



Seminary Newsletter

of the Christian Community in North America

In the group photo above,
first-year students and staff:

Standing: Patrick Kennedy,
director, Diana Haynes, Anna
Silber, Gail Ritscher,
Operations and Events
Coordinator, Ana Lipkowitz,
Paula Williams

Kneeling: Gillian Cross, Lisa
Majoros, Monica Sanchez,
Mimi Coleman, Wendy Matus.

We circled up in the little kitchenette, and looked at each other, a calm, deeply present focus on the faces of each of the students. “Is there anything that needs our attention? Does anyone need help with anything?”, I asked, expecting for sure there would be a few ‘fires’ that might need to be put out.

It was the largest open course ever hosted by the Seminary. Some sixty guests, twenty students and staff and priests arriving by the day for the ordinations that would be held in just a few days. There was an enormous amount of work and countless details to carry...and there were no fires to put out. No extra drama, no holes that would sink the ship. Just a dedicated, engaged team, working together in the joy of serving this event.

In fact, the joy of the work spread to other people. Other Open Course participants, who hoped to attend the seminary in the near future, joined in the work, staying through the breaks, staying after it was over, and feeling the blessing of *working together*.

There are many deep and powerful ways we are a community here at the seminary, many ways we get to know one another. We learn in the classroom together, create, paint and sing together, and, of course, we pray together. This year we learned, at a whole new level, the power of what it means to *work* together.



Seminarians ponder Hilma af Klimt's "The Ten Largest," which depict the human life cycle from childhood through old age at the Guggenheim Museum in NYC.

There was a time when the open courses, for different reasons, used to feel like something that taxed the students and took us away from our actual curriculum and flow at the seminary. Now they have become an essential part of the *training*. Easily the greatest challenge facing us in the world - and in the Christian Community especially - is our ability to work *together*. In John's Gospel we read, "They will know you are my disciples by your love for one another". This love can only be tested and truly grown when we also enter the arena of work.

I know this especially well through the deep privilege I have had of working together with Bastiaan Baan these past three years in Spring Valley. I know this because of the joy and honor of working with our speech teachers, Barbara Renold and Jennifer Kleinbach, with our Eurythmy teacher, Brigida Baldszun, our spatial dynamics teacher, Will Crane, and our art teachers, Aeola Baan and Bonnie Manacas. I know this because of the profound joy of collaborating and working with colleagues in Threefold, the Eurythmy School Spring Valley, the Pfeiffer Center and the Spring Valley congregation. Not to mention our board members, Michael Vode, Melissa Lyons and Camilla Lake!

Thank you all for your tremendous service, sacrifice and creative gifting to the Seminary of the Christian Community in North America. Having just spoken with our three most recent ordinands, I can promise you that your work has born good fruit!

And now, thank God, we head up to Toronto for a new adventure in the life of the seminary with a strong team, dedicated to working together: Gail Ritscher, as Operations and Events Coordinator, Janice Morgante, as Registrar and Financial Administrator, and Jonah Evans, Director. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Rev. Patrick Kennedy

A poem

Mimi Coleman, First Year, United States

The atmosphere is thick with them-
friends who were and who are to be-
memories attending,
souls befriending,
thick like mist, like waves,
rich with gathered life forces
old new and in-between.

This life is a drop in a stream
of ongoing living, dying and living again.

Reflections

Anna Silber, First Year, United States

As I reflect back on this year in the Seminary, I can best express it as a musical composition is experienced, in which the various elements that shape time are brought together into an artistic whole. The daily presence of the Act of Consecration of Man was the ostinato that accompanied us throughout the year and upon which all else was built. The ostinato belies all of the other voices and steadily holds the same note or phrase throughout the piece. It is a reliable, steadying element that deepens the whole, and in its unchanging strength lends necessary ballast.

Nearly every week, we were visited by a different guest teacher who opened doors to one of the seven sacraments and its related elements. These changing melodies brought with them profound thoughts and questions to live with. The artistic work in speech, singing, eurythmy, and the visual arts offered encounters with ourselves and others that helped us digest, reflect, and grow. Working and sometimes struggling together to develop a healthy social culture added yet another voice to the music. Our independent research projects sent us each into our respective contemplative corners to find our own way with themes we were assigned; perhaps these stand out as moments of musical improvisation or variations on a theme. This year ended with a particularly powerful crescendo with three ordinations during

Passiontide. We were gifted an inside view, having walked alongside the ordinands as they prepared throughout the year to become priests, and then were present as they each celebrated the Eucharist for the first time. From the altar, they each sounded a new heavenly tone in this musical composition that was our seminary year.

All of these experiences were illuminating and deeply enriching in themselves, but to experience them in light of the Act of Consecration of Man every day rendered them into a transformative process. At the altar, we witnessed daily the transformation of earthly substances into vehicles of spiritual substance. It would seem that this same alchemy was at work on each of us, transforming our earthly substance so that we, too, may become vehicles of spiritual substance. What is more, the shared experience of this sacrament nourished us as a Christ Community, uniting us in a way that only a true sacrament can.



Kate Kennedy, intern, Wendy Matus and Mimi Coleman, first-year students

An Interview

Mimi Coleman and Paula Williams, first-year students, interview each other on the first year at the Seminary

Paula: How did you find your way to the Seminary?

Mimi: After many years of being a congregation member of the Christian Community in Devon, Pennsylvania, then joining the board of directors, and then in 2015 assuming the treasurer role for the church, I finally went to an open course at the Seminary in Spring Valley in 2017, and that changed everything. I never thought I would go to the Seminary, but suddenly I felt this need to go.

Paula: Did you find what you were looking for?

Mimi: Yes, and more! I didn't know exactly what I was seeking, but I knew that I would find not only answers, but more, deeper questions by coming here.

Paula: Is there anything that stands out in particular from this year?

Mimi: My written and oral project. I had the opportunity to study Holy Week in the Gospel of Luke with an emphasis on the

crucifixion. It was not an easy process. I needed some help along the way. My teacher gave me some help, but I received the most help from Christ. The effects of this project will reverberate for a long time to come.

I also notice the way all the courses seem to dovetail together so beautifully. The content of an ongoing class may reflect what a visiting teacher says, or what is happening in another ongoing class. For example, in our Inner Life class, we are working our way through (not exactly in order) How to Know Higher Worlds, and it seems to correlate nicely with what we have been learning in our Anthroposophy and Christianity class, where we are studying Christianity as Mystical Fact. But what about you, Paula? Is there anything that stands out in particular for you from this year?

Paula: Having to go through the fire of giving presentations. Even though it was painfully challenging, I want to do more.

Mimi: I feel the same way, Paula! That presentation was a real growing point for me. Even though now I would do it all differently and I still would like to rewrite my paper, it took me to such a deep place in my relationship with Christ. That is what I am here for!

Paula: The first semester began with a course on Sacramentalism in the life of Rudolf Steiner and ended with Erk Ludwig's course on Christology. Those two courses, and everything in-between, knocked me off my feet – in order to get up and stand stronger. The morning courses were deepened by the afternoon courses. And, in this second semester, we had three ordinations, which brought the meaning of the process of being in the Seminary to a new level of real.

So, Mimi, what would you say to someone who is thinking about coming to the Seminary?

Mimi: Come! You will probably find what you were looking for and you will probably find something you did not know you were looking for!

Paula: I would say the same and add: drop everything, make the necessary sacrifices, prepare whatever you have to and do it!

How does the content of this year's studies live in you?

Mimi: It is like a piece of cloth all woven together of various strands, and it is around me and also warms me from within. I do not quite know how to describe it.

How does the content of this year's studies live in you?

Paula: After all the courses, building new relationships, attending the Act of Consecration of Man several times a week, meeting so many priests, I feel changed. We are still here, still taking it all in. At this point, what I can say for sure is that this year at the Seminary lives in me as a precious drop of medicine, to last as long as I keep it alive.

Digging in the Clay

Victoria Capon

Digging in the clay
I find my cross,
The one I am to bear.

The clay crystalizes
Like salt
Receding
Into a canyon
Of memory
Leaving
The splintery wood exposed

Digging in the clay
That is to be my grave
Finding the charred wooden cross
That is no longer rough and jagged
But black like coal.

All is silence...

The crystals glint with sunlight
The cross emerges
Transformed, radiant
I live again, now only through You



Monica working on a painting from art class with Bonnie Manacas.

Messages from the Scroll

Mónica Sánchez Valderrama

When life, like a scroll, is unrolled and reveals little by little its message, each line can be an experience. Thus, this year, the scroll of the life of the seminary unrolled, for me, with experiences - each one with a different intensity for my being. Each week a message and a different personality enriched the morning sessions going through new and different paths that helped me get deeper into the essence of the seminary.

In the midst of this, the relation between all of us, students and teachers, was growing and strengthening my self, affirming my being here. As a part of this process, within the first weeks of the first semester, I received the request, from one of the fourth-year students, a candidate for ordination, to help with sewing the stole and belt for their vestments. I accepted with pleasure and gratitude, and began with that process, sewing the vestments for Passiontide. Then the accompaniment of these three candidates took on a different nuance for me because I felt that in some way I was getting to know part of their path, and, at the same time, this became part of my own process this year in the seminary.

In the final weeks of the path to the ordinations, the experience of joint work was an enriching element that helped me to live the contrasts in the personality of the group and mine in the group.

The three days of the ordinations, as well as the three days when the new priests celebrated the Act of Consecration of Man for the first time, will remain embedded deeply in my soul.

There is still more message to be discovered in the scroll, but I will leave it unrolled just to this point for now.

Mensajes del Pergamino

Cuando la vida, como un pergamino, se desenrolla y revela poco a poco su mensaje, cada línea puede ser una experiencia. Así, este año, el rollo de la vida del seminario se desenrolla, para mí, con experiencias, cada una con una intensidad diferente para mi ser. Cada semana, un mensaje y una personalidad diferente enriquecieron las sesiones de la mañana al recorrer nuevos y diferentes caminos que me ayudaron a profundizar en la esencia del Seminario.

En medio de esto, la relación entre todos nosotros, estudiantes y maestros, fue creciendo y fortaleciéndome, afirmando que estoy aquí. Como parte de este proceso, en las primeras semanas del primer semestre, recibí la solicitud de uno de los estudiantes de cuarto año, un candidato para la ordenación, para ayudar a coser la estola y el cinturón de sus vestimentas. Acepté con placer y gratitud, y comencé con ese proceso, cosiendo las vestimentas para Passiontide. Luego, el acompañamiento de los tres candidatos tomó un matiz diferente para mí porque sentí que de alguna manera estaba conociendo parte de su camino, y esto al mismo tiempo, se convirtió en parte de mi propio proceso este año en el seminario.

La experiencia del trabajo conjunto de las últimas semanas en el camino a las Ordenaciones ha sido un elemento enriquecedor que me ha ayudado a vivir los contrastes en la personalidad del grupo y la mía en el grupo.

Los tres días de las ordenaciones, así como los tres días siguientes en que los nuevos sacerdotes celebraron el Acto de Consagración del Hombre por primera vez, permanecerán profundamente arraigados en mi alma.

Bien, aún hay más mensajes por descubrir en el pergamino, pero por ahora lo dejaré desenrollado hasta ese momento.

Looking Back...

Diana Haynes, First Year, United States



A painting from *The Dream Song of Olaf Åsteson*

Beginnings and endings; endings and beginnings... You'd think we'd all be used to them by now. Every week we had a new teacher, a new class, a new topic of study, but some classes, like our basic books on Anthroposophy, carry us like a slow river through the whole year. It felt like we were explorers on a journey of discovery traveling on the ship called Seminary. We've been developing capacities in ourselves, discovering the hidden treasures of Christianity, feasting on the abundant wisdom of Anthroposophy and seeking Truth everywhere. We've been charting new territory in our inner lives, but mostly, we've been building relationships, which are the very life of this seminary.

I sense that a bright star has been guiding this ship, which shines in the intelligence and moral fiber of all our teachers. I feel the greater hand of Grace that guides this ship in the Being of the Christian Communion... Sometimes the deepest teachings we receive are not given in words but through our daily participation in the Act of Consecration of Man. Every night, as I did my nightly review, I marveled at how many new ideas and understandings this old head could contain... My heart has broken through some shackles it didn't know existed, and compassion and love flow more freely in my life. One doesn't have to become a priest to gain immeasurable riches on the good ship Seminary.



First-year students: Ana Lipkowitz,
Anna Silber, Gillian Cross

“When Done with a ‘Yes’”

Gillian Cross, First Year, Australia

I started at the seminary imagining I'd study for one semester and in that time become clearer about what my goals were for working in community; where, which, in what capacity. One semester at the seminary would have been such a gift of a kick-start into any direction I decided at that point. But I'd just gotten into this pool, and it didn't feel time to get out just yet. The work we were doing at the seminary, the classes with the directors and visiting priests each week, the ritual, the social life and social learning, and living with the wider threefold community, was offering opportunity to contribute and free myself for tasks and a direction that lay ahead.

Now, a year in, I'm planning to continue with the move of the seminary to Toronto for another year. I'm fortunate that this opportunity to travel to another country is relatively simple. Seminary life, and being part of the Act of Consecration of Man five times a week, orients my life towards new possibilities and to the walls that need to be encountered on the way. One of the key things I'm learning is how to trust. How often can I trust something greater than myself? Can I accept, frequently, that I'm at the beginning of something that I don't know yet? And can I serve it anyway, uncertain where it'll lead? Like Peter climbing out of the boat and walking on the water to Christ, and then dropping his gaze and sinking into the water, can I have the faith to say 'yes' to what comes, and have the faith that something will be there if I throw out my hand when I'm sinking?

It's been an absolute gift to spend the last ten months in this community and at the seminary. Watching and living the changes, in us and around us, witnessing and experiencing how possible change and evolution can be when done patiently, courageously, and enduringly; when done together with a 'yes', despite shaky ground, and asking for the help that's needed along the way.

Threshold

Lisa Hartog, First Year, Holland

Which side
wish side
the good side
true side
the slight side
right side
lightside
darkside

Who's side
I am
to be
good
serving
fighting
who tries
to convince

Can I
do it
make it
want it
step over
it
back
forth

The way
small
I fall
climb up
further
where
to stop
to go



The Lisa's! - Lisa Hartog, Lisa Majoros and Lisa Hildreth, priest in Boston, Massachusetts

A requirement
 belief
 in me
 always
 there
 is
 love
 You

Painting a Dream...

Elizabeth Majoros, First Year, United States

*“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.” -
 Thomas Merton*

As first-year students, we found ourselves immersed in the modal tones of the Norwegian mystery story *The Dream Song of Olaf Åsteson* in December and January. In this song, which Rudolf Steiner refers to as one of the last authentic stories of initiation, a man experiences a profound, life-changing journey in his sleep during the Holy Nights of Christmastide, and appears at the church to tell about it. Our teacher, Bonnie Manaças, first learned of this version from a Norwegian eurythmist friend who had been singing it in Norwegian Stave churches at Christmastime. They

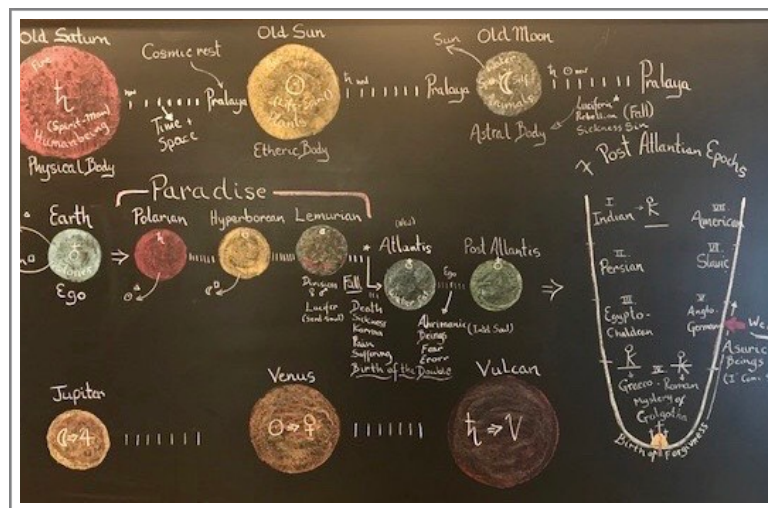


worked on translating it directly from Norwegian to English, instead of from Norwegian to German to English. The evocative music itself was set in the modes of the ancient Norwegian folk music. Previously, Bonnie had brought *The Dream Song of Olaf*

Asteson to three of the Waldorf school classes that she taught, and they sang and performed it. At the seminary, Bonnie would sing us a portion of the song each week, and lead us in a watercolor painting exercise. Listening to Bonnie, and then immersing ourselves in the watercolors, was for us a meditative soul experience, where we lived in the moods and the pictures through hearing and then made them visible on paper. It lent a depth to our study of Rudolf Steiner's *Christianity as Mystical Fact* in another class. There we looked at the initiation experience in general, objective terms; here, we dreamed into it ourselves. Even now, months later, the melodies and pictures echo in my soul.

Forgiveness of Sin

Ana Lipkowitz, First Year, United States



Blackboard image from Ben Black's course: *The Forgiveness of Sin*

A week-long Morning Course entitled *The Forgiveness of Sin* was presented to the first-year student body in late February by Rev. Ben Black, a priest of Canadian origin, practicing in Cologne, Germany. He brought to us this concept in something of a picture language, which I will share here.

Subjective Sin: that which is personally ours (living in our etheric) = Nails*. We are required to rectify this ourselves through some form of restitution.

Objective Sin: that which is collective (living in the cosmic etheric) = Holes.

*'Nails' refers to a story sometimes called, "Nails in the Fence" that illustrates how a single sin can be represented by a nail hammered into a fence, every good deed an act that removes the nail and Christ's salvific work fills in the objective damage, 'the holes' that were left behind.

Christ's deed expunged the weight of this debt from humanity up until the time of Golgotha, but after Golgotha this sin may only be canceled through our own relationship with Him. Further, objective sin of an evil nature must be made into good - literally!

Through our relationship with Christ there streams the opportunity to fully obliterate our personally created sin and remove the 'nails,' leaving no residue upon the Akashic record. The remaining 'holes' are borne solely through His Being, holes from which flow the blood of sacrifice. A critical element in the forgiveness process is that, unless we are to work actively in these arenas, what remains untouched by our efforts to forgive leaves upon our death an opening for the Adversary to harden our etheric bodies against the Christ.

In Luke 23:39-43, we encounter one of the last deeds of Christ before he offers his spirit into the realms of the Father. In these near final mortal moments, utterly vulnerable, he is yet in possession of and radiating 'I' forces great enough to silence the mockery of one being crucified with him. What must have been his shining light and beneficent warmth was recognized by a third on a cross that day, one who invites His future remembrance. Christ endows the healing balm of forgiveness upon this admitted criminal, not only pardoning, but promising to extend to him what will be His own glory.

And forgive us our trespasses...

Victoria Capon, Intern, Washington D.C.

And I got it in a moment.

I was hurt and angry, my ego stepped on.

Brooding for hours, reveling in the indignant and self righteous feelings.

Opportunities came early when I knew I could let it go, but I chose to dig in.

I was committed.

As the afternoon wore on, I reached out for Christ - but he wasn't there.

I was cut off from him.

Then, I got it in a moment.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

I couldn't be in relationship with the divine while I was so committed to the resentment.

Continuing to crucify him, he left me alone.

John says it best in 8:29, He does not leave me because I do the things that please him always.

I made a choice to cut my self off from him, wanting the resentment more than I wanted him.

He waits, his patience endures.

As I forgive others, then I will be forgiven!

I have known the Lords Prayer all my life and I never got it.

Division of the Sexes – In Search of Wholeness

Jeana Lee, Internship in Toronto, CA, from the United States

During my internship in Toronto, I had the opportunity to research a topic of my own interest, and then give a talk on it for the congregation. In part, my exploration led me to the question: Are we who are of different sexes fundamentally the same or fundamentally different? In trying to answer this question, I found that it depends on one's perspective – we are both the same and different.

There was a period in human evolution when there was no sex differentiation. Before human beings incarnated into fully material physical bodies, it was possible for the soul - which is both masculine and feminine - to express all of itself in the flexible immaterial body it had. In the book of Genesis, the first human being, Adam, is described as being both male and female (Genesis 1:27). Then, as the earth conditions hardened and became more material, the human beings could not express both man and woman at the same time. While one of these two aspects worked into the physical body, the other could not. Instead, its creative forces were freed to go into the thinking capacity of the human being. According to Rudolf Steiner, it is due to the single-sexed nature of the human being that we are also thinking beings. We all have masculine and feminine qualities in us and come from the same archetype.



Study of Christ by Leonardo da Vinci
for the *Last Supper*

However, there would not be two categories, male and female, if there were no distinction between them. It is in the physical body that the differences between the sexes are most obvious. If we try to represent in simplest form the difference in body shape of the male and the female, we could show the male as a straight line, and the female as a curved line or a circle. These are the two fundamental gestures that everyone in the first-grade classroom at a Waldorf school learns, often on the first day of school: the straight line and the curved line. These symbols can be used to characterize the germ cells of the male and female human being as well. The male sperm cells are like straight lines; they show directionality, plurality and the quality of movement. In contrast, the female egg cells are spherical and they show unity and a quality of being at rest. The masculine principle is directed outward, while the feminine principle is directed inward.



A close up from Raphael's *La Disputa del Sacramento*, an image we looked at during the course on the Sacrament of Marriage

We can begin to see a reunion of the masculine and feminine principles in the symbol of the sun, the point and periphery. In the point, we see the masculine principle, and a strong focus on one's own center. In the periphery, we see the feminine principle, and a strong focus on the surrounding environment. A person who is a maverick and an independent thinker demonstrates the masculine principle, while someone who is attuned to the mood of the group and seeks to harmonize with it displays the feminine principle. On the unhealthy side, we can see those who over-identify with their individual self and lose connection with the people around them, or those who over-identify with their environment and lose their sense of self. In all cases, we are seeking balance.

As human beings, we are capable of acting in both healthy masculine and healthy feminine ways. The wife of a seminary student took it upon herself to go out and find a job to support her husband while he studied to become a priest. Although she is female, this was a masculine gesture, taking responsibility beyond what was required and lifting her husband towards his best self. An example of the feminine gesture is a Waldorf teacher who had an impossible student. After many failures, she realized that she had to bear the pain of this student with him. She inwardly brought him in, close to her heart, and bore his pain as her own.

The life of Jesus Christ gives us a beautiful example of balance between these two fundamental archetypes. He shows us the

masculine, father love that says, “I am going to help you reach your full potential, and accept nothing less, because I love you.” He also shows us the feminine, mother love that says, “I love you no matter what you do. I bear your pain with you.” As the Risen One, the Christ has no gender. ‘He’ is the true human being who has evolved through the process of death and rebirth, who has actively sacrificed ‘his’ being and who receives and bears all of our sins.

Sources: Rudolf Steiner, Wolfgang Gadeke, Lisa Romero, Jean-Paul Larchet, and researched in collaboration with Rev. Jonah Evans.

Impressions from the Ordination Open Course March 25-29, 2019 *The New Priesthood: Priest Training and Ordination in the Era of the Free Human Self*

By Open Course guest Katherine Jenkins and First-Year student, Diana Haynes

Each open course includes the joy of celebrating the Act of Consecration of Man as a daily activity. Entering the chapel, sitting quietly, experiencing the ritual, receiving the sacrament; I felt carried by a blessing that began each day in a holy mood. After a nourishing breakfast, chatting with old and new friends, it was time for the morning block on “Melchizedek & the Origins of the Priesthood”, taught by the Rev. Bastiaan Baan and the Rev. Jonah Evans. Melchizedek was the first priest, ordained by God as an eternal priest. Melchizedek had the capacity to be transparent to God’s blessing, and he initiated the first sacramental meal of bread and wine to Abram before Judaism even existed. This ritual prefigured the Last Supper. We learned about the origin of ritual as a reflection of the deeds of divine beings giving praise and offerings to the Most High God, which is echoed here on earth in true sacraments.



Gillian Cross, first year, Rev. Bastiaan Baan, Director and now priest in Zeist in Holland.

The question was asked: Why is a priesthood needed today? The world is getting rid of kings and priests – spiritual hierarchies are being replaced by the hierarchy of material wealth. The concept of a spiritually given or a ‘consecrated’ task is not well understood today. Also, if Christ is already within us, why do we need sacraments, ritual or study? This led to conversations where we

explored the role of priest as a gardener to bring forth and awaken the seed of Christ within us. It is not a hierarchical position, but a willingness to be transparent to Christ. All priestly work is a reuniting of the eternal and temporal – helping us to transform our fallen nature into a resurrected nature through Christ. This is the work of the sacraments.

Mark Your Calendars...*Open Courses in Toronto*

November 18-22, 2019: “The New Revelation of Christ” - Evening Open Course & Webinar with Patrick Kennedy & Jonah Evans

January 20-24, 2020: “The Christ Voice of Conscience” with Bastiaan Baan

March 2-6, 2020: “Rudolf Steiner’s Mystery Dramas and the ‘Lord of Karma’, with Daniel Hafner, Nuernberg, Germany

In the past, priests offered sacrifices in exchange for forgiveness of sins for their people. In Christ we have a High Priest, anointed by God, who made the ultimate sacrifice of himself for the sin of all humanity. A priest in the Christian Community doesn’t work out of his/her own ego, but brings words and blessing

out of the divine world, as Melchizedek did, to continue the work of Christ on earth. Our priests are consecrated by God; not out of the Jewish Levitical stream, nor the Catholic Peter stream, but the John or Johanine stream – which is why the Prologue of John is the first speaking of a newly ordained Christian Community priest. The word *Christos* means ‘the anointed one,’ and we talked at some length about the meaning and purpose of anointing. In the future, when the higher ego in us has become a conscious Christ bearer, we will no longer need priests or temples. But it was pretty apparent to all of us that Christian Community priests are very much needed in the world today to help awaken the Christ forces slumbering in humanity.

We explored the deep waters of the Prologue of the Gospel of John further in our classes, with Jong-Won Choi in eurythmy and with Jennifer Kleinbach in speech. In speech class, we made sounds guided by some eurythmy gestures – stretching lots more than our mouths! Soon, we discovered the sounds formed words from the Prologue. By the end of the week, we put sounds and gestures together to speak the first lines of the Prologue in Greek and English, and we had an amazing experience of ‘The Word!’

After speech class, Bastiaan continued to help us understand the mysteries of the Prologue. He showed us how the rhythm and

limited vocabulary of the Prologue is a masterpiece of Trinitarian structure. No word is in the wrong place, no sound monotonous. Speaking these words has a powerful effect on the elementals and the entire cosmos. Such profound truth is embodied in it that it reverberates as a healing force through the world. Bastiaan told us that if the Prologue were not read and understood by someone on the earth, the cosmos would not be able to find its destiny. He told us a great story of someone who had used the spoken Prologue as a successful therapy for autistic children.

As humans, when we speak, we affect the spiritual atmosphere around us. Our moral qualities flow into our words. Just as thought becomes word, word becomes action, and action repeated becomes habit. Habit shapes character and character becomes destiny. In the Prologue, we can think the thoughts of John the beloved and they will work in us and transform us, if done regularly. God speaks the word of 'Becoming'. God himself is becoming. We are becoming creators with God through the Word... Marvelous mysteries!



Revs. Vicke von Behr, Erzoherlenker and Peter van Breda, London

On days three and four, the Erzoherlenker, Vicke von Behr, taught in the mornings about the old and new priesthood. He took us back to ancient initiation rites in Egypt and the temple of Artemis in Greece. In Egypt, potential priests were found among young boys up and down the Nile who had certain special qualities. The boys then had to submit to very intensive training and testing. The trials were frightening and even life-threatening and not all candidates survived. But through the trials, it was determined whether the child was capable of controlling his fear and might eventually become an initiate.

In the Artemis temple, very young girls were brought and trained for their entire lives to be devoted channels of the Goddess herself. We also learned of the Roman Catholic ordination ritual in which the priest candidate is literally bound by a cord to the will of the Bishop who is bound to the will of the Holy Church. The priest must sacrifice his free will and declare a complete submission to the mother church. In the Christian Community, the new priesthood, individual freedom is sacrosanct. The candidate for ordination makes a vow out of personal freedom and his or her primary commitment is to be open to becoming through Christ.

There was so much more rich Christological content that was very helpful to understand what it means to be a priest in the Christian Community and what we are all striving towards in the “priesthood of all believers.” On Friday morning, we attended the Ordination Sacrament for Cheryl Prigg. It was an amazing service, expanding the elements of the Act of Consecration of Man with windows that opened up to add the elements of Ordination. Cheryl spoke the Prologue of John for the first time in her new capacity, and it was a very moving experience for me. Seeing the chasuble descend slowly over her as though it was descending from heaven was particularly powerful. After the Service, we had a chance to speak with Cheryl and thank her for making this destiny decision. My appreciation of what it means to be a priest has grown. It seems both an incredible sacrifice and an incredible blessing of spiritual grace.

On Saturday, Luis Gonzalez was ordained, and on Sunday, Matthias Giles was ordained. All day on Sunday, a song that was used during the Act of Consecration throughout the week kept running through my mind, “I am the Bread of Life.” Like a harmonious echo it brought my thoughts back to the wonderful week I had experienced. Many thanks to all those who were involved in this most special event, which meant so much to me and, I’m sure, to all who participated.

Shepherds of Souls

Wendy Matus, First Year, United States

On March 29, 30 and 31, 2019 the Spring Valley Christian Community held the sacrament of ordination for three new Christian Community priests; Cheryl Prigg, Luis Gonzalez and Matthias Giles. Before this momentous weekend of ordination I was able to meet with each candidate to hear about the years spent in the seminary.

Matthias Giles - sent to Denver, USA

What was hardest part of the past 4 years in the seminary?

MG: Being away from my wife who is a priest in Denver, Colorado. But it is helpful that we are on the same path. The Third year Practicum in Germany was also a great challenge. Trying to express my thoughts while learning a new language was difficult and I felt alone sometimes, but it forced me to strengthen parts of myself.



The newly ordained: Luis Gonzales, Matthias Giles and Cheryl Prigg

Is it necessary to learn German in order to be a CC priest?

MG: No, but it is a great gift. There are resources in German that are not translated into English and it is still the common language of the priest circle though that is changing. Also because the sacraments were originally brought in German one can understand more of the nuances.

It is a great sacrifice to become a priest, thank you.

MG: It is a sacrifice to dedicate your life to something; in the literal sense of the word, it is a 'sacred deed'. I sometimes think it is easier to dedicate your whole life to the Christian Community. I am always humbled and impressed when I see so many community members who have a full life of work and family while still giving so much time and care to the Community and the sacraments. Being a priest is all encompassing so it's easier in a way. It's a huge gift to serve people. That there is an opportunity to serve people and that is your work? Amazing. In the practicum people are very thankful. It is a joy to stand there and help facilitate something of Christ's substance. I think it is a great challenge and task to find how to receive the gratitude in the 'right' way so that I am receiving it on behalf of Christ, not myself.

Luis Gonzalez - sent to Sacramento, USA

Becoming a priest is a sacrifice, what does the sacrifice mean to you?

LG: It is not a sacrifice. It feels more like a realization there is another life that is even better than my old life. It is not a sacrifice but a gift. It is an opportunity to grow, so it is a gift. Now I know how to turn to Christ whereas in other work I didn't know how to



A Meeting at the Ordinations in March. Rev. Julia Polter speaking with speech teacher, Barbara renold

turn to Christ. This is the job, Priesthood. It cannot be done without turning toward Christ. This is the essence of religious life. Initially during the seminary training a resistance kept coming up within me. It felt like I had to leave a life behind. In the first year I had a fear of losing my life. Now I feel differently. Now I have a new life that has more to do with my true self. My other life was spent feeling proud and good about myself. This life isn't feeling proud or good about personal achievements. It is about learning to live with the sacraments.

What does that mean, "Learning to live with the sacraments"?

LG: Making myself available for the sacraments to happen.

How do you do this?

LG: This is what I have to learn. What I have learned so far is how to be present during the Act of Consecration of Man. I've learned how to live with it and know the sacrament happens in me; in us. The seminary training helped me to really learn what happens in the Act of Consecration of Man so that it can penetrate my life. That is what I have been learning here.

Now I need to be an instrument for those sacraments in the world. I have learned in the seminary how to make first encounters with other human beings holy, to make them sacramental. The seminary helped me to find communion with others. Now, I need to learn to do this with a community and to learn from the community how they let Christ come into their lives.

Cheryl Prigg - sent to New Zealand

What was the most challenging part of the seminary training for you?

CP: Coming to the other side of the world from Australia, leaving behind everything and everyone. Feeling that I had no roots. Stepping into the complete unknown without any guarantee of anything. Having no roots of any sort was a blessing in a way as study and inner work were the whole focus. I was not pulled in any other direction. I was pulled towards home but there were no distractions here in Spring Valley.

What does it mean to you to become a Shepherd of Souls?

CP: Helping someone discern, with help from the Angelic realm and the Lord of Destiny what needs healing and what is asking to become.

What have you learned at the seminary that allows this?

CP: Inner Life work is important. In our time with out a strong connection it is very difficult to develop a strong Ego, a clear and strong Ego.

If you were on a desert Island and you had to choose one book to have with you, what would it be?

CP: I must have at least 2.... An Interlinear Bible, Emil Bock The Three Years and The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.

Do you have insights to share with someone who may be thinking of becoming a student of the Christian Community seminary?

CP: Seminary training is the most deep, rich and affirming experience for any life. The second year is especially deep. Being in the seminary is like living in a crucible in a parallel universe. It offers the possibility of intense development and transformation.

It was a great gift to interview all three of our new priests. I wish them much Love and light on their new paths.

A Circle of Friends

This summer we have launched a new way to strengthen our connection with you - the friends of the Seminary of the Christian Community in North America. Here is one of our 'friends' sharing their experience from this new way of connecting, a way that will be all the more important as we move our seminary to Toronto:

Greetings to Everyone,



Friends from the South! - Nelson Fredsell, Barbara Bittles, Katherine Jenkins with Jonah Evans (from left to right)

Last night, I was privileged to view a new digital meeting format from the Christian Community Seminary from Toronto, with Revs Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans. We took a tour of the facility there that will be shared by the Congregation and the North American Seminary. I also received words of inspiration for daily living, and heard about plans for the future. I was included in this first attempt, because I had requested to be a Friend of the Seminary and signed up to attend. There will be meetings of this group every month except July. I would encourage you to check out this opportunity on the website: www.christiancommunityseminary.org. Once you are on the homepage, click on Friends of the Seminary. Read about the group and see if you would like to join. There is a donate button, for your convenience, as well.

We hope that more people will be drawn to become Priestly and also go forward to become ordained, through the courses of the Seminary. Here in the southeast, we are looking forward towards establishing a Congregation, this can't happen without a Priest. Pray for The Christian Community, our Seminary, and it's Directors, and our Priests.

With Love and Appreciation,

Katherine Jenkins



Rev. Jonah Evans teaching at the most recent Open Course in March

Anticipating Toronto...

The seminary is a place of meeting. It is a place where we meet and deepen our relationship with the living reality of Christ Jesus, a place where we meet other human souls on the journey and take up the challenge of living in social harmony, a place where we meet the shadows in our own being that want to darken the light. The Seminary is a place of meeting the inner priest in our hearts, so that His light may shine into whatever we take up in the world.

Dear friends, not only is seminary's new home city one of the most international and diverse in the world, its Native American name, 'Toronto,' means 'place of meeting.' It is with deep reverence and gratitude that we look toward The North American Seminary's next incarnation in Toronto, Canada, where we hope to continue and build upon the profound Christ culture that started in 2003. Beginning in Chicago, moving to Spring Valley, and now a third incarnation in Toronto, may the Angel of our Seminary continue to follow and empower us. As we look forward to our 100th anniversary as the movement for religious renewal, may our North American Seminary be a place of continued meetings, where human souls find and renew their will to serve at the altar of Christ.

With warm greetings to you all,

Rev. Jonah Evans, Director

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