



THE DESERT CHRONICLE

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The Four Marks of the Church

By Fr. Hugh Feiss, OSB

(Photos from along the Camino to Compostela)

“We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.”

(Creed of the Council of Constantinople, 381 AD)

AS WE APPROACH THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517), WE ARE REMINDED OF THE VENERABLE ADAGE, “ECCLESIA SEMPER REFORMANDA,” the Church always needs to be reforming itself. In recent years, scholars have been thinking about the notion of reform. It does not necessarily mean that the Church, or monastery, or other institution has become deformed, though it can mean that. Reform can be required simply because the Church and other institutions are

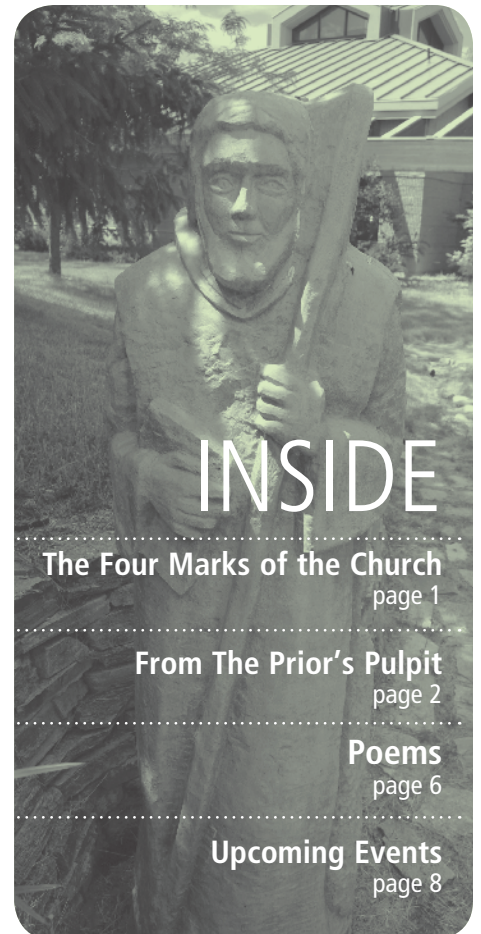
constituted by people living in time, so they need to change to meet new situations and new challenges.

Thus, in 381 AD, at the Council of Constantinople, the creed promulgated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD was slightly revised to meet the challenges raised by a half-century of struggle against the teachings of Arius, who did not think that God

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Pamplona: St. Nicholas



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From the Prior's Pulpit

HOCUS POCUS

By Fr. Kenneth Hein, OSB

AS MANY READING THIS COLUMN KNOW, THE “MAGIC WORDS”, HOCUS POCUS, WERE ORIGINALLY A MOCKING PLAY ON THE LATIN WORDS, *HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM* (“FOR THIS is my body”), used in Masses said in Latin. Thankfully the ecumenical spirit of our times has consigned this use of hocus pocus to the dust bins of history. However, a recent event here at the monastery has revived memories of the not-so-good old days of less-than-kind interchange between Catholics and Protestants.

On the morning of January 5, I entered our chapel as usual for Morning Prayer. As I prepared to genuflect toward the tabernacle, I noticed that the tabernacle was not in its expected place. I looked around, wondering where the tabernacle might have been relocated. Father Boniface then advised me that the tabernacle and the Blessed Sacrament within it had somehow disappeared during the night.

As coincidence would have it, it was my turn to be the main celebrant at Mass that morning, and the Gospel for the day recounted Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand who had followed him to “a deserted place.” My homily was quickly transformed into a reflection on the common experience of absence which can make one more keenly aware of something than would otherwise be the case. This experience “plays big” in the philosophy of

existentialism a-la-mode de Jean Paul Sartre’s Being and Nothingness.

We take daily things for granted and use them without being much aware of them. A common example is that of a pencil or a ball-point pen. We use such items without being very aware of them--until they break or become defective. Then our consciousness is “raised” by “brokenness”, i.e., by “nothingness”. Consciousness is thus a sort of “crack” in the solid rock of existence. Okay. That’s enough about nothing. Now let’s get on with something--in this case, the tabernacle.

Our local parish priest offered us the use of a tabernacle, which turned out to be too large for our rather small chapel. Still another parish, St. Mary’s in Boise, has offered us a tabernacle that is similar to the one we had. It is now located in a proper place and with added security in our chapel. It is doubtful that we will ever know for sure what has become of our tabernacle. The thief or thieves have probably already discovered that it is not made of gold and that it has no salvage value. However, let us all pray that the one or ones who has/ have perpetrated this sacrilegious action will experience a change of heart. We harbor no resentment, but only pray that this experience of absence will bring us all closer to the Lord and make our hearts grow fonder for the gift of the Eucharist. •





Pamplona Cathedral: Madonna

the Son, who became incarnate in Jesus, was equal and equally eternal with the Father. The creed of Constantinople, which most Christians still follow and Catholics recite most Sundays, emphasized Jesus' equality with the Father. It also listed four marks or essential attributes of the Church. It is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. It is understandable that the council wanted to emphasize these characteristics of the Church after over fifty years of division and conflict over the interpretation of the faith handed on from the apostles. Perhaps now fifty years after Vatican Council II it is time to emphasize these characteristics of the Church once again.

Many of the challenges that have faced the Church since the Council of Constantinople have been geographic. Missionaries went out to preach the Good News in new cultural settings and new languages. It was necessary to express the Gospel in ways that conveyed its meaning to people who looked at the world differently than the missionaries did. This meant that every missionary effort required that all the parties involved reform their ways of thinking and acting. The missionaries had to enter respectfully into the culture of the new peoples, and the new peoples were invited to meet Jesus and the Triune God. The process could produce some striking results, such as the Masai Creed formulated by the Masai people of Africa and Catholic missionaries in 1950. The Christological portion of it reads: "We believe that God made good His promise by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left His home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching

about God and man, showing the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, He rose from the grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord."

The last 125 years have been a time of rapid technological developments: in 1900 there were no cars, no airplanes, no atomic power, no voices over the radio, no television, no Internet. These inventions have brought enormous benefits to people: a vastly broader and faster acquaintance with what is happening in the world; mobility across continents and seas; almost instant communication with others; electricity; robotics; and medical drugs and technologies. These same inventions have brought us scientism, the atomic bomb, the globalization of superficiality, drone strikes, and epidemics of drug abuse and pornography. All of which require the Church to re-form itself in ways that will make it possible to spread the Gospel in a not always conducive environment. Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council sought to address the challenge, and the Popes since then have urged us to re-form. Pope Francis has perhaps been the most eloquent and effective advocate of re-form for the sake of sharing the Good News, urging us to become a missionary Church focused especially on service to the poor. So it may be helpful to look at the four marks of the Church that entered into the Christian creed in 381 AD and how they might apply today.

Apostolic: *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 18:19–20).*

"Apostolic" means continuity with the teaching and mission of the apostles whom Jesus chose to be the foundation of the Church and sent to announce the Good News to all. "Apostolic" emphasizes continuity and re-form, fidelity to tradition and dynamic evangelization. The longest document issued by Vatican II was "The Church in the Modern World." It analyzed in a mainly positive way the modern world, focusing primarily Europe and North America. Pope John XXIII wanted to open the windows and let in the fresh breezes of modernity. The results were mixed, as are the results of most human endeavors.





Veruela: St. Benedict

From the perspective of 50 years, the contemporary world seems somewhat less hospitable to the Gospel than it did in 1965. On the other hand, since Vatican II the popes have urged all of us in the Church to undertake a new evangelization, and new effort to bring the gospel to this tumultuous world, in which secular autonomy (recognized as valid and helpful by Vatican II) often leads to rejection of anything that is not of this world or susceptible to human mastery. This secularism says we are doing just fine on our own; we can engineer a brave, new, progressive world without God.

Such thinking has no room for tradition, or even for history.

Pope Francis wants us to take the Gospel into this world, that is, “to evangelize it.” We are to immerse ourselves in the Good News, in faith in Jesus and the God of love, and then joyfully proclaim that Good News to the inhabitants of our world, especially those who are impoverished materially and spiritually. To do that we are to meet them where they are, but offer them something quite different than they are used to, something not necessarily politically correct.

Holy: “*You who have been made holy in Christ Jesus, called to be holy with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

To take the Gospel anywhere in a credible fashion, we have to have found joy in it, taken its yoke upon ourselves and found its burden easy and light. That is, we have to let God work in us. There is a paradox here: we have been made holy and we are called to be holy. Holiness is not a once and for all: we are brought into God’s territory, his kingdom, but once there we need to work at letting him make us holier. This is an individual and collective task. The “you” of the Bible, including the “you” of Paul’s address to the Corinthians cited above, is a plural “you.” Our temptation is to make the “you” singular and emphasize the “have been” rather than the “called to be.”

This leads to very bad thoughts, such as, “Others are the ones who need to be reformed; if they will just adopt my views, the Church will be reformed.” That sort of thinking or talking will not work. The Church will not be re-formed until we feel the call to holiness

in our own individual and collective bones, and we open ourselves to God’s healing, saving, sanctifying, and forgiving grace. Just as we can look at the environmental crisis from the outside and see things happening in the environment as though we were outside it, so we can look at the Church as though it was “them.” Pogo had it right: “it is us.”



Nájera: Santa Maria Real

The Church is a communion of holy things—the Scriptures, the sacraments, a vast legacy of wisdom, a commitment to social justice, and intimate ties that stretch across time and space—all that Jesus has given us. The power of these things is inestimable. The problem is that we have domesticated the Church, put the Church’s dynamite safely away in the box and sat on it, as Peter Maurin put it. The Church is re-formed when that dynamite is let loose in the hearts of Christians and through them in the world.

Catholic and One:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you all are one in Christ” (Gal. 3:23).

“Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever



Santo Domingo de la Calzada: Santiago peregrine





Burgos Cathedral: Façade

is done will be safe and valid” (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8).

Catholic and One are in the same kind of tension as are the pairs preaching the Gospel (a given) to all nations (in their variety), and being holy and becoming holy. The Church embraces all human beings, who despite their variety have one origin (human and divine), one Lord, and one destiny (also human and divine). We know from current history how hard it is to keep communities intact today. There are internal factors (different ideas, different aims, jealousy, and personal conflicts) and external ones (the relentless pressure of global consumerism to commodify and homogenize everything and everyone, to the disadvantage of smaller units of society, local loyalties and faithful living) that can destroy communities. So, how can the Church embrace all nations and peoples and locales and at the same time stay one?

The Church is organically one; it is the Body of Christ sharing one faith, one baptism, and animated by Holy Spirit. Ultimate reality, the all-holy Mystery from whose generosity everything else exists, is one and three, who are distinct by the relationships to each other. It is their unreality of sin, not the reality of creation, that is divisive. That sin has not splintered the Church into tiny conventicles is the result what medieval preachers called the “cement of the Holy Spirit.” On the other hand, sin has torn the seamless cloak of Christ many times on large and small scales. The Churches of the Syriac world closest to Jesus’ own home turf was divided off from the Church of Constantinople by fine points of doctrine and long-standing political and ethnic resentments. The Churches of Constantinople and the Latin West were divided in much the same way. The Western Church itself was divided at the Protestant Reformation, when calls to reform, inadequately heeded, let to unchristian division, hatred and violence. Although we chafe at the idea, unity requires authority. Authority in the Church is apostolic; modeled on and descended from the church of apostolic times. For Catholics, certainly, unity is focused on the bishops, as the quotation from St. Ignatius (ca. 105 AD), cited above,

indicates. The bishop is the chief teacher and liturgical celebrant of his diocese; around him the Church becomes present and active in a given place. At the same time the bishop belongs to a communion of bishops united with the bishop of Rome, who together are responsible for the whole Church, as Vatican II emphasized. In a globalized world it is more than ever necessary to have the Pope as a focus of unity and as a spokesperson for the Church, but at the same time, it is also more than ever necessary to respect local differences in the churches that make up the Church universal. The recent Synod on the Family offers an example of the communion of bishops in action and how Christians can listen prayerfully together to the Holy Spirit speaking through each of us. We will see more such efforts in the future, a redefinition of the roles of national and regional conferences of bishops and an enhancement of the role of laity and particularly women in the leadership of the Church. The aim is, in the words of Catholic social teaching, to balance solidarity and subsidiarity.

So we have been made one, holy, catholic and apostolic and we are called to become one, holy, catholic and apostolic under the impetus of grace. Sin holds us back; the Spirit tugs us forward. The old Adam is a inert, chaotic crowd; the new creation in Christ is an organic communion, called to reshape itself continually in order to be and to do what it is called to be and do: the sacrament of the Holy God calling his world to come to him, rejoicing as it goes. •



San Millán: Monastery of Suso



Joanne Draper is an adjunct in the English department at The College of Southern Idaho, and an oblate of the Monastery of the Ascension.

MY OWN INNISFREE

Give me a morning with mist in the meadow
Dawn's light breaks soft as it glows through the trees
Wake me with birdsong, a sweet lilting music
Borne to my ear by the gentlest breeze.

Days without number to tend a wee garden
Carrots - and corn growing tall in the sun
Roses that wreath 'round my doorway all summer
Spreading the fragrance of heaven, each one.

Give me a hearth with a fire to spin by
Flames flicker low as I'm plying my yarn
Joyful I'll be as the golden light's slanting
Across the green grass and my fine sturdy barn.

Indulge this mad dream, Lord - for as I grow older
The dreams I once had are now passing away
I only want peace and a quiet salvation
My own Innisfree, where I'd live out my days.

NIAGARA SPRINGS

The white - hot blaze of noon sun beat down
as I walked the canyon path - following
the sound of water somewhere down below
along twists and turns, through sagebrush
and brambly bushes that snapped against my legs

As I came to the streambank, the landscape
changed - a gnarled old tree rose up
out of the water - beneath it, a small waterfall
sang and danced over its roots - over moss
and fern - I sat on a rock beside it
for a long time - enveloped by cool green
and quiet rush of water

Just then, it was all there was,
and it was enough

Susanna Lundgren is an instructor in the art department of Warner-Pacific University in Portland, Oregon, who visits the monastery in the summer to present on art and music in the Road Scholar programs. One summer she took the Prodigal Beatrice home with her from the monastery.

THE PRODIGAL

Never seek to tell thy love, love that never told can be
For the gentle wind does move silently, invisibly.
I told my love...all my heart, trembling cold in ghastly fears—
Ah, she doth depart. —William Blake

Like magic,
like an answer to vain prayer,
you appear at the sliding glass door —
furry striped tumbleweed,
you roll in, whining
your appropriation of the tuna bowl.

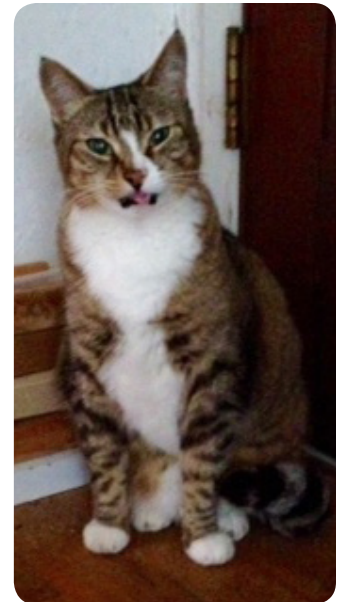
Oh, Beatrice,
where have you been these four weeks?
Eating well at another's table?

By this vanishing act,
you have indulged your antipathy
for the feline
INTERLOPERS Simone and Céline
with no regard for my feelings and fears.
Did you not for one minute think of me,
picturing you in some fatal
FACE > < OFF
with a coyote in the canyon?

O fickle Bea!
One bite of tuna, one swallow of
crunchy kibble,
then it's off again, but not before,
on your way out the door,
I've captured you in my iPhone
to prove your momentary presence.

One day soon,
will you not re-appear
(oh please, oh please)
to stay, stay, stay —

O faithless one.



Tom Hogan is a retired social worker who lives with his wife, Jane Rickenbaugh, in Milwaukie, OR. They visit the monastery each summer and help with the Road Scholar programs.

COLD FRONT IN DOWNTOWN EUGENE

We saw people sleeping outside this evening in tents
or under tarps beneath the freeway overpasses,

the temperature in downtown Eugene holding
at a frigid 9 degrees, chilling to the bone to be outside

the car for five min., much less be living outside.
“How can this be,” I thought, “in the richest country

on earth?” Ice hung on the tent poles and you said
“It’s a case of the haves and the haves nots and

we’re some of the haves.” I thought about that and said,
“You can see it most on cruises, the passengers

are us and the servers are from third world countries.”
I can pass on going on any more cruises, I thought.

But does that act help with those sleeping outside in tents
in downtown Eugene? We thought about that some more,

then got out of the car and gave the man on the corner
three dollars. We drove along for a bit, thought some more,

said some prayers, then went home. What else was there
to do that evening in the cold front in downtown Eugene?

TREE HOUSE

I saw a tree house today while
walking with my granddaughter
Emma along Meadowlark Lane
strewn with cheery blossoms
crying out like gossamer gumdrops
on the slippery spring pavement.

It was a complete building finished
with a corrugated roof and boards
covering windows looking like
cannon ports on a Ship o’ the Line
to keep out any unwanted intruder.
Two ladders rose to the house

and even though they were side by
side, one looked every bit an entrance,
the other like a last ditch escape hatch
from prying parents or space invaders.
I’d walked this street a hundred times
before but, as things would be with

tree houses and purloined letters
in plain view, never saw this dwelling
till this instant. When I was walking,
slowed down, with my granddaughter,
paying attention to things like tree houses.
It seemed to shout “see me” today.

YELLOW BIRD IS HAPPY

The yellow bird looked happy today
perched on the wooden deck railing
pleased with the bird seed evenly laid out.

Usually he was too shy to come first to eat,
waiting till after the loud-mouthed
red birds ate their fill. The green birds

usually didn’t get up this early, they were
no problem and the black birds were nesting
by the lake. Today he’d read a little before

rising, his latest novel “Bird Watchers: Their
Habits and Neuroses.” Why anyone would
travel miles to sit, he thought, in a stinking bog

to watch what birds did and write their names
down in a sodden note book was beyond him.
But today he let all that go.

He even thought he was getting a little sunburn,
which would help his feelings of inferiority.
Today he was happy to be alive and where he was,

unlike the red bird who always wanted to be someone else
the green bird who was always looking for harmony
or the black birds who were always flying away.

He watched “She Wore a Yellow Ribbon” last night,
then had a nightmare about turning red for a day,
waking up before he knew the ending.

Today he liked being yellow, being alive, healthy,
basking in the translucent sunlight of summer,
for today, not wanting to be different any more.





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Upcoming Retreats at the Monastery

BREAKTHROUGH ENNEAGRAM WORKSHOP

April 29-30, 2016, Sr. Barbara Glodowski, Facilitator.
Using the ancient wisdom preserved by the Monks of
Mount Athos, come discover your personality traits and
how to walk on the path of transformation through
Christ's power. For more information contact Anita
Koehn, anita_koehn@q.com, 208-324-8094.

Road Scholar Programs/2016

May 23-29: Geology of the Snake River Plain (full)

May 30-June 5: Benedictine Life, Literature and Art,
550-1500 AD

June 13-19: Quilting (Personal Story Quilts)

July 11-17: English History, 1066-1450 and Detective
Fiction Set in the Period (Full)

July 18-24: Quilting (Two Block Quilt with Variations)

August 1-7: Religion and the Settling of the West

September 5-11: Hiking the Snake River Plain

For information contact Road Scholar or Fr. Hugh,
208-761-9389



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