoming **Lee Erickson**, a Board Certified Chaplain through both the Association of Professional Chaplains and the Spiritual Care Association. His current areas of ministry include hospice, palliative care, and early stage dementia support.

Born in Portland, Oregon and raised in southern Nevada, Lee is now living in northern California with his soul mate Kathy whom he met through an improvisational theatre group in Sacramento.

Lee comes to FCM at a significant threshold in his life's journey, which has already spanned living on 3 continents. He is looking forward to establishing roots, building relationships, and becoming an interdependent member of FCM.



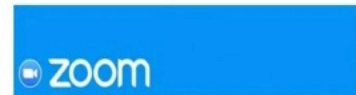
Rebecca Henson is another of our newer members. She provided this picture of a mask she recently made and discusses it below:

I am a 'process' artist. I do not preconceive form, but rather I allow the hidden psyche to manifest in outward form. At the time I made this clay mask, I was experiencing emotional conflict with a loved one. Upon completing the mask, I stepped back, looked at it, and thought, 'yes, that is how I feel', realizing I had become emotionally disconnected from my own self.

As those in the healing profession, as clinicians, I believe we can become disconnected emotionally, or deny how we feel personally/professionally for a myriad of reasons. Art reconnects those fractured parts of our psyche and shows us in physical & symbolic form that which is hidden deep inside us, making us whole again.

We are grateful to **Scott Bennion** who continues to host our Zoom video conferences. It's a very comfortable format that allows us to enjoy the fellowship of other FCM members in a living room/coffee shop style. People can come and go and stay as long as they like.

Conferences are scheduled for the first Saturday of the even-numbered months from 5-6pm Arizona time. (Please note that Arizona does not observe Daylight Saving Time.) You may join us on your PC, tablet or smart phone, and don't worry if you have not used Zoom before. The invitation which will go out a day or so before will have a link which is very easy to follow. The next gathering will be August 4 and we hope to see you there. We will also meet on October 6 and December 1. If you have any questions, contact Scott chaplainbennion@gmail.com 602.595.9577 or Donna PacificVP@FCMmail.org 609-304-4866



Federation of Christian Ministries



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The FCM Newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Federation of Christian Ministries, a non-profit religious body. As the informational publication of FCM, its mission is to keep members current

with the organization and its activities, to provide ideas to further ministry and to promote community building among local FCM groups and the national organization. All current members receive a copy. Articles and feedback are welcomed and can be sent to : newsletter@FCMmail.org by the 15th of each month (February, April, June, August, October and December).

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FCM CERTIFICATES

These lovely certificates are available from the FCM Central Office. Please specify your choice: Baptism, Marriage, Holy Union, and the number of certificates you need. Certificates are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Each certificate is printed on certificate weight paper in blue ink; they carry the FCM logo and seal.

Endorsement for Specialized Ministries

Qualified FCM members may apply for "Religious Body Endorsement" for the specialized ministries of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Pastoral Education. Such endorsement is required by professional certifying organizations and many institutional employers. The FCM Circle of Directors acts on endorsement applications twice yearly. Endorsement application materials are available for downloading on the FCM website at: www.federationofchristianministries.org
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GMU offers degree completion programs and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. For more information, visit the web site: www.globalministriesuniversity.org Email: GMU5053@aol.com
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