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LIVING SCHOOL ALUMNI

Q U A R T E R L Y

CONTEMPLATION
AND PARENTING

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We set out to create a digital publication that felt like it was in print. We heard from many of you that the experience of sitting down with a cup of coffee and reading about your beloved Alumni community was preferred. So, we created this format to resist distraction and invite attention. If you're reading on a desktop or laptop, expand the "landscape" version to full screen and turn off your notifications; or if an iPad or tablet is handy, enjoy this most book-like of reading experiences in either the "landscape" or "portrait" versions. The Table of Contents is clickable, allowing easy navigation to every section of the quarterly. We've also included a link to return to the TOC on every page, so it's easy to find your way back. Hyperlinks are in red type and underlined; click these to open webpages in your browser. We hope you enjoy this new format. If you have any questions, please email us at support@cac.org and we will help as soon as we can. Peace, CAC Design Team

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Dear Living School Alumni,

During the last few months, Thomas Keating's radiant smile and luminous eyes have been etched on my heart. The intention of our contemplative prayer and living, as Fr. Thomas taught, is to consent to the presence of God. My first introduction to Centering Prayer in hospital chaplaincy training used the tried and true Contemplative Outreach instructional brochure, which read "Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within." Each of us, in our own unique circumstances, faces this prayer and sometimes terror-filled decision to consent to God—or to deny, postpone, repress, or ignore Love's always-available invitation. Fr. Thomas shines as one who said "Yes" to God with all of his heart, soul, strength, and mind. Toward the end of the newsletter, several alumni share brief remembrances of how his presence and work impacted their lives.

One theme circling through this newsletter edition is contemplation and parenting. If there's one area in which reality humbles me to consent to Christ's gentle presence, it is this. Dani Walker Kreutter ('18) writes about parenthood as a hermit's cell; Kathy Hendricks ('17) offers alumni the powerful contemplative practice of teaching icons to children. Fr. Richard Rohr shares about his new book *The Universal Christ* (forthcoming March 5), the scope of which can


surely change how parents parent, but its reach is both far more and also nothing less than our most intimate relationships. The sub-title boldly affirms *How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe*.

This month, I'm thrilled to share with you a new format for the Alumni Newsletter. In a recent survey, we heard that the Alumni Newsletter truly means something to you. The majority of readers report that a thematic issue is compelling and that you value a wide variety of topics and voices, from alumni and faculty reflections to reviews of books and films, inclusion of art, poetry, and more. We also heard that most of you appreciate video and audio recordings, but nevertheless prefer a slower, text-based reading experience primarily on your computer.

CAC Creative Director Nicholas Kramer and Graphic Designer Izzy Spitz have crafted something special for us, an interactive PDF that we're calling the Living School Alumni Quarterly. In addition to an updated design, an inviting reading experience, and a navigable style, the contents of the newsletter are now organized around the Living School Rhythm of Life areas: Contemplative Practice, Contemplative Study, Contemplative Community, and Contemplative Solidarity. We're hopeful that this will continue to serve as a significant resource for the alumni community to learn, share, and connect.

I welcome any and all of your suggestions and submissions. How is your Rhythm of Life going? How did your integration project turn out? What mystic is inspiring you? How do you “keep on keeping on” a contemplative path, even in the midst of struggle? The theme of the next newsletter in May takes inspiration from Fr. Richard’s forthcoming book on the Universal Christ; our focus will be “Nature: The First Bible.” I invite your submissions of articles, personal reflections, poems, photographs, and more along this theme, and along any other themes, too! Send them to mlonghurst@cac.org by April 8.

Yours in “Yes” to divine presence,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Longhurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Longhurst" clearly distinguishable.

—Mark Longhurst ('15)

Killing the Butterfly: Writing and Transformation

Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew ('18)

The morning of November 9, 2016, I woke up to the news of Donald Trump's election and heard with unequivocal clarity how I needed to respond: You must teach writing. Admittedly, I'd been teaching creative writing as a spiritual practice for twenty-five years, so the calling didn't come out of the blue. But a few months prior I'd started the Living School, and now I had a new understanding that our fundamental purpose is to manifest fully the love present within creation, and that contemplative practice is a trustworthy means. In my back pocket I had a tool for meaning-making, truth-telling, growing in compassion, being of service, exercising surrender, profound listening—for dismantling the destructive, dualistic tensions harming our country. I knew a sneaky, secular way to practice contemplation that's wildly accessible, at least to anyone who writes. In the language of the Rhythm of Life, I knew what "was mine to do." Creative writing can be a transformational practice. From that day forward, I would teach it as such. The author Ann Patchett does a marvelous job of describing how writing plunges us into the kenotic dance. An idea for a novel, formed over months, is "an oversized butterfly" making a breeze around her head:

This book I have not yet written one word of is a thing of indescribable beauty, unpredictable in its patterns, piercing in its color, so wild and loyal in its nature

that my love for this book, and my faith in it as I track its lazy flight, is the single perfect joy in my life.

Here is creative potential cultivated to the point of bursting. We all have this capacity. It's in our nature because it's God's nature.

When Patchett "can't think of another stall, when putting it off has actually become more painful than doing it," she plucks the butterfly from the air and presses it against her desk. "There, with my own hand, I kill it. It's not that I want to kill it, but it's the only way I can get something that is so three-dimensional onto the flat page." Then "everything that was beautiful about this living thing—all the color, the light and movement—is gone. What I'm left with is the dry husk of my friend, the broken body chipped, dismantled, and poorly reassembled. Dead. That's my book."

When under Cynthia's guidance we read Jacob Boehme, I immediately thought of Patchett. "In order for outward and visible creation to emerge, the divine must undergo a compression into somethingness, and this entails a passage through the 'fiery' matrix of desire and its frustration." Writers of every stripe know this. Beginners assume they killed the butterfly because they didn't know better, but that's not the case; it's just how creation happens. "The journey from the head to hand is perilous and lined with bodies," Patchett says.

It is the road on which nearly everyone who wants to write—and many of the people who do write—get lost. . . . Only a few of us are

going to be willing to break our own hearts by trading in the living beauty of imagination for the stark disappointment of words.

Sound familiar? This is the same heart-breaking labor we experience in Centering Prayer. A broken heart is also an aperture for possibility. To be a writer, essayist Sarah Porter says, means “surrendering the defined, expressible self to the wider possibilities of the page.”

What distinguishes Patchett and anyone who perseveres through the disappointments of writing is that we disallow despair’s stopping power. Faith in the process surpasses the brokenness of our hearts and the damage we’ve wrecked on our ideas. Or perhaps our love for that butterfly insists on accompanying it through its final, ugly metamorphosis onto the page. We’ve pinned our hearts on an idea, insubstantial and fleeting, and bear the awful consequences of substantiating it outside of ourselves. In the writing world, “practice” means getting your butt in the chair and exercising the literary craft. These external means also invite us to interior transformation. Loss, inadequacy, failure, grief—these are inevitable, and for Patchett, forgiveness is the key response. “I can’t write the book I want to write, but I can and will write the book I am capable of writing. Again and again throughout the course of my life I will forgive myself.” To come be created the life-spark dims, significantly, and must be stoked back with fortitude, commitment, and compassion.

Throughout my years in the Living School, I heard a refrain that puzzled me: The innermost quality of God’s heart is mercy. Why not love or justice or truth? Patchett helped me see mercy’s primacy in the creative process, how forgiving myself for not being able to write the book I want to write makes writing possible, and how forgiving myself for the brokenness of the book I do write turns the gears of transformation in the lives of my readers. Mercy is the key that unlocks creation.

For decades I’ve been tickled by Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood’s statement that writing “is a naming of the world, a reverse incarnation: the flesh becoming word.” Now I know writing is a continuation of incarnation, a participation in it. When we take our experiences and make something of them, “enfleshing” them with language, we receive more fully what these experiences have made of us—and so step into the generous, life-giving flow that is creation.

Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew ('18) is a writer, writing instructor, and spiritual director living in Minneapolis, MN.

Introducing Icons to Children

Kathy Hendricks ('17)

As Tom Eberle and other members of the CAC staff were explaining the integration project to our cohort in the winter of 2017, ideas were already percolating in my mind. For the past three decades my work as a writer and catechetical consultant for Catholic publishing companies has focused on the spirituality of the home. Over the years, it has become evident that the Catholic Church does an uneven job in teaching people how to pray. Emphasis on memorized prayers and devotions, such as novenas and rosaries, have left many with little or no understanding of the practices of contemplation, meditation, and spontaneous prayer. More than once, I have heard parents, teachers, and catechists lament that, while they know prayers, they aren't sure how to pray. This was an area I knew I wanted to incorporate into my project.

My visits to Albuquerque for the Living School gatherings gave me the opportunity to visit with a very old and dear friend, Father William (Bill) McNichols. As children, we loved poring through booklets about the saints, inspired and engaged by their stories of courage and compassion. Over time, we grew quite familiar with these sacred figures and the various ways they cultivated intimate relationships with the Divine through prayer. As we revisited our childhood memories, we began discussing a

project that would bring together Bill's artistry in iconography and my work as a writer. The result is a book called *Heavenly Friends: Introducing the Beauty of Icons*, released by Twenty-Third Publications in January 2019. Our desire is to draw children and their parents into prayer through the imagery of icons and the stories of saints and other holy people.

Icons bring us into the presence of holy people by inviting conversation with them in the midst of ordinary life. Along with other forms of sacred art, they stir the imagination by presenting visual images of holy people in ways that resonate with our own lives. Icons offer particular opportunities for children by introducing them to these figures through something visually beautiful and symbolically meaningful. While icons might first appear sad or serious to children (as well as adults), further reflection draws us deeper into their beauty and depth. As Bill explains: "They're really kind of imploring and begging for compassion. I'm trying to cause a metanoia (spiritual conversion) in the person looking at it, because the icon is also looking at you. It asks for love, but it doesn't work if it's too sentimental or pretty."

Each section of the book contains an icon of a holy person and an accompanying story about his or her life. The figures were chosen with a specific facet of life that connects with the experience of the child. Bill offers insights into symbols within the icon that expand a child's appreciation of its artistry and meaning. For example, the icon of Joseph shows his cloak partly

covering the halo of the child Jesus. It's a way of illustrating that Jesus was not yet ready to show who he was to the world. Both figures carry a staff, and Joseph appears to be guiding Jesus forward in a warm and caring manner. Such an image brings comfort to children when they feel frightened or uncertain. In a brief practice of *visio divina* (sacred seeing) the child is led into prayer and reflection, bringing an assurance that God is with us at all times, covering us with a cloak of compassion and endless love.

As we worked on the book, I came to appreciate the process of creating icons and the intimacy that grows between artist and subject. Bill's knowledge of each figure in the book speaks to his prayerful discernment around how to portray them. At a recent exhibit of his icons in Denver, the breadth of his work was on full display. In addition to Christian figures, he has painted sacred figures from Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu traditions, as well as secular figures, such as Matthew Shephard and Lady Diana. His body of work also includes gorgeous multi-cultural images of Christ and Mary. (To learn more about his work, visit <http://frbillmcnichols-sacredimages.com/>.)

One of the most heartening experiences in the process of publishing the book happened after the designer at Twenty-Third, moved by the iconography and accompanying stories, suggested that we remove the word "children" from the original title. As a father of a young child, he noted that the book would have as much appeal for adults as it would for children. This

collaborative venture brings to life one aspect of my integration project and a "taking forth" of my experience of the Living School. As such, it enables me to fulfill the task as "multiplier" in a bright and promising way.

Kathy Hendricks ('17) is the National Catechetical Consultant for William H. Sadlier, a spiritual director, and author of several books, including Seeking Spiritual Balance in an Off-Kilter World, The Spirituality of Parenting, and Prayers and Rituals for the Home.

Icon: San Jose en el Rio Grande by Fr. Bill McNichols, used by permission.



Photo: Rowan Mayer (Brie Stoner's ('15) six year old son)

Ancient Nest

Matted rust colored needles, red bark shredded by time
feather the inner sanctum of this path like an ancient nest of
evolution.

Its gentle curvature along a flat terrain make for an intimate
unexplainable descent.

Sun pushes her shine through shades of green, birthing soft towers of
light—
Christening the old grove with fire.

The burls are alive and awake,

telling their primordial legends

Quietly whispering of longing and Love—

of the full emptiness of eternity, pointing me in the direction where
all Truth finds its home.

Thunderheads of Silence slow my pace into a labyrinth of tears,
while the sheer and massive height of the canopy swallows up my
body—my thoughts—
leaving only Stillness
singing in its wake.

—*Leigh Schickendantz ('15)*

Parenthood as a Hermit's Cell

Dani Walker Kreutter ('18)

My first son was a few months old when I applied to the Living School. As I filled out the application, I realized I knew of no mystics, saints, or contemplatives who were mothers. Was it possible, I asked myself, to have a contemplative life as a mother? I had already felt so clearly the experiences I read about through the mystics—the desire to turn away from words and look in the face of Life instead, the welling up of something unspeakable and deeply embodied, and, of course, facing plenty of dark nights. I decided to trust this experience despite the lack of historical role models and carry this question with me to the Living School. It became a topic dear to me, one that has been at the center of my growth for the last few years.

Needless to say, I was delighted when I saw the theme for this newsletter and promptly planned to submit an article. The problem was that I held a 2-week-old newborn in my arms, was contending with a jealous older sibling, and was in the midst of moving from Indiana back to our home in Uganda. The days ticked away with not a minute to spare. The deadline for the article came quickly and still I had nothing to submit. It felt incredibly symbolic of my spiritual life. My practice had fallen to the wayside between the baby and the move and I couldn't help but feel guilty for not keeping up. I just couldn't do it all.

And I should have known. One

of my first lessons as a mother was that parenthood comes with a grand set of limitations. Having children required a shedding of other identities and activities, many of which had oriented me to the spiritual life. It was Cynthia's teaching on the Desert Fathers and Mothers that helped me see the very limitations of parenthood are, in fact, an opportunity to deepen into where we are. Indeed, we still have "everything we need for a godly life" (2 Peter 1:3). Abba Moses tells us, "Sit in your cell and it will teach you everything." As Cynthia pointed out to us:

At the literal level, the cell is the hermit's home. On a symbolic level, the cell stands for any set of self-limiting conditions voluntarily embraced, which is an identical way to furnish the conditions for spiritual work. A core Desert teaching is that spiritual transformation occurs more readily under conditions of constriction rather than expansion—quite against the grain of our own culture, which prioritizes constant stimulation and spiritual acquisitiveness. In the Desert, freedom is not about having limitless options; it is about being able to say "Yes" wholeheartedly to whatever the present moment holds.

And so, parenthood is our cell and the limitations it imposes upon us require we simplify our lives and delve deeply into lessons offered in this season.

I managed to squeeze an hour of time to write this article while the baby was sleeping and before a dinner guest arrived. It was my only opportunity. The minutes passed, the

pressure built, and still I had nothing decent to share. Ready to throw my arms up in surrender, tears welled at the thought of not participating in this topic that means so much to me. In a fit of frustration, I went to check on dinner, muttering a few words under my breath you wouldn't expect from someone writing an article on the spiritual life. This, I thought, is why we have no historical role models of mothers leading a contemplative life. What parent has the time to get their thoughts in order, write them down, and share them with the world? And yet, perhaps it does not matter. Perhaps the limitations we (sometimes) voluntarily embrace force us to simply live out what we have learned, to embody action arising from our stolen moments of contemplation. Perhaps we pass it on without knowing it, to our little disciples to take into the world. Perhaps this is the essence of a contemplative life. "Sitting in our cell" is how we can be monks and parents simultaneously.

Dani Walker Kreutter ('18) grew up on a farm in Indiana but now lives in Kampala, Uganda, with her husband and two children where they work with a community involved in youth leadership development programs and where she runs a Waldorf-inspired preschool.

Universal Christ Interview with Fr. Richard Rohr

Mark Longhurst ('15)

Mark Longhurst ('15) caught up with Fr. Richard Rohr to talk about his upcoming book *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe*. Their wide-ranging conversation covers why the universal Christ has been forgotten, how Jesus Christ is both personal and universal, contemplation and parenting, universal Christ as a foundation for affirming interfaith friendships, and more. (*This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.*)



Mark Longhurst: Fr. Richard, we in the alumni community are excited about your book, *The Universal Christ*, and I wanted to start off by asking, what are you excited about?

Fr. Richard Rohr: It thrills me that this has meant something to the students of the school. You've probably heard me mention how incarnational Christianity is unique and the importance of its implications. In this book I get to talk in a very foundational way about how real and universal the incarnation is. Most Christians—Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant—were not told that.

Mark: The subtitle is *How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe*. What is it, do you think, that has been forgotten by many Christians?

Richard: In spite of numerous passages pointing to the universal Christ (for example Colossians, Ephesians, the Prologue to John's Gospel, Hebrews and 1 John), this idea didn't take firm root in the early church, except in the East. Here's my interpretation. I can't prove it, but I think we were so enamored with Jesus and needed to prove that Jesus was the incarnate Son of God that we narrowed the field from a universal message to a personal message. Even in the Eastern Church the universal emphasis became a subtext by the 7th and 8th centuries. We do see it recur in the mystics. But once Christianity aligned with Empire after 1054—the East with Constantinople, the West with Rome—we focused on Jesus as our God figure. The institutional church needed tribalism, not universalism, to justify its existence. From the perspective of spiral dynamics, at this point in history most people and groups were at the red and blue levels of development. The universal Christ is a yellow and turquoise level concept, and the churches just weren't there yet. It amazes me that the Christic texts even made their way into the Bible. How did Colossians, Ephesians, and John's Prologue

get written? Who were these geniuses at the end of the 1st century who already understood the cosmic Christ?

Mark: You intentionally separate the words “every” and “thing.” Knowing your theological background as a Franciscan, what is the specificity of “things” and how is that important in this vision?

Richard: The significance of these two words only hit me after I had gone through the third or fourth redaction of the book, and I don't know if I explain it in the book. This was the hardest book I ever wrote. It went back and forth between me and the publishers and editors eight or nine times. I had never done that with any previous book. And I was getting sick of it, frankly. “Oh, do I have to go through this text one more time?” And then I realized that I'm not really talking about everything as much as every thing. In other words, it's precisely thingness, facticity, reality, materiality that is the Christ. That's a crucial distinction. We've tried to make concepts and theories and theologies into the Christ, and I don't think they are. The word became flesh, you see. A little lizard or leaf, a big tree, that's the body of Christ—materiality. That's what I'm really trying to say in the book.

Mark: Can you say more about the importance of the personal vision of Jesus and the universal vision of Christ and why is it so important that we hold both together?

Richard: Without the personal Jesus the whole thing becomes literally ungrounded. It becomes theoretical, abstract, conceptual, too universal with no place to stand. The rubber hits the road in Jesus. Focusing on John's Gospel without the balance of Matthew, Mark, and Luke gets us into high Christology—how you and I were trained. It's wonderful, but it doesn't address the poor, immigrants, sexism, homophobia, or any of the issues that are tearing our world apart. It becomes an overarching grand scheme which pleases the intellect but doesn't engage the heart and body in the way that the three Synoptic Gospels do. We need a very concrete Jesus touching concrete people, addressing concrete issues. I see the inspiration of having four Gospel texts, with only one of them focusing on Christ, three of them being about Jesus. It's almost as if the Gospel writers intuited the human temptation to make religion out of Christ. Cosmic religion needs to be grounded in concern for concrete people, concrete suffering. That's what Jesus does for us.

If Christ is the life principle—positive, evolutionary, unfolding, moving—then the death principle—the crucified Jesus—has to be added on to that. If you try to define the life principle in some glorious Enneagram seven terms (forgive me if you're a seven). . . . If you do life without the cross—not recognizing that loss is a part of renewal, that two steps backward is part of three steps forward—you're in trouble. So, this combination really works for me. If you can hold the life principle together with the necessary death principle, you've got a pattern of unfolding, evolution, growth, and change that is indisputable, even though we don't like the death part. The cross is the pattern of everything. Even science reflects this.

Mark: For parents or for people involved in parenting in some way, how might a vision of the universal Christ apply?

Richard: Let's get back to relationality. I'm sure you've heard some of the work of Barbara Holmes. Her focus on communal and embodied forms of contemplation is so important! For all of contemplative Christianity's appreciation for Centering Prayer and sitting on the mat for 20 minutes, we've just got to be honest. After visiting Mexico recently and seeing so many children and babies with their parents all the time, our rather monastic, Buddhist (nothing against monks or Buddhists) approach just can't be adequate to describe contemplation. It can't be, or 99% of the creatures God has created can never know God. Experiences of great love and great suffering can lead anyone to union. Every time you let your kids pull love out of you, you let your wife pull suffering out of you, you're in relationship. There's not the lone Mark standing there. He has to submit to flow. I almost wish I could live 10 more years to develop this idea further, because I think we—including wonderful teachers like Thomas Keating—have over-emphasized the monastic, celibate path, which is a luxury. I know I enjoy that luxury. So, I found it easy to talk about. But most people I'm talking to are like you. They have a spouse and children and a job and a house to fix up and all the rest. So, I think it is really important that the CAC and Living School broaden the definition of contemplation to a Trinitarian understanding of God—God as flow—and learning how to allow and participate in the flow. Once you can do that, a father like you isn't going to spend his day feeling guilty because he didn't do his 20 minutes on the mat.

Mark: Yeah, I didn't do it today. I had to take my kid to school and then find and deliver his coat.

Richard: I hope you can experience silence once in a while, especially those of us like you and me who get up in pulpits and lead. For those who are going to teach, I think it's doubly important that they have a disciplined practice. But if we expect the same disciplined practice of everyone—for example, busy parents—I think we're setting ourselves up for delusion. When you can let the love flow toward your little boys, toward your wife in your moment of contemplation, you'll keep growing. Now, let me say that as a celibate, monastic type (Franciscans aren't really monks; we're friars), I recognize how many laypeople are far more mature in the spiritual life than those of us who have all these accoutrements of celibacy and monasteries. Maybe some of us become teachers, but very often we become slovenly ourselves. You have an object of love that keeps you growing because you're committed to your wife and children. I don't have an object of love like that. Now, I thought I had Venus, my black Labrador, for 15 years and then she passed, and you know I have this wonderful staff who I think love me. I surely love them. But, you know, it's not required of me in the same way. I don't have to love them. I can go home and shut the door. As a father and partner, you can't go home and shut the door to your loved ones.

Mark: It's so refreshing to hear you talk about that. It seems to me we're in a really

exciting moment of contemplative expansion. Where do you see this going in the next 20 years?

Richard: Hidden away in the middle of Parker Palmer's new book, *On the Brink of Everything*, is a wonderful one-sentence definition of contemplation. I hope I'm remembering it right: Whatever helps us to knock on hard reality and to overcome our delusions is contemplative. I just think that's brilliant. There are things that force you toward a contemplative mind, for example your mother's death, because they force you to face reality and free you from your delusions. I'm still grateful to the monastic and Buddhist teachers. But sitting in silence isn't the whole enchilada. Life is the whole enchilada.

Mark: How do you hope *The Universal Christ* impacts the alumni who have been journeying with your teachings for a while?

Richard: This may be too optimistic, but I'd love it if this could re-stir the first love in some of our students who have gotten bored with the message or think it's not revolutionary. What we're trying to teach in the Living School is revolutionary, even as it is orthodox.

Mark: Final question. What are one or two mystics that you have journeyed with in writing this book?

Richard: Maximus the Confessor—a lesser known mystic from the Eastern tradition—thoroughly understood the Cosmic Christ. So, if that intrigues anybody, study him. I think the reason I've always been fascinated by Julian of Norwich is that she was not systematically trained—thank God! She understood intuitively the inherent holiness of everything, the universal character of the message, the universal mercy and love of God. She really was a universalist. When she speaks of the “great deed,” she never goes so far as to say what it is. Scholars or students of Julian are convinced the “great deed” is universal salvation: God saving history, society, humanity. God isn't saving you apart from me and me apart from you. This competitive mode, this moral contest, has gotten us nowhere. There's nothing to fight here. There's nothing to portion out or divvy up. Christ is the shape of reality. Christ is the forgotten future brought early in time so we can see where history is going: toward resurrection. So, for our students, if that stirs their early love of the message, I'll be entirely happy.

Letting Go

Mike Sweppe ('17) and Emily Shweppe

Authors' Note

We are working on a book for dads and daughters entitled *Dad! Don't Throw Your Gum Out the Window! And Other Father Daughter Conversations: Returning to What's Most Important in Life, Death, and Love*. The framework for each chapter is first to take a situation and share individual perspectives, followed by reflections on how those situations have fostered growth as individuals and in our father-daughter relationship. The following excerpt is called "Letting Go." We reflect on a situation that challenged our inner-work, triggered old patterns, and, ultimately, helped us to let go of those patterns.

Contemplation is largely teaching you how to let go—how to let go of your attachment to your self-image, your expectations, your very ideas.

—Richard Rohr

Emily's Perspective

The routine for writing this book is that we meet at my parents' house on Sunday and write for three hours. One day I arrived at 12:45 p.m. and my dad said he'd be ready shortly. I went downstairs to debrief with my sister about something that happened the night before. My dad asked at 1:08 p.m., "Are you ready?" I responded, "Three minutes!"

Approximately twelve minutes later I finished my conversation with Sarah and went upstairs where my dad

and mom were in the living room with Sunday football on in the background. With a "please don't be mad at me smirk," I asked, "Are you ready?" My dad responded with, "Yeah, for like twenty minutes." Although I knew he was joking, the energy felt different. I scanned both my mom and dad's faces to see if everything was okay.

I wanted to share the situation with them that I had shared with Sarah since I had experienced an important revelation. Since I knew my dad said his remark with sarcasm, I still perceived frustrated energy. Reluctantly, I shared the story. I paused, waiting for a typical enlightened response of approval, but I got crickets from my audience. I looked at my dad and said, "Is everything okay?"

Silence was not a typical response from my dad, and quite frankly, made me a little uneasy. He responded with, "I'm just practicing listening."

I said, "Okay." He came back gently with, "Is there something you wanted me to say?" Lying, I said, "No." My mom said, "Is there something you want me to say?" I said, "Yes, somebody please!" My mom shared her always-insightful thoughts. And then I looked back to my dad, "Are you sure you're okay? It just seems weird that you're quiet."

In my mind, I went to, "He doesn't care about my story for x, y, and z reasons. He's annoyed that I'm taking up our writing time. But maybe he is just practicing listening. We'll feel it out and see how it goes."

Dad's Perspective

As Em arrived at our home, I knew she would be making her rounds with

everyone to say hello. The relationships that my wife, Sue, and my children have made my heart smile. Although we agreed on starting our writing session at 1:00 p.m., I was ready to start after she made her rounds.

Once Em came upstairs, her mom and I were present to her desire to share a story that was important to her. I observed Em going into her habitual pattern of scanning my energy and, in particular, my forehead as it has been a great indicator for my emotions. She asked if everything was okay and I replied, "Yes," although I could tell she wasn't confident in my response. As she told this powerful story about something that happened the evening before, I could sense her wanting my input or better yet, my affirmation.

My wife related her insights that corroborated how Em was feeling. Em has looked to my advice over the years, and I felt that as our relationship has transcended that it was important for me simply just to listen. I knew it was pivotal for Em to trust and have faith in her own experience and that she didn't need my input as she has needed in the past.

Our Reflection

Continuing to observe my parents' every single action is a pattern that I grew up with as a result of being told something that didn't match what I was seeing or feeling.

As my dad and I were writing and reflecting on the situation, it became very clear that, in the past, the situation in the living room could have gone a few different ways. On some level, I was hesitant to ask him if he

was okay because I didn't want to be yelled at (quick reminder, I'm thirty-one years old). Even as an adult child who has done inner-work, it's crazy that patterns so deeply embedded within myself can still manifest. It took the awareness of me watching my dad, my dad watching me, and us both watching our own reactions to save the living room from imploding, as it may have done years ago.

When we went into the office to write and set up the computer, I wanted to confirm just one more time. What typically happens is that when there aren't others around, the truth comes out. So now I was in a space of, "It's okay to ask him if he's okay again so maybe now I'll get the truth."

In thinking that the third time's a charm, I asked, "Are you sure there isn't something going on?" And for the third time my dad replied, without any hostility, resentment, or annoyance, "I'm really just in this space of listening."

I guess I have to accept that my dad has let go and is responding to me with grace. The hostile energy that I thought I was feeling was within me, not my dad. My dad really was just listening.

Mike Schweppe ('17) has been married to his wife, Sue, for 38 years and has four children. He is self-employed and leads a small insurance and financial services agency. Emily teaches first grade.

Parenthood Contemplated

Kirk Drake ('17)

When I found out I was going to be a parent, I wondered what it would be like to be with my child. Now as I contemplate parenthood, I begin with all I need. The wonder of not knowing and the willingness to be with my child.

All my love for my child arose from my wonder about who my child is becoming. My fears arose from me projecting my knowing into what may be. My fears changed nothing, except my need for control. This control I thought was needed to keep my child safe—safe from life, or is it death? Now I see the trap I have imposed. My knowing has been subject to error all along, for the paradoxical nature I cannot claim to know is now the apparent wisdom of the wonder.

My life is but a story, made of experiences I used to deduce into me and you and everything. Here and now does not know what's next. Wonder is the place we are. Let me stay in wonder where love is all there is. Into the withing that arises.

Kirk Drake ('17). Kirk's wife became full spirit on February 10, 2019, facing death with grace. Visit the following site for a deeper view of Shelley: <https://horancares.com/obits/mary-shelley-drake/>.

Tending the Seed of Community (Peer Group Report)

by Kerri Power ('17)

At our first gathering we were strangers—eleven people from five



Our peer group (missing Mary Altalo) at our final symposium in September 2017. From left: Kerri Power, Benedicte Christensen, Catherine (Peps) Pepper, Rick Olson, Diana Mady Kelly, Jim Bruns, Hazel Bradley, Kuno Kohn, Martha Kirkpatrick Peter Zaremba

different countries, thrust into a circle group, trying to remember each other's names while navigating the sensory and spiritual overload of our first Living School symposium.

Now, more than three years later, our names and faces are engraved on each other's hearts. Our monthly video chats have evolved into a weekly online worship and meditation. We have laughed together, mourned together, and sustained each other through the mysterious unfolding of the Living School experience in our lives.

"It has truly been a blessing to all of us," says Martha Kirkpatrick. "We nurture and support each other—we have become a community."

Our group is scattered across the eastern U.S., Canada, London, Germany, and Australia. Since finishing the Living School in 2017, a core group of eight of us have stayed in weekly contact on the Zoom video platform. Those who can't come regularly due to work commitments

or time zone differences are welcomed whenever they are able to join.

In September 2018, a year after being “sent,” six of us gathered in Orkney Springs, Virginia, for a self-guided retreat (a seventh joined via Zoom). We wanted to enjoy some time together and talk about how the Living School was manifesting in our lives now. We also wanted to discern how to best continue supporting each other in being “multipliers” as we go forward.

No one led the retreat—rather, people offered gifts as they felt called. The three ordained clergy in the group took turns holding prayer sessions throughout the day. Others offered sessions on topics such as sacred dance, colouring and praying with mandalas, and chanting the psalms. We walked in the rain on the beautiful (if muddy) grounds of the Shrine Mont retreat center. We laughed a lot.

During one afternoon, we spent some time reflecting on our group—what has worked well for us, what we might need to change. From this discussion, several key practices emerged that we think have helped our group to flourish.

In this article, we want to share these reflections with the alumni community—not as some kind of formula but simply what we have found valuable in our particular context. For us, the peer group has been a crucial component of the Living School experience.

Somehow, the group has held space for the teachings to take root in each of us, far beyond what we could have done on our own.

What follows are the elements that have helped our group and that we hope to continue.

Monthly gatherings

At our first Symposium in August 2015, we agreed to meet monthly on Zoom. During our calls we would share our struggles with the latest Living School material and discuss how it was seeping into our daily lives.

We think that the discipline of this monthly call, begun before we really knew each other, created a container where intimacy and trust could grow over time. We were supported in those early months by the “Way of the Circle” guidelines, and we have continued to use them, adapting them as needed.



Six of our group, plus two spouses, gathered in September 2018 in Orkney Springs, Virginia, for a self-guided retreat.

An egalitarian approach

We all agree that this has been key. Although our group includes several priests, a pastor, a drama teacher, a martial arts instructor, and others with professional experience in teaching and leadership, no one leads the group overall. We all share leadership roles, taking turns offering and receiving each other's gifts. One of us with experience in logistics offered to schedule the ongoing Zoom meetings. Another with a background in liturgy volunteered to create a weekly online worship. "We each play to our strengths," says Rick Olson.

Ongoing activities together

Although we are spread out geographically, several of us have attended events together since the Living School ended, such as Contemplative Outreach retreats or alumni-led events in the Washington,

D.C. area. When this happens, those members bring the experience back to share with the larger group.

We have also continued helping each other with the Living School material. Last year, several of us formed a book group to read Ilia Delio's *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*. Currently we are reading Beatrice Bruteau's *God's Ecstasy*. "The book group keeps us connected with the Living School teachings over a period of weeks or months," says Jim Bruns.

Weekly gathering in worship

Since completing the Living School, our meetings have evolved from a monthly Zoom call to a weekly online worship and meditation. We didn't plan this—it emerged naturally out of the interests of the group (one member had created a weekly worship as his Integration Project).

This weekly gathering has become a touchstone for our spiritual lives beyond the Living School and given the group new traction. Having a place to return to, where others can share and validate the journey that we're on, has helped us tremendously.

Being open to what emerges

Since our retreat last September, it feels as though we have begun a new "octave," as Cynthia would say. A few of us have felt drawn to solidify our Centering Prayer practice through a daily meditation on Zoom. Begun as an experiment, we have found—to our own surprise—that we are showing up at 6:30 a.m. on weekday mornings for a 25-minute sit. Like the other



Reverend Mary Altalo offers Teilhard's "Mass on the World" at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs, Virginia.

activities, this one wasn't planned, but has emerged out of the readiness of the group.

We have no idea how long these practices will continue, what the group's lifespan will be, or if it will naturally dissolve or change form at some point. We are trying to remain open to what emerges, without defining the outcome.

Whatever may come, we know that, of all the gifts of the Living School which continue to unfold daily, one of the deepest and most transformational has been the gift of this group.

“When people come together and self-organize for a common purpose, we experience something larger than ourselves,” says Martha. “It is a gift of grace that keeps on giving.”

We can be reached through the Living School directory (2017 cohort) or at power.kerri@gmail.com.



Photo of Living School Alumni meeting in Minneapolis, MN, in December 2018.

Photo by Brian Mogren ('18)

Sacred Journeys and Barmen Today

*Susan Stocker ('18) and Roy
Hoagland ('18)*

While taking a sacred journey to World War II concentration camps, several students of the Living School became aware of Barmen Today: A Contemporary, Contemplative Declaration. “We are reading this in Krakow, Poland,” they wrote to us, “having spent the day at Auschwitz and Birkenau. There is no better way to conclude our pilgrimage than signing this pledge.”

The juxtaposition of the history of inhumanity at a World War II concentration camp and the Living School’s commitment to human dignity reminds us of our need to stand in loving non-violence for all the disenfranchised and vulnerable, today and through the ages. The words of these Living School students sound a deep-seated alarm about our nation free-falling down the chasm of fascism with talk of authoritarianism and the scapegoating of the marginalized, whether it be for their religion, the color of their skin, their sexuality, or their political beliefs.

These students, reading and signing Barmen Today: A Contemporary Contemplative Declaration, make this declaration all the more relevant, imperative, and, perhaps, prophetic.

Born out of the work of a group of Living School alumni and students, the Barmen Today Circle is seeking to integrate the historic perennial search

for the Divine with actions of justice and compassion. Barmen Today asserts that values we hold in common—values of love, healing of division, promotion and protection of human dignity, and stewardship of creation—transcend political party, national heritage, race, religion, or other dualistic distinctions with which we define ourselves and distance others. As Barbara Holmes so eloquently points out, “We are all from the same and only family: the human family.”

Those of us who drafted Barmen Today merely state the obvious when we point out that the leadership of our nation and other nations presents a very real threat to these common values so ardently embraced by the Living School:

Recognizing that actions of tribalism, fascism, isolationism, and similar divisive initiatives are now happening throughout this world, as citizens of this nation, together, we seek to provide a common message to reject and resist the policies and actions of our nation and its leaders . . . until our nation chooses to serve all people and all creation with the divine love to which all are entitled.

Barmen Today has generated over 10,000 signatories in support of its call to reject and resist the current threats to the values we hold in common. Each of the Living School core faculty have endorsed and signed it. Richard has stated that he believes Barmen Today is a necessary document at a point in the evolution of our nation and of humanity when “the stakes are so high” and “the risks of being disobedient to

the Gospel are so great.”

Barmen Today has inspired Alana Levandoski, a member of the inaugural Living School cohort, to compose and perform [Divine Obedience](#). Alana’s spiritually honest and profound work touches the very heart of our souls.

But contemplative action is not without its consequences. The uncomfortable truths in the powerful words of Divine Obedience resulted in over 100 of her followers canceling their subscription to Alana’s [emails](#).

The seven Living School students who decided to write, sign, and share Barmen Today sought to integrate action and contemplation. Our work on Barmen Today is part of our sacred journeys, journeys that respond to a call that demands we be among the “multipliers” the Living School seeks to produce. As representatives of varied cohorts, varied generations, varied races, and varied faith backgrounds, we are attempting to generate a wave of change from a drop of contemplative action added to the giant sea that is Creation.

We and the thousands of others who have signed Barmen Today invite you to join the Barmen Today community, to share your talents, expertise and creativity. United we can reject and resist. United we can move mountains. United we can create a nation and a world loving and tolerant enough for the one and only human family, huddled on this small, precious planet.

Susan Stocker ('18) and Roy Hoagland ('18) can be reached at BarmenToday@gmail.com.

[Read and sign Barmen Today here.](#)

Listen to the [Contemplative Light](#) podcast interview on the history of Barmen Today.

Barmen Today Circle:
Leslye Colvin ('20), Roy Hoagland ('18), Scott McClelland ('20), David Morris ('18), Enrique Otero ('15), Susan Stocker ('18), Amari Verástegui ('17)

Hope in Focus (Photo Essay)

Steve Pavey ('20)



“Garifuna Child” (Honduras, 2014)

The Garifuna in Honduras struggle for their land, culture, and the right to not migrate! This photo of a Garifuna child playing in the sand in Honduras is one I created with her in 2014 on a visit I made to accompany refugees fleeing, in large part, due to U.S. economic and political invasions of Central America among other violent forces on their lives. In 2014, nearly 70,000 unaccompanied children were apprehended at the U.S./Mexico border, most fleeing violence in Central America. Under the Obama administration, a decision was made to crack-down and send a message to stay where you are by building new prisons for women and children refugees.

The violence continues!

When will we listen or see?

When will our heart break open?

When will we act and change our ways?

When will we join the resistance?



“Empathy at the Border” (Tijuana, Mexico, 2014)

And beyond empathy (to feel with) we will be challenged to embrace compassion . . . which means to suffer with.

Let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to a place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken. But this is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it. . . .

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. . . .

Those who are not afraid . . . can break through paralyzing boundaries and witness the birth of a new fellowship, the fellowship of the broken.

—Henri Nouwen



“Love Knows No Borders” (U.S./Mexico Border near San Diego/Tijuana, 2018)

American Friends Service Committee & the Poor People’s Campaign brought over 400 moral leaders from across the country for a week of action as a “Moral Call for Migrant Justice” to stand in solidarity with these migrant caravans and all who seek refuge in the U.S.

Together, we demand the U.S. government:

- (1) Respect the human right to migrate and seek asylum
- (2) End border militarization
- (3) End immigrant detention and deportation and defund ICE and CBP



“Best Nine of 2018 #instagram” (Steve Pavey, Hope in Focus, 2018)

Human existence is so fragile a thing and exposed to such dangers that I cannot love without trembling. —Simone Weil

Looking back on 2018 through these images of my #topnine2018, I see love and liberation forged between resistance/struggle and contemplation/prayer. I see courage & compassion, suffering & resilience, beauty & pain, colonization of the heart & hope of another way! I am thankful for #apachestronghold and all those marginalized by empire who teach me and include me in this loving way of life.

Steve Pavey ('20) @stevepavey is an artist, scholar, and contemplative-activist—all of which come together in the vocation of cultivating a way to see, in order to bear witness to the world both as it is and as it could be. His creative process is deeply shaped by a way of love accompanying and being accompanied by humanity marginalized and dehumanized by Empire. He documents stories and creates images together with those shrouded in “otherness” in our collective struggle for liberation. Steve’s photography ultimately bears witness to hope—hope found within the struggle for human dignity and justice.

“Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse” or How Peter Parker Got His Groove Back

Debonee Morgan ('15)

Perhaps you're not a comic book nerd, but I suspect you might appreciate a little ego-transcendence and spiritual growth now and then; so I'm really recommending, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse*. Geekmeister Kevin Smith says of the film, “It just goes to show you that any character in the right hands can be a transformative experience.”

Yes, the animated film is visually magnificent and groundbreaking, using technology to bring the joyous medium of comic books to life in ways that are beyond the pedestrian imagination, but there is so much more. An implicit lexicon of the film is diversity of identity and experience while also emphasizing the commonality of great love and great suffering. Swirl in the main premise of a multiverse (looking at you, Ilia!), and an origin story that begins in community (rather than the archetypal orphanage), and we're off to the perennial races.

You'll see that the main villain (in this story it's mob boss Kingpin), creates all the trouble out of his own clinging and inability to accept life on life's terms. Rather than be present with his loss and pain, he attempts to control his external world. As with us, this mission ultimately becomes destructive. The eventual solution arises from another's ability to accept insecurity and surrender to Something Bigger.

We see a recurring motif where, upon meeting, characters are shown with a visual cue of revelation and say to one another, “You're like me!” This naturally assumes an original understanding of “not like me.” The web of the Spider-Verse is reflected in two scenes where many people are wearing Spider-Man costumes. In one, protagonist Miles mutters to himself, “They're counting on me. . . .” and is interrupted by the person behind him who wisely says, “Not you specifically. It's a metaphor.” Later, we're told, “Anyone can wear the mask. You can wear the mask.” Like God's love, the specialness is both absolutely unique and also universal.

It's important to note that the moment of transformation is illustrated in a contemplative way. Plot devices find Miles bound to a chair and silenced. He is without volition, circumstantially still and quiet. It is this moment that he needs in order to hear the compassionate voice of the Loving Parent who speaks through the separation of a door. He does not “find” himself until he is able to be silent and receptive to the truth about his belovedness.

Go for the swinging heroics, stay for the transformation through Love.

—*Debonee Morgan ('15)*

Alumni Remembrances of Fr. Thomas Keating

1923-2018

“He has influenced my way to be with & to love God/Self/Others . . . through the gift of Centering Prayer.”

—*Stacy Green* ('18)

“I met him once after he had traveled all day and given a transcendent 90-minute lecture about the cosmos, God, humanity—without any notes. I was at the end of a long line of people wanting to meet him. I was thinking, ‘You must be exhausted,’ as I sat down beside him. He took my hand and looked at me with such childlike delight that I was literally speechless. His presence radiated something beyond words—and I felt changed by that moment.”

—*Nelson Coffey* ('15)

“His teaching on basic goodness is both revolutionary and foundational for contemplative justice. It’s also changed my life and deepened my capacity for compassion for self and others.” —*Holly Roach Knight* ('15)

“The Welcoming Prayer is a gift I keep close. The first time I heard it referenced was at a dinner during our Intensive in June 2014. It seemed so ‘out there.’ Why would I welcome what I have been trying so hard to be ‘good enough’ to keep at bay? Over time this prayer has given me roots on this path, reminding me to meet



life just as it is and know that Love is present.” —*Julie Ann Stevens* ('15)

“The fine-tuning Thomas Keating did for us, as he opened his heart to *The Cloud of Unknowing* and sacred texts of Jesus, is an immeasurable gift. He gave to us the deep spiritual, alchemical science of ‘allowing’ and ‘letting go’ in prayer, and I believe that practice is what made him an instrument of love and presence wherever he was, especially in interfaith spaces. As a human being, he became the music instead of just playing the notes.”

—*Alana Porteous* ('15)

“Father Keating got me started in Centering Prayer through the Spiritual Journey video series. We got to know him through several trips to Snowmass and when he used to visit our church in Austin. A funny aside: he was a terrible driver. I once accepted a ride from the retreat center at St Benedict’s to the chapel in this old Ford station wagon with fake wood panels and history of multiple fender benders. He was so busy talking, he didn’t notice he was running over gophers popping out of their holes in the road. Definitely not a Franciscan!” —*Stephen Utts* ('18)

“I devoured his books when I started doing Centering Prayer in 2007. Ten years later a friend and I had a private visit with him at Snowmass. He was warm, caring, extremely gracious, and completely present with us, even as there was something innocent and childlike about him. I aspire to be like him.” —*Merilee Melvin* ('16)

“He taught me how to be intimate with God, which in turn helped me to be intimate with others and the world. He introduced for me what I had already known—the God indwelling—and gave me a way to practice remembering it.” —*Donnelle Privette Poling* ('15)

“His was a voice in the desert in the mid-90s that awakened me to the body of mystical writers and contemplative practices. Not only did I learn from him Centering Prayer, but his small commentaries on Scripture, Awakenings, opened me to a deep way of reading that the church was not teaching.” —*Lee Warren* ('15)

“In the late 1990s after returning from Nepal and time with a Buddhist Rinpoche, I visited with Father Thomas. He helped me to see that I could embrace both Christianity and Buddhism, each one informing my spiritual journey in differing and enhancing ways. I was concerned that having taken refuge in Buddhism, as an ordained minister, I might feel

bifurcated in my soulfulness. His statement, ‘Nora, whatever hand you reach for, will be there!’ has assured me that I can trust my experience of the yearnings which have called me forth!” —*Nora Smith* ('15)

“In the 1980s I had the privilege of meeting Fr. Thomas during his ‘Way of the Mystic’ retreats in Santa Barbara with Rabbi Shapiro, Kabir Helminski, and later Cynthia Bourgeault. It was during an accidental private lunch that he gave me the exquisite gift of his loving presence and encouragement in my early exploration into contemplation and interfaith practice. It was the beginning of my journey all these years later to the Living School.” —*Mary Ann Jepsen Evans* ('19)

INTEGRAL CHRISTIAN NETWORK

Luke Healey ('18) recently launched his Rhythm of Life project: Integral Christian Network, an effort to provide community and connection for integrally-minded Christians. To learn more, visit www.integralchristiannetwork.org.

VIRGINIA LIVING SCHOOL CIRCLE

Roy Hoagland ('18) and others have established a Virginia Living School Circle that meets in Richmond, VA, on every third Friday. Contact royhoagland@hopeimpacts.com.

CONGRATS TO NANCY ENDERLE

Congrats to Nancy Enderle ('18) who starts a new job at a Benedictine monastery in Madison, WI, as co-director of the Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal.

MYTHOLOGICAL ROUNDTABLE GROUP

Bill Brennan ('15) hosts a Mythological Roundtable Group in Deland, FL, based on the videos of Joseph Campbell and welcomes interested alumni. Email wbrennan8@cfl.rr.com.

ASSISI, ITALY TRIP

Delores Montpetit ('15) and husband Ken Skuba lead "The Practice of Presence with St. Francis and St. Clare" pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy, October 14-23, 2019. Email Delores at delores@dwellretreat.com or visit www.contemplativepilgrimages.com.

YOUR NEWS UPDATES

Have a shout-out, event, project, gratitude, or prayer to share? Are you attending The Universal Christ conference or otherwise gathering with alumni in person or online? Send your news updates to mlonghurst@cac.org by April 8.

THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST

This year we are exploring themes from Father Richard's new book in a variety of ways:

Conference with Richard Rohr, John Dominic Crossan, and Jacqui Lewis
March 28–31, 2019

If you're not coming in person (the conference has sold out!), consider inviting friends or church members to watch the webcast with you. Learn more and register at cac.org/universal-christ.

Companion resources like videos, glossary, bios, and more

Study guide with a manual for group facilitators (free PDF)

Podcast with Richard Rohr, Brie Stoner, and Paul Swanson

Find these resources and pre-order the book (available March 5) at universalchrist.cac.org.

Future Submissions

We welcome any and all of your suggestions and submissions. How is your Rhythm of Life going? How did your integration project turn out? What mystic is inspiring you? How do you “keep on keeping on” a contemplative path, even in the midst of struggle? The theme of the next newsletter in May takes inspiration from Fr. Richard’s forthcoming book on the Universal Christ; our focus will be “Nature: The First Bible.” We invite your submissions of articles, personal reflections, poems, photographs, and more along this theme, and along any other themes, too! Send them to mlonghurst@cac.org by April 8.

A Special Thanks

To all alumni writing contributors, to **Marjory Wilson** for permission to use Fr. William McNichols’s *San Jose en el Rio Grande*, **Brie Stoner** (’15) for the photo of Rowan Mayer praying, **Brian Mogren** (’18) for the Minneapolis Alumni gathering photo, **Kerri Power** (’17) for the peer group retreat photos, **Fr. Richard Rohr** for a generous interview and **Jenna Bourland** for scheduling assistance, **Steve Pavey** (’20) for his courageous photo essay, to **Debonee Morgan**

(’15) for starting the Quarterly’s regular film column, **Joelle Chase** for editing support, **Morgan Overton** for Wordpress and email formatting, and **CAC Creative Director Nick Kramer** and **Graphic Designer Izzy Spitz** for their gorgeous vision and work for a redesigned newsletter.

Additional Sources

To learn more about writer **Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew’s** (’18) work, see her website [here](#). Writer **Kathy Hendricks** (’17) and iconographer **Fr. William McNichols’** book *Heavenly Friends* can be purchased [here](#). To learn about retreats at **Shrine Mont retreat center** in Orkney Springs, VA, see [here](#). To view **Steve Pavey’s photographs** of solidarity and resistance, see [Hope in Focus](#).

Stay Connected

