

the Mendicant

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Teaching and Me—Part III

Parts I and II of Fr. Richard's reminiscences were published in the March and May 2014 editions of the Mendicant, available online at cac.org/about-cac/newsletter.

I find it embarrassing to write about my own life as a teacher, but the staff has asked me to share. I hope the first two parts and what follows, the last in this series, are honest and informative.

By God's timing and grace, my early public teaching coincided with the emergence of the cassette tape, and for many years I was laughingly introduced as "the tape priest," while others even added "who does not seem to have an unrecorded thought!" The New Jerusalem Community started a little distribution center in the basement of our house on Derby Avenue in Cincinnati, and St. Anthony Messenger Press (now Franciscan Media) gradually added to their stock from the conferences that I was invited to give both nationally and internationally.

Some of the early titles reflected community building, which was then in its heyday (e.g., "The Price of Peoplehood"), and others were from talks and retreats that I gave to priests, nuns, and most of the major lay groups in the American Catholic Church (e.g., "Wild Beasts and Angels"). At that time I was still associated with the Charismatic movement, the healing ministry, and youth ministry, all of which taught me a lot. Precisely because I was being invited to address these many groups, I kept reading, studying, and observing the mystery of church in its many forms. Traveling to different cultures and learning about other religions and denominations also helped tremendously.

My early books (*Great Themes of Scripture*, *Jesus' Plan for a New World*, *The Enneagram*, *The Good News According to Luke*, *Job and the Mystery of Suffering*, *The Wild Man's Journey*, *Why Be*

Catholic? and *Simplicity*) were largely transcriptions of recorded conferences. The result was a youthful, chatty, sometimes confusing writing style. I am always overjoyed when I hear that people still get something out of them.

It wasn't until the 1990s that I had the confidence and experience to deliberately write several books, including *Everything Belongs*, *The Naked Now*, *Falling Upward*, and *Immortal Diamond*. They are the more mature fruit of my customary Lenten hermitage retreats, for which I can only thank and praise God.

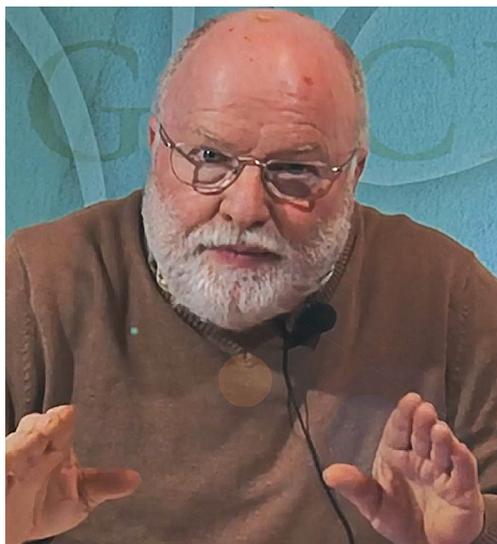
In 2008, when I turned 65, with the help of the Franciscans and the CAC staff, I discerned that I would teach "on the road" for only five more years. Now I primarily teach and write here in New Mexico for our Living School, and via online classes and webinars, where I am graciously joined by the Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault and Dr. James Finley, who keep me balanced, grounded, and happy!

From here on, it is all in the Lord's hands. Hopefully recordings and writings that are the fruit of prayer and the Holy Spirit will last, and those that are too much of me or caught up in current and passing issues will not. I can only thank God, and *you*, for such humble trusting

in this loquacious and ordinary friar!

I end with perhaps a surprising quote from Albert Einstein: "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift. The rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant, and has almost totally forgotten the gift." Or as Ian McGilcrist puts it, "The master (the intuitive mind) has become the emissary, and the emissary (the rational mind) has become the master." I hope my teaching has helped to return the sacred gift of the master, and especially the Divine Master, to its rightful place in our world, in the churches, and in all religions.

fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.



... I kept reading, studying, and observing the mystery of church in its many forms.



Center for
Action and
Contemplation

Home of THE ROHR INSTITUTE

An educational center grounded in the
Christian mystical tradition



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- Stop by our Visitor Center and Bookstore at 1823 Five Points Rd SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Write to us at info@cac.org or CAC, PO Box 12464, Albuquerque, NM 87195

Welcome, seeker. We invite you to stop by the CAC Visitor Center when you are in Albuquerque to rediscover how inextricably connected you are with the world and that all is held within one Divine Reality. Open 9 a.m. – 12:00 noon and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m

Turning Information into Transformation

The question for us is always "how can we turn information into transformation?"

How can we use the sacred texts, tradition, and experience to lead people into new places with God, with life, with themselves? — Richard Rohr, OFM

We seek to empower individuals to live out their sacred soul tasks in service to the world through:

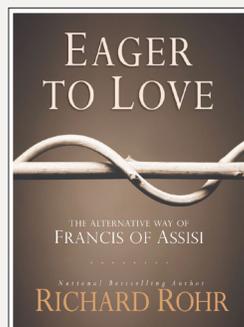
- ◆ **Conspire Symposia:** Seven-year series of events following Fr. Richard's underlying themes
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BOOK REVIEW EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

Eager to Love

By Richard Rohr
Franciscan Media, July 2014

[Richard] Rohr both values the institutional Church and suggests ways to survive within it. The autobiographical import of this statement is not lost on the reader. He admonishes Christians to give priority to Jesus and his message and to make use of both the inherited wisdom of the Church and the protection it affords that message. From the Church one inherits



Scripture and the spiritual and theological tools by which to critique the Church's own structures and practices. While maintaining that the most meaningful critique is from the inside of the institution, he warns that in order to "survive" as an "insider" one must learn the non-dualistic thinking which is embodied in the mystic way, the alternative way of Francis and his followers.

Excerpted from a review by Dana Greene for the print version of National Catholic Reporter, July 18, 2014. Used with permission.

Order *Eager to Love* at store.cac.org (Not available from other booksellers until August 2014.)

Or donate \$250 by July 31, 2014 at cac.org/support-cac and receive a signed copy! (If you've already donated in 2014, your book will be on its way soon.)

Ripples in the World: CAC Multipliers

We are honored to share stories of friends who take teachings and turn them into palpable actions and blessings for others. These “multipliers” extend our reach much further than we could ever dream—both geographically and within the context of practical issues. Thanks to the many, in addition to those named here, who allow the ripples of love to cross the still surfaces of their souls and become waves of transformation.



Tim Shriver

I was raised to connect spirituality with action. My parents had both strong faith and political aspirations. While I’m not sure either of them talked about how the two connected, I somehow knew they did, and I intuitively understood that healing the culture and seeking social and political change was really a deeply spiritual pursuit.

In the wisdom way of knowing, Fr. Richard is among the world’s leading teachers. He expresses particularly well that seeking a unitive way of life requires broadening the social circle of inclusion. Much of the literature and practice in the field of spiritual awakening and self-emptying can be individualistic. This can lead to a primarily personal pursuit of interior silence, self-acceptance, and relationship with the Divine.

The Franciscan orthodoxy espoused by Fr. Richard acts as a corrective to this, I think. Fr. Richard has avoided the excessive focus on the private by emphasizing the healing that comes when we reach out to those at the margin. It is particularly important that even in our inward spiritual movements we are called out of ourselves and into healing actions and solidarity with those who are marginalized or humiliated.

Paul is helpful on this point: “God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful” (1 Corinthians 1:27 NLT). Those on the edge hold the key to healing and uniting the whole system. To unite with those who are the most vulnerable, the

most excluded, is the critical social dimension of unitive consciousness and community.

Fr. Richard and others like Cynthia Bourgeault have recovered from Jewish and Christian texts the invitation to unitive consciousness and to healing the wounds of social and political structure. This is the heart of Genesis, Leviticus, Ezekiel, Psalms, and, of course, the Gospels with their teaching. I am hearing old stories with new ears. Throughout Scripture there is a call for social justice—meaning social equality, inclusion of those on the edge. It is a deeply spiritual call, and yet it has a powerful and important political function.

You cannot believe in or practice unitive consciousness as long as you exclude and marginalize others—whether it is women or people of different sexual orientations or people of religious or ethnic minorities or, in my experience, people with intellectual disabilities.

My work is largely with and in support of people who have significant vulnerabilities because of intellectual disability. In many cultures these people are excluded and oppressed, though often unconsciously, even more so than other marginalized groups. Ironically, most do not even think that they’re excluding people with intellectual disabilities. They are thought to be hopeless. Mostly they are ignored and forgotten.

For 20 years I have been mentored by these same people. Some might not be the best-spoken, the most articulate writers, the most celebrated thinkers, the fastest runners. And yet, despite all of that, I have met person after person who emanates a kind of radiant light. After a while, even the

densest of us may have our eyes opened to that something which transcends all superficial distractions of disability: the unimaginable beauty of every person. That beauty is ours for the seeing if only we have the eyes to see, if only we pay attention.



Tim Shriver (yellow tee-shirt) with family and friends (Richard Robr, far right) with Tim Harris (front) of Tim's Place Restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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Ripples in the World: CAC Multipliers *continued*

Tim Shriver, *continued from page 3*

I try to maintain those eyes as I am engaged in this work. At times I will pull myself out of whatever I'm doing and try to remember that I am united with all that is. I give myself license to step away and reconnect. I fail mostly, but once in a while I succeed, and when I do, I feel like I am touching a "sweet spot" of wonder and peace. It enables me to be present to people in a way that I can communicate to them that I love them unconditionally. There are no conditions to our unity, to our oneness. Sometimes I want to hug them even if they're complete strangers!

One of the most powerful invitations to non-dual consciousness I have had is seeing a person with an intellectual disability as an Olympic hero—where all I see is good. The struggle disappears. Many times I've watched, for instance, as a person with Down syndrome stands with a gold medal around her neck, arms raised high to a cheering crowd. I can't look at that child, at that human being, without slipping out of dualistic thinking. Those moments are a kind of sacrament of unitive consciousness. They are "both-and" moments where shadow and light coexist in the same experience.

In those moments when Special Olympics athletes experience exuberance, triumph, and victory, if I take them seriously, as I try to do, and acknowledge them for what they are—no less a victory than any other victory—there is a beautiful way in which the Divine energy shoots vertically through me like a force, and says, "See! Look! Pay attention to what is right in front of you! That is all you need to know!"

Tim Shriver is a social leader, an educator, activist, film producer, and business entrepreneur. He is the Chairman of Special Olympics, and in that capacity he serves more than 4 million Special Olympics athletes and their families in 180 countries. Tim and his wife, Linda, live in the Washington, D.C. area with their five children.



"In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers.... There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun."

—Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*



Brad Pickel

It all started with a simple "yes" on a long car ride in 2003. "Can we listen to some tapes that my mom sent us by Richard Rohr?" asked my wife. This simple response led me on the spiritual journey to where I am today—walking shoulder to shoulder with my brothers in Illuman.

In 2005, we attended the CAC-sponsored conference, *How Do We Breathe Underwater? The Gospel and Twelve Step Spirituality*. Being an adult child of an alcoholic, I wanted to better understand addiction while assuming there was little I would learn about myself. It was life-changing when I realized that I was addicted to chasing success and the validation of others, which ultimately led to feelings of unworthiness. There had to be a better way to live.

After I did the Men's Rites of Passage (MROP) in 2010, it became clear that I needed to find a way to use my gifts in the service of others, particularly men who are facing similar addictive patterns. This January, I was selected to be the Illuman Administrator and am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, especially our first men's conference this November with Fr. Richard. More information about Illuman and how we help men on their spiritual journeys can be found at Illuman.org.

Brad Pickel is president of Seahaven Consulting, Inc., located in Beaufort, South Carolina, and is the current administrator for Illuman, Inc. Illuman is a nonprofit entity continuing the work started by Fr. Richard Rohr as Men as Learners and Elders (M.A.L.Es). Brad is also involved in a number of initiatives in his community focusing on male spirituality.

BEING A GENERATIVE MAN: WATER IN THE DESERT

Friday, November 7–Sunday, November 9, 2014
Hyatt Tamaya, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico

Teachers include Richard Rohr, Belden Lane, and Adrian Scott.

In an informal session on Saturday afternoon, Fr. Richard will speak with women who are accompanying men to the conference (no registration needed). Initiated men (who have completed a Men's Rites of Passage) are also invited to Soularize, November 5-7, 2014.

Learn more and register at illuman.org

Note: These events are organized by Illuman. Please contact Illuman directly for more information and registration.

Over the past few years the CAC has broken new ground in education in the Christian mystical tradition through the Rohr Institute's Living School for Action and Contemplation and Online Education offerings.

The Living School currently has two classes of students on distinct 2-year journeys through the program, and the application window for the 2015-2017 Living School program opens July 1, 2014. The first class of Living School students have immersed themselves in online study and conversation around the themes of Contemplative/Non-Dual Consciousness, Human Incarnation, and Cosmic Incarnation with our core faculty—Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and James Finley.

New and current students will be participating in the annual Living School Symposium with core faculty and invited master teachers Ilia Delio and Robert Sardello this

September. Last year's Symposium underscored the theological and contemplative stance of the core faculty's teaching, inviting students to cultivate a contemplative mind through teaching sessions and practices, deepening their awareness of our common union with Divine Reality and all beings.

We launched a new online course in April—Immortal Diamond: A Study in Search of the True Self. This course focuses on Fr. Richard's book, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self*, as a map for discovering a vision of your True Self and deepening your enjoyment of divine friendship. This online course has attracted over 500 individuals from across the globe and is drawing them into deep study, reflection, and conversation. Stay tuned to CAC emails and *the Mendicant* for future updates on course offerings.

Paul Swanson is Director of Curriculum for the Rohr Institute.

LIVING SCHOOL for Action and Contemplation



What are current Living School students experiencing? A conversation with Gabrielle Stoner

Gabrielle "Brie" Stoner lives in Michigan with her husband, Steve, and two young sons, Søren (4) and Rowan (1).

Mendicant: Tell us a little about yourself, Brie.

Brie: I have been working as a musician and vocalist for the last 10 years, but I am trading my microphone these days for more dedicated time with my boys, in what I believe to be my vocation for the time being as a mother "monk."

Mendicant: What about the Living School has supported this vocation?

Brie: The "Living" part! This is not a school for mental grasping, but one where the material must be patiently chewed and slowly digested into all centers of "knowing." It's easy to feel mystical when on retreat, with meals prepared for you, hours of silence, and a nice view of the mountains, but as the title of Jack Kornfield's book puts it: after the ecstasy, the laundry. I am



slowly learning how to live from that inner still point of convergence of All in All . . . so that all I am and do may be the catalytic love of Christ-becoming. This is the moment-by-moment joyful evolution we all share in as the Body of Christ.

Mendicant: Such beautiful and true imagery! How do you see this "Christ-becoming" taking shape?

Brie: We do not lack information or teaching in our age, but we surely lack the faith that we can become Christ in our world. We allow the incarnation to take root when we simply say "yes" to the invitation and let the dance flow through us, as us, rather than thinking the dance is happening "out there" somewhere—at the next conference, in the next book, or even at the Living School.

Mendicant: Amen and cheers, Brie! Here's to joining the movement, wherever God has us!

LIVING SCHOOL *for* Action and Contemplation

2015–2017 Cohort

Two-year program combining onsite and online learning with master teachers including Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and James Finley

Study and practice to deepen awareness of union with God.

Live out your soul task in service to the world.

Explore and apply at cac.org/rohr-inst Application deadline: September 30, 2014

IMMORTAL DIAMOND

A Study in Search of the True Self

September 24–December 3, 2014



Self-paced, 10-week online study of Fr. Richard's book, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self*

Learn what the crucifixion and resurrection really mean for your transformative journey.

Register at cac.org

(No application required!)

HIERARCHY of TRUTHS:

Jesus' Use of Scripture

Fr. Richard's teaching on how Jesus interpreted Scripture is now available as an audio recording (CD or MP3 download). His insights may change the way you read the Bible and can guide you in discerning the truest of true things, those that matter most.

Order at store.cac.org

HIERARCHY of TRUTHS:

Jesus' Use
of Scripture

RICHARD
ROHR, OFM

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