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# Teacher plants poetry

By Mary Stamp

English teacher Jim Bodeen planted a poetry pole in his garden 10 years ago to give voice to passing poets.

His journey to nurture poetry now includes publishing poetry and essays of Latino students in the Yakima Valley and a new voice arising from encounters with Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gómez of El Salvador.

Poetry—mixed with lives and stories of people he encounters and publishes—is his calling.

Just as the garden by his Yakima home has become a place where lives intersect “along the path of the mailman and the butterflies,” so, too, his publishing books of poetry and essays by young Latinos has allowed those field workers’ and students’ lives to intersect with more people.

A March visit to El Salvador, Jim said, has “entrusted me with the subversive cross” and instructions to tell the living story of El Salvadorans.

Jim began by telling about the poetry pole.

“Planted in an out-of-the-way place, the poetry pole is a source of

*Continued on page 4*



Jim Bodeen takes poems from the pole, upper right, to the press.

## Fig Tree updates email network

The Fig Tree is updating and expanding its email network in conjunction with sending targeted messages of news and resources on the website, [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org).

“Our goal is to customize to whom we send what notices as a way to draw more people to the website, where we will have more information than we include in the newspaper,” said editor Mary Stamp.

For example, mainstream media were slow and limited in covering the death of Brother Roger of Taizé. The Fig Tree could send emails to notify those interested of such news and of sources for more information on the internet.

“This fall, The Fig Tree will redesign its website structure and menus to facilitate access and input from throughout the Northwest, so we can move to put in place the vision the Website Team has of providing more information and video/audio content,” Mary said.

Making those changes and moving hosting to Gonzaga University will require some major donations to pay for people, services and equipment to make it possible, she said.

For information, call 535-1813.

## Taizé meditation experiences enrich with chants, candles, silence, action

Leaders of Taizé worship in Spokane and Pullman expressed sorrow at news of the murder of Taizé founder Brother Roger Schutz in August. They carry Taizé in their lives here.

**Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet Joy Milos**, who teaches Christian spirituality at Gonzaga University, describes Taizé as an inclusive, simple form of prayer, “an oasis of peace” that takes participants inward and moves them outward.

“It calls us to reconciliation and inclusiveness,” she said, “giving us a vision beyond sectarianism, to come together as Catholics and Protestants.”

**Suzanne Capstick**, music team leader for Taizé services held alternate months for about six years at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church and St. Ann’s Catholic Church in Spokane, said, “It was tragic that someone with his way of peace and reconciliation would meet such a violent end.”

The next regular candlelight Taizé worship will be held at 7 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 24, at St. Stephen’s, 5720 S. Perry. The

schedule varies each month.

In addition, the St. Ann’s Taizé team will lead the third annual Taizé camp Sept. 9 to 11 at Camp Cross, the Episcopal camp on Lake Coeur d’Alene.

Sheryll Shepard of St. Stephen’s said the meditative services include repetitive chants that help people “reflect on the spirit of God deep within” and give space to “shut out the noise of the world.”

About 40 to 60 regularly attend the Spokane services that developed from one started 10 years ago at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John.

Sister Joy and the Rev. Kristi Philip, now interim dean at the cathedral, shared leading those services. About five years ago, they visited Taizé for a few days.

“The prayers and music inhabit your spirit, focusing energy. The simplicity of chants draws you to another level. Many major church hymnals today include ‘Ubi Caritas’ or ‘Eat this Bread,’ among the Taizé golden oldies,” Joy said.

**Bishop William Skylstad** of the Diocese of Spokane, writing

to The Fig Tree from Moscow, Russia, commented:

“The Taizé community is well known throughout the Catholic world. In the United States, the music from Taizé is often used in Catholic parishes. The simplicity, the depth of the hymns has touched many people.

“I was presiding at the first international Mass at World Youth Day when one of the priests came up after communion and told me that Brother Roger had been murdered,” Bishop Skylstad said. “We offered a prayer for him as the crowd became silent in appreciation and, I suspect, shock.”

He pointed out that the Holy See has been supportive of the Taizé movement because of its ecumenical implications.

Catholic News Service quoted him, as head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, expressing “great sadness” at the “horrific news” of Brother Roger’s death.

In an Aug. 18 letter of condolence to the new leader, Brother Alois, he said: “Being one with  
Continued on page 8

## Sisters of St. Francis celebrate 150 years

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of their United States-based order on Saturday, Oct. 8, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

Five sisters first came to Spokane in the fall of 1890 to establish the St. Joseph Children’s Home for homeless and neglected children—recognized by Washington State as a “centenary agency, one of the oldest ministries in town.

The Sisters of St. Francis in the Spokane area have also been involved with Transitions, Kairos House of Prayer, and for 40 years at St. Anne’s Children’s Home and St. Charles’ Parish School. Sisters also served at St. Joseph’s Academy in Tekoa and in a school in Lewiston.

In October, they will present a day of prayer, celebration and dialogue from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on “Franciscan Gifts Given to Create a Future of Faithfulness and Peace.”

Sister Anne Amati, OSF, a retreat director from the Franciscan Spiritual Center near Philadelphia, and Brother Edward Coughlin, OFM, from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University in New York, will facilitate reflections on Franciscan spirituality. Sister Lynn Patrice Lavin, general minister of the Sisters of St. Francis and a former director of St. Joseph Family Center, will speak on the community’s history.

Sister Elaine Thaden said the event is an opportunity to gather with Franciscans in the area—including the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, the Poor Clare Sisters, Franciscan Friars Minor, Secular Franciscans and with other friends, supporters and people interested in learning about Franciscan spirituality. For information, call 487-3810.

## Religion News Briefs Around the World

*Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100  
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111  
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 Email: eni@eni.ch*

### Zimbabwe churches form body to help victims

Harare (ENI). Church groups in Zimbabwe formed a broad-based, ecumenical coalition to help victims of a government drive that demolished homes and left hundreds of thousands homeless. That drew condemnation from the United Nations and international aid organizations. The alliance includes the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference.

### Churches move toward full communion

New York (ENI). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has moved closer to a full communion agreement with the United Methodist Church. In one of several actions taken during the denomination's August assembly, delegates voted 877 to 60 to begin an "interim Eucharistic sharing" agreement with the United Methodists, who approved the pact in April 2004.

### Indian church activists oppose nuclear arms race

New Delhi (ENI). As the world remembered the dropping of the first atomic bombs in Japan 60 years ago in August, Indian church activists vowed to oppose proliferation of nuclear weapons, which their country, the world's second largest nation, now possesses. The meeting of the National Council of Churches in India focused on emerging nuclear giants in southern Asia.

### Kenyan churches oppose Sunday marathon

Nairobi (ENI). A group of Kenyan churches opposes a bank-sponsored marathon set for Sunday, Oct. 23. In the land that "mass produces marathon runners," the churches complain the race interferes with freedom of worship. The marathon is the first in a worldwide series of races, dubbed "The Greatest Race on Earth," to raise funds for the visually impaired. Races will be held on Sundays in Singapore, Mumbai and Hong Kong.

### Former U.S. president teaches Sunday school

Plains, Georgia (ENI). Flanked by Secret Service agents and greeted by the flash of cameras, Jimmy Carter enters the sanctuary of Maranatha Baptist Church and beams a familiar, well-photographed grin. "Any visitors?" he deadpans. The 250 visitors roar with laughter. The former President and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate is probably the most famous Sunday school teacher in America.

### Peruvian bishops defend role of clerics

Lima (ENI). The Peruvian Bishops' Conference defends two Roman Catholic bishops, accused of inciting recent anti-mining protests that left one person dead and more than 20 injured. "The presence of the bishops in this difficult situation does not correspond to political interests but to an interest in fostering peace and dialogue," said Bishop José Hugo Garaycoa Hawkins, head of the Bishops' Conference.

### Return to democracy is key to religious freedom

New Delhi (ENI). Restoration of fundamental rights and democracy "holds the key to religious freedom" in the Hindu kingdom of Nepal, which is in a state of emergency under an absolute monarch, said Kalai Bahadur Rokaya, general secretary of the National Christian Council of Nepal.

### Christians and Muslims compatible in Syria

Damascus (ENI). On top of the historic Omayyad Mosque in Damascus is the Jesus minaret, which honors the founder of Christianity. Inside the great mosque is the Shrine of St. John the Baptist, who is revered by both Islam and Christianity.

### Polish church reports vocations up

Warsaw (ENI). Poland's Roman Catholic Church reports a sharp rise in priesthood vocations since the death of Pope John Paul II, with seminary applications doubling in some dioceses. The country's 800,000-member minority Orthodox Church also reported an increase in vocations in July, with three candidates for each place at the church's Warsaw seminary.

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Interfaith Council plans for Peace Day

The Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest will celebrate International Peace Day and its second anniversary on Tuesday, Sept. 20 with an intercultural dinner, conversations, entertainment and a peace vigil.

Alaa-eldin Aamer, an Egyptian Muslim chef, will cater a dinner at 6 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Marianne Mishima will lead cross-cultural conversation, which Interfaith Council director Kateri Caron describes as "the most simple act of true peace-making."

There will be an offering to sup-

port Interfaith Council Programs: Advocacy Action Network, Camp P.E.A.C.E. and Circle of Caring.

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Day of Peace, to encourage annual observance of one single day of global ceasefire and nonviolence. Twenty years later, in 2001, they fixed September 21 as the annual date for people in every country around the world to practice acts of peace, Kateri reported.

On September 21, 2003, the Interfaith Council was "established as a model of people from diverse faith groups working together for

the peace and well-being of our local community and the world," she said. "Each year, we celebrate our birthday by joining people around the globe in the International Day of Peace."

The Interfaith Council encourages every house of worship to honor Sept. 21 by holding a peace vigil "so the power of meditation, prayer and spiritual practice may promote peace and prevent violent conflict in our world," Kateri said.

Vigils may be listed at [www.idpvigil.com/commitments/commitment2005.php](http://www.idpvigil.com/commitments/commitment2005.php).

For information, call 329-1410.

### 'Catholicism for New Millennium' series starts

Gonzaga University religious studies professor Patrick McCormick will discuss "Jesus' Table Manners: Etiquette for a Revolution" at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 8 in the Globe Room at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

His lecture is the first in the fourth season of the speaker series, "Catholicism for a New Millennium." Pat will base the lecture on his recent book, "A Banqueter's Guide to the All Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God," contending that Jesus' trouble resulted from his radical dinner-table politics.

Like black civil rights workers who integrated America's lunch counters in the 1950s and 1960s, Jesus introduced revolutionary table manners based on his vision of God's heavenly kingdom—breaking bread with aliens and outcasts, giving up seats for the lowly and weak, and getting up from the table to wait on servants.

Pat says Jesus' table manners teach "the radical politics of hospitality, equality and service, dismantling head tables and setting up a banquet where no one is hungry or excluded."

The fall series includes:

- On Sept. 23, Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, of the Oblate School of Theology, will discuss "Polarization in the Church and Community" at St. Aloysius Church.

- On Oct. 20, Julie Hanlan Rubio of St. Louis University will address "A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family" in Barbieri Courtroom at the Law School.

- On Nov. 17, Thomas Shannon of Worcester Polytechnic Institute will lecture on "Cloning & Stem Cells: Reflections of a Catholic Theologian," also in the Barbieri Courtroom.

For information, call 323-6715.

### Crosswalk sets 20th anniversary street fair

Volunteers of America will hold a Street Fair from 3 to 6 p.m., Friday, Sept. 23, on Howard between Second and Third Avenues to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its Crosswalk program for street kids.

Founder Marilee Roloff, now director of VOA-Spokane, said making plans for it has been "a walk down Memory Lane."

"It's unbelievable that it has been 20 years since we started in 'cockroach heaven' on Jefferson Street. It has grown and changed, as have the teens we serve."

Marilee praises the VOA Board for stepping up to meet the need. "I'm grateful that the com-

munity came together to start Crosswalk. About two-thirds of the original 30 churches that signed up to serve dinners are still involved. Since then we added 20 more groups to provide lunches," she said. "Now we also provide shelter, school, medical care, job training and counseling."

Marilee considers it "sad news that the program started with 300 in the first year and now serves more than 1,000, because it shows that other systems are not preventing teens from being homeless and involved in high-risk activities."

"The bad news is that some are dead or in prison. The good news is that some have gone on to col-

lege, are raising families and are working," she added.

She estimates that over the 20 years, Crosswalk has served about 10,000 individuals.

Fourteen years ago, Crosswalk moved to the present location at 525 W. Second.

"I have found a home for me. VOA is a perfect fit for my passion for service. I would not do this work if I were not crazily hopeful," she said.

The anniversary celebration is for current and former youth, meal providers, volunteers, staff and community supporters.

For information, call 838-6596.

### UN development goals are theme for presentation

The United Nations Association-Spokane will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, Sept. 12, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., to hear Golie Jansen speak on "The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals," which were passed by all 191 members in 2000.

Golie, associate professor of social work at Eastern Washington University, will discuss the goals of 1) eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, 2) providing universal primary education, 3) promoting gender equality, 4) reducing child mortality, 5) improving maternal health, 6) combatting HIV/AIDS,

malaria and other diseases, 7) ensuring environmental sustainability, and 8) developing a global partnership for development.

Golie is a board member of both the UNA-Spokane and the Spokane AIDS Network.

For information, call 624-3608 or visit [www.unaspokane.org](http://www.unaspokane.org).

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## World Council of Churches calls churches to join in prayer for peace on Sept. 21

With the world at war in many places and forces of war, violence and oppression increasing, World Council of Churches' General Secretary Samuel Kobia says no matter how futile praying for peace seems, "We Christians believe both in the power and the promise of peace, just as we believe in both the power of prayer."

He calls congregations around the world to join in prayer on the United Nations' International Day of Peace, Wednesday, Sept. 21, and on the preceding and following Sundays, Sept. 18 and 25.

"Prayer is not a call to turn inward or retreat from social action and public life, but a call to awaken and pursue the continuity of things of the spirit with action for justice and peace," Samuel said.

The World Council encourages this as part of its Decade to Overcome Violence, which addresses four types of violence: physical, psychological, sexual and deprivation or negligence—including deaths by hunger.

To observe the International Day of Prayer for Peace, the WCC suggests holding public events, art contests, educational and cultural programs, church-bell tolling at noon and organizing a prayer for peace or a 24-hour prayer vigil for peace, and meeting with other people of faith to discuss how to build a culture of peace.

The WCC, an ecumenical fellowship of more than 340 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches, working with the Roman Catholic Church, established the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001 to 2010) to call churches, ecumenical organizations and people of goodwill to work with people oppressed by violence and with those struggling for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

"It calls people to repent of their complicity in violence and engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence," Samuel said.

For information, visit [www.overcomingviolence.org](http://www.overcomingviolence.org).

## Kent Hoffman speaks for Caring for Kids benefit

Kent Hoffman, a psychotherapist who co-founded the Center for Attachment and Clinical Intervention at Marycliff Institute in Spokane, is the featured speaker for Catholic Charities' Caring for Kids Benefit Luncheon for the St. Anne's Children and Family Center and the Morning Star Boys' Ranch. It is at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 25, at the Red Lion Hotel at the Park.

Kent specializes in attachment- and separation-related problems

with parent-child relationships, dyads, adults and couples. He helps at-risk parents and infants at the Volunteers of America Crosswalk program for street-dependent youth.

He was the 2000 Child Advocate of the Year for Spokane Head Start/Early Head Start and co-recipient of the 2000 Governor's Award for Innovation in Prevention from the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Kent is known for his work on the "Circle of Security," a model for helping parents strengthen bonds with children, often leading workshops for therapists, educators, social workers, clergy and parents.

"Once we understand the importance of the developmental needs of children, we will give them greater priority, benefiting children in a way that will lead to real social change," he said.

For information, call 358-4254.

## Habitat's 'Building on Faith Week' is Sept. 11-18

A duplex at 2218 W. Bridge will be the focus of Habitat for Humanity-Spokane's participation in "Building on Faith Week," a worldwide celebration of Habitat partnerships with communities of faith Sept. 11 to 18.

Construction will be launched at noon, Sunday, Sept. 11, and ceremonies will include an opening prayer by Debbie Calhoun of St. Aloysius Parish and a talk by Michone Preston, executive director of Habitat-Spokane.

For the International Day of Prayer during the week, Jerry Sittser, professor of religion at Whitworth College, will preach at noon, Sunday, Sept. 18, at the site. Dia Maurer, interim regional director of Habitat for Humanity International will be guest speaker. She is a former director of Habitat-Spokane.

During the week will be are shifts for 350 volunteers to meet the goal of completing the framing

and putting on a roof.

Dennis Reed, community relations director, said he sent letters to 130 churches seeking volunteers.

"Through prayer, financial or volunteer support, faith communities have contributed to most of the about 150 Habitat homes in Spokane," said Michone Preston, director. "Partnering with Habitat-Spokane is a way for churches to engage in outreach ministry with an established Christian housing organization.

"Many faith organizations begin and continue their partnership with Habitat-Spokane out of a desire to help others. Then they are delighted to discover how working with Habitat benefits them," she said. "Habitat homeowners and volunteers prove that an active faith changes people's lives."

For the September event, congregations can provide financial support to sponsor a home, organize a

group of volunteers, offer to host a meal or simply keep low-income families in their prayers.

The duplex in West Central Spokane will be homes #152 and 153. Eight other Habitat homes are in process.

For information, call 534-2552.

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## WAC's 30th anniversary features editor Jim Wallis

The Washington Association of Churches (WAC) will mark its 30th anniversary with a dinner and lecture featuring author and Sojourners editor Jim Wallis on Thursday, Sept. 29, at the Seattle Town Hall, 1118 Eighth Ave.

Jim, a Christian leader for social change, will speak on "God's Politics—Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It." He is a speaker, author, activist and international commentator on ethics and public life.

The goal of the event is to build on progressive, prophetic faith-based movements in and from Washington State, supporting the WAC Faith Advocacy Network.

The association provides an ecumenical, prophetic and progressive religious voice that stands for justice, sustainability, stewardship, fairness and equity in the region, said the Rev. John Boonstra, executive minister.

"We come together to deepen our capacity—in dialogue and action—to enable Christians to heal the pain and restore wholeness to the broken parts of our communal fabric," he said.

As part of celebrating 30 years of ecumenical work, the WAC will honor former Catholic Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen with a Lifetime Ecumenical Leadership Award.

"We honor him for his work as a social justice champion, pastoral and spiritual leader and as one who provided and continues to provide moral inspiration to our community," John said.

For information, visit [www.thewac.org](http://www.thewac.org) or call (206) 625-9790.

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# Ties to Latino students, El Salvadorans opens doors to insights

*Continued from page 1*  
truth. Poems here are written directly to the muse without editors intervening," said Jim. "Poetry poles are places to share spiritual insights, longings, and truth."

*Weathered Pages: The Poetry Pole*, a book with submissions of 132 writers—66 women and 66 men—has just been released.

**On a sabbatical in Chile**, Jim made a pilgrimage to the home of Pablo Neruda at Isla Negra. There he found people writing poems and notes on Pablo's fence post.

People learn of poetry poles by word of mouth, said Jim.

For 25 years, he has printed poetry people tack on his pole. A shed behind his home houses Blue Begonia Press, a letterpress, with which he published poetry on broadsides and in hand-sewn, limited-edition chapbooks until the 1990s, when he shifted to computer publishing.

Now he sends books as digital files by internet to Michigan to be printed and bound in 1,000-run paperbound editions.

"No poet makes a living writing poetry. It's my calling," said Jim who has taught literature and writing at Davis High School in Yakima for 33 years. He left the classroom last year to write full time and "go deeper into stories and listening."

**Born in a small town** in North Dakota, he graduated from high school in Seattle and was in the army in charge of medical evacuation in Panama and Vietnam.

He returned to Central Washington, earning a master's degree in English at Central Washington University in Ellensburg in 1971. He also attended Seattle University's summer programs on Vatican II for three years with his wife, Karen—the only Lutherans studying Lutheran theologians with Catholic priests and nuns—earning a second master's degree in religious education.

"In 1988, I became aware of the cycle of migration into the Yakima Valley that meant Latino students came and went from classes, and that many in my English classes spoke Spanish," Jim said.

**On spring break**, he found them in asparagus fields. He followed them for three years to learn their stories, which he published in "The Asparagus Journal."

The students read their stories live on stage throughout the state, at the Seattle Repertory Theatre Bumbershoot Arts Festival and at a National Migrant Conference.

While giving them voice, he watched them grow up and settle

## Dimes

*The dimes in my pocket whisper among themselves.*

*When my hand reaches in my pocket for quarters*

*the vending machine wants, it disturbs me to find them*

*between my fingers. Dimes bring down the world.*

*Dimes are the offering of the people of God.*

*La Iglesia de la Resurrección en San Salvador is a church*

*of dimes. Dimes are invitations.*

*Children like the slippery silveriness of dimes.*

*Dress up in the finery of dimes. They invite*

*you to fall with them,*

*listening to all that whispers.*

in the Yakima Valley or go on.

Alberto Cardenes, who picked strawberries, is now a teacher and wrestling coach at Eisenhower High. José Garcia is cross-country coach at Davis. Another student, Eloisa Gonzales, graduated from Gonzaga University and works for a newspaper in Delaware.

**Jim improved his Spanish** in 1991, after the Gulf War resurfaced his post-traumatic stress from the Vietnam War. He had a seizure that temporarily blinded him and paralyzed one side of his body. So he spent a summer in Chile, taking a Latino literature course, connecting with youth and working with Mapuche Indians on a Fulbright scholarship.

"I began to understand the connection of the external and internal worlds, learning about healing from a Mapuche healer called 'The Machi.' I realized I had carried stress from Vietnam into my family living room."

Creative times of writing poems and of learning to write, live and teach followed his experience in Chile, Jim said.

Because of The Asparagus Journal and the summer in Chile, the school asked Jim, who considered himself a beginner in Spanish, to teach a Latino literature course.

**Jim has edited** and published two collections of poetry and essays: *With My Hands Full (Con Mis Manos Llenas)* and *Seeking Light in Each Dark Room (Buscando Luz in Cada Cuarto Oscuro)*, in 2002 with a grant through the Yakima schools.

"The first book was raw," Jim said. "The youth wanted to do another. The second one has 120 pages of interviews with the teens and their parents—telling how they came to Yakima, sharing the Mexican insight that "each

time an old person dies, a library burns"—that each person is a library of stories and information.

"Youth have taught me through their stories. They became my children through the power of sharing their stories," Jim said. "Many are illegal, so their stories also touch law and justice issues.

"Their stories are theology," he asserted.

Jim recently saw Albion, a former student, at the YMCA and learned a new part of his story that makes Jim realize these students' futures are limited by laws. For example, Albion has to pay out-of-state tuition to go to college.

"These children are the future of this valley," Jim affirmed.

**In 2002, a new door** opened for Jim while he was enroute to the Abriendo Caminos—Opening Paths—summer retreat week at Holden Village. He, Karen and a group of Latinos were crossing Lake Chelan, sitting on the deck of the Lady of the Lake.

A friend introduced him to "El Salvador's Bishop of Peace." Bishop Medardo Gómez was also going to teach that week in Holden.

"He looked at me and said, 'If you want to write the best poems of your life, come to El Salvador.'"

"Crossing the water is always a conversion experience. Literature teaches us this. Still I was caught off guard," Jim said.

**It took him two years to go**—in February and March, 2005—to be with Medardo and glimpse into his story, the story of El Salvador and his people.

Jim found it a conversion experience. He learned that, during the civil war in El Salvador, people from U.S. churches came regularly to be in solidarity with Medardo, as human shields to

protect him from being arrested. Bishop Martin Wells of the Eastern Washington Idaho ELCA Synod was among those shields. Bishop Gómez was at Bishop Wells' installation as bishop.

**Jim walked with Medardo**, going where he walks with his people, with God, visiting the places of martyrs, a coffee plantation and a Habitat for Humanity project.

"He was inviting me to walk in accompaniment as fully as I was able in his work with his people," Jim said.

Medardo gathered poets from San Salvador to meet with Jim, invited him to travel with his team of pastors, took him into his office to meet with people in desperate daily situations and included him in a workshop with more than 100 pastors discussing the Lutheran Church's deepest problems.

Proclaiming a prophetic ministry, Medardo struggles daily to minister to poor and marginalized people. His wife, Abelina, also a pastor, helps in the Lutheran Refugee Camp.

**Jim also learned of needs** of El Salvadorans while helping build a Habitat for Humanity house. In that week, he found that "questions mixed with cement."

His boss, José, a skilled worker, asked how much he would earn in the United States for his \$15-day of work. He builds 10 houses a year.

Jim told José about his own life, saying that he and his wife both work. Working in a bank, his wife earns more than he does as a teacher, but he earns more than teachers in El Salvador. They have a house with two bathrooms, a garden, two cars and two dogs. They work hard. Their three children have jobs, speak Spanish and live on their own. Jim also learned about José's life.

"In El Salvador, workers make less, and corporations now have more power than the government," said Jim, who returned with a new way of seeing and a new voice for speaking.

"It's easy to forget the civil war and refugees, but the peace process, too, has left the country and its people impoverished. El Salvador is a microcosm of

globalization and the story of poverty. The Lutheran Church there is out front walking with the poor. Jesus is present there in a way Jesus is not present here," Jim observed.

"Jesus walks with the crucified people, doing what Medardo—who attended the church of Archbishop Oscar Romero as a boy and now walks in his shoes—does," he said.

Jim read Romero's biography and studied the liberation theology of theologian Jon Sobrino in his book, *Where Is God?*

"I realize in a new way that Jesus is with the crucified people, with earthquake and hurricane victims," he said.

"Medardo changed my life. Walking with him and the people he loves and serves shows me we need what they have as much as they need what we have," Jim said. "We are stronger when we do it together."

**In a recent poem**, "The Trouble with Crosses," he wrote: "I've stood before the cross all my life. I thought I understood. I thought it was resurrection I didn't understand."

"I went to El Salvador to walk with the bishop until I understood what he was calling me to do. I'm still finding out," said Jim, who has joined Medardo's Church of the Resurrection.

While he was there, a death squad killed a guard at a university, as in the days of war. Medardo wailed. Jim felt helpless, but discovered la cruz subversiva—the subversive cross.

"**That cross was then born** in me," he said.

Medardo gave him wooden crosses made from houses destroyed by earthquakes. For Jim, these crosses carry "instructions to tell a living story."

Jim returned from a week-long June visit to El Salvador with an appeal for medicine, blankets, food and money to help people following hurricane damage there.

"**Dimes**," one of several poems he wrote in El Salvador, presents the story, which he feels entrusted to tell.

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# South African challenges American congregations

As a white South African, the Rev. Peter Storey knows about living in a bubble of privilege floating on a sea of poverty and resentment. He helped burst that bubble in South Africa—assisted by American churches.

Now he hopes churches in America, where he lives six months each year, will see ways their nation floats in a bubble on the sea of a troubled world.

He raised that image to challenge people in U.S. congregations to struggle with what their faith tells them about poverty and wealth, violence and non-violence, church-state relations and inclusion-exclusion dynamics.

In June, Peter spoke in Spokane for The Fig Tree's Faith in Action Dialogue.

Along with challenging the faith community here, he expressed gratitude for the challenge American Christians brought South Africans under apartheid.

**Having gone back and forth** since 1966, he said he has a lover's quarrel with the United States, which he believes has "so much to give the world."

Many of his visits were to seek help during the struggle against apartheid. American churches offered prayers, support and solidarity—both challenging and encouraging, he said, describing one example of solidarity:

The President of South Africa hated the South Africa Council of Churches and arranged a trial to prove that the SACC was a communist front, Peter said.

"Desmond Tutu as general secretary and I as president faced a tribunal in Pretoria. The court turned over every stone of our lives. Each question was grueling. It was intimidating to sit alone in a chair at a little table facing the tribunal for 20 hours," said Peter, retired bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

**At one hearing**, there was a commotion. Into the courtroom's public gallery came representatives of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope in Rome, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in the United States, the World Methodist Conference, the World Lutheran Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

They had flown to South Africa to be present and be witnesses for the world church. Suddenly, the tribunal knew it was taking on the church around the world.

"What an amazing act of solidarity," Peter said. "After that we knew we couldn't lose. Who can take on God's church?" he said.



Peter Storey, right, met with Austin DePaolo at Spokane's Martin Luther King Family Center.

Living and working at Duke University in Durham, N.C., he has many friends and considers Americans "genuinely good people who look out for neighbors and care about other people."

**In that context of respect**, he brings a challenge about the struggle he sees looming. He likens U.S. citizens to citizens of the Roman Empire, who enjoyed the spoils of Rome's resources from far away. Arts, sports and music flourished because of the empire's wealth. Some went to foreign places to garrison the empire, but those at home knew little about these places. Rome never lost. Citizens were confident Roman ways would spread and replace local cultures.

**Peter believes U.S. media** are pressured not to tell what is happening around the world. While CNN reports in America focus on America, CNN reports beamed to the world tell about the world and the impact of U.S. foreign policy, he said, describing one aspect of life in a bubble.

"There's a myth that your nation's foreign policy is moral, benign and filled with goodwill

because you are nice people," he said. "Relational dynamics between the U.S. and the rest of the world may be like dynamics in apartheid South Africa.

"Whites sucked from our country what we needed for our lifestyle, then the highest standard of living in the world. We left the majority of our citizens, who were black and whom we hardly cared to know, with no hope for a better life. We used their labor and resources, but preferred them to be invisible."

**White South Africans knew** little about the lives—let alone the real names—of the blacks who cleaned their homes and watched their children.

"They knew everything about us, every intimate detail, including the color of our undershorts.

"We couldn't do that forever without resentments growing," Peter said. "Eventually their resentments broke our bubble in South Africa, and we resorted, to no avail, to pre-emptive military strikes to protect our lifestyle."

For safety and security, white South Africans accepted having the state intrude into their private

lives and limit their civil rights.

"In the end, we had to come to terms with the real world and re-join the human race," he said.

**He and his wife**, Elizabeth, enjoy the bubble of comfort and convenience of living in America—with summer camps, school outings, weight loss, obsessive wellness, big cars, and TV commercials that promise "a new holy trinity of health, welfare and happiness," Peter observed.

"It's an amazing culture, but it's in a bubble, floating on the resources of the developing world, which is increasingly alienated. With more of the planet's resources and people beyond the bubble producing and processing for your needs, the U.S. Christmas depends on Chinese workers.

"Your culture is everywhere. People watch American TV shows on flickering screens in Katmandu," Peter said. "The world knows everything about you.

"There is an expectation that world affairs will serve interests

of those in the bubble. Those in the bubble are willing to wield military superiority against any attempt to upset this order and they construct myths of moral superiority, militaristic virtue and redemptive violence to maintain their power."

Peter saw the comfort and security of American society turned into a post-9/11 society, in which a terrorist act has replaced security with fear and insecurity.

"It's important for a country so poorly served by its media to hear about what is happening outside and know how people in the rest of the world experience America," he said. "It's a starting point for a long-overdue conversation between the powerful and the powerless, a conversation that depends on those in power listening to the powerless."

**He invites Americans to see** the rest of the world with new eyes and be present to the rest of the world in new ways.

Peter knows that, just as there were South Africans struggling against apartheid, there are many Americans who inspire the world, like several Duke divinity students recently commissioned to spend 10 weeks listening to people in Costa Rica and Haiti.

To make that happen on a large scale, he said people first must be aware of how good people can let institutions sin for them. While many white South Africans were kind, hospitable people under apartheid, they let their government commit racial sins and oppress, he said, advising: "Take care that your institutions are not sinning for you around the world in ways that would make you ashamed."

**Peter calls good-willed** Americans and people of faith to be part of a groundswell calling for "being strong in a different way," because "history shows no

*Continued on page 6*

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## Peter Storey experienced media repression and churchness' ways around it

With access to media outside the United States part of the year, Peter Storey wonders about the credibility of U.S. media.

He told about 200 people gathered at Central United Methodist Church for The Fig Tree's benefit breakfast and Faith in Action Dialogue during June that he and his wife, Elizabeth, spend extra money in the United States to have cable so they can watch the Canadian Broadcasting and British Broadcasting news.

"Otherwise we feel we are living in a news blackout," he said. "In South Africa, we learn more from our media about world news than U.S. media report.

"Networks want no more than 12 percent of evening news about the world. So American TV viewers think 88 percent of what happens in the world happens in the United States," said the former Methodist bishop of South Africa, who edited a Methodist newspaper, Dimension, and wrote a column on faith and values in a daily post-apartheid newspaper.

While some U.S. newspapers cover the world effectively, most Americans read local papers that lack international news, he said.

"Another problem is the takeover of many local papers by conglomerates, obsessed with the bottom line. So people follow the money, chasing Michael Jackson's trial rather than other stories."

Now many newsmakers and news writ-

ers have become celebrities and are now part of the ruling class, Peter added.

"Journalists used to be scruffy, low-income people, just making ends meet. Celebrity journalists are millionaires. So don't expect stories from them to reflect the struggle of people on the margins," he said. "Media reflect interests of the powerful, people less concerned about economic and political justice. The media were meant to hold the powerful accountable, but they now are the powerful with no one to hold them accountable.

"In South Africa, we had a tradition of advocacy journalism, which held the state accountable," he continued, "so no one in South Africa can claim not to have known what was happening. We had journalists of courage and integrity who, until the state silenced them, raised the issues."

One by one, syndicated papers under apartheid were brought to heel by: 1) pressure from advertisers, 2) a bullying government with 90 laws about what could or could not be said and 3) competing government-sponsored publications drawing advertisers with false claims.

"How to get around the 90 laws was a trick of the trade," Peter said.

Each month, he knew he might go to jail if he printed some reports. Newspapers were co-opted or silenced. The govern-

ment owned the TV station. That brought the birth of an alternative media.

Old staffers of the Rand Daily Mail—driven out of business by "competition"—started the Weekly Mail to continue their commitment to tell the truth. Then security officers grabbed the first copy off the press to try to ban it, Peter said.

Religious and ecumenical newspapers also made a contribution. Dimension, which reached 21,000 readers, resulted in the Methodist Church's being a banned organization for 10 years in the Transvaal.

"Many small papers had impact far beyond their circulation," he said.

Peter told of a top journalist from The Star newspaper in Johannesburg. He was irritated to be assigned to cover the South Africa Council of Churches, because the church was in the foreground of the struggle for liberation.

Later that reporter said he heard more sense, saw more people acting for transformation and found more hope there than at any political conference.

He rejoined the church and fought to hold the religion beat, because he realized that was where the true news was, Peter said. He later became the press person for Desmond Tutu and traveled with him.

Peter told of a meeting with former

President P.W. Botha, who questioned him and other religious leaders who went to confront him. Peter advised: "Mr. President, you need to listen carefully to what we church leaders are telling you, because we are where the people are—the little people, the suffering people, the people bruised and broken by your policies—and because we are not coming because we want your job."

Peter knows that when people and movements of faith let beliefs shape not only what they say but also what they do, that becomes news, because "it is transformational in a world that talks about transformation but hopes to high heaven that it will never happen."

He also knows that, "when we tell stories from God's little people with respect for their dignity, future, rights and needs, and when we do so for the sake of truth and justice, presidents should listen."

After apartheid, Peter began writing a column on faith and values in a new national newspaper. When asked how he became a columnist, he said he just went to the editor and asked what news he intended to include. Peter told the editor that more people were active in churches than would ever play one low-profile sport the editor planned to cover.

"I told him that there is need to tell how beliefs shape what people do and to offer alternatives to what media assume they need to do," Peter said.

## Former bishop calls for grappling with what faith says about four issues

Continued from page 5

empire survives by throwing its military weight around. Having U.S. bases in 200 countries will not save this empire. God has a way of humbling empires."

He asks people of faith to turn to God about subjects key to the future of nation and humankind.

"The world moves when ordinary people catch a vision of what God wants in love, compassion, truth and justice," he said, challenging churches to gather every week for six months or more and struggle with scriptures, God and each other on four issues:

1) **What does our faith say** about wealth, poverty and good news to the poor?

"Forget what political parties say. They tend to say the same thing. What does our faith say? There is a gap between what Jesus says and what politicians say," Peter said, telling about author and editor Jim Wallis asking university students to take a Bible and cut out everything it says about the poor. They were left with "a tattered ribbon of paper."

Peter knows how easy it is for people in comfort to lose touch with the poor.

When he first became bishop, he tried to continue as pastor of an inner-city Johannesburg church, but it became too much. When he decided to be bishop full-time, he moved up the hill to Civic Center Church.

"It was amazing how quickly I forgot what it was to live among

the poor. It was easy to live among the corporations," he said.

2) **What does our faith tell us** about violence and nonviolence, war and peace?

"We simply do not take God or scriptures seriously on this issue. Until we dig below the platitudes convincing us to justify war and look at theological truths and human consequences of war, we are not serious about our faith," he said.

3) **What is the relationship** of flag and altar, church and state? How do people of faith relate to Caesar? South African churches have a rule not to display their flag in any church, because it's Caesar's banner.

"It's not that we don't like the flag. The danger is we might like it too much," he said. "We were ashamed of our flag when it was stained with evils our regime committed, so we would not allow it in our churches.

"We still do not have our new, multicolored flag, that represents our freedom and democracy, in

our churches. While it had no stains at first, it is no longer unstained. People of faith need to decide where their first citizenship lies," he said.

4) **Whom do we include** and exclude?

"The hot-button issue around sexuality is tearing some faith communities apart, because some people want to include and others want to exclude. In every faith—Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist or Hindu—there are people with a tendency to a destructive fundamentalism.

"I used to think fundamentalism was about taking the Scriptures literally, but that's the cover. Fundamentalism is about who is in and who is out," Peter said. "Once you see yourself as the insider and others as outsiders, it's a short step to killing the outsider as an act of religion.

"When I stand before my Maker, I would rather be judged for having my arms too wide open and welcoming as a person of faith or citizen of a nation than to

have them crossed over my chest to keep people out," he said.

In love, Peter challenges: "Is it not possible that for once in history people in power might use

their power for the common good rather than for that strange, selfish thing called the national interest, under which a multitude of sins take place?"

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# Program uses Psalm 23 as basis for ending domestic violence

A Northwest-based abuse recovery ministry uses Psalm 23 as a tool to help women distinguish between submission to righteousness and submission to oppression.

Abuse Recovery Ministry and Services (ARMS) uses the psalm as the basis for a curriculum to encourage women find new ways to deal with abuse and develop prevention plans for daily life.

Ophelia Araujo-Islas, director of the Spokane ARMS, expands on the curriculum, sharing her journey from childhood abuse into unhealthy relationships, pregnancy at 15, cocaine and alcohol abuse, intravenous meth abuse, porn and strip clubs.

"The Christian community has its own culture and needs an interpreter to walk beside Christian women, to invite them to develop self-esteem, find purpose and live life victoriously," Ophelia said. "Secular approaches help, but God can take us the rest of the way. Christians have hope and tools for daily living."

Now she uses her painful experiences for God's glory, rather than to feed more pain.

"It's a package, experiencing trials and tribulations to help others experiencing trials and tribulations, so they know they can move to health," she said. "When I am alone now, I am not lonely, because I know God has a plan. I'm ready to speak truth to set captives free."

The flow and imagery of Psalm 23 remind women that the "Lord is their shepherd," Ophelia said. "God knows hearts and prepares 'green pastures' and 'still waters,' where we can release our anger and become restored and refreshed to follow God's lead on paths of righteousness."

The curriculum assures that God can heal depression for women "in the valley of the shadow of death," so they "fear no evil." They are never alone. God's "rod and staff" protect them and guide them to focus on their relationship with Christ rather than on their abusers.

Insights and assurance from the psalm call women to set limits to oppression, to take responsibility for choices and to let God lead them in a new direction.

The promise then is that God is "preparing a table" and will anoint them, leading them to forgive their enemies in their own time, according to the curriculum outline.

"God's way is goodness and mercy, anointing us so our 'cup overflows' and so 'goodness and mercy will follow' us," said Ophelia, who grew up with her mother's Seventh-Day Adventist teachings.

"Homeless, friendless and abused, I sought the Lord one day while driving. I wanted a friend, and accepted Jesus as my friend," she said. "When I fell back into smoking pot and drinking, howev-



Ophelia Araujo-Islas

er, I felt condemned and thought it would be hypocritical to say I loved God.

"I did not understand forgiveness and mercy, so I fell away. The demons came back seven times worse for another 10 years," she said, understanding the walk of women who are abused.

At a shelter in Portland, Ophelia was introduced to ARMS, which was started in 1997 by a pastor's daughter and mother of six children in Hillsboro, Ore.

Now there are 24 ARMS groups in Oregon and four in Northeast Washington—two in Spokane and one each in Wilbur and Davenport. In Portland, ARMS also has programs for perpetrators and youth.

For several years, Ophelia worked as a street evangelist in Portland, working with and praying for addicts and prostitutes with Victory Outreach. She also began to teach ARMS sessions there.

She moved to Spokane three years ago to help lead a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program with Victory Outreach. She led ARMS groups on the side.

"God said I should not be afraid to move forward," she said.

She opened the program in March at Hillyard Baptist Church, because the pastor, John Dotson, and associate pastor, Ron Ulmer, offered office space, and because she says the neighborhood has the most domestic violence calls in the state.

Ophelia began studies in sociology and completed a two-year

program, using ARMS for her work-study project. When her child died last September, she began attending Grace Harvest.

Since then, she has trained two facilitators to lead 15-week sessions—Charlotte Cozetto in Hillyard and Rebecca Harris in Davenport

"There are many hurting women who want to leave abusive relationships and do not know how to do it. They need tools to help them," Ophelia said. "Housing, finances and loneliness become barriers, as does a desire to stay with their children's father.

"Some Christian women believe divorce is not of God and think they should carry their cross as Jesus carried his cross," she said, "but Jesus died so we would have life in abundance.

"We walk people through anger to accept that forgiveness takes time and does not come until they are ready. Some women in the program are in denial and do not realize the impact of childhood abuse," she said. "So we help them understand the effects of abuse and help them realize that cars, jewelry and material things will not make them happy. Only God will make us perfect and happy.

"I am a vessel to help people. I

know God opens doors and God is the one who heals hearts, renews minds, gives financial blessings and makes the crooked path straight," she said.

Last spring, Ophelia prayed with a woman whose abuser took her child. "We fasted for three days, until the child was brought back," she said.

Ophelia knows the power of words and presence. Her mother, who came to the United States from Mexico, always told her she was beautiful and that she loved her. Sometimes in her struggles, she would call her mother just to hear that reminder.

"Words have the power of life and death. The Word of God came to give life, not death. If we use the Word of God to justify abuse, it's blasphemy.

"The curriculum is God's Word, speaking the 23rd Psalm into the lives of women," Ophelia said. "We seek to speak life and breathe into dry bones of people who have been abused, are spiritually dead, have no hope or dreams, may hate themselves and use alcohol and drugs to cover their pain.

"We let them know God has a plan for each of us. No one else tells women that they have worth and do not need to accept abuse—that there is a way out."

To tell them, Ophelia has to earn their trust and show them she understands, because she has walked in their shoes.

She networks with community agencies—such as a Hillyard pastors' group, the Domestic Violence Consortium, Ogden Hall, the Interfaith Council, the YWCA and other agencies that make referrals. She give presentations, leads sessions or goes to court as an advocate for women.

"Three million women in the U.S. are seen for ongoing treatment from domestic violence. A woman is beaten every nine sec-

onds. Many who seek to leave their abuser are killed. They are our mothers, sisters, aunts and daughters," she said.

"If 3 million people had a disease, it would be an epidemic, but it's 'just women'—coming to emergency rooms with stab wounds, strangulation injuries or sexual abuse," said Ophelia, who met such women when she was a Spanish interpreter in an emergency room in Portland.

"I want women's lives to be filled with laughter, smiles, playing with children, education and financial prosperity," said Ophelia, who wants to offer classes in Spanish, too.

"I want to see justice, to see people treat people as equals," she said. "Much comes from injustices in society. The system is not set up to help women coming out of abuse deal with its emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dynamics. Many are not emotionally ready to work. Many are grieving.

"We need a more compassionate system," she said. "Stereotypes hinder progress, too," said Ophelia, who offers both words of assurance and the example of her life turned around.

For information, call 484-0600 or email ophelia@armsonline.org.



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# Taizé prayer leads people inward and moves them back outward

Continued from page 1

Brother Roger and the community in a firm faith in the Resurrection, we recommit ourselves to the communion to which he bore witness in life and death."

**Gail Stearns**, director of the Common Ministries in Higher Education at Koinonia House at Washington State University in Pullman, saw Brother Roger in 2004, when she took 10 students there with the Rev. Robert Hicks, United Methodist campus minister.

"Brother Roger, who came to evening services, was frail and preparing for his successor, but what a horrible way for his life to end," she said.

Koinonia House began the semester's weekly Taizé services at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 28 at Simpson United Methodist Church in Pullman.

**Robert also visited Taizé** in May with five students and the Rev. Kristine Zakarison of Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pullman. He found Brother Roger more frail.

"We are restructuring the Common Ministry, which includes six denominations, to offer a Taizé worship configured around simplicity and reconciliation," said Robert, whose father, also a United Methodist pastor, was interested in mystics and contemplative prayer. "That background made him receptive to the balance of contemplative prayer, an inward journey and outward action. My father was involved in the civil rights movement, sponsoring boat people after the Vietnam War and setting up a refugee center—all balanced with prayer."

Robert said the Vatican embraced Taizé in the 1960s, and the Eastern Orthodox in the 1970s.

Every day, Catholics celebrate the Eucharist at a 7:30 a.m. Mass in the crypt under the Church of Reconciliation, said Kristine, who attended and was served. The elements consecrated by the priest are served in the communion service for everyone.

"Some Catholics receive that. Other pilgrims share only the bread of fellowship, so everyone can experience part of the common table," Robert said. "Those over 30 separate from the young people, attending the same worship, but sitting on the side."

Robert said Taizé brothers consider it a miracle that 3,000 to 6,000 come each week with no promotion on their part.

"The students appreciated the music, but said nothing compared to the power of the silence," he



The Rev. Kristine Zakarison of Pullman, second from left, meets with a group of women from around the world at Taizé in May.

said. "It's the gift of Taizé worship. Worshipers are invited to center and focus, closing their eyes to meditate without distraction of candles or images."

Chants were once in Latin and French, but now monks and pilgrims sing in many languages.

"We use many languages in our services" Robert said. "Singing in another language helps us enter into prayer for reconciliation for the world. As we repeat a song 10 to 15 times, our bodies enter the cadence, we forget the words and experience their meaning."

"Music seems to happen magically, because the leaders, cantors and musicians are not in front. The brothers may leave between 8:30 and 9 p.m., but many stay after midnight, singing or sitting in silence in the candlelight. A cycle of rhythm and silence spirals worshipers into the depths of prayer."

At Simpson United Methodist in Pullman, people can sit in pews or on the floor. At Taizé, there are no pews. The Church of the Reconciliation has expanded over the years. Walls can be closed in the winter, so worship is cozy for 200 pilgrims or expanded for 6,000.

At the Saturday evening candlelight service, monks pass out thin tapers that do not drip and have a notch cut above the base. The candlelight flows from front to back, creating a growing sense of light that lasts 10 minutes, with candles extinguishing on their own, creating a growing wave of darkness from front to back.

When pilgrims come, they sign up for chores, because there is no paid staff, said Robert. His group volunteered to clean the toilets.

"We thought it would be an appropriate witness for Americans to do that in the international community," he said. "Doing

menial labor, we see the connection between worship and serving each other."

Kristine said that monks told them that they could return to their communities all over the world and do Taizé worship, but that would not be "taking Taizé with you." To take Taizé with them meant going back to their communities, *looking for* the broken places and working to make reconciliation occur.

"Then we would be taking the spirit of Taizé back," she said.

With the decline of ecumenical relations in recent years in the Pullman area, Kristine and Robert hope the Taizé gatherings for college and high school students and the community will inspire churches to find each other again and will spark engagement in common mission.

"It's hard to sustain work for causes by meeting around a table. Taizé begins with an inner experience of God's affirming love, moves us to Brother Roger's simple theology of God's affirming love in our lives," Robert said.

Along with the Taizé gatherings in Pullman, the Common Ministry will offer classes on spiritual life and contemplative prayer.

**The Rev. Dennis Andersen**, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Otis Orchards, first became acquainted with Taizé worship at Holden Village, which holds weekly meditative services. He has long had an interest in contemplative prayer.

"With our emphasis on the Word, we Protestants have a slow time with contemplative prayer and silence. To many it seems that nothing is happening," said Dennis, who has offered Taizé services for his congregations during Lent, particularly for youth.

**Diane Shiner**, director of Holden Village, said, "We have adapted and used a Taizé-like service every Friday night since 1995. We have named this Vespers service "Prayer Around the Cross" and have created several adaptations of a basic format of quiet chanting of repetitive songs, many from Taizé; individual intercessory, healing or meditative prayer, and candle lighting around the cross in a darkened worship space."

Holden has compiled a booklet, "Prayer Around the Cross: A Handbook to the Liturgy," of

seven sample services with music resources and other information, available at the Holden Village Bookstore or from its website [www.holdenvillage.org](http://www.holdenvillage.org).

"Holden is always a place of retreat, learning, and intentional Christian community. At any given time, there are almost always a few people here who have also been to Taizé," said Diane.

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# Taizé commitment to reconciliation will outlive its founder

Brother Roger Schutz, 90, founder of the Taizé community in southeastern France, died on Aug. 16 of stab wounds inflicted during the evening worship service attended by 2,500 people.

A Romanian woman, whom authorities consider mentally unstable, stabbed him in the neck. He died immediately. Onlookers detained her. She is in custody.

The community has appointed 51-year-old Brother Alois, a German Roman Catholic whom he designated as his successor.

Taizé, a community and movement, builds ecumenical reconciliation and dialogue among Christians—Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox—and promotes love, peace and justice.

From early spring to late autumn, 3,000 to 6,000 young people from 75 countries gather each week at Taizé in Burgundy, 240 miles from Paris, discovering a new sense of communion.

Today the community consists of more than 100 brothers—Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Evangelicals and other Protestants, from more than 25 nations.

As a 25-year-old Swiss Reformed minister, Brother Roger left Switzerland and bought a small house in the village of Taizé to begin with three others a community where they would live Christian reconciliation daily.

They asked the Catholic bishop to use the village church. It was such an unusual request that the bishop referred it to Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, who was later Pope John XXIII. The archbishop gave his consent and became a friend of the new community.

Located a few miles from a demarcation line dividing France in two during the early years of World War II, Brother Roger was able to hide refugees, particularly Jews, in the house.

After the war, others joined them, and on Easter Day, 1949, the first brothers made a commitment to celibacy, community possessions, and simplicity.

From the 1950s on, some brothers went to Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe to be a presence of love among the poor, street children, prisoners, the dying, and those who are wounded by broken relationships and abandonment.

Taizé became a popular pilgrimage place for young people from across Europe and around the world. They come for "an inner pilgrimage" that encourages them to build relationships and then return home to take responsibility to make the world a better place to live. By the 1960s, when tens of thousands began coming each year, the community built the Church of Reconciliation.

World Catholic News reported that Pope John Paul II first met Brother Roger at the Second Vatican Council, where Brother Roger was invited as a non-Catholic ex-



Brother Roger Schutz, founder of Taizé, died Aug. 16.

Photo by S Leutenegger

pert. As a Polish archbishop, the future pope visited Taizé twice.

The Catholic News Agency commented that, although not Catholic, Brother Roger was closely associated with the Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II esteemed him and his community. The two were long-time friends.

In April at the funeral Mass for Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—now Pope Benedict XVI—served Brother Roger communion, making an exception to the rule that Protestants cannot take the Catholic Eucharist, according to these Catholic news agencies.

In May, a Taizé monk told Kristine Zakarison of Pullman that Brother Roger was one of the first persons Pope Benedict XVI served Eucharist, because of his "commitment to reconciliation and his humanitarian service."

"Even as an individual in a group of 5,000, I personally felt embraced by his living presence of reconciliation and his call to work for reconciliation, to walk the walk, to step beyond boundaries," she said.

Associated Press reported that Pope Benedict said Brother Roger had written him, expressing his desire to come to Rome to meet him and to tell him how "the community of Taizé intends to walk in communion with the pope."

The internet shared comments of leaders about Brother Roger:

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, head of the Church of England, described him as "one of the best-loved Christian leaders of our times."

President Jacques Chirac praised him as "one of the most remarkable servants of the values of respect and tolerance."

The head of the Roman Catholic Conference of French Bishops, Bordeaux Archbishop Jean-Pierre Ricard, said Brother Roger "often met with the youth of the world to teach them to bear witness to the transforming power of love."

The World Council of Churches leadership expressed its grief in a letter of condolence from acting general secretary Geneviève Jacques: "Brother Roger died as he lived, praying at the center of his community. His witness to the gospel and to ecumenical dialogue has been enormously influential."

She praised his "unceasing search for authentic ecumenical dialogue" which reached across "institutional barriers."

"Thousands of people, young and not so young, have found in the Taizé community a unique place of spiritual refreshment and openness to others through listening to the word of God.

"Under his spiritual leadership, the Taizé community has offered a model that integrates praising God by living out liturgical renewal together with practical

solidarity towards those who are most deprived.

"We pray that those who witnessed the violent death may find the strength to continue the struggle to overcome violence in our world. We also pray for the woman responsible for this fatal act, that through the grace of God her life may be transformed," Geneviève said.

General Secretary Bob Edgar of the U.S. National Council of Churches said: "Brother Roger and the Taizé Community ministered to millions, offering a model of living and worship that brings us closer to each other and God.

He said Taizé prayers and hymns are common in U.S. congregations, and Americans are responding to their messages of peace, reconciliation and spirituality: "Tens of thousands of American congregations hold

regular Taizé prayer services and sing the songs.

"The violent nature of his passing is appalling, and makes it all the more essential for us to embrace the Taizé message," Bob said.

The Taizé community's website—www.taize.fr—said: "In the face of violence, we can respond only by peace. Brother Roger never stopped insisting on this. Peace requires a commitment of our whole being, inwardly and outwardly. It demands our whole person."

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## Stories of ordinary people delve into the depths of extraordinary acts

Ordinary people, swimming with or against the tides of their times, have extraordinary impact.

Few may have heard of Peter Storey, but he faithfully traveled between the United States and South Africa as one of many who helped end apartheid.

Not enough knew of Brother Roger Schutz of Taizé for mainstream U.S. media to give his murder much attention, but the Cardinal turned new Pope respected his impact on reconciliation to the point he served the Protestant Eucharist.

Similarly, Sister Elaine Thaden, Sister Marie Monica Borden and other Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, and Ophelia Araujo-Islas, and Jim Bodeen quietly persist in healing wounds in individuals, often wounds arising from injustices.

The many other shorter articles in this issue convey the same story.

We hope the words in Fig Tree media result in people phoning people and making personal connections that add to the impact

of those who seek to make a difference. We hope stories of people putting their faith into action generate more people putting faith into action.

We need an alternative voice so the voice of ordinary people will be heard—not just the voices of those politically, socially, economically or corporately popular. We assume from mass media that the only relevant voices are those media promote.

Sometimes working late nights at the computer at The Fig Tree deadline seems lonely, but the stories of people we cover energize me as editor.

There is more demand for our services—more article ideas than we can cover in 12 pages 10 times a year. More and more people know about the Fig Tree and call our office. More churches send us their newsletters. More agencies call with article ideas. They see what we are doing and want to share their stories, trusting we can tell those stories.

In our society, we are inundated with

information, but most of the information is reported in a way that leaves us wanting more—good for media income. The quantity does not provide the context, reflection or connection of ideas with action and hope for resolution of unresolved conflicts.

Our news of the ordinary is news because it is unusual to cover in a way that engages us in a new level of public discourse.

For example, it's amazing that someone prominent and influential in religious circles was almost ignored by mainstream media. Brother Roger's work moving people beyond the barriers of theology, tradition, worship style, communion and justice was experienced by millions of everyday youth as well as religious leaders.

Youth could see his eyes a window into God's spirit. As Benjamin Decker, a 19-year-old apprentice from Cologne who visited Taizé five months ago said: "Brother Roger was old but incredibly alert. There was an astonishing calm and gentleness that emanated from him. You saw it in his

shining eyes, and could recognize it came straight from his heart." Brother Roger was an ordinary person who touched lives without the media spotlight.

Pullman pastor Kristine Zakarison, who was at Taizé in May, said monks said that "to carry Taizé back to their communities" pilgrims must find the places of broken relationships and work to build reconciliation in the midst of our troubled world.

As we in The Fig Tree share such stories, we hope to share in their commitment to make a difference in the lives of people and the life of the world, so that we might have more peace, more love, more faithfulness, more justice, more truth and more reconciliation.

We know there are more stories to tell in more ways to more people in more parts of the Northwest, so we continue to bring faith in action voices to a new level, to remind people they are part of a larger community working together to heal the world.

**Mary Stamp - Editor**

## How do the culture wars, hate, oil and poverty feed terrorism?

Sept. 11, 2001, lingers interminably in the minds and hearts of Americans. Media images repeat it. So some people continue to wonder: Why do those extremists in al Qaida hate us with such intensity that they plowed suicide planes into the heart of Manhattan?

Such images and questions continue to feed a "blame game," as suicide bombings against our occupying forces in Iraq have become more frequent.

Then come the nagging questions: Why Iraq? Why are we there? Our search for weapons of mass destruction revealed no nascent terrorist activities in Iraq. In fact, our presence there may have drawn those who hate from around the world to fight us there.

Some terrorists say they hate us because of our involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or because of our insatiable desire for continued flow of oil from the Middle

East. Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran are now targeted. Our attempts to "democratize the region," beginning with Iraq, have further incite anger.

The capture of Saddam Hussein received widespread approval of both the Western world and the Middle East—with the exception of the Sunni triangle in Iraq. However, our liberation efforts in the area received mixed support.

The 2003 incursions of our forces into the heart of Baghdad also generated increased hatred.

Our declaration of pre-emptive war has been deemed illegal by the United Nations and much of the world.

The war is increasingly unpopular at home with a toll of nearly 1,900 soldiers killed, plus tens of thousands wounded and countless innocent Iraqi civilians killed. The war continues with no end in sight.

Thoughtful assessment of the war in Iraq

concludes that, in reality, hate is indeed also part of the culture war—both theirs and ours.

We maintain in the United States that our "way of life" is threatened. Our government repeats this on occasion.

Oil, however, is a linch-pin in the culture wars. Government officials say that any disruption in the flow of oil is a "peril to the United States." Most consider the flow of oil essential for our prosperity, military supremacy, economic stability and even our religious freedom.

Some believe our Christian ideals suffer when our "way of life," and the forces that feed it, are not present.

Muslim spiritual dynamic presents a different culture, but leaders have denounced terrorism and excommunicated terrorists.

Most Muslim clerics believe there is a common thread of "goodness" in both the Qur'an and our Bible—expressing the

voice of Allah/God in churches and synagogues, as well as mosques.

Many clerics and mullahs, however, resent the infiltration of a western "pop culture," which has been characterized as "lewd and hedonistic."

Many Christians are offended, too, but think limiting free speech for the pop culture might extend to their free speech.

As the military and culture wars go on, they intensify poverty in the Middle East, worldwide and in our own country. The gap between the "have-nots" and the "have-a-lots" has reached new heights.

As we work for peace, shalom, salaam, we have many questions as terrorist acts continue, stirring a cycle of fear, desire for security, economic oppression and limits to civil rights.

How will we as average Americans, as people of faith, use our influence?

**Jo Hendricks - Contributing editor**

Newsletter Excerpts

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**In Genesis, God reveals** that we are different within God's created order, given the task to have dominion over creation. In those same verses, there is something else that stands parallel but is often missed.

We were also created dependent on the creation we have dominion over. Look at the order of things and see how dependent we are. Each thing God created before us doesn't need us. If we were not to exist, creation would get along fine, but if one of the previously created acts dies or disappears, we are done for. We are dependent on everything created before us.

**The Rev. Matt Goodrich**  
American Lutheran – Newport

**We cannot, we must not,** separate what our faith tells us from the reality of daily life. Old Testament prophets Amos, Micah, Joel and Hosea were addressing the political and economic power people of their day, challenging the policies that allowed the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. They called it a justice issue. God stands beside the poor and oppressed when they are being run over by those in power. The prophets challenged the kings to be responsible to protect the rights of all citizens.

Jesus stood for those who were marginalized by the political and religious leadership and their rules.

He gave hope to those who felt they were not good enough—women, tax collectors, sinners and lepers. He challenged the Pharisees' elitist attitudes.

Faith in God has practical applications. We do not live our faith in isolation, but in

community. What about the homeless, or people who can't afford health care, utilities, fuel, food and medicine? Are policies today much different than in Amos' time?

**The Rev. David Helseth**  
Englewood Christian – Yakima

**Being confronted with** a life-or-death need to know one's mission would force many of us to reexamine who we are, what we're about and how we live our lives. It would save immeasurable amounts of money, time, tears, debates and heartache.

Why wait for such a time? Now is the time to ponder and act. What would become of the church, our community and God's world if we all stopped waiting for the threat of dire predictions before we honor our true reason for being?

Absenteeism would drop. Productivity would soar. Joy would be scattered with abandon. Leaders would be forced to exchange rhetoric for real and meaningful action. Church members would proclaim the gospel more through their lives than their lips. People who linger in the shadows of oppression would burst into the sunlight of empowerment.

**The Rev. Tammy Bell**  
First Congregational United Church of Christ – Colville

**God's loving presence** cannot be earned, won or purchased. God's grace or favor is unconditional. Even when that love is revealed in unique ways in personal lives—even to the point of the miraculous—it is gift.

Nothing in Jesus' ministry hints that the faithful need to go through any material, emotional or psychological contortions to receive God's salvation. Jesus angrily confronts the self-serving and guilt-creating mentality discovered in the Pharisees of his day who tried to tie grace to the detailed performance of some action.

The believer does not need to manipulate God. God cannot be so moved. God's favor cannot be won, earned or forced. What freedom there is in that!

**The Rev. Michael Savelesky**  
Assumption Catholic Church  
The Inland Register

**In face of daily news** from Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, London and Sudan, it is hard to remember the power of God to conquer evil. Evil seems to be running the world.

So it is hard to read the prayer of Desmond Tutu of South Africa: "Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate; light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death; victory is ours through Jesus who loved us."

Living Christian life is rarely easy. There are always going to be people who hurt us or try to take advantage of us.

There is evil in this world that leaves us troubled and worried for the safety of those we love. It is in fact easier to move into hatred and to use violence in an attempt to protect ourselves.

I am not talking just physical violence, but also the spiritual and mental violence of words we use to build ourselves up while tearing others apart.

Bishop Tutu's prayer reminds me that I live in Christ, who is the light of the world. This truth gives me courage to live out God's love, to trust in God's ability to overcome adversity, including physical death, with life.

**The Rev. Ginny Johnson**  
St. Paul Lutheran Church – Quincy

**We are created and claimed** by God. We are God's witnesses in this time and place, so how are we doing? What do we not want to explain before God?

- Why we helped or gave only to people who seemed deserving.
- Why we spent more time itemizing others' faults than improving our own.
- Why we spent more time watching TV than praying.
- Why we spent more days worrying about our health than visiting the sick.
- Why we did nothing for the need of another when we could have helped.
- Why in our grief we assumed God was out to get us rather than to love us.
- Why we had a close relationship with Jesus and didn't need other people.
- Why we longed for love but didn't give much away.

Why not do something to change now? We forget about the sea of grace washing around us. We sometimes think that our little lives are hidden from God, that God is too busy to notice every little thing. We are given life and love to pass around, to share and to enjoy.

**The Rev. Deb Allen**  
United Church of Christ – Newport

## Shop displays 'Holy Land Art'

On Sacred Grounds: Coffee, Tea & Specialty Shoppe in Steam Plant Square at 163 S. Lincoln in Spokane is committed to present art that is pleasant to the eye and pleasing to the heart, soul and mind, said Elaine Rising, owner.

The featured artist for Sept. 1 to 30 is Bassam Al Hayek, a Palestinian Christian. His show,

## CROP Walk income rises

The Spokane-Cheney CROP Walk raised \$31,343, the highest amount in its 27-year history, said Linda Carter of Church World Service in Seattle.

Sunnyside raised \$4,401, more than four times the amount raised in its previous walk.

Milton-Freewater raised \$4,330 in its 15<sup>th</sup> CROP Walk, making a total of \$75,565 raised over the years with \$19,000—25 percent—returned to the community for hunger relief.

Random Fairchild, a 12-year-old Boy Scout, raised more than a third of the \$1,786 raised in the Prosser-Grandview walk. Emmaus Lutheran in Grandview, gave Lenten offerings for him.

Fall CROP Walks scheduled include Wenatchee on Saturday, Oct. 8; Pullman-Moscow on Sunday, Oct. 9, and the Yakima Valley on Saturday, Oct. 15.

For information, call (888) 297-2767.

## Wisdomworks plans two events

Suzanne Zoglio, author, motivational speaker, executive coach and life-balance consultant, will give two presentations in Coeur d'Alene during September.

She will speak to the business community on "Managing your Energy for Optimal Performance!" from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Friday, Sept. 23, at the Best Western Coeur d'Alene Inn and Conference Center on Appleway and Highway 95.

She is also author of *Recharge in Minutes: the Quick-Lift Way to Less Stress, More Success*.

Wisdomworks, a non-profit organization working with businesses to develop positive energy in the workplace, is sponsoring the event with the Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce.

Suzanne will also speak to the general public from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Sept. 24, at St. Pius Catholic Church on the theme of her book, *Create a Life that Tickles Your Soul*.

For information, call 208-667-7562 or visit [www.wisdomworks.com](http://www.wisdomworks.com).

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"Holy Land Art," includes pencil and color drawings, woodcarvings and Orthodox icons.

As part of the shop's Artists in Action series, Father Bill O'Brien from Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church will demonstrate iconography from 6 to 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 2. There will also be a reception for Bassam from 5 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 3.

For information call 747-6294.

## Jewish Film Festival scheduled in Spokane

The Spokane Area Jewish Family Services is presenting "Spokane Jewish Film Festival 2005," featuring seven showings of three films Sunday to Tuesday, Sept. 18 to 20, at the Gonzaga University School of Law, 721 N. Cincinnati.

"The Ninth Day" tells of a Catholic priest released in 1942 from Dachau—where he was held for opposing Nazi racial law—and given nine days to convince the

Bishop of Luxembourg to cooperate with Nazi occupiers. It will be shown at 3 p.m., Sunday, 8 p.m., Monday and 6 p.m., Tuesday.

"Promises" follows an Israeli-American filmmaker from 1995 to 2000 to a Palestinian refugee camp, an Israeli settlement in the West Bank and neighborhoods of Jerusalem where he meets seven Palestinian and Israeli children

who live 20 minutes apart, but in separate worlds. It shows at 5 p.m., Sunday and 8 p.m., Tuesday.

"Broken Wings" is a bittersweet comedy about an Israeli family in Haifa, struggling to persevere in the aftermath of the father's sudden death. It shows at 7 p.m. Sunday and 6 p.m. Monday.

For information, call 747-7394.

## Calendar of Events

- Sept 1-30** • "Holy Land Art" by Bassam al Hayek, p. 11
- Sept 1, 15** • PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept 6** • School of the Americas Watch, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.
- Northwest Equality, 508 W. 2nd, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept 8** • "Jesus' Table Manners," Catholicism in the New Millennium Lecture, p. 2 and p. 7
- Sept. 9-11** • Taizé Weekend at Camp Cross - call 624-3191
- Sept 10** • Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning Lay Certificate program begins, p. 8
- Sept 11-18** • Habitat for Humanity Building on Faith Week, p. 3
- Sept 12** • "The Millennium Goals," United Nations Association, p. 2
- Sept 13** • VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept 18-20** • Jewish Film Festival, p. 11
- Sept 20** • International Day of Peace, Interfaith Council, p. 2 and p. 4
- Sept 21** • Carol Coletta, "How Can Spokane Become a 'Smart City'?" Spokane City Forum Fund-Raising Luncheon, Spokane First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m. - call 777-1155
- Sept 22** • Life Services' Fund-Raising Dessert, p. 9
- Sept 23** • 'Polarization in the Church and Community,' St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 7:30 p.m.
- Crosswalk 20th Anniversary Street Fair on Howard, p. 2
- Sept 23-25** • Wild Rockies Rendezvous," The Land's Council - call 838-4912
- Sept 23,24** • Suzanne Zoglio presentations in Coeur d'Alene, p. 11
- Sept 24** • National Protest the War Day Rally, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Federal Building on Riverside & Monroe, 11 a.m. and moves to Northbank Shelter at Riverfront Park for speakers and music until 3 p.m. - call 838-7870
- Thin Air Movie Night, "A Patriot Act," 35 W Main, 7:30 p.m.
- Taizé service, St. Stephen's Episcopal, 5720 S. Perry, 7 p.m.
- Sept 25** • Caring for Kids Benefit, p. 3
- Sept 27** • Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Open Member Meeting - call 838-7870
- Sept 29** • Washington Association of Churches 30th Anniversary with Jim Wallis, p. 3
- Oct 1** • Mennonite Country Auction, p. 3
- Oct 2** • Immaculate Heart Retreat Center Octoberfeast & Auction, p. 5
- Oct 5** • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- Oct 6** • Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
- Oct 8** • CROP Walk in Wenatchee
- Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Day of Prayer and Dialogue on 150th anniversary of their order, p. 1 and p. 12
- Oct 9** • CROP Walk in Pullman-Moscow
- Oct 15** • CROP Walk in Yakima Valley
- Tues-Sats** • Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays** • Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats** • Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- Sundays** • Taizé classes on contemplative prayer, 6:30 p.m., worship, 7:30 p.m., Simpson United Methodist in Pullman - call 332-2611

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News & Public Affairs



# Following Francis is more about practice than doctrine

Two Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia recently described their lives in community, seeking to "walk in Jesus' footprints" and follow Francis' style of gospel living, "risking to be a healing, compassionate presence in a violent world."

Sister Elaine Thaden, director of St. Joseph Family Center in Spokane, and Sister Marie Monica Bordon, intake therapist, said following Francis is more practice and approach than doctrine.

There are more than 700 Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and "probably 700 ways to live the spirit of St. Francis and Clare," said Sister Marie Monica, who grew up in the Yakima Valley and first met Franciscan sisters during high school studies in Pendleton. They inspired her to commit her life to work in the church.

"We are Gospel driven, but individuals, seeking to follow what Jesus did, living a cycle of prayer and intimacy with God" that drives us "to justice and caring for the poor, especially women and children," she said.

That relationship permeates her relationship with other sisters living in community and with people she served as a teacher and school administrator in Oregon, Washington, California and Wyoming.

After earning a degree in counseling in Eugene in 1972, she led formation for women entering the community, retiring three years ago to volunteer at St. Joseph, where is first to listen to clients' stories to match them with the most suitable therapist.

Sister Elaine, who has been director at St. Joseph Family Center for three years, was drawn by the sense of sisterhood and Francis' charisma—his understanding of "the relationship of all of creation and of all people of all nations as brothers and sisters."

For her, life as a Franciscan sister is about radical living of Gospel life—committed to the poorest of the poor, the most marginalized people of society, and committed to establishing peace and justice, in ministries in the United States, Caribbean, Central America, Europe and Africa.

"St. Francis' peace prayer is a favorite. It expresses how we balance contemplative living and active service," said Sister Elaine, who was principal at St. Charles' Elementary School and at All Saints Middle School, and worked at St. Anne's Infants and Maternity Home in Spokane in the 1970s, before she spent nine years doing spiritual direction and formation for laity, religious and



Sister Maria Monica Bordon and Sister Elaine Thaden

priests in Zambia. She was also in education ministry for 25 years in California and Oregon.

In a Tacoma high school taught by Franciscans, Sister Elaine was impressed and attracted by the community and simplicity of the young sisters who taught her.

From first grade at a Benedictine grade school, she knew she wanted to be a sister. So she entered the novitiate out of high school and completed college studies at Marylhurst, a Holy Names college near Portland.

At St. Joseph Family Center, she oversees a staff of 22 who provide holistic services in counseling, spirituality and body therapies. Individual, family and child counseling are growing. About 53 percent of clients are on the sliding scale or fee assistance.

Recent cuts in Medicaid are resulting in more referrals of people who would have nowhere else to go, Sister Elaine said.

St. Joseph Center has 250 to 300 monthly client visits, more than 3,000 a year. Counselors see 38 new clients a month, a 15 percent in recent months. So they will add more staff and services.

People coming are depressed,

anxious, facing the run of mental health issues, family issues and abuse.

"Helping them heal strengthens the whole community," Sister Elaine said.

Sister Marie Monica added that counseling strengthens people for their daily journeys, so they are healthier and better able to deal with injustices they face.

"We help people heal themselves. We do not heal them," she clarified.

Both value living in community, sharing all in common and a daily schedule with time for community and personal prayer.

The five sisters living at St. Joseph's, at 1016 N. Superior, dine together every evening. Often dinner conversations go on and on into the evening.

"We live a cycle of prayer and intimacy with God, but need to be in relationship," said Sister Marie Monica. "My prayer time is less about words and more quiet, listening, being in the presence of God. I believe that: 'Bidden or not bidden, God is present.'"

"Even when I am not thinking of God, I know God is present. God knows me in prayer and in

my life doing God's work. With our human foibles and limitations, we can move forward because there is goodness in everyone, even in the worst of us," Sister Marie Monica affirmed.

Sister Elaine summed up her understanding of Franciscan spirituality, saying: "God is goodness and everything is gift. Our ministry here conveys that understanding through the way we are, the way we interact as staff and the way we treat people who come to us."

"Those who come enrich us as we enrich them. We receive in giving," she said. "All people we serve are gifts to us as we are to be gift to them. We are to give respect, whether to men in anger or someone depressed. Each person is still a gift."

Although Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia sponsor the center and have worked there for 115 years, staff includes Sufi, Jewish, Catholic and other Christians.

"So clients of all belief systems are comfortable about our services as we seek to make them whole," she said, "healing body, mind, emotion and spirit."

Sister Elaine described other local ministries in which Sisters of St. Francis have been partners:

- Transitional Programs for Women, which began as Miryam's

House of Transition in 1986, a long-term residential program for women seeking to recover from abuse, addiction and displacement includes a women's drop-in center and a transitional home. The Franciscans are co-sponsors with the Dominican Sisters of Spokane, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and the Sisters of Providence.

• In the 1970s, Sister Florence Leone, OSF, established Kairos House of Prayer on 27 acres of wooded land at 1714 W. Stearns Rd. It is a contemplative community with a rhythm of prayer, work and study, offering a place for centering meditation, relaxation, Buddhist meditation, breathing techniques, yoga and other forms of meditation.

• In 1951, the order opened St. Charles Parish School and had sisters there through the 1980s.

• Seven administrators of the Catholic Charities' St. Anne's Children's Home—from its beginning to 1943 to 1983—were Sisters of St. Francis. It first provided daycare for children whose mothers worked in defense plants. Then it sheltered orphans awaiting adoption and unwed pregnant women. In 1994, services evolved to providing childcare and early childhood education.

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