



InterACT

The Newsletter of the Association of Christian Therapists: A fellowship of Health Care Professionals and Associates

DATEBOOK... Save the Date!

ACT International Conference

Oct 6-9, 2011
"Mental Health, Spiritual Growth & Bodily Well-Being: An Evolving Christian Approach to Wholeness"
Renaissance Philadelphia
actheals@degnon.org
703-556-9222

Regional Meetings Region 4 Retreat 2011

April 8-10, Espousal Center Waltham, MA. Presenters: Fr. Bob Sears, SJ, Sr. Betty Ann Igo

Annual Canadian Conference

The Courage to Change/To Love/To Serve: A Christian Holistic Approach to Body Mind Spirit, April 28-May 1, Niagara Falls, Ontario.
Contact: Vince Kirton (416-492-9593) or Kenneth Fung (416-291-2864)

Southern California Region Annual Retreat

July 8 - 10, 2011
Vina de Lestonnac Retreat Center, Temecula, CA
Contact: Rita Cornyn redsunrise@mac.com

Travel

Holy Land Trip: 11/21/11
J. Dodson 905-335-6902

InterACT deadline: June 1, 2011

storysunday@optonline.net
Subject line: InterACT.
All submissions subject to editing.



FULL COURT PEACE

In 2006 Michael Evans returned to Belfast, Northern Ireland, with the goal of forming a travel basketball team out of a select group of Catholic and Protestant teenagers. After coaching in two high schools in the city's segregated public school system, Michael recruited an equal number of players from each side of the divided community. After some time, and not without controversy, these two groups came together as one team, which was later named the Belfast Blazers.

The Blazers practiced as a team at each school once per week, and they traveled throughout the city playing in informal scrimmages against other high school teams. Then, after months of fundraising, the Blazers raised enough money to pay for a team trip to their coach's hometown in Weston, CT.

Although it is considerably risky for them, the Belfast Blazers remain friends to this day. To learn more from the players themselves visit the website: www.fullcourtpeace.org.

For three years after the Belfast Blazers' groundbreaking season, and while Full Court Peace was officially forming, the peacemaking and forging friendship through basketball continued in Belfast. New, fresh faces joined the Belfast Blazers, and FCP introduced its first expansion team, the Belfast Bulldogs, made up of players from St. Colm's High School and Dunmurry High School.

In the words of player Niall Ward, Catholic, Short Strand: "When I started playing with the Belfast Blazers I wasn't sure that I wanted to play basketball with Orangefield because they are Protestants. But I went to practice a couple of times and I got to know the people from Orangefield and I realized that it doesn't matter where people are from or what football team they support. They're just the same as me. I kept on going to practice and played games against other schools with Orangefield and the Belfast Blazers, and we all became good friends. Even though we don't go to school anymore we still talk with each other and are still friends."

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inside

Peacemaking

Michael Evans

Accept and Forgive

Denise Dolff, MA

Lazarus

Francis Hymel, DMin

Dear ACT Community



Before Lent I read an article about embracing Lent's surprises. The author said that while we make plans for Lenten sacrifices and devotions, the trials we experience during Lent are often harder than the Lent we had planned. Life could become its own Lenten discipline and to seek God not only in the things we choose but in the things we do not choose. I have been reflecting on her words in relation to ACT.

The Board of Directors meeting in February, via web-conferencing, included a discussion of the ACT we plan for and the ACT that we have. We plan for increase in membership, adequate revenues to fulfill our mission and a balanced budget. The ACT we have includes a \$14,000 deficit in the 2010 budget, approximate 10% annual decline in membership, an aging membership, a decline in charitable contributions and a bare bones budget that maintains current services while challenging our creativity to fund growth. The organization we have is more challenging than the one we plan for. Whatever metaphor we choose, ACT being pruned by God, or ACT dying to self, the facts show a steady decline in membership and income and our best efforts to turn this around have not been fruitful. Fr. Bob told the Board that these facts are an aspect of our discernment of God's will for ACT. How do you hear God speaking to ACT through these challenges?

ACT's leaders are focusing their time, treasure and talents on implementing ACT's mission, to support members with the resources to achieve our vision of being a Spirit-led community equipped to extend the healing presence, heart and mind of Jesus Christ to our patients, clients, colleagues and institutions. We are seeking God's will in every endeavor, keeping our attention on the process and giving the outcome over to God. The future of ACT is not known, our call today is to be faithful to choosing God in the midst of the challenges while fulfilling the mission and vision as best we can.

While the future of ACT is unknown, we are an Easter people, living in resurrection hope and the power of Pentecost. We will bring God's love into the broken world of healthcare. Please continue to support ACT in prayer and join us in ministry.

Cheryl

Cheryl Marsh, APRN, BC
President, ACT



EDITOR'S NOTE

Gloria Doino, MA

Lot's family was saved by two angels (Genesis 18-19); Daniel prayed, Archangel Michael overcame the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13); Jesus prayed in the garden and an angel came to strengthen him (Luke 22:43). The list of angelic intervention is long and lively. Angels protect and prevent, comfort and guide, they declare, "Fear not." Enjoy Dr. Thomas Hicks, guest writer, as he reflects on "Angels as Guardians". Work with Denise Dolff as she takes us deeper into the work of "Acceptance and Forgiveness". Then hear the voice of the Lord when he calls each of us to "COME OUT" in Francis Hymel's, "Lectio Divina on Lazarus." Francis reminds us that

"we need the power of Jesus to heal us and the Christian community to support us." How fortunate we are to know the healing love of Jesus. How blessed we are to be part of ACT.

thought...

"Who you are in God is who you are, nothing more and nothing less."
(Radical Grace: Daily Meditations)

click...

<http://sacredspace.ie> Spend ten minutes praying at the Sacred Space site, run by the Irish Jesuits. Receive guidance and scripture chosen daily according to the Church season.

REMINDER: Use your member number (DIRECTLY next to your last name on the mailing label) to access the members only section of the ACT website at www.actheals.org

ACCEPTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Denise Dolff, MA



In working with severely abused and/or traumatized individuals, there are words that many wish to delete from the dictionary. Traditionally, these are 'acceptance' and 'forgiveness', but both concepts are integral to the healing process.

Avoidance of the term 'acceptance' is generally based upon its understood meaning, which is 'to approve of', or 'to be in agreement with'. The trauma survivor naturally reacts to these concepts if applied to the abuse. In addition, the idea that 'some things can never be forgiven' has become popular within our contemporary culture, thereby creating resistance to forgiveness as a necessary step toward healing.

Understandably, the deeper the hurt that one has experienced, the greater the struggle to forgive. Intense hurt caused by another always involves great loss – loss of relationship, loss of childhood, material loss, and/or loss of hopes and dreams. Consider, however, that it is impossible to change the past. What has happened has happened. No matter how much one may wish to change the way it was, or go back to better times, this cannot be done. No matter what revenge one may consider, no matter what evil one may wish the offender, no matter how long one refuses to forgive, the past remains the same. The truth that sets free, then, is the realization that either avoiding or living in the past will not change the current state of one's life, and the present reality is what it is, like it or not. The decision to accept this fact can enable the injured party to release the past, engage the present, and anticipate the possibility of a future, however different from the original hope or dream. At this point, the journey toward the choice to forgive begins.

What then is acceptance? Acceptance is the recognition that no level of compensation will ever make up for the loss that has been experienced. Whatever amends are possible or desired will never repay the debt that was created by the injury. Millions of dollars will never buy back one's lost childhood. Life imprisonment ten times over will not give breath to one's murdered father. Acceptance acknowledges this truth.

What then is forgiveness? Forgiveness is the conscious decision to cancel the debt that is owed because of the injurious act of another. In making the decision to forgive, one is taking back control of one's life. Until then, the offender has held the

victim captive. Thoughts, feelings, and actions, both conscious and unconscious have largely been either overtly reactive to the offense, or patterns established in reaction to the offense. In either case, the individual has lacked freedom of self. Forgiveness recognizes that ongoing blame serves no constructive purpose. If so, it is time to let go of blame and to begin to grieve one's losses, trusting in God's promise to heal. *Lord, give me the grace to accept and forgive, to grieve and to heal, that I may be released into the future You have always ordained for me, full of hope in You.*

GUARDIAN ANGELS

Thomas Hicks, PhD



Angels are mentioned in the Bible 340 times. Remove angels from the Bible and one has a significant gap. Belief in Guardian Angels is world wide. The Scripture verse most commonly quoted to support this teaching is Mt.18:10: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven."

Guardian Angels are believed to be caught up in the everydayness of our earthly pilgrimages; from infancy to death our human life is surrounded by the watchful care and intercession of these angels. Guardian Angels are viewed as a way that God exercises personal care over each of us as we and our loved-ones move through our risk-filled days. Protecting charges from dangers has long been viewed as one of the Guardian Angel's most important roles. Another special role of Guardian Angels is to give aid in the last hours of life and then lead souls to God. Luke 16:22: "The poor man (Lazarus) died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." Angels are also thought to inspire us with holy thoughts, and defend us against temptations. It is generally held that guardian angels are given to nations as well as individuals; indeed, perhaps even every city and each church congregation has its own Guardian Angel.

When it comes to comments on Guardian Angels scripture scholar, Douglas Moo, has included his thoughts in a commentary on Romans: "Our own day has seen a renewed interest in angels. This interest in angels has positive results. People can move out of their narrow materialism. However, belief in angels is perfect for people who want their religion to offer them comfort and hope without any obligations. Angels do good things for us but don't demand anything from us. For many people, interest in angels can provide a warm fuzzy feeling of being religious or spiritual while avoiding coming

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THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Douglas Schoeninger, PhD



This past month I received the following two e-mails which illustrate beautifully the presence and action of Holy Spirit through responsive clinicians. The first, from Cheryl Marsh, witnesses to the impact of love in the context of a most mundane and technical nursing procedure. The second, from Barbara Byers, details some of her experiences of the Holy Spirit resourcing her in her psychotherapy practice.

From Cheryl Marsh, APRN, President ACT
marshcdt68@comcast.net:

I read this letter to the editor in the Norwich Bulletin on Saturday, February 5, 2011 and knew I had to share it with ACT members.

While my practice is in psychiatry, my heart is, and always will be, in nursing. I talk with and watch the nurses at the hospital where I work and recognize the hunger for a positive word. The environment for practice is very demanding and at times discouraging. This letter to the editor is a reminder that what you do, and how you do it makes a huge difference. I hope the letter will encourage you to continue to reach out with the love of Jesus that you carry in your heart.

"I want to publicly thank C.D. my lab nurse at the William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. Her every carefully measured word and action, the grace of her total manner put me increasingly at ease. Surely, she was divinely inspired.

When she scanned my bar code she said, 'Just like the Stop & Shop scanner, except you're priceless.'

Well, when an angel calls you priceless, it is a call as to the ministry. It is a command. When I think of the times I have been a liability, the angel's assessment was a call for a personal transfiguration. It is a measure I am to take before all my thoughts and deeds." Michael Barrett, Plainfield

Who would think that scanning a bar code on an ID bracelet would or could be the source of a healing encounter, but here it is. It is more than the mere act, it is her "carefully measured word and action, the grace of her total manner" that transformed the encounter from an ordinary event into a grace-filled, transformative, encounter. It is not the acts alone, but the love behind them that brings the healing into the action.

I just wanted to share this, to encourage each of you to continue to bring that love into the ordinary,

mundane, demanding actions of your everyday work experiences. Grounded in the love of God, you are able to share that love with patients to whom you minister.

It is my dream that ACT can continue to be a source of sustenance for each of you. A place where you can receive ministry, be nourished and equipped to return to the workplace and be the healing presence, heart and mind of Jesus.

(Cheryl)

From Barbara Byers, PhD, LPC

(byers.barb@gmail.com) in response to the article on The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit in Clinical Practice by Douglas Schoeninger and Cheryl Marsh in the Winter 2011 InterACT:

Thanks so much for your excellent article on the Holy Spirit Who is so competent in clinical practice! I too have participated in the particular ways Doug mentions. You asked for experiences (I am a clinician with my own practice):

— I find it helps if I go in a few minutes before the appointment and pray in tongues for a while, cleansing the room by the blood of Jesus, and inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit.

— I often yield up my education and skill, asking instead for His wisdom and counsel and find that He often takes me in a different direction, as I begin to probe or emphasize something I never even considered...this then opens new insight and understanding for them.

— When I can't seem to communicate with the client with a normal explanation, I am aware that the Holy Spirit may give me an analogy or metaphor that seems to communicate with that person and then the person seems to grasp it....whether it's tornados, balloons, or comic characters. He knows how to communicate with each person in the way they can receive.

— I often have the experience, after praying at the beginning of the session, of bringing up an apropos Scripture during the session only to have them say: "I read that just yesterday!" or "My preacher preached on that this past Sunday."

— When I get stuck and ask for help and use what I receive, I love it when I suddenly hear: "How in the world did you know that?" The Spirit of Truth shows up to reveal the past, or the current contents of the heart-thoughts.

— Sometimes I realize I can't go in the "front door" and confront with something obvious, so I ask and the Spirit gives me an approach, a thought, a way to go in a side door through which the person can receive.

— When I am sitting in the session, asking for the Spirit's help, I sometimes am suddenly aware of a client's pain (either a place in their body currently aching or a particular area of grief or confusion) and when I ask about that, they begin to realize He is present and loves them.

Blessings! Barbara

COME OUT!

LECTIO DIVINA LAZARUS

(JOHN 11:1-45)

Francis Hymel, D.Min, LPC, LMFT

"Master, the one you love is ill." I often doubt the love of God when I'm ill. I feel disconnected and distant from God. Here, I can receive the good news that Jesus loves me when I'm ill.



"This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." It's hard to believe that my illness could be used for the glory of God. I certainly don't feel like glorifying God. Perhaps in dying to my ego, illness always humbles me, I am now fully attuned to God, and seek his wholeness and healing.

"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was." Today, we might call that an oxymoron, at least in adult logic. Talk about "My ways are not your ways." When I want God to do something for me now, I don't want to wait two days. Yet Jesus loves the whole family. There is such a solid foundation of love, He is free to stay where he is. His timing is not my timing. Sometimes, I must simply wait for Jesus to act when he chooses, and rest, knowing that he loves me, trusting even when I cannot see his visible presence.

"Let us go back to Judea... Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there." In other words, "are you crazy?!" Jesus doesn't ever do or not do anything out of fear, only love, in unity with the Father's will. He knows when it is time to move forward. We synchronize with Jesus and follow His lead.

"Our friend Lazarus is asleep but I am going to awaken him....Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." There are times in my life that I am dead asleep spiritually. Jesus is my friend and he will awaken me. He calls to me lovingly, inviting me to wake up, to rise up, and follow Him. I may choose to remain in my slumber, my spiritual darkness, believing that I am "saved" or safe in my illusion of unconscious knowing. But Jesus brings His light and life that calls me out my darkness and death.

"Lazarus has died. And I am glad that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him"....Thomas said "Let us also go to die with him." I cannot deny the reality of death in my life. Loved

ones die. I am not alone. Jesus invites me to face my own mortality, with Him, on the journey, "let us go to him (being death)." Through death, I come to experience the risen Christ, both in this life, and the next, that I might "believe."

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Some might call this my bargaining stage of grief. "Where were you Jesus when I needed you the most?! Things would have turned out differently if God had intervened and done something. I might feel abandoned and confused, lost and forsaken. My grief is compounded.

Jesus tells us, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." Dialogue and relationship, leads to transformation and healing. Jesus allows me to express my heartfelt pain to Him directly; he calls me into a deeper relationship with Him; challenges me to grow, to make a response in faith, and heals my pain.

"The teacher is here and is asking for you....she rose quickly and went to him." The teacher, Jesus, is here and asking for me. How will I respond to Jesus' invitation? Will I rise quickly, like Mary, and go to him? Or will I remain passive and expect him to come to me? Sometimes we stay at home, and sometimes we go out to meet him. Different situations call for different responses.

"When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, 'Where have you laid him?' 'Sir, come and see.' And Jesus wept....'See how he loved him.'"

Jesus is like me in all ways except sin. Fully human, and fully alive. The pain of others does affect Jesus. He is full of compassion and love. He weeps. He has empathy for my emotional pain as well. I can connect with Jesus in my grief. He cries with me. He's not emotionally detached. He feels what I feel. He wants to go to where I have laid my pain, where I have buried it. My response to Jesus needs to be "come and see." Knowing that he loves me, and trusting our relationship, I can invite him to go deeper within.

"So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead

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INSIDE ACT

Restoring the Heart Ministries' **JULIE WOODLEY, REGION 2**, has announced a DVD project that will be a joint effort of many organizations. *Into My*

Arms Counseling, a nine part series with an accompanying curriculum for those who have suffered the pain of abortion promises to be as successful as was the IN THE WILD FLOWERS program created by Julie, info@rthm.cc **REGION 10, CATHY**

MACDOUGALL, member of ACT from Nova Scotia, is interested in seeing ACT set up a writer's group to create a university course on Christian healing. mcmacdougall@hotmail.com In addition, Cathy has a house which overlooks St. George's Bay and would make a great place for either a retreat or for someone who is writing a book. Cathy currently teaches in Ontario. **REGION 17**, salutes their sister, Barbara Ryan, on her special March birthday. Congratulations to Connie Spitznagel, who is now a certified lactation consultant, able to assist women with their babies. *We Remember, in prayer*, George Guschwan's sister, Frances Simecek, who passed away suddenly in January. Our prayers go out to George, Anne and the family. Prayers of condolence, as well, are sent to Kate Murphy (Co-Coordinator Region 3) on the loss of her sister, Patricia. Kate was Patricia's care taker and very close to her. May the souls of the faithful rest in peace.



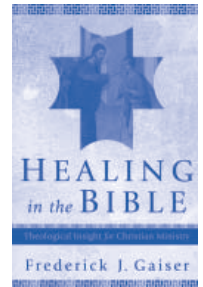
Region 3 Friends

Welcome Home, from page 1

Building relationships between these two schools, their administrators and most importantly, their students brought peace on the court through the game of Basketball. In 2010, Full Court Peace left its Belfast, Northern Ireland program under local control and moved on to promote its mission in Latin America. Additionally, in the interest of doing work domestically, Full Court Peace merged with Basketball Beyond Barriers, a Phoenix-based group, to form a two-part organization Full Court Peace USA/ Full Court Peace International. Coach Michael Evans, "You rock!"

book review...

HEALING IN THE BIBLE: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry by Frederick Gaiser is an excellent work that reflects on healing in the Bible and its potential meaning for the healing ministry today. Gaiser is a professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.



fyi...

3 Minute Retreat, \$0.99 for iPhone application or free online on loyolapress.com If you've ever found yourself needing a few moments of spiritual renewal in the midst of a hectic day, Loyola Press's 3-Minute Retreat is your invitation to remember the presence of God and to place yourself therein. Each retreat begins with a prompt to clear your mind and focus in on some attribute or promise of God, followed by a short scripture reading, questions prompting meditation, and final prayer. Soft music plays in the background, but this can easily be turned on or off based on your preference.

VerseWise Bible, Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition \$4.99 (iPhone only) Of all the resources available to Christians, there is, of course, none better than the Bible. While many applications contain full text versions of the Bible, many of them are less popular translations. The Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition is a clear and easily readable translation that most Christians will find familiar. Extra features in this application include the ability to highlight favorite verses, copy verses to the clipboard, and e-mail verses.

Guardian Angels, from page 3

to grips with moral requirements." In 1994, 32 books on Angels were released. Most of these trivialized Angels. For some, belief in Angels becomes trendy.

Consider, instead, those consoling words from Psalm 9:10-11: "No disaster can overtake you, no plague come near your tent; He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways." And there is this from Exodus 23:20: "Behold I will send my angel who shall go before you and keep you on your journey and bring you to the place that I have prepared."

And theologian, Karl Rahner, has written a challenging word for each of us to consider: "Every person has the office of 'Guardian Angel' to those whom God has specially entrusted to them; those who go together with us along the path of life."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Degnon Associates has managed the Association of Christian Therapists since 1996, with George Degnon serving as Executive Director. Degnon Associates, Inc., established in 1979, is an association management company providing a full range of personalized services to professional associations, national organizations, and international societies. Degnon Associates is a charter accredited association management company achieving that distinction as one of the first accredited companies in the country in the late 1990s. Currently there are 22 full time employees and their operation is international in scope. Degnon has put on meetings for its clients in five continents throughout the world and in all the major cities in Europe.



ACT has been blessed to have the exceptional business insight, personal friendship and generosity of George Degnon at its side. He has provided orientation and board training to the directors, advises on strategic matters, and assists the president as necessary, oversees the risk management activities, and guides the board of directors in their deliberation with strategic suggestions. George received the coveted Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation in 1979 and has been recertified every three years since. Currently, George is assisted in his daily activity with ACT by



Christy McGinty Levine and Nicole Ritchey. Christy McGinty Levine is on the senior management team at Degnon where she has worked for nearly four years and she serves as Association Manager of ACT. Christy works with George on board training and strategic matters. In addition, she is invaluable as a member of the International Conference committee, assisting in all areas of planning. Christy provides ACT with extraordinary help.

Nicole Ritchey is the Executive Assistant for ACT with whom she has worked for four years. Nicole maintains all of ACT's membership records, which includes collecting and updating dues payments and processing and welcoming new ACT members. She also helps with all aspects of the planning and execution of events and meetings, including the annual International Conference. She, also, assists the Regional Coordinators and supervises the production of InterACT. Nicole is a talented, multi-tasker who provides superior professional support to all those in need of her services. Other Degnon employees assisting ACT are Office Manager Sandy Titus, Corporate Accountant Stephanie Leisenring, and Meg Gorham, who does tireless work on behalf of the InterACT Newsletter. Meg's gifted talent for design and generosity of spirit are an unending source of support to the editor who considers her a gentle giant.

Words cannot fully express our gratitude to George and his singular staff, but we want you to know that your myriad efforts on our behalf are deeply appreciated. On a daily basis you provide ACT with outstanding professional management support. Receive our heartfelt thanks! You are indeed *excellence in action*. (Your ACT brothers and sisters).

International Conference

October 6-9, 2011



Association of Christian Therapists

“Mental Health, Spiritual Growth & Bodily Well-Being:
An Evolving Christian Approach to Wholeness”

Renaissance Hotel, Philadelphia PA

Physicians • Dentists • Nurses • Clergy & Religious • Chiropractors
Pastoral Care • Psychotherapists • Counselors • Educators • Allied Health Practitioners

Invited Speakers

Theresa Burke, MA, PhD, DAPA, NCP, LPC
Anthony Campo, MD
Damon Owens, BSME, MSME
Mary Jean Ricci, BA, BSN, MSN
Bob Schuchts, PhD, LMFT
Charles Zeiders, Psy.D., N.C.C.

Workshops

- Clinical insights into the meaning of incarnation
- Holistic health: prayer, meditation, nutrition, exercise
- Integrating prayer in the clinical/hospital context
- Impact of teamwork in a clinical or medical setting
 - Holistic care for the healthcare provider

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keep connected

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Lectio Divina, from page 4

for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God!'" So they took away the stone.

Jesus moves in like a delicate heart surgeon. It is the cave of my heart that he approaches. He knows all my stony defenses. He can't get to my heart until my defense mechanisms are removed. He asks others for help to move the stone and, at times, I must do the same. I may be afraid of the stench – the shame, disgust, hurt, anger, hopeless despair, deep sadness and fear. All the death, darkness and secrets that I don't want to face in my life. Jesus asks me again to simply believe and trust in him. At times, I need to ask the Christian community to help me take away my stone. I can't do it alone.

After Jesus prayed to the Father, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Jesus continues with the power of prayer, of being in unity with the Father, and so must I. He must be the source of my strength and power, for any good to come. There is power and authority in the words of Jesus. Yet, he doesn't go in and take Lazarus out by the hand. He waits for Lazarus to step out in faith. He must be willing to come out by his own free choice. Jesus' command calls for a response from me. I can stay in my cave and hide even still. I can choose to stay stuck in my depression, self-pity, blame or denial. I can stay in my own comfort zone of what is familiar. The cave may bring a false sense of security. Or will I choose to rise in response to the light and words of Jesus? I may have to crawl out. Maybe Lazarus did! I want to be free but maybe I'm still tied up with old security blankets. Again, Jesus did not do it all for Lazarus. He asked the community to assist in letting him go free. And so we are to do the same. I can't free myself. I need the power of Jesus to heal me and the Christian community to support me.

May the Risen Christ beckon you to **"COME OUT!"**