



Winter 2015-2016



*"... She will bear a son
and you are to name him
Jesus, because he will
save his people from
their sins." All this took
place to fulfill what the
Lord had said through
the prophet: "Behold, the
virgin shall be with child
and bear a son, and they
shall name him
Emmanuel," which means
"God is with us."*

-- Matthew 1:21-23

2016 Annual Meeting

The Bridges Foundation, Inc. is changing its location for its Open Annual Meeting. Over the last several years it was held in the Loyola Room in Jesuit Hall. Even though the Bridges Foundation is grateful to the Jesuit Community for sharing its space, a change in location is deemed advisable due to location and parking. The Board decided to have the meeting following an already scheduled program. It is customary to hold the Annual Meeting in February of each year. The Foundation's 2015 Annual Report will be available. A report from each of the committees will be given. A Listening Session for all prayer companions with board members will be held. Mark your calendar with the following information:

Invitation to 2016 Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2016

12:15pm (including a light lunch) – 3:30pm

Location:

Webster Groves Christian Church

1320 W. Lockwood

St. Louis, MO 63122

RSVP by February 9, 2016 to

Cheryl Rauschenbach @ 636-225-8433 or

cheryl.rauschenbach@bridgesfoundation.org



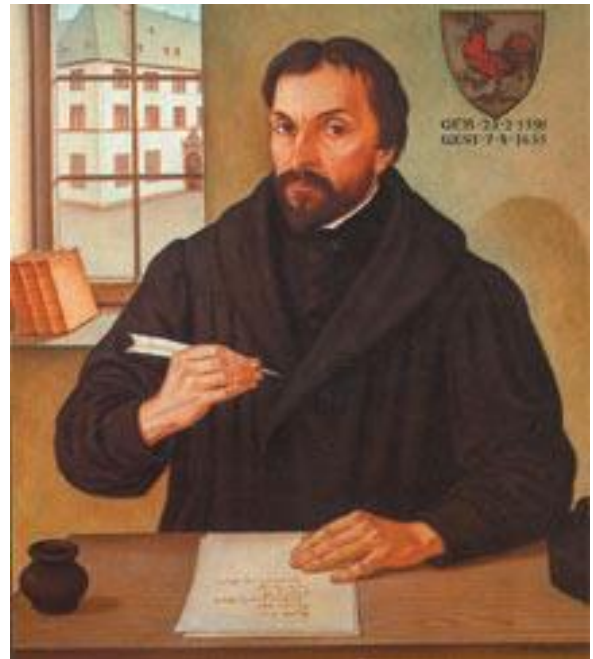
Friedrich Spee, S.J. 1591-1635

Friedrich Spee (a.k.a. Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld, and sometimes erroneously referred to as Friedrich von Spee) was a 17th century German Jesuit priest who was an outspoken critic of torture and of false allegations of witchcraft, many of which led to executions of innocent people.

Spee was born in Kaiserswerth (now part of the city of Düsseldorf), on the Rhine River in western Germany, on February 25, 1591. He received his early education at Cologne before entering the Society of Jesus in 1610. He spent a number of years writing poetry and teaching in a variety of cities and towns across Germany. Ordained in Mainz in 1622, he became a professor at the University of Paderborn two years later, and survived an assassination attempt in 1629. Over time Spee was a professor and a confessor at different locations around Germany, including Wesel, Trier and Cologne.

Sorcery and witchcraft today are associated by many with horror movies and Halloween costumes, but for many centuries were things that were very real to a great many people. Women's roles in seventeenth century Europe often included gardening, midwifery, and healing, which led many to associate them with using herbs and potions, standing over cauldrons, and various other things that came to be associated with witchcraft. Witch hunts were common, and men, women and children were accused in many places across Europe, particularly the British Isles, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, but much less often in Italy and Spain. Villages had witchcraft councils. Over time it came to be associated with women more often than not.

There were accusations and trials leading to torture, confessions that were often of dubious authenticity, and executions, often done by burning at the stake. The most well-known of these involved St. Joan of Arc in France, who was executed by burning in 1431.



Friedrich Spee, S.J.

The notion of witchcraft and its implications was taken up by Friedrich Spee. Although he believed as many did in his time that witches did exist, he was concerned with the large number of cases in which the accused seemed to be convicted without a careful examination of the facts. Spee visited with the accused and condemned, often as a confessor, and came to believe that many simply had no complicity in the charges against them. He accompanied a number of the falsely accused to the implementation of their death sentence. And he was an advocate of holding judges responsible for their actions.

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Friedrich Spee, S.J.
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Spee was strongly against the use of torture as a means of obtaining confessions, especially via the brutal use of the rack, which was common. It was his belief that many innocent people would confess simply because it was the only way to stop the pain, and he argued that the



Spee's *Cautio Criminalis*

accused should be given access to a competent defense. One undergoing torture could end it with either the truth or with lies, which Spee found inconsistent with logic or common sense. He thought if the one enduring the duress remained silent and was then found to be guilty, it would imply that everyone was guilty. He put forth his theories in a work known as *Cautio Criminalis* (Precautions for Prosecutors), which answered 52 questions and at first was published anonymously and without Spee's sanction. *Cautio Criminalis* became very well known and led to the cessation of witchcraft trials in some places and a diminishing emphasis on witchcraft in many others, although it continued in practice for many more decades.

He devoted much of his time in later years to writing. His works *Goldenes Tugendbuch* (Golden Book of Virtues), a book of devotion, and *Trutznachtigall*, a collection of about fifty or sixty sacred songs, were published after his death. Spee taught at Trier and when that city was attacked by imperial forces in March, 1635, he dedicated his efforts to the care of the suffering. He was stricken with an infection while doing hospital work, and died as a result a short time later, on August 7, 1635. He is regarded today as a steadfast opponent of the use of torture as a means of getting truthful information from those who suffer its belligerence, and of torture in general, as well as of the witchcraft trials that were prominent in his day.

Sister Marian Cowan, C.S.J.
1932-2015

We mourn the loss of longtime Bridges contributor Sister Marian Cowan, C.S.J. Sister Marian has been with Bridges since the early days, and has made enormous contributions to various programs over the years, including Prayer Companions, Bridges II and Magis. She is the co-author, with John C. Futrell, S.J., of *Companions in Grace: Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, a book that is a favorite of many Bridges prayer companions. Sister Marian suffered from pneumonia and died on November 7. May she rest in peace.



Marian Cowan, C.S.J.

*Best wishes for
peace, health and
happiness during the
holidays and all year
long*



Teilhard's Nephew Interviewed for Teilhard de Chardin Project

Information has been compiled regarding Henri du Passage, nephew of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, with Frank Frost, Director of the Teilhard de Chardin Project, and Marie Bayon de la Tour, Teilhard's great niece, at interview time in Paris.

Official shooting for the Teilhard de Chardin documentary was launched in Paris in September 2015, beginning with key

interviews. Most important among these was Henri du Passage, Teilhard's 93-year-old nephew by marriage.

Henri was the master of the Teilhard family estate known as Les Moulins. He met Teilhard when, at the age of 26, he married the daughter of Teilhard's brother Joseph in 1947. Teilhard visited Moulins during the summers of 1948, 1949, and 1950, each time spending a month there for rest, writing, and his annual Spiritual Exercises.

What emerges from Henri's stories is a portrait of a man with a zest for life, who bonded deeply to the world of nature that shaped him as a boy; a man of humility, who willingly shared in the down and dirty tasks of the estate; a man with a good sense of humor and of deep spirituality, who would sometimes go into a trance during his celebration of Mass in the chateau's chapel. He also witnessed Teilhard at a time of Teilhard's greatest disappointment. In 1948 Henri picked his uncle up from the train station an hour from Moulins on the occasion of Teilhard's return from making his case to Fr. General in Rome. Teilhard was seeking publication permission for *The Human Phenomenon* and permission to accept teaching positions he had been offered at Collège de France and the Museum of Natural History. The official answers were not given in person in Rome, but by letter a couple of weeks later: "no" to all permissions. In addition Teilhard was exiled again from France, this time to the United States.

Excerpts of the interview can be found on the website of the Teilhard de Chardin Project at www.teilhardproject.com.

-- *Katherine Rucinsky*

Bridges Faith Sharing Retreat October 24, 2015

Reflection on the Day of Faith Sharing

[Editor's Note: Bridges held its Faith Sharing Retreat for current retreatants and prayer companions at CSJ-Carondelet on October 24. One of the retreatants who was there that day, Penny Durban, provided us with her thoughts on the experience.]

Two words stand out for me – trust and intimacy.

Trust was what made our day together possible. We responded to each question asked with openness. I never feared being judged, rejected or avoided. If others in the group feared this, they “risked to trust” and it was beautiful and life affirming. When we went around at the final request of telling how we saw Christ in one another, I was surprised and warmed by the joy, the love, and the depth of appreciation people had for one another. We seemed to see with the eyes of Jesus and with His love.



That day we also shared the painful parts of our lives and our struggles. We each had our time to reveal and be transparent. But much of what I remember is my respect for each brave person who is seeking a deeper relationship with God, our common journey and the unique paths we're on to get there. In our sharing with each other in our group all that mattered to me was

feeling “at home” with these people and my happiness at having the privilege of being faith sharers together.

Further thoughts that I am having are to not guess about who anyone is! As our lives unfolded that day, each of us became who they are rather than what I imagined! Their lives were/are so rich, beyond my imagining.

Another awareness came from the prayer companions: that our seeking God and learning to be more like Jesus never ends! This may be obvious, I suppose, but refreshing to know we are all brothers and sisters with no superior/inferior order.

My last thought is, I will hold that day dear in my heart and wonder why we can't live every day in this world like that! Yet I feel hopeful.

-- Penny Durban

This is the newsletter of the Bridges Foundation of St. Louis. The newsletter is published quarterly and distributed as a PDF file via email, free to anyone who would like to receive it. Thank you to the contributors to this issue: Penny Durban, Katherine Rucinsky, Miriam Wesselmann SSND, and Tom Simon.

Quarterly issues are sent late in the months of March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submission of material is on the 15th day of each of those months for inclusion in the issue to be mailed later that month. Look for your next issue around the time that the seasons change.

The deadline for submissions to the next issue of the Bridges Newsletter is March 15, 2016. Please send articles, letters, mailing list additions and deletions, and other correspondence to: Tom Simon, Editor, 1730 Derrynane, Manchester, MO 63021, or by email to tsimon@tsimon.com.