

CORPUS: Sensus Fidelium

Note: Our members are the heart and soul of CORPUS. We appreciate the many messages of support as well as the profound and passionate responses that members have sent regarding how they best celebrate their spirituality and priesthood. Please think about sending in your response to any of the following prompts:

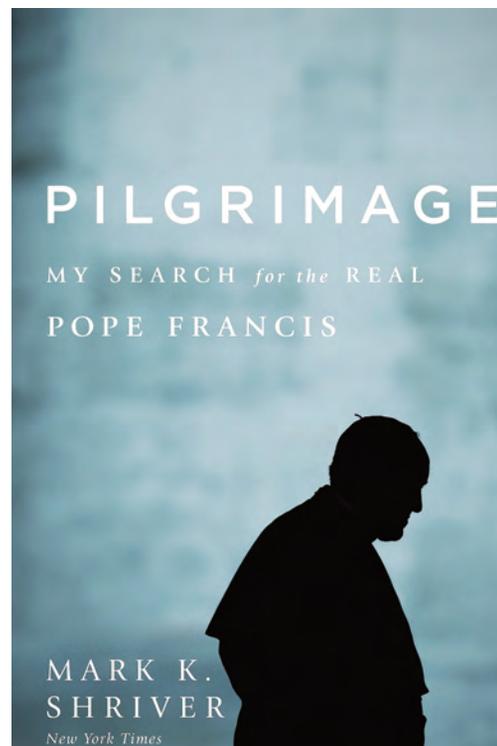
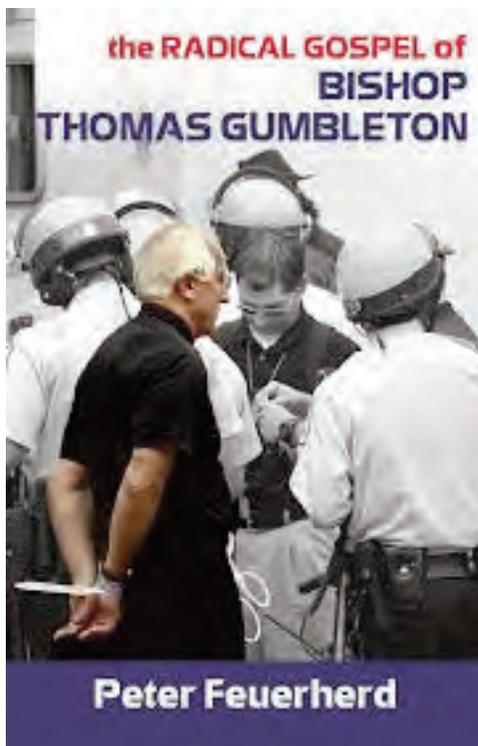
1. Does the priesthood have a future?
2. How do we best dismantle clericalism?
3. How do you express your call to priestly ministry?
4. How do you celebrate your faith and spirituality in your location?
5. What difference has CORPUS made in your life?
6. Other thoughts, recommendations proposals for action?

Sincerely,

The Executive Council

(Nick De Los Reyes, Linda Pinto, Phil and Linda Marcin, Andrea and Spencer Johnson)

Recommended by CORPUS Members



CORPUS: Sensus Fidelium

Bob (Schaden)
South Lyon, MI
Member since 2000

The Real Church

Much has been written on how organized religion and so many millennials have parted company. My own experience suggests that this is not a phenomenon unique to millennials. Far from it, I see and hear of the same disgruntlement even among those who have long since qualified for senior citizen status.

Having been in ministry going on sixty years, I must admit that I have become uncomfortably surprised where I am landing on the matter. I still admit to a need for spiritual nourishment. Worshipping the God of my creation in a communal setting continues to hold me. Acknowledgement that Jesus shows us the way to God is still relevant.

However, finding these realities is sadly lacking in too many of our weekend church offerings. In the recent movie, "The Two Popes" we see Cardinal Bergoglio (Francis) in a scene before he was elected pope telling Benedict that he was finding it difficult to "sell" certain things any longer. On a personal note I can relate.

It is becoming more difficult to justify the spiritual dryness of too many weekend mass experiences to my children or grandchildren.

A recent church experience brought the difficulty home in spades. As I entered the church, I met a woman who was shepherding her elderly mother into mass. The church was divided by an aisle separating the back of the church from the front with the first pew of the back section reserved for walkers, canes and the like. The woman whom I had just met sat her mother in the reserved pew intending to sit behind her in case her mother might need her help. However, the entire back section other than the reserved row was roped off. Noticing the woman's chagrin, I removed the rope for her and the two of us then entered the pew where I sat with her. Within a couple of minutes an usher came along and informed us that we could not sit there. I explained that we needed to sit there, so that the woman could watch her mother. Whereupon the usher told the woman that she could sit up front from where she would be able to turn and see her mother. When I suggested that was not adequate, he asked who I was. When I told him I was a friend, the usher said that the daughter could stay but I would have to move.

Although I was not happy about it I got up and stood in the aisle for a moment trying to decide to stay or leave. When another usher told me that I could not stand there, my bruised attitude took another downward turn. However, I decided that with my attitude, such as it was, I needed to be there and I went to the front of the church. When mass was over, and I was leaving, the daughter bid her farewell and informed me that she was embarrassed and would not be returning.

From the parking lot at this building with a cross on top I left for dinner at a local restaurant, with which I was familiar. When I walked in, the owner came up to me and greeted me by name. The maître d' asked how my week had been and one of the waitresses invited me to sit in her section. This building did not have a cross on top but I was left with a question, even before my salad had been served: Which building was the real church?

Sent with Bundles of Blessings!



Members of CORPUS Reflect on Faith and Fidelity

Chaplain Bill Wisniewski #450.
Ravenna, OH
Member since 1980

In August of 2017 the City of Ravenna hired a new police chief from within the department. Chief Jeff Wallis was sworn in and shortly after spoke with and asked me to be the chaplain for the police department (48 members). Mayor Frank Seman swore me in on August 7 as Volunteer Police Chaplain. (With the members of the department and the Wisniewski Family present). I was presented with my Gold Chaplain Badge, Police Chaplain ID and police chaplain shirt.

I have been called to ministry again, to the officers, dispatchers and members of their families (regardless of their religious beliefs). I am called to be a ministry of presence. As Chaplain I am called to serve with empathy, offer advice, counsel, and offer assistance where and when needed.'

'In accordance with the OHIO REVISED CODE ORC. 2317.02, when functioning in the performance of counseling duties, the communication between the chaplain and the counseled are privileged, and the chaplain may not be compelled to disclose the issues discussed.

One of the first things the chief did was buy new badges for the officers and asked me to bless them and share a reflection about police officers. Here are some examples of what I do and have experienced.

I write an email twice a week to the department- WEDNESDAY WORDS and SUNDAY REFLECTION.

At times, I will just visit with the patrol officers in patrol room, meet with the administrative officers/ and detectives, and spend time with the dispatchers.

I have been present along with our officers/and members of their families in doing these community activities.

I would like to share some of the great things our department does in and for the community. Our officers have done food drives for the needy in the community (fill the Cruiser with food items).

Our officers have served a lunch time at our local food center, (125 people come for lunch daily to the Center of Hope). Our officers have raised funds (from their own monies) to assist needy families at Christmas/other times of year. We sponsor Halloween activities at the station for the Kids. I even sat in a dunk tank to raise money for some of our projects (the fire department thought they were cute and kept dumping ice in the tank to keep me refreshed...police/fire rivalry) This past Christmas our department raised over \$10,000 to take 100 kids Christmas Shopping with Shop with a Cop program.

I am present when new officers are sworn in and when our officers retire. I have performed a wedding for 2 of our officers. I have conducted a funeral service for the father of one of our detectives; been with our officers as they qualify for the state weapons training; been with the officers when they take promotional exams; present with other officers in a neighboring town for a police officer killed in the line of duty; been with our officers when with they are in training how to enter a building safely and with officers during training with our K9 dog.



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I have seen officers help and be a presence to people in need with their sense with care and concern. I have done ride-alongs with officers while they are on patrol. I have grown to appreciate the seriousness of every call. I have seen people arrested, taken into custody, observed the manner in which they speak and act to the officers. My respect grows for them on every call.

A number of our officers have gone through additional training in dealing with people with mental illness.

I have been called to be with the officers of a reported person with a weapon near a school. I have been with officers as a prisoner was treated in the Emergency Department of a hospital and then booked into jail. I have seen officers make a traffic stop and approach the vehicle with great caution. There is no such thing as a simple traffic stop.

I have seen officers respond to domestic situation when a child had to be removed from a home.

I am called to be there for them as they are for me. I hear their stories, their life's journeys. I am blessed. I witness the realities of the daily lives while on duty. The officers and dispatchers are called to serve, I am called once again to serve.



Father Charles Ara was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest by Cardinal James Francis McIntyre on April 25, 1956 at St. Vibiana's Cathedral in Los Angeles, California.

From 1956 to 1970, he served as associate pastor in five large parishes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. On October 10, 1970 Father Ara added love and marriage to his priesthood. He and his wife, Shirley, have been blessed with five wonderful children.

Charlie was an enthusiastic presence during our third national conference in 1990. You can reach him at cara@sprintmail.com.

Members of CORPUS Reflect on Faith and Fidelity

Paul and Eileen Ackerman
Columbus, MS 39705
Member since 1994

At this time in the history of our small Southern town parish in Columbus, Mississippi, my wife and I were just marveling at how Vatican II had transformed parish life since our arrival in 1973.

We have now been parishioners here for 47 years, having moved here shortly after I had been laicized in Chicago; I had been strictly warned (1) not to move where I was known, (2) not to tell anyone of my former status as a Roman Catholic priest and (3) take no part whatsoever in the life of any parish; you know, scandal!

We had honored Rule #1 but discovered that we had moved to a Vatican I parish pastored by a Vatican I pastor (FBI); no ministries, no Parish Council, no meaningful Liturgies, not even a Kiss of Peace!

Following the transfer of this pastor, we were sent a dynamic replacement who promptly put Vatican 2 changes front and center e.g. Vincent de Paul ministry, Parish Council, an altar in the middle of the Church and explanations of the Documents of Vatican II.

As expected, a new spirit of ecumenism erupted soon to produce a Good Friday joint denominational Way of the Cross thru town at 3 PM, joint weddings with other pastors/churches, exchanging of pulpits and other such behaviors which broke down denominational barriers: much needed Christian change was palpable!

So, it was now safe for me to come out of the closet as to my ordained status. I was accepted quickly as a vital cog in the RCIA classes and CYO plus Lectoring, Commentating, Anointing the Sick (in the absence of the pastor), and generally all other aspects of a renewed Vatican II parish; I had now violated Rules #2 and 3...with panache!

Parishioners were quick to accept my active role, many commenting that a married priesthood worked. They had seen the positive difference that my wife and I had made on the moribund "business as usual" attitude of our original pastor.

Today, this parish has become a microcosmic example of what happens when the Spirit is turned loose; parishioners have been quick to say that they wish Pope Francis would not stop at the Amazon but would extend a married priesthood option to the entire U.S.A.!

(Note: One of our parishioners owns this 150 year old Confederate mansion which she opens up yearly during our Pilgrimage reenactment each Spring. She asked Eileen and I to play the roles of Confederate General and Ms Sharpe.)



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Stephen (a pseudonym) is a longtime “under the radar” member of CORPUS. He is a recently retired canonical priest. He was glad to be contacted for his opinions.

He is one of 1200 members of AUSCP (Association of United States Catholic Priests), an organization of canonical priests who are reform minded when it comes to the ministry. He pointed out that AUSCP has published two important white papers in the last couple of years. One was presented last June on confronting clericalism. Stephen referred to clericalism as a toxin that destroys the priestly ministry of the Catholic church. He believes that the USCCB going retro only hastens the crash of the institution as it exists today.

When asked “How do you understand priesthood today?”, he responded: A good priest is first of all in touch with what it is to be a human being; and then, what it is to be a Christian. Only then can the priest begin to understand what it means to be a priest. This is the antithesis of clericalism which begins with being special and set apart. When asked how he managed to stay an active priest when the toxicity was all around him, he said he focused on not selling his soul.

Concerning his spirituality and spiritual practice, he said his 42 years as a member of Alanon (he had a PTSD father who was a serious alcoholic) kept him close to the fragility of human nature. His life-altering work as a counselor of victims of incest kept him in the realm of reality that sometimes there are no good solutions. He has worked in Jungian Psychology and family systems for many years. He has been an intern at Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation. He is a devotee of Thomas Keating and Thomas Merton.

When asked “Is the priesthood necessary?”, he responds that it is important to realize that the sacramental priesthood emerges from the priesthood of all the baptized – who receive their priesthood from the only “high priest” who is Christ. Here he cites the second AUSCP white paper on reform of the seminaries.

On the question “Can a married clergy save the priesthood?”, Stephen replies that a married priesthood is part of the solution.

I am grateful for and enriched by my association with CORPUS. It has been “my little secret” that for over 40 years I have been a member. It is a way I have stayed in touch with the “priesthood of the laity” and my brothers in the “ordained priesthood” who left active ministry—some of whom are members of CORPUS.



Members of CORPUS Reflect on Faith and Fidelity

Finbarr and Laurie Corr
Ft. Myers, FL
South Dennis, MA
Member since 1989

Thank you for including me into this conversation for CORPUS. To begin, I am very comfortable with my spirituality at age 84 ½.

I begin my day using the Magnificat for morning prayer.

O Jesus through the most pure heart of Mary, I offer thee the prayers works and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of thy divine heart.

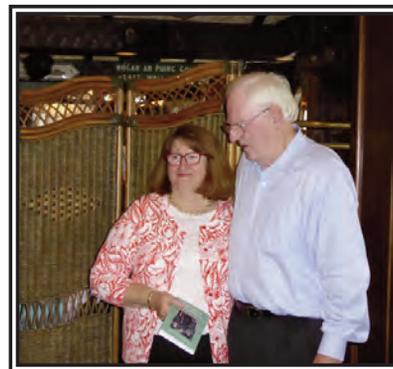
O Eternal God, most holy and undivided Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I firmly believe that thou are present in the Blessed Sacrament, I adore thee with the most divine humility, I praise thee and give you thanks from the bottom of my heart for having created me after thine image and likeness and redeemed me with the most precious blood of your Son. For having hither to preserved me and brought me safe to the beginning of this day.

Behold O Lord, I offer thee my whole being in particular all my thoughts, words, sufferings and contradictions that I may experience through this day.”

Under Intercessions, the first individual I pray for is Pope Francis. I pray that he will be emotionally and physically safe as he continues to reform the church. Secondly, I pray for priest friends and secular friends who are suffering from cancer.

I feel ways to change a monarchical/hierarchical church are: appointing progressive cardinals and bishops; reaching out to the victims of pedophile priests; be inspired by the Holy Spirit to ordain women as deacons; change the hierarchy at the Vatican to 50% men and 50 % women and thus destroy the condition of clericalism in the Catholic Church; and authorize bishops in countries where there is a decrease in priestly vocations to ordain *virii probati* to function as priests in the parishes, authorizing them to fulfill all duties except hearing confessions of fellow parishioners...

Regarding my understanding of the priesthood - I see myself as a vehicle of God's grace to people. Even though married, I still give my blessing to sick and emotionally disturbed friends. As priest married for 31 years I see no problem to act as a priest. I would have 100% support from Laurie.



CORPUS: Sensus Fidelium

Thomas and Betty Koenig

Hammond, Indiana

Members since 1975

How do I understand priesthood now?

There must be any number of books on this subject. Because my concentration has primarily been on philosophy and theology (particularly in the area of religious experience and biblical criticism). I do not feel very confident expressing new ideas that others have suggested on this topic I am totally confident the future to be open to married priests and women priests. The requirements may be very different from the education structure we currently have for ordination. Betty and I have observed some very dedicated deacons. They may well foreshadow some of the direction for the future. Women deacons are ready to serve and we realize some women are being ordained.

The situation Betty and I are experiencing is a sign of the Church's critical stage presently. This is with respect to the priesthood and the Church's response to it.

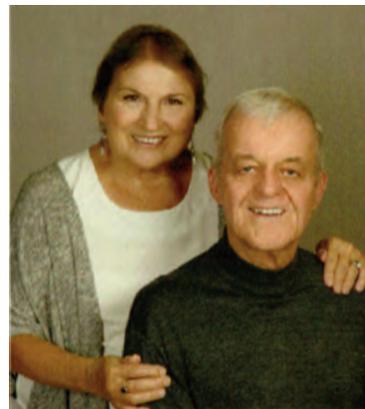
The failure to respond to the circumstance of 30,000 priests in this country having resigned since 1960, we find that more and more priests assigned to our parish are from other countries. English is not their native language and their theology is very conservative. Also, in my opinion, these priests are unable to appeal to many Catholics who are no longer part of a Catholic community. The church seems satisfied to let these Catholics go. The Church instead welcomes those ready to accept its traditional teachings and structures.

Betty and I have been members of our parish for forty-five years. All of the pastors knew I am a priest. However, not once has there been a homily addressing the question of those 30,000 resigned priests.

Is the ordained priesthood necessary?

The answers to all these questions beg some basic understanding of Church history. How did the Church as an institution become what it is today? The present crisis in the Church points to a radical change somewhere in the future. All those priests who have resigned to marry or for other authentic reasons will be part of the answer.

I was ordained in Rome in 1960. Betty and I married in 1971. At the time, the Pope had made the decision to halt dispensations. My first assignment as an Augustinian was a professor at Mendel High School on the south side of Chicago. I chose to attend night classes at DePaul University, majoring in philosophy. I was introduced to the philosophers in the existential phenomenology tradition. They were writers who had published works long before my philosophy classes at Villanova.



But we never heard of them in our philosophy classes.

With an M.A. in philosophy and a Licentiate in theology from Tome, I pursued doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Louvain, having received a Fulbright scholarship. I look back and often say that I was influenced in a positive way by the liberal thinking of the Dutch priests I lived with at the time. I mention this background because I think it has bearing on the question of priests who have resigned since around 1960 to the present day.

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There is an underlying change in their thinking that precedes the difficult change from ordination and religious vows. For many of us this change did not mean walking away from the possibility of a different kind of priesthood.

I was especially fortunate after leaving religious life attaining a position teaching philosophy at Purdue University Northwest. I had no intention of continuing my former ordination ministry. But some faculty who knew my background asked if I would say Mass in our home. We did this for some years. Later we joined a parish south of Chicago, St. Victor.

We have been there for forty-five years. Our church recently merged with two other parishes in that area. On several occasions I have celebrated marriages and baptisms. The question how I now understand priesthood, I would say that the experience of some resigned priests point in the direction of a new kind of priesthood. It is one inclusive of both married men and women priests. But I have a hard time imagining this happening as the conservative traditions of historical Christianity remain in place.

How do you describe your spirituality?

I think of spirituality as a way of life. How do I define that? I am certain of one thing...everyone must find it for oneself. It is an experience of 'spirit' which is an experience of personal inwardness. Paraphrasing St. Augustine: Do not look outside... "God is more interior to me than I am to myself." Each person stands in an immediate relationship to God. This is through their experience of transcendent freedom and the experience of love. It is never done in a vacuum. The experience of spirit will always be done at the same time an experience we find together with others. It is the "I-Thou" of Martin Buber. The "Thou" is ever present in human history.

This is especially true of religious experience. Karl Jaspers expressed this in his definition of the 'axial age'. It is in the age of the sudden emergence of the world religions around 500 B.C., when human beings "discovered in themselves the primal source, by virtue of which each one might rise above themselves

and the world...the spiritual life is still oriented toward the axial age." The voice of God "does not speak through the commands and the revelations of others, but in the individual's selfhood and through their freedom." Even for the Church the voice of conscience is paramount.

Therefore, for me, religious spirituality is fundamental. Even when the Church is in crisis, we are like Peter... "Lord, where shall we go?" But today, to choose to stay with the Church implies a critical attitude and an understanding of our personal relationship to an institution that needs fundamental reformation. One's spirituality is defined in part by this critical attitude toward the Church.

...to choose to stay with the Church implies a critical attitude and an understanding of our personal relationship to an institution that needs fundamental reformation.

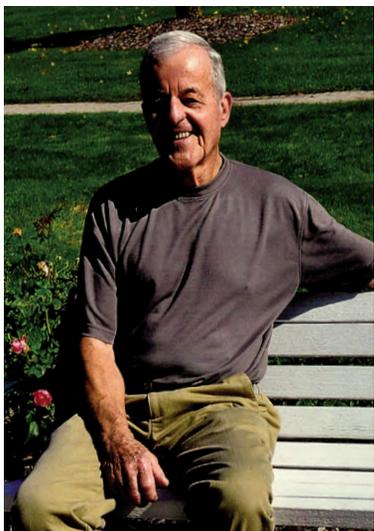
L.T. Johnson has made an insightful definition of the problem in his work: *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies. Christianity is a Religion. It is not just a "Faith" defined by official teachings and practices. It is a every other world religion, a community of persons who have come together to share in community their own religious experience, that is, a personal experience of God, the primal source, by virtue of which each one might rise above themselves and the world.*

By its own self-definition: "One, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, one baptism for the forgiveness of sins". The Church has in some ways cut itself off from religious experience. The religious experience of the axial age towards which our spiritual life is still oriented.

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Therefore, the question about spirituality leads directly into the question of the character of religious experience in the context of the individual's relationship to God and the individual's relationship to the official teaching of the Church and the Church's historical development down through the ages.

In this context can objective faith be in conflict with personal freedom and love? In speaking about the period, we know as the Enlightenment, Karl Jaspers notes that opposition to the enlightenment by religious was based on the idea that it was "the supererogation by man, who wishes to owe only to himself what has been bestowed upon him by grace."



Those who make this accusation fail to recognize that God does not speak through the commands and revelations of other men but in the persons' selfhood and through his freedom, created by God and oriented toward God, is a restriction upon the very thing through which God manifests himself."

In concrete terms, Like Johnson points out as examples of the movements of religious experience in our times: the women's movement in all its forms, the social sciences with their attention to lived experience, popular culture in its involvement with religious questions, phenomenology in philosophy with its emphasis on lived experience. There is one more area, I believe, that spirituality in religion calls for a reversal of understanding. It is the question of the Secular. We cannot be spiritually alive if

we are fighting against the very character of the world we are living in. I believe it is paramount to recognize the positive character of the secular world. Without addressing this complex issue more fully, I will only point in the direction by suggesting two basic approaches to the question. Finally, if we want to state simply the essence of spirituality, we come back to love. "God is love. He who abides in love, abides in God and God in them." To abide in love. That is the emphasis. Marriage is such a gift because it can be this abiding love wherein each person gives that love to the other over the whole of a lifetime. The meaning of life itself is the gift each one gives to the other. Thereby fulfilling all that the spirit of the person could hope for when seeking life's purpose.

Could a married priesthood save the priesthood?

A married priesthood would be a sign that the Church had changed in significant ways. So the fundamental problem is not that priests are prohibited marriage and continue as priests. There are more basic problems having to do with the church's historical development; Dogma, papal authority, women's role in the Church, the role of the laity. The pope's recent document addressing priest shortage in the Amazon dismissed the issue of married priests. In my opinion, that says it all.

Betty and I have been fortunate these past forty-nine years to have found a parish on the south side of Chicago. The four pastors we have been fortunate to know are priests to admire. They were concerned about social justice. Their homilies were down to earth as was their dedication to their parish community. St. Victor's building closed recently and the congregation became part of a three-church merger under a new name in the catholic community.

We are living in a time of great uncertainty. There are "Ecclesia" like CORPUS that have given married priests a sense of belonging. CORPUS has become a very important community for me. I have kept a small library of important articles from CORPUS REPORTS!

Members of CORPUS Reflect on Faith and Fidelity

Susan Negrotto+
Lakona Harbor, NJ

John and I were married over 42 years, all of which he served as an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Newark. Our marriage was enhanced by John's ministry although living in a rectory with two children was not without its "problems".

John always made sure our family life was as normal as possible and he always made time for us. Our children were used to emergencies coming up & since John was on both the fire dept and ambulance corps, he was frequently out the door. He was very much part of the Community.

Sharing in John's priesthood was a very special part of our marriage and he always made an effort to include me as much as possible. I taught school for 20 years but found that I had a calling to the priesthood when I retired. I know that working with John prepared me. He was very supportive and proud of my calling.

It was a long process and for a variety of reasons, I was ordained a priest in the Old Catholic Church and am a hospital chaplain. My only regret is that John died before my ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood.

I can't imagine not having married clergy anymore and, for us, it was the greatest gift we could give each other. I thank God for the blessings He bestowed on our marriage every day. Marriage needs to be an option for each priest.



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**Paul Gabonay,
Avon, Indiana**

While exposed to all things Catholic during my upbringing and seminary years, and now as a senior continuing to try to deepen my understanding of Jesus' life and message, I am still struck by the challenge of responding to the simple question: "How do you describe your spirituality/spiritual practice?". I am clearly no expert in the vocabulary of spirituality, but I guess I would first say that spirituality broadly equates to one's overall prayer life. And my prayer life undoubtedly lacks the attention that it deserves. Still, I would characterize my spiritual experience and practice as multifaceted and probably not that different from most folks endeavoring to grow in their humanity and in the love of God and neighbor.

Amid and between daily and weekly tasks and activities, routine and not-so-routine comings and goings, a quiet presence makes itself known and felt in the background—a kind of ongoing conversation or self-talk I suppose, with interjections by a recognizable Voice—of reason, conscience, correction, empathy, kindness. There are moments of insight and inspiration when I feel particularly blessed and that prompt me to gratefully acknowledge the Holy Spirit stirring within me or reflected in the people, places and things around me. This can happen while reading an enlightening book, watching a really good movie, or engaging in a stimulating conversation with a friend.

Ever since my parish school music teacher/director gave me my first guitar, I have been involved in liturgical music, playing and singing at Mass and other services on and off for 50-plus years. During my time at St. Meinrad College Seminary in Southern Indiana I was thoroughly engaged in this new avocation. Over a particularly inspired three-year period of theological study at Louvain in Belgium, a lifelong friend and I churned out many songs for Mass and meditation. Currently, in preparation at home for the two Sundays a month when I lend my modest musical abilities to that same friend's band at St. Philip Neri

Church across town, I cannot help but reflect on the beautifully crafted, moving lyrics and melodies by the composers of our era. Liturgical music has been a pathway to the divine for me throughout my life beginning with my pre-Vatican II choirboy days.

I have lacked self-discipline regarding a dedicated prayer regimen—that is, sitting down each day at a specific time and place and engaging in a consistent prayer mode. When this does happen, however, once a week or so, it often entails simply calling to mind the many "saints" of my past and people of my present who are facing some sort of hardship, those known to me personally, those close by or around the world.

To "jumpstart" my meditation, I often use the *People's Companion to the Breviary* prepared years ago by a group of wonderful Carmelite sisters whose monastery I used to regularly visit and at whose Sunday liturgies I used to sing and play. Probably the prayer I most appreciate and identify with is Thomas Merton's *The Road Ahead*, closely followed by the *Prayer of St. Francis*. Of the psalms I especially like to recite is Psalm (138) 139 concerning God's knowledge and care for us. Bernadette Farrell's rendition of this psalm in GIA's Gather hymnal is simply beautiful. Naturally in retirement there has been more time to read in the spiritual realm as well as to learn from some of the leading religious writers and, yes, critics of our day

To the second set of questions, "How do you understand priesthood?" and "Is the (ordained) priesthood necessary?", the following inadequate response comes from the perspective of a layman whose views about the priesthood certainly have evolved over the years, but whose understanding (not having been ordained or served in a priestly capacity) probably has not matured in any serious way. That said, every Christian, of course, shares in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and we all have a priestly calling according to our gifts and talents. A priest in the Roman Catholic Church is charged with ministerial, catechetical, pastoral and leadership responsibilities, among others,

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just as in most any Christian denomination and probably most faith traditions.

I believe there definitely is a role for ordained ministers of the Gospel, though I do not think that knowledgeable, gifted and articulate lay folks should be restricted from preaching. As to the administration of certain sacraments (baptism, anointing of the sick, matrimony, possibly reconciliation), I'm not entirely sure that ordination need be an absolute requirement.



A truly spiritually oriented Catholic layman, laywoman, religious brother or sister with a solid understanding of the faith, proper training, and the ability to communicate well and serve in the capacity of a sacramental minister, could qualify, in my opinion, especially in circumstances where priests are scarce. Theologically trained and similarly equipped women religious should feel welcome and encouraged to assume all the traditional sacramental responsibilities of a priest and deacon if, indeed, they feel called to either of these challenging yet rewarding roles. The same goes for gay and lesbian folks.

I do believe a married clergy could help save the priesthood. In my mind, there absolutely is no reason to force men to assume a life of celibacy as prerequisite to priestly service. I feel the same about women who would wish to be ordained in the Catholic Church.

Some priests may regard celibacy as a genuine gift, but clearly many have seen it as a heavy burden. To those who seriously believe a priest cannot adequately minister to his congregation and be married (with children) at the same time, I would like to introduce them to a few of my married clergy friends of other denominations for whom I have the utmost admiration and respect. Obviously, family life has its challenges, but so does life as a single person.

Countless talented people, working extended and odd hours in numerous professions, find ways to negotiate their careers alongside family responsibilities. In my opinion, the Church could make room for part-time working priests as well, just as it has done for male bread-winners serving as deacons. How rich and exciting the presbytery would be and how fortunate and blessed our congregations ordained ministry open to a more diverse candidate pool, people sincerely willing to share their faith and experience in a broader, fuller way for the edification of all.

This last question posed is the easiest to answer. If there are significant positive reforms of one kind or another happening in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis (outside administrative, fiscal, programmatic or liturgical changes), I am not aware of them. Even as a regular reader of *The Criterion*, our Archdiocesan weekly newspaper, I cannot recall noting any particular advancement in the way Church happens in Central and Southern Indiana.

Of course, I could be dead wrong about this. I'm not privy to the inside workings of the chancery or of enhancements or experiments going on in parishes other than the ones I frequent. If anything, we seem to be regularly reminded of how much the status quo continues. Examples of this have been evidenced in the national news over the past two years in the controversy involving married gay folks employed in several of our Catholic high schools and the ongoing priest sexual abuse debacle.

CORPUS: Sensus Fidelium

Not that long ago we saw a good number of parish closures, mergers and reorganizations due to a lack of priest personnel, decreased membership and financial issues, mirroring national trends I would guess.

Outside the mainstream, almost eight years ago now, a Roman Catholic Woman Priest was ordained in Indianapolis for service to a newly established Saint Mary of Magdala Catholic Community in Central Indiana. I was privileged to be part of the music group for this event and for her first mass. A couple of years later I was honored to coordinate the music for the ordination ceremonies of a new bishop with Roman Catholic Womenpriests, a former Oldenburg, Indiana, Sister of St. Francis, teacher, and lay pastoral associate employed by my home parish of St. Christopher in Speedway, Indiana.



Paul, John Kirby, Susan (Paul's spouse) Mary (John's spouse) in Belgium 2017

You asked how long I've been a member of CORPUS. I'm thinking I've been an actual subscriber to CORPUS REPORTS for only two to three years. Prior to this, the lifelong friend and fellow liturgical musician to whom I refer in my responses, John Kirby, passed along his copies of the journal to me for several years.

John and I attended the same high school, college and theology. He went on to ordination and served as a priest in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for five years before resigning. He and I have had numerous conversations over the years around theology and church. John would be a great person to invite for comment in some future issue of CORPUS REPORTS. While I pursued counseling, adult education and administrative roles in higher education, John spent his career primarily in human resource management and development. We sang and played in a four-member folk group back at St. Meinrad from 1968-1971 and have the pleasure of singing and playing together still in our retirement years at the parish in which he currently coordinates the music for Sunday mass a couple of times a month. Last summer a new priest, one year out of seminary, became the parish administrator.

It's been very interesting and challenging to reconcile this young man's pre-Vatican II liturgical style with our very upbeat (even rockin') brand of music. So far he hasn't outwardly complained about what he's hearing, probably because there are next to no other musical resources to draw upon. Parish membership has become predominantly Hispanic, except for the 100+ folks who attend the Sunday 10:00 a.m. service in English. There's more to this story which I'll leave for another day.

In 2017 (photo left) we all had the pleasure of traveling through the Benelux countries together and spent a day in Louvain, Belgium, where we both studied theology at the Catholic University of Louvain, while residing at the American College, the other European seminary (besides the North American College in Rome) supported by the American bishops. Our college was closed a number of years back probably because the theology we were receiving at the university was a bit more liberal than they could handle. Oh well. This past fall the four of us enjoyed another tour through Germany and Austria, with a side trip to Bratislava, Slovakia, where my paternal grandparents emigrated from at the turn of the 20th century, a very Catholic country still.