



THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE USA

NEWS
FALL 2004

A NEW BEGINNING: A Message from the Regionary



The last few months have been trying. Our new movement, which we expected to be restricted to two or three Provinces, has received a worldwide response. It was the wish of our members to find a solution to the differences of opinion and form a harmonious relationship. Unfortunately, our wishes are now dreams. Conversations with several members of the General Episcopal Synod have indicated that a reunion would not be possible for a long time.

For reasons incomprehensible to me, some members of the American Clergy, including the Episcopate, are spreading unfounded accusations, creating a climate of intolerance unknown in Liberal Catholicism to date. Looking for reasons, and trying to correct the misinformation is useless. I deeply regret that dialogue which Bp. Leadbeater indicates is the only constructive way to resolve differences of opinions among Liberal Catholics is no longer possible. But the page is now turned, and our movement has taken a new direction. We should now devote our time to doing our work as members of the Liberal Catholic Church.

In order to cope with its fast expansion and its unexpected more or less permanent character, the bishops of our movement have seen the necessity to have a meeting of the General Episcopal Synod. The sessions were held in Natoye, Belgium, Aug. 4-Aug. 10, 2004. All the proposals submitted for consideration were addressed and the participants believe that this meeting has firmly planted the roots of the Liberal Catholic Church into the future.

At the end of the session, a "Common Declaration" by the participating bishops, summarizing the resolutions by this Synod, was read by Bp. Tom Degenaaers, our Presiding Bishop. This Declaration is published in this issue *in extenso* to provide to all our members a good idea of what was accomplished

What was remarkable, was the perfect harmony of the work sessions, and the unity of thought of the participants: the bishops, the assisting clergy, and the lay volunteers helping with the organization.

After reading the Common Declaration by the Bishops, you will realize how much work lies before us. Some of the structural changes in the government of our Church will require everyone's participation. We certainly will have to deal with serious issues as we travel in uncharted territory, as no Catholic Church thus far has attempted to share the government of its Church with its membership. But we will have the opportunity to build a more "people oriented" structure in our Church. Please feel free to send your opinions. I'll gladly include them in our news letter.

May Peace and Harmony remain among us.

+Maurice.

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GENERAL EPISCOPAL SYNOD OF THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Natoye, August 4-10, 2004

COMMON DECLARATION

presented by the Rt. Rev. Tom Degenars, Presiding Bishop

The members of the General Episcopal Synod of the Liberal Catholic Church, have met under the Presidency of the Rt. Rev. Tom Degenars, in Natoye, Belgium, from August 4 to August 10, 2004.

The Bishops have considered the proposals brought to their attention by various members of the Clergy and lay members and re-grouped into the following categories:

- AN EVENTUAL REUNIFICATION OF THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.
- THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR NEW GENERAL EPISCOPAL SYNOD.
- THE EXTENSION OF OUR NEW GENERAL EPISCOPAL SYNOD
- THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY ORDERS
- THE LITURGY
- THE ORGANIZATION OF OUR NEW MOVEMENT
- MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS.

The following is a brief summary of the resolutions taken and declarations made during the sessions:

As regards the reunification of the Liberal Catholic Church, this Synod considers that a full reunification with the Synod presided over by the Rt. Rev. Ian Hooker is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The Bishops have defined the conditions for such a reunion. (Question: What are the conditions? Can they be shared)

On the other hand, they consider that a Union of the Liberal Catholics, on the model of the Union of the Old-Catholic Churches of the Sea of Utrecht is possible and should be attempted.

As many decisions about the Constitution of the present Synod had been made informally so far, it has become necessary to confirm the nomination and assignments of the various Bishops. All previous nominations have been confirmed, and the composition of our General Episcopal Synod is now clearly defined.

Because of the small number of members of our General Episcopal Synod, it was decided that its extension was necessary to secure the survival of our line of Apostolic Succession.

Several Priests have been chosen to be elevated to the Episcopate. The names of these individuals cannot yet be made public, as some of the candidates have not yet been notified nor accepted the nomination. Furthermore, rules have been defined for the acceptance of other Liberal Catholic Bishops, Priests, and Congregation into our movement. (Q: What are these rules? Can they be shared?)

The general principles for the admission of candidates to the Sacrament of the Holy Orders have been defined. This Synod has decided that all the Holy Orders from Cleric to Bishop shall be open equally to candidates of both genders, and that there will be no difference in clothing, naming, admission, ordination or consecration, between female and male candidates.

Minor changes have been made to the Liturgy to introduce invocations to Our Lady at the Ordination at all the degrees of the Holy Orders, and to adjust the language of the ordination of candidates of both genders. An invocation to Our Lady has been added to the Healing Service. The 1983 edition of the English Liturgy has been adopted as the text of reference for translation of the Liturgy into other languages, except for the Shorter Form of the Holy Eucharist, which shall be taken from the 1967 edition, as some important elements have been deleted from the 1983 edition.

As regards the organization of our Movement, a few necessary changes have been made to the Constitution and the Code of Canons in simplifying certain definitions, the most important one being the definition of Canonical Obedience. Two irrelevant Canons have been deleted from the Code. The Synod hopes to establish in the Liberal Catholic Church a threefold structure of the government as follows:

(a) The General Episcopal Synod (GES) remaining for the time being the government of the Church.

(b) The General Clerical Synod (GCS) with the mission to present to the General Episcopal Synod for approval, a Constitution describing its purpose, objectives, competence, and membership. The General Episcopal Synod has asked the Rev. Parcival van Gessel to begin with the process of this formation. (Q: Is Parcival correct or should it be Percival?)

(c) The General Congress of the Members (GCM) a body representing all the members of the Church. The Rt. Rev. Maurice Warnon has been designated to initiate the process leading to the establishment of this body.

It is the intention of this Synod that once firmly established and organized, the GCS and the GCM shall be included in the normal process of the government of the Liberal Catholic Church. The Order of Deacon has seen its importance considerably increased: the Bishops recommend that Deacons, when Priests are not available, be

allowed to celebrate the Solemn Benediction and the Mass of the Presanctified as an alternative to the Holy Eucharist. Such celebrations must be authorized by the Ordinary Bishop. An attempt will be made to improve the communication between the members of our movement by the publication of an international magazine.

More detailed information about this meeting of the General Episcopal Synod will be released in due time by the Regional Bishops in their respective Provinces.

The members of the General Episcopal Synod agree that the various actions taken during this Synod will allow the development of our movement in the future and they consider that this meeting was very successful in that respect. They are very grateful for the loving and efficient assistance provided by all the volunteers who have made this successful Synod reunion possible.

A.M.D.G.

Natoye (Belgium), August 10, 2004

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TALKS TO CLERGY, by the Rt. Rev. James I. Wedgwood.

After his retirement as the first presiding bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, the Rt. Rev. James I. Wedgwood came to live on a property given to him, for the work of the Church, by Mrs. van Eeghen, one of the first members in the Netherlands. Bp. Wedgwood organized every summer a reunion of the European clergy, and these encounters were attended by practically all the European priests. The founder of our Church gave special instructions to these early workers, but unfortunately very few of his talks have been recorded. The following is a portion of a rarely published account of one of these sessions in August of 1928 at St. Michael's, Naarden N.H., The Netherlands. The complete set of these talks will soon be published by Albanus Press.

Realization of God

...We have gradually to sensitize to this reaction, and as we do this, God becomes less of a theological or intellectual idea, and more of a living reality; so that there comes a time when you can really say that you have a love for God — which I suppose very few in these days can say. Possibly the last generation, and our forefathers, could say this, but today there are few who have a definite feeling of love for God because we realize very little about Him. Today it is the fashion to think very little of the cosmic God outside us, but only to recognize Him as God in our fellow man — as, of course, He is in everybody — but it a mistake to forget that He exists outside us, as well as within all of us. It is as well to recognize that there is the God without and the God within, if we wish to make a balanced and orderly progress in the spiritual life.

The understanding of our liturgy depends rather on the degree to which we have realized all this. You remember that when the Christ was asked what was the greatest commandment, He replied, "First Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart

and with all thy strength." and then "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as Thyself." Of course, the modern Theosophist would put the second one first (he knows more about it than Christ did!); he thinks it is more important to love one's neighbour. But the point is that you cannot love him in the real sense until you have discovered the divinity within him. You can have all sorts of emotional impulses towards your neighbour, but your love for him really springs from this recognition of the divinity within him. It is the God in you responding to the God within him. That is the only real basis for love between people. We have plenty of emotional experience of love but before we attain to that; it comes and goes in great surges or waves, but the real love, which we call *buddhi*, does not come and go; it is like a great sun steadily shining, always glowing, without fluctuation. It does not come and go in surges like the emotional impulses. Therefore, if you examine the facts, you will see that the injunction of our Lord was quite right; that first you have to realize this great love for God, and then you will love your neighbour as yourself.

I think you need first to realize that before you can grasp all that is in the Liturgy. I think that if God is for you only an intellectual conception, you cannot make much out of the liturgy. When you say "Glory to God in the Highest," have you had any experience of the immense satisfaction of merging yourself in the larger consciousness of God, when the consciousness within you, imprisoned within you, reaches up and strives to unite with the consciousness of the God outside you? It is a natural thing that we should want to give praise and glory to God, to unite our consciousness with His, that the human consciousness should reach up in the endeavor to unite with the larger consciousness.

Then you turn your thought outward, and send out to men of goodwill (because only if you have goodwill can you be peaceful) as much as they will be able to receive, the benediction of peace.

"We bless Thee, we worship Thee" – we recognize the greatness of God in relation to ourselves. "We glorify Thee" – we allow the divine life in us to shine out to the greater life outside. "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory." – we lift up ourselves in recognition of that glory.

Those words stamp all this passage as reflecting the First Ray aspect; and you can put an enormous amount of power into these words if you think of their real meaning – the recognition of the kingship, the magnificence and the might of God. You can lift up the whole congregation into that source of power, the strength of God Himself. You can if you wish, work through the First Ray center of the church, raising not only yourself, but the whole congregation with you, into the omnipotence of God. You think of the divine life outside of us, which is so much greater than anything we have in our own consciousness. Now we will practice it.

You notice the difference when you say it with meaning as you have just done. Do you not get an impression as of a rain of power coming down on the top of the head? Do you not feel a hush of holiness in the church as the result of saying that? It is the response that comes from outside. You should go through the whole service in that way.

In the next paragraph you turn to the Second Aspect of the Logos: "O Lord Christ, alone-born of the Father." Those words were originally put in, I suppose, for some theological purpose. They mean that there is One Life, which is the Father's life. Then it gives a different aspect; you notice a change: "O Lord God Indwelling Light." Here your outlook is changed; you have been thinking of the life without, and here you think of the life and light which dwells within the human heart. You become a mystic for the moment, and think of "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." You think as strongly as you can of the divine life which has imprisoned itself in you.

"Son of the Father, Whose wisdom mightily and sweetly ordereth all things." There you have the Second Aspect. I always put myself into the ashram of the Master K.H. at this part, but if you do that you must always be careful not to go with a demand to the Master, with an idea of pulling Him down to you, of getting Him to do something for you. But you may take the wisdom aspect of yourself, unite that with the accumulation of wisdom in the church, and offer that to the Master. You should have the attitude of giving, the attitude of pouring forth our life and our wisdom as an offering to the Christ.

"Thou Whose strength upholdeth and sustaineth all creation ." Here you can think of the Master M., if you like, and send up a great blaze of strength from yourself and the congregation to Him for His service.

"Thou Whose beauty shineth through the whole universe, unveil Thy glory." You take the idea of beauty, you lift up your consciousness in the sense of splendor, and offer it with the prayer that the beauty and splendor of God may be revealed. I generally think of the Master R. when saying these words.

In the last paragraph we are addressing the Christ, as you usually do whenever at the end of passages you have ascriptions to the Holy Trinity. You wrap it up, as it were, send it up as an offering, gathered together as a tribute to the higher worlds before the Throne. All unselfish thought, every thought of feeling which is not colored by self-interest or selfishness, goes up into that spiritual reservoir which, we are told, exists for the helping of the world. Thus the unselfish thought sent up in Church worship flows into that reservoir and is thus used. Having lifted your consciousness and attained a kind of ecstasy, you finally merge your thought of the Second and Third into the First Aspect of the Trinity.

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NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Church of Saint Francis, Minneapolis, MN.

On June 27, Rev. Curney baptized Shawn Thorson and admitted him as a server at St. Francis.

On August 20, Rev. Curney officiated at the marriage of Jennelle Marie Jacobski and Louis Alonzo Vidal at the Grand Ballroom in Stillwater, MN.

On August 21, Rev. Curney officiated at the marriage of Leah Marie Schock and David Benjamin Kuypers at the Afton Apple Orchard.

On August 22, St. Francis hosted its quarterly vegetarian potluck; our next potluck will be on Thanksgiving Day.

On August 29, St. Francis held a special Memorial Eucharist for Mary Krusch, a long-time member of St. Francis, who had moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to live with relatives. She passed on in June at the age of 97. (Her husband, Deacon Walter Krusch, did the paintings behind the altar at St. Francis.)

David S. Cargo and Judie A. C. Cilcain

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Mission of St. Sophia, Stockholm, WI.

On September 3, I officiated at the marriage of Laurie Lintereur and John Elliott, who were married in their garden in Stockholm.

Work on the church proceeds at a slow pace, as I am working alone, but it is coming together. I have begun to build the altar which will be set into an arched opening. A friend who is interested in the church has offered a Winona limestone top for the altar, 26" wide and 7' long with finished edges. A recess for the altar stone will be cut into the top. Another local man just bought the church a lovely votive light set. It is truly amazing how this project has taken on a life of its own. We look forward to the visit of +Maurice in November when he will consecrate the church.

Rev. Wallace Zick.

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Church of Our Lady, Mother of the World, Rock Tavern, NY.

Longtime member of our Parish, D. Nieves, from Poughkeepsie has suffered two successive strokes during his vacation in Mexico in August. He is still in the hospital, but no longer in intensive care and the prospect of full recovery is very good. Our brother also suffers from diabetes, which makes the recovery longer and more difficult.

Our brothers Val Pfeiffer and Buck Lawrence have met several times over the summer to work on the renovation of our Chapel. The installation of the siding is practically complete..

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THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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