

North American Newsletter

Early Summer, 2023

Gold in the River of Life

Rev. Gisela Wielki

A river in the mountains may look like any other mountain stream until one day someone unexpectedly discovers in a ray of sunlight its gold. And the rush is on to claim it.

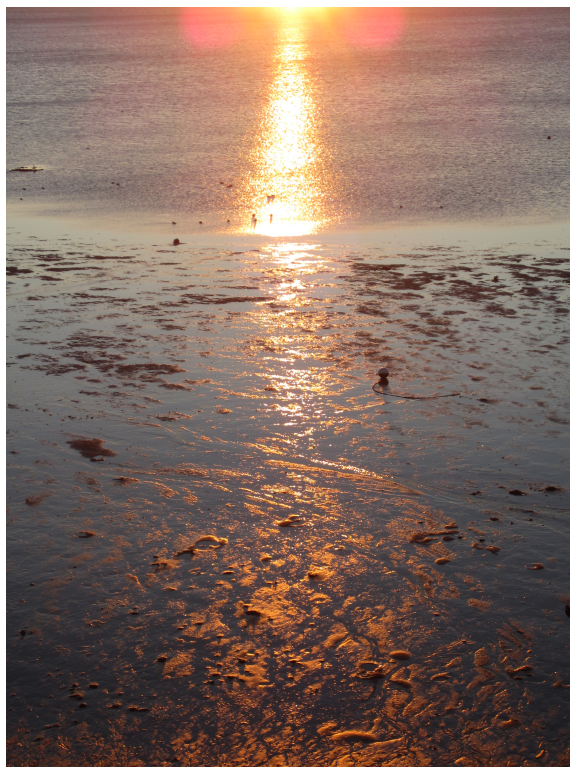
From birth to death we are selflessly carried and nourished by nature's stream of life. It is the same life for all creation. We draw our life from the same source our neighbor does. It is what it is, natural life.

But as if we knew, that gold may be found in the river of life, few people are content with natural life only. And out of some deep discontent the question arises: where is the real life to be found? Where is the gold? Where in time is eternity to be found?

To seek for something beyond natural life, beyond our biological existence is a sign of our humanity and so is over and over the recognition: I could have done better. Animal life and plant life is what it is. Our life is what we make of it, out of our own moral choices.

And if gold is found by the angels in the river of our life, it is because of a kind word, a loving heart, a simple gesture of good will on our part towards our fellow human beings, towards all of creation.

But the angels do not claim the discovered gold. Like the ray of sunlight, they just reveal it.



The Seven Heavens — a retreat weekend in Parrish, Florida

Report by Sabrina Dalla Valle

The Seven Heavens Anthroposophical weekend retreat in Parrish, Florida drew in folks not only from all of Florida, but also from: North Carolina, Colorado, Tennessee, Basel (Switzerland), Maine, New York, and New Hampshire. The wind was unusual that Friday morning. It blew in from the Sahara Desert, swirling from all directions. The spirit of breath set the tone for Rev. Patrick Kennedy's all *in-spiring* talks on our journey after death through the planetary realms into our new birth. As we would learn, our earthly life is fully woven into the fabric of our heavenly journey. What we came away with is knowing that Christ, the Sun Being, has to be found on Earth in order to find him in the sphere of the Sun on our journey after death – and there are *many* ways to do so! The heart does the constant work of uniting Heaven and Earth.

We gathered at DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center nestled in an old Florida forest of bearded oaks; tall, rounded slash pines; and rugged cabbage palms. This 97-acre wilderness campus centers around a large spring and edges on the broad, slow, curving Manatee River.

The weekend was rich with activities that put to practice the insights from Patrick's talks. Felicia Campbell led our 63 voices through songs about the night, the dawn, and those who have passed over. Being a model of harmony within herself, she carried us into a three-part choir with immediacy and effortlessness. Carol Ann Williamson carefully guided all of us in concentric groups through Eurythmy forms to live this center to periphery dance of integrated life – along with fluid and heartfelt pianist accompaniment. Sabrina Dalla Valle brought a writing exercise linking 'verse' to 'universe' in a practice of Sun Beingness. Participants were led from their individual morning writing into small afternoon groups where they worked to unify each voice into a collective verse. We ended the night with a talent sharing, listening to the verses written in the day, original guitar songs played by different participants, jokes, and poems.

On Sunday, Herbert Hagens, our First Class reader, shared his grandfather's Anthroposophical Society cards – one signed by Rudolf Steiner, and the other by Ita Wegman. (These are the closest things we have to relics in this movement!) Joe Savage, another First Class reader, brought us to our final Sunday reflection in Goethean Conversation as we faced each other in two concentric circles. Standing in the center, he swirled his finger around like a quick wind and said, "This is the Grail, and when we gather under one ideal... the spirit enters." With his raised hand, he drew the spirit downward to show the Light quickening our inner flame. Joe's question for us was, "How does your awareness of karma affect the world?" All could not be possible without the rich, deep soul strength of Barbara Bedingfield who for 18 years, with the help of the Waldorf School of Tampa Bay, has diligently organized this annual retreat. Thank you to all who came and created in this living vessel with Patrick Kennedy!

Before the beginning of my life, I danced in the stars with God.
Before the beginning of the earth, what did the light shine on?
Before the beginning of the universe, all creation was inside of God.
Before the beginning, what existed?
In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God.
In the beginning there was silence.
In the beginning where was the light?
In the end, do we all go back to God?

In the end of my life, will I rise up? Will I expand out into the universe?
In the end, all will be balanced.
In the end, will I still know you?
In the end, who will reflect the light?
In the end, we'll all be love-encased.
Look past what the eyes can see.
You are a mystery and so am I
You came from farther than you know
Concentrated down from the heights
Out of spaces wide.

By Anne Brunson

Before the beginning
Out of the darkness
God built light
We danced in the stars
In the beginning
We leapt like lions
Lambs of the morning
Where was the light?
Behind it all,
Giving and giving
Where will we be in the end?
Will we rise up and expand?
Yes, we'll be ready
Ripened raspberries
Swollen
Full of heaven
Harvested

Group poem by Patrick, Daniel, Anne, Donna and Sylvia

Before the beginning
Was God
Alone Sad
Begotten
One
In the beginning
God breathed life
Into words
Into beings
Forming man
In the end
We come together
One
As many
Facets

By Donna Marcantonio

If I Could Offer the Children of Today One Gift...

Rev. Carol Kelly, Director of Camp Harmony Lake

If I could offer the children of today one gift, it would be the feeling of security; that feeling that they are being carried and held by people and powers above them who are tending to everything, who are attentive to them. When children are allowed to be in nature, they let themselves go. They feel the Divine Presence moving through everything including themselves. How joyous is the sound of children's voices on the playground! They are free and yet they are held.

Our sense of security resides in the reality that the world of nature is a mirror of the Divine world, and that we are part of this world and have a relationship to it. In his new book "Climate, a New Story" Charles Eisenstein proposes that the only way we are ever really going to solve the climate crisis is to love the earth: "The key to our salvation lies beyond what science currently offers – it lies in facing the world as a living being, a sacred being, and a beloved being."

I have had the honor to direct a children's summer camp for 22 years. I have watched our children come from a world of fear, anxiety, media indulgence and isolation, completely unfold and open up in the world of singing, woods, stars and sunsets. They are led by admirable young people who feel the responsibility for setting a good example for the children. They work together on their relationship to the earth and on gratitude and reverence for every living thing.

There are children who come to our camp who are "media impaired." They do not relate to others, they hardly know how to have a conversation at mealtime, or to wait until everyone has been served to start eating. They find it challenging to go along with group activities or to live in real time without being "bored."

It only takes three days for them to start creating something new. Each group has to perform a skit for the whole camp on the third day. The pressure is on. They figure out a rough story line, they find whacky costumes and they are busy! They find out without being able to articulate it, that they can create something wonderful, entertaining and funny with no help from any outside source. They can create. They weave baskets, they make journals, they make jewelry, they paint, they whittle, and they sing in four-part harmony. And they are happy!

Camp Harmony Lake (meeting in Kingsley, PA) is one of the many ways that children can be children again. They make friends for life, they sing all day, they laugh at the drop of a hat and they learn to live in community with others, in real time, in real space. I cannot think of a greater gift.

Registrations are open now: campharmonylake.com

Rev. Carol Kelly
Camp Director

Camp Harmony Lake too far away? Consider the Adventure Camps, offering experiences in various locations and for a wide range of ages: www.theadventurecamps.org

50th Anniversary Reunion of the East Coast Children's Camp

An invitation to all former campers, counselors, and staff



THE CHRISTIAN CO CHILDREN'S CAMP

50th Aniversary Reunion

Saturday, July 29th - Sunday,
Arrive anytime on Satu

For all former campers, couns

Kingsley, PA

\$150

Come sing, swim, feel the camp s
celebrate 50 years of Camp Harm

Register at www.CampHarm

For questions, please email Rev.
our website.
[carolkelly.cc@gmail](mailto:carolkelly.cc@gmail.com)



A Letter from the Regional Board

Jodi Dill, President; Trish Mooney, Administrator

The Regional Board of The Christian Community in North America was formed in 1996 with a primary mandate to care for retired priests and their spouses, as well as the Lenker's residence and activities through stewardship of assets held in The Christian Community in North America Central Fund. In addition, the board is also mandated to lend support to new initiatives and certain seminary student expenses; however, these mandates do have a more discretionary nature and are more dependent on the Central Fund's overall financial health. Congregations do give up a certain degree of autonomy with respect to these mandates, but it is generally agreed upon that these particular mandates are regional in nature and so it makes sense to have them managed that way. The region relies on congregational contributions and generous legacy donations to fund its primary mandate. The regional board is not considered or mandated to be a fundraising body. It is considered to be a sensing organ of the region and functions in service to the congregations. It meets 11 times a year, including two three-day face-to-face intensive meetings in person at various locations throughout the region. It is currently comprised of three officers, three priests, three congregation members, and a new board candidate who will be a non-voting member until officially elected. It has two part-time employees: a bookkeeper and an administrator. The Board is currently seeking to add new members to increase its diversity in thinking and perspectives. It is also considering a new process in decision making that includes more frequent connection and input from delegates throughout the year.

Other activities of the regional board are the creation and maintenance of a regional website, database, and email list. It convenes a quarterly meeting with all treasurers for sharing, support, and exchanging ideas. It is required to convene an Annual General Meeting wherein board elections and the previous year's financial report are voted upon by representatives from all congregations in North America. It does so as part of the Annual Delegates Meeting, which has become a three-day event coordinated by the regional board and hosted by a willing congregation where we gather to participate in talks and activities on a theme as well as sharing meals and social time together. The annual delegates meeting in 2023 was generously hosted in Sacramento with the theme "Christ in our Midst — Compassionate Interactions in Building Community." Revs. Miller, Burfeind and Polter led the activities, conversations, and talks about developing compassion for oneself as a foundation for compassionate interactions with others, and as the underpinning for further development of the health and prosperity in our congregations and the region. Rev. Burfeind also introduced us to the Becoming Project and the Bellingham Initiative, impulses which take a radically new approach from the way The Christian Community has formed congregations and activities in the past.

The regional board holds the assets of The Christian Community in North America Central Fund in stewardship for future needs and has an obligation to grow these assets, or at least to ensure that their value keeps pace with inflation. The Board's current financial mood is one of concern. Its ongoing financial structure runs with a functional deficit, as its monetary increases come at unpredictable times, primarily through legacy donations. All congregations do contribute a significant percentage of their donated funds in support of our primary work of supporting retired priests and the Lenker, yet this has never been enough to cover the needs of our 14 retired priests. Our current deficit has increased in the last couple of years due to many factors, the most significant of which is how inflation has impacted its financial holdings and investments, congregational contributions, cost of living increases, and expenses.

The Regional Board appreciates and hopes to continue to earn the trust of all who love and support The Christian Community in North America. Despite financial concerns, the Board remains deeply trusting in the primary force of development in The Christian Community, the healing and hope which emanates from each and every altar and congregation.

Jodi Dill, President

Trish Mooney, Administrator

The Ruler of This World

Rev. Bastiaan Baan

Wherever and whenever you look around you, the ruler of this world is always present — so prominent, so overpowering that the hidden power of the good is mostly really hard to find. It sounds so simple in the last words of Christ, and it is so difficult to recognize in our daily existence: “...the decision has already been made about the ruler of this world.” (Jn. 16:11) It often looks as if the ruler of this world has free play.

Only when you try to imagine what Christ did when He stood face to face with the adversary power can you begin to understand these enigmatic words. How did Christ look? What did Christ see? He saw a deformed being, a demon, estranged from his origin and purpose. Christ Himself, through whom “all things came into being” (Jn.1:3), recognized His creature. And the demon recognized his origin and purpose—and surrendered.

We human beings are still far from able to vanquish the ruler of this world on our own power. But together with Christ we can subdue him. One of the psalms says it with the words:

The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can people do to me?
With the Lord beside me as my helper,
I will triumph over those who hate me. (Ps. 118: 6-7)

Watch the adversary power, together with Christ. Look at the world through the eyes of Christ — and the ruler of this world will recognize his Lord and Master.

A Report from the Delegates Meeting: Christ in our Midst — Compassionate Interactions in Building Community

Cheryl Martine, member in the Sacramento congregation

At the end of March, the Sacramento Christian Community was privileged to host the 2023 Annual Delegates Meeting. Delegates came from throughout the United States and Canada to address business concerns and to participate in activities to build community and relationships, including the sharing of meals. They were joined by several members of our local congregation. The weekend commenced with Rev. Sanford Miller speaking to us on “Our Social Future in the Light of the Apocalypse of John,” richly setting the tone for the activities that followed. The theme was also a question: How do we create compassionate interactions while building community? Each day began with the Consecration of the Human Being (celebrated by Revs. Craig Wiggins, Nora Manassian and Julia Polter, respectively) – thus, setting the greater context of “Christ in our Midst.”



Led by Revs. Ann Burfeind and Julia Polter, we were asked to engage in a simple but potent will activity. We were asked to write on a card one quality in ourselves we would like to focus on improving during the weekend. The anonymous cards were then posted. Together they gave an excellent picture of qualities we all need to strengthen to be compassionate participants. We addressed Knowing Self – Self Compassion – Compassion for Others through several well-designed activities.

Here is a simple, moving activity that we were invited to participate in which each can do on their own. We were asked to think of an experience in which we felt as if wrapped in a sphere of compassion. Recall with all your senses a moment of feeling fully nourished. So we did. Within seconds, the whole feeling of the room shifted. Such a healing exercise for our times. Beautiful.

Ann and Julia presented a picture of the founding of The Christian Community as creating Christianity as *radically new*. Then we were invited to explore what we might bring to our communities that would be radically new. They asked, “What keeps you from the radically new? What supports you?”

In this vein, they then presented the **Becoming Project** – a project to take the enthusiasm that young people experience in Christian Community camps and, with these young people, work together to find new forms for meeting and working that continues to nurture their development.

Thanks to everyone, we did experience “compassionate interactions in building community.” Gratitude to all that made this possible.



Ordinations in Buenos Aires Argentina, April 2023

Rev. Mimi Coleman

Sometime about the middle of the celebrations of the ordinations for seven of the nine new candidates in Stuttgart, Germany, I suddenly thought that I should go to Argentina for the ordinations of the final two candidates. Wouldn't it be nice if someone from North America were present at that upcoming event? Before the trip to Stuttgart I had thought of it briefly but it seemed out of the question, due to the nature of my work. However, there I was thinking of it again, feeling the urgency that someone from the north should go. I am a Spanish-speaker and former resident of Latin America; there are not so many of us within the North American priest circle. I made sure to check with Telma Dave and Craig Wiggins, the Lenkers for Latin America and North America; they both thought it was a good idea. I was able to secure funding and make the trip.

What a contrast I experienced. In Stuttgart, we had been more than 100 priests sitting behind the nine candidates; while four weeks later, in Buenos Aires we were 'only' 10 sitting behind these final two candidates. I say 'only' because, of course, it is not important how many we were. We were there! That is what matters. This was the first ever Christian Community ordination in Latin America. Four of us were able to make the long trip from Europe and North America (aside from the celebrant, our Erzoberlenker, Joao Torunsky from Berlin). All the others were from Latin America. The chapel was filled both ordination days, as well as for celebrations and talks for two days prior. The new priests are Nahuel Di Stefano Villalba, who will stay in Buenos Aires, and Nicolas Martin, who will go to Cali, Colombia. And while Germany is full of warm and kind people, there was almost no comparison with the Argentinians, Chileans, Brazilians, Peruvians, Mexicans and Colombians: the kiss on the cheek when greeting is such a feature of that culture, it took me by surprise again when being there. Another great contrast was hearing the Easter epistle and prayers while experiencing the autumnal climate and weather of that southern-hemisphere country. Just a reminder that our festival activity is not nature-based, but really an inward experience that has validity anywhere on the earth.

The chapel in Buenos Aires, in the neighborhood of Olivos, is a brick structure, purpose-built, about 40 years ago. It has a brick altar! The windows are made of thin slices of translucent stone. The wood floor is made of slices of wood logs, stained a dark color. I remember the bright yellow and white of the risen Christ in the altar painting. Some of the extra rooms attached almost have the form of a beehive with connecting parts.

The festive celebrations after the sacrament included speeches, a two-piece duo on guitar and vocals, some singing by the youth and congregation, a wonderful spread of cakes and breads as well as an endless supply of coffee, tea and the ever-present "mate" tea.



I am grateful to have been able to renew the connections between the Americas and our languages and I am hopeful to re-enliven the impulse to have a North - South conference again. Many of the folks there that I spoke with are enthusiastic to come north in 2025 — it is our turn since the previous conference, in 2016, was in Cordoba, Argentina. (We hope the economy there is conducive to such travel at that time — they are experiencing real financial hardships with the current level of inflation). Our North American priests spoke of it at our recent synod and have convened a planning group, so please stay tuned for an announcement sometime next year. Plan to come! It would be great to have representation from each congregation. Until then, I say, Adios.



Priests at the Ordinations in Buenos Aires

BACK row, left to right:

Maarten de Gans (La Choza, near Buenos Aires, Argentina); Andreas Loos (looking back, Cali, Colombia); Marta Schumann (Neuquen, Argentina); Fernando Chevallier (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Luis Gonzalez Sabater (Lima, Peru); Mariano Kasanetz (Seminary Director, Stuttgart, Germany); Telma Dave (Lenker for Latin America); Mimi Coleman (Hillsdale, New York, USA); Michael Bruhn (Lenker for Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain)

FRONT row, left to right:

Manuel Toro (Canary Islands, Spain); Guido Rosell (Berlin, Germany); Nahuel Di Stefano Villalba (newly ordained, sent to Buenos Aires, Argentina); Julian Rogge (Sao Paulo, Brasil); Nicolas Martin (newly ordained, sent to Cali, Colombia)

MISSING from photo: Emilia Hossman (Emeritus, Buenos Aires, Argentina); Carlos Maranhao (Florianopolis, Brasil); Sebastian Bardach (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Joao Torunsky (Erzoberlenker, Berlin, Germany)

Psalm 23 — A Rendering by Rev. Heinrich Ogilvie (1893-1988)

Translation by Philip Mees

Christus is mijn leider,
Ik zal niets vrezen.
Hij leidt mij door het leven heen,
Hij is de kracht in al mijn werken,
Hij troost mij in het levensleed
En in mijn duisternissen straalt Zijn licht.
Al ga ik ook door het dal des doods,
Ik vrees geen kwaad
Want Gij zijt met mij.
Uw hand wijst mij de weg.
Gij richt voor mij de tafel op
Met spijs voor mijn eeuwig wezen.
Gij zalft mijn hoofd met olie
En geestesmoed stroomt uit de lijdenskelk.
Ja, Uw kracht leeft in mijn zwakheid
En Uw leven overwint mijn sterven.
Gij bouwt met macht in mij de nieuwe mens.

Christ is my leader,
I shall not fear.
He leads me throughout life,
He is the strength in all my works,
He comforts me in life's suffering
And into my darkness shines His light.
Even though I go through the valley of death,
I fear no evil
For You are with me.
Your hand shows me the way.
You set the table for me
With sustenance for my eternal being.
You anoint my head with oil
And spirit courage flows from suffering's chalice.
Yes, Your strength lives in my weakness
And Your life vanquishes my dying.
You build in me with power the new Man.

Reflections on Rev. Jonah Evan's Visit to Johannesburg, South Africa

Bridgette Siepker; Elmarie Vuren; Bakang Batshegi

Since 2021 I have met and worked with people from all over the world sharing in their journey of coming to know Christ in the world and in their lives through the seminary's Distance Learning Program (DLP). Both Jonah Evans and Patrick Kennedy have been central to this process and have helped to build a virtual community that has real substance.

You must now imagine my delight as I walked into the church community room on Friday evening in the midst of candle light due to load shedding to hear the voice that is so familiar to me in my online world now sounding in reality. It was really a joy to meet Jonah face to face and to experience him teaching out of his "whole physical body."

Of course Jonah is no stranger to the Johannesburg community and it was evident that many remembered him and were grateful to reconnect with someone who had held a special place for them.

During the weekend Jonah took us on a journey where he was able to reveal signs and the pictures through which our eyes could be opened to recognize Christ in the world. It was also revealed how we might work with the Christ impulses as seeds within us to cultivate our own very personal relationship with Christ.

Many participating in the weekend workshop were happy to keep Jonah talking through tea and lunch breaks as we worked with ideas that had been presented and processed the multitude of questions that arose. Despite the obvious jet lag that always accompanies a long trip Jonah never let on that he was suffering in any way and availed himself with real enthusiasm in addressing all of our questions, concerns and considerations.

Some were able to have more private and quieter conversations about deeper questions they were carrying. There seemed to be an abundance of time and Jonah was ever so generous.

It was most appropriate to have Jonah celebrate the Act of Consecration of the Human Being on Sunday morning.

Thank you to all who made it possible for Jonah to visit South Africa and to bring all that he did in his warm and sincere way.

Thank you, Jonah.

Bridgette Siepker

The congregation has been looking forward to Rev. Jonah's visit for some time since he spent 6 months at our congregation in 2008 and several members remember him fondly from that time. We are still amazed that he was able to present a wonderful talk on the Friday evening after having stepped off a long-haul flight with a crying baby as his fellow passenger. It was a huge gift to participate in the Africa Seminary module that he led, as

well as attend the Act of Consecration he celebrated. I heard many comments from people that they received new insights and perspectives that were most valuable and inspiring for them, both in the group discussions, as well as in individual conversations. And when Jonah responded to a participant's comments in true charismatic fashion with "Amen, Sister!" he had us in stitches with laughter! The everyday relevance and applicability of how we can each cultivate an experience of the Etheric Christ, along with having experienced how Jonah lives what he brought: "love is its own self-regenerating engine"; I personally feel inspired to strive towards this as a foundation and source for being of service to Christ. The joyful love and compassion that is an intrinsic part of Jonah touched us all, and we felt very blessed to have him spend time with our congregation and share his depth of knowledge and love for Christ with us. We only wish that he could have stayed longer, and sincerely hope that he will be able to visit again in future! Thank you, Jonah!

Elmarie Vuren

Cultivating the Relationship with the Etheric Christ

There are three ways that help us to cultivate a relationship with the etheric Christ, namely:

1. Life
2. Prayer and meditation
3. Holy Communion

Life, we can encounter him as an impulse deep in us (Christ who lives in me), or in extraordinary personal situations.

Prayer and meditation or inner being, what we do to connect.

Receiving Communion at the altar. Christ acts through the priest.

Impulses: Like learning to receive the grace of God in the Act of Consecration of Man. The first quality of the relationship with the etheric Christ is the encounter with him. We should learn how to recognize the Christ's impulse. Impulses like encountering joy in the midst of the fear, feeling peace even if everything around feels broken, seeing Christ also in the other person.

What I personally took with me from the weekend was 'Impulse and Encounter' and that the experience of Damascus of Paul where he had an encounter with Christ can still be real for us. Jonah shared experiences where Christ breaks unexpectedly into life and how to cultivate a relationship every day.

Bakang Batshegi

Manna

Jeff Bronow, member in the Washington D.C. congregation

"Things look dire," said Jocelyn.

"In what way?" asked Jasper.

"Well," said Jocelyn. "Many of our congregations are running deficits. And we need to feed our priests and support our retired priests. And there will be more retirements coming up in the years ahead. What are we to do?"

"God will provide," said Jasper.

"How so?" asked Jocelyn.

"Faith," said Jasper. "God works in mysterious ways."

"Perhaps," said Jocelyn. "But we are of this world, and we have worldly needs."

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true."

"And we need to provide for ourselves."

"Yes, that is true."

"And things don't always work out."

"Yes, that is true."

"So, we can't live on faith alone. Isn't that true?"

Jasper looked down at the ground and didn't answer.

"What do you think?" asked Jocelyn.

"About what?" asked Jasper.

"About my question on faith," said Jocelyn.

"Well," said Jasper. "I'm thinking of Jesus looking at that coin."

"What coin?" asked Jocelyn.

"The denarius."

"What about it?"

"Whose likeness was on this denarius?"

"Caesar, the king, of course."

"And what did Jesus say about this coin?"

"Something about letting Caesar's things be Caesar's, and God's be God's."

"Right," said Jasper. "It goes like this: *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*"

"But we still need those denarii," said Jocelyn, "to build our chapels and to provide food and sustenance. And our retired priests need denarii."

"Yes," said Jasper, "That is true."

"So, what to do?" asked Jocelyn.

"We can ask and then receive," said Jasper.

"Why do you keep quoting Bible things?" asked Jocelyn.

"Because I am a priest," said Jasper. "And we don't live on bread alone."

"What do we live on?"

"The Word of God."

"I see," said Jocelyn. "But we still need bread, right? It says we don't live on bread *alone*, but bread is still there."

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true." And he looked down at the ground again.

"So we still need bread, right?" asked Jocelyn.

"Yes, we do," said Jasper.

"So, what are we to do if we don't have enough?" asked Jocelyn.

"We don't live on bread alone," said Jasper. "Jesus said this to the devil after being in the desert for 40 days. He was hungry."

"Yes, I know that. But you're not answering my question."

"God has always provided," said Jasper. "He did so for Jews who were in the desert for 40 years! They went hungry but were humbled and provided for with *manna*."

"Manna?" asked Jocelyn.

"Yes, Bread from Heaven," said Jasper. "Read the scripture."

"I do read the scripture," said Jocelyn.

"That is good," said Jasper.

Then Jocelyn asked, "So are you saying that money will fall from the sky?"

"Yes and no," said Jasper. "We just need to have faith and maybe pray a little."

"Or pray a lot!" said Jocelyn. "And how can you say 'yes and no' as an answer?"

"It depends on which way you are looking at things."

"Which way are you looking to get to *yes*, as that is what we need?"

"Thinking behind the thinking, perhaps," said Jasper.

"What is *thinking behind thinking*?" asked Jocelyn.

"That which is behind our thinking, of course," said Jasper.

"What is *behind* our thinking?" asked Jocelyn, exasperated.

"That which makes our thinking — *beings*, of course."

"Beings?"

"Yes, beings."

"Now you're just being obtuse, Jasper."

"I am sorry." And then he said, "Let me ask you a question."

"Okay," said Jocelyn.

"What if you won the lottery," asked Jasper, "and suddenly had 10 million dollars? What would you do?"

"Well," said Jocelyn. "I would certainly make sure that all our chapels were built, and our priests were well fed and had shelter, including all our retired priests."

"Would our problems be solved?" asked Jasper.

"Our bread problem would be solved," said Jocelyn. "And then we could spend our energy on solving other problems."

"I see," said Jasper. "And what other problems would there be?"

"Well, I don't know exactly," said Jocelyn. "I suppose it depends. Every place has its own problems."

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true. And problems beget problems."

"Beget?" asked Jocelyn.

"Yes, beget," said Jasper.

"That is a priestly thing to say," said Jocelyn.

"I am a priest," said Jasper.

"Yes," said Jocelyn. "That is true."

"Okay," said Jocelyn. "So, what do you mean when you say *problems beget problems*?"

"Do you know that story of the rich young man?" asked Jasper.

"Yes," said Jocelyn. "You always tell me to read my scripture. So I do."

"That is good," said Jasper.

"He is also a ruler, this rich young man," said Jocelyn.

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true."

"Like Caesar?"

"I suppose."

"So, his riches beget problems?" asked Jocelyn.

"Perhaps," said Jasper.

"That's not a yes or no," said Jocelyn.

"Yes," said Jasper, "That is true."

"Is this where I am supposed to come to an understanding on my own?" asked Jocelyn.

"Perhaps," said Jasper.

"I thought so," said Jocelyn, exasperated once again. "Let me think."

"That is good," said Jasper.

"And I will try to think *behind* my thinking," said Jocelyn.

"Excellent," said Jasper. "As that is the place where truth may be found."

"What is truth?" asked Jocelyn.

"Excellent," said Jasper.

"What?" asked Jocelyn.

"You are begetting correctly," said Jasper.

"I see," said Jocelyn. "So let me think."

"Good."

"Well, I don't have an answer."

"That is okay."

"It doesn't seem okay to me!"

"So, you have a problem."

"Yes, I do. And I think that problem is standing right in front of me!"

"Let me help," said Jasper.

"Thank you," said Jocelyn.

"What did the rich young man want?"

"He wanted to inherit eternal life."

"And what did the rich young man have to do to inherit eternal life?"

"He had to sell all his riches and give to the poor."

"And what did he do?"

"He walked away quite sad."

"And then what happened?" asked Jasper.

"I don't know," said Jocelyn. "I don't think it says. But this was clearly a problem for the rich young ruler."

"Yes," said Jasper. "Something was begat for him right then at that moment, I think."

"Begat?"

"Yes," said Jasper. "Begat is the past tense of beget."

"I thought it was *begot*."

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true."

"So, is it both begat and begot?" asked Jocelyn.

"Yes," said Jasper.

"I think we are getting off subject," said Jocelyn, exasperated yet once again for a third time.

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true."

"So, something must have been begotten," said Jocelyn.

"Yes," said Jasper.

"Was it *manna*?" asked Jocelyn.

"Now you are thinking behind your thinking!" said Jasper.

"So, if the rich young ruler sells all his possessions," said Jocelyn, "he receives bread in return."

"The *Bread of Life*," said Jasper.

"That's good," said Jocelyn.

"Yes," said Jasper. "That is true."

"So, Jasper," said Jocelyn. "Can I ask you a question?"

"Yes, Jocelyn," said Jasper. "Please do."

Then Jocelyn went on. "We are running short on cash. How are we going to feed our priests?"



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