n a recent podcast conversation, Fr. Richard Rohr shared an orientation toward Christian spirituality that I found very helpful for our present moment of global distress:

The goal of Christian spirituality is not perfection, it is union. . . . Union isn’t the same thing as a game of elimination. It’s a game of love, of vulnerability, of mutuality, of giving and receiving, forgiving and accepting. If the goal of Christian spirituality, or any spirituality, is union, then you won’t waste much time on the path of perfection.

During a time when it can feel so hard to know “exactly what to do” and when the needs around each of us are so large, I found this reminder so helpful. Our Living School teaches, “we don’t seek spiritual awareness to help escape the pain of the world, but to gain the capacity to feel the pain and live in solidarity with it.” For many of us, the level of disruption in our lives today can leave us feeling unmoored and unsure how best to help. We are not immune from those feelings at the CAC ourselves. We have been continuing to discern just “what is ours to do” when there are so many needs and ways that the expanding CAC can help build a more loving, sustainable, and just world.

As part of our ongoing discernment, we have spent a lot of time looking back to Fr. Richard’s founding vision for CAC. The good news is that while the specific expression of CAC’s work has changed from year to year, the driving vision has remained remarkably consistent. In an effort to highlight Fr. Richard’s founding vision, combined with a selection of the current state of our operations and impact, we are excited to introduce you to our 2019 Annual Report: Building from a Strong Foundation. With the major growth and expansion happening at CAC, we hope this report gives you a greater “insider view” into the evolution of our work and your partnership in making it happen. We are committed to the transparency of our organizational life and activity because we are all in this together.

I want to thank the many hands that went into creating this report, including our stellar new Managing Director of Finance, Cindy Kroll. Cindy’s leadership is a crucial element in the integrity of our work and you’ll be introduced to her toward the end of this edition of the Mendicant.

The 2019 Annual Report is available in its full form at CAC.org/AnnualReport. It comprises twenty-nine colorful pages and includes some wonderful details about our history and current programs.

We will give you some selections from the report over the next few pages of the Mendicant as a preview of what is available online at CAC.org/AnnualReport.

Thank you for all you do to make this work possible!
A School for Prophets

Over the past thirty-three years, the Center for Action and Contemplation has gone through many iterations, but the essential vision has remained rooted in Fr. Richard’s founding purpose: to operate as a “school for prophets,” an almost “underground seminary” to teach the alternative Franciscan Orthodoxy of both praxis and prayer, action and contemplation.

We are grateful to share with you a look into the future that we are building from this strong foundation.

Our signature formation program continues to evolve and expand to help students deepen engagement with their true self and with the world. With the addition of Barbara Holmes and Brian McLaren to the core faculty (more on this below), the school continues to progress and develop. 2019’s Living School Symposium incorporated powerful new sessions, including a Centering the Margins Ritual, as well as experiences inspired by Paulo Freire’s work Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The development of these experiences was heavily supported by Program Design team members Darleen Ortega, Cliff Berrien, and Gigi Ross.

Since 2013, over one thousand students have been “sent” (graduated) from the Living School.

The Living School is a beautiful expression of the CAC’s maturing identity and dynamic faithfulness to its originating vision. With an amazing young leadership team now in place and fully co-creating this school, the future seems hopeful indeed.

—Cynthia Bourgeault

Expansion of Our Core Faculty

A key priority for CAC has been to effectively partner with an expanding team of gifted faculty to serve as elders, teachers, and spiritual leaders for everything that we do. In 2019, we were blessed with the fantastic additions of Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes and Rev. Dr. Brian McLaren, who joined Fr. Richard Rohr, Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault, and Dr. James Finley as the core Faculty of the CAC.

To be a wisdom teacher at the CAC, someone must have a first-hand experience of the power and grace of God, like Dr. Barbara Holmes. She doesn’t just know about God; she knows God.

—Richard Rohr

There are few people I know who bring such learned wisdom, tried faith, and pastoral hope to the present world and church situation than Brian McLaren. You would do well to sit at his feet. I do!

—Richard Rohr

Faculty Highlights:

Each CAC faculty member brings their unique contributions to the work of the CAC:

James Finley: Interior Castle Online Course
Cynthia Bourgeault: Mary Magdalene and Introductory Wisdom School Online Courses
Barbara Holmes: Race and the Cosmos book publication and accompanying artistic video trailer
Brian McLaren: Living School Intensives co-leader with Fr. Richard Rohr
Richard Rohr: The Universal Christ book and Another Name for Every Thing podcast
In 2019, the worldwide reach of CAC programs expanded further than ever before. The set of programs—grounded in the Christian Contemplative Tradition—ranges from free Daily Meditations to the application-based two-year Living School formation program.

A specific highlight in 2019 was the launch of our first podcast with Richard Rohr, titled Another Name for Everything, which went straight to the top of the charts.

Expanding Our Team

To meet the spiritual needs in our world, we continue to build an increasingly robust and capable team that is committed to using their gifts to bring forward CAC’s work in new ways.

In 2019 we were blessed with twelve new additions to our staff and executive team.

Community Expansion

CAC intends to meet people where they are and develop initiatives that are scalable and adaptable to address life’s disruptions with prophetic insight. In doing so, we open the door to a vast audience of people around the world who are searching for wisdom to help them navigate the tough realities of life.

The talent that CAC has assembled is simply remarkable. In my role as COO, I facilitate the use of our collective talent towards navigating our constituents along a path of personal transformation through the transfer of wisdom and the embodiment of service. Our team demonstrates a resilience and brilliance fit to meet any uncertainty the future can bring. #BringIt

—Doug Murrell
Our Budgeting Philosophy

The CAC holds itself to high standards of sustainable and responsible stewardship. We work to steward our resources to serve our mission: to help create a more loving world. We are working extensively with Fr. Richard to develop a comprehensive framework for how our values translate into specific financial principles and fiscal policies.

2019 Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>$4,945,436</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living School Tuition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,361,680</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introducing CAC’s New Managing Director of Finance and Business Analytics:

Cindy Kroll

I’ve always been a bit of a wanderer. Growing up on a small, 180-acre farm in northern Minnesota, I was surrounded by miles of dirt service roads and acres of quiet fields, where I spent hours discovering hidden clearings, wildflowers, abandoned buildings, and banded red agates. I’d like to think my contemplative path started on those roads.

My career has been a wandering road as well; I started on a traditional trajectory, working for a large public accounting firm, followed by a large health insurance company. Then I felt led to change direction, spending a season focused on implementing business and reporting systems, eventually moving into business coaching and consulting.

When I was asked to help lead the CAC’s Finance Department in mid-2019, I was nearing the end of my time as a Living School student and serving as a member of the CAC Finance Committee. In taking on this role, I felt a new sense of convergence among all the roads I’d travelled—professional, personal, and spiritual.

It is an honor to help support the CAC’s work during this season of both great disruption and great possibility. Each day, I lead our five-person finance department that makes sure we accurately account, report, and process roughly eighty thousand individual transactions per year across a variety of program and revenue channels. My deepest intention is to faithfully steward the resources with which we’ve been entrusted in alignment with CAC’s mission and values, and to honor and mirror back to the world the generosity with which we are being supported by each of you.

Peace and every good,
Cindy

“It is an honor to help support the CAC’s work during this season of both great disruption and great possibility.”
DURING A TIME OF HISTORIC DISRUPTION:

We do not seek spiritual awareness to help us escape the pain in the world, but to gain a capacity to feel the pain and live in solidarity with it.

“The point of the Christian life is . . . to stand in radical solidarity with everyone and everything else. This is the full, final, and intended effect of the incarnation—symbolized by its finality in the cross, which is God’s great act of solidarity instead of judgment. Without a doubt, Jesus perfectly exemplified this seeing, and thus passed it on to the rest of history.”

—Richard Rohr

Visit CAC.org/AnnualReport to View the Entire 2019 Annual Report

There is much more to discover in the twenty-nine-page online Annual Report, includ letters from Fr. Richard and from Executive Director Michael Poffenberger, as well many more quotes, stories, financial data and photos!
“Every original ‘order’ learns to include an initially threatening disorder, which morphs into and creates a new reordering, and we begin all over again.”

—Richard Rohr

Order at store.cac.org

SUPPORT THE WORK

The Center for Action and Contemplation is a nonprofit educational organization. Please consider supporting our work by donating securely online at cac.org/support-cac or by sending a check, payable to CAC, to PO Box 12464, Albuquerque, NM 87195. We also invite you to remember CAC in your estate plan. For more information about making a charitable contribution, including stock transfers and bequests, please email development@cac.org.

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