



# ECC NEWS

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## Upcoming Events

- **October 24-27, 2007** – Synod 2007 at Holy Spirit ECC in Clearwater, Florida

For more information on the Synod, see our website at [www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org](http://www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org)

**Editor's note:** Contributions to ECC News are welcome. Send your submission to [administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org](mailto:administrator@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org)

## An Easter Message from our Presiding Bishop Peter E. Hickman

My Dearest Sisters and Brothers,

I often think deeply about our beloved Communion especially our beautiful words in the Constitution:

*We are men and women, baptized in Christ. We are laity and ordained. We join together at the messianic call of the Spirit to form the household of faith; to preach the Gospel of liberation and justice for the poor, the outcast, the sick, the disabled, the old, the young, and the imprisoned; to offer a refuge in Christ for those who suffer prejudice because of race, color, culture, philosophy, gender, sexual orientation or educational deprivation; to conform our lives to the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ through prayer and study, service, and the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments.*

What words of hope and peace – this noble calling to which we dedicate our lives and service! Yet, we too are the “poor, the outcast, the sick, the disabled, the old, the young and the imprisoned...” At the same time we are the ones who minister to these needs. To quote Henri Nouwen, we are the “wounded healers.” With the Risen Christ our wounds are now made glorious – wounds now transformed to heal others.

I write to ask that we attend to our woundedness and anger as the first priority of our preparation for the coming Synod – before it has power to divide and hurt us. I look into my heart and sometimes find the spirit of anger – and see it in others as well. It is present in our nation – now torn by issues of war, economics, justice and ideology. While not an overwhelming presence, the spirit of anger also has energy within our beloved Communion. Anger comes from many places – hurts of the past and struggles in the present. I have heard said, “Acknowledging anger is a first step to healing it.” We bring it into the light, so that we may achieve what St. Paul tells us: “Everything that comes into the light becomes clear, and becomes light itself.” (Ephesians 5:13-14)

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*Bishop Peter's Easter Message continued:*

In ecumenical openness, our brother, Jim Farris, has often observed that we can learn from our Buddhist brothers and sisters who teach that we cause suffering when we cling to our own comfort, our own views as absolute, our idea that laws and observances do not change, and our independent sense of "self." We examine our hearts to let go of what I fearfully cling to – that we might be led by the Spirit instead of our fear and anger. We empty ourselves to be filled with Christ, we humble ourselves that we may share in the glory of the risen Christ; we die that we may be raised to the new life in Christ. Jesus says of this, "If you lose yourself through me, you will discover who you truly are." (Matthew 10:39) And elsewhere he says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it will bear no fruit." (John 12:24)

I write not to point a finger, but to lend a hand – joining our hearts to pray diligently for the spirit of love, joining our minds to pray unceasingly for the spirit of wisdom. If we seek for the spirit of peace, we shall surely find it as we gather for the Synod at Tampa in October, hosted by our sisters and brothers of the Holy Spirit Community.

Through the working of the Holy Spirit among us we hope to discover processes not only for the issues of governance, but also for true **communion...koinonia**. We seek to **serve, diakoneo**, those who have already joined us, yet fulfill our mission of reaching out to other similar faith communities. We strive to affirm the words of the creed: "I believe in God...the creator... of all that is seen and unseen," attending on the hidden yet ever present Christ who is more real than our words – who is discovered in stillness, in humility, and in love.

Pray with me that our Synod will be a time of hope, compassion, creativity, and healing, yet also a time for the God of surprises – encountered when we forgive, listen and trust.

May the Joy and Glory of Easter fill your hearts with holy laughter and overwhelming awe!

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

**ECC News Bites**

**St Ignatius, Seattle, WA...** enters the ECC. Congratulations Rev. Philip Knowles on incardination to the ECC.

**San Damiano, Little Rock, AK...** enters the ECC. Congratulations to Rev Fred Ball on his ordination to the Priesthood

**Sts. Clare & Francis Ecumenical Catholic Community, St. Louis, MO...** Congratulations to Jessica Rowley on her ordination to the transitional diaconate. Ordination to the priesthood is scheduled for Friday, September 7.



**Introducing Deacon Jessica Rowley**

**Church of the Holy Trinity in Long Beach, CA...** On February 3, 2007, 55 young people were confirmed by Bishop Peter and Father Armando Leyva. Working with Father Armando, Pastor to Holy Trinity are Father Ramon Pedrosa, who was incardinated into the ECC last year and Father Fernando Olivera, who formally served as the associate pastor for the Hispanic ministry of Saint Matthew Church in Orange, CA from 1997 to 2004.

**Saint Matthew Church in Orange, CA...** On February 10, 44 young people were confirmed by Bishop Peter. Congratulations to Jay Thompson on his recent ordination to the diaconate.

**Saints Andrew and Paul Ecumenical Catholic Church in Glendale, CA...** In February, Bishop Peter and his wife Mirella celebrated the Liturgy and hosted a parish forum to discuss the ongoing development of the ECC.

**The ECC was voted into membership with the Southern California Ecumenical Council of Churches.** Thank-you to Rev. Mark Jaufmann for representing the ECC to the SCECC.

**A Pilgrim People of Boston, MA...** has voted to apply for membership into the ECC.

**Saint Frances of the Pass in Banning, CA...** to host a retreat to be lead by Bishop Peter on March 10<sup>th</sup>.



### **Holy Family's New Sanctuary**

#### **Holy Family, Las Cruces Buys A Building**

Rev. Jim Lehman  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

After eleven years on March 3 a dream became a reality. Holy Family's attendance had grown such that we could no longer fit into the Disciple of Christ chapel.

God has opened doors to allow us to buy Temple Beth El. On the weekend of March 3-4, 2007 with over 100 people in attendance we celebrated in our new facility.

The church will seat about 150 people as will also the fellowship hall. To accommodate our young families, we are planning a nursery and also a youth room. This is in addition to classrooms, an office, and library.

In all the building is 6,500 square feet. We ask that God continue to bless the work of our hands and our ministry to the people of God. The formal dedication of the building will take place on May 5.



**A new home for Holy Family, Las Cruces**

#### **Saint Ignatius Catholic Community**

Rev. Philip Knowles, PhD  
Seattle, Washington

Saint Ignatius is a community new to the ECC, and I have the honor of serving as its pastor. We came together formally on the first Sunday of Advent, 2006. This community was born after conversations over several years and discernment with a small group of people who describe themselves as estranged Roman Catholics. Most have found spiritual homes outside of a catholic community, but also describe themselves as feeling a need to connect with a catholic form of prayer and liturgy.

As a community, we are working to meet several immediate needs. First is to create a stable base of members. This group will be instrumental in helping to articulate the vision of the community in harmony with the gospel. It will also be the group that implements the initial form of organization and governance. Stability will allow to also move our focus outward to the world where we are called to exercise Christian responsibility and service.

Shortly after we formed, I was incardinated into the ECC. I was ordained a priest in the American Catholic Church in the United States in November 2004. My training was accomplished in the ACCUS Institute, through which its priests are formed. I also have masters in pastoral theology from Saint Joseph's College of Maine. I work as a psychologist.

The Pacific Northwest is an area that is rich and challenging for church. Ours is a part of the country where formal education levels are high. This is not surprising. We are the land of Microsoft, many high tech genetic companies, and other companies demanding a well-educated labor force. Maybe Starbucks somehow fits into that equation as well. This part of the country is known for being heavy consumers of books and other materials (and we are home to Amazon.com! Imagine!).

We are also one of the most under churchd areas in the country. What church growth we do see is found especially in evangelical communities and their opposites, the mega churches that place an emphasis on new age spirituality. There is a good deal of skepticism about traditional religious forms, and certainly this area of the country is as fatigued by clerical

abuse scandals of one form or another as other areas.

I hope that people will be attracted to this community because it is welcoming, compassionate, all-inclusive, and passionately committed to social justice. We have a prophetic role to play in this community and in the world. And we also have the responsibility to care for one another, to nurture one another, and to build a community amongst ourselves in the spirit of the gospel. This is a great challenge, and it is energizing, not tiring.

We look forward to working with other ECC communities. We have a great deal to learn from your varied experiences, and anticipate many fruitful conversations in the years to come.

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Web Site: [www.ignatiusecc.org](http://www.ignatiusecc.org)

## **Community-Building Communication & Interaction Strategies**

By Rev Frank Krebs  
St. Louis, MO

[a summary of a workshop I was asked to facilitate at the Rochester retreat]

I believe that the quality of our relationships with one another affects everything we do as church. The only way we can be an effective sacrament of the Reign of God is to be skillful at making communion.

I believe that our local churches can be schools of communion. Communion skills are eminently practical. Since this is a life-long learning process, these practical skills would fill a lot of newsletters. Here are some skills I shared in Rochester in no particular order. [A fuller version of this article appears at the following website [www.stsclareandfrancis.org](http://www.stsclareandfrancis.org) ; each of the skills below is explained there in more detail.]

- Sharing in Dyads
- Creating Intentions
- Establishing Ground Rules
- Using Both Right and Left Brain
- Sharing in Small Groups
- Appreciating Differences

I believe that what we have to give to this world is our communion; that is the way we re-present Christ to this world. At times in the past the Church has chosen to "protect the Eucharist" by *excommunicating* those considered unworthy. What I am suggesting is that we choose to "show forth the meaning of the Eucharist" by *communicating* with everyone, including those who are different from us. The world already knows how to condemn. It does not know very well how to create communion.

If you have the heart for this and want to do it, let me know if I can ever be of any help. We'll work at it and learn together. —Frank Krebs

## **The Role of the ECC's Vice-Chancellor for External Affairs**

Charlie Davis  
Fripp Island, South Carolina

The role of the ECC Vice Chancellor Of External Affairs primarily is to maintain liaison with Roman Catholic reform groups. When the position was proposed, some in the ECC objected because they felt that we should leave our RC contacts behind - maintaining them would make us look like we are "Romans" in exile - seeking a place at the Roman table.

I am under no illusion that effective reform of the Catholic Church is going to happen anytime soon. From my own personal experience, as well as my work in Catholic reform organizations since the mid-1980s, I agree on the part of our need to leave the Romans behind -- but there are distinct advantages for the ECC in our maintaining a strong liaison with Catholic reform groups.

First of all, we possibly never would have met up with the wonderful folks in Spiritus Christi had not the reform groups been seeking out a bishop to ordain Mary Ramerman. I have been on the Board of Catholics Advisory Board of **Catholics Speak Out [CSO]** since the mid-1980s. CSO and members of other Catholic reform groups interviewed RC bishops here and abroad seeking a willing RC bishop. Many were sympathetic - none would risk breaking their ties with Rome.

In 2000, at a meeting of Roman Catholic Small Faith Communities in Wash. DC, we met Bishop Peter and he indicated he might be willing. Conversation revealed mutual interests and, in the fullness of time, we celebrated Mary's [and then Denise Donato's] ordination in Rochester.

Last fall we were the beneficiaries of Spiritus' gracious hospitality in their hosting of our Retreat.

Second, through our membership in **COR [Catholic Organizations for Renewal]**, we have established an excellent relationship with other reform groups that indirectly help to advance the interests of the ECC. Through CSO, I have been a member of COR since the early 1990s and there met Fr. Ned Reidy and the Rev. Kathy McCarthy of our own Pathfinder Community. Pathfinder and Spiritus Christi were of great help in facilitating the ECC's membership in COR. Initially there was resistance to having the ECC join COR because we identified ourselves only as Catholics - not Roman Catholics whose mission it was to seek church reform. When, it was pointed out that the example of our actions - such as ordaining women as priests - gave heart to other reform groups, objections were muted.

One of the prominent organizations of COR is **CORPUS [the main advocacy group for a married priesthood in the RC Church]**. Many of our priests, are former RC clerics; and others - when they hear about the ECC -- are interested in joining us. The ECC and CORPUS are currently working on the terms of agreement of a joint initiative called the "The Community of John XXIII." When a draft is completed, it will be presented to the ECC for approval. Bishop Peter has given presentations at CORPUS Conferences and will do so again at its Conference 22-24 June. Although I have never darkened a seminary door, I have been going to CORPUS Conferences since the late 1980s. A good group of people.

COR holds two conferences a year. I generally attend the COR Conference in April and Bishop Peter and I attend the one that immediately precedes the **CTA [Call to Action]** Conference held annually the first weekend in Nov. That latter conference presents a first class lineup of theologians.

**FutureChurch** is another organization in COR whose agenda indirectly benefits the ECC. Headed by nun, Chris Schenk, FutureChurch organizes "Mary Magdala" celebrations [these began way before the movie "The DaVinci Code" came out]; they remind people of how close Mary Magdala and Jesus were and of her true role as an apostle. Another FutureChurch initiative that is helpful is "Save Our Parish Community" - that Eucharist is more important

than maintaining an exclusive male, celibate priesthood.

We can count on the Catholic hierarchy to either ignore or condemn the efforts of FutureChurch and, as a consequence, frustrated lay Catholics continue to look for alternatives such as ourselves.

**The Women's Ordination Conference [WOC], Dignity and New Ways Ministry** also speak out against the discrimination in the RC Church against women as well as gays and lesbians. At the Nov. COR meeting, the ECC joined a press release from COR that criticized the RC bishops Nov. statement on "homosexual inclinations." Don Pachuta reports from Boston that a number of groups there -- alienated by the Archbishop's attempt to close a number of parishes as well as his condemnation of gay marriage -- were delighted COR had responded to the bishops and that the ECC had joined the response. Some of these groups are in dialogue with the ECC about joining us.

**FCM [the Federation of Christian Ministries]** helps anyone who is qualified to get a license to perform weddings and funerals in the state in which they reside. I believe some of our priests get their licensing from FCM.

I am writing a book: "The Lay Catholic's Survival Guide." Naturally, at the end of the book, I will mention that one of the best ways to survive the dysfunction of the RC Church is to join the ECC.

### Pastoral Visits Across the Nation

Bishop Peter visits...

- May 3 - 6  
**Holy Family Church, Las Cruces, NM**  
Dedication of new Church
- June 23 - 24  
**The Pilgrim Community, Boston, MA**  
Reception into ECC
- July 21 - 22  
**Holy Spirit, Tampa, FL**  
Pastoral visit
- August  
**Spiritus Dei, Seattle/Tacoma, WA**  
**Saint Ignatius, Seattle, WA**  
**Saint Lawrence, British Columbia**  
Pastoral visits