



# Ascension–Alliance for Spiritual Renewal

A MOVEMENT RICH IN SPIRIT ... WITHOUT CEILING

## Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1 • January, 2010

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- Affiliated Communities**
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  - Spiritus Abbey Community  
Portland, Oregon
  - Celtic Cross Community  
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*Please give us a call, e-mail, or letter. We'd love to hear from you.*

### Aspire, Grow, Transcend Ordination Program!

ASCENSION–An Alliance for Spiritual Renewal is born. It is both a Church and mystical movement – without ceiling, walls, or affiliation with any other ecclesiastical body. Emerging from a small mission community it strives to be a spiritual “stagecoach stop” for pilgrims and small faith communities called and gathered for the opportunity to experience spiritual renewal, maximum self-determination, and fellowship with like-minded sojourners.

We are born of a “Free Catholic” vision, in the tradition of a fledgling “Independent Catholic” movement, inspired by the intuitions of the “Emerging Church,” and following the example of the “Jewish Renewal” movement. We are really part of a much larger stirring of Spirit that beckons us to transcend old ways that no longer work and ascend to higher levels of consciousness and spiritual living. To use a metaphor from New Testament scripture: Don’t put new wine into old wineskins.

In keeping with the wisdom of spiritual reflection, we can say we are open to exploring new insights in conversation with and respect for ancient traditions.

If your own Spirit resonates with what you’re reading, perhaps you’re already part of the ASCENSION vision and didn’t realize it.

At this time we are building a network of affiliated communities and an ordination program that will serve them. If you are interested in exploring an affiliation with us, now might be a good time for you to contact us.

We have recently launched a highly decentralized program of study that offers structured guidance and mentorship for those willing to undergo rigorous study and practice that may lead to ordination as a “barefoot priest” within the context of spiritual renewal. The core faculty include clergy and educators known for their scholarship, spiritual depth, passion, and creativity.

Each candidate is asked to master sacred scripture, engage in purposeful prayer, learn traditional liturgy, and achieve an understanding of mysticism in its various forms. In addition, each is called on to engage with and develop their creativity in an exploration of new expressions of ritual, art, music, and prayer. Active engagement with our approach to spirituality, celebration, prayer, learning, community-building, and healing, is intended to prepare the seminarian for a rich and creative spiritual life of love and service.

Students develop a learning covenant in collaboration with a formation committee and pursue their studies in a variety of venues according to their needs and local resources.

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## ***Priest Ordained to Serve Portland Community***

On January 3, 2010 the Spiritus Abbey Community of Portland, Oregon, saw their minister, Rev. Charles Cooper, become an ordained "free" Catholic priest.

Held at Saints Peter and Paul Episcopal Church, Cooper was ordained by Bishop Alan Kemp, Presiding Bishop of the newly formed Ascension–Alliance for Spiritual Renewal. A Methodist minister for over thirty years, Father Chuck already had a Doctor of Ministry degree from Claremont. He completed additional course work in our ordination program to prepare him for sacramental ministry. Local Anglican, Methodist, and Independent Catholic clergy participated. Members of Portland's Jewish and Islamic communities were also represented. Father Chuck serves the interfaith community as Executive Director of the Institute for Progressive Spirituality. He is deeply loved.

## About Ascension Renewal

**One small branch of the mystical body**

- **Rich in Spirit ... Without Ceiling.** We are born of a "Free Catholic" vision, in the tradition of a fledgling "Independent Catholic" movement, inspired by the intuitions of the "Emerging Church," and following in the example of Jewish Renewal. We require rigorous preparation for ordained ministry but encourage maximum self-determination and a creative response to the needs of today's world. Our bishops and priests trace their "apostolic succession" as far back as that of even the most ancient of Christian communions.

- **We are about fellowship, the spiritual path, and love.** We strive to be a fellowship of spiritual pilgrims. Without imposing dogma, we give ourselves and others the freedom and encouragement we need to live the truth and become ever more renewed and transformed. For us, Christ's ministry is the law of love and truth. Saint Augustine may have said it best, "Love and do as you will."

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