

The American Catholic Council – Detroit June 10-12, 2011

Insights & Inspirations

Gleaned from an extraordinary cast of competent characters

By

Maureen Kenny

I want to share with you a synthesis of my notes on the American Catholic Council (Detroit June 10-12) It was the first council called and conducted by lay people in the Catholic Church in America (perhaps in the world).

There were 6 keynote speakers: Hans Kung (on video), Jeanette Rodriguez, Anthony Padovano, James Carroll, Mathew Fox, and Joan Chittister. There were 19 breakout presenters, and a woman homilist, paired with a male priest presider at the Pentecost Mass on Sunday. At least 2,000 people were present.

In most cases I have used the exact words of the speaker, and in others I have translated what for me was the essence. I believe I have captured the spirit and the content of the Council in accord with what resonated with me. I take full responsibility for this compilation of my personal notes.

- Every age dying is a new age coming to life.
- How we see depends on what we are looking for.
- The Roman system has no future; the Vatican is a museum.
- We have to deconstruct this whole clerical machine; we see how impotence becomes omnipotence.
- Idolatry is looking for stability in a form (institution); forms come and go.
- The world moves on, with or without the church.
- The needs of the people come before the proclamations of an insular church.
- The gospel of Jesus is stronger than any hierarchy at any given time.
- Truth is the daughter of time, because of the emergence of new cultural and scientific information.
- It is dangerous for the hierarchy to dismiss massive resistance among the people.
- The Bible is not a textbook; it is a communal effort. It is inspired because it is accepted by the people.
- It is the community that creates the marks of the church: One-Holy-Catholic and Apostolic -- not the episcopate.
- The purpose of canon law is spirituality not compliance.
- The universal body of the faithful cannot be mistaken.

- Each person needs to contribute his/her own charism.
- The Latino church has given us Liberation Theology, Base Communities and Radical Inclusion.
- Jesus is the essence of Christianity. As mystic and prophet, he encouraged marginality and resistance regarding the prevailing clerical and political culture of his time.
- We must seek transformation of the oppressive structures in church and society.
- Our lives begin to end when we remain silent about injustice and about all the things that really matter.
- A prophet stands up to be counted; she resists. We are all called to be prophets.
- The first sign of spirituality is courage.
- Solidarity is the opposite of obedience; it is the discerning community alive and well.
- It is time to put childhood behind us; it is time to be fully responsible for what we believe and for how we practice justice and charity according to our informed conscience.
- A mystic falls in love with Life; we are all called to be mystics.
- The Cosmic Christ cries out from within the depths of every person seeking to realize and feel the connection that already exists in our interdependence with one another.
- Our dialogue must be about lived experience, communal practice and discerning the relevance of the gospels for our times.
- We need to find our own voice, our own language or we will be soulless compliants.
- We need to reinvent ritual (**SPI - RITUAL**) that which heals, awakens, excites and gets the juices moving.
- The betrayal we feel, the collective grief we carry is weighing us down and stressing us out, zapping our energy.
- It is time to get rid of this toxic waste in our souls; we need to moan and groan and mourn and cry. We need to create liturgies for grieving.
- A liturgical ritual is a life-giving experience; it is Spirit/Breath/Dance.

- We need to find a way to ritualize the drama of our lives:
 - The joy and gratitude we feel for life
 - The grief of loss and betrayal we need to express
 - The creative connection to all of creation
 - The work of transforming ourselves and our world

- We are moving away from parochialism, clericalism, patriarchy, archaic liturgies, punitive pronouncements...We are moving out to the edge.
 - " And when you get to the edge- **JUMP!**"

- Are we ready for the free-fall that is to come? Do we trust? Do we have courage? If we are not moving toward what is life-giving, we are dying.

- What will happen in our church and in our world depends on our spirituality, our solidarity and our fidelity to that inner voice of conscience.

- What will happen next depends on what each of us does **NOW.**

I am grateful to be able to share the insights and inspirations I have gleaned from an extraordinary cast of competent characters.

Maureen Kenny June 16, 2011