



# e. news

OF THE SINGAPORE PASTORAL INSTITUTE

FEBRUARY 2012

## Dear Friends

We have ushered in the Dragon with great joy and hope! I look around at our Church in this new year and see many things to give thanks to God for. Among our lay people we find a strong spiritual sense, a desire to deepen in knowledge of our Catholic tradition, and the impulse to serve in the Church. In particular, I notice a flourishing of lay groups; principally the neighbourhood Christian communities, but also associations, covenant communities, and groupings of many other kinds.

Catholics hold the firm conviction that Christianity cannot only be the exercise of individual spirituality and private religious activity. We instinctively seek out others of like faith to form bonds of fellowship and discipleship. But how do we identify ourselves as Catholic lay communities? What sets us apart from other groups?

Pope John Paul II, in his letter *The Lay Faithful of Christ*, gives us five conditions to assess our own communities: he called these “Criteria for Ecclesiality.”

**1. Primacy of the Call to Holiness.** Lay groups must have God’s universal call to holiness as the basis of their planning and activities. They help each baptized member maintain a strong connection between faith and life, and strive towards perfection of love.

**2. Profess the Catholic Faith.** Lay groups have the responsibility of proclaiming the Catholic faith in its entirety with respect to the Church’s teaching authority.

**3. Witness True Communion.** Lay groups must be ready to express their union with the Pope and their bishop by embracing their

teaching and pastoral directives. Lay groups should also acknowledge the rich variety present among the various communities in the Church and show openness in mutual understanding and cooperation.

**4. Participate in the Apostolate.** Lay groups are tasked with the mission to make holy the world we live in, to educate society’s conscience, and to bring the Gospel of love to all.

**5. Present in Human Society.** Instead of gathering together to remove themselves from the world or to only be preoccupied with internal matters, Catholic lay groups are called to build solidarity with others by committing themselves to serving their fellow brothers and sisters in society and work for the common good.

With these in mind, we can intentionally call ourselves authentic Catholic lay communities - groups that help lay people to do their primary ministry of evangelizing and transforming the areas where we dwell.

I believe that nurturing Catholic communities well is the first step towards renewing prayer in liturgical participation and sacramental life. Lay communities are also potent platforms to advocate the value of good vocation. They can be instrumental in building up appreciation for Christian marriage, the consecrated life, and the ordained ministry.

To all Catholic groups and communities, I wish you all of God’s blessings, happy “ecclesializing,” and a holy 2012!

**Arthur**

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# Christian Humanism & Vatican II

## *Theological Foundations for the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*

The Pastoral Institute played host to visiting lecturer Dr. Dominic Doyle on the opening week of 2012. Doyle is assistant professor of systematic theology in Boston College. He gave two addresses; one to clergy, religious and church staff, the other to an open audience. Both dealt with the topic of Christian identity in modern culture.

Dr. Doyle's main proposal was that although the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* was written half a decade ago, it remains a vital source of inspiration for Christian engagement with the world today.

Underpinning the Constitution is the theological tradition of Christian humanism, which Dr. Doyle identified with three axioms of St. Thomas Aquinas: (1) God and Creation are not competing causes. (2) The human person has a natural desire for God. (3) Grace perfects nature. The Council fathers were clear about the solidarity shared between the Church and the entire human family, "the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious reign." (GS, n.44)

Christian humanism springs from the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation, and claims that the more one comes to understand and love what is authentically human, the more one will resonate with the Good News proclaimed by Christianity.



However, Christian identity has been reshaped over the years following Vatican II, especially by the challenges of globalization and secularization. Christian humanism has been disparaged by some as being overly optimistic, or too naive of the world's power to corrupt what being human means.

Dr. Doyle offered a perspective of hope, drawing from two Western Catholic thinkers; Charles Taylor and Nicholas Boyle. The Catholic Church can and must play a very important role in civil society, its transnational identity as a moral force enables it to be a voice for many, especially the poor and the oppressed. Faith has not been a casualty of secularization. It has not disappeared in modern society, but has become more "fragile," calling Catholics to appreciate more deeply their identity as the People of God in the world, in the faith that as they serve humanity and offer it a Christian vision for development, they are also advancing God's reign.

"Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in the hearts of the followers of Christ...it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear." (GS, n. 22)

*Dr. Doyle's lectures were part of the series of events for this year commemorating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council.*

# Gray upon Gray

## Concerns of ageing caregivers to the elderly

*Daphne Leong*

Florence is 62 years old, unmarried, and living with her 95 year old mother. Although she has three other siblings, they contribute little to caring for their mother. "They have their own family and in-laws to support so it's understandable," Florence reasons. When her siblings advised her to put mother in an aged care home, she refused because she felt it would be undutiful. Since her mother is completely dependent on Florence for her day-to-day care, she has little time for anything else besides looking after mum and her work as a private tuition teacher.

Recently, her mother was warded when her chronic health problem acted up. Her regular medical treatments had already depleted her own Medisave account, and now she is using Florence's. Each day Florence prays fervently: "Please God, don't let my own health fail."

It is common knowledge that Singapore is facing the phenomenon of rapid ageing - the growing elderly population is dubbed "the silver tsunami." While much emphasis is being placed on the care of aged persons, we at SPI are realizing that there is a reality of gray upon gray that is unfolding: A rising number of 'old' elderly being cared for by unsupported 'younger' elderly.

The Singapore National Caregiving Survey 2010 was conducted by the DUKE-NUS Graduate Medical School. Of the 925 caregivers to elderly polled majority were daughters (33%) and sons (26%) followed by others. 39.2% of those surveyed were aged 50 to 64. These caregivers often experience disruption in their career development by taking on the role as primary caregivers to their parents. With medical advancement increasing life expectancy, these caregivers will have to remain in the caregiving role for a longer period than before.

Even now, I am sure that many Catholics already know someone, or even are themselves, in the position of Florence. What will happen when we become too frail to care for our own parents? How can the Church support and minister to us who face this reality?

For this year, we hope to investigate and find out more about people who are confronted by this situation. If you fall into the category of ageing caregiver to one or more elderly persons, we would like to hear your story. The information that you share will help us formulate relevant and timely responses. Please help us to help those like Florence in our neighbourhoods. Contact me at [daphne@catholicspi.org](mailto:daphne@catholicspi.org) or call 68587022.

For 2012, the SPI Pastoral Office is also working on a pastoral care booklet for the Neighbourhood Christian Communities. This booklet will be a helpful resource for the NCCs, listing the different social services available in the various residential zones. Ordinary Catholics can often be a great help to others simply by pointing people in the right direction to get assistance. This booklet will be handy for NCCs when they encounter persons or families who require professional aid. There will also be guidelines, tips, and 'dos' and 'don'ts' for NCCs as they engage or attend to neighbours in their area. We hope to publish this resource booklet by August this year around Lay Apostolate Sunday. Do look out for it.





“You can't be a priest, so what are you going to do with your theology degree?”

“Find work in the Church”



When Amanda attended World Youth Day 2008 (WYD08) in Sydney, she did not expect the impact it would have on her vocation. She was then reading for a degree in Animal Science and Management at the University of Melbourne, with the hope of getting into animal genetics research. Little did she know that she would eventually be pursuing her first interest as an academic discipline - theology.

Following the inspiration of WYD08, Amanda continued to seek a way to get more in touch with her faith by joining MAGiS – an Ignatian Young Adult ministry - where she learnt about and grew to love Ignatian Spirituality.

Providentially, the opportunity arose for Amanda to participate in a six-week Retreat in Daily Life organized by the Jesuits in early 2009 during her final semester at the University of Melbourne. With very supportive parents, extended family, friends and the guidance of her Spiritual Director, Amanda was able to discern that plunging into theology was what she wanted.

The next two and the half years were spent at the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne studying with a variety of students, including candidates for ordinations in other church traditions as well as Jesuit scholastics.

In 2011, Amanda received one of four Father Gerald Daily SJ Travelling Scholarships from Newman College – where she was a Senior Common Room resident member – and took two intensive units at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry over summer, exposing her to students of theology from diverse backgrounds. Amanda describes her time in Boston with the scripture phrase ‘... in Christ we who are many form one body.’ (Rom 12:5)

Amanda is a parishioner of St. Stephen Church, and will receive her Masters in Divinity degree in May 2012. She has now joined the SPI family, and is excited to discover what the Church in Singapore has in store for her.

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*Amanda Yeo is the Pastoral Associate of SPI. She will complement Daphne Leong and Jarvis Tan in the work of developing Neighbourhood Christian Communities and Christian Initiation ministry. Her email is [amanda@catholicspi.org](mailto:amanda@catholicspi.org)*



Calendar 2012

Updated as of February 2012

# CATHOLIC MORALITY

## The Personal Compass - Navigating Life's Ambiguities

by Fr. David Garcia OP

This year-long course helps participants to understand the reasoning of Catholic moral theology. Its aim is to enable ordinary Catholics to apply the principles of faith to ethical questions and dilemmas typical to contemporary Singaporean life. Audit students may register for any module as offered. Students wishing to complete Personal Compass for certification can contact [Janice Ng](#) for course requirements. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Thursday evenings, 7:30pm-9:30pm, CWS Auditorium, 55 Waterloo Street (first half of 2012), and Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre (CAEC), 2 Highland Road (second half of 2012). Audit registration: \$80.00 per module (Early registration by indicated ER date: \$70.00). Certification student registration: \$400.00.*

### M1. FUNDAMENTALS

*January 5, 12, 19, February 2, 9, 16 (ER December 22)*

### M4. SOCIAL JUSTICE

*July 12, 19, 26, August 2, 16, 23 (ER June 28)*

### M2. HUMAN VIRTUES (Elective)

*February 23, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (ER February 9)*

### M5. SEXUALITY & MARRIAGE

*August 30, September 6, 13, 20, 27, October 4 (ER August 16)*

### M3. THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES (Elective)

*April 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, 24 (ER March 29)*

### M6. BIOETHICS

*October 11, 18, 25, November 8, 15, 22 (ER September 27)*

# CHRISTIAN INITIATION

## Archdiocesan Rites of Election

presided by Archbishop Nicholas Chia

Held over the first weekend of the liturgical season of Lent. Parish communities send catechumens who are ready to be elected by the Church to celebrate the sacraments of initiation at Easter.

*Saturday, February 25 at Blessed Sacrament Church (City and West district parishes), 2:00pm-4:00pm.*

*Sunday, February 26 at Holy Spirit Church (North, East and Serangoon district parishes), 2:00pm-4:00pm.*

## Introduction to the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

by Jarvis Tan & Arthur Goh

Suitable for newcomers to parish RCIA work, as well as experienced ministers wanting a refresher. This course helps participants to use the RCIA text, and deals with the history and principles that guide the Church's care and training of adults preparing for the sacraments of Christian initiation. Registration fee is waived for members of the clergy and religious.

*Fridays, August 3, 10, 17, 24, at the CAEC, 2 Highland Road. 8:00pm-10:00pm. \$20.00 (Does not include RCIA text book).*

# CATECHETICS

## Workshop on Eucharistic Adoration for Children

by the Catechetical Office & the Children's Eucharistic Adoration Team

This workshop prepares catechists to be facilitators of Eucharistic Adoration for children and youth in the context of catechetical sessions.

*Saturday, January 7, Holy Spirit Church, 9:30am-12:30pm. \$20.00.*

## Launch of Catechetical Year

presided by Archbishop Nicholas Chia

Catechists from across the diocese join Archbishop Nicholas Chia to celebrate the beginning of the catechetical year.

*Sunday, January 8, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 2:00pm-5:00pm. Free.*

## Basic Catechist Course (BCC) - Scripture I

by the Catechetical Office

The Scripture course for catechists covers key themes and how to present Scripture during catechetical sessions. This course is part of the Level 1 certification programme for catechists. Option to attend in February or July. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Saturdays, February 25, March 3, 10, 17, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 9:30am-12:30pm. \$60.00.*

*Fridays, July 6, 13, 20, 27, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 7:00pm-10:00pm. \$60.00.*

## Basic Catechist Course (BCC) - Liturgy I

by the Catechetical Office

The Liturgy course covers the significance of the Liturgy and its implications for catechesis. This course is part of the Level 1 certification programme for catechists. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Wednesdays, April 11, 18, 25, May 2, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 7:00pm-10:00pm. \$60.00.*

## Catechists Annual Day of Recollection

by the Catechetical Office

A day of prayer and retreat for those involved in parish catechetical ministry. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Sunday, May 6, venue TBA, 9:00am-6:00pm. \$30.00.*

## Archdiocesan Catechist Coordinators Course (ACCC) IV

by the Catechetical Office

For parish catechetical coordinators to be equipped with the essential catechetical theory required for their work in parish catechesis. This is a stay-in event. Contact [Sylvia Stewart](#) for more information.

*Tuesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 2, St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary. Registration fee TBA.*

# CATECHETICS

## Training for Primary Curriculum

by the Catechetical Office

For the second group of parishes implementing the new primary level curriculum in 2013. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Saturday, June 9 to Sunday, June 10, CAEC, 2 Highland Road. Time and registration fee TBA.*

## Training for Secondary Curriculum

by the Catechetical Office

For parishes implementing the new secondary level curriculum. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Saturday, September 1 to Sunday, September 2, CAEC, 2 Highland Road. Time and registration fee TBA.*

## Childrens' Holiday Bible Camp

by the Catechetical Office

An enriching and fun four-and-a-half days camp for children from Kindergarten 2 through Primary 6.

*Monday, 19 November to Friday, 23 November, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 9:00am-1:00pm. Registration fee TBA.*

## ACCC IV - Follow-up Retreat

by the Catechetical Office

Catechists who attended ACCC IV are invited to this retreat to spend time with the Lord, and to share experiences with one another of applying what was learned from ACCC IV in their respective parish settings.

*Friday, November 30 to Sunday, December 2, Montfort Retreat Centre. Registration fee TBA.*

## Orientation for New Catechists

by the Catechetical Office

This session aims to orient newcomers to parish catechetical ministry, with special emphasis on Liturgical Catechesis. Registration fees will be waived for members of the clergy and the religious.

*Sunday, December 9, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, Time TBA. \$30.00.*

# DAFF

## Diploma of Adult Faith Formation

by SPI/DAFF Team

Two year course aiming to familiarize students to the theology of various Church disciplines, with a view to nurture Christian identity and a self-owned faith.

*With the exceptions of Days of Recollection and Module 8, all classes are on Wednesday evenings, Risen Christ Church, 7:30pm-9:30pm. Registration forms available in parishes and at SPI.*

Year I - 2012

### M1. OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING

by Sr. Maria Lau IJ

*February 1, 8, 15, 29, March 7.*

### M2. SALVATION HISTORY

by Msgr. Eugene Vaz

*March 21, 28, April, 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23.*

### Day of Recollection I

by Sr. Susan Thomas FMM

*Saturday, May 26, CAEC, 10:00am-4:00pm.*

### M3. WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

by Arthur Goh

*June 13, 20, 27, July 4, 11, 18, 25, August 1, 8, 22.*

### M4. CHRIST & THE SACRAMENTS

by Fr. Michael Arro MEP

*August 29, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7, 14.*

### Day of Recollection II

by Sr. Susan Thomas FMM

*Saturday, November 17, CAEC, 10:00am-4:00pm.*

Year II - 2013

*Details for Year II will be released in fourth quarter 2012.*

### M5. CHRIST, CHURCH, & CREATION

by Sr. Maria Lau IJ

### M6. CHRISTIAN MORAL LIFE

by Fr. David Garcia OP

### Day of Recollection III

by Sr. Susan Thomas FMM

### M7. FAITH DEVELOPMENT

by Arthur Goh

### M8. LEADERSHIP FOR MINISTRY

by Br. Dominic Yeo-Koh SG

### M9. THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

by Arthur Goh

### Day of Recollection IV

by Sr. Susan Thomas FMM

# PASTORAL

## *Christian Identity in Modern Culture*

by Dominic Doyle, Ph.D.

Prof. Doyle is assistant professor of systematic theology at the School of Theology and Ministry (STM) of Boston College, USA. He will speak on Christian humanism as a way for Catholics to approach modern life, integrating insights from the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* and the writings of two Catholic thinkers, Nicholas Boyle and Charles Taylor.

**Tuesday, January 3, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 3:00pm-5:00pm. Free. Registration required. (For clergy, religious, and lay church staff).**

**Wednesday, January 4, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 8:00pm-10:00pm. Free. Registration required. (Open to all).**

## *Vatican II: What Happened?*

by Arthur Goh

These sessions are intended for clergy, religious, and lay church staff to reacquaint with Vatican II in its historical context. The Council is more than merely a set of sixteen documents, and these sessions aim at a fuller appreciation of the Council and its vision, dynamic, and even its ambiguities, as God's ongoing work of steering the Church.

**Wednesdays, February 1, 8, 15, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 3:00pm-5:00pm. Or Wednesdays, October 17, 24, 31, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 3:00pm-5:00pm. Free. Registration required. (For clergy, religious, and lay church staff).**

## *Introduction to the Second Vatican Council*

by Arthur Goh

This course will introduce in an accessible way the history, highlights, and basic teachings of this historic event that propelled the Roman Catholic Church decisively into a new era.

**Fridays, April 11, 18, 25, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 8:00pm-10:00pm. Registration required. Free.**

## *Priests & Laity - An Interrelationship for Life*

by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP

Fr. Radcliffe is the former Master of the Dominican Order and a respected author and theologian. He will speak on the roles of the ordained priesthood and the common priesthood of the baptized, sharing his understanding of their inter-relationship as outlined in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*.

**Sunday, July 8, St. Mary of the Angels, St. Clare Hall, 3:00pm-5:00pm. Registration required. Free.**

## *Ecumenism & the Catholic Church*

by Deacon Sherman Kuek SFO

What does it mean for Catholics to be ecumenical? How did Vatican II express its teaching on the Catholic Church with respect to other Christians? Deacon Sherman unravels the threads to help participants grasp the inter-relationship between Christians of various traditions and the role Catholics play in the work towards Christian unity.

**Friday, November 23, 7:30pm-9:30pm and Saturday, November 24, 10:00am-3:00pm, . Registration required.**

# PASTORAL

## *Go Into the Deep: Dealing with Mid-life Transitions*

by Sr. Florence Wong FMDM

We all reach a point in time when we look back on the earlier part of our history and wonder: "What did I do with my life?" For some, it can be an anxiety provoking retrospect. Sr. Florence Wong will deal with some of the growing pains typical of this stage; the 'midlife crisis' and the empty-nest syndrome, to help participants arrive at some integration in the spirituality of ageing.

**Tuesdays and Fridays, 4, 7, 11, 14 September, Blessed Sacrament Church, St. James Room, 7:30pm-9:30pm. Voluntary contribution.**

## *Archdiocesan Neighbourhood Christian Communities' (NCC) Day*

presided by Archbishop Nicholas Chia

The annual assembly of neighbourhood churches is convened to provide an opportunity for the Catholic grassroots to connect with the chief shepherd of the diocese, and to discern God's desire for the development of Catholic Christian life in Singapore.

**Saturday, October 13, Venue TBA, 1:00pm-5:00pm. Free.**



# BIBLICAL

## The Prophet Jeremiah

by Msgr. Eugene Vaz

This course is an exploration of the biblical book of Jeremiah.

**Tuesdays, January 3, 10, 17, February 7, 14, 21, 28, March 6, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 8, 15, 22, CAEC, 2 Highland Road. Option between morning sessions, 9:30am-11:30am, or evening sessions, 7:45pm-9:45pm. \$95.00. Early registration before 20 Dec 2011, \$90.00.**

## Salvation History - God's Covenantal Love Through the Ages

by Fr. Aloysius Ong

This course is recommended for students as a foundation prior to other bible study courses. A grasp of salvation history is indispensable to Roman Catholic interpretation of the scriptures, and forms the basis for a biblical spirituality. Fr. Ong is the seminary professor of Spirituality.

**Wednesdays, July 4, 18, 25, August 1, 8, 22, 29, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7, 14, 21, 28 at the CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 7:45pm-9:45pm. \$105.00. Early registration before June 5 2012, \$100.00.**

## Introduction to the Bible

by Fr. Ambrose Vaz

A two week course to reading and interpreting Scripture. Students will be taught to apply the historical-critical method among others in bible-reading. They will also learn how to use reference tools for bible study such as concordances and commentaries.

**Tuesdays, July 3, 10, CAEC, 2 Highland Road, 7:45pm-9:45pm. \$20.00. Early registration before June 26 2012, \$15.00.**

## The Book of Revelation

by Fr. Ambrose Vaz

The scriptural writings categorized as apocalyptic literature are often challenging and eludes our understanding. Father Ambrose helps students to make sense of this genre, with specific attention on the book of Revelation.

**Tuesdays, August 7, 14, 21, 28, September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, CAEC, 2 Highland Road. Option between morning sessions, 9:30am-11:30am, or evening sessions, 7:45pm-9:45pm. \$95.00. Early registration before August 1, \$90.00.**



## Introduction to the Second Vatican Council

by Arthur Goh

*"I hear people referring to Vatican II a lot, but what was it about?"*

*"What are the Vatican II documents?"*

*"Why was the Council so important?"*

*"How did Vatican II affect the way we practice Catholicism?"*

*"Who were the minds and personalities behind the Council?"*

If you have ever wondered about questions like these, then this course is for you. Modern day Catholics would do well to have some grasp of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council since it had an immense influence in shaping the Church today, and will still continue to shape the Church of tomorrow.

2012 is the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. The Singapore Pastoral Institute wants to bring the word and spirit of the Council into the consciousness of all our Catholic faithful. This course will introduce in an accessible way the history, highlights, and basic teachings of this historic event that propelled the Roman Catholic Church decisively into a new era.

**Friday evenings, 13, 20, and 27 April 2012, 8:00pm-10:00pm.**

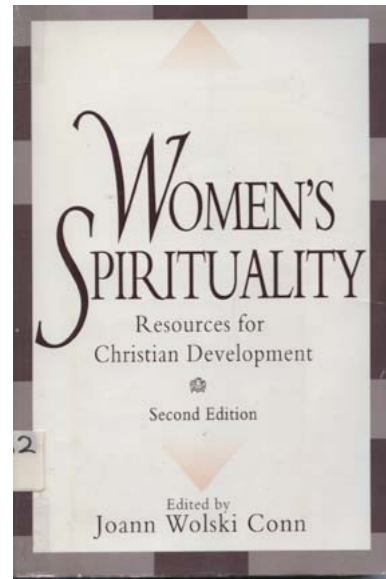
**Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre (CAEC)**

**No registration fee. A voluntary contribution will be taken to defray costs..**

**Seating is limited, please register by 9 April. Call us at 6858 3011**

**or e-mail [admin@catholicspi.org](mailto:admin@catholicspi.org)**





**Title:** Women's Spirituality - Resources for Christian Development, 2nd edition  
**Editor:** Joann Wolksi Conn  
**Publisher:** Paulist Press  
**Pages:** 473

### Ann Shirley Hoffner

The book is a collection of writings, from several authors, on women's spirituality. It also encompasses the Ignatian, Carmelite and Salesian traditions, and contributions of spiritual leaders such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Jane de Chantal and Therese of Lisieux.

Whilst the title of the book seems focused on women's spirituality, the book can also be meaningful for men. Tracing the psychological development of both genders from cradle to maturity, the book leads us into an awakening of contemplative thoughts on how social customs and traditions have played a part in shaping gender roles. It extends progressive thinking to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which is specifically patriarchal as an institution and in its theology.

This work aims to free women from stereotyping and traditional exclusion, to discover their own identity and in doing so, give meaning and validation to their contributions in church ministry. Since spirituality for women was initially based merely on women's capacity for child bearing and their contributions to the home, women may experience a kind of "conflict resolution" when they discover a 'manly dimension' within; such as struggling with the emotion of anger, which seems incompatible with feminine holiness.

A woman's sense of self includes responsibility for, care and inclusion of others. Her experience of being

woman in a patriarchal culture requires deference, submission and passivity. A boy is raised to expect to be looked after and attended, a girl is raised to provide the looking after and attending to. Motherhood is traditionally the apex of a woman's sense of self worth. Thus the effect of having to repress one's needs over time, leads to complicated feelings. In a mother-daughter relationship, a mother identifies with her daughter and may even project some of her own feelings of self and her sexuality onto her daughter.

Two models were developed in the 1978 research report done by the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) on the "nature of women". (1) A dual anthropology of 'different but equal' status of men and women as inherent in nature and part of the divine plan. (2) A single anthropology negates rigidly defined roles for men and women, beyond biological, with emphasis on history and data of experience rather than on 'nature'. However, history shows a tendency to stereotype women's nature, place and role in ways not reflective of God-given structures.

Mary Buckley has a third view, a "transformative person centered model" which calls a person (both genders) to the likeness of Jesus, in love, compassion, mercy, peace, service and community. She feels that transformation of our distorted social system calls for courage, knowledge, initiative, independence,

responsibility, and the ability to challenge, which would require both feminine and masculine qualities.

The transformative model calls for awareness of past historical conditions and recognition of the struggle for equality; it requires recovery of certain images of God, self and of the world. This model seeks to restore the universe from being a collection of objects for human use and mastery, towards an intimate interconnected communion of human subjects.

Pope John Paul II called upon all persons, especially Catholics, to make equality of women a lived reality. The Church's social teachings within the last 10 years, not only promoted the role of the woman within the family, but also her contributions in church and public life. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). In summary the spirituality of woman is rooted in tradition, experience and in the story of the poor, oppressed, aged, the wounds of the earth and environment. It focuses on self growth, relationships and a search for God and one's human wholeness.

Other interesting topics covered are Teresa of Avila's contribution on the four degrees of prayer, the dark night of John of the Cross, and the Salesian view of human development. These enable us to move away from discussions solely on feminine spirituality, to the gradual embracing of the whole personhood (both genders).

Each phase of human development is described as a longing for independence and attachment (independence is a term of the ethics of justice, whilst attachment is a term of the ethics of care). Whilst the development of self is not reducible to stages of spiritual maturity, this framework helps us understand why a person sees things in a particular way. Every transitional stage requires a "death to self".

The 3 stages of spiritual development is described as, **The conformist** who may experience God as a stern parent or judge, lacks a self-chosen identity, instead takes on various identities as dictated by the group they commit themselves to. **The conscientious** person has forged an enhanced sense of self, a deepened sense

of ideals, relationships between persons & systems and is able to express feelings directly to God. **The inter-individual** person develops a sense of autonomy, develops interdependence in interpersonal relationship even when values and goals are antithetical. At this stage the individual frees God to be God, surrendering oneself to God's care and previous inadequate God images fall away.

I would like to end this reflection on a note that acknowledges the existence of all things in God, connected through the indwelling, renewing, life giving Spirit which Arthur Peacocke (scientist & religious thinker) describes as "a choreographer of an unfinished dance." He writes "Love grants autonomy to the beloved and respects this, all the while participating in the joy and pain of the other's destiny. It vigorously cares and works for and urges the beloved towards his/her well being but never forces."



*Women's Spirituality* is available for borrowing from the Pastoral Institute Library. 248.082WOM





The Pastoral Institute was established in 1978 to assist the Archbishop in providing faith formation for the Catholic Archdiocese in Singapore. Today, the Institute continues to carry out this responsibility in the catechetical, biblical, and pastoral aspects of Christian ministry. In addition, the Institute looks to the preparation of those who serve the Church in various ministerial capacities, and identifies emerging issues that have pastoral import on the life of the local Church.

This newsletter is published monthly for internal circulation within the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore.

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Pastoral Associate:	Amanda Yeo
Rite of Christian Initiation:	Nicholas Jarvis Tan
Coordinator of Parish Catechesis:	Jane Lau
Catechetical Admin:	Sylvia Stewart
Accounts:	Teresa Hoe
Library:	Angela Fernandez
Formation Courses:	Janice Ng
Reception & Biblical Liaison:	Melinda Reyes
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Catechetical:	catoffice@catholicspi.org
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## THE PERSONAL COMPASS: NAVIGATING LIFE'S AMBIGUITY - MODULE II, HUMAN VIRTUES

Fr. David Garcia OP leads us in reflecting on the fundamental questions of human morality.

**6 Thursdays, starting 23 February, 7:30pm to 9:30pm at 55 Waterloo Street, 8th floor auditorium. Contact [Janice Ng](#) for registration details.**

## BASIC CATECHIST COURSE (BCC) LEVEL I: SCRIPTURE

A quote attributed to St. Jerome goes, "knowledge of the scriptures is knowledge of Christ." Msgr. Eugene Vaz and Fr. Erbin Fernandez will guide parish catechists towards a better grasp of the bible for catechetical ministry.

**4 Saturdays, starting 25 February, 9:30am to 12:30pm, CAEC. Contact [Sylvia Stewart](#) for registration details.**