



## The Power and Effect of Ecumenical Prayer

Editor's Note: In the previous InterACT the ecumenical relations subcommittee of the Spiritual Life Committee posted two articles by Protestants (Doug Schoeninger and Catherine Hunter) that presented the challenge of being open to the positions of denominations other than our own and a presentation of a Protestant's view of their communion service as remembering the Lord's Supper. Our focus was on accepting our different gifts as God's filling out the fullness of Christ's message. We asked for feed-back from the membership to see if this approach has been helpful for opening ACTheals to valuing the gifts of our members of different denominations. Our final Protestant and Catholic Sunday services in the Orlando IC seemed well-attended, so perhaps we are growing in valuing each others charisms.

Still, the lack of feed-back on our InterACT articles made us wonder if looking at differences first was the most effective way to unite us. A rephrasing of our "Invitation to Ecumenical Unity" focused first on what we have in common – our gifts of healing – as perhaps a better approach, since when we value each other's gifts and how they enrich us, we are more likely to want to get to know each other better and to know the faith traditions that have nourished our spiritual gifts. It was with that in mind that we offer the following short reflection by Renee Lavitt, who found herself blessed by the predominantly Mennonite prayer group of her new residence.

by Renee Lavitt

Recently my husband and I moved into a seniors' residence. It is very nice and is run by a Mennonite denomination. We are Roman Catholics and have been well received. They have a Spiritual Life Coordinator who recently has organized a prayer gathering every Monday afternoon. She was unable to attend several weeks ago, but some of the participants still wanted to gather. The members of the group are predominantly Mennonite. I am the only Catholic in the group, though there may be other denominations. We gathered and decided we would pray for one another's needs. This is not done at the usual meetings; they are usually general prayer intentions.

There was a woman whose daughter had been waiting for a liver transplant in

Toronto. She was at the head of the waiting list, but had developed a problem and was moved to the bottom of the list. We prayed for her and the very next day, she was returned to the top of the list and went on to have the transplant. We have kept her in our prayers. She developed pneumonia, but has recovered and has overcome some other problems and is now doing well.

Another woman who was at the meeting suffers from Pulmonary Fibrosis and has difficulty breathing. We prayed with her, but there was no apparent change in her breathing. The next day, however, she told us that when she returned to her suite, she felt a weight being lifted and her breathing became considerably better. So, coming together in spite of our differences had a remarkable result. We all worship the same God and trust in His love and mercy.



Renee Lavitt



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The vision of ACTheals is to be an international, ecumenical association of Christian healthcare professionals, clergy, and associates equipped and extending the healing presence, heart, and mind of Jesus Christ to their patients, clients, colleagues, and institutions, under the power and guidance the Holy Spirit.

The mission of ACTheals is to provide resources and support to enable healthcare professionals, clergy, and associates to: 1) Personally experience the healing power of Jesus Christ; 2) Integrate their professional skills, spiritual development, healing ministry, and theological understanding; and 3) Extend the healing presence, heart, and mind of Jesus Christ through their work and ministry.

We invite your comments/suggestions, written thoughts, or submissions. We reserve the right to edit submitted articles without notice. Your name can be withheld by request in *InterACT*, but must be included with a contact phone or email when your article is submitted. We also request that a current digital "headshot" photo of you accompany your submission.

**The next deadline for *InterACT* is  
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# President's Letter

by Denise Dolff, M.A.

As we look forward to the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, I encourage us to be both expectant and excited about what lies ahead. The challenges of the past year, precipitated by the decision to become better stewards of our resources in response to our declining membership, are beginning to pale as we experience the first fruits of our year's labour. Our relationship with AEC, our new management company, is very positive, and we are now approaching a full cycle of work together in all aspects of ACTheals' administration and financial oversight. In this latter area, we have succeeded in reducing our overall expenditures to date compared to this time last year, and can tentatively suggest that ACTheals may be beginning to stabilize financially (check out the Treasurer's report in the Documents section in the Members Centre of our website [www.actheals.org](http://www.actheals.org)). With this comes new hope for the availability of funding directed specifically toward our mission. Our most recent International Conference was anointed and the power of the Holy Spirit was evident (refer to the Word Gifts in the Spirituality folder in the Documents section of the website). Over the last several months we have had considerable positive feedback regarding our new website, as it is both informative and user friendly. Our membership did decrease again this past year, but leadership is hopeful that rebuilding the website and increasing our presence on social media, as well as having updated membership data through the use of our new software, will be an asset to addressing this over the next year.

The groundwork has been done, and now it is up to each of us as members to continue the forward momentum. The best place to start is within your own region. If you are not already active there, start to attend regional activities. If you live in an area where there are few events, contact your Regional Coordinator and offer assistance in coordinating gatherings. These could be as simple as a coffee and prayer time, or as involved as a retreat day, workshop, or even regional conference. SEW (Support, Empower, and Witness) groups have stimulated both professional and spiritual growth for members who have participated in these. Consider starting one in your local community ("Where two or three are gathered together...") and reap the graces. If you lack support and there are few members in your



Denise Dolff, ACTheals President

area, consider an online or telephone support group. Today, everything is possible and no one need feel isolated. Any and all of these, as well as other ideas of your own creativity and initiative also become great opportunities for outreach. And at the very least, hold ACTheals in your prayer. For those of you who are older and can no longer participate or travel, become Intercessors for ACTheals. The prayer of a righteous person does indeed accomplish much.

I frequently hear the comment "ACTheals has it all, but it is also the best kept secret". Each of us has the choice to be part of either the problem, or of the solution. As our membership ages and our numbers decline, it becomes incumbent upon each of us to find even some small way to pass forward the knowledge we have gained, the healing we have experienced, and the anointing we have received. This is the inheritance that we have to give, our legacy to the future generations.

Lord Jesus, you modeled humility by coming into this world as a tiny, helpless infant. As we prepare for the celebration of your birth, we ask for this same humility, acknowledging that our desire to serve you through furthering the mission of ACTheals can only be accomplished by yielding to your leading. We invite you to take your rightful place in the cradle of our hearts and upon the throne of this organization, that ACTheals may succeed and prosper in the call you have given us. We praise and thank you as we pray in your name, Jesus. Amen.



# Words Spoken at 2015 International Conference

I loved you into being. I called you forth with Hope and a promise that you would serve Me with faith-filled love. Do you know how I fashioned you in great dignity and respect? You are My pride and joy. No one else is like you. You are unique to yourself. You are totally Mine. Do not hesitate to come to Me? Take my out-stretched hand, feel My arms enfold you in tenderness and complete trust. I totally love you sweet child of Mine. Your unique calling will change the world. Suffer not the little ones to come to Me. Accept My commission. Surrender to Me.

– Antoinette McDermott

My children, The surrendered soul does not fear, but rejoices in My power and majesty. The surrendered soul does not worry, but trusts in My provision. The surrendered soul is not alarmed by the events which appear to suggest that darkness is overcoming light. The surrendered soul turns only to me and trusts Me in all that occurs. My

beloved ACT, people of My heart, turn not to your own strength, but submit always to My strength. Seek first the glory of My Name and the furthering of My kingdom, the territory that I have entrusted to you, and be comforted and delighted by My solution to your concerns. Decide today, am I God or are you? It is only as you trust and seek Me that My will for ACTheals can be done.

– Denise Dolff

“Children, In days long ago My people sought My Face earnestly. They set a time and place specific to “fellowship with the DIVINE.” Whereas before I stood in a place of prominence, now I have become a mere “afterthought” to My people. This affront to the Father’s Heart is grievous!

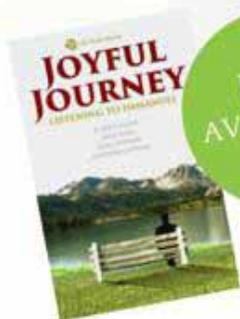
Set your gaze upon ME! Is it not I who leads you into the kingdom? Did I not come to bring His Love, Mercy and Guidance to you? You set your agendas for “business”--and rightly so, as much needs to be done. But BEFORE your “head-work” must come “heart-work”. Humble yourselves before Me, your Lord of Hosts. Surrender all hindrances. If I, Your Lord and Master, surrendered My Godhead, can you do less?

*continued on page 4*

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*master your relationships  
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## Words Spoken at 2015 International Conference *continued from page 3*

Hear Me My children. Time is short. Divine Intimacy must be your solace in these turbulent days. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" ...' Harken to these word lest the enemy establish a foothold among you. I am Jesus, your Teacher and Lord. Hear Me.

– *Ann Arcieri*

The vision of a gold chalice appeared in my minds eye, my eyes being closed. This was followed ten seconds later with the out-pouring of "Christ's Eucharistic Blood". Only the Blood was seen, without the Chalice being visible.

**Interpretation by Richard:** At the travelers Mass, our beloved Eucharistic Christ has already begun His out-pouring of His Consecrated Blood upon the whole of Actheals who were present. He is faithful. He is filling us up with His Love.

– *Richard Alfaro*

My little ones, I am calling you into a deep deep deep level of My Mercy. Be not afraid. My hand is out-stretched. A place is set for you at My abundant table of life. Will you dine with Me? I do not wish to eat alone. The meal is prepared. Will you sit down with Me?

– *Ann Behneman*

Come My beloved children into the lap of My Love. Come with open hands and open listening hearts, with listening ears, eager to hear My Word for you. I have waited for you for ever so long for you to give up and surrender to My call of total surrender. The world is passing away. The time is coming for you to be a perfect vessel of My Love to the world who is so hungry for the truth of My Love for each of them. Speak with holy boldness. Speak My Truth in My Love which is unconditional, free to all. Be one with Me!

– *Antoinette McDermott*

To come unto Me is to come unto life. For I am the well spring of living water and I call you to drink. Drink deeply my people. I come to fill you, to renew you. - Know that I have forgiven you and I call each of you to be vessels of grace for My Kingdom.

– *Sheilamarie Racicot*

My beloved people of Act, You have humbled yourself before. I have forgiven you your sins. I have lifted My sanctions from you and removed the false yoke from your shoulders. I have heard the cry of your hearts and set you free from the bondages of your captivity. I come again to commune and to fellowship with you, to minister to you and to heal your wounds. But My beloved, I call you to faithfulness, the bride to her Bridegroom. I set My seal upon you and begin a new covenant with you, a free gift of My love? I seek only your "yes", your willingness to allow Me to be Lord and God, not just of your lives, but of this, my organization. Your surrender frees Me to act, and My healing will once again be manifest through you. Let it be as I your Lord have spoken.

– *Denise Doff*

I am your mother. My Son is giving you a new heart. It is a mother heart. It is an alive and vibrant heart that beats with love for the poor, the lost and the broken as you encounter them you will recognize and connect. It will be My Love that flows thru you to them. Are you, willing to receive this heart transplant? I await your answer. For those of you who are willing I am connecting the arteries and stimulating the beat, and syncrinizing it to the rhythm of mine and My Sons heart.

– *Anne Behneman*

My little ones I am your father and My Son stands between you and past generation pouring out abundant blessings on you and generations to come. His hand out-stretched, He alone is your guide, your protection, your way. Stay close. The evil one is actively working to regain his previous territory. Be aware and not afraid. I am here willing, waiting and pleased to give you all that you need to prosper and bear fruit.

– *Anne Behneman*

As you journey with Me I will show you the way. I wait for you. Be open. Be accepting. Be a willing servant of My truth and My boundless Love. I await you in each moment. I will fill your open heart and mind with My thoughts, My direction for you. Do not doubt My love and My care for you. I await your invitation to be your One and Only. My beloved child whom I treasure as My most. Priceless gift to be share with the world around you. Each person is My deepest treasure, My beloved child of mine. Believe it. Live it. Share this. Love it. Come into My embrace of pure Love.

– *Antoinette Mc Dermott*

Go forth in My Name with holy boldness. Your soil is fertile, full of hope and promise from all you learned. Do not let it lie dormant. Bring the riches of this conference into the world you live in. Reach out and connect to others in Gods loving ways. Make connections by a smile, kind word, and My Love that flows in you and through you. Be Me to all you meet. Hold fast to Me. Do not let Me go. I am all you need to transform this world. It isn't you. It's Me - your Lord, Saviour, Healer and Redeemer. Start and live each day with a yes to Me and all it brings.

– *Antoinette McDermott*

I am their Saviour. Time is near for all. Reap what you have sows in My name and offer to are in prayer and devotion? I am with you EACH one. I bless you EACH one. I fill you with gifts, SUDDEN inspiration and lead you? Do not be afraid. I watch over you, am with you in EACH good deed that you do in My Name.

Rejoice in My love for you. Spread My. Love for you to all by your concern, touch and prayer, I call you to love others as I love you each moment of each day. Each gift I have given to you do not hoard that gift or reserve it but give it out - reach out to all peoples of my land and spill out My love, My gifts that have so lovingly been given to you, to all people of all nations. Pray daily that all come to Me. My blessing is with you at this particular moment. Let it fill You and soothe you. Go out and bring My Holy Name to all.

– *Amelia O'Reilly*

Renewed in My promises, refreshed in My Love, I send you forth now, My people, My chosen ones. The harvest is plentiful but the labourers few.

Redeem My people in your offices, your hospitals, your homes, your clinics.

Make them My hospitals, My offices, My homes and My clinics. Let Me bring you to health and wholeness and holiness. It is not your credentials but My anointing working through those credentials that accomplishes My saving work. Look not to yourselves but to Me. Seek only My face. Hear only My voice. Be obedient to MY call and My people will be healed.

– *Denise Doff*



# The Holy Spirit in Clinical Practice

by Douglas Schoeninger, PhD



Douglas Schoeninger, PhD

*Below you will see the winning poster by Kathleen Murphy at the ACTheals International Conference in September 2015. I have placed her poster here because I want to emphasize the ministry of angels in clinical practice. As Kathleen makes clear in her poster, God has given us angels as helpers, guides, and intercessors, to do things for us we cannot do for ourselves. I have found it*

*so beneficial to call on the angels God has assigned to me and to my clients to help with spiritual warfare and provision of needed healing graces. In her poster, Kathleen highlights the work of angels in the healing of Tobit.*

## A Manifestation of God's Healing Power through the Intercession of an Archangel: The Book of Tobit

By Kathleen Murphy MSN, RN (2015 IC Poster Winner)

### Objectives:

1. To use a biblical story to demonstrate the importance of intercessory prayer and healing through an angel
2. To recognize that the word of God is living effective and God is interested in family life and all we do
3. To demonstrate how angels can serve as guides, healers, mentors, and matchmakers
4. To show contemporary Christians that God answers the prayers of those who turn to him.

### People:

Archangel Raphael – Patron Saint of travelers, marriages, meetings, blind, purity, joy, prayer, thanksgiving, healing and praise

### Tobias- Son of Tobit

Sarah – becomes wife of Tobias who feels forsaken and eventually finds joy

Azariah – means healer. Dispatched by God in answer to the prayers of Tobit

Asmodeus – Evil spirit who slays seven husbands on wedding night

### Story:

**Tobit, husband of Anna**, is faithful to God when his fellow captives in Nineveh turned to idols. Tobit was the provider



Kathleen Murphy, winner of the 2015 International Conference Poster presentation.

for Anna, his wife and his son, Tobias. He offers his first fruits and practices works of mercy such as: burying the dead, giving alms, fasting, and prayer. He became blind; he began to pray to God, “Better dead than life for me.” He remembers silver given to relative for safe keeping and asks Tobias to retrieve it with a guide who turns out to be Archangel Raphael (Azariah). Tobias is obedient to Raphael and his father, Tobit. Tobit is healed spiritually and physically through this obedience.

Sarah buries seven husbands and prays, “Why should I live any longer? They look at me with pity.” Raphael tells Tobias to stay the night with Sarah’s family. He becomes engaged to Sarah and on the day of their marriage, the demon, Asmodeus, is driven away. Tobit, and Sarah had trials to purify them, but remained steadfast in their faith and eventually received God’s blessings and mercy.

### Outcomes:

Tobit is healed physically and spiritually. His total sight is holistically restored

Through faith and prayer, Sarah is no longer tormented by the evil one and finds happiness in marriage

God provided hope for Tobit and Sarah in their moments of despair and they lived long and prosperous lives.

### Implications for Practice:

Christians can use the Book of Tobit to demonstrate how angels intercede for us.

God always provides healing love and mercy for those who remain faithful.

Major victories over evil and sickness are accomplished through prayer and the healing intercession of the angels

*Kathleen Murphy has been a member of ACT since 1977 and is presently the coordinator of the Delaware Valley Region. She holds a Masters degree in Nursing and is retired. She continues her volunteer work of healing in Parish Nursing and for The American Red Cross.*



# Wholistic Massage

by Ping-Tak Peter Chow

“Listen, I will tell you a mystery!  
We will not all die, but we will all  
be changed” 1 Corinthians 15:51

These are my concluding thoughts on Wholistic Massage.

## Wholistic Massage attempts to:

- Integrate body, emotion, mind and spirit through massage manipulations towards wholeness.
- Bring back the authentic essence of the human being, to be fully alive, present, congruent, and relational to all who come into contact.
- Enable the client to enjoy peace, joy, truth, and love with all senses.
- Bring freedom to move, grow, and evolve with dynamic conformation of the inner body structures as well as to ease any resistance and tension on the body.
- Expand bodily consciousness and awareness by listening to your body.
- Ease restrictive bodily functions through special massage techniques.
- Induce distinctive positive feelings in contrast to pain and sufferings in the body.

- Gradually eliminate resistance and restore the rhythm of the body,
- Integrate and connect every part of the body into one being.

## Wholistic Massage Defined:

It is the preparation of the body to a resilient state where he/she can be ready, with all available support networks, to integrate, change, and transform. The body is awakened by experience (touch/massage/contact) in time and grounded in space (integrity in touch) fully in the present moment.

There are three **Body Resilience** states:

1. Dry resilient state, the present state of being.
2. Wet resilient state, Flow of life exchanges (therapist/client)
3. Fully resilient state, Life flow, plus shock/pain, vibration and release of energy.

The last one is permanent transformation which expands the body resilience. The first two are temporary or transitional transformations which may revert to the lower state.

Resilience is when your body is capable of withstanding shock and injury through choices; it involves flexibility when confronted with challenges and being prepared. Resiliency is mounted by the strong, caring support of others (therapists) in time of need.

## Therapist/Client interface

There are four aspects of body awareness:

1. **Physical Body** The client's inner-self. The therapist helps to un-cover the body's memory—its awareness, which has already been structured and organized.



Ping-Tak Peter Chow

2. **Spiritual Body** The client's relationship with God and others: feelings, faith, and trust. The therapist helps the body to feel and experience the present moment and become grounded, i.e., awareness which is unstructured and unorganized.
3. **Emotional Body** The client's response to emotional stimulus. The therapist helps to detect the sensitivity of the body part, i.e., its unawareness, which is structured but unorganised.
4. **Psychological Body** The client's reaction to psychological triggers. The therapist helps to locate the resistance of body parts, i.e., its unawareness, which is unstructured, but organized.

The therapist and client are in a relationship and work in a cybernetic system. The therapist serves as fair witness to the changes in the client until the client senses a distinction or difference that will lead or motivate him/her to change behavior toward healing.

“It is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:46)

**Through wholistic massage, we transform our physical body and through our awakened body, we re-connect spiritually to the spirit of our Creator which is love, truth, joy, and peace.**

“Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51).

Our body will change spiritually during the journey (Philippians 3:21).

Enjoy.



## ACTheals Members Recently Passed

**Catherine M. Dix**  
Baltimore  
Passed August 2015

**John Palmer PhD**  
New York  
Passed October 2015

**Jackie Sitte RN**  
Massachusetts  
Passed September 2015

# Healing in the Vestry

by Bonnie Lay, M.A.

Just before Lent I was transferred to a nearby parish. Soon I trained as a sacristan along with several other duties for opening the church and preparing for daily Mass. This meant I got to meet and chat with the visiting priests. There were three of them, one of whom was a retired Army chaplain.

In casual conversation, I learned that he had been stationed in Vilseck, Germany at the same time I was there downsizing an Army installation. That led to several other sharings, including the fact that I been in the Caribbean for 19 years, where I had the occasion once to pray over a Bishop's knees. Among the people living there, it became known as the "B's knees" because shortly after praying over him, the Holy Spirit healed the Bishop's knees.

The retelling of this story led to a prayer request from the ex-Army chaplain. He told me that he had cancer of the larynx and that the radiation had affected his thyroid, with serious concerns about nodules surfacing. His medical examination had indicated that one side was okay, unlike the other side, and a scan and biopsy had been scheduled.

I asked him to sit down while I prayed, but he preferred to stand. He then removed his collar. With sacramental oils in hand, I asked the priest his name and what he wanted to be prayed for specifically. He told me about the scheduled tests. Next, with one hand on his forehead, I said, "In the name of the Father, who created Bill, and of the Son, who redeemed Bill, and of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and keeps Bill holy we pray for...."

I prayed rather briefly, and asked the Father that the doctors, technicians, and medications would be protected, and for right diagnosis and healing mercies. It took three minutes. We then went on our separate ways and our duties for that day's Mass.

After the scheduled scan, Father informed me that he was scheduled for the biopsy and that he just didn't want to hear the word "cancer". I stood up straight, faced



Bonnie Lay, M.A.

him, extended my hand to him and said, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, Restore, Restore, Restore." That was it.

The following week, Father was called to go in for the biopsy. Apparently, those nodules did not look good. A few days later, when Father came into the vestry, I wondered out loud how he was. He broke out into a big grin and said that the nodules were gone and that his doctor had asked for a second look again at the scan. He also said that "no biopsy was needed" and that he had to be "checked again in seven months."

Well I did a "yippee-praise-the-Lord dance" and high-fived Father Bill. I noticed he said Mass that day a bit differently.

As a post script, a good friend, Sister Betty Igo, told me:

"God is faithful. I do believe every time we honor a request for prayer, God honors it with a healing, although at times, He chooses to heal the person spiritually, emotionally, relationally, or intellectually, and not physically. We get disappointed if we only focus on that. I have learned to let go and let God do His thing, but I believe every prayer for healing is answered. In the case of Father Bill, it was great that Jesus chose to honor the priest with physical healing. Keep up the good work of honoring Jesus!"

## Subject: The Cycle of Life Embraced

By Kris Dolbow

I just got mom/Frances off to the hospital.  
Went outside to water the plants.  
Sharing what the flowers showed me today:  
What do I see?  
Life among the Gerber Daisies.  
From left to right they display natural stages of life:  
One in the process of dying,  
One in midlife, one middle aged,  
One dead, one beginning to open.  
Creation around us passes through life stages  
Without despair, alarm,  
Embracing each cycle.  
I have 2 choices before me.  
I can live these days and follow their example  
OR I can psychoanalyze the how's, why's, what if's  
Blame Satan or Pennsylvania water  
Stress, beer, Merlot, plaque  
Scour the Internet for cures  
With the belief that those answers will  
Make me feel better and  
Change what already happened to Doug.  
That choice doesn't do anything but  
Keep me focused on finding THE answers  
Remain duped by the powerful lie  
That isolated the holy couple  
From Holy Love  
The first who believed  
Knowledge brought power, made life better.  
Flowers live in all stages of life  
Accept change as natural  
Yield to the Master Gardener for ultimate care  
Rest, expect all things to work together for good  
I want to rest in that assurance  
Experience His Care.  
So I choose to follow their example  
Trust the mind and heart of PerfectLove  
Discover Eden in my Temple  
Where He lives.  
Selah...  
Oh, look at the bottom left corner!  
I edit this pic leaving a shadow selfie of my hands.  
Why?  
Reminder of Holy Hands that edit my life perfectly.  
Amazing Love...



# The Trinitarian Ground of Healing of Families

by Father Bob Sears, SJ, Ph.D.

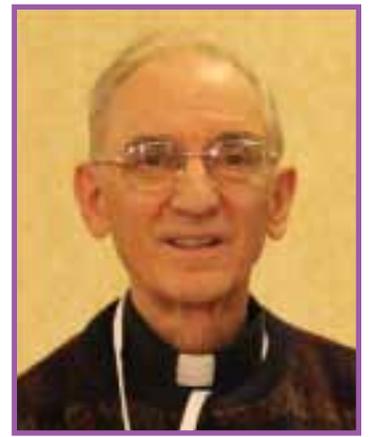
I have been interested in the Theological ground of psychotherapy for many years. I wrote my PhD dissertation Spirit: Divine and Human (Fordham University, 1974) on the Theology of the Holy Spirit as a divine WE breathed forth from the joint love of Father and Son in the Trinity in relation to the psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Moreno (the founder of Psychodrama). I later discovered family systems therapy of Murray Bowen and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy who helped me develop a scriptural view of psycho-social development that continues to help me integrate psychotherapy and spirituality. (See my "Healing and Family Spiritual/Emotional Systems," Journal of Christian Healing, 1983, available on my website: [www.familytreehealing.com](http://www.familytreehealing.com).) In my presentation, I worked from my experience of "Family Constellations Therapy" of Bert Hellinger and his discovery of three consciences – personal, collective/systematic, and spiritual, and two principles he discovered through working with families:

the law of inclusiveness (everyone must be included, even those who have died) and the law of priority (those who belonged earlier to the system take precedence over those who came later – eg. parents are prior to their children. Thus children cannot "save" their parents though they naturally want to. God can save all generations because as an eternal NOW, God precedes every generation including Adam and Eve.)

My five scriptural stages of spiritual/emotional faith development (initial, familial, individuating, communitarian, and mission faith) as described in the above-mentioned article, correlate with Hellinger's three consciences. Since experience shows they are cumulative (each builds on the preceding stage) and cyclical (new development depends on deeper healing of previous stages), the final stage of mission faith, springing from Jesus' life/death/resurrection, integrates every stage and, as I pointed out, restores what God had intended before Adam and Eve sinned: that we be adopted into the divine family. We are baptized free of original sin, into paradise, as it were, walking familiarly with our heavenly Father, no longer seen as a judge punishing our sin. As Jesus told Mary Magdalene after the resurrection: "Go tell my brothers that I am ascending to my Father and to your Father..." We now have God as our Father.

On the cross Jesus also gave us His mother to be our mother (see Jn 19:26-27 and Rev 12:17). Very early (Justin Martyr and Irenaeus c. 200) Mary was seen as the "New Eve" who obeyed where the first Eve disobeyed (Lk 1:38) and directed us

to obey (at Cana, Jn 2:5). As Eve in the garden was free of original sin, the Church gradually concluded that Mary, as the mother of our sinless redeemer intended before all humans, must also have been preserved from sin from the beginning for Jesus' sake and for our restoration. (See Eph 1:4, "before the foundation of the world, God chose us in the beloved to be holy and blameless".) As Saint Irenaeus developed from Eph 1:10, Jesus "recapitulated" and transformed every stage of human development through his cross/resurrection/sending the Spirit to what God intended before Adam and Eve sinned. His cross had become "the tree of everlasting life."



Father Bob Sears, SJ, Ph.D.

“...before the foundation of the world, God chose us in the beloved to be holy and blameless”

But this transformation cannot be given to us unless we "choose" it. At each stage of our development we choose either the "tree of life" (Jesus' cross) or, as Adam and Eve did, the tree of "the knowledge of good and evil," which is our way over God's. What does that look like at each stage? I illustrate it by my own life.

**Childhood** – "Initial Faith": In my 40s, through healing prayer, I realized I said in the womb, "I won't be a burden," which decision closed me to human mothering. I renounced that decision, so God could

give me "spiritual mothers" to heal my mother wound. Thirty years later I saw it was "shock" (overwhelming primal pain). Then Jesus showed me he had given me His sinless mother as my mother, and His Father as my father (Mt 23:9). Both always loved me. I needed to be "born again" (Jn 3:5). By trying to save myself I had carried on my choice of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Now I invite clients to let Mary and the Father parent them and their parents (to avoid disloyalty).

**Youth** – "Familial faith": My choice "not to be a burden" pressured me to be self-reliant and "perfect." I became like my Dad (perfectionistic) and mother (scrupulous). Jesus imitated His Father – perfect love (see "Finding in the Temple"). Only what is of God is true "tradition." Jesus submitted to His family (Lk 2:51) and culture only as His Father indicated (see Jn 5:17, "my Father works until now and I work.")

**Our Unique Call** – "Individuating Faith" began in Israel's exile with God proclaiming a "new covenant" (Jer 31:31ff;

Ez 36:26; Ez 18). The breakdown of tradition brought a personal experience of God. Jesus experienced this in His desert experience, facing Israel's temptations to self-salvation in food, honor, and power. I experienced this in my depression in Germany, when my efforts to understand only made me more depressed. Is 43:18-19 was God's word to me "Behold I am doing something new." God is NOW creating anew, our healing involves a new creation. We all may experience it in various crises—divorce, failure in work, sickness, loss of loved ones, children going astray. Our deep fears emerge and call for deep trust in God creating new now, and a release of our efforts to save ourselves.

### Ministry of Reconciliation and Restoration –

“Communitarian Faith”: Jesus takes us further. Isaiah 53:3-5 says, "...it was our infirmities that he bore." Jesus "became sin for us, that we might

become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor 5:21). In this stage we join Jesus in "loving our enemies," interceding for our ancestors and our offspring—ultimately for all. God transcends time and intercedes for everybody who ever lived or would live, and as we deepen in Jesus, we also can intercede for our ancestors. We are to be like the Good Samaritan, Lk 10:29-37 "risking our lives to help our neighbor."

### Jesus' Death and Resurrection –

“Mission Faith”: Death is from the devil's envy (Wisdom of Solomon, 2:24), from sin (Gn 2:17), our final enemy (1 Cor 15:26), used by Satan to enslave us (Heb 2:15). Jesus has made it the gateway to eternal life (1 Cor 15:55-56), a remedy for sin (Gn 3:22-23). Jesus primal scream ("Why have you abandoned me" (Mk 15:34) is our unspoken scream. It opens us to God's Love beyond our terror. With Jesus, dying gives life (2 Cor 4:12), and Paul

rejoices in his sufferings for the church (Col 1:24). Jesus is now the new Adam (1 Cor 15:27-28) opening all to "eternal life" through his resurrection. Mary is the new Eve, redeemed partner to mediate the Holy Spirit, mothering the church to become "holy and blameless" (Eph 1:4). Believers are to share their redemptive intercession.

### Conclusion: Trinity and Healing of Families

All illness, sin, and death came because of sin, and was handed down in families and cultures. Jesus passed through each of the stages of development and opened healing for each stage. As we choose, with Jesus, to bear our cross at each stage of our lives, we are brought into the inner life of the Trinity, the foundation and goal of the healing of our human family. "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." (Eph 3:14-15)



## A Short Biography of Reverend James Wheeler, SJ

by Ginny Antaya



### “Thus, the last will be first and first last” – Matt 20:16

There are people who walk with us who make an indelible imprint upon our lives. It is subtle, unspoken, and often sadly taken for granted. It is only after this person passes that we realize the privilege of crossing their path in this life.

Such a person for me was Reverend James Wheeler, SJ, who considered himself, “James

of translating the Exercises such that they became an easier read by nuns and the laity for incorporation into daily spiritual life. He saw his mission as that of leading everyone more deeply into the Heart of Jesus and His Mother through a process of Inner Healing following the Exercises through the Life of Christ.

This process transformed into the School for Spiritual Growth and Inner Healing in Texas, now called “The Next Step Program.” In 1972, Father Wheeler and Sister Dymphna Murray, RSM, founded the first Prayer Center in Long Island, New York. Hundreds of people have attended this two-year, life-changing program, resulting in the establishment of currently sixteen Prayer Centers and four more in current formation. The Centers are located in Mexico, the United States, Spain, and Costa Rica, and form the Society of Prayer Centers of Our Lady of Guadalupe, International.

Through the invitation of the Nuncio from Costa Rico, the Society is now in the process of submitting pertinent documents, including

its constitutions, to the Vatican. This is towards application for the status as a Lay Catholic Faithful Organization.

From the countless many whose spiritual lives came alive through this process of inner healing, we thank God for allowing us to cross paths with “James the Greater!” He touched our lives, and we have grown!

Now, he rests in Peace.

“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” (1 Peter 5:6)

Reverend James Wheeler, SJ, died at age 79, on April 7, 2015 at Murray Weigel Hall, Fordham University, Bronx, NY.

*Ginny Antaya, Associate Member of ACTheals, is the Founder of the Mercy of God Prayer Center in Austin, Texas, and the Vice President of Our Lady of Guadalupe Prayer Centers, International.*



the Lesser” as he would refer to himself. He claimed no public fame or importance, and never worried about his unkempt appearance. His focus was his mission and prayer life. In seeking balance in his life, he enjoyed everyone and his humor brought an infectious joy and laughter to all who knew or met him.

Father Wheeler was an Associate Editor of The Journal of Christian Healing for over ten years. He was a prolific writer and poet. He published sixteen articles in the Journal during the 1980s and 1990s and authored two books on the healing of depression and countless other related manuscripts.

He also had a great love of Saint Ignatius and Spiritual Exercises. He had the gift

# An Interview with Father Joseph Scerbo, S.A., Ph.D. (Part I)

by Anna Pecoraro, Psy.D.

## **Do you see psychology or counseling as inherently contradictory to religious practice or experience? Please explain.**

Oh, no. On the contrary, psychology is a handmaid, a servant of truth. It can help our understanding of human nature, one's brokenness, and the need for healing. We're all looking for the inherent problem. Ultimately, when nothing else works, therapists ask "Is there another way for this person to be transformed?" It is then that we get into the untapped area of welcoming Divine intervention.

Even psychology can be used for good or bad. When it is used for good, the dysfunctional person ultimately becomes happier and productive. I am a trained Gestalt therapist and also use Transactional Analysis. I was also trained in psychosynthesis by Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis in Italy, and later undertook graduate courses in the Psychology Department at Berkley.

## **What about "the God question"?**

Not everyone is interested in a theological discussion about God. For those who have not been exposed to this view, it would require deeper interaction before their awareness of the Creator and Creation can be sensitized. So people who call themselves atheists really do not know what they are dismissing because their awareness of the Creator and Creation was not raised.

## **What do Catholic psychotherapists or other Christian psychotherapists bring to the therapy room that might be different from secular psychotherapists?**

The difference is that the Christian therapist is more aware of the intimacy of Love that comes from Christ, and this Love is always going to be a strength for that person. It is this awareness that I as a Christian therapist can bring to the therapy room. . . As Christ said to Saint Andrew the Apostle, "Come and see"—if we want our life to really be alive and experience connectedness. The feeling of being connected is another way of talking about incarnation. God incarnated himself in me. He becomes flesh. Everything

in our human experience, now, is sanctified. It doesn't mean that we are robots and can't make wrong decisions, in other words, when we misdirect the energy of love. With us the gift that we have, which is love, we have the freedom to pass it on or not to do so, i.e., to be all that we are, or to be less than we are. We are each irreplaceable in the universe. If we do not shine, there will be the lack of this light in the universe.

## **If you were to develop a Catholic model for training mental health professionals, such as a masters or doctoral program, what would it look like? Which courses would you teach?**

I ran the Masters of Family Therapy program at Trinity College of Graduate Studies, in Anaheim, California. At the center of the program was the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of faith. Now what does that mean?

Well, in some way, when our hearts or minds are open to something bigger, and we begin to believe in something, in someone... that is the beginning of the spiritual walk. With some belief, we go into what the spiritual life has taught me.. In 54 years as a friar, I've learned that faith is a gift. I believe that I've been given the gift of faith. I praise God for that every day because I know that God is love. I know that God loves me. I know that God loves the world and his creation. And I know that he put in our hearts the desire to know, the desire to search for truth. So now, we get into philosophy, which always helped theology. So the program would have theological investigations around psychological truths. This brings in psychology and talks about defense mechanisms, while scripture talks about sin. . . So it gets interesting. Students ask, so what's the difference, and you talk about it. I was at this college for 17 years, and I totally loved it. A lot of our students came from California, but we had many from out of state because of the program itself. What drew people was a trust in the school's program. They came with faith and truly believed that Jesus heals. They truly believed in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They prayed before class that the Holy Spirit and the divine mercy of Christ would illumine their study of psychopathology. I am

still excited about it. The concept of searching for truth was so embedded in everything we did—for the truth that Christ heals.



Father Joseph Scerbo, S.A., Ph.D.

## **For those who don't have access to a program like that, or who are already in practice, what would you recommend that they read or study if they want to incorporate a Catholic perspective in their work?**

Google and look up inner healing workshops. And then explore that whole realm, and do something experiential. Go to an inner healing workshop. We used to do them Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at the Mission for 30 years. It was experiential, but the Holy Spirit taught the conceptual. Take experiential workshops.

## **Please tell us about inner healing and how this is similar to or different from psychotherapy or counseling: What is it, and how does one do it?**

It's all about opening up to a Presence. Prayer itself, or meditation, is the opening of the heart to a Presence. We speak about a Divine Presence, when we come before God and experience the peace in the silence. Some people like to see God as a symbol for an experience of being deeply loved or deeply embraced. So, there's something in the God experience that has to do with the revelation of how love manifests itself as a gift incarnated here, and it became incarnate in the man, Jesus. In psychotherapy, you are opening to the presence of yourself and your own inner life; you're getting to voice dialog with parts of yourself that you didn't like, or parts of yourself that you were afraid to actualize and develop. In religion, we are opening to the gift of ourselves carried by the gift of the love that we celebrate at Christmas. Inner healing for us Catholics is a process that has several levels. There is a physical part, an emotional part, a

“The concept of searching for truth was so embedded in everything we did—for the truth that Christ heals.”

– Father Joseph Scerbo

mental part, a relational part, a spiritual part, and a societal part. Inner healing has all of those dimensions. Relating is truly the way that healing happens.

### **What's the best way to do inner healing in the context of Catholic counseling or psychotherapy?**

Well I think that you should always begin with prayer. The therapist should spend time in prayer before going to the office, lift the client up to the Lord, and ask the Lord to bless the session. The greeting of the client at the office, and the initial chitchat are all of extreme significance. . Nothing is unimportant, and you should be able to have a session where there is an accomplishment of a definite purpose. It might have been that of helping the client discover their feelings during the session, how they block them, and how their life would be happier if they're not defensive - or whatever. We need to help clients develop skills where they can stay open to be happier. Happiness is really about being heard, being seen, being held, being loved, and the best thing we can do for each other is to hear each other and understand each other. And I think that people should feel that they belong. The worst suffering is feeling that you don't belong to anybody, that's a place where there's no love and no relationship. Developing a feeling of belonging is part of inner healing. Belonging is at the heart of being human. The word "belonging" goes with the word "revelation." We belong to God. God is passionate for following us around. He is the hound of heaven. He will never let us be alone. . There is a passion in the adventure of human love. And at the heart of the adventure of human love is the Godhead. And so, this is a conversation that individuals would come to know when they are open to it. They will know the truth. We have something at the heart of our consciousness that is like a magnet that recognizes truth, and so when we hear it, see it, or feel it, we recognize it. To me, healing is a process that on several levels is always led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead us to all truth. The human adventure is an adventure of "What is truth?" Truth is found in relationships-what kinds of relationships

do I have with others? And truth is found in revelation and what the Saints discovered. The revelation that we have in Christ is something that is God given, and we didn't make that up. It's revelation. It's like the rain that is coming down today. It's free. It's given from above. We're always receiving from above. And I think that is where the spiritual element of inner healing comes in. So inner healing is a process on the physical, emotional, mental, relational, spiritual, and societal levels that is led by the Holy Spirit into the yes of Jesus. The Holy Spirit leads us into the yes of Jesus. Now, the yes of Jesus is known ultimately by the Cross that he endured and on which He died for us. And so through the Precious Blood of Jesus, we are being healed every day at Mass when we receive communion. Sacraments are given as conduits of healing, which are like very strong energies, or river currents. And the river current is Grace. And Grace can move us to transform. One of the biggest things that facilitate healing is regularly receiving the sacraments, with the Eucharist being essential. When we are baptized, we enter into the consciousness of Christ. Only then can we experience the Divinity of Jesus, Jesus being both fully human and fully divine. The Mass is the one place where heaven comes to earth. Now that's pretty awesome. It is here that you have the sacred host being consecrated by Jesus at the Last Supper, in an ongoing offertory every minute somewhere in the world by a priest. You might say that Jesus is eternally offering Himself to the Father for us and through the Priesthood, of which I am glad to be a part.

### **And how can patients or clients open themselves up to sacramental grace?**

Well, I think they just have to look at their hearts. The language of love is the language of listening. We have to learn how to listen. It's like the Saints said: We're all in Kindergarten and we're learning to read three books: the book of creation; the book of the self; the book of Jesus. And in those three things, you find the goodness of God, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.



## **Final Editor's Note from Mike MacCarthy:**

So, why am I really retiring? Many of you have written and called to ask that question. So here's the scoop.

First of all when I accepted the job as Editor of *InterACT*, I was still looking for a job for which I would get paid. I had been looking since 2010 when I lost my job with the local newspaper due to industry cutbacks. I have continued that search since the Fall of 2012 when I became Editor of *InterACT*, and this summer God blessed me with a writing job that I could do from my home. And I'm getting paid. Thank you God!

Secondly, as some of you know, I have written a book about Joan of Arc entitled *Maiden General. How 17-year-old Joan of Arc Saved France at Orleans: A True Story*. I've been working on this book for over 10 years and it's due to come off the presses any day. So the marketing and distribution of my book is also going to require a lot of my time. And BTW, if you want more information about the book, go to [www.outskirtspress.com/MaidenGeneral](http://www.outskirtspress.com/MaidenGeneral).

And finally, a new and challenging chapter of my life is about to unfold. My 18-year-old grandson who is just coming out of rehab from drug addiction is moving in with my wife and me as I write. Up until now, he was living in Minnesota with his mother (our daughter). The friends he chose there proved destructive to his best interests, so we raised our hands and said, "Yes," to his mother's request. We would greatly appreciate all your prayers for this new journey. God knows we're going to give it our very best shot. After that, as in all things, God's in charge.

Our prayers are for all of you and the continued success of ACTheals. May God keep each of you always safe in the palms of His loving hands.

Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!

