

Listening Session Planned Bordini Center FVTC Appleton WI Thursday March 26th

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You are invited to attend a Listening Session sponsored by Beacon of Hope at the Bordini Center, 6:15 PM at the Fox Valley Technical College March 26th.

In a two hour meeting, a neutral communication specialist will allow small discussion groups to meet in an open manner to discuss our feelings and experiences. Four questions will form the discussion:

- How do you see change unfolding in our Church today?
- What do you see as the hope for tomorrow’s church in America?
- What direction do you feel the Church in America should be going today?
- What priorities do you think the Bishops of America need to address at their next annual meeting?

Each person will have a chance to hear other people’s opinion and write his/her own anonymous response to be shared later when we meet with our Bishop.

We all need to be heard and this is your chance to come, share your ideas and hear what other Catholics are thinking. For more information about how these synods/listening sessions are becoming a national movement, see page 5.



*Catholic Church Canon Law #2 reads,
Custom is the best interpreter of laws.*

A Visit with the Bishop Is In Our Plans



From the President...

As I stated in our last newsletter, the Board of Directors will share with you our discussions and decisions from the December and

January board meetings regarding the survey that many of you filled out last year and our vision for going forward.

One of the main things to come out of our discussions is the need to continue listening sessions with people. In a related article in this newsletter, you will see that we have scheduled another.

.As we did after the last listening session in 2007, we hope to have a meeting with Bishop Ricken to go over our findings, and ask if the Diocese would like to expand the sessions to other areas within Northeastern Wisconsin.

Another item that came up for consideration

was the idea of Beacon of Hope – Light of Christ affiliating with a national organization to expand our reach and gain synergy with others that feel as we do about the Catholic Church. Many groups came up in our discussions, including Voice of the Faithful, Call to Action and FutureChurch. A decision has not yet been made on which group we will pursue affiliation with, so if you have a preference, please e-mail your suggestion for an organization and we will take your thoughts into consideration.

A third item that we discussed was the need to continue to bring speakers to the Fox Valley to speak on important issues, but our (cont. p.4) ambitious goal for one every six months may be a bit too ambitious. To that end, we will not be having a speaker this spring, but watch for an announcement about another speaker coming this fall. Our venue may also change, and we will make sure this is very clear to everyone as well.

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Suggested Follow-up to Lumen Gentium

Thank you for the invitation to write for the Beacon Of Hope newsletter. I want to make it clear that I am a faithful Catholic with a big "C". I wish to express frustrations typical of the laity, many of whom have left Catholicism for other denominations. I will not leave my church because I was called by the Holy Spirit to become a member and because of the sacrament of Eucharist. All institutions have serious human shortcomings including leaders who abuse or do not understand their authority. Nor will I quit praying for a vibrant and joyful church wherein our shepherds will dialogue with the laity and respect the reality that the Holy Spirit lives in each of us.

Our Pope, who last year encouraged that all Catholics should read and study the word (bible), recently lifted excommunication from several Lefebvre' bishops giving a hopeful signal to traditionalists who disagree with Vatican II. On February 4, the Vatican made it clear that Lefebvre's Fraternity of Pius X would have to recognize the teachings of Vatican II in order to be in full communion with the church. These mixed messages from the Vatican are confusing, but do not discourage the laity from learning about our

faith thru the bible and do uphold the teachings of Vatican II.

On page 3 is a copy of a section of Lumen Gentium, the dogmatic constitution of the Catholic Church as promulgated by Paul VI November 1964 and supported by Pope John Paul. This section speaks clearly of the relationship of the laity and the Bishops, encouraging creativity and initiative.

As an 'action' to begin dialogue I would suggest that parish's hold a 'Synagogue" Sunday (monthly or even weekly) where laity/deacons/pastors and invited guests could discuss the readings of the week and how current events challenge our Christian faith. This would be in keeping with the tradition of Jesus' time when religion and faith were openly discussed. To be practical it could be held after a particular mass with a simple breakfast.

In Christ,
Curtis L. Biggar

Note, this is the first of several articles from Curt Biggar, an acknowledged, dedicated Catholic with insights and wisdom for our Church today.

The Church in Our Day

At a time when many question the Church, when some forsake her and seek an allegiance to Christ without a Church, the Church reminds us that discipleship in Christ is necessarily a vocation to the Church of Christ. It is Christ Who evokes the Church. All who listen carefully to His voice hear the clarity of His summons to belong also to the Church. But for the historic Church, there would be today no possibility of affirming or denying Christ. For without the Church men, over the long centuries, would have made of Christ what they preferred Christ to be rather than what He is. Some seek to follow the Lord without the Church in what seems to them a simple, less complex, and more spontaneous religious experience. But we must remind ourselves that without the Church the following of Jesus subtly becomes a following of self or even a following of those false prophets against whom Christ warned and whom the Church resists.

Jesus lives undiminished only in that Church which has written and preached the Scriptures; in that Church wherein apostolic tradition remains alive in Christian hearts; in that Church which celebrates the sacraments, proclaims the creeds, assembles the councils, worships the Father, offers the Body of the Lord in her liturgy, and lives by the unfailing Spirit of God. The Church is alive in Christ and Christ lives in His Church. Thus she exists for the glory of God and for the healing of mankind. In Christ, she realizes how mighty is God's glory which abides with us in so tangible a manner. God, however, is not glorified nor are human hearts healed when men seek Christ while consciously rejecting His Church. Man is not allowed to pick and choose when he seeks God's will for himself.

(Excerpts from the document The Church in Our Day published by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, January 21, 1968, appear on a regular basis.)

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

‘ LUMEN GENTIUM ‘

CHAPTER IV

SECTION 37

PARAGRAPH 3

**LET THE SPIRITUAL SHEPHERDS
RECOGNIZE AND PROMOTE THE
DIGNITY AS WELL AS THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE
LAITY IN THE CHURCH.**

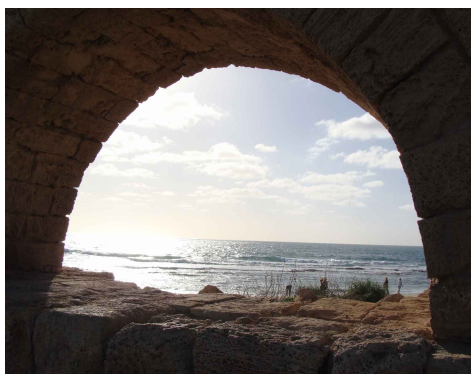
**LET THEM WILLINGLY EMPLOY
THEIR PRUDENT ADVICE.**

**LET THEM CONFIDENTLY ASSIGN
DUTIES TO THEM IN THE SERVICE
OF THE CHURCH ALLOWING THEM
FREEDOM AND ROOM FOR ACTION.
FURTHER, LET THEM ENCOURAGE LAY
PEOPLE SO THEY MAY UNDERTAKE
TASKS ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE.
ATTENTIVELY, IN CHRIST, LET THEM
CONSIDER WITH FATHERLY LOVE
THE PROJECTS, SUGGESTIONS AND
DESIRES PROPOSED BY THE LAITY.**

**HOWEVER, LET THE SHEPHERDS
RESPECTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
JUST FREEDOM WHICH BELONGS TO
EVERYONE IN THIS EARTHLY CITY.**

**SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY POPE
PAUL IV 11/21/64**

Expanded Young Leaders Opportunities



While donations to support the anticipated 30 college age students who travel to Israel in January 2010 are coming in, the big news comes in two areas. Our

partner for the Beacon of Hope sponsored trip once again is Blossoming Rose and they have arranged both an archeological opportunity and the opportunity for college credit for students. Additional changes are also taking place.

Expanded opportunities for chaperones

There are four open positions for adult chaperones for the 2010 Young Adult Leaders trip due to the addition of two seats and the withdrawal of two chaperones due to a business promotion and a wedding! Adult chaperones will be assigned specific leadership responsibilities and need to be able to pay for their travel. We are seeking funding sufficient enough to cover 50% of travel, but we cannot guarantee this. Currently six chaperones are registered.

Fundraising status

We are excited to report that our awareness and fundraising campaigns have begun in earnest. Letters announcing the 2010 Young Leaders trip went to 203 area pastors early in January. In mid-January, Appleton Rotary- West announced that they would be sponsoring a student, adding to the sponsorships we have already received. During the last week of January letters requesting support went to several major companies in our area. Beacon of Hope has already heard from several executives saying that they are going to be responding favorably. Currently, pledges and donations stand at \$17,500 as the fundraising campaign begins. Our fully funded goal is \$65,000.

We are also pleased to announce that Todd Falstad, Founder and Executive Director of WNMD Men's Ministries will be promoting awareness of the 2010 Israel Young Leaders trip on their web site. Details will be forthcoming.

For questions or more information, please call Dr. Tom Wiltzius at 920-757-0906.

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Dig in the Desert

Blossoming Rose is licensed by the Israeli Department of Antiquities to manage Biblical Tel Tamar, a significant archeological site in the Arava (southern desert). While our itinerary calls for us to stay at Tamar for three nights, we have just learned that the members of our trip will actually have the opportunity to participate in a supervised dig at the site. Since Tel Tamar is regarded as the second most significant ancient archeological site in Israel, this is quite an honor. The largest display of artifacts in the Israel Museum is known to come from Tamar...who knows what will be found!

College credit to be available

Beacon of Hope has also been advised that Blossoming Rose is making arrangements for college students on the trip to get 3 college credits (undergraduate or graduate levels) due to the academic nature of this trip. Blossoming Rose anticipates that the college awarding the credit will require additional fees. Right now, discussions are

From President Greg Stock ...continued

Finally, we discussed a desire to make changes to our current website, and Joe Uchytel, our VP – Communications has volunteered to take on this task of upgrading our website to make it even better than it is now. So, watch for exciting changes here as well!

As we move into the Lenten season, please use the time as reflection as to how you can help others (giving alms) as well as make your life more meaningful to you. Then we can all celebrate with great joy at Jesus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. God Bless!

HISTORIC MOVE FOR VOTF AND U.S. CATHOLICS

January 25, 2009 – Boston –

In a move to unite U.S. Catholics, the newly formed American Catholic Council (ACC) called today for an historic assembly of the Catholic Church in the United States. Voice of the Faithful joins this call, spurred by evidence of serious deterioration in the life of the U.S. Church today.

“The way the Church is now is not the way it was meant to be,” says John Hushon, a VOTF board member who serves as the ACC co-chair. “The Gospels make it abundantly clear that Jesus envisioned a community that welcomes and encourages the gifts of all. The two-tiered clerical system that separates the ordained from the non-ordained was never meant to be, and it has caused enormous harm. Vatican II attempted to recapture the universal call to ministry, but this promise has not been fulfilled.”

The idea of a lay-convened gathering to recapture this promise has been championed for several years by VOTF president Dan Bartley and was formally endorsed by VOTF after consultation with its own members and member representatives. In addition, Board member Hushon and VOTF Vice President Janet Hauer are serving as the first co-chairs for the ACC.

To date, 55 individual Catholics—some sitting as representatives of Catholic reform organizations and others as theologian advisors and expert consultants—have joined the ACC’s organizing efforts. Included are prominent Catholics such as Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, well-known author on issues of contemporary spirituality; Robert Blair Kaiser, who writes extensively about Church reform; prominent theologian and author Dr. Paul Lakeland; professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue Dr. Len Swidler; and Chris Schenk, a Sister of Saint Joseph in Cleveland, who serves as Executive Director of FutureChurch.

FutureChurch, VOTF, and other organizations are in the process of formally endorsing the American Catholic Council Declaration for Reform and Renewal, which launches the call for a national council. The declaration was posted online Jan. 23, at www.americancatholiccouncil.org, to mark the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII’s call for a Second Vatican Council.

Emergency Telephone Numbers



When -

You are sad, call John 14

You have sinned, Psalm

51

You are facing danger,

Psalm 91

People have failed you,

Psalm 27

You think God is far from

you, Psalm 139

Your faith needs

stimulation, Hebrews 11

You are alone and scared, Psalm 23

You are worried, Matthew 8:19-34

You are hurt and critical, 1 Corinthians 13

You wonder about Christianity, 2 Corinthians 5:15

-18

You feel like an outcast, Romans 8:31-39

You are seeking peace, Matthew 11:25-30

You need Christ like insurance, Romans 8:1-30

You are leaving home for a trip, Psalm 121

You are praying for yourself, Psalm 87

You require courage for a task, Joshua 1

You are worried about money, Mark 10:17-31

You are depressive, Psalm 27

Your bank account is empty, Psalm 37

You lose faith in mankind, 1 Corinthians 13

It looks like people are unfriendly, John 15

You are losing hope, Psalm 126

You want to carry fruit, John 15

Paul’s secret for happiness, Colossians 3:12-17

With big opportunity/ discovery, Isaiah 55

To get along with other people, Romans 12

ALTERNATE NUMBERS

For dealing with fear, call Psalm 47

For security, call Psalm 121:3

For assurance, call Mark 8:35

For reassurance, call Psalm 145:18

**ALL THESE NUMBERS MAY BE PHONED
DIRECTLY.**

**NO OPERATOR ASSISTANCE IS NECESSARY.
ALL LINES TO HEAVEN ARE AVAILABLE 24
HOURS A DAY.**

**FEED YOUR FAITH, AND DOUBT WILL STARVE
TO DEATH**

Beacon is the official newsletter of Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ and is intended to inform its members by sharing news, ideas, and opinions within the progressive Catholic Church. Beacon of Hope is an intentional community and a tax exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)3. All contributions are tax deductible. Our guiding principles are to inform, support, challenge, and grow. Our goals are transparency and inclusion within the Church. Communications staff include: Joe Uchytel, Greg Stock, Tom Wiltzius, Dave Arent, Anne Thielen, Tom Whittenberger, and guest contributors.