



The Journal



July - September 2011

Presence

by Bernard Cooke

We must briefly ask ourselves what we mean by “presence”. On the surface, presence would seem to coincide with spatial proximity, being nearby in a certain place. So if a roll call is taken at some meeting, a person answers “present”.

Spatial proximity, however, is not the same as presence. For us humans, because we live in a context of space and time, presence is conditioned by some kind of spatial link. If we use the word ‘presence’ strictly, a sharing of consciousness is involved: I am aware of you being aware of me because we are sharing awareness; we are with one another as persons.

Presence is grounded in some form of communication from one person to another. Generally, this is verbal communication, but this is not always the case. Some gesture or other sign can convey my consciousness to a friend. Whatever form of communication is involved, one must be careful not to see the word or gesture as simply joining one consciousness to another, as being a bridge that the meaning and self-sharing pass over. The communicating is itself constitutive of the presence for the communicating includes the awareness of the two people.

The speaker must be willing to give her consciousness to the hearer; the hearer must allow his consciousness to be taken over for the moment by the meaning of the words being spoken.

When I am present to you, the actuality of that presence takes place in your awareness. But it occurs while that awareness is being shaped by my words which carry the “shaping power” of the understanding that I am attempting to communicate to you. Presence is not a static reality; presence is an event, a basic component in that continuing event which is the reality of being human... every experience of another person is some form of communication. Words and other signs can have a static form, when, for example, they are printed in a book. But one does not print a book simply to have it exist as a book on a shelf; it is meant to be read, that is, to be part of a communication and a sharing of understanding. The words of the book only become words in the full sense when they function in a communication event. And when a book is being read, the author becomes present to the readers.

Realizing the role of communication in all presence of humans to one another has brought us to the need for appropriate symbols. Starting with language, our most common symbol system, all our communication is achieved through some symbols.... We cannot establish contact immediately from one consciousness to another. If we want to make another aware of what I am thinking, it is not sufficient to will such a sharing; I must use some symbols as a link to the other person’s awareness.... For authentic communication, for the hearer to become conscious of what the speaker wishes to say, there must be a commonly understood symbolism.

From *Sacraments and Sacramentality*.

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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.

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Note Correction:

*The Jan - Mar. 2011 issue of The Journal paid tribute to the memory of Neil Parado by Leonard Schmidt. Unfortunately, The Journal made a mistake and the wrong picture accompanied the Tribute. We regret the error and apologize for it. Gregoria Parado thanks all for their prayers and compassionate support.
Chris Diamond*

"The Christian believer is a simple person: bishops should protect the faith of these little people against the power of intellectuals.

Cardinal Ratzinger on Hans Kung

Searching For A More Inclusive Spirituality

by David Pogue, Corpus Calgary



This is the story of Ireland's unique gifts to Christianity and what they can mean to us today. In this first article, we will explore the beginnings of Irish spirituality, which flowered into a unique civilization lasting half a millennium. In the second article, we will see how Irish influence spread throughout a devastated Europe and encountered defiance from the Church of Rome. In the third article we will explore what this story says to us, in a new age

where we face many of the same moral and spiritual dilemmas.

Let me first introduce myself. I am an 82-year-old Catholic layman, married to Adelle for 52 years. We have a family of 3 and 7 grandchildren. Though I was raised in the United Church, I was fascinated by the hopeful ferment of Vatican Two, and became active in my wife's parish.

I later joined the Catholic faith, but gradually became disillusioned during the years of retrenchment. A transfer took us away from Calgary for 21 spiritually dry years. After we both retired, we returned to Calgary, and began to pick up the pieces of a spiritual life. The Corpus group helped us to reconnect with stirrings inside and beyond the Catholic Church. Recently, I presented three talks based on my studies, and I have been encouraged to adapt them for the Journal. I welcome any and all comments to dandapogue@shaw.ca

Ireland, in the 5th century - a raw, restless land seemingly at war with itself. The main source of wealth and power, livestock, was the cause of petty wars and thievery. A pagan land, beyond the pale of the Roman Empire and its newly-adopted Christianity. An almost entirely rural country, without cities or any civil government. Yet a resourceful people with great courage, pride and an unquenchable love of life. We know this from their rich oral tradition of poetry, song and history, soon to be written down, taught and memorized.

One historian notes that "the survival of an Irish psychological identity is one of the marvels of the Irish story".¹ Indeed, other 'barbarian' peoples left hardly a trace as they were absorbed by higher cultures. So let us see what was special about the Celts in Ireland.

- They had a deep belief in the divinity of nature - sky, rocks, trees, animals and the sea, represented by familiar spirits.
- They made no artificial distinctions between men and women. Their legends tell of strong women in all aspects of life.
- Fertility was a blessing, enabling them to join nature in birthing,

creating.

- Hospitality was freely given in a country where roads were rudimentary and travelers needed respite.
- They enjoyed laughter. The paradoxes and playfulness of life prevented them from taking themselves or others too seriously.
- Art and life blended easily, were not treated in a dualistic way (as we do)
- They were action-oriented, not inclined to be reflective or ascetic in their spirituality.
- Justice was a moral norm, much as it was in ancient Israel.

Into this unique society strode the gentle giant Patrick in the year 432. Born of a well-to-do Celtic Briton family, he was kidnapped and sold into Irish slavery at the age of 11. For several lonely, miserable years, he tended sheep and learned to pray. Then, receiving the first of many "calls" to meet his destiny, he walked unharmed for over 200 miles to find the boat that was waiting for him. Many years and many miracles later, he had completed his education and returned to his family in Wales. But only briefly.

Now a priest of the Roman order and a bishop, he knew what he must do - return to serve the people of Ireland. He became the first missionary since St. Paul, and the only one to venture into a pagan land. "The step he took was, in its way, as bold as Columbus's, and a thousand times more humane"²

Without so much as a compass to guide him, and only an elementary knowledge of the language, Patrick gradually won Irish hearts and found welcoming souls for his Christian message. By the time of Patrick's death in 461 AD, the Irish had laid down their weapons of war, and had given up slavery - the only European nation to do so for another 1200 years.

Patrick's success lay in his gentle yet persistent approach, his love of the Irish people, and his respect for their traditions. This conversion to Christianity may be the only one in history ever accomplished without the shedding of blood!

Many ancient Irish traditions have survived into modern times. Though obviously non-Christian, trolls and May-Day antics add colour, mischievous fun and creativity to Irish life. Patrick wasted no time in trying to change them. Instead, his remarkable vision enfolded pagan magic into a new world "charged with the grandeur of God"³ By contrast, under Roman or English authority, pagan rites and rituals would be condemned as the devil's work.

Patrick's crowning gift to the Irish people was the foundation for a new type of civilization based on monasteries which evolved into centers of communal spiritual life, learning, art, hospitality, industry and trade. In a land without cities, monasteries became city-states with multiple functions. One result was the virtual disappearance of bishops. The Irish saw little need for them, or the dioceses artificially carved out for them by Rome. Instead the new position of power was the abbot, or to the horror of Rome, the abbess.

Patrick knew that Christianity would not survive without literacy. Long before Luther, he strove to place the pearls of Christian thought in the hands of a literate people. After his death, that effort continued with the collection and copying of Christian texts, evolving a distinctive Irish script, training scholars to translate Latin and Greek, and perfecting the arts of text illumination,

vellum manufacture, and bookbinding.

External forces were also shaping the growth of monasteries. During the 5th and 6th centuries, the barbarian hordes ravaged continental Europe, destroying monasteries and libraries, virtually wiping civilized life off the map. Some refugees found their way to England and Ireland, bringing books and manuscripts with them, which were eagerly translated and copied. In later centuries, students from England, Scotland and the continent were sent to learn from Irish monks or scholars, because that's where the best education could be found.

The Venerable Bede, England's first historian, tells us how Ireland received people of high and low estate and treated them with heroic Irish hospitality:

Many of the nobles of the English nation and lesser men also had set out thither, forsaking their native island either for the grace of learning or a more austere life. And some of them indeed soon dedicated themselves faithfully to the monastic life, while others rejoiced rather to give themselves to learning, going from one master's cell to another. All these the Irish willingly received, and saw to it to supply them with food and bed, day by day without cost, and books for their studies, and

teaching, free of charge. 4

Irish generosity also extended to a wide variety of ideas from their own history, from Christian texts, and the literature of Greece and Rome. English clerics sniffed at the bawdy stories in their libraries. But the Irish just were not concerned about orthodoxy of thought or any kind of censorship. Perhaps it was an Irish child-like acceptance, or one may say a catholicity of spirit. In any case, this openness to new thought fueled a virtual explosion of creativity which left an indelible imprint on Europe.

How the Irish introduced their unique blend of Christian spirituality to a starving continent will be the subject of the next article.

1. *Thomas Cahill: How the Irish Saved Civilization p 148*

2. *op cit p 108*

3. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: God's Grandeur from Poets' Corner, compiled by John Lithgow*

4. *Venerable Bede quoted in Thomas Cahill, op cit p 158*

Epikeia

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC

Recently, I was reminded of the virtue of EPIKEIA. Those who favour a strict literal application of rules and laws **do not like it being called a virtue**. However, many great scholars, philosophers, and saints, such as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Irish John (Duns Scotus), Cajetan, Suarez, Alphonsus, and many other have treated it as a virtue. And well they might since its origins in Greek mean *reasonableness, fairness, goodness, virtuousness* and as such it was expounded by Aristotle in his work on Ethics. Its cognate word EPIEIKES means *fitting, meet, suitable reasonable, and not according to the letter of the law*. EPIKEIA in the moral sense has always been taken to mean *fair, kind, gentle, and good*. I have no trouble calling them virtues.

Epikeia is “an interpretation of law which regards a law as not applying in a particular case because of circumstances unforeseen by the lawmaker who cannot foresee all cases that may come under that law.”

Epikeia is invoked in making good, moral, right decisions in particular cases. It is related to “good conscience” which in Catholic moral theology is the “norm of morality”. It has been called “the perfection of justice”. What lies behind it is the weakness inherent in rules, laws, and practices that are promulgated as being universal. When some situation occurs that a well-formed conscience judges 1. that it does not fit the universal application of a rule or law or practice, 2. that some important element has been overlooked, and 3. that some injustice would result, then the law or rule or practice is deemed to be defective and the use of epikeia is thought to be the higher principle of good moral action.

Thomas Aquinas recommended first “appealing to the law maker,” to reconsider a universal rule, but experience today has shown the futility of that. 16th century Spanish Jesuit philosopher, Francisco Suarez S.J., held that same opinion “when the harm is serious and no requirement of the common good obliges one to cause or permit the harm.” His opinion was the accepted position of Catholic moral theology until recently. He added that this did not apply to divine negative laws, such as “Thou shalt not have....” Medieval scholars gave examples, such as stealing in extreme life circumstances. Some of their examples do not exist today, but others do: the birth control issue, or the prohibition on the ordination of women, or the rule of celibacy, or the poking of curial noses into the affairs of a diocese, or the new rubrics for the celebration of the eucharist. Catholics have many of their own examples where great suffering has occurred because of the universal application of an unnecessary rule, however well intentioned.

Contemporary Catholics have rejected birth control, and some diocesan church tribunals have objected to the ban on a second marriage after a first marriage breakdown -- not for the sake of moral laxity but to right wrongs. “Where an authority is unwilling to change a grossly unjust or unreasonable law, rule, or practice, a person is entitled to act on the basis of what would have been a reasonable response by the authority.” Donal Dorr in *Time for a Change*

Is it that those in authority do not trust people to make the right moral decisions and to act on them?

Churchmouseland II

by Emil Kutarna, Regina, SK

The story in Churchmouseland I (Journal Jan/Mar 2011) was about the church in mouseland run by the mice with pointy hats. This story is about a young mouse named Earnest who had the idea that he would like to be one of those who wore a pointy hat.

Now Earnest came from a very religious home. The family attended services regularly and so Earnest was noticed by the pointy hats because he was a good looking lad, and very willing to be of help with the services. Earnest and his parents were honoured when the local pointy hat offered Earnest a scholarship to the training academy Mus muscalis to study for the ministry.

During his studies, Earnest learned that the power over life and death was with the Cats. So whenever they wrote about the Cat it was always with a capital C. This inspired great reverence in Earnest for the Cat. It was also the reason Earnest was most interested in the branch of studies called Catology. He also learned that all the laws in Churchmouseland

were made in a far away place called Emor. And it was also there that the most important pointy-hat mice lived and worked for the Cat.

And so Earnest grew in age and knowledge as his studies progressed. It entered his head one day that he would like to travel to faraway Emor and

see for himself what a marvellous place it must be. To earn enough money to travel he took on whatever jobs he could find. But this experience was most upsetting.

Earnest learned that life was not as rosy out in the workaday world as it was at Mus muscalis. He learned that not all pointy hats were nice mice. He learned that some pointy hats were only interested in their own importance and good name. They even covered up crimes so the public would not know of their misdeeds. In fact one pointy hat he knew at Mus muscalis was sent away, presumably for punishment. Although this shook Earnest up deeply, he still believed that the religion was true even if some mice were bad, which he attributed to

fallen mouse nature as he was taught in Catology.

This made Earnest all the more determined to go to Emor and 'get to the heart of the matter'.

Finally he had enough saved to make the trip and arrived at Emor during a very important ceremony. Unfortunately the crowd was too great for him to get anywhere near to see the procession. So he wandered just outside the walls where he could at least hear the music and the prayers. As luck would have it, he noticed a crack in the wall just behind a little bush. He said to himself "I think I can just squeeze through". And he did.

He found himself in a huge basement-like area. There were a number of mice sitting at desks writing letters. When one mouse left his desk momentarily, Earnest scampered up to see what was written. To his horror he read a letter informing a professor at Mus muscalis that he was stripped of his teaching position

because he questioned some of Emor's rules. What shocked Earnest more was that this professor was his best friend. And the letter was signed by the Big Cat.

With a heavy heart, Earnest sneaked upstairs. Peeking through a crack in a partly open door he saw a mouse dressing up in strange garments. As he donned

each part of the costume it made the mouse look more and more like a cat! Wearing this cat costume he went out in a great procession where the other mice bowed and prayed loudly thinking this was the Great Cat. And who was at the head of the procession? It was the pointy hat he thought was sent away for punishment!

Poorer but wiser, Earnest returned home. When other mice asked him what he learned and saw at Emor, he told them: "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time".



The Trinity, Difficult To Understand

by Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC



“The doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of its being so often extolled as the fundamental mystery of Christianity, plays a very modest role, if it occurs at all, in the actual life of

Christians and in the teaching which they hear.” K. Rahner
Encyclopedia of Theology: the Concise Sacramentum Mundi p1765

The trouble with the doctrine of the Trinity is that, after going through the difficult explanation that uses extraordinarily uncommon language, the Church ends up by asserting that the Trinity is all an absolute mystery! The difficulty lies in that the theological explanation tries to deal with the inner nature of God, with what is God’s essence. Christian theologians call this the immanent Trinity, and it is there that the mystery lies.

The Western Church thought it necessary to dwell on God’s inner nature in order to answer questions from those who held opinions that denied the oneness of nature of the three Persons of the Trinity, and also that Jesus was not of the same nature as God (which put in jeopardy the reconciliation of humanity with God and the religious practices upon which it is grounded). For example, second and third century Modalists held that there is only one God but revealed in three modes or forms: The Old Testament Father; the New Testament Son; and later the Spirit; these modes, they maintained, did not exist simultaneously but consecutively. In other words, there were not three Persons in the Modalist Godhead. These and other opinions (heresies), the Western bishops thought, called for clearer theological definitions.

However, the immanent Trinity is not found in the Bible because biblical people had no way of discovering it. The Bible has language for God. God’s word, power, wisdom, presence and so on. But how God and these characteristics function together is not clear. Hebrew ruach; Aramaic shechinah; Greek pneuma; Latin spiritus; English spirit or ghost are commonly understood as breath, wind, spirit, and indwelling presence. In the Bible, ‘spirit’ occurs more than 800 times, often in Isaiah and in the Acts of the Apostles.

Today, because of gender sensitivity, much is made of the linguistic gender of each of these words. Ruach and shechina are feminine (f); pneuma is neuter (n); spiritus is masculine (m); breath, wind, presence, and spirit in English do not indicate any gender. I do not know whether or not these words ever gave any indication of bodily gender to the original users. It seems unlikely. I do not know whether to say that there is no gender in God or that all genders are in God. But I do know that all words are constructs and that the masculine, feminine, and neuter words that express human faith in God are constructs by people who long tried to discover the best ways of

expressing their faith. If any one particular linguistic gender fosters a person’s faith, that is a good thing for that person, which is not to say that it is good to impose it on others.

The New Testament does not consider only one word gender when proclaiming faith stories: “I am the way (hodos f), and the truth (aletheia f), and the life (zoe f).” Jn 15:26; When he writes of the paraclete (m), the evangelist uses “the spirit (n) of truth (f)” Jn 14:6; The wisdom (f) of God says “I will send them prophets (m)...” Lk 11:49; The members of the synagogue cannot resist the wisdom (f) and the spirit (n) of Stephen. Acts 6:10; Peter, at the bidding of the spirit (n), returns to Caesarea with three men who had come to fetch him. Acts 11; the writer of 1 Jn 2:1 says: “We have a paraclete (m) with the Father, Jesus Christ.” And of course, there is the poetic prologue of John’s Gospel that uses ‘logos’ (m) to proclaim to the Hellenist world that Jesus of Nazareth is the word (logos m) who “took on human nature (flesh f) and who dwelt among us, and we witnessed his presence (f), a presence as of a unique one (m) alongside of (the) father”.

Jesus inherited many longstanding traditions expressing faith in God. When he reportedly speaks of God as father, he is expressing his relationship with God. Our inheritance is no different. In faith, we accept God as encountered and understood throughout many generations. Some people have accepted traditional terms for God; others need to coin new language to express their faith. Among other things, the Bible is a record of this human development of faith expressions, of people discovering their relationships with God and their ways to proclaim them. Even when we say (with the Bible) “This is the word of the Lord.”, it is a proclamation of our relationship with God. Ruach, shechina, pneuma, spiritus, breath, wind, ghost, indwelling presence, word, spirit and many others are our human efforts to speak about God.

Patriarchal religions have leaned towards linguistic masculinity when they proclaim faith in God even though God has no gender. When the notion of three Persons in the trinitarian God took shape, Christians had no difficulty with the images of Father (bearded old man) and Son (young manly Jesus). Spirit dove, however, was more problematic because the dove was often seen as a female symbol -- though there must also have been male doves around. Similarly, “A noise (m) from heaven as carrying a violent wind (f)” and “divided tongues (f) as of fire (n)” Acts 2:2 indicate a strong divine presence but are not easy to worship nor pray to as a divine Person. It is easy to picture and pray to the Father and the Son as “Persons” in the Trinity, but the Holy Spirit (breath, wind, dove, fire) as Person is much more difficult.

It is the catechisms and the prayerful repetition of “In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” that has embedded the Trinity firmly in the Christian mind. These three names were and still are spoken together without much thought. ‘Ghost’ as a mysterious presence may have been easier perhaps than ‘Spirit’. For me growing up in Ireland, St. Patrick’s shamrock Trinity (three leaves, one stem) was everywhere and it was patriotic to boot. It made some sort of sense.

It must be said right off that the word ‘person’ does not mean

The Trinity Continued...

the same today as it did when earlier christian theologians used it. Today, a person is a separate individual, a unique consciousness, separate in its own existence. If this were the case in the Trinity, it could be said that there are three Gods. But the christian understanding of God was and is that there is only one God, only one divine nature. In God there are three co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial Persons but only one nature or substance. In Jesus there are two natures -- one God-nature and one human nature -- but only one Person.

The word 'person', from the Latin 'persona', was derived from the Greek word 'prosopon' meaning 'face' and was used widely as in "to come before" a tribunal, or to describe the face of things, such as the face of the moon, or of an animal, or the mask that covered the face used in dramas to indicate a character. It easily came to mean person.

'Prosopon' (face), however, was not the first choice of christian theologians in explaining the immanent Trinity, i.e. the inner nature of God. They preferred the word 'hupostasis', substance. (literally, that which "stands under" a thing). The Father is uncreated being (ousia f); the Son is one nature with the Father in being (homoousios m); the Spirit comes (proceeds) from the Father (and the Son in the Western tradition but from the Father only in the Eastern) and is one in substance (hupostasis) with them.

While the Apostles' Creed emphasized the fully human nature of Jesus, the attempt to explain immanent Trinity brought about the Nicene Creed. It was the fourth century theologians' answer to Arianism. To do this, the Nicene Creed combined also the understanding of the economic Trinity. (See below.) The Nicene Creed emphasized that Jesus was fully God: "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God... of the same being (homoousios) with the Father, begotten, not made." This follows their understanding of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the word and the word was related to God... (1:1) And the word took on human nature (sarx f. flesh) and lived among us and we saw his glory (his presence), a glory as of a unique one (m) present with the Father, (and) full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14) The personified word (Word) always was, and is, just as Yahweh God always was, and is. Likewise, God's pneuma always was and is the personified mutual love of Father and Son.

As with all christians, theologians of the time inherited the biblical tradition that Yahweh's pneuma, (sophia, logos, spirit) was distinct from Yahweh, and there was no tradition of how they were related to God or to one another. Similarly, when the NT speaks of God, it means Yahweh. "God spoke to the fathers in the prophets and in these last days spoke to us in the son whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom he also made the ages, who had the fullness of his glory and the character of his substance..." Heb 1:1-3; And "When the paraclete has come whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who goes forth from the Father..." Jn15:26 By the fourth century, christians were seeing the Father, Son, and Spirit as three distinct "Persons" with different roles.

Theologians struggled to express the relations of the personified Word and Spirit with God. They believed that "You can't have one without the other." that these relations were "communicated" within one identical essence, and that the relations made them distinct Persons. They called the relations processions 1. by generation (Father to Son) and 2. by spiration (Father and Son to Spirit) -- though the Eastern

theologians made spiration Father only to Spirit. There could not be two Sons nor two Spirits.

It was unfortunate that the expressions used were "processions", "generation", and "spiration" because they indicate priority of being. But 'father', 'son' and 'spirit' were the words inherited from the Gospels and embedded in christian tradition. The three Persons are distinct but they cannot be divided; so the second Person could become human in Jesus and the third Person could become a comforting presence or even a strong wind! Nevertheless, there is one principle of action, one nature in the Trinity. The mission of the Son is directed towards the establishment of God's Kingdom (eschatological); and it is not the same as the mission of the Spirit which is to guide the community in carrying on Jesus' mission.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the spirit is not yet thought of as the personified trinitarian Holy Spirit but the principle of life in the groups of Jesus followers (i.e. churches). God's presence through the living exalted anointed Jesus is the spirit that urges and guides the christian gatherings in the spirit of prophecy as they proclaim God's Kingdom (Acts 2:17). In this way, Acts fosters the inner life of the groups and establishes their connection with the former great prophetic leaders, Moses and Joshua.

People did discover and express some things of God's outer doings. Through revelation people mined how God acts and what God does: God creates; God's spirit breathes life into; God's wind blows freely; God speaks and things happen; God walks with and stands by people; God's wisdom (sophia) guides; God's power makes things right, balances (judges); God can be relied on and be trusted; God makes covenants; God forgives as though misdeeds had never happened; God reconciles sinners and so on. Theologians call this outer-self of God "the economic Trinity" because it deals with the "economy of salvation" i.e. "the household rules of reconciliation". These things are faithed.

In the "economy of salvation" there are divine nature and human nature. Creation did not offend divine nature; human nature did. In a patriarchal culture where women did not count, it was the man who represented human nature, and a male representative was needed to undo the wrong. "That which is born of human nature is human nature; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." John 3:6

In story and legend, the Israelites have told how God does these things. The Bible accounts were satisfied with that God; the Eastern Church too was satisfied; but the Western Church went where wise men fear to tread; they tried to explain God's inner nature (the immanent Trinity) in language that is incomprehensible, far too difficult to make sense of, and not worth much in the development of prayer life.

Christians, theologians excepted, have given up trying to understand and have mostly ignored the explanations of the immanent Trinity.

"The spirit itself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God, and if we are children, heirs indeed of God and joint-heirs of Christ." Rom.8:16

"The spirit itself bears witness to our spirit that we are children

The Trinity Continued...

of God, (i.e. dependent beings) and if we are children, heirs indeed of God and joint-heirs of Christ.” Rom.8:16

Spiritual leaders have guided the faithful in expressing God’s deeds and God’s loving attention. The following are two examples:

1. “By naming God the sum total of created goodness.... present to every distinct moment, every separate segment of life... every gracious mortal being around us charged with that presence, we come to see every facet of life -- all of them, each of them -- as glints of the Divine. We get a fuller picture of God. At the same time, we get a deeper understanding of the sacredness of a creation that shares in this divinity... the practice of naming God ‘all of life there is’ also makes theology manifest. It teaches more about the nature of God in one single gesture than the most well meaning emphasis on any single quality of the Divine can possibly do. Clearly, if God is really God, no one name can possibly hold all the allusions, say all the concepts, breathe in one breath all the qualities that are God. That awareness changes the way we see both God and life... Every single dimension of God, though it crystallizes our understanding of God, also limits the human understanding of God. To cling to one without proclaiming the others is to make God small.”

Joan Chittister *In Search of Belief* pp23-4

2. When we acknowledge God as person, we sense an actual someone to whom we can relate. Given that one of the most beautiful things about being human is the ability to encounter another person, it is natural that we should want that experience with the deepest source of everything also to be intimate and personal. The notion of an infinite person who is pure love means that we are using the term ‘person’ in a transfigured sense; there is no control or despotic power here, rather a

sublime quickening of our every potential for passion, creativity, compassion and freedom... when we speak of God as beauty, we are speaking of the beauty of *who-ness*. The *who* question is the most numinous and mysterious of questions. The self is unlike any other thing in the world: though it appears in time and space, it is beyond them. The *who-ness* of someone can never be finally named, known, claimed, controlled or predicted. The *who* is beyond all frames and frontiers and dwells in the mystery of its own reflexivity and infinity. *Who* has no map. When we claim that God is beauty, we are claiming for beauty all the adventure, mystery, infinity and autonomy of divine *who-ness*. Beauty is the inconceivable made so intimate that it illuminates our hearts.

The notion of the divine person also grounds the depth and intimacy of human affection. If you listen to your affection or attraction to someone, you can sense that there is more than the two of you there. There is also present a third force- the affection itself as a threshold where your two lives meet and engage each other. This finds primal expression in the notion of the Trinity. The affection between Son and Father is so utterly alive as to be not merely a bond but an other person, the Holy Spirit. That constant, passionate spill-over of pure affection is the Spirit. This is the Spirit of affection in which we live and move in each moment and it is at the heart of the Christian notion of God. The Holy Spirit holds the tension of God, and is both the abyss and summit of the knowing between Father and Son.... The Holy Spirit is the spirit of primal Eros, the between that is forever quickening, the source of all the gifts that turn up in our lives. John O’Donohue *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace* pp230-32

The Soft Breath Of God by Hank Mattimore, San Jose, CA

I am convinced that there are moments in our lives when the Creator of the Universe makes his presence known by softly breathing his spirit, into a situation in our lives. I felt the breath of God last month when one of our village “alumni” gave me a ticket to attend his graduation from high school. “Bret” had only four tickets allotted to him so I felt honored to be given one of them.

Any parent who has had to endure a long graduation ceremony for one of their kids can understand that his well meaning invitation was not an unmixed blessing. Graduation ceremonies have a way of going on and on and on. I knew in advance that I would be sitting in a crowded football stadium, under a hot summer sun, craning my neck and eyes to catch so much as a glimpse of my kid among the nine hundred graduates.

But nothing could have kept me from the graduation ceremony of this particular foster kid. The soft breath of God blew on me and I knew I had to show up for him at his significant moment in his life. Call it conscience or sense of duty or good old fashioned guilt; there was no way I was going to miss this event.

Blessed with a free will, we are faced with dozens (hundreds?) of choices every day.

The nuns used to tell us we each had two angels sitting on our shoulders. The bad demon was on the left, telling us what NOT to do, while our good angel on the right shoulder was urging us to do the right thing.

Whether it’s the voice of God or his angel sometimes his whisper is more like a shout. “Thou shalt not kill.” “Thou shalt not covet they neighbors wife,” “Honor the father and thy mother.” But more often, the Spirit of God communicates his wishes for us through that quiet inner voice we call conscience. God tells us when it is time to forgive someone who has hurt us or when it is time to stand up for what is right or to be grateful for the gifts we have received, but He/She is speaking in a whisper.

Aye! There’s the rub. How can we hear that soft voice of the spirit through the bedlam we have created in our modern world. I don’t know. But I do know that if we do not forge a quiet space for ourselves, we will not only be unable to hear the voice of God, we won’t even be able to hear one another or give our children the one-on-one attention they crave. be able to carry on a civilized conversation with one another, or give our kids the quality one-on-one time they crave.

I’m trying to put aside some time for meditation these days because unless I do, I won’t be able to hear that inner voice. God knows how many times I missed God’s promptings in the past but this time, for once, I got it right and was there for a kid named Bret.

New Evangelization Will 'Forge New Paths' For Church

A Letter To The Editor by John Palardy, Calgary, AB



I read the article "New evangelization will 'forge new paths' for church" dated March 14, 2011 in the Western Catholic Reporter, with great interest but as I read it many thoughts crossed my mind. My fear is that it will be another Vatican undertaking that will not reach the intended audience. I say this because the "linementa or outline" for pre-synod discussion among the hierarchy appears to have been crafted by the Vatican, just like the recent liturgical reforms that did not include the cultures and language of the people they are intended to embrace. This is not a good sign from my vantage point. I have had experience in reading such "white papers" in the past and the tone has always been one of "HERE IS THE CONCLUSION YOU WILL ARRIVE AT, SO NOW LETS START THE DISCUSSION". This type of closed mindedness will never engage the hearts and minds of the intended audience.

What is required of the Bishops who will attend the Synod is a very serious openness to hear and discover the minds, hearts and knowledge

of the masses. My wife and I are very much engaged in the search for a meaningful spirituality. Our experience is such that when visiting friends we inevitably find ourselves engaged in the topic of the search for real meaning and truth in our lives. The people we discuss this with are the very one's the new evangelization is intent on reaching but I can tell you a closed superior attitude of having the TRUTH will not cut it. In the English speaking medium I am aware that extensive writing and exploration of spirituality is taking place.

To name only a few authors, that are shaping the minds of our modern world, I can think of the academic work of Brian Swimme who discusses astrophysics and the need to tell a new story, which in turn resonates with Diarmuid O'Murchu's book 'RECLAIMING SPIRITUALITY'. The work of the Jesus Seminar that is searching to grasp ever more accurately the truth of the historical Jesus, should assist us in understanding the need for compassion, forgiveness and the real meaning of Jesus' teachings.

Personally I have been edified by writers like Marcus Borg and his colleagues. Will the craftsmen of this new evangelization go so far as to read Richard Dawkins the 'GOD DELUSION'? If they are going to start a discussion of who God is they had better come prepared for some indepth exploration. Also please do not attempt to use Greek philosophy to argue successfully when it comes to a scientific explanation of how the world fits into the spiritual realm.

All this might make you think I am a non church going atheist but I am neither. I am deeply moved by the teachings of Jesus and personally committed to outreach to the poor and suffering. Tell me if this is not what our faith should be guiding us towards? I find it very offensive that the institutional church does not want to enter into real dialogue with its flock. We may not be protesting in the streets but many are walking away from the Catholic Church.

Western Catholic, week of March 14, 2011



Dan, our Corpus Canada friend in Goa recently lost his wife Germana. He also had a visit from Joe Gubbels to his home in Goa. Since then Joe has returned to Edmonton for treatment for a cancer. We ask your prayers for these two wonderful people.

Dan sent the following email to The Journal:

The attached Image is that of the *Naturaja* -- Shiva's 'Cosmic Dance' for destruction of old things and creation of the new.

Do you remember John Alan Cameron singing his "*Dance, Dance, wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the Dance says he*"; I think that whoever wrote that song used this as inspiration.

My friend, Amalor, put this image in the wrought-iron 'grill windows' (window grills to keep out larger flying birds and monkeys, used everywhere here), and redneck catholics tried to take him to Court for it. If you type *Naturaja* into the Wikipedia searchbox you'll get further exposition---and that might come in handy.

The craftsmanship for this is even now almost miraculous; done only by families who have been doing it for generations. In one of the great temples there is a casting in gold that is 2 metres high!

They Can Take Everything From Us But Hope

by Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga, Sao Felix, Brazil



Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga is the retired Bishop of Sao Felix do Araguaia, Brazil. His work in defending the rights of indigenous peoples and oppressed social groups and his support of the movements of landless peasants in Brazil and the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in the 1980s make him an essential part of the living memory of the struggle for dignity and liberation of the people of Latin America.

Today, there are different liberation theologies. What has been done is to add more explicit themes, sectors of society, of life, that before were not thought about as

much. There have been emerging issues associated with indigenous

people, women, ecology, street children... Now it is a theology that is enriched by the demands of these emerging groups and now is very pluralistic in its objectives, albeit within the demand for liberation.

Global awareness helps us to understand that we must transform the world. It's not enough to just look after one's own house and one's own country. Utopia is thus possible because now it is a utopia with political vision, solidarity, with specific positions. Years ago, who could ask for a world government? Today, talking about it is not as utopian. Utopia is the daughter of hope. And hope is the DNA of the human race. You can take everything away from us except faithful hope. But it must be credible, active, and justifiable hope and one that acts. That is why liberation theology has emphasized praxis so much: if we say that God is love, we have to put it into practice; if God is life, life should be enhanced. Religion is not praxis, we are told, it is faith. But faith without practice is a chimera, and sarcasm. Theoretically, this is clear; now, in practice, we'll see...

Excerpt from "They can take everything from us but hope": An interview with Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga by Pedro Ramiro, Maria Gonzalez Reyes, and Luis Gonzalez Reyes in *Revista Pueblos* #39, Sept. 2009

Small Faith Group/Intentional Eucharistic Community

by John Chuchman, Bellaire, MI

I offer these as possible characteristics:

Freedom of Thought
Sense of Community, Loving and Caring, Supportive
Dialogue, not just discussion

Willingness to Search *Outside the Box*, outside conventional thinking
Progressive, Evolutionary Theology
Ideas not boxed up and finished

Willingness to dwell in Questions/Ambiguity
Answers not mandatory, Live the Questions
Acceptance that Answers are *Within*

Full Group Participation
Social Interaction
Meals together

Forward Looking, not backwards
Adult Faith
Abandonment of need for security

New Ways of looking at things
Not all need agree
Acceptance of Unknowing

Desire for *Refueling/Recharging*
No Power issues, Community of Equals

A *Living Tree*, not petrified forest

Creative Liturgy
Nourishing/Nurturing
Truly Catholic/Sacramental

**Want to help start one?
Love, John Chuchman**



Fundamentalism Still

by Leonard Boff, Brazil

The calculated act of terror perpetrated in Norway by a 32 year old Norwegian extremist has brought up once again the question of fundamentalism. We must try to understand the reasons for terrorism and fundamentalism. I have already dealt with the topic several times in this column, and published it as a book, *Fundamentalism, Terrorism, Religion and Peace: challenge of the XXI century*, (*Fundamentalismo, Terrorismo, Religión y Paz: desafío del siglo XXI*, Vozes, 2009.) There I mention, among other causes, the type of globalization that has prevailed from the beginning, a globalization that is fundamentally one of the economy, of the markets and of finance. Edgar Morin calls the present <the iron age of globalization.> It was not followed, as reality demanded, by an ethical and educational globalization - a political globalization, (a global government of the peoples.) . Let me explain: with globalization we inaugurated a new phase of the living Planet's history, and of humanity itself. We are leaving behind the narrow limits of regional cultures, with their identities and the figure of the nation-state, to go deeper into the process of a collective history of the human species, with a common destiny, linked to the destiny of life and, somehow, to the destiny of the Earth herself. Peoples were put in motion, communications put everything into contact with everything else, and, for various reasons, the multitudes began to circulate around the world.

This was not a prepared transition, because a confrontation prevailed between two forms of organizing society: state socialism of the Soviet Union and Western liberal capitalism. Everyone had to be aligned with one of these alternatives. When the Soviet Union was dismantled, no multipolar world appeared. Rather, the United States predominated as the major economic-military world power, that began to exert an imperial force, obligating everyone to align with its global interests. More than globalization in a wider sense, a sort of Westernization of

the world came about. It functioned as a compressor that rolled over respectable cultural traditions. This was aggravated by the typical Western arrogance of thinking that they were the carriers of the best in culture, the best science, the best religion, the best forms of producing and of governing.

This global uniformity generated strong resistance, bitterness and anger in many peoples, who saw their identities and customs erode. In this type of situation, forces of identity normally appear. They align themselves with the conservative sectors of their religions, which are the natural guardians of tradition. From there a fundamentalism originates that is characterized by the absolute value it affords its point of view. Those who affirm their identity as absolute are condemned to be intolerant with those who are different, to despise them and, at the outer limits, to eliminate them.

This phenomenon occurs all over the world. In the West, significant conservative groups feel their identity threatened by the penetration of non-European cultures, especially by Islamism. They reject multiculturalism and cultivate xenophobia. The Norwegian terrorist was convinced that the democratic struggle against the threat of foreigners in Europe was lost. So he undertook a desperate solution: a symbolic gesture of eliminating the multicultural <traitors.>

The response of the government and of the Norwegian people has been a wise one: they responded with flowers and with the affirmation of more democracy, this is to say, of more good fellowship, with its differences, more tolerance, more hospitality and more solidarity. This is the path that guarantees human globalization, where it will be more difficult for such tragedy to happen again.

Comments From Readers

Thanks to our readers, The Journal receives many positive comments such as the following which we usually do not include:

Thanks for the Journal. I've read most of it and find it very interesting and resonates with the way I'm thinking. The new translation is driving anyone who knows about it crazy. I can't imagine anything we need less at this time.

Many thanks for the latest edition of the journal.

Thanks for printing The Journal.

In this epoch of religious belief our world has been moving from religions founded on the differences between people to an emerging global spirituality that celebrates our common humanity. This shift, the movement of the Spirit, has made many of us strangers in our own home. We have been confronted with the choice of propping up a institution that is deeply flawed as clerics, or accepting the role of the more ancient calling of 'priest'- an archaic role that every society creates for itself before it creates religion. Many of us who were ordained have left the ministry altogether, many of have remained to act as clerics, and a few have remained faithful to their priesthood and followed the Spirit. The Spirit has asked us to create the foundations for humanity to understand its spirituality on a global scale. Since all such tasks start locally, those who have chosen to be priests rather than clerics created local initiatives to build these new communities. While many ordained people will celebrate anniversaries in a specific religion, they will do so as 'clerics'... François will, true to his calling, celebrate as a priest.

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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