

nova notes

NOVA Catholic Community

September 2010

Chair Notes...

Looking back at August

Four of our “padres” shared their prayerful perspectives at our Masses during August: Fathers Jim Corriden, John Haughey, Joe Nangle and Quinn Conners. They helped us to understand God’s movement in our lives in new ways. On the one Sunday for which none of our padres was available, Marie Keefe planned and led a community liturgy in which the simple remembering of Jesus’s actions then and now gave us strength for our coming week. I thought that the highlight of our August liturgies was the baptism of Isabella Makayla Iskander. Of course there is nothing more beautiful than a baby being baptized, but I loved seeing the crowd of people in Isabella’s family who came to celebrate her baptism as a follower of Christ. We are happy that Isabella came to us, the NOVA Catholic Community, and that by the grace of God we were there to welcome her.

Major Social Action Project Meeting

On Sunday, September 12, 6:00 p.m. at the home of Meg Tucillo, we will have a General Meeting at which we will decide which of the five major project proposals NOVA will support in the coming year. This is a watershed moment in NOVA’s history because for the first time, at least in my memory, NOVA will commit to a large project that will require help from most of our members if it is going to be successful. As we know most of our members are already working on a long list of social action projects, and some of these are large and long-lived endeavors. But this project will be different from those others because it will become a

call for commitment of everyone in NOVA. It will shape the character of NOVA from now on and become one of the most important ways in which we express ourselves as a community. This is a meeting that everyone should attend. Any project that we choose will require everyone’s support in order to be a success. So read the proposals and come ready to choose, and most of all, be ready to support the community’s choice.

Labor Day Picnic after Mass

On Sunday, September 5, we are going to have a Labor Day picnic after the liturgy. Bring something to eat and drink – and make it good. The adventurous may want to cook something at the park. Whatever you bring or cook, make sure it’s yummy.

September NOVA Retreat

NOVA’s annual retreat will take place from Friday evening, September 17, to Sunday afternoon, September 19, at the Shrine Mont Retreat Center. The retreat committee has a great weekend planned. Pay your registration to Kopp. If cost is a problem, let us know and we’ll make it easy for you.

~Tom Clarkson, Co-Chair



September Birthdays

NOVA Message Line	(703) 852-7907
Chairpersons	Tom Clarkson Teddi Ahrens
Treasurer	Joe Formoso
Coordinator, Community Life	Cece Michelotti
Liturgy Coordinator	Jeanne Clarkson
Padre Cadre Coordinator	John Mooney
Music Coordinator	Victoria Robinson
Peace and Justice Coordinators	Dianne Carroll Marie Keefe
Christ House Coordinator	Kopp Michelotti
Facilities	Glen Passin
Newsletter Editor	Judy Christofferson

- 8 Barbara Formoso
Cathy Showalter
- 9 Gloria Mog
- 13 Adam Clarkson
Hetty Irmer
- 14 Christopher Iskander
- 18 John Michie
- 23 Bob Michie
- 25 Nico Mele
- 27 Daniel Cackley
- 29 Ted Miller

Please send Judy Christofferson your birthday if you would like it to appear here (month/day only).

NOVA is praying for. . .

Peggy Becker, who is recovering from surgery

Eve Birch, who is looking for a home to provide temporary housing for the homeless

Sonja Donahue, who appreciates a card, a call or a visit.

Jody Furlong, who would also appreciate a phone call or note.

Kopp Michelotti, who is recovering from surgery.

John Veldhuis, who will undergo bypass surgery in the near future.

Remember these and any other NOVA members and their friends and family who need our prayers.

The NOVA Catholic Community invites you to celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy with us every Sunday in Arlington, Virginia.

Note: Our Liturgy is usually celebrated at Kenmore Middle School, Arlington Blvd. and Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington, VA. Beginning Memorial Day weekend up to our Fall Retreat weekend in September, we celebrate at Lacey Woods Park, George Mason Drive near Washington Blvd., unless otherwise noted.

Liturgies at Kenmore begin at 10:15 a.m.
Gather at 10:00 a.m.
Liturgies at Lacey Woods begin at 9:30 a.m.
Gather at 9:15 am

Call the Message Line (above) or check the NOVA website for the latest information.

**October Newsletter Deadline:
Friday, September 17**

Liturgies: Cycle C

Inclusive Readings and Music Selections are available in the new NOVA Yahoo Group Files. Please give all music selections to the Music Liaison the Sunday before your liturgy and print 65 copies of the liturgy program. Liturgies at Kenmore begin at 10:15 a.m. and at 9:30 at Lacey Woods Park.

September Music Liaison Tim White

Sept. 5 - 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

John Haughey, SJ - Rosemarie Annunziata
Wisdom 9: 13-18
Psalm 90: 3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14-17
Philemon 9-10, 12-17
Luke 14: 25-33

Note: Potluck following the liturgy.

Sept. 12 - 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Daniel Madigan, SJ - Joe Annunziata
Exodus 32: 7-11, 13-14
Psalm 51: 3-4, 12-13, 17, 19
1 Timothy 1: 12-17
Luke 15: 1-32 or 15: 1-10

Sept. 19 - 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Daniel Madigan, SJ- NOVA RETREAT
Amos 8: 4-7
Psalm 113: 1-2, 4-6, 7-8
1 Timothy 2: 1-8
Luke 16: 1-13, or 16: 10-13

Sept. 26 - 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Ray Kemp, SJ- Mike and Gen Timpane
Amos 6: 1, 4-7
Psalm 146: 7, 8-9, 9-10
1 Timothy 6: 11-16
Luke 16: 19-31

Reminders:

***The liturgy on September 19 will be held at Shrine Mont. There will be no liturgy at Lacey Woods.**

****On September 26, the liturgy returns to Kenmore School and will begin at 10:15 a.m.**

October Music Liaison Gloria Mog

October 3 - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

TBA- Kate Doherty
Habakkuk 1: 2-3, 2: 2-4
Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-7, 8-9
2 Timothy 1: 6-8, 13-14
Luke 17: 5-10

October 10 - 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Joe Kenna - Eric Carroll
2 Kings 5: 14-17
Psalm 98: 1, 2-3, 3-4
2 Timothy 2: 8-13
Luke 17: 11-19

October 17 - 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dan Madigan, SJ - Clyde and Judy Christofferson
Exodus 17: 8-13
Psalm 121: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
2 Timothy 3: 14- 4: 2
Luke 18: 1-8

October 24 - 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Aiden Shea, OSB - Peggy Meyer
Sirach 35: 12-14, 16-18
Psalm 34: 2-3, 17-19, 23
2 Timothy 4: 6-8, 16-18
Luke 18: 9-14

October 31 - 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Quinn Conners, O.Carm - Emma Violand-Sanchez
Wisdom 11: 22- 12: 2
Psalm 145: 1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 12, 14
2 Thessalonians 1: 11-2:2
Luke 19: 1-10

"We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace."

~William Gladstone

Gunston Volunteers Needed

Nova volunteers distribute bags of non-perishable food, cereal provided by Nova, and perishable items such as eggs, milk, and meat that are picked up at the Arlington Food Assistance Center warehouse on the night of distribution. Produce items are picked up every other week by Eric Carroll at the produce markets downtown (and funded by the Nova Peace and Justice budget). The distribution takes place at the Gunston Middle School Recreation Center in Arlington. Many volunteers have been active in this project for a lot of years. Every Thursday there is already a seasoned volunteer, so this is your chance to try out your skills. Having someone who speaks Spanish is a real plus for each of the teams. **Please help.** If you are interested in being a volunteer, email Dianne Carroll.

September Gunston Schedule:

Sept 2: Michael and Joe Kane, James Hainer

Sept 9: Tim, Jerry, and Eric

Sept 16: Mike Timpane and Don or Ann A.

Sept 23: Volunteers needed

Sept 30: Glen, Syd

Interfaith Unity Walk

On **Sunday, September 12 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**, the Sixth Annual Unity Walk welcomes all people to **“Building Peace by Serving Each Other.”** Building on last year’s focus on service, the Unity Walk continues to empower diverse individuals to come together for dialogue and volunteer opportunities. Participants are invited to visit a variety of religious congregations for open houses and celebration located along Washington, DC’s picturesque Embassy Row.

The program will start at the Sikh Temple (3801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW). Next, participants will have time to visit open houses in the surrounding area before making their way to the Islamic Center where they can learn even more

about community service projects. After a brief presentation, Unity Walk participants will proceed down to the Gandhi Memorial near Dupont Circle where the program will conclude. For more information about the program, see the website: www.911unitywalk.org.

Bread for the World Speaker

Our speaker from Bread for the World, Marco Grimaldo, had to postpone his talk because he was sick on August 1. The talk and postcard-writing have been rescheduled to September 12, following the liturgy. Please stay to hear his brief presentation. ~Peggy Meyer

Learn How to Work for Social Change

On Saturday, October 23, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., Coleman McCarthy will speak at the Saint Mark Catholic Church, Msgr. Thomas J. Cassidy Activities Center, 9970 Vale Road, Vienna, VA 22181

Mr. McCarthy, a highly respected peace activist and teacher of peace, will talk about how we can be empowered and work more effectively for social change by embracing the skills that he teaches at the Center for Teaching Peace, where he serves as the director. He will share his insights relative to developing the competencies needed to become more effective advocates for the most vulnerable.

The goal is not only to make legislators and the public more aware of the most vulnerable in our society and the structural injustices that keep them from having a place at the table, but also to advocate more effectively for social justice via peaceful social change. **Please plan to attend.**

~ John Horesji, Social Action Linking Together

AFAC Social Action Opportunities

A Call to Action!

Hunger Action Month, September 2010

September is Hunger Action Month and an opportunity for all of us to focus on the problem of hunger in our community.

The Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) addresses the problem of hunger year-round by providing groceries to Arlington residents who do not have enough food for their families. We welcome individuals, couples, families, companies, congregations, schools—anyone can choose an action item(s) and do something about hunger in Arlington in September.

Hunger Action Month Kick Off Event, Thurs., Sept. 2!

Busboys and Poets, Shirlington, in the new Robeson Room
Band, poetry & info on how you can help
fight hunger in our community.
Admission: \$10 and a non-perishable item.

COLLECT! Be the person in your office, school, church, neighborhood, to organize a food drive for AFAC during September. (Contact: Magda.Jaskot@afac.org)

PICK! AFAC goes gleaning every weekend to farms that let us harvest and provide fresh produce for our clients. And it's great exercise, too! The Sept. dates are Sept. 11, 18 & 25. (Contact: Puwen.Lee@afac.org)

WALK! Organize your friends now or join AFAC's team for the National Crop Walk on October 16 in Arlington. AFAC receives 1/4 of the proceeds, the rest goes to hunger efforts throughout the country and worldwide. All AFAC team members (our goal is 100 walkers!) will receive an AFAC T-shirt. (Contact: volunteer4afac@afac.org)

EAT! The following ARLINGTON restaurants will donate a part of their proceeds to AFAC on these Tuesdays in September: Restaurant 3, Sept. 14; Whitlows, Sept. 21; PieTanza, Sept. 28. Check the website for details.

For updates, keep checking "Hunger Action Month" on AFAC's website www.afac.org.



AFAC Quick Facts

Mission

AFAC's mission is to obtain and distribute groceries directly and free of charge to people living in Arlington who cannot afford to purchase enough food to meet their basic needs.

Operation Facts

- * In a recent, average week 1,234 families came to AFAC for supplemental groceries.
- * In FY '10 AFAC distributed over 2.45 million pounds of food—bread, meats, produce, canned goods, milk, eggs, baked goods, and cereal—directly to Arlington families.
- * Over 60% of the food AFAC distributes is donated.
- * We are committed to distributing the most nutritious food possible.
- * AFAC's overhead rate in FY'10 was 8.4%.
- * Our cash budget for FY '11 is \$1.7 million.

Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC)
2708 S. Nelson St., Arlington, VA 22206
703-845-8486 • www.afac.org
United Way #8354; CFC #19265

Upcoming Events: Save the Dates

NOVA General Meeting

Date: Sunday, September 12

Time: 6:00 p.m. (desserts)

6:30 p.m. – Meeting Begins

Location: Home of Meg Tuccillo

**Please bring a dessert to share.
See further details about this meeting below.**

General Meeting Overview

Background: Over the last few years, NOVA members have expressed a desire to explore how we might intensify the impact of our peace and social justice efforts. This is in *addition* to:

- 1) NOVA's commitment to respond to pressing needs as they arise, something we deeply value.
- 2) The 32 currently funded projects.

NOVA members submitted five proposals designed to bring about a *targeted impact* where our funds and efforts might make a big difference. They are strictly a one-year commitment. They are available at <http://novacommunity.wikispaces.com> and in the August Newsletter. For 3 months they have been open to clarification questions from the writers.

Meeting Preparation:

- 1) Please read all five project proposals before the meeting.
- 2) If there is anything in any project proposal that is not clear, please submit clarification questions to mlkeefe@verizon.net by September 4 so we can pass that information on to the whole community before the meeting.
- 3) Come prepared to choose *one* project.

Meeting Purpose:

This is a decision-making meeting. The proposal writers have brought us five very specific needs that are not being met by any other group and that are of

a year's duration. Our resources will go directly to meet these needs.

By the end of this meeting we will commit to: (1) selecting a project and (2) discussing a strategy for finding resources for it.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting. The annual Peace and Social Justice (PSJ) meeting to review and fund all our social justice work will take place as usual in January. ~ *PSJ Committee:* Joe Annunziata, Dianne and Eric Carroll, Cece and Michelotti, Marie Keefe, Cathy Showalter, Meg Tuccillo, John Veldhuis, and Tim White.

Retreat Reservation Deadline

If you are planning to attend NOVA's annual retreat, September 17-19, ***you must reserve your room with Kopp Michelotti by September 12.*** Kopp needs to notify Shrine Mont of the number of rooms by that date. You can e-mail or call Kopp to register.

For further information about the retreat (program, directions to Shrine Mont, etc.), refer to the August newsletter.

Franciscan Missionary Service: 20th Anniversary Celebration

Date/Time: Saturday, October 23, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Trinity College Center, 125 Michigan Avenue Northeast, Washington, DC 20017

This event will include a silent auction, live band, and a social hour with wine and hors d'oeuvres. The keynote speaker will be Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province. He is widely known for his spiritual writing and lecturing. He currently serves as the Director of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque. For further details, go to the website: www.franciscanmissionservice.org.

Note: NOVA has reserved two tables (8 persons per table). **Please register with Marie Pinho if you plan to attend.**

Additional Upcoming Events

Communities of Faith United for Housing

Communities of Faith United for Housing (CFUH) will hold its Annual Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 26, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF). UUCF's address is 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Directions to the church can be found on their web site: <http://www.uucf.org/>

CFUH is an award-winning advocacy network of faith communities in the Fairfax/Falls Church community who are committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing within our community with a special focus on providing permanent housing opportunities for those at the lowest levels of income who are either homeless or dangerously close to becoming homeless. Please join us to for an update on our efforts and to hear from our guest speakers, **Henry G. Brinton**, Senior Pastor of Fairfax Presbyterian Church and a regular contributor to *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* and **Pat Harrison**, Fairfax County deputy county executive for human service programs and agencies.

Come "*Open your mouth in behalf of the (mute), and for the rights of the destitute; open your mouth, decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor.*" (Proverbs 31: 8-9). For more information, contact Gerry Williams, cfuhchair@cfuhfx.org, or 703-620-4456.



Chris and Meg at August 22 liturgy

Reminder: Listening Session

DATE: Saturday, October 9, 2010
TIME: Refreshments 12:30 p.m.; program will start promptly at 1:00 and end at 5:00 p.m.
LOCATION: St. Luke's Orthodox Church, McLean, VA (in the usual meeting place of the PAX Community)

This "listening session" is being planned by a team including members from NOVA and PAX. The session reflects a sense of urgency given the signs of the times, and a shared responsibility to further the reforms of Vatican II. NOVA members are encouraged to attend. PAX has committed to thirty people, and NOVA to at least twenty.

The session is designed to elicit dialogue, in a small group format, about the kind of Catholic Church we desire and envision in the future. What kind of a Catholic Church do we wish to pass on to our children and grandchildren? How might the future of the Catholic Church here in the United States be shaped by the cultural context of our unique experience as Americans? Responses to the October 9th dialogue (and many others like it across the country) will feed the agenda for a lay "council" in Detroit, June 10-12, 2011, being organized by the American Catholic Council (ACC) as an expression of the "sensus fidelium." The Detroit conference will feature Joan Chittister and Hans Kung, among others.

Note: For further information about the ACC meeting in Detroit next June, or to register, go to their website: www.americancatholiccouncil.org.

Thank You Letter

Ramadan Basket Project



I want to thank you, Dianne, and Marie and Eric and the Nova Community for your love and dedication to help the Muslim Women's Coalition help others in our community. Ramadan Basket is just such a project that helps us tell others that Muslims also care. In fact there are many of our members who emphasize that we need to include every one in this project and we try to aim at that with your help. I hope we will continue to grow in this relationship and I look forward to meeting the members of Nova community in the near future. Thanks for everything!



Warm regards,

Uzma Farooq

Muslim Women's Coalition
For the Greater Washington DC Area.



If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

1 John 3:17-18

Song in Memory of Bill Callahan

“The Ballad of Red-Head Bill”

Victoria Robinson sat with Bill Callahan on July 1 – the Thursday before he died – and noticed the red in his beard. She heard his whispered “Yes” when she asked if he’d been a redhead as a younger man. She semi-jokingly promised him a song called “Redhead Bill.” This is it. Rest in peace, Bill. ~ Victoria (7/18/10)

♪Refrain: Redhead Bill was a man of the people,
Redhead Bill fought for justice and peace.
He never would walk if he knew he could run,
And he searched his whole life for the laughter and fun.

Verse 1:

He came from the South Shore of Boston’s fair city,
He rode with the Jesuits ‘til they told him goodbye.
He challenged our Church, without any pity,
To seek out Christ’s wisdom and stop all the lies.

REFRAIN

Verse 2:

Women-Priests and the poor were among his amigos,
He crossed many borders, even talked with his foes.
He showed us a path of charisma and courage:
Redhead Bill was Quixote himself. REFRAIN

Verse 3:

He changed our minds through the power of pronouns,
And words of equality, hope and belief.
For a man who could lobby just like a jack-hammer,
A moment of silence he also could seize. REFRAIN

Verse 4:

In the backyard in Brentwood, he planted his garden,
Squash and zucchini for neighbors and friends.
The seeds of his wisdom, they’ve traveled much further,
Nicaragua and Haiti and Capitol Hill. REFRAIN

Verse 5:

Show tunes and kids’ songs he sang out with gusto,
His “merry God” brought him joy and delight!
Some called him a saint; some just called him a nuisance,
He will live on in our hearts and our deeds. REFRAIN ♪



John with copies of Bill’s book,
Noisy Contemplation

August Photos

We continue to celebrate our many blessings . . .



Theology for a Small Planet

A collection of essays by Clyde Christofferson © 2009-2010

Prior Essays

Part 2: From Kindness to Social Justice

D. Social Justice and the Institutional Church

Catholic social teaching is often referred to as “the Church’s best kept secret.” A Google of this phrase coupled with the words “Catholic,” “social” and “justice” produces over seven hundred hits. When Pope Leo XIII called for reform of the traditional social structures of labor in *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, he was fulfilling not only a promise but also breaking new ground.

The promise of justice is ancient, but theologians rely on a slightly more recent formulation by Thomas Aquinas. Ken Himes, in a series of talks on Catholic Social Teaching at St. Mary’s Church in Fairfax in 1999, showed how changes in understanding have affected our views of social justice. He first described *Rerum Novarum* as an effort to address two excesses and to walk a path between them. On the one hand, *laissez faire* capitalism carried freedom to excess. On the other socialism in its pursuit of equality was Godless and denied a right moral order, leading to class warfare. The preeminent value is human dignity, not freedom (as envisioned by capitalism) or equality (as envisioned by socialism). Leo XIII emphasized the importance of social charity as a response to the excesses of capitalism and socialism.

Ken then returned to Thomas Aquinas for a framework for understanding the term “social justice.” Aquinas defined three aspects of justice. First, justice should be blind as between individuals. That is to say, relationships (primarily in the nature of contracts) should be *commutative*. Second, principles of justice applied to the relationship between the individual and the group: the individual should obey just laws, and had a duty to contribute to the group through work. Ken called this *legal* justice. Third, there is the concept of *distributive* justice, which refers to the duties of the group toward the individual: a fair sharing of both the benefits and burdens of life in community. This requires an assessment of the needs that each individual has a right to have met, and imposes upon the state the duty to satisfy a certain set of basic needs before allowing the marketplace to operate to satisfy needs beyond this basic set. This produces a “relative equality” but demonstrates that justice trumps market freedom.

But something was missing in the latter half of the 19th century. Justice in practice did not measure up to the Thomistic framework. This is why Leo XIII had to break new ground. By 1891 the social sciences had demonstrated that much of what we had heretofore accepted as being beyond our control was indeed subject to deliberate efforts to change, so that injustices could be corrected. The institutions of society are not the work of God or of nature, but are the work of human beings, and can be changed by human beings.

Thus the concept of “social justice” is an addition to the three forms of justice articulated by Thomas Aquinas. We need to create new institutions of society so that *commutative*, *legal* and *distributive* justice in fact come to pass. The state has a positive role in this formulation, to regulate society toward the common good.

But is not the Church an institution of society, and should not Catholics examine and reform this institution? This is not what Leo XIII had in mind in *Rerum Novarum*. John XXIII talked about opening the Church to fresh winds, and Vatican II took steps in that direction. In recent decades a more conservative view has become ascendant in the Vatican, and it is not clear how this struggle will turn out.

But what, then, of Catholic social teaching? Is the institutional Church an exception? There are some who would argue, yes, the Church is an exception because it is guided by the Holy Spirit. Surely, the Body of Christ is preserved from error. On the other hand, is not the laity included in the Body of Christ? Are not we all the People of God? The documents of Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* in particular) talk about the People of God first, as the inclusive communion. The Magisterium is discussed thereafter, as a part of that broader communion.

The problem the institutional Church faces is that it is only slowly coming to grips with its own evolution in history. The idea that God’s creation is through evolution on a cosmic scale is still a fairly new idea, even in scientific circles. The implications of the idea have not yet taken hold in the public imagination. And the Church is still in thrall to an understanding of reality that places revelation and

science in separate categories. Pope Paul VI was happy to recognize Stephen Hawking for showing that the universe had a beginning in the Big Bang, but this was taken as a confirmation of Genesis, not as a challenge to the traditional understanding of divine intervention in the world.

As it turns out the same evidence that confirmed the Big Bang has provided a story of an evolving cosmos. This story is not at all like Genesis. Furthermore, the narrative of cosmic evolution is so comprehensive that it suggests a view of God's presence in the world that is at the same time more subtle and more awesome than the traditional view.

It will take the institutional Church some time to adapt. St. Augustine advised that interpretation of scripture should take care to avoid the embarrassment of conflict with what was understood about the natural world, but those were simpler times when relatively little was known about the natural world. The challenge of following Augustine's advice would become more difficult, as the Galileo episode showed. The Church supported the picture of the universe favored by Aristotle, where the earth was at the center and movement of celestial bodies was in perfect circles, a sign of God's perfection. The mathematical gyrations of Ptolemy preserved that picture as data accumulated about the motion of the planets. Ptolemy constructed an elaborate system of circles upon circles in order to preserve the appearance of perfection of planetary orbits.

When the Roman Empire in the West disintegrated, the Church filled the vacuum. When Roman civil institutions collapsed, the Church provided the glue that held society together. The Christian view of how individuals and society were to behave became not only the standard but the essential line of defense between order and disorder. Challenges to the Church's world view were viewed as a threat to the stability of society. And, as Machiavelli observed, stability is the first responsibility of those who would govern.

In this context, even Copernicus and Galileo were influenced by the reigning world view of God's celestial perfection. Although Copernicus placed the sun at the center, he held to circular orbits. By the time of Galileo the data were difficult to reconcile with circular orbits, and Galileo knew this. He nonetheless maintained that the orbits must be circular.

Politics is the art of accommodating the reigning world view. Copernicus had the benefit of a judicious publisher who found a theologian (Osiander) who wrote a substitute preface to *De Revolutionibus* that suggested that it was for the convenience of simplifying the calculations only, and not making a statement about reality, that the planetary orbits were described using the sun as their center.

Galileo was not nearly so politic. In his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World*, he put the astronomical views of his former friend, now Pope Urban VIII, into the mouth of a simple-minded character with the name Simplicio. This indiscretion – characteristic of Galileo – led to his trial by inquisition and house arrest.

Yet, apart from this impolitic behavior, the position of Church officials (notably Cardinal Bellarmine, who had dealt with Galileo on the Copernican issue fifteen years earlier) was that further research had to be done to confirm or condemn heliocentrism. Thus, the practical implementation of Augustine's advice placed the burden of proof upon those who would challenge the Church's worldview. This makes some logical sense because no one's interest would be served if the Church abandoned its long held position only to find that the new view had not been adequately vetted.

This cautionary experience with Galileo provides a realistic model for how the Church's position is likely to evolve in response to the still developing story of cosmic evolution. It is important to emphasize how recent is our understanding of cosmic evolution. A hundred years ago the general consensus among scientists – even Albert Einstein – was that the universe was in a steady state condition, as it had always been and always would be. Indeed, this was the view of Aristotle.

So ingrained was this preconception that when it appeared that solutions to Einstein's field equations of General Relativity could include both expanding and collapsing universes, Einstein nipped that interpretation in the bud by adding a "cosmological constant" to the equations. Only after Hubble's discovery in the late 1920s that distant galaxies were receding at a speed proportional to their distance did Einstein recognize that the cosmological constant was "the biggest mistake of my life."

And other scientists persisted in believing in a steady-state universe until discovery of the cosmic background radiation in the mid-1960s. If the

scientific community is cautious about such matters, who can expect the institutional Church to be otherwise?

On the other hand, change in response to an evolutionary view of creation will not be without precedent. The Galileo episode is one form of precedent. The history of Catholic social teaching itself moves the Church toward recognition of the human role in evolution. Leaders of the Church (beginning with St. Paul) accommodated Church teaching to the reality of slavery, but the Church has come to see the error of this accommodation. The position of the Church on the “divine right of kings” went through a similar evolution. Pope John Paul II, to his credit, acknowledged similar mistakes with regard to Galileo and with regard to the Jews.

If *Rerum Novarum* was a milestone in 1891, what the Church needs, more than a hundred years later, is another milestone of the same kind – a recognition that the institutional structures of the Church are made by human beings, not by God. *Rerum Novarum* did not come out of the blue, but had been prepared by a growing consensus in the social science community. What is currently missing is a framework for developing such a consensus with regard to the institutional structures of the Church.

For the most part, the Church has tried to place itself above the fray, taking the high road of principle and leaving practical implementation of changes in institutional structure to the political process. The Church has weighed in politically on traditional moral behavior issues, as with abortion and stem cell research, but these issues are more about institutional positions rather than about changes in the structure of institutions.

Ironically, if the Church applies Catholic Social Teaching to itself as an institution it will be in a better position to advocate social justice in secular institutions. This is not because “setting an example” improves credibility, but rather because change is hard and practical experience helps, especially first hand experience from the point of view of the institution being changed. We are still in the early stages of making social justice a reality. The problem addressed by *Rerum Novarum* was that justice was not happening; the structures and institutions of society were standing in the way. In order for justice to happen, it would be necessary to change these structures and institutions. Catholic Social Teaching

provides objectives, but doesn’t tell particular institutional realities how to get from here to there. What is needed are reasonably stable and reliable mechanisms for getting from here to there.

What better way for the Church to start down this path than to use its own institutional structure as a guinea pig. Needless to say, the notion of institutional Church as guinea pig is a hard sell. It doesn’t have to be put exactly that way, of course. But it’s a hard sell nonetheless. The gathering next June in Detroit sponsored by the American Catholic Conference may serve as a sounding board for the kinds of injustices that call for changes in Church structure. But that doesn’t change the underlying dynamic: the institutional Church as guinea pig is a hard sell.

That said, allow me to go out on a limb and say where I think the Church is going to end up, and why this place will be not only dramatically different but also much better adapted to the unity for which Christ prayed.

Recently I watched Ken Burns' film "Mark Twain." *Huckleberry Finn* began as a sequel to *Tom Sawyer*, but Twain put it aside while he took a trip down the Mississippi. There he saw what had happened to the Civil War legacy of freedom for slaves. When he returned he recast *Huckleberry Finn* as a commentary on American life that has become a classic. At one point in the book Huck considers writing a letter to Jim's owner telling her where she can find her runaway slave. Huck wrestles with his impulse to write the letter, because everything he has been taught tells him that he is doing wrong by helping Jim run away. He will surely go to hell if he doesn't right this wrong, so that Jim gets back to his proper place. But in his wrestling Huck comes back to this person Jim, whom he has come to know, and he throws the letter away. "Well, then, I'll just go to hell."

Huck’s struggle serves as a metaphor for current times with the Church. The Church is divided as Huck is divided. Justice issues – for silenced theologians, for women, for a lay role in governance – are adrift on a raft. What will we do? The authority of the Church’s past weighs heavily. But that burden can be lightened if the Church’s view of itself is transformed to reflect an evolutionary view of God’s handiwork.

TO BE CONTINUED