

RADICAL Grace

"Most of us would like
to see the **poor**
get more.

It comes as a shock to
realize this will require
that **we take**
less."

THE CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

*A Christian center forwarding the integration of
social action and contemplative prayer*

The CAC supports a new reformation—from the inside:

- In the spirit of the Gospels
- Confirming peoples' deeper spiritual intuitions
- Encouraging actions of justice rooted in prayer
- With a new appreciation for, and cooperation with, other denominations, religions, and cultures

Our Core Principles:

- The teaching of Jesus is our central reference point (*criterion*).
- We need a contemplative mind in order to do compassionate action (*process*).
- The best criticism of the bad is the practice of the better. Oppositional energy only creates more of the same (*emphasis*).
- Practical truth is more likely found at the bottom and the edges than at the top or the center of most groups, institutions, and cultures (*perspective*).
- We will support true authority, the ability to “author” life in others, regardless of the group (*non-tribal*).
- Life is about discovering the right questions more than having the right answers (*primacy of discernment*).
- True religion leads us to an experience of our True Self and undermines my false self (*ultimate direction*).



A collision of opposites forms the cross of Christ. One leads downward preferring the truth of the humble. The other moves leftward against the grain. But all are wrapped safely inside a hidden harmony: One world, God's cosmos, a benevolent universe.

RADICAL GRACE is published quarterly by the Center for Action and Contemplation. Radical Grace has shifted from a subscription-based publication to an on-going means of relationship and communication with the CAC community. Friends making a financial contribution will receive a year's worth (four issues) of Radical Grace. A gift of Radical Grace is available for the suggested amount of \$25.00 per year.

CAC Founder:	Richard Rohr, OFM
CAC Board:	Lynnessa Gallagher, Marianne Kemp, Annette O'Connor, Russ Raskob
CAC Staff:	Anita Amstutz, Mike Bennett, Wendy Bennett, Lou-Anne Dillard, Vanessa Guerin, Kathie Helzer, Shirin McArthur, Rich Meixner, Paula Montoya, Mary Jo Picha, Stephen Picha, Cynthia Ranke, Ken Reno, Cece Shantzek, Doug Spence, Paul Vosburgh, Aaron Wallentine
Work Interns:	Cliff Dyer
Editor:	Vanessa Guerin, editor@cacradicalgrace.org
Layout:	Aaron Wallentine, Center for Action and Contemplation
Cover:	Excerpt from <i>America's over-consumption to the detriment of the rest of the world</i> on Provoke Radio, www.provokeradio.com.
Artwork:	Artwork, p. 10 by Todd Guess, www.toddhormanguess.com, used with permission; Cartoon by Michael Leunig, p. 15, from <i>The Prayer Tree</i> , HarperCollins, ©1980 Michael Leunig 1990, used with permission of the artist.
Photography:	Photos, p. 16-17 by Jill Britton, used with permission.
Poetry:	“When I Was the Forest” p. 20, by Meister Eckhart (1260-1328), translation by Daniel Ladinsky from <i>Love Poems from God</i> , Penguin Group (USA) Inc., © Daniel Ladinsky, 2002, used with permission of the translator.

RADICAL GRACE (USPS 023-275)

Published quarterly by Center for Action and Contemplation
1705 Five Points Rd. SW, Albuquerque NM 87105-3017.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Albuquerque NM
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

RADICAL GRACE
1705 Five Points Rd. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105

Center for Action and Contemplation
Telephone: (505) 242-9588 Fax: (505) 242-9518
E-mail: info@cacradicalgrace.org

Websites: www.cacradicalgrace.org • www.malespirituality.org

INSIDE RG

- 3 THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING
By Richard Rohr, OFM
- 4 SIMPLY ABUNDANT
By Joni Thompson
- 6 UNCONSUMPTION: Can getting rid of stuff feel as good as getting it?
By Rob Walker
- 7 IN PURSUIT OF SIMPLE HAPPINESS
By Robin Hebert
- 8 GLOBAL AWARENESS—PART II
By Dr. Denise R. Ames
- 10 LIVING WITH DYING
By Mary Groves
- 11 GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS
By Ann Githinji
- 12 'TIS THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE ...
By Sr. Paula González, sc
- 14 SIMPLICITY AND SABBATH
By Suzanne Stabile
- 16 A TRAVEL DIARY
By Jill Britton
- 18 A VENUE FOR LETTING GO
By Zenaida Quismorio
- 19 SIMPLY LIVING
By Br. Benet Tvedten, OSB
- 22 CENTERPOINT
By Rich Meixner

EDITOR'S NOTE

“WE ARE RELATED to all things: the earth and the stars—EVERYTHING” One might not think that this quote by Black Elk relates to the “Simplicity” theme of this edition of *Radical Grace*. Yet, the articles—beginning with “The Great Chain of Being,” by Fr. Richard Rohr—reveal the complexity of simplicity that the great Ogala Sioux Indian clearly understood.

As Christians we are called to prayerfully practice intentional living in order to become more mindful of the interrelatedness of all things. That includes an awareness of the effects of global warming on the air we breathe, the earth we stand on, and the water that “quenches, refreshes, and cleanses” (St. Teresa of Avila).

While we are not all called to the austere life chosen by Francis of Assisi and others, this edition of *Radical Grace* invites us to examine ways in which we can simplify our lives by becoming more mindful of one another and the planet we inhabit. ■

— Vanessa Guerin

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

By Richard Rohr, OFM

Francis called all creatures, no matter how small, by the name of brother and sister; because he knew they had the same source as himself.

~ Saint Bonaventure's Life of Francis

By this image the Scholastic theologians tried to communicate a linked and coherent world (q.v. *The Great Chain of Being*, Arthur Lovejoy, [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936]). The essential and unbreakable links in the chain include the Divine Creator, the angelic heavenly, the human, the animal, the world of plants and vegetation, the waters upon the earth, and the planet Earth itself with its minerals. In themselves, and in their union together, they proclaim the glory of God (Psalm 104) and the inherent dignity of all things. This image became the basis for calling anything and everything “sacred.”

What some now call creation spirituality, deep ecology, or holistic Gospel actually found a much earlier voice in the spirituality of the ancient Celts, the Rhineland mystics, and most especially St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). Women like Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) communicated it through music, art, poetry, and community life itself; scholars like St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) created an entire *Summa Theologica* based on St. Francis' spiritual seeing: “In the soul's journey to God we must present to ourselves *the whole material world* as the first mirror through which we may pass over to the Supreme (Artisan)” (*The Soul's Journey to God*, I, 9 [emphasis added]). The Dominican Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) said the same: “If humankind could have known God without the world, God would never have created the world.”

The “Catholic synthesis” of the early Middle Ages was exactly that—a synthesis that held together, for us, one coherent world, a positive intellectual vision not defined by “againstness” or enemies but by “the clarity and beauty of form.” It was a “cosmic egg” of meaning, a vision of Creator and a multitude of creatures that excluded nothing. The great chain of being was the first holistic metaphor for the new seeing offered us by the Incarnation: Jesus as the living icon of integration, “the coincidence of opposites” who “holds all things in unity” within himself (Colossians 1: 15 20). God is One. I am whole and so is everything else.

Sadly we seldom saw the Catholic synthesis move beyond philosophers' books and mystics' prayers. The rest of us Catholics often remained in a fragmented and dualistic world, usually looking for the contaminating element to punish or the unworthy member to expel. While still daring

to worship the cosmic Scapegoat—Jesus—we scapegoated the other links in the great chain of being. We have been unwilling to see the Divine Image in those we judge to be inferior or unworthy: sinners, heretics, animals, things growing from earth and earth itself. Once the great chain of being was broken, we were soon unable to see the Divine Image in our own species, except for folks just like us. Then it was only a short time before the Enlightenment and modern secularism denied the whole heavenly sphere unknown in any culture except the recent West—and finally we doubted the Divinity itself!

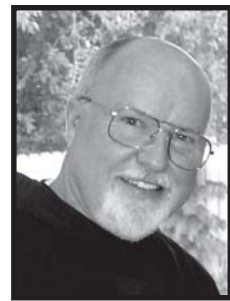
As the medievalists predicted, once the chain was broken, and one link not honored, the whole vision collapsed. Either we acknowledge that God is in all things or we have lost the basis for seeing God in anything. Once the choice is ours and not God's, it is merely a world of private preferences and prejudices. The cosmic egg is shattered.

Saint Bonaventure, who is called the second founder of the Franciscan Order, took Francis' intuitive genius and made it into an entire philosophy. “The magnitude of things clearly manifests the wisdom and goodness of the triune God, who by power, presence and essence exists uncircumscribed in all things” (*The Soul's Journey to God*, I, 14). “God is within all things but not enclosed; outside all things, but not excluded; above all things, but not aloof; below all things but not debased” (V 8). Bonaventure was the first to speak of God as one “whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.” Therefore the origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, fullness, activity, and order of all created things are the very “footprints” and “fingerprints” (*vestigia*) of God.

Whoever, therefore, is not enlightened by such splendor of created things is blind; whoever is not awakened by such outcries is deaf; whoever does not praise God because of all these effects is dumb; whoever does not discover the First Principle from such clear signs is a fool.

Therefore, open your eyes, alert the ears of your spirit, open your lips and apply your heart so that in all creatures you may see, hear, praise, love and worship, glorify and honor your God, lest the whole world rise against you (I, 15).

It is hard to imagine how different the last 800 years might have been if this truly catholic vision had formed more Christians. But instead, as Bonaventure feared, “The whole world has now risen [in judgment] against” us. Our seeing has been very partial and usually prejudicial, and often not seeing at all. The individual has always decided and discriminated as to where and if God's image would be honored. Sinners, heretics, witches, Moslems, ► page 20



SIMPLY ABUNDANT

By Joni Thompson

Shortly after it was announced that the theme for the CAC's 2007 summer conference would be "Simplicity," the following quote appeared on the homepage of Excite.com: "Simplicity of character is the natural result of profound thought."

It struck me as somewhat of a paraphrase of "action borne from contemplation." Upon reflection, it also seems to me that many of us might have the wrong idea about simplicity. Perhaps simplicity, like so many spiritual virtues, is not the thing to be sought, but the natural outcome of living out our lives in God.

I've always struggled with the Spirituality of Subtraction in a world where it seems so clear that our loving God lavishly gives good gifts.

In many senses, the idea of simplicity resonates with the idea of poverty. A popular bumper sticker philosophy states: "Live Simply So Others May Simply Live." There is a deep, poignant truth in that turned phrase, but also a deep potential for missing the point. In *That Man Is You*, Louis Evely writes, "Material poverty's an economic condition, not a virtue. If it sanctified us automatically, we'd be duty-bound to spread it rather than try to relieve it." So simplicity has to be more than a fervent 'self-stripping' of our material trappings.

Personally, I've always struggled with the Spirituality of Subtraction in a world where it seems so clear that our loving God lavishly gives good gifts. Intellectually I understand the ascetic way—the emptying of self to make room for the Other. Experientially, I have a much better understanding of the Spirituality of Abundance. Rather than constant attention to 'removal' or disengagement, I feel drawn to inviting the indwelling spirit to permeate and hallow the abundance. Evely sums it up in the same book: "The humiliation of being rich is a first step toward poverty (simplicity), whereas pride in one's poverty is the most dangerous of luxuries. 'I thank you that I'm not like this publican' can easily become, 'I thank you that I'm not like this Pharisee.'"

Nelson Mandela says it another way, "Your playing small does not serve the world.... As we are liberated..., our presence automatically liberates others." False humility is

the ugliest face of pride—denying the gifts of the Giver with a contrived piety must break God's heart. Imagine giving your children the finest and best gifts only to have them slink away to eat dirt or play with sticks because they don't feel worthy. I wonder if after Jesus addressed the fathers about their not feeding their children scorpions, if He completed the metaphor by pointing out how freely and gladly the children accepted their good gifts?

So if simplicity is the outgrowth rather than the object, what is our focus? Where does 'profound thought' take us?

In the movie, "Diary of a Mad Black Woman" the victim/heroine goes on her own journey to find life after her husband of 18 years, a prominent, successful attorney throws her out of their house for "the other woman." Helen's path leads from a sense of unworthiness (not

wanting to fight him for a hefty settlement) through vengeful anger (wanting to destroy him) and finally resolves in a quiet yet firm desire to walk away from 'all that'. During a visit with her mother (perfectly captured by Cicely Tyson), Helen wails, "Mama, he was my everything!" Mama stops stroking Helen's hair and states with stern compassion, "Baby, GOD is your everything."

And there it was. The secret to simplicity, poverty in spirit, purity of heart. Regardless of what abundance or what lack we experience throughout life, God is our everything. St. Paul understood this—that's why he was able to be content in all situations, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want (Phil. 4). And although Jesus promised abundant life, He also reminded that life does not exist in the abundance of possessions.

The egret gives the best example for moving through life with the simplicity we desire. This bird is able to walk and eat among garbage dumps and landfills, but none of the refuse sticks to his feet. May we learn to walk gently upon the earth, taking what we need, giving thanks for the abundance but not allowing any of it to cling to us because, after all, "Baby, GOD is our everything!" ■

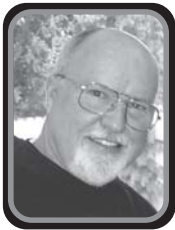
Joni Thompson, Chief Operating Officer for the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau in Albuquerque, NM, considers her self a true ecumenist – growing through faith traditions in various Christian and Non-Denominational communities.

The Center for Action and Contemplation invites you to beautiful Albuquerque this summer for ...

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING: SIMPLIFYING OUR LIVES

PRESENTED BY:

Fr. Richard
Rohr, OFM



Internationally
recognized author
and spiritual teacher



SPECIAL GUESTS:

Sr. Paula
Gonzalez, sc

Futurist,
Environmentalist,
Pioneer in
alternative
energy
approaches



and

Tiki
Küstenmacher



German author of
the best-
selling book
*How To Simplify
Your Life*

Friday, August 3rd through Sunday, August 5, 2007

at the Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Ecology is a modern word for what medieval Franciscan scholars called "The Great Chain of Being," describing the interconnectedness of all: God, angels, humans, animals, plants, water, and the Earth itself. They predicted that if we stopped seeing God in any one link of the chain, the whole chain would fall apart. This conference will offer spiritual, global, and practical direction to help each of us discern our place, and how we can work together to re-link the chain.

For more information or to register, visit

www.cacracticalgrace.org

Center for Action and Contemplation • PO Box 12464, Albuquerque, NM 87195 • (505) 242-9588
www.cacracticalgrace.org • info@cacradicalgrace.org

UNCONSUMPTION

Can getting rid of stuff feel as good as getting it?

By Rob Walker

Getting new stuff can feel really good. Most everybody knows that. Most everybody also knows—particularly in the aftermath of the consumption-frenzy holiday season—that utility can fade, pleasure can be fleeting and the whole thought-that-counts thing is especially ephemeral. Apart from the usual solution to this problem (more new stuff!), it's worth pondering whether getting rid of stuff can ever feel as good as getting it.

A few years ago, a self-described tree-hugger in Tucson named Deron Beal was working for a nonprofit that focused on recycling as a way to minimize what was going into local landfills. While plenty of people were willing, even eager, to get rid of things they no longer wanted but that weren't really trash, finding people who wanted those things was a challenge. Beal set up a Yahoo Groups mailing list, hoping to create a giveaway marketplace where people could list usable items and others could lay claim to them and then come pick them up. The mailing list became the basis for Freecycle, a Web-enabled network of about 3,900 such e-mail groups, each dedicated to a local community and managed by a volunteer moderator, and claiming 2.9 million participants in more than 70 countries. One of the largest Freecycle groups, with 25,000 members, is for New York City.

Save-the-earth types make up only a fraction of Freecycle users. Like any successful marketplace, this one works because it links people with widely disparate motivations. Some participants want to de-clutter. Some see it as akin to a charity. Some just don't want to lug items to the dump. And of course, many people are looking for free stuff. As Freecycle has become a bigger and bigger de facto brand—Beal prefers “movement”—

its sheer scale no doubt attracts people who aren't tree-huggers or “simple living” fanatics but just have some item they'd like to un-consume and in the process see what all the fuss is about.

Whatever attracts people to join, part of what keeps them involved, Beal says, is something they probably didn't expect: the

moment when someone thanks you backward and forward for giving him something you planned to throw away. “There's a sort of paradigm shift in your brain: ‘Wow, that feels really good,’” Beal says. “That's what I think is fueling this absurd amount of growth we've had.”

But it's not all one big love-in. Freecycle has also sparked squabbles, schisms and even legal disputes among its enthusiasts. Though Beal turned away venture capitalists, opting to register as a nonprofit, he did take on a sponsor, the garbage-hauling company Waste Management Inc. Some of the network's purists didn't like that idea; others didn't like what they saw as too many Freecycle rules and split off to form their own groups. The legal wrangling (and some of the network's rules) stem from competing efforts to claim the Freecycle name. Given all this turmoil, the online environmental magazine *Grist* was already asking in 2005 whether, only two years after Freecycle started, it had “run its course.” Beal concedes that “it was messy there for a while,” but membership has more ▶ page 13



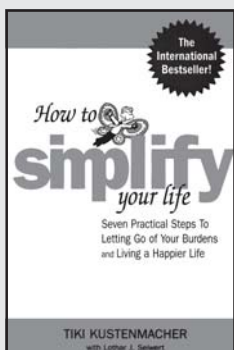
HOW TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE: Seven Practical Steps to Letting Go of Your Burdens and Living a Happier Life

by Tiki Küstenmacher with Lothar J. Seiwert, © 2004 Campus Verlag GmbH

“Learn to understand yourself better and to move toward the purpose of your life” — Step 7

In less than 300 cartoon-filled pages, Tiki Küstenmacher guides us using a 7-step pyramid model and practical techniques in ways to simplify our lives. We begin at the base of the pyramid—by sorting out the mess on our desks and in our homes—and spiral up using tools to help us clear up our finances, find quality time in our lives, take care of our health, develop healthier relationships, simplify our life partnerships, and much more. We culminate with the discovery of our selves and our goal in life at the top of the pyramid.

Tiki Küstenmacher is a Lutheran minister, journalist, cartoonist, author, and columnist living in Munich, Germany. He will be a guest presenter at *The Great Chain of Being: Simplifying Our Lives*, the CAC-sponsored conference with Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM in August 2007.



IN PURSUIT OF SIMPLE HAPPINESS

By Robin Hebert

Preparing to leave on our annual mission trip, an excursion which my husband, Easton, and I lead each year to a small village in Mexico, we found ourselves running around town picking up last minute items that had been requested via email from the mission base where we were headed. One of the articles was a car battery for a woman living in a very isolated rancho called “Kilometer 64,” a village I have visited on numerous occasions. The battery, to be charged by a solar panel, would provide a little light at night for her family.

Always looking for opportunities to evangelize, I explained to the clerk at AutoZone where the battery we were purchasing was headed. I described the desolation of the village and the fact that there was no electricity. I wanted her to know about the village women, about their extreme poverty and the hope we bring each time we visit. Although I didn’t share all of that with her, still she was moved. Her quick response confirmed a mild awakening: “We got everything we need,” she quipped, “and we still ain’t happy.” My mind flashed ahead to the look on the face that would receive the gift of light—meager energy for one solitary light bulb in a simple adobe home shared with countless others.

My sadness about the economic “unconsciousness” in my own country was softened by the thought that there was just one more person with a bit of awareness—that in our rich nation, we’ve got more than we could ever need, yet we always want more. Her words reminded me of a statement I once heard, “We work hard to buy the things we don’t need, with the money we don’t have, to impress the people we don’t like.” Yes, my sister, we still ain’t happy.

Fr. Richard Rohr opens *Everything Belongs* with a description of our cultural conditioning: “We are a circumference people with little access to the center...confusing edges with essence, too quickly claiming the superficial as substance.” My personal image for this circumference conditioning is a giant hamster wheel, where, in a state of frantic chasing and spinning, many of us think we’re pursuing happiness. I witness the hamster wheel when I’m driving on a busy street and observe drivers with glazed looks on their faces, chattering mindlessly on cell phones, running red lights because they feel entitled by their busyness. I often remind myself when I’m in that stream of rushing traffic that I—too—need to slow down and live in the present moment, the place where true happiness resides.

Father Rohr offers a helpful insight: “earlier peoples, who

didn’t have as many escapes and means to avoid reality, had to find Essence earlier—just to survive.” Ah, Essence. I think that’s why I travel on mission at least once a year. Through their simplicity, my Mexican brothers and sisters point me towards Essence, which is for them faith, family,

“*We got everything we need,” she quipped, “and we still ain’t happy.”*”

friends and food. While I’m in Mexico, life is simple. And integrated. The four values by which I try to live my life—love, worship, work, play—come together in perfect harmony. Yes, we all work hard, but we play hard. We can’t tell the difference between worshipping and loving. The pace of course is slower and so much more conscious, so we aren’t running like hamsters spinning mindlessly on a wheel.

The Essence, indeed, is found not in the circumference, but in the center, where, charged by the Divine Energy Source, we become the transmitters of infinite love and compassion. I experienced that privilege when I presented the car battery and visited the tiny adobe home of the recipient of light, a woman named Maricella. She is one of about a dozen women who teach me about suffering and perseverance. They offer me the opportunity to bear their anguish with them as together we reach for the light.

Standing in the stark barrenness of a dirt-floored kitchen illuminated now by one single light bulb I felt an indescribable happiness which envelops a soul who knows she has met another’s deep need. The truth is: I go to Mexico to bring *their* light back home—to my family, my community, even my own tired spirit that spends more time on that hamster wheel than I care to admit. I always find that in the weeks following mission, my life is simpler. It seems to reflect the humility, joy, and gratitude of the people to whom I have ministered. In reality, they minister to me in ways they may never know. Their spirits make mine happy. Simply happy.

Robin Hebert, a pastoral counselor, spiritual director, retreat leader, and a campus minister leads annual mission trips with her husband, Easton, for the Theresian World Ministry to a poor village in Mexico. Robin is co-author of When Women Pray: Our Personal Stories of Extraordinary Grace and When Wisdom Speaks: Living Experiences with Biblical Women (to be released spring '07). ■

GLOBAL AWARENESS — PART II

By Denise Ames

What can we do to counter the dire effects of economic globalization? In the first part of this two-part article for *Radical Grace* I explained ten factors that I think are necessary for economic/corporate globalization to take place. I also maintained that, if economic globalization continues unchecked, it will paint a rather bleak scenario for the future state of the planet. With this article I hope to infuse some hope and optimism into the mix; after all it is spring and hope springs eternal. I am an optimist by nature, so this article is more fun for me and hopefully for you as well.

To review briefly—just in case you missed or, heaven forbid, skipped the first article—I described how economic globalization has expanded and incorporated every dimension of our global society and way of life into its economic web. This expansion has brought economic benefits to about 20% of the world's population, including many Americans, but has decreased the economic and spiritual well being of billions of people, and wrecked havoc, if not permanent scars, on our earth's ecosystem.

A reaction to this spirit-numbing information is to feel helpless and hopeless, after all “they” are many and we are few. But, actually the reverse is true. We are many and “they” are few! We can individually and collectively turn the trajectory of economic globalization towards life-enhancing choices for sustainable community, healthy living, and spiritual connections. Although this will not happen overnight, we can all begin acting now! The rest of this article lays out a number of individual actions that we may each choose to make that will contribute to a more sustainable world and help counter the ill effects of economic globalization. Here are just a few suggestions.

Buy Local Foods

With the average meal on our dinner plates traveling over 1500 miles, a turn to local agriculture is practical, healthier, and sustainable. Although local farmers today supply only about 2% of our nation's food, it is one of the fastest growing segments of the food industry. Corporate industrial agriculture still commands an unfair economic advantage aided by about \$14.5 billion in annual agricultural subsidies. Yet, surging consumer demand has convinced some large supermarket companies to rethink their far-flung supply chains and search for small-scale producers and local retail outlets. Individuals with their consumer dollars tightly waded in their paradigm-shifting hands, can seek out farmer's markets and restaurants that buy locally grown foods.

Also on the rise are CSA's—Community Supported Agriculture—where customers buy a share of a farm's output before the season starts, sharing the risks and rewards of the harvest.

Buy Organic Food

Organic food is produced without chemical pesticides and is processed with natural additives. But many ask why buy organic foods, after all, it is more expensive than conventional foods and is it really healthier? I strongly suggest that we switch to organic foods as much as possible. One, compared to conventional agriculture, organic farming fosters biodiversity at every level, from bacteria to birds to mammals by using fewer inorganic fertilizers and pesticides and by adopting practices like mixing arable and livestock farming. Second, organic farms tend to be less corporate dominated (although this is changing). Third, heavy reliance on pesticides by conventional farmers is suspected of leading to increased rates of cancer and reproductive problems in humans. More than 80% of the commonly-used pesticides today have been classified by scientists as potentially carcinogenic—and are routinely found in mothers' milk. Fourth, toxic run-off from pesticide-heavy farmland into rivers, lakes, and streams takes a toll on wildlife. Riparian habitats within watersheds are destroyed by chemical contamination. Fifth, about 20% of the entire U.S. food supply is contaminated with toxins from pesticide residue, and a recent study estimates that the average American receives about 68 “exposures” to these substances each day. Not only are we, the consumers, at risk for pesticide toxicity, but approximately 1.2 billion pounds of highly toxic pesticides are sprayed on our food annually, exposing all farm workers, both in the U.S. and worldwide, to grave risk.

Consume Less Meat

I am not out to convert you to vegan/vegetarianism but it is easy to see why cutting back on meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products in the diet can greatly improve the state of the environment, and reduce harmful effects of economic globalization. Livestock production in the U.S. uses more than half of all water consumed. Producing a pound of wheat or vegetables requires 25 gallons of water while a pound of beef requires 2500 gallons. Raising just one average steer uses enough water to float a navy destroyer!

Seventy percent of the total U.S. grain production, and half of the world's grain harvest, is consumed by livestock. A total of 56% of U.S. agricultural land is used to produce beef. In addition, animals raised for food produce 130 times more excrement than the entire U.S. human population.

For example, Circle 4 Farms in Milford, Utah, which raises 2.5 million pigs every year, creates more waste than the entire city of Los Angeles. And this is just one farm! Each year, the nation's factory farms, collectively produce 2 billion tons of manure, a substance that is rated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as one of the country's top 10 pollutants.

If we were to just eat lower on the food chain the beneficial effects would multiply across the economic and ecological spectrum.

Responsible Shopping

One of the most powerful things we can do with our consumer dollars is to avoid companies with poor human rights and environmental records, and shop with responsible companies who go the extra mile to treat their workers with dignity and give them a living wage. With sweatshop abuses spanning the globe, and with more giant corporations subcontracting their manufacturing to third parties, making an informed choice about where to shop for sweatshop-free products can be daunting. The Co-op America's *Retailer Scorecard* (www.coopamerica.org) is a handy reference to help us decide where to shop. Avoiding, as

people and the planet, SRI integrates personal, social, and environmental concerns with financial considerations. The key to SRI is screening. Socially concerned investors generally seek to own profitable companies with respectable employee relations, strong records of community involvement, low environmental impact policies and practices, respect for human rights around the world, and safe and useful products. SRI's also avoid investments in firms that fall short in these areas. Screening criterion used by various SRI funds include: alcohol, tobacco, defense weapons, animal testing, environment, human rights, labor relations, employment equality, and community investing.

Simple Living

One of the best ways we can reject the negative effects of corporate globalization is to follow what is called simple living or voluntary simplicity. This idea has just about as many definitions as there are practicing individuals. It is not about living in poverty or self-inflicted deprivation but living an examined life—one in which we have determined what is important, or what is “enough.” Rather than let corporate/consumer America dictate their version of the

“You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”

much as possible, Wal-Mart—one of the largest American corporations in terms of sales, \$344 billion in 2006, the largest employer in the U.S., and home to the wealthiest family in the world, about \$80 billion net worth in 2006—can be a positive step in the direction of rejecting corporate globalization.

Buy Fair Trade Products

Fair Trade is an international movement with roots that go back 50 years. It means a fair partnership among consumers, marketers, and producers. This is an even-handed model for business based on the “triple bottom line:” fair or living wages for farmers and workers, environmental sustainability, and profitability for all parties in the chain of production. Once again, buying fair trade products is an opportunity to vote our values with our purchase dollars. Choosing Fair Trade products—coffee, tea, chocolate, and many others—is an easy way to make a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Socially Responsible Investing (SRI)

Ensuring that our investments have a positive impact on

“American Dream” we can define our own version with sustainability, community, and concern for future generations as priority values. If you believe the world would be a better place if we all took a little more responsibility for what we consume and how we live our lives, then the path to simple living is probably one you will enjoy following.

It has been a pleasure sharing with you just a few ideas about how we can individually and collectively challenge the seemingly overwhelming forces of economic/corporate globalization. If you have questions or would like more information email me or visit my website. I would welcome the opportunity to correspond with you.

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi put it so well ... “You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.” ■

Dr. Denise R. Ames is a life-long educator and director of the Center for Global Awareness, a campaign promoting greater global consciousness and creative action. She is available for workshops, presentations, and lectures. www.global-awareness.net, (505)344-1892.

LIVING WITH DYING

By Mary Groves

In November of 2006 I developed a severe allergic reaction to a drug that affects the membranes of the mouth and tongue. I thought, “Maybe this is it.” Maybe it wouldn’t be cancer that would take my life, but some side effect from the treatment medications. At the hospital, the doctors discussed my treatment plan and agreed that a breathing tube was necessary. The steroids administered for the allergic reaction were not taking effect and a tracheotomy might be necessary. I was suddenly filled with a deep level of anxiety. Then I overheard a nurse saying let’s give the steroids ten more minutes and I began to relax. The steroids were working. Slowly I was feeling a response. The breathing tube was not necessary—at least for now. I was carefully monitored and with the help of God, I made it through that very dark night and so I am still here to share my story.

Six years ago I was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma (kidney cancer). Surgeons removed my right kidney and three years later my right adrenal gland. Rather than allow myself to be a victim I decided to become proactive in my recovery. I began to see a naturopath. He challenged me to a healthier lifestyle through diet, supplements, exercise and the practice of regular meditation. Of course I continued to see my oncologist. I had hoped the two practitioners would collaborate in my treatment plan, but that did not happen. The challenge was for me to incorporate both disciplines into my health care and allow the big “C” to become a great teacher of how to live life more fully each day.

Living with cancer has its cycles of hope and of disappointment but there are always opportunities to be open to awareness. In 2005 experimental drugs were being developed specifically for renal cell carcinoma. My oncologist wanted me to consider entering a clinical research trial. At first I resisted because I felt good and had lots of energy. Then in July of that year my routine tests showed a significant growth in the tumors. They had metastasized to my lungs. I decided to enter a clinical trial.

Although the drugs did help for a time, the cancer continued to grow. I even entered a second clinical trial with a new set of drugs, only to experience a life-threatening reaction.

Today I have survived for nearly seven years with cancer and have benefited from a long list of lessons and supportive relationships. I have found numerous ways to keep learning the truth of “leaning into the pain,” as my friend and mentor Richard Rohr often teaches. Some of my survival tools

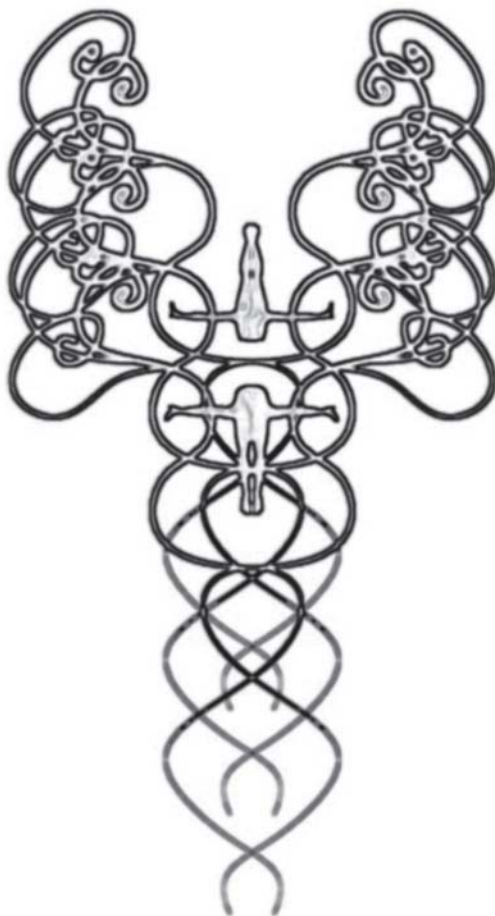
have included journaling, contemplative prayer, and scripture reading. I have come to love playing pirate with my seven-year-old grandson who thinks he is Captain Jack Sparrow, and listening to the inspiring lyrics of Neil Diamond’s music. Finally, I am grateful for inspirational literature including Parker Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness* and films like “Conversations with God” and “An Inconvenient Truth” that put life in perspective.

Now I realize that when we are “healthy” it is easy to be complacent with the relationship we have with God. Life with cancer has sharpened my awareness of that complacency. I have found that the transformation of my spiritual pain lies in becoming the true self God created me to be—one in deep communion with the Divine and all of creation.

The mystery is that I am learning about living with dying and my commitment to wake up to life has allowed me to teach others not to settle for lives half-lived. “To die

daily” has always been the core teaching in our life work at Sacred Art of Living—we call it the “Sacred Art of Living and Dying.” But now it has become incorporated by those who live courageously with chronic illness. I believe my greatest accomplishment is a deepened awareness of the gift of life and the privilege of sharing it with a spirit of love. ■

Mary Groves and her husband Richard have extensive experience in hospice ministry and founded the Sacred Art of Living Center in Bend, Oregon. Its mission has expanded to include many programs and retreats, including Sacred Art of Living and Dying, one of the nation’s first comprehensive programs for spirituality in end-of-life care. Learn more about Sacred Art of Living Center at www.sacredartofliving.org



GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

By Ann Githinji

We are living in a highly advanced scientific and technological era, where human beings are constantly conquering the constraints of time and space. The internet has opened up global communication like never before, and explorations of outer space no longer surprise us. Yet alongside all these advances is the sharp contrast of unimaginable levels of global poverty and disease. It is quite apparent that disease and poverty are inextricably linked and perpetuate each other. There is no shortage of statistics to paint this picture: 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty, earning less than a dollar a day, which translates into complete inability to afford basic human needs. Half of the world's population survives on less than two dollars a day which means they can barely meet their basic needs and must therefore forgo important necessities such as education and healthcare. Most of the world's poor die from preventable illnesses such as malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia, water-borne diseases and malnutrition. Malnutrition alone afflicts more than 840 million people globally and results in the death of 6 million children annually. 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean water and 2.4 billion do not have adequate sanitation. Against this backdrop, HIV/AIDS afflicts 40 million people world wide.

Unlike centuries earlier, global poverty today is not mainly due to natural catastrophes but rather is a result of the control of resources by wealthy nations. Poverty is an economic construct.

In an unprecedented effort to address the economic, health and development needs of underdeveloped nations, the world leaders of 189 countries came up with eight millennium goals in the year 2000. These goals are to be accomplished by the year 2015 and include: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development. In keeping with the eighth goal, Global Health Partnership (GHP), a non-profit organization based in Albuquerque, New Mexico has established partnerships with local and foreign-based community organizations to simultaneously address global health and poverty.

GHP is composed of medical professionals and other volunteers who work with local community organizations and health care providers to improve the health and well-being of the poor and marginalized throughout the world.

GHP provides direct medical service and delivers medical supplies and equipment, in addition to providing training to local community health workers (CHWs) and traditional birth attendants (TBAs). In Guatemala, GHP has trained CHWs and TBAs to treat the most common problems of children including malnutrition, pneumonia and diarrhea. The CHWs are supplied with essential medicines and supplies so that they can continue to address the healthcare needs of their communities once GHP medical professionals return home.

In Kenya, GHP has initiated similar work through partnerships with the University of Nairobi School of Medicine and local women's basket making co-operatives. The co-operatives, comprised of about 300 women weavers are organized under two fair trade organizations, Crafts of Africa and Machakos District Union Co-operative. Through these organizations, the women artisans get a fair economic exchange for their basketry.

The women used some of their income to begin to build a health clinic to address the needs of their isolated villages. A medical team led by Dr. Angelo Tomedi, the president of GHP, met with several community leaders in Kenya last year and determined that the immediate health care needs include malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, malnutrition- and pregnancy-related complications. Besides needing assistance to finish clinic construction, the CHWs and TBAs asked for training and medical supplies to help serve their communities.

Currently donations to GHP are going towards building the clinic in Kenya and purchasing supplies and medicines. Donations for bicycles for CHWs and TBAs in Kenya are also being collected at Peacecraft, a fair trade store in Albuquerque, NM that also partners with GHP. Some of the crafts made by artisans from Kenya, Guatemala and other developing nations are sold at Peacecraft. Given that a majority of the artisans are women, supporting fair trade of their crafts empowers them and improves the overall well-being of their communities. Clearly, to create sustainable solutions to the twin issues of global health and poverty it is key that partnerships with other nations be mediated through local communities. That is the overall goal of Global Health Partnerships. ■

Ann Githinji, a native of Kenya and New Mexico resident, is research coordinator on an African Refugee Well-Being Project funded through the University of New Mexico. Ann has been a community activist in New Mexico working to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa and among minority populations in the USA. Ann is now with Global Health Partnerships working to further the projects in Kenya. Mail donations to Global Health Partnerships: PO Box 4385, Albuquerque, NM 87196. For info on GHP, contact Angelo Tomedi, M.D. at atomedi@salud.unm.edu or Ann Githinji at githinji_ann@yahoo.com.

'TIS THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE...

By Sr. Paula González, SC

We are all familiar with the lovely Shaker song, “Simple Gifts,” but have we realized the depth of wisdom to be found in these words? The lilting melody seems appropriate when we realize that this was sung by the United Believers in Christ’s Second Coming (the Shakers, an offshoot of the Quakers) as they worked. As we face the great work which living in our times demands, probing the words may provide guidance: “ ‘Tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free, ‘tis the gift to come down where we ought to be....” Simplicity and freedom and true humility—remembering that the root of this word is “humus”—have you ever connected these? Notice that this states, that being simple and free and truly humble (“earthy”) are the gifts. I was struck by this as I

Fear is a primary source of suffering for many—fear of not having enough, of people who don’t look like or think like we do, of declining economic, political and ecclesial institutions, of global warming and other signs of planetary distress, and on and on. What might all this mean? We are being called to wake up to an invitation from Eternal Mystery, “in whom we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). We humans are called to leave behind our adolescent ways of relating to God, to one another and to the magnificent cosmos of which we are a part. We are called to return to basic essentials and strive for clarity about our role in God’s magnificent plan; to struggle with the challenges of what it means to grow into our name, Homo sapiens (wise humans)!

The Earth Charter—a wonderfully spiritual, yet practical, document—has emerged from the civil society and

We are called to return to basic essentials and strive for clarity about our role in God’s magnificent plan

had always thought the words were “ ‘tis a gift...” Pondering the original version as written by Shaker Elder Joseph Brackett, Jr. in 1848 also caused me to reflect on the dictionary’s synonyms for “simplify:” to reduce to basic essentials, to clarify. (I use the verb, as it will require a great deal of energy and commitment for most of us to simplify our lives to the extent that a serious reading of the signs of the times demands.) Also, how similar these words are to the first Beatitude! The poor in spirit have the Kingdom of God right now—along with those who “suffer persecution for justice’s sake” (Matthew 5:10). This sounds a lot like the next words of the song: “And when we find ourselves in the place just right, it will be in the valley of love and delight.”

Many people today are baffled and troubled by the relentless pace of change in nearly every area of human life. Perhaps a majority are oblivious to the fact that their discomfort—even what I call a “low-level despair”—stems from being “enslaved.” Intuitively, all experience the deep yearning which has inspired generations of slaves in every age and culture to seek the precious gift of freedom. Today there seems to be a pervading sense that all is not well, that everything is out of control. In our troubled times, what are some of the barriers to true freedom of spirit? What worries folks so much that sales of over-the-counter medications to combat stress and anxiety promote billion-dollar businesses and that even children are treated for any number of syndromes?

identifies “values and principles for a sustainable future” which can provide guidance. The opening words provide great clarity as they propose the basic agenda for these opening decades of the 21st century:

We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny... The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions and ways of life.

Essentially, we Christians are called to live the Great Commandment: to love God and our neighbor! But now we must expand our horizons and realize that “neighbor” includes not only all the other humans, but everything in the created Universe. Everything is part of the Mystical Body of Christ! How do we become involved in this co-creative activity to which the Eternal Creator is inviting us? What fundamental changes are we being called to make? How do we “form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another?” Both individually and collectively

we are called to examine our values. What is really important? It would be interesting to learn how some of our sisters and brothers who have recently experienced natural disasters rethink this question. If you had experienced Katrina, what do you think your answer to that question might be? Enslaved by consumerism, as so many in the industrialized world are today, how might the importance of shopping, buying, having the latest, change when faced with life and death situations? Have we become so spoiled as a nation that we are willing to pay a scandalous price—both in dollars and lives—to protect the “American Dream?”

To continue our search for clarity we might ask ourselves if our human institutions today are largely dysfunctional—and why? In groups where I have posed this question about whether our institutions are working, I find that almost everyone agrees that they are not working well, surely not for everyone. They are neither simple nor freeing. But who is responsible for the malaise so many are feeling? Perhaps if we seriously contemplate our lifestyles we can see how we are being called to be involved in the “co-creation of a sustainable future for all.” How do we use the air, soil, water and fire (energy) that God has loaned us to tend? We have to face the reality that we humans are using a disproportionate share of Earth’s gifts. It is estimated that if all 6.5 billion of our human sisters and brothers lived the U.S./Canadian lifestyle we would need three more Earths, and this does not consider the rest of the life forms with which we share this planet, and upon which we depend for life!

Clearly, as the Earth Charter proclaims, “we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities.” Obviously, we are being invited to come down where we ought to be. We must be delighted to be “earthlings,” as Jesus was! To realize that heaven is not “out there” but can be right here if we take seriously the

promise of Jesus, “I have come that you may have life—in abundance” (John 10:10). Invigorated by God’s grace we will work enthusiastically to promote fullness of life wherever we can, to bring a message of hope through alternatives; creative new ways of using the planet’s resources and of collaborating together. God needs us! It will be very satisfying to simplify our lives, to reexamine the value we give to our use of time, to evaluate carefully what material things we really need to be happy and fulfilled, to discern the importance we place on getting together with others in efforts to “create a better world.” We can spread the message, “Behold, I make all things new!” (Revelations 21:5).

A rabbi once told me that we have been misinterpreting an important phrase, “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 1:7). A more accurate understanding is that it is awe that is the beginning of wisdom. This is the spirit which can engulf us if our stance in this world is one of reverence—of awe at the wonder of life, at the magnificence of the planet we share with all the other forms in which Eternal Mystery chooses to become “the Word made flesh” (John 1:14) in space and time. Because we have been born at this particular time in human history we are called in an unprecedented way to be co-creators of a different tomorrow. The choice is ours.

The closing words of the Earth Charter could be a wonderful anthem as we take up this great work:

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life! ■

Sister Paula González, SC, PhD, futurist and environmentalist, has offered over 1600 talks, minicourses and retreats. She has constructed two solar buildings and authored several book chapters, articles and audio and video programs. Sr. Paula will be a guest presenter at the CAC’s 2007 summer conference.

UNCONSUMPTION

continued from page 6

than doubled since then, and Freecycle is still keeping tons of exercise equipment, old computers, Santa neckties, 80-pound bags of cement and whatever else out of landfills.

In a sense, what Freecycle has done is channel the same blend of utility and pleasure that motivates consumption itself. Steve Portigal, a business-strategy consultant based in Montara, California, founded a Freecycle group for the San Francisco area’s coastal communities in 2004. “Getting something you need and getting rid of something you don’t need are both satisfying as problems solved,” he points out. But while we’re all well trained in the former, the latter often exceeds our patience and know-how.

Consider the unwanted shed in Portigal’s backyard.

Instead of trying to figure out how to take it apart and hauling the pieces to the dump, he listed it on his Freecycle group. Sure enough, someone volunteered to take the thing, expertly disassembling it and moving it to a nearby farm. Thus a tedious hassle was converted into a virtuous act, and Portigal enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that his old shed had a new home. Moreover, he adds, “it was great to get rid of it.” ■

Reprinted with permission from The New York Times Magazine, Sunday, January 7, 2007, Section 6, Page 19.

Rob Walker is the “Consumed” columnist for The New York Times Magazine. A former editor at The Times Magazine, Money, and The American Lawyer, he has also written for Slate, The New Republic, The Wall Street Journal, Details, and The Nation, among others.

SIMPLICITY AND SABBATH

By Suzanne Stabile

It seems that all of the things we are gathering around us are important and yet all accumulation ends in dispersion. It seems that, as we go through our days working on relationships, the people we love will be with us forever. And yet, all meetings end in separation. Finally, as we measure our lives in a way that charts growth, maturity and change, we come to realize that all birth ends in death. That is the simple truth.

In *Nothing Left Over*, a small book by Toinette Lippe, she writes “As I thought about it I realized that the result of gathering about you only what you need and relinquishing everything else is self-sufficiency—a lack of emotional

and the concept of “enough.” Our culture seems to be void of both.

“What is ‘enough’ in relation to stuff?” was the title of the first page of my November 2005 journal. As the Christmas season made itself visible on the first day of the eleventh month I had written that I couldn’t even find Oreos that didn’t have red or green filling! On another day I wrote, “I have just spent three hours of my one wild and precious life dusting ‘treasures’ that will one day be landfill.” All accumulation ends in dispersion.

At the end of my mother’s life I asked her about the interesting and valuable art collectables she and my father had acquired over the course of their world travels.

“It would be good if you could write the names of each

*In our naiveté we expected to be
successful immediately only to find that
accomplishment would be one of the things
we needed to give up for twenty-four hours.*

neediness. This is another way of saying that it is wise to be satisfied with what you have.” I found this to be one of the touchstones I am using to try to simplify my life.

I took stock. I have so much. The people who inhabit my days are full of goodness and they offer me God’s grace one handful after another. And yet I meet a new and interesting person and find myself once again adding someone to the list of those I call friends, never fully considering that all of these relationships will end in separation. At what point, I wonder, can an encounter exist only in the moment; a time for two people to add to the experience of the other without the trappings of needing to “get together for lunch.” It is not friendships I lack. It is contentment.

I suppose I have always tried to simplify my life from the outside in; cleaning out closets and bookshelves, ridding the house of unnecessary items, when really the work that must be done is inner work. I need to rid myself of outdated attitudes and habitual behavior. Only then will I cease the accumulation of things that I have talked myself into believing are essential. Only then will more space become available for the living of my life. Last fall I made a conscious effort to listen for both the word contentment

child and grandchild on the items you want them to have,” I had explained. “You know how weird people get about stuff when someone they love dies.” “Suzanne,” she said, “You all aren’t going to want these things. I’m not even sure I want them!” In that moment I learned that the closer we are to dispersing of things the more we understand how little value there is in our accumulations. It is contentment that we lack, not treasures.

Where do we look for contentment? Who teaches us to recognize it when we see it or feel it? Those are the questions I bring to 2007. The year is young and my answers are few but I am sure of one thing: the greatest teacher of contentment for me is the keeping of Sabbath.

The word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew verb *Shabbat* which means primarily “to cease or desist.” Marva Dawn says, “To cease working on the Sabbath means to quit laboring at anything that is work.” So that means we can continue with any activity that is enjoyable, freeing and not undertaken for the purpose of accomplishing something.

I’m not sure how it happened but somewhere in my spiritual development I knew to honor the commandments not to murder, steal, lie, commit adultery or covet my neighbor’s anything. However, honoring the third

commandment was one that I missed as equally important. My husband and I decided to spend a year learning about and honoring the Sabbath, which we now practice from sundown on Sunday to sundown on Monday. In our naiveté we expected to be successful immediately only to find that *accomplishment* would be one of the things we needed to give up for twenty-four hours.

Over time our understanding of setting apart a day to let God be God deepened. Our challenge was to stop worrying, so we have tried to replace anxiety with gratitude. I have really struggled with a day set apart when I'm not "productive." However, I have learned that when I am worried, I am not open to what God is doing in my life, instead life becomes all about what *I* am doing.

Simply taking a day off from scrambling after security by having answers and being in charge was the next challenge we faced. Our practice became one of listening on the Sabbath while avoiding the temptation to make decisions. The most recent hurdle in our practice came in our relationship to our culture. Perhaps enculturation is one reason so many of us have given up the practice of a day of rest. The modern idolatry of desiring space and things is in direct contrast to the holy time and the events that took place during the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

I believe that when we talk about simplicity we are looking for contentment. Unfortunately we hear so many subliminal messages from the media and those around us that suggest that we will be content only if we have *more*. One of the most important lessons taught to the people of Israel during their wilderness experience was that God would provide on the seventh day.

In the rhythm of a Sabbath day, we have the opportunity to bask in contentment and practice not being in charge. We can trust in a Truth that is bigger than we are. And the rhythm of the day teaches us that! Eugene Peterson says, "During the hours of my sleep how will God prepare to use my obedience, service and speech when morning breaks? I go to sleep to get out of the way for awhile. I get into the rhythm of salvation. While we sleep great and marvelous things are happening, things far beyond our ability to create. Then when we rise our work can settle into the context of God's work. Our human work can be integrated into God's holy work." In the practice of Sabbath-keeping, I need to find my place in what God is already doing. Then I can be where I fit in. I don't have to create everything. God begins without my help and then invites me to enjoy and share and develop the work God initiated. That is simplicity at its very best.

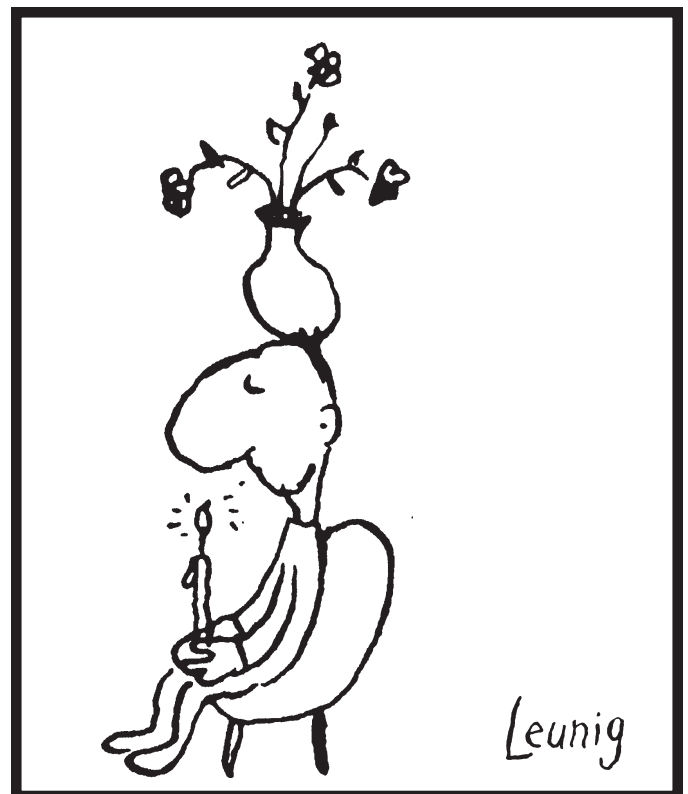
That the end of birth is death is perhaps the most important paradox. Honestly, our Sabbath is a day for realizing that death is at hand and that it is nothing to fear. We are mindful

each Sabbath to include both a time for prayer and a time for play. On that day we try to allow the world to exist without us and it does. We practice walking softly, requiring little while living the moments as they present themselves to us. I wear the purple shoes that I bought several springs ago to remind me that life was simpler without them. Introducing limitations to our lives has helped us get reacquainted with our selves. Our growing satisfaction with life as it is, has contributed more than any one thing to our practice of simplicity.

Eugene Peterson teaches that we don't have to have any rules for preserving the sanctity of the day, only the commitment that it be set apart for being, not using. That it is not a day to get anything done but a day to watch and be responsive to what God has done. He says, "My wife has been keeping, off and on, a Sabbath journal for the fourteen years that we have been doing this. The journal is labeled "Emmaus Walks." You wouldn't be greatly impressed, I think if you read the sporadic entries. Bird lists, wildflowers in bloom, snatches of conversation, brief notes on the weather. But the spareness records a fullness, a presence. For Sabbath-keeping is not primarily something we do, but what we don't do."

Now what could be simpler than that! ■

Suzanne Stabile is a long time teacher of spiritual growth and development. For the past 20 years she has served as a teacher, Retreat Director and Enneagram Master through Life in the Trinity Ministry. As a co-founder and animator of this ministry along with her husband Rev. Joseph Stabile, she serves as the Executive Director.



A TRAVEL DIARY

After 16 years working as a professional librarian I decided to give up my job, store my furniture, lease my house and join an ecumenical community in East Anglia. I wanted to try a community compatible with my outlook on life. It was while I was at Hengrave that I met Maita and Gamay; two Filipinas who later persuaded me to visit them in the Philippines.

When I made such a big change it was tempting to think, “This is it. This is what is being required of me.” I was heading for community life of one form or another. But rarely can the purpose be anticipated. After nearly two years at Hengrave my path took on more of an internal nature—of growing self-awareness, a seeking of God within. It was a path with no obvious structure but as part of that I spent three months at the end of 2003 at Othona, another community on the south coast of England, as one of five interns doing a course on community, spirituality and self-development. This was a significant time for me—an opening to much new thinking and the sharing of experiences and ideas. At the time, one of the members of the community announced that he would like to take a group of “friends” to his beloved southern India in January 2006.

January is a good time to be in the Philippines and back in 2004 I had said half jokingly to Maita that I would come to visit in 2006. With the possibility of being shown India by someone who knows it well, and India being (more or less) on the way to the Philippines, the parts of my journey began to fall into place. The India tour was to be 3 weeks and it was hardly worth going to the Philippines for less than 3 months.

My actual journey began on January 17th, 2006 when I left from Southampton at 3:30 in the morning to get to Heathrow Airport. My many adventures started several hours later when I was diverted onto an Air India flight at Frankfurt because of long delays due to thick snow—the one element I hadn’t allowed for given that I was expecting nine months of hot weather! So instead of Bangalore, in the south, I arrived at Delhi, in the north. In trying to locate my connecting flight I walked out a side door straight into India and people sitting and lying on the ground. I took a bumpy taxi ride to the domestic airport eight miles away and once on Air Sahara, enjoyed a wonderful hot Indian breakfast complete with fresh lime juice.

We would be staying for a week at Shantivanum in India—the Ashram made famous by the teaching of Bede Griffiths, an English Benedictine priest who sought to bring together Eastern and Western spirituality. Community was also a recurring theme—a group of 12 on pilgrimage in India. But although I can write of themes I tried not to impose too many expectations on my journey. These can be dangerous things which lead into judgments rather than simply seeing with an open mind. But that doesn’t come naturally—when you see a ferry which looks just like the kind sailing several times a day from England to France it is quite a shock to see an economy deck with several hundred bunk beds open to the elements on each side (not to mention the several hundred chicks chirping in numerous cardboard boxes).

But it was fun to find that I could cope with new experiences and enjoy them. Not that it was always easy. So often sanitation can be a stumbling block and there was a moment at Shantivanum when I wondered if I was going to cope. I was staying in one of the original huts—a single room with a “bathroom” which consisted of a western style toilet but no flush, other than a jug of water, a basin, and a bucket. Washing is done by filling the bucket with water and pouring it over oneself with a jug. The water goes all over the bare concrete floor. I nearly balked at the prospect of a week of washing



Jill with friends in the Philippines

myself and my hair in cold water until I remembered all the Indian women who do this daily. The compensation was lying in bed under my mosquito net and watching the constellations of fireflies inside the thatched roof of the hut.

Some of my more memorable memories include an overnight sleeper train which we joined in the early morning hours to the sound of snores behind swaying bunk curtains; a colourful clothing shop in a small town where we were surrounded by several young giggling shop assistants in their bright saris who persuaded us to buy bangles, anklets, and bindis to put on our foreheads; being presented with a sari by a holy man in a large four-wheel drive vehicle who told me "I can see you in a sari"; meeting my cousin Kevan by a chai stall in Tiruvanamalai. Finally, a hair-raising journey to the airport in the chaos of the traffic in Bangalore, where the most common transportation is the motor rickshaw!

In the Philippines I was made to eat balot with my eyes shut (fertilised duck eggs which are cooked when they are 17 days old—yuk!). I hiked two hours to reach the village of Batad, located in the middle of two-thousand year old rice terraces in the north. I had opportunities to share in many celebrations and meals, including Maita's birthday when she was awakened early in the morning by friends singing under her window—well my window until I directed them to the right one! I toured the local barrio to see the shanty houses built on bamboo stilts over swampy ground and swam in warm seas and remote pools. Being stranded for a day by the tail end of a typhoon was challenging. But over all, there were so many adventures and so much generous hospitality.

Travelling among people with so much less than I have taught me that embracing the moment was really the only way to be. I had nothing to take except myself and it seemed that my willingness to be there, to be interested enough to go and see for myself and to live alongside the people was enough. And I came away with so much more, being enriched and challenged by all the experiences.

— Jill Britton



India, 2006

Jill Britton is from Salisbury, UK (near Stonehenge!). She spent 3 months as a work intern at the CAC in 2006. She would be very happy to offer hospitality to any friends of the CAC who make it over the Atlantic. jbrittonuk@yahoo.co.uk

But no sign will be given, except the sign of Jonah. ~ Luke 11:29

MEN'S RITES OF PASSAGE

This is not about religion, but about spirituality, about age-old traditions that guide us into manhood, about coming to trust

that there is something much greater at work in our lives than we could ever imagine.

2007 Dates and Locations

April 25-29 - Oracle, Arizona

May 23-27 - Austria

June 20-24 - Sandstone, Minnesota

September 12-16 - Australia

October 24-28 - Southern California

Application Process Required

For more information and future dates/locations visit

www.malespirituality.org

call (505)242-9588 ext. 111, or email menswork@cacradicalgrace.org



A VENUE FOR LETTING GO

By Zenaida Quismorio

I arrived at the Center for Action and Contemplation as an intern, eager to learn. I had first heard about Fr. Richard Rohr in my home province from a small group of Poor Clares who had a set of *The Great Themes of the Scripture*—an early set of tapes which they treated like a prized possession. I listened to the tapes and read *Job and the Mystery of Suffering*—Fr. Richard’s only available book in my country. It was only during my stay at the CAC that I understood the dearth of his works in the Philippines—a predominantly Catholic country.

As a socio-economic development practitioner and as a student of management strategies, I wanted to study how action and contemplation could be integrated into the management strategy of a non-profit organization. With

the news that typhoon Durian had hit my home province. The equivalent to six months of rainfall fell during that typhoon. Tons of recently deposited volcanic ash and debris swept down the slopes of Mt. Mayon. Many villages lying at its base were flooding, burying hundreds of people and destroying homes and farm lands, including my beloved ancestral home.

In the midst of my tremendous loss and indescribable grief, I realized that I could not have been in a better place than the CAC, where I was offered the consolation and the compassion I needed. One of the most powerful moments—a moment of almost perfect calm—happened when I had been crying during contemplative sit one morning. I found myself after prayer surrounded by everyone in the chapel—hugging me and offering words of sympathy. I felt loved and safe.

Although I did not recognize them at the time, the humiliations I privately suffered were much-needed blessings.

this left-brained paradigm I hoped to go back home armed with a new-found management model in social enterprise where contemplation is a “major strategic component.” So, my purpose for spending time at the CAC was mostly about gaining more knowledge.

However, everything turned out differently, and now I am very grateful for that.

I cannot recall when I started losing sight of my initial agenda or of any time when I experienced so many ups and downs, inspiration, frustrations, enlightenments, confusions, delights, disappointments, hellos, goodbyes—as I did at the Center in such a short span. I just know that at some point during my stay at the CAC my agenda diminished.

Within the first few days of my internship I had to admit to myself that I did not have the skill base or experience to do what I had intended. I had fears and doubts about how much I was able to contribute, and would ask myself if I was giving enough. Sr. Vincentia, my spiritual director, would say “giving is not your business.” Indeed, how and what can a self-illusory ego really give?

Although I did not recognize them at the time, the humiliations I privately suffered were much-needed blessings. Ultimately, I was given a task that I found life-giving and which helped me tremendously in dealing with an unexpected tragedy.

After I had been at the CAC for two months, I received

I cannot recall when I first began to feel myself surrendering. All I know is that I became more peaceful and I was able to breathe more freely! With the gift of surrender came a trust that all would be well. This experience could not be easily contained so I wrote to a dear friend about the new turn my life had taken. I no longer looked at “goals” in terms of power, prestige, and possessions—which by the standards of the Philippines, I had already attained to some degree. I wrote about my greater sense of security and freedom outside the pursuit of the three P’s.

My friend’s response to me was not supportive: “I am angry that with all the talents and gifts you have, you have not vigorously claimed your stake to what truly is a good life...” It speaks so well to what I expect many others might think or say as I share of the transformation in my life and the choices I’ve made.

In just two days I leave the CAC to go back home and I stand here holding the tension of excitement and sadness. And there is this sweet feeling of the divine thumb and forefinger holding the tension in Love. ■

Zenaida Quismorio was an Executive Director of a Fair Trade organization in the Philippines. Before interning at the CAC, she was teaching Management of Social Enterprise and Strategic Planning & Project Development at the local university. While at the CAC, Zenaida translated two of Fr. Richard Rohr’s DVDs into her native language and she is currently working on a third translation.

SIMPLY LIVING

By Brother Benet Tvedten, OSB

In the prologue to the Rule, St. Benedict, the Patriarch of Western Monasticism, referred to the Lord seeking workers in a multitude of people, “Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days?” It occurs to me that I have seen good days as a monk. When a monk professes final vows, he prays three times in the ceremony: “Uphold me, O Lord, and do not let me be confounded in my expectations.”

Benedict asked in his Rule that we monks respect one another by “supporting with the greatest patience one another’s weaknesses of body or behavior.” Being aware of them and accepting them, we are encouraged to compete “in obedience to one another.” Furthermore, we are to show our fellow monks “the pure love of brothers.” They are more to us than friends.

Patience is mentioned in several places throughout the Rule. Benedict stated that in the monastic family “we shall, through patience, share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom.” The newcomer must be patient when applying to the monastery. The monks are to be patient with the sick, and the sick are not to make “excessive demands” of those caring for them. The monk who can’t perform a particular task is asked to patiently explain to the abbot why this is so. A good deal of patience is required in living together in a monastery.

Be patient with yourself, Benedict told us. “Do not wish to be called holy before you really are.” Don’t be in such a hurry. Take your time. Be patient. I am one of those monks who somewhere along the way began to drink immoderately. When I got into AA, I became aware of how

much the Twelve Step Program had in common with the Rule of St. Benedict. AA taught me this: “We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” Benedict, like AA, placed great emphasis on living one day at a time. In the Prologue to the Rule, he stated, “The Lord waits for us daily to translate into action, as we should his teaching.” Near the end of the Rule, Benedict explained that “this little rule for beginners is to show that we have some degree of virtue.”

Someone has said that simply living together defines Benedictine asceticism. Being part of a monastic family provides sufficient discipline and penance. The mutual obedience that Benedict would have us practice requires our adapting to one another regardless of our differences. Ours is a way of life in which we are mindful of and care for one another.

I’ve been a monk for almost fifty years. Having entered my community when it was only eight years old in 1958, no one had yet died. There are now thirty-seven graves in our cemetery. I knew all of these deceased monks. When Cardinal Hume was still the Abbot of Ampleforth, he gave a conference to novices on the eve of their profession, and told them they should accept the community in its totality: “Its work, its strength, its weakness, the things you like and those you dislike. You accept us as we are. You love us as we are.” The longer I live in the monastery, the more I love it—the place and the people. I accept them as they are. I love them as they are. And I feel confident that they love me as I am. ■

Brother Benet Tvedten is Director of Oblates of Blue Cloud Abbey, Marvin, South Dakota. He is the author of How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job: An Invitation to Oblate Life and The View from a Monastery: The Vowed Life and Its Cast of Many Characters, both published by Paraclete Press, as well as The Motley Crew: Monastic Lives, published by Liturgical Press.

Join us for a CAC Internship in 2007!

Through the practice of contemplative prayer and through active engagement with challenging issues and marginalized people, interns continue the journey of faith together and strive to become active contemplatives and contemplative in all their actions.

2007 Dates:

April 28-May 6 (FULL)

June 23-July 1 (FULL)

Sept. 29-Oct. 7

Application process is required; applications are on our website, or call (505)242-9588.

Internships are limited to 10 participants.

Program fees: \$750 per person.



CAC Interns, Winter 2007

Standing (L to r):

Lynnessa Gallagher,
Garth Bulmer, Tom Fries,
Dennis Johnson, Cathy Crosby,
Peggy Kincaid, Mark Waters,
Martha Gross, David Ryan,
Maria Teresa Crowell

In Front: Cliff Dyer (with his dog Poco), Rich Meixner

WHEN I WAS THE FOREST

When I was the stream, when I was the
forest, when I was still the field,
when I was every hoof, foot,
fin and wing, when I
was the sky
itself,

no one ever asked me did I have a purpose, no one ever
wondered was there anything I might need,
for there was nothing
I could not
love.

It was when I left all we once were that
the agony began, the fear and questions came,
and I wept, I wept. And tears
I had never known
before.

So I returned to the river, I returned to
the mountains. I asked for their hand in marriage again,
I begged—I begged to wed every object
and creature,

and when they accepted,
God was ever present in my arms.
And He did not say,
“Where have you
been?”

For then I knew my soul—every soul—
has always held
Him.

— Meister Eckhart
Translated by Daniel Ladinsky

THE GREAT CHAIN ...

continued from page 3

Jews, Indians, native spiritualities, buffalo and elephants, land and water were the losers. And we dared to call ourselves monotheists (“one God” tends to move a people toward one world) or “Christ like” (The union of the human and the divine in one). The Divine Indwelling, subject to our whimsical seeing, seems to dwell nowhere except in temples of our own choosing. We have always had a “pro-choice movement,” it seems. It did not start with the abortion debate.

Until we weep over these sins and publicly own our complicity in the destruction of God’s creation, we are surely doomed to remain blind. If not, we will likely keep looking for “acceptable” scapegoats. We always think the problem is *elsewhere*, whereas the Gospel keeps the pressure of conversion on *me*. As far as the soul is concerned, *no one else is your problem. You are your problem*. “You be converted, and live” says the biblical tradition (Deuteronomy 31:20; Mark 1:15).

Jesus tried desperately to keep us within and connected to the great chain of being by taking away from us the power to scapegoat and project onto enemies and outsiders. We were not to break the chain by hating, eliminating, or expelling the other. He commanded us to love the enemy and gave us himself as Cosmic Victim so we would get the point—and stop creating victims. But we are transformed into Christ slowly.

Our inclination to break the chain—to decide who is good and who is bad—seems to be a basic control mechanism in all of us. We actually are a bit worried about the God that Jesus believes in: “Who causes the sun to rise on bad as well as good, who lets the rain fall on the honest and the dishonest alike” (Matthew 5:45). If we dishonor the so-called inferior or unworthy members of creation, we finally destroy ourselves, too. Once we stop seeing, we stop seeing. Like nothing else, spiritual transformation is an all or nothing proposition. Like Jesus’ robe, it is a “seamless garment.” He wore it and then offered it to us.

Saint Paul did for Jesus exactly what Saint Bonaventure

did for Francis. He took the life lived and made it into a philosophy/theology. The seamless garment is still intact in his most quoted analogy of the body:

If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it, if one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it ... and it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones, and it is the least honorable parts of the body that we must clothe with the greatest care (I Corinthians 12:26, 22).

Paul, the former mass murderer Saul, knew well religion's power to create hate and violence toward other people and other links in the great chain of being. He left no room for scapegoating in his teaching: "There is one God and Creator of all, who is over all, who works through all and is within all" (Ephesians 4:6).

For those given sight by the Gospel, there is only one world—God's world—and it is *all* supernatural! We may no longer divide the world into sacred and profane. There is cosmic symbolism in the tearing of the temple veil from top to bottom at the death of Jesus (Matthew 27:51). In the one world liberated by Christ, our need to divide and discriminate has been denied us and frankly, we don't like it. For some reason, we want to retain the right to decide where God is, who we must honor, and who we may hate. A rather clever guise actually, for I can remain autonomous and violent while thinking of myself as holy. But, as Jesus reminds us, any branch cut off from the vine is useless (John 15:5). We either go to God *linked* or it seems we don't go at all. How easy it is to avoid the searing and sacramental mystery: "Listen, Israel, the Lord your God is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jewish monotheism became the basis for one coherent and cosmic world, where truth is one, and there is no basis for rivalry between the arts, science and religion. If it is true it is true, regardless of its source. It is such truth that will set us free (John 8:32).

In his brilliant contemporary synthesis, *A Brief History of Everything*, Ken Wilber sounds like a post-modern Thomas Aquinas or Bonaventure. He concludes that "everything is a holon."—something that is simultaneously whole within itself and yet also part of something larger. He demonstrates at great length (see *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Shambala, 1995) that everything in the physical, biological, psychic, and spiritual universe is a "holon." It really is *one* connected universe of meaning. And in relation to the arrogance of modernism and the cynicism of post modernism, Wilber only adds that "No epoch is finally privileged. We are all tomorrow's food." Agreeing with the genuinely *traditional* Catholic, he reminds us that even our moment in time is a holon, a small chain link in something still larger. A "Great Catholic"—one who embraces the whole Tradition—would call it the Cosmic Christ, before whom no institution, no moment of time, no attempt at verbalization will be adequate. Virgil's Aeneid ends with Aeneas leaving burning Troy, carrying his father on his shoulders, with his son in one hand and clutching his gods in the other. We all enter the future carrying our past and with the future and our God in our hands—or we do not enter the future at all.

Those who continue to look through microscopes and telescopes are surrendering to the mysteries of an infinite, creative spectrum. The chain of being is even longer and bigger than we church folks imagined—and we had best come to the telescope and microscope with our shoes off and ready to live the emptiness of *not* knowing. Maybe we are just beginning to do this. See how broad the "communion of saints" might be and whether we really want to believe in it. ■

Fr. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan of the New Mexico province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, NM. Reprinted from Radical Grace, Vol. 10 No. 5, Oct-Nov 1997.

RICHARD ON THE ROAD — APRIL-JUNE 2007

April 1 **The Spiritual Journey: Is Your Spiritual Life Improving the World?**

University of St Thomas, St. Paul, MN
www.cacradicalgrace.org

April 16-18 **Rochester, NY, Diocesan Conference (Closed)**

April 20-22 **Inner Peace, Outer Peacemaking Retreat**
Holy Family Retreat Center, Hartford, CT
www.holyfamilyretreat.org/programs/retreats/men_women.htm

May 22 **Franciscans International**
Geneva, Switzerland

www.franciscansinternational.org

May 24-27 **Men's Rites of Passage**
Leoben/Steiermark, Austria
www.malespirituality.org

May 30 **Durham, England**
For info: chris.fallon@ushaw.ac.uk

June 1-3 **On the Edge? Being a Christian in the 21st Century** — Weekend Conference, York, England; flyer & info on Richard on the Road page at www.cacradicalgrace.org, contact: action.contemplation@ntlworld.com

June 4-5 **A Prayer, A Pie, and a Pint and Drowning Not Waving: Being a Christian in the 21st Century**, Glasgow, Scotland.
For info: http://rohr.wordpress.com

June 6 **Edinburgh, Scotland**
For info: Gus MacLeod, gus@cce.uk.net

June 8-10 **Kirchentag**, Cologne, Germany
For info: fulda@kirchentag.de

June 11-13 **Damme, Germany**, for info:
Rainer and Ulla Finke, upeff@aol.com

June 15-17 **Berlin, Germany**, for info:
Rainer and Ulla Finke, upeff@aol.com

For the most updated listings and contact details, visit www.cacradicalgrace.org and select "Richard on the Road"

CENTERPOINT

For the past few months several of the CAC staff have been reading about simplifying one's life. Beginning with *How to Simplify Your Life* by Tiki Küstenmacher with Lothar J. Seiwert and moving on to *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective* (edited by Michael Schut), the roles of less (such as clutter) and more (for example, time) have occupied a mostly weekly focus of discussions to accompany the myriad of other activities here at the CAC and in each of our lives. During these short times we have been blessed with one unique point of view after another.

One of our work interns introduced us to a simple web tool that calculates the impact of one's activities on the planet. Deferring any arguments about the matter of completeness of which activities and accuracy about how they each are "scored", that exercise gave pause to consider the amount and role of material things in each of our lives. I certainly was embarrassed about the "number of earths" that would be required were every person on the planet to live as I do: a mobile individual with the option of many quite luxurious choices, at least in comparison to most of the world's inhabitants.

Another one of our work interns, Zenaida Quismorio ("A Venue for Letting Go" page 18) pointed out that in our abundant society, the concept of necessity is much different than what she left at home in the Philippines. During an internship project she worked with the homeless and was

amazed to find out that packages of new underwear were routinely given out. She marveled at that particular generosity, finding no comparison to what she knows of life at home.

Zenaida recently returned to what is left of her home province. The devastating typhoon and subsequent mudslides last fall buried numerous villages and took away her house and all that it contained. Had she been there, she could have been one of the thousands killed. Fortunately no members of her family were lost, and she survived because she was here at the CAC. That realization and the loss of nearly all of the possessions that had been part of her life add a simple clarity to her expression of marvel. How much is enough often seems relative to context, whether it is a granola bar to be shared, the gift of new and clean clothing, or that proverbial "grass on the other side of the 'fence'."

Jerome Segal has thought and written about simple living for many years. In *Graceful Simplicity: Toward a Philosophy and Politics of Simple Living*, he wrote about some of the ideas that have been considered to help clarify what is implied by "simpler living." He laid out a number of economic and philosophical concepts and issues that expanded upon his primary themes: the role of the aesthetic dimension of life, and the central role that service to one another plays in our lives.

It was this latter role that caught my attention, that of service to others or servanthood. The typical first impression is the superior/inferior or the master/slave relationship. But Segal points out that such a hierarchical view is not the only one to use. Several years ago Philip Yancy wrote a poignant memoir in honor of Henri Nouwen, shortly after his death. Yancy had gone to visit Nouwen at L'Arch Daybreak in Toronto, where Henri was living with and caring for a severely crippled man named Adam. Each day Henri and Adam would spend several hours together, preparing for the day ahead. In response to a question about the "better" use of his time or energy, Nouwen described a version of unconditional love and mercy from which he found both solace and a sublime sense of grace. Such simplicity of vision and commitment is not easily incorporated into our material lives. That "holy inefficiency" does not yet fit into a corporate balance sheet or cookie-cutter approach to simpler living. It is a surrender that moves one closer to the veil between the obvious reality of that phrase, "Chop wood, carry water," and the equally real supplication of washing another's feet in that abundant life promised in the Gospel. ■

— Rich Meixner

Rich Meixner is Receptionist and Administrative Assistant for the CAC.

UPCOMING CAC EVENTS

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING: SIMPLIFYING OUR LIVES

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM • Sr. Paula González, SC • Tiki Küstenmacher
August 3-5 • Albuquerque, NM

A Justice Revival

Jim Wallis and Richard Rohr
October 19-21 • Cleveland, OH

How Do We Breathe Under Water?

The Gospel and 12-Step Spirituality
Richard Rohr, OFM
November 9-11 • Dallas, TX

Paradox and Mystery

Richard Rohr, OFM
Dec. 30, 2007 - Jan. 1, 2008 • Prague, Czech Republic

Jesus and Buddha

Richard Rohr and James Finley
January 25-27, 2008 • Albuquerque, NM

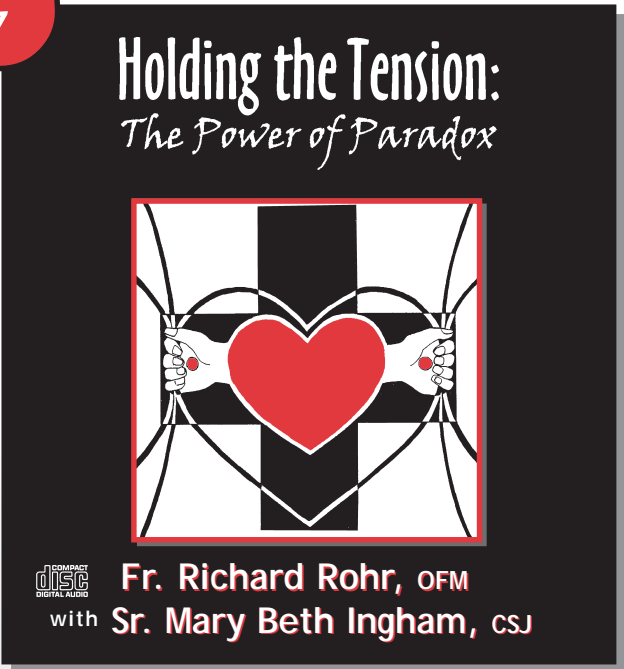
Mustard Seed Resource Center
New Release — RADICAL GRACE SPECIAL

\$10 Off *Good Through June 1, 2007*

The subject of the 2007 year-beginning conference was determined by questions that Fr. Richard had received time and again over the last few years:

How do you hold the tension of these opposites that you talk about on a practical level?

How do you live with your own contradictions and inconsistencies which have all been multiplied by the contradictions and inconsistencies of our government and our church?



We were never taught to stop, to savor, and to hold our feelings of fear, anger, grief or loneliness... We were taught to get rid of our pain before we learned its lessons. Maybe that's why wisdom is hard to find in our culture.

Fr. Richard was joined by Sr. Mary Beth Ingham in unpackaging, on a practical level, the way to hold the tension and learn wisdom from our lives.

**Faster order processing is available on the web at www.cacradicalgrace.org
 To take advantage of the sale price, enter coupon code 4882 at checkout.**

Order Form

Send to: CAC, P.O. Box 12464, Albuquerque, NM 87195-2464

Holding the Tension: RG Special

Item	Original Price	Discounted Price	Qty	Total
Holding the Tension — 7 CDs	\$50.00	\$40.00		
Holding the Tension — 4 DVDs	\$60.00	\$50.00		

Name and address on reverse must match billing address of credit card. **For a different billing or shipping address, please [check here](#) and include appropriate information (on reverse).**

Shipping Table		
Order Amt.	-USA-	-Int'l-
\$10-25	4.50	8.00
\$26-50	6.00	12.00
\$51-75	8.00	18.00
\$76-100	9.00	20.00

Shipping : _____
 Order Total : \$ _____

Method of Payment:

- Check or money order enclosed (payable to CAC)
 VISA or MasterCard

If ordering DVDs outside of USA, please specify format: NTSC PAL

Exp. date (mo/yr) ____ / ____

We are naturally reverent beings, but much of our natural reverence has been torn away from us because we have been born into a world that hurries. There is no time to be reverent with the earth or with each other. We are all hurrying into progress. And for all our hurrying we lose sight of our true nature a little more each day.

~ Macrina Wiederkehr



Center for **A**ction and **C**ontemplation

1705 Five Points Rd. SW

Albuquerque, NM 87105

PHONE 505-242-9588 FAX 505-242-9518

www.cacradicalgrace.org