

Adelante Juntos



Forward Together

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## Falling in Love with God

I was recently blessed to be at Bishop Robert Barron's talk in Anaheim, California where he gave a very moving presentation entitled *Beauty and Catholicism*. Towards the end of his presentation, he said something that deeply resonated with me: "Read the Gospels as the stories of people falling in love with Jesus; read the Gospels as the stories of people drawn to the splendor of him."

For me, this is a beautiful starting point for Church at its best: A gathering place for us to go and hear love stories, love stories relating the history of how God has wooed those who came before us; to hear the unexpected and difficult journeys our spiritual ancestors were inspired to make out of love for him. I think of Mary Magdalene, a woman who seems to have been living a very disturbed and dark life when she met Jesus and was healed by him. She completely changed the course of her life after having met him. Why? Because her encounter with Jesus transformed her: God had pursued her, and she began living a love story that she embraced all the way to the Cross and beyond. Behind every character in the Gospels is a love story.

And why not imagine that Church, at its best, is a place where we go to share our own God-love stories, and listen to the God-love stories of our community. How wonderful to think that every person sitting in our parish has their own love story to share!

The very essence of the Eucharist is a God-love story, as we encounter a God who wants to touch us and be touched by us, who wants to give everything to us, and to help free us so that we are people who love God enough to give everything back to him.

This sense of church doesn't just happen in the physical parish building, it happens wherever the people of God are gathered. I've been blessed to live in vibrant fcl communities during my short time as a religious sister, where dinner table conversation is often filled with the stories of God at work in our lives, with the stories of God wooing us. I think of Sister Gertrude, a British fcl sister, who would often travel on the red double decker busses in London. At the time I knew her, she was in her 90s with a weak heart and a walker. She'd come back from her Saturday travels, full of news about the man who'd helped her with her walker getting off the bus, the bus driver who'd had a friendly word, or the person at a nearby table who she'd struck up a conversation with. This was a woman who knew that God was still wooing her, and she delighted in every moment of it. And we delighted in hearing her tell us about it.

When Church is at its best, our faith leaders are in love with God. When Church is at its best, our faith leaders understand that the Gospels must be read and proclaimed through the lens of the love story. Why? Because God love stories give us hope, they stir our hearts. They feed us. They give us the energy to go out into the world and be part of the God love stories for those around us.



I would like to end with a poem, written by Pedro Arrupe, a Jesuit General Superior.

### **Falling in Love**

Nothing is more practical than  
finding God,  
that is, falling in love  
in a quite absolute,  
final way.

What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.

It will decide what will get  
you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evenings,  
how you will spend your weekends,  
what you read, who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you  
with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love.

Stay in love.

And it will decide everything.

Attributed to Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

*Michelle Langlois, FCJ*

*(talk given to the Council of Consecrated Women in Edmonton)*



### **“Do Whatever He Tells You” (John 2: 5-6)**

Annie Wesley is making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius at the FCJ Centre in Calgary. A First Nations Cree woman from Ontario, she came to Calgary about five years ago and is an active member of St. Michael parish. She serves as Eucharistic minister one Sunday a month and feels greatly blessed through this ministry. In her 80s now, Annie has time for prolonged prayer. She has grown in her awareness of God’s love for her and of God’s presence and action in her life during these months of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation retreat. She wrote this reflection in the week in which she was praying about how hard it is to take up our cross and follow Jesus. (Madeleine Gregg, FCJ)



### **“Do Whatever He Tells You”**

Powerful words uttered by Mary, the Mother of God.  
A call for a total trust in Jesus.

### **“Do Whatever He tells you.”**

Annie trembled, for “trust” was a foreign word.  
Her world had been shaken at her birth, uprooted to  
live in no man’s land.  
Parents trusted God for her, guided and sheltered her  
from the storm.  
They did “Whatever” God told them.



Annie’s little heart followed the path of fear.  
Fear of God was the norm of her youth.  
She did not understand what it meant to trust.

She was in a place where she prepared to meet a wider world.  
Longlac, Ontario taught her lessons of endurance, patience and courage.  
Rules, discipline taught her to forge on ahead through shyness, and difficult situations.  
Missionaries taught her to pray, sacrifice and obey.

Her heart bled from shame and failure.  
Example from her parent’s faith and her own faith strengthened her.

Parents guided her to holy grounds:

Indian Day school,  
boarding school,  
convent,  
University  
and a teaching career.

Annie ploughed through pain, loneliness, struggles, addictions and a multitude of sins.

God was silently present.  
Forgiveness, faith, love and gratitude became her strength.

She longed for a deeper understanding of the words of our blessed mother.  
“Do whatever He tells you”. Trust Jesus, totally.  
God’s grace and love overshadowed Annie...and fearlessly she continues her journey.

### **“Do Whatever He tells you”**

*By Annie Wesley*





## Friday Night Friends

For thirteen or more years there has been what I feel is Calgary's best party. Held for many years every Friday, in recent years once or twice a month, Friday Night Friends is a community of rich friendship for adults of all special abilities. We eat, we visit, play hockey, pray. It keeps growing but somehow everyone fits into my house! I am thankful to God for these dear friends who have shown me genuine love and acceptance. Of course I am grateful to the friends who have helped with food, preparation and serving over the years. Some Companions in Mission and FCJs have been able to join us on occasion.



Calgary Police SWAT Team with my Friends, March 8, and with my son, David

Mayor Nenshi came too!

*Barb Nicholson, CIM*



It used to be

that when I would wake in the morning

I could with confidence say

“What am ‘I’ going to do?”

That was before the seed

cracked open.

Now Hafiz is certain:

There are two of us housed

in this body,

doing the shopping together in the market and

tickling each other

while fixing the evening’s food.

Now when I awake

all the internal instruments play the same music:

“God, what love-mischief can ‘We’ do

for the world today?”

--by Hafiz

*Submitted by Liz Poilievre fcl*



## Praying with Mom

November 2018-Today I asked my Mom to pray for Doug. I was sitting on one of those unreliable folding chairs edged as close as possible to her big black reclining wheelchair. It was later in the afternoon and I needed to be with someone I loved and trusted. So I picked my demented Mom.

I know Mom had always prayed for others since I understood that people did not have to be wearing their best clothes sitting in a pew to pray. In our house there was a note pad right by the phone to jot down prayer requests. She was the lead of one of the prayer chains. If you called one person, that guaranteed that several people would be storming heaven on your behalf. As I got older I frequently surveyed the names and mysterious notes on the list. "Jo-biopsy Thursday, church-new roof, Helen's son-faith weak, John-drinking." My motives were far from holy. "Guess who is pregnant?" I whispered to my friend at church Girls' Club. Often a name or topic could be crossed off. Did that mean Rhoda was cured or died? Did Bill and Mary recover from their marital problems or get a divorce? While I was ambivalent about the effects of prayer I was frequently its subject: "Laura-shoplifting, Laura-exams, Laura-Muslim boyfriend!!"

Mom's prayer resume is impressive. She went to special seminars, led a prayer group in support of the Billy Graham crusades, and was in demand when people were in hospital. She prayed faithfully for sixty years and kept praying even when things seemed hopeless. But now? She has had dementia for twelve years and needed total care for the last four. She can use words sometimes but they rarely make sense. She has not said my name for the last two years. And here I sit, tears trickling down my face asking her for pray for Doug. "I can't do it Mom. Can you pray that it will go away? I need you to pray, Mom."

Am I crazy? By asking her to pray, I must believe at some level that she can understand me. Has Mom been sitting here for five years waiting for requests for the prayer chain? When staff are feeding her puréed meatballs is she praying for Mildred across the table who can no longer lift her head? Or the health care aid that is frustrated and exhausted after working six shifts in a row? In her soul can Mom understand my desperation? I look into her hazel eyes that are staring elsewhere. "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief".

March 2019-God gave Mom a promotion and she went home to him on March 11th, 2019. I believe her Redeemer lives and so does she.



*Laura Krefting, CIM*





### **What are you reading these days?**

I am sure that you are often asked this question and I am astounded at how many of our Sisters do read inspiring books and articles with titles varying from the deeply spiritual to light-hearted novels with a range in-between. Recently I bought on Amazon, Richard Rohr's latest book, 'The Universal Christ'. Many people I know read Rohr's daily reflections and they often feel transformed by them.

I noticed on the jacket of Rohr's book a comment by Bono. He said" "Rohr sees the Christ everywhere and not just in people. He reminds us that the first incarnation of God is in Creation itself, and he tells us that "God loves things by becoming them." Rohr always has so many gems that he wishes to share with us; it seems that there is always something for anyone who wishes to read what he has to say.

If you are not doing so already, what about taking some time to savour some of Rohr's reflections or maybe even read his latest book? I have a copy that you are welcome to borrow!

*Bonnie Moser FCJ*



### **A Reflective and Exciting Moment**

One of the joys I had during my time in Ireland was to reconnect with my first cousins living in Ireland, most of whom I had not seen in about 30 years or more! Since Joanna and I do not have any nieces or nephews, cousins are our closest family members and as I get older, and since our sister and brother died, cousins have taken on a greater importance in our family picture and life!



During a visit in Shrule, Co. Mayo where my Dad was born, our cousin's wife brought out a copy of the Walsh Family Tree which she is working on at present. She is enjoying looking up the various connections, and wanted us to help her fill in information on the USA relatives - which we could do. She hopes to have the Tree fairly completed before a Walsh Family Reunion which is planned for the summer of 2019 in Mayo.

The Tree begins with our great, great grandparents and as I looked at the rolled out paper with hundreds of names on it, all coming down from the first two, it really struck me in a new way that each person's decisions really impact on the others coming after them! Now, I know this is not a new thought for anyone but somehow, it deepened in me as we went through the different generations, shared stories, and saw how the Tree branched out in so many directions.... Some family branches stayed in Ireland and others emigrated. I have three cousins actually still living on the 'Old Road' where our Dad was born. One actually lives on the land/farm where Dad was born and grew up. Others live in other counties in Ireland. Some emigrated to England, some to America where they settled in different States.

It was something to see on paper how many descendants there are from this one couple who met and decided to marry and stay in Ireland! As I mentioned earlier, it really struck me that as each person made their life decisions... for many various reasons... those decisions meant that many others' lives were also changed! So often I have reflected on and spoken of the fact that each one of us is really important in God's work of on-going creation! But looking at our Family Tree, and reflecting on the impact it had on me, I have a 'deeper knowing' of how true that statement really is for each one of us! And we are all enfolded in God's Love!



*Ann Marie Walsh, FCJ*



## The Incarnation of God's Love

*[Resurrection] signifies:...the world,...life with its imprisonments and tragedies of sorrow and of sin, life with its doubts and unanswered questions, life with its grave mounds and crosses for the dead: a unique enigma, so immense that all answers are silent before it. ... No cultural education, no art, no evolutionary development helps us beyond our sins. We must receive assistance from the ground up. (Threatened by Resurrection by Karl Barth in Bread and Wine, pp298 to 302)*

### Words

our words are but symbols of  
that which we describe and  
when we are describing the  
fading world  
we were born into  
we need to understand  
that we too are fading in  
the same way  
as the world fades  
and when we are describing the  
world that is yet to come we  
are becoming  
part of the reality  
that will be our new Home

So how does God's Love become incarnate in us? God's Love begins to become incarnate when we surrender/submit and allow God's presence to over take and change our selves. i have found the best way for me to do this is to submit to the process of contemplative prayer. The method of contemplative prayer i submit to is Centring Prayer. Now, as i change i find myself learning how to love all that is outside myself—all my neighbours, all of God's creation—while i am learning to love myself. This changing process is the assistance that i need to incarnate Jesus who is God's love. This process is like a rebirth. The decision to submit to contemplative prayer is like that moment of conception when a father's genes are knit together with a mother's genes. The doing of contemplative prayer is like being formed in a mother's womb; then when you are born into a new world you continue to change as you become part of the new Kingdom. This process is best illustrated in the Gospels when Jesus joins two disciples walking the road to Emmaus the day after the his crucifixion.

*Anyone who wants to save his life must lose it. Anyone who loses her life will find it. (Matthew 16:25)*

*Douglas Victor Krefting, CiM*





## **Building Sacred Bridges**

A 'Building Sacred Bridges' Concert, sponsored by the Interfaith Build Project and benefitting Habitat for Humanity, was held at the beautiful Beth Tzedec Temple in Calgary on May 3rd. Donna Marie and Ann Marie attended. It was a beautiful evening of Choral Music performed by choirs of different ages and various faith-traditions. The evening opened with an Invocation offered by the Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese, Most Rev. Greg Kerr-Wilson, followed by a Land Acknowledgement and Welcome Song in the Cree tradition sung by Chantal Chagnon. This was followed by the whole gathering singing "O Canada".

The songs in the two-hour concert were varied –some sacred music such as the solo sung by the Cantor from the Jewish Temple and others amusing such as 'A Place in the Choir' sung by the United Church Leaders and Mass Choir in the 'United in Song Group'. Most unusual and very moving was a mantra played and sung by an accomplished devotional Sikh Musician. Even more inspiring than the wonderful music was the feeling of the whole evening –one of so many differing faith-traditions coming together to do good! The feeling of welcome, joy, friendship and shared excitement was palpable in the gathering of several hundred people in this beautiful Temple.

Three years ago, the Interfaith Build Project began as an ambitious project providing "an opportunity for the Abrahamic faith traditions to express their mutually shared values of hospitality and compassion". The congregations were invited to take part in raising \$1,000,000 to build ten Habitat affordable houses for working families to purchase. The Anglican Archbishop and the Beth Tzedec Temple Rabbi, Shaul Osadchey, agreed to co-chair the Clergy Leadership Team to bolster the fund-raising efforts. The Jewish Rabbi gave a wonderful account of the three-year project and he announced that their goal was successfully reached as a cheque for \$1,000,000 was presented to a representative of Habitat for Humanity by the Rabbi, Anglican Archbishop and Catholic priest, Rev. Adrian Martens, representing Bishop William McGrattan. They spoke very highly of the generosity and co-operation of so many people during the three years, and of their hopes that the efforts will continue. An immigrant family now living in one of the newly constructed homes also spoke of what the opportunity of buying this home has meant to them and how they can peacefully move into the future because of it. They have two children (whose photo was on the cover of the evening's program) who also shared on how wonderful it is for them to have their own rooms in a lovely home!

Over 30 congregations and 500 donors had contributed to the three-year Interfaith Build Project through both manual labor and finances. It was great to be able to be a part of this very special evening!

*Ann Marie Walsh, fcJ*



## The Charism Lives On



The FCJs were involved in Madonna High School in Toronto from 1963 until 1985. In recent years we have made contact with the school and offer two scholarships yearly.

It is encouraging to see how the charism of the FCJs lives on

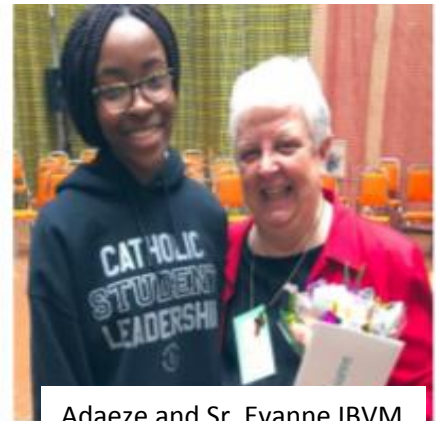
even to this day. Madonna receives such accolades from visitors and dignitaries who visit the school, and reflect this back to the students and teachers.

Two events have come to my attention in recent days. Firstly, a Grade 11 class in the school initiated and led an Interfaith Youth Alliance Movement at the School Board. The event was recorded by Salt and Light TV and can be viewed here:

<https://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=90642>

Secondly, the first young woman to receive the Toronto District Catholic School Board *Sr. Evanne Hunter Award for Young Women in Leadership* is a Madonna student, Adaeze Mbalaja, who came to Canada from Nigeria just a few years ago. Sr. Evanne IBVM wrote: *"She won it over a formidable Loretto Abbey girl and two others who made it to the last round. I just love her!!"*

About the award: <https://bit.ly/2VNVhqq>



Adaeze and Sr. Evanne IBVM

*Lois Anne Bordowitz fcJ*







## **FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE'S MIGRANT WORKERS WELCOME PROGRAM**

The FCJ Refugee Centre's Anti-Human Trafficking Program has been at the forefront of the work done on human trafficking in Toronto and surrounding areas. We have held numerous forums during the past few years, and it has always been our viewpoint to include all forms of trafficking, not only the sex trade. The FCJ Refugee Centre realized that currently, there is a lack of services, settlement and/or legal, available to migrant workers who are exploited or at risk. To respond to this, the Centre has launched the ***Migrant Workers Welcome Program***, with three main goals:

- 1)** to prevent instances of labour exploitation by informing migrant workers about labour and immigration laws, policies and available community supports;
- 2)** to identify at-risk or potential labour exploitation cases with the support of peers, and offer holistic case management support services;
- 3)** to collect information about the extent of labour exploitation as well as the complex experiences of migrant workers exploited within the spectrum.

Most specifically this project aims to outline the spectrum within which migrant workers are exploited, and complexities of their unique needs and support which will reflect future policy development.

Below is an example of a labour exploitation situation recently discovered in Ontario:

### ***Migrant workers from Mexico in Wasaga Beach/Barrie, ON, Victims of Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation***

Up to 60 migrant workers from Mexico were caught in a network of labour exploitation in Wasaga Beach/Barrie, Ontario. Forty-three workers were directly removed from the trafficking situation by the police.

A recruiter from a temporary employment agency used her connections in Mexico to advertise jobs, legal documents and a better future in Canada.

The temporary agency's connections approached poor people in isolated neighborhoods in Mexico and promised they would earn a lot of money and have better living and working conditions if they came to Canada. They were told they needed to pay between 25 to 60 thousand Mexican pesos for the application process, in addition to paying for their own flight to Canada.

Once they arrived in Canada, they discovered squalid living conditions (up to 28 people living in a house), each person required to pay \$400 rent, a \$17 daily fee to be put on a job waiting list as cleaners, as well as other costs.



The workers realized they had been misinformed about the nature of the job, the hours, pay, job role, type of services, work and living conditions that were described by recruiters in Mexico.

In addition to the 43 migrant workers removed from their labour trafficking situations by the police, 14 other migrants approached the FCJ Refugee Centre and other organizations such as Legal Assistance of Windsor to disclose similar situations. However, these 14 left or escaped the trafficking situation before the police investigation happened.

More workers recruited by the same temporary employment agency continue to come out from underground living conditions. However, some remain underground because they are afraid of being deported back to Mexico, where they may face dangerous situations for not having paid back costly loans they took to cover fees imposed by their traffickers.

**Approach pursued:** After several months of police investigation, and collaborative grassroots intervention, dialogue was established with authorities to ensure the case was followed with a human rights holistic approach.

The workers were then interviewed by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Later, the authorities in coordination with the grassroots organization, presented the workers to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The workers were granted Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs), Open Work Permits, and Interim Federal Health coverage. Now, if they wish, they can make an application for permanent residence under Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds.

*Luis Alberto Mata  
Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Workers Program Coordinator  
And CiM in formation*





## A Joyful Surprise

On my journey back to Calgary from my time in Ireland, I had the opportunity of visiting St. Philomena School in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. It is always a joy for me to have time there (where I spent 26 years of my life) and to experience anew the wonderful spirit that pervades the campus! As well as seeing the New England FCJs, enjoying the various events that were going on in school, and sharing with present teachers and pupils, I also met a number of past pupils! One evening, the Maher Family (a former school family) invited me to go to their home where the family was gathering for a Sunday evening Family Supper. The parents, Cathy and Jim, have four children, two of whom are married with two grandchildren born within the past year. It was a joy to be with them and to hear some of their memories of St. Phil's days as well as to catch up on their present lives and to meet the beautiful little children who are so dearly loved.



I brought 4 copies of the little FCJ Reflection Booklet (stones on the cover) and as I gave it to the four of them, I said, "You remember who Marie Madeleine is, don't you?" Just about in unison, they said, "O yes, Gigi" and began to sing the refrain of the Gigi song that, when they were students, they learned in Music classes, and sang twice each year at the Prayer Services held to celebrate Marie Madeleine on her September birthday and again around April 5<sup>th</sup>. I was really touched by this: seeing these young men and women, now in their late 20s and 30s, recalling so quickly this song learned so many years ago! What a wonderful experience for me to see them so happy to recall it and so joyful in singing it again! It reminded me of the impact repetition has on all of us and how important ritual is in the life of children. We never really know what impact the things we share with others has on them!



*Ann Marie Walsh, FCJ*





## **In Memory of the Newest Tamil Martyrs**

For several years, our parish shared its premises with our neighbouring Tamil parish, Our Lady of Good Health. Even though our services were independent of one another, we often overlapped, and, on occasion, we attended one another's events. Because our children are so precious to all of us, one of the events was First Holy Communion for the Tamil little ones. I still vividly remember the procession of the boys and girls in their white dresses and white suits. The beauty of the contrast of their white outfits against their saucer-like dark eyes; glossy black hair and beautiful ebony skin was awe inspiring---a picture that Da Vinci, himself, would have been proud to have painted.

When I read that among those killed in the Sri Lanka Easter bombings was a group of children making their First Communion, like the rest of humanity, I was bereft with horror and sadness. My natural instincts were to pray for their souls, but on reflection, I realized that if any souls were ready for heaven, it was theirs.

When such horrific events occur, to assuage our collective grief, we, as a society, often join together to honour the value of the lives lost, through "acts of remembrance." My thoughts were of Marie Madeleine and how much she valued and provided for the youth of her time. Let us ask her intercession with Our Lord to provide comfort and consolation for the friends/family who survived the bombings. And may we, FCJ's/CIM's, commit ourselves to remembering the souls of these Tamil children, by adding them to our perpetual prayer list.

"Eternal rest grant unto their souls, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon them."

*Tomi Tarasuk, CIM  
Islington, Ontario*

*{Note: Readers may like to google "Interfaith 'Ring of Peace' Formed around Tamil Church"}*





## Live Film Concerto

On Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, Denise and I had the opportunity to attend “The Rescue”, a live film concerto at Temple B’Nai Tikvah. This unique event experience combined a 70-minute documentary with a live musical performance of its soundtrack.

The event recounted the little-known story of Colonel José Arturo Castellanos, the Salvadoran diplomat recognized as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. This ground-breaking film-concerto concept was developed by filmmakers Alvaro and Boris Castellanos, grandsons of Colonel Castellanos. This emotionally engaging and uplifting method of telling their grandfather’s story has become a powerful tool for Holocaust education and commemoration.

The Live Film-Concerto has been performed in Germany, Argentina, Chile, Panama, Costa Rica, Canada and China. In Germany the film was presented at the former seat of the Nazi Reich Bank and at the Topographie des Terrors Museum – the former Nazi SS and Gestapo headquarters in Berlin. The live musical performance was directed by Boris and Alvaro Castellanos (who play piano and bass respectively), along with a Latin chamber music and Latin Jazz sextet.

It was a privilege to be there and to be in the audience with a number of Holocaust survivors from the Calgary Jewish Community. If this event ever comes to your area, it is an opportunity not to be missed.

*Ger Curran, FCJ, and Denise De Neve, Director of FCJ Christian Life Centre*

