

nova notes

NOVA Catholic Community

October/November 2012

Chair Notes...

As the weather begins to change and Nova begins to settle into our regular routines (whatever they may be!), I've been thinking about some wise and thoughtful words we've heard lately.

Thanks to the great planners, the retreat was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our "Twelve Steps" shared through personal stories and ideas from Quinn Conners, Rich Rosenberg, John Mooney and each other. Perhaps the time together inspired some of us to explore new thinking and to make commitments we've previously set aside. For me, while quiet reflection has never been a strength, I am really trying to incorporate time to do just that into my day.

In addition, our recent liturgies and dialogues have been as thoughtful and provocative as always! A few weeks ago, in response to the readings about the disciples jockeying for position and John Haughey's homily challenge to us, Warren Reich shared, in a dialogue response, that the head of his religious congregation had been called Custodian rather than Superior or Superior General. That thought has stayed with me! Any of us called to provide leadership and guidance for others -and that's really all of us in one way or another- whether at work, in organizations or in daily life, would be wise to consider that responsibility as a custodian. I went online to look up the meaning of a custodian and it is "a person responsible for something valuable, someone entrusted with caring for someone or something, an upholder of something valuable." In our community, we all share something valuable - a faith commitment along with a commitment to peace and social justice. As a

community and as individuals, we should be helping each other to be consciously aware of living those values and, all of us, being custodians to uphold them.

Lastly, Cece and I are looking forward to a number of community events in the weeks and months ahead that provide opportunities for us to learn, grow spiritually, extend our social action outreach and just share time together. Look for movie nights, general meeting info and fundraising activities to help us live our commitments to our faith, each other and the broader community - as caring custodians.

~Meg Tucillo, Co-chair



Elena lights candles at Oct. 7 liturgy

December/January
Newsletter Deadline
Sunday, December 2

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

| NOVA Message Line | (703) 852-7907 |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Chairpersons | Cece Michelotti Meg Tucillo |
| 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 | John Tarrant |
| Directory & Yahoo Groups Coordinator; Webmaster | Ken Chaison |
| Announcements Coordinator | Linda Christie |
| Newsletter Editor | Judy Christofferson |

October & November Birthdays

Belated wishes for good health and joy in the coming year to the following October birthday celebrators:

- 2 Tom Ahrens
- 4 Teddi Ahrens
- 5 Ben Brady
- 6 Jack Christie



- 6 Chris Swanberg
- 11 Clyde Christofferson
- 12 Carolyn Miller

And the following October birthday celebrators:

- 15 Betsy Marron
- 20 Peggy Becker
- 21 David Mog
- 22 Nancy Veldhuis

November Birthdays

- 3 Ken Chaison
- 4 Tom Marron
- 5 Emma Violand-Sanchez
- 6 Marie Schum-Brady
- 7 Joe Houck
- 8 Rosemarie Annunziata
Phyllis Houck
- 12 George Lowrey
- 17 Jennifer Powell
- 22 Carmela Ormando
- 25 Bernie Byrne
- 27 Mary Gillmarten
Mike Timpane
Natalia Mercado-Violand
- 29 Rich Rosenberg
Julia Hainer-Violand
- 30 Arthur Rosenberg

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 in assisting the needy

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

Jody Furlong, who also would appreciate a card or a call

Cece Michelotti, who is recovering from an accident.

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

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. Beginning September 23, liturgies will be held at Kenmore School (located on Carlin Springs Rd. off Arlington Blvd.) starting at 10:15 a.m.

October Music Liaison

Gloria Mog

October 14 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Dan Madigan, SJ

Planner: Peggy Meyer

October 21 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Ray Kemp

Planners: Judy and Clyde Christofferson

October 28 – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Gerry Stockhausen, SJ

Planner: Peace and Social Justice Team

November Music Liaison

Linda Rosenberg

November 4 – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: John Haughey, SJ

Planner: Emma Violand-Sanchez

November 11 – 32 Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Joe Kenna

Planners: Mike and Gen Timpane

November 18 – 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Quinn Connors, O.Carm.

Planners: Nancy and John Veldhuis

November 25 – Christ the King

Priest: Joe Nangle, OFM

Planner: Catherine Schmitt

When possible arrange any needed exchanges with other planners on dates near your scheduled liturgy. Let Gloria Mog, liturgy coordinator, know of any changes to the schedule. Thanks!



Fr. Joe Kenna's banner for October 7th liturgy



Garden at Shrine Mont

Gunston Volunteers Needed

NOVA volunteers distribute bags of nonperishable food and 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 provide needed help. Having someone who speaks Spanish is a real plus for each of the teams. **Please help.** If you are interested in volunteering, contact Dianne Carroll.

October & November Gunston Schedule

Oct 11: The **Millers**
Oct 18: **Tim/Jerry: Cathy G**
Oct 25: **Glen/Syd**

Nov. 1: **Eric (volunteer needed)**
Nov. 8: **Volunteers needed**
Nov. 15: **Tim/Jerry**
Nov. 20 Thanksgiving Day on 11/22 **Volunteers needed on Tuesday**
Nov. 29: **Glen/Syd**

St. Clement Winter Shelter Volunteers Needed

NOVA will again be participating in the Winter Emergency Shelter at the Church of St. Clement in Alexandria. NOVA has been sending overnight volunteers for more than 10 years. Dianne will be setting up a schedule volunteers. If you are interested in participating, please contact Diane. her by e-mail for more information:

The dates in 2013 for NOVA volunteers are January 7 and 21; February 4 and 18; and March 4. Two NOVA volunteers are needed spend for each night at the shelter

Christ House Reminder

On Monday, October 15, NOVA will once again prepare and serve meatloaf and scalloped potatoes to the hungry clients at Christ House. **Bring your meatloaves and spuds to the liturgy on October 14.** You may drop them off at the Michelotti's anytime on Sunday or up till 1:00 p.m. on Monday, the 15th. Just leave them in the coolers on the front porch.

If you'd like to get involved in the kitchen, please call or e-mail Kopp Michelotti or Ken Chaison. We start food preparation around 4:00 p.m.

The last Christ House date in 2012 for NOVA will be on Monday, December 17. Details will be in the next issue of the newsletter ~**Kopp Michelotti**

Reminder: A Taste of Africa

Action Africa (<http://www.actionafrica.org>) invites you to attend "A Taste of Africa" Fundraiser on October 21, at 6:00 p.m. at Top of the Town, 1400 14th St. North, Arlington, VA 22209. Tickets are still available. Charles Mann will be the keynote speaker. Contact the office directly to avoid internet fees. Call 202-529-8350; or email: actionafrica@verizon.net



The graphic features a lion in a savanna setting on the left, a red and black 'ACTION AFRICA' logo on the right, and a black silhouette of the African continent on the right side. The central text reads: "Action Africa is excited to announce that at our 'A Taste of Africa' fundraiser on October 21st, 2012, we will be giving away a 3 Day Classic Kruger Safari for 2 people, staying in the renowned Kruger National Park in South Africa. As well as a night for 2 at the Outlook Lodge Johannesburg!". At the bottom, it says "Become a Fan" with a Facebook icon and the ID "07c#06033", and "Get more information by visiting our site www.ActionAfrica.org".

Upcoming Events

Two Showings of Romero Film

As part of NOVA's ongoing education about El Salvador, *there will be two opportunities* for you to see the film "Romero" in October. Let your host know which date you plan to attend.

Date: Friday, October 26

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Rosenbergs' home

Second Showing

Date: Sunday, October 28

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Michelotti's home

Bring snacks/beverages to share.

Discussion following both showings.

Other Dates to Remember

October 20 – 9:00-11:30 a.m. SALT invites you to hear Sister Simone Campbell discuss working effectively for social change at the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 2188, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax, VA 22031.

October 25 - AACH (Arlington-Alexandria Coalition on the Homeless) wine tasting. Kopp has tickets, which sell for \$35 per person. The theme of this event is Value American Wines.

October 28 – noon - ASPAN Walkathon (following NOVA liturgy) Meg Tuccillo has further details.

November 17 – 2012 Musical at Arlington Women's club

Dec. 1 -- Day of Reflection at the Abby in Berryville (ends in early afternoon.) See Mike Timpane for more information.

NOVA General Meeting

Date: Saturday, December 1

Time: 5:30 p.m. (potluck)
7:00 p.m. (meeting)

Location: Home of Meg Tucillo

Topics for Discussion

- Our promptness
- Space for liturgy
- Films: "Pink Smoke over the Vatican: We have a Pope" and "Return to El Salvador;" discussion of the Oscar Romero film
- Tables of Six - starting in January, possibly centered around selected books for discussion
- Get acquainted times in Party Room
- Christmas caroling (determine date/time: December 7, 8 or 9?)
- Proposed cookbook to raise funds for El Salvador project
- Proposed poetry sharing gatherings

Quotes from Review of "Romero" Film*

"The first feature film from the Paulist Fathers' moviemaking division, John Duigan's *Romero* tells the true story of Latin America's best-known and most revered modern martyr, Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Goldamez, a man whom John Paul II described as a "zealous pastor who gave his life for his flock."

"*Romero* excels as a film is in its depiction of its subject's gradual transformation. Romero is a man morally transformed by office and responsibility. Romero comes to the archbishopric at a time when El Salvador is torn apart by violence and injustice. El Salvadoran military forces – aided and equipped by the United States as a defense against Communism – oppose the country's Marxist guerrilla resistance. However, much of what is done in the name of "fighting Communists" is really just repressing the poor, or anyone who speaks out on their behalf."

*From lengthier review by Steven D. Greydanus

Raising Funds for the Rural Women's Center in El Salvador

NOVA chose a one-year project in addition to our monthly peace and justice commitments that will be funded by fund raising activities.

This year's project described by Archer:

For eighteen years a valiant group of women in Ilobasco, El Salvador has been running an education and training organization for rural women and youth, using small grants they receive from the US. They call their organization La Nueva Esperanza (New Hope) to reflect their hope for a better life after El Salvador's civil war. Over 800 girls and women have learned dressmaking or tailoring. Over 50% report earnings from their new skills. Over 100 youth have learned computer skills. Others have learned to make traditional crafts and natural medicines and reported good earnings. Over 2,000 children have received scholarships of school supplies or school transportation money. La Nueva Esperanza is losing the borrowed location where they have worked for the last ten years. To continue, they need a meeting space. If we build it, they will keep coming. NOVA has committed to raising \$10,000 for this project this year.



FUNDRAISING PLAN

Over the last two months the community has been ginning up ideas on how to support Co-Partner's Rural Women's Center. We are blessed by very imaginative ideas and willingness to put energy into them. Based on volunteer sign up, the Peace and Social Justice Team has narrowed them down into a fun-filled program to raise \$10,000. Here's what we are looking forward to:

- Oct 26—Romero movie at the Rosenbergs (donation accepted)
- Oct 28—Romero movie at the Michelottis (“ “)
- Nov. 17—Hollertown & Friends Bluegrass concert at Barcroft (admission at door)
- TBA—Yankee Candle Event
- Jan. TBA—Concert
- Jan. TBA—Movie: Return to El Salvador
- March 3—Men Who Cook (advance sale tickets)
- A cookbook is in development

~A Huge thanks for all your efforts ~ the Peace and Social Justice Team

Another Upcoming Fundraiser

Co-partners of Campesinas

Christmas Crafts Sale

Sunday, December 2 (before and after the NOVA liturgy)



See Archer Heinzen if you have any questions.

Summary of Group Report to Friends of Fontaine Committee* Submitted by Richard Urban

Prepared: August 24, 2012 at the Matthew 25 House while awaiting the arrival of Hurricane Isaac



On August 21, Father David Noone, Vinny Poisinelli, Lawrence Furan, Tonie Malone, and I left for Fontaine, Haiti. Father Noone is the Chairman of the Friends of Fontaine Foundation that supports St. Gabriel's through Christ the Light Parish in upstate NY. Vinny Poisinelli, Lawrence Furan are members of the committee. Tonie represents St. Joseph Parish in Keyport, N.J. that has been involved in ministry projects in Pignon, Haiti and its chapels, of which Fontaine is one, for the past 17 years. She has traveled to the Pignon/Fontaine area multiple times. Given her knowledge of Haiti, Fontaine and Pignon and her many contacts in both the country and region, Tonie was invited to join our group.

Fontaine is located in the northern part of the Central Plateau in Haiti, about 100 miles from Port-au-Prince. The

town has a population of approximately 10,000 with over 50% under the age of 25. Older residents report that many years ago Fontaine used to have a very good rainy season, and water was plentiful. The residents grew rice, corn, millet and beans and raised mangoes, nuts, and pineapples. They also raised animals and were not dependent on importing milk or meat or rice. Today, however, the community suffers from a lack of water. The residents plant but reap very little due to the lack of sufficient rain over the past several years. Five hundred children are born in the town each year but 35 % of them die because of malnutrition and bad water. Only 20 % of the residents have even rudimentary toilets. Some families have as many as 12 people living in a small house of two or three rooms. Most live on less than \$ 2 (US) per day. The primary activity of Fontaine's residents is to make charcoal, which causes deforestation. The population uses trees for about 5 or 6 activities, such as cooking, building, charcoal, making bread, making sugar cane syrup and clairin, the local alcoholic drink. The biggest problem is that too many trees are cut without planting even one new one. As the trees recede, poverty grows. In an effort to turn this tide, a parish in New Jersey (see below) is funding a reforestation program in Fontaine. Thousands of seedlings have been planted.

There are primary schools in Fontaine but only 25% of the community's residents are primary school graduates. The nearest high school is in Pignon and requires a 4 ½ mile, four hour R/T walk, depending on the season. It is difficult to find high school graduates in Fontaine and almost impossible to find college graduates. It is because we believe that in such an environment education can make a difference and start the process leading to growth and development that we accepted the invitation of a young resident of Fontaine, and one of its few college graduates, Pierre-Louis Jozil, to help him build a secondary school in his hometown.

Pierre-Louis Jozil, who had arranged transportation for us to Pignon, met us at the airport. From Port-au-Prince we traveled to Pignon with a stop at Hinche, Haiti, where Brother Mike McCarthy and Brother Bill Griffin joined us. Brothers Mike and Bill are Xaverian Brothers currently on staff at Maison Fortuné Orphanage in Hinche. The orphanage houses 250 male and female residents, from age 4 and up. Brother Mike had supervised the Xaverian Center in Port-au-Prince where Pierre-Louis lived and served as student director during much of his time while at University in that city. Brother Bill served for many years as the assistant superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. From them we learned the orphanage's \$350,000 annual budget is almost totally funded through a 501(c) 3 Foundation formed by a number of Richmond, Virginia Catholic parishes. Given the connection between Pierre-Louis and the Xaverian Brothers, and his relationship with Brothers Bill and Mike, in particular, the Brothers had been invited to attend the school's dedication.

As Fontaine, our final destination, offered no overnight hospitality facilities, Tonie Malone had made arrangements for us to stay at the rectory of the Catholic Church in Pignon during our time in the Fontaine area. The parish in New Jersey, Tonie Malone's parish, supports many projects in Pignon. Last year, alone, that support amounted to \$139,000 dollars, which provided needed funding for a microcredit-loan program, a medical clinic and pharmacy, a veterinarian clinic, a reforestation project and over 250 primary, secondary and university scholarships. The trip from Port-au-Prince to Pignon took approximately 3 ½ hours, the last hour and 15 minutes of which were over the worst unpaved roads that any of us had ever ridden on.

On the road from Port-au-Prince to Pignon one quickly gets a sense of the overwhelming challenges Haiti faces. People line many of the streets in Port-au-Prince attempting to make a living selling a variety of merchandise. Many homes are well below poverty level. As a result of the earthquake, there are still several tent cities in Port-au-Prince housing approximately 400,000 homeless people. The homes we visited in Pignon and Fontaine were very small but clean, built from cement blocks. All cooking is done outside over or on charcoal fires. Few homes have water that is not secured from the river or a cistern of some sort and there is no hot water. Happily, the well in Fontaine, for which Christ Our Light Catholic Church supplied the funding, is now operative. Approximately, 50 families a day, who previously would have had to walk 30 or 45 minutes to the river for water, now obtain their water from that well. The well is secured and its hours of operation are posted.

Upon our arrival in Pignon we were greeted by the local pastor, Father Ronald Mervil and, after a brief time to refresh, enjoyed supper at the home of Berteau Zephir and his wife, Jacqueline. Berteau and Pierre-Louis attended and graduated from the same university in Port-au-Prince, thanks to scholarships from the New Jersey parish. Berteau now oversees the parish's micro finance program which makes business loans to qualified residents and is personally and professionally supportive of Pierre-Louis and St. Gabriel's School.

Wednesday morning, St. Gabriel's School was officially dedicated. It was a beautiful warm and sunny day for the ceremony, which began in the small chapel in Pignon from which all the attendees, led by a band, walked in procession to the school. There the initial opening ceremonies included words of welcome, opening prayers and a blessing of the school building by Father Mervil. Following the blessing, the band led us back to the chapel where Mass was to be celebrated. Along the way, one of the marching tunes played was the US Marines' Hymn. The liturgy, which was both meaningful and beautiful, included traditional Haitian liturgical music and dance provided by several young Haitian girls. After giving thanks to God, all were led back again to the school for the concluding ceremonies which included remarks from a number of people, including members of the local community, the school principal, the district educational official, three members of our group, Bro. Mike, Fr Noone and myself, with closing remarks offered by Pierre- Louis. Earlier in the day, we had presented Pierre-Louis with the many gifts we had brought for the students, teachers and staff. They were most appreciatively received and will be distributed on the first day of school in October. Following the ceremony, a meal, cooked over open charcoal pits on the school property by several women of the community, was served to all in attendance, roughly 400 people. Though the dedication ceremonies lasted over four hours, the obvious spirit of pride, gratefulness and sense of accomplishment felt throughout made the time spent feel graced.

Wednesday evening Pierre-Louis and his wife invited us to supper at their home, which provided us an opportunity to review the day and enjoy the company of new friends. Late Wednesday evening, Vinny rejoined us and on Thursday he had an opportunity to meet with Pierre-Louis, tour the school and join in our discussions.

On Thursday morning before our departure from Pignon, we toured the Pharmacy, Medical Clinic and the newly constructed but as yet unfinished Catholic and community radio station being established by the pastor of the Catholic parish, all funded, to a large extent, by the New Jersey parish.

On Thursday afternoon, the group boarded a small, chartered plane for the return trip to Port-au-Prince where we stayed at Matthew 25 House, the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas' guest house which was erected by the 238 parishes in the United States that provide assistance to a variety of ministries and projects in Haiti. There the group learned that the flight returning home via United Airlines had been cancelled due to the anticipated arrival of Hurricane Isaac. The hurricane passed on Friday and we departed on the rescheduled flight on Saturday.

Members of this group offered to travel to Haiti to attend the dedication of the school in Fontaine, observe the state of the project and report to the Friends of Fontaine Committee. Following the dedication ceremonies and meal on Wednesday, we had an opportunity to sit down with Pierre-Louis, the school principal and accountant, to have, what turned out to be, a very frank and helpful conversation about what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done, as well as needs and expectations. That conversation, along with our own onsite experience, has led us to make the following observations to the Friends of Fontaine Committee.

OBSERVATIONS

- The people of the community of Fontaine seem very supportive of this school project; a member of the community donated the land needed for the project, the community cleared the land and cut a road that leads to the school, dug a well and constructed the first phase, which in October will be home for 120 7th, 8th and 9th grade students who will be taught by 17 part-time teachers. Somewhere around 400/500 students and adults attended the school’s dedication ceremony, which lasted over four hours, following which members of the community provided a very fine meal cooked outside, in the heat, over charcoal fires. The presence of a choir and band from Pignon for the dedication ceremonies was another significant sign of broader community support.
- Pierre-Louis reported that our presence for the dedication gave “hope to the people of Fontaine”
- Rather than exhibiting a “poor us” attitude with “hand outs” expected, that might easily arise given their standard of living, the Haitians we were privileged to meet were people who live good lives with far less than we, are willing to share what they do have and prefer to work with others to improve their situation rather than simply expecting others to do that for them
- We were impressed by the quality of the school building’s construction. The images we had viewed by e-mail did not do justice to how well constructed the school actually is
- The school has the support of the local public education system; the local district school representative stated he would request permission to allow student achievement testing at the school rather than requiring the students to be tested in Pignon. Local testing permission, not always granted to schools, would be an indication of broader community support
- The school also has the support of the local parish as well as the education office of the local diocese, Cape Haitian. A copy of a letter confirming that support will be sent to us.
- It was apparent that Pierre-Louis Jozil is both respected and highly regarded by the community, his peers, the local pastor, and by all to whom we spoke. Brother Mike McCarthy, who mentored Pierre-Louis during his years at the Xaverian Center in Port-au-Prince spoke very highly of Pierre-Louis’s maturity, leadership skills, Christian faith and voiced confidence in Pierre-Louis’s ability to oversee the continuation of this project.
- As mentioned above, the well has already had a significant impact on the community of Fontaine.
- In addition, the school has the potential to impact the lives of many local residents. Since 2006 only four members of the Fontaine community have graduated from college, partially because they were willing to walk the daily round trip from Fontaine to Pignon to attend high school. Most would not or, more likely, could not make that daily journey, especially during the rainy season when the road becomes almost impassable. We met with those four young college graduates on Wednesday. Now that Fontaine will have a high school, it is likely that more members of that community will attend university in the future.
- When solar panels are installed at the school, which could happen before the end of the year, they would generate a further positive impact on the school’s educational potential as well as on the social life of the community, the choir, the band, etc.

Signed by: Antonia Malone, Brother Michael McCarthy, Brother William Griffin, Richard Urban, Lawrence Furan, Vinny Poisinelli, and Father Noone

*This report is a group report principally penned by Father David Noone, Chairman of Friends of Fontaine Foundation, with input and review by the other trip participants. –Richard Urban

Comments on Recent *America Magazine* Editorial

Our newsletter editor has suggested community members consider a more participatory mindset: don't just read the newsletter, contribute to it, as the Spirit moves you.

[An editorial in the October 8, 2012 issue of *America Magazine*](#) confirms the wisdom of that suggestion, and these brief paragraphs are an example of one kind of contribution: give others in the community a reason to read something that has touched you.

October 11th was the 50th anniversary of the start of Vatican II. As a personal aside I celebrated my 19th birthday on that day fifty years ago.

The *America* editorial points out that Vatican II called for a more participatory model of the Church. It did so by "reimagining" the church as the People of God in concrete ways that we are still struggling to implement. The Council reformed the liturgy by using vernacular language, turning the altar around, and removing the altar rail. The Council also authorized the use of parish and diocesan councils, and bishops' conferences. These measures invite fuller participation by all the People of God.

Sadly, recent Curial politics has produced "retranslation of the Mass into clumsy, Latinate prose darkened by feudal images of the divine-human relationship." A movement toward unity by centralization has reduced conferences of bishops to mere consultative bodies. Parish and diocesan councils remain largely unused. The Church – that is us – has left stillborn the unity of and through the Spirit that comes from a sense of shared participation in a common enterprise.

The *America* editorial concludes with a model for participation: We are a pilgrim people, able (but not always humble enough to be willing) to make space for "corrections of deviations made in what was alleged to be the spirit of the council" and for "new promptings of the Spirit."
~Clyde Christofferson

Books of Interest

I want NOVA members to know that I am working my way through a new book called *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt. The subtitle is: "Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion." I have high hopes that this social psychologist will help me understand why I assume the worst about the motives of some of my fellow citizens. And why congress is having such difficulty working together. The book came highly recommended. Folks can feel free to ask what it did for me.
~Linda Rosenberg

Inspired by the recent NOVA retreat, I listed some personal bad habits I'd like to change. A book that caught my attention and that I hope might help me is *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*. The author is Charles Duhigg, an investigative reporter for the New York Times. I've only begun reading the book so at this point, I'm not sure it will help me with changing any of my bad habits. Nevertheless, I've found it engaging. Timothy Wilson says about this book: "This is not a self-help book conveying one author's homespun remedies, but a serious look at the science of habit formation and change." You might find [Wilson's article about the book](#) helpful for determining whether you'd like to read it.
~Judy Christofferson

Searching for a Church that is More Catholic than the Pope: Continued

The late Pope Paul VI (1963–78), in his address to the opening of the second session of the Second Vatican Council (1962–63) on September 29, 1963, declared: *“The Church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the Church to be always open to new and greater exploration.”*

My last article suggested that the Church is on the cusp of a new self-understanding of its mission. In a sense, it’s where we have been going all along but we just have not seen it in quite that way. Where is the Church centered? It is not centered in the Vatican, because the Church is the whole People of God.

But if “center of the Church” is not the right description for the hierarchical structure of Pope and bishops that we associate with the Vatican, what do we say about these servants of the Church? Is the Church left rootless and without moorings in the absence of a Vatican centered structure?

No. The moorings are provided by what I have been referring to as “what is written on their hearts” by the one God. This presence of the living God manifests itself as “conscience.” The key insight is but a slight shift in emphasis, from the hierarchy to the living God. Put that way, it is not a shift at all because the living God – incarnate in Jesus Christ – has always been the focus. The role of the hierarchy is not to detract from that focus but, indeed, to preserve it.

However, many have become accustomed to a Vatican centered Church. And it is not only Catholics who have this understanding. Non-Catholic Christians and those of other faiths commonly think of the Pope and the Vatican as the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, notwithstanding Vatican II’s broader definition of the People of God. There is a concreteness and clarity provided by the Vatican centered hierarchical structure that certainly gives the appearance of solid moorings. “What is written on their hearts” is a mooring of a different kind. For those who need a strong sense of being well moored, it will be a difficult matter politically to shift away from a Vatican centered view of the Church. And yet the shift is remarkable not because it rejects what Catholics have come to understand as the Vatican – whether as a rock or an albatross – but because it both preserves these contentious

understandings and frees the Vatican from the chains of a narrow view of catholicity.

In this context it is not possible to avoid the question of how “what is written on their hearts” can provide a solid mooring. In a sense, the music of the heart is the central message of Jesus, because it reflects the in-breaking of the living God into the world. It is through this music that we know that “the reign of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15) as Jesus preached. But in another sense the music from so many hearts becomes a Tower of Babel when put to words.

During the first millennium the Church found unity in ritual and practice, and found pastoral acceptance if not encouragement for a variety of musical scores for “what is written on their hearts.” But after the Reformation the Church became much more concerned about the lyrics, and whether the words for these musical scores came from the same songbook. The test of “catholicity” was less a matter of common ritual and practice and more a matter of doctrine. The music of the heart was muffled by words.

It is no small irony that the politics of responding to the Reformation effectively transmuted “catholicity” into a much narrower “Catholic identity.” It is not that the goal of catholicity had been reached prior to the Reformation. Far from it. But the detour toward Catholic identity has left catholicity to languish in the backwaters of doctrinal division. There is an unfinished course toward catholicity, and Vatican II began turning the Church onto that course. What I am suggesting in these essays is that a renewed emphasis on the integrity of the journey toward “what is written on their hearts” – a shift from the hierarchy as doctrinal custodian to the living and incarnate God who makes music in every heart – holds promise for dramatically expanding the Church’s catholicity.

The difficulty is that “what is written on their hearts” by a loving God provides a different kind of mooring than the rock of Peter as currently

understood. This different kind of mooring brings with it not a Tower of Babel but an expanded catholicity that *resonates* with the unity for which Christ prayed. Seeing this requires a shift in perspective.

In the last essay I argued for this shift by analogy, in terms of a parallel development in the history of physics: the transition from Newton (where space and time provided a fixed frame of reference) to Einstein (where *invariance* was not in the frame of reference but in that which holds true in all frames of reference). In Einstein's universe, there is no preferred frame of reference, yet the laws of physics are the same in all frames of reference. This shift forced Einstein to reformulate the laws of physics. This turned out to be a considerable mathematical challenge to Einstein and, more importantly, a wrenching change in perspective for his colleagues.

The question for Catholicism is how to transition from a catholicity based on a preferred frame of reference centered at the Vatican to a catholicity rooted in something else. How well does the analogy hold? Are we looking for something that endures in all frames of reference, in communities of the People of God not only here on planet Earth but in distant worlds as yet unknown?

Where would such a transition leave the hierarchy? The same approach would presumably apply to the traditional structures of other religions, but our first step as Catholics is to deal with our own tradition. Suppose the role of the hierarchy is not to shepherd the flock to a preferred frame of reference centered at the Vatican but rather to support *the integrity of the journey* upon which each one of the faithful is embarked. The focus on the living God is through cultivation of conscience, **not** measuring conscience against a preferred frame of reference maintained by the Vatican.

Is this too subtle a shift? Does not sound pastoral practice already give priority to conscience and to the journey? Well, yes. But this age old pastoral practice has been cast in a different light by the increasing Vatican emphasis in recent decades upon doctrine, upon the pronouncements – *ex cathedra* and otherwise – on the teaching authority of the Church. The distinction is less and less subtle the more the Vatican emphasizes doctrine, as the current dialogue between the LCWR and the CDF makes clear.

Which is not to say that the Vatican's teaching authority is not both important and useful, especially

for Catholics. The physics of Newton and Einstein provides a parallel even for this. Engineers continue to use Newton for the practical tasks of building bridges and sending rockets to the moon. The assumption that space and time are an absolute frame of reference only breaks down at the margins. It is only necessary to invoke Einstein's teaching (that there is no preferred frame of reference) when the question is how the cosmos came to be (i.e. the Big Bang) or, at a more mundane level, when the challenge is ensuring that a GPS correctly identifies position. It turns out your GPS would drive you off the road after a few days if it used Newton's equations to compute position. To keep you on the road, your GPS must use Einstein's relativistic equations.

There are other examples that require Einstein's equations in order to explain observed reality. The axis of Mercury's elliptical orbit around the sun rotates at a rate slightly different from what Newton predicts, and this difference is accounted for by Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. But in most everyday applications – from building bridges to sending rockets to the moon – Newton's teachings are quite practical and useful.

So, by analogy, the community of believers that call themselves Catholic could continue to function with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, even though for purposes of union with the whole People of God the role of the Vatican and the hierarchy would be more pastoral. That is, the mission of the hierarchy would not be to shepherd the flock to a Vatican centered frame of reference but, instead, to help the faithful deal with the challenges of being responsible for their own journeys of faith in response to God's music played on the human heart. The necessary article of faith is that the in-breaking of the one God – so that love may be “on Earth as it is in Heaven” – is the music, and that dancing to this music is what life is about.

From this perspective – the primacy of the integrity of the journey – the journeys of other communities and other listeners to the music of the heart can be joyfully supported. Learning from the experience of others on journey becomes novel discovery rather than subtle condescension. The stories of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son will bear fruit confirming the wisdom of support for the integrity of the journey.

And the sisters will prevail with the integrity of their mission. TO BE CONTINUED.

Celebration of Rose and Jerry Barrett's Sixtieth Wedding Anniversary on September 9

Thank You Note from Rose and Jerry

We thank everyone who helped with the Liturgy and party celebrating our 60th anniversary, as well as everyone who came that sunny day. We felt blessed by your presence. You made our day!

We also appreciate all the wonderful cards we received.

Thank you! Thank you!



Rose and Jerry introducing visiting family and friends



Fr. Quinn Connors, celebrant



The Barretts enjoying Barbara Formoso's "serenade"



Left to right: Gen, Rose and Clyde

Memorial Celebration of the Life of Mary Chaison

A memorial mass and service was held to celebrate the life of Mary Chaison, a NOVA member and dear friend to those of us who knew her. Seventeen NOVA members attended the service, which was held at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Woburn, Massachusetts on Saturday, September 22. Below are a few pictures from the service: a photo of Mary, Ken Chaison, Ken Himes, OFM, and NOVA singers – Bill Meyer, Victoria Robinson and Tim White.



Mary Chaison
1950 ~ 2002



Socializing at NOVA's Annual Retreat, September 14-16



Relaxing discussion on Friday before dinner



Traditional bonfire and smore-making



Meg, "shushing" group while explaining "Who's Who" in NOVA crossword puzzle game



Team working on solving crossword puzzle



Teddi, John and Nancy enjoy a good laugh



Group practicing a line dance at Saturday night party

Farewell and Welcome



Community blesses Peggy Becker at September 23 liturgy. Peggy left for a new position in New Jersey. She will be missed.



Nancy and Scott Schnier
Nancy has volunteered to help with our fundraising projects.



Alvarez Icaza family: Emilio, Raquel, Guadalupe, Luisa, Jesus

Emilio Álvarez Icaza is the new Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an autonomous organ of the Organization of American States, which promotes and protects human rights in the American hemisphere. The family has just arrived and will be here for four years.



Margaret Kurtz Randall and her son, John

Margaret joined the community this past summer and recently brought her son to a liturgy.