

nova notes

NOVA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

OCTOBER 2013

Chair Notes.....

For the first time since I joined NOVA in 2007, I participated in the community's annual retreat at Shrine Mont over the weekend of September 13-15. What a privilege it was to step away from the pace and stress of the everyday and journey to a place of such beauty and spiritual centeredness. And what a privilege it was to be led in discussion by Joe Nangle and Dolores Leckey. Among the many challenging insights put forward over the weekend, there are a few that I keep coming back to and wish to reflect on here.

"Jesus didn't come to preach about the Church," we were told. "He came to preach about the reign of God." And to understand what the reign of God would look like, Joe referred us to what Jesus talked about with his friends on the night before he died – peace, unity and love. He went on to suggest that we have a responsibility to imagine what a world during the reign of God would look like – concretely. And not because we can expect to get there in our lifetime, but because those images are what should guide us in our day to day.

Rather than an inward looking search for peace and contentment, Joe Nangle espouses an "engaged spirituality." A spirituality that constantly asks, "Where are we in the world? What's happening in that world. What's our response?" NOVA, he suggests, should be a "school of discipleship and a community of discernment." NOVA's "engagement" is extensive. Unburdened by the constraints of a brick and mortar church, it seems we are especially well-suited for the pilgrimage that Joe and Dolores suggest we are traveling.

~ Brian Carome

General Meeting Dates

We are planning ahead to schedule some general meetings over the next few months and want to share the dates for you to put on your calendars now.

At this point we are scheduling them through January and we will start at 5:30 with potluck and meeting beginning by 7 pm. Our meetings will be at Meg Tuccillo's home - 2532 North Ridgeview Rd, Arlington, VA 22207.

Our agendas are not complete so let us know if there are other agenda items to add.

Oct 26 – Follow-up on the communication survey conducted early in 2013

Dec 7 – Community session on consensus process

Jan 25 – Fun night/anniversary celebration!

~ Meg Tuccillo



See Retreat Photos and many more...

@ <http://www.novacommunity.weebly.com>

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DONATIONS FOR PROJECT ESPERANZA

Last spring, NOVA considered for its annual project supporting the building of the Boys' Home and School of Project Esperanza, a registered non-profit supporting the Haitian community in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. Although the project was not selected, many NOVA members have expressed support for the organization's work -- which is to encourage sustainability within the Haitian immigrant community, as well as provide opportunities for education to children. Project Esperanza is now seeking sponsors for students for the school year. \$100 provides a child with uniforms, books, supplies and a daily meal for an entire school year.

To learn more about Project Esperanza, visit esperanzameanshope.org. Katie Matthews and Markie Harwood will also have information and will be collecting donations after liturgy Sept. 29 and Oct. 6. Checks payable to "Project Esperanza."

Thanks for your support.

~ Marie Keefe

NOVA Catholic Community
www.novacommunity.info

NOVA Photos:

<http://www.novacommunity.weebly.com>

NOVA Message Line.....	(703) 852-7907
Chairpersons	Brian Carome Meg Tuccillo
Treasurer	Joseph Formoso
Community Life Coordinator	Marlene Shade
Liturgy Coordinator	Gloria Mog
Padre Cadre Coordinator	John Mooney
Music Coordinator	Victoria Robinson
Peace & Justice Coordinators	Dianne Carroll Marie Keefe
Christ House Coordinator	Kopp Michelotti
Facilities	John Tarrant
Announcements Coordinator	Linda Christie
Directory, Yahoo Group, Webmaster	Ken Chaison
Newsletter Editor	Scott Schnier Ken Chaison
E-mail Address.....	news4nova@gmail.com

The NOVA Catholic Community Invites You To Celebrate The Eucharistic Liturgy With Us on Sundays in Arlington, Virginia.

KENMORE... Winter Months...

Liturgy begins at 10:15 am—Gather at 10:00 am

During the winter months, our Liturgy is usually celebrated at Kenmore Middle School, Arlington Blvd. and Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington, VA.

LACEY WOODS... Summer Months...

Liturgies begin at 9:30 am—Gather at 9:15 am

Beginning Memorial Day Weekend up to our Fall Retreat weekend, we celebrate at Lacey Woods Park, George Mason Drive near Washington Blvd.

The schedule changes for Holidays and special occasions. Please call the Message Line, or check the NOVA website, both mentioned above, for the latest information.

We Remember In Prayer.....

Gloria Mog & Family... especially, Gloria's oldest sister, Joyce, who died suddenly of a heart attack on Sunday morning, Sept. 29, at her home in TN.

Please pray for all those who have been impacted by violence in recent days.

Continue to pray for members of our community who are shut in or in other ways unable to join us physically.

Please pray for those who have mental illness and pray that the stigma of this, that often prevents treatment, is erased.

~ **Marlene Shade**

CHRIST HOUSE

HELP WANTED: EXECUTIVE CHEF

Must do Meatloaf as a *Specialite de Casa*.

NOVA is next scheduled to serve at Christ House on Oct 21. But the Michelotti freezer has taken not-so-early retirement and Kopp has taken this as an omen that it's time for him to retire his toque as well. So NOVA is seeking a new meatloaf meister. Requirements of the job include:

- being able to collect and store 20-25 meatloaves and 10-15 pans of scalloped potatoes for a little over 24 hours;
- being able to go to Christ House early to get these into the ovens;
- being able to organize (ahahahahaha!) the work in the kitchen to get the food on the plates and the plates on the tables.

There is a dedicated core of NOVA workers who prepare and serve on a regular basis and have a good understanding of how it all comes together. (They'll be able to train their new "supervisor.") As for cooking, part of the job is to worry about whether you have enough food. Guess what? You always do! (Or we make it stretch.) The Executive Chef just leaves the coolers out and the food miraculously appears in them.

Kopp would be happy to talk with anyone who's interested in the job. And a very nice, large cooler, donated several years ago by other NOVA'ns who were lightening up, goes along with the funny hat.

NOVA is next scheduled to serve on Oct 21. If we do not find a new head chef by Oct 4, Kopp will inform Christ House that we are giving up this ministry.

~ **Kopp Michelotti**

October Birthdays....

- 2 Tom Ahrens
- 4 Teddi Ahrens
- 5 Ben Brady
- 6 Jack Christie
- Chris Swanberg
- 11 Clyde Christofferson
- Katie Matthews
- 12 Carolyn Miller
- 13 Bill Matthews
- 15 Betsy Marron
- 20 Peggy Becker
- Pat Sodo
- 21 David Mog
- 22 Nancy Veldhuis



Please send your birth date (month & day only) to the Newsletter Editor, news4nova@gmail.com, if you would like it to appear here.

NOVA Members attended Maureen Fiedler's 50th Jubilee celebration as a nun – Sept. 15. Nancy & John Veldhuis, Maureen, John Mooney, Gloria & David Mog



Others in attendance included Tom & Jeanne Clarkson, Bill & Peggy Meyer

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Planners can find Inclusive Readings (Year C) and Music Selections in the NOVA Yahoo Group Files, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/novacomunity/files/>. Sign on with the Yahoo ID you used to enroll. Please give all music selections to the Music Liaison the Sunday before your liturgy and print **65 copies** of the liturgy program.

OCTOBER MUSIC LIAISON
Gloria Mog

NOVEMBER MUSIC LIAISON
LINDA ROSENBERG

October 6 – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Rev. Joe Kenna
Planners: The Christoffersons

October 13 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Joe Nangle, OFM
Planners: Peace & Social Justice Committee

October 20 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: John Haughey, SJ
Planner: Jeanne Clarkson

October 27 – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Bread for the World Sunday

Priest: Gerry Stockhausen, SJ
Planner: Peggy Meyer

November 3 – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Quinn Conners, O.Carm.
Planner: Catherine Loveless

November 10 – 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: Gerry Stockhausen, SJ
Planners: Ted & Carolyn Miller

November 17 – 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: John Haughey, SJ
Planners: Nancy & John Veldhuis

November 24 – Christ the King

Priest: Joe Nangle, OFM
Planner: Ken Chaison

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| October 21 | Christ House (If new Executive Chef is found – see article on page 3) |
| October 26 @ 5:30 pm | General Meeting - Follow-up on the communication survey |
| October 27 | Bread for the World Sunday |
| November 3 @ 5 p.m. | Mark Russell & TEACH |
| November 16 | Holiday Bazaar Benefit for Dreamers |
| November 23 | Hollertown Concert/fundraiser for Dream Project |
| December 7 @ 5:30 pm | General Meeting - Community session on consensus process |
| January 25 @ 5:30 pm | General Meeting - Fun night/anniversary celebration! |
| March 2, 2014 | Men Who Cook fundraiser for Dream Project |

Back to Kenmore September 22.....



GUNSTON VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

NOVA volunteers distribute bags of non-perishable food, cereal provided by NOVA, perishable (eggs, milk, meat, etc) items picked up at the Arlington Food Assistance Center warehouse on the night of distribution and



produce items every other week picked up by Eric Carroll at the produce markets downtown (funded by the NOVA Peace & Justice budget). The distribution takes place at the Gunston Middle School Recreation Center in Arlington. Many volunteers

have been active in this project for a dozen years and others are more recent. All love their work and would love to teach new NOVA folks how it's done. So if you would like to volunteer: send email to Dianne Carroll

diacarroll@comcast.net or call 703-536-2616

~Dianne

A big thanks to all the Gunston faithful volunteers!!

- October 3** Cece, Kopp, Cathy G, Marie K
- October 10** James H, Marie P, Eric
- October 17** Glen, Syd,
- October 24** Tim, Jerry, Raquel
- October 31** Alicia/Jack, Ted/Carolyn

Routine: (usually)

Perishable pickup at AFAC warehouse at 6:00 p.m.
Distribution at Gunston 6:30-7:30
Clean up and return list to AFAC

Note: An activity where the more hands, the merrier.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

NOVA will observe **Bread for the World Sunday** this year at our liturgy on Oct. 27. It is a time to pray for the ministry of BFW and re-dedicate ourselves to on-going advocacy on behalf of hungry people here and throughout the world.

There will not be a time for letter-writing at NOVA that day. I hope many of you continue to send letters, email and phone calls to Congress.

Please pray often for BFW and for Congress.

~ Peggy Meyer

MARK RUSSELL & TEACH

Mark Russell, famed political satirist, is out-of-retirement and performing a benefit show for TEACH on **Sunday, November 3 at 5pm** at the **Annandale Campus of No. Virginia Community College**, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22203.

TEACH is a home-grown local charity based in Burke, VA. Pat and Don Sodo of NOVA have been involved for the 10 years it has helped Mayan children in very rural and poor areas of Guatemala. Many of these children do not have the means to attend school or only attend for a few years. TEACH provides financial support to schools and families so that these youngsters can learn to read, write, do math and have an opportunity for a better life.

Join us in a celebration of TEACH's work and laugh along with Mark Russell. Tickets are \$75.

For more info or to purchase a ticket go to: www.teacham.org and click on the Mark Russell page. Thanks.

~ Don Sodo



"I think that Shrine Mont is that way."

~David Mog

THOSE WHO SING PRAISE

Qui enim cantat laudem, non solum laudat, sed etiam hilariter laudat; qui cantat laudem, non solum cantat, sed et amat eum quem cantat. (For he who sings praise, does not only praise, but also praises with gladness; he that singeth praise, not only sings, but also loves him, of whom he sings.) ~ St. Augustine



Gloria Mog has been singing with the NOVAtones since she joined NOVA in 1983 at the encouragement of Kathy Zinn – who sang with the group before she moved away. Gloria has always loved Church music and heartily embraced the post-Vatican II folk music



movement while attending the Newman Center at UCLA (where she met David). At that time she was still plunking away at the guitar but has since turned that in for drums and other percussion instruments. Gloria was in choral groups all the way through school

including 4 years with the University of Detroit Chorus where they took the “show on the road” several times a year. She loves pairing up with Barb Formoso for the alto harmonies and treasures the camaraderie and real joy that has evolved over the years in making music every Thursday evening and Sunday morning with a terrific group of people.

Tim White joined the NOVA music group in 1982 at the invite of former neighbor, Linda Rosenberg, and thanks his NOVAtone buddies for half a lifetime of loving friendship and music making. His three loves in music are accompanying singers, composing, and



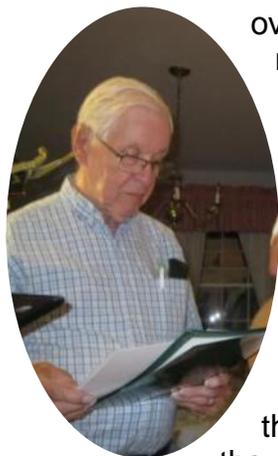
singing with various groupings of friends. Currently, he’s a member of a small singing group called Mini-Musicals on the Move which performs Broadway musicals at senior residences around the area. In recent years, he studied jazz and classical guitar at the Levine School of Music, and enjoys organizing and performing in concerts to benefit charities. Tim has published a book of songs and psalms that he has composed over the years with NOVA. He almost always comes up with a new offering for Advent, Lent and Holy Thursday. NOVAtone friends confirm that his fine Tenor voice is only improved by his second passion in life, drinking good beer.

Jack Christie and Linda discovered NOVA in October of 2008. “After one Mass, I was sold, and I asked Tom Clarkson if they could use another guitar.” Practice conflicted with his prayer group gatherings, so the group agreed to move the weekly gathering to Wednesday so that he could join the NOVAtones. Jack is fairly new to guitar although he has always loved to sing, and loved contemporary worship since it was introduced after Vatican II. After an Emmaus Weekend in 1999, Linda got him a guitar for Christmas and after a couple years he was leading the opening and closing songs for the parish Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee meetings each month. Since 2004 Jack has led the music on an annual



retreat the Christies have participated in for 32 years and he also is part of the Emmaus music ministry at its monthly meetings and on retreat weekends. "Playing with the NOVAtones has been a joy and a growth experience for me. All were very welcoming from the start and have been a joy to work with during the past five years. It has been my mission to introduce newer Contemporary Christian music into the liturgies, especially those that Linda and I plan. The growth has come through learning harmonies and lots of new chords.

Bill Meyer started singing with the NOVAtones in Feb 1976. "Wow! It's hard to believe that was over 37 years ago." He



remembers lots of changes during that time period. At one time Kathy Zinn was leader of the group, then Nancy Chase, Trina Mesher and Dave Coale were the primary members. Carol Dick then came on as a paid leader and song writer. After that there was a slow transition to the group as it now stands and

became known as the NOVAtones. Bill has also been singing since 1995 with the NOVA Community Chorus under the direction of Dr. Mark Whitmire.

Linda Rosenberg had been in charge of music at a parish in Texas and then part of a music group in Chicago before coming to the DC area. She had a BA and MME in music and took over the NOVA Music Group when Carol Dick left in 1981-82. Carol was the only paid musician in the history of NOVA.



"My most remarkable achievement during those times (other than teaching Harold how to sing on pitch...or maybe the Holy Spirit taught him...) was to enlist my good friend and neighbor, Tim White, to come to NOVA. When Linda and Rich went to Costa Rica in 1985, Tim took over the music group. While in Costa Rica, Linda talked enough about NOVA that somehow a few years later the Clarksons found us and Tom came on board. Linda returned from Bolivia in 1994 and a year later when Barb broke her hand and the Group was in need, she volunteered to join again. About this time Ted Miller first used the term NOVAtones and it stuck. By the time Linda rejoined, the 'Tones had become a more democratic group with the various jobs distributed among the members. Linda's major contribution to the group is her skills at the keyboard as well as helping the 'Tones learn new music. *(To be continued next month)*

~ Gloria Mog



AFAC GUNSTON DISTRIBUTION

This Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) food distribution site, Gunston, has been a NOVA project for almost 20 years. We have provided the volunteers to pick up at the warehouse and distribute and more recently have provided money to buy fresh produce for the families twice a month.

AFAC recently has been trying to update photos of volunteers and clients which could be used in a variety of ways, i.e., client stories, fundraising. So Eric spoke to the Gunston clients inviting them to participate – several were interested in having their photo taken and sharing their story about why they receive food at AFAC.

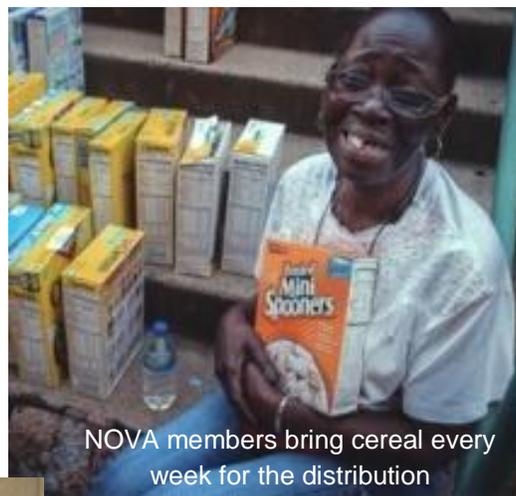


The Thursday that was chosen for the photographer to come to Gunston was the Thursday that the distribution had to be outside the rec center while they were getting ready for school. It turned out to be a lovely night outside! It was also a Thursday that Eric was bringing the fresh produce which the clients helped bag in red mesh bags. Tim White, Cathy Goldschmidt were the



distribution volunteers and Marie Keefe, who speaks Spanish, helped the photographer with the clients who wished to have theirs taken. All clients signed permission for the photos to be used and also each received a photo in a frame a couple weeks later. The photos attached here were also taken by the photographer and I think you will enjoy seeing them. Eric stated that: "All were entranced by the colorful bags and colorful veggies and fruits."

~ **Dianne Carroll**



NOVA members bring cereal every week for the distribution



LA NUEVA ESPERANZA

Look! The walls are going up for the new education and training center of *La Nueva Esperanza* in Ilobasco, El Salvador. Thanks to the terrific fundraising and support of NOVA Community and *Co-Partners of Campesinas*, a pasture and piles of dirt are gradually being transformed into the outline of their new building. The new center will have areas for workshops as well as a kitchen and events space large enough so that the hall can be rented out for local events and produce income for the organization.



New Facility under Construction

Fundraising continues to cover additional expenses, but Archer and Jim Heinzen, *Co-Partners* Board officers, look forward to officially opening the door to the new center this fall. The women plan to begin their workshops in tailoring, computers, and other income-producing skills in their new home before the end of the year, and the local *Co-Partners* "team" look forward to their next trip to Ilobasco, having the summer workshops and children's arts program in this wonderful new space.



La Nueva Esperanza is an organization of rural women from cantons around Ilobasco working for the educational and economic improvement of women and youth. Formed at the same time in 1997, *Co-Partners of Campesinas* is a non-profit organization which supports women's empowerment in El Salvador and Guatemala. For more information, go to www.copartners.org.

~ Teddi Ahrens



Current Facility



Current Facility

The woman is standing in the doorway where *Compensinas* events take place. (The open area is where the "custodian" lives and where the fire originated.)



“A TASTE OF AFRICA”

An Annual Dinner-Awards-Dance Fundraiser

Saturday, October 19, 2013. 8 pm – 1 am.

@ La Fontaine Bleue Ballroom, 7963 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Africa-themed Dinner menu.
- African cultural dance entertainment.
- All-night African dance music.
- Silent auction & promotions.
- Special awards & Tributes
- Keynote address.

EVENT GOALS:

- Raise funds to ship up to seven 40-foot containers of medical supplies and equipment to sub-Saharan African hospitals each year;
- Provide microenterprise funds for up to 250 rural families each year.
- Provide ongoing support to highly creative educational learning centers, for both primary and skills training programs, to benefit up to 500 children and youth each year.
- Support for capacity-building efforts among African immigrants in the U.S.
- NOTE: Direct program implementation is currently ongoing in the DC area and the two West African countries of Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Future efforts will extend to the Congo (DRC), Cameroun, Kenya, etc.

Thank you for your partnership and support!

~ Marie Keefe

For Tickets.....

Contact Marie Keefe.

Save the Date
For Our Annual fundraising event
A Taste of Africa
Saturday October 19, 2013
8:00pm - 1:00am

*A Taste of Africa will be held this year at:
La Fontaine Bleue Catering
7963 Annapolis Road, Lanham, Maryland*

- The goal of "A Taste of Africa" is to continue to raise awareness of the work that Action Africa, Inc does in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in Washington D.C.
- A Taste of Africa will also highlight its "Surround Support" Program
- Proceeds from this event will be used to aid in the delivery of 70 containers of medical supplies each valued at \$500,000 to public hospitals and clinics in need in Sub-Saharan Africa



EVE BIRCH SHELTER

Tom and Teddi Ahrens off to Martinsburg, WV to take food, warm clothes, blankets etc. to Eve Birch who serves many homeless and others who are in need.

Teddi says: "Many, many thanks to everyone who responded to Eve's list of needs this month. Tom and I filled the car almost "to the brim." Eve and her guests send their warm thanks as well."

~Dianne Carroll

2014 SALT PRIORITIES

Social Action Linking Together (SALT) has achieved enormous momentum on most priorities and is hopeful about the next General Assembly session. Success, as always, depends on quality of advocacy from the faith communities.

SALT Priority #1: VA Prisons to Ban Shackling of Pregnant Women – SALT supports the prohibition of shackling pregnant inmates in Virginia’s regional prisons and local jails, in agreement with our successful regulations of the Virginia Department of Correction Shackling practices. This practice violates the dignity of the human person, a foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

SALT Priority #2: Work Sharing: An Employer Tool that Helps Save Jobs and Communities – SALT is in support of Virginia utilizing compensated work sharing, a type of unemployment insurance that enables businesses to avoid layoffs and keep workers on the job by reducing their work hours and providing them with partial unemployment benefits. This action supports the Catholic Social Teaching principles of the “common good”--a just ordering of society so that *all* may do well (*Gaudium et Spes*, #26, 74)—and the dignity of work and the rights of workers.

SALT Priority #3: Inmate Telecommunications Systems - SALT proposes legislation to authorize the State Corporation Commission to determine that the rates for debit or prepaid telephone systems at state correctional facilities are at the lowest available rates for the service in accordance with filed schedules. This goal is consistent with our successful efforts to get the FCC to regulate inter-state rates. This action supports the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the option for the poor and vulnerable, the focus of attention in the story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

SALT Priority #4: SALT is in support of establishing a reasonable, automatic adjustment for inflation each year to be applied to the TANF assistance grant. This action, as the one noted immediately above, supports the Catholic Social

Teaching principle of the option for the poor and vulnerable, the focus of attention in the story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

SALT Priority #5: SALT is in support of a Virginia Back to School Supplies & Clothing Allowance (OperationBackpack) for needy TANF children to prepare for school, ensuring that they will return with confidence fully equipped for learning.

SALT Priority #6: SALT is in support of the proposed FY 2014-15 TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) budget provision rescinding the Federal lifetime ban on TANF welfare benefits for ex-offenders convicted of felony drug crimes. The Federal lifetime ban penalizes children of drug felons for the crimes of their parents. This action, supports the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the option for the poor and vulnerable, the focus of attention in the story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

Find Your Virginia Legislators:

<http://legis.state.va.us/>

~Helen Gettys Michie

SAVE THE DATE!
October 24, 5-7 p.m.
Happy Hour
at
Lauriol Plaza Terrace
 1835 18th St. NW, Washington, DC
Sponsored by Co-Partners of
Campesinas
To benefit the construction of a
training center for women and youth in
Ilobasco, El Salvador

~ Teddi Ahrens

Theology for a Small Planet

A collection of essays by Clyde Christofferson © 2009-2013

[Prior Essays](#)

The New Evangelization: 'Rebuild Our Prodigal Church' – Homeward Bound

The late Pope John XXIII (1959-63) is quoted as giving the following advice: “*Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what is still possible for you to do.*”

The last two essays were an interlude in this series, reflections occasioned by the death of my mother. Yet they related to the present topic, using a fabled story about St. Francis preaching without words.

In the essay before this interlude I asked whether it was too harsh to suggest that the hierarchy has taken its inheritance from God's house and is now finding itself in a sort of wilderness, with the rest of us along for the ride since we are all bound together in this People of God we call Church.

In the parable, the Prodigal Son tires of the wilderness and comes home. What would it mean for the hierarchy to come home? Or, since we are all in this together, what would it mean for the People of God to come home?

The interlude since my mother's death has provided time for hints of an answer to that question. Serendipitously, another Francis -- Pope Francis -- has been giving signs that this is still a Church of surprises. There is a new tone in this Church of ours. It is not ours, really, but you and I -- and sentient children of God across the cosmos -- are possessed by this communion we call Church. As Pope Francis said recently, we do not possess the truth but are possessed by it. This is the Eucharist of our existence: Christ is the truth and we share in that mystery at liturgy every Sunday.

Much has been made of the lengthy interview of Francis published in early September. Planning for the interview began at the Jesuit journal *America* shortly after the election of Francis. After collaboration with *America's* counterpart Jesuit journal in Rome, *Civiltà Cattolica*, final arrangements for the interview were made by the Italian journal's editor in chief, Antonio Spadaro, S.J. The interview included questions submitted by a number of Jesuit journals, whose editors had agreed on this strategy at their meeting in Lisbon in the Spring. The interview extended over three sessions in August and Spadaro's compilation was approved by the Pope prior to publication. The interview was in Italian, but a translation into

English was arranged by *America* and is available on the *America Magazine* [web site](#) (with an expanded Kindle version at [Amazon](#) for \$2.99).

The interview serves as a capstone on changes in tone and emphasis that have gradually become evident in the Pope's remarks since his election a scant six months ago. When a Catholic pope makes regular headlines in the secular press, you know something is afoot. Francis is shifting emphasis from doctrine to mercy, from a focus on the moral issues of abortion and same sex marriage to the compassion of walking with another as they journey.

Regarding homosexuals -- heretofore regarded as subject to an "inherently disordered" condition -- he said on his plane trip back from Brazil in late July, "if they are of good will and in search of God, who am I to judge?" After that he wrote an open "letter to non-believers" in response to questions from an atheist. His letter made the point that since "the mercy of God is limitless for those who turn to him with a sincere and contrite heart, the issue for the unbeliever lies in obeying his or her conscience. There is sin, even for those who have no faith, when conscience is not followed. Listening to and obeying conscience means deciding in the face of what is understood to be good or evil. It is on the basis of this choice that the goodness or evil of our actions is determined."

Yet Francis is content to lay foundations. He is not challenging Church doctrine, but simply putting doctrine in perspective. At the same time that he places homosexuals and atheists in a non-judgmental light he has pointedly maintained that the Church has spoken on abortion and the ordination of women.

Two quotes from his long interview with Italian Jesuit Antonio Spadaro will suffice:

“We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that. But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the

church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time.

“The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church’s pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently. Proclamation in a missionary style focuses [sic] on the essentials, on the necessary things: this is also what fascinates and attracts more, what makes the heart burn, as it did for the disciples at Emmaus. We have to find a new balance; otherwise even the moral edifice of the church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the Gospel. The proposal of the Gospel must be more simple, profound, radiant. It is from this proposition that the moral consequences then flow.”

Francis also talks about the Church in a similar vein. He uses two concepts over and over: journey and dialogue. Quotes from the Spadaro interview are again helpful:

“... the church is the people of God on the journey through history, with joys and sorrows. Thinking with the church, therefore, is my way of being a part of this people. And all the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief, and the people display ... this infallibility in believing, through a supernatural sense of the faith of all the people walking together. This is what I understand today as the ‘thinking with the church’ of which St. Ignatius speaks. When the dialogue among the people and the bishops and the pope goes down this road and is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit. So this thinking with the church does not concern theologians only.

“This is how it is with Mary: If you want to know who she is, you ask theologians; if you want to know how to love her, you have to ask the people. In turn, Mary loved Jesus with the heart of the people, as we read in the Magnificat. We should not even think, therefore, that ‘thinking with the church’ means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church.”

After a brief pause, Pope Francis emphasizes the following point, in order to avoid misunderstandings: *“And, of course, we must be very careful not to think that this [infallibility] of all the faithful I am talking about in the light of Vatican*

II is a form of populism. No; it is the experience of ‘holy mother the hierarchical church,’ as St. Ignatius called it, the church as the people of God, pastors and people together. The church is the totality of God’s people.

In a sense there is nothing new here: the priority of conscience is a very old principle, yet doctrine is alive and well. But the shift in emphasis from doctrine to a sense that pastoral priority should be given to “walking with” those on journey with the church is quite palpable.

There is a further shift in emphasis, at least it seems so to me. Francis seems very comfortable in his own shoes, as if a great burden had been taken from him. The shift from doctrine to mercy has another dimension to it. He is perfectly comfortable with the doctrines of the Church, notwithstanding his pastoral focus. At the same time, he is perfectly comfortable making plain views that those of a doctrinal bent might see as undermining this or that position of the Church.

Is it possible that Francis does not see himself as the legislator of last resort? He is perfectly comfortable because he has a clear idea of the role of pope, as servant of the servants of ... the people of God?

I recall a story about Franklin Delano Roosevelt. During his campaign for President in 1936 a voter came up to him with a list of objectives. He responded, “I want to do these things, but you must make me.”

I can imagine Francis thinking in the same terms: he does not have the power to change Church doctrine, since he is only a son of the Church; if the Church is to change, the people of God must make him do it.

If Francis does indeed embody such a shift, then the recent letter written to him by reformers (www.catholicchurchreform.com) perhaps should be redirected to all the people of God, with courtesy copies to Francis and all the bishops. It is not a perfect letter, but I signed it anyway, on general principles. But the reformers have their work cut out for them.

In any event, these shifts in emphasis prompted by Pope Francis serve as fitting steps of a prodigal journeying toward home. Where do we go from here? I confess that Francis has given me hope for a more universal approach to being church, where all God's children are truly one.

Such enthusiasms can prove to be temporary, but retain their attraction nonetheless. What might a universal church look like? What would hold such a church together, considering a diversity that might include sentient beings across a vast cosmos, not simply the human diversity we see here on Earth?

I have been working on a model along these lines, and the elements of this model will seem

familiar from prior essays. What I might call "theoretical theology" has two principles tied together by the journey that is faith.

TO BE CONTINUED.



<http://www.novacommunity.weebly.com>

Dianne Carroll maintains a NOVA website of outstanding photos and videos, including the recent NOVA Retreat

There are many good photos..... too numerous to include in monthly newsletters.

Please click on the above link and *Enjoy!*

(After opening the Photo Website, click on the links, in white, at the top of the screen to view photos.)

NOVA-ON-THE-BUS

On September 29, a tour of D.C. was led by NOVA member Marie Pinho, who is also a professional DC tour guide. This very special, unique Sunday tour was organized by Marie Pinho and Nancy Veldhuis in support for Educate the Girls, <http://educatethegirls.org/>. Educate the Girls supports the education of girls in Uganda who otherwise would stand very little chance of getting an education.

Photos taken at Frederick Douglass home, Emancipation Memorial & Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park, Clara Barton Museum and National Japanese-American Memorial...



~ Photos by Pat Sodo



Marie Pinho on the Bus



Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, Lincoln Park, Capitol Hill



Statue of Freedom on Capitol dome



Gloria & Nancy serve lunches before the tour



Guide pointing out painting to Eric Robinson - [Wallpaper seen here is emblematic of Douglass as Ambassador to Haiti -Ed]



Park Service Guides at Frederick Douglass home



Nonviolence mural at entrance to Frederick Douglass home



Marie & Jeanne at bookstore, Frederick Douglass home



National Japanese-American Memorial – former internee described her experience during WWII

~ Photos by Dianne Carroll

More photos at <http://www.novacommunity.weebly.com>