



The  
Evangelist

Feb.  
2019

The Church of  
Saint John  
the Evangelist  
Montreal

## EDITORIAL

By TONY WHITEHEAD

This issue welcomes in Epiphany! The New Year also is welcomed as an occasion to achieve new and exciting things. It is no use making New Year Resolutions which usually reflect selfish ideas, but to reflect the Joy and Promise of the Christmas Message in dedicating our lives to Christ!

Of course the idea of Christ dwelling in Us and We in Him is a difficult concept, especially for Scientists! However, to simply do it is easier than I thought. It is opening one's Heart to Christ's message: *Love your Neighbour as Yourself*. This is easier than Bureaucrats and Politicians think, when they make rules and regulations to constrain us to do Wrong.

Follow your Christian Beliefs, and ignore rules and regulations when they intrude!

Tony



## REFLECTIONS

BY FR. KEITH SCHMIDT



Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. John's,

Do you ever have those occasions when you wonder whose side God is on? Even clergy occasionally ask such a question.

On the Monday before Christmas Eve, the electrician came to St John's to make a minor repair with a fuse box in the electrical room, but it did entail turning off the power for the entire building. Originally, he had planned to come in the spring, but his boss decided that the

repair really should be made sooner to avoid any possibility of more issues. All was fine, even though it did mean I had to be at the church at 6 AM to let him in. With the Warming Center open at night, and the Mission during the day, there is only a small window of time to turn the power off. It all happened as planned and without incident.

Then I happily returned to my office to continue working on my Christmas sermon. Only, as I tried to start my computer, it got so far and then nothing happened. 'Unable to find hard drive' repeatedly flashed on the screen. I have no idea what the difference is between a hard drive or software, but I realized after several failed attempts this was not good! I phoned a friend to ask what it meant when it said it could not find my hard drive. He was not completely sure either, but said it was not good news!

Off I jumped with the computer to the repair store, which is conveniently just two blocks from the church. The next day, the shop phoned with the news that the technician had only seen one other computer as badly damaged as mine!

Several months previously, the office Parish computer had also died. We had not replaced it yet, but after waiting until year end, we did order a new one which

was sitting in the office ready to be set up. This meant we were down to one machine for the office, which we try to limit to use of accounting purposes only. "Well", I said, "can you retrieve anything from it"? A flat "no" was the reply.

O dear! Gone was my Christmas sermon, indeed gone were my sermons from the last 15 years! Gone was **everything** from the last 15 years! I tried to restrain my hysteria with difficulty. "All gone", I said! Well, hopefully not gone, just inaccessible. Perhaps I could go to a specialist and see what he can do. But it was close to Christmas, so almost everything was closing. I did rewrite my Christmas sermon and survived into the new year. The hard drive is now with someone who, in the next week or so, will tell me if he can extract any of my precious information. "You had it backed up you will say"? Well, the ugly truth is **no**. I thought it was, and indeed I even had files in a 'cloud' (if you don't know what a cloud is, you are better for it). Well, my files in a cloud are there, but nothing was in them (typical of me, you might say).

I had planned a week away after Christmas and Epiphany when the Bishop came on relatively short notice. Bishop, no computer files, just a happy

Rector was I. I needed a break. Off to New York City I went. It was a marvelous time away. I had never been to The Cloisters, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval collection at the north end of Manhattan (photo below). It was built like a monastery, with bits of pieces of several European ones donated by J. D. Rockefeller in the 1930s. It is incredibly beautiful and full of the most moving pieces of mostly Christian art in a park setting which is appealing even in January.



I also visited St. John the Divine, the Episcopal cathedral of New York City. It is still not yet completed, but it is still one of the largest, if not *the* largest in the world. New York Episcopalians sure had ambition!

On Sunday, I visited St. Ignatius of Antioch which is a delightful Anglo-Catholic parish, which is very much in our tradition (Rite 1, traditional language, eastward facing, humeral veils, High Mass, etc.), on the upper west side. Its Rector was a classmate of the late Mother Ellen Aitken. He too was having his Christmas/Epiphany troubles. A radiator had broken in the adjacent Parish House, and it flooded parts of it and the wall of the church it shared. We commiserated over church plumbing, and that no one told us about this in seminary!



Later in the morning, I went to the Solemn Mass at St. Mary the Virgin, Times Square (photo above). I had been to St. Mary's before some 15 or 20 years ago. I entered, and I observed the sanctuary very brightly lit, but the nave of

the church in darkness. This was a shame because I was trying to admire the statues of the Apostles which are on the columns in the nave. But I thought the lights will come on shortly as it was almost 11 AM. Just before then, the Rector came out to apologize to the congregation. He had been away the past week, and St. Mary's had just begun to install a new lighting system. For some reason, the workers had left on Friday without making sure the lights in the nave actually functioned, so we were in the dark for the entire Mass! I was beginning to fear at this rate what I might find when I returned to St John's. Still, it was a beautiful Service, but it was rather difficult to follow the bulletin, unless you had a flashlight!

All to say that - yes, all of us get hit with challenges both large and small at different times in our lives. Our faith is not a talisman against unpleasant things happening to us. But how we confront and deal with these situations can, and are mediated by our faith in a good and generous Creator.

By the way, did I mention my cell phone is now malfunctioning?!

Your technically challenged Rector,

*Keith +*

## ONE OF US

BY MTR. WENDY TELFER

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14)*

In *One of Us*, the American singer-songwriter Joan Osborne asks what if God was one of us, and if God had a face, what would it look like? The video clip takes place in an amusement park, where people of different genders, ages, and races line up behind a life-sized cut-out depicting Michaelangelo's God, place their faces in the opening in its head, and have their photos taken. Although this may seem irreverent, to me, Ms. Osborne offers a thoughtful contemporary reflection on the Incarnation.



God's coming to us in human form, in the person of Jesus Christ, lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It is a major theme in music, in visual art, and especially in the Christmas crèche scene, a beloved tradition of this holy season. St Joseph's Oratory mounts an annual exhibition of nativity sets from around the world.



This year, the hipster crèche from the United States raised eyebrows. Inside a stable with a solar panel on its roof, Joseph is taking a selfie of the Holy Family. Mary is holding a cup of take-out coffee in one hand, and making a peace sign with the other. Outside, a cow bearing the brand '100% organic' is eating gluten-free feed. An angel with a tablet computer is leading the Magi, who are carrying gifts from the retailer *Amazon* and riding Segway scooters. As Fr. Keith said in his Christmas Eve sermon, only baby Jesus looks normal.

When I saw a photograph of this controversial crèche in *Le Devoir*, I found it amusing. By contrast, seen in the context of the exhibition, it follows the tradition of depicting the birth of Christ to reflect a particular culture and era. The figurines offer a rich diversity of skin tones, facial features, and costumes. There are modern industrial workers, and women bearing firewood, fruit, and freshly-churned butter. My favourite was a tiny, minimalist set from Cambodia. Mary and Joseph sit with their heels tucked under them, their hands folded in prayer, their lovely faces suffused with peace and joy. Their Son, lying calmly in the manger, meets their gaze with outstretched arms and a smile of pure love.

Although God first became one of us at a specific place and time, the gift of the divine presence in Jesus Christ remains with us everywhere and always. It continues to inspire artists to express the faith, and to challenge us to see with fresh eyes and to hear with open ears. Thank you, Holy Spirit.



Wendy +

**JAZZ MASS  
2019**

Save the date for the  
fourth annual Jazz Mass  
on June 30!

We will be welcoming  
soloist Jean-Pierre  
Zanella, and Susie  
Arioli who will give  
the address.

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More details to come!

## EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ALTAR SERVING BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK (PART 1)

BY THE ALTAR SERVERS'  
GUILD OF ST. JOHN'S

*Mysterious mumblings, strange  
gestures, bells and smells - what's it  
all about? Find out here!*

Q: What are the Altar Servers' various positions or duties at Mass?

A: *The Crucifer, often dressed as a Sub Deacon, and bearing the cross, leads the Sanctuary party in and out of the sacristy, and in processions. The Acolytes, holding candles, and walking alongside the Crucifer, assist at the Mass itself. The Thurifer, censens with his/her silver thurible. A Master of Ceremonies is sometimes present to help move the Service along smoothly. Banner Bearers and Torch Bearers may also be there when needed.*

Q: What preparations are being made as the Service begins?

A: *High Mass begins with the recital of the Confiteor. The prayer, borrowed from the*



*Roman Catholic Mass - here at St. John's, we use an English version translated from Latin - is an expression of penitence by the Clergy and the Altar Servers. As forgiveness is being asked, various associated gestures including deep bowing and the striking of the breast three times, are made.*

Q: What type of incense is used at St. John's?

A: *We use a blend of frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and various natural oils. Our incense is obtained from Mucknell Abbey, an Anglican Benedictine community of monks and nuns based in Worcestershire in England.*



Q: Do Servers experience the Mass differently when they are serving?

A: *Of course, spirituality and emotional responses differ from person to person. However, it would be fair to say that our Altar Servers all experience a very intimate relationship to the Mass. They assist in its very preparation, and/or they observe the rituals close hand in the Sanctuary. While Altar Serving has traditionally been a part of a vocation to the priesthood (at least three of our Servers have gone on to study for Ministry), that is not necessarily so today. Still, our Altar Servers have responded to Our Lord's call to be of service to Him. We invite others who may be interested as well, to join us in serving.*



Q: Are mistakes ever made up there?

A: *Sure, we have our 'off days' as well! Spilled coals from the thurible, unwieldy banners hitting stuff above, things gone missing when you need them, you name it! As our Master of Ceremonies always tells us in these moments of mishap, just "keep calm and genuflect"!*

Q: During the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, why do the Clergy and the Servers remove their shoes?

A: *Like many Anglo-Catholic practices, this is another adopted from the Roman Catholic Easter ceremonies. In medieval times, penitents 'crept' to the Cross barefoot in humility and contrition as the Reproaches were sung by the Choir. Nowadays, the ritual of crawling has been modified to just genuflecting three times as one approached to venerate Our Lord Crucified.*



Q: Why is the Crucifer the only one wearing gloves?

A: *This is one that has no mystical significance. The brass processional cross was polished and restored professionally a few years ago. When people touch it, the brass becomes tarnished. So unless someone wants to volunteer to polish the brass every week, the gloves are a necessity.*



Q: When and why does the Thurifer swing his/her censor, and then not at other times?

A: *The Thurifer swings the censor when there is a procession, but when he/she leads the way back to the Sanctuary (like after the reading of the Gospel), no swinging is done. The release of incense is meant to ritually purify the sacred space and those within. Notice that the thurible is held in the left hand if it does not contain blessed incense.*

Q: What exactly do the Altar Servers wear?

A: *The Servers wear a white cotta over a long black cassock. While the Gothic*

*architecture of our building would perhaps make long white surplices more appropriate, we at St. John's have adopted the more Baroque style cotta. The Servers here probably never wore long surplices. Before the middle of Fr. Slattery's time, they wore albs and amices with seasonally-coloured collars ('apparels'). However, albs are more correctly worn by the clergy, and the change to cassock and cotta was in keeping with the traditional clothes of servers in the Western rite.*



# A RECENT VISIT FROM BISHOP MARY

BY TONY WHITEHEAD

This Epiphany, we were honoured by a visit from our Bishop, Mary Irwin-Gibson.

She radiated a smiling joy on everyone! Her bell-like reading of our Service was thrilling and made the Service come alive.

The Choir and Music were excellent. The Bishop's Sermon brilliantly tied together the Old Testament, St Paul, and the Gospel.

The reception for Bishop Mary included the most peculiar modern representation of Christ in the Manger; a 21st century thing with cell phones and Wise Men on motor platforms!



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