

THE GRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 73

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 16, 2008

CANADIAN MINING

Thank you to all our parishioners that signed the cards in support of regulating Canadian Mining Overseas. So far we have over 280 cards signed!! That is up from last year!!

Just in case there was any confusion Development and Peace is not against mining. We are in support of mining companies that operate with respect for human life and the environment. This is not a matter of putting people out of work, but a matter of protecting human life.

If you missed signing D&P's action card last weekend. Don't worry, it's still possible to sign your name on to this cause. There are additional cards at the back of the church for both the Prime Minister and your MP. Please sign the PM (green) card and put it in the collection basket or sacristy or parish office or give to one of the D&P folk, Dick, Joe or Nadine. D&P will deliver the total sum of cards collected across Canada to the PM in person. Please sign the MP card and put it in the nearest mailbox. No postage required on this one.

Thank you for your support in this important matter of justice. (Nadine Hale)



USING OUR TALENTS

The readings today praise those who use their talents, and call us to reflect on the talents we have been given and how we use those talents.

First of all, we need to recognize that there are two kinds of talents spoken of in the readings: talents as in gifts or abilities and talents, the measure of gold that would be worth several millions of dollars in today's world.

Whether we are talking about abilities or material talents, we recognize that we are given these talents as gifts from the Creator, and we are expected to exercise good stewardship or management of these talents.

The first reading praises the woman who uses her abilities well and profitably, not just for herself and her family, but for all the members of her community. As we look at the talents God has given us, there are several questions we need to ask ourselves. First of all, do we recognize our talents or abilities as gifts given to us by God out of love? Do we have a sincere appreciation for those gifts? Do we recognize that these gifts are given to us to be used for our wellbeing and that of others? Are there gifts or talents that we ignore in ourselves? Do we see our talents as a gift or as a burden? Why? God certainly gives us these gifts for our wellbeing. God wants us to use the gifts we received in order that our lives can be enriched, and so that the lives of those around us can also be enriched. Using our talents gives praise and thanks to God who is the giver of these gifts and God's intention is that we use these gifts wisely and well. So we recognize that when we develop and use the gifts that God has given us we are indeed praising the giver of those gifts and enriching the lives of those around us?

What we say about our talents or abilities, we can also say about the material gifts (talents) God has given us. We look at the gift of creation, of our environment, of all that God created in order to sustain our lives. All of this God has given us, as we are reminded in the story of creation in Genesis. The gifts that we have been given are good gifts, as we are reminded so often in Genesis. Again, are we appreciative of the gift? Do we recognize the wonder of the gift and give praise and thanks to God? How do we treat this gift - do we cherish and nurture it, or do we use the gift selfishly with no concern for others or for the future? Do our attitudes and actions express our appreciation for this marvelous gift? The gospel parable would remind us that we are to use the talents, the gifts we have received, for our well-being and for the good of others. Once again, we need to recognize the purpose behind the gift and use it accordingly. The gifts of creation are given for our well being, but we are also given the responsibility of managing those gifts and returning them for others to use.

Being faithful followers of Jesus means that we must use the gifts we have been given and in so doing continue the work of proclaiming the wonder of God's love for us. The reward for faithful stewardship or management of the talents we have received is even greater gifts given by the one who gave us the gifts in the first place.

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.

Shirley Chisholm

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: I will be heading up to Fort Ware on Monday morning for a couple of days; time for a pastoral visit and to celebrate Eucharist and other sacraments. All in all, it seems that there is a lot going on and people are joyfully involved in the activities that attract them.

Giselle: I was in Victoria the first week of November for a Returning to Spirit (RTS) workshop. Fr. John Greene omi (former pastor here) was a participant! This past week, I've been busily catching up on parish work and juggling some RTS stuff as well.

Jude: This week has flown by and it is hard to believe that it is the middle of November already. We have added a couple of people to the RCIA this week and I wouldn't be surprised if there aren't a few more out there. I know the Holy Spirit is always working but perhaps some parishioners have also extended invitations to those they think may be interested. Have a Great Week!

Roger: Two and a half months have gone by since I started working in Prince George. As you know it is hard to put names to faces for some time. But have patience with me, I'm getting there. It is nice to see how helpful people are. The hospital work is an interesting challenge. Music ministry does a lot for liturgy and I would encourage any young people with musical talent to consider supporting music ministry for the masses. It supports the parish and develops a talent.

NOT FOR SALE

David Batstone, social justice advocate, professor of ethics, researcher and author from the University of San Francisco spoke in St. Mary's Gym Monday Oct 27. It was a positive, hopeful presentation on a very negative topic, human trafficking.

David has traveled the world putting the facts together on this topic. He estimates 27 million to be a conservative number of people in slavery. Throughout the world people are trafficked for commercial sex, their labour and to be nannies. 1.3 million Latin Americans work today in bondage. There is debt bondage in India and child soldiers in Africa. 70% of the world's chocolate comes from West Africa where child slavery is rampant. People as well as drugs and arms are traded by organized crime. "Human trafficking generates \$31 billion annually." 1 million children enter the sex trade each year.

The hopeful part:

An example of intervening in the supplying of slavery; young female artist in Thailand rescues children involved in the sex trade by abducting them from Karaoke bars and a foundation builds her a border home in which to house these children who now number in the 100's.

To address the demand for slaves; David's Justice 101 class, through research projects and with media assistance, have now involved the justice system in San Francisco to deal with some commercial sex trade in massage parlors; his students travel to instruct other universities in their methods.

To enlarge the scale of helping; the website FREETOWORK.ORG has been set up to identify ethical companies who hire workers who have the choice to work or not.

Slavery's power comes from it's invisibility. He encourages us to identify local situations, work with law enforcement and with social services available to those rescued and also with national laws, policy and agreements. He suggested that we google Craig's list for illicit items within our own community to learn of local situations involving human trafficking. In our province Ben Parry at UBC is working on a Canadian map of slavery. David Batstone puts his gifts of teaching, researching and writing together to "re-abolish slavery" and challenges us to do the same. For more information read his very current (2007) book Not for Sale or visit: www.notforsalecampaign.org, www.TheAmazingChange.com, www.embracedignity.org, anamadeluco@yahoo.es, or www.unanuma-international.org

Article written for the Grapevine by Dorothy Reimer

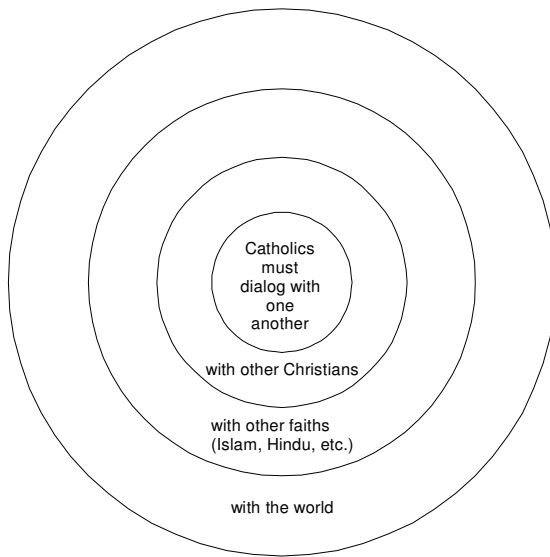
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WEEK—NOV 16-22, 2008

Restorative Justice is based on promoting justice through equality, fairness, community engagement, responsibility, restoration, inclusion, healing and well being for all parties affected by crime. Canada is a leader in incorporating this kind of approach into the criminal justice system. The goal is to address the harm caused by crime by focusing on the needs and issues of the people affected. This approach emphasizes the offender taking responsibility, promotes empathy for victims as well as communication between communities, victims and offenders.

On a voluntary basis, the program provides opportunities for victims to be in contact with the perpetrators through professional mediators. Taking part in this program provides victims with the opportunity to obtain answers to long held questions, to tell their story and to regain control of their lives so that they can begin to heal. Results show that victims who have taken part in this kind of program are very satisfied and that offenders take more responsibility for their actions and show more empathy for their victims.

CONNECTION THROUGH DIALOGUE

Shortly after the first session of Vatican II, a document called, *Ecclesiam Suam* (Our Church) was written by Pope Paul VI regarding the need for dialogue among all peoples. Dialogue is described as a conversation in which all parties are open to suspending their own opinions as they listen attentively to another's perspective. Actually, what he was calling for was opening the dialogue between the Church and others on several levels. See the following diagram:



Pope Paul VI said it was necessary for Catholics to talk about their faith with one another. Our Church is very deliberately a communal gathering of believers. Our faith is not private, it is meant to be shared. A part of God's revelation comes to us through our interaction with others. Often this kind of conversation is not automatic as many Catholics think of their faith as a private matter between themselves and God. We are often reluctant to talk about our beliefs even to one another let alone to others who may not believe as we do. This belief that our faith is private may mean that some of the religious concepts we learned as children may still be held with a child's understanding.

Perhaps it is time now to heed the teaching of the Church that our faith must grow and develop throughout our lifetime. There are many ways that this growth takes place and one of the easiest is **DIALOGUE**.

STEWARDING HIS SECURITY

The times in your life when you probably feel most secure are when you are sharing a meal with people you care about most. This communion is a basic human experience that transcends all cultures and peoples. Thanksgiving dinner. The family par-ty. The neighborhood potluck. The parish supper. These meals bring both the companionship and nourishment that sustain human life.

Ancient peoples considered the act of eating together sacred. Yet they recognized that even this togetherness was not enough to make life completely secure. Seated around the fire amidst the chaos of the cosmos, they offered sacrifice (sometimes even one among themselves!) to the "something out there" to quell their fears and assure their security. The Lord of creation had al-ready planted deep in their hearts a longing for companionship and sustenance--and the search for a peace that never ends.

Scripture shows how the Father made us for a companionship that is eternal, for a meal that is real food. By sending--and sac-rificing--his only Son, the Father offers everything we need: "For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink," Jesus said. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6: 55-56).

The Last Supper began as a meal among beloved companions and gradually became so much more. By offering himself to the Father as the sacrifice, and to us as the food and the eternal peace, Christ provides the most secure experience offered to the human person. This experience can only be found in the Mass.

People who live in places where the Mass is outlawed or infre-quent know the pain of missing the communion of compan-ions, the true food, the sacrifice and security of the sacred meal. Do the rest of us realize how well the Mass provides for our every need?

On Sunday, the priest tells us to "go in peace" from the Eucha-ristic celebration, to "go live this Mass". Take the peace of this secure life, this meal, and share it with the people in your life.

This month, as we gather at table with those we love, let us ask the Blessed Mother to help us have a deeper experi-ence of the eternal security of Jesus Christ offered in the Eucharistic celebra-tion of the Mass.

How blessed are we to be among those chosen to steward his eternal security out in an increasingly insecure world!

By Mary Beth Newkumet, excerpted from the Security Issue, Life After Sunday

In moments of surprise we catch at least a glimpse of the joy to which gratefulness opens the door.

David Steindl-Rast

THEO-TIDBITS



Our new season of Theo-Tidbits has started!

Sr. Tarianne DeYonker op will offer the second of two sessions on **Social Justice on Nov 19.**

All sessions held in the Parish Office Meeting Room (1088 Gillett Street) at 7 pm.

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following in the Sacrament of Baptism:

Landon Robert Crocetta
Andrew Gregory Blackburn

*I am not afraid of storms,
for I am learning how to sail
my ship.*

Louisa May Alcott

UNSUNG HEROINES: MIRIAM

We first encounter Miriam, sister of Aaron and Moses, in the scene from the Red Sea, where Miriam takes her tambourine and dances and sings God's triumph over the Egyptians who have perished in the waters of the Red Sea.

Miriam recognized that the Lord was with the Israelites, and although their journey to freedom had just begun (they still had 40 years in the desert), she praises God for God's faithfulness in their lives.

Miriam, Aaron and Moses are often spoken of together in the Book of Numbers. They were the leaders of the Israelites, with God speaking through all three of them, and yet Moses was the chosen one of God. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses at one point, challenging his marriage to a Cushite woman (Num 12). God hears of it, challenges Aaron and Miriam and then departs from them. After this departure, Miriam is seen to be leprous. This scripture passage is interpreted to mean that the leprosy was Miriam's punishment, and yet, Aaron recognizes that the punishment of the Lord is upon both of them. God has departed from both of them. In Miriam this departure manifested as leprosy, but not in Aaron. Aaron and Moses beg God to heal her, and after seven days, she is allowed back into the camp. Some interpret this reading to mean that Miriam was punished for usurping male authority. Such is not the case however. God spoke through Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and this is recognized centuries later by the prophet Micah (6:4). God got angry with Aaron and Miriam because they spoke against his chosen one. Finally, Miriam was not the only one punished, for even Aaron says "'do not punish us".

The Bible proudly proclaims that Miriam was a leader of the children of Israel. While we may look at Miriam's error in criticizing Moses, and decide her actions "prove" women shouldn't lead, the Holy Spirit inspired Micah to proclaim her leadership. This reminds us that God's people had three leaders: Moses, Aaron and Miriam. While we may have problems with women leaders, God didn't.



SWEDEN'S PROSTITUTION SOLUTION

In a centuries deep sea of clichés despairing that 'prostitution will always be with us', one country's success stands out as a solitary beacon lighting the way. In just five years Sweden has dramatically reduced the number of its women in prostitution. In the capital city of Stockholm the number of women in street prostitution has been reduced by two thirds, and the number of johns has been reduced by 80%. There are other major Swedish cities where street prostitution has all but disappeared. Gone too, for the most part, are the renowned Swedish brothels and massage parlors which proliferated during the last three decades of the twentieth century when prostitution in Sweden was legal.

In addition, the number of foreign women now being trafficked into Sweden for sex is nil. The Swedish government estimates that in the last few years only 200 to 400 women and girls have been annually sex trafficked into Sweden, a figure that's negligible compared to the 15,000 to 17,000 females yearly sex trafficked into neighboring Finland. No other country, nor any other social experiment, has come anywhere near Sweden's promising results. Sweden's strategy isn't complex. It's tenets, in fact, seem so simple and so firmly anchored in common sense as to immediately spark the question, "Why hasn't anyone tried this before?"

In 1999, after years of research and study, Sweden passed legislation that a) criminalizes the buying of sex, and b) decriminalizes the selling of sex. The novel rationale behind this legislation is clearly stated in the government's literature on the law: "In Sweden prostitution is regarded as an aspect of male violence against women and children. It is officially acknowledged as a form of exploitation of women and children and constitutes a significant social problem... gender equality will remain unattainable so long as men buy, sell and exploit women and children by prostituting them." In addition to the two pronged legal strategy, a third and essential element of Sweden's prostitution legislation provides for ample and comprehensive social service funds aimed at helping any prostitute who wants to get out, and additional funds to educate the public. To securely anchor their view in firm legal ground, Sweden's prostitution legislation was passed as part and parcel of the country's 1999 omnibus violence against women legislation.

For the complete article, visit: http://www.justicewomen.com:80/cj_sweden.html