



North American Newsletter

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Paul Newton, Georg Dreissig, Ann Burfeind, Vicke von Behr, Darryl Coonan

Ordinations in North America

For only the third time in our history, Ordinations were celebrated in North America. Darryl Coonan was ordained in Hillsdale NY on Friday March 16, 2012, Paul Newton in Spring Valley NY on Saturday March 17, and Ann Burfeind, also in Spring Valley on Sunday March 18.

It is hard to describe the effects of such events. Certainly the two congregations prepared the events in a magnificent way. The preparatory talks given the evenings before helped heighten our awareness of what was to take place. And the large gatherings of friends, not only from North America, multiplied the effect. Everything served to create a radiance, an atmosphere of warmth, elevation and depth. One feels that something has changed in North America, just because such events took place here.

Ordinations follow a period of preparation at one or the other of our

seminaries (Spring Valley, NY, Hamburg Germany, or Stuttgart Germany). The candidate is ultimately invited to join the circle of priests by the Circle of Seven. The event of Ordination itself, somewhat like the Confirmation, is embedded within the Act of Consecration of Man and is celebrated by Vicke von Behr, our Erzoberlenker.

The radiance spreads as each of the new priests is welcomed into their first community. Darryl Coonan has been sent to Boston, Ann Burfeind to Chicago, Paul Newton to England. We follow their further steps with interest and joy.

Ordination of Priests (excerpt)

Serving the Divine in Every Person
Claudio Holland

Today religion has become a very individual matter. The relationship to God has developed with as many facets as there are people. This is also true of the Christian religion.

Christ addresses Himself to the freedom and the developmental capacities of human beings. Against this background, it may seem surprising that there are priests in The Christian Community. What can the task of the priest be today, when each individual seeks his or her own religious path?

Why Are Priests Needed Today?

Every human being can learn to pray and seek his own forms of prayer. Whoever prays knows the feeling that the 'success' of prayer varies, but also that the power of a prayer can increase when a number of people pray together.

The question remains whether prayer serves only one's own feeling of well-being, or whether it is actually effective beyond that. If prayer is to bring about the transformation of substances (bread and wine) and to intensify them into the sacrament, then the power of this prayer cannot be entirely dependent upon the momentary personal competence of those present.

Through the ordination, a human being places his or her whole labor in lifelong service of Christ. Through this, he or she receives – far beyond personal abilities – the possibility of fulfilling the sacraments at the altar. He does not become a better human being through this; rather he places himself at the disposal of a spiritual event in order that individual religious paths can become 'concentrated' into the sacrament.

The Priest's Cross and the Three Tasks of the Priest

In the Act of Consecration of Man, those present have several opportunities

to make the sign of the cross over forehead, chin and breast. At the same time, the priest makes a large cross, enclosed in a circle. In the Ordination of Priests, which is woven into the Act of Consecration of Man, the priest-to-be receives this cross, inscribed for the first time – a picture for the three priestly tasks: 1. The vertical, from above to below: proclaiming the Gospel to human beings; 2. The horizontal: performing the sacramental services with other human beings; 3. The circle in the center: cultivating a pastoral relationship with human beings. What does this mean in concrete terms?

Proclaiming – Mediating the Message from Heaven

Before the first Gospel Reading within the Ordination, the stole is laid about around the candidate's neck and crossed over the breast: what streams from heaven as 'eu-angelion' – good news from the angels – is to pass through the priest's heart and become audible for the people. Thought and Word are to become streaming life.

Performing Sacraments – God's Deed and Human Deed in One

The second task has to do with an ideal that every human being can have: that in every deed, God may be active. In order that this hope may become dependably effective at the altar, the priest-to-be is anointed with consecrated oil. With this substance, which has been blessed with the power of 'making inclined toward love,' a cross is inscribed on the forehead and on the backs of the hands, and touched three times on the crown of the head. Openings to the divine world are initiated through which the activity of Christ can flow into the priestly activity.

Then the priest-to-be receives the chasuble, the central liturgical vestment, open at the sides. He or she is vested with an ability that is beyond personal capacities. And the hands are free to do deeds in which divine powers are at work.

Becoming a Priest through the Affirmation of Others

The priest must be aware that he is doing something that no one can do alone and out of themselves. In order to be able to work as a priest, one needs threefold support: from the divine world, from human beings, and from the priests' circle.

This necessity comes to expression in connection with the anointing, when the priest-to-be is affirmed three times: by the one performing the ordination, by the servers, and finally by all the priests present behind him, with a powerful 'Yea, so be it'.

Pastoral Care – To Serve Christ Means to Serve People

The third task is the pastoral connection with people. finding and supporting the spiritual dimension of each unique and distinctive destiny.

Towards the end of the ordination, the celebrant, carrying the chalice, walks a circle around the assembled priests, thus creating an inner space. From out of this center, a priest is sent to his or her congregation. He or she is given the task of 'setting his own being in connection with the being of the community'. Thus, pastoral care is about an existential relationship to the other person with one's whole heart – at the same time while completely honoring the other's person's freedom. The priest does not fulfill this dynamic task only out of his personal powers, but rather with the power of the community of priests, from out of a spiritual center.

Hierarchy

The divine beings - in the Bible they are called Angels, Archangels etc. - are in a "sacred order", a "hierarchy", among one another. Thereby they can work together. A community wanting to work out of the power of the spiritual world also needs such an ordering, so that within this working together, sacraments can take place.

Within this order, every priest carries responsibility for his local congregation, and bears it in his consciousness; some priests for more than one congregation ('Lenkers'); and a few for the whole Christian Community (three 'Oberlenkers', of whom one is the 'Erzoberlenker'). Increasing responsibility comes with such administrative functions,

but the prestige, power or economic status of the priest is not influenced thereby.



White Rose, Gustave Dore

All priests grant the Lenkers and the Oberlenkers the task of sending them out to their place of work. This ensures before God and human beings that the sacraments can be continuously celebrated in all congregations.

The Ordination is received standing. Priests do not subjugate themselves to an institution, but rather carry out their tasks with an attentive sense of responsibility.

Sacrament of Ordination in Hillsdale, NY March 16, 2012

Amy Burkey, Cincinnati Ohio

Entering the church in Hillsdale, one could feel the presence of something special. Sitting there and watching the long row of priests entering in was as if a wind of spirit took over the room and swept us all in. As the new priest entered we could see the warmth and love, as well as a great dignity of being, offered to him by his fellow brethren. Speaking those words, guided to him from the altar was like freshness and water being poured into him and given out again from his very own lips.



It was a special event that took place here, and all present seemed to be filled with joy and reverence of just that. What a true privilege to be there; how fortunate to witness that pivotal event in Darryl Coonan's life as he joins the circle of priests and to feel the strength which flowed into our community.

Receiving a Priest

Kathleen Clark

For months and months our Boston congregation lived with anticipation of the possibility of receiving a second priest. "My goodness", reflected many of us, "how in the world might we support a second priest when we indeed can barely support ourselves right now?" Of course, initially, many discussions centered on the financial practicalities - buy or rent - needs - approaches. Finally we stopped to reflect on what actually might happen if and when a second priest would arrive - to talk and reflect on how the spiritual life of the community could change - and to realize that changes could occur which we heretofore had not imagined. We needed to see the unseen. We became more open. This became part of a wonderful preparation as it finally became certain that we could expect the arrival of a second priest in the spring - but of course, we knew not whom that might be!

Many from the Boston congregation traveled from the far reaches of New Hampshire, Maine and of course from Massachusetts to Hillsdale or to Spring Valley to participate in the ordinations. Impressions were shared the following weekend with descriptions of awe and inspiration. "I felt like I was in the depths of a Mystery". Some described the experience as one which deepened their connections with the Christian Community.



After the ordination of Darryl Coonan, we found out that it was he who would be coming to Boston as our long anticipated "second priest"! With many folks from the Boston community having participated in his ordination, we now began the process of planning how to receive him. On April 1, 2012 a large number of the congregation gathered and warmly welcomed the Rev. Darryl Coonan. The warmth and the depth of feeling that was shared has enlivened and enriched our community. The

anticipatory fears which nudged some of us initially changed into a stronger spirituality within our congregation.

Support of the priest and the work of the Christian Community has many practical applications. The following shows a remarkable blending of work as a spiritual activity:

Baking the Bread

Ben Gregg, Brookline, MA

My wife and I have been baking bread for our local Christian Community for six years now. It started after Karen Geyer, the person who used to make the bread, died, and someone was needed to take her place.

Now, if there's anything my friends know about me, it's that I love bread. I have toast for breakfast just about every morning, and when we go to France each year, visits to local "boulangeries" are high on my list of things to do. Yet the funny thing is, at the moment that I volunteered, I realized that I'd never actually made bread! (At least not in my present incarnation.)



So it was in this state of innocence that I received the official recipe:

Karen Geyer's Recipe for Host (Church Bread)

The ideal host is cut from bread that has small holes and little or no taste of yeast (or any other flavors besides wheat and salt). Using a non-stick pan also helps, since that avoids the temptation to use any grease or oil.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups unbleached flour
- 1/2 package of dry yeast (or 1 heaping teaspoon)
- 1 cup of warm water
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of sugar

The night before baking, start the dough. In a large mixing bowl, mix the yeast with 1 cup of warm water. Stir. Wait for a few minutes, and then add the teaspoon of salt and the tablespoon of sugar together with one cup of the flour.

Refrigerate overnight. The yeast will do its work during that time, eating up the sugar and leaving no taste of yeast.

The following day, gradually mix in the two remaining cups of flour, kneading and even tossing the dough if necessary. Knead the resulting dough for another 15 minutes—ensuring that there are no large air bubbles left. Leave the dough to rest under a towel for one hour. Then place it in a pan and allow it to rise.



Once the dough has risen in the pan, put it in a preheated oven warmed to 425-degrees. Along with the bread pan, it is recommended to put in a pan of hot water as well (this helps to keep the bread from drying out). Bake at 425 for 15 minutes (or until brown), and then turn down the heat to 350 degrees, baking for another 25 minutes (Total baking time: 40 minutes).

Lucky for me, my wife is French, and knows her way around a kitchen. That allowed me to get up and running pretty quickly, and probably also prevented me from doing any number of silly things that I otherwise might have!

Over the years, my bread making has settled into a ritual that seems to grow ever more spiritual and filled with meaning.

My ritual:

On Friday nights, I prepare the dough.

First, I heat up the water for the yeast. Watching the flame, I find myself thinking of the beginning of our solar system, when pure love flowed from the Thrones as warmth, and later when the light was separated from the darkness.

Once the water has been warmed, I find myself thinking of the ancient waters before life existed. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Into this is poured the yeast, which to me, is like watching the first primordial creatures coming to life.

Then, into this pure state of innocence, comes Lucifer, in the form of sweet sugar to tempt the little yeast into movement and activity. This opens the door to Ahriman, as the salt is then added to strengthen

and form them. Finally, comes the flour, which to me represents the earth; the physical world; life on the earth. After all is mixed together, this mixture is put into a cool dark place overnight (which I imagine to myself must feel like an eternity to the little yeast).

Finally, the morning comes. At dawn, as sun the rises, I take out the dough. During the night it has separated into light and dark—the lighter doughy part floating on top of the dark liquid part. This is all mixed back together along with the remainder of the flour. This is the moment when I imagine Christ entering in. That’s when all the mixing and kneading begins—not unlike my own experience of Karma at work!

As I mix and knead the dough, it slowly forms into a heart shaped ball, which I fold and press and form, over and over, until all is blended and uniform. As I do this, I feel my own heart, and think of Christ working not only in me, but in everything!

At last, the heart-shaped mass is left to rise; transforming into something that is greater than it was before! It is then placed into a pan, left to rise some more, and finally put into a hot oven where it is baked into a glorious loaf of bread!

The funny thing is, when it comes out, each loaf always looks slightly different from the last one. You never quite know how it will come out, but it’s always an adventure.

East Coast Summer Youth Conference, 2012

Seek and You Will Find

What are we looking for? What is it we wish to find - in life, in friendship, in knowledge, in love? Do we even know how powerful our seeking, our being on a quest, really is?



When: August 20-24, 2012

Ages: rising 9th-12th graders

Location:

The Christian Community
10 Green River Lane, Hillsdale, NY

Meeting Each Other, Meeting the World, Meeting Your Self - and the Art of Conversation

Youth conference is all about meetings: encountering new ideas, new people, new experiences. We learn to come into conversation - with everything! To really listen and observe, to find our own voice, we do this in the context of the magic of summer and joy of being together around campfires, in the pond and along the river. Each year we explore a particular question through presentations and small and large group conversation. Indeed, almost nothing can compare with true conversation with your own age group, exploring the deeper questions of life.

Artistic Projects

A major way we engage our questions at the youth conference is through artistic group projects. We long not only to discuss the deeper questions of life but to respond creatively to them

by offering something to the world. This year's project groups are still in the works! Previous year's groups included:

- Stone Carving
- Journal/Newsletter
- Print Making
- Improv Theater
- Mosaics
- Studio Arts
- Nature Sculpture
- Photography, & more...



Outdoor and Indoor Activities

The days will be rounded out with choral singing, games, swimming and freetime. We will also have a pond and the Green River to swim in, as well as evening bonfires and singing and the now famous Café Talent Night.

Cost: \$300

Registration

Please register online at: <http://ccyouth.homestead>.

OR

Contact the conference Director, Rev. Patrick Kennedy, directly at

Phone: 240-505-9960

Email: cckennedy2006@gmail.com



One Heart

Li-Young-Li

Look at the birds. Even flying
is born

out of nothing. The first sky
is inside you, friend, open

at either end of day.
The work of wings

was always freedom, fastening
one heart to every falling thing.



East Coast Children's Summer Camp

August 2-18, 2012



In the quiet of early morning, the counselors and staff silently gather around the tents and cabins of sleeping children. They begin to sing a song to the morning, to the awakening day, rousing the children from their slumber. The stillness is broken - a new day of summer camp has begun!

From a wholesome breakfast to the quiet of evening and a story shared by candlelight, the children are provided an abundance of creative activity. Each group's counselor strives to build a daily rhythm that will best serve the needs of the children. Artistic activities, such as plays and skits, painting, singing and storytelling are balanced with sports and games, swimming, boating and hiking. The children also put their imagination into their hands through various crafts. A quiet time after lunch adds a necessary touch to the pattern of the day.

Sundays are a special day, beginning with a short religious service in the morning, which all children attend. In the afternoon, campers and staff join together for a community festival such as Fair Day or the presentation of prepared plays or skits. With the Adventure Course and an evening bonfire camp draws to a close.

The joy and laughter, the challenge of learning and sharing together creates a community experience that is special and unique, and which lives on throughout the year in the hearts and memories of each adult and child.

East Coast Children's Summer Camp, August 2-18th. Camp Echo Trail, Felton PA 17322

Bring a NEW Camper and deduct \$150 from your payment. Be sure to call for details! Rev. Carol Kelly - 845.803.2071 Camp Co-Director, Rev. Marcus Knausenberger - 610.710.9294

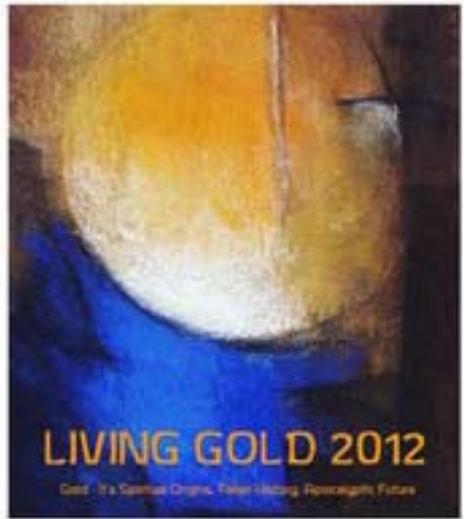
For more details and to download registration forms, go to www.ccsummerncamp.org. Registration deadline June 30.



Living Gold

2012 North South Conference of
The Christian Community
July 21 –29, 2012 on Vancouver
Island

The venue is a picturesque
boarding school – the Shawnigan
Lake School on Vancouver Island,
located halfway between Victoria
and Duncan; with room on
campus for 200+ people. As well
there are nearby campgrounds,
hotels and Bed and Breakfasts.



The theme will allow us to develop seven major aspects of the amazing
metal gold – stretching from its spiritual history origins in light to the
distant future of the transparent gold ground of the New Jerusalem.

While the main language will be English, we will also work in Spanish
and Portuguese as much as possible. The daily talks will be translated
so participants from North and South America can share the content.

There will be many choices for workshops at the conference. Each day
the Act of Consecration of Man (in different languages) and a Close of
Day Service, both with sermons, will be celebrated.

A concurrent Youth Conference and children's day camp will make this
a family-oriented experience.

Mark your calendars, make your plans and spread the word! The
conference opens for registration on the afternoon of Saturday, July
21, 2012 and ends after lunch on Sunday, July 29, 2012. Each day
begins with breakfast and The Act of Consecration of Man, followed by
a keynote lecture and break out discussion group by language. There
will be two workshops each day after lunch and a cultural event and
Close of Day service with address after dinner. The one exception will
be Wednesday afternoon, which has been left free to explore the local
surroundings.

For more information, visit www.livinggold2012.com.

To Register, contact

Karen Humber, Conference Coordinator

250.746.5090

LivingGold2012@gmail.com