



ECC NEWS

A Publication Produced by the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

Volume 4, Issue 1

April 2009

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An Easter Message from our Presiding Bishop Peter E. Hickman

The Mystery of Faith and the Glory of Easter



"Dying you destroyed our death; Rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory." Embodied in these words from the Holy Liturgy, which the gathered community intones upon hearing the call of the deacon, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith," is the very heart of the Christian experience. The Mystery of Faith, which we encounter in the very act of celebrating the Eucharist, is summed up in these very words which we sing or recite week after week at the table of Jesus Christ.

This is the Paschal Mystery of Christ in which we participate every time we gather as the People of God to partake of the Eucharistic bread and wine that has become for us the body and blood of Christ, that is, the very life of Christ among us and within us. The Eucharistic moment is when our communion with God and one another is fully realized through the presence of the Risen Christ. It is the moment we recognize Christ among us in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, his body broken, his blood poured out. It is a sacred moment when we glimpse the in-breaking of the "age to come" into the here and now of our lives. It is the moment we are reminded that this present age of suffering and death is already passing away as God's new creation is now actually coming into being in our very midst.

The Paschal Mystery of Christ is that decisive act of God in Christ that saves God's beloved humanity from the tyranny of death and sin. In some mysterious way, which we cannot even begin to fully comprehend, the suffering and dying of Jesus sets us free from our complicity with evil. Our many particular sins are but the evidence of humankind's consent to the angelic lie that has held us hostage throughout this present age. And by rising from the dead Jesus delivers the decisive and fatal blow to death itself. In so doing He restores to us the essence of life, which is His life in us, which is the life of the "age to come."
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Upcoming Events

**2009 National
ECC Retreat
All Are Welcome!**

**June 24th – 27th
YMCA Retreat
Center
Estes Park, CO**

The Mystery of Faith and the Glory of Easter (Continued from page 1)

We participate in this saving action of Christ by means of the baptismal waters whereby we die with Christ in his death and are raised to new life in Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit imparted to us. This gift of the Holy Spirit is the divine guarantee to us that God will complete and perfect our salvation by the resurrection of our own bodies when this age finally passes away. Then we will behold the New Heavens and the New Earth and the descent of the Holy City of the New Jerusalem coming down from out of heaven to rest upon the Earth where God will dwell forever with the human race. This will be the perfect consummation of the communion of heaven and earth, of divinity and humanity, the ultimate divinization, not only of the new humanity, but of the whole universe as well. Salvation is inclusive of the entire cosmos not merely reserved for just a few million human souls. Our salvation becomes complete with the coming of the "new creation" where all the power of evil, suffering, and death will be no more. The thought of the coming of this new world, this new age, is incomprehensible to us because all we have ever known is this present existence. It is staggering to even try to imagine this new creation. And yet it remains our deepest hope and our greatest longing.

At Easter we celebrate another part of this mystery, namely the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The resurrection is not merely God's validation of the person and work of His holy son, Jesus, but it is the very beginning of this new creation. Christ becomes the first fruits of the new age which now has already come upon us in Him. This also marks the beginning of the end of the old creation that has been held in bondage to the entropy of corruption and decay for countless millennia.

Oh, my beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, this is the Mystery of Faith that we proclaim. It is this mystery which is already at work within us, and to which we are called to live out in the here and now of our lives. It is this mystery that enables us to become co-workers with Christ and one another in the ushering in of this new creation. We have become agents of God's light illuminating the darkness of the world through our faithful witness to this coming reality of God's reign and through the ongoing work of bringing God's justice, peace, and healing to our broken, suffering and frightened world. This is the Mystery of Faith in which we now live. It is the Gospel we now proclaim. It is the reality that we now bear witness to for the whole world. It is that mystery which Saint Paul says "is Christ in you the hope of glory."

So let us never cease in praying the words of this prayer, for in so doing we proclaim the glory of the

Easter hope we celebrate: "Dying you destroyed our death; Rising you restored our life; Lord Jesus, come in glory."

Yours in the service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
+Peter



George VonStamwitz (ECC Chancellor), Marlene Guganig (ECC Treasurer), Sarah Ball (HOL Co-Chair), Fr. Scott Jenkins (Rocky Mountain Vicar), Teri Thompson (ECC Administrator), Chuck Howard (HOL Delegate), Wayne Parent (HOL Delegate)

National Meeting on Finance

Chuck Howard
HOL Delegate
Light of Christ
Longmont, CO

On Saturday, March 21, a few members of the Leadership Council and the ECC administrative staff met with an all volunteer work group to find ways to finance the growth of the ECC. The need was stated clearly in the summary letter about the Leadership Retreat held last June; *the ECC contains a great richness of initiative, faith, and theology, but at the same time faces a scarcity of human and financial resources*. The ECC is experiencing growth, and being able to respond appropriately to that growth requires work and money. Any entrepreneur will tell you that this is the right kind of problem when you are getting started.

The meeting started by everyone responding to the question, "What makes the ECC different from other Catholic/Christian churches?" After a lively discussion, we concluded the answer had to be; because we practice our Catholicism in such radically inclusive ways. It is true. Our practice of the open table at the Eucharist and saying ALL ARE WELCOME, and really meaning it, seems radical to many. It is an especially comforting message to those who have been marginalized in any way. The message is appealing and we need to find a way to keep saying all are welcome to any who would join us.

The formation of the work group was a way to address the growth issues. There are now a few
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National Meeting on Finance

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more people doing the work, so the Leadership Council can focus on leading as opposed to doing everything themselves.

The first job for the work group is to find ways to raise funds to support the growth. It is important that every community be involved in some way, at least in the dialogue.

In our communion, where leadership is shared between laity and clergy, it is important that every voice be heard. We are now exploring ways to begin a national dialogue concerning our financial needs. Stay tuned. You'll be hearing more.



The Community Journey

Wayne Clark
Holy Spirit ECC
Florida

Pilgrims on a journey..... We at Holy Spirit are truly pilgrims (some say wanderers) as we have physically moved six times in five years. As one parishioner noted, "We've never celebrated Christmas in the same place twice." Wow! With our latest move last November 30th and a new seven-year lease we now can focus on growth both in spirit and numbers (we already know how to pack and unpack). Finally we have a real sense of "being at home".... And what a wonderful feeling it is in our larger space. Fr. Steve even has a real office. But through all the moves, we were building relationships and living our community commitment to be there for each other.

Our first quarter 2009 has been a time of remodeling, painting, decorating and generally settling in along with the continuing community involvement both "inside the beehive" and "outside the beehive".

We have continued our commitment to the "Grace House" with our Sharing Sunday each month. Grace House is an outreach to homeless families who are in need (primarily mom's and their children). Part of

the ecumenical Religious Community Services, Grace House has several apartments and an eight week program of counseling in parenting, resume writing, job hunting, budgeting and finance, and keeping their home in order. These families are then placed at the front of the line for Section 8 housing.

We are blessed to have the generous hearts and hands of both Fr. Steve and Fr. Jack to preside at liturgy each week and our own John Rehg, HOL delegate, shares his poetic talent as he writes in the bulletin his reflections on the week's readings. Our music ministry with eight vocalists and three accompanists give life and joy to our liturgical celebrations.

Being a community that loves the art of culinary skills, we enjoy our monthly "Bring a Friend" potluck luncheon after Mass along with our annual "Pig Roast" that is hosted by HOL delegate Barb Fichter and her spouse Maggie Kelly.

This past month, 24 parishioners were delighted to sponsor a spaghetti dinner held for the AIDS Partnership monthly meeting (a network forum for persons with HIV/AIDS); what a grand time was had by all.

Lent finds us participating in the Heifer International "Ark" Project. With each of our little cardboard "Piggy banks" we are collecting for a cow or a goat or a few chickens for needs in developing nations. Our Wednesday "simple soup" dinners during Lent are a meaningful way to reflect together as we journey toward Easter.

Peace and love from your ECC sisters and brothers of west central Florida!

Kyler's Story

Kyler Corby
Church of the Holy Family
Aurora, CO



From the beginning, I recognized that something about Holy Family was different. In this community, I encountered Christ in the love that is shared. Even though life can hold struggle and brokenness, Holy Family taught me that Christ loves each one of us. More importantly, Holy Family taught me that God loves me.
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Kyler's Storey

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I began attending Holy Family about 10 years ago when an old friend invited my family to the annual picnic mass. I was about 12 years old and so, any church service that included a massive pot luck picnic and a petting zoo was definitely the coolest in my book. At first, this church felt a little strange. It seemed it took about 10 minutes to get through the sign of peace, an event that in my previous experiences lasted just long enough to shake a couple hands, but here everyone wanted to hug everyone else. I hadn't known a community of people who cared so much for one another.

After high school, I went to Arizona State University on an academic scholarship. I had friends and academic success, but a part of my heart longed for my family and my church. When I came home during school breaks, I felt such strong love from the fellowship at Holy Family. Everyone wanted to know how I was doing and what I was up to. God started pulling on my heart and I felt that God wanted me to come back to Colorado.

What began as a decision to transfer back home became an answer to God's call to ministry. Last May I moved back to Denver from Phoenix. I started volunteering at [Joshua Station](#) and became involved with Mile High Ministries ([milehighmin.org](#)). In August, I joined Mile High Ministries' [Issachar Community](#), a program that prepares young people for leadership in the spirit of Christ. I was honored when Mile High Ministries considered me for the Issachar program, but I wasn't sure I was ready. However, my discernment kept leading me to the same conclusions. Conceding to God's plans for my life, I let go of the wheel and let God steer. In *Prince Caspian*, the Prince tells Aslan "I do not think I am ready," and Aslan returns "It is for that reason that I know you are." That's what God was telling me.

This summer, I will work in Kenya. Just outside of Nairobi is a two-acre piece of land with two buildings that is home to 56 orphans. Tumaini (<http://www.tumainiministries.org>) is a home for children orphaned or abandoned because of HIV/AIDS and poverty. During my time at Tumaini, I'll do a number of things ranging from changing diapers and caring for infants and toddlers to tutoring students to helping with construction on their newly-acquired land. While in Kenya, I will also visit Dagoretti and Kibera, two of the largest slums in the world. I would sincerely appreciate prayers as I ready myself for this journey.

The seeds of my work with Mile High Ministries and the direction of my life were planted by the love and the fellowship at Holy Family and by the guidance of Fr. Scott Jenkins who supported and mentored me and the youth of our community. That is where I learned the core of my faith – that God loves each one of us and that love is felt by us loving one another. In serving my neighbor, I serve Christ.

News Bites



Holy Trinity Long Beach, CA

This June Holy Trinity celebrates a 10 year anniversary!

On July 19, a celebration is planned where more than 500 guests who are invited to celebrate together at the service of God and to his people.

Holy Trinity participated in a survey where Pastor Fr. Armando asked, "What do you find in this church and what do you see in this church?"

Over 520 parishioners participated and they said: Peace, Love and Hope!



St Mary's Ecumenical Catholic Church

Daytona Beach, FL

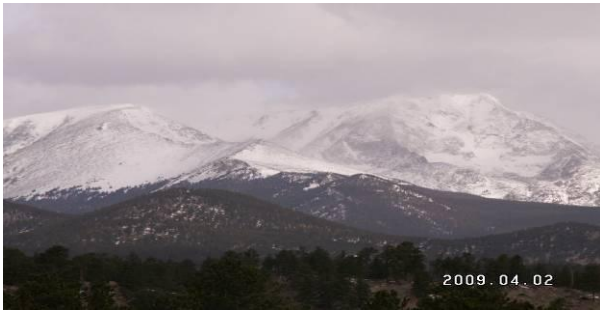
St. Mary's Ecumenical Catholic Church in Daytona Beach, FL is embarking upon an exciting new journey.

Moving into a new space and in concert with their mission, they have decided to open a business designed to help people with disabilities return to the work force. This will be a computer-based business run by the two disabled employees. The goal is to increase staff of people living with disabilities as the business grows.

Donations are welcome to this start up business. A gift level called *A Blessing* (donations of \$1,000 or more) entitles the donor to a complimentary stay for a weekend of two nights and three days in beautiful Daytona Beach, FL. with full access to house and pool; breakfast and dinner are provided during your visit. Mass is held every Sunday at 11:00 am, where all are welcome! For more information contact: frmike@stmarysecc.org

ECC National Retreat

Estes Park, CO



The ECC national retreat for 2009 will be held at the YMCA in Estes Park Colorado, June 24th thru June 27th where all are welcome!

Lodging at the YMCA is designed to be affordable and is based on a sliding scale of guests per room. The rooms are spacious and clean, offering two queen beds; hide away sleeper sofa, private bath/shower and walk-out balconies with seating! Early registration will not only secure your reservation for this event but will allow for the best views. Availability is on a first come first serve basis. Space is limited!



View from private balcony. 2nd floor

While you might be tempted to stay off site at a near by lodge be warned that the YMCA is tucked back in the Rocky Mountain Forest and a commute after dark on the winding mountain roads offers even the locals a challenge.



Father Bjorn Marcussen is the key note speaker and will host a series of lectures on our Old Catholic tradition. Discussion break out groups will be offered. Prayer services will be hosted each morning and evening by the various Colorado communities. The schedule will allow plenty of free time for rest and rejuvenation.



Make time to play!

Activities available on site include hiking, horseback riding, hay rides, zip lines, miniature golf, swimming and much more. The closing service Saturday morning will be a celebration of the Eucharist with our presiding Bishop Peter Hickman. This event is a must for all who have yearned for the experience only a national ECC retreat can bring!



The wild life in and around the YMCA will take your breath away! The pictures featured in this article were taken at the YMCA by the committee during their tour. For more details and online registration go to www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org

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