

THE SHOFAR

The Voice of the Charismatic Old Catholic Church

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Unto Us, A Savior is Born

A Hello From Our New Shofar Editor...

I have recently been handed the reins of the COCC Shofar, and I am very excited and grateful to our Bishops for allowing me the opportunity to serve our COCC in this new role. I hope you will be patient with me as I learn the ropes, get to know our contributors and readers, and experiment with different design ideas for the publication.

I can't think of a better season to embark on a new ministry, a season that reminds us of new birth and hope for the world. I have often pondered that Jesus could have just "showed up" and began His ministry with His Apostles, but He didn't. Instead of coming into the world like a lion, he came as a lamb, as a small infant born of a woman



Continued from page 1...

into the great mystery that it was. He walked among us— as an infant, in an everyday family, on an everyday street. I think He wanted us to see His presence in every part of our lives, and in the hearts and lives of each other.

At this point, I intend to publish at least bi-annually, and hopefully tri-annually, depending on the amount of material that contributors submit, and other factors. Your comments are always welcome.

Many thanks and blessings are due for Bishop John and Dcn. Mimi for all of their sacrifice and service to us for so long in making the Shofar a reality.

Please keep Dcn. Karla and I in your prayers for the success of this new ministry!



In Christ,

Fr. Tim

DELIVERANCE AND HEALING MINISTRY NOTICE **FOR THE COCC**

Fr. Tim and Deacon Karla want to let the church know that they would be honored to share their exorcism and healing ministry experience and techniques with the ministers in the COCC. They do not charge anything for their services, and can work in person, or anywhere else in the world via internet connection or teleconference. They can also assist with your own deliverance ministry, or help with training, or respond to questions.

Please bless us by reaching out!

Dcn. Karla Schoonard

Issue Contents:

*EDITORS	1
INTRODUCTION	
From Fr. Tim Schoonard	
*ARCHBISHOP'S HOLIDAY BLESSING:	3
*BRAZIL PROJECT UPDATE:	4
From Bishop of Brazil Ted Kerr	
*CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT:	6
A model for Church decision making, by Bishop John Geinzer	
*NIGERIA MISSIONS:	8
An invitation from our Bishop of Africa Gabriel Obiano	
*WHEN CHRISTMAS CHANGED FOR ME	9
By Deacon Karla Schoonard	
*BUILDING UP THE CHURCH?	10
By Msgr. Hal Ellis	
*ST. FREDERICK of Utrecht	11
By Editorial Staff	
*VIRTUAL EXORCISM:	12
A world-wide mission field by Fr. Tim Schoonard	
*AFFILIATED CHURCH DIRECTORY	14



Christmas Blessings!

**TO ALL OF OUR BISHOPS, CLERGY, FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND
FAITHFUL**

**OF OUR CHARISMATIC OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH
ALL OVER THE WORLD!**

+Archbishop Robert Ortega

+Archbishop Emeritus Maurice McCormick





Transforming Lives Brazil Project Team



BP. Ted Kerr is the Founder/CEO of

Touchstone Capital, Inc. an Investment Advisory group with over \$150 million in assets under management. Ted is also the President of Touchstone Cares, a 501(c)3 organization, which has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to local, national, and international charities, including Transformando Vidas (Transforming Lives), a community project in North-east Brazil.

Many from our COCC are already aware of Bishop Ted and his wife Patty's Transforming Lives Education Center project in Lagoa De Pedras, a small, poor rural farm community in Northeastern Brazil (as covered in our May 2024 issue). This project continues to grow, and their dreams are slowly but surely, by God's grace, becoming a reality!



Exterior View of Proposed Chapel and School



TRANSFORMING LIVES...

The Kerr's and their team are hoping to start construction on the newest school campus soon. The current school is bursting at the seams and has about 30 staff and heading into next year will have about 170 students. The new school campus, when completely built out, will be enormous, about 40,000 SF under roof! It could take a decade to build it all but they have the master plan in hand and hope to complete phase 1 in 2025.

Keeping up with such an ambitious but direly needed mission project in another country hasn't been without a lot of faith and personal sacrifice by Bishop Ted and Patty. They have recently relocated to Miami, Florida from Pennsylvania, have a busy travel schedule juggling business responsibilities, and their Brazil ministry.

Let us keep Bishop Ted and Patty, their health and family, and everything and everyone involved in the success of this project, that will literally "transform lives", in our prayers. Thank you Bishop Ted and Patty for all your hard work!



-Proposed School Chapel Interior-

Editors Note: The Shofar will update everyone with more pictures as they become available. Tim+





Peter and the first Council of Jerusalem



CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT

As a Model for Decision-Making in the Charismatic Old Catholic Church

By Bishop John Geinzer (Bearded Version)

AKA: Main Theological Kitty herder and hurricane avoider at St Thomas Old Catholic Theological Seminary.

At our last convocation it was brought to the writers of the Canons that our form of government and decision making had not been addressed in the Canons. The House of Bishops (HoBs) quickly took a look at this short coming and together worked through the process of answering the question. After a lot of prayer and a lot of discussion the HOBs guided by the by the Holy Spirit decided to use the method that the Apostles used. Today it is known as consensus government. Let's talk about what it means for the church!

Consensus decision-making offers a collaborative and inclusive approach that aligns well with the Christian principles of unity, mutual submission, and including the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in each of our decisions. I hope to explain the HoBs concept of consensus government, its key characteristics and processes, and its theological and biblical foundations and its necessity for church unity.

The goal is to find solutions that all members can support, or at least agree not to oppose, even if the outcome is not to their personal preference.

The key characteristics of consensus decision-making include:

Collaboration, Cooperation, Egalitarianism (equal input), Inclusion (equal involvement). Consensus does not insist on unanimity. It is based on Love and mutual respect. A consensus approach allows the full range of spiritual gifts to be expressed in decision-making.

Implementing a consensus model for church decision-making offers many benefits:

By creating space to hear all perspectives and reflect together, consensus can lead to more thorough discernment of God's





will for the church. It encourages prayerful consideration rather than rushed decisions. Rather than decision making being a chore it becomes a method for all of us to grow closer in our brotherhood that we call the church.

When people feel their voices have been heard and concerns addressed, they are more likely to support the final decision, even if it wasn't their first choice. This can lead to smoother implementation of decisions and again a sense of camaraderie.

Conclusion

Consensus government offers a promising model for church decision-making that aligns well with our Christian theology and values. It promotes unity, mutual submission, and focused discernment of God's will. With thoughtful implementation and ongoing evaluation, consensus approaches can help our church make decisions in ways that honor God, empower all members, and strengthen the body of Christ.

“Implementing a consensus model for church decision-making offers many benefits...”

Today, we live in a self made world of stress and being busy. Everything must be accomplished in a hurry and each decision we make somehow seems to be critical. Study, focus on consensus; with your church, within your social group and within your family. You just may find an entire new group of friends among the people you already know.

Love,
+john



John and Deacon Mimi live in a small condo shack across from Kennedy Space station, where they spend time as servants to their ShihTzu Mookie and help Disabled Veterans with Service Claims and Guitars for Vets lessons.



NIGERIA: A Ripe Mission Territory!

by Bishop Gabriel Obiano



Bishop Gabriel Okechukwu Chinedu Obiano aka O.O.C., is the first Provincial Bishop of Africa of the COCC. He hails from Umueze, Nigeria, is happily married and blessed with two lovely children, as well as being a prolific song writer and award winning author.

Nigeria, located in West Africa, offers a unique and dynamic environment for missionary work. Here are some reasons why missionaries should consider Nigeria:

- **Spiritual Need:** Nigeria has a significant population of people who identify as religious, with around 50% identifying as Muslim and 40% as Christian. Missionaries can contribute to spreading their message and fostering spiritual growth.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages, offering a rich cultural tapestry for missionaries to engage with.
- **Economic Development:** Nigeria faces development challenges, and missionaries can contribute to initiatives addressing poverty, education and healthcare.
- **Language:** English is the official language, making communication relatively easy for English-speaking missionaries.
- **Strategic Location:** Nigeria's geographical position in West Africa makes it an ideal hub for regional outreach.
- **Unreached Peoples:** Nigeria has several unreached people groups, providing opportunities for missionaries to share their message with those who may not have heard it before.
- **Existing Infrastructure:** Various missionary organizations and churches already operate in Nigeria, providing a support network for new missionaries.
- **Resilient Communities:** Nigerians are known for their hospitality and resilience, making it easier for missionaries to integrate and build connections.



Missionaries should consider Nigeria for its unique blend of spiritual openness, cultural diversity and development needs, offering a challenging yet rewarding environment for service and outreach.

Blessings to all,

+ Gabriel





When Christmas Changed For Me

By Deacon Karla Schoonard

December 8, 1975 – I was 14, a Freshman at Hellgate High School in Missoula, Montana.

I was familiar with church to the extent that I had been confirmed at a Lutheran church 2 years prior but did not have any understanding about salvation. A friend of mine began to share with me about heaven, about hell, about the true meaning of the Cross and the power of it. My heart was stirred to urgency! I wanted and needed what he was talking about! I wanted Jesus and that forgiveness that would assure me of heaven one day.

The following evening, I was invited to his home for dinner with his parents and siblings. They always followed dinner with a devotional time. We all knelt in the living room, and I heard them intercede for my soul. When there was a pause, I heard my own voice say to the Lord that I was so sorry for my sins and that I wanted to be His. The simplicity and sincerity of that prayer was heard by a loving God. I got up from my knees and from that moment on my young life was tremendously changed. My speech was cleaned up. The things that I used to do were no longer a draw for me. I began to be a Christian witness to my family and my friends hoping they would feel this urgency as well.

As Christmas approached, for the first time ever, the Christmas songs began to excite my heart to a new understanding for the reason for this precious baby Jesus came into the world. What a miracle it was, and it was for my soul personally as well as all the people of the world.

I have loved Christmas ever since that special day 49 years ago. It is a precious time for me to reflect on what Jesus means to me. I encourage you to welcome His Holy Spirit to walk close to you this Christmas Season. Take pause to immerse yourself in Him and let the Christmas carols lift your heart and let the twinkling lights remind you of the guidance of God that was once the guiding Star in the sky to lead those seeking their King. Let the Christmas spirit truly be His Spirit surrounding your life this season.

Merry Christmas!



BUILDING UP THE CHURCH? (Don't Forget The Buns!)

"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."

Romans 12: 4,5 (ESV)

This scripture reminds us that the church is not a building. It is not a priest or pastor, a committee, leadership team, musicians, or other individual or group. It is the body of Christ here on earth charged by our Lord to take the Gospel to the nations. Like any body, it functions best when it is healthy and all the parts perform as they are intended to do.

We are one body. When one part is missing, failing, or unable to perform its function, the others must take up the slack. Like any other institution involving mortal man, it most often means that a small portion of the total membership does the larger portion of the work. Before we point our fingers at others and say they are not doing their part, we need to evaluate the reasons why some people don't step up when something needs done. Have we, from day one, shown them a welcoming and loving body of Christians? Do they immediately feel that they are welcome to be a part of the community? Are they motivated by seeing examples of the individual members pulling together? Do we simply ask for volunteers when some task or tasks need done and then try to put folks on a "guilt trip" when they fail to respond?

Or, do we really try to get to know each person individually and learn their interests, talents, and motivations? Do we invite them to be a part of the team or to serve as the labor force? Are we as interested in their input as their output? Are we recognizing their gifts and giving them an opportunity to use them in service to the Lord. CAUTION: This means that some people may need to surrender some control to welcome others into the body! So, when the Lord sends visitors or new people to our church, how do we encourage them to stay and be a part of this body?

I look at it like building a delicious burger. You can cook to perfection the finest ground chuck. You gather your favorite cheese, onion, lettuce, pickles, and condiments. This is like the liturgy, music, and preaching of the church.

Monsignor Harold (Hal) Ellis West, O.S.S.T., O.S.L., S.T.A., S.T.B., S.T.M., M.Div.

Fr. Hal is a Priest, Chancellor and Vicar General for the State of Florida of the Archdiocese of the Southeastern States and Missionary Dependencies. Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos in the Evangelical Orthodox Catholic Church in America and Shofar contributor.



We are one body. When one part is missing, failing, or unable to perform its function, the others must take up the slack.



It may look and smell delicious. However, if you forget the bun, you have no base. You have nothing to top it off. You can offer it to your hungry friend but, as savory as it may be, trying to consume it will be messy and leave them disappointed.

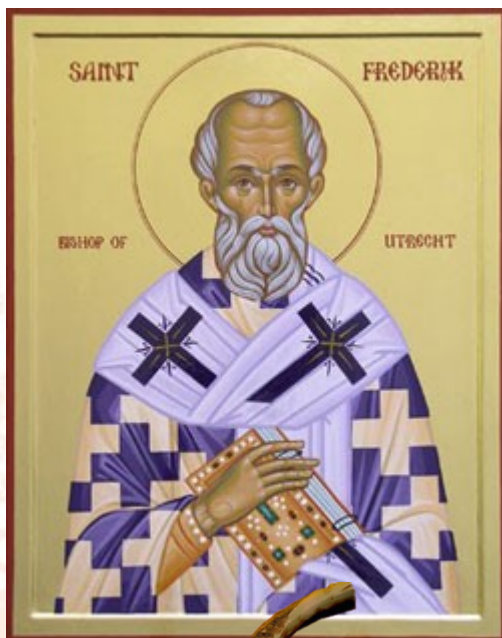
Some of God's people need to function as the bun. The only skill set required is that of the love of one another as it is God's will. When a stranger walks through the door, who greets them? Who will have the time to introduce themselves? Who will sincerely engage them and make sure they feel at home? Offer to answer any questions? Be ready to explain what they might expect during the service. This is the bottom part of the bun. Establishing a base for the meat and the toppings to follow. Making it less messy for them to consume.

If we all are willing to be the buns, being the foundation for the "burger" and topping it off in a way that shows the love of Christ, more will be motivated to come and join this glorious mission and find their place in the body of Christ.

Lord show me the ways you want me to serve you. Help me to always be willing to be the bun upon everything else you would have me to do is built. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"Some people may need to surrender some control to welcome others into the body."

Hal West, O.S.S.T



St. Frederick I (780-838) was a Bishop of Utrecht, a link in our Old Catholic ancestry.

He is revered as a saint and martyr of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church. It is known that he preached to convert the pagans with St. Odulfus.

Legend has it that St. Frederick was murdered by unknown assassins at the altar while saying mass in 838.



VIRTUAL EXORCISM - A Worldwide Mission Field

By Fr. Tim Schoonard

It would be an understatement to say that the COVID events turned our world upside-down, the effects of which we are still seeing around us today. Our good God certainly has a reputation for making good things come out of something bad. This has been true for our mission outreach of deliverance and healing. The isolation of COVID lockdowns caused opportunities for experimentation with technology, particularly in our field of ministry.



*Definitely not like
Hollywood!*

The results were surprising to say the least. We, and hundreds like us, found that the Holy Spirit is not bound by time or space when it comes to ministering deliverance and healing to God's people. The question arose that if demons can near instantaneously travel at will from one place to another, why can't the Holy Spirit of the God who created them? From experience, I think, because of many Christians own personal relationships with the Lord, we inadvertently tend to restrict God by our own human perceptions and limitations.

Using digital outreach, we have been able to reach out across the U.S., and even to British Columbia and Africa, casting out demons right from our kitchen table. Using Zoom, Facetime, or other video or voice communication apps, we have delivered Protestant pastors and their families, abused women, addicts, other deliverance ministers, and everyday folks, while others we have worked with have delivered Fortune 500 executives, world champion prize fighters, famous celebrities, and even Catholic Priests. There are few places in the world we cannot reach now and minister digitally, and it is no longer contingent on the means someone possesses for travel or other expenses. This digital ministry gives the poor as much access as the rich, and to facilitate that our Joyful Heart Ministries minister to all without charge.

We are continually learning new things about digital outreach. We have been able to heal trauma, break curses, break witchcraft and satanic spells, break soul bonds and strongholds, and cast out the demons who cling to these, as well as offer spiritual counsel. For any of this, we must always remember it only works because this is the Lord's spiritual warfare, and we are simply his warriors. All power and authority in anything that is done comes from God. When we pour out holy water at our end, the demon still growls at us and tells us how angry it makes him; he is still tormented by the bible or cross, holy Angels still come to

Using digital outreach, we have been able to reach out across the U.S., and even to British Columbia and Africa, casting out demons right from our kitchen table.



VIRTUAL EXORCISM - A Worldwide Mission Field

our aid when we need them, and the demon still goes to the pit of hell when we command him in the name of the Lord to go there. So, we have learned this much about this method of ministry's efficacy - God has shown us that it works.

Exorcism at its worst exposes the harsh reality of the depravity of evil in the world. We have had to develop some really thick skin to protect us from the heartbreaking stories of so many. But perhaps the best part of this work has been both working with God through the Holy Spirit, and the joyful, glowing look on our clients faces when the weight of darkness is lifted from them in God's mercy and seeing them praising Him joyfully in thanksgiving. It not only brings them closer to Christ, but us too; it literally takes about three hours for us to come down from the high afterward that the Holy Spirit leaves with us. Truly incredible.

Digital ministry is new of course, and to some unorthodox, but so far, at least in our work, it has been an effective tool to bring people closer to Christ. If we have learned anything from this work it is that the devil doesn't discriminate, nor does he care what denomination you belong to, if any; he comes to kill, steal, and destroy, and uses every means necessary. So why shouldn't we?

Let's take our fight to the enemy, no matter where he hides!

Fr. Tim



Fr. Tim Schoonard, ThM, is a bestselling author, and Pastor of Joyful Heart Ministries in Delton, MI. Together with his wife Dcn. Karla, he serves as a healing minister and exorcist, and most recently as editor of the Shofar.

Let's take our fight to the enemy, no matter where he hides!





Oh Come Let Us Adore Him!

Affiliated Churches of the COCC:

AGAPE OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Jeffersontown, KY

LIGHT OF CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Bedford, KY

HOLY SPIRIT OF HOPE

CHARISMATIC OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

El Paso, TX

(Both Ground and Zoom Services)

ONLINE SEMINARIES:

AGAPE SEMINARY of LOUISVILLE

Jeffersontown, KY

ST. THOMAS OLD CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Titusville, FL

ST MICHAEL'S INDEPENDENT OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

Loganville, GA

Note to all Clergy:

If you have a church proper or similar ministry in progress (anywhere in the world) that people could attend if they have the notion, please notify the Shofar so we can include it! This includes online stuff too. Thanks!

SEEKING INFORMATION FOR FUTURE ISSUES:

If you should have a significant achievement, publication, completed training, or other information that you would like shared with the rest of our Charismatic Old Catholic Church, please contact me so I can try to include it in a future issue. We would love to celebrate these triumphs with you! And, don't forget, we are always seeking interesting articles or news. Blessings to all! Merry Christmas!