

nova notes

NOVA Catholic Community

February 2012

Chair Notes...

*“What energizes me?” “Repent and believe!”
“What do I need to repent about?”*

What challenging questions Quinn offered to us one Sunday in January! And how do we answer? A couple years ago, members of NOVA suggested that we come up with a one-year project that the whole community could work toward and be involved in – involvement that went beyond making a monetary donation. Working together for a common objective, we believed would make a difference for others. In part, I think, we wanted to re-energize our NOVA Community. We would have a goal in our minds throughout the year and people would be energized by their participation as well as the ultimate success of the project. And isn't that what has been happening?

“Connecting with others” - We heard this repeated that Sunday in several ways. But, everyone seemed to be talking about getting outside ourselves and looking at the possibilities of how we can be *in* the kingdom. We also heard how fear of change often stands in our way.

I can't help thinking of the many opportunities we have to get outside ourselves – thanks to the many things happening right now in NOVA. For example:

- We've been **reviewing Consensus** and how it can work for us. Consensus, as pointed out in our meeting, is sometimes a matter of checking our egos at the door so that we can experience the amazing things that can happen. We listen better and are more flexible with our opinions.

- We have been asked by our **Community Life Ministry Team** to reach out to those in our community who have great difficulty coming to liturgy, and letting them know they are still a part of us.
- Some of us have shown an interest in learning more about the **“Five Wishes”** (living will) at sometime in the near future.
- **The Benefit Concert** featuring wonderful NOVA talent is coming up on **February 25**.
- The **Peace and Social Justice Team** is planning for a big general meeting at Meg Tuccillo's on **March 17**.
- Our effort to “Fight Global Poverty One Meal at a Time” is happening at our **“MEN WHO COOK”** dinner on Sunday, **April 22** at 5:00 p.m.
- And near the end of **May, May 20th and/ or 27th**, we will be holding our **Calling Forth Gathering**, the time for each of us to listen prayerfully to the Holy Spirit and reflect on how each of us might serve the community in the coming year.

So mark your calendars or copy the list on page 8. Commit and energize yourselves in the Spirit in 2012.

~Cece Michelotti, Co-chair



Epiphany Altar

For NOVA photos, click on:
<http://www.novacomunity.weebly.com>

February 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
Announcements Coordinator	Linda Christie
Newsletter Editor	Judy Christofferson

- 2 Linda Christie
Bonnie Lowrey
11 Ray Kemp
12 Monica Rosenberg
15 Amy Kyleen Lute
Justin Mog
19 Josh White
20 Linda Rosenberg
24 Amy Bailey
27 Catherine Schmidt
28 Mary Grace



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

Remember in your prayers. . .

Eve Birch, for the success of her work to assist the needy

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

Moira Eisele, who is recovering from surgery

Jody Furlong, who also appreciates phone calls or notes

Margaret Hayes, who is recovering from knee surgery

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

Jean Mendez, who appreciates a call or note

Linda Rosenberg, for a speedy recovery following recent surgery

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

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
FOR MARCH ISSUE:
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

Liturgies: Cycle B

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 School (located on Carlin Springs Rd. off Arlington Blvd.) begin at 10:15 a.m.

February Music Liaison
Barbara Formoso

March Music Liaison
Tim White

February 5–Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gerry Stockhausen, S.J.

Planners: Alicia and Phil Cackley

February 12–Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Joe Nangle, OFM

Planners: Peace and Social Justice Group

February 19–Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Joe Kenna

Planners: Jeanne and Tom Clarkson

February 26–First Sunday of Lent

Dan Madigan, S.J.

Planner: Barbara Formoso

March 4–Second Sunday of Lent

Quinn Conners, O.Carm.

Planners: Carolyn and Ted Miller

March 11–Third Sunday of Lent

Jim Hug, S.J.

Planners: Carol and John Reeder

March 18 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Joe Kenna

Planner: Rose Barrett

March 25–Fifth Sunday of Lent

John Haughey, S.J.

Planners: John Tarrant and Marlene Shade

NOTE: Celebration of **Ash Wednesday** on

February 22, will be at **7:30 p.m.** at the home of

Marlene Shade and John Tarrant

Follow-up Announcements

Call for Facilitator Volunteers

In the discussion regarding consensus at the January General Meeting, there was suggestion to call for individuals who are interested in being trained to become part of a corps of facilitators in NOVA. If you are interested in this, please contact Jerry Barrett or one of the co-chairs

YERT Movie

In the discussion following the recent viewing of “YERT,” there was a question about creating an environmental-specific advocacy group in NOVA. If you are interested in being part of or leading this team, please contact one of the co-chairs.

Five Wishes

The Five Wishes/living will was discussed at the January General Meeting. If you are interested in meeting again and hearing from individuals with legal and medical expertise about these issues, please call or e-mail one of the co-Chairs.

Gunston Volunteers

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. More than one volunteer is needed. There is a seasoned volunteer every Thursday, 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.

February Gunston Volunteer Schedule

February 2: **Eric and Gamboa family**

February 9: **Tim and Jerry**

Note: *This is client survey week and Marie Keefe has volunteered to help so far; more volunteers are needed who speak Spanish to help with the survey.*

February 16: **Glen and Syd**

February 23: **Orlando-Kane family**

February Christ House Dinner

**St. Valentine wants you to show your love...
...with meat & potatoes!**

On Monday, February 20, NOVA will prepare and serve meatloaf and scalloped potatoes to the hungry clients at Christ House. Please mark your calendars to remember to **bring your meatloaves and spuds to liturgy on February 19**.

Alternatively, you may drop them off at the Michelotti's anytime on Sunday or up to 1:00 p.m. on Monday, the 20th on the front porch of my home.

If you'd like to get a little of that cozy kitchen feeling, please contact Kopp Michelotti or Ken Chaison. We generally start food preparation around 4:00 p.m.

Below are NOVA's Christ House dates for the remainder of 2012:

April 16; June 18; August 20; October 15; December 17 (Please put the dates on your calendar.)

Thank you for all that you do. ~**Kopp Michelotti**

VOICE Annual Meeting

Plan to attend the VOICE Annual Meeting, February 12, 2012, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1400 G Street Woodbridge, VA 22191, just off of I-395. (For more detailed directions, visit the church's website: www.stpaul-umc.org and click on the "Information" bar.) The annual meeting is always lively and informative. Join the members of our fellow interfaith VOICE congregations to learn more about the following VOICE accomplishments in 2011 and the plans for 2012:

- *Foreclosure Campaign Update & Action Next Steps*
- *Affordable Housing Strategy & Next Steps (Alexandria, Fairfax, Arlington)*
- *Local Issues Update: Western Fairfax Dental Campaign Emerging Issues: Education & Youth Issues in Rt. 1 Corridor*
- *Proposal to Expand Immigration Organizing*

A light supper will be served following the meeting. Please let Nancy or John Veldhuis know if you plan to attend.

~**Nancy Veldhuis**

A NEW “Deal”: Tables of Six, Part II

Well, a new shuffle, anyway.

Many NOVA members participated in the last year in "Tables of Six" get-togethers, generally dinners, with groups of NOVA members that they might not have known very well beforehand. The groups usually took turns meeting at one another's homes, but sometimes met at restaurants or other venues. The aim was to get to know one another better. Anyone who wished could participate – singles, couples, lay members, priests. Informal feedback indicates that the program was fun and fruitful.

We'd like to continue with “Tables of Six, Part II,” but reshuffle the groups as well as add the names of people who didn't participate this past year but are interested in joining a group. Just let Kopp know about your interest. He will put together groups whose members' paths may not cross that often. Then it's up to the table groups to organize themselves for get-togethers.

Kopp will take names starting now. However, before developing the tables of six, he'd like some feedback about last year's program. Send via email any suggestions for improvement and any ideas that seemed to help last years' groups function better. He'll pass them along to the community at large.

~Kopp Michelotti

More News on the American Catholic Council

You may recall that in past issue of “NOVA Notes,” there was a brief article on John Hushon's November 22nd remarks on follow-up to the ACC meeting in Detroit last June. On January 6, John sent the following e-mail, which specifically addresses the ACC's objectives for Intentional Eucharistic Communities. Note in particular the ACC's future directions for IECs in 2012 and his request for volunteers.

You can read about IECs and other ACC initiatives in the ACC Newsletter. If you want to receive this

newsletter via email, just click on the website:

www.americancatholiccouncil.org.

Scroll down the page and click on “Join Our Newsletter Mailing List.”

~JC

As a result of the November meeting at Pax (where both Communitas and NOVA) were present, ACC has spoken to Bill D'Antonio and is preparing an initiative for IECs. We hope to collect "best practices" on incorporation, tax exemptions, bylaws, governance, liturgy etc; to create an online blog to which IEC members (or prospects) might go to share; to create an online library of materials; to provide some basic “how to's” in creating a community etc. We are working on a strategic plan; we have found an "editor/administrator" – [a person] who has a M. Div. with experience in pastoral work, who will work for about \$400/month (part time obviously). We plan to complete the strategic plan and then ask IECs (like Pax, NOVA and Communitas) to volunteer time and materials--and perhaps handle a bit of financial support to make this happen.

ACC is going to move in four directions in 2012: the IEC project noted above, the creation of a Non-Violent Resistance Institute/On Line Course (working with Gene Sharp and focusing on the RC hierarchy to bring about a Catholic Spring), additional study materials to go along with the ACC videos and transcripts, and work with IMWAC on Vatican III in Rome in 2014 or 2015.

More in about a month on this. The IEC task force has its second conference call next week. Then the group will be asking for additional volunteers to expand the task force. ~John Hushon*

* John Hushon is a retired international attorney and energy industry executive. He has degrees in international relations (Brown), law (Harvard) and theology (Washington Theological Union); he is a national trustee of VOTF, co-chair of *American Catholic Council* and active in various local and international social justice organizations; he teaches at the Renaissance Academy of Florida Gulf Coast University.

February Benefit Concert Information

The Barcroft Community House
February 25th , 7:00 – 10:00 pm

Featuring the bluegrass band, Hollertown; the Josh Drews including Cecelia Cackley (general manager), and Tim White and Friends.

Benefit: South Sudan - Assistance to help support educational programs for the Nuer people in Leer, South Sudan

Charge: \$10/person

More than a thousand children in four counties are learning to read and write thanks to the Comboni Sisters, and their lay deacons, teachers and other assistants. The assistance from NOVA, together with funds they have already accumulated, would allow them to buy necessary equipment to support audio visual educational programs in their school, to cover the cost of transporting equipment, and fuel to keep the generator running for a year. They also need a small refrigerator. In addition the money raised will go towards much-needed educational materials.

Prayer Breakfast

Occupy Faith DC invites you to the
People's Prayer Breakfast
Thursday February 2, 2012
7:30am to 9:30am
Church of the Pilgrims
2201 P St NW Washington, DC 20037

People from across the country are joining together to pray and to stand in unity with those suffering economic hardship and inequality in our nation; We are issuing our call to political and faith-based leaders, corporate interests, and every American that ***"THERE IS ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE!"***

Please join us afterwards for discussions, strategic sessions, and actions on:

- joining faith-based efforts to support the Occupy movement
- "silent witness" protest at the Washington Hilton where the National Prayer Breakfast is taking place

Occupy Faith DC is an interfaith coalition supporting the non-violent social action of the Occupy movement in the National Capital area. See their website <http://occupyfaithdc.org/>

~Submitted by **Teddi Ahrens**



Banner made by Fr. Joe Kenna
for Jan. 15th liturgy

Occupy Faith DC

“Occupy Faith DC is an Interfaith coalition supporting the non-violent social action of the Occupy Movement in the National Capital Region. The coalition includes both clergy and members from mosques, temples, churches, and synagogues as well as interfaith and ecumenical bodies, and other faith-based organizations.

“We have come together to support the efforts and ideals of the Occupy Movement promoting inclusion, economic justice, peaceful coexistence, and the brotherhood of mankind.” (Quoted from Occupy Faith DC mission statement.)

Over the past several months, various members of NOVA have brought food donations and other supplies to the Occupy encampments and joined in demonstrations, and some plan to attend the People’s Prayer Breakfast events on February 2, but most of this has been happening individually, without coordination.

John Reeder has offered to be the contact person to support Occupy Faith DC and the Occupy Movement and to keep the community up to date on what else is happening. He is also planning to attend the Prayer Breakfast (7:30-9:30 a.m.), on February 2nd at the Church of the Pilgrims, 2201 P Street NW. If you’d like to join him or get involved in coordinating efforts with Occupy Faith DC to support the Occupy Movement, contact John.

~**Teddi Ahrens**



Altar setting for January 21st liturgy

Growing Inequality in Wealth, the Corruption of the Democratic Process and Resulting Social Injustice

Saturday, February 4, 8:30 a.m. -12:30pm
Mount Vernon Unitarian Church
1909 Windmill Lane
Alexandria, VA 22307

Income inequality has produced wealthy beneficiaries who use that wealth to create political influence. The political influence of wealthy individuals is magnified by equally powerful (and closely related) corporate interests; it distorts our political system so that it routinely produces outcomes favoring these wealthy and corporate interests (the 1%) rather than the public interest. There is less and less available for the rest of us (the 99%), resulting in deprivation and growing social injustice, particularly among the most vulnerable. This process represents a vicious cycle that keeps expanding the inequality and the problems it causes.

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Registration and Networking
9:00 - 9:10 a.m.	Opening Worship
9:10 -10:00 a.m.	Plenary on Growing Inequality and Wealth
10:00 -10:10 a.m.	Break
10:10 -11:00 a.m.	Plenary on Corruption of Democratic Process
11:00 -11:10 a.m.	Break
11:10 a.m. -12:00	Breakout Sessions: Identifying Allies and Crafting Next Steps
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Report on Next Steps and Closing

To register: Click on the Register for Upcoming Events banner at www.uusj.org.

Please RSVP by Monday, January 30.

This program is sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. There is no registration fee, but a free will offering for UUSJ will be taken. ~Submitted by Teddi Ahrens

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING NOVA EVENTS AND MEETINGS

February-June, 2012

February 19, Sunday, after Liturgy: Kenmore	Part I of General Meeting about the Calling Forth Process: Discussion about the current process and consideration of other methods to try. No decision-making.
February 25, Saturday 7:00 p.m. Barcroft Community House Arlington	Blues/Folk Concert to benefit South Sudan Education Project
February 26, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. Place: TBA	Part II of General Meeting about Calling Forth: Seeking consensus to: (1) reaffirm what we are doing now, or (2) do something differently – and decide what specific thing(s) to do differently.
March 17, Saturday evening Meg Tuccillo's home	General Meeting, Peace and Social Justice Projects Overview .
April 1 Liturgy	Palm Sunday
April 5 Liturgy	Holy Thursday Liturgy and Dinner
April 7, Saturday, 7:00 p.m. Unitarian Church in Oakton	Easter Vigil: Liturgy followed by an agape
April 22, Sunday, 5:00 p.m. Unitarian Church, Oakton	"Men Who Cook" Dinner to benefit South Sudan Education Project
Month of May	Ongoing community review of Peace and Social Justice proposals for next year.
May 20, Sunday after Liturgy, Kenmore	(Proposed) General Meeting: Step 1 of Calling Forth process
May 27, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. Place TBA	(Proposed) General Meeting, Calling Forth Consensus Meeting
Early June	General Meeting, Peace and Social Justice Agenda. Reaching Consensus on new social justice Project.

~Cece Michelotti and Teddi Ahrens, Co-chairs

Editor: Teddi has already emailed this item to those on the NOVA Yahoo groups. Please note that Easter is a vigil service at the Unitarian Church on Saturday this year.

Notes from January 21st NOVA General Meeting

Jerry Barrett's outline for discussing consensus decision-making in NOVA:

1. General ideas about consensus decision-making (CDM):

Consensus meetings differ from all other discussions, gatherings, meetings, dialogues, encounters, negotiations, etc.

All participants must be committed to and support the group's goal, that is: achieving a consensus decision.

CDM requires different individual behaviors than are typical in other meetings.

CDM begins by allowing or entertaining many ideas or options, and then gradually narrows them by dropping and/or combining them. The process resembles a funnel.

Flip Charts or electronic projection and strong facilitation are very helpful.

The most effective participants help the process by combining ideas/options and/or amending them in a respectful style that attempts to attract or gain more participant acceptance.

Ultimately, the group's goal is to achieve an answer or a solution that everyone in the group can live with.

A consensus decision is unlikely to contain everyone's favorite option or first choice.

- It must be sufficiently acceptable that participants can live with it and support it.
- Interests of individuals versus group interest (overlapping circles)

2. Helpful Individual behaviors that aid CDM.

Flexibility, open mindedness and less certitude
Remember that even our most strongly held views are just opinions.

Participants must ask themselves:

- Can I live with a solution that may not be my favorite or on my agenda?
- How will my words be heard or understood?

Often close enough is good enough.

Each person's presence at CDM represents their commitment to working toward a CD.

3. Some behaviors that frustrate reaching consensus:

Individuals talking too often – talking too long – talking off point.

Using language that is disrespectful or angry

Not asking yourself: Is what I am planning to say going to help CDM? If not, stifle yourself, and, thus aid CDM. For some individuals that will be painful. Seeing differences, not commonality. Two circles overlapping

Raising distinctions that are not important differences

4. Several Points Made by Participants at 1-21 Meeting:

Compromise, often viewed as a negative, can lead to consensus when based on listening and mind-changing.

Consensus is very creative because it is more inclusive and thus produces better solutions.

Attend consensus meetings with an open mind, patience and generosity.

Marie Keefe's Notes on the General Meeting

Following a review of the consensus process and the behaviors that make it successful led by Jerry Barrett assisted by Mike Timpane, the discussion yielded several suggestions and observations:

- Perhaps those who have experience facilitating might get training in the consensus process.
- There are other roles that could assist a facilitator such as time keepers or an observer facilitator.
- Formal consensus should be reserved only for those things that affect the character of the community with informal consensus used routinely.

As the consensus process takes time, meetings should be structured with that in mind rather than rush to a conclusion by a certain hour. Small get-togethers such as coffees after liturgy could provide opportunities for folks to chat and gain understanding of the perspectives of other members prior to any meeting requiring consensus.

Teddi Ahrens' and Cece Michelotti's Summary Notes

32 members of the community were present.

Gloria opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:30 p.m.

A review of the consensus process and the behaviors that make it successful was led by Jerry Barrett assisted by Mike Timpane. [See Jerry's and Marie's notes on previous page.]

Everyone agreed that varying the days and times of general meetings was fine as long as advance notice was given and major conflicts avoided on the calendar. The group endorsed the idea of combining meals and meetings anytime, especially on Sunday afternoons.

The Five Wishes/living will document was reviewed and members were invited to plan a follow-up meeting where they would have the opportunity to ask questions of a lawyer and doctor.

Marlene Shade, coordinator of the Community Life and Outreach Team asked the group for ideas on how the team could more effectively assist the community. She mentioned a list of needs, such as those who are able to attend liturgies, but need a ride because they no longer drive; those who need visitors, cards or phone calls to remind them of their connection to the community; and unexpected crises that come up. Marlene asked members to let her or any team members know of needs as soon as possible so that NOVA can better respond.

The meeting ended at 9:00 p.m. and closed with a prayer. Thanks to Marie Keefe for her notes.

NOVA "YERT" Event Notes

Thanks to the hospitality of the Rosenbergs on January 14, we viewed the award-winning documentary, "Your Environmental Road Trip"

(YERT). The evening was a fantastic success. About 30 people came to see the movie, and the discussion following in small groups was lively, excited, and filled with many ideas and questions. Some ideas generated were about how to promote the film and secondly, how NOVA addresses environmental issues.

Promoting the film

Each group suggested places to show it: libraries, high school environment studies classes, PBS, Fairfax Cinema Arts Theater, churches, community venues, etc. Basically everyone should see it. Dianne Carroll volunteered to liaison with the filmmakers to find out about licensing and what we would need to be able to move this forward.

Environmental Suggestions

Among the suggestions generated were:

- composting classes; community compost place
- community garden to serve the food bank
- praying for earth issues each Sunday
- walk/bike to church Sunday
- reusable bag drive at NOVA for Gunston food distribution site
- use locally grown flowers for altar decoration
- urge "Men Who Cook" to use recyclable products
- assess all the peace and social justice projects to make them more environmentally hospitable
- have the community help one another in being environmentally responsible, such as helping rake a yard for those who find it too strenuous
- finding ways to include the environment in liturgies

The Peace and Social Justice team suggests that a group of interested people meet to form a team to continue to bring this to the community and move forward given the engaged conversation the movie generated.

~Marie Keefe
(on behalf of the Peace and Social Justice Committee)

Discover Your Gift
WomenCircles Retreat Weekend
May 4-6, 2012

Friday 4:00 p.m. to Sunday 3:00 p.m.

Signal Knob Retreat Center, Strasburg, VA

Leaders: Gloria J. Mog, LCSW & Dava Money, M.A.

“Not to discover your Gift is to die with the music still inside of you.”
-Jack Canfield

Everyone has a unique and precious gift to offer the world. It is the core purpose of our lives and is meant to be fully expressed and shared generously with others. The challenge is to clearly identify and honor that purpose, to have the courage to seek out and discover the gifts within. As we engage in this work of the soul, we are inevitably inspired and energized to live more fully and authentically. Join us for a week-end of transformative exploration, discovery and expression of your gifts. The retreat will use a creative mix of sharing and reflection, journaling and meditation, music, poetry and more. Gloria and Dava provide a safe container to guide, support and inspire you on the next step of your life journey.

You are invited to simply bring the gift of you. Together we will create a community of wise and authentic women. We will share our heart's longings and help one another uncover that which is powerful and life-giving within each one of us.

Signal Knob is located just outside Strasburg, Va. in the Shenandoah Mountains, less than 1 1/2 hours from the DC area. Set on farmland with a view of the mountains, the Center has spacious meeting areas with a central stone fireplace, ten comfortable bedrooms (2 beds/room), and a large country kitchen/dining area with some outdoor seating. Visit www.carolinefurnace.org. Food contributions and preparation will be shared by the group.

*Fee: \$375 if registered by 4/6 - \$400 after. A \$125 deposit holds your reservation until 4/6 when the balance is due; no refunds after 4/13. **Please contact if you have any questions.***

Limited to 16 participants - register early!

“A powerful, fun and rewarding experience. I loved it!” –J.R.
“You have all left a mark on my soul. Women are wonderful.” – C.O.



Following Epiphany liturgy, members share the time they joined the community and who introduced them to NOVA



Salomon Klein Orphanage

Pasaje Amanecer N° 945
Tele/Fax: (591-4) 423-3844
Casilla 2431, Cochabamba - Bolivia

E-mail: amanecer@supernet.com.bo
www.amanecer-bolivia.org

Cochabamba, December, 2011

Dear Friends,

Christmas greetings from all of the children and workers of Amanecer here in Cochabamba, Bolivia! It is our prayer that this season be filled with the blessings of health and happiness for each of you and for all those you love.

Here in the midst of the riotous colors of the bougainvillea, the bright orange of the lluvia de oro and numerous other flowers in full bloom, the children are excitedly preparing for the celebration of Christmas. The boys of Casa Wiñay and Albergue Sayaricuy are practicing the villancicos (the typical Bolivian Christmas songs accompanied with dance and instruments) preparing for the nine days of Las Posadas when they will visit homes in their neighborhood, asking to be received as Mary and Joseph did in Bethlehem. They find it very easy to identify with this part of the Christmas story since many of them have memories of walking the streets also, looking for a place of shelter and often being turned away. In most of the houses, including Hogar Salomon Klein, home to over 150 babies and toddlers, practice has begun for the traditional Christmas pageants with the roles of the three kings being especially coveted, and the workers and volunteers are busy helping the children make ornaments and decorations.

Traditions are important for all children, but especially for our children of Amanecer whose early years were usually chaotic due to extreme poverty and parental alcoholism with the ensuing violence and neglect. Most children come with no experience of celebration, even of their own birthdays, usually a forgotten and often unknown date. To have a festive meal and especially to see wrapped presents with their names on them under a decorated tree is a new and wonderful experience for them. They begin asking months before, "When is Christmas?" as those who were with us last year tell the new ones about the celebrations.

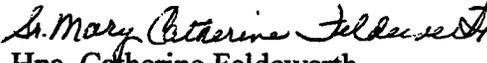
*amanecer... ofreciendo albergue y la promesa de un nuevo día a los niños y mujeres que viven en las calles de Cochabamba.
dávbreak... offering shelter and the promise of a new day to children and women living in the streets of Cochabamba.*

We wish each of you could be here to share these experiences with the children and to see their excitement and joy, because without your help none of this would be possible. The prices of many things, especially food and salaries, have risen sharply these last few years, and we often ask ourselves how long we can continue. Yet it is at the times when we are most worried that your generous support and prayers show us that God will provide whatever is needed so that these children who come to us needing shelter, care and love will always have a home.

Thank you!




Hector Fernández R.
Director Executive
Fundación Amanecer


Hna. Catherine Feldewerth
Director
Casa Nazareth

(The Angels of Hogar Salomon Klein ready for their Christmas play)



~Thank you letter submitted by Emma Violand-Sanchez

Note: *The above letter was scanned from a hard copy and this affects the resolution, which the editor is not able to correct.*

Food for Thought

Secrets in the Bible (Adam)

A Second in a Series by
John Veldhuis

Reading the Bible as a science textbook or a history text, as the fundamentalists do, misses the whole meaning of the written Word. Taking a literal approach is far too simplistic and misses the great wisdom the Bible has to offer.

The Bible starts with “In the beginning” (Genesis). Genesis means in the beginning. The book goes on to describe the beginning of the universe. But there is another genesis in our Bible which does not describe the creation of the physical universe but deals with the spiritual world. That book also starts with genesis, in the beginning. This book is the Gospel of St. John, “In the beginning was the Logos (Word).”

There were, and are, many creation stories. Each culture, unless introduced to Christianity or Judaism has a creation story and so the writers of Genesis had many creation stories available to them but they selected only two (Gen 1:1 and Gen 2:4). Why these two were selected we do not know.

The second creation story focuses on the Garden of Eden. Four rivers are mentioned, the Euphrates, the Tigris, The Gihon, and the Pishon but where is , or was, this Garden of Eden? We can identify the Tigris and the Euphrates but where are the Gihon and the Pishon? Recently those two rivers were discovered using satellite imaging and it turns out the Garden of Eden is now underwater in the Persian Gulf. But can we look at the Garden of Eden as a state of mind? One where we walk with God in our heart and mind....a state of love, appreciation, and gratitude? Or where, as St Paul tells us, we give thanks for everything and always. When we reach that stage of spiritual development we do live in a Garden of Eden where joy and fulfillment abound.

In Genesis 3 we learn the story of “The Fall of Adam.” It is easy to blame Adam or Eve for all of our problems but what if we read Adam as “all of humankind”? The Creator tells the humans that if they eat of the “Tree of Knowledge” they will surely die. But does that make any sense?

Before they ate of the forbidden fruit they lived a life of certainty, optimism, love, and security. But once they “ate” of the fruit their life became one of fear, chaos, pain and death. Could we read this as spiritual or psychological death? In other words is it possible that the story is a metaphor?

We realize that the Creator now changes from One who walks with us and is close to us to become One who is to be feared and who metes out punishment. The Creator is merciful but is also a judge and therefore becomes removed from us. We are no longer innocents and childlike. (Unless you have faith like a child you shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven – Jesus).

It is not Adam’s sin that brought death into the world and separated us from the love of God. Adam is not responsible for our individual deaths but we must bear the responsibility for our actions. We must accept responsibility for everything. Our sins can and must be forgiven so we can reclaim that joy of love for God.

Vatican II: the Promise Behind the New Missal

In an earlier essay I gave a brief account of how we arrived at the New Missal. But that account did not do justice to the Vatican II document that had promised renewal of the liturgical texts. There is something stirring about the words of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

The Council states the goals of renewal with clarity and passion:

“This sacred Council ... desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change ... The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy. For the liturgy ... is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek. ... The Council also desires that, where necessary, the rites be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times.”¹

This preamble is followed by Chapter I entitled **General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy**, which includes the following language:

“... Thus by baptism men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him ... From that time onward the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery: reading ... the scriptures ... celebrating the Eucharist ... and at the same time giving thanks ... through the power of the Holy Spirit. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations ... in the person of His minister ... especially under the Eucharistic species ... He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and

sings, for He promised: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’ (Matt. 18:20). ... But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace ... fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects. ... all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people ... is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit ...”²

The Council then concludes the general statement of objectives with the following: *“In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it. In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.”³*

The foregoing recitation leaves out one passage that is perhaps wistfully ironic in light of subsequent events: *“... when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the mere observation of the laws governing valid and licit celebration ...”⁴* This sentiment was reflected in guidance for translation issued a few years later: *“... it is not sufficient that a liturgical translation merely reproduce the*

expressions and ideas of the original text. Rather it must faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language, that which the Church by means of this given text originally intended to communicate to another people in another time. A faithful translation, therefore, cannot be judged on the basis of individual words: the total context of this specific act of communication must be kept in mind, as well as the literary form proper to the respective language. Thus, in the case of liturgical communication, it is necessary to take into account not only the message to be conveyed, but also the speaker, the audience, and the style. Translations, therefore, must be faithful to the art of communication in all its various aspects, but especially in regard to the message itself, in regard to the audience for which it is intended, and in regard to the manner of expression”⁵ (emphasis supplied).

How is it possible to reach a “*general restoration of the liturgy itself*” for all the worthy reasons stated at Vatican II with great passion and obvious hope and expectation when – as we have now seen – the task is reduced to how accurately the translation conforms to a Latin text that yearns for the past? Does Rome not understand – as the fathers at Vatican II understood – that Christ is alive and well, becoming again, in and through the Spirit within the People of God?

Alas, the Church’s talents for liturgical renewal are being buried. In the years following Vatican II fear rather than joy has become ascendant in the corridors of the Vatican. The fiduciaries of the institutional Church have conflated and confused unity with uniformity. Unity of the People of God is an aspect of the mystery of the Church, but its meaning shines with a gold that is debased by uniformity. One is left with the sense that the Vatican seeks to maintain a form of unity that falls short, and the careful conformities of the New Missal stand in contrast to a full and vibrant diversity that would better comport with the full unity in Christ of the People of God.

Yet this discouraging turn of events goes back to the same conciliar document on the liturgy that spoke of renewal in such soaring terms. Having stated the objectives of the reform effort, the Council then sets forth the norms for implementation. These norms have two components. One component makes clear who has authority to make changes. The second component provides substantive guidance.

The substantive guidance is provided by the following norm:

“That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress. Careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. This investigation should be theological, historical, and pastoral. Also the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults conceded to various places. Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.” (Emphasis supplied.)

This language retains the sense of renewal earlier stated with such conviction. The two underlined passages are worthy of note. The first is a reference to reform experience of the kind exhibited by NOVA’s own experimental charter. The second is a prudent recognition of continuity with a long tradition.

With regard to authority, the regulation of the liturgy depends “*solely on the Apostolic See and, as the laws may determine, on the bishop.*”⁶ In addition, certain authority was provided to “*competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.*”⁷ This provision is the basis for the subsequent formation of ICEL (International Commission on English in the Liturgy). No one else has authority to make changes in the liturgy.⁸

The history of the New Missal is best summarized in terms of the authority structures set up to implement *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. ICEL was set up by a number of bishops conferences and approved by Pope Paul VI soon after the conciliar document was promulgated, and produced its first version of the Roman Missal in 1973, some four years after the first Latin version was produced. These were somewhat hurried versions, intended to put something in the hands of the faithful quickly.

On the 25th anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Pope John Paul II issued a letter that reaffirmed the importance of the liturgy, quoting or restating the objectives of the conciliar document. In particular, John Paul II amplified the connection between restoration of the liturgy and the unity of the Church. Earlier that same year John Paul had issued *Pastor Bonus*, which said that the Congregation on

Divine Worship (CDW) exercised the Apostolic See's authority over liturgical texts.

A second English version of the Latin Missal came out of ICEL in 1998, and was sent to CDW after approval by the various bishops' conferences. The CDW was continuing to work on its own update to the Latin version. In 1999 the head of CDW, Cardinal Medina Estevez, issued a letter indicating that ICEL's role was to provide a faithful translation into English of the Latin version, and that "any proposals for cultural adaptation, modification or the composition of original texts remain the province of the individual Bishops' Conferences ... subject to the approval of the Holy See."⁹ The Cardinal noted the "undue autonomy that has been observed in the translations prepared by [ICEL]."

This decision essentially derailed the ICEL 1998 translation, which included "cultural adaptation, modification [and] composition of original texts." Yet how could the Council's call for renewal be achieved without such adaptations?

The Council had said, "*in this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.*" It is difficult to see how "a faithful translation ... of the Latin version" would help energize the people toward the work of justice. The people can be taught the words, but owning them is another matter. The hopes of the Council have been set aside in order to preserve a unity that is careful and precise, not the vigorous and diverse unity that would be worthy of the Risen Christ.

Perhaps this is just the political reality. Politics has a bad name, and seems out of place. On the other hand, Church communities have always had to tame the political tiger. Progress comes slowly, but it does come. The untamed political tiger simply means that the Church is "now, but not yet."

If we take that perspective on what is going on, then what is happening with the New Missal can be seen in a fresh and hopeful light. This is not simply politics, where conservatives in the Curia have come to the rescue of conservatives in the People of God. It is a continuing opportunity for dialogue about what it means to be a Christian in the world, and what it means to flow Christ out into the world from the fountain of perpetual renewal that is the liturgy.

No one said this would be easy. The Holy Spirit does not protect us from either earthquakes or politics: we must work these things through ourselves. The Council spoke eloquently about the central place of the liturgy in energizing the people to be the hands and feet of Christ. And although the eloquent words are not self-executing, this eloquence is more likely to withstand the test of time than the politics that has transmuted reform into conformity.

The Church is all of us, including the institution. If the institution has succumbed to the political tiger, burying the talents called forth by the Council's eloquent words, should we not give some consideration to helping our brother in the faith (institutional though our brother may be)?

To put the matter quite bluntly, how can dialogue be reconciled with the Church's concern for a careful and precise form of unity? It's not about the New Missal so much as a style of dialogue within an organizational structure that dates from the Roman Empire. Vatican II promoted parish and diocesan councils, which have languished but might become vehicles for dialogue if some way can be found to engage them without the incivilities of the democratic process. There is hope. Also, the American Catholic Council is providing a lay led initiative that may be instructive on how a style of dialogue can be organized as the hands and feet of Christ. Furthermore, NOVA's own experience with the consensus process is relevant to these questions.

TO BE CONTINUED.

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, excerpts from paragraphs 1, 2 and 4.

² *Ibid.*, excerpts from paragraphs 6, 7, 11 and 14.

³ *Ibid.*, paragraph 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, from paragraph 11.

⁵ Concilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Comme Le Prevoit), issued January 25, 1969; paragraphs 6 and 7.

⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium.*, paragraph 22(1).

⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraph 22(2).

⁸ *Ibid.*, paragraph 22(3).

⁹ Letter of Cardinal Medina Estevez to Bishop Taylor, 26 October 1999; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prot. n. 2322/99/L.