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## November 2023 Edition

### Advent Edition 2023

The Vision for the Charismatic Old Catholic Church has always been one of relationships. The first relationship is that of the Holy Spirit and the Church. It is about how the Charis empowers the Bride to spread the Gospel year after year after year.

It is about how we propitiate the ongoing sacrifice of the Lamb of God that began 2,000 years ago. It is up to us to ensure its continuation till the end of time.

It is about how souls are nourished and raised up to go out and share the 'good news'.

It is about training and preparing the next generation to care for this gift we have been entrusted.

We hope you enjoy the articles and thoughts of our Shofar contributors. We wish you all to have a blessed Christmas season and that God continues to bless your ministries. Please free to reach out with ideas or suggestions or articles that you would like to share with our organization!



Holy Spirit of Hope serves as the COCC Cathedral of the West .  
When in town please visit us at:  
7728 Alameda Ave El Paso, Texas 79915

Holy Spirit of Hope has a Zoom Sunday Mass at 2:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. Request a free subscription to the weekly service by emailing [pastorrobert@holyspiritofhope.org](mailto:pastorrobert@holyspiritofhope.org)  
Please include your email address in the request.

## *New Life AGAIN!*



### NEW LIFE 1

Our first New Life came on June 20, 1991. My wife (Martha) and I bankrupted a construction business with 300 employees after 10 very successful years. The meteoric success of the business had us appointed to local and state prestigious boards and we received awards around the nation. Our family was thriving with riches and all that accompanies it. But on that fateful day it came crashing down along with personal shame and embarrassment.

However, God sent a very annoying acquaintance to introduce us to Jesus. Although we'd been very faithful in Catholic Church attendance, we didn't know the person of Jesus. Saying the sinner's prayer (Romans 10:9) made Martha and I nervous because it was not a Roman Catholic Church priest leading the prayer...we thought we'd surely wake up in I hell! Instead, we found a new meaning for life centered on a relationship with Jesus and not on human or material worth nor religion. This new Life in the Spirit, or Born Again experience, resulted in our seeking greater knowledge to this God we thought we knew.





The seeking found us being ordained by Catholic Charismatic Church (Gorham, NH) in 2002 and the start of Holy Spirit of Hope CCC. Death of CCC leader in 2011 had us move affiliation to the IOCC (Louisville, KY) as we found an amazingly warm friend in +Maurice. Then, soon after tragedies in both +Maurice and +Robert's families, COCC was founded in El Paso, TX in February 2020 as the Covid virus was sweeping the world.



At the ripe age of 76, I was busied with extensive parish duties (weekly baptisms, weddings and confirmations plus two Sunday services), COCC ABP functions, full time tent making as a construction engineer, and family responsibilities (including assisting with care of autistic 5 yr old twin boys). But God still needed to refine me more.

## NEW LIFE 2

August 2023, I found myself in the ER due to an infection that went wild. Fast forwarding through 2 hospital stays including ICU, I was released from the hospital late September 2023 with AFib and pneumonia resulting from infectious attacks on all my organs. Hospital reports show I suffered 2 heart failures and collapsed lungs along the way. God's miraculous hands were definitely in this!!

During the worst part of my heart failures, God had Msgr Ken, who I hardly knew, accompany me full-time by phone and guide me on all the scary things that were happening. Fearing death, I consecrated Ken as Bishop to continue work at the Archdiocese of the West. During these

moments God directed me clearly: (1) continue the church but work smarter – not harder, allow the self-assigned members under the lead of Rev Elizabeth (God's other miracle) to continue with church services with my guidance.

Bp Raul and I had been estranged, but God brought him back into our lives during my stay in the hospital. I incardinated him and he is excited to evangelically lead the church the next 20 years. Martha and I are falling into agape love, again. The COCC House of Bishops agreed with Ken's credentials for Bishop. Therefore, Bp Raul and I will lay hands on Bp Ken in the near future as my energy and time allow. Bp Raul will assist me in administering Holy Spirit of Hope ministry. Aux Bp Ken will assist me with the Archdiocese of the west clergy assimilation and communication.

Led by the Spirit, we can do marvelous deeds. I am so happy to still be here and to tell everyone about the miracles God has done to allow me to be here. May the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be pleasing to You, my God. Blessings of New Life in the Spirit to all.

+Robert



God bless us all!

***Robert Ortega***

## THE MINISTRY OF Arch Bishop Maurice D. McCormick, SCJ, BS, M.Ed., M.Div. Ed.D.



Licensed Professional Clinic Counselor (LPCC) KY  
 Certified Batterer Intervention Provider (CBIP) domestic violence -KY  
 Certified Sex Offender Treatment Counselor (CSOT) - KY  
 Certified Pastoral Counselor (CPC)  
 Licensed Living Love Counselor (LLC)



Ordained. priest by +Norman Parr in 1983.

Functioned as a Campus Minister at Jefferson Community College in Louisville where I taught psychology from 1968-88 years. Started a wedding ministry during this 20 year period.

>>

Moved to Ft. Myers, Florida in 1989. Started my first church, Agape of Jesus Old Catholic Church. Took over a vacant community church. Had Sunday Masses at 8 am and 10:30 am. Continued the wedding ministry. Started the church from scratch, ran newspaper ads, hung flyers at Laundromats, college bulletin boards, etc.

> Advertised in phone books under churches and wedding chapel (you remember telephone books-yellow pages)

> I was consecrated a bishop along with John Paul Hozvicka by Bishop Norman Parr

> around 1992. (Don't have my dates with me now). Later had other bishops lay hands on me.





Established Agape Seminary and have been training men for the clergy since then. Co-founded St Thomas Old Catholic theological Seminary in Florida.

[www.AgapeSeminaryLouisville.weebly.com/](http://www.AgapeSeminaryLouisville.weebly.com/) <https://stocts.weebly.com>

>

Moved back to Louisville in 1993 and established Agape of Jesus church and have been the pastor in Louisville for 30 years now. 2 masses every Sunday.

> [www.AgapeofJesusChurch.jimdofree.com](http://www.AgapeofJesusChurch.jimdofree.com)

>

Left the Independent Old Catholic Church around 2014 because they were wanting to officiate same sex weddings, and established the Charismatic Old Catholic Church with Bishop Robert Ortega, El Paso, Texas.

> [www.coccna.org](http://www.coccna.org)

>

> My wedding ministry has slowed down since the internet, but from 1993 to 2023, I have officiated over 2,000 weddings. Mostly divorced Roman Catholics that didn't want to go through an annulment. But lots of Christians that just wanted to get married. A lot of couples I married were unchurched, and started coming to my church. [www.LouisvilleWeddingMinister.yolasite.com](http://www.LouisvilleWeddingMinister.yolasite.com)

>

> I have a secular Ed.D., and M.Ed in counseling psychology and M.Div. In pastoral counseling. (attended Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in Louisville, Bellarmine Catholic Univ and Spalding Catholic Univ in Louisville, and still audit classes at Louisville Bible College (Christian/Church of Christ)

> I have been doing pastoral counseling (Catholic/Christian/Spiritual) since 1993.

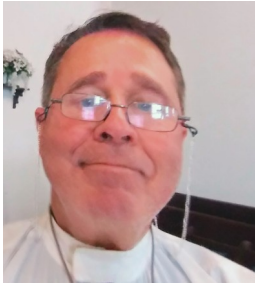
> [www.LifeManagementClinic.yolasite.com](http://www.LifeManagementClinic.yolasite.com)

>

> My wife of 57 years died 4 years ago. I have 2 adult children, 5, grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. Former Marathon Runner, finished the Boston Marathon, New York Marathon. Coached College Baseball for 14 years. Threw out the first pitch on my 80 TH birthday at the Louisville Bats AAA baseball game (Farm team of Reds)

God bless the COCC , its members and its work.

## THE MUTE MISSIONARY



**Monsignor David A. Brown DD, DDPC, resides in Huntington Texas with his wife Terry where he provides psychological services for the community and pro bono work in the church.**

I met a man who flew to Burundi, Africa. He was trying to do good work. He had big plans to help people find a better place in life and

**No One understood a word he was saying!**

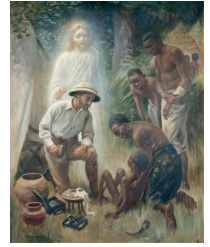
the way to heaven. He had planned to talk to them and present the gospel in various ways. He had brought all the sundries required to talk to ten people during a daily meal. He had done all his prep work for what he hoped would be God's will. You see, he was a man with many degrees, studied for years seeking the insights of God's word and was a fine apologist who could hold his own in an argument and was ready to fight the great fight.

Upon arriving in the country, he found that no one understood what he was saying. Starting with the taxi cab driver at the airport, staff where he slept, and everyone on the streets; this continued throughout his entire stay. Every time he spoke in English, people would respond in Swahili. It was apparent that he would make no inroads by preaching the gospel in this country. He wondered why he had come, stopped, prayed, and asked what he should do. The Lord was quick to respond and said to feed my flock.

The next day, he went to the market and found some peas, beans and rice for sale. He bought five pounds of each and bagged them into individual bags so a person could receive enough food for the day. He went to the streets, alleys, rivers, jungles and byways and found those begging and needing something to eat. Each day, he continued buying food and finding those in need.

He displayed a cross and would wear a shirt that had a depiction of Christ on it. When the people saw him, they would cry out Jesus in Swahili, French or Burundi. The people near those yelling would smile and wave as they saw charity being given to needy people. As the days passed, people in the area became aware of who he was and would wave and call out Jesus from across the street, out of the jungle or from the river while he crossed the bridges. He could only wave back and know God had made the way. These were the only words he heard for a month that he actually understood.

Not all moments were happy and calm. At times, those influenced by evil would confront and try to intimidate him. He trusted that God had sent angels to be his bodyguards. He would pray for those in peril and confront evil whenever it reared its ugly head. He knew he was in the enemy's stronghold but knew that his God was God and that Christ commanded him to go and fight the good fight.



He went home, knowing the trip was nothing like he expected. There were no tremendous eloquent speeches. No great crowds of people eager to hear the next word. Instead, people could meet a Christ that met their needs and shared love without reservation. People throughout the land received nutrition even if they did not take a food bag, for the Spirit goes before us; the hidden manna revives the soul. The community saw Christ in their mist, loving them as many had never seen. He will never know what fruit will grow from what was planted, but he hopes that in heaven, he will know the souls that found hope in Christ.

May Christ be with you all as you continue your missions that God has put before you.

Love always, your brother,

Monsignor David

## MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS TODAY NEED MORALITY *Fr. Ken*



**Dr Ken Lambert, DMin** is a senior contributing member of the COCC Shofar magazine And instructor at Agape of Louisville and St Thomas OCC Seminaries. Dr Ken is a prolific writer and published author with keen insights on the Historic aspects of religion.

Where do our children (or society's children) learn about morality? Especially during the middle school years, which are often difficult and the onset of adolescence and all which that entails. They are learning about adult themes and responsibilities. They are young enough to still be molded, perhaps a bit easier than being 17 or 18 years old-in high school.

**Is "morality" taught in public schools? My experience is- not really, or not at all.**

Some peripheral things are taught in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade: tolerance, kindness, acceptance. Those are fine traits- but there is so much more that is essentially ignored in most school settings.

**What is right and what is wrong? What is good, and what is evil? Is evil even a real thing?**

What is truth? The trends over the past 20-25 years generally are that you can have your truth and I can have my truth- and those truths do not have to align. Are there agreed-upon absolute truths? In the USA aside from maybe 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder, there are very few absolute truths it seems.

My children are 12 years old, and in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. We still send them every week to Sunday School, though we were very close to not doing so this year. We almost didn't do it last year. Our kids don't necessarily "want" to go there- and of course this is a common theme amongst teens or preteens.

Last Sunday I was dropping off the boys at the Sunday School class, and I saw the youth minister. I try to be friendly and engaged in what they are doing and speaking about. So I asked him what they were going to be learning about today, in the 75 minute session.

"Morality", he responds.

So I said, "Ah, morality. Excellent. I'm sure you can cover all of that in today's class."

It was meant as somewhat of a joke, and we both chuckled a bit- knowing naturally that volumes of books and lifetimes of struggle have been dealing with morality down throughout the centuries.

But, as a parent, I want my kids to spend the 75 minutes talking about and learning about Christ's lessons on morality. What does it mean? How do I

know I am being moral? What happens when I (or they) do something that might be immoral? What next? Children today in this country need all the help and guidance they can get.

Growing up now, with all the societal ills and with pervasive social media as well, is quite difficult and youngsters can fall off the rails pretty easily and quickly.

I want my kids to have as much positive reinforcement as possible, regarding what is right and what is wrong. It won't be from TV, or music, or pro sports. Or YouTube. A small amount can come from the school.

Much will come from my wife and I, we hope. And a good amount should come from church and from its associated youth ministry. 75 minutes learning about morality is about 74 minutes more than most unchurched kids do in 18 years, unfortunately. Let's try to change that- one preteen at a time.

**MIDDLE  
SCHOOL KIDS  
TODAY NEED  
MORE  
"MORALITY"  
INSTRUCTION**

*Dr Ken*



## WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

*Fr. Hal West*

**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.**



The season of Advent is coming upon us. For the Christian it is a time of joyous anticipation of the remembrance of Christ's first coming. Clergy will break out their vestments with the brighter colors that serve to remind us of the festive nature of the time, Our churches will likewise be adorned. Vibrant plants and flowers will surround the altars. A Christmas tree and other familiar signs of the season will appear along with the manger scene that will await the presentation of the baby Jesus. There will be Christmas pageants and wonderful music. Many of our children who seem disinterested the rest of the year will be watching in wide-eyed

wonder. The transformation they see growing before them is a reminder the time is soon when Santa will come. The day when they will awaken to presents under the tree.

I was reminded this year as I went into two stores at the very beginning of the month of October, that the world seems to have a different anticipation. The two stores had already had Halloween candies and decorations out, but now, Christmas decorations and supplies shared the shelf space. I seemed their joyous anticipation was for the profits that will strengthen their "bottom line". Sadly, it seems each year they choose to begin the season of profit earlier and earlier. And, worse yet, there are less and less (if any) mention of the Savior and recognition of Him as the true "reason for the season". "Merry Christmas!" has been replaced by "happy holidays" both in word and print.

The world will embrace the festivities of the season. Neighbors will compete to see who can produce the biggest and brightest display of lights, Santas, reindeer, candy canes, wreaths, and other symbols they choose with few who will design their display to focus on the birth of Jesus. All that work for a month or so of pride and happiness. They miss the whole point. The church celebrates two big events in the birth of Christ and His resurrection. But, we celebrate those events and make special recognition of them because they are the things which give us reason to have joy all year long. A reminder that we have been born anew in

Christ and will someday be raised into eternal life where festive is the norm and the joy is beyond our comprehension.

So my question to you (and to me) is, "What are YOU waiting for?" Are you anticipating the celebration of the birth of the Savior, or the office "Holiday" party and the bonus check or gift from boss that might be coming? Are you anticipating you will have and plotting to get the biggest Christmas tree on the block or the brightest and flashiest lights on your house? Are you waiting to greet people with a hearty, "Merry Christmas!" or waiting to see how they greet you lest you might offend them? Are you telling your children how we are celebrating Jesus' birthday or assuring them that you and Santa will try very hard to see that they get everything they want on their Christmas list?

My brothers and sisters, I wish you a hearty MERRY CHRISTMAS!



And, dear Jesus, I can give you no gift, no decorations, no song, that can begin to compare to the undeserved gift you have given me. I can only praise you and thank you and offer you a hearty. "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"

**Fr. Hal West**

## FINDING MOTHER MARY

Fr Tim



*Fr. Tim Schoonard, MTh, is a prolific author, artisan, and military veteran who for 30 years ministered to the Roman Church in his liturgical art apostolate. Today, with his wife Dcn. Karla, he serves across the northeastern U.S. as a healing minister and exorcist.*

I first met Karla in December of 2019. She, four years out from an abusive marriage, and I, four years out from being devastatingly widowed. Neither one of us planning to find another meaningful relationship; I had intention of becoming a hermit monk, and she, a devout and doting Christian grandmother with an active charismatic prayer ministry at her church. But, at the exhortation of our kids and clergy, that we put our hearts to the test one more time, we stepped out into the foggy unknown of attempting to try and meet someone of substance through online dating.



We certainly have an interesting story of meeting and know beyond a doubt that God arranged all circumstances so that we would marry and together eventually become a pow-

erful healing and deliverance ministry team. Our most important criteria in seeking a significant other was a devout love of Christ, and both having that, were agreeable on all other worldly life issues. However, she was 45 years into her walk as a charismatic, full gospel Protestant, and I was 38 years a hard-core faithful Roman Catholic convert. We knew we had different belief systems, but with mutual respect and support, saw no conflicts with sharing a life together. But because of our active faith lives, questions arose about certain differences between her Protestant teaching and my Roman Catholic teaching. One of them, of course, was Mary.

I served as Sacristan and Acolyte at my parish of St. Mary's, and Karla came to mass with me every week. She watched questioningly, the weekly honoring of Mary after mass, culminating in our singing of "Salve Regina". Not wanting to proselytize each other, but wanting each other to know why we believed what we did, for simple understanding, she called me to task to explain

BECAUSE OF  
OUR ACTIVE  
FAITH LIVES  
QUESTIONS  
AROSE  
BETWEEN HER  
PROTESTANT  
TEACHING  
AND MY  
ROMAN  
CATHOLIC  
TEACHING



## FINDING MOTHER MARY

Fr Tim



Marian devotion and where that was in scripture, etc. My prowess as an Apologist for Catholicism was as good as anyone I had met; however,

Karla was a walking Bible Concordance in her own right and asked me in depth questions that left me stumped quite often. I could not just explain something, she asked me to prove it to her from scripture so that she could fully understand and be at peace with honoring Mary.

She bought some books to read about it, and we spent many hours talking about it all. It still troubled her. For 45 years, as a teen Assembly of God adherent and later, most of her adult life a non-denominational full-gospel charismatic Protestant, she was taught it was a sin to honor Mary other than being the Mother of Jesus. She said the teaching didn't deny Mary was the Mother of God, but that no one dared to actually say it, thinking it would be somehow blasphemous, so she said that the role of Mary, outside of the Nativity aspect, was basically dropped. She was taught that Christ was the only intercessor to the Father, and the only way through the door of the impervious walls of Heaven was through Jesus with the Holy Spirit. The saints in Heaven were oblivious to the earthly drama and turned away from us to give all their attention to praising God. The imagery in the Book of Revelation of the saints carrying the incense of our prayers to the throne of God was restricted to the end of times. Praying to the Mother of God, or

honoring Mary were incomprehensible and incredulous for obvious reasons.

I gave her a Miraculous Medal that was the last of a handful I had left that had been blessed by Pope Benedict XVI while on a pilgrimage to Rome in 2012, in hopes that if she wore it, perhaps God would send her an interior understanding of something so foreign to her life-long belief system. She wore it daily as she sought to find peace with this quandary in her Spirit. She knew it seemed right on the face of it, but it sure didn't set right. Her daily prayer implored God that she wanted everything He had to offer and did not want to restrict His bounty in any way, but if it was okay to speak to and honor Mary, He had to let her know because she didn't want to be deceived. She added a prayer to Mary, asking her if she could really hear her to let her know this. Karla yearned in hope for this Heavenly Mothering because of the pain she still dealt with from the consequences to her and her children from decades of spousal abuse. She wanted this possible relationship with the mother of the Lord but didn't want to accept such a thing just because someone told her it was so.



## FINDING MOTHER MARY

Fr Tim

After months of study, prayer, and quandary, while visiting me in the country and sitting on the patio alone praying, suddenly the Holy Spirit spoke, “Karla the Gospel of Luke, 1:26-45.” In an instant, her prayers had been answered. Elizabeth echoed the greeting of the Angel Gabriel, “God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored that the mother of my Lord should visit me!”



Karla was made to clearly understand that nowhere in the Gospels did Christ condemn Elizabeth’s honoring of Mary. Paul never condemned it either, or neither did any other writers in the New Testament. She rushed to me when I arrived, wide-eyed and excited, to tell me the news! That week after mass, Karla went to Mary’s altar and wept. I listened as she apologized to Mary that so many years had gone by that she could have honored her and had a relationship with her but had never known it was possible.

Karla learned to the Rosary prayers and began reciting them nearly every day. On our wedding day, in 2020, at Karla’s request, we stood before the altar of Mary, and I sang the Salve Regina. Karla could never settle with what seemed to her to be many unscriptural Pharisaical rules, enforced by what had been publicly revealed to be a largely corrupt hierarchy, and never became a Roman Catholic. Several years later though on August 6, 2023, in Louisville, Kentucky, Karla was Ordained by Archbishop Maurice McCormick, a Deaconess of the Charismatic Old Catholic Church! Thanks be to God.





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**Contact editor to list your weekly celebration and to welcome our  
brothers and sisters to join your local Worship!**

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DIOCESIS DE SAN RAFAEL  
ARCÁNGEL**

**Misa Dominical en español  
Via Zoom al las 2:15 PM EST  
Visitanos en el canal de YOUTUBE  
"ANTIGUA IGLESIA CATÓLICA  
CARISMÁTICA DE SAN RAFAEL"**



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