



ECC NEWS

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Upcoming Events

- **October 24-27** – Synod 2007 at Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida
For more information on the Synod, see our website at www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org
- **October 27** – First Annual Gospel Blues and BBQ fundraiser at Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida

A Message from our Presiding Bishop Peter E. Hickman

Greetings to All the Sisters and Brothers of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion!

I have been called many things in the past few years and one of the most common things that I have heard is that I am some kind of radical bishop. As if that is a bad thing.

Yes, I am a radical in that I am convinced that we, as the Body of Christ and the People of God, must return to our roots. Our roots are in the Church of the first century which was rooted in the person and work of Jesus through the gift and agency of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is head of His church and He actively seeks to lead her through the Holy Spirit.

Like our ancestors of the first generation of Christians, we are to be a Spirit-led people. We are to respond in obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit. But first we must hear Her voice which requires undying devotion to repentance, prayer and the death of the self life, which Saint Paul calls the life of the flesh. If we do this then we, as a people of faith, will begin to realize both the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit in the life of our beloved communion. However, we cannot do this under our own steam in our own human strength, wisdom, or effort. Only through the gift of the Holy Spirit are we able to manifest Her fruit and gifts.

Each one of us is called to be a minister within the Body of Christ. We are each assigned a very specific ministry by the Holy Spirit. One's giftedness and fruitfulness should determine our respective ministerial role within the church. We begin by discovering and recognizing the spiritual gifts of each member of the Body. We must be very intentional about this. Then, we must determine the readiness of each by carefully examining the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifest in their lives. Is the fruit one is bearing ripe or unripe? Or has their fruit become bitter or rotten?

Personal holiness is not an option if we are to be faithful servants of Christ. Holiness is about one's character. The glory of God is the divine character. The glory of Jesus is His character, which was manifest in His suffering. Our glory will be manifest in our transformed characters, which will be reflected in our relationships with one another. God's glory is God's love, for God is love. Jesus Christ's glory is His sacrificial love. Our glory will be our love for God and one another.

Sadly, we seem to ignore the Holy Spirit's leading. We would rather do things in our own way and pray that the Spirit will bless our efforts. It should be no surprise to us that more often than not we do not have the Spirit's blessing. But by persisting in doing things in our own way we create an institution that is a reflection of our human propensity to become corrupted by self deception and selfish ambition, which becomes manifest in the bitter fruit of what St. Paul calls the works of the flesh.

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Ultimately, no matter what we chose to call our leadership it will inevitably reflect human corruption and become oppressive. We see this in the Roman Church and I have seen it in various Protestant churches. The same corruption infects any human structure or church polity. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the workers work in vain." And elsewhere Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Apart from the leading and the power of the Holy Spirit our beloved communion is doomed to repeat this process of becoming yet another corrupt and oppressive human ecclesial institution.

So it remains my constant prayer that we, as the people of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, would open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and make it our sole endeavor and highest priority to become a Spirit-led people of God. This is Christ's will and desire for all of us who claim to be His disciples. If we accomplish anything at the Holy Synod this year may it be that we hear more clearly the voice of the Holy Spirit within our hearts and come to realize that we can only be held together in the bonds and chains of the love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord.

In the Bonds of Christ's Love,
Bishop Peter Hickman



Welcome To Florida

Father Steve Roszczewski
Clearwater, FL

Dear Friend and Synod Delegate,
Can you believe that we are only days away from our ECC Synod 2007? Our local community of Holy Spirit ECC has been quite busy preparing for your welcome as we look forward to sharing faith, friendship and vision for church together. We're excited as I am sure you are.

Our time together will begin with a Welcome Reception, Wednesday, October 24th beginning at

6PM near the beach and will close with round table forums on Saturday morning, October 27th. Check out the details at:

http://www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org/eccpdf/synod_schedule.pdf

As part of our compassionate care for those most in need, I invite you (and your local faith community) to collect children's bathing suits and sunscreen and bring them with you to the Synod. We are collecting them for the inner-city children of Tampa, FL many of whom cannot access the city swimming pools because they are not wearing "real" bathing suits. The city will not allow cut-offs, gym shorts, bermuda shorts, etc. Our effort together for this project will be deeply appreciated by these little ones, particularly with our warm tropical climate.

We, the community of Holy Spirit ECC, eagerly await your safe arrival to the Sunshine State. Until then, may we all prepare well in prayer, study and discussions with one another for our "holy assembly" in Synod.

<http://www.holyspiriticc.org>

So, What's in Your Fridge?

Fr. Scott Jenkins
Aurora, Co

This is the question I get asked most often when the high school people are over at my house. It is a good question. It is their question..."You got something to eat?" We always find or order something and then we begin.

Young people today are always hungry. Whether they are in middle school, high school, or college, one thing is for certain...they can always eat.

It goes along with the rest of their busy, text-messaging, hanging out lives. They're either soaking up info at school, tuned into their music, or connected to each other via a number of electronic means.

I have often wondered just "how's it going?" within the confines of youth ministry throughout the ECC.

What's in our fridge?

Is there something more we could be doing in order to feed our young people than we are doing already?

I have had some inspiring conversations with the Rev. Jessica Rowley from St. Louis, Mrs. Margaret Sanders from Orange, California, and folks throughout Colorado. (Continued on page 3)

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There is more in the old' frig than I thought. Our dreaming and thinking led us to invite all of you to participate in the formation of a National (?) or Regional (?) Team, which would work together to accomplish the following goals or different goals, which would be put forth by the team:

1. Empower and support our youth to have a voice in shaping our church.
2. Create opportunities for regional retreats and mission trips
3. Share resources and strategies between communities through online communities, such as Face Book and My Space

There will be a table set up at the Synod where you can pick up information on how to get involved. We will need both adult sponsors and our young people to make this happen. If possible, you can bring the contact information (Name, age, e-mail, and phone numbers) of your young people who would like to be part of this effort. We'll begin networking in early November. I think this is pretty exciting stuff! So...what's in our frig? Quite a bit I think. If you have questions (and I hope you do!) you may text/call me at 720-298-3583 or email me at fr.scott@churchofhollyfamily.org.

Fr. Scott Jenkins and Rev. Jessica Rowely will be presenting at a Joint Session and will be available Saturday morning at the round table forum to answer questions and receive information.

Leadership to House of Laity

Donna Williams
Palm Springs, CA

The HOL will be selecting new leaders at the Synod in October. After much work, thought and prayer, the Nominating Committee has undergone the process of seeking and recommending nominations. We have outstanding candidates. Take a glimpse!

Sarah C. Ball

San Damiano Church
Little Rock, AR

I would like to implement a better communication system and establish a "virtual community" where all HOL delegates, and any other members of the laity who wish to join, may participate in an online list-serve.

The strengths I bring to this position are: The ability and willingness to communicate well with all; experience in guiding diverse groups of people from very different backgrounds who are ECC NEWS

passionate about their belief systems; experience with large budgets and business financial strategy ; optimistic attitude and a belief in extending grace at all times

Celina B. Martinez

Church of the Beloved
Northglenn, CO

I would like to see the Ecumenical Catholic Communion grow to be a much larger and more fully appreciated religious presence in the United States. I wish to be able to "get our voice out there" so that more disenfranchised teenagers/adults/families know of our existence and their options to join a "Wholly Welcoming" community of faith.

I believe the strengths I bring to this position are: understanding of many diverse opinions and the ability take all into consideration, excellent communicate with peers, knowledge of budgets and finance (with multi-million dollars projects), and a high energy level to offer in coordinating ECC activities.

Leadership to the House of Pastors

Jim Lehman, Las Cruces, NM

Over the past months delegates of the House of Pastors (HOP) have been in dialogue about the future of the HOP and about the selection of its next leader. From this process, three strong candidates for the president of the HOP have come forward and have agreed to serve their fellow pastors as president to the house if elected. Meet them.

Rev. Fr. Arturo Querijero

Associate Pastor of the Hispanic Community at St. Matthew, Orange, CA

I believe in a community-based church that accompanies individual persons in their struggle for self determination, respectful of their tradition, ethnic origin, religious orientation, social class and sexual preference. I also believe that together as a communion we can define our identity as a church in search of God in our lives.

Rev. Mother Kathleen Jess

Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi ECC
Calimesa, CA

I believe that healthy local parishes are our strength as we build up together the larger church....Communication is the key, and we will develop a system by which the clergy know that their voice and view is heard and responded to.

Rev. Fr. Steve Roszczewsk
Pastor of Holy Spirit ECC
Tampa, FL

Our call as a 'communion of communities' is as exciting as it can be stressful for we are called to be in constant discernment of God's way in this holy endeavor....Giving birth to this awesome movement of Christ's love is both our blessing and our challenge. We are called to be church!

Newly elected leaders will be presented at the first Joint Session and will be available Saturday morning at the round table forum to answer questions and receive information.

ECC National Health Insurance Plan

Frank Krebs, St. Louise, MO

Barbara Fichter of Holy Spirit in Clearwater Florida and Fr. Frank Krebs of Sts. Clare & Francis in St. Louis, MO, are serving on a temporary board to the National Health Insurance Plan. "Our goal is to serve for two years at which time there would be an elected board."

This insurance plan is intended to cover on a voluntary basis any employee of an ECC community or organization who works at least 20 hours a week for that group. Sign-up (enrollment) will occur in November to start January of 2008.

Coverage and carriers will be determined by the board, with the input of participants and would-be participants. The goal by synod is to have an outline of the chosen health plan and offer premium information for individual, spouse/partner, or families.

To date there are 16 persons who have said they are interested throughout the ECC. If anyone else is interested—just interested—they should *immediately* contact Frank Krebs with their name, date of birth, gender, zip code, and selection of self + spouse/partner, or family preference.

This is a small beginning, but it will grow as the ECC grows. This plan will offer ECC communities an affordable insurance option for their Pastors and staff.

There is strength in numbers so please consider this option and contact Frank Krebs if your community is interested! fekrebs@msn.com

Fr. Frank Krebs and Barbara Fichter will be presenting at a Joint Session and will be available Saturday morning at the round table forum to answer questions and receive information.

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West Coast Retreat

Rev. Jim Farris
Laguna Beach, CA

The Pacific Region of the Communion met on September 14th at Holy Trinity Church in Long Beach, CA. for day of prayer, sharing and preparation for the Synod in October. Fr. Armando Leyva and his community graciously hosted the event complete with a delicious Mexican lunch. Communion members came from various Southern California parishes including, St. Francis, Pathfinder, St. Matthew, Holy Trinity, St. Andrew and St. Paul and Sophia Spirit.

They were joined by Bishop Thomas Abel and clergy from the Catholic Church of America, San Diego, CA. Also in attendance were three guest priests, friends of ECC priests originally from the Philippines – all hoping to start an ECC mission for the American Filipino community. Our diversity was celebrated in the unity of Christ.

As we gathered we were aware of the need to dialogue about preparations for the Synod in Tampa. But, instead of jumping into a discussion of proposed legislation, we began the day with a question: "What does your heart bring to this gathering?" Continuing with the liturgy and lunch, we then returned to the visioning process by answering a second question: "How do you envision the growth of the independent Catholic movement in our region in the 5-10 years?" Hopes and dreams were exchanged, along with the heartache of some failed attempts at unity and the present struggle of parishes to thrive. Troubles and triumphs were shared as we spoke and listened, agreed and disagreed with love.

To transition to a discussion of the Synod we ended our time together with a short healing service in which we all prayed and the two bishops anointed everyone present. We said good-bye to our visitors, and then re-assembled the members of the Communion. Again, hopes and dreams for the Synod were shared, along with a discussion of the process that was followed for the work of the episcopacy commission. While we shared frustrations and worked to understand each other, we also agreed that the gathering was a blessing and hoped to gather again after the Holy Synod in October. The day was a true sharing of the heart – sometimes painful, but also healing and unifying.

October 2007

News Bites

Synod Update -- October 24-27, 2007

Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida

Synod and hotel registration are available online
www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org.

Topics slated for the agenda are:

- Institution of new leaders to the House of Pastors and the House of Laity
- Presentation from the Episcopal Commission
- Presentation of a National Youth Council
- Presentation of a National Health Plan
- An outreach Service Project for the entire convention
- Legislation on :
Synodal Structure \ Synodal Council
The Office Role and Selection of Regional Bishops, Ministry of a Bishop, Ecumenical Values/Ecumenical Relationships

The Reverend Jessica Rowley September 7, 2007

On Friday, September 7, Sts. Clare and Francis Ecumenical Catholic Community, St. Louis, celebrated the ordination of Jessica Rowley by Bishop Peter Hickman, Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. The ordination took place in the chapel at Eden Theological Seminary where Jessica graduated earlier this year. She will now serve as full-time associate pastor at Sts. Clare and Francis.



Welcome, Sts. Francis and Clare Church!

The Southeast Region gratefully welcomed a new parish community, Sts. Francis and Clare Catholic Church-Havana, Florida to the ECC! This growing community, under the pastoral leadership of Fr. Michael LaLone ministers in the beautiful country near the Florida-Georgia line north of Tallahassee, FL. Fr. Mike and the community look forward to a long and happy life in the ECC. Visit their website: <http://www.catholicchurchhavanaf.org>.

Welcome, sisters and brothers!

The Community of Holy Spirit ECC Clearwater, FL

Holy Spirit gratefully welcomed Bishop Peter and Mirella Hickman to their community to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation on Sunday, July 22nd. In a very Spirit-filled liturgy, Bishop Peter baptized one candidate and confirmed seven members of the parish.

They are from l to r: Rhonda Chambers, Kristy Curts, Victor Bellis, Bishop Peter, Armando Morales, Holly Sullivant, Merry Wilson and John Warner. May the fruits of the Spirit be borne in your living and your loving!



Congratulations Fr. Ned Reidy – Co pastor of the Path Finder Community of the Risen Christ in Bermuda Dunes, CA

Ned has completed nursing school and graduated on September 22nd. He intends to use his new skills in everyday life as well and working for six weeks every summer with Doctors without Borders. Ned will also be running the medical tent with the California fire fighters as they annually fight the fall wild fires in the southern California region. Bless you Ned!

San Damiano Ecumenical Catholic Church Arkansas, MO

San Damiano hosted it's Parish Launch Wednesday, Sept. 26th. Bishop Peter presided over Mass Wednesday evening and celebrated San Damiano formally launching the first ECC community in Arkansas. The community has, since it's inception, become the home to many people from a variety of religious backgrounds. The launch offered it's members the opportunity to make formal their commitment and celebrate it's new beginning. Congratulations!

Holy Spirit Catholic Community A Journey through Time

Tim Ronan
Boston, MA

We started our journey in January 2006 in a current member's living room. At that time the group that met had been through tremendous turmoil that resulted in the removal of their pastor. Additionally, a sexual abuse cover-up and the closing of over 60 vibrant parishes had already plagued the Archdiocese of Boston. We weren't sure where we were going or exactly what we wanted to be, but we knew it was something different, something that was faith-based and free of the limiting beliefs and deceit of the institutional Roman Catholic Church.

Through many weekly meetings and prayerful reflection we discerned that we wanted to form a faith community. What a tall order for such a fledgling group. We asked ourselves how we go about doing this? The answer was 'we need to do research on the net'. Little did we know at the time that there was an independent movement of Catholics gathering who thought the same way and were doing the same thing – forming home-based and other communities celebrating Eucharist together. We found local groups such as Evensong, the American Catholic Church, Saint Paul's Catholic Community, as well others across the country. We heard of Spiritus Christi, CORPUS and CITI, Future Church, Ecumenical Catholic Communion, and Women Priest's. After all of our research and some visits to the various local groups we had a plan in place that we were indeed going to form a faith community.

The next step was to figure out our name. Well, that seemed to be an easy task since we were indeed a group in formation and often referred to each other as 'pilgrims'- so we decided that our name would be *A Pilgrim People*. Just like Jesus in his early days, we were indeed wandering to find a home and our identity. Known as *A Pilgrim People* we had our first Eucharistic Liturgy on Pentecost Sunday June 2006 at Grace Episcopal Church in Newton MA and continued with summer monthly services.

Soon after we had a visit from Bishop Peter Hickman, and learned that Spiritus Christi was hosting the ECC retreat in October. Five members of our community made the journey to Rochester and attended the retreat. The Pilgrim members attending felt in communion with the people they met and the message of the ECC.

So back to Boston they went with this feeling of hope that they had found a place to belong among kindred spirits. Inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, the group discerned that we indeed wanted to join the ECC.

In April 2007 we formally joined the ECC. And at our one-year anniversary on Pentecost in June of 2007 Bishop Peter Hickman joined us as we announced our new name *Holy Spirit Catholic Community* and our official membership with the ECC.

As the word has spread about the original *Pilgrims*, Holy Spirit Catholic Community has become a home to many and today our community is the joining of many groups, which includes people from the churches in vigil protesting their closing.

Out of pain and struggle we are striving to create anew the church of God's promise – the kingdom of God here on Earth. We still see ourselves as *pilgrims* on a journey through time in solidarity with all pilgrims across the world celebrating and living the Jesus' gospel of love, justice and peace.

Editor's note: Contributions to ECC News are welcome. Send your submission to administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org