

FINAL WORDS

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATE: As some of you are aware, there was a printing glitch in how some members' information was formatted in our 2009 Directories. The corrections have been made and are available in three different ways for members who already have their Directory: 1) if CP&BC has your email address, you will be sent a PDF file to print; 2) you can download the updated lists from our website www.cpbcfresno.org; or 3) you can email a request for the updated list to directory@cpbcfresno.org. If you haven't received your 2009 Directory yet, there will be a letter inserted with the same opportunities outlined when your Directory is mailed.

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CARTOON CREATIVITY:

By Joseph Garcia



"YES SIRE, AN IMMINENT ATTACK... I HEARD IT STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH."

Catholic Professional & Business Club of the Fresno Diocese

Volume 12 Number 8

Newsletter

May 2009

April Speaker “Took a Plunge” in Converting to Catholicism

By Pat Ogle



Eric Scheske told the April CP&BC audience that his conversion from Lutheran to Catholic was like the sudden sinking of the ship Edmund Fitzgerald near his Michigan roots in Lake Gitche Gumees...it came out of no where and it was sudden. He was raised in a conservative Lutheran environment where anti-Catholicism dogma sentiments prevailed. Scheske said there is a difference between being anti to Catholic beliefs and traditions and being unfriendly to people of the Catholic faith. His upbringing was the former, not the latter.

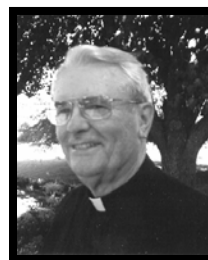
At age 22 he didn't realize that his innocence in taking an unopened book off his father's bookshelf was the start of his conversion path. Eric didn't realize until a year later that it was a Catholic book, *“Another Sort of Learning”* by Jesuit Priest James Shaw. The next “blessing” was when there wasn't a spot in the University of Michigan Law School after his undergraduate days there, so he took his second choice, the University of Notre Dame where he was told “you can still be a Lutheran here”. Almost immediately Scheske says he “started taking in Catholic water” like in the sinking of the good ship Edmund Fitzgerald.

More water intake came from finding out that 3 of his most liked and respected law professors had 28 children between them. And then there was the case of meeting “Stretch”, a 5-foot-4-inch classmate and mild mannered Catholic apologist, who challenged some of Eric's opinions in a non-confrontational manner. The kicker was when he went to Professor Murphy and proposed he receive two extra class credits if he allowed the Professor to try and convert him by assigning six books to read and to meet once a week. Scheske really believed he would convert the Professor to Lutheranism...however, after only two sessions and two books Eric started taking RCIA classes at Notre Dame.

Following graduation from law school Scheske eventually resettled in his hometown with his legal practice, married to his college sweetheart and with the first of seven children in 15 years, admitting with a chuckle to the

“Food for Thought”

By CPBC Spiritual Advisor Msgr. Las Byrne



In the Gospel readings for the Sundays after Easter, we read of events immediately following the resurrection of our Lord. The disciples of Jesus are still mourning the loss of their friend Jesus. Their doubts and disillusiones are still present in their minds and hearts. Gradually Jesus appears first to Mary, John and Peter. The rumors are still spreading when Jesus appears to the two disciples as they walk the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Let us call it the Emmaus Journey.

He walks with them, however they still think he is a stranger and they befriend him. He wonders why they are all depressed and they more or less chastise him, “Are you the only one who doesn't know what has happened to our great friend, what they did to Him?” He gently REMINDS THEM of the Scriptures that he had told them that he had to suffer and die in order to fulfill His mission – they still did not recognize Him until they invited Him to stay awhile and eat and visit with Him. In the course of the meal, He took bread, broke it and blessed it – as He did at the Last Supper. Suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognized Him in the ‘Breaking of the Bread’. It is related that they said, “Were we not blind to Him as he related all what he had explained to them on the Journey” – sound familiar?

Does it not remind us that we all walk our Emmaus journey when we go our way in depression – each with his own cross – each with our problems whether it be the loss of a loved one, a terminal illness, the loss of our job, our difficulty in marriage, seeing our sons and daughters stray away from God, or their falling into drug addictions. Then we go to Mass continuing our Emmaus journey and we listen as the Scriptures are expounded to us, as we are told that carrying a cross is an essential part of celebrating our Easter Sunday as we are strengthened when he takes the bread and blesses it and he gives us Himself to help us carry that cross to see the meaning in life as he reminds us to walk with Him and we will survive.

May the Good Lord strengthen our faith as we continue to celebrate this Easter Season. God Bless and let us pray for each other.....

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Personal Perspective – Are We Really Following Jesus’ Example?

By Lanny Larson

What a challenge we face with the daily doses of bad news resonating in our media and our thoughts like a badly tuned, constantly pounded bass drum: foreclosures, layoffs, bankruptcies, stocks plunging, buyouts, bailouts, shootouts and, always, uncertainty. Maybe that’s why some of us seem just plain mean, emulating talk radio and TV with venomous, spiteful, uncharitable words and characterizations about anyone with whom we disagree or is a different race, gender, religion, culture, economic class or body type.

If you imagine we moved past all that ugliness with the Politically Correct Movement, think again. People sneer at PCM (I hesitate calling anything PC for fear Mac people will be hatin’ on *me*, next.), blantly – we hope unwittingly – suggesting intolerance is OK. It isn’t OK. And our intolerance of others’ differences isn’t helping us get important things done in this country. We’re shouting our vilification, not listening for what might be a better idea or a road to compromise.

Suddenly incivility rules and anyone who would speak against it fears denunciation. Can we just take a breath? We don’t all need to hold hands and sing “Kumbaya,” but we *can* respect that people different from us are every bit as sincerely motivated as we are. Wasn’t Jesus our model of acceptance, encouraging us to respect – even love – those who had different beliefs, appearance and so forth? How would He fare today?

Would Jesus be branded a felon for vandalizing the temple? Would He be “soft on crime” for consorting with lawbreakers? Would there be dark hints about His little-known formative years because they’re so little known? Would he be mistrusted as a Nazarean? Would his gender preference be questioned because of long hair, remaining single and hanging out with a bunch of men? Would He be criticized for not getting to Calvary and the Resurrection quickly enough?

Ridiculous? From what I see, read and hear, it’s not a great stretch. What’s especially disheartening is that you read a lot of shrill disrespect on Catholic Web sites. Harsh judgment is pronounced and always rooted in “Catholic teachings,” none of which embraces love, acceptance, tolerance, respect or peace. I believe the level of incivility has ratcheted up since the November election and Catholic Web sites are not excepted. It cannot be explained away by our uncertainties and fears about our earthly future.

It’s past time for us all to pray for the gifts of thinking before speaking and for measuring our words against the possible hurt that might result. We should trust that what the Gospel writers gave us to consider about Jesus’ example of tolerance is, in fact, worth our contemplation. Then we could practice what He preached.

-- Lanny Larson is an editor at California State University, Fresno.

CP&BC audience that six of the seven were not planned. Besides trying to be the best lawyer by applying Scriptural readings to his daily life pursuits, Eric also started writing and sharing his Catholic testimony on radio and television. He maintains a daily blog of entertaining social and religious commentary called “The Daily Eudemon”.

Scheske concluded by saying that he now realizes his urge to have “his works” sanctify him was backwards in thinking and that his spiritual side should show through all he does in family and work and that one has to pay attention. He uses the following Simone Weil quote to keep him focused: “In the intellectual order, the virtue of humility is nothing more nor less than the power of attention”.

May 8th – Michael Shanks



Join the CP&BC on May 8th when a self-described “radically Catholic husband, father, entrepreneur, designer and public speaker” joins us from Arizona. Michael Shanks says that self-description doesn’t mean he’s “a crazy, strange, off-the-grid kind of Catholic”. To Michael, it means living his faith out in the world, in his life, and in his work. Michael’s company - Shanks DMG - has been named “the number one company you need to know in Arizona,” and has been honored with many marketing/design industry awards.

In his dynamic and engaging presentations, Michael delivers a message designed for all Catholics. He instructs, informs and inspires on such topics as chasing your dreams, living the faith in our world, being a man of principle, doing exceptional work, living happily, practicing sexual abstinence before marriage, realizing the importance of great friends, and most importantly, celebrating the responsibilities and rewards of being a loving father, a devoted husband and a dedicated servant of God...quite possibly all in one talk, really.

See the insert for more background on our next CP&BC speaker, Michael Shanks, and how his ministry is one of sharing about courage, risk-taking and dreams. Be sure to make your reservations now for our May 8th breakfast!

Book Review

By John Kasaian

Priestblock 25487

A Memoir of Dachau by Fr. Jean Bernard

Zaccheus Press, Bethesda, Maryland

Paperbound, 177 pages

ISBN 978-0-9725981-7-0

Fr. Bernard became, in 1934, the general secretary of the International Catholic Cinema Office headquartered in Brussels. From what I gather, he was a popular and highly respected authority in European cinema. Of course the totalitarianism of the Nazi occupiers of Belgium couldn't tolerate such an independent (and critical authority) and in 1940 Fr. Bernard's offices and files were seized by the Gestapo and his Chapel converted into a torture chamber by the SS. Fr. Bernard was suspected of being a Belgium nationalist and landed in the infamous Dachau concentration camp. There are lots of books on Dachau and other notorious concentration camps, but this is the first I've come across written by a Catholic Priest. Fortunately Fr. Bernard did survive (and that is a miraculous story in its self!) This story, then, isn't just Fr. Bernard's story but the story unique to too many priests and the treatment they received at the hands of the Nazis.

I think Priestblock 25487 is an important book from a variety of perspectives and besides being a good historical account of a very dark period in the 20th century it touches on many important current issues. Our Holy Father Benedict XVI has received scathing criticism from many quarters, (including one of our local congressmen) for being insensitive to the historical reality of the Genocide of Jews during World War 2 because His Holiness recently welcomed a group of schismatic SSPX bishops back into communion with Rome and one of the SSPX Bishops is of the erroneously notion that the Holocaust was merely a fabrication. These accusations against Pope Benedict strike me as being particularly sinister. The healing of the schism has nothing to do with World War 2 or the illusionary political views of any one bishop. Furthermore our current Pontiff as well as His predecessor and close friend John Paul II were both in the thick of war torn Europe and were both members of groups which were singled out as hostile or suspect by the Nazi regime and would have been well aware of the realities of the holocaust.

Another issue which I found the book dealt with is a subject of evil. Priests were not allowed to mingle with the other prisoners since they presented a threat due to their intrinsic roles as leaders, which in turn might have fomented rebellion. To foster antagonism against the priests and clergy, they were sometimes given "easy" jobs and briefly Fr. Bernard was tasked with feeding the furnace in the quarters of an SS Officer's family. While he is in the furnace room, the SS Officer's little girl comes to pay a visit to the prisoner. Her gentle innocence underscores the a classic Thomistic view that all people strive for "good" and it is in the striving that we encounter the evil men are capable of.

Yet another, more timely issue is that of government controlling religion. Right now, in this country the current ruling political party seeks to force Catholic physicians and nurses to perform abortions which all Catholics (and all Christians for that matter) should find immoral and irreprehensible. North of us in Canada (and perhaps here before too long) Priests and other clergy have been prosecuted for reading scriptures to their congregations which government censors find politically incorrect. These are alarming trends which in my mind mirror the intolerance of the Nazis towards religion.

The Holy Child Bookstore on the North West corner of Palm and Bullard can get you a copy.

49er Highlights

Catholic Television *Changing Lives*

By Laurie Patterson



This is Our City with H Spees

We know you enjoy our local programs, but here is a little more about the characters behind your favorite shows. H. Spees is the esteemed host of "This is Our City" on KNXT-TV, Thursdays at 8:00pm and Fridays at 1:00pm. "This is Our City" features influential people in our community, who work diligently to better the lives of themselves and their neighbors. H. has spent his life making a positive impact on his community and challenging others to do the same.

As well as a TV host, H. is a Pastor-at-Large with First Presbyterian Church, a community activist, newspaper columnist and a youth worker. Passions that allow him to connect with leaders from government, business, the non-profit sector and the faith-based community in cities across the country and around the world, addressing issues such as poverty, literacy, gang violence, race relations, and spiritual development.

H. was born in Los Angeles in 1953, and married his high school sweetheart, Terry, in 1972. Terry and H. have spent the last 37 years involved in community improvement, with a special passion for the vulnerable and medically needy. They have lived in Fresno since 1984, establishing themselves and their family in the community.

H. is fundamentally, above all else, a communicator, working to engage people from all walks of life to join together to tackle the biggest problems in their cities. His goal is to communicate a compelling message of how every one of us can make a difference in the lives of young people, family, or neighborhood. H. Spees is a treasured member of the KNXT family and line-up.