“Do this... Remember me”

A 50-year Spiritan journey
Appreciating God’s gift of creation
Jesus and the Samaritan woman
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A time for every purpose

Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp

A courageous retirement from a role long seen as lasting ‘until death do us part’ has opened up our church leadership like no other event in centuries. Pope Benedict’s resignation as Pope has handed future Popes the opportunity to give of their best and then know when to say, “enough is enough.”

We have seen a change in personality from Benedict to Francis. We have also seen a change in priorities. We await a change in leadership style. Not necessarily changing right to wrong, or wrong to right — but certainly seeing things differently and beginning to do things differently, in addition to doing different things.

From the thousands gathered in St Peter’s Square Pope Francis asked a favour: “Please bless me before I bless you — I need all the blessings I can get.” Then he bowed to receive their blessing. The next day, he stopped to pay his hotel bill on the way back to the Vatican from Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica. The next week he went to prison: “I wash and kiss your feet — male and female, Christian and Muslim, Italian and foreigner.” A truly “catholic” Pope.

Will he make all things new? That is unlikely and unwanted. But he has already begun to do some new things: eating with others rather than all by himself; as Bishop of Rome he speaks publicly only in Italian. He has moved out of his private Papal quarters and uses rooms closer to where other people work and reside.

And further down the road? Revitalizing existing procedures — perhaps revising some practices — and removing some people past their Best Before? Are we in for a time of renewal — under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

‘To Live is to change’

Words of Cardinal Newman come to mind: “In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.” A church needs to change so as to remain true to itself. Living beings are not the same as they were twenty or forty years ago — look at any photo album.

Go with the flow then? No. Go with a glow? Yes: “a brightness in complexion, a sense of happiness or wellbeing.”

A Pope from Argentina — a fresh face — an overdue acknowledgement that Europe no longer ‘rules the roost’. “At the beginning of the last century, only a quarter of the world’s Catholics lived outside Europe; today only a quarter live in Europe,” wrote German Cardinal Walter Kasper.

We have adopted the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible in our liturgies; surely we can welcome a new revised way of being Pope too? Why not continue what Pope John XXIII reportedly said when asked why the Second Vatican II Council was needed: “I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in.”

Changing churchgoers

Over the centuries ours has been a changing Canadian church: our founding fathers and mothers came from France; they were joined by emigrants from Ireland and Ukraine. Then after World War II came boatloads from Italy. More recent arrivals are from the Philippines (about 80% of whom are Roman Catholics), Central and South America and various African countries. Due to the impact of Asian, African and Latin American immigrants we have become “a post-European Canadian Catholic Church” according to Fr Terrence Fay S.J.

Churches are closing, parishes are amalgamating, Catholic schools are few or many depending on provincial educational policies. But a visit to any Catholic school in southern Ontario is an opportunity to meet the world in miniature. In a way he didn’t foresee, James Joyce’s definition becomes visible: “Catholic means ‘Here comes everybody.’”

The future of the Catholic Church lies outside Europe. A Pope from Argentina may well be the right person, from the right place, at the right time.
St Joseph’s celebrates Pentecost

Photos by Frank Taylor

Pam Canham, recipient of the 2013 Libermann Award.
Don’t resist the Holy Spirit

Pope Francis

The Holy Spirit pushes people and the Church forward, but we resist this and do not want to change.

The Holy Spirit upsets us because it moves us, it makes us walk, it pushes the Church forward. (But) we wish to calm down the Holy Spirit, we want to tame it and this is wrong.

The Holy Spirit is the strength of God, the strength to go forward, but many find this upsetting and prefer the comfort of the familiar.

Nowadays, everybody seems happy about the presence of the Holy Spirit, but it’s not really the case and there still is that temptation to resist it.

The Second Vatican Council was a beautiful work of the Holy Spirit, but (50 years later) have we done everything the Holy Spirit was asking us to do during the Council? The answer is ‘No.’ We celebrate this anniversary; we put up a monument, but we don’t want it to upset us. We don’t want to change and what’s more there are those who wish to turn the clock back. This is stubbornness and wanting to tame the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit pushes us to take a more evangelical path, but we resist this. Submit to the Holy Spirit, which comes from within us and makes us go forward along the path of holiness.

*Homily at Mass, April 16, 2013*
As we all know, the Church in our day is in critical need of inspiration and enlightenment and that this must come from the Holy Spirit.

I want to start with a prayer, a kind of responsorial psalm and your response is, “Come Holy Spirit and show us what is true.”

In a world of great wealth where many go hungry and fortunes are won and lost by trading in money...

R. Come Holy Spirit and show us what is true.

In a world of easy communication where words leak between continents and we always want a picture to illustrate each item of the news...

R. Come Holy Spirit and show us what is true.

In a Church that speaks a thousand accents divided over doctrine, creed and ministry, more anxious for itself than for the gospel...

R. Come Holy Spirit and show us what is true.

And in a Church touched by the flame of Pentecost may it move to generous sacrifice and costly love, interpreting the will of God with new insight...
Every single priest-presider completes the consecration with these words: “Do this in memory of me.” Certainly at this particular point in the Eucharistic liturgy, it applies to the consecration, to the consecrated bread and wine.

When they gathered in the upper room, it was the feast of the Passover which for the Jewish people down to our own day is a feast of remembering. So Jesus and his apostles gathered to celebrate the feast of the Passover and to celebrate his first Mass. Jesus is asking to be remembered. He’s trying to ensure that he doesn’t get forgotten. He says, basically, if you remember me then you’ll remember who you are. If you don’t remember me, you won’t remember who you are, or what you’re about and you won’t know why. So the first real issue is that Jesus is asking to be remembered. He wants his memory to last through generations.

The opposite of remembering is forgetting: if you don’t remember, you forget. And if you don’t remember there’s a great danger you might dismember. How many of us remember our grandparents? How many of us remember our great grandparents? And how many of us remember our great, great grandparents? What is going to happen, of course, is that over the generations there’s not going to be anybody left who actually remembers. And the first thing that Jesus wants to do is to be remembered by somebody. Then the question is, where is the memory? It might be in photographs. It might be in poetry. It might be in all kinds of things. But the memory needs to be kept alive.

Ancestor veneration
This reminds me of societies all over the world that have enormous respect for the ancestors. One of the major issues about ancestor veneration is that it keeps alive people who are dead. So when you gather together for an ancestor veneration or an ancestor ceremony there are a couple of different things that happen. One of them is that you call out the names of the people you can remember. And the oldest people, maybe, have the furthest back memories. So, all kinds of names will come up. And many of the young people won’t remember some of the people that the old people remember. But when their names are articulated people will say, “Okay I don’t actually remember that person but I know that somebody does. So, I remember because they remember.”

Then when all the people who are present have remembered all the people that they remember, what happens to the people that none of them remember? So there’s a kind of a prayer that goes up and it essentially is, “and for all those whom we now cannot remember we remember them too.” And we have that in our liturgy for those who have gone before us marked with a sign of faith. So what we do in our liturgy is we remember the living and we remember the dead.

In societies that have ancestor veneration, they know that the community is composed of the unborn and the living and the dead. And there needs to be a connection between the unborn and the dead. The connector is the living. The job of the living is to keep in mind the people who have gone before, marked with a sign of faith, and to try and live the way they lived. And then to bring on the next generation, the generation that is unborn, so that they come into the same family and they learn the values and the virtues from those who have gone before.

The Last Supper
So, the idea is that if I am one of the living, I am receiving from those who have gone before me and I’m transmitting to those who are going to come after me. And then we try to remember who we are as a people, as a nation, as a tribe. And we remember who we are by virtue of remembering where we came from, whom we are descended from. And that’s what Jesus is asking to be remembered. He says, basically, if you remember me then you’ll remember who you are.

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So, what he’s going to do is he’s going to recapitulate his whole life. He’s got them for one last time and they’re very, very slow these guys. They’ve not been learning very well at all. And Jesus is going to go through his life and say to them, “Okay, do you remember this? Do you remember when I called you, Peter and James, and John and Thomas and Matthew? Do you remember what you were doing? Do you remember what it’s been like since? Do you remember why things have changed so much in the few years, the few months since I’ve known you? Because I’ve been trying to teach you something and trying to show you something and I want you to do this. And remember me when you do it. Don’t do your own thing. Do what I’ve shown you. Do what I’ve taught you. Do what I’ve commanded you to do.” Jesus said, “Don’t eat yet. I’ve got something else to say to you. Do you remember this? Do you remember that?”

So I can think of Jesus at the Last Supper saying, “James and John and Peter, do you remember when I took you up the
moutain for the Transfiguration when you were so slow to understand? Do you remember a long time before that when the Holy Spirit came down at my baptism and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Beloved Son?” And they’ll go, “Yeah, yeah. Yeah we remember that.” And Jesus will say, “No, no you don’t. The voice then said, ‘This is my Beloved Son. Listen to him.’ Why? Because you hadn’t been listening. You hadn’t been listening. I want you to listen. I want you to remember.”

**Remembering**

Jesus has recapitulated his life in order to forge a memory, the memory of what Jesus showed and what Jesus taught them. And that way, if they remember who Jesus was they will remember what discipleship is. Discipleship is not just doing something for Jesus or doing something for God. It is God doing something for us and calling us to do not just what we want to do. And the only way that we can do what God is calling us to do is to remember, to remember who God is for us. To remem-

In the world today there are more than 40,000 denominations, all of whom call themselves Christians. This is the body of Christ dismembered.

So, one of the things that Jesus is doing the night before he dies is saying, “Don’t let this happen. I pray, Father, that they will be one, you in me and I in them. And that they always will be one and not dismembered.” So he’s trying to call them together to be all part of one body and not separated, scattered to the four winds. Holy Thursday, the Last Supper, is this recapitulation of his whole life so that days and weeks after the death and resurrection of Jesus they’ll be able to say, “Remember that night? Remember that last supper before he died? Remember how powerful that was? Remember how that made us know who we were and, therefore, who we are to be now. Then let’s do this again, periodically. Let’s gather around the table again. Let’s tell the stories again. Let’s read the stories. Let’s remember the life of Jesus and then we can do this in memory of him.”

Jesus is recapitulating his whole life so that our lives can be a recapitulation of his life. The question is how do we, two thousand years later, remember? We remember in two kinds of ways. We remember through the Eucharistic Sacrament. And we remember through the Eucharistic Thanksgiving. So, we’ve got two words: Sacrament and Thanksgiving.

The people to whom Jesus’ command applies is not just the Twelve, not just those in the room for the Last Supper. It is to anybody who will come after — all those who are embraced by God’s call.

**We become dismembered**

Failure to remember is forgetting. Failing to remember will lead to dismembering. And Jesus is concerned that very soon after his death they will go in so many different directions. They will run away. They will be scattered. They will be dismembered. And there’s only one thing that will bring them back and that’s the memory of Jesus.

So what happens throughout the history of the Christian church and the Christian experience is that for a variety of reasons people scatter. People go away. People say, “I can’t take this anymore. This is driving me crazy.” And we become dismembered.

**Hear, listen, use your ear**

And God’s call goes right back to the very beginning of the Israelites, the Hebrew people, who were called to observe the commandments of God. The call is the Great Shema, the great rallying call of Deuteronomy. It starts with, “Hear O Israel. Listen O Israel. Use your ear.” The defining characteristic for the ancient Israelites was having ears. That’s all it meant. This Shema was an appeal to their ears, to anybody with ears, to come and listen. And then they could go and do holy things.

So, “Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart. You shall repeat them to your children and say them over to them, whether at rest in your home or walking, or lying down, or rising. You shall fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as headband. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Talk about remembering. That’s how you remember. You talk about it. You tell it. You repeat it. You write it. You fasten it around your arm. You fasten it around your head. It’s very difficult to forget if you do all of those things. We too are left with this call, “Hear O Israel” — pay attention.

The only way that we can do what God is calling us to do is to remember, to remember who God is for us. To remember who Jesus is for us. To remember what Jesus has taught us. To remember what we have learned and what we have failed to learn.
Parable of the Sower

Many years later, Jesus comes along, to people who have not listened, to people who have forgotten, to people who don’t know who they are. And Jesus starts again with the same appeal: “Listen, you people.” When Jesus starts his public life the first parable that he gives in Matthew’s gospel is the Parable of the Sower. This parable is all about listening. Jesus is trying to explain to people that if only they would listen they would know what to do. And if they knew what to do, then they could go and continue to do holy things. But the people don’t listen. They said to Jesus, “So why do you tell them parables?” And he said, “Well some of them just want to be entertained. Some of them just want to hear a story.” And he said, “The problem is that some people have ears but they don’t listen.” So he said, “They have shut their eyes for fear that they should see with their eyes or hear with their ears or understand with their heart or be converted and healed by me. But blessed are you,” he says, “because your eyes see and your ears hear.”

Now this is the very beginning of his public life where he’s kind of flattering them a little bit saying you’re good, you’re listening. But from then onwards it’s quite clear they’re not listening and they’re not good. And so they have to constantly come back and say, “Excuse me, what did you mean? What did you mean?”

We all know that the parable of the Sower is something that’s pretty self-evident. It doesn’t need a whole lot of explanation. Jesus has just told them this parable and told them that they are privileged people and therefore, they obviously, understand it. Yet they say, “Excuse me. Could you please explain the parable to us just one more time?” So Jesus, very patiently, goes back and explains the parable. He does so five times! “Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen; ear, ear, ear; hear, hear, hear.”

“When anyone hears the word without understanding it, the evil one comes and carries it off. The one who hears the word and welcomes it with joy is the one who receives it on patches of rock where it cannot take root. The one who receives it in thorns is the one who hears the word but the worries of the world and the lure of riches choke it and he produces nothing. But the one who receives the seed in rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it; the one who yields a harvest now a hundred fold, now sixty, now thirty.”

So, what Jesus is doing is calling people to listen to his words, to watch his actions and then they’ll know how to do this in memory of him, the whole lot of it. ■

Part Two of Fr Gittins’ Mission talk will appear in the Summer 2012 issue of Spiritan.
Twists and turns in a Spiritan journey

Bernard Kelly CSSp

1952 was the year that the Big Bang Theory for the creation of the universe was first propounded. In 1952 I was working in a Quantity Surveyor’s office in Leinster Street, Dublin, looking out over Trinity College. Life was good, playing rugby on the weekend, making friends, going to dances. But I was restless, vaguely dissatisfied. I was missing something. God seemed to want to get my attention. The message was vague, a bit like Cardinal Newman described it: “God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me, which He has not committed to another. I have my mission — I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.”

This God dimension, the Call, changed things. I was no longer struggling with a career decision, but with the answer to a call. I decided to go to the Spiritan novitiate and there things became more firm. I liked the Spiritans and I wanted to live and work with them.

Canada

After ordination and finishing theology, I came to Canada in 1963. My brief experience of teaching at Neil McNeil: happiness and exhaustion. At St. Augustine’s Seminary: pressure, both from teaching and some responsibilities in formation. 1969 — doctoral Studies at the Institut Catholique, Paris, a great experience. Subsequent work in formation was rewarding, but a struggle. I adopted a whole new concept of the Call, of vocation — thanks especially to the Lay Spiritans and VICS volunteers.

1980 — Papua New Guinea: two theoretical truths became firm convictions: 1) the Holy Spirit precedes the missionary; 2) it is in evangelizing that we ourselves are evangelized.

1981 — Provincial: nine years in administration. My debt to Mike Doyle, my predecessor — Organization — Structure … There were great moments. Tough moments too.

Dermot Doran and I were living together on Sunrise Avenue. Some evenings he would return to find me pacing the living room puffing away furiously. He would sum up the situation quickly and work to bring about some calm. Most often he succeeded. And he managed this without ever invoking John of the Cross, or The Little Flower…! He had his own methods.

I had to take a break

I remember one incident during this time when I was really down: everything seemed to be going wrong. We decided that I had to take a break, and I found peace, unexpectedly, in Nova Scotia. Ever since we had a housekeeper from Inverness at Hambly Avenue I had wanted to go to Nova Scotia. So there was this musician singing a song called
Come by the Hills. He was nothing special — he had a guitar, some electronic accompaniment and an average voice. What struck me was the last stanza of his song:

*Come by the hills, to a land where legends remain,*
*Where stories of old fill the heart and may yet come again,*
*Where the past has been lost and the future has still to be won,*
*But the cares of tomorrow must wait till this day is done.*

Maybe it was the biblical echo: “sufficient for the day”; or the contrast between different moments in the story … whatever …
Anyway I returned to Toronto refreshed.

**Fiftieth anniversary of ordination**

There have been lots of twists and turns on the journey. There is a definite sense that I don’t know where I am going. I love Thomas Merton’s prayer:

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.*
*I do not see the road ahead of me.*
*I cannot know for certain where it will end.*
*Nor do I really know myself*  
*And the fact that I think I am following your will*  
*Does not mean that I am actually doing so.*  
*But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you …*  
*I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.*  
*I will not fear, for you are ever with me,*  
*And you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

**A time to give thanks**

I have made some plans and I have chosen a prayer. It is taken from David Kaufmann’s musical arrangement of the Magnificat:

*Behold, behold, the Mighty One has done great things for me*  
*Behold, behold, the Mighty One has done great things for me*  
*And holy is your Name*  
*And holy is your Name*  
*My soul exalts you, behold my Lord*  
*Whose mercy lies on me.*

We celebrate a young man, Claude Poullart des Places, who founded our Congregation that is over 300 years old, who died at the age of 30 and whose creative act involved leaving the security of living with the Jesuits and going to live with the poor students that he had gathered around him.

Leaving the security of familiar living arrangements may sound an echo for us. May the Holy Spirit help us be creative in our time.

**Letting Go**

*Sometimes we want the new beginning without the old ending. We find it very difficult to “let go.”*

*You must let go of where you’ve been — whether it is turning 21, 40 or 65; whether it’s losing your health or your hair, your looks or your lustiness, your money or your memory, your love or a possession you prize. You have to move on. You have to die and rise.*

*Walter Burghardt SJ*
Human beings and our environment

“The document invites human beings to a stance of wonder before the created world. This profound wonder is what can motivate us to care properly for the environment, and it also points us to God’s presence in creation.”

Bishop Donald Bolen, Saskatoon

More attention will be given to the natural environment — appreciating it as God’s gift. We are determined to protect the environment by a more respectful relationship with the whole of nature, keeping in mind that natural resources are limited and that we need to recycle all that can be recycled.

Spiritan General Chapter, Bagamoyo, Tanzania 2013
Humans are creatures made in God’s image
Human beings are creatures — we are not God. We recognize that creation comes to us as a gift from God. Unique among creatures, we are created in God’s image, and therefore bear an inestimable dignity.

Creation has an Intrinsic Order
Because of their privileged position in creation, human beings must recognize their responsibility to be guardians of this creation, and to ensure the proper balance of the ecosystems they depend on.

The Dignity of the Human Person, the Common Good and Nature
Human beings recognize that the environment does not belong to them, but is a gift entrusted to them which demands responsibility in action. They discern the role granted to them from God by exercising their intelligence and ethical judgment.

Humanity’s place in Creation
Human beings have received the task of giving thanks for nature and caring for it. As stewards, human beings recognize that the environment does not belong to them, but is a gift entrusted to them which demands responsibility in action.

Care for the environment is a moral issue
Because of the place of human beings in nature, care for the environment is never only an economic or technological issue; it is above all a moral one. The destruction of the environment ... is ultimately caused by a lack of Gospel values.

Solidarity
Solidarity with respect to the environment is based on the requirements of justice and the common good, which is understood to extend not only between those living, but forward, to those not yet born.

Creation and Spirituality
The wondrous beauty of creation ought to lead us to recognize within it the artistry of our Creator and to give him praise. The created world ... can lift our minds to God.

Conclusion
It is our duty to encourage and support all efforts made to protect God’s creation, and to bequeath to future generations a world in which they will be able to live.

May the Lord grant to Catholics and to all people of good will the virtue of hope, so that we will not lose heart as we strive to safeguard our environment.
Jesus came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

“I come for fresh water because I get thirsty. I also need running water for washing dishes, washing dirty clothes, cleaning floors and cooking. My bucket gets empty and I get thirsty. Even if I haven’t used up all of yesterday’s water, it gets stale and undrinkable. I need fresh water — fresh running water. Sometimes it’s just my routine — I avoid the other women and their gossiping. They look down their noses at me — I’m on my fifth husband. One way or another — I need fresh water every day.

“There’s a man there today — sitting by the well in the noonday sun. ‘Give me a drink,’ he asks. He isn’t a Samaritan. What is a lonely Jew doing in our area — a thirsty Jew who needs me, a woman of Samaria, to get him a drink? On his own he has no way of drawing water. Anyway, drawing water is women’s work.

“I suppose he arrived too late for the other women to give him a drink and now he is hoping against hope that a latecomer might make her way to the well.”

John, the gospel author, is at his double-meaning best: a Jew and a Samaritan, a woman and a man, a two-layer conversation full of hidden allusions.

The introductory paragraphs to the New Evangelization document start with this Jacob’s well story in Samaria. An outreach to today’s drawers of water, washers of clothes, preparers of meals is a very good place to start — out there where women (and some men) spend most of their time — out there where the lonely and the shunned get through their daily chores — out there where you go for a bucket of water … and come face to face with the water of life.

Think Catholic Church leadership and you think all-male. Think Catholic Church membership and you think vast majority female. Where would Jesus be without his mother, Mary of Nazareth? Where would the risen Jesus be without his faithful follower, Mary of Magdala? Who stood at the foot of the cross on Good Friday? His mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene — four women and
one man, the apostle John. Four women for every man — things haven’t changed.

**Jesus and Samaritans**

Back to the well. The woman and the tired and thirsty traveler talk theology. We might label it a conversation about salvation history — the role of the Samaritans, the “no contact” rule preventing Jews and Samaritans from meeting and greeting. What a scandal it was in Luke’s gospel when Jesus told his parable about the “good” Samaritan. In the eyes of chief priests and teachers of the Law there were no good Samaritans. A Samaritan was the social equivalent of a leper back then: “unclean, unclean.” Yet Jesus chose one of them to illustrate what a real neighbour was like.

We didn’t learn gospel stories in religion class — we learned answers to questions in catechism class. One such question was, “Who is my neighbour?” Answer: “My neighbour is all mankind of every description, without any exception of persons, even those who injure us or differ from us in religion.” I grew up with Protestants as next-door neighbours. My one-true-Catholic Church mother could never quite work out how good these neighbours were: “They’re wonderful people,” she would say … “for Protestants.”

Woman and man at Jacob’s Well in Samaria slaked each other’s thirst. Jesus broke through the social mores of how Jews and Samaritans should relate; he sat with her, answered her questions, made her feel that it was all right to sit and talk religion in public, in broad daylight. She went back to her village and told everyone about this man she had met at the well. “This man? What man? A traveling Samaritan?” “No. A thirsty Jew who badly needed a drink of water and who told me everything I wanted to know. You must come and meet him.”

A strange story to introduce a document on The New Evangelization. Yet it highlights this new evangelization, at its best, breaking down differences and distinctions, stopping for one-on-one conversations, answering questions, engaging in friendly debates and returning home with a story, “You’ll never guess who I met at the well this morning, what we talked about, what I asked and he answered, what he already knew about me.” He? Yes — he. Man and woman sitting and talking in public against all the customs and conventions of that time and place.

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**A call for dialogue**

The New Evangelization goes back a long way. At its best, in a non-religious society, it revives our faith. It restores long hidden, even buried aspects of human life, it engages in dialogue not in top down teaching, like Jesus it is willing to stretch the rules — man and woman alone in conversation, Jew and Samaritan sitting side by side, man needing woman to give him a drink (some things never change, do they?), God as the God of all groups, both sexes, former enemies, chance encounters. Believers become witnesses and then missionaries to their own people.

A necessary beginning is dealing with and asking one’s own questions. The issues are not so much in textbooks as in life. A conversation is far more likely to be of use than giving someone a book to “look it up.”

Be converted — and then, only then, think of converting others. How many of us are “converts”? How many have never felt the need to be converted from this or that way of life? How often, or perhaps how seldom, does our church, as such, feel it needs to be converted? Yet in the eyes of many our ways, our sense of self-importance cry out for change.
We have a new Pope and it would appear from his initial approach he has no fear of doing things differently, of converting the role of Pope from top-down to in-and-among, shepherd-like care: live among, listen to, learn from, seek advice, roll over, “I am among you as one who serves.”

The weaknesses of the disciples drag down the credibility of the mission. Church after church has testified to this. One need only think of the Irish church in recent decades.

The Acts of the Apostles and ourselves
Through the Easter season Masses we have been reading the Acts of the Apostles. Paul and Barnabas, then Paul by himself, went from attempt to attempt in their efforts to promote the Christian way. They got mixed results, but they kept on going — a success here, a rejection there, back to Jerusalem to give an account of their ministry, their successes and failures, their insistence that this new movement did not have to be a Jewish-only movement.

Gradually they won the approval of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. To be a follower of the Way, one did not need to be converted to Jewish ritual and observances. Do our newly-thriving Catholic churches have to become as Roman as the Romans themselves? Does our inherited way have to be fully imitated by every new member when, in reality, a more catholic approach would work better? We live the ongoing paradox of being “Roman Catholics”. We don’t always find it easy to be both.

Jesus wasn’t a Roman Catholic. Will our ongoing challenge be to reconcile these two ‘contradictions’? Will we rediscover ways by which individuals and groups can come close to Jesus and his ways without losing their own individuality.

Our western Catholic Church is an aging church. Young people are not attracted to it in any significant numbers. How can we channel their enthusiasm?

Inter-religious dialogue contributes to peace and greater understanding and promotes respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

Each continent has its own particular contribution, its own particular challenge. Africa is a meeting place of old and newly imported cultures. North America continues to welcome immigrants and refugees. South America has given us our new Pope and faces various issues of poverty, religious pluralism and occasional violence. Europe — for so many centuries the cradle of Christianity — seems to have abandoned its Christian inheritance. Asia, on the other hand, has relatively few Christians. But their number is increasing.

On Good Friday the disciples were convinced that all was lost. It was the end of a foolish dream. In hiding, they waited, they prayed, they supported each other, they retreated. They must have felt like giving up. Then it happened — his spirit, the Holy Spirit, filled the entire house like the rush of a violent wind. A tongue, as of fire, rested on each of them. Wind and fire — and no insurance! Who cares?

People from all over the world were in town and they must proclaim God’s deeds of power to all of them — in their own languages. Out they went — from their hiding place into the market place. Not to the temple, not to the nearest synagogue, but into the streets. A new evangelization had begun.

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A Conversation at Calvary

“Centurion, were you at the killing of that teacher today?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Tell me about his death.”

“The people were mocking him at first, and he prayed God to forgive them.”

“Was he suffering much?”

“No, sir. He wasn’t a strong man. The scourging must have nearly killed him. I thought he was dead by noon, and then suddenly he began to sing in a loud voice that he was giving back his spirit to God … He believed he was God, they say.”

“Do you believe it?”

“We saw a fine young fellow, sir; not past middle age. And he was all alone. When we were done with him, he was a poor broken-down thing, dead on the cross.”

“Do you think he is dead?”

“No, sir. I don’t.”

“Then where is he?”

“Let loose in the world, sir.”

The Trial of Jesus, John Masefield

The Difference Easter Made

He was a Jew before that, knowing only the Jewish culture. He didn’t think that knowing all the cultures of the world like God knew them was something to cling to. He knew his own.

On Easter Sunday his Jewish friends didn’t want to let him go; they wanted to hang on to him. But he was no longer just a Jew. He was no longer just a male. What good would that be to half the human race? He was a universal human being, a complete human being.

Like Mary Magdalene, we too want to hold on to him, but we must let him rise from the dead. We must let him go to the Father so that he can send out his Spirit on all humankind, not just on us.

Vincent Donovan CSSp

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Vincent Donovan CSSp
food for thought

I am a Catholic writer because this very notion … so astonishes me that I can’t help but bring it to every story I tell. What makes me a Catholic writer is that the faith I profess contends that out of love — love — for such troubled, flawed, struggling human beings, the Creator became flesh so that we, every one of us, would not perish.

Alice MacDermott

Jesus tells us in the Gospel that we will be known by the fruits of our work. We can talk a good game, but people will know who we are by what we do.

Jeffrey Duaime CSSp

Pope Francis says you must go out to the fringe of life and see what is going on. You should not wait for the world to come to you. He doesn’t see the poor as people he can help. But rather as people from whom he can learn. He believes the poor are closer to God than the rest of us; they have a very personal experience of him.

Fr Guillermo Marco, Press spokesman for the then Bishop Bergoglio

God comes through the human — and we don’t like that. We like God to come as our idea of God.

Ruth Burrows (Sister Rachel, Carmelite)

When we serve and help others, our generosity leaves traces in our personality which can be a factor in our future decisions. These traces of generosity leave their mark on the personality of givers, which remain with them as they live out their beliefs. Thus, giving does not simply affect the recipient, but also affects the person who gives.

Mark and Louise Zwick
When we started out in Kolofata, Africa was further away than it is now. Electricity and running water, to say nothing of telephones and television, were distant dreams. The single squat structure that we used as a hospital sported crumbling cement floors, metal shutters for windows, and a roof that leaked rivers.

We sterilized instruments in boiling water over the flame of a kerosene stove. At night we worked by lantern light. Water we trucked in or hauled uphill from the river. Depending on what was needed, I was doctor, ambulance driver, counselor, laboratory technician, midwife, nurse, orderly, pharmacist, burner of garbage and sweeper of floors.

Much is much better now. Assuming all the stars are rightly aligned, we have electricity and running water, cellular phones and limited but adequate internet. We have a beautiful hospital with 12 sturdy pavilions, 120 beds, and enough nurses, lab techs, midwives and ancillary staff that I can stick for the most part to doctoring and keeping all the different pieces working as one.

We treat over a hundred patients a day in Kolofata; administer thousands of vaccinations a month; deliver babies; feed orphans; care for malnourished children; teach students, patients, aspiring nurses, doctors-in-training and each other; support the development of schools and the digging of wells; sponsor teachers, students and women’s groups; and nothing, absolutely nothing, we do is done without your help.

**Crises and epidemics**

The hospital knows no stillness, except perhaps of the kind found in the eye of a storm. Crises — dozens of them at any given time — have a way of swirling around us cyclone-like, and often it seems that we no sooner get one under control than two more blow in to take its place. Epidemics are either raging or not far from the horizon. In a town with no electricians, mechanics or plumbers, electrical, mechanical and plumbing parts act up or break down with exasperating regularity. Over one shoulder we keep an eye out for the next drought, famine or flood, and over the other for the next outburst of violence sending us victims from across the border. Even in the absence of an epidemic or other catastrophe, patients tumble in non-stop.

**Baby Rebecca**

Not always, but often enough, wonderful things happen. One Sunday evening I had just lifted my stethoscope from my neck and was closing my office to head home when a middle-aged woman in a faded and torn cotton dress rushed in, cradling a puny baby in her arms. She was hunched over it, and the little body emitted a rasping wheeze with every breath. The mother’s eyes reached out, grappling like hooks, as she raised the child towards me and pleaded, “Tata-ni — martine!”, “My baby — please!”

The baby’s name was Rebecca, and she was 11 months old. She had a temperature of 104 and a chest that heaved and flailed in a way that made her fight against pneumonia look all but over. Her lips and nail beds were blue, her limbs flaccid, her eyes fixed in a sightless stare. I took the child from her mother, hugged her to me and ran from my office, out the front door of our waiting room and down the dusty incline to our post-partum ward, the only place outside the operating theatre where we have oxygen.

**Six-year-old Algadi**

But the oxygen machine was already being used by a 6-year-old shepherd, a fatherless boy named Algadi, who had been brought in earlier that day with cerebral malaria, convulsions, a deep coma, and a temperature of 106. From the time he arrived, Algadi had not been expected to live, not with a body that hot and a coma that deep. He had not died yet though.
so we had poured bowlfuls of water over his body to cool it down and injected quinine and glucose into his blood stream. We had inserted a nasogastric tube and put him on oxygen, and now, seven hours later, he was, astonishingly, still holding on. I checked his oxygen saturation and reckoned it safe to borrow his machine for Rebecca until we could lug the other machine over from the surgery.

**Fifteen-year-old Hadidja**

In an adjacent bed lay Hadidja, a fifteen-year-old girl who had been bitten on the leg by a snake, a carpet viper, several days earlier. Carpet viper venom prevents a victim’s blood from clotting while simultaneously easing apart the cells that make up the walls of the body’s capillaries. So blood seeps spontaneously from vessels, in addition to leaking from the slightest bruise or scrape new or old anywhere, and because the blood does not clot, the bleeding does not stop.

Hadidja was from Nigeria, and after she was bitten, her family dragged her from hospital to hospital for four days in search of a cure, and all the while her life was slowly oozing out of her. They finally landed on our doorstep late one evening.

By this time Hadidja’s right leg, the bitten one, was twice its normal size and black from internal bleeding. She was bleeding copiously from gums and from a tiny scratch on her left forearm, and she had lost so much blood she was unconscious. Her breaths came infrequently and in deep laboured sighs. Within minutes we had oxygen pouring into her lungs and then fresh blood and antivenin into her veins. She clung to life. She survived the night and by morning she had regained consciousness. The days passed and here she was now, mostly out of danger and watching us intently. We did not know yet if the snake-bitten leg could be saved.

**Tiomodok and Kadi**

There were only two real post-partum patients in the post-partum ward, both women who had arrived the night before in obstructed labour and delivered finally by vacuum extraction.

Tiomodok was 17 years old. Her first baby had been born dead at home a year earlier. Without help she would have lost this child as well for she was small and the baby was big and he was well and truly stuck. Combining forces, we managed to unstick him and get him out. He was born a bruiser, but a bruiser who stubbornly refused to breathe on his own — until an hour or so later he at last understood that his stubbornness was nothing compared to ours.

Next to Tiomodok was Kadi, at 30 years old already a dowager, mother of eight children, four of whom had survived infancy. She should have been able to deliver this ninth baby with relative ease, but trouble unexpectedly intervened and her baby, like Tiomodok’s, had been going nowhere until we attached a vacuum to his head and pulled him out. He emerged kicking and screaming — two signs we take as a neonate’s way of saying thanks.

And now both women Tiomodok and Kadi, lay quietly on their beds, their newborns nestled against them, as across the room Rebecca, the feverish cyanotic eleven-month-old with raging pneumonia, battled to stay alive.

**Night and day nursing back to life**

I did not think she had a chance. She had been sick too long, her lungs were stiff, her heart was overwhelmed, her brain exhausted. Children are made of miracles, though, and with the right nudge here and there, it is amazing how often they beat the odds. We nursed Rebecca all night, and the next morning she was still alive. The morning after that she was too, and by the third day she was smiling.

Algadi, the comatose shepherd boy with cerebral malaria, did fine as well, though it took him longer. After three days he awoke from his coma. A couple of days later he was able to sit again, then to stand with help, finally to walk a wobbly, drunken sort of walk, gesticulating wildly and shouting incoherently as he did. Eventually he was well enough to go home, and at a follow-up visit two weeks later, it was with pure delight that I found him to be wholly recovered, in every way perfect.

Hadidja, the snakebite victim who had had that massively swollen, blackened leg, also got better and went home, walking on her own all the way.

**“Enough, Lord!”**

Our days and our nights are filled to the brim with people like these and stories like theirs. The challenges in Kolofata are endless, the endings are not always happy. There are times when we, like people the world over, think Elijah had it about endless, the endings are not always happy. There are times when we, like people the world over, think Elijah had it about right when he threw up his hands, cried “Enough, Lord!”, then lay down under a tree and fell asleep.

But I suspect that in Kolofata we have it easier than most, for here it takes so little — the whimper of the next suffering child, the joyful tears of the next relieved mother, the clenched clasped hands of the next distraught father — to remind us that when Christ sacrificed everything for us, the only thing he asked in return was that we walk in the way of love. This we try to do.

The path he set us on is neither straight nor smooth, there are no shortcuts, and sometimes despite our best efforts we find ourselves doubling back and doubling back again. But it is a road along which wonderful things do happen.
Katie Flaherty introduced us to a personal walking reflection on the first evening. After about twenty steps under her guidance, many of us had gone round in circles, some arrived where we started, others had criss-crossed the room, sometimes backwards, sometimes forward, often-times sideways.

Katie’s sharing of her personal journey set the tone for the weekend. We spent our time in prayer, reflection, social interaction, personal sharing and discussion on the theme of journey as individuals, as groups and as provinces.

Fr. Pierre Jubinville
First Assistant, Spiritan General Council, Rome

The central consensus of last year’s Bagamoyo Chapter was the importance of “animation” i.e. acting to produce the desired change; literally, breathing life into something. This includes ongoing formation; going back to the roots of who we are as religious and missionaries; our self identity as an ongoing process; the role of superiors as animators, not just administrators; shared community life and the missionary project seen as a means of animation and formation. Community life is crucially important and doesn’t happen without ‘roof – table – prayer’: live together, eat together, pray together. Special emphasis must be placed on mission as “cross-dimensional”, a give and take approach involving Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. We cannot leave this to our experts; it is meant to include and involve every Spiritan. Inter-religious dialogue is replacing ‘go and tell’, ‘go and convert’. Education takes place in formal and informal settings. There has been a heightened awareness of the demographic and cultural diversity of the Congregation and the growing importance of African Spiritans, with their own diversity.

Various forms of fragility were recognized, including withdrawal from difficult missions, delinquency, and aging. Bagamoyo was the symbolic start of the first Spiritan missions in East Africa — a new beginning for so many enslaved and without hope.

Bagamoyo, a personal journey
John Hansen, USA

For John, Bagamoyo was a personal journey: a return to a place that was his home for 3 years, enabling him to reconnect.
with the people who have kept their deep spirituality expressed through dance and music despite the obvious changes that had taken place over the years. At the Chapter, there were 3 other Lay Spiritan Associates from Uganda, Portugal and Bolivia who described their life-supporting ministries to the Chapter delegates. John commented on the fact that, although we are all grappling with change, there appears to be a real understanding of the gift of lay people in the Congregation and what it means to be a truly international Congregation. The idea of an international conference of Lay Spiritan Associates (LSAs) was proposed for 2015.

Joy presented a common project for North American LSAs and urged each of the participants to take up the St. Francis Pledge to care for Creation and the Poor; the form of implementation will be left up to the Associates in each province and their level of commitment to pray, learn, assess, act and advocate (http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge).

Re-visionsing the way forward
Fr Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp
Towards the end, Fr Pat invited us to distill what we would like to take home with us and what practical actions we would choose to take as a result:

• “What characterizes the second half of life is an ability to live in paradox, to live in mystery. We no longer think that we know it all; we no longer think that we can know it all; we’ve long ago given up on trying to know it all.” Fr. Richard Rohr.
• “…it is more rewarding to explore than to reach conclusions, more satisfying to wonder than to know, and more exciting to search than to stay put.”
• What spoke to me? What do I take away with me? What shall I do with it? The Word was made Flesh… which idea can we embody? How much can we deal with? What is it time for?
• Did this time together help me? How do we see ourselves as a group and/or as part of the Spiritans?
• “God is in the bits and pieces of Everyday — A kiss here and a laugh again, and sometimes tears, A pearl necklace round the neck of poverty.” Patrick Kavanagh
• We can’t move forward honestly unless we acknowledge the rocks along the path.
• What should we continue to do … the activities that continue to bear fruit?

Lay Spiritan Associates gather from Ontario (facing page), Quebec (below) and United States (right).
Canadian Church Press Awards

*Spiritan* recently won two Canadian Church Press awards:

- **First Place** in the Editorial category for “Watch your language” by Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp.
- **Second Place** in the Personal Experience First Person Account category for “Will you keep her now?” by Ellen Einterz.

Pentecost Novena at Toronto Spiritan Parish

The Annual Holy Spirit Novena, led by nine priests, including Our Lady of Good Counsel pastor, Spiritan Fr Carlyle Guiseppi, was celebrated on the nine days leading up to Pentecost. The Caribbean parish is in the west end of downtown Toronto. “When we started the Holy Spirit Novena, I was told that people would not come out for nine nights,” Fr Carlyle said. “This is our sixth year and every time we have had it we have been almost full. If they weren’t getting something from it, people wouldn’t be coming here for nine nights... As priests we are in the business of helping God to help His people.”

Lay Spiritans honoured

**George Webster**
Lay Spiritan Associate

2015 Lifetime Achievement Award, Catholic Health Alliance of Canada

*Citation*
For more than 30 years, George has made an outstanding contribution to Catholic health care, and to the broader Canadian health care system, in the field of health care ethics services. Prior to joining the ethics service at St. Boniface Hospital in 1997, he was for 14 years the Director of the first full-time, hospital-based ethics service in Canada, serving St. Michael’s, St. Joseph Health Centre, and Providence Centre in Toronto.

In addition, George has worked on numerous provincial, regional and national ethics committees.

George has been tireless in his quest to be just, caring and wise in this domain of ethical decision-making. Not given to facile answers, he listens well, questions when necessary, and involves the caregivers who are closest to the patients; he meets with families and has at heart the goal of arriving at resolutions that will bring life and serenity.

**Dermot McLoughlin**
Lay Spiritan Associate

2013 Honorary Doctor of Science, Lakehead University

*Citation*
Dr Dermot McLoughlin is an award-winning, community-minded staff radiologist with the Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre who takes pride in the role he has played as an Associate Professor with the Northern School of Medicine and as a founding board member. He received the Chris Cromarty award for Leadership in honour of his effective teamwork, quality leadership and significant contributions to the wellbeing of the people of the Sioux Lookout region. He started his career in Ireland and Scotland, worked in Africa and then Ontario where he has practiced as a radiologist in various hospitals.

“I would recommend to all newly graduated Health Professionals that they should include in their careers working in remote areas at home and abroad where the need for their services is the greatest,” Dr McLoughlin said.
For sixty-five years Fr Jimmy Dunne has been a friend and model for me. Fr Gerry Scott — our presider over this farewell Eucharist — Jimmy and I, three young boys recently graduated from High School, entered the Spiritan Novitiate on September 2, 1948. Although three among thirty-eight, we soon became a trio of friends despite the Novice Master’s fulminations about what he called “particular friendships.” By sheer coincidence, we all ended up belonging to the new Spiritan foundation in English-speaking Canada.

Jimmy was a few years older than either of us and was always regarded as prudent, sensible and reliable: mature beyond his age. In our Mass booklet is a one-page biography of Jimmy: a series of facts and dates. This is the record of his life, which will be preserved in our archives in Rome. Future scholars, researching the history of the Spiritans, might read it and be tempted to say, “A very ordinary life: nothing very spectacular.” They may think that Jimmy was a very ordinary man who led a very unspectacular life. But we who knew Jimmy and loved him and who benefited from his friendship and ministry, know that he was indeed a very extraordinary man.

His character was based on a deep, mature faith in God. He obviously acquired this in his home, from his father and mother, his seven brothers and sisters. He is the first of the siblings to die. To them we extend our deepest sympathy.

Jimmy spent ten years on what was called “formation”, preparing himself for living as a priest, taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience — which he lived to the day he died — and acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to be a missionary. Even in this period of formation Jimmy’s spirituality and holiness were apparent. When he was sent for two years of practical training, it was to teach in a Juniorate, a school where young boys who felt a calling to the priesthood, developed their vocations.

Nigeria first, then Canada

After ordination to the priesthood, the particular friendship among the trio of Jimmy, Scotty and Fitz was broken up. Jimmy was sent to Nigeria, Scotty and I to Canada. Jimmy was appointed to the Junior Seminary in Ihiala. One of his students there, Fr Gabriel, is present on the altar today. It is no coincidence that there is a Nigerian presence at Jimmy’s requiem. He was so disappointed to be expelled from that country, along with his fellow missionaries, at the end of the Biafran war.

Africa’s loss was Canada’s gain. Jimmy served loyally for forty years in various parishes in Ontario. The people of Holy Rosary in Guelph, St Joseph in Highland Creek, St Rita in Woodstock, and St Bernard in Waterford loved and admired their pastor. In his declining years the people of Waterford covered up his medical problems from all outsiders. Nobody in Waterford wanted this wonderful pastor to be replaced.

A deeply spiritual man

What the people of these parishes saw and what his Spiritan brothers and sisters recognized was the deep spirituality of the man. He was a laid back, quiet, strong person. He flew very much under the radar. His prayer life was built on the foundation of his daily Mass, his daily Divine Office, his daily Rosary. Everyone who met him knew they were dealing with a holy person. His sanctity was that of St Therese of Lisieux. On her death another nun said, “What will we write in her obituary?” Like her, Jimmy did ordinary things in an extraordinary way.

Only a handful of people know the pain he suffered since a botched procedure in one of our Toronto hospitals left him medically incapacitated for the last thirty years of his life. The pain he endured after a series of major operations and numerous surgical procedures is known to very few.

In my years of friendship with Jimmy, I never once heard a word of complaint about his medical condition, his pain or the circumstances which caused it. In my years of friendship with Jimmy I have never heard any parishioner or confrere make a negative remark about him — never once. In my years of friendship with Jimmy, I never once heard him make a nasty or judgmental remark about anybody.

I was blessed to have enjoyed the friendship and example of one very holy man and like all of you here I will miss him very much. I thank God for the great gift of Jimmy and I ask God to welcome this good man, this good priest, this good Spiritan into Paradise.
Please listen

When I ask you to listen to me
and you start giving me advice,
you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn’t feel that way,
you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you feel you have to do something
to solve my problem,
you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen!
All I ask is that you listen.
Don’t talk or do — just hear me.
Advice is cheap — 20 cents will get you both
Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper.
And I can do for myself: I am not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless

When you do something for me that I can
and need to do for myself,
you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.
But when you accept as a simple fact
that I feel what I feel, no matter how irrational,
then I can stop trying to convince you
and get about this business of understanding
what’s behind this irrational feeling.
And when that’s clear, the answers are obvious
and I don’t need advice.
Irrational feelings make sense
when we understand what’s behind them.

Perhaps that’s why prayer works — sometimes —
for some people, because God is mute,
and he doesn’t give advice or try to fix things.
God just listens and lets you work it out for yourself.

So please listen, and just hear me.
and if you want to talk,
wait a minute for your turn,
and I will listen to you.

— Kate Marshall Flaherty, Lay Spiritan