

The Third Gathering of Intentional Eucharistic Communities (IECs)

May 15-17, 2009 at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, MD

Below are the details for this extraordinary event. Web link is intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org

Theme: **“Embracing and Shaping Our Future.”**

Format: Major presentations with responders, small group dialogue sessions, and informal settings.

Keynote: Robert McClory, author of the award-winning book, *As It Was in the Beginning*, in which he heralds **“the coming democratization of the Catholic Church”**

- Makes the connection between the historic form of the Christian community during the first millennium and today's IEC movement.
- Uses key findings from his book, his interviews and discussions with the Dutch Theologians, in particular Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, to examine their thesis that it is time to return the Church to the people (see *NCR* December 14, 2007),
- Explores the implications for the future of IECs.

Responders: Paul Philibert, a distinguished Dominican Theologian in his own right (*The Priesthood of the Faithful*), and

Christine Vladimiroff, Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA, and Call to Action Leadership Award winner in 2002,

- Respond with their insights into the depth and boldness of the writings of Schillebeeckx, whose work grounds this session.
- The three speakers draw from Schillebeeckx' work "the value, indeed, the necessity of 'illegality' in times of change and the need for optimism and courage" as we shape our future.

General Sessions on Saturday examine key facets of IEC life:

- “Religion and Spirituality among IEC members”
- “Women in Ministry”
- “Social Justice at local, national and international levels”

“Religion and Spirituality among IEC members” reports the results of the survey on that topic filled out by some 700 members of IECs from all parts of the country.

- Victoria MacDonald of the Fremont Community shares with us her own experiences of spirituality with the variety of IECs she has met along the way.
- Ted Keating, a Marist priest, who originated the idea for the survey, and is a frequent presider at IECs in the DC area, focuses on the prophetic nature of the spirituality of IECs and how the spirituality of IECs is impacting the institutional Church.
- Michele Dillon, a sociologist, whose recent writings have examined the roles of religion and spirituality in the course of a lifetime, discusses how the religion-spirituality distinction is reflected in IECs. She uses the survey results to show the institution-religion-spirituality distinction characteristic of Catholicism, especially American Catholics.

“Women in Ministry”

- Francine Cardman, feminist theologian at Boston College, distinguished scholar of the role of women in the Church ("Non Conclusive Arguments: Therefore, Non-Conclusion?");

- Paul Surlis, Professor of Theology at St. John's University, has written extensively on the work of the Dutch Dominican Theologians, will address the Question "Women Priests: Why Not?"
- Zeni Fox, Professor of Pastoral Theology at Seton Hall University ("Lay People in an Evolving Ministry" (*Church*),
- Explore roles that women have historically and traditionally performed in the Church and are presently achieving
- Express a vision that we can embrace and implement as we move forward
- View the issues of Women in Ministry from both scriptural and theological perspectives, as well as from the perspective of the Christian experience in contemporary society.

“Social Justice at local, national and international levels”

- Jean Sammon, the voice of Catholic NETWORK informing us of the legislation before Congress and urging our active support for social justice
- Joe Nangle, OFM, known for his many years working for justice in Latin America, and who has presided at IEC liturgies throughout the DC area (*Engaged Spirituality: Faith Life in the Heart of the Empire*)
- Bill Callahan, co-founder of the Quixote Center, whose voice for social justice has been heard throughout the U.S. and Central America. (*Noisy Contemplation*)
- Address a range of questions:
 - How do we as a community practice or even try to address social justice issues that may range from such internal matters as use of inclusive language, choice of music, women as Eucharistic ministers, to volunteering in soup kitchens, to larger Church issues as women priests, married priests, and governance.
 - Then there are the larger local and national issues involving politics and social legislation. Is it possible for IECs to address political, legislative issues at local and national levels?
 - Can IECs develop a community social conscience that enables them to act collectively, as well as, or instead of just individually? What are the limits to community? How does or can the community deal with the trials and tribulations that are likely to emerge when important social issues are brought up for community consideration? Or should they be?

Closing Session on Sunday Morning will bring us “back to the future” of IECs.

- **“Young Catholics and the Future of IECs.”** Ray Kemp, a long time priest supporter of the IEC movement, is bringing together a group of young Catholics to address this challenge.
- The dialogue includes the kinds of formative experiences IECs do or do not provide young people
- The kind of experiences young people have when they leave an IEC and encounter the larger parish church, and whether there is an identifiable and adequate network of IECs available to accommodate young Catholics.
- Three central questions will frame the dialogue: What do young people believe? From where do they get a sense of belonging? And what does it mean to them to serve?

Dialogue Sessions: We expect to have as many as 36 dialogue sessions.

- Speakers/moderators and other voices in small group settings
- To allow you to explore the ideas and issues raised in the general sessions
- To provide ample opportunities for faith sharing and the exploration of issues and ideas we may have overlooked.

Closing Liturgy and Sending Forth: The Gathering will close with a liturgy presided over by Ray Kemp, with the assistance of all who will be joining us from across the country. A closing luncheon meal will send us back to our local communities "with the audacity of hope" and the reality of renewed faith in the future of Intentional Eucharistic Communities.

Now as we approach the end of the first decade of the 21st century, we see this Gathering as a way to grow and expand a new way of being church.

www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org