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Meeting urges persistence for church renewal

by NCR Staff



Liturgical ministers shared their thoughts on the parable of "A Knock at Midnight" (Luke 11:5-13), the theme of the conference. (NCR photo/Joshua McElwee)

Celebration, the worship resource of *National Catholic Reporter*, held its second annual conference on effective liturgy July 21-23 in Chicago. The three-day meeting brought together professionals involved in worship under the theme "A Knock at Midnight," taken from one of Jesus' parables about persistence in prayer.

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Speakers included Gabe Huck, Benedictine Sr. Mary Collins, Fr. Roger Vermalen Karban, Wes Howard-Brook, Denise Simeone and Grayson Warren Brown. The speakers addressed the many challenges that confront worshipping communities at a time of national crisis and tension within the church. Mercy Sr. Theresa Kane spoke at the conference luncheon on July 22, the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala, on the question: "Woman, Why Are You Weeping?" (See accompanying story.)

Huck, who served for 26 years as director of the Chicago archdiocese's Liturgy Training Publications, traveled to the conference from Damascus, Syria, where he and his wife, Theresa Kubasak, have lived since 2005, engaged in peace initiatives.

In his keynote, Huck addressed the 'ecclesial midnight' faced by those who have dedicated their lives to implementing the vision of the church promulgated in the documents of Vatican II, urging persistence and hope in the face of resistance to change and attempts to restore worship more suited to a monarchical model of the church.

Huck praised Fr. Gerard Sloyan, present at the meeting, for his long service at The Catholic University of America in Washington and with the Liturgical Conference, a national network of reformers started in Chicago in the 1940s. Their efforts, Huck said, unified Christian formation, Bible study, liturgy and justice. This integration of the basic elements of Christian living was a key to energizing both Catholic worship and involvement in civil rights, global disarmament and the push for economic justice.

Kane's remarks on the struggle of women in the church drew special attention because of her support for women's ordination, a cause that the Vatican's Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith recently called a 'grave crime against the sacrament of ordination.'

To see edited portions of Sr. Theresa Kane's talk read 'In the fullness of time, God's purpose will be revealed'

For the extended version of Kane's talk read Sr. Theresa Kane speaks on effective liturgy at Celebration conference in Chicago

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