

THE ORDER:ECUMENICAL

I'm Lyn Mathews. I've been assigned to do the ninth lecture in a series of ten lectures during the GRA. As I counted it up, with this morning's lecture we've had about 125 years of Order experience or Order corporate living behind these lectures, for better or for worse. It's been the old hands giving these lectures. As Justin said yesterday, they've been very exciting to me. I hope that somehow or other they all get pulled together and distributed because they have been going back and reclaiming our past in order that we may glean all of our best wisdom out of that to move into what all of us sense to be a very radically new future.

The lectures have been two on the New World, two on the New Mood, which is the World of Hope--or Hope Beyond Hope--, two on the New Style and two on the New Form. It was very good of Justin to announce that I was giving the lecture this morning, because I cannot describe to you the incredible care that I received all day yesterday. You will not believe, but this is true, that at 7:30 last night, there was a knock on my door. There were two of my colleagues with a tray with wine and a candle lighted and burning--all the way from wine to mince pie. That had been preceded by a knock on my door at 5:30 when a colleague came in and said, "Lyn, I have a lecture for you to give tomorrow." We sat down and spent about an hour and a half going over one of the most fabulous lectures I have ever encountered. But you're not going to hear it this morning. I sort of regret that. I was tempted to say, "Why don't you get up and give that lecture tomorrow?" Then someone yesterday brought me a timeline that has the twenty-year journey laid out, quarterly designs, weekly designs. Then this morning when I came down, I had a flower on my plate. Just that kind of graciousness that is present in our Order is really quite overwhelming.

The title of my lecture is very profound, if not prosaic. It's just the Order: Ecumenical. I'm not going to be saying much of anything new up here this morning. I want to spend some time on the Role of an Order in History, the Profile of the Pluriform Order, the Order's Presence, and then the Religious House. Now, I thought that what Justin did yesterday by way of a ritual was great. When you sort of experience something great, the propensity is to duplicate it. I am going to ask you to repeat after me: All that is, is good; I am received; The past is approved; the future is open. Having said that together, I could really sit down because it is that contentless word about the way life is that releases us to experience the deeps of our humanness and that gives us the courage to go about our task.

Let's take a look at the Role of an Order. Kaye Hayes came up to me yesterday morning and asked me the question, "Why did we decide to become an order?" I didn't have any easy answer to that. Orders do come into being in times of social disruption, in times of chaos. I do not have to document the fact that the twentieth century is a time of chaos. In fact, I was reading a book the other day in which the writers said that the twentieth century was an age of destruction. This said to me that he was not a man of faith, probably in that he did not see the radical possibility that has broken loose and which we have pointed to with resurgence in our time. There is chaos in this world. I think the technological revolution probably set it off or at least intensified it because it was through that revolution that man was given a new consciousness of what life could be. He saw

that it isn't necessary (through that revolution) to starve. It isn't necessary for babies to die of malnutrition. It isn't necessary not to have the useful skills to move out into the marketplace. It isn't necessary for whole cultures to be dominated by another culture. It isn't necessary by law to be second-class citizens. Historical necessity demanded something else. So we have had the upheaval, the chaos of our time. We've tried to talk about that in terms of the seven revolutions.

What happens in a revolution? I sometimes think that all revolutions are set off by just one person. For me, it breaks through the consciousness of one human being that history is demanding something different. Rosa Parks, in the black revolution, was such a person. Rosa had been getting on that bus and going to the back of it probably for years. Then one day, she got on that bus and something broke loose and she said, "This isn't human!" She sat down in the front of that bus. The black revolution around that event broke loose. Thousands of black people and white people joined in that revolution in our nation. After the breakloose of a revolution, you have the trauma to create the new form. At that point a kind of wildness breaks loose, a wildness of experimentation. I do believe that the wildness that terrorism around this globe represents is but the wildness of the local man revolution who has decided that he is going to have a voice in his own destiny, his own individual destiny and the destiny of his nation.

This kind of wild breakloose needs ordering. It needs a sense of order to be brought into it. Any dynamic of ordering needs form. It is at that point, in those moments of history, when the orders have come into being. For us as the Order: Ecumenical, we came into being as a group of people who decided that we would order our own life in order to instill order in the world. When Kaye asked me that question, "Why did we become an order?" I said to her--my very first response to her was that when we moved to Evanston in 1962 we had the House of the Ecumenical Institute for the seven families that made the move. There was the house to live in so we lived in it. We arrived with ten thousand dollars worth of debt. So some of us went out to work. It just seemed to me at the beginning we began to operate corporately as a very practical solution to a very practical problem. But we did move, you know, because of that urban revolution. We had forged out CS-I and decided that we wanted to be on the edge and we wanted to be in the midst of that urban revolution. At some point in time, at least in 1964, we hung the iron cross of the Order: Ecumenical in the basement of faculty west in Fifth City. At any rate, we are an historical order. We're a very strange order. We used to talk about going to Rome and getting permission, but the very real question now is who would we ask permission of in the glorious state we find ourselves in with being the pluriform Order: Ecumenical.

I would remind us that an order is always absolute nothingness. We are nothing but a sign of depth humanness. We are nothing but sheer transparency relative to the mystery, sheer transparency as to what the comprehensive, the futuristic, and the intentional needs to look like. We have no secret wisdom to impart to anyone. We only help people to perceive and experience their own humanness. I would also remind us that as an order we are absolute dedication, relative to our mission. We don't have a mission. We are the mission. I can remember sitting

in the planning meeting for this assembly back in April. Someone made the casual comment that the Order is demonstration. I hadn't thought of it that way, but we are our mission. We have corporateness which is the foundational mark of our order for the sake of mission. We are people who have an inner discipline to just know in the context of the mission what is required and then to deliver it. Finally, I think, our order is one that lives out of the principle of cruciformity and sacrificial service. We had a great time on the Panchayat trip this year. I've accused Duffy of having us arrive in Rome one day early. That gave us a day to go around and experience our roots. So we walked over to that Coliseum. We went up to the second level where you look down into the amphitheater, that amphitheater where thousands of people had decided to proclaim, to declare a new word in history, and went to their deaths. It all became pictorially clear for me as I stood there. First of all, I saw all of those early fathers standing in the midst of that coliseum. All around it are the cages where, as the story goes, there were 1000 lions that would be let loose into the amphitheater. In just a moment, I all of a sudden saw myself in the midst of that amphitheater. The question came to me, in fact an old hymn came to me out of my Sunday School past, "Are ye able?" Well, are ye able? I don't know that I would be able, colleagues, without all of you in my life.

So let's take a look at this profile of the pluriform order. What is happening each year when we gather and see the increase in numbers of our colleagues from around the globe--it just makes "your heart soar like an eagle." The wonder of our pluriformity. I find myself sometimes taking that for granted. Then I stand back and realize that we are as this order a most unusual phenomena in the midst of history. We are indeed in our composition what the future is requiring.

What is our task? Well, I could go on for a long time talking about our task. Let me just say it very briefly. It is to build the social structures that will create the environment so that the last fat lady may experience effulgent life that comes from significant engagement in creating the future on behalf of all. Now, in being that task we are a sign of hope to this world. I don't know how you experienced the reports from Madrid last year, but I got intrigued with the saga of the King's Chaplain. It got so that when the Order Report was on my plate, I'd turn to Madrid to see what he had been doing that week. When we were in Madrid, we had the opportunity in our guardians' event to meet Father Bartholome who is the King's Chaplain. He arrived--do you know how often you get images of these people who begin to be part of your world? Oftentimes when you meet them they are nothing like you imagine. Well, I will report to you that the King's Chaplain was everything that I had imagined and even more. There he was in his long white robe, with his heavy silver cross. He moved with great pomp into the midst of that guardians' event. He asked Duffy and me if he could have a conversation with us later. We spent about two hours one morning at the Madrid House with the King's Chaplain, just telling him--He was questioning us saying, "Who are you? Who are you?" So we were telling him. We were telling him who we are. At the end, he had been introduced the night before to the term "guardian," he said, "Well, what do you want me to do? Shall I join the Order or shall I be a guardian?" He said, "You people are a sign of hope. The world needs you. I want to be a part of whatever you're doing." We have been given

that task of delivering the word of possibility and creating the environment in which every last fat lady can live a fulfilled life. How many of you in this room want to be a part of that task? I want you to raise your hand. Alright, then, with that I declare you, I bless you as a member of the Order: Ecumenical.

I was addressed yesterday when Justin talked about how his images had shifted, when he said that what he's discovered was that he had always thought that it was the role of the Movemental Order to bring the wine to House Church. He'd discovered that that was all backwards, that the Symbolic and Extended Order's role was to serve that Movemental Order out there. That spoke to me. I think that what I've discovered that just overwhelmed me, filled me with a state of awe and accompanying fear and fascination that comes with awe is that we will soon be thirty thousand strong. I mean self-consciously committed to doing the task that we are about. If that happens, we can just move--we've been moving mountains--we can do the whole range in one day.

The next point on this is the dynamics of the Order--that is Symbolic, Extended, and Movemental. I have been - - I guess you've got in your packet the two triangles that teams 5 and 6 have been working on. One of them is on the sheet of paper before you. I was so grateful to see them. For years, all by myself, I've been trying to create such a triangle and I've never been able to come up with it. The one that you have on your plate is the one that uses as its screen the social process. That is the foundational pole is the Movemental. The relational pole is the Extended Order. The Symbolic Order is the significating pole. The other triangle uses the local church as its screen. That put the Extended Order on the congregation pole, the Movemental Order on the parish pole, and the Symbolic Order on the cadre pole. It's very interesting what happens to these triangles out of the screen which you use because when we go through those functions they look entirely different.

It is true what Justin said. I'll say it again. There is no difference. We are all under full-time assignment. We are all equally committed to the task. Maybe what is different is our time design relative to the amount of time that is head-on for direct engagement in the campaign. Our space is different. But the Movemental Order is just out there. We experienced this on our Panchayat trip this year. It is just out there begging for some form to be created to which it can be related. There were many dramatic examples. I do remember in particular what was called the guardians' event in Sol de Septiembre where we met in a hotel. We were sixty-five strong. Part of the conversation that Mary Coggeshall led was to go around and just ask everyone to give their names and how they got in touch with the ICA or how they knew the ICA. That was the conversation. It was the most amazing experience. What was amazing about it was that gathered in that room were people from the United Nations, people from the Peace Corps, people from the government, there were folks there from every sector. As they spelled out their relationship and why they were choosing to help us in our work, once again it was an experience of awe. The movement is just out there.

Every order has its symbols. One of the most powerful symbols is the wearing of the blue. I have the experience these days that if I get out of the blue I have to pinch myself to know who I am. The guild symbol is one of our foundational symbols. I was delighted to see Augustine Hajega because he has on this beautiful shirt and embroidered on the pocket is the guild symbol. Every order has its symbols. It is indeed a rather overwhelming experience to walk into the preschool in Vaviharsh, a remote village outside of Bombay. There you see the one piece of decor on the wall is the Iron Man. It is really something to watch the global film and see the community workdays around the globe. Or to hear the children, the preschoolers singing their songs. It's really great that our songbook this year is going to have our Phase One songs in it. That is just tremendous.

Part of who we are is just one battery of tools: impact courses, demonstration systems and all that goes with them. I have been particularly interested but not surprised that the LENS course is what is really currently taking hold of my imagination. The Post brought in a list of the number of LENS courses that we are going to be doing between now and the end of September. It's something like seventy-five. That is only the beginning. We're all going to have to learn to teach this course, that's for sure. What addresses me is that what it says to me is that that LENS course is a head-on address--it's on the pressure point of social morality. What that says to me is that the world is calling out for some new way to be socially responsible.

What about the Global Presence? It is grounded in our covenant together. We make a covenant together to work corporately to be our mission. A covenant is a promise. Do you remember as a kid--I remember that I would promise my friend that I would do something and then "cross my heart and hope to die." A covenant is something like that. Whatever this covenant is that we get articulated for ourselves for every dynamic of our Order, it will have something to do with time. That's why that marriage covenant is so overwhelming. It's very clear, you know, to love, honor and obey, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in richness and in poorness, and then it adds on "til death do us part." Believe you me, I can confess this at this point in time, that "until death do us part" saved our marriage for the first fifteen years I think about 1500 times! However we create our covenant, it is going to have something to do with time. Wiegel was telling me that he knows of an order that covenants for a year. At the end of the year they take the order out of being. Then they re-covenant for another year. That timeline that my colleague brought me, these rings--this means a life-time covenant. This has been something that's been very informal in our order. I know that when I see someone with this ring on that I do expect them to be on the firing line along side of me at the end. It will have something to do with time.

We probably do have to look at our Order classes. Actually we have to resurrect them! Most of us don't even know what the Order classes are. We have to begin working on that covenant. A covenant always has a rule. Thinking on time again, that Academy when they convene, they make a covenant for eight weeks. I will remind you of that covenant of RS-1. You sneak in that word at the beginning of the course that we're going to covenant together for forty-four hours. That has saved many a situation. I remember doing an RS-1 course in Oklahoma, when one woman at the end of the God lecture packed her bags and was walking out the door. I quickly followed her out the door and reminded her, "Don't you re-

member that you promised to stay here for forty-four hours?" It was that time frame that allowed the event to happen.

Our rule is here. Every covenant needs a rule. It is really going to be something when we sit down together--and no real hurry--but for us to begin to write this. In 1972 one of the products of a guardians meeting was calling for a rule for the guardians--as long ago as that. We're ready to begin to spell out a rule. The rule whatever it is will certainly have something to do with worship or that office which holds up every day, if not twice a day, who we intend to be and who we are in the midst of history. I say to my colleagues and no one likes this and I don't even like it either, but I don't know how else to say it. For me, Daily Office is magic. I don't get up in the morning very early. In fact I wake up most mornings and I begin the day being burdened with the claims of the day. It's hard. I'm under covenant to be at that office. That's part of the rule I've entered into. I get myself down there. Colleagues, it does not miss one morning. In that rehearsal, my life is given back to me. I am ready to walk out and stand present in radical care for the events of that day. Goods--money--I think Joe Pierce was the first to say this-- money is our stored-up selfhood. We've already decided to put all of ourself on the line. What does it look like in a rule relative to money? It means something.

Part of who we are are those vows out of which we live. Those are the classic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I asked myself, "Why do we stand present to these vows?" I think it is these vows that empower significant engagement in the midst of the civilizing process. I do believe that significant engagement requires detachment; it requires detachment from our goods and from our relations. All of us know the painful journey that is. It requires all for the sake of significant engagement in doing our missional task. The stipend, the reminder that we are nobodies, that we live out of two suitcases, that we live with the poor, all of these are symbols of that vow of poverty. I think the perversion of poverty is that I get so attached to detachment that I lose all my passion. Then I sit back because I'm so detached from everything.

The vow of chastity--willing one thing with your life, laying down one's life for the world. Symbols of that are setting our priorities, doing our checklists, wearing the blue, having brooding screens, building models to respond to the major contradiction. These are all symbols of that vow of chastity. The perversion of the vow of chastity is a kind of martyrdom, if you will, in being so chaste about our mission that we forget to take care of our bodies. We forget to take care of our spirit. If you really want to push that, when that happens, I think there's some kind of passive defiance that is going on.

The vow of obedience is just total engagement with open eyes and a joyous heart. That's familiar language. It is grounded in the principle of saying yes before you say no to any demand or any need that comes into your universe of operation. That calls for radical decision that pushes you out over 40 fathoms of ambiguity. We rehearse that in House Church when we say the yes and now and the no and the yes in our ritual of accountability. The perversion

of that vow is just blind compliance to rules. We have to have rules. We have to have our operating principles. They're absolutely essential to self-hood. However, there is perversion when we get pharisaical about those rules. Joe used to say that rules were made to be broken. Folks, that doesn't give us permission to go out and break all the rules. The perversion is to get into a phariseeism.

Benedict adds a fourth vow. That is the vow of stability. I like that. Stability is the quality that is necessary to live consistently and constantly before the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I think it is the breaking of that vow that leads to defection from the task.

When people brush up against those of us who live out of these vows, they know they've encountered the presence. They wouldn't be able to say it, but they know they've encountered something that is the "in but not of this world."

Now, the life qualities of humility, gratitude, and compassion. In the quality of humility, you allow yourself to be utterly exposed to the way life is. I had a tremendous happening several weeks back. I was walking over to the drug store. A black guy was coming toward me. When he got next to me, he said, "Hi, old lady." I was quick on the draw and said, "Hi, young squirt." You know, I'm sixty-three years old. I am Phase Four. Most of the time I deny that in a million and one ways. One of those is not picking up the responsibility to be Phase Four relative to getting my wisdom into the midst of the scene. The vow of humility allows you to know that you are a separated human being. It allows you to take into yourself the Dark Night of the Soul and eat of it. Then you can spit it out in raw creativity, if you will. It is the vow of humility that pushes you up over against forgiveness. It is that exposure that you have to say yes to the forgiveness that is already present. What we know is that then we are able to forgive even the crummiest among us.

Now the life quality of gratitude. It is gratitude for every bit of life. It is this quality which allows for a lifestyle of problemlessness. Last year, the month we were here in Chicago Nexus, I didn't experience life as not being without problems. It seemed there were so many problems to be worked through. All that bad press, I just couldn't understand it. We're such fine people, doing such great things. What do these people mean splattering us all over the front pages? One of my rituals when I go up to bed at night is that I rehearse the journey of the day. What I was forced back into doing, when all that was happening, was to recall the objective reality and say to myself, "Lyn, you are being cared for by that which is utterly unsynonymous with anything in the midst of history. You are being cared for. What is more, this order is being cared for. What is more, the whole creation, the whole world is being cared for." At that point, those problems just became contradictions. At that point, what we well know, I recalled that the contradictions are the grist out of which the future possibility is wrung.

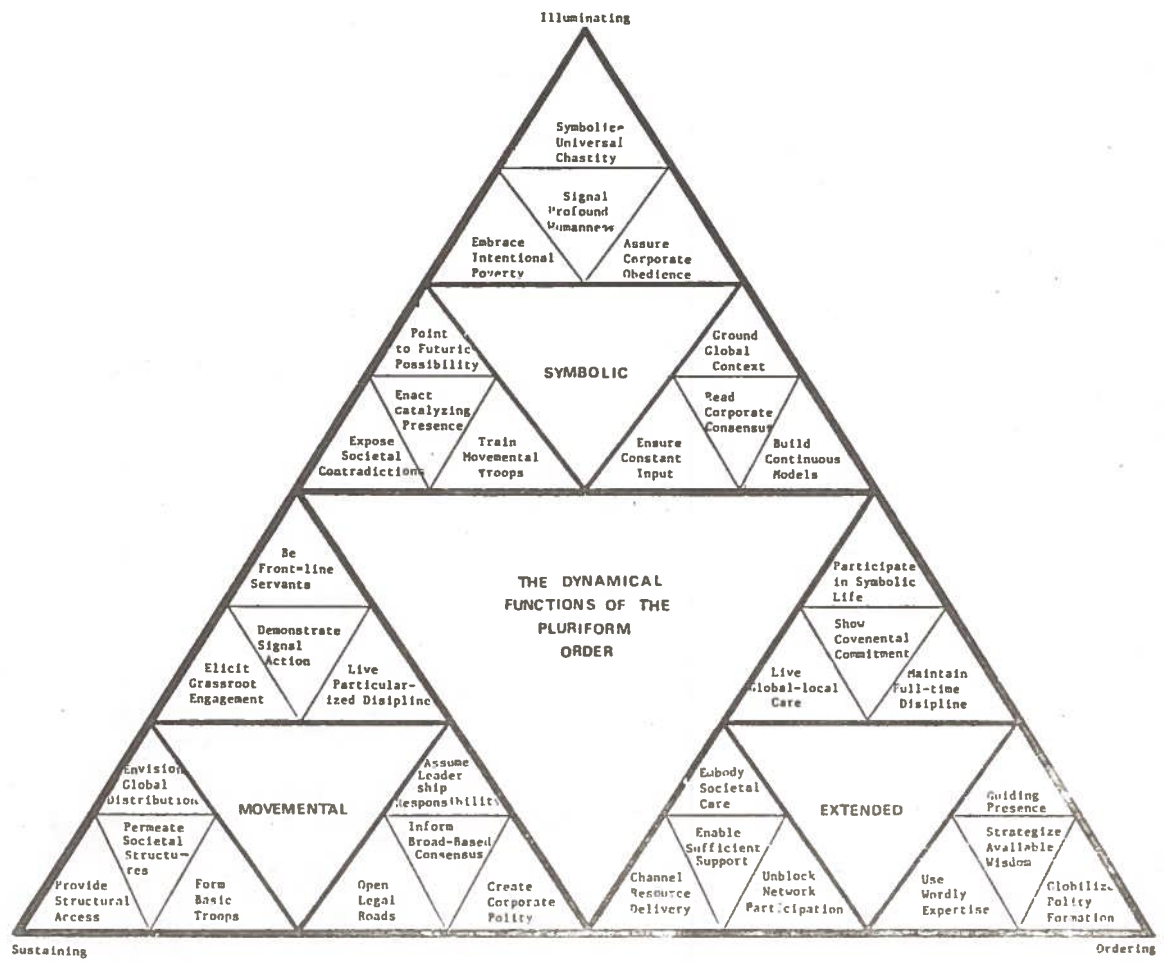
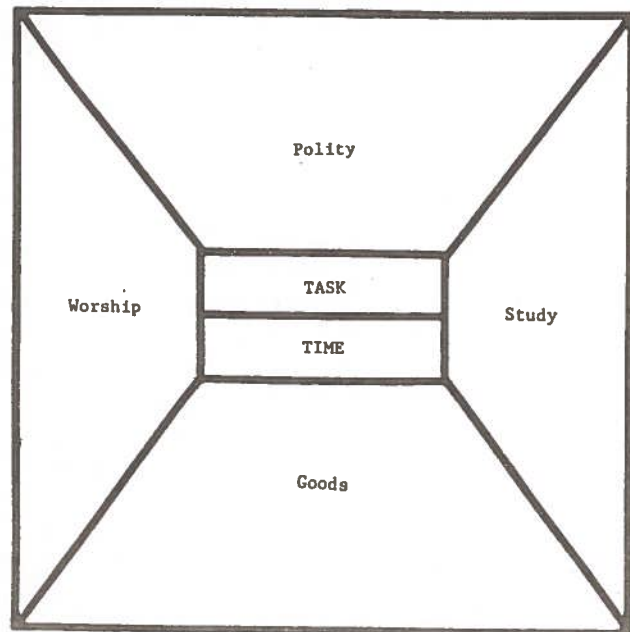
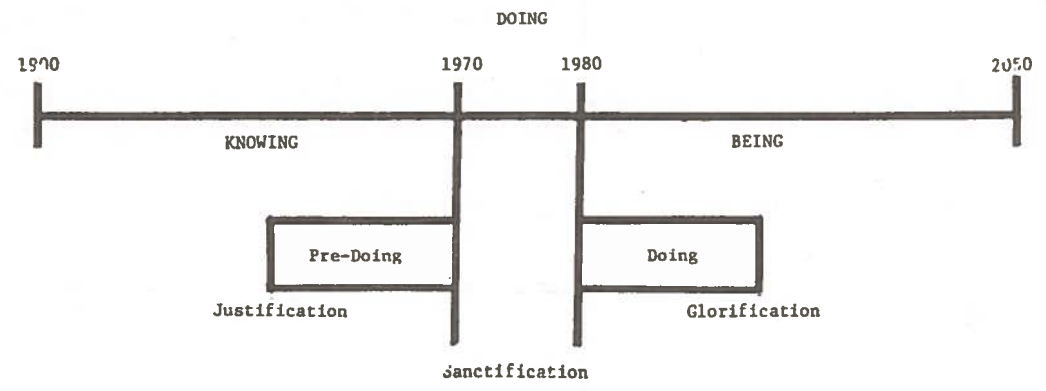
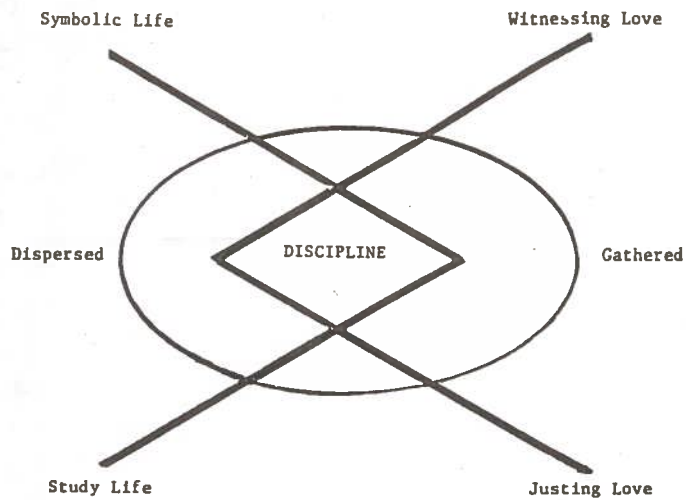
Then, the quality of compassion or care. It allows us to take into ourselves the Long March and the ineffectivity and all that we experience when we are on the Long March. It allows us to take into ourselves the pain and suffering of the whole world. We can take it into our being and stand present to it.

The paradox is that that's what the fulfilled life is all about, taking into ourselves the pain and suffering of this world.

All of this is radically and structurally present in the Religious House. I want to say, colleagues, that the best training ground we have ever built was the religious house. There is no other place where you get training in what it means to live before the vocational decision to expend your life on behalf of all. For whatever this rule is that we forge out in the next four years for the Movemental Order, it must have a period of time, I'd say a year out of every four years, where you pack up your bags and go and live in that Religious House.

I want to say by way of conclusion, (This is part of the lecture my colleague gave me and I decided I couldn't give, but I'm going to give just a little snitch of it). In the next four years, as this pluriform order, in our knowing, what we are going to discover is what it means to build the structures of teamhood. For years we have said that the team is an ontological reality in the midst of history. In the next four years, and we've begun to have a taste of it this summer, we're going to discover what it means to build the structures of teamhood. That will happen in those metro cadres out there. In our doing, we're going to do mass awakenment across this globe. That means the convergence of all our awakenment tools and all of our engagement tools. It was pointed out that every sixteen years we make a declaration. In our being, the declaration of 1980 is that we are going to focus our being on being the global pluriform order. That is what the world is calling us to be. The world is calling us to be the Order.

Last year as we went around on the Panchayat Trek, we pointed out that we have always said that the ICA was but one of our flags. God's economy has put us in a new position. He is taking down the ICA flag and what we'll soon be putting up, colleagues, is the flag of the Order:Ecumenical. That's what the world is calling for, from you and from me. The world is calling us to be the religious. Corporately, and no other way, will we have the courage to risk making that declaration about ourselves.



641 Ear life - K Hase
642 Profound ~~Iteration~~ Loop

