

# THAW!

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Of/for Canadian Anglican and Ecumenical Franciscans

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**The Highland Shepherd**

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## HOST: THE HIGHLAND SHEPHERD

A unique, Christian site, featuring many resources for individuals and for parish study and action. Not without humour! A creation of Canon Jim Irvine, of the Diocese of Fredericton. Cruise the site; it's useful, edifying, fun, original, surprising!

## EDITORIAL EXCUSE

The April edition of "Thaw!" is being thrown together with more than the usual abandon because I have been busy with the dying of my mother-in-law, age just short of 101 years. She has Franciscan links, by Providence more than by intention. The story follows below.

The night of her dying, our sky was filled with waves of "green fire" rolling up from the east and clouds of light going on and off, which we took to be a sign for us. I have put a poem about it in this issue.

There is also a review of an article in *Biblica*, (online) by Andreas Hock with the wonderful title, "Christ is the Parade" – an analysis of 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 and Colossians 2:15b; a timely insight on a Palm Sunday theme. It shows how Paul thought of us all being in Christ's triumphal procession.

Father Weir Shivering's cause is receiving so much public attention these days, (not because of his appearance in the pages of "Thaw!"), that he has decided to play it cool, (sorry for the pun) and send us nothing about the melting ice cap. His concerns have been swamped (!) by the attentions of Messrs. Dion, Harper, Layton and Ms. May. He says that the hot air in Ottawa is doing nothing to help the situation.

Aboriginal concerns grip the Franciscan conscience so we find here an article on "Apology or Apologia", written by Frankie Paxbon.

Finally, a set of lyrics for a tune celebrating 6 years of Anglican Lutheran union, and published at "The Highland Shepherd" can be found herein.

## THE HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, MILESTONE, SK

In the 1930's during the blight on the Canadian prairies, one of the efforts of Anglican clergy to turn the world around, was the formation of the House of the Good Shepherd in Milestone Saskatchewan. The actual residence was rented from Billy and Tottie Bradley; their town house. They lived also a few miles out of town at the farm home. Ellen Waight, my mother-in-law, was their youngest child.

The spearhead of this movement to redeem the prairies with a strong dose of Anglo-Catholicism, was a priest named Father Frank Smye. In his time he was well known across Canada. For he was a magnetic person, with a charismatic manner of preaching and speaking and he was full of ardor for the Lord. Fr. Smye used to grace the Lenten circuit of noon-day speakers and could always be counted on by local sponsors to fill the Church to overflowing. He could mesmerize a whole congregation while speaking to an unknown being out the window beside the pulpit, never looking at the hundreds hanging on his every word. I never missed the whole week of his noon-day sermons at All Saints' Cathedral, Edmonton.

At Milestone, clergy and students came to join him at the mission, some being students from as far away as General Seminary in New York.

Now it came to pass, that the brothers and fathers did not consider their efforts to have been acknowledged by divine approval until they could demonstrate a genuine miracle having occurred in their ministry at the House of the Good Shepherd. And so they watched the members of their several congregations carefully, in hopes of a divine sign. Their interest was especially directed to Mrs. McGillicutty (*let us say*), who showed two of the three attributes of sainthood. She was devout and loved the Church. She was a serving person. (An altar guild member who washed and ironed the purificators perfectly). But she had not been associated with a healing or miracle. Until...

One bitterly cold evening, the mercury at 40 below, one of the priests came bursting into the House of the Good Shepherd in great excitement! "I have seen it! I have seen it! The miracle!" Everybody crowded around. "Tell us, tell us! they cried.

"Well," he said. "I saw Mrs. M come out of her back door in her nightie and she made it to the outhouse without so much as touching the ground!"

That was enough. The fathers and brothers were elated. God had indeed smiled on their mission.

Like other Franciscan initiatives on the prairies, and especially in the diocese of Qu'Appelle, the mission faded away.

In later years, to everyone's surprise, Fr. Smye married; ending his days as the rector of St. Anne's Toronto, a Church known to love theatre.

## DEPARTURE

Waves of green fire come up the sky  
from the east  
rising rapidly one after another, sudden,  
urgent;  
and large clouds of light go on and off.  
The cosmos is responding to a self  
ascending.

A communication -  
"This is a glimpse, our side  
of your little death."

Behind - a fixed look  
determined to see and know  
the depth of things,  
refusing now to be distracted by tears  
and little consolations,  
"Did she see me?"  
"Does she not know me even now?"  
but unmoved.  
And so she departs leaving behind  
her truth,  
her inner strength in full view.

## APOLOGY OR APOLOGIA ?

At the time of writing there is a mild issue about the Prime Minister making an apology to the aboriginal people who attended a Residential School. Advocates quote statements by former deputy ministers, long gone, exposing a motive behind the schools of cultural genocide. The thinking was, among some: "Go to our schools, forget your native language, learn English, be trained for a job, (servile) and disappear!" Others did not share this cultural abuse. Many Anglican teachers and W.A. members who sent hundreds of hampers, thought they were doing something good for aboriginal children; something like getting an education. It was paternalistic, for sure. That was the distortion of the day.

To date, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has not been swayed to offer the apology to the tens of thousands who attended the schools, some of whom were driven to drink by the experience; a few others were propelled to University and law or theological degrees.

For all the effort and billions of dollars expended by Canadians to remedy the plight of native people, not much seems to have happened. We read of moldy houses, unsafe drinking water, alcoholism, high suicide rates among teenagers, obesity and diabetes far in excess of stats for the rest of Canadians. So we come not to "Apology" but to "Apologia". We want to know why this has happened, or not happened. What has gone wrong? What are the reasons? What's the apologia?

Part of the answer has been studied by John Ibbitson, a columnist for the Globe and Mail. He urges governments and citizens to concentrate on one of the many ills and curses influencing native communities. The issue of his choice is, guess what, education. The drop-out rate of high school students from school on reserves is so high that Mr. Ibbitson advises kids to flee to the cities, where their chances of success are better.

A revamped educational system on the reserves could be best provided he suggests, by provincial authorities and systems, who are experienced in providing education, (where the Federal government is not). One problem, identified by Minister Nault, of the Chretien government, is the council of chiefs who, on the grounds of autonomous "nationhood" are as yet unwilling to delegate powers (and money) to a provincial agency.

So the reasons for persistent ill in native communities are complex. This is my view. The apologia is required more than the apology. Saying you are sorry is relatively easy. But a consensus as to what exactly is the problem – and therefore the remedy – is more difficult. We need more apologia and less apology.

## "CHRIST IS THE PARADE"

Andreas Hock

Thinking of Palm Sunday, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, we recall that His intention was to contrast his kingship with that of the secular rulers. Here is Andreas Hock's description of that Roman Triumphus, the victor's procession.

"At the head of a Roman Triumphus, (as it was called), an ostentatious pageant, came the magistrates and the senate, who were followed by trumpeters and some spoils of war. Then came the flute players ahead of white oxen to be sacrificed in the temples, along with some representative captives from the conquered territory, including such dignitaries as the king, driven in chains in front of the ornate chariot of the general, the "triumphator", (the one honoured by the triumph) who wore the garb of Jupiter and carried a scepter in his left hand. A slave held a crown over his head, whispering into his ear, "*memento te hominem*", ("Remember you are human"). The victorious army followed shouting "*Io triumphe*", (Hail, triumphant one!") As the procession ascended the Capitoline Hill, some of the leading captives, (usually royal figures or the tallest and strongest of the conquered warriors), were taken aside into the nearby prisons and executed. Sacrifices were offered upon arrival at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Twofold was the purpose of the triumph; to thank the gods who had guaranteed the victory and to glorify the valor of the triumphator".

In comparison Andreas examine two Pauline statements about the triumphal procession in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:14 and Colossians 2:15. The former reads (in the Oxford Study Bible, Revised English Version)

"But thanks be to God who continually leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread abroad the fragrance of the knowledge of himself".

And the latter:

"There he disarmed the cosmic powers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them leading them as captives in his triumphal procession".

Putting them together, and reading Paul's mind we come up with a procession like this: the magistrates and senators are displaced by the apostles and evangelists who precede the general who is Christ. He is followed by the army of angels who, as principalities and powers, have become obedient to Christ.

But the greatest Pauline transformation of the triumphant procession is that we all are "in Christ". As the branches are in the vine or the members in the body. Being in

Christ means that we too are in the parade. Indeed, Christ is the Parade and we are in Him, as it were, walking the walk of Christ to the cross and beyond – to the resurrection!

Christ being the Parade and we being 'in Him' introduces us to two of the greatest mysteries of our lives as Christians. First, we do walk "in him" to his future: the upper room, the garden, the arrest and unjust trial, the via dolorosa, the cross and the Easter tomb.

In another sense, being in Christ's Parade means that we are walking into our own time: the time of Iraq, of Baghdad, of Afghanistan. The time of your own relationships of dark and grey. In Christ you are walking into these times and relationships as if to the cross and tomb, as if to sacrifice and triumph. In Christ we will walk into forgiveness, healing, joy and love. You are in His Parade and He is in yours. But not as captives. We are more converts than captives. We are willingly "in Christ". The parade includes the whole Body of Christ. It is blocks long: it is miles long. It is teeming with disciples who, in their time have walked the walk and talked the talk.

May our walks be understood as triumphal procession, Christ's Parade which is their true nature.

### **We Are Trinity**

*(from The Highland Shepherd)*

[Tune: Nettleton – 354 Common Praise]

Make thanksgiving to the One God  
in Three Persons unified;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
(in) perfect charity abide.

*Trinity's love is overflowing  
calling creation by the Word.  
Joyfully the Spirit's blowing  
through the hearts of those who've heard.*

We belong with one another  
bound into God's unity  
we are sister, we are brother  
in the Holy One in Three

*Trinity's love is...*

Counted righteous by God's mercy  
justified by faith alone

we can boast in God's forgiveness  
in Christ Jesus who atones  
*Trinity's love is...*

Martin Luther knew the blessing  
of the wondrous Crucified.  
Word within the word, confessing;  
for their insight, Cranmer died  
*Trinity's love is...*

If we're creatures of God's making  
we must share what heaven gives  
and be stewards, not forsaking  
the well-being of all who live  
*Trinity's love is...*