

THAW!

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EDITORIAL

This journal takes up the work of our previous publication, which Brother Lyndon began a couple of years ago, but must now surrender.

I've made changes. First, it will be published monthly starting June 1. Second, it will be published on the Internet at the Highland Shepherd website, freely offered by Canon Jim Irvine of the diocese of Fredericton. Paper copies will be sent to Canadian Franciscans not on the internet. Third, I have made some decisions without consulting you in order to demonstrate what we might look like. Fourth, the journal is "of" Canadian Anglican Franciscans, not "for" Canadian Anglican Franciscans. "Of" means that your contributions will be welcome. I retain editorial freedom to change (with consultation) or eliminate material sent to me. But I will seek advice from Lyndon and the author, before doing anything drastic.

Who we are. "Canadian" means that we will seek symbols, metaphors, for the Franciscan life which come from our experience in this great, northern land. The word "Thaw" is an example. It suggests the physical reality of our Canadian experience. It also suggests the effect of Franciscan life on the soul; or I should say, of the Risen Christ on the Franciscan soul ready and willing to accept Him. "Anglican" means that we will concern ourselves with experience in the Anglican Church of Canada. And "Franciscan" means, well... you know that already. I take "Living with the Principles of the Third Order" as a good basis.

All of the above is fit for discussion in these pages. Turn it all into questions and send me your answers! Nothing is written in stone. For

instance, we will have a contest to choose the name for the journal. In the meantime, warm up, relax, melt, THAW!

"THINKING FAITHFULLY ABOUT SEX AND MARRIAGE" A Step Towards Unity and Inclusion

Fr. Jamie Howison has written a paper (titled above) for the Primate's Theological Commission, of which he is a member. You can download the document, (11 pages) from the Anglican Church website, or contact the Anglican Book Centre to see if there's a printed copy available. The paper breaks new ground and opens the door to much more material about sex; it legitimizes descriptions of our sexual experience.

Fr. Howison writes: "In a very real sense, both liturgical voices are deficient, (the 1662 Prayer Book and the BAS), for neither is able to tell the whole truth. What is required is a liturgy that can speak of marriage and sexuality in a more complete and truthful manner, and for that to occur we need to revisit and reinvigorate our theology of sex; we (and here I mean the whole laos and not just the members of a theological commission..) need a theology that pushes beyond both the liberal/conservative impass and the entirely deficient sexual ideologies of our popular culture. We require a critical theology of sex that will equip us to begin to live with this powerful thing that is our sexual desire. We need something akin to a celebratory holiness, which might give us a fighting chance to indwell our own desires in all of their power and ambivalence".

Dogwood Fellowship – Report from August 2005

The Western Convocation is held every other year at beautiful St Andrews retreat house owned by the Diocese of Olympia, Washington. The house is perched on a hill overlooking the Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains .

This year's theme was Making Room. Making Room in our lives for God, making room for the important things, making room to hear God's voice, and making room for those who for one reason or another we exclude from our lives.

Five members of the Dogwood Fellowship from Vancouver attended this year. We were joined by many of the members of the St Clair fellowship who were our hosts. Also attending were several Franciscans from California and one from Florida.

We begin to gather Friday Afternoon after 4:00 pm and settle in our rooms as assigned and then meet for Dinner followed by Evening Eucharist this year Celebrated by The Rt. Rev. Nedi Rivera Bishop of Olympia. We were honoured to have her celebrate.

The leader of this year's convocation was Br. Robert Hugh SSF from San Damiano friary in California. His reflections at each service of Eucharist were

wonderful. The message was Christ's message and Francis's message. It is one of open arms inclusive of all. Welcoming sinners and inviting them in to share the meal of the bread and the wine. Making room for everyone sharing what we have with the poor and the outcast. Visiting the sick of body and mind and sharing with them the new life that is among us. We came away from the experience renewed and refreshed.

We shared meals together sitting at table with different groups at each meal so that new friendships could be formed.

Morning begins early with Contemplative prayer in the chapel from 6:00am to 7:30.

Morning Prayer was from 6:00 to 7:30 followed by breakfast.

After breakfast we had a morning session of discussion from 9:30 to 11:30

Mid-day Prayer was from 11:30-12:00

Lunch was from 12:30 to 1:30 and then a rest or walk or we just sat and quietly enjoying the amazing beauty of God's creation.

The afternoon session began at 4:30 with Eucharist and Professions and Novicings and Renewals. Our own Carol Salmela was Professed at Convocation. We were so happy for her.

Dinner was at 6:00

After dinner was a party hosted by St Clair fellowship, It included their invention of Franciscan Jeopardy. Much fun and loads of laughter continued as the wine and deserts of various biblical origins were invented for us to taste and taste we did.

The evening was over too soon. Compline was said and we all fell quietly into bed.

Sunday was another sunny day beginning with prayer followed by breakfast

Packing up is the next chore and then we gather for Eucharist and much singing,

A fabulous Brunch followed and then we all said good-by for another year. Attending convocation is such a great joy. You make new friends and have questions answered especially for those in formation, and share your spiritual journey. Best of all you get to worship with your Franciscan brothers and sisters and sing and pray together.

Dogwood Fellowship has several new members now 3 are professed one is nearly professed and three are postulants. We also have occasional inquirers. We meet Bi-monthly and share Communion and always discuss one of the formation documents. We also watch Franciscan videos occasionally.

kindest Regards

Marilynn Mincey sect. Dogwood Fellowship

Creator of all,
You gave us golden fields of wheat,

Whose many grains we have gathered
And made into this one bread.
So may your Church be gathered
From the ends of the earth
Into your kingdom.

(BAS, *The Breaking of the Bread*, page 212)

“SPIRITUALITY” NOT A WORTHY GOAL

Rolf Pedersen, TSSF

One feature of being immersed in what many scholars allege are the last days of Christendom is that we commonly hear people speak more about their “spirituality” than they do about their Christianity. Many, in fact, even speak of spirituality as an alternative to traditional religious observances, as in “I am not religious; I am spiritual.”

Many Franciscans -- and I may be unfairly projecting a personal weakness here -- may be guilty of this very thing. In these days of growing ecological awareness, we are surrounded by spiritual brothers and sisters who seek to invade the realm of the divine by bypassing conventional religion, perhaps also conventional ethics.

It's difficult for some of us not to join those who rail against today's insular corporate model of “organized religion” because the early Franciscans railed against the dominant forms of churchmanship of their time. Whether it was corruption, complacency or paralysis, much of the church in Francis's day was exhausted. It was in survival mode. It seemed to have completely lost its capacity and its inspiration to preach the Good News of Christ crucified in any meaningful way to those who needed it most. In the same spirit, Canadian Franciscans today rightly tend to be wary of transplanted European church forms and divisions, particularly when the need to convey the gospel message convincingly to a new world has never been more urgent. The temptation to strike out on our own individual searches for spirituality is always before us.

Yet, reformer though he was, Francis knew that “spirituality” alone was not a worthy goal. The proper task of the Christian (or Jew or Muslim) is rather to seek holiness, to walk the bridge between the profane and the holy and to see the world in all its manifestations as God's creation and therefore imbued with God's presence. It is to help transform what is broken; to turn the potential for unity with God and all

creation into the actual.

Moreover, Francis knew that, however close he may have felt to God and to God's creatures, he could not discharge these responsibilities on his own. He needed to work in community -- and so do we. Francis, like Jesus, needed others to be himself.

Spirituality, as understood by many of its critics and some of its exponents, puts the emphasis on the individual. In some of its extreme forms it aims to annihilate the human dimension as we know it. It can turn into a form of suicide. Holiness, on the other hand, affirms life in the here and now, seeks community, avoids narcissism and aims at altruism.

Communities based on holiness consequently see their task as caring for all, whether or not they are members. But is this enough? Probably not. Holy communities today must also be charged with a healthy dose of spirituality to help them see beyond the natural and the reasonable to fathom something of the mystery of the Other. We need, as the church in Francis's day needed, both a spiritually-charged holiness and a holiness-charged spirituality. Our task, as Canadian Franciscans in these last/first days, is to seek both holiness and spirituality.