

Catholic Organizing in the Anthropocene

Kevin Glauber Ahern, PhD

10:30 - 11:10: (re)Discovering a Spirituality of Action
11:10 - 11:20: Break
11:20- Noon: Forming Structures of Grace

PART I: (RE)DISCOVERING A SPIRITUALITY OF ACTION

~What does spirituality mean to you?

~What does it mean to be a lay Catholic?

Matthew 25: 40: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least of my people, you did for me.”

Matthew 7:24-27: “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise person who built their house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built their house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

Acts 2:4: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”

James 2:14-16, 26: “What good is it...if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save them? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day and one of you says to them “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? ...For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without action is dead.”

“Jesus does not hold back; instead, he gets involved in people’s pain and their need... **Compassion leads Jesus to concrete action: he reinstates the marginalized!**...I urge you to serve the Church in such a way that Christians - edified by our witness - will not be tempted to turn to Jesus without turning to the outcast, to become a closed caste with nothing authentically ecclesial about it. I urge you to serve Jesus crucified **in every person who is emarginated, for whatever reason**; to see the Lord in every excluded person who is hungry, thirsty, naked; to see the Lord present even in those who have lost their faith, or turned away from the practice of their faith, or say that they are atheists; **to see the Lord who is imprisoned, sick, unemployed, persecuted; to see the Lord in the leper – whether in body or soul - who encounters discrimination!** We will not find the Lord unless we truly accept the marginalized!” (Pope Francis’s *Homily to New Cardinals*, 2/15/15)

PART II: FORMING STRUCTURES OF GRACE

~Where do you see *effective* lay action?

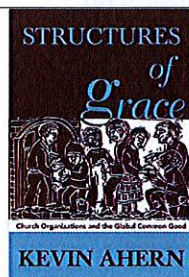
~What do you think prevents the formation of engaged lay Catholics?

“Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste and harmed with impunity. **Cowardice in defending it is a grave sin.** We see with growing disappointment how one international summit after another takes place without any significant result. There exists a clear, definite and pressing ethical imperative to implement what has not yet been done. We cannot allow certain interests – interests which are global but not universal – to take over, to dominate states and international organizations, and to continue destroying creation. People and their movements are called to cry out, to mobilize and to demand – peacefully, but firmly – that appropriate and urgently-needed measures be taken...I would like to repeat: **the future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize.** It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change.” (Pope Francis to Popular Movements 9 July 2015)

“Isolated individuals can lose their ability and freedom to escape the utilitarian mindset, and end up prey to an unethical consumerism bereft of social or ecological awareness. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds.” (*Laudato Si'*, 219)

SAMPLE GROUP STRUCTURE FOR THE REVIEW OF LIFE METHOD

10 min	Opening Prayer	15 min	ACT: Witnessing to God's Kingdom
10 min	Check in / updates <i>Select an issue to address</i>		<i>How are we called to respond as persons and as a group?</i>
15 min	SEE: Examining the Issue <i>What is happening and why?</i> <i>What interests are at stake?</i>		<i>What will we do?</i> <i>How will we do it and evaluate it?</i>
15 min	JUDGE: Analysis <i>What does this mean in light of Scripture and the Catholic Tradition?</i>	5 min	Closing Prayer



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