

# enneagram monthly

May 2015

Issue 217

## Catholic Spiritual Tradition & Enneagram

The purpose of this essay is to show how the Enneagram compares, coincides with, or further illuminates a Catholic<sup>1</sup> approach to spirituality—or at least one expression of it. The need to define the topic so narrowly here at the beginning is that Catholic spiritual tradition is broad enough to contain many spiritual traditions—each with its own charism or special emphasis. Well known examples include the Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit traditions, which might be called “spiritualities” to distinguish them from the universal Catholic spiritual tradition, with which each is sufficiently compatible that they can all be called Catholic. Moreover, Catholic spirituality is complex. The aforementioned four spiritualities, since they are largely practiced by members of the Latin (or Roman or Western) Rite, do not include the spiritual traditions of the twenty-one Eastern Catholic Churches, which in many ways are akin to the spiritual traditions of various corresponding Orthodox Catholic Churches. Thus, this essay focuses only on Latin Catholic spirituality, and within that broad category, mostly on the Jesuit model, since this is the spirituality with which the author is most familiar.

One would think that a Catholic spirituality would mesh well with the Enneagram. The very complexity of Catholic spirituality just discussed, for example, resonates with the Enneagram, which expresses the unity of all nine types

**John R. Amos JCD**



despite all their differences. All nine belong on the Enneagram equally just as the Catholic Churches—both Eastern and Western—and all the spiritualities named above belong to the one Catholic Church. Also, negative aspects of the nine personality types sound a lot like the Seven Deadly Sins, with which most Catholics would be familiar.<sup>2</sup> Positive aspects correspond to the pursuit of virtue, an activity which most Catholics have had suggested to them.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the history of the Enneagram’s spread throughout the United States and beyond it to the world suggests a fruitful connection to the Catholic Church. Father Robert Ochs, S.J. was apparently the first to learn of the Enneagram at the Esalen Institute from Claudio Naranjo, a Chilean psychiatrist credited along with Oscar Ichazo and Georges I. Gurdjieff with helping to introduce the Enneagram to the modern world. In turn, Don Richard Riso and Helen Palmer, both Catholic, learned the Enneagram from Father Ochs. Their writings, workshops, and certification programs have made Enneagram retreats and workshops a staple in many Catholic retreat houses throughout the United States and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

However, the Enneagram has been under attack from within the Catholic Church for many years. Dorothy Garrity Ranaghan published her tract, entitled *A Closer Look at the Enneagram*, in 1989.<sup>5</sup> ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

## Thoughts from EM Group’s Facebook

Short excerpt from a Facebook conversation on the *Enneagram Monthly Group* with minimal edits. Just a taste of an ongoing discussions about the merits of the enneagram, different approaches to it, and the possibilities or obstacles commonly encountered.

**Kirby Olson, Frederic Schmitt, Jack Labanauskas & Bernadette Schmitt**

**Kirby Olson:** Naranjo in *Character and Neurosis* proposes that certain archetypal homeopathic remedies correlate with enneagram numbers. Are they accurate? Naranjo uses the work of Catherine R. Coulter? Are her descriptions considered to be universally valid?

**Frederic Schmitt:** Naranjo proposes a correlation between enneatype and homeopathic remedies based on literature (C.R. Coulter), my approach was differ-

ent, a strategy explained in the

article we published in *EM* issue 199 “Homeopathy and Enneagram.” First we diagnosed which remedy was effective on a patient, then we typed the patient, and only after studying a sufficient number of cases, we would notice statistically if there was a correlation between certain remedies that worked better on certain types. So we didn’t start out by presuming that a certain remedy would belong to a certain type, that would have been too subjective.

After months of intense analysis, (gong over video tapes of consultations to determine the type of the patient and then comparing records of remedies used and their effectiveness...) we built up a data bank of correlations that were statistically significant. As to the hypothesis of Naranjo, ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

### In This Issue

Outshining Ignorance  
**Michael Damian**  
page 4

Five/Nine Couple  
**J. Schneider / R. Corn**  
page 5

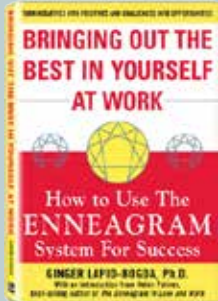
The Little Ego  
**Amy Zoll**  
page 8

Spiritual Guidance  
**3 authors**  
page 10

Review: “E for Teens”  
**Ally Marth**  
page 15



## 6-DAY TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAMS

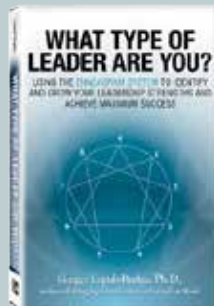


Integrates the Enneagram fully with today's most important business applications

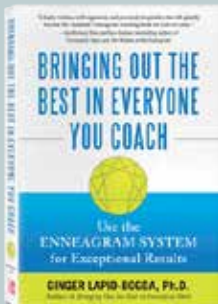
*"Like an onion, this program unfolds with layers of deep and rich learning about self, others, the Enneagram, teams, and more."*

Develops exemplary leaders using the Enneagram with 7 crucial leadership competencies

*"A state-of-the-art program – stimulating, meaningful, purposeful, profound, and innovative."*



## 5-DAY "COACHING WITH THE ENNEAGRAM" PROGRAM



Integrates the Enneagram with the best coaching theory and practice 35.5 ICF CCEs

*"Incredible content, fabulous learning environment and tons of encouragement, strengthening my trust in myself and in the unseen powers in which I am grounded and guided."*

## ENNEAGRAM TRAINING RESOURCES IN FULL COLOR

JUMP-START AND DEEPEN YOUR WORK WITH 27 FULL COLOR TRAINING TOOLS



**KNOW YOUR TYPE**  
a comprehensive Enneagram App for iPhone, Android & Kindle Fire



**Ginger Lapid-Bogda PhD**

| organization development consultant  
| author of 4 Enneagram-business books  
| provider of Enneagram resources and programs across the globe

[TheEnneagramInBusiness.com](http://TheEnneagramInBusiness.com) | 310.829.3309

# From the Editor

George Santayana's famous saying "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" works often, because as Niccolò Machiavelli puts it: "Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who ever have been, and ever shall be, animated by the same passions, and thus they necessarily have the same results." Two aphorisms that withstood the test of time as terse sayings expressing a general truth.

*Seekers After Truth* do well to take history seriously, learn from it, and not fall into arrogance urging us to believe that somehow we can be exempted from the consequences of our actions. Our actions of course, are reflections of our thinking which is limited by the quantity and quality of knowledge we possess -- that, and passion, external influences aside, is what guides us.

### In this Issue:

**John R. Amos** goes to the root of the "Catholic Spiritual Tradition and the Enneagram." So much of what we today accept as "traditional" enneagram concepts, have striking parallels in the Catholic approach to spirituality. Father Robert Ochs, S.J. learned of the Enneagram at the *Esalen Institute* from Claudio Naranjo, and introduced it to Don Richard Riso and Helen Palmer. Their books, workshops, and certification programs have made Enneagram retreats and workshops a staple in many Catholic retreat houses from the early 70's onwards. There were however a few very vocal activists that put the enneagram under attack within the Catholic Church. Dorothy Garrity Ranaghan with her tract, *A Closer Look at the Enneagram*, in 1989 and Father Mitch Pacwa, S.J. In July of 2000, the *Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices* of the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* (USCCB) even drafted a warning to Catholics about dangers of the Enneagram; and the Vatican too has weighed in on the subject.

Apparently Father Pacwa's major objections appear to be that the Enneagram has non-Christian origins and is not scientifically founded. True. Newsflash to Father Pacwa and the Bishops: most of the enneagram tenets are actually pre-Christian and as such share the same roots... As to the lack of scientific validation, not an easy feat to obtain in the field of psychology or religion. Clarence Thomson, an Enneagram teacher and correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*,

noted that most of the information coming from Father Pacwa alone, was more than 15 years out of date and that most of the research and teaching of the Enneagram has been done in the last 15 years.

John makes an elegant case for the Enneagram being fully in the spirit of the Catholic Spiritual Tradition regardless of the origins. As with most truly spiritual traditions, they all speak of the same ultimate truth, albeit in different languages and to people from different cultures at different times in history.

In a similar spirit we picked some "Thoughts from EM Group's Facebook" about merits, pitfalls and applications of the Enneagram. The discussion is on how vital accurate typing must be to benefit a medical diagnosis and to be helpful in the choice of remedies. That, and what the obstacles are in preventing consensus in typing, and what it takes to overcome such obstacles. **Kirby Olson, Frederic Schmitt, Jack Labanauskas** and **Bernadette Schmitt** discuss these topics and a few other areas where a little sunshine could do a lot of disinfecting...

Speaking of sunshine, **Michael Damian** goes one step further and recommends "Outshining Ignorance" completely, and not by a process of altering, increasing, or expanding consciousness, but a process of subtracting ignorance. Like dissolving clouds, we can see and feel the sun that was always shining behind them. Yet the sun never changed.

In this, all nine types share the same dilemma: how to turn the light of attention upon our true nature, the felt presence of awareness, the witness or essence if you prefer. Turning the light of attention upon itself, awareness seems to grow and expand. Ignorance of our true nature does not imply a lack of intelligence and is simply the condition of ignoring or not being aware of the actual nature of reality.

Instinctively we realize how existentially lost we can be, how a sense of searching has always been with us, and how we always misidentify our being and our happiness with external things and circumstances. We cannot help this. Many substitutes for truth are accepted along the way, and substitutes always lead to disillusionment. This is the natural process of growing up.

We have the fortune of living in the Bay Area and are able to attend the once or twice a month Saturday afternoon meetings in Redwood City with Michael, where we get a chance to discuss how to get in touch with

**Enneagram Monthly**

748 Wayside Rd.  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Phone: 650-851-4806 Fax: 650-851-3113

Email: em@guna.us

**Editor and Publisher** Jack Labanauskas

**Staff Writer** Susan Rhodes

**Assistant Editor** Sue Ann McKean

**Consulting Editor** Andrea Isaacs

The Enneagram Monthly, Inc. was founded by Jack Labanauskas and Andrea Isaacs as a not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to gather and disseminate information in the field of the Enneagram, that is most commonly known as a personality typing system.

For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

Catholic Spiritual Tradition and the Enneagram . . . . .	John R. Amos	1
Thoughts from the Enneagram Monthly Group's Facebook . . . . .	Kirby Olson, Frederic Schmitt, Jack Labanauskas and Bernadette Schmitt	1
From the Editor. . . . .	Jack Labanauskas	2
Outshining Ignorance . . . . .	Michael Damian	4
The Observer-Mediator (Five-Nine) Couple . . . . .	Jennifer Schneider & Ron Corn	5
The Little Ego Who Could "I think I can" "I thnk I know" . . . . .	Amy Zoll	8
Enneagram for Spiritual Guidance ( <i>impressions from workshop participants</i> ) . . . . .	Nicholas S. Litterski, Melissa Thompson and Michelle M. Slusser	10
Enneagram For Teens: <i>Review by a Real Teen</i> . . . . .	Ally Marth	15
Teacher's Listing . . . . .		23
Subscription Forms and Ad Rates . . . . .		24



Visit [www.enneagram-monthly.com](http://www.enneagram-monthly.com) full of useful information, introductory articles, Index by Author and Subject and lots more



**Enneagram Monthly Page & Enneagram Monthly Group**

our true nature. You are welcome to join, for more information just check out the ad and the link on page 5.

**Jennifer Schneider** and **Ron Corn** take on "The Observer-Mediator (Five-Nine) Couple," noting that Observers are well known to crave solitude, but the fact that many Mediators want to have alone time too is often unappreciated. They therefore give each other space and are comfortable being in the same house where neither feels pressured to have constant interaction. The downside is that they may live like ships passing in the night with minimal emotional intensity.

Taking action is difficult for them and that can make for a very low-energy relationship, with neither partner initiating activities. Subtype issues can increase or decrease particular aspects of each personality type. If Mediators are disappointed with their partner, they may console themselves expecting that other opportunities will come along in the future. In reality, Observers, if uncomfortable with a partner's emotional dependency will tend to withdraw if it seems that their spouse has "excessive" expectations.

Task-oriented Observers and are good at focusing on the project and getting it done with little tolerance for mistakes which makes them resemble Perfectionists (Ones). Mediators have difficulty with procrastination and unless they are on a strict deadline, it's easier for them to live with the status quo rather than to take action.

**Amy Zoll** has a knack for distilling pithy definitions that highlight how "The Little Ego Who Could 'I think I can' - 'I think I know'" illustrates the enneagram type, or ego pattern, that thinks what we should know, and are able to do. Amy has a list that includes an example of "I know" and "I can do" for each Type.

Thinking, "I can do it," grows out of a realistic core fear that "I can't do it." Trying to prove that "I know," is a reaction to a fear of "not knowing." In fact, every positive value that is attached to the pronoun "I" is an attempt to ward off an opposing, negative value.

This dualistic thinking is difficult to wrap our heads around. It is the nature of the mind itself, and the murky river we swim in.

Sueann McKean and Jack Labanauskas were teaching a class at Sofia University for graduates in psychology on how to work with "The Enneagram for Spiritual Guidance."

The participants had varying levels of exposure and experience with the enneagram and were looking at their own type related issues and ways they could work with their client in deeper and more effective ways.

We asked them to write a paper at the end of the course on what they got out of the workshop and the 9 weeks followup on the net.

The responses were very interesting and to a large degree type-specific, each with a totally unique experience. Such is the nature of "Maya" the Sanskrit term

for "illusion" or rather, the way we each see the same world or event, and yet, if we compare notes it always turns out to be a completely different reality-- after it's filtered through the lens of our individuality.

**Nicholas S. Litterski** "Reflections after a Workshop by a Type Six". Main focus is on the dynamics and interactions within the group and own attitudes towards life and work with others.

**Melissa Thompson** "Who am I? A quest for Understanding My Type" As the title says, it's a search for finer distinctions to justify a type shift from 9 to 3.

**Michelle M. Slusser** "My Journey as an Enneagram Type Three" Unlike Melissa, here we have a solid match and an affirmation of one's own type.

**Ally Marth** is a "real teen" and her review of Elizabeth Wagele's latest book "Enneagram for Teens" has the weight of a true *insider*. If you have a teen or know some that have the intellectual curiosity to pose deeper questions of life, this kindle (don't all teens have them by now?) edition would make a handsome gift.

I remember my own teens and the hunger for understanding people, life and what really matters; so full of questions that could only be stilled by heavy tomes of classic literature (until a book on Graphology came along and then books on divinatory arts, Macrobiotics, Eastern philosophies and such followed). Today teens have sooo much more material and opportunities to choose from, hopefully they can find time for it as well.