

Satellite image of the Ganges river in India

Seminary Newsletter

of the Christian Community in North America

Dear Friends of the Seminary,

A river flows through every tree. Hidden under the rough, protective bark, an invisible force of life slowly flows from the deepest root to the highest twig. At the right time, this life comes to the surface and reveals itself, unfolding, blossoming and ripening in every leaf, flower and fruit.

In many ways, this has been a rough year, a year full of challenges and extra burdens for our students, faculty and staff. Certainly, we were spared one aspect of the destiny of our time, as none of our students or staff had to suffer the direct effects of the illness that has swept our planet this past year. For this we are so thankful and feel our prayers rising up to and for those who have had to suffer this fate.

No, our challenges were different. We were all challenged to find a way through outer limitations, restrictions and geographical separation, which resulted in extraordinary tests upon the limits of our creativity, capacities and strength. Through this testing, we were all challenged to stay connected to the living source of seminary life, to His hidden life.

When, in June of this year, our *Knowing Christ* students spoke their Shakespeare monologues, rich with wit, feeling and power of speech, you could see that hidden life unfurling before you. When our *Walking with Christ* students shared their culminating hour-long talks on the deep need for the sacraments in our time, the same kind of hope-of-spring revealed by the tree blossoms was palpable. And when, in May of 2021, eight newly ordained priests gave their lives

to the cause of religious renewal in our time, while nature clothed the event in a glorious Ascension garment, one could hardly notice the presence of anything called a “challenge” or a “burden.” There was only joy.

And when our circle of friends and supporters came through with generous gifts of some \$25,000, making it possible to practically meet these challenges, we got an even deeper sense for the size and reach of the “tree” we are a part of. Thank you.

In the middle of the limitations of this world-wide pandemic, the reach of our work has never been greater. In addition to the over 300 patrons who listen to our podcast and the hundreds of people who have participated in our webinars and extension courses, we also had 20 students participate in our “Distance Learning Program.” Already now we have sent out a calendar for the coming year of seminary to the 12 full-time students we expect, including 7 new *Knowing Christ* students, none of whom hail from the United States, a first in our seminary’s history.

And we can share additional hopeful news: On the weekend of May 14 and 15, 2022, ordinations are to be celebrated in Toronto. The preparation group is set to include as many as six individuals from Canada, South Africa, the United States and England. With your continued help, we can hope to provide those souls approaching the Seminary in North America with true aid on the path to becoming servants of the Word, servants of Christ and servants of humanity in our time.

As our annual letter of gratitude to you all, we hope that this newsletter is able to open up a small window into this life of the seminary that took place this year.

Yours in Christ,

Patrick and Jonah

Patrick Kennedy

Jonah Evans



Patrick and
Jonah in
Bologna,
Italy
on a
youth
group trip
in 2011

Table of Contents

Opening Letter

Opening Letter from p. 1
Jonah & Patrick...

Reflections on the Ordinations

Gathering... p. 3
by Claire Jerram

Eight Newly Ordained... p. 4
by Shannon Young

Homily

Light p. 6
by Tish Pierce

The Arts at the Seminary

The Three Sillies... p. 6
by Teresa Bogdanovich

I will never experience yellow... p. 8
by Shannon Young

Art Classes in Toronto... p. 8
by Robert Bower

Indwelling... p. 9
a poem by Faith DiVecchio

Christ and the Sacraments

A Dwelling Place for God... p. 10
by Caitlin Wallace French

“Into this Powerlessness”... p. 11
by Marc Fortin

Table of Contents (cont.)

The Distance Learning Program

Entering the Kingdom of God...p. 12
by Daniil Kalinov

Inner Aspects of the Training

Guiding Imaginations... p. 14
by Patrick Kennedy

There but for the Grace... p. 14
by Erica MacLennan

Shepherding Kingliness... p. 17
a poem by Marc Fortin

The Wounded Healer p. 18
by Faith DiVecchio

Self-Denial, Cross-Bearing... p. 19
by Dhruva Corrigan

Reflections on the Year... p. 19
by Robert Bower

Homily

Waves p. 22
by Erica MacLennan

Photos and Info

Seminary Group Photos... p. 23
Contact Info... Back Cover

REFLECTIONS ON THE ORDINATIONS IN MAY

Gathering...

Claire Jerram, "Knowing Christ" student, United States

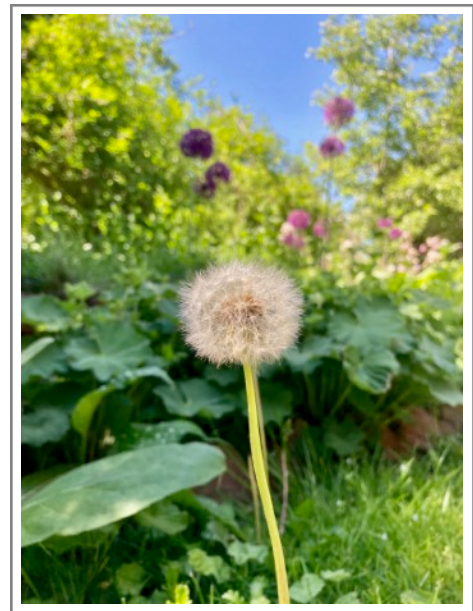
There comes a moment for a dandelion when it creates a silvery orb. The sun-like flowers give birth to seeds which cluster around a center, each with a feathery wing, and these, together, create the orb. All previous activity of the plant culminates in this silvery sphere.

In May, the seminary community came together for eight ordinations. The activity of the whole community required to prepare this culmination can hardly be grasped. Apart from the preparation on the soul level, getting there physically required an international temporary move on the part of a director's family, and a two-week quarantine in Mexico for two members of the leadership in Berlin.

For those of us in the first and second years, much effort went into being able to gather this year, for ordinary classes alone. To be in one building with the North American priest circle, the ordinands, both seminary directors and many friends appears nothing short of miraculous.

But like the dandelion's culmination, the synod and ordination lasted only a few days. Like the dandelion gathering, its ultimate purpose is dispersal, scattering. Like a warm wind, the spirit of the movement will blow each new priest to a new place to begin her work.

But even those of us who remain in Hillsdale will never again be in the place we were before these ordinations.



“Eight newly ordained priests are on their way..”

Shannon Young, “Knowing Christ” student, United States

In May, we witnessed the ordinations of eight new priests – all women – in Hillsdale, NY. Carol Kelly, resident priest in the Taconic-Berkshire congregation, and the entire congregation graciously opened their chapel doors and grounds to host this momentous 10-day experience, which was attended by hundreds of people, including 23 priests from North America, Germany, and Brazil.

The *Knowing Christ* and *Walking with Christ* seminarians currently studying in Hillsdale worked carefully preparing for the experience. They were joined by two of the three *Walking with Christ* students studying in Toronto, Erica Maclellan and Robert Bower, who managed to cross the border for the first time in months. Seminary director The Reverend Jonah Evans also managed to travel from Toronto. It was very joyful for us eight students to finally meet in person with both seminary directors for the first time since the full-time seminary program began in Hillsdale and Toronto in January, 2021, after many COVID related delays.

The first 3 days of the 10-day gathering were devoted to a North American Priest Synod. Outgoing Erzoerlenker Vicke von Behr, from Germany, and incoming Erzoerlenker João Torunsky, from Brazil, along with his wife, Claudia, faithfully undertook the very uncertain journey to arrive in Hillsdale for these events. Oberlenker Oliver Steinrueck also arrived from Berlin.

We seminary students were thrilled to be involved in the exhaustive planning and implementation of the synod, surrounded by so many inspiring priests. We cooked, cleaned, and assisted in any small and large way we could. A frequent image was of the seminarians clustered around a table in the living room of the meeting house diligently sewing by hand many brightly colored vestments for the ordinands (stoles and belts).

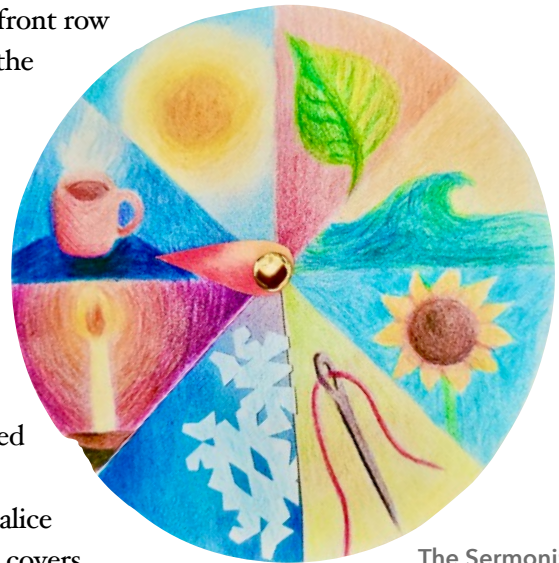
After the three-day synod concluded, we joyfully welcomed the eight ordinands. Over the next three days, we



Back Row, left to right: Vicke von Behr, from the Leadership in Berlin; Anna Silber; Jong Won Choi; Patrick Kennedy, Seminary Director; Jeana Lee. Front Row, left to right: Kate Kennedy; Elizabeth Majoros; Leslie Waite; Mimi Coleman; Victoria Capon

witnessed their ordinations, with many people attending from the surrounding area.

The Sacrament of Ordination is woven into the Act of Consecration of Man (ACM). The eight ordinands all sat in the front row in their new bright, white albs, facing the altar, as the erzoberlenker celebrated the ACM. Behind the ordinands sat the gathered body of priests. As Rudolf Frieling observes in the section “Ordination of Priests” in his treatise *The Seven Sacraments**, by this “encircling of the gathered priesthood . . . the newly ordained know themselves to be within a golden ring. They now stand within the area where the gift of the new priesthood is preserved.” This is powerfully revealed when, within the Ordination Sacrament, after the transubstantiation, the erzoberlenker takes the chalice with the transformed and consecrated substances, covers them, and solemnly walks in a circle with them around the gathered body of priests.



The Sermonizer

At specific places in the ACM, each ordinand received from the erzoberlenker, the celebrant: their stole, the chasuble (for the celebrating of the service), a sacred anointing, and a question to accept their calling to continually “become” as they serve to lead souls to Christ. Rudolf Frieling observes in *The Seven Sacraments*, “nothing can more effectively call us to ‘become who you are!’ than the priest’s future-revealing work at the altar. Whoever grasps the archetypal, apocalyptic character of the work at the altar will clearly recognize that the ordination at the high altar serves the developing future universal priesthood. In its strictly ordered form, ordination carries Christ’s eternal priesthood through cycles of time and sinks it into human souls so that it may arise anew in them.”

Following the ordinations, the seminarians toasted the new priests through a festive celebration involving songs, skits, poetry, speeches and some fun gifts like: communion bread recipes, throat lozenges, black socks, and a “sermonizer” – when the priests have difficulty thinking of a sermon topic, all they need to do is spin the dial.

The final momentous stage of the 10-day process was witnessing each of the new priests prayerfully fulfilling the responsibility of celebrating the ACM for the first time. This concluded the eventful series of solemn and joyful days. Eight new priests are now on their way. All the seminarians feel deeply honored that we could play

The Sendings...

- Victoria Capon – Chicago
- Jong Won Choi – Devon
- Mimi Coleman – Taconic-Berkshire
- Kate Kennedy – Toronto
- Jeana Lee – Chicago
- Elizabeth Majoros – Denver
- Anna Silber – Spring Valley
- Leslie Waite – New Zealand

a role in assisting, celebrating and sending them off with our deeply felt gratitude and many good blessings as they travel the separate roads that lie ahead for them.

HOMILY

Light

When the sky is filled with dark and heavy clouds, all the space between sky and earth can also seem dark and heavy. It can seem like it would never change.

But things never stay just as they are. There is a continual living movement in the world that always brings something new. We can behold in the sky the moment when the clouds part and a ray of sunlight shines through. Suddenly, the whole atmosphere is flooded with light. What was once dark becomes light. What was once dull becomes full of color and takes on form. What was once heavy is lifted.

Our souls too can experience an inner darkness or heaviness no matter what the weather outside. When we see through this lens, things appear dark and dull and heavy. But just as a ray of sunlight shines through the dark clouds, so too can a ray of light appear in times of soul darkness. It can come as a flash of inspiration—a thought or a voice saying, “You are not alone. My light and my love are all around you.” Things suddenly become brighter and clearer. We begin to perceive all of life’s richness and color; new manifestations and possibilities emerge. Our hearts are lifted and we find new energy, a sense of meaning and purpose and joy for life.

This light, this clarity, and this levity we can experience in our hearts and souls no matter what the weather outside. It is always with us, around us and in us. It takes only one ray of light to open us to its presence. We can turn to this light and open our hearts and be drenched by this light and all that it brings with it.

A homily by Tish Pierce, “Walking with Christ” student, United States

Students in the *Walking with Christ* program are introduced to the basics of writing sermons, or *homilies*. In this newsletter, we are sharing some of the fruits of their labors.

The Seminary Newsletter Student Editing Team
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Photo Credits
Emily Watson, Richard Chomko, others from students

THE ARTS AT THE SEMINARY

The Three Sillies

Teresa Bogdanovich, "Knowing Christ" student, United States

The Seminary students, newly arrived together in January 2021, had an enlivening social experience getting acquainted through a block of Theatre Arts with Laurie Portocarrero. We worked on improvisational drama using the text of a lively English folktale, ***The Three Sillies***.

The story tells of a young squire who courts a young woman. The squire cannot believe how silly the young woman's family is, and he sets out to find three bigger sillies before he could possibly agree to settle on spending the rest of his life with the silly young woman. He has various silly misadventures.

This picture enacts the scene of the old lady the squire encounters pushing her cow up on the thatched roof to eat the grass growing there. This herculean task accomplished, she ties a rope around the cow's neck, drops the rope down the chimney and ties the rope around her wrist so she can go about doing her chores...Until, of course, the cow falls off the roof and drags the old woman up the chimney!

No person had a fixed part. Each person was challenged to jump in as any character as we moved quickly through the various scenes, so it was a great exercise in developing inner flexibility and fluidity as we learned to quickly create the different scenes and the quality of the characters appearing in the different scenes. A very helpful skill to develop in life.



FRIENDS CIRCLE

Go beyond the newsletter and join our *Circle of Friends*:
special online content, meetings
and communications. Sign up at:

www.christiancommunityseminary.ca/friends-of-the-seminary

You are also warmly invited to join Patrick and Jonah on
The Light in Every Thing,

their weekly conversational podcast:

www.patreon.com/ccseminary

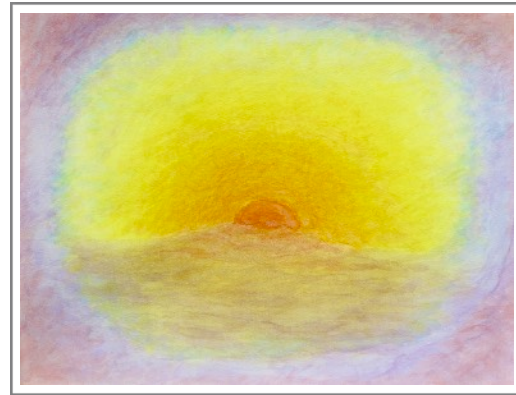
“I will never experience yellow the same way again”

Shannon Young, “Knowing Christ” student, United States

Arriving at Hans Schumm’s studio, the snow sifting down outside, the warmth and the smells from the wood-burning stove embrace us. The easels are arranged in a pool of light coming through a skylight. Hans Schumm, wizened and spry, his gray hair drawn back in a pony tail, stands in the room smiling benevolently as we enter.

Our watercolor study begins with Lemon Yellow. Hans works with calm and concentrated interest in the colors, each brush stroke preceded by a thoughtful rest.

We each take our brushes and contemplatively experience applying yellow to the center of the page before us. Hans moves behind us, “Don’t hurry it. Let the color flow out from your core.” After a few hours: “Yes. You are feeling the color now. How does it feel?”



by Dhruva Corrigan

“I feel I will never experience yellow the same way again,” I respond.

At length we move from Lemon Yellow to Golden Yellow, working carefully to shade the one into the other. One student has put too much Golden Yellow onto the center of the Lemon Yellow. Hans pauses before the painting: “Well, there it sits,” he observes good-naturedly. We laugh.

At intervals, he lowly intones these words from The Iliad: “Paint for me, O Muse . . . Carry my soul into my hands, so that Thou canst guide the brush in my hands.”

We move to Prussian Blue, Mauve, Vermilion, Carmine Red. He introduces each different color with careful attention to how they interact. “The blue is bashful,” he says knowingly. “It resists entering into the yellow. It feels the shock of it.”

In Hans’ studio, we feel penetrated by this drama of color. Steiner in Mystery Centres Lecture II writes of “what lies on the other side of the Threshold,” how the painter feels color as a “spiritual essence,” intuiting how colors take their “right place on the canvas.” Hans Schumm is such a painter.

Art Classes at the Toronto Seminary

Robert Bower, “Walking with Christ” Student, United States

I almost don’t recognize who I was when I look back at myself just 18 months ago, when I first set foot in the Seminary of The Christian Community in North America. I’ve gone through multiple transformative processes in such a short time. One area in particular in which I have grown is in my experience of creating visual art.

When the seminary relocated to Toronto in the summer of 2019, it was blessed to be able to hire Regine Kurek as its art instructor. Regine used her 40 years of experience facilitating adult art classes to lead us through areas ranging from working with water colors to Goethe's Color Theory. I have been struck with how sensitively she directs us all through the process of creating art. She doesn't just assign us tasks; she guides us through exercises that build upon one another. Before we know it, we've become creators.

The following pictures come from our exploration into The After Image, Complimentary Colors, and the Seven Life Processes (which are sequential as follows): 1) Breathing, 2) Pulsing, 3) Relating, 4) Identifying, 5) Refining, 6) Enlivening, 7) Balancing / Beautifying / Harmonizing.



by Erica MacLennan

Indwelling

by Faith DiVecchio

He lives in me and I,
Unworthy as I am
stained with pig swill
bound, interwoven with weeds,
late to the vineyard,
I live in Him.
His body is ours.
His love drums in our hearts.
What patient waiting
of ages must He bear?
What unrelenting suffering, while we
struggling, stumble
towards the small
flame, which begets the timeless? Take me,
we say.
Indwelling is sacred mystery.
Fire is the path.
The fire in hearts, stars,
the fire in communion. The
fire of the Word.
And the secret of fire: the smallest,
hushed flame is as strong
as the thunderous conflagration.
The smallest flame is still flame.
Indwelling. He burns in me. I glow,
flickering and faint, in Him.
Oh tender, longed-for, bliss...

As we moved from enlivening the senses to ensouling the life processes, our artwork moved towards the refinement of subtle figures, which our classmates noticed within our paintings.

We hope you enjoy these images as much as we enjoyed creating them.

Each student is asked at the seminary not only to receive in true listening and learning, but to become someone who can give of the spirit. This is practiced especially in the end-of-year projects which are often connected to the theme of the year and culminate in an oral presentation. The following two is born of one student's work in this direction.

PROJECTS ON THE THEME FOR THE YEAR: CHRIST AND THE SACRAMENTS

A Dwelling Place for God

Caitlin Wallace French, "Knowing Christ" student, United States

"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God, built upon the apostles and prophets, Christ being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him, you are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." Ephesians 2:19-22

In ancient Israel, the temple was the dwelling of God. Through the event of Golgotha, Christ permeated the earth with His substance; it is now his dwelling place. But St. Paul reveals to us that there is another dwelling He seeks: He has made it possible for each of us to be dwelling places for the Lord through our faithfulness. What once existed in a specific, outer place – the temple – can now exist in the heart of the human being. The body can be a temple; God now would dwell within the human being.

An example of this is on Pentecost, when the disciples and Mary were gathered together in the Upper Room - praying and recollecting the time they spent with Christ. *"From heaven came the sound of a robust rushing wind and tongues of fire descended on the apostles. Each one was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke what the Holy Spirit gave them to say."* (Acts 2: 1-4) Mary, in her heart of devotion, teaches us how to receive the Christ. She symbolizes what the disciples and all of us can now experience. In this open and pious state, they were each baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. They received penetrating cosmic love and the ability to understand each other with the heart. Emil Bock wrote, "The human Spirit ego, full of Christ, came down to the human being" (Studies in the Gospels, Volume 1). This baptism by fire was an incarnating process which happened in community. They were formed together into an abiding place for God, not just an individual temple, but a communal temple.

We, too, are a part of this community, "Members of the household of God, built upon the apostles and the prophets." We, too, are disciples, people of the way. The possibility of the Ephesians verse is a gift – a ray of hope – which streams toward us from the future. It invites us, beckons us, to live for the spirit,



by Marc Fortin

as we are reminded in the words of the Christian Community Baptismal Sacrament. In our own small ways, with devoted hearts, we become an abode for God, woven together, connected by the Holy Spirit – that someday we may grow together “into a holy temple in the Lord.”

Sacramentalism: “Into this powerlessness...”

Five talks, five unique voices. Compiled by Marc Fortin

"If you were to address a group of total strangers, how would you share with them the 'good news' of the sacraments for humanity today?"

This was the question put to the *Walking with Christ* group for their end of year assignment, which coincided with the end of seminary classroom-time for this group. They each prepared and gave a fifty-minute presentation of original work in response to this question in their respective congregations. The presentation evenings culminated in a closed review by peers and teachers. Below is a glimpse into the student process of researching, forming, dissolving, dying, birthing and reviewing a talk:

Erica, when looking at sacramentalism through the eyes of a stranger, what did you see?

I found this assignment daunting! How could I talk about sacramentalism, something so real to me, to those who don't relate to or know anything about it? The inspiration came to look into the wider community and see how elements of sacramentalism may be living in those I know outside my sacramental community. I noticed elements that include routine, tradition and ideals that bring people together, that unite people. I was granted the gift of being able to see Jesus Christ's working in our world, between people, in what they do that brings them together, in the wish to be in community as individuals. The reality of the sacraments is the reality of the Being of the Risen One at the altar and in the world.

Tish, what are your thoughts on this experience?

I found this assignment daunting as well! The question rang out to me as “How do you connect heaven and earth?” Thankfully, Jonah suggested that I speak about what I know and have experienced myself, especially regarding the Sacrament of Consultation. Prior to our seminary studies this year, I worked as chaplain at a level-one trauma hospital in Philadelphia. I was witness to a tremendous amount of human suffering. The question I was left with was, “Why do we need to suffer?” In the Act of Consecration, we are given “the healing medicine” for the “sickness of sin.” This path led to another question, “How is sickness related to sin?” It became clear to me that the only way that I could approach these questions was through an exploration of my own experiences. I spoke about my journey of self-knowledge gained through the Sacrament of Consultation, and then the way towards healing gained through many experiences attending the Act of Consecration. I offered my insights in a public presentation, hoping that some would resonate with my experiences and find a way towards self-knowledge and healing themselves.

Marc, the theme of sacramentalism is vast, how did you find your way?

I was amazed at how so many of the elements of the talk came together and how each of our classes continued guiding me to these revelations. I have deep gratitude for all of our seminary teachers! However, in the last stages, when it came to practicing my presentation, I

realized it was all just pieces – as beautiful as they were, I didn't have a thread that connected all these wonderful gems. I had received so much, and I didn't know how to offer the fruits I received this year for others to receive. Into this powerlessness came the grace of a cosmic spool of light tying all the elements together. In lecture 7 of CW110, Rudolf Steiner mentions that all of existence proceeds from receiving to giving. This was what I needed to hear. And it became clear that the fundamental activity of sacramentalism is receiving and giving as Christ-Jesus has done and is doing. He is ever receiving his life from the Father and giving it to the world.

Robert, what was it like to hear feedback after your talk?

Like Marc, I also found it challenging to grasp a strong thread that could bring my ideas on the sacramental sphere together into a cohesive offering. In the review of my presentation afterwards with Jonah and my classmates, I discovered that one of the notable themes of my talk – that of “holy loneliness” — really landed, struck a chord, with my peers. This surprised me, as I had much more that I could have shared about this idea but was still in the beginning stages of understanding its relationship to sacramentalism. I now plan to further develop this theme and offer my talk again to other communities. I feel that throughout the whole process I have received a great gift from my colleagues, my teachers, and the seminary.

Dhruva, how is speaking on the sacraments different from speaking on other topics?

I found that to speak on the sacraments in any meaningful way actually required a kind of sacramental activity. In my talk, I looked at the seven sacraments as archetypal deeds of love and took some time to study the relationship between wisdom and love. The need for a sacramental quality in the giving of the talk meant that it was important to fill the words not only with wisdom, but with love. This required a unique kind of preparation, a prayerful approach to my studies that was a deeper working than simply understanding ideas about the subject at hand. It meant allowing myself to be worked on by the One who shows us His sevenfold nature through the sacraments, that, ultimately, I might have something substantial to offer those who might come to hear what I had to say. This could come about not by my own ability, but by His working through me, that a little of His love for us and for the world might come through.

Erica Maclellan, Canada, Tish Pierce, United States, Marc Fortin, Canada, Robert Bower, United States, and Dhruva Corrigan, United States were students in the “Walking with Christ” program of the Seminary of the Christian Community in North America.

THE DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

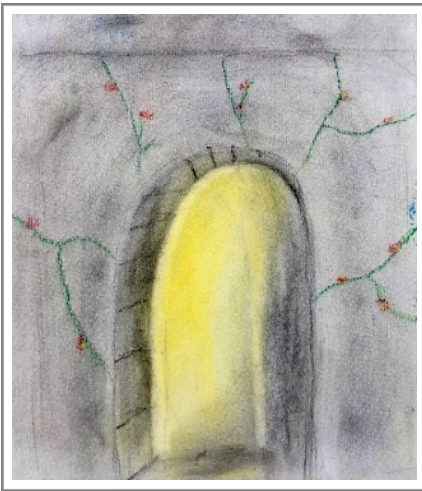
Entering The Kingdom of God

Daniil Kalinov, Distance Learning Program Student, Russia

In 2019, the seminary began its first full-fledged Distance Learning Program (DLP). Looking back, it seems as if the DLP was preparing the ground for the times we live in right now. It feels as though we were the pioneers of this digital space, which was soon to become a world-wide necessity. Last fall, however, already in the midst of the pandemic, the seminary directors decided to further expand the opportunities for the DLP. A second track, led by Rev. Jonah

Evans, was added to the first one, which Rev. Patrick Kennedy continued to lead. In this way, we – the second-year DLP students – along with the students who had been accepted into the *Knowing Christ* full-time seminary training, had an opportunity to dive deep into the main theme of our studies: the parables of the Kingdom of God.

In the fall trimester, we had just enough time to work our way through two sequences of the parables. The main focus of the first one, consisting of five parables in chapters 15 and 16 of the Gospel of Luke, was the idea of *μετάνοια* [editor's note: this greek word is often written as *metanoia* in English]. Through these parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, etc., we strove to understand what this activity of *μετάνοια* (classically translated as “repentance”) actually is. Under Jonah’s guidance, we were able to see that this changing of one’s heart and mind (the literal rendering of *μετάνοια*) is in fact the gate, the doorway into



by Naomi Mattana of the DLP

the Kingdom of God. It is that shift of one’s outlook on life, one’s path in life, one’s purpose in it, which allows one to gain an access to the Kingdom. An entry into a sphere of consciousness, in which man sees that the Kingdom of God is not only near — it is here. What helped us greatly in these studies was the insight into the way one can picture this Kingdom to oneself, as shared with us by Jonah. Most importantly he showed how this term – “Kingdom of God” – can refer to three interconnected, but distinct realms, and how it in fact does so in different parables. The first one, the eternal realm of the heavenly spheres, in which we participate between our death and our new birth, is, for example, addressed in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Something of the third one, on the other hand, the future realm of the heavenly Jerusalem, which looms before us as a guiding star, can

be found in the picture of the separation of the goats and the sheep (Matthew 25:31-46) and many others. But it is the second one, the Kingdom of God on Earth, of which most parables speak. It is that realm which, through our “repentance,” is fully accessible to us right now. And it is that realm which – as shown by the second sequence of the parables (Matthew 13) – grows hidden within the world. It is like a seed that lies within our heart and will grow, if only we give it space. It is like leaven that can slowly permeate and change our whole being. And so, if from the parables of Luke, we have learned how the Kingdom can be entered, in Matthew we have learned a bit more about what it actually is. How it is everywhere: unseen, yet potent. And that it is within our reach, if only we know how to find it.

It was also a great help in our studies that Jonah didn’t let all this remain theoretical, abstract knowledge. Instead, he showed how one can put it into an actual practice. He not only illustrated how the dynamics of the parables can be seen in concrete life-examples, but he also introduced us to the main prayer practice of our class, working with the four lines of the opening prayer of the Gospel section of the Act of Consecration of Man; with the prayer that asks Christ to completely fill one’s heart with His Life and to let this Life live on in the words flowing from one’s lips. Through this, we were given a tool to truly perform *μετάνοια* in our hearts, to find the spirit of Christ, ever-present, all around us. The Kingdom of God

could start to become for us not only a thought, but an experience. An experience we could share among ourselves in our small groups and in the opening portions of our classes, where each week one of us had an opportunity to present a small contemplation on this prayer.

At the end of that trimester, we could also share the flowering of our studies and experiences through small artistic projects, samples of which we are sharing with you here as well. These tried to express, in verse, in forms and colors or in another medium, the dynamics of *μετάνοια* and the Kingdom of God described in the parables we have worked on. Within this newsletter, there are paintings and poems by DLP students. I hope they may bring you the spirit we have all shared in the DLP this year!

INNER ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING

Guiding Imaginations for the Priestly Self

Patrick Kennedy, seminary director

What is it that a person is to work on and work towards at seminary? Is it a certain amount of knowledge that needs to be gained? Is it a certain number of professional skills and capacities?

Certainly, there are many skills that are needed to serve as a priest – as well as knowledge – in order to proclaim the word of spirit to human hearts, to care for the souls God sends us as a true pastor and to celebrate and consecrate at Christ’s altar. In fact, this work of learning and developing capacities hardly ends at ordination! In many ways it just begins.

But beyond this knowledge and practice, what makes the path to priesthood – and its accompanying training – so subtle and profound is that it has to do with *who we are*. It is in the sacred realm of our own activities of “self” that a foundation can be laid upon which a healthy priesthood can be built in our time.

To this end, the directors (Jonah Evans and Patrick Kennedy) have created a seven-fold imagination of the “Activities of the Priestly-Self” that is given to the students – especially in the *Walking with Christ* program – to work with. It is there to serve as a guiding star in their own self-development and a way of assisting their own self-assessment on the learning journey.

There, but for the Grace of God, go I

Erica Maclennan, “Walking with Christ” student, Canada

“There but for the Grace of God go I” – this beautiful phrase expresses the wonder and gratitude we feel about the guidance and blessings received on our life’s journey. But... what about the “I” and its life in the world as a free being, its self-determination, its possibilities for development? We are living in an age of consciousness where our “I” feels like it can do and be everything, a being of possibility. These impulses of the “I” can often separate us from God and

from Grace. How do we consciously and actively take up the development of the “I” while remaining in right relationship with God?

To this end, in the seminary training the directors have given the students descriptions of Seven Activities of the “I” (see diagram).

Below is a description of these activities and some of the ways they can be worked with as tools for self-reflection and development:

1. The Witness – objective self-witnessing, objective world-witnessing, objective Christ-witnessing

Witnessing ourselves with objectivity can feel like a cold hard place, for what we see may be hard to bear. How would we not become emotionally overwhelmed by looking at our weaknesses or by being overly focused on shortcomings? How do we not get trapped into thinking about a kind of “preferred self” – the one “who I think I should be”? Finding courage to disentangle oneself from these tendencies is helped by using a warm gaze towards ourselves, by seeing the true self in Christ. How does Christ regard us objectively? With Love. In this warm light we can then observe the things in ourselves that we are longing to let go of, transform, heal or cultivate. This helps us to learn to know who we are and open the door for our becoming.

2. The Becoming One – dying and being reborn

In the Sacrament of Ordination is heard the question, “Do you feel the earnestness of the ongoing part of your becoming?” Becoming is a lifelong journey, and it means being able to die – die to old ideas, old pictures of oneself, mistakes... Then it's about growing anew, accepting what is needed, seeing a new truth. An openness is called for and an earnestness to become, to change, to be different. Dying and becoming can happen in a moment (think of Paul's Damascus experience!). There can also be the experience that something in us may die, but time is needed for the new to come to birth – time, patience,

prayer and trust. This trust is the new faith that draws towards us knowledge of a new aspect of self.

3. The Wounded Healer – developing a free relationship to one's wounds so that Christ's light might shine through them

The Risen One has wounds from the crucifixion, wounds that are shining with Healing Light. How can we follow this process? Through building a relationship with the sufferings and struggles that have come to us in our lives. It's about taking responsibility for them,



looking for the gift in them, the learning opportunity they provide – this helps transform the wounds, redeeming them so that they become sources of light for life in the world. Working in this way strengthens awareness that others are wounded also and that those wounds have the possibility to be healed/transformed, that all judgments of the other person should be put aside. The work is to see and to experience the blessings hidden inside of illness, struggle and sufferings. A wound then becomes redeemed, a source of joy and a place for the Healing Light to shine through.

4. The Disciple – following Christ Jesus as one's helping guide

The Gospels relate to us that the disciples were taught and guided by Christ Jesus — they asked questions, listened and followed Him. How can this show up in our lives? How do we take up this activity? By building up a relationship with the Living Christ through prayer, through reading the gospel. We can turn to Him, pray, connect to His Being as Lord, Brother, Comforter. We can read the Gospel, sit at His feet and hear His message to guide our lives. We can also be active in sensing Jesus Christ by looking for His activity in all that we meet — His reality in the Spirit, in oneself, in others, in the world.

5. The Shepherd-King – demonstrating Christ-centered leadership

The priestly shepherd and priestly king are here united in activity as the one who leads, guides and serves. With love and truth, the king discerns through wisdom what is rightful and needed, names what is, accepts responsibility and is accountable. The shepherd leads, guides, builds trust and serves. Bringing these two streams together creates a balanced approach to leadership. This is helped by finding sovereignty over ourselves, and by listening for the voice of the High Priestly King and Good Shepherd who leads us all through our destinies.

6. The Overflowing Cup – enthusiasm, joy and life in the work

Abundance... this is a word we hear often in our culture today. In the context of the Seven "I" Activities, abundance means becoming a source of life – life that flows out to other human hearts and that flows into our daily work. If the cup feels drained, or there is a feeling of burnout, then perhaps the work is being done out of a sense of duty, or there is a worry about disappointing people, or there is the thought we should be able to do everything. We can ask ourselves: does our prayer/meditative life nourish and give inspiritive* substance and joy? We then turn and begin to build a relationship to Grace, know that the "I" is free to fill itself with Him – with Grace of the Spirit — and fill the Cup to Overflowing.

7. Love for the Deed – not burden or duty nor attachment to outcome, but love for the deed itself

When working with Love for the Deed we often can see that we ourselves are the biggest blocks to a deed being done out of love and freedom. Has what we are doing become “all about me”? When we are working with something and the activity of the "I" is focused on oneself – reputation, accolades, acceptance, control, etc. – then we are inclined towards egotism. If the inclination is towards egotism, how can we be inclined towards God? The focus to work for the sake of the deed and not for one's value in the deed is the goal. Putting oneself aside and entering into the deed itself frees us up to ask for Grace to be a part of the deed. There go “I,” with all I am, into the work of God's grace.

**inspiritive: is a word that may have been coined by seminary director, Rev. Jonah Evans*

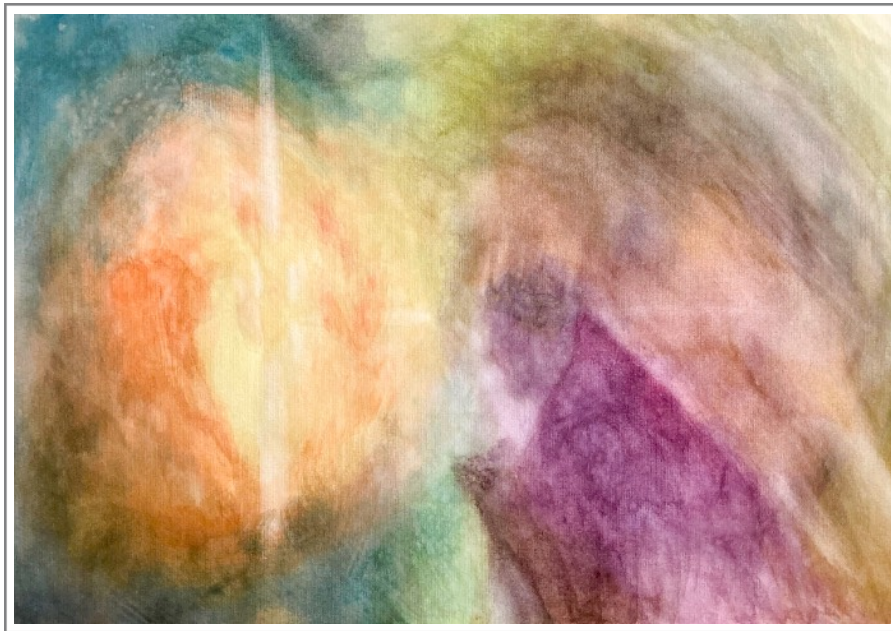
The above Seven Activities of the "I" give us seminary students a language for communicating with the directors about how things are forming and developing in our being. It also provides a framework to name challenges and to ask for much appreciated advice from the directors.

The inner work with the "I" activities is part of our effort to move towards God, through Christ, so that the "I" goes forth able to work more readily with the "Grace upon Grace" [John 1:16] we receive from Him.

Shepherding Kingliness

by Marc Fortin

Easterly outlined majesty fulfilling nights demand
Weight-bearing gaze reveals crystallized offering
Life-pierced beats echo safe towering fields
Mercy-enrobed flames guide all within
Safe haven rays crowning's gentle fleece
Calling near future graced deeds
Death unveiled sacrifice enthroned thy name



by Marc Fortin, *Walking with Christ* student

The Wounded Healer

Faith DiVecchio, "Knowing Christ" student, United States

What does it mean to be a wounded healer? To explore this image, we can first ask, what does it mean to be wounded? And when we understand our woundedness, what is the alchemy that transforms wounds into the activity of healing?

Our woundedness began long ago in the fall of humanity from paradise, in the beginning of separation from the divine and the whole spiritual world. This descent, in essence, is our fallen or wounded condition. Human earthly life since that time has been full of suffering. In Genesis 3:18, for example, we learn that the ground will produce thorns and thistles for us, a picture of ongoing struggle. The need was created also at that moment for a spiritual being to make a sacrifice for us in order to create the possibility of healing the wound.

Christ could only bring healing and redemption to us, in our wounded condition, through incarnating into a path of woundedness himself. To follow him is to walk this path with him and to welcome the wounds in our own being to work alchemically in us to become the places of strength. The Apostle Paul, in 2nd Corinthians 12:9, tells us that he has been taught by the Lord, "My Grace is sufficient for you, because your power is made perfect in weakness." Our suffering is also our potential. It is through pain that we can reach the greatest consciousness. When we feel our brokenness, we can then turn to the higher world and pray, "Dear Lord, give

me your strength to overcome this part of my fallen nature." When we ask for healing in a pure, humble way, we open a doorway to receive grace. These same areas become then our most beautiful characteristics, places where the light of Christ shines through us.

In the words of Novalis, "Whoever flees pain will love no more. To love is to feel the opening, to hold the wound always open."

Our wounds are part of what define us as unique individuals. Even Christ, after the resurrection, was

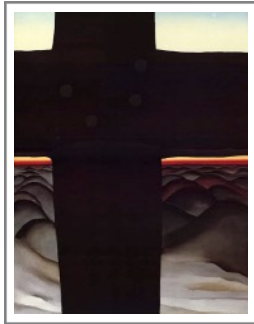
often first known by his wounds! (John 20) Our wounds, we might say, call us into existence in the incarnated world. It is a deep acceptance of entering the woundedness of the incarnated world which makes earthly life possible. The wisest parts of ourselves love the wounds and the challenging path through them. Every part of us that is broken, torn, ravaged by life and circumstance is a part in which we can come more tenderly into the compassion and gentle love of Christ, who seeks us in those places as we seek Him. These are the places that call us out of the banality of mundane life, out of our less than conscious places. They wake us up. These are gifts.

When we have said yes to our wounds, yes to our suffering, yes to the awakening this brings, the dawning and deepening awareness of the need for God's grace and love, we begin to be transformed by our wounds. This does not always mean the wound disappears. It more often means we pick up our pallet and walk. We learn to carry our pallet, our woundedness and fallen nature, as we learn to carry, with Christ, our cross. This is the heart of the Christian path, and it is this exquisite process in our own



by Sylvia Carrabias of the Distance Learning Program

being which opens the doors for us to witness, with insight and compassion, the wounds of others. It gives us the ability to bear suffering with others, to walk beside them, and to ask for the grace which transmutes the wounds into portals of light. In this age, this is healing. This is what is needed.



Georgia O'Keeffe

Self-Denial, Cross-Bearing, and Following

Dhruva Corrigan, "Walking with Christ" student, United States

As our term draws to a close and we enter the depths of Holy Week, I find myself pausing to reflect on the recent months. The local seminary endeavor here in Hillsdale has been and continues to be a great adventure. It is an experiment in student initiative and an exercise in the Michaelic impulse of our time: for each of us to take our spiritual formation into our own hands, and consciously and freely apply the forces of our soul to the tasks at hand.

The formation of the seminary program in Hillsdale is a good story. In the depth of winter-darkness, word came from our directors that the *Knowing Christ* and *Walking with Christ* programs would not be able to continue—realities of the material world in a pandemic were insurmountable. But, from within several students, a voice spoke, an annunciation within our souls of a new hope, a new will to take matters into our own hands and create a way forward. Many phone calls and emails followed, and in the midst of the Advent season, Christmas came early: a new light was born, a hope and plan to be able to continue our studies together in Hillsdale with the support of our directors from a distance.

And a month later, at the end of the Epiphany season, we came together: five students in the *Knowing Christ* program and two students in the *Walking with Christ* program, with the shared goal of continuing a process of formation that we had begun and committed ourselves to in the autumn. We moved through Trinity season worshipping together, studying together, and finding our way through the tides of social life, its joys and its trials. We entered Passiontide, donning for our service the black of the season, and have now come to the end of our winter term. Spring is upon us, and anticipation of the dawn of Easter grows in us.

But before Easter dawns comes a confrontation with the reality of Christ's death, the reality of the cross. This term's unique seminary experience brings to mind the words of Christ after revealing to his disciples the fate of the Son of Man: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16: 24-25) As ones who come after Christ, this threefold process of denial, cross-bearing and following is a picture of our discipleship. We must deny our own lower nature and cultivate our higher, moral nature, which exists in Christ; we must welcome as necessary and medicinal the events of our lives, from the most joyous to, especially, the most painful, as ordered by Christ as the Lord of Karma; and we must turn our wills to following Him to the cross and beyond, and to the serving of His community on earth.

This charge stirs us to feel in our souls the activity of the Archangel Michael, who would lead us to the Christ-power in our own depths. At this time of year, when we see and hear before us on the altar and perceive in the world-heights the activity of Raphael the Healer, we can receive into ourselves the forces of Michael the Warrior of Heaven from within, below, and behind. It

is the courage of Michael that can help us to bear witness to the event of Good Friday without turning away. Through his guidance we can grapple with the reality that “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” And, in doing so, we arrive at the reality that Christ is risen, and therefore we can lay ourselves in the grave, trusting in the resurrection through The Risen One.

And so it is, in our seminary endeavor. As we bear witness to the realities of the pandemic, and see brought to the forefront in our world the Raphaeleic processes of illness and medicine, we feel in our souls the call to a Michaelic task. With the guidance of our directors, the support of each other, and the will to serve Christ and follow Him as he instructed us, we continue to take up the work of forming our seminary program and moving forward in new and unique ways. We move into and through the festival of Easter, celebrating the resurrection of Christ that makes all renewal possible, and we look to the coming months of Spring when we can continue our work, study and formation together.

Reflections on the Year: Learning to Walk on Water...

Robert Bower, "Walking with Christ" Student, United States

The final, spring, in-person classes of the Seminary of the Christian Community in North America, located in Toronto, Canada, ended as planned in late March of 2020, just as the world-wide events connected with the novel coronavirus started to take hold. The echoes of uncertainty around this global pandemic reverberated in most of our lives for months on end. This unpredictability also impacted the plans of the seminary directors, the next group of potential priests and the continuing and new seminarians. A June, 2020, Whitsun trip to the Seminary in Stuttgart, Germany, and to the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, had to be scrapped. In-person priest candidate meetings with the Circle of Seven (the leadership of the Christian Community located in Berlin) were cancelled and alternative plans were developed, redeveloped, changed, abandoned and finally reborn.

And so, in December 2020, Patrick Kennedy and his family moved temporarily from Toronto back to Spring Valley, NY, USA to prepare for and receive the eight ordination preparation students. The preparation term began in January of 2021 embedded in The Spring Valley Christian Community church and its environs, with thanks for the support of teaching priest Rev. Paul Newton and his wife, Donna Simmons, and tireless and resourceful seminary operations coordinator Gail Ritscher. Even as the term began, it was still



Seminary students practice songs for the New Priests' Celebration

hoped that the actual ordinations could take place at the Seminary's new home in Toronto. This changed mid-stream, in light of a locked-down border, and the ordinations were celebrated magnificently in Hillsdale, NY, beginning on Ascension, May 13, 2021.

What takes place in such a time of preparation? Newly ordained priest Jeana Lee gives us a window:

"It did not feel like we were in school anymore; we were walking towards a threshold. One aspect that was particularly meaningful to me was connecting with the events of the founding and getting to know some of the founders through their letters and stories. There was a deepening and widening of prayer life as well."

Once the preparation group plan had been settled, questions of how to work towards continuing with the *Walking with Christ* students (of which there were five) and beginning with the new *Knowing Christ* students (of which there were, also, five) were addressed. Many options were explored, but none seemed truly tenable. Then, in early December, the seminary directors, Patrick and Jonah, decided to delay in-person learning for these students. After being faced with another cancellation/delay for in-person study, it was now the students who took initiative! New ideas were born among them and two locations for continuing forward came together organically. They shared these ideas with the directors, and classes began at these two locations in late January. The plan unfolded as follows...

Two *Walking with Christ* and five *Knowing Christ* students studied in Hillsdale, NY, USA (2 hours north of Spring Valley and 7 hours south-east of Toronto, Canada).

Knowing Christ student in Hillsdale, NY, Faith DiVecchio, explains:

"After the decision to delay the first- and second-year students until April or maybe even September of 2021, an upsurge of forces within the student body arose to keep trying to find something that could work. Together with Patrick and Jonah, a plan was hatched for the students in the US to come together in person in Hillsdale to study Sunday evening through Wednesday, followed by our group traveling to Spring Valley to attend classes there on Thursdays and Fridays (most of the students slept on the floor of the church on Thursday nights).

"For our opening circle in Hillsdale, Patrick came up from Spring Valley on a Sunday afternoon in late January. How amazing it was to meet him in person for the first time! The circle felt full of energy, as if something surprisingly substantial had landed in our midst in the Hillsdale 'sunroom', the winter light fading behind the tall pines as we talked about the seven activities of the priestly self and shared thoughts and questions towards the unusual semester journey we were beginning."

An amazing aspect about this effort was the offerings of The Christian Community Church which serves the Taconic-Berkshire Region (located in Hillsdale, NY), its priests, Rev. Carol Kelly and Rev. Franziska Hesse, and the local community, including several learned faculty members: Laura Summer (painting), Laurie Portocarrero (speech), Stella Elliston (eurythmy) and Hans Schumm (painting). Jonah also taught a class to the Hillsdale group via Zoom. And, Daniil Kalinov, an incoming seminarian, taught an on-line Greek class as well.

In Spring Valley, besides Patrick leading a couple of classes, Rev. Norah Minassian (Devon, PA), Rev. Paul Newton (Spring Valley), and Barbara Renold (speech) also helped teach the Hillsdale 7.

Three *Walking with Christ* students studied in Toronto at the Seminary with Jonah, with additional classes led by Rev. Susan Locey, Rev. Inken Contreras, Reg Down (eurythmy and speech), Regine Kurek (art), and Sylvie Roberge (speech).

Student Erica Maclennan described her experience in Toronto as follows: *“Being at the Seminary for a second year of studies was amazing! Not only because it looked as though it might be delayed a year, but because the richness and depth of material and learning was way beyond my expectations.”*

Somewhat precariously, but full of heart, we wound our way through a pandemic version of the seminary spread out over our three locations. Our three “campuses” were ever connected by the central sacrament of The Christian Community: The Act of Consecration of Man. This sacrament is almost a daily part of priest training, and, when considering all three locations, I believe it was celebrated each and every day from late January through Ascension. This was something done for more than just us; this was something done for the world.

HOMILY

Waves

One of the most beautiful places to be on a sunny day is the west coast of Vancouver Island. There, standing on the beach and looking out over the ocean, the eye expands into the vastness of sea and sky. The waves are a steady rhythm of sound and sight, ever rolling in to break against the sand. All is calmness and peace. Later in the day the line of ever-breaking waves has receded far from the dry sand and then a journey is needed, a journey across wet sand to reach the breaking waves. Even as we travel towards them, the waves are always rolling back towards us, towards the shore.

The Peace of Christ is like the ocean waves, always flowing towards us. In The Act of Consecration of Man, we hear the words of Jesus: “I stand at peace with the world, and this peace with the world can be with you, also, because I give it to you.” The comfort of Jesus Christ’s Peace is given to us all the time, it is ever there for us, always moving towards us. In our everyday lives we can turn and move towards this Peace, opening our hearts to Him. We can make a journey, like walking across the wet sand to reach the breaking waves. We can journey towards the altar during communion, where bestowed upon us is His gift of Peace.

A homily by Erica Maclennan, "Walking with Christ" Student, Canada

Seminary Students

2020-2021

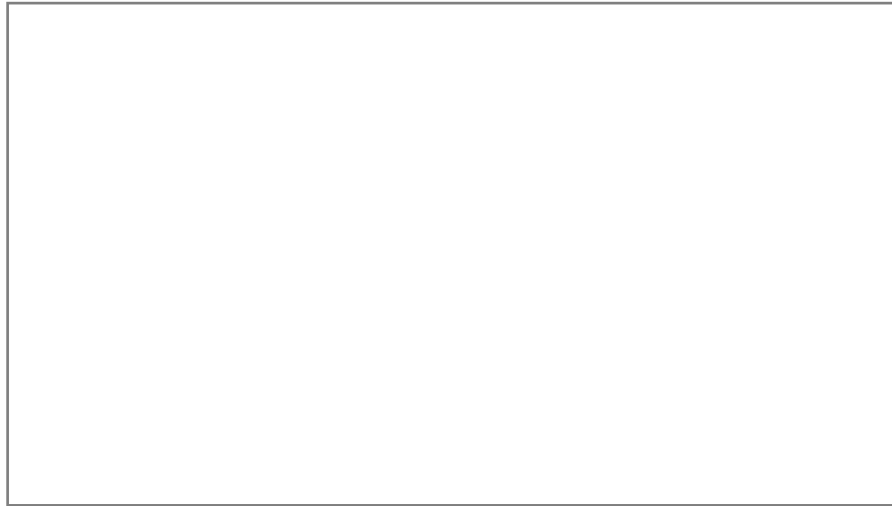
Back Row, left to
right: Tish Pierce
Faith DiVecchio
Teresa Bogdanovich
Dhruva Corrigan
Front Row, left to
right:
Caitlin Wallace French
Shannon Young
Claire Jerram



The 3 students
at the Toronto
Seminary:
Erica MacLennan,
Marc Fortin, and
Robert Bower



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