



# nova notes

NOVA Catholic Community

March 2011

## Chair Notes...

### “Cooking up Faith”

Faith is the potential to cook up something good. Maybe I've got cooking on my mind because on March 6<sup>th</sup> we're going to enjoy the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Men Who Cook benefit dinner. Much of the talk about faith implicitly defines it as an intellectual act. For example, belief in God is assumed to be the intellectual acceptance of the statement “God exists.” But my point is that we should act on our beliefs, not just think about them or talk about them. Certainly thought and discussion are essential to the act of faith, and I do not want to promote anti-intellectual attitudes. But unless we are literally paralyzed we ought to go further and act on our beliefs to engender good in the real world. So, while it is true that faith has an intellectual component, we must move ourselves to act on our faith, if we can. Why? Here are my top ten reasons for acting on our beliefs.

**Reason 1:** People pay more attention to what we do than what we say. So, if you want to influence others to be good, doing something good yourself is likely to be more effective than telling them what they need to do to be good.

**Reason 2:** People tend to discuss the correctness of this or that religious belief, thinking that having a proper set of religious ideas is a necessary precondition for acting like a good person. However, I don't think that's true. I have known people whose formal religious beliefs are different from my own but who have done wonderfully good things.

**Reason 3:** Being theologically correct can make us feel superior to others. But trying to actually do good keeps us humble because it can be difficult and makes us more aware of our limitations.

**Reason 4:** If we try to do something good and we fail, we search for comfort and that search leads us back to God.

**Reason 5:** The effort to do good often impels us to seek the help and company of other good people and we meet some neat people that way.

**Reason 6:** I believe that the purpose of life is to become a noble person and that by trying to make the world a better place we become more courageous, generous, patient and persistent.

**Reason 7:** If you want to feel closer to God, then by giving God a freer rein in your life you will experience God's companionship more fully.

**Reason 8:** If we succeed at doing something good we will feel a tiny bit more hopeful, a tiny bit more powerful, knowing that we didn't just talk about making the world a little better, we actually made the world a little better.

**Reason 9:** If we fail when we try to do something good, we can comfort ourselves with the realization that at least we are in good company. Jesus didn't feel like much of a success on the cross, either.

**Reason 10:** It helps us forget about our own happiness and allows us to care about someone else. And as we experience ourselves caring about someone else, it makes it possible for us to believe that God cares about us. And that, my friends, is a big relief.

~ Tom Clarkson, Co-chair

**March Newsletter Deadline:  
Friday, March 25**

## March Birthdays

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| NOVA Message Line                                  | (703) 852-7907                |
| Chairpersons                                       | Tom Clarkson<br>Teddi Ahrens  |
| Treasurer  | Joe Formoso                   |
| Coordinator,<br>Community Life                     | Cece Michelotti               |
| Liturgy Coordinator                                | Gloria Mog                    |
| Padre Cadre Coordinator                            | John Mooney                   |
| Music Coordinator                                  | Victoria Robinson             |
| Peace and Justice Coordinators                     | Dianne Carroll<br>Marie Keefe |
| Christ House<br>Coordinator                        | Kopp Michelotti               |
| Facilities   | Glen Passin                   |
| Directory & Yahoo Groups<br>Coordinator; Webmaster | Ken Chaison                   |
| Newsletter Editor                                  | Judy Christofferson           |

The NOVA Catholic Community invites you to celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy with us every Sunday in Arlington, Virginia.

**Note:** Our Liturgy is usually celebrated at Kenmore Middle School, Arlington Blvd. and Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA. Beginning Memorial Day weekend up to our Fall Retreat weekend in September, we celebrate at Lacey Woods Park, George Mason Drive near Washington Blvd., unless otherwise noted.

Liturgies at Kenmore begin at 10:15 a.m.  
Gather at 10:00 a.m.  
Liturgies at Lacey Woods begin at 9:30 a.m.  
Gather at 9:15 am

Call the Message Line (above) or check the NOVA website for the latest information.

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 2  | Helen Gettys Michie  |
| 7  | John Tarrant   |
| 8  | Cece Michelotti<br>Eric Robinson<br>Peter Reich<br>Kate Connelly |
| 9  | Marlene Shade<br>John Iskander<br>Michael Kane                   |
| 12 | Jim Todaro   |
| 13 | Mary Mele  |
| 14 | Bill Meyer   |
| 19 | Mali Kane  |
| 20 | Kathy Scheimer   |
| 25 | Ilse Lath-Cruces   |
| 26 | Charlie Bailey<br>Brian Schmidt                                  |
| 28 | Michael Iskander   |

*Please send Judy Christofferson your birthday if you would like it to appear here (month/day only).*

### NOVA is praying for. . .

**Eve Birch**, who is looking for a home and items to provide temporary housing for the homeless.

**Judy Christofferson**, who is recovering from a broken ankle

**Sonja Donahue**, who appreciates a card, a call or a visit.

**Jody Furlong**, who would also appreciate a phone call or note.

Remember these and any other NOVA members and their friends and family who need our prayers.

## Liturgies: Cycle A

Inclusive Readings and Music Selections are available in the new NOVA Yahoo Group Files. Please give all music selections to the Music Liaison the Sunday before your liturgy and print 65 copies of the liturgy program. Liturgies at Kenmore begin at 10:15 a.m. and at 9:30 at Lacey Woods Park.

### March Music Liaison Tim White

#### March 6 – 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Joe Nangle, OFM – Christies and O'Tooles  
Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28, 32  
Psalm 31  
Romans 3:21-25, 28  
Matthew 7:21-27

#### March 9 – Ash Wednesday

7:30 p.m. – Home of John & Marlene Tarrant

#### March 13 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

Gerry Stockhauser, SJ – Barbara and Joe Formoso  
Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7  
Psalm 51  
Romans 5:12-19  
Matthew 4: 1-11

#### March 20 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

Dan Madigan, SJ – David and Gloria Mog  
Genesis 12:1-4a  
Psalm 33  
2 Timothy 1:8-10  
Matthew 17:1-9

#### March 27 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

Ray Kemp - Walt Landry and Catherine Loveless  
Exodus 17:3-7  
Psalm 95  
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8  
John 4:5-42

### April Music Liaison Tim White

#### April 3 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

Quinn Conners, O.Carm. – Barbara and Joe Formoso  
1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a  
Psalm 23  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41

#### April 10 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

Dan Madigan, SJ – Jeanne Clarkson  
Ezekiel 37:12-14  
Psalm 130  
Romans 8:8-11  
John 11:1-45

#### April 17 – Palm Sunday

Joe Nangle, OFM – Helen Michie  
Isaiah 50:4-7  
Psalm 22  
Phillipians 2:6-11  
Matthew 26:14-27

#### April 21 – Holy Thursday Mass and Meal *Center for Spiritual Enlightenment - 7:00 p.m.*

Gerry Stockhausen, SJ – Holy Thursday Team

#### April 22 – Good Friday

*Kenmore Middle School – 8:00 p.m.*  
Meg Tuccillo

#### April 24 – Easter Sunday

*Goodwin House – 10 a.m.*  
Gerry Stockhausen, SJ – Gloria Mog and Tim White  
Acts 10:34a, 37-43  
Psalm 118  
1 Corinthians 5:6b-8  
John 20:1-9

**Please Help! Two more Liturgy Planners  
Needed:**

**July 3 and August 7**

Contact Gloria Mog if you can take either of these  
dates

## SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS

### Gunston Volunteers Needed

NOVA volunteers distribute bags of non-perishable food, cereal provided by the Community, and perishable items such as eggs, milk, and meat that are picked up at the Arlington Food Assistance Center warehouse on the night of distribution. Produce items are picked up every other week by Eric Carroll at the produce markets downtown (and funded by the NOVA Peace and Justice budget). The distribution takes place at the Gunston Middle School Recreation Center in Arlington. Many volunteers have been active in this project for a lot of years. Every Thursday there is a seasoned volunteer, so this is your chance to try out your skills. Having someone who speaks Spanish is a real plus for each of the teams. If you are interested in being a volunteer, email Dianne Carroll at: [diacarroll@comcast.net](mailto:diacarroll@comcast.net) or call her at 703-536-2616.

#### March Gunston Schedule:

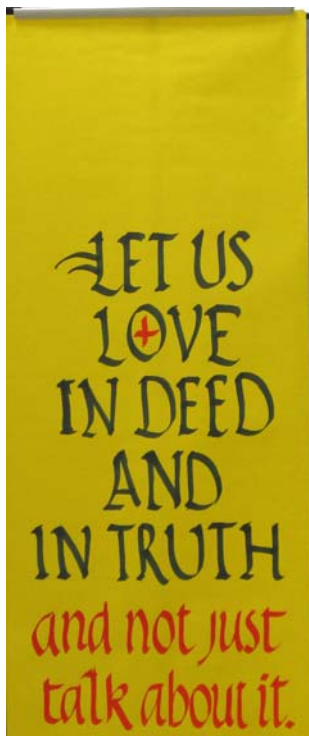
**March 3:** Tim, Jerry

**March 10:** Volunteers needed

**March 17:** Eric, Mike T.

**March 24:** Glen, Syd

**March 31:** Volunteers needed



### 2010 Homeless Prevention/Rental Assistance

NOVA has been administering a program to provide rental relief on a one-time, emergency basis for those in need in the Arlington Public School community since 2007. Social Workers in five schools (one added this fall) were sent information about how to access funds and a form to complete for each family needing assistance. The forms include: documentation of need, agencies that have been accessed for help, and the amount requested. When the program started most families were in need of \$500-600 for the month in need. During this last year the amount needed has increased as the rents have increased to \$1,100 and up. Human Services and other agencies that offer assistance often have restrictions on the amount granted. This has meant NOVA's amount to meet the rent for that month has increased. During the last 3+ years only one family has returned to the social worker for repeat help.

Jennifer Carroll, former Arlington Public School social worker, designed the intake form, approves the request and administers the funds. During 2010 six families were helped with amounts between \$600-800 for the month. Reasons include job loss of a parent, illness in family, construction worker with less work, and a sudden unexpected crisis.

The other fund that is administered through the Arlington Public School social workers at these schools is an Emergency Fund. NOVA has received some funds from members designated for emergency family needs. Those monies were put in a special account. Social workers use the same form to request the funds limited to under \$200. They have been used, e.g., for cab vouchers for a mom with chemo treatments and a disabled child, diapers for home for an elementary student with a medical condition, and an electric bill.

Thanks to the NOVA Community special collection in December and the bimonthly Social Justice project checks, this program continues to serve the community.  
~ Dianne Carroll

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**THE ANNUAL  
PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE  
MEETING  
Sunday, March 27, 5:30 p.m.**

**Potluck Dinner**

Home of Meg Tuccillo  
2532 N. Ridgeview Road  
Arlington, VA

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### **SALT Richmond Wrap-up**

**SALT** (*Social Action Linking Together*) announces that its annual forum to learn what happened during the Virginia General Assembly Session in Richmond will be held on **Saturday, March 19, 2011 from 9:00-11:15 a.m.** at The American Legion Auxiliary Post 180, 330 Center Street North, Vienna, Virginia.

Michael Cassidy, President and CEO of the Commonwealth Institute, will deliver the keynote address on the topic, "Poverty in Virginia." In addition, legislators from Northern Virginia will discuss how well the General Assembly responded to social justice and human services needs facing Virginia and will answer questions posed by participants. This is an excellent opportunity to learn first-hand what transpired in Richmond. There is no charge for the program. All are welcome. For more information, contact SALT Coordinator, John Horejsi at [jhorejsi@cox.net](mailto:jhorejsi@cox.net) or visit the SALT web site at [www.S-A-L-T.org](http://www.S-A-L-T.org). For directions call (703) 938-9535.

**"I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is no hurt, but only more love."**

~Mother Teresa

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Lenten Theme: *Green Shoots: Push Through and Find a Way*



Lent begins on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> with an Ash Wednesday service at the home of John and Marlene Tarrant. The Lenten Team has decided to center the community's reflections this year around the overall theme of "green shoots" – signs of hope, renewal and growth. The Team had a lively discussion on what plants go through each year as they burrow under in coldness and dark while debris rains down upon them. So, too, we and others often sit amidst the dark and destruction wondering if we have the wherewithal to push through to a new way, a renewed sense of hope and purpose. It is our faith and our "cosmic task," as one person put it, that causes us to search for the light so that we might take heart and spread it to others.

We will begin our Lenten liturgies in quiet reflection in the round. Opening statements as well as the Peace Candle ritual will remind us of the green shoots that are poking up amidst a world in trouble on many different counts. The Team encourages community members to keep a symbol of green shoots in a prominent place in your home this Lenten season. May our reflections and prayers nourish these fragile yearnings into a garden of possibilities.

### Father Hug Wins 2011 Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award

**Education for Justice** staff received the Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award on February 12, 2011 for their exemplary contributions to the achievement of the Catholic social justice vision through the Education for Justice Web Project. Sister Katherine Feely, SND, Jane Deren and **Father Jim Hug, S.J.** were honored this year for their contributions.

The Roundtable Association of Catholic Diocesan Social Action Directors presents the award each year to a person or persons whose work, in the tradition of Catholic social teaching, has led to significant progress towards greater social justice and dignity for all members of society at the national or international level. The Roundtable Award is named for the late Harry A. Fagan, who served as the director of Catholic Community Action in the diocese of Cleveland and later worked for the National Pastoral Life Center as staff for the Roundtable Association. Past winners of this award include Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ; Most Rev. Ricardo Ramirez, CSB; Msgr. Philip J. Murnion, Mr. John J. Sweeney; Rev. Greg Boyle, SJ; Bishop John McCarthy; Ms. Joan Rosenhauer; and Rev. Bryan Massingale.



The "NOVA-Tones"

## NICARAGUAN MICRO-FINANCE PROJECT



### Prayer of Blessing for the Women Participating in the Micro-Finance Project

On January 31, 2011 the Nova Peace & Justice Committee planned a liturgy which included the blessing of the women in Nicaragua who are participating in the Micro-Finance Project. Marie Keefe made origami peace doves with the name of one of the women attached. Each Nova household received one to take home. All at the liturgy participated in the blessing prayer below. We will continue to pray for each of the women at home in the coming months.



Dear God, we ask you to bless (say the name of the woman on your dove), with a special blessing to help her as she begins her new quest of learning to better her life and the life of her family.

Help her to reflect on your grace that has brought us together today and remind her that she is not alone; that the members of the NOVA community are praying for her and for her success. Amen.

~ Submitted by Dianne Carroll

## Nicaraguan Micro-Loan Project List

We ask for your continued prayers for these women on their journey of launching new businesses to support their families with the struggles and joys that may entail. ~ Marie Keefe

### Ciudad Dario Municipality, Nicaragua

| <u>Microloans To</u>                | <u>Equipment/Supplies</u> | <u>Community</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Mirtha Jesenia Balmacedo Espinoza   | sewing                    | Cruz de Jicaro   |
| Luz Marina Martinez Valle           | sewing                    | Cruz de Jicaro   |
| Suzana Martinez Centeno             | bread making              | La China         |
| Lidia del Socorro Orozco Moran      | bread making              | Apompua          |
| Rosa Elena Saenz Alonso             | bread making              | La China         |
| Marbelly Gonzalez Vega              | sewing                    | La China         |
| Xiomara del Carmen Orozco Espinosa  | sewing                    | Apompua          |
| Damaris Francisca Alvarado Torrez   | bread making              | El Jobo          |
| Angelita Ocon Urbina                | bread making              | El Jobo          |
| Marilet Alonso Martinez             | bread making              | Apompua          |
| Maribel Martinez Soza               | bread making              | Las Lajas        |
| Yamilet Mairena Mendoza             | bread making              | Cerro Colorado   |
| Damaris del Rosario Mendoza Mendoza | bread making              | Cerro Colorado   |
| Maria Teodora Mendoza Lopez         | bread making              | Cerro Colorado   |
| Maria del Carmen Escobar            | bread making              | Candelaria       |
| Lizeth del Socorro Moreno           | bread making              | Candelaria       |

### Tipitapa Municipality, Nicaragua

| <u>Microloans To</u>                 | <u>Equipment/Supplies</u> | <u>Community</u>  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Vilma Marlene Garay Trejos           | beauty                    | Cristo Rey        |
| Aracely Bello Olivares               | cooking                   | Antonio Mendoza   |
| Elisabeth Gonzalez Silva             | cooking                   | Roberto Vargas    |
| Aida Vanessa Rocha Zamora            | cooking                   | Yuris Ordonez     |
| Yadira del Carmen Torrez Matamoros   | pastry                    | San Fran Cisco    |
| Ingrid Maria Madrigal Garcia         | pastry                    | La Villa          |
| Maria Concepcion Flores Arcia        | pastry                    | Yuris Ordonez     |
| Maria Guadalupe Rodriguez Gutierrez  | pastry                    | Yuris Ordonez     |
| Carolina del Carmen Sanchez Cardenas | pastry                    | San Jorge         |
| Jenny Jamileth Amador                | pastry                    | Gaspar Garcia     |
| Yadira del Carmen Lopex Andino       | pastry                    | Gaspar Garcia     |
| Aleyda Johanna Meza Soza             | beauty                    | La Bocana         |
| Ana Maria Mayorga Gutierrez          | pastry                    | Yuris Ordonez     |
| Blanca Estela Vasquez Gonzales       | pastry                    | Gaspar Garcia     |
| Mirna Mercedes Rivas Castro          | pastry                    | Gaspar Garcia     |
| Dulce Maria Espinales Moreno         | pastry                    | Francisco Sanchez |
| Raquel Elisabeth Salazar Espinales   | beauty                    | Francisco Sanchez |
| Juana Mercedes Roja Mercado          | beauty                    | Marcos Somarriba  |
| Maria de los Angeles Selva Solis     | beauty                    | El Chaparral      |
| Rosa Aracellyes Rios Urbina          | beauty                    | La Villa          |
| Heysell Jeaneth Gutierrez Lezama     | beauty                    | La Villa          |



## Nicaragua Micro-loans List - continued

### Microloans To

Martha Lisbeth Gomez Fonseca  
Marlene Antonia Salinas Mena  
Juana Paula Cabrera Garcia  
Juana Manuela Rivas  
Griselis Martha Cerna Ramos  
Yaneth de los Angeles Valle Solorzano  
Maritza del Socorro Alvarado Conde  
Ana Zoraida Baez Mena  
Marlene Facunda Ugarte  
Auxiliadora Maria Mena

### Equipment/Supplies

pastry  
pastry  
pastry  
pastry  
pastry  
pastry  
pastry  
sewing  
sewing  
sewing

### Community

San Francisco  
Anexo La Villa  
La Villa  
La Villa  
Aleyda Delgado  
Francisco Rojas  
Francisco Rojas  
Jorge Navarro 1  
Marcos Somarriba  
Marcos Somarriba

## NOVA PHOTO AND PRAYER SENT TO NICARAGUA



Saludos de parte de la Comunidad de NOVA. Las felicitamos por haber comenzado el proceso de iniciar empresas nuevas. Sabemos que el camino hacia una vida mejor puede ser difícil. Por esto nosotros las acompañaremos con nuestras oraciones y deseos para un éxito fuerte. Se puede ver en la foto que cada uno de nosotros tenemos una paloma de papel con el nombre de una de Uds, así que siempre estaremos pensando en ella. !Que Dios las bendiga!

Greetings from the NOVA Community. Congratulations on beginning your process of launching new businesses. We realize that the path to a better life can be difficult. For this reason we are accompanying you with our prayers and best wishes for much success. In the picture you can see that each one of us has a paper dove with one of your names so that we will always be thinking of you. May God bless you!

## THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Carolyn and NOVA Community,

Greetings and thanks for keeping in touch. The people are happy for the results of the referendum even though they have not been made official yet. The great majority has voted for separation and now is the great challenge for the country. Let us pray that all shall be well.

I just returned from a 10-day visit to a very far away Christian community in Panyijar County, very vast and isolated area of the country; it belongs to our Parish and we can only visit this area in the dry season because during the rainy season we cannot reach it due to the bad roads and the swamps. I had a joyful time there teaching the girls and the women. The girls learn to do the holy rosaries with beads and next time I will teach them how to embroider. Some girls are going to school and that is very good. Here in this place girls get married very early and most of the heavy work is done by them. The two catechists that went with me conducted a seminar and workshop for the new catechists and for the youth leaders and members of the committees of the church. It was very good and intense days but we are all happy for reaching these brothers and sisters with the Word of God.

Please keep us in your prayers and thank you for all you do for us. May you continue to experience God's love and joy in your lives, and that "Immanuel-God-With-Us" may be manifested through your loving concern for others. Hope one day you can come and visit us here in Leer and Juba.

A big hug, con carino,  
Sr. Adriana

Dear NOVA Friends,

I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for me since I broke my ankle. The Prayer Wheel, food, flowers, visits, cards and phone calls have given a wonderful boost to my morale. The latest X-ray looks good (lots of "hardware" in the picture). I still need to keep any weight off the injured foot for at least the next two weeks and then I hope I'll be able to start weight-bearing therapy. I'm really looking forward to being able to stand on two feet again!

With Clyde's help, I can get out of the house now and look forward to seeing you at a liturgy in the near future – also don't want to miss the "Men Who Cook" event.

With love, gratitude and prayers,

Judy

## Theology for a Small Planet

Prior Essays

A collection of essays by Clyde Christofferson © 2009-2011

### Implications of being a Small Planet – Part 2

Paul (1 Corinthians 13:8-12) *“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. When I was a child I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”*

Einstein was asked, *“When will your theories of physics be accepted?”* He replied, *“When all those who have taught me physics have died.”*

At a time when fifty percent of the American public remain highly skeptical of the evolution of species, as first described by Darwin in 1859, it may be presumptuous to rely upon an equally revolutionary concept developed a hundred years after Darwin.

The concept is the evolution of the entire cosmos. There are some physicists (including Stephen Hawking) who contend that this particular cosmos may be one of many, but that doesn't affect what I am about to say. There is something marvelously pregnant about this cosmos, and it places “revelation” in a different light.

Note Einstein's quote above. *Homo sapiens* as a species is averse to change. Never mind that a host of particular individuals have ventured out into the unknown. Both Darwin and Einstein ran up against entrenched and comfortable ways of thinking about the world. Change is hard.

Perhaps change is hard for quite understandable reasons. The human animal seeks understanding. We each come at this from different life experiences. I remember two distinct events when I was fifteen, both in the same place – my room at the family home in St. Louis. On one occasion I asked myself “What if nothing?” It was not about whether I might not have been born, or whether my parents had not married, or whether the United States had never gotten off the ground. It was a more comprehensive question that gradually grows as you follow a line of thought. What if the Earth had never been, or the solar system, or the Milky Way – or anything at all?

At about that same age I remember finishing some sit-ups beside my bed, pausing for a moment, and praying to God for understanding. I wanted to know why things were. I had just recently become a Catholic – that's another story – and I felt comfortable asking God for help.

I guess there is a lesson there – be careful what you ask for. At this point in time I no longer think of God in that same way. That's just not the way God works. This is a God of warmth and tenderness, comforting me as I fall to my death. I don't mean that as a joke. It's just another version of the story of Job.

My understanding of how and why things are has grown over the years, yet I can see common threads. I'm still myself. And if anything has changed in how I consider this ineffable reality that has no name, it is the awe. When I was young I was comforted by Love; now my jaw drops as I marvel – almost to the point of stupor – at existence.

I've become attached to my own understanding, a view of the world that seems to make sense, a view that provides a coherent framework for how and why things are. And it is reasonable to suppose that others with different understandings also find that these understandings provide coherent frameworks for living. These different coherent frameworks serve us as we look in the mirror in the morning and contemplate what is to be done in the day ahead, even after the previous day when things didn't work out as we had hoped. It's that down side of hope, again.

As disappointing as a coherent framework can be, it is nonetheless part of me. And change is hard, because I'm not going to give up my sense of

coherence. And a reasonable attention to objectivity leads to the reasonable presumption that others who may have quite different understandings have a similar attachment to their own coherence.

There, I've said it. It's not truth, it's coherence. We are different, and stubbornly so. Scientists are no different. The evidence that scientists work with may be the same – that is, replicable by others – but how you select and interpret the evidence makes a lot of difference. There is a famous story about a speech that Lord Kelvin – the dean of British science – gave at the end of the nineteenth century. He concluded that the major theories required to understand the world had been developed and that the science of the future would be about fleshing out the details.

A few years later Lord Kelvin's words became an embarrassment to him. He had not anticipated quantum theory and relativity. Yet how could Lord Kelvin – and a great many other scientists of the time – part with their coherent understandings? They couldn't, not without an alternative that was also coherent. Developing such alternatives takes time. And perhaps death, so that a newer generation without the same attachments may take hold. This is what Einstein meant by "when all those who have taught me physics have died."

Is religion any different? Until discovery of the cosmic background radiation less than fifty years ago, a good case could be made that the supernatural occupied a different space than the natural. Even scientists like Stephen Jay Gould argued that science and religion each had their own areas of competence. He coined a term for this separation: NOMA – Non-Overlapping Magisterial Areas.

Gould has since died. But will his thoughts about NOMA be an embarrassment to him? Will he follow the pattern of Lord Kelvin?

Or will it be the Church that follows the pattern of Lord Kelvin?

Pardon the abruptness of that transition. That was what I was intending to get to all along. What is it that we call "revelation"? In ancient times it was reasonable to suppose that the universe had always existed. There may have been disputes about whether a God or gods existed, but if God existed and was active in the world it seemed obvious that the mode of activity would be straightforward and direct: giving tablets to Moses, or the Qu'ran to Muhammad.

Or sending His only Son, Jesus the Christ.

Where am I going with this? I'm a practicing Catholic, and this God of ours is truly awesome. And the disciples and followers, and then also Paul, experienced the Risen Christ after the Crucifixion.

Where I am going with this is very straightforward: we – through our religion and our Church – are idolaters, taking human constructions and calling them divine. That goes for us, that goes for Muslims and that goes for Jews.

Wait! Not so fast! Is that any way to treat a friend? Have you no consideration for the sensibilities of your fellow human beings?

Not to worry. No one will pay any attention to me anyway. Why? Because people give priority to maintaining the coherence of their outlook upon the world. Look at Lord Kelvin, and consider the difficulty which even scientists faced in their attempt to deal with relativity theory and the quantum hypothesis. There was confusion, there was doubt, and it took years to change. A generation of prior teachers passed away. And our current understandings about science may face comparably wrenching changes in the future.

Why should religion be immune from this process? Did not God bring one reality into being?

It's not about truth; it's about coherence. The challenge I am proposing is not a challenge to truth; it's a challenge because of the importance of coherence.

So let me back up, and run through that last part once again, this time more slowly.

TO BE CONTINUED.



## RECENT PHOTOS



Meg and Clara



Juniper Marjorie Weber



Blessing of Mali before she leaves for Nicaragua



Gloria leads Community in song



Blessing of Marie and Rich as Communion Ministers



Play Time