

THE GRRAPEVINE

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

Number 81

3rd Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2009

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple is a familiar story as the prophets Jeremiah, Zechariah and Malachi prophesied that when the Kingdom of God was at hand, the Temple would be cleansed of all activities unworthy of an encounter with God.

Stewards of the Lord's abundant gifts are referred to as the Temple of the Lord. What are we doing to be cleansed of activities unworthy of an encounter with the Lord? What are we doing to cleanse our Temple and make sacred space for the gift of our Savior, Jesus Christ?



**I believe,
I give**



CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR
**Development
and Peace**
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www.devp.org

THAT YOU MAY LIVE!

In giving Israel the commandments, God begins with the statement: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Ex.20:1) In this statement God reminds us that God's plan for humanity is life and freedom, not death and slavery. In the creation account of Genesis, we are reminded that God created us in God's image and likeness, then breathed God's own life into us and then called us into an intimate relationship with God and each other.

The commandments that God gives therefore, are meant to help us live those relationships as they are meant to be lived. The commandments that are couched in negative terms are meant to be boundaries, fences. This is the limit beyond which we cannot venture if we are going to live according to God's call. Within those boundaries, however, we are called to something, We need to look beyond the 'boundaries' that are set and recognize the call within those boundaries.

The commandments that deal with relationship with God and parents call us to recognize and honour the special love that brought us into being. Our love and gratitude for the gift of life are to be expressed in wholehearted and single minded love, respect and devotion. We recognize the great gift of love that is expressed in our being alive, and live out in a very special way our relationships with those who gave us that life.

Likewise, in our relationships with others, we are called to special kind of respect honour, according to each person the dignity that is theirs by right of their having been created in love, by God, in God's own image and likeness. In some ways, the commandments are common sense—if we honour all people as created in God's image and likeness, there are certain things that we absolutely will not do in our relationships. However, simply avoiding certain behaviour is not living fully the relationships to which are called. We are called to actively love, honour and respect each other, remembering we are all freed by God's love.

LENTEN CALENDAR

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, the international development arm of the Canadian Catholic Church, has produced a Lenten *Lifestyle Awareness Calendar*. Over the 40 days of Lent it invites us to reflect on the wealth we enjoy as part of our lifestyle. It does this by providing opportunities for prayer and discussion. Each family/individual is invited to make donations recognizing our relative affluence. Please put your calendar somewhere visible on the fridge, bulletin board, wall, somewhere where you will see it. The contribution from these calendars can be placed in the brown bag stapled to the calendar. The donations in these brown bags can be given on Solidarity Sunday, Mar29th, or given as part of the offertory on Easter Sunday. Last year St. Mary's donated very generously to Share Lent helping thousands of men, women and children in countries of the South to improve their lives. If you missed getting one of these calendars in last weeks bulletin, don't worry there are extras available at the back of the church

LENTEN RECONCILIATION

March 24—IC
March 26—St. Mary's
All services start at 7 pm.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The past few weeks have been a whirlwind, but I will have three days in Fort Ware this week to unwind, split a bit of firewood, preach a little, visit the elders and just generally enjoy the beauty of the north. The trips north in the winter are always a bit of a rush, as I fly in and the best days for flying are Tuesday and Thursday - so the visit is short, but quite wonderful.

Giselle: I'm back for a couple of weeks! And then gone again for another. Returning to Spirit workshop in Calgary near the end of March. Coming back this time, I noticed the first shy or brave or foolhardy pussy willows poking out!!

Jude: In spite of the weather, this time of year always passes quickly. Lent and RCIA are partly responsible for that. Also, my Dominican Congregation has turned up the communication as we prepare for a General Chapter next February. They only occur every 6 years and set the direction for the next several years.

Roger: During Lent, there is often more activity within parishes. We have a number of programs in progress in our parish with Living Room Dialogue as the most recent. This is where a lot of involvement and commitment is needed. It is nice to see this interest which makes all this activity possible. Along with other faith education programs, I'm sure the community is quietly being built up as a parish family. Something which develops subtly and takes time to measure.

SHARING IN TIMES OF CRISIS: A GESTURE OF DIVINE ORIGIN THAT GOES AGAINST THE TIDE

What is the meaning of our financial contributions to the work of Development and Peace?

The global economic system, with its obsession for maximum profit, is like a idol that is constantly demanding that leaders offer it sacrifices—jobs, social policy and natural resources. In the end, those who are not competitive or who want life to come before profit are excluded, condemned to a slow death. This is the root cause of the current crises and we are all affected, but it is our brothers and sisters in the Global South who are affected the most.

Biblical tradition goes against that tide. There, movement goes from top to bottom and then horizontally. At the beginning, it is God who gives, liberates, and forgives debts... freely. In return, he asks nothing for himself, but only that this grace be passed on to our neighbours, especially to those who are the most vulnerable or oppressed and with whom He personally identified: "... you did for me" (Mt 25). Everything, "our" life, "our" property and even "our" work, are gifts received. Sharing them lets us enter into this movement of divine origin and makes social justice and brotherhood possible. It makes us live "in the image of God" who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that is to say, a community.

Development and Peace is our ecclesial commitment in this direction, including goods received; it is going beyond the reflex to close our heart and our hand in times of crisis. We don't "give;" that would be to take ourselves for God, as if we didn't owe anything to anyone. We "share" that which has been given for the life of all human beings but is poorly distributed because the way the economy is organized has yet to be changed. If we understand our faith in that way, then we can say: "I believe, I give," I share in solidarity with my brothers and sisters in the Global South.

Michael Casey (Executive Director of Development and Peace)

STEWARDSHIP AND THE SEASON OF LENT

Lent is a special season for the Christian steward to center attention on conversion, one of the first principles of Christian stewardship. It is a time when conversion finds practical expression in prayer, fasting and developing habits of greater generosity. In the current financial crisis, with rising unemployment, and a deepening global recession, the Lenten season invites stewards to focus more intensely on their relationship with the Lord and cultivate a greater awareness of those in need. It is because we live in such an increasingly interconnected world, that the poor and vulnerable suffer the worst during these times.

In his annual Lenten message, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, made clear that fasting from food and detaching oneself from material goods during Lent helps us open our hearts to God and our hands to the poor. "Fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live."

Lent is also a time to practice almsgiving; to renounce those conveniences and material comforts that keep us from hearing the cries of a fragile world and find creative ways to respond to the poor. Almsgiving brings together love for God and love for neighbor.

As we begin this season of Lent, let us make a concrete commitment to prayer, fasting and acts of generosity. Let us pray for the wisdom and strength to let go of things that get in the way of our relationship with God; for a strengthening of faith; and for the grace to see that the poor of the world are not strangers, but are our sisters and brothers.

RETURNING TO SPIRIT: FOR WHOM?

Returning to Spirit (RTS) is designed to address the issues surrounding the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) legacy. The way in which aboriginals and non-aboriginals deal with the IRS experience determines the possibility (or not) of a life-giving, creative relationship between the two at all levels: social, economic, political, spiritual. RTS is a transformational process that helps participants shift from being "stuck in no possibilities" into new possibilities of creative partnership.



Who would benefit from participating in the RTS workshops? An obvious answer is all those who attended or worked in IRS. But the reality is much deeper. In aboriginal communities, the inter-generational impact of IRS has affected people who never attended the schools. The IRS legacy also affected the relationship of aboriginals with the rest of Canadian society. The IRS experience colours the way aboriginals see and experience themselves in relationship to Canadian society. Society's way of relating to aboriginals amplifies, confirms or reinforces aboriginal experience of the IRS. An unending cycle of no possibilities develops and persists. It takes on the colour of discrimination, racism and separation at all level of society. Time and time again, individuals/organizations/communities have tried to fix the situation through various projects but with little progress. It is just more of the same.

The truth is that all of Canadian society is responsible for the legacy of IRS. Our entire society is affected by the IRS experience and needs to deal with the consequences. Each member of Canadian society, whether nonaboriginal or aboriginal, is responsible for the resolution of the IRS legacy.

The RTS workshops give participants the opportunity to own that responsibility and make a difference. Through a process of awareness and transformation RTS supports participants in reaching a place of healing and reconciliation. In the space created, there is the possibility of new life for families and communities. The RTS workshop is for all those who want to make a difference in our society regarding the IRS legacy. The RTS workshop is for all those who want to create a just society in which everyone, regardless of faith, gender, race, ethnicity, can create a fulfilling life instead of just surviving life. Non-aboriginal society needs aboriginals in order to heal; aboriginals need non-aboriginals in order to heal. We need to come together. Healing does NOT take a lifetime. It can happen now!

HOW'S YOUR LENT GOING??

Here we are at the third week of Lent already. Most of us have been working on our Lenten sacrifices. Many of us are giving up pop, chocolate, sweets or some other goodies because Lent is a time of fasting. But Lent is also a time feasting. It is a time when we focus on Jesus and seek to be transformed by Christ, to become more like Christ! Here are a few ideas of Lenten fasting and feasting:

- Fast from worry, and feast on the divine order by trusting in God.
- Fast from complaining, and feast on appreciation.
- Fast from negatives and feast on affirmatives.
- Fast from unrelenting pressures and feast on unceasing prayer.
- Fast from hostility and feast on tenderness.
- Fast from bitterness and feast on forgiveness.
- Fast from self-concern and feast on compassion for others.
- Fast from idle gossip and feast on purposeful silence.
- Fast from judging others and feast on the Christ within them.
- Fast from emphasis on differences and feast on unity of life.
- Fast from thoughts of illness and feast on God's healing power.
- Fast from words that pollute and feast on phrases that purify.
- Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude.
- Fast from discontent and feast on optimism.
- Fast from anxiety and feast on eternal truth.
- Fast from discouragement and feast on hope.
- Fast from facts that depress and feast on truths that uplift.
- Fast from laziness and feast on enthusiasm.
- Fast from suspicion and feast on truth.

The RTS process consists of three parts:

Part 1 is a 5 day workshop for **aboriginals**

Part 2 is a 5 day workshop for **non-aboriginals**

Part 3 a 5 day workshop where the two groups come together for **Reconciliation**.

So, aboriginals take Parts 1 & 3, non-aboriginals take Parts 2 & 3.

Upcoming workshops here in Prince George:

Part 1—May 18-22, 2009

Part 2—July 6-10, 2009

Part 2—Dec 7-11, 2009

Part 3—2010

For more info, contact:

Part 1 Mary-Anne Jamin-
250-964-4424
(ext 235)

Part 2 Stacy—964-4424

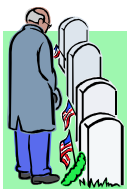
**50 THINGS YOU CAN DO
TO SAVE
THE ENVIRONMENT**

31. Learn to live with a few "weeds" instead of using chemical herbicides.
32. Try companion planting, natural pest controls, or digging weeds by hand.
33. Decorate a live Christmas tree and plant it after Christmas.
34. Avoid anything disposable—diapers, pens, razorblades, lighters, cups, etc.
35. Bring your own coffee mug to the office or to meetings.
36. Use cloth napkins, tea towels or rags instead of paper towels.
37. Use handkerchiefs instead of tissues.
38. Write on both sides of the paper.
39. Reuse envelopes.
40. Buy materials made from recyclables whenever possible.
41. Buy second hand times, rent or share.
42. Donate used items to charity.
43. Hold a garage sale.
44. Return used oil to the garage.
45. Use unleaded gas.
46. Drive within the speed limit.
47. Have regular tune-ups and emission checks.
48. Take the bus, ride a bike, carpool, or walk.
49. Share your successes, ideas with friends. Hold or attend an environmentally friendly coffee party.
50. Recycle this Grrapevine—pass it on to someone else!

**REJOICING &
REMEMBERING**

In the sure hope of the resurrection, we bid farewell to:

Kay Klovance
Renald Campeau



UNSUNG HEROINES: HULDAH

Huldah? Yup, Huldah! I can't say that I've ever come across her name in the bible, ever! Mind you, she is tucked away in the Second Book of Kings (2 Kings 22) and the Second Book of Chronicles (2 Chr 34), not exactly the most readable books of the bible!



Both books outline the slow decline of Israel after David and Solomon, as things went from bad to worse. Lots of stories about bad kings who did bad things. Finally, in about 640 BCE, a new king began to reign, at the tender age of 8 years old! Josiah was a "good king" and sought to reverse the policies of the previous kings who had basically led Israel into idolatry, witchcraft, human sacrifice and temple prostitution. Josiah collected a tax from all of Israel and delivered it to Hilkiah, the high priest, to assist with Temple restoration. As they were doing this, Hilkiah found the book of the Law of the Lord (generally thought to be Deuteronomy) and presented it to the king. It was read to King Josiah, who was struck to the heart and tore his clothes. He asked Hilkiah to "inquire of the Lord" regarding the words in the book, for he was quite aware that Israel had... to say the least... strayed from the law of the Lord.

So, off they go, Hilkiah the High Priest and the king's representatives, to "inquire of the Lord". And to whom do they go?? Huldah, the prophetess! We always hear about the male prophets out there, Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel, etc., and somehow we never hear about the female prophets, but they did exist! Huldah was the wife of Shallum who was the keeper of the king's wardrobe. So not only a prophetess, but a married one at that. Huldah was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, two well-known prophets. And Huldah affirms the words found in the law of the Lord, that Israel would be decimated, but that this would not happen until Josiah had died a peaceful death. Sort of a bad news/good news message!

Josiah recognized the authenticity of the book, but it is through Huldah's prophecy that the book is set into motion. This is the first occurrence in the Old Testament where writings are definitely ascribed as being the "Word of God". It didn't matter to the King or to the authors of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles that Huldah was a woman. She had spiritual authority and it was recognized by the civic and spiritual leaders of the day. What does Huldah say to us today? Are women recognized for their gifts and talents? Consulted by civic and spiritual leaders? Recognized as having spiritual authority? Good question...

LIVING ROOM DIALOGUES

If any parishioners may be looking for more information on any of the topics discussed at their gathering, the internet offers a wealth of resources. Why not check some out.

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| <i>Active Parishioner</i> | www.activeparishioner.com |
| <i>Catherine of Siena Institute</i> | www.siena.org |
| <i>Catholic Doctrine</i> | www.cin.org/doctrine.html |
| <i>Catholic Encyclopaedia</i> | www.newadvent.org/cathen/ |
| <i>Catholic Ireland</i> | www.catholicireland.net |
| <i>Centro Catolico Multimedial Mexico</i> | http://web.mac.com/rrialmexico |
| <i>Christus Rex</i> | www.ChristusRex.net |
| <i>Church Resources</i> | www.churchresources.com.au/catholicaustralia/demo/index.php |
| <i>Ecatholicism</i> | www.ecatholicism.org |
| <i>Irish Theological Association</i> | www.theology.ie |
| <i>My Catholic Voice</i> | www.MyCatholicVoice.com |
| <i>RESource</i> | www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au |
| <i>St. Anthony Messenger</i> | www.americancatholic.org |