

	<b>EQUAL</b>	<b>Catholic Feminist Newsletter for Women and Men in the Philadelphia Area</b>
Vol. XIV No. 2		SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2005
	<b>WRITES</b>	<i><b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>—As women and men rooted in faith, we call for justice, equality, and full partnership in ministry. We are committed to church renewal and to the transformation of a structure which uses gender rather than gifts as its criterion for ministry.</i>

## OTTAWA WOWed

*by Mary Whelan*

First we saw a lone woman playing a drum, singing “The Strong Woman Song.” Soon we were all singing along with her, hundreds of us. It was poignant and powerful. And so began the Women’s Ordination Worldwide Second International Ecumenical Conference: “Breaking Silence, Breaking Bread: Christ Calls Women to Lead” in Ottawa held from July 22 through July 24. The institutional brick walls were softened by quilts depicting feminine images. I could not help but compare this simple scene to the pomp and pageantry (and overwhelming masculine presence) surrounding the Pope’s recent installation. Yes, it was different way altogether of imaging the Church.

Approximately 450 women and men from over twenty countries gathered, celebrated, dialogued, prayed, debated, listened, learned and sang for three days. I personally went to Ottawa to see the international aspect of this movement. We met people from Austria, Australia, Chile, Bangladesh, Columbia, Canada, El Salvador, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Scotland, United States and United Kingdom.

I would like to share with you a patchwork quilt of impressions from those who attended from SEPA/WOC. We had representatives attending the Witness Wagon Tour, the conference itself, as well as the ordinations of nine women on July 25, on the St. Lawrence River, a separate event from the conference, organized by Roman Catholic Womenpriests.

The Witness Wagon Tour, originating in Washington, D.C. began July 16 and ended in Ottawa on July 22. When the tour arrived in Philadelphia, Eileen DiFranco, Regina Bannon and Alice Foley met with the travelers. Eileen shared her thoughts: “The Welcome Wagon gathering in Philadelphia was amazing. Fifteen women from all over the world coming together to pray for the day when there will be no male or female, for all will be one in Christ Jesus! There were two women from England, two from Germany, including the inventor of the Purple Stole Movement. There was a woman who traveled all the way from South Africa. Several people came from California, Michigan and a group from Pennsylvania.”

“You could feel the breath of the Spirit hovering, breathing, inspiring us with the power of her love. Where two or more are gathered, there God is. God was with us and God was with the women who were later ordained.”

My husband, George, and I traveled to Ottawa to attend the conference. I have teased him mercilessly, for as we entered the hall to register he was immediately approached by a (male) member of the media for an interview! So here we have a real, live male point of view from George Whelan:

“The conference was exciting for me. On Friday, a television reporter asked me for an interview, ‘as you are one of the few men here’. I was a little nervous trying to answer his repeated question about just what can men do at the conference and by implication the larger cause. I pointed out that women get shunted aside and that it was important to offer support and solidarity, but the conference and the movement was to remain within the leadership of women. I do genuinely feel that way for I am sensitive to the disenfranchisement of women throughout history. Ordination is one area where it is blatantly obvious. Suffice it to say that the impressive presentations of a variety of women left no doubt as to this organization’s leadership and wise direction. I was an observer in a sense who was awed by the energy, passion, and resolve of these women. I don’t know if I made the

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### Mary Kaib—1914—2005

Slight in stature but feisty and determined, Mary Kaib was for many years a staunch supporter of women’s ordination and a familiar figure at SEPA/WOC’s annual Holy Thursday vigils outside the Cathedral.

Mother of four children including SEPA/WOC member Jenny Ratigan, grandmother of eight and great-grandmother of three (with three more on the way), Mary Kaib died August 7, in Huntington, West Virginia, while visiting her daughter Marge and the many friends she had in the area from the 75 years she had lived there before coming to the Philadelphia area.

She will be missed.

## OTTAWA WOWED

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news or ended up on the cutting room floor. I was happy to be asked to say my piece.”

The actual conference itself consisted of keynote speakers, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (“We are Church: A Kingdom of Priests”), Rosemary Radford Ruether (“The Church as a Community of Liberation from Patriarchy: Ministry as Praxis of Discipleship of Equals”), and a panel featuring Teresa Hinga, Mary Hunt, Kirsten Pederson and Myra Poole (“Different Voices. Different Choices? Feminist Perspectives on Ministry from around the Globe”). The variety of timely workshops offered throughout the day Saturday made choosing a difficult task. Regina Bannan shares thoughts on one of the workshops she attended presented by women from Mexico, “who were liberation theology in the flesh. The Catholic Action principles of observe, judge, act, led them to such ‘secular’ pursuits as growing and processing soy for more protein in their diet and producing crafts like pillows and purses for sale for additional income. Their theology was as progressive as Vatican II and still held. Despite our differences, our belief is the same.”

One personal comment follows. It was clear to me from the remarks made by several audience members after keynote speakers and after the panel that there were “tensions in the ranks” over those who “continue to seek Vatican approval for women’s ordination, and those who seek to forge new models of leadership.” (from National Catholic Reporter article authored by Kris Berggren, August 12, 2005). In the article Berggren quotes Katy Scott, a board member of WOC. “The board really wrestled with the issue of dealing with the split.” I can understand what a delicate area this is, though I personally see it as a question of “both/and”. This is a debate that probably will continue, but hopefully with the WOC spirit of “witness, affirmation and support” for Catholic women whatever their approach to ministry in the face of an “oppressing, repressing and depressing hierarchical culture” (Katy Scott quoted by Berggren). Handling this debate is sticky. I am glad that I was not the one to have to wrestle with this difference of opinion at an international conference with the world looking on. I am happy to read in a WOC Action Alert sent by Aisha Taylor, WOC program director, on July 31, 2005, that “WOC plans to continue the dialogue that occurred at the conference and help bridge the differences in our movement.” I am reassured by the commitment of WOC and pleased to be part of a movement that is so different from the institutional church in that we can acknowledge our differences, listen to each other and continue the dialogue (silence is not an option or a requirement!).

The presentation by Rosemary Radford Ruether will be highlighted in a separate article in more detail by Peg Murphy.

One additional item of local interest is that on Sunday, July 24, WOC hosted a celebration for our Thirtieth Anniversary and for the Young Feminist Network’s Tenth Anni-

versary. WOC presented an award to Judith Heffernan for her Ministry of Prophetic Obedience.

This brings us to the ordinations on the St. Lawrence of nine female Roman Catholic women, five as deacons and four as priests aboard a Gananoque Boat Lines vessel on July 25, 2005. The names of the courageous women are Michele Birch-Conery, Marie David, Rebecca McGuyver, Regina Nicolosi, Dana Reynolds, Victoria Rue, Jean Marie St. Onge, Kathleen Strack and Kathy Sullivan Vandenberg. Regina Bannan shares with us: “I am astonished by how unifying the ordinations on the St. Lawrence have been for the movement. We do celebration well, we Catholics, and this moment is to be celebrated. Nine women were able to live out their dream. People who used to object to ‘irregular’ ordinations could feel that the bishops, women though they were, were consecrated in the line of succession and therefore this was valid, if not lawful. People who used to object to ‘ordination as subordination’ could feel that if friends found it meaningful, why not share their joy? Creating a new truth on the ground—or on the water, as it happened—made old arguments—old. The movement has moved beyond the academic, a very interesting phenomenon for this academic to realize. It is no longer theory or theology, but lived practice. I found myself unable to see much of what was happening because of the press. I was so annoyed until I realized that I have given the last twenty years of my life to getting attention to this cause. Now the attention was here and in my way!”

Overall, I was awed by the planning and forethought that preceded this conference. I am reassured by the international and ecumenical aspects of this movement. I felt that I was part of an historical event.

*Mary Whelan, is a social worker and member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Germantown and guest editor of this issue of Equalrites.*

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## ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER SPEAKS AT WOW

By Peg Murphy

On Saturday, July 23, 2005, Rosemary Radford Ruether spoke on “The Church as a Community of Liberation from Patriarchy: Ministry as Praxis of Discipleship of Equals.” She was a keynote speaker at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Women’s Ordination Worldwide conference in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. She noted that, in the beginning, the nascent church followed the teachings of Jesus and removed all social hierarchies within its small face-to-face communities. However, history shows that, in practice, this was changed back to recognizing a hierarchy quite quickly as the church grew. Thereafter, patriarchy became the norm.

In Dr. Ruether’s view, patriarchy is “the central sinful distortion of our relationships to others and the planet.” Early

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on, the male ruling class established themselves as the dominant force over women, other 'lesser' males and 'lesser' beings. Patriarchy then built ideologies that shored up their monopolization of economic and political power.

She stated that there is an inherent opposition between clericalism and ministry. Ordination, which the patriarchy claimed was created by Christ, became a way to retain power over the sacramental life and the educational life of the community, i.e., it became a power tool. Patriarchy's aim was/is to keep people in a permanent state of dependency, ignorance and underdevelopment. The sacraments are the symbols of life in community but, under patriarchy and its separate clerical caste, the sacraments are alienated from the people and dispensed like magic. The Eucharist, the symbol of our authentic life through nurturance and community by the blessing and distribution of food, has thus been most radically alienated from the people and turned into a clerical power tool.

She notes that theological education was made inaccessible to people through the use of arcane language and jargon. Lay people were convinced they were incompetent and dependent on clerics for an understanding even of the scriptures. Through control of the sacraments and education and through the centralization of power in Rome, the church became essentially despotic.

While clericalism expropriates ministry from people, women's ordination reappropriates ministry to people through the discipleship of equals. In her view, true ministry is the active practice of our authentic lives through the building up of authentic communities from which we can challenge all systems of patriarchy and injustice.

In these authentic communities, the Eucharist is the ongoing center of nurturance in our life. These communities are not anarchistic and do not reject all leadership roles and skills. Rather, the community itself becomes the decision maker as to how it will celebrate its life. Thus, there is a ministry of function, not of clerical caste. As such, the community can respond to a plurality of needs whereas clericalism leaves many needs unmet. Needed for authentic communities, where there is a discipleship of equals, are:

- 1) Persons who can and will create liturgies that nourish and celebrate the life of the community;
- 2) Persons who can teach of our history and our relationship to other social systems;
- 3) Persons who can deal with finding and allocating material resources, i.e., administrators;
- 4) Persons who recognize social oppression and create social change;
- 5) Persons who are wise and can act as spiritual guides and counselors.

Dr. Ruether went on to ask whether ministries in such communities should become fulltime jobs or careers or, rather, should they be attached to other work? From her perspective,

they should not become a separate permanent caste that is set for life. The role of these ministers is to educate others and reproduce themselves so they are not indispensable. Their purpose is not to create spiritual dependency but, rather, to empower people.

She noted that, at the present time, we are seldom privileged to experience all functions and all dimensions of the authentic Eucharistic community being performed in one place with one group of people. For example, sometimes people come together for a short period to study which may then be combined with social justice work. She summarized by describing the several places where she finds elements of her authentic community. Some parts are found at Pilgrim Place, where she resides. Some are found through the communities of colleagues at universities where she teaches or has taught. Some are found through reform groups, e.g., Call to Action or Catholics for a Free Choice.

In response to some questions from the audience, she suggested that Catholics spend some time in attempting to reform the institutional church. However, she cautioned to take care not to allow that work to wear you out. She recommended that no more than ten to fifteen percent of your time be spent in such work and then urged women to: "Go, live your life!"  
**Peg Murphy** is a member of the core committee of SEPA/WOC.

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## HANS KUNG TO RECEIVE AWARD FROM ARCC

ARCC, The Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church, will sponsor a fund-raising dinner honoring Professor Hans Kung with the presentation of the first "Rights of Catholics in the Church" Award on Wednesday, November 16, 2005. The event will be held at Temple University Diamond Club in Mitten Hall at 2100 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122. The Reception Award will be at 5:30 p.m. and dinner and program at 6:30p.m. Professor Kung will make extended remarks and entertain questions.

On November 17, at 4 p.m. in Paley Library, also at Temple University, Professor Kung will receive the first Journal of Ecumenical Studies' "Religions in Dialogue Award." At that time he will formally open The Global Ethic Traveling Exhibition.

Also on November 17 in Gladfelter Hall, Temple University at 7:30 p.m. Professor Kung will deliver a lecture, "Reform in the Catholic Church and Dialogue with Religions."

For more information and registration, go to <http://arccsites.org> and click on the flashing URL for Hans Kung.

### **Editorial Board of *Equal wRites***

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## AND NOW A WORD FROM RAHNER ON REFORM...

*By Mary Byrne*

This is the second part of an article that was published in the last issue of EqualWrites.

**KR:** My qualification for the priesthood was based on many things but never my essential maleness. I do empathize with what must be a great sorrow in the lives of many women. However, we need to see this with a clarity unclouded by emotion. (I have just proved my essential maleness, no?) Well, perhaps it is better said that we are *in a period of transition requiring all to exercise patience in light of the terminum a quo and courage in light of the terminum ad quem*. In light of the changing times that we live in, yes, a woman could be considered just as much as a man for leadership of a basic community and therefore should be ordained to priestly office. *And obviously I held this position before the 1994 apostolic letter, Ordination Sacerdotalis (“On Reserving Priestly Ordination for Men Alone”) which effectively imposed a ban of silence on the issue. Which I think is most unfortunate. It has forced the issue underground where the Spirit will continue to work in mysterious ways even in the absence of dialogue which is an act of acquiescence on our part to be the vehicles of God’s communication. So, we are being willful in this matter and there will be a price to pay for that. How easily we forget the Garden! At any rate, the bottom line is that there is no reason in principle to deny women ordination. However, her right to ordination, as in the case of the non-celibate male, must be in response to the needs of the basic community not according to her personal wishes or self-understanding.*

**MB:** Well, does that negate the validity of one following a calling?

**KR:** Absolutely not. Remember that one is called. We do not do the calling. Our part is to respond.

**MB:** But, for women, that is most difficult. The institutional church is certainly not going to call us....

**KR:** But the institutional church does not do the calling. It comes from the community of the faithful. This is why the issue of priestly renewal and community renewal are inextricably bound. To reference one of the more popular sayings from an American movie...I’m terrible with remembering the names of movies...It is the one about the baseball field... “If you form the community, the call will come.” What do you need? Patience and courage—the wisdom of prophecy.

**MB:** What is the responsibility of the hierarchical church in terms of community and leadership renewal?

**KR:** Let’s go back to our starting point—Vatican II—a very good example of the relationship between the historical and incarnational. Vatican II, the historical event, created the spirit of openness that transformed the Body of Christ. This was and is the work of the Spirit and so we must prayerfully submit. In light of the growing appeal of basic communities

(which, by the way, is a direct result of changing the language of the Mass to the vernacular thereby making the liturgy more intimate and of the people), many traditional churches are experiencing declining affiliation. This is likely to continue given the current mood of grave distrust and disenfranchisement among both American and European Catholics. So, of necessity, what must be the response of the church to basic communities? *If the institutional Church does not wish to shrivel into a Church without people—the episcopal great Church has the task and duty of stimulating and contributing to their formation and missionary activity. The episcopal great Church must not regard them suspiciously as a disturbing element. If the basic community is really genuinely Christian and genuinely alive, the result of a free decision of faith...then all ecclesiastical organization is largely at the service of these communities: they are not means to serve the ends of an ecclesiastical bureaucracy wanting to reproduce itself.*

**MB:** I hear a significant caveat in your definition of a viable basic community which leads me to my last question: What is the responsibility of the basic community?

**KR:** I like ending on a note of accountability. It is very tempting, given the times, to move too quickly and eagerly into what is becoming at the expense of what is enduring. We call these communities “basic” not simply because of their bottom-up structure or their institutional simplicity. They have a responsibility to adhere to the basic tenets of the Christian Catholic faith. They have a duty to maintain unity with the episcopal great Church as fully constituted members in observance of the laws of the whole Church. *They must remain open in a self-critical spirit, in truth and love, to the life of the whole Church and also to make practical contributions beyond their own frontier.* Some communities will find it very difficult to maintain these ties. Some communities will interpret these responsibilities differently. Whatever the response of the Church or basic community, the Spirit is at work and indeed will have the last word. That is where I place my faith.

**MB:** Thank you, Father Rahner. It has been a pleasure to have you back again.

**KR:** Amen

*Mary Byrne is a Roman Catholic minister and a writer.*

Teilhard de Jardin: Rediscovering Fire  
A conference to celebrate fifty years of Teilhard scholarship will be held November 17—19 at Chestnut Hill College, 9601 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118. *Le Phenomene Humain*, published fifty years ago, coupled with his many essays sets forth Teilhard’s synthesis of the Christian God with the theory of evolution. To register contact Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, at 215-248-7197 or at [Kduffy@CHC.edu](mailto:Kduffy@CHC.edu).

## ORDAINED MINISTRY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

by James Plastaras

The use of the word *ordained* in the title calls for clarification, if not apology. The *New Testament* offers various examples of commissioning of leaders by the community, accompanied by prayer and laying on of hands, but no examples of ordination as such:

“[The community presented the seven deacons] to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them.” (*Acts* 6:6)

“While they [the community at Antioch] were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit [speaking through a prophet] said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” (*Acts* 13:23)

“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord.” (*Acts* 14:21)

“Do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (*1 Tim* 4:1)

The earliest description of rites used in the ordination of bishops and presbyters appears in the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, dating from the third century.

Note the use of the term *ministry*, rather than *priesthood*, in the title. This is quite deliberate. *Ministry* is the term used by the *NT*, and eventually adopted by Vatican II. These are the terms used by *NT* writers to describe the various offices of church leadership:

*Presbyteroi* (Elders) is the title applied to members of the leadership council, whether within Jewish or Christian communities.

*Episkopoi* (Overseers of Supervisors) is a title used interchangeably with *Presbyteroi* in both the *Pastoral Epistles* and *Acts*. It was not until the second century that *Episkopos* became the title used to designate the leader of the local church, with the *Presbyteroi* serving in a subordinate rank as a council of helpers of advisors.

The word *Ierus* (Priest), by contrast, is **never** used as a title applied to the leaders of the Christian community. There are indeed two occurrences where the word *Ierus* is used with reference to the Christian community, but it is to the entire community: “*You, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*” (*1 Peter* 2:5,9)

How remarkable that this title *Priest*, which in *NT* times was never associated with community leadership, in later centuries would become the primary descriptor of church leaders! Once Christianity became the official state religion

in the fourth century, those in positions of church leadership were seen as a class apart. The title *priest*, whose background was the stratified priesthood of the *Old Testament*, supported the perception that these individuals were set apart from, and above the community. The Eucharist and other sacramental actions came to be understood as grace-bestowing rituals performed by a special class of priests, rather than faith celebrations of the whole community.

It is important also to realize that the normative leadership structure for the local churches—i.e., a single bishop (*episkopos*) assisted by a group of elders (*presbyteroi*) became the norm only in the middle of the second century. Jesus did **not** tell his disciples how to organize the church, so it took more than one hundred years for the normative structure to emerge.

During the early years, there was enormous diversity and change in the leadership structures of local churches, as illustrated by these four examples:

**The Church at Jerusalem, the “Mother Church”** as described in *Acts* 11:1-18;15:1-30; *Galatians* 2:1-15, had a hierarchical structure modeled after the synagogue. James, the brother of the Lord—not one of “The Twelve”—appears to have been the person in charge. Difficult issues, such as the requirement of circumcision for Gentile converts, were referred to a council made up of the Twelve (Apostles) and the elders (*presbyteroi*). Peter and the sons of Zebedee, James and John, are described as the *three pillars* of the church. Paul, it would seem, was not impressed by the hierarchical rank of the Jerusalem powers-that-be. He says: “As for those who *seemed* to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message” (*Gal* 2:6). The Mother Church of Jerusalem would be swept away with cataclysmic events of 70 C.E., and for that reason alone would not serve as the model for church governance to the Christian communities of succeeding centuries.

**The Gentile Churches founded by Paul** belong to this same period (50-to-60 C.E.), but did not have the hierarchical structures of the Mother Church. Paul’s letters to the Corinthians pictures the colorful, and sometimes chaotic, community at Corinth. It is not clear who—if anyone—was in charge. Paul makes no mention of *elders* (*presbyteroi*) or overseers (*episkopoi*) in *Corinthians* or in any of the other genuine Pauline epistles. The single exception is *Philippians* 1:1, where Paul sends greetings to the *episkopoi* [plural] at Philippi. There is no *hierarchy* in the Pauline Churches, only a marvelous diversity of gifts and ministries widely distributed within the community. All gifts come from the same Spirit and work together for the building up of the body (*1 Cor.* 12:4-7). He describes a certain precedence or se-

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quence among the diverse gifts, but it is hardly a hierarchy, as seen in this enumeration of gifts in *1 Cor.* 12:28:

First, *Apostles* (itinerant messengers sent by the Risen Lord to found the churches)

Second, *Prophets*

Third, *Teachers* (resident members of the community gifted to proclaim the Word)

Then those with powers to perform miracles and heal

Then gifts of practical helping and *direction*

Finally [in the bottom place], the speaking tongues [the gift so inordinately prized by the Corinthians]

The gift related to community leadership, *kubernesis* (*administration* or *direction*), is listed as one of the less glamorous, but necessary gifts.

This unstructured, charismatic model of community, as exemplified by the Church at Corinth, would not survive for long as a viable model of church governance. While alive, Paul had sent letters and emissaries, like Timothy and Titus, to provide direction to the local churches. Once he was gone, greater structure would be needed.

**The Church of the Acts of the Apostles** (14:21-23; 20:17-35) and **the Pastoral Epistles** (*1 & 2 Timothy & Titus*) is the picture of the same Pauline churches some thirty years later. While *Acts* purports to describe events from the time of Paul's ministry, the narratives in fact often reflect the conditions from at the time when Luke wrote *Acts*, i.e., about 80 C.E. The *Pastoral Epistles*, written not by Paul, but by an anonymous disciple concerned to preserve Paul's legacy within these churches, date from the same period. The author uses the literary device of letters of advice addressed to Paul's lieutenants, Timothy and Titus. With the first generation Apostles gone, it was critical to have responsible leaders able to protect the flock against the "savage wolves" who would lead them astray. The Lord's return was no longer seen as imminent; it was now important to organize the communities for the long haul. These became the important questions: Who should hold positions of leadership with responsibility to preserve the deposit of faith? How should they be chose? This is what the author of the *Pastoral Epistles* has to say:

*I left you in Crete that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders (presbyteroi) in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Such an overseer (episkopos) is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest*

*gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5-9)*  
*Now the overseer (episkopos) must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? (1 Tim 3:2-6)*

The governance structure of the *Pastoral Epistles* was clearly collegial. Leadership was entrusted to a group of overseers (*episkopoi*) or elders (*presbyteroi*)—the terms are interchangeable. The evolution of mainstream church governance from unstructured, charismatic community (50 C.E.) to collegial governance (80 C.E.) to monarchical episcopate (150 C.E.) could be presented as a predictable linear development were it not for the anomaly of the *Johannine* community that continued to exist through the end of the first century.

The *Johannine* community is the branch of Christianity that produced the *Fourth Gospel*, the *Letters of John*, and possibly the *Book of Revelation*. This community is quite different from the church pictured in the *Pastoral Epistles* and *Acts*. The *Johannine* literature has little to say about church governance, or about *Church* for that matter. The word *church* appears only once (3 *Jn* 6:9), where the reference is to the opposition party of Diotrephes. There is no mention of hierarchy, or diversity of functions, or distinction between those who teach and those who are taught. The elder of *First John* does not claim authority based on special office in the church, or even on his longevity as a disciple of Jesus. The Word that he writes possesses its own authority. What he teaches them, they already know. They have heard the Word from the beginning (1 *Jn* 2:7; 2 *Jn* 6). He simply *recalls* to the disciples what the Spirit has already taught them: *I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it...Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you...The anointing which you have received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you, as his anointing teaches you about everything. (1Jn 2:21, 24, 27)*. The continuing existence of this unstructured, Spirit-led community of believers at the end of the first century is an anomaly, a relic of an earlier generation of Christianity that had somehow survived beyond its time. Apparently, it was not a practical model for survival of the

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faith community, because the Johannine community disappears from history, leaving as its only legacy, the *Fourth Gospel* and *Epistles of John*, and their enduring affirmations about the primacy of the Spirit in the life of the church.

What conclusions can be drawn from the variety and evolution of governance structures during New Testament times? With the possible exception of the enigmatic Johannine community, it is clear that the local churches were never *acephalous* [i.e., head-less] congregations. From the earliest times, local churches recognized certain individuals as gifted and/or chosen by God for ministries of leadership. *Presbyteroi* were respected members of the community entrusted with leadership responsibilities, but *presbyter* was hardly a profession or occupation. *Presbyteroi* supported themselves like everyone else.

Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M. in his excellent study tracing the history of the church's understanding of ministerial leadership from NT times: *Priesthood: A History of the Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (Paulist Press, 1988) comes to this conclusion:

[The NT describes] ministerial leadership, with little mention of sacramental leadership, much less the more specific eucharistic leadership...It is not because the NT ministers have the power to celebrate the Eucharist that they are the ministers of the Christian community; rather, it is more the opposite: because they are the ministers of leadership over the Christian community, they have a presiding ministry over the Eucharist. (p.80) This brief survey of ordained ministry in NT times admittedly raises more questions than it answers, but here are some questions worth pondering:

Would supporters of WOC do well to follow the lead of Vatican II and discretely drop the words *priest* and *priesthood* in favor of the more generic, but theologically correct *ministry*? The word *priest* is heavily laden with the baggage of bad theology.

How much of the church's governance structure is truly—as often claimed—of divine institution? A respectful study of *New Testament* suggests that Jesus left most of the decisions about governance up to us, to find, with the help of the Holy Spirit, workable structures to support the mission of the church in our times.

*Jim Plastaras, a member of CTA-Philadelphia, is a parishioner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Doylestown.*

#### SEPA/WOC E-MAIL LISTSERV

If you would like to receive and share information related to the women's ordination movement, and engage in dialogue with others committed to the cause of full equality in ministry in the Roman Catholic church, you are invited to join the SEPA/WOC listserv. To do so, contact Gaile Pohlhaus at [gaile.pohlhaus@villanova.edu](mailto:gaile.pohlhaus@villanova.edu).

## CALL TO ACTION: LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

Call To Action will sponsor two conferences featuring two modern day prophets, Dr. Joseph Hough and Father John Dear, who have spent their lives troubling the waters of complacency, and agitating the ego of comfort in pursuit of peace and justice.

Dr. Joseph Hough, speaker at the September 17, 2005, conference, is currently President and Social Ethics Professor at Union Theological Seminary. His theme will be, "The Poor and the Children of Abraham." He envisions a time when the three great Abrahamic traditions stand together to say, "we do not countenance the oppression of the needy. It is immoral and an insult to God." John Dear will lead the day of retreat on October 15, 2005, on the theme, "Troublemakers for Peace and Justice." He is a Jesuit Priest who preaches nonviolence. He has been arrested for acts of civil disobedience, and spent nearly a year in prison for a Plowshares disarmament action.

Both programs begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude after the 12 noon Ecumenical Prayer Service. The September 17 program will be held at Collenbrook United Church, 5390 Township Line Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026. The October 15<sup>th</sup> program is to be located at St. Augustine Church, 4<sup>th</sup> and Vine Streets, Old City, Philadelphia. Both events are open to the public but pre-registration is requested. A fifteen dollar donation is suggested, but come whether or not you can contribute. Register by mail ([CTAPhiladelphia@comcast.net](mailto:CTAPhiladelphia@comcast.net)) or call 215-345-1176.

Please consider attending CTA's annual conference in Milwaukee, WI, scheduled from November 4 to 6, 2005. This year's theme is "Religion, Money, Politics: What's God got to do with it?" Registration can be done on line at [www.cta-usa.org](http://www.cta-usa.org). While you are there you can check out the schedule and featured speakers and events. A registration form can be printed out from that same website or you can write to Call To Action, P.O. Box 87618, Dept. 3040, Chicago, IL 60680-0618 or by calling 815-332

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## Book Reviews

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***DOUBT, A Play by John Patrick Shanley.*** Currently running at the Walter Kerr Theatre 219 West 48th Street New York, NY.

***Reviewed by Dugan McGinley***

The scholar William Halsey has written that American Catholics maintained an aura of “innocence” amidst the general disillusionment that pervaded the first half of the twentieth century. Despite the tragedy of two world wars, Catholics could take comfort in a tight network of schools and parishes, guarded by nuns and priests steeped in Thomistic philosophy. Playwright John Patrick Shanley has crafted a metaphor for the loss of that innocence in the latter half of the century.

In *Doubt*, Shanley mines the terrain of the clergy sex abuse scandal to set forth a parable about uncertainty. The 1964 setting of the play allows us to feel the security of the Catholic world of the time. From Shanley’s preface: “The faith, which held us together, went beyond the precincts of religion. It was a shared dream we agreed to call Reality.” But we now realize this trusted illusion of security left us vulnerable to predators from within. “And the shepherds, so invested in the surface, sacrificed actual good for perceived virtue.” Today, with the facade of our “moral guardians” removed, we long to understand how it all happened and argue about the best way to deal with past offenders and prevent future misconduct. But Shanley’s drama makes it clear (even as it leaves the audience in doubt) that absolute answers and positions ultimately do not satisfy.

I have to give Shanley credit for wading into these waters at all. Clergy sex abuse is a volatile subject and dramatizing it runs the risk of reducing the issue to sound bites. But *Doubt* is a work of great nuance. It is complex and layered and demands that we exercise our moral imagination. Both the script and the production have been deservedly critically praised. It won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 2005 Tony Award for Best New Play. The actors bring depth to roles which might otherwise come off as caricatures. In fact, their performances are so central to the experience that I urge you to see the play before you read the script. It is currently playing on Broadway and I understand it will tour in 2006.

The drama takes place in a Bronx Catholic church and school where the principal, Sr. Aloysius (Cherry Jones), governs with an iron hand. Though she seems cold, it is clear that she has the best interests of her students at heart. She suspects the newly assigned priest, the young and well-liked Fr. Flynn (Brian O’Byrne) of initiating an improper relationship with one of the eighth grade boys. When she confers with the boy’s compassionate and warm teacher, Sr. James (Heather Goldenhersh) Sr. Aloysius is careful “not to create something by saying it.” She merely asks Sister James to watch for anything unusual. The drama unfolds when Sr. James notices the boy acting strangely and smelling of alcohol after meeting with Fr. Flynn.

I would love to tell the whole plot and give my take on it, but that would spoil what needs to be a firsthand experience. Be forewarned: we never find out the “truth” of the situation. As in “real” life, we only have what is spoken and our

own perceptions to go by; but this is how it must be for Shanley’s parable to succeed. Each character makes us wrestle with doubt. Fr. Flynn may be suspect, but he is dynamic and progressive and we want to trust his sincerity. Sr. Aloysius has an admirable determination to protect her charges, even as she tragically realizes that suspicion feels cold and “in the pursuit of wrongdoing one steps away from God.” For me, however, Shanley’s metaphor rests squarely on Sr. James, who loses her innocence and old sense of self as her eyes are opened to the potential improprieties lurking under the warm blanket of the Church’s social order.

Perhaps the most mind-blowing scene takes place when Sr. Aloysius meets with Mrs. Muller, the boy’s mother (Adriane Lenox). In this encounter, we are brought face to face with the complexity of sex abuse situations and the intersecting dynamics of race, class and sexuality. The relationship between her son and Fr. Flynn is brought into relief against the backdrop of her relationship with her domineering husband, the boy’s relationship with his father, and the boy’s own personality and needs. It is a profound moment when Mrs. Muller admonishes the habit-wearing Sr. Aloysius, “Sometimes things aren’t black and white.”

The Church hierarchy plays its ever-constraining and hypocritical role. Progressive Catholics will be well versed in the kinds of constraints Sr. Aloysius faces as she tries to deal with this delicate problem. As she says so tellingly, “What is it, forty feet across? The convent here, the rectory there. We might as well be separated by the Atlantic Ocean.” She is never naive. She knows she can’t simply use the “chain of command” she normally finds so helpful in maintaining discipline: “There are parameters which protect him and hinder me.” It is distressing to know so little has changed in this regard.

My only criticism is minor: In 1964, I’m not sure Sr. Aloysius really could have imagined what she suspected. Shanley may be guilty of projecting today’s consciousness back to that time. But it doesn’t matter; it works. In our quest for solutions to the problem of clergy sex abuse, many of us appeal to absolutes in the hope of regaining the innocence of that time; “But innocence can only be wisdom in a world without evil.” As Sr. Aloysius points out, “You just want things to be resolved so you can have simplicity back.” Ultimately, *Doubt* calls us to examine not only the strategies (how do we accuse without waiting for clear evidence?) but also the motives that drive our individual and collective responses to this issue. Shanley’s greatest contribution is to show us the fragility of certainty and the wisdom of doubt, even if this makes us uncomfortable. In Shanley’s words, “Doubt requires more courage than conviction does. . . . There is no last word.”

***Dugan McGinley*** teaches in the Religion department at Temple University. He is the author of *Acts of Faith, Acts of Love: Gay Catholic Autobiographies as Sacred Texts* (Continuum 2004).



***O God of Players: The Story of The Immaculate Mighty Macs*** by Julie Byrne (Columbia University Press, 2003), \$22.50, 211 pages, appendices, notes, illustrations.

***Reviewed by Regina Bannan***

How weird, I thought. Living in Vermont, coming from New Jersey, I could not imagine how a small Catholic women’s college managed to win the first national basketball championship in 1972—and then went on to win two more and then seemed to drop out of contention. At that time I did not understand Philadelphia Catholicism—but I do now. And Julie Byrne’s *O God of Players* explains the remarkable achievement by Immaculata’s team by placing it in the context of a whole culture I so often see as detrimental to women. This is a good corrective.

Basketball was no post-sixties phenomenon for these women. Byrne describes the importance of the game to Philadelphia’s Catholic working class population, with leagues that began in the late 1910s of parish, CYO, high school and eventually college teams for boys at first and soon girls. Cardinal Dougherty and Monsignor Bonner saw physical education as part of the “wholeness” that they hoped the vast parochial school system would promote. And the girls ran with it and loved it. A hard, physical game was fun for them, just like the boys. They learned from brothers and competed with them. These girls were tough and aggressive.

Byrne confirms David Contosta’s class analysis in his article, “The Philadelphia Story: Life at Immaculata, Rosemont, and Chestnut Hill” (reviewed in *EqualwRites*, March 2003). Contosta devotes only a paragraph to athletics, however; Byrne uses basketball to explain the way some working class students carved out a space for themselves in an institution that might otherwise have been more elite. At Immaculata, most of the players were commuter students, not boarders. Byrne says that these girls “reversed the patterns of privilege” with their success at basketball, which became a focus for the whole school and often for the wider regional Catholic population. They loved being successful. They loved having fans. And they loved to win.

In addition to archival sources, Byrne’s study is based on interviews with women who played, coached, or cheered for Immaculata’s teams from the 1940s through the 1970s. This may limit some of the conclusions possible, especially in sensitive areas like sexuality. Homosexuality was not talked about until the 1970s. Players were not comfortable with nudity. “Femininity” was expected even as hard play was accepted. Marriage or becoming a nun ended their basketball careers.

Byrne characterizes the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who staffed the school as more progressive before Vatican II and more conservative after, when compared with other religious orders. There was a conservative feeling about the various religious practices around the basketball team—prayers for success, wearing miracu-

lous medals, affirmation of Catholic identity when playing non-Catholic schools, etc. Byrne finds it hard to untangle these elements, and accepts that there was something “Catholic” about Immaculata basketball. Those involved did not seek to separate it out, but accepted it as the way things were.

Byrne answers questions we ask now that we did not ask at the time. Few black women were at Immaculata before 1970, and thus few were on the teams. The players enjoyed their travel and as their circle widened, used it to examine their assumptions—sometimes changing them, sometimes not. They remained white ethnics. They were “inadvertent feminists” who generally rejected feminist ideology but acted to support the choices of individual women. If you want to read about the glory years, all the detail is there, too. But you learn a lot more than basketball from *O God of Players*.

***Regina Bannan*** teaches at Temple University, whose women’s basketball team was defeated by Immaculata in the 1946 Mythical City Championship game.

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**Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization , And World Religions.***  
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005. pb. 195 pp. \$19.95.

*Reviewed by Marian Ronan*

Rosemary Radford Ruether, one of the pioneers of U.S. Christian feminist theology, has to date written twenty-eight books and edited ten more. The latest of these is *Integrating Ecofeminism Globalization and World Religions*, in which she examines the interconnections between a numbers of grave contemporary problems and offers a potent resource for their resolution.

Ruether begins *Integrating* with a brief introduction. She then delineates, in the first chapter, the growth of massive global corporations since World War II and their grievous impacts on air, water, climate, agriculture, gene pools, and populations, resulting in human and ecological pauperization on a large scale. She also explores the disproportionate effects of corporate globalization on women and the ideological linkages between corporate globalization, American imperial aggression, and “Christian fundamentalist thought.”

The second chapter surveys work on the ecological import of the major world religions done in the late 1990s at the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions. Treated are Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Ruether adds to these summaries her own perspectives on the place of gender, race and class in each tradition’s view of nature and ends with prescriptions about what the world religions should do to help restore ecological harmony.

Chapter three describes ecofeminism as a major theoretical resource for overcoming global degradation. Ruether begins by clarifying the meaning of ecofeminism, and then surveys six prominent ecofeminist perspectives, North American neo-paganism (Starhawk and Carol Christ), African ecofeminism (Tumani Mutasa Nyajekam, Teresia Hinga, and Nobel Prize-winning Wangari Maathai), Indian ecofeminism (Vandana Shiva and Aruna Gnanadason), Latin American ecofeminism, (Ivone Gebara and others) and North American ecofeminism (Catherine Keller and Carolyn Merchant). She discerns a remarkable commonality among these thinkers.

The fourth chapter details a number of movements against corporate globalization around the world and the leadership of women in these groups. It concludes by offering an alternative vision of global society which is informed by ecofeminism, as well as a critique of economic neoliberalism and American messianic nationalism.

The task that Rosemary Radford Ruether undertakes in this book is a very important one. Many believe that a major reason for the success of conservative movements in recent years is the ability of economic, religious and political conservatives to agree on goals and programs. Liberals and progressives, however, continue to fragment around various

movements and issues. Some liberal American Christians, engage, for example, in a kind of environmentalism that is quite removed from questions of corporate globalization, and others are concerned with spirituality and spiritual direction separate from questions of the environment or economics. Once again, as so often in the past, Ruether is in the forefront of critical thinking, displaying the crucial connections between these areas. Until we begin to come to terms with these connections, progress with regard to the oppression of women, ecological harm, and global corporate exploitation will be hampered.

Another of the strengths of *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* is the extraordinary amount of relevant scholarship that Ruether brings together in it. I myself spent some months studying women, corporate globalization and the world water crisis during a recent sabbatical; the job that Ruether does connecting and elucidating these issues in her first chapter and throughout the book is quite amazing. One assumes, since the book is published by an academic publisher, that the primary audience will be religious studies classes; students cannot help finding the lucid integration of so much pertinent material a great help in becoming oriented toward the book’s subject matter and thesis.

There’s also a downside to Ruether’s use in this book of her extraordinary talents for summarizing and integration, however. Some will find troubling her decision to offer summaries of all of the religions of the world, their ecological teachings, and prescriptions for improving those teachings in four to seven pages each. This inappropriate assumption of authority in relation to others’ religious traditions is reinforced by Ruether’s unfortunate decision, following Martin Marty, to use a term specifically descriptive of early 20<sup>th</sup> century American Protestant groups, “fundamentalism,” to characterize diverse groups within a number of the world religions (26-27 and throughout). While there are some similarities between these groups, even many American conservative evangelicals object to being characterized as fundamentalists. Surely Hindus, Confucians, Muslims and Jews deserve more nuanced treatment.

Similarly troubling is Ruether’s negative evaluation of much Jewish environmentalism for its failure to apply sabbatical/Jubilee legislation in the book of Leviticus to what is being done today to Palestinians by the nation of Israel. Such a critique of Jewish teaching on the environment may be accurate, of course. But the overall tone contrasts strikingly with Ruether’s far more balanced, even optimistic, evaluation of Christianity. This optimism is based in what Ruether perceives as recent improvements in the Christian approach to the environment and women, much of it introduced by the discourse she herself pioneered, ecofeminism. Ruether has,

*Continued on page 11*

Continued from page 10

of course, done ground-breaking work on Christian anti-Judaism as well on as the negative environmental impacts of Christian teaching. Many readers will be ignorant of this background, however, and will have good reason to find Christianity the more ecologically enlightened of the two faiths because of Ruether's assessment here. By positioning Christianity or North American (really US) ecofeminism as culminating examples in three of the book's chapters, Ruether seems, in fact, to suggest the superiority of her own religious and US feminist traditions in the struggle against global corporate environmental degradation.

Underlying these and a number of other troubling aspects of *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* is the author's failure to acknowledge her own social location as a U.S. national of the professional managerial class who is—as I am—deeply implicated in inflicting some of the worst environmental degradation the world has ever known. The production of paper, for example, is one of the causes of the world water crisis, but academic feminists continue to publish their work on paper rather than, for example, on the Internet, and to contract with profit-making corporations for these publications.

Instead of integrating her own social location into her analysis, Ruether adopts a universal or perhaps we might say transcendent point of view that is authorized primarily by her superior knowledge. This location of intellectual superiority, in turn, justifies the prescriptions Ruether makes to a wide range of groups. Take, for example, her prescription to organized labor:

Local union struggles need to network together across borders to insist on decent wages and working conditions throughout the world. ...*Only when* such global standards are recognized and enforced will it no longer be possible for corporations to engage in a "race to the bottom" by exploiting low-waged and unprotected labor pools. (149) (Emphasis mine).

Union leadership in the US, struggling to reverse membership losses and offset the enormous financial power of corporations in its effort, for example, to organize Wal-Mart workers, will no doubt be grateful to Professor Ruether for letting them know exactly what they should do.

Since the elections of November, 2004, there has been much soul-searching about what might have caused the defeat of many liberal candidates and initiatives. One critique holds that a contributing factor is the assumption that Americans' minds will be changed by presenting them with correct knowledge: "the truth will set you free," as linguist George Lakoff characterizes it. On the contrary, Lakoff argues, to bring some conservatives over to the progressive point of view requires the use of emotionally-infused values to reframe the beliefs that motivate them.

"The truth will set you free" is the conviction that underlies *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions*. In discussing the ideologies of corporate/military

dominance and American messianism, for example, Professor Ruether writes, "These dominant ideologies need to be intellectually refuted, alternatives to them proposed, and their hegemonic control over social communication dismantled" (166). But Professor Ruether and a number of the ecofeminists she profiles have been intellectually refuting these and related ideologies for many years; Ruether's *Gaia and God*, for example, was published in 1992. *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* likewise offers many examples of environmental activism that are, ostensibly, reversing this degradation, or at least modeling environmental activism for the rest of us.

But the 2004 elections suggest something different—that the approaches many of us have adopted have not, in fact, succeeded. The kind of scholarship that characterizes *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* is in some respects analogous to the economic theory that undergirds corporate globalization. In each case hierarchical structures, uprooted from local communities, use reason—facts—to advance their position. Reason is necessary, of course, but it's going to take a good deal more than that for us to instill in our neighbors and ourselves, on our way to the mall, a new vision of ecological justice for all God's creatures.

*Marian Ronan is a faculty member at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. This review appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of CrossCurrents*

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## HONORING ONE OF OUR OWN

*By Alice J. Foley*

Over sixty wonderful women and men gathered at a beautiful setting to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of Judy Heffernan. Margaret McLaughlin and Roberta Brunner, two members of her special congregation, The Community of the Christian Spirit, organized this event for one of their presidens. Others who attended were some of us from SEPA-WOC, co-workers and friends.

Regina Bannan read a letter to Judy from those at the national office of Women's Ordination Conference and she was presented with gifts from CCS. A book in which attendees wrote good wishes was presented to Judy. If you could not attend this event and wish to add your thoughts to this book, send them c/o Community of the Christian Spirit, P.O.Box 353, Abington, PA 19001, and they will be included.

Marianne and Tom Tucker, musicians who have offered their skills to both CCS and SEPA/WOC provided musical entertainment as did No Windows, a talented quartet of musicians and vocalists.

There has been speculation that the two persons on the road to Emmaus were a woman and a man. Just imagine if one had been our own Judy Heffernan! She certainly would have had wonderful conversation and definitely would have recognized the One who was risen. Knowing Judy Heffernan for almost twenty years, I can say she is a valuable asset to all of us who know her. Congratulations, again.

*Alice J. Foley is a core committee member of SEPA/WOC, fifteen year member of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Germantown and nineteen year member of Dignity/Philadelphia. She is a local disability activist*

## CALENDAR

The following centers and groups offer programs and activities of interest to progressive Catholics. If you would like to include events in the **Equal wRites** calendar, please contact Cassie at 215-467-8898 or [peacecatphilly@yahoo.com](mailto:peacecatphilly@yahoo.com)

### Centers for Spiritual Growth and Support

**Franciscan Spiritual Center**, a contemplative place of simple beauty, respectful of creation, and reflective of the Franciscan values of hospitality, mutuality and Gospel living, offers programs which are holistic, ecumenical, collaborative in nature and supportive of nonviolence. The center provides accommodations, space for spiritual direction, prayer, study, art and exercise on a beautiful, handicapped-accessible campus. Clare House offers a quiet place for contemplation, guided retreat weekends and directed prayer. This fall, share in the simple beauty of Taize prayer, discover T'ai Chi Chih or join fellow pilgrims following in the footsteps of St. Bonaventure in the six-week course *The Journey into God*. For more information, call 610 527-4813 or check the web site at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org). The center is at 609 S. Convent Rd. in Aston, PA.

**Jesus House Prayer and Renewal Center** is a Roman Catholic center that is open to people of all faiths. The mission of Jesus House is to offer programs, prayer support, spiritual direction, and hospitality toward all God's people. Its quiet, reflective atmosphere fosters reconciliation for those who separated from church or society. The Center offers a variety of retreats, personal growth seminars, book studies and days of reflection. Groups are also welcome to use the Center's facilities for their own programs. Bible study this season will take the Acts of the Apostles. Book study groups will be reading and discussing Sue Monk Kidd's *When the Heart Waits* and William Bausch's *The Yellow Brick Road*. Widows and widowers may join in an All Souls' Day retreat and all are welcome to *Pray with the Eucharist* or *Pray with Ignatius of Loyola* on days of reflection. For more information, call 302-995-6859 or check the website at [www.jesushousecenter.org](http://www.jesushousecenter.org). The Center is located at 2501 Milltown Road, Wilmington, DE 19808.

**Kirkridge** is a retreat and study center rooted in Christ close to the earth where people of diverse backgrounds find community and experience the transforming power of the Spirit for personal wholeness, reconciliation and justice in the world. Its work is based on the understanding that the life of faith requires not only action to transform the world toward greater shalom, but also the cultivation of a deep spirituality to sustain that compassionate action. Enter *Sisterly Conversations; Come Out of Empire* with Dan Berrigan and Elizabeth McAlister; join John Dominic Crossan *In Search of Paul*; share *Stories for Grownups* or relax into an *Autumn Sabbath*. Young LGBT friends between 18 and 30 years old will gather for *Agape 2005—Over the Rainbow*. Learn about the contemplative insights of three traditions in *Flowing from Your Center* or uncover a message of peace in *The Gospel of Thomas*. For more information, call 610-588-1793, check the site at [www.kirkridge.com](http://www.kirkridge.com) or e-mail [kirkridge@fast.net](mailto:kirkridge@fast.net). Kirkridge is located at 2495 Fox Gap Road in Bangor, PA.

**The Lourdes Wellness Center**, a ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegheny, New York, is sponsored by Our Lady of Lourdes Health System. The center hosts a wide variety of wellness workshops, offering programs on yoga, meditation, feng shui, hypnosis, aromatherapy, guided imagery for pain management, Feldenkrais method, reiki, shiatsu and reflexology. The center also offers special programs for older adults through its 50-Plus Club. Experience poetry as a spiritual exercise at the once-monthly Poetry Circle or join with other survivors of breast cancer in the Pink Ribbon Poetry Group, which meets twice monthly. The Lourdes Wellness Center is on 900 Haddon Avenue, Suite 100 in Collingswood, NJ. Please call 856-869-3125 for information, or check the web site at [www.lourdeswellnesscenter.org](http://www.lourdeswellnesscenter.org).

**Mary's Vineyard** welcomes people of all faiths. All those alienated from the traditions of their upbringing will be given opportunities to continue their search for meaning. Although primarily focused on the needs of women, the center is open to all who have accepted the responsibility to form and care for future generations and who desire to share their burdens and joys with others. For information about upcoming programs at Mary's Vineyard, please call 856-428-5495 or check the web site at [www.marysvineyard.org](http://www.marysvineyard.org). Mary's Vineyard is located at 1812 Haddonfield-Berlin Road in Cherry Hill, NJ.

At **Pendle Hill**, education is envisioned as the transforming of people and society. Programs offer the resources and time for integrated spiritual, intellectual and personal learning. Guests come to Pendle Hill to study, learn more about Quakerism, seek an experience of community living, deepen prayer and spiritual life, or discern a future direction. The community offers an autumn abundance of weekend and week-long programs for your enrichment. You could be *Cultivating the Great Act of Generosity; Speaking from the Heart* to enhance your relationships; learning with other people of color about *Self Care and Your Spiritual Center*; or *Integrating Core Beliefs with Action at Work*. Those with an interest in learning more about Quakerism may attend an *Inquirers' Weekend* or learn about Quaker worship *Behind the Silence*. Social Action and Social Witness Internships support and encourage young people who are, or wish to be, actively engaged in social justice work. For more information on any Pendle Hill programs, call 610-566-4507 or check the web site at [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org). Pendle Hill is located at 338 Plush Mill Road in Wallingford, PA.

The **SSJ Center for Spirituality** is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill rooted in the charism of unity and reconciliation. In a spirit of hospitality, the center welcomes individuals and groups for spiritual direction, retreats, and other opportunities for deepening one's relationship with God, self, and all creation. Directed prayer weekends are scheduled in both November and December and individual retreats may be arranged at the Cape May retreat house. Spanish-speaking seekers may learn *The Language of the Heart* this season, and women join in the *Autumn Sharing Group*. ANCHOR co-hosts a women's retreat day at Cape May addresses the theme *As Clay in the Hands of the Potter*, and all are welcome in Grieving through All of Life's Losses. Founders of the order will be celebrated in a pilgrimage in image, prayer and song: *From LePuy to Lyon*. For more information on these and other programs, call 215-248-7231. The SSJ Center is at 9701 Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill, PA.

**Temenos**, an outreach ministry of the Swedenborgian Church, is a nonprofit conference and retreat center. It exists to facilitate renewal and transformation in human lives in the Swedenborgian spirit of inquiry and personal growth and the belief that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life. Programs are open to persons of all spiritual traditions and the sacred space of Temenos is also available for private individual retreats and for groups wishing to reserve space for their own programs or events. Visitors are welcome at worship Sundays followed by a spiritual discussion group. Come to Temenos for ongoing Yoga classes, for Mindfulness Meditation or to join the Course in Miracles. Feel empowered in a feminine contemplative path at the *Via Feminina* weekend retreat this November or learn about the innovative therapy practice of *Esogetic Colorpuncture*. For information call 610-696-8145 or e-mail [programs@temenosretreat.org](mailto:programs@temenosretreat.org). Temenos is at 1564 Telegraph Road in West Chester, PA.

## Local Groups Working for Peace, Justice and Equality

**ANCHOR** (A Non-Denominational Community Harvesting Our Resources) is a group of Christians committed to living creatively and reflectively. Its mission is to engage in the holistic exploration of contemporary spiritual/religious/moral issues. Communal prayer days and discussion groups, one each in the fall and the spring address relevant topics of religious and social concern. This fall's subject is *Teilhard and the Texture of the Evolutionary Cosmos*, to take place at the SSJ Center for Spirituality on October 28. Please see the listing above for contact information. The "Universe Story" study group meets on the third Wednesday morning of the month, September through May. Discussions focus on the interface between science and faith, with an emphasis on ecology, cosmology, and the increasing urgency of mutuality, sustainability and justice. For particulars on any of the above programs, call 215-233-4929 and request a calendar of events.

The **Brandywine Peace Community** continues its peaceful resistance to the manufacture of weapons by Lockheed Martin and to America's presence in Iraq. Join the community for a monthly potluck supper and program on the second Sunday of each month, 4:30 pm, University Lutheran Church, 3637 Chestnut St., Philadelphia (bring a main dish, salad, or dessert to share.) For information, call 610-544-1818 or e-mail [brandywine@juno.com](mailto:brandywine@juno.com). For updates, see the site: [www.bandywinepeace.org](http://www.bandywinepeace.org).

**Call to Action/Philadelphia**, a group committed to church renewal, serves southeastern Pennsylvania, south Jersey and Delaware. For information on organizational meetings and programs, call 215-345-1176.

**COR/Philadelphia (Catholic Organizations for Renewal)** is a coalition of individuals and groups, including SEPA/WOC, sharing a commitment to a renewed church. All are most welcome to attend planning meetings. For information, call 215-232-7823.

**Dignity Sunday Liturgies** are at 7 pm at St. Luke and the Epiphany Church, 330 S. 13 St. in Philadelphia. The church is wheelchair-accessible. For information on these and other Dignity programs, call 215-546-2093.

**House of Grace Catholic Worker** holds a liturgy and potluck the first Monday of each month September through June at 1826 Lehigh Avenue, and a Bible study on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at 2421 Jasper St. Contact the house for details: 215-426-0364.

**Philadelphia Catholic Worker** hosts liturgy and potluck every Wednesday at 6 pm at 430 W. Jefferson Street. The Philadelphia Catholic Worker is a community striving to follow in the footsteps of Dorothy Day. A newsletter, "Common Life," is available upon request. For information, call 215-232-7823.

**Southeastern Pennsylvania Women's Ordination Conference** core committee meetings with liturgy are held monthly, and all are welcome. For information on time and location, call 215-545-9649.

**Women of Faith**, a ministry of the Metropolitan Christian Council, is an ecumenical community in the greater Philadelphia area that celebrates women's gifts in Christian ministry and seeks justice and equality for all women in the church and the broader society. Women of Faith endeavors to foster Christian unity through worship and education, bringing together persons from diverse cultures and backgrounds for mutual nurture, support and service to the larger community. Join Women of Faith for a monthly potluck supper. For information, contact the Metropolitan Christian Council at 215-836-7784

### ***Spirituality and Healing Workshop***

Level 1

#### ***Understanding and Benefiting from the Connection between The Spiritual and the Physical*** ***(Only prerequisite is a willingness to learn)***

Whether you are a professional in a "helping field" (Health care, counseling, teaching, clergy, for example) or are on a journey for personal growth, this workshop is for you! We will be exploring Ancient Traditions and learning contemporary applications for everyday living.

**Saturday, October 1, 2005**

**9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

To be held at the

**St. Joseph's University, Carriage House**

**261 City Line Ave. (Loyola Center), Philadelphia, PA.19131**

Presented by:

**The Time Out Center**

**Jenny and Jim Ratigan, Facilitators**

If you would like further information or if you would like registration materials please contact us at [610-695-9780](tel:610-695-9780) or [info@thetimeoutcenter.com](mailto:info@thetimeoutcenter.com).



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## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; Ps. 67; Mt. 15:21-28

by Judith A. Heffernan

Today at liturgy we reflected at length on this Gospel reading. The Canaanite woman sought out Jesus with faith and perseverance. Her daughter needed healing—and it was done!

I have been trying to synthesize my experiences at the WOW (Women's Ordination Worldwide) Conference in Ottawa. Reflecting on this Gospel today I remembered hearing at the conference that Jesus thought He was to lead a renewal in His own tradition, but this woman called Him out. Jesus was willing to dialogue, to listen, to change.

When reading Isaiah today, "My justice is to be revealed" I thought of Dorothy Irvin. At WOW she shared with us that forty years ago in the United States women could not study theology in Catholic universities. When Catholic University finally accepted women in theology, the women were banned from some classes. However, the women could give a tape recorder to a seminarian who was permitted to tape the classes for the women!

Dorothy decided to go to Tubingen for her doctorate and in her archeological studies discovered that Christianity had lots of women leaders and celebrated it. She shared with us that we have a beautiful tradition of equality and we need to reclaim that tradition!

In reading the Psalm today, "Oh God, let all the nations praise you" I thought of the 450 people gathered from twenty countries at the WOW Conference. We assembled in faith,

### FINE POINTS

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**AFFILIATION:** *Equal wRites* is published by the core committee of the Southeastern Pennsylvania chapter of the Women's Ordination Conference. We are inspired by but independent of the national office of the Women's Ordination Conference.



SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE

c/o Jann  
49 Driscoll Drive  
Ivyland, PA 18974

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perseverance, hope, respect, prayer and good will! We found that although we may be at different places on the spectrum of women's ordination we are all part of its rainbow splendor. Together we sang, "We'll weave a cloth of all the world united, within the vision of a Christ who sets us free."

So much of what I experienced in Ottawa renewed me—Marion Dewar the 77 year old former mayor of Ottawa: when we pray to God to lead us, we sometimes go places we never knew existed...Be aware of your capacity for divinity: change the world, the church through prayer and action...Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza: Our vision is a world free of oppression...Rosemary Radford Ruether: We can stand up for a more life-giving world and a church that is a community of liberation, or race, class and gender...Mary Hunt: when you meet injustice, you must name the wrong...Myra Poole: We are called beyond our strength...ordination is not a minor issue and once you make the connections, you get passion...Nicole Sotelo: We must discern our lives as a just and holy people, as individuals and as a movement!...

The closing prayer of today's liturgy brought this all together for me. "Your care extends beyond the boundaries of race and nation. May the walls which prejudice raises between us crumble beneath the shadow of your outstretched arm."

*Judy Heffernan has a Master of Divinity degree from a Catholic seminary. A member of the Community of the Christian Spirit, she is an original member of the Women's Ordination Conference.*

**MANUSCRIPTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** If you would like to contribute an article, letter, or anything else to *Equal wRites*, please send it double-spaced, with your name, phone number, and a short biographical note. The next issue will be December 2005. Final deadline for submissions is October 15. Send to the editor: Karen B. Lenz, 430 W. Jefferson St., Philadelphia, PA 19122 (215) 232-7823, or e-mail her at [equalwrites2005@aol.com](mailto:equalwrites2005@aol.com).

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