We are an Easter people, celebrate like you mean it

Every year on Easter the Christian community in Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, Mexico gathers to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. They do this with kites celebrating in joy over a terrible death because they know death was not the end.

Photo Ana Quadros
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:From_suffering_to_Joy.jpg
Doute et foi

Dans une communauté de foi, le terme « doute » est parfois considéré comme un gros mot, certaines communautés chrétiennes ne faisant pas exception à la règle. Nous prions nous-mêmes parfois afin d’être sauvés de nos doutes. Une prière composée par un éminent théologien du XXe siècle comprend la supplique suivante : « Dans les choses spirituelles, épuisons-nous du doute ».

Vu sous cet angle, le doute est perçu comme une faiblesse. Une personne professant une foi authentique et inébranlable n’est apparemment pas supposée avoir de doutes. Si vous en avez, cela signifie que vous n’essayez pas assez fort, que vous ne priez pas assez fort ou que vous ne croyez pas assez fort.

Dans le récit de Pâques, le scepticisme de l’apôtre Thomas au sujet de la résurrection de Jésus d’entre les morts (voir Jean 20: 19-31) lui a valu à jamais le titre de « Thomas l’incrédule », une épithète encore lancée aujourd’hui (« incrédule comme Saint-Thomas ») contre ceux qui requièrent des preuves irréfutables à toute affirmation – ce qui n’est pas nécessairement si mauvais dans cette nouvelle et troublante époque de « fausses nouvelles », de « post-vérités » et de « faits alternatifs ».

Il est important de noter que Jésus ne blâme jamais Thomas pour ses doutes. Jésus apparaît tout simplement à Thomas, lui parle, lui montre ses blessures, l’invite à les toucher, fait savoir à Thomas qu’il peut cesser de douter parce qu’il a vu le Christ ressuscité de ses propres yeux : « Parce que tu m’as vu, tu crois. Heureux ceux qui croient sans avoir vu. »

À savoir vous et moi.

Notre croyance — ou cherchons à croire — mais devons le faire comme ceux « qui croient sans avoir vu », sans avoir le bénéfice même de genre de rencontre en chair et en os que Thomas pu avoir avec le Christ ressuscité. Alors nous aurons donc des doutes. Quand nous serons confrontés à la douleur, à la souffrance, à la tragédie, à la violence, à l’injustice et à la mort, nous aurons des doutes — des doutes sur le fait que ce Seigneur crucifié et ressuscité ait en fait racheté toutes choses et vaincu la mort elle-même.

En effet, la foi n’est vraiment pas la foi à moins d’une saine dose de scepticisme. Nous croyons en quelque chose parce que nous n’avons pas nécessairement toutes les preuves pour appeler cela une certitude. On parlerait alors de savoir, de connaissance, pas de foi. Tout ce qui est prouvé au-delà de tout doute n’est plus une affaire de foi. La foi n’est pas comme une science expérimentale ou un problème mathématique.


En latin, cette prière commence par le mot « credo ». Ce terme se traduit généralement par « croire », mais cela peut aussi signifier « avoir confiance », « compter sur », « se fier à » ou « être persuadé ». Vues sous cet angle, ces prières ne représentent pas des listes de contrôle dogmatiques auxquelles nous devons sans réserve donner notre consentement intellectuel, mais bien plutôt des actes de foi qui expriment ce à quoi notre communauté, à travers le temps et l’espace, a aspiré à croire.

Le doute peut en réalité nous mener à une foi plus profonde, alors qu’une foi aveugle et incomplète a conduit à une sorte de stagnation spirituelle, ou pire : au fondamentalisme rigide. Nos doutes — loin de menacer notre foi — sont le catalyseur d’un engagement indéfectible dans la Voie que nous nous sentons appelés à suivre.

On dit que le contraire de la foi n’est pas le doute, mais plutôt l’indifférence. Le doute que nous attirons, tout comme il attirait Jésus dans cette maison une semaine après qu’il ait déclaré ne pas croire à la résurrection de Jésus. Peut-être le doute continue-t-il de vous attirer. Même Jésus caractérise cela comme une sorte de processus lorsqu’il appelle bénis ceux qui en sont venus à « croire sans avoir vu ».

Thomas parle en notre nom à tous lorsqu’il admet ses doutes. Et à travers Thomas, Jésus nous montre que le doute raisonnable ne nous empêche pas d’être des disciples. C’est plutôt une partie intégrante de notre vie de disciples.
Canada Briefs: articles from other diocesan papers written by Tali Folkins of the Anglican Journal

Newfoundland clergy sleep on the floor for furniture bank

Clergy in the diocese of eastern Newfoundland and Labrador are planning to spend a night sleeping on the floor of the cathedral of St. John the Baptist, in St. John’s, for an organization that provides used furniture to those in need.

The event is part of a new campaign being launched by the archdeaconry of Avalon, “Clergy on the Floor.” Participants seek donors to sponsor their night of sleep without a bed at the cathedral, to take place April 26. They hope to raise awareness and funds, to the tune of $10,000, for Home Again Furniture Bank, a non-profit group that collects and then redistributes second-hand furniture in the St. John’s region for free.

“Their discomfort is a demonstration of their compassion for those in our region who live without basic furnishings each day and night,” says Maureen Lynnburner, director of development for Home Again.

The non-profit distributes the furniture to people referred to it by its partners, which include Anglican parishes in the region. Home Again says it has provided used furniture to more than 870 households in less than three and a half years. As of press time, more than 200 households were on its growing waiting list.

—Montreal Anglican

Diocese of Toronto’s FaithWorks campaign raises $1.4 million

An annual funding drive by the diocese of Toronto raised $1,365,600 in 2018. The diocese’s FaithWorks campaign, which has raised more than $30 million since it was launched in 1996, helps families in crisis, needy children, youth and women, newcomers, homeless and imprisoned people, HIV/AIDS patients and people living in developing countries.

The result of the campaign shows that “Anglicans have a heart for social justice and taking care of the most vulnerable among us,” said Andrew Ashil, diocesan bishop of Toronto.

—The Anglican

Montreal church offers performance space to local circus

St. Jax Anglican Church in Montreal is renting space to Le Monastère, a circus company that specializes in intimate, cabaret-style shows.

The paper reserves the right to edit submissions.

Letters to the editor

Jacob and the Right to Be

Jacob, the patriarch, is an astonishing Biblical figure. Here is a man who exploited his brother’s impulsivity in order to steal his birthright, and his father’s weakness to obtain a blessing that was not meant for him. Later, during a combat with a Mysterious Being, he received a wound that never completely healed, but he also received a new name: that of Israel. The people of Israel are named for him, not because he was docile or self-effacing, but because he was a fighter. Jacob is not the traditional model of the obedient follower; rather, he is an example of someone who stands up to human and divine authorities and is rewarded by God.

Outside of Judaism I have not found a similar figure, especially not in Christianity. Christianity is one religion, but certainly not the only one, that puts a premium on submissive-ness. It is a religion that over the centuries has developed a tried and true recipe for promoting obedience. It does this by planting fear and guilt in peoples’ hearts, and this really works. It is so easy and tempting to plant fear when you are in a position of power and your main preoccupation is control.

As Christians, we have become so accustomed to the messages of guilt in the Sunday liturgy that we do not even notice them anymore. Theological anthropology (or, the way in which a particular theology depicts human beings) is rarely addressed by the church. Yet, it is a fundamental question. The only image of human beings we see in the Eucharistic liturgy is that of the guilty one, the unworthy one. We never see a person who is capable of doing good, or even one who is wounded. If our image of humans is principally that of fallibility (as in the phrase “there is no health in us” from the Book of Common Prayer), this justifies the need to constantly refer to divinely appointed authorities to tell us what to think, say and do.

Fighting with the divine as Jacob Israel did, means having the audacity to question what is considered sacred and established. It is about having the temerity to speak up when you disagree. Christian tradition has developed catechisms wherein the believer is called on to adhere to established truths. On the other hand Judaism developed the Talmudic tradition of discussion and debate, of argument and counter-argument. Imagine for a moment what kind of catechism we would have if we were permitted to also hear the voice of the heretics, those who paid dearly, sometimes with their lives for the audacity to express their faith in different words. If this had been the case in Christian history, priests would not be trained to think of- ficially and to silence those who think freely.

I am surprised to see that, still today, the expression of a disagreement is a perilous act in the church. You can count yourself lucky if you openly express a significant disagree-ment, the people in your church community do not try to intimidate you and make you feel guilty. Personally, I have not had such luck. There are those who prefer to protect theologi- cal constructions and liturgies rather than listen and permit open discussion. But the Church is still my family and I want to remain in my family even if it has little space for liberty.

Edouard-Charles Lebeau
Ph.D Religious Studies

The Quebec Diocesan Gazette is glad to receive letters to the editor on subjects relevant to the members of the diocese. They should be no longer than 600 words and the author must be identi-fied. The paper reserves the right to edit submissions.

Email them to jsweeny@abacom.com

Curling update

In the March paper, we reported on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Bonspiel held in the Eastern Townships. The team representing St. George’s Church, borough of Lennoxville, accumulated the greatest number of points against the seven other teams from five local churches and so took home the trophy.

Plans are underway to hold the event again in 2020, perhaps your church would like to take up the challenge to throw a few rocks for Christian Unity.

More than two years ago, St. John Gualbert, a shared Anglican Church of Canada-United Church of Canada ministry in Port McNeill, B.C., had a half-dozen regular congregants for Sunday morning services, and a procession of clergy who tended to stay for a relatively short period of time before moving on. Two parishioners, Craig and Deborah Murray, together with some others, went door-to-door through the community, raising $120,000 for a new roof and other building renovations. They also applied to the diocese’s Vision Fund for support, putting on community programs aimed at assisting the local community.

The church now has a deck for people in wheelchairs to view its community garden, comfortable chairs instead of pews, and its bookstore serves as a local gathering place. Today, the church attracts more than 870 households in less than three and a half years. As of press time, more than 200 households were on its growing waiting list.

—The Diocesan Post

B.C. congregation reaches out to community, reverses decline

A small ecumenical ministry in the diocese of British Columbia has been attracting increasing numbers of congregants after taking a number of measures aimed at building bridges with the local community.

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The church now has a deck for people in wheelchairs to view its community garden, comfortable chairs instead of pews, and its bookstore serves as a local gathering place. Sunday services attract 32 people and the congregation is growing. The congregation is still unable to afford a full-time priest or minister, but Deborah Murray, a lay reader and celebrant, minister, but Deborah Murray, a lay reader and celebrant,
A Weekend with the Bishop and Bonhomme

Aware that the Anglican Diocese of Quebec is now once again home to a proportionally significant number of clergy families with young children, Bishop Bruce invited those clergy and their families to Quebec City for a weekend of reflection and mutual support that became known as "A Weekend with the Bishop and Bonhomme."

Everyone gathered at Bishopthorpe for three days of fun, food, and noisy fellowship! Photos: Jesse Dymond

Photo: Carnaval.qc.ca
St George’s Drummondville property split, transferred to two not-for-profit organizations

By James Sweeny

In mid-January the Corporation of the Incumbent and Churchwardens of St George’s Drummondville signed two ephyteutic leases, each for a duration of thirty years.

The first was for the rectory and was with the Centre Renaitre de Drummondville, a local branch of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The church, parking lot and parish hall were signed over to the St George’s Church Foundation.

The Foundation membership is mainly non-Anglican and its mission is the protection of the St. George’s Church heritage site. On their website it states their mission is to “preserve and promote our religious and cultural heritage. The members of the board of directors and volunteers are devoted to the development of St. George’s Church buildings and site while respecting a balance between maintenance, restoration and the promotion of the site in the community.”

According to the Land register of Quebec, a public register that contains information on real property transactions in Quebec, there was no money exchanged however the deeds require restoration and improvements to the buildings be done by the two organizations by January 2039.

For the church the joints in the stonewalls are to be replaced, the bell tower woodwork is to be restored or replaced, as well work on the stained-glass windows will be done.

The parish hall is to get new main doors, be equipped with a bathroom on the ground level and both the church and hall are to have better handicap access. Finally, the Foundation must redo the joints in the stonewall along Hertot Street.

The rectory is to be re-clad in clapboard, a new roof and windows installed.

The church building will continue to be known as St George’s Church however it is no longer an Anglican church given that the operators have no affiliation with the Anglican Church of Canada or this diocese. This will not stop the small but active Drummondville parish from worshipping there but they are now no longer burdened with upkeep on the property valued at $1,188,675. St George’s Church Foundation agrees to allow the parish free use of the church and hall for services, provided the Corporation of the Incumbent and Churchwardens advises the Foundation by the 30th of January each year what dates it will be needing the building during the remainder of the year. The transfer now allows for other non-religious uses of the church building by the Foundation such as civil marriages which are not permitted to be held in Anglican churches in the diocese.

The church property in Drummondville is one of the four most valuable in the diocese and these two leases will result in work that enhances the property. Since 2000 there have been questions regarding the ownership of the church property. Despite negotiations since that time the ownership matter has not yet been settled. However, in a letter deposited in the diocesan archives, the bishop waived his rights to be named in the deeds to allow the incumbent (who is the bishop) and churchwardens to proceed with these transfers.

St George’s Church with the parish hall in the background. Photo http://blog.haverootswilltravel.com/

Staff change at Church House

Isabelle Farrah has moved on from her role as Executive Assistant in the Synod Office effective on March 1. Some of you will have never met Isabelle face to face, but you very likely know her as the friendly voice picking up the phone at Church House and fielding all sorts of questions and requests. She has also been key in organizing meetings of the DEC, clergy gatherings, and the countless other tasks that have helped the Synod Office work as smoothly as possible.

Isabelle joined our little synod office team three years ago. Even though she doesn’t come from a church background, she quickly and adeptly learned our lingo and sometimes peculiar way of doing things in the church. She’s been a valued colleague and she will be missed. Nevertheless wish her well as she begins a new opportunity as a public servant, working at the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l’Habitation du Québec.

Isabelle’s departure means that until new arrangements are made, it may take those of us who work out of the Synod Office a little longer than usual to answer your call, reply to your email or letter, or get that piece of information you’re looking for. We appreciate your patience.
I feel a collection coming on

“When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away. But whoever takes refuge in me will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.”

- Isaiah 57:13

Why are we such avid collectors? Like magpies, we can’t help it, and pretty soon our nests overflow. Even venerable institutions lose control of their collections. A basement at Université Laval is so full of objects from shut-down museum collections that you can hardly move between the rows. Once upon a time, every self-respecting institution in Quebec, whether it was a school, convent, library, university, or even middle-class home, had its natural history collection, or cabinet de curiosités. They were considered an educational necessity. Stuffed birds, shells, insects, rocks, and fossils were neatly arranged in glass-fronted cabinets according to the latest theory of classification, or else to suit the taste of the collector. But the craze for natural history collecting became a race to the top – kings and emperors sent out fleets of ships to make sure theirs was the biggest collection and their objects the rarest.

The church has also been an avid collector. Cast your eyes upwards during a concert at the now-deconsecrated Chapelle du Séminaire, in Quebec city, and you find you are surrounded by hundreds of tiny fragments of human bone, skin or hair, carefully framed and hung on the walls. Six hundred relics, many taken from the catacombs of Rome, were given to the Séminaire around 1900 by one of the great relic collectors of all time, Fr. Calixte Marquis. He brought thousands home from Rome just before buying relics was banned by the pope. Relics were not just an object of devotion. Collecting always has its venial side. They were also for church building – the more you had, the more parishes you could set up (every altar needed a relic). They were for profit, too – a parish could make money from pilgrims.

You may scoff, but are we not all busy collecting something? Are we collecting followers on Instagram, or likes on Facebook? Are we collecting Harry Potter books from the same publisher (so they look nice and even on the shelf)? Hoarding self-help books? Or back issues of the Quebec Diocesan Gazette? No – wait! That’s important stuff!

I have an absurdly large collection of books, most of which I haven’t taken off the shelf for years, surrounding me as I write. Upstairs I have an absurdly large collection of sweaters, each of which I went out and bought when I was feeling a little empty. It doesn’t take much to get me going on a collection. I have an absurd rooster-shaped jug which pours through its beak. I also have a cow-shaped milk-jug which pours through its mouth. Just these two mouth-pouring jugs, and I already feel a collection coming on.

To collect is human. Even Jesus collected disciples. But it has its dangers – especially if our collections, like those of Calixte Marquis, have an apparent link with our faith lives. Some of us, for example, collect fragments of different religions to create our own personal cabinet of spiritualities.

Lent is a time when I am determined to examine my collecting impulse before rushing out to get another sweater or going online to research mouth-pouring creature-jugs. Emptiness is a terrifying feeling, and will it ever end? I don’t know. But unless I sit and wait in it, cross-legged, staring up at its bare walls rising around me, I’ll never know my need for God and never inherit anything but a set of jugs. I think God might be just waiting for me to keep still for long enough to let him show me the holy mountain where I will be safe and where even the magpies have stopped going after the glitter.
One of the great rewards of dipping into the back pages of the Diocesan Gazette comes from finding a letter from a ‘missionary in the field’—a minister in one of the regions far from the city of Quebec—serving the distant faithful in places virtually unknown to a majority of its readers.

“The following extract from a letter received by the Bishop from the Rev. H.H. Corey, gives a good idea of the difficulties and hardships of the life of a Missionary on the Labrador Coast,” begins an item in the Gazette’s July issue. Hollis Hamilton Ambrose Corey was a regular contributor to the Gazette. A native of the province of Quebec—born in Barrington, Stanstead County—Corey’s first posting in the Diocese had been to the Labrador mission in 1909. In 1912 he was moved to Kenogami for four years, before being called to Mutton Bay in 1916. At the time this letter was written, plans were already afoot for his transfer to Foreign Missionary Work. He, his wife Constance and their young family were about to leave the country for a rural ministry in Japan.

“I am in a somewhat annoying dilemma just now,” Corey wrote from the Lower North Shore, on April 3rd, 1919. “The spring break-up has come—about fifteen or twenty days earlier than usual—and has caught me here at Kegaska, with a komatik and dog-team.”

“It is very doubtful now whether I shall be able to get back home before the open water comes, and that will probably be more than a month hence. I have been absent from Mrs Corey and the children, almost without a break, since January 21st when I left for my eastern journey—that is 72 days today—and I had so looked forward all winter to a happy last spring in Mutton Bay.” “In all these 72 days, I have only had five with the family…”

“My winter mission, however, is now done,” his letter continues, “except at Harrington, Mutton Bay and La Tabatiere. I trust the Commander will be willing to let Your Lordship call at many out-of-the-way places, for we are anxious that Your Lordship should consecrate the burying-ground at that place. Last year the family moved to Harrington where he was an assistant at St Mary’s Church. Corey died at Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1954.

In 1920, the Rev. Hollis Corey and his family left the Diocese of Quebec to serve in the Diocese of Chubu, Japan, as part of the Anglican Church of Canada’s mission to that country. In later years the family moved to Hawaii where he ministered in Honolulu. He retired at the age of 68 from the American Episcopal Church. In 1932, although officially retired he remained active in ministry. He along with his wife returned the Lower North Shore for the summer of 1952 as a missioner. The following summer is was acting rector of St Mary Magdalene, Toronto. The couple wintered in Daytona Beach where he was an assistant at St Mary’s Church.

In 1962, Bishop Russel Brown commissioned the Mercedes-Benz diesel-powered M.V Hollis Corey, successor to the Glad Tidings III, as the Diocesan Mission Boat serving the Lower North Shore, named in honour of this dynamic, faithful missionary. The mission boat was thirty-five and a half feet long with a well-appointed cabin and wheelhouse. It was designed and built by Roderick Jones of Wolf Bay.

Looking at the Consecrations Register, a burial ground described as ‘Kegaska River Labrador’ was indeed consecrated by Bishop Williams on 29th June 1919. Care was taken and time was allowed to perform this task.

Finally, in closing, Corey expresses the eagerness for news of the wider world which the Bishop’s forthcoming visit also represented. “We have had almost no papers at all this winter, nor indeed since the armistice was signed. We are so anxious to hear the whole story, and especially to see the illustrated papers depicting King George’s visit to Paris, and President Wilson’s visits to Paris, London and Rome.”

The national church Communications Department has decided to take control the mailing lists that are currently the property of the parishes. All current and future readers of both the Quebec Diocesan Gazette and the Anglican journal will have to “opt-in” to continue or begin receiving those papers. Any current subscriber who does not confirm their desire to continue receiving the papers June 2019 will be removed from the mailing list.

There are many ways to make sure you continue to receive the papers: email: yes@national.anglican.ca with your name, address, phone number and if available the ID# from the label on the front-page of the Anglican Journal. You can also go online to anglicanjournal.com/yes and complete the online form there, phone them toll free at 1-866-333-9899 or fill in the form found in the current issue of the Journal and mail it to them.

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