



NOVA notes

NOVA Catholic Community

October 2011

Chair Notes...

It has never ceased to amaze me. September is perhaps the most anticipated, sometimes dreaded, often magical, but always the quickest month of the year. And here we are: summer has ended, vacations have been taken by most of us. September means a new beginning for many in education, which may bring delight or fear.

But it seems that September always rushes in, dashes about, and all of a sudden autumn is here winking at us as we turn around in disbelief.

And so, let's catch our breath and look back on NOVA's September 16-18 retreat at Shrine Mont. The retreat brought with it many surprises and challenges. One surprise that took us through the weekend was a new menu for many of the meals. Too numerous to mention, I'll just suggest that the food was still plentiful but also much improved nutritionally. Our number of participants was smaller than in previous years, with about 30 members in attendance.

Gloria started us out on Friday evening with several questions:

- Who is God? Is there a God? Who is Jesus?
- Where are we in the universe? Who are we?
- Where are we going in the universe?

She invited us to explore these questions in small groups with an open mind and an open heart. Very important to the weekend was to invite the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Ken has made videos of the week-end that are available for all of us. They are well worth the time it will take to view to them. What an inspiring weekend this was for us. We had an opportunity to learn about the universe in a very graphic way – to realize that we are all on this journey together and our (human) destiny is unknown.

David explained concepts from the science of physics but in a way that connected it to our very existence with questions about where we are heading as a human beings. We are able to receive mechanical body parts,

make purchases that lighten our load and make our life "more livable." So much more came out of the weekend about the development of the body and the human mind. But what about the heart and soul? Where does the Christ fit into all this? And who is the Christ? What is the message given to us?

On Sunday morning, Father John Haughey presented several thoughts for our consideration including the importance of understanding that the message of Christ: "To love the Creator, and to love others as we love ourselves" is vital for living today. If we love the Creator, we love the creations of which we are a part, and so, we must love ourselves. And it follows then that we love one another. How easy. How difficult!

I hope I have whet your appetite and you take some time in the next few days to explore and reflect on the videos, especially if you were one of the unfortunate people who were unable to attend retreat.

Let me close with a few words about connecting with one another in NOVA through team work. When we look at page two of our monthly newsletter we see a list of the coordinators for our several teams in NOVA. Most recently we have been blessed to add another to our list of teams. We have the Liturgy Team which includes the Padre Cadre and Facilities, the Music Team, Peace and Social Justice Team, the Christ House Team, the Gunston/AFAC Team. This month we have added our Communication Team. It now includes not only the newsletter, and Ken's important contributions, but our new Announcement Team, which sends emails to the community with a summary of all the Sunday announcements made at the liturgy. A huge thank you goes out to each of the coordinators, and every member of the teams, too numerous to mention here.

If you feel you'd like to connect with one of these teams, call the coordinator and find out more about it.

Peace and love to each of you

~Cece Michelotti, Co-chair



October Birthdays

NOVA Message Line (703) 852-7907

Chairpersons Teddi Ahrens
Cece Michelotti

Treasurer Joe Formoso

Coordinator,
Community Life Marlene Shade

Liturgy Coordinator Gloria Mog

Padre Cadre Coordinator John Mooney

Music Coordinator Victoria Robinson

Peace and Justice Coordinators Dianne Carroll
Marie Keefe

Christ House
Coordinator Kopp Michelotti

Facilities Glen Passin

Directory & Yahoo Groups
Coordinator; Webmaster Ken Chaison

Newsletter Editor Judy Christofferson

- 2 Tom Ahrens
- 4 Teddi Ahrens
- 5 Ben Brady
- 6 Chris Swanberg
- 11 Clyde Christofferson
- 12 Carolyn Miller
- 15 Betsy Marron
- 21 David Mog
- 22 Nancy Veldhuis

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

NOVA is praying for. . .

Peggy Becker, who is healing from hip surgery.

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

Brigid Doherty, Kate's sister, who is recovering from two broken ankles.

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

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

Michael Iskander, who is recovering from extensive injuries following a car accident.

Elsie Shade, mother of Marlene, who recently had heart surgery.

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

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.

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.

November Newsletter

Deadline: Wednesday, October 26

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.

October Music Liaison Gloria Mog

October 2 – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dan Madigan, SJ
Planner: Catherine Loveless

October 9 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ray Kemp
Planner: Eric Carroll

October 16 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gerry Stockhausen, SJ
Planner: Peggy Meyer

October 23 – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jim Hug, SJ
Planners: Nancy and John Veldhuis

October 30 – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Joe Nangle, OFM
Planners: Peace & Social Justice Group

November Music Liaison Linda Rosenberg

November 6 – 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dan Madigan, SJ
Planners: Carolyn and Ted Miller

November 13 – 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Quinn Conners, O.Carm.
Planner: Victoria Robinson

November 20 – Christ the King

Gerry Stockhausen, SJ
Planners: Judy and Clyde Christofferson

November 27 – First Sunday of Advent

Quinn Conners, O.Carm.
Planners: TBA

NOTE: Cycle B Begins

Liturgy Tips: The Lottery is Coming!

Gen Timpane will again coordinate the 2011-2012 “Liturgy Lottery,” which begins in October. Each household is asked to select **two** dates in the upcoming Cycle B liturgical year when you will be responsible for planning the liturgy. If you know there is a particular Sunday you’d like to plan, call or email Gen now and she will save that date for you. Although you will be the main “point person” for that date, everyone is encouraged to team up with other community members to complete the planning. If you have never planned a liturgy before, don’t hesitate to select a date and then ask others who have experience planning to help you out. The inclusive readings and music possibilities are all on the NOVA website. The music liaison person for your month (see newsletter) needs your music selections a week ahead and is available to help choose music if you want help. You can get tips and help with setting up the environment from Cathy Showalter. The *Guidelines for Planning a Nova Liturgy* are published on the inside covers of the Directory as well as on the website.

If you have any questions or need other support, Gloria Mog, Liturgy Coordinator, is happy to help. If you choose to plan an Advent or Lenten liturgy, you will be working with a team of all the liturgical planners for that season. There will also be a small group formed for Christmas or Easter liturgy. Since we sign up as much as a year ahead for some liturgies, it may be that you find you cannot plan the liturgy on the date you originally chose. If that happens, look in the newsletter for planners on the dates near to your date and contact them to arrange a switch. Let me know if you change your date. We hope everyone will be a part of creating liturgy at Nova – it is an important faith and community-building experience.

~Gloria Mog, Liturgy Coordinator

SOCIAL ACTION

October Gunston Schedule

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. NOVA volunteers have been active in this project for many 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. **Please help.** If you are interested in being a volunteer, contact Dianne Carroll.

October Volunteer Schedule

October 6: Eric, Cathy G.

October 13: Tim, Jerry

October 20: Volunteers Needed

October 27: Syd/Michael K.

“Celebrity Cinematographer” Will Be the Guest Chef at Christ House

NOVA videographer, Ken Chaison, will be in a command performance as executive chef at Christ House on **Monday, October 17**. On that date, NOVA community members will prepare and serve home cooked meals to about 70 hungry clients at the shelter. Ken is looking forward to collecting many, many, meatloaves and pans of scalloped potatoes at the liturgy on **October 16**. He is also hopeful that some new hands will help out in the kitchen as some of the regular crew will not be there. Food preparation begins at 4:00 p.m. Those interested should contact Ken. The alternative drop-off point (the Michelotti front porch) will NOT be available for this event. Let's all help make this event a rousing success!

~Kopp Michelotti

October 30: VOICE Needs Your Support

NOVA members are invited to attend a meeting on October 30, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Freedom Senior High School in Woodbridge, VA. Please join with the members of 44 interfaith VOICE congregations to show solidarity with those who are either facing foreclosure or have had their homes foreclosed as the result of unfair lending practices in Prince William County. Senator Mark Warner, who is a member of the Senate Banking Committee will be there as well as Brian Moynihan, President and CEO of Bank of America, and chief of staff to Jamie Dimon, President and CEO of J.P. Morgan Chase

The goal is to have at least 1,000-1,500 people at the meeting to show that these lower income homeowners are not alone. Prince William County leads the State in foreclosures at 13%. Some of these foreclosures have been against families who have met their mortgage obligations for years and after layoffs and decreased income as the result of the recession were arbitrarily denied loan modifications and lost their homes and the equity they had built.

Freedom Senior High School is located at 15201 Neabsco Mills Rd., Woodbridge, VA 22191. Please plan to arrive in time to be seated by 3:30 p.m. and look for the NOVA placard. VOICE meetings begin and end on time out of respect for the time commitments of all participants. Let John or Nancy Veldhuis know if you will attend so that you can be included in the NOVA count for VOICE.

~Nancy Veldhuis



UPCOMING EVENTS AND SUDAN PROJECT REPORT

Bringing Back the American Catholic Council:

Date/Time: Sunday, Oct. 2, 7:00-9:30 p.m. and
Sunday Oct. 23, 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Location: Barcroft Community Center
800 Buchanan St.
Arlington, VA 22204

The ACC Conference held this summer in Detroit was a profound experience as the 11 NOVA members who attended in Detroit will attest. Be sure to join the "Detroit 11" this Sunday evening, at the Barcroft Community House as they bring a taste of the Council back to Nova. This first of the two planned gatherings will begin with Joan Chittister's Council keynote address "Reclaiming the Hope of the People of God." Joan Chittister's address was seen as one of the Conference's most important and it was powerfully motivating. The videotape of her remarks will be introduced by John Mooney, who will also give a short overview of the ACC Conference. The program is planned to offer insights into the ever-growing reform movement in the Catholic church and also to act as a catalyst for what we expect to be a lively discussion of NOVA's continuing journey as a Vatican II-inspired community and the role we may

choose to play in preserving Vatican II principles in the institutional church, a theme which will be continued at the October 23rd session in a video interview with theologian Hans Kung.

As always, we look forward to the community's response to the program and its always thoughtful sharing of observations, questions, and concerns, but especially, its vision.

SALT Event

Date/Time: Saturday, October 15, 2011
9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Location: Arlington-Fairfax Elk's Lodge
8421 Arlington Boulevard
Fairfax, Virginia..

This is a "**Candidate Meet and Greet**" event that is co-sponsored by Social Action Linking Together (SALT), Virginia Organizing, VACOLAO, and Virginia CURE. Social justice advocates from Fairfax County and the surrounding area are hosting this opportunity to meet legislators and candidates for state offices in the fall election. If you have questions or want further information, contact John Horejsi at jhorejsi@cox.net or visit the SALT web site at www.S-A-L-T.org. Come to meet candidates and to network. Bring your questions!

South Sudan and NOVA's Social Action Annual Project

This summer NOVA committed \$4,000 to the Comboni Sisters in Leer, South Sudan, choosing Leer as its major social action project for 2011. Specifically, the money is being used to purchase solar converters and generators to provide electric power to support the Sisters' efforts to educate children and adults in four parishes that surround Leer. After the liturgy on September 25, Carolyn Miller, the project's chief sponsor, provided background on the Comboni's Sisters and their work in South Sudan. Here is a summary of her report.

About eighteen years ago, NOVA's Christmas-day presider, Father Joe McCloskey, read a letter from a young Comboni nun serving in Ethiopia asking whether he knew of an organization that might be willing to help her. I contacted her and she wrote back describing her "Cotton Project" to teach poor single mothers in rural Ethiopia how to weave. I asked NOVA to add her project to our social action agenda.

Sister Adriana Tovar Villacis was born in 1962 in Ecuador, the ninth of eleven children. She joined the Comboni Missionary Sisters and came to Richmond as a postulant. After serving for four years in inner-city Chicago, and obtaining her B.A. in Sociology and Religious Studies at DePaul University, she was assigned to serve in Ethiopia.

The Comboni order's goals are to learn the language and customs, and to promote education, health care and social-economic development. The over-arching mission is to form Africans for Africa. They now work in 41 countries. They are particularly active in Sudan where Father Comboni worked for many years. He died in Khartoum.

In May 2005, five months after the peace accord was signed that ended about 50 years of Sudan's civil wars and conflicts (except, apparently in Darfur), Sr. Adriana went with another nun from Costa Rica to re-establish a mission in Leer, Unity State, Sudan. They moved into a grass and mud hut and lived with the natives. In a devastated country, with no electricity, they planted a vegetable garden, learned the language, and began teaching the children.

Their elementary school now teaches 900 students. They are particularly interested in educating the girls who are often sold into marriage as children. There are 180 students in class eight, of which 24 are girls, and 22 students in the two upper grades, of which two are girls.

South Sudan became a new country independent from Sudan in July 2011. It is approximately one-quarter the size of the United States, with a population of 4.5 million. It is flat marshland including delta between the Blue and West Nile Rivers, littered with oil fields and very poor roads that are unusable during the long rainy season. The land is rich in natural resources such as fish, reeds and derivatives and includes a port at Adok on the White Nile River.

The people of South Sudan are tall, dark-skinned, and comprise three different ethnic groups: the Dinka, Nuer, and Atwat. The Comboni Mission in Leer works with the Nuer people, which are the second largest group in South Sudan. They are primarily Christian and animist. They are pastoralist and their wealth is measured in cattle. They name themselves after their cattle, which are used as monetary payment for dowries and court costs (for example, Hm-m-m, Daisy's Dad?). Men are the decision-makers in both family and society at large, but women are responsible meeting the family's needs. Cited on the internet, "A woman selling milk in Leer may earn about \$7.00 per day, and could walk as far as 19 miles from her village to Leer."

In a recent email message, Sr. Adriana wrote, "Some aspects of the culture need to be evangelized, such as: polygamy, levirate (a dead man's brother must marry his widow unless there are sons), revenge, the relative of a culprit can be asked to pay, be arrested or go to prison for the crime, and other similar practices are common."

The city of Leer now has a hospital erected by "Doctors Without Borders" that employs 150 natives and eight foreign medical staff. Electricity is not generally available except through rare and expensive generators. There is a need for a canal system to divert rain water and impede stagnation and flooding. There is no trash disposal system. Women must often walk long distances for clean water and the population uses rain water stored in ponds as wells are few. The capital, Juba, is a two-day bus ride from Leer except during the rainy season, when transportation ceases except by boat.

Until the referendum in January 2011, when South Sudan voted for independence, there was free trade and commerce between the north and the south. After the vote, northern Sudan closed the borders and all commerce halted. Goods are now very scarce in the south and very expensive when they can be found in the market. In addition, there is armed conflict along the border in the oil-producing areas. Land mine explosions have killed a number of people in the Unity State.

Sr. Adriana closed her most recent email message as follows:

"With joy and gratitude, I witness God's merciful love and fidelity towards the people. He has been with them in all the years of war and suffering and now God brought them out from "slavery" to rejoice in their freedom as an independent nation. The 9th of July 2011 marked a day in the life of all of us here in South Sudan, and I was very happy to witness such an event in the history of the new nation, the Republic of South Sudan. Now, I invite all of you to continue to pray for this new nation so that, as they start on the road of freedom, her leaders may always work for development and democracy and that each citizen may be given her/his own rights and dignity. God bless South Sudan!"

~Carolyn Miller

See photos on pages 8 and 11.

THANK YOU LETTER

Emma Violand-Sanchez submitted the following letter from **ANACER SALOMON KLEIN ORPHANAGE**, which is one of NOVA's ongoing social action projects. The letter describes a touching story about one child who was restored to health and eventually adopted by a Bolivian family. Currently there are about 150 children from newborn to 6 years at the orphanage in Cochabamba Bolivia. At the "hogar" (home) children receive medical care and attend Montessori and Kindergarten classes.

Cochabamba, August, 2011

DEAR FRIENDS:

THE STORY OF A CHILD WHO YEARNED FOR A FAMILY

Salomon Klein is a facility which is supported by our Foundation Amanecer. The orphanage receives children who have been abused and/or abandoned, as well as orphans, between the ages of birth and six years. Many of the children who live at Salomon return to their families once family stability is achieved, but others, those who have been legally classified as "abandoned" or "orphaned", may go through the process of adoption. This is the story of one of these children, Juanito.

Juanito arrived at Salomon Klein when he was just eight months old and was very sick, suffering from malnourishment, anaemia and bronchitis. He was underweight, and the condition of his skin and hair demonstrated that he was malnourished. His face showed a deep sadness, and he cried all the time. It was obvious from his physical condition that he was neglected, and there were signs of maltreatment. His mother worked at night and left the child alone in the room in which they lived. The mother had four other children, all of whom were in care: one in an orphanage and the others in foster homes. She did not visit her other children, claiming that she had no money to do so.

Once in the care of the educators and medical staff of Salomon Klein, Juanito began to recover quickly. After three months, Juanito's parents went to the State Child Care Agency, asking that their son be released back into their care. In order to ensure the well-being of the child in situations when there is evidence of parental neglect and/or abuse, the Agency requires that various evaluations, including that of the socio-economic status and psychological state of both parents, be done before they release a child to the parents' care. Having been informed of this, the parents never returned to the agency. Juanito continued to grow and became a sociable, communicative and cheerful child who, from a very young age, liked listening and moving to music.

Seeing some of the other children leaving to live with adoptive families, Juanito started to ask when he would have adoptive parents; but because he was known to have living parents and a birth certificate, all that could be done was to wait for them to reclaim him. Efforts were made to try to locate his parents, including visits to the address they had left at the Child and Adolescent Protection Agency, but they were never found.

*amanecer... ofreciendo albergue y la promesa de un nuevo día a los niños y mujeres que viven en las calles de Cochabamba
daybreak... offering shelter and the promise of a new day to children and women living in the streets of Cochabamba.*

Continued on the following page

Juanito continued insisting that he wanted an adoptive family, so emancipation processes were started to remove parental authority, a process which took two years. Meanwhile, Juanito attended the Montessorri pre-school at age three, followed by pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. He learned easily and liked to dance in the festivals and civic activities.

A month ago, Juanito was finally assigned to an adoptive family. He has established a very good emotional relationship with his new family and even resembles his adoptive father. He and his new sister get along very well, and they play, sing, talk, draw and paint together, Juanito is very happy and has come to say said goodbye to his old home, Salomon Klein, and to his many friends there.

Unfortunately, not all the children are as blessed as Juanito. Because of the ban on international adoptions, there are not enough families for all the children who need them, and also some are not eligible for adoption because of legal restrictions. For these many children, usually at least 150 at any given time, Amanecer is committed to making their early years as nourishing, both emotionally and physically, as possible. Because of the number and fragility of the children, this requires a vast outlay of both human and economic resources. With the rising prices of food and other costs, especially that of salaries which this year had a government mandated 11% increase, we find ourselves often at a loss how to make ends meet. Without your help and that of other generous friends, this is impossible. We thank you for whatever you can give for these smallest and most vulnerable of God's children.


Héctor Fernández R.
Director Executive
Fundación Amanecer


Emma Rojas A.
Director
Hogar Salomon Klein



Carolyn provides information regarding Sudan project



Converters purchased by NOVA for Comboni sisters' school in Sudan

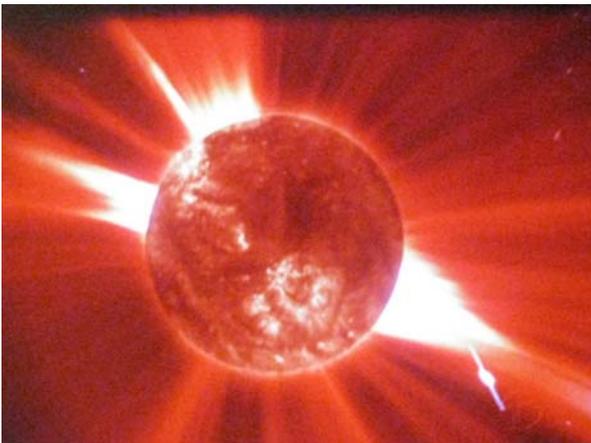
NOVA FRIDAY NIGHT RETREAT PHOTOS



Side table enhancing the environment



Jack, Tom and Tim warm up to lead group in song



One of many awesome slide show pictures



Small group shares thoughts on God and the universe



Group enjoying traditional marshmallow toasting

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.
~Albert Einstein

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY RETREAT PHOTOS



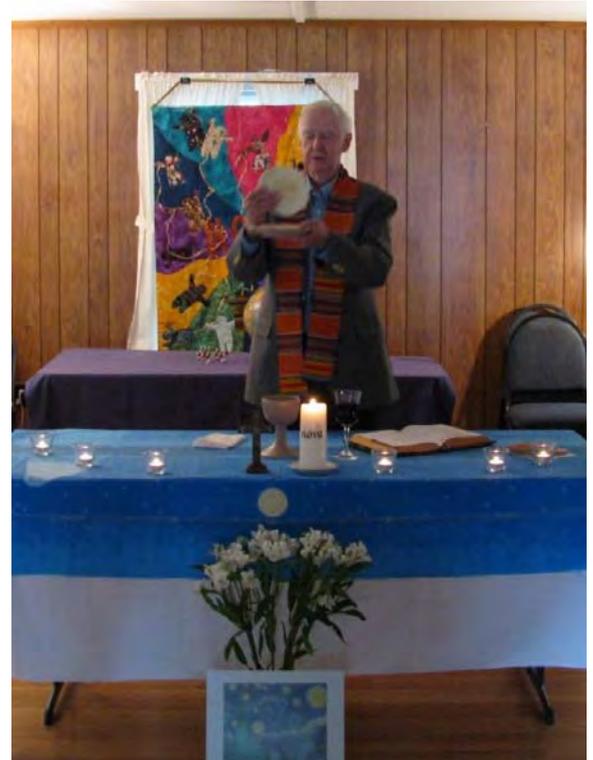
David explains the wonders of our physical world



A mosaic of chickens at nearby Deauville Farm



Tim leads early-risers in bird walk



Father Haughey shares the Eucharist



Group enjoying breakfast and conversation

Retreat photos by Ken, Judy and Clyde

OTHER RECENT PHOTOS



Sudan teachers (Sr. Adriana on the right)



Sudan teacher with students



Community blesses Kate



Fr. Quinn Connors and others helping to distribute Communion



Community blesses teachers at start of school year



NOVA-Tones joyfully lead community in song

Theology for a Small Planet

Prior Essays

A collection of essays by Clyde Christofferson © 2009-2011

Implications of being a Small Planet – How Can Reality be both One and Intelligible?

Albert Einstein, 1926: *“God does not play dice with the Universe.”*¹

Albert Einstein, 1936: *“The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible.”*²

Bernard Lonergan, 1957: *“The world of our experience is an unfolding of emergent probabilities, neither deterministic nor a non-intelligible morass of merely chance events.”*³

NOVA’s 2011 retreat at Shrine Mont was titled “A Cosmic Adventure.” Courtesy of Marie Pinho’s projection equipment and video materials found and explained by David Mog, the community enjoyed a mind-bending introduction to modern cosmology, and how science can nurture the religious imagination by simply reflecting upon God’s creation. John Haughey, S.J., was with us the entire weekend and gave the final talk on Sunday morning before celebrating the Eucharist with us.

It would be prosaic to say that life has its surprises. In science, experimental results can be unsettling. And explanations of experimental results can be downright weird, as we found out on Saturday. We saw a short video cartoon where “Dr. Quantum” used the famous “two slit” experiment to explain how electrons (and baseballs, for that matter) could look like particles on some occasions and look like waves on other occasions, depending on what the observer was looking at.

An even weirder experimental result is called “quantum entanglement,” where two subatomic particles form a single quantum system. Each particle has what is called “spin” (which is just a name, but that is the name that physicists give to this quality which can be measured). When the spin of one particle is measured, the spin of the other is determined, even if the other particle is in a different place. The problem is that the spin is not known until it is measured. There is a probability that it could be, for example, “spin up”, but it could also be “spin down.” You don’t know until the measurement is taken. And if it turns out to be “spin up” for one particle, then the experimental results also show that the other particle in the “entangled” pair will be “spin down.”

How can this be? It would be one thing if the spin probability was just a question of our ignorance: there is

a real value of spin for each particle, and we just don’t know what it is until it is measured. But it would be another thing entirely if the spin value didn’t actually materialize until it was measured. In that case, how does the other particle in the entangled pair know what its value is? How would that value be communicated? This is what Einstein called “spooky action at a distance.”

So what is the answer, and what does this say about God? Is the spin value already set, and we just don’t know it until it is measured, as Einstein argued? Or is it truly a matter of probability, as Niels Bohr argued in a famous series of debates with Einstein? The debates ended inconclusively, in the 1930s, with a paper by Einstein and a clever but difficult counterargument by Bohr.

And so the argument sat for thirty years.

Saturday night at the retreat John Mooney sat down with David Mog and me to talk about how to interpret what quantum mechanics was telling us. John was concerned that Bohr’s interpretation – that there was no reality to “spin” until it was measured – would mean that reality was unintelligible. He talked about a Teaching Company course which disclosed that Bohr had been influenced by the logical positivist school of philosophy. John said he didn’t know much about physics, but knew something about philosophy, and logical positivism has been discredited. We agreed that the universe should be intelligible.

I would put it this way: a loving God is sharing existence with independent beings able to love one another and comprehend existence, thereby imaging God. There is so much of nature that is comprehensible, why would God merely tantalize us with understanding only to cut us off at the quantum level?

On the way home from the retreat I listened to a Teaching Company course on Quantum Mechanics, in which the professor gave a very lucid account of what happened some thirty years after the Einstein paper and Bohr's response. In 1964 a physicist named John Bell took a novel approach to the Einstein-Bohr problem. He set up a fictional universe having the characteristics described in Einstein's paper, and then developed what is now known as "Bell's inequality." He showed mathematically that in any hypothetical universe where, for example, the "spin" of an entangled particle was real before it was measured and there was no "spooky action at a distance," then "Bell's inequality" would be correct.

But when he analyzed the experimental results of quantum mechanics, Bell's inequality was not correct. Consequently, Einstein's assumptions may be correct in some universe, but not the universe we are living in. Since 1964 Bell's results have been confirmed in experiments with "entangled" particles that are very far apart, so that "spooky action at a distance" would require communication at far greater than the speed of light.

Einstein was a believer in cause and effect, and was troubled by "spooky action at a distance." And certainly, if there is cause and effect, the universe is intelligible. But since 1964 it has been necessary to abandon either determinism, accept "spooky action at a distance", or both.

Is there a middle ground? Can we have intelligibility without determinism, and what would that look like? Bernard Lonergan provides such intelligibility in his book, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. As you will see, Lonergan – although no physicist – has the better of the argument.

I would put the question another way. Use Bell's approach, but from a different angle. Suppose there were a universe which is deterministic, where God – if there is a God for such a universe – acts upon such a universe from afar (or above, or whatever). You might call it "spooky action at a distance," but it's not "spooky" if you also assume that God is all powerful and can do anything. If God can do "action at a distance" it wouldn't matter that the universe is deterministic. In such a universe, God comes from somewhere else and intervenes in an otherwise deterministic universe. We would call these interventions "miracles" because they are inconsistent with a deterministic universe. In such a universe, God becomes a problem. How intelligible is a world in which God intervenes from afar to give human beings

free will and a soul, but lets the Lisbon earthquake kill tens of thousands in 1755?

But what if God is not a God from afar who created a separate deterministic universe and put human beings in it? Instead, what if we live in an unfolding cosmos that is pregnant with the living God, a cosmos that is an integral part of the fullness of reality?

In short, suppose there is one reality. In such a reality there is no place for a deterministic cosmos. God could not come from afar because there is no separate "afar" to come from: there is but one reality.

So, what kind of a universe do we live in? Quantum mechanics says that it's not deterministic. Ironically, it is the two world assumption – a deterministic universe into which God intervenes from afar – that is unintelligible. What good is it for a deterministic natural world to be intelligible if human existence must be explained by God's interventions? How can it be intelligible for an all powerful God to intervene from afar to give us free will and a soul, and then to sit idly by while all manner of disaster decimates us? Human sin can be used to explain disaster that we visit upon ourselves, but not the ravages of nature.

Suppose, instead, that we abandon a God who intervenes from afar. We still have the Lisbon earthquake, but it is not necessary to conjure up an all powerful God to blame for this or other natural disasters. Simply put, God's presence is more integral to our reality than intervention from afar. Power is a human label that we paste on God. A God of love takes a different course, less showy but more profound. We are made whole in this knowing.

In the last several essays I have talked about Aristotle's demons, and how they have made it difficult for the institutional Church to see the implications of the small place that planet Earth occupies in the cosmos. In the most recent essay I argued that the prospect of other sentient civilizations in this vast cosmos, similarly graced by a loving God, requires a shift in focus from the institutional Church to the people of God. Vatican II began this shift by locating the discussion of the people of God ahead of the discussion of the role of the bishops⁴. Vatican II also recognized the role of the sense of the faithful, the *sensus fidelium*, in channeling the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the Church⁵.

But these teachings of Vatican II are mere hints of what is yet to come. There remains a chasm that the institutional Church is not yet prepared to jump. Some theologians are making preparations, but prelates concerned with doctrine are not comfortable, and are

attempting to restrain theologians who see a more promising future across this chasm.

The chasm is stubborn and persistent. On this side of the chasm is the comfort of knowing that faith in Jesus Christ overcomes the power of death in this life and leads to an eternal life hereafter. On the other side of the chasm is essentially the same comfort, so why the chasm? What is different on the other side?

What is different is a fresh appreciation of Christ's summary of what his ministry was about: "the reign of God is at hand!"⁶ In many ways it is the same understanding that the Church has always taught. We are to love one another, here and now. We are to make life on earth new. We are to make the presence of the living Christ felt in the daily lives of those around us. What is different, then?

What about heaven? On this side of the chasm heaven is after death. On the other side of the chasm is one reality. It is not about living a good life and then going to heaven; it is about living in the fullness of reality – there is no "then". Yes, there is death, but there is no "then".

The skeptic may say, "precisely! You die and that's it. The end." No, to paraphrase Christ's summary: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Eternal life is to be lived now, and simply continues. Death is not a "then" event, any more than God is a God who intervenes from afar.

For those on this side of the chasm there are still two orders of being, this life "then" a next life. And there is nothing illogical about that. The sequence seems perfectly sensible.

In recent times the book of nature has raised questions about this perfectly sensible sequence. For those on this side of the chasm the natural world is like a set for the drama of this life. The natural world is what it is, but we leave it behind at death. For those on this side of the chasm death is a critical transition: there is an accounting, and "then" a next life.

On the other side of the chasm is a more integrated existence. When we say "God's ways are not our ways" it is not an unintelligible distinction between God's intervention to cure one child but not another. Rather, God's healing presence is of another order entirely. It is a freeing presence that calls us to live by loving one another, to share the joy of the parents whose child was cured and to share the grief of the parents whose child died. This is the life for which one sells all that one has and buys the field with the treasure in it.

This is a different kind of intelligibility, one that is a continuing struggle that never quite ends. Is it enough

that our struggle is also the struggle of a God who is with us, a God whose shared reality seems to be both intelligible and full of surprises – like quantum entanglement – which bring hope for a fuller intelligibility. Strange, indeed, or perhaps not so strange. More on that next time.

TO BE CONTINUED.

¹ Paraphrased from a comment in Einstein's letter to Max Born of December 4, 1926. The full comment is: "*Quantum mechanics is certainly imposing. But an inner voice tells me that it is not yet the real thing. The theory says a lot, but does not really bring us any closer to the secret of the 'old one.'* I, at any rate, am convinced that He does not throw dice."

² Paraphrased from a passage in the article "Physics and Reality" by Albert Einstein, published in the March 1936 issue of the Journal of the Franklin Institute, at p. 351; reprinted in *Ideas and Opinions* (Crown Publishers: New York, NY, 1954) at p. 290, 292. The full passage is: "*One may say 'the eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility.'* It is one of the great realizations of Immanuel Kant that the postulation of a real external world would be senseless without this comprehensibility. In speaking here of 'comprehensibility,' the expression is used in its most modest sense. It implies: the production of some sort of order among sense impressions, this order being produced by the creation of general concepts, relations between these concepts, and by definite relations of some kind between these concepts and sense experience. It is in this sense that the world of our sense experience is comprehensible. The fact that it is comprehensible is a miracle."

³ Paraphrased from Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 125-126. The full quote is: "*There remains the task of working out the generic properties of a world process in which the order or design is constituted by emergent probability. ... inasmuch as combinations of classical laws yield schemes of recurrence. ... Schemes can be arranged in a conditioned series, such that the earlier can function without the emergence of the later but the later cannot emerge or function unless the earlier already are functioning. ... Emergent probability is the successive ... of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence. ... World process is open. It is a succession of probable realizations of possibilities. Hence, it does not run along the iron rails laid by determinists nor, on the other hand, is it a non-intelligible morass of merely chance events*"

⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, ¶¶9-17.

⁵ Op.cit., ¶12.

⁶ Mark 1:15.