



The Journal

October - December 2009

"Mary wrapped the babe in swaddling clothes
and laid him in a manger." Lk 2:7
drawing by Angela Rose Ramwell aged 6, Duncan, BC



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The Journal welcomes submissions from small faith communities and individuals that share its vision of the Christian Church as one in which all are equal, decisions are made by consensus, healthy relationships are nurtured, justice is done, and the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

All submissions to the Journal must be received by February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

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See the back page for further details.

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Letters

Thanks for the twentieth anniversary Corpus issue with so many good pictures and memories for those who have been part of your community for many years! I much appreciate it that you notify me of each issue.
Wayne Holst, Calgary

Congratulations to you and Michael Irving in publishing a worthy, painstaking, 20th anniversary of The Journal. Adeline and I looked at every photo. Keep up this good work.
Leonard Schmidt, Winnipeg

Thanks to Michael and yourself for the wonderful issue. I read it twice and spent much time looking at the photos, and to be honest, sometimes with tears of emotion. What a beautiful remembrance for us who were so deeply involved in the early stages of Corpus Canada.
Jose Gubbles, Peru

Many thanks for the latest edition of The Journal and congratulations on your 20th anniversary. All Good Wishes for the next twenty.
Joe Sheehy, Belfast, Ireland

On Oct. '09 in Dublin, Ireland, Jack Shea and his wife, Jean, of Corpus NCR, attended an Executive Committee meeting of The International Federation for a Renewed Catholic Ministry (formerly the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood). The report of this meeting may be obtained from jnoonan@storm.ca

Christmas Meditation

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK



Pondering the meaning of Christmas

A polished diamond has many facets. To see the beauty and sparkle you need to turn it this way and that so that the different facets catch and diffuse the light to produce the rainbow of colours. Christmas is like a diamond that yields a rainbow of beautiful ideas that can give us much

pleasure in thinking about the meaning of Christmas. This lifts our spirits with joy that makes us feel fully alive and walking on the clouds.

Why we celebrate

If you ask a child what Christmas is, the child will say it is the birthday of Jesus. We celebrate birthdays with cake and candles. We celebrate Christmas with a Christmas tree and lights and presents and traditional dishes for the table. And when family and friends can come together to share the celebration and the feasting, it is even more joyful. Sadly, those who cannot be with family or friends at Christmas find it the loneliest day of the year. Why? Simply because we need each other. *We need relationship as much as we need air to breath.*

Jesus, Mary and Joseph

When you look at the Christmas manger scene, consider this: the birth of a baby is the *birth of a new relationship*. Parents are awestruck by the first sight of the newborn. From that moment, the mother and father are profoundly changed. They become totally selfless. They are prepared to sacrifice everything for the children. For example, my dad left his young wife, two little boys and a baby on the way, and his Polish village to get on a ship for Canada. For over a year of hard labour, he earned enough to bring his family over too. Perhaps your own mom and dad or grandparents did this. It wasn't uncommon so you can appreciate the price they paid. What drove them to do it? That invisible but so powerful magnet: their relationship!

Relationship

Did it ever cross your mind that the message of Jesus is all about relationship? When he spoke of God, he said "Abwoon". Scholars say that this Aramaic word is both masculine and feminine and means Divine Parent or Mother/Father, Source. There must have been those who thought he was loony. The fear and the awe for God in his day was so great that it was forbidden to speak the name of God! Instead they used other words such as "Lord". Today, we say the "Our Father" with not much second thoughts. We really don't appreciate how much our consciousness of God has evolved in the two thousand years since Jesus.

Science on Relationship and Consciousness

Science tells us that the universe doesn't just haphazardly tumble along. Scientists notice that the way the universe functions is that there is an organizing power at every level, and this power has the characteristics of a mind. There is evidence of a pattern -- self-organization and a set of *dynamic relationships*. This mind is present in all created matter, in plants and animals, *and this mind became*

conscious in us.

Consciousness in the universe

Consider a different slant on the manger scene. Think of it as any other human birth story. The relationship bond between Joseph and Mary suddenly took on a major charge of magnetism. Just as you did if you have experienced the birth of your child. If you haven't experienced it, imagine it. It is awesome! Yet we don't even know the bond is taking on a major leap. In this relationship, a new consciousness is born. Yes, what our eyes see is a baby, but what our eyes don't see is even more marvelous. It takes our mind to see the flash of the divine – the brand-new, never before existing, and now to exist forever consciousness born in this relationship.

Jesus as the Incarnational Sacrament

Try to follow the next step: now take leave of science and enter the realm of faith. If we believe that God is present everywhere, we can understand God's presence as an *incarnational* presence and not an external manipulator. Do you now see how relationship penetrates all of creation? God penetrates all of creation. While pondering on how relationship is so vital to the unfolding of the universe, can we not say that this gives us a peek behind the curtain of the mystery of who God is? When we meditate on relationship, we are meditating on God. When we enter into the organizing power at every level of creation, we are looking at creation's "mind", a key element of which is relationship.

God and Relationship

Relationship by its very definition cannot stand alone. It seems that God feels the same way (to use an anthropological metaphor) because here we are in existence; and existence is part of the very nature of God. It as if God cannot stand to be alone; relationship is part of God's nature.

So What?

We must ask the following: Is this relevant to my everyday life? What difference does it make whether I look at life from this perspective or from the everyday way of going about my daily work at home or on business, earning a living, taking care of my family, and so on? Contemplating the manger scene in this different way, I can get a new appreciation of what a marvelous gift we have received – the gift of relationship, another word for which is LOVE. Where there is love, there is God. All of creation is the gift that surrounds me. What joy! What gratitude! How can I not burst out in sharing this, not only with those nearest and dearest to me, but with all creation!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



The Vanishing Priesthood

by Charles Callanan, St. John's, NL



The Catholic Church has never been run like a secular company. Regular companies have strictly defined aims and goals and “five year plans”. This fact becomes very evident when you look at the Catholic priesthood. If there is any plan or goal for the continuance of the priesthood, I certainly do not know what it is.

The old policy of, “praying for vocations” is still good but it is not enough. I believe that God wants us to take a good look at society and see what is in the minds and hearts of young people. I have spoken to very good young men who have considered a life in the priesthood but who do not wish to forego the life of marriage and family. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to convince the young that celibacy is a necessary path to becoming a priest.

We know that mandatory celibacy (as opposed to voluntary celibacy) was a late inclusion in the prerequisites for priesthood and that it came about largely for pragmatic reasons. Priests were free to marry for several hundred years after the time of Christ. As time went on, it seems that various Church properties were being passed on to the children of married priests. The Church proceeded to make mandatory celibacy a permanent prerequisite for entry into the priesthood. Various spiritual reasons were later given for this change.

Many people are accustomed to blame local Bishops for not making the change and accepting married men into the priesthood. These people do not realise that local Bishops really have very little power in the Church to introduce change. So, where is the real power? The real power comes from the top of the Church hierarchy and pertains to the reigning Pope. Mandatory can become voluntary celibacy with the approval of the Church hierarchy.

So why doesn't the Church hierarchy) make the change? Again I believe that the reasons for this are more human than Divine. Money is a big issue in the reluctance to make any major change. How can the Church support not only priests but their families as well? The economic implications of this change would be staggering. Where would the money come from?

Another issue would be loss of control on the part of the Church in Rome. One has less control over a man with a family than over a celibate. The implications are so great that no Pope has felt that he should set them in motion... at least not up to now.

The point of this discussion is... when something has to give, what will it be? Will it be loss of mandatory celibacy or loss of priesthood?

There is a very important spiritual issue here; what is more important, Eucharist or celibacy? The Church has to decide on this issue. Failure to make a move on this issue is to decide in favour of celibacy over Eucharist.

The old question remains, “What would Jesus do?” Personally, I have no doubt that Jesus would tell us that our spiritual lives and our relationship with God are far more important than having ministers among us who are married or single.

This is not to deny the importance of celibacy in the world. A celibate person is in a better position to dedicate his whole life and being for the good of others. John Vanier is a very good current example of this fact.

In order to be truly celibate I feel that one must be exceptionally emotionally mature. This kind of maturity is not generally displayed by seventeen and eighteen year olds who enter the seminary at that age and are separated from the world for seven years, only to return suddenly to modern life. I know that this situation of early seminary entry has virtually disappeared but it is true to note that many of the currently practising priests came into the priesthood under those conditions. I have spent ten years in the Catholic priesthood and thirty-three years as a married man with a family. All ministries, pertaining to the priesthood in the Catholic Church are denied to me. I was aware of this fact when I married. Now, however, I feel that it is time for a change.

Does change need to be implemented at the Vatican? Certainly. Is change forbidden by God or by Jesus? Why would it be? We are trusted by God and expected to relate to the changes that are taking place in society. This does not mean that the Church should be driven by the society or by its value systems. It does mean that things that can be changed and ought to be changed for the good of society and the Christian community should be changed. More and more the consensus of the faithful favours married as well as celibate priests.

Notice from Leonard Schmidt, M.A. (Laval)

*Alpha & Omega Christian Community of
Manitoba, Inc.*

*A no-charge Course in Mysticism (the spiritual
marriage on earth of God and your human
soul) is being offered at Crescent Fort Rouge
United Church, 525 Wardlaw, 1:30 P.M.,
Monday, Nov. 30. Phone 487-3553 or email
ADELINE.LEONARD.SCHMIDT@SHAW.CA.*

Eileen Little Recalls Status Of Women Commission

by Eileen Little, Cedar, BC

I was asked to tell about my experience with the 1970's Catholic initiative and special commission on the Status of Women in Society and the Church. I hesitated because women such as Doreen Hunter, Helen Patenaude, Sister Augusta Raabe and Pat Kahr would have been able to tell the story of the Commission and the Women of Vancouver Island more completely. However, some of my former commission members have passed on, and so I am more than happy to give a brief synopsis of the events surrounding the call from the Canadian Catholic Bishops to organize groups of women to study the role of women in the church and in particular as it relates to Vancouver Island Women's committee.

In 1972, the United Nations Organization proclaimed that the year 1975 would be International Women's Year. Following this proclamation, the Vatican set up a special commission with its terms of reference being to Study the role of women in society and in the church.

In 1974, the Canadian Catholic Bishops announced that Catholic Women in Canada will organize meetings in every parish of every diocese to study and explore Women's role in the church. At that time, I was living in Edmonton and I was an active member of the Catholic Women's League and of our Parish. In 1975, I was asked by Archbishop MacNeil to be part of the Edmonton Archdiocese "Study of women in the church" one of the fourteen western Canadian dioceses participating in the study.

As a result of our study of the role of women in the church we made nine recommendations to the Canadian Bishops. Recommendation number seven being stated that "a request be made to Rome through the Canadian Catholic Conference that the diaconate be opened to women; and that in-depth theological and historical studies on the ordination of women to the priesthood be continued".

I moved to Vancouver Island in 1977. My cousin, Father Kevin Wiseman, was the priest in Nanaimo at that time. He told me I would be comfortable in the church here as long as I didn't get mixed up with a certain woman called Pat Kahr! That statement intrigued me! Very soon afterwards the opportunity arose to meet this woman who presented such a threat so as to scare a well-seasoned Priest.

When Pat Kahr discovered that I had been part of the study of Women in the Church in the Archdiocese of Edmonton she invited me to attend a meeting in Duncan with a group of women who represented the Vancouver Island Study Group. After completing their study, subsequent recommendations were made to the Canadian Bishops as we did in Edmonton; this Vancouver Island group continued to meet to discuss issues pertaining to Women in the Church.

That first meeting I attended with Pat Kahr will always be memorable to me as I was completely blown away by where these women were at, what they were reading, and most important what they were anticipating and ready for. Words spoken by Bishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle were noted and adopted into their hope for the future church. To say the least, I had a lot of catching up to do.

Throughout my years with these dynamic, knowledgeable, and reform-minded women we held workshops and seminars in a few welcoming parishes on the Island. We were not without opposition from some quarters. We experienced indifference and in some places

downright rejection to any talk of changing rules and regulations referring to Women's place in the hierarchal structure. We knew the road to reform in our church was not going to be an easy one.

At one of the initial meetings of the Island women, Bishop Remi De Roo commented on why women were denied full acceptance. He stated "that the absence of female priests resulted in part from sociological and cultural conditions and that leading scholars claim nothing in scripture or theology prohibits eventual ordination of women". This disclosure astonished listeners and perhaps was the stimulus that motivated the women here to continue on after the study was completed and form the Vancouver Island Women's Committee which I was a part of. I remained with them until 1984 when the dream ended and the group disbanded.

Today, I am grateful I was given the opportunity to be part of this small group of intelligent, forward-thinking, creative, and progressive Women. I owe all the members of this committee much gratitude as I am still reaping the benefits of my association with these women visionaries. Three of the original members of the Women's committee, Helen Patenaude, Sister Augusta Raabe and Pat Kahr have passed away. From beyond the stars, I am sure they will join me now in rejoicing and extending to you, Kim and Rose, good wishes and congratulations.

Excerpt from **Yahweh's Woman**

by Sister Rita Bernard Walton S.S.J. in
The Bible Today, Nov. 1977

*My Lord, You are God, and I am woman.
How can I as woman praise you?
I am all that You are not
Yet You are all that I am.*

*I am creature, love created.
You are Spirit, created not --
Yet I am Spirit-touched and Spirit-
breathed.
How can I as woman praise You?*

*You are Blesser.
You are Molder.
You are Holder, vessel Lover.
How can I as woman praise You?*

*I am woman, I praise You, Yahweh!
Woman created, created I praise You.
Woman loved, loving I praise You.
Woman redeemed, forgiven I praise You.
Woman chosen, chosen I praise you.
Woman united, as surrendered I praise
You.
Woman of Yahweh, Yahweh I praise You.
Yahweh's Woman, loved - now loving.*

Yahweh, as woman I can praise You.

The Our Father Translated From The Aramaic

by Bishop Patricia Fresen, RCWP



Notes Presented By
Patricia Fresen,
Parksville, BC,
June 2009

Based on the work
of Neil Douglas
Klotz:
“Prayers of the
Cosmos:
Meditations on the
Aramaic Words of
Jesus,”

HarperSanFrancisco
1990.

The language
Jesus spoke was
Aramaic and when
he taught the prayer
we call the “Our
Father” or the
“Lord’s Prayer,” he
did so in Aramaic.

However, Aramaic

was not a written language, so when the Gospels were written (in Greek), they were already a translation.

I will concentrate on the first and the last petitions: *Our Father (who art) in heaven*; and “*Lead us not into temptation*” (which is the most problematic line), and I will give shorter renderings of the verses in between.

We find the Our Father in Matthew 6, 9-13 and in Luke 11, 2-4. There are a number of differences between the two versions.

Since most of us can't read Aramaic, here is a transliteration, using our alphabet:

“Abwoon d'bwashmaya
Nethquadash shmakh
Teytey malkuthakh
Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph b'arha.
Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana.
Washboqlan khaubayn (wakhtahayn) aykana daph khnan shbwoqan l'khayyabayn.
Wela tahlan l'nesyuna
Ela patzan min bisha.”

Introductory comments from Neil Douglas-Klotz on related topics:

Prayer: In Aramaic, the word “to pray” (shalu) means *to open oneself*, open oneself to receive something from the Holy One, the Source. Prayer, for Jesus, was not necessarily saying words or asking for things. It's equivalent to what we call today meditation or contemplation. Praying is asking the Source to make me/us a 'resonating space' for your vibrations.

9th Beatitude on love of enemies (re forgiveness): (also found in Luke 6,27)

Jesus used several different words for love. In the 5th Beatitude,

“*rachme*,” “*rachmene*” (from the word for “womb”) point to an unconditional shining, a rebirth, a radiance from the deepest place within. In this saying about “love your enemies,” Jesus uses an entirely different word for love -the Aramaic “*gheb*” which means a relationship that can build slowly, not from a sense of sentimentality or emotional effusion, but simply from finding one's own rhythm in relationship to another person, The word for “enemy” in Aramaic is another dense word “*lubvelbabaikon*” -and this means literally a person (or a part of ourselves) which is out of rhythm with us. So, Douglas-Klotz retranslated this 9th Beatitude into a long, interpretive explanation:

“*From a hidden place, unite with your enemies from the inside, Fill the inner void that makes them swell outwardly, and fall out of rhythm.*

Instead of progressing step by step, they start and stop harshly, out of time with you.

Bring yourself back into rhythm within.

Find the movement that mates with theirs like two lovers, creating life from dust.

Do this in secret, so they don't know.

This kind of love creates, it doesn't emote.”

The Our Father:

1) Abwoon d'bwashmaya (Our Father in heaven)

Ab from Abba + Bwn - ray or emanation from Source, birthing,

oo - the Breath or Spirit or wind that carries the flow,

n - as breath vibrates and moves, there must be a substance that

this force touches, moves and changes. This sound echoes the earth. So: Abwoon: Father-Mother, Birther, Source.

shm (Shem): name, light, vibration, word, radiation, resonance...

aya: the shining or vibration includes every centre of activity, every place, the potential abilities of all things.

Thus: O Birther/Father-Mother (divine parent) source of all,

Your vibration/name/light...radiates throughout the cosmos.

2) Nethquadash shmakh (Hallowed be your name)

Notice, again there is the root “shem:” the divine name light, sound, experience, vibration.

quadash = holy; neth: may it become or be held holy.

The inner shrine by which God's name is hallowed can be developed only through letting go, releasing some of the clutter inside that keeps us too busy to listen to the “still, small voice” within. Jesus recommended going into this “heart-shrine” (cf. Matt 6,6 - enter into your closet). We need to create an inner space, place for the Oneness (God) to live inside us.

Thus: Let me be a resonant space for your vibrations (like the space inside a violin or guitar).

Or: Focus your light within us; make it useful.

3) Teytey malkutakh (Your kingdom come)

Teytey = “come” but includes mutual desire, as in a “nuptial chamber,” a place where mutual desire is fulfilled and birthing begins.

Malkuthakh = the quality of ruling principles that guide our lives

Lord's Prayer Continued...

towards unity. It includes the collective ideals of a nation or of the planet. Malkutah was the name of the Great Mother in the Middle East thousands of years before Jesus. The word "malkutakh" is feminine. Thus: Your ruling principles/sphere of influence, come.

4) Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph b'arha (Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven)
tzevyanach = will, but not in the sense of willpower or wilfulness. Rather, it means "heart's desire." The ancient roots of the word summon forth images of a vortex of harmony and generation, of a host of stars whirling through the heavens.
aykanna = just as, and carries the sense of a determined desire for consistency and stability.
arha = earth, may be the original source of the English word. It carries the ideas of earth as another living being, rather than an object to be exploited. The old Hebrew roots mean "all of nature," all natural gatherings of mass or form produced by the universal force AR (power with movement). From this root comes the word "ardour."
Thus: May your heart's desire for unity and harmony penetrate, radiate through, vibrate into/ every part of the cosmos, just as it does the earth.

5) Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana (Give us this day our daily bread)
lachma = A word rich in meaning, "lachma" is both "bread" and "insight" or wisdom or understanding. It is related to a more basic root, "hochma," wisdom, which is feminine.
Sunqanan = needs
Hawvlan = give
This part of the prayer reminds us that sometimes what we need is not only the grand picture of unity and God's creation, but also the "next step" - just food or understanding for this moment.
Thus: Give us what we need each day in bread and insight.

6) Washboqlan khaubayn aykanna daphkhnan shbwoqan khayyabayn (And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us).
This request has to do with letting go of the mistakes that tie ourselves and one another in knots.
Washboqlan = forgive, return to its original state, re-establish ties to...
Khaubayn = debts, offenses, hidden past (in Matthew's version). In Luke's version, the word "khtahayn" is used signifying sins, failures, mistakes, tangled threads...
Thus: Loose the cords of mistakes/sins binding us, as we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.

7) Wela tahlan l'nesyuna (Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil)
These are probably the least understood and, because of the Greek version, the most mistranslated lines of the prayer. In the Aramaic version, no one outside "leads us into temptation," least of all God.
Wela tahlan = Don't let us be seduced by the appearance of...
nesyuna = something that leads to inner vacillation or agitation, diverting us from the purpose of our lives (Don't let us enter forgetfulness, the temptation of false appearances).

8) Ela patzan min bisha (but deliver us from evil)
patzan = free us, loosen the hold of...
bisha = does mean evil or error, but in the Aramaic sense of 'unripeness' or inappropriate action.
The roots point towards what delays us or diverts us from advancing, as well as a sense of inner shame for not producing good fruit. (Keep us from hoarding false wealth and from the shame of help not given in time.)
Thus for 7) and 8) together: Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back (from our true purpose).

This completes what I intended to cover in this seminar. The prayer has a concluding segment of praise to the Source that I will include in the summary that follows. This is one possible new translation from the Aramaic.

Jesus' Prayer

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now -
Your one desire then acts with ours,
As in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
As we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.
Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,
The power and the life to do,
The song that beautifies all,
From age to age it renews.

Truly, power to these words!
May they be the ground from which all my actions grow.
Amen.

From Mirabile Dictu

Prayer is the umbrella word for interior journeys or practices that allow people to experience faith, hope, and love within themselves. It is not a technique for getting things done, a pious exercise that somehow makes God happy, or a requirement for entry into heaven.

The Aramaic 'Our Father'

by *François Brassard, Ladysmith, BC*



Last June I and several members of Corpus and Roman Catholic WomenPriests attended a workshop in Parksville, BC on "The Our Father Translated From The Aramaic" given by Canada's very own RCWP bishop, Patricia Fresen.

I was deeply moved and inspired by what

this version of the prayer reveals about Jesus' spirituality or, more precisely, about his connection to the 'Compassionate One.' This

aramaic version reveals to me a profoundly sensitive and nurturing Energy Source, the Ultimate Birther that is neither male nor female. I give thanks to Jesus for revealing to me this image of the Spirit and for showing me the Way of Compassion that allows us all to become one with the Source.

There are scripture scholars who would question the validity of Neil Douglas Klotz's Aramaic translation of the 'Our Father.' It is true that we have scant literary evidence of first century Palestinian/Galilean aramaic, the language that we presume Jesus spoke. However, we do have other more or less contemporary written expressions of Aramaic (Syriac, Imperial/Iranian) that allow us to make reasonable guesstimates of what Jesus would have said. And, frankly, that's all we need when our goal is to inspire and enlighten our faith, rather than achieve scientific possibility or probability. In this way, we pursue the same goal that the Gospel writers had in mind and that countless generations of readers have pondered for their own spiritual benefit.

Abwoon d'bwashmaya...teyey malkutakh!

My Response To Bishop Fresen's "Day Of Reflection"

by *Jim Lauder, Victoria, BC*

Initially, I did not know what to expect from the retreat day. I was thrilled to learn Jesus prayed very differently than the Greek versions of the Our Father Prayer that I and most everyone grew up with, and still pray today.

For example, instead of "Our Father", how about, "O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos. What an expanded notion of a God, "whose vibration/name/light...radiates throughout the cosmos." After hearing this possible translation, I vowed never again to pray the "old" version, and excitedly I was ready to tell others about the Aramaic version as Patricia invited us all to do. To that end, I was inspired to publish a new RCWP prayer card of a possible Aramaic translation of the Lord's Prayer, based on Neil- Douglas Klotz' work. To date, our faith communities have fully embraced this very powerful and inclusive prayer.

And in my own life, I am dealing with some very troubling family issues that beg me to "forgive those who trespass against [me] us." This is a big challenge for me right now, but I feel relieved when I pray the Aramaic version that reads, "loose the cords of mistakes binding [me], us as we [I] release the strands we [I] hold of others' guilt." If I release the strands I hold of my family members guilt, then I hope that I will let go of the needless suffering within myself that clogs my inner space. In this act, I will as Patricia Fresen wrote, "...create an inner space, place for the Oneness (God) to live inside [me] us." In this way, I take full responsibility for my healing as I sort out what is my stuff and what is their stuff, and realize too, that its not likely that they will change.

On that note, one of the members of our faith community phoned me the other day. She was upset about how her family was victimizing her. In response, I encouraged her to pray the Aramaic translation of the Our

Father. My hope is that she will have more respite from the ghosts that haunt her if she is able to let go of the strands that are truly binding her.

I also make a point of showing the Aramaic translation of the Our Father to grieving families. Many are blown away by it, as was I; but many are unable to embrace the Aramaic version fully, especially in a public ceremony. I understand that after years and years of reciting the old version it's a difficult to reclaim and even older version. My hope is that people will in time realize how inspiring, inclusive, and powerful the words Jesus possibly prayed in his own language.

In closing, Bishop Patricia's Fresen's retreat left an indelible mark on my heart, and I am inspired to continue to share my experience and the delight of this prayer with the People of God I encounter on my journey.



Elijah The Prophet

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



The Prophet of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 9th century B.C., Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, did not go to Jerusalem but to Mt. Sinai (Horeb to the ten Israelite Tribes) to renew the covenant with Yahweh whose voice he heard not in the storm nor the earthquake nor the fire but in the tiny whispering sound of the breeze (1 Kgs 19).

The ten northern tribes worshipped God on Mt. Carmel and in Gilgal, Bethel, and Beersheba. They believed that Yahweh could be worshipped anywhere anytime. Solomon's temple in Jerusalem was not for them the only place to find God nor was the line of David the only anointed of God. Moses was the one whom Yahweh had chosen and spoken to. The ten tribes of Israel considered themselves equal to the two tribes of Judah.

In fairness to the later priestly efforts in Jerusalem, it must be said that without the temple hierarchy, there would likely be no Bible. The Bible is the product of their priestly labours. They stress the priority of Jerusalem, the Davidic line, and the temple as the institutions that are faithful to the Lord God. The traditions of the Northern Tribes, however, remain to illustrate that the revelation of God's Word and the worship of the Lord God are not restricted to the official Jerusalem

priestly institutions.

While the institutional Bible was preserved in Hebrew, by the 4th century B.C., most Jews spoke various Aramaic dialects and did not understand Hebrew. In the second temple (late 5th century B.C.) when Ezra proclaimed the Torah in Hebrew, it was necessary for interpreters to spread out among the assembled people and explain it to them in Aramaic. Aramaic took many dialectal forms, some of which are still spoken. At one time, these dialects stretched from Egypt to India and beyond. Jesus spoke one version of Aramaic and Christian writings were translated into others, generally called Syriac.

Latin Rite Catholics usually think of Greek and Latin as the vehicles for the transmission of the sacred scriptures, but Aramaic has had a much longer history and has been a very profound vehicle for the spread of religious ideas. When the Jews attended their synagogues and the Hebrew scroll was read, very often the readers, not to mention the hearers, did not understand Hebrew. Older Latin Rite Catholics who "heard mass" in Latin will understand this phenomenon:

"Introibo ad altare Dei. Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meum. Judica me Deus, et discerne causam meam de gentibus non sancta: ab homine iniquo et dolosa erue me.... Confitebor tibi in cithara, Deus, Deus meus: quare tristis anima mea, at quare conturbas me?"

And that was the easy part! We boasted and took comfort in saying that we could go to any place in the world and still not understand it! Praise Yah! It was the mystery of it!

As the first followers of John the Baptist and Jesus grasped to understand them and their deaths, the story of Elijah occupied a very important place. These two did not emphasize the role of the temple hierarchy but they did preach the importance of being part of God's Kingdom. The programmes, the names, the labels, the languages that hierarchies put on things are not as important as the attitudes that direct our actions. The great concern about telling people what they must say and do in liturgical worship is not as important as fostering attitudes that effect the rightness of our actions. Jesus taught with the life-giving authority of a prophet and was recognized as such by a burdened people.

The Nature Of The Prophetic Role

by Dr. Sonya A. Quitslund, Bainbridge Island, WA

...because of abuses of or difficulty in recognizing true prophetic words in the early church, attempts to control teaching apparently stifled or silenced the prophetic voice. For centuries prophetic figures have been rare, acceptance and recognition in their own lifetimes even rarer. A certain ecclesiastical skepticism has greeted any departure from the established norm, having decided the prophetic or teaching office to be embodied in the office of bishop. Perhaps greater familiarity with the prophets will enable us to be more attentive to and receptive of their voices in our world today. If Jesus is God's most perfect Word, he need not be God's last. from "The Nature of The Prophetic Role" by Dr. Sonya A. Quitslund who "speaks as a voice of radical fidelity to a liberating tradition."

Are You Gonna Watch Me?

by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA



As the saying goes, "Just showing up is half the battle." At least, I like to think so.

I was taking "Lori", one of our Village kids, to her soccer game on Saturday when she asked me, "Grandpa Hank", are you staying to watch me?" Lori is a quiet ten year old and normally doesn't ask a lot of questions but this one, I could sense, was important to her. She wanted me to be more than a

pick-up and take-home chauffeuring service. This little ten year old, separated from any parent or other relative, wanted someone down on the field cheering her on. She needed to have "family" watching her. Needless to say, I was delighted to be able to fill that role for her.

I have also been a "watcher" for "Shauna" who wants someone to see her doing back-flips in gymnastics class, "Henry" a linebacker for his team in the PAL football league, and several kids doing their aikido moves at a martial arts class.

I kind of like this part of my "job" as a Village grandpa. I believe that participation in sports can play a major role in helping kids to grow and develop. So anything I can do to support them, even if it's just planting my butt in the stands and watching them, is important.

When my own kids were growing up, I recall showing up for all my son's Little League games. Like an old time Catholic who wouldn't dream of missing Mass on Sunday, I made sure I was in the bleachers for his games. At the time I wondered if he even noticed but years later, Sean, now a man in his 30's called me on the phone one day. He said "Dad I was just thinking the other day how you always showed up for my baseball games. I want to say thanks." Wow! There are father-son moments that happen in life too deep for words. That was one of those moments.

So I'll continue to show up to watch our kids whether it be at school plays or basketball games or soccer. I know I'm not mom or dad or even their "real" grandpa but at least they have someone there to give them a hug or a pat on the back and say "Hey, you did great."

Urgent Appeal

by Patricia Fitzgerald, Victoria, BC

The Victoria Human Exchange Society needs your help.

Our houses have always been rented from owners who understand the need to house those who have no fixed address because of poverty, addiction, marriage break-up, unemployment, under-employment, mental illness and so on. Many of these these owners have entered into the spirit of our Society by keeping the rents low and even raising money for us within their own circles. Four of our owners have never raised the rent beyond approximately \$1000. Of course, they could get more on the open market, but having a social conscience, they have agreed to enter into the exchange of life's gifts. They will never make a profit from this arrangement but they can pay their mortgages.

We have many volunteers who within their churches and service agencies talk about what we were doing, and they raise money to support us; we have accessed funds from several Foundations over the years: Victoria Foundation; Vancouver Foundation; Adennchase-Birchwood Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Woodward's Foundation and others. Constant among our sharers of life's gifts have been the Sisters of St. Anne and the Knights of Columbus and several Anglican and United churches in Victoria, Sidney and Salt Spring Island. We also regularly apply to the Unitarian church for funds for individuals.

The Provincial Employees assisted us from 1992 until this year when our application was denied.

Other regular funders express regret that they no longer have funds to disperse.

A few volunteers are bearing the major burden of fund raising, doing

intakes for new people; hands on care of the very fragile who need a lot of attention, trying to meet their own needs including their own family's needs. In some cases, very active volunteers are also caring for grandchildren and children with disabilities in their own homes.

Readers who are able to help may contact Patricia Fitzgerald grandmas@saltspring.com www.humanx.org <<http://www.humanx.org/>> 250-920-5056

Dr. Neil and Cory Parado of the Alpha & Omega Christian Community of Manitoba attended the 4th European Assembly of the Knights of Rizal. This Assembly was held in Prague and Litomerice from September 17 to 20, 2009 for delegates to rededicate themselves to the Rizalian Ideals of justice and freedom, integrity and unity, and to renew old friendships and make new friends. Besides those from Canada, delegates came from the United States, Philippines, England, Ireland, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. May the Holy Infant of Prague continue to bless us all.

Some Recent Understandings Of Jesus' Prayer Teachings

by Dr. Michele Birch-Conery, Parkville, BC



In the possible translations of what Jesus might have said when he taught us how to pray, Neil Douglas-Klotz is more suggestive than literal in coming close to the Aramaic prayer conceptions of Jesus. Through his meditations and body prayers Douglas-Klotz offers some Syrian Aramaic words while acknowledging the absence of the Aramaic words Jesus would have spoken. His was an oral language tradition.

In the introductions to the meditations, Douglas-Klotz explores the difficulties encountered, scripturally and theologically, in reaching the Aramaic words comparable to Jesus' articulations. Nevertheless, he explains a remnant of some major conceptions by bringing forward key words and phrases representative of Jesus' spirituality. Such a study reveals that, in our current acceptances of Jesus' words, we are left with some levels of spiritual impoverishment in relation to the needs of our times. Some of our beliefs give way to an opposite understanding in Aramaic thinking. In other words, our limited conceptions are turned on their heads. For instance, Douglas-Klotz claims that for Jesus, the Apocalypse would not be the end but rather a new beginning: "Jesus' experience was not 'Apocalypse now!' but rather 'genesis now!'" (Blessings xii)

In praying these meditations, I have found possibilities for expansion into the cosmic understandings prevalent today without losing the ground of my life with Jesus. I am finding my way into a compassionate and unconditional love not only for others but for myself because I experience movement into the heart and spirituality of Jesus. It is a more commodious way than I could ever have imagined. Now, I can live more from the heart without running every contradictory conception through my head. I attribute this last habit to the constant siege of too much language (much of it sexist) from the monarchical constructions of our RC life. These can still inhabit me such that I am vigilant in struggling for their release. But struggle alone can never bring the freedom I seek with God for presence in loving community with others.

Currently, I am studying and praying from two of Douglas-Klotz' Aramaic prayer meditation: *Blessings of the Cosmos* and *Original Prayer: Teachings and Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus*. Both of these explications come with CD discs where Douglas-Klotz sings, chants and speaks us through the expansive conceptions more characteristic of Jesus' understanding. Lately, I have been gripped by a passage from *Blessings of the Cosmos*. When thinking too literally, I say that I have come upon "What the Angel said to Mary" but this angelic messenger from the Divine One did not speak as we have imagined.

Gabriel was more of a light energy who arrived with an affirmation of Mary's ripeness for accepting a wondrous invitation. She consented because she was ready for this Divine calling in her

life. Here are the spiritual realities Douglas-Klotz interprets.

The Blessing of Gabriel: What Mary Heard
And a messenger of Alaha came to her and said
"Peace to you-
the peace of new beginnings.
the fullness of force before creation.
To you - who are fully ready and
ripe, in tune with *Alaha's* melody.
To you - who are prepared to follow
this sacred song to its last note-
here's the power of sacred Unity!
The One who shines and brightens the cosmos,
is already with and within you.
To you, who are ready to kneel to
blessing wherever, whenever you feel it:
The fruit of your purpose in life
is growing within you right now." (83-84)

This "greeting by the angel" is followed by textual notes expanding upon the ideas introduced in this language. Again, they are large ideas, less literal than those from our customary prayers. In the understanding unfolded for us, Mary ceases to be an enigma where in our human way, it is almost impossible to comprehend the Divine conception of a child within her. In this understanding we must surpass the laws of human experience and so diminish the human realities of any woman becoming pregnant. Other complexities abound in relation to women's reproductive lives and choices and the many violences attendant upon unwanted pregnancies that ask for a political theology of Mary. But this is not what Douglas-Klotz is addressing.

For Douglas-Klotz, Mary's sacred experience would relate more to being overshadowed by Divine Light, an energy Ray, the gentle coming of the Spirit renewing sacred purpose received in her heart because she was ready. He concludes this meditation by suggesting Mary's experience is analogous to ours when we renew our life's purposes after a particular illumination intuited as sacred. Like Mary, we continue our faith journeys energized by resources that have arrived within us and which will manifest in an unfolding "we can scarcely dare to imagine." (86)

So the angel's words are not really about this divine conception of a child we have grown to believe and often question. They are about a new turning in the unfolding of Mary's vocation. The movement within that leads to her acceptance is not so hard to imagine if we think of how we feel in nature. We are "touched by the wind and the sun, or the moon and stars, and stillness of the night." In the same way The "Holy Breath" passes "over and through our skin, in and out of our lungs." She was penetrated by a Divine event and it had implications for her forever.

I was initiated into this praying by Dr. Patricia Fresen. In her trip across Canada last June, she presented a Day of Reflection on the Aramaic 'Our Father' based in *The Original Prayer*, first in Ottawa and then in Parkville. I was soon persuaded to enter more deeply into the Aramaic reality of Jesus' consciousness. I couldn't be more grateful for the gift and the chance to tell you about it.



Corpus

Dear Friends,

We share a dream: a Church that celebrates what is good in us and calls forth what is best in us; a Church that is honest enough to confess not only the sins of its members but the sin that is built into its very structure and corporate practices; a Church that is catholic enough to include the children of Rome, Constantinople and the Protestant Reformation; a Church that proclaims the intrinsic goodness of human sexuality and any expression of it that creates and sustains loving relationships; a Church that gives its members full scope to exercise all the gifts and charisms the Holy Spirit has bestowed on them; a Church that makes assistance for the poorest and most persecuted of people its highest priority. Through Corpus Canada we keep this dream alive.

If you are already a member of Corpus Canada, I invite you to renew your membership for the year 2010. If you are not a member, I invite you to join. The annual membership fee is \$50 for individuals and \$75 for families. Corpus Canada will send \$25 of your membership fee as a donation in your name to Xristos Community Society, the registered charity that publishes and distributes The Journal free of charge. You will receive from Xristos Community Society a tax deductible receipt for the \$25 donation, and from Corpus Canada a receipt (not tax deductible) for the rest of your membership fee. As a member of Corpus Canada you will receive The Journal free of charge. You will also become eligible to join the CORPUS-N internet mailing list and take part in the discussions of the National Coordinating Team. ***Make your cheque payable to "Corpus Canada" and mail it with this completed form to "Corpus Canada, 35 – 10070 Fifth Street, Sidney BC V8L 2X9, Canada."***

I would like to take out an individual membership in Corpus Canada for the year 2010, and am enclosing a cheque in the amount of \$50.

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Yours truly,

Arthur Menu

On behalf of the Corpus Canada National Coordinating Team

Corpus Canada

Who Are We?

We are a faith community of men and women empowered by our baptism in Jesus' Spirit to reach out to others in their need as Jesus did. We also provide support for married Roman Catholic priests, their family and friends.

Where Are We Going?

This faith community is dedicated to

- Renewal of ministries in the Church, including an ordained ministry open to men and women, married and unmarried;
- A vision of Church that includes all people who profess faith in Jesus Christ;
- Development of leadership among all the baptised in the Church;
- Promotion of a wholesome view of sexuality;
- Justice for all based on Gospel values.

Our message is a healing one and is directed to everyone, especially the marginalized in the Church. It is our hope to reach people through many ministries, and in a special way through the creation of small faith communities.

How Do We Get There?

Through a collegial approach based on consensus reached through communal discernment in the Spirit, we share our gifts that all creation might be transformed according to God's loving plan.

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