



INITIATIVE REPORT

CATHOLIC COMMON GROUND INITIATIVE

March 2011

The Challenge of Communion

On November 4-5, 2010 *The Catholic Common Ground Initiative* and *The Center for Global Catholicism* of DePaul University sponsored a two day conference entitled "The US Catholic Church: The Challenge of Communion." The purpose of the conference was to examine challenges in key areas of the life of the Church, naming points of difference and conflict, and lifting up opportunities for building communion.



Sr. Doris Gottemoeller, S.M., addressed "The Challenge of the Communion in the U.S. Church."

The first day of the program was held at the DePaul University Student Center with over 130 attending. After an opening prayer service, a welcome by DePaul President Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., and an explanation of a Common Ground dialogue process, the gathering heard keynote addresses on "The Challenge to Communion" by Sister Doris Gottemoeller, R.S.M., and

Professor William T. Cavanaugh. Participants had the opportunity to participate in two of ten break-out sessions that explored more specific opportunities for building ecclesial communion. These break-out sessions focused on significant contemporary Church issues such as liturgy, Catholic identity, racism, cultural integrity, and young adults. After hearing from two speakers with varied perspectives on the issue, those attending engaged in dialogue on the topic, focusing specifically on the challenges

presented for ecclesial communion. The day concluded with Sister Doris and Professor Cavanaugh reflecting on what they had heard over the course of the day.



Dr. William Cavanaugh spoke to "Living Together in the Body of Christ: Some Approaches to the Challenge of Communion"

The second day of the program was held at Catholic Theological Union. After a welcome by CTU President Father Donald Senior, C.P., reports were given on the challenges to communion in the Church from the previous day's break-out sessions. Participants then broke into small groups and deepened the conversation and dialogue by offering perspectives on opportunities for building com-

munion in the Church on each of these issues. Of particular interest were some of the opportunities identified for building intergenerational ecclesial communion. Participants noted that young adults have already begun to accomplish the bridge building that currently presents such a challenge. Many of them have unique gifts and talents to offer the Church if they are brought in and allowed to exercise those gifts and talents. Ecclesial communities must embrace the challenge and mission of inviting and allowing every voice within the community to have a place at the table. We must affirm and recognize one another in our celebrations and interactions. These are two examples of many ideas that were generated from the day's dialogue. The program concluded with CCGI committee member Father Michael Place synthesizing the day's discussions.

Keynote Addresses from Challenge of Communion Conference

In her keynote address, CCGI Committee member and Catholic Health Partners' Senior Vice President for Mission and Values Integration, Sister of Mercy Doris Gottemoeller sought to "make a connection between the Catholic Common Ground Initiative and communion in the Church and then addressed three questions which deal with challenges to that communion." Though at its inception CCGI "did not explicitly link our Initiative to the theology of communion which had been identified as a unifying theme of the Second Vatican Council" Sister Doris proposed that CCGI "resonates with and draws inspiration from the theology of communion."

In this context Sister Doris then framed the contemporary challenges to communion in the form of three interrelated questions: Does change in the Church weaken communion? Who speaks for the church? Where do we find holiness today? In the context of the pursuit of holiness Sister Doris concluded that "Loving one's neighbor, especially one's neighbor in the family of faith, even if one disagrees with him or her on some issues of consequence, is an expression of God's love present within the community."

DePaul University Professor William Cavanaugh gave the second keynote address. He began with general remarks to "help orient the more specific discussions" of the conference. Then "in that light, I will first make some comments about dialogue and diversity in the church, and then make some theological observations about how diversity and unity are enacted in participation in Jesus Christ, the concrete universal."

Professor Cavanaugh noted that "in the Catholic tradition obedience is an act of the intelligence, not an act of sheer will." "Obedience is an act of learning, a drawing nearer to the truth." And this learning process "is not an instantaneous submission of will, but a careful listening and discerning, a pursuit of the long-range goal of consensus, not the short-range goal of order. Communion is not the distant end of this process: it is the process itself, the sharing of different minds and lives and visions in the Body of Christ whose soul is the Holy Spirit."

In this context the lecturer then considered how the popular Catholicism that has come to the U.S from Latin America "comes from a quite different experience of Church than that of European Catholicism" and "can serve as an example of a possible third way forward" (as distinguished from the conservative/liberal polarity). Professor Cavanaugh concluded by noting that "the Eucharist is where all our battles and attempts to discern the right way forward are taken up into the larger cosmic and comic reality of the Body of Christ."

Both keynote addresses can be found on the CCGI website at www.catholiccommonground.org.

Save the Date!

2011 Murnion Lecture – Building Communion Across Generations: The Challenge and Promise of Intergenerational Dialogue

Keynote by Sr. Patricia Wittberg, S.C.

Sister Patricia Wittberg, S.C., is a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati, Ohio. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago, and is currently Professor of Sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. She is the author of four books and numerous articles on Catholic religious orders.

Presentation of the Annual Bernardin Award: Rev. J. Bryan Hehir
Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice in Religion and Public Life, Kennedy School, Harvard University and Secretary for Health and Social Services, Archdiocese of Boston

June 10, 2011, 7 p.m.

Catholic Theological Union
5416 S. Cornell Ave
Chicago, IL 60615

For more information and to RSVP by June 1:
bernardincenter@ctu.edu or 773-371-5432

Enhanced Website

We are pleased to announce that CCGI has an updated website. Dialogue resources, archives of past lectures and information on current initiatives, conferences, and lectures can be found at www.catholiccommonground.org.

Finding Common Ground Between Generations

“The kind of cross generational conversation that builds up the communion of the church must meet emerging adults in the context in which they actually reside, must offer them the precious tools of the tradition which can help them navigate that terrain, and must see within them the beauty that God sees...and it must be conversation.”

*Claire Noonan, D.Min.,
speaker on young adults in the Church from the
Challenge of Communion Conference*

2011 Murnion Lecture-Communion across Cultures: The Challenge and Promise of Generational Dialogue

As previously reported, one of CCGI's strategic priorities is involving young people in the life of the Church and the Initiative. To that end CCGI will focus on this topic and the correlative issue of fostering intergenerational dialogue in order to enhance ecclesial communion. This effort will be kicked off by the 2011 Murnion Lecture which will be given by noted sociologist Sister Patricia Wittberg, S.C., who teaches at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. Sister Patricia will speak to how successive generations dwell in very different psychological and cultural worlds. Each generation draws on a different set of memories, even when experiencing the same event. As a result,



Sister Patricia Wittberg, S.C.

the meanings and emotions they attach to cultural symbols and values also differ. Recent decades have witnessed this phenomenon within the Church as well, which hinders true dialogue between various age cohorts. She will summarize current sociological research on Catholic generations in order to catalyze a discussion of the implications of generational differences for the future of the Church. After the Lecture an intergenerational audience will dialogue about building ecclesial communion between generations.

Welcome to Our New Advisory Board Members!

Kevin Ahern is a doctoral candidate in theological ethics at Boston College. He has been active among Catholic organizations working at the United Nations and has worked in helping to empower national student associations in over 80 countries representing them to different Vatican and UN Forums. Most recently he served as a member of the planning committee of the Forum of Catholic NGOs, a Vatican supported network which seeks to facilitate “dialogue and communion” among the leadership of the more than 100 diverse Catholic organizations that work with the United Nations and between them and the Holy See.

Dr. Kathleen Dolphin, P.B.V.M., is the Director of the Center for Spirituality at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN and teaches in the Religious Studies Department. Her area of research is the integration of theology and spirituality. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago Divinity School and also holds three master's degrees. She has lectured both locally, nationally, and internationally on various topics related to theology, spirituality, ethics, and ecclesiological issues.

Rev. Ron Lewinski is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago and pastor of St. Mary of the Annunciation Parish in Mundelein, IL. He serves as an Archdiocesan Dean and President of Frassati Catholic Academy, the first Archdiocesan Catholic Middle School. He is a frequent speaker on liturgy and pastoral life across North America, Australia, Germany, South Africa, and SE Asia.

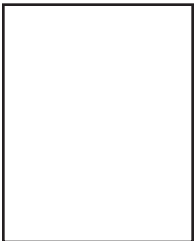
Most Rev. Gabino Zavala is an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. A native of Guerrero, Mexico, Bishop Zavala grew up in Los Angeles and attended St. John's Seminary. He was ordained a priest in 1977 by Cardinal Timothy Manning and was assigned to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in East Los Angeles. After graduating from Catholic University of America with a degree in Canon Law, he worked in the Tribunal and was named rector of St. John's Seminary in 1992. Two years later, Cardinal Mahony ordained him as Auxiliary Bishop for the San Gabriel Region.

An Evening of Appreciation in New York City

On October 28, 2010, CCGI hosted a reception at St. Francis Church in downtown New York City. We were joined by 35 CCGI friends including family members of Monsignor Phil Murnion. The reception was an opportunity for CCGI to express its gratitude to the National Pastoral Life Center and Monsignor Murnion for their tireless efforts in making CCGI possible. After a description of current and future CCGI activities, those attending expressed their hopes for the future of the Initiative. It was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our New York area friendships. Plans are underway for similar gatherings in Boston, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.



St. Francis of Assisi Church, New York



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