

My Father's House

P.O. Box 22 Moodus, CT 06469 Phone: 860-873-1581 860-873-2357

A Pastoral Plan for *My Father's House* Ministry Based Upon Pope John Paul II's *Ecclesia In America and Tertio Millenio Inuente*

Introduction

Our Holy Father has given a pastoral plan to the world for the new Millennium, and also a pastoral plan for the Church in America. *My Father's House*, in obedience to the headship of the Holy Father, wishes to adopt our Pastoral Plan in union with his. The Charism of *My Father's House* has always been the Father's love manifested through Jesus in the power of their Spirit for every human being. Here we proclaim that the Father loves us with an unconditional love, not because we are perfect, but because we are His. In order to experience more fully the Father's love, we first of all try to introduce into a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus so that Jesus can speak to us, love us, heal us, unite us, forgive us, and fill us with His Holy Spirit

Second, we try to form a community of men and women who truly love one another with a love that is authentic, open, pure, caring, forgiving, and sensitive.

And third, we try to help everyone discover and to fulfill God's plan in their life. We call these three goals: 1. Jesus 2. Others 3. You - or in short, JOY!

1. A Personal Relationship With Jesus

We try to lead everyone into a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus so that they may experience in an ongoing way how much He loves them, how easily and often He forgives them, how powerfully He wants to use them, and how He wants them to think and love and act. This we see as the central meaning of the Gospel, where Jesus says to each of us, "Who am I to you?" Am I God way up there who is like the son shining graces on his children below, or am I the Jesus who lives in your heart - your best and greatest friend? Am I the God way back there in the Bible who used to speak and who used to heal, or am I the Jesus who is now speaking to you through your own thoughts and is healing you of worry, fear, doubt, and sin?

We firmly believe that Jesus wants to be our best friend. He wants us to learn how to hear His voice, to receive His love and forgiveness, and to be transformed supernaturally into an anointed Christian. Here at *My Father's House*, we have written a book entitled *A*

Personal Relationship with Jesus that we encourage everyone to read. It is a simple yet detailed study of the first part of our charism.

2. Communion

Jesus prayed that we may be one in Him as He is in the Father. He promised us that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, there He is in our midst. And the Holy Father stated, "It seems timely, therefore, to form ecclesial communities and groups of a size that allows for true human relationships. This will make it possible to live communion more intensely." EIA #41.

What we hear the Spirit saying to *My Father's House* (see *Rev. 2:1 ff*) is to form families within families. For what God is doing upon earth most essentially is forming family His way. And that is because the God we worship, is, as our Holy Father has stated so eloquently, a family. That is, a Trinity of persons loving one another, deferring to one another, delighting in one another, and serving one another. "In the Godhead are all the essential qualities of family life - fatherhood, Sonship, relationships, and love." (JP II).

The Early Church formed Christian communities that were devoted to the apostles teachings, to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer. We believe that we are called to do the same. The Spirit is moving us in that direction to form a small, home-based, family community where the love of Christ will impel us to be open, honest, and loving toward one another living no longer for ourselves but for the other (cf 2 Cor 5:14-15). Those presently living on this property, that is Sr. Bernadette and Fr. Bill, Ed and Nancy, Dolores and Blanche, Richard and Briege, Janet, Stephen and Maria, Chuck and Ellis, and Trisha. We are to be affirming and caring and direct, honest, truthful and compassionate. And thus we are to call those who come here into the love that should already exist.

3. Lay Leadership Development

Pope John Paul II has stated, "What is expected from the laity is a great creative effort in activities and work demonstrating a life in harmony with the Gospel. America needs lay Christians able to assume roles of leadership in society. It is urgent to train men and women who, in keeping with their vocation, can influence public life, and direct it to the common good." EIA #44

The goal of lay leadership development is expressed by Pope John Paul II: "The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene, that of countless lay people, both men and women, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oft times far from view and quite unclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages, but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring laborers who work in the Lord's vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the kingdom of God in history" (*Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*, 17).

My Father's House is privileged to labor in the vineyard to develop lay leadership. As our Holy Father has stated in the same apostolic constitution, *Lay members of Christ's*

Faithful People, the three words, *You too go*, are addressed to every baptized Christian who by reason of our baptism become Priest, Prophet and King. That each of us are not only called to holiness and love, but also to the apostolate and evangelization. We are to become apostles of truth, love and action. The Lord has given us exceptional gifts in lay leadership development with the men's and women's discipleship group, with the Thursday morning Holy Spirit Breakfast, with the Legion of Mary and Carmelites, and with the community that forms around the altar at each Mass and with each retreat. A good way to enhance lay leadership is through our *Life in the Spirit* and Holy Spirit Retreats. Fr. John Randall has been an excellent apostle coming here yearly to teach us.

Youth Ministry

Our Holy Father, once again, states, "The formation process for young people must be constant and active, capable of helping them to find their place in the Church and in the world. Consequently, youth ministry must be one of the primary concerns of pastors and communities." -*EIA*, 47

Here at *My Father's House*, we have had many youth retreats. In fact, more than 100 of them. We have become a base for home schooling families. We also are one of the principle bases for the *Jesus Club* with Steve and Mary Kay Lonardo. The grounds are ideal for young people, and towards that end, we have set up a game room in the upper level of the barn.

Family Reunions

We also are endeavoring to get more and more families to make their yearly reunions here at *My Father's House*. We have had many family reunions, and hope to have many more. For the family that comes together and prays together has a greater chance to stay together. The highlight of our family reunion is a family Mass during which we mention all of the deceased relatives, as well as all of the needs of the present living members. Our motto is:

"God made us a family.
We need one another.
We love one another.
We forgive one another.
We work together, we worship together, we play together.
Together we use God's word in sacrament.
Together we grow in Christ.
Together we love all men and women.
Together we serve our God.
Together we hope for Heaven.
These are our hopes and ideals.
Help us to attain them together through Christ Our Lord,
Amen.

A Ministry of Healing, and Forgiveness

Because we realistically realize that most people do not have a personal relationship with

Jesus, nor strong family ties, nor are they functioning in their God-ordained ministry, we have a powerful healing and forgiveness ministry to help make whole and holy men and women in whole relationships. We help them to realize that faith in Jesus really heals worry, fear and doubt. That trusting Him really heals depression, that His love really heals loneliness and rejection as well as their poor self-images and that His forgiveness, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, really heals guilt and sin, as well as bitterness, hatred and Unforgiveness. We have become in Pauline words, "Ambassadors of Reconciliation."

A Charismatic Community

Because we are open to all the gifts of the Spirit, we are a Charismatic Community. Actually, we teach everyone that Catholicism is an essentially and totally Charismatic religion. As Paul says, "All is grace, everything is gift." Or as we say in the Mass, "All life, all holiness comes from you Father, through your Son by the working of the Holy Spirit." Thus, we are open to all the wisdom gifts - wisdom, understanding, knowledge, prophecy, counsel and discernment; the love gifts - love, compassion, sensitivity, warmth, zeal, enthusiasm, loving-kindness, purity of heart, and forgiveness; as well as the power gifts - healing, miracles, signs and wonders, administration, helps, and service.

A Marian Community

Last, but far from least, we are devoted to Mary as our Mother. Every major room, chapel and meeting place at *My Father's House* has at least one statue or large image of Mary, our mother. In fact, all of us are consecrated to the twin hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Lay Carmelites

Because Our Holy Father has asked us especially in this new millennium to fashion our spirituality on four saints, three of whom are Carmelites -- St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the Little Flower - almost all of us have adopted the Carmelite Spirituality. And most of our Lay members are, in fact, Lay Carmelites. Our Lady, especially under the title of Our Lay of Mount Carmel, is helping us all to become disciples of Jesus and to do whatever He tells us.

Eight Steps to Develop Our Plan

Pope John Paul II, on the very day when he closed the Holy Year Door, January 6, 2001, issued a new document entitled *Tertio Millennio Ineunte* - "As We Enter the Third Millennium". In this magnificent apostolic letter, the Holy Father gave his pastoral plan for the whole Church in the new millennium and emphasized seven pastoral priorities for each and every Catholic. It was the first time in recorded history that any Holy Father has done such. He calls it his program.

He states: "It is not, therefore, a matter of inventing a new program. The program already exists. It is a plan found in the gospel and in the living tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ, Himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated so that in Him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with Him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change

with shifts of time and culture, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium. But it must be translated into *pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community.*”

His seven pastoral priorities are:

1. Holiness, that is to think and love and act like Jesus
2. Prayer as a reciprocal conversation with God
3. The centrality of the Eucharist in Catholic belief and practice
4. Frequent confession
5. To live by grace and by the Spirit
6. Frequent meditation on the Scriptures and the New Catechism
7. The new evangelization

The Eighth

Then on the 16th of October, 2002, he issued another apostolic letter on the rosary. In this, he added an eighth pastoral priority, namely the frequent recitation of the rosary.

Eucharist is Central

Subsequently, on Holy Thursday, April 7, 2003, he issued his 14th encyclical on the Eucharist, summing up everything he encouraged in the Eucharist. In fact, he poignantly begins the very first sentence of *Ecclesia de Eucharistic* (The Church from the Eucharist) with the words, “The Church draws her very life from the Eucharist.” He went on to say, “The Eucharist recapitulates the heart of the Church and is the deepest fulfillment of Our Lord’s promise, ‘Behold, I am with you always.’” He further states, “The Holy Eucharist contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth. It is the summit of Catholic devotion.”

The Incarnate Presence of Christ in the Church

He encourages all of us to gaze constantly toward the Lord present in the sacrament of the altar to discover the full manifestation of His boundless wisdom, love and power. He sums up the essence of His new vision in Section 6 where he states:

“I would like to rekindle this Eucharistic ‘amazement’ by the present Encyclical Letter, in continuity with the Jubilee heritage which I have left to the Church in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* and its Marian crowning, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the ‘program’ which I have set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium, summoning her to put out into the deep on the sea of history with the enthusiasm of the new evangelization. To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize Him where He manifests Himself, in His many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of His Body and His Blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by Him she is fed and by Him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a ‘mystery of light’. Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relieve the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: ‘Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.’” (Lk 24:31).

To See Thee More Clearly

The Holy Father has stated that he wants to open up all our eyes to that amazement at those things that eyes have not seen nor have ears heard nor has it entered into the minds of men the glories and happiness that God has revealed in the Eucharist and in the Church. And that which we behold with our eyes we will learn to love.

To Love thee More Dearly

The Holy Father is asking the whole Church to renew the liturgy of the Mass to make it more present, operative, personal, and powerful in the lives of the faithful so that they will be filled with the very love of Christ for the Father and for each other. He reminds us that the Eucharistic Christ is a man for others. Therefore, we who receive Him become men and women for others...for God, the Church and especially the poor.

To Follow Thee More Nearly

Thus, filled with the Eucharistic presence of God's wisdom, love and power, we become lights to a dark and broken world. We become another Jesus capable of continuing across our time and space the redemptive, healing, evangelizing work of Jesus. We become His hands, His eyes, His lips, His feet, His very body. We become apostles of truth, of love and of action. Accordingly, we become participants in the pope's new evangelization to bring Christ to every person and every strata of human endeavor...into our courts, our offices, our working environments, our art, our sport, our homes, and our world. We become proclaimers in word and in deed that Christ is risen, lives and reigns through us.

In Conclusion

"Since we for our part are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every encumbrance of sin which clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead; let us keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb 12:1-2).

"He who calls us is trustworthy. Therefore, he will do it" (1 Thes 5:24).