



Walkway to the seminary in Toronto, Ontario

Seminary Newsletter

of the Christian Community in North America

Dear Friends of the Seminary,

These past three years have been, in many ways, the most disrupted and outwardly challenging years in the life of the seminary in North America. And yet, they have also been easily the most fruitful. Since the spring of 2019 we have accompanied and supported 15 human beings to the sacrament of ordination.

Border restrictions and international public health mandates have made it extraordinarily difficult to bring the students and teachers to Toronto who have longed to come. Nevertheless, this past year was our most international ever, with no students from the United States in our “Knowing Christ” Program and two of our four ordinands hailing from overseas.

When we look back over the year, however, this is not what stands out. Whatever outer challenges we have faced, whatever differences may have existed between the students and directors in terms of culture and language, when looking back over the past year it is the inner experiences *in community* that stand out. The “aha” moments of enthusiastic insight. The

vulnerability of a prayer for those in need shared out loud. The first sermons risked, proclaiming an original experience of the working and presence of Christ in our world. The sharing of communion nearly every day. The formative, hope-giving power of this profound learning community here at the seminary - these are what stand out. And, of course, prayers answered.

One significant challenge this past year was losing the blessings that come from our treasured eurythmy and speech teachers here in Toronto, Reg Down and Silvie Roberge. Both of them had to step back from the work and we were not sure who could possibly carry these two essential parts of the training. It was another moment to pray. And, as has been the case through all of the challenges we have faced, the answer to our prayer wasn't long in the coming. Lori Scotchko, a member of the community and eurythmist trained in Spring Valley, NY, stepped in to teach *both* classes. The eurythmy the students did with Psalm 23 was a particular highlight for the year.

And, somehow, three of the seven members of the leadership for the world-wide movement were able to come to Toronto in May to celebrate the Sacrament of Ordination. Oliver Steinrueck, Toronto born, celebrated his first ordinations as a member of the Oberlenkung in Berlin. Over twenty priests were able to attend. It was a real festival full of awe, solemnity and joy.

Elements of all this *inner* side of the seminary are given voice in this newsletter. We write it to you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, in the hope that it might open up a window into the soul and spirit of the training, even if you cannot be here in person to experience it yourself.

In gratitude for your faithful support,

Patrick and Jonah

Patrick Kennedy Jonah Evans

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ORDINATIONS



The four new priests from left to right: Robert Bower (USA), Nigel Lumsden (Great Britain), Damien Gilroy (Australia) and Erica Maclennan (Canada)

Ordinations 13 to 15 of May, 2022

by Silke Chatfield, "Knowing Christ" student, England

Last week we all came together to celebrate the ordinations of four new priests. What a truly inspiring event it was!

People from far and near gave their willing hands and time to prepare for this weekend, from sorting out accommodation to setting up tables and chairs. It was community-building in action! Much was helped by the warm sunshine, the leaves and flowers that suddenly burst forth with vigour.

It was very heart-warming and inspiring to witness the ordination of our student colleagues to take on this task of becoming priests and shepherds of souls, the serious and solemn vow to work from Christ and with the help of the higher beings to guide people in becoming and growing into true human beings. And this journey started by stepping into the seminary and saying yes to being shaped by the directors and life itself!

The church and seminary became a meeting point of the leadership of the Christian Community, of priests from as far away as Australia, Peru, the USA, of families and friends and of members of the congregation in Toronto. An endless supply of good food and coffee and the warm weather made conversations and talks even more inviting.



Clockwise from top left: May sunshine at the reception; Patrick and Jonah at the 'gifting celebration'; one-year-old priests singing 'Always Look On the Bright Side of Life' (Monty Python) with updated lyrics for the newly ordained; Nigel Lumsden greeting our new Erzoberlenker, Joao Torunsky

Reflecting on the Journey to Ordination

by Damien Gilroy, newly ordained priest in Adelaide, Australia

I have many sparkling memories from the seminary in Toronto. All of them are in some way connected to the people and also to happenings and events. Altogether, these meetings and experiences have a coherence and common thread which gave a sense of an angelic being that lives there. The journey to Toronto had taken me from the height of Australian summer, with its average +30C (86F) temperatures, to the depths of Canadian winter, where people valiantly ploughed their way from day to day through metre-deep snow below -10C. This profound contrast to my home conditions was something I had longed to experience, and it was wonderful to finally be in it. A rugged strength and warmth in the Canadian spirit was something similar to the Aussie character. Coming to know and appreciate the spirit of North America was part of my harvest.

Before arriving, I was already familiar with Patrick and Jonah through the Patreon podcasts which I had tuned into from home in Australia. I had also become acquainted with my three

fellow candidates through our zoom-session meetings and working on the Creed of the Christian Community that had been going on through the previous semester. But there's nothing like really being there living and working together, which in post-lockdown 2022 was felt with quiet joy, relief and gratitude. Our group always felt grounded and whole as we contentedly walked the path which grew in its magnitude, meaning and depth as we journeyed toward ordination. The community of the seminar included our first-year brothers and sisters, who shared much of the heart space with us. In Toronto, the seminary shares the chapel with the regular Toronto congregation. We all felt the richness, the love and the support that flowed to us from so many of the wise elders of this community. Toronto was indeed a fine example of a congregation for us priests-to-be to experience.

What were the particular times or activities that stand out in retrospect? The daily morning Act of Consecration formed an anchor to each day and brought us together out of our deepest inwardness. And all the sacramental life that took place in that beautiful sacred space permeated us throughout the weeks and months. Each day ended profoundly with the Close of Day service, which sealed the day's substance with divine essence. Our study and instructional work never failed to bring us to thoughts we had never thought before and to seeing things with fresh perspectives. We all struggled with heart and mind through our initial attempts at writing and delivering sermons. We delved into the founding of Christianity as well as the founding of our Christian Community. There was so much that Steiner gave to the founders a century ago to base this renewed religious impulse upon, and which has been grist for all Christian Community priests since. Our group so often felt amazed and very grateful to our dynamic and illumined teachers, who led us to deeper anthroposophical, theological and religious understandings. Their teaching style was sensitive and attuned to our individual processes. Were the slightest spark or shadow of a question to cross our minds, Patrick or Jonah would intuit it, encourage us to express it and then respond fruitfully.

We were quite often wowed by the media savviness of our directors. On occasions, we were in the physical room with Patrick or Jonah whilst they simultaneously educated us and scores of zoom participants across the world. It was so wonderful having youthful and modern human beings leading the seminary. Tuned into social trends, popular culture, literature, film, music and the world at large. Our hearts were moved frequently by the honest, open and authentic human qualities of our teachers.

It was through the interweaving of all the above (and more) that we were inwardly and outwardly guided into the path to ordination. It was only possible to come through that threshold by feeling the closeness of a spiritual reality that lives in all the deep Christian content and which accompanied us each day and through all our seminary experiences. "The grave is empty, the heart is full." The Toronto Seminary 'delivered' us, and I feel so much gratitude.

I am now working as a priest in the congregation in Melbourne, Australia with three other priests, and will be inducted into the Adelaide, South Australia, congregation in November.

Coming to the Seminary



“Knowing Christ” Students: Marc Delannoy (Ottawa, CAN), Silke Chatfield (Bristol, UK), Claudia Pfiffner (Ottawa, CAN), Daniil Kalinov (Moscow, RUS), (Flanked by directors Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans)

by Marc Delannoy, “Knowing Christ” student, Ottawa, Canada

With hopeful hearts we turned to this year ahead – 2022 –, a year full of students in different moments of the training: four people preparing to be ordained in May; the “Knowing Christ” group, on site in Toronto, grasping new insights and grappling with new challenges; three interns living into communities with diverse needs in three different countries... We felt the mystery of *Epiphany* here at the seminary - students waiting and working in expectation, a Star shining in the darkness of night...

My fellow student Claudia Pfiffner and I arrived in Toronto on Friday, January 14th. We were both very excited and somewhat anxious about a presentation that needed to be given on Monday on work we had done from September to December with the gospels.

The drive was easy, the traffic light, the sun shining bright as we speeded south the five hours or so from Canada’s capital, Ottawa, to the big T. O. (Toronto, Ontario).

I had begun reading a book on the life of the Reverend Peter Jones, or Kahkewaquonaby (Sacred Feathers), an indigenous Methodist minister of the Mississauga tribe who had travelled preaching from community to community along the shores of Lake Ontario, including what was then York (Toronto), in the 1820s, 30s and 40s. Nothing was more precious for him than Christ’s redemptive deed, than Christ’s redemptive presence. With him I concurred, wholeheartedly.

Reading his experiences of long ago, tied as they are to the larger geography of the region (Mississauga, Etobicoke, Credit River, Yonge and Dundas Streets in Toronto, etc.), builds for me a bridge, through history (even down to the elementals of the land), to conceive of my life in the seminary of The Christian Community in Toronto, on the lands formerly of his tribe

(including Richmond Hill and Vaughan), where I will work and write, serve and speak, meditate and pray for the next six months.

Another bridge, through faith, leads me to the Seminary: reading the Gospel of Matthew, that of Mark, reading the Gospel of Luke, and then John, one per month from September to December 2021 and preparing the already mentioned presentation during Christmas, the Holy Nights, and Epiphany.

And a world-feeling pushes me also to the seminary and the inner transformation it will bring: the Pandemic, as if a figure standing before me, saying: "Who is your center? Your source? Who is your community?" To which questions I would answer to all three: Christ.

To my surprise, there was no snow, or barely, on the streets of the city when I arrived. After a pleasant visit to my eldest son's place downtown on Saturday, I had decided to walk from my billeted room to The Christian Community on Rutherford Avenue for the Sunday service. The walk would be an hour long, I knew, and pass through a park which would lead me to a ravine that I would follow for a good twenty minutes. And so, under a pristine sun, in numbing cold, I walked, uplifted all the way by the thought of the service I would attend.

The community was buzzing when I pushed through the doors and came in. It was greetings and hellos and nods and smiles. I knew some from the Distance Learning Programs, others through time spent here long ago and more recently. I felt an experience of completeness, of fullness, with the church filled, the music solemn and striking, with piano or a cappella, and three priests, together, feeding the divine-physical medicine.

Knowing full well that a major snowstorm was announced but, having thoroughly enjoyed the hour-long walk Sunday, I resolved to do the same on Monday for the first day of classes. From the downstairs window Monday morning, the storm did not look so bad. Still, a lot of snow, indeed had accumulated, it was plain to see: the little Buddha statue in the garden, so calm and meditative yesterday, was now under snow and, having completely disappeared from view, was still meditating, unperturbed, I'm sure.

When I ventured outside, well-prepared with a warm coat, new boots, and excellent mitts, I was happily surprised by the house's owner from whom I was renting my room. We had spoken about the imminent storm last evening; here she was shoveling, she said, for some time already (it didn't show). "It is so peaceful," she said, face beaming, cheeks red. Indeed, it was, with traffic sparse, and snow hanging in the air, swirling in eddies.

When I finally arrived at the seminary, having trudged through the winding streets and the park, having even helped a woman, in vain, her car stuck on the side of a major thoroughfare (she decided eventually to call a tow truck), having climbed through certain sections where snowplows had pushed important amounts of sleet and snow, I knew this seminary would be my warm haven in the cold of the world. The park I had walked through the other day where little snow was to be seen now had some, in parts, up to my knees! It had snowed an historic 36 cm (14 in.) that one day – the first day of the seminary in 2022.

SECTION I: STUDY AT THE SEMINARY

Servants of the Word

On Learning Languages at Seminary, by Patrick Kennedy

In the course of ordination preparation each candidate learns that they are called to become *servants of the word*. Our whole training is permeated by this calling. Eurythmy (visible, moved speech), creative speech, sermon class (discovering the Word at work in nature, in the soul and in the spirit) and a training in public speaking all serve this calling, for example.

And then there are the languages the spirit has chosen to work with in regard to the formation of scripture and the first expression of the renewed sacraments. It is also an essential part of the seminary curriculum to learn at least some of the basics of New Testament Greek and German.

Matthias Giles, priest in Washington D.C. and Daniil Kalinov, one of our students in the “Knowing Christ” Program, have been teaching our Greek courses the past few years and have managed to awaken a real love for this first ‘Christ language’. In the fall of 2021, both full-time students and distance students participated in Greek lessons. The following is a reflection from a distance learning student who took the course taught by Daniil.

God’s Language - *On the Autumn 2021 Greek Classes*

by Jonitha Hasse, Distance Learning Student and Friend of the Seminary

Last Fall we students in the Distant Learning Program (DLP) were invited to join the seminary Greek Class with Daniil Kalinov. As with any elementary language class, we learned grammar and vocabulary and translated simple sentences. But unique to this class, our translation exercises were taken from the New Testament. Daniil built the class up methodically, was compassionate when we struggled to keep up and always positive and encouraging.

The mental challenges were fun, like working puzzles with a group of friends. I continue to use my little Greek every week when contemplating the Gospel Readings. It helps me see through the familiar words to a new heart level.

For instance: Luke 1:38: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord."

Hand-maid is the Greek word "doula". Probably most birth doulas and death doulas are very aware of the holiness of the service they perform at the thresholds of heaven and earth.

Relating to Mary as doula, handmaid, humble servant can also inspire us in the holy deeds we are called to by the Lord.

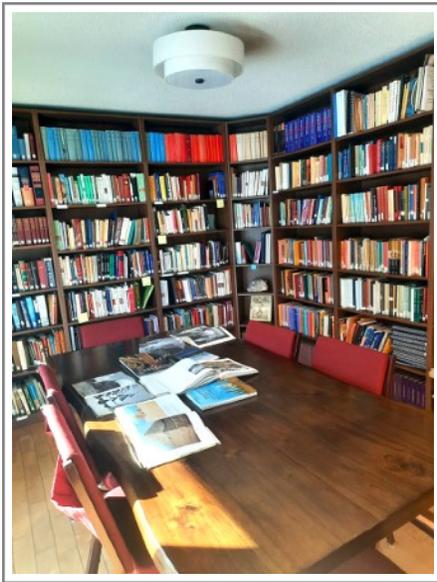
Light Bulb Moments

by Silke Chatfield, "Knowing Christ" student, Bristol, England

Stepping through the door of the seminary is like stepping into another world.

Outwardly, not so much is different; there is community, laughter and joy, an endless supply of good coffee and snacks and, of course, the daily celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man.

Inwardly it is a different story - for me, anyway. When we started the studies at home in the Fall trimester, we were all separated and only connected via zoom. We began by reading through the four gospels, reading one or two chapters each day.



This was a new experience for me. I thought I knew the gospels well, but I soon noticed that I never had read all the way through them. From September to December, I was slowly reading, chapter by chapter, starting with Matthew and finishing with John.

We were encouraged to deepen our understanding of the gospels by answering the questions: What stood out for us? Who is this Jesus Christ? How is he pictured in the four accounts? And, more importantly, we were encouraged to wrestle with the question "Who do *you* say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).

Viewed from four different angles, each unique in the way of describing the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ I thought that I had formed a complete picture of this Being. How wrong I was!!

When we were finally all gathered together in person here at the seminary, the real process of "Knowing Christ" had begun. Under the wise tutelage of Jonah Evans and Patrick Kennedy, it soon became clear that this "complete picture" I thought I had was a mere fragment of the whole story.

This realization dawned on me during the two classes called "Bible" and "Second Coming Themes" taken up every single morning. During them, I felt as if every moment was spent deepening our understanding of this being we call Jesus Christ beyond everything I had previously understood so far.

This process was accompanied by numerous "Light Bulb Moments."

A Light Bulb Moment for me is like weaving a large tapestry, working with different types of wool and yarn. There might be contrasting colours and the thickness of the yarn might be different. The back of this tapestry looks messy, knotted and tangled. Then comes the sudden realization that so far only the underside was perceived. Only by looking at the other side, a beautiful woven picture emerges and the seemingly messy strings make sense!

What were some of those Light Bulb Moments?

- that the two creation stories (The Seven-Day Creation of Genesis 1 and the Garden of Eden creation of Genesis 2) are NOT two descriptions of the same event.

- the story of the Son of Man as the Christ is already starting in Genesis with the forming of the earth and is ending in the Book of Revelation with the New Jerusalem!

-the profound discovery of the presence of Christ at the beginning of creation.

-the discovery that the Son of Man is this first Adam, the paradisaical blueprint for all of humanity!

These are just a few strings of wool that suddenly fell into place by looking at the whole of the tapestry through a careful study of the creation story, its translation from the Hebrew into English with different bibles and the rhythm and wording used.

We also studied the pre-earthly deeds of this Son of Man, thereby combining and interweaving the purely biblical aspect with the modern approach of anthroposophy. With this bringing together of old and new, there were many moments of wonder and indeed a deeper sense of reverence for this being we call Jesus Christ.

As I write this, we are only in our fourth week and already so much is happening inwardly. I am eager to explore more in the months to come; to really try to get to “know Christ” and get a sense of the whole story and have a good look at the beautiful tapestry.

SECTION II: SEMINARY AND THE ARTS

The Artistic Approach: Bible Studies at the Seminary

by Daniil Kalinov, “Knowing Christ” student, Moscow, Russia

This year, the “Knowing Christ” students took part in an entirely new weekly class, which is called, simply, “Bible” and is led by Rev. Patrick Kennedy. Below, you can find the reflections about one of the ways of engaging with the Scripture used in this class that can be summarized with the phrase – “an artistic approach”. Throughout the text, you can see examples of artwork the students created during their long-distance studies in the fall.

What does it mean to approach something as a creation of art? How do we engage art? To answer these questions, let us imagine ourselves in a gallery. If we look around, we can notice that the design of the room, the lighting, the colors of the walls, the frames—everything is there to emphasize the painting. It all makes the painting the center of attention. Everything draws us to it. Even if we would encounter a mundane object, say a pencil, on a wall, framed like a painting, it would catch our eyes much more than it does in the usual flow of life. So, the first thing that needs to happen for us to engage with artistic creation can be simply called



Tree by Daniil Kalinov

attention. One could say, we first need to grasp an object, register it as a certain unity. Now once this unity is grasped it often starts to work as such on our soul. A reaction, a first feeling-impression, positive or negative, is born in us as we look at the painting. For example, if some of us would actually see a framed pencil in a gallery, they could, at once, feel a certain repulsion: a desire to dismiss this as some sort of “meaningless modern art.” Usually, however, in our journey through the gallery, we do find a painting that we like. We want to stop and let that impression linger in our soul. At this point, we can feel quite satisfied with simply enjoying the effect the painting has on us. But, after a time, we can start to go deeper into its details. We stop at the individual forms, elements of composition, particular colors, different characters, and so on. Through this, we gradually start to be interested in the painting itself and not only in the feeling it produces in us. We start to contemplate the art-piece instead of simply enjoying it. This process, when we are really interested in the art object, can transform into a full-fledged study. Every historical detail about

it, every sentence the author itself and other people said about it, can become dear to us. We try to see and understand every part of the painting, which we first approached as a unity, and try to draw connections between them. In this process, we can sense that the initial impression that the painting had on us is slowly being extinguished; however, we also feel that the warmth of our honest selfless interest is helping to bring into being a newer, fuller, much more objective appreciation of it instead. Before we could only say that we like the painting, now we could talk about it for hours. We know every little aspect of it, can picture it lively before our mind's eye, maybe even draw it ourselves if we have the skill. All the inner lawfulnesses that stand behind the painting now live within us. We stop being mere spectators. Instead, we actively participate in that which brought this art object into being. Ultimately, by approaching something as art, we ourselves become artists.

But what about all other “mundane” things which we neither see in galleries, encounter on the pages of poetry books nor hear in the concert halls? How are they different? For sure, confronted with human artistic work it is easier for us to trust that there is another, deeper layer to reach. We know that the artist, especially if he is a master, tried to express in his work something which he had in his mind beforehand. But we can also be aware that with the natural objects, too, the whole thing is not given to us if we simply stare at them. Could we gain something by approaching them in the same way we approach art? Well, one can at least try and see what happens.

Such an attempt was, in fact, the part of the long-distance part of our (“Knowing Christ” students) studies in the fall. We all chose a tree in our immediate neighborhood. The next few

months we were to live with this tree as an art-piece. We observed it, drew or painted it, observed it once more, saw all the things we didn't see before, painted it again, and so on. And we could all feel that our relationship to the tree did change. It became much more alive for us. We started to feel something of the story, the gesture and the basic mood of our tree. And it is this inner reality of the tree which we allowed more and more to guide our work. Until we could also express it in a totally different medium of our words and concepts, as we finished our work by writing short poems about it.

However, this work was also to prepare us for something else. It was to help us develop the skill required for this kind of artistic engagement—the skill, which here in the seminary, we could apply to the text central for all of our studies: the Bible.

Is it such a strange idea to approach scripture—in addition to all other ways one could approach it—also as art? It does, after all, have a form of a literary creation: of a collection of stories, poems, songs and letters. But (as Robert Alter also points out in the introduction to his translation of the Hebrew Bible) it seems that many a person in our culture can hesitate to do so, for one or another reason. Some of us may feel that it is irreverent to approach it as we approach human creations; isn't it the Word of God? Or we might feel that the most obvious literal layer of the text is already the whole truth; are we some kind of Gnostics to seek for hidden truths? We may also sense that there is a danger in analyzing the text too much; the modern theologians did so, and for many the text crumbled in their hands. The naive understanding of the text disappeared, but there was no other to be found.

But if we take seriously what the Bible is and what it says about itself, this is the path we should actually take. Indeed, as far as its physical manifestation is concerned it is just a book, a literary work, a story. It is not the Word of God. But the spirit, who lives and breathes through it, is. It is the Creative Word, the Logos, the Christ. And it is He, as the story of two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) tells us, who can open the inner meaning of the Scripture to us. But it also requires some work on our part. We need to engage the text, analyze it, selflessly give ourselves to all the little details of it. And if we do so in His warm Presence, we can be sure that the text will not crumble, but receive newer and fuller life.

We, the seminary students, can confess to that. The last few weeks, Rev. Patrick Kennedy was leading us in the careful and slow study of the first four chapters of Genesis, concentrating mainly on the first one. And we could see how just looking at the language, the unique turns and twists of the narrative or its overall composition can shed so much light on this story. Suddenly, instead of an old well-known and well-worn tale, we were in the beautiful living world of meaning, insight and interconnections.

Tree

Written from within it

I stand, I live, I hope, I pray
That all that happened since I was a seed
Will, in the end, to my unfolding lead.
But you, who's free
The reins of your own destiny to wield,
Still, you can learn from me to yield
And trust that we are loved; -- so, come
what may.

by Daniil Kalinov

“Dying” and “Becoming” in a Process of Art

by Silke Chatfield, “Knowing Christ” student, Bristol, England

Art classes with Regine Kurek are always very inspiring.

We worked on individual paintings up until the Easter break, working with only one or two colours at a time. Slowly the third colour was added, exploring the Goethean colour wheel exercises. After the Easter break, Regine had something very different in mind for us. Rather than working on individual pieces, we were led into working on one large piece over a period of 5 weeks. This exercise was based on the “Seven Life Processes,” which are Breathing, Pulsing, Relating, Identifying, Refining, Enlivening and Balancing/Beautifying/Harmonizing.

We painted with a “homeopathic” amount of colour pigment and using only one of the secondary colours and spreading it in only a few places. This was to allow the colour itself to be fixed onto paper, but without the restriction of confining it to a certain form or image. We then introduced the primary colour, using the same process. “Breathing” and “Pulsating” those two colours allowed them to come alive, and we noticed a forming of a relationship between them. When we came back to the paintings, Regine encouraged us to find places where the colours themselves wanted to come out more. Adding more of the same colour to the already existing ones we could experience a gentle transition from “being” and seeing “what is” to more defined forms, but still refraining from giving it an outer, defined form. Some colours became dominant, while others almost disappeared!

Gradually, more colours were introduced and eventually the whole paper was filled. As we were working together on a very large piece, we then had to consider what the other students did on their sides. Meeting the other and mutually finding a harmony between the edges, an overlapping and giving and receiving of their colours occurred. We had to step back often and see the paper as a whole before coming back to work in a certain place. Others perceived differently from me and brought in their own seeing.

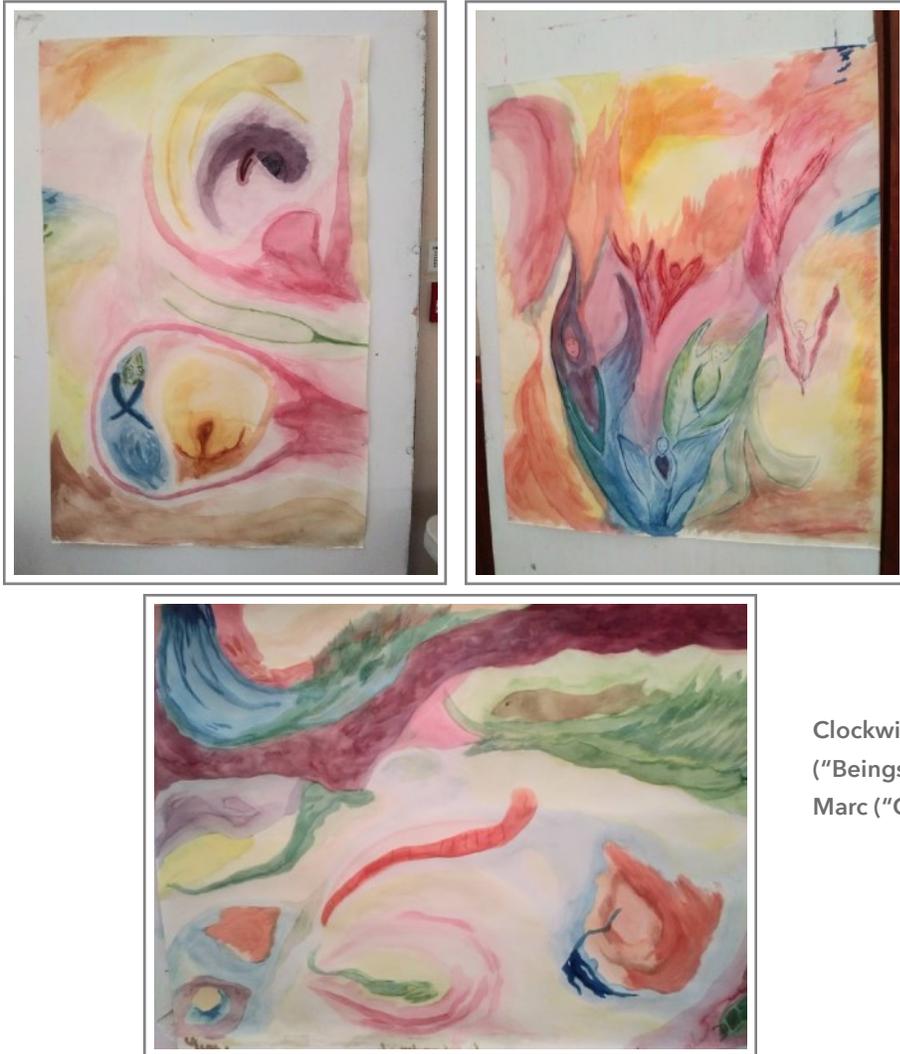
The last step in the process was to actively step back and take in the whole painting and let it speak to us. What wants to come out of the forms we created? Is there a motif somewhere?

And then the big piece of paper was cut up into three smaller ones. Working on our own and having listened to what the others saw, we then painted definite motifs. It was quite exciting to find the images in the painting itself and bringing it to a reality by defining it.



“What wants to come out of the forms we created?” Silke’s section, June 2022

At the very end we brought our three pieces together again. Trying to find the “right” way to fit everything into a whole again, we created a beautiful triptych. What started off with “not knowing” and went through the process of constantly looking for what the colours themselves want to reveal. It was a constant “dying and becoming,” forms we thought that were there disappeared and others arose out of themselves. It was certainly a new, wonderful experience.



Clockwise from left: Daniil (“Beings”), Silke (“Angels”) and Marc (“Critters and Sprouts”)

Seeing the triptych at the end we were invited to seek a name for this painting. Considering the different elements in the painting as a whole, words appeared: “Prayer”, “Creation” and “Heart”! We named it “Prayer as the Heart of Creation.”

SECTION III: INNER ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING

The Shape of the Priestly Heart

on Spiritual Formation at the Seminary, by Patrick Kennedy

When the tanks began rolling into Ukraine in February, everything changed. The beautiful joy and excitement that belong to beginning the training gave way to a profound earnestness and deep wondering: *what is happening?* It struck particularly hard here in our learning community, as one of our students comes to us from Moscow. The war couldn't remain a distant reality because someone we hold dear was deeply shaken and personally affected.

During that week, our morning course focused on the profound path Jesus took from his youth up to the moment of his baptism in the Jordan river as related by Rudolf Steiner in the lecture series known as "The Fifth Gospel".

The essence of this 'additional', new gospel is the story of how a human heart was shaped—from within and without—in such a way that it could become the bearer of the heart of the divine creator. The story of Jesus's life leading up to his baptism in the Jordan river reveals a heart made of the most profound and deep-going *compassion*. Indeed, it is even described in the fourth lecture how it is precisely *this* element in Jesus which caused those who met him at that time to see in him a *priest*:

"...the place of worship had long since been abandoned by the priests. And Jesus heard the people wailing: The priests have abandoned us and the blessings of the sacrifice do not come to us and we are leprous and sick because the priests have abandoned us." Those people cried out to Jesus. Infinite love for these aggrieved people flared up in his soul. The people must have noticed something of this infinite love; it must have made a profound impression on those lamenting people who had been abandoned by their priests and, as they believed, by their gods. And then arose, instantaneously, in the hearts of most of them who saw the expression of infinite love on Jesus's face, the need to say: "You are the new priest sent to us." - October 5, 1913, Oslo

The nature of priesthood as expressed in Jesus is the infinite, loving compassion that shone in his face: "infinite love for these aggrieved people flared up in his soul." With what was happening in Ukraine shaking us open already, these images and words fell deep into the hearts of our students. And they would hear their directors say: it is the heart of Jesus, formed by his *suffering with the world* that guides us into the shaping of our own priestly heart. From this heart every priest can honestly pray, "my heart be filled with your pure life, O Christ."

It is therefore a core aspect of the training to give time and attention to the 'shaping' of our heart. Our twice weekly course on 'shepherding' is such a time. There we take up the spiritual disciplines of prayer, the cultivation of reverence, the practice of self-reflection, moral development and meditation. In support of this, each student has individual meetings with

one of the directors at regular intervals. But all of the time spent in worship, in hearing the gospel and in turning our attention to the person of Jesus Christ is the most formative work we do and permeates nearly every day.

On War, Hate and Violence

by Daniil Kalinov, “Knowing Christ” student, Moscow, Russia

This article is partially based on the article which the author of the present text wrote in Russian on February 24th, when the Russian troops invaded Ukraine. It also integrates into itself the themes, which the “Knowing Christ” students have discussed in the morning course, “The Fifth Gospel and the Way of Jesus”.

There are many works of art that can be called “anti-war.” It seems that every major conflict in the 20th century brought with it a host of films, books, poems and musical pieces that would like to help digest such a traumatic experience. Their goal is to understand why such a terrible event could happen, how could we make meaning of it, and what can be done so that it doesn’t repeat itself. And, as the current events show, we still have a long way to go before we can reach satisfactory answers to such questions. So, in this essay, I would like to share my thoughts on these topics, starting with one particular “anti-war” film. This film is *Come and See* by Elem Klimov. It depicts, in an almost hyperrealistic style, the atrocities that have happened to the civilians in Belarus under Nazi occupation. And at first it can seem that this is what the film aims to do: to simply confront the viewer with the reality of these events. However, what reveals the true genius of the director is the final scene, which goes far beyond recreating the events in a documentary fashion. And this scene is what I would like to zero in on.

During the whole film, we experience the passing events through the eyes and ears of the main character—a teenager named Flyora. Together with him, we witness all the horrors of life in the occupied Belarus, culminating with the burning of the whole village. We feel how anger and hate grow in his soul as a result of what he undergoes. Just before the last scene of the film, we also observe him becoming a witness to how the partisans deal with the captured Nazis and release their anger in violence. And then Flyora sees a portrait of “Hitler the Liberator” lying in the ditch. He raises his rifle, which he hadn’t yet used during the entire film, and shoots at the picture of him, whom he understands to be the source of all evil which poured into his land. It is as though he sets his heart on erasing Hitler out of existence, and all the events that occurred because of him together with it. And this is what starts to happen. Suddenly, the film breaks the normal chain of events, and we see the documentary footage of the 20th century events in rewind. Each time the figure of Hitler appears in the chronicles, Flyora shoots again. And each shot takes us further and further back in the life of Hitler. First, we see the scenes of the second world war, then his rising to power in post-war Germany, his service in the German army during the first



Picture of Adolf Hitler as a child

world-war, his youth, and, finally, a photo of his mother holding a young child in her hands. Here Flyora stops, he cannot take a shot. The camera zooms in on his face. His countenance appears as though a deeper, fearful truth was revealed to him, and tears start to flow from his eyes. He looks into the camera, into our eyes. It is as though he would want to imprint this revelation onto our souls as well.

What did he realize? How did it change him? And can it also change us? To me, it seems that this realization has to do with the question concerning the source of evil in the world. At first, Flyora was gripped with the certainty that Hitler is the cause of all the pain and suffering he witnessed. However, going back through Hitler's whole biography, he found an innocent-looking child. A child, which doesn't seem to be predestined or pre-inclined towards evil, any more than any other child in the world. This realization, that no man is inherently a source of evil, can at the same time fill a human heart with horror and hope. With horror, because it takes away the hope of defeating evil in the outward way. Indeed, when we are confronted with evil the first, natural reaction is to isolate, punish or destroy the evil-doer. While we believe that the evil-doer is the origin of evil, we also believe that by destroying him, we could destroy the evil itself. But once we see that this is not so, we lose the aim for our anger and discontentment. Instead of being embodied in a particular person, the evil now lurks around us like a terrible ghost. All the tools we had in our hands to fight it dissolve into dust. But amid the darkness and fear into which such a realization can plunge us, we can start to feel the glimmer of true hope. The old way of dealing with evil shows its impotence, but was it solving the problem anyway? When we were filled with hatred and used violence against "the evil person", what was happening to our own heart? Were we not becoming the source of the same evil we tried to fight? But now, realizing the fundamental problem of this method, we have the hope of discovering an approach that actually might work. However, to find this other approach, we first need to reach a truer answer to the core question—what actually is the source of evil? What are we fighting with?

Here the common use of words in our contemporary culture can be of use. It often happens that in order to discredit or to condemn a certain person, people nowadays, compare him or her with Hitler. One can even see how sometimes both sides of the same conflict call each other's leaders with the name of Führer. It is certainly the case that we connect this name with the utmost evil, with irrational hate, cold-blooded murder and all kinds of war crimes. But how much of the real historical Adolf Hitler do we mean when we use his name almost as a curse? Are we much more using it as a placeholder for "the person capable of the most horrible actions"? When we compare someone with Hitler, don't we see the same mode of thinking, the same sentiments, the same pattern of acting in them? And so, it becomes clear that what we are really pointing to in such instances is that they share the same spirit. They embody the same archetype. We may have seen this archetype expressed in the clearest way in such personalities as Hitler, and so come to attach their personality to it. But this spirit, by its very nature, possesses an ideal existence, and so every human being has their share in it. It is for this reason that Elem Klimov initially gave a different title to his film. It was—*To Kill Hitler*. But, as

the film shows, this can not be done in an external way. Later, Klimov himself said that what he meant by it is the need to, primarily, kill “Hitler” within ourselves; to stop that spirit from laying hold of our own soul.

But, still, how am I to fight it? Now I see how, when I confront violence and hatred in the world, the same spirit that inspired them reaches into my heart to awaken hatred and condemnation within me. I know that by following the urge to answer violence with violence, I become a puppet of the same monster. Once I truly realize that, the anger and hate in me run out of fuel. But what they leave behind is utter helplessness. I see humanity in its weakness, its total impotence to stop the evil raging in the world. This spirit was here before each one of us. It is much stronger than any individual. How then can I condemn those who succumb to it? And is there anything within me that could oppose it? It seems that the only thing left to me is to be a witness to this world-tragedy.

And what is there actually nothing else one can do about it all out of one’s own power? This is, at least, one answer, which Rudolf Steiner’s lecture cycle under the title “The Fifth Gospel” seems to give us. In these lectures, Steiner is shedding a bit of light on that part of Jesus’s life, which the other gospels almost entirely omit. He describes what kind of experiences Jesus had to have to be ready for the baptism in the Jordan; the path he had to take to become the vehicle of the Christ. And this path proves to be one filled with suffering and helplessness.

We hear how during his youth, Jesus encountered different religious-spiritual streams, which were trying to help mankind find their way back to the divine. And in each case, he came to the same conclusion: their attempts are fruitless. Even more than fruitless – they have actually become the tools of the evil spirits that prey on humanity. He saw how every attempt to lift humankind out of the Fall only led it further down. More than that, he also understood that neither he nor any other human beings could do anything about it. And in the midst of this utmost helplessness and loneliness, the spirit of Christ descended on him. The only thing he was able to do was to become the true witness to the state of humankind, no matter how much it had hurt him. But this witnessing became a prayer, a cry of help to the World-Spirit. And someone much loftier than Jesus came to help. Can he also come to our aid? We can, at least, ask for that out of the powerlessness we find ourselves in. We can do the only thing left for us —pray. And perhaps one can feel the grace of such a prayer being answered. One can start sensing the rays of compassion which stream into the tragedy that one is witnessing. And one’s heart can start to participate in their activity. Until, finally, love is born within this heart. Love, which one has not produced, but which was given through pure grace.

And this love is the only thing that can prevail against the spirit of hate, violence and evil. It is not a weapon, which can be used to outwardly attack it. It is a creative force that fashions reality, which is much fuller and stronger than anything hate can produce. After all, it is Christ, the spirit of love, who has already won the fight for us. And he gives his love as a free gift to anyone who really asks him, who stretches his entire being towards it. Both love and hate have a capacity to spread themselves in the world. The actions that are full of love soften and open

the human heart, so that it too can receive love into itself. Hateful and violent actions ignite hate in return. But hate ultimately seeks to destroy itself. Its fruits are meaninglessness and death. Love, however, creates true life and gives meaning to everything, even death. What gives us nourishment, when we look into the darkness of history? It is the stories of love, forgiveness, self-sacrifice that really feed our soul, not the tales of hate, revenge or violence. And the darker the circumstances, the more radiant is the light of this love. Hate cannot survive the test of time; it perishes into nothingness; but love remains eternally.

Of course, it would be utopian to imagine that humanity could just abandon all violence in one moment. In certain situations, where violence is used, there seems to be no other way to respond except with some degree of violence. When people close to me are under threat of physical destruction, it appears necessary to use physical force to eliminate this danger. But even in such situations, let us be conscious of the spirit we are allowing to enter into our conduct. Let us not embrace violence as something good or exemplary. But let us be aware of the tragedy of the fact that we have to use it at all, of the consequences it can lead to. This awareness itself can become the safeguard of using violence beyond the actual need. It leaves a free space in us, which can not become possessed by hate—door for love to enter even in the midst of conflict.

And no matter what the circumstances are, there always is an opportunity for love to come into the world, one way or the other: be it through a smile, a sentence of support or a truly understanding ear; through our relationship with our friends, family and colleagues or through an offering before an altar. There always is a part of us we can lift up, so that the divine love can pour into us - and from us pour into the smallest of our deeds, so that out of them a new love-filled world is built by the careful hand of him who orders our destiny. The world where there is no more war, hate, violence and suffering.

SECTION IV: LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Participating in the Act of Consecration - Once a Month or Twenty-Four Times a Month

by Claudia Pfiffner, "Knowing Christ" student, Ottawa, Canada

I am a member of the Ottawa affiliate of the Toronto Christian Community congregation. Once a month, Reverend Susan Locey from Toronto visits Ottawa and celebrates the Act of Consecration of Man. The service is held in a rented room in an old high-school building where Polaris Waldorf School is also housed. I wondered what the difference would be for me between attending the Act of Consecration once a month compared to twenty-four times a month.

While studying at the seminary I have experienced the service almost every day. It is held in the beautiful, large, and purpose-built chapel of the church building of the congregation of the Christian Community in Toronto.

When I step into the chapel in Toronto, I immediately feel a quiet and reverential mood. I find a chair to sit down, candles are lit, the priest enters with the servers, books and chalice are carried in, the service begins. The priest speaks clear and meaningful words into this sacred space, and it seems that he or she is speaking something into reality.

The service develops in four parts. The first part is the gospel reading. We listen to the word of God, it fills our thinking and feeling with the divine message. After hearing the message, we may feel inspired to offer up our soul forces of willing, feeling and thinking in the service of Christ. If we are to follow Christ, we may feel a need for self-transformation coming about. There is also a transformation happening with Christ, as we pray in the transubstantiation that he may "hold sway" in bread and wine. Finally, in the communion we share a meal with the divine world.

Through this four-part Act of Consecration of Man, guided by the priest and followed along by the congregation, the chapel space becomes more and more filled with spirit. It finds its culmination in the union with the divine when the community ingests the body and blood of Christ. And then, suddenly, the service is over, the priest and servers leave, candles are extinguished, and the chapel room feels empty again.

But wait a minute.

Observing myself carefully, I notice that after having been witness to this service I feel different than when I first entered the chapel. Something has been flowing into me. My soul space feels full and substantial, which is different from an hour ago. I feel peace, joy, and strength that permeates my body and my life as I leave the chapel and go about my day.

If we want to receive this 'water of life' we have to simply put ourselves into the stream of it. "Christ in you!" spoken by the priest and "May he fill your spirit!" the response offered by a server becomes like a river that brings us this living water.

To experience the Act of Consecration of Man twenty-four times a month is like living in a waterfall compared to living in a trickle.

Chronos and Kairos

by Claire Jerram, intern student in Stourbridge, England

As a Waldorf teacher in the early grades, I often wished for more time to prepare for the many hours with the students. My colleagues in the middle school complained of the opposite problem: enough time to prepare, but too little time with the students. Yet even



Group painting by "Knowing Christ" students

they had two hours a day. Compared with a teacher, a priest may not spend two hours with a congregant in the space of several weeks.

The ancient Greeks recognized two different types of time: Chronos, the linear, quantitative unfolding of time, and Kairos, a season or specific moment, qualitatively different from other moments.

In my practicum for the Christian Community, I have noticed this difference between a teacher's and a priest's approach to time. While a teacher can use both Chronos and Kairos as tools, the priest must seize the Kairos.

From a quantitative point of view, the priest has very little 'chronos' to work with people. A teacher has a lot of it, sometimes too much. School is the main activity of a child's life and they spend about almost half their waking life at school. Group religious life is not the main activity for most people of our time. It happens once a week or maybe twice, to enrich both work and play. Conferences and summer camps give a bit more. But what is possible in these brief hours?

The first parable in the gospels tells of a sower who sowed his seed in many different terrains: the path, the rocks, the thorns, and the good soil. Christ then tells the disciples that the seed is the Word of God. Sometimes it lands on the path. The half-conscious coming and going of everyday life makes the ground too hard. Our flitting thoughts, the birds of the air, gobble them up. Or it lands on the rock, sprouts for a time, but the shallow soil lacks the moisture needed to sustain interest in a dry spell. Or it lands in the thorns, we have some space at first, but greed and other cares of life crowd out the seedling. Occasionally, the seed lands in good soil. The one seed, though quantitatively small, can produce fruit one hundredfold.

One hour spent in the Act of Consecration, or the ten-minute conversation with a fellow seeker, can influence the hours spent doing other things, with surprising power. The time that we carve out of our busy lives for cultivating religious life, painstakingly weeding out the distractions, makes for good soil. Sometimes a crisis will burn out the briars, leaving the ground clear. An illness, a crossroads, the approach of death, can all create good soil in our souls. These are Kairos, the season, the opportunity, the ripe moment that touches the eternal.

Soil is made of organic and inorganic matter: humus, and rock. What a blessing that every moment is not a life-changing encounter. Sometimes the seed falls on rock because it needs to. We must sleep through many of our Chronos hours on earth, though we are technically awake. "Humankind cannot bear very much reality," writes T. S. Eliot. But what a blessing to be on the priesthood path, and to orient our lives towards those moments of Kairos, when a ray of spirit reality can shine through.

SECTION V: FINAL PROJECTS AND THE THEME FOR THE YEAR

Christ and the Lamb of God

Reflections on the final projects for the “Knowing Christ” Program students

The theme of this past year has been, “The Return of Christ in Our Time and Christ as the ‘Lord of Karma’”. For this reason, we have delved deeply into the mysteries of karma in the language of the Bible: the world of sin and forgiveness.

To deepen this learning, the “Knowing Christ” students were each given a topic to research themselves: ‘The Passover Lamb’ (Silke Chatfield), “The Scapegoat” (Daniil Kalinov) and “The Lamb of Atonement” (Marc Delannoy). They were each challenged to make use of everything they learned over the whole year, to search deeply on their own into the Bible, meditating on these particular riddles and questions, and then to teach and proclaim to others what insights and inspirations they themselves had come to through the help of the Holy Spirit.

After a ‘rough draft’ of a presentation to their fellow students and seminary directors, they taught a whole class on their topic to the visiting group of Distance Learning students during the last week. Jonah and I were both thoroughly encouraged and full of joy to experience how they each had broken through to original insights and shared much more than just a ‘theoretical’ content, but proclaimed a deeply religious one.

What follows are some reflections from their own experiences with this project. - PK

Reflecting on the Scapegoat

by Daniil Kalinov, “Knowing Christ” student, Moscow, Russia

For me, working on and delivering my project to the audience was one of the highest points of the whole seminary experience this year.

On the one hand, I was immensely grateful to our directors for the choice of the theme. It was very profound for me to submerge myself in the images of “scapegoating”-rituals (which was my topic) and to see how those rituals still live on, though unconscious, in human culture; how easy it is for us to blame the other for the problems we see, instead of taking on responsibility for them ourselves. It was also especially important for me to grapple with these questions of guilt and atonement in the light of the ongoing world-events. And in the end, I was also able to see clearer how the life of Christ, the deed of Christ, his experience of being a scapegoat can become the true medicine for that sickness in our humanity.

But on the other hand, even more profound and new was the experience of trying to bring this content to the Distance Learning Program students in the form of a teaching. Teaching itself wasn’t new for me. Indeed, I had a number of experiences with teaching adults, both when I was a Ph.D. student and taught mathematics to undergraduates and while I was

teaching ancient Greek to seminarians for the past two years. However, there is a huge difference between teaching math or Greek and presenting a purely religious topic. Of course, one's personality as a teacher is always important, but with such topics as teaching a language, for example, the personality is quite external to the content that is being presented and is more at work in the way it is brought. With a religious topic, however, if it is not a purely abstract theological presentation, what is being said has much more to do with the speaker: it is, one could hope, the direct religious experience of the teacher that he is speaking out of. This experience, of course, is not purely subjective, far from that, but it has to be brought from the heart, from the being of the speaker, if it is to warm the hearts of the listeners and become an experience for them. And this is, of course, quite a challenge to accomplish! So, trying to do that, after seeing our directors do that every single day, was a very formative, enlightening and inspiring experience.

The Lamb of Atonement

by Marc Delannoy, "Knowing Christ" student, Ottawa, Canada

The last assignment of the seminary year for our "Knowing Christ" group was to prepare a 45 minute talk in which one of three animal-imaginings from the Bible would be explored as a theme. I received "The Lamb of Atonement," a subject unknown to me. Where would this lead me? What content would be mine to discover? My research led me to consider the nature of sacrifice. The following is one way to understand it.

In ancient times, pagan sacrifices on the altar, that is, the letting of blood through the ritual killing of an animal, was done to appease the gods' anger or irritation towards men and their foolish actions. Man, trivial and unworthy to these gods, would need to offer them something of value: the life of a worthy animal from one's flock. But the God who revealed Himself to Moses was seeking a different relationship with humanity. From His lofty plane, He sought to come closer to the earth and to relate ultimately to all the peoples of the earth through one people, Israel, chosen by Him. In short, the sacrifices and all the rules issuing from them had to do with rectifying the effects of immorality in order to interact with God. Offering a sacrifice was meant to change one's moral disposition to attune oneself to Him.

A special sacrificial service was instituted by Moses as the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur in Hebrew). It was a once-a-year sacrifice for all of Israel. What one sacrifice was for a single member of the Chosen People to atone for a wrong, the Day of Atonement was to be for all members of Israel: a single day of sacrifice to right all wrongs that had not been atoned for during the year.

During my research, I came across an article by Rudolf Frieling that hinted at the significance of sacrifice. Frieling showed how the Exodus text deliberately evoked Chapter one of Genesis by revealing a sevenfoldness in the architecture of the Tabernacle. This intrigued me, and I mapped out the Days of Creation as well as their corresponding elements in the Tabernacle. Frieling particularly highlighted the Sixth Day: the creation of the warm-blooded animals and

of Man. This day—showing such a close rapport between animals and man—corresponded to the Altar of Burnt Offerings of the Tabernacle! A burnt offering was an offering completely burnt on the altar as opposed to partly consumed with the animal's meat shared in a ritual meal. Nothing was kept to be eaten, everything was offered up to God.

After exploring how all of this was reflected in the imaginations contained in the Genesis scroll, chapters 1-3, I finally looked at Jesus to see how “The Lamb of Atonement” title related to him. After many deliberations, I decided to follow John's story of Holy Week. It offered me a fruitful sevenfoldness again that could be compared to the Days of Creation and to the Tabernacle architecture. What occurred on the sixth day of Holy Week according to John? The Crucifixion! As the sacrifice done at the Altar of Burnt Offerings was a complete consummation of the sacrificial victim, so Jesus gave completely of his life on the cross.

Though I struggled to find an ending for the talk, I found it, at last, in John's “Revelation”. We can read there about the deed of “The Lamb”: “Persons from every tribe and language and people and nation...you have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God” (Rev. 5:9-10). Who is this Lamb with seven eyes (Rev. 5:6), but Christ? The same one who's essence shone through in the sacrificial cleansing of sin at the Tabernacle shines through Christ Jesus's redemptive act on the cross and offered anew in every Act of Consecration of Man. We can contemplate this lamb as we look at the altar and consider the seven lit candles. They can become for us the seven eyes of The Lamb, seeing us, as we devote ourselves to him in the light of the New Jerusalem.

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